

The experience of writing a practice-based thesis in Fine Art and Design

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I'll be a Doctor of Art and people will bring their poorly
paintings to me and I'll tell them what's wrong, you know...
[Jane, 13 Apr 2005]



Abstract

This study describes the writing processes of Ph.D. candidates in Fine Art Practice and Design. These disciplines are relatively new within universities and have little history of research and writing at doctoral level. Through the experience of the participants, the study illuminates the complexities and difficulties of appropriating an existing genre to fit new purposes.

This study takes an academic literacies approach, derived from literacy practices. The approach views writing as a situated practice that is best observed through extended ethnographically-based engagement in sites of literacy-in-action. However, literacy practices exist in a wider context that can be understood as a network that both enables and limits local literacy practices. Among the actors maintaining the network surrounding and enmeshing the local literacy practices are a variety of discourse communities that use a multifaceted genre like the doctoral thesis to further their own purposes.

The study reports on two sites of literacy-in-action, one a seminar for doctoral candidates in Fine Art Practice, and the other a seminar for candidates in Design. Each site constituted a case that was studied for over three years, looking at the difficulties that candidates faced in each site. These case studies are placed in a wider context of writing in fine art and design in order to understand the factors that shaped the texts that the candidates wrote.

The study shows that, while candidates worked to assemble distinct individual and disciplinary identities in both Fine Art Practice and Design, the candidates in Fine Art Practice particularly struggled to find research methodologies and written textual forms that would adequately represent their understanding of current art practices.

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1 Introduction

Background to the study

This study began with an interest in the problems of writing. The question that it began with was, "What are the problems that advanced writers face in writing in a new context?" I was interested not just in the challenges that writers face when they write a type of text they have never written or have to write at a more demanding level. I was interested what happened when clever, articulate people who did not ordinarily write much chose to write in a form that was not only demanding, but quite new. To answer these questions, I looked at the problems that artists and designers faced when they wrote doctoral theses.

It's a convention of writing instruction that if the writing process is made more transparent, writers at every stage will be able to write more easily. As a result, writing instruction has developed a medley of tricks, small useful insights, that can help developing writers, such as that writing is reiterative, or that texts have structures that can be broken down and analysed. One of the most fruitful insights has been that texts can be grouped, and that these groups, called *genres*, are responsive to the social groups that use them to accomplish their goals. Genres define fuzzy, temporarily stabilised boundaries for the acceptability of a text to a social group, the *discourse community*, which is said to own the genre. A text that meets the expectations of the discourse community will be accepted as a successful example of the genre, while a text that deviates too far from those expectations will be rejected. One of the simplest tricks, looking at previous models, may break down if the genre is so new there are few models. How would writers write a high stakes text like a thesis, which requires years of dedication, without clear models, and how would the discourse community assess the new text?

The doctoral thesis may be considered an example of a genre, though whether theses are a single genre or a collection of genres gathered under a common name remains open to question. Although theses serve similar purposes of documenting research and substantiating claims of achievement, they differ greatly in how they embody them. Theses vary by discipline in terms of content, methodologies and written form, among other variations. These variations exert a centrifugal pressure on theses as a genre. However, wider groups than the disciplinary community have claims on the genre (C. Park, 2007), and these communities exert centripetal forces, which slow the evolution of the genre and tend to create a shared expectation (if possibly mistaken) of commonality.

At the local level, candidates, a small group of supervisors, examiners, and the department work to create and evaluate theses, while moving outward in an expanding helix the university, the disciplinary community, the academic community and the society that recognises the Ph.D. are implicated and to some extent engaged with the writing process. These communities have different and sometimes conflicting purposes. The wider community may want evidence that researchers have been trained, while the local community may be more invested in the candidate, the research project or fostering a research culture. Thompson (2005) argued that there is such extensive variation among theses that they can hardly be considered a single genre.

The differences among the communities that own the genre of the Ph.D. thesis become more apparent when the genre changes. Variations in doctoral studies have developed that reflect the different starting points and new goals of candidates (C. Park, 2007) as well as the needs of local and wider communities. Members of the wider academic community, many of whom have doctorates, question the purposes and doubt the rigour of new forms of the doctorate. While in the past, doctoral degrees were primarily qualifications for teaching at university, a bureaucratic, knowledge-based economy of high modernity has made them much more widely useful, so that only a portion (from a third to two thirds, depending on discipline) of

those earning doctorates enter education as a career (Haynes & Metcalfe, 2007). If a genre is owned and judged by a discourse community, which is the relevant community?

The context of the study

Two areas in which a new form of the doctorate have developed are Fine Art Practice¹ and Design. Originally fine art was a manual craft, learned through apprenticeship, while design did not exist as a discipline before the industrial revolution, when design, like other stages of manufacturing processes became a specialised activity. Beginning in the Renaissance for fine art and in the nineteenth century for design, these disciplines were taught in dedicated institutions outside of the university system. Although geometry for proportion and reading to understand and interpret the classical sources of art had become a part of artists' education during the Renaissance, writing was not a significant element. Art and design colleges largely continued this tradition. However, after the Second World War, in England art and design colleges were folded first into the polytechnics, and then, as components of the polytechnics, into the university sector. In this process, writing was added to teaching and assessment in art and design.

Alongside the change in the site of art and design education—and the changes in ethos that accompanied that change—art became much more theory- and concept-driven during the twentieth century. Where once skill with tools characterised artists, as the twentieth century moved on artists



Figure 1: Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917

¹ *Fine Art Practice* is the name given to the area of study in which the creation of artefacts or conceptual practices are central. Though it may be a component of Fine Art Practice, Art History is a separate programme with a much longer history in the University and its own traditions of writing.

became much more identified with conceptual innovations. Marcel Duchamp turned a urinal on its side, signed it, and entered it in an exhibition as what he called a "ready-made." Along with the institutional changes, this changed understanding of art contributed to writing becoming a component of art and design education. Nevertheless, the relationship between art or design practice and formal academic texts remained contested; some postgraduate programmes have not required written texts as part of assessed coursework. Some artists, though, wanted advanced qualifications, and during the 1970's, polytechnics in England began to award Ph.D.'s in Fine Arts based on creative practices. At the end of that decade, the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) introduced a regulation allowing for the submission of creative work in other than written form as part of the examined thesis (Newbury, 1996; UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997).

These changes in art and design education, art practice, and the nature of the Ph.D. meant that writing a thesis in Fine Arts Practice or Design is a fraught process. There are relatively few examples of successful theses; excluding doctorates in architecture, there were only 156 Ph.D.s in art and design in the UK between 1976 and 1995, or roughly eight a year (Mottram, 2009). She estimated approximately 40 completions per year in art and design including architecture during the next decade. (Compare this with an average total of 12,445 of Ph.D. graduates in the UK during the period 2003-2005 [Haynes & Metcalfe, 2007].) As a result, not all supervisors in these fields have completed doctorates themselves. Many candidates have supervisors from allied fields such as Art History or Cultural Studies, who bring their different traditions to research and thesis writing. In addition, while variations on social science research methodologies have won acceptance in design, there is no such consensus on methodologies or even the nature of research in fine arts. This thin history in fissiparous disciplines means that embarking on a three year project with a high stakes written outcome is a considerable adventure.

In addition, artists and designers don't commonly write as part of their professional practice. Writing is, of course, essential to postmodern social life, and artists and

designers write grant applications, project specifications, and artist's statements, among other texts, as part of their working lives. However, in contrast with Thompson's (2005) Agricultural Botany candidates, some of whom wrote theses structured with Introductions, Methodologies, Results and Discussions (IMRaD) like the journal articles that they read to research their topics, art and design candidates had no clear professional models of writing. Although the journal articles that candidates in Agricultural Botany read were aimed at a professional audience, the articles had a purpose similar to that of the candidates' theses, the dissemination of new knowledge to the discipline. There is no such parallel in art and design. Artists, and to a large extent designers, do not research or report research in written form as part of their professional practice. This may change as these disciplines develop a research culture within the university, and as they—and the university—develop new understandings of research appropriate to these disciplines. However, although many artists and designers are articulate and widely read, neither research nor writing is commonly central to their practice.

Doctoral theses are unusual texts, because they are owned by communities at different levels of generality. Typically, the sole audience for a text is the discourse community, whether the text is a journal article in science or an artist's statement. If a text is needed or wanted by readers outside of the discourse community, translators or brokers facilitate the move to a new audience. Journalists (e.g., science journalists, art reviewers) frequently fill the role of information brokers, reconfiguring the original text for the new discourse community. However, since the Ph.D. is the qualification for teaching at university, the entire university community has a stake in seeing that it is not devalued. The wider, now international, community that accepts the Ph.D. as the highest earned qualification, and which, through its various state institutions, accredits the doctorate, also has a stake in its rigour. However, theses are written at a local level by candidates mediated by supervisors, fellow candidates, friends, and internal and external examiners. The movement between global and local communities shapes all theses, but is more visible in the emergence of a new type of thesis.

Aims of the study and research approach

The primary question for the study was “What does writing a doctoral thesis in emerging disciplines that have no strong traditions of either research or writing feel like to the writers and the other participants in the process? Where do the difficulties that they encounter arise?” To try to answer this question, I watched participants interact, read their texts and talked with them. The study took a flexible approach that attempted to make sense of the process of writing in terms of the meanings that the people involved in it understood (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

Martin’s description of genres as “how things get done, when language is used to accomplish them” (Martin, 1985, p. 250) conveys something of the openness and breadth of the question that drove the research project. All of the participants in the process of researching and writing a thesis wanted to do something through the successful writing of a text. My question tried to ask how participants, from their varying perspectives, understood and enacted “getting things done.” This aim of trying to understand the writing process from the participants’ perspectives remained constant as the research progressed.

Other questions that were set out before beginning research had to evolve. A question relating to whether generic variation would increase in new disciplines encountered the participants’ desire to write texts that were largely traditional. This led to further questions as to why they wanted a traditional text even though they were writing in disciplines known for innovation and creativity, questions that related to their purposes and interpretation of the task. Another question concerned the possibility of the inclusion of multimodal elements in texts of writers whose primary language was visual. This turned out to be a lower order question, one with limited but interesting results.

Writers such as Ivanič (1998), Lillis (2001), and Prior (1998) have written ethnographically-based accounts of writing. They portrayed writing in a social context as a social act that implicated other actors. Genre theory is in some ways a counterpart to emic accounts of writing. Genre theory (e.g., Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Russell, 1997; Swales, 1990, 2004) tends to look at writing through reception and intertextuality, by situating writing in a matrix of actors, with the writer only one of the participants. The successful writer anticipates the desires of the reader in the discourse community. But because genre theory understands texts through their reception, it always looks in the rear-view mirror. I was interested in how people write when they have few relevant models for the genre they are trying to write. As I have tried to answer those questions, I have tried to sharpen my descriptions of their writing, but my goal has remained to try to understand writing from the point of view of the participants, their goals, and the context of their writing. Mike Baynham introduced me to actor-network theory (Latour, 2005), which provided an intellectual framework for my inclination, that tools and context make opportunities for but also limit actors. Actor-network theory allowed me to situate my own beliefs and reminded me to look around and beyond the immediate site of the study.

This research describes how writing is embedded in the world, with writers and their purposes connected to other people's understandings and purposes for the doctorate. Writing a doctoral thesis is always difficult, but not all a candidate's difficulties are in writing their research. Significantly, they have to navigate their text through other people's gateways.

At the same time, the nature of the doctorate is changing. Doctorates are increasingly required for university posts, and they are important for a wide range of positions outside the university. This has led to new interpretations of the Ph.D., as more people try to fit a wider range of skills into the single measure of the doctorate.

Finally, the nature of formal written texts is changing. Where meaning was formerly carried largely by embedded clauses and compound sentences, more meaning has been shifted to visual forms, such as tables, charts and images (Kress, 2003). This may represent to some extent a return to the earliest form of literacy, in which tabular data was the primary content (Goody, 1977). It certainly reflects multimodal meaning making, facilitated by personal computers. PCs have made all of us graphic designers, communicating with visual material; designers and artists have always been there.

Contribution

Some parts of the narrative told here have been presented previously, such as a review of the meanings of *discourse community* (Borg, 2003), the background of art and design education and the inclusion of writing in this education (Borg, 2007b), and portions of learning to write in Fine Art Practice (Borg, 2004, 2007a). This thesis represents an integrated description of writing in context. Understanding writing in context includes the role of multiple discourse communities in the emergence of a new genre, as well as the difficulties that exist for writers as they try to force the genre to their own purposes. I hope too that this thesis will contribute to an understanding by members of the wider discourse communities that own the genre of the thesis of some of the difficulties writers have with these important texts. Finally, I hope to contribute to recent studies of multi-modal writing.

Overview of the thesis

The thesis is divided into two large sections, each preceded by a brief overview. The first section presents the intellectual background for the study and the methodology of the study. This section contains four chapters that discuss, successively, academic literacy, the history of the education of artists and designers, issues surrounding the Ph.D. in Fine Arts Practice and Design (FAP & D), and the methodology of the study. The second section consists of encounters with artists and designers. It

consists of a chapter describing artists writing theses, designers writing theses, and a chapter describing two candidates who had difficulties at the point at which their progress in their studies was formally assessed. A conclusion tries to make sense of it all.

Section 1

Situated literacy practices; the history of Art and Design education, the development of the Ph.D. in Art and Design, and the methodological approach of the study

2 Section overview

This section outlines the theories that describe literacy practices and link these practices to a wider context. It begins with Chapter 3, on academic literacy, that situates advanced literate activity within the larger context of literate practices. It suggests that genre theory is a symmetrical counterpart to literacy practices, in which, by its negotiation of texts and its powers of rejection, the text-receiving discourse community shapes the writer's text. As new contexts for writing emerge, genres are repurposed for these contexts. The development of the doctoral thesis in art and design, disciplines that do not write as part of their normal professional practice, is a new context, for which writers must write in a new genre. The chapter also describes actant-network theory, the framework that links literacy practices on a local level with global discourse communities, where economic and social trends shape what gets read, discussed and ultimately put on the page.

The next two chapters look at some of the global influences on writing in FAP & D, beginning with the development of formal education for artists, which replaced an earlier apprenticeship model. Formal education in art and design schools did not immediately lead to the use of writing as a tool of assessment. That waited on changes in the understanding of art, which shifted thinking of art as a manual skill underpinned by an implicit theory of illusionistic representation to thinking of art as conceptual innovation. In the second half of the twentieth century, art education in England came first to parallel university education with a qualification equivalent to a first degree, and then, as independent art and design colleges were absorbed into polytechnics, to be part of the university system. Changes in the understanding of art and changes in the type of institution in which art and design were taught led to writing becoming a significant component of art and design assessment.

The desire for full equivalence for artists working as lecturers in universities led to the development of Ph.D.s in Fine Arts and Design. This is the subject of the third

chapter, which discusses the heated debate within these communities on the appropriate form of the qualification. Issues include the content of Ph.D. training, and the extent to which theses should reflect disciplinary research and presentation traditions or should rather conform to existing models of research and training.

The final chapter of this section describes the methodology of the study. This study used a flexible design (Robson, 2002), which drew on ethnographic traditions of case study, observation, and interviews to generate data. The data generated was coded, analysed, and reflected upon. I discuss how reflection contributed to the research process and my representation of the participants and the process in this thesis.

3 The practice of academic literacy

This study of the interactions of texts and people uses a variety of analytic frameworks to try to illuminate how the participants create texts and the difficulties they find in this process. One framework is literacy practices, which studies people interacting using texts. Another is genre analysis, which looks at how people's interactions shape texts. These two frameworks are symmetrical and complementary. Studies of literacy practices describe how people interact with texts, how they take meaning from texts and how their social practices shape the texts that they create. Genre analysis describes how texts are shaped by social groups to accomplish their shared purposes. Genre analysis may focus on the features and characteristics of texts, but underlying and shaping these features are the social purposes of a group, described as a discourse community.

These two frameworks share important beliefs about the ways that people and texts interact. These beliefs include that the interactions are local and distant. Literate activities—writing, reading and discussing texts—occur locally, but because texts are easily moved, the community that shares the texts may be dispersed. Texts are shaped by the purposes of the community, as will be the meanings that the community takes from them. These purposes circumscribe the features and content of texts.

I will also discuss texts as tools for identity elaboration. Our identities emerge and are shaped by the opportunities existing in our societies and by the choices that we make. Opportunities and choices for identity elaboration parallel the opportunities and the limitations that genres enforce, and, as earning a doctorate is to a large extent the textual creation of a new professional identity, the choices made in writing create that identity.

A number of theories link local interactions to the wider context. Actant-network theory (ANT) is one of the theories that will be used in the study. ANT provides a bridge between people's interactions involving texts and the artefacts that both shape and are created by those interactions. Because texts can be easily and widely distributed, ANT links the local interactions—the discussion and writing of texts—to the wider context in which these actions happen.

All of these frameworks have substantial and increasing bodies of literature, which can only be indicated in this chapter. I will first sketch literacy practices as an approach to understanding how people understand and work with texts and then outline the concepts of genre analysis. These two approaches come together in studies of academic literacy, which describe the contextualised uses of texts by skilled practitioners.

Literacy practices

Studies of literacy practices portray literacy not as a set of discreet skills (reading, writing) but rather as a suite of embedded practices characterised by ways of using written language involving not only reading and writing but also the decoding of other semiotic systems (maps, drawings), discussion (e.g., conversation, giving directions) and perhaps actions such as following a recipe or preparing a manuscript according to submission guidelines.

One of the foundational studies of literacy as a practice (Street, 1984) described two models of literacy, the *autonomous* model and the *ideological* model. The autonomous model viewed literacy as a neutral skill. Literacy was said to exist on a scale or spectrum, with functional literacy indicating a basic ability and the ability to read and write fluently in socially accepted contexts a further point on the scale, but the autonomous model does not recognise the contextual grounding of advanced literacy. The autonomous model also portrays literacy as free of context in other ways. Texts are accessible to all readers and susceptible to decontextualised,

disinterested interpretation. Autonomous literacy is in many ways a projection of the values claimed for academic literacy by the academics who highlighted the importance of literacy in human development. The values attributed to literacy were the values of “essayist literacy” (Scollon & Scollon, 1981) which these scholars valued in their reading and strove for in their writing.

Building on Street (1984), Barton and Hamilton (2000, p. 8) summarised the principles of the ideological model of literacy:

- Literacy is best understood as a set of social practices.
- Different domains of life have different literacy practices associated with them.
- Literacy practices reflect social institutions and power relations, making some forms of literacy dominant.
- Literacy practices enact social goals, and are historically situated.
- Literacy practices change in response to individual interpretation, social goals and technological change, among other reasons.

Literacy practices are the accumulation of individual *literacy events* (Heath, 1982),

which are events in

which literacy is integral to an activity.

In daily life, these might

include following the instructions of a recipe or assembling flat-pack

furniture. In recent

years, watching

television news has become a multimodal literacy event (Figure 2), with text running below the presenter carrying information that sometimes runs counter to the presenter’s information (e.g., stock market reports in text against a spoken story of a celebrity divorce) and sometimes presents additional details or headlines. Though it



Figure 2: Television news as multimodal event

comes from a single box, television news resembles the multiple strands of the literacy events of Trackton that Heath (1982, p. 68) described, from which participants “must themselves select, practice and determine rules of production and structuring,” and, in this example, interpretation.

A cluster of literacy events that have become increasingly common throughout life are educational and training experiences. For example, when an employee is added at a small pet shop, they will experience a range of formal and structured informal literacy events. The employee will receive a written contract, a staff handbook, and written and verbal orientations to the pets and products that the store stocks. They will be told how to make sales using written textual and numeric information, how to help customers, and how to comply with legal requirements. Many of these requirements are displayed throughout the shop in written texts such as no smoking signs, and health and safety requirements. As employee and employer walk through the shop, the induction of the new employee is a rich mixture of discussion, reading and writing, blending the use of numbers, diagrams and other sign systems, plus, of course, the reality of animals, pet food and other goods that the shop carries.

In what we experience as high modern life², the boundaries, nature and content of literacy events are increasingly blurred: a tee shirt with the phrase “just do it” has different meanings, as inspiration, provocation, or advertisement, depending on the wearer and their context. Should it turn up among used clothing sold in West Africa where the dominant written languages are Arabic and French (Brandt & Clinton, 2002), it may point toward a wider literate world, unheeded by the wearer.

The meanings given and taken by the participants in literacy events and the wider context of literacy practices can best be understood from the perspective of the participants, who may participate in different spheres of literacy practices. For example, the new employee of the pet shop may watch television news or surf the

² “High’ modernity” (or, alternatively, “late’ modernity”) are Giddens’s (1991, p. 3) terms for “our present-day world,” and are perhaps less confusing than the artworld’s “post-modern” with its implicit questions: “Where do we go from here?” or “Have we arrived yet?”

Internet as she eats breakfast, before going to her new job, perhaps wearing a tee shirt with “just do it” across the front.

However, literacy practices are shaped by institutions and power relations. The television news programme is designed by a global corporation competing with other corporations for participants in its commercial literacy event, while the tee shirt is designed by another corporation, which blends inspiration and advertising in a way that it hopes will appeal to young consumers. In an expression of power and practical generosity, the shop owner may provide a new tee shirt with the name of the shop embroidered on it. The regulations governing the signs on the shop walls, as well as the rights of employees and customers, and the treatment of the pets in the shop, are stipulated by the government. Literacy practices are not simply local; they are almost always global.

Brandt and Clinton (2002) argue that *literacy-in-action* better describes the mixture of local interaction embedded in a wider context of global literacy than *literacy events*, with their focus on the immediate context of participants interacting with texts. The need to include both the local context and a global context is particularly appropriate for studying academic literacy practices. Literacy practices in an academic context are both intensely local—two peer reviewers and an editor for a prospective journal article; one marker with another for internal moderation plus an external examiner for an undergraduate dissertation—and global, with students coming to universities from around the world for qualifications recognised and valued in their distant countries. Brandt and Clinton propose ANT as a theory which links these contexts.

Academic literacies

As argued above, education and training are routine and recurrent parts of high modern life, rather than experiences that are distinctive to one period of life.

Academic literacies therefore share the characteristics of literacy practices in other

contexts, in that reading, writing and the discussion of texts are not isolable skills but rather contextually bound practices. Although education and training are recurrent, the literacy practices associated with formal academic study are characterised by features that make academic literacy practices distinct. Society values and supports formal education on the basis that it transmits the professed values of a society. Further, texts and writing have a central role in the academy as both products of knowledge creation and measures of learning. There are shared and proclaimed elements of academic written style: at one level, vocabulary, grammar, and spelling that conform to social expectations of accuracy and formality. At another level is a rhetorical stance that reflects historical practice, and is embodied in a particular literary and social technology (Shapin, 1984). The literary technology attributes advances in knowledge creation to objective processes rather than individual insight (Bazerman, 1988), leading to an author-evacuated style (Geertz, 1988, p. 9), in which the author is distanced and portrayed as a disinterested observer of matters of fact.

Nevertheless, disciplines within the academy are large enough to evolve distinctive practices. Using the presence or absence of personal pronouns as a proxy for Geertz's larger concept of the author within the text, a variety of corpus-based studies have found significant differences among disciplines in their acceptance of the use of these pronouns. Disciplines such as Information Systems and Business Studies accept the use of personal pronouns to a much greater extent than Mechanical Engineering and Biology (Hyland, 2002). The presence of the author in texts is a minor difference between disciplines that vary in their subject matter, how they conduct their investigations, and their beliefs about what constitutes knowledge and evidence. Business Studies differ in all these ways from Biology, as well as in many others. But, in spite of differences in subject matter, ontology and epistemology, since much of what is done at university is done with texts, the literary technology is as significant as the material technology.

Academic literacy practices, then, are both similar to literacy practices in other parts of life and different. They are similar in that they are local and particular, but reflect overarching institutions and power relationships. Academic literacy practices also carry out social goals and change in response to changing contexts. They are different in that the stakes are higher than in many other contexts. Logocentric textual activity, that is, textual interaction based around texts with limited support or relief from other modes, remains relatively common in academic contexts for all participants including learners, lecturers and support staff³. This textual activity is important and cannot be avoided, as the viewer of a television news programme can ignore the textual crawl across the bottom of the screen. Learners are assessed by tasks presented in texts, and must frequently respond with written texts. Lecturers advance professionally through textual activity such as the presentation opportunities obtained by writing abstracts, which then lead to written publications. The importance of texts outside of academic contexts shouldn't be downplayed. Job applications, e-mails and memos, proposals, sales records are all crucial in other areas of life, but, while an automobile salesman or a pet shop clerk could not function without literacy in action, they are judged largely on other measures. In the domain of academic life, textual activity is central and crucial.

Genre theory

Turning from the perspective of how people interact using texts to how texts are shaped by people's interaction means turning to genre theory. Genre theory connects texts to social interaction by showing how social groups use relatively stable text types (genres) to carry out their shared goals. Because similar interactions reoccur, genres become typified and stabilised-for-now (Schryer, 1994). The social group, known as a discourse community or community of practice, maintains the

³ It is important to acknowledge that in significant parts of the academy, visual content is an increasingly important component of textual interaction. Visual content is crucial and growing in the sciences for learners at all levels of study (e.g., Kress, 2003; Veal, 1998) and for professionals (e.g., G. Myers, 1990a; Rowley-Jolivet, 2004). In addition, there are new disciplines such as media studies that specifically address multimodal communication. Nevertheless, many academic texts, from student handbooks and assignment task sheets to journal articles are relentlessly comprised of the written word in a society that is increasingly multimodal.

genres that it uses. More powerful actors within the group assess the acceptability of individual manifestations of genres and so maintain the stability of the form. Genre theory is particularly powerful in describing academic and workplace literacy in action, perhaps because social structures are clearly visible in these contexts.

Miller (1984) was the first to shift attention from genres as text forms characterised by discrete features to genres as the means of carrying out social actions. These social actions are driven by the purposes that drive them. Purpose, therefore, is the defining criterion for a genre (Swales, 1990). Myers (2000, p. 178) summarised three broad areas of consensus in the study of genre:

- Genres link the textual and the social
- Genres are relatively stable, because they are based on stereotypical social acts
- Genres can be analysed in terms of participants' purposes

However, there are refinements of interpretation and differences among scholars who would agree with Myers's description.

Discourse communities

One significant area of difference is in the nature of the social group that acts through genres. Many scholars describe genres as being shaped by relatively small, relatively discrete *discourse communities* within larger societies. However, scholars in the Australian tradition (Hyon, 1996) describe large genres (e.g., narration, exposition) that are used throughout society⁴. Smaller groups (*discourse communities*) do not feature in definitions that describe genres as staged, goal-

⁴ "Throughout society" is a phrase that can hardly be used without irony, but I need to discuss the nature of society in a globalised world and the privileged elements within it in order to discuss the power relations implicit in writing. In complex societies (and high modern Britain is certainly one), some people have greater power than others, and many people—perhaps most—feel themselves disempowered in some aspect of their lives. Students—doctoral candidates—are defined as peripheral participants, people coming to be. In addition, many of the participants in this study identified themselves as outsiders in Britain: non-traditional students, non-native English speakers, women. Exclusions transect society, and people may be simultaneously excluded and privileged.

oriented social processes (Martin, Christie, & Rothery, 1987, p. 59); the social unit is the culture or the society. For both the ESP and New Rhetoric traditions (Hyon, 1996), the relevant social groups for an understanding of genre are significantly narrower, and in this study of the process of writing theses, this interpretation of genre is used.

We participate in many discourse communities, and different domains of life have different literacy practices associated with them. Even in relation to earning their doctorates, the candidates and supervisors in this study interacted with many different discourse communities; their participation was marked by varying degrees of distance from power. They interacted in seminar groups with their supervisors in purely local interactions. However, they were brought together in these seminar groups by the university's Fine Arts Practice and Design schools in order to study for and eventually earn Ph.D.s.

They also interacted with university structures formally at key moments in the process of working toward their qualifications: at the proposal stage; at the Mid-Point Progression stage, when their progress was evaluated, and at the viva stage, when their work was assessed.

There were other interactions with the university structure. This structure was connected both to the Fine Arts Practice and Design academic communities and to the wider academic world that valued and assessed the Ph.D. The university mediated significant contacts to this wider community, such as the requests for funding that supported many of the home FAP students through the Arts and



Figure 3: Overlapping discourse communities

Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and by providing funding for external conference participation for the Design students. Finally in this schematic representation, there was the external world of Art and Design practice, in which the participants received recognition primarily for their art and design practices. Each of these groups, represented by overlapping circles, formed distinct communities with differing goals. The local seminar groups, the University structures and the academic art and design communities could be seen as discourse communities. The external Art and Design communities and the academic world lacked the cohesiveness and shared purpose that would define a discourse community⁵, but helped shape the discourse of the smaller groups within them. Academic FAP & D communities are relatively new, and the nature of the hybrid academic and art and design identities is developing in part through arguing about texts including the thesis.

In Swales's (1990) original description, "genres belong to discourse communities, not to individuals, other kinds of grouping or to wider speech communities" (p. 9). His prototypical example of a discourse community was that of collectors of the stamps of Hong Kong, an international community that was maintained solely by the texts they circulated to discuss their shared interest. In later publications (Swales, 1998, 2004), he revisited the concept of discourse community. In Swales (1998), he draws on Killingsworth and Gilbertson (1992) and Porter (1992) to distinguish between *local discourse communities* and *global discourse communities*. Local discourse communities (which he calls *place discourse communities*) are "people who regularly work together... [and] have a settled (if evolving) sense of their aggregation's roles and purposes" (Swales, 1998, p. 204). This contrasts with global discourse communities, which are "groups of writers and readers defined exclusively by a commitment to particular kinds of action and discourse" (Killingsworth &

⁵ There are texts (text series), such as *The Times Higher Education Supplement* (now *The Times Higher Education*) and the Education section of *The Guardian* newspaper, that tried to address issues that link these very large groups, as well as professional journals (e.g., *Studies in Higher Education*) and organisations that act through texts, such as the Higher Education Academy.

Gilbertson, 1992, p. 162). This contrast between local and global discourse communities will be important for this study.

In this context, it is useful to note the parallels between literacy practices and genre theory. Global discourse communities, in Swales's (1998) terms are slightly to the side of Brandt and Clinton's (2002) *globalising connects*, in that Swales sees the members of the more distant communities as having an active role in maintaining the shared discourse. The concept of globalising connects, with its inclusion of nonhuman actors, does not require direct if distant participation. However, there is a close relationship between his place discourse communities and Brandt and Clinton's *localising moves*. In Swales's view as well as theirs, the place discourse community performs literacy-in-action.

Constellations of genres

Swales expanded the description of genres to include texts that bear on each other in particular ways, which he called constellations of genres (Swales, 2004). He identified several different groupings of texts. The most important for this study are *genre chains*, texts that are dependent chronologically or logically on each other. A simple but crucial genre chain for the participants in this study is the set of documents leading up to the successful writing of the thesis. These are the texts that are established by universities to assess students' progress through their doctoral study. The Mid-Point Progression report⁶, for example, is the text that the candidate must write after a year to eighteen months of full time study. This text, along with the supervisor's report, is used to determine whether the

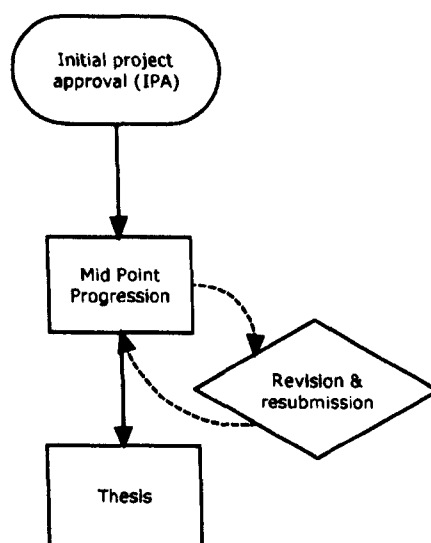


Figure 4: Genre chain

⁶ At the University of Leeds and some other universities, this is known as *upgrading*.

candidate will be allowed to continue their study, or is required to make changes in their research programme, or be required to take an MPhil degree. In addition to these formal documents, there are numerous additional texts, occluded or public, that candidates, supervisors and others connected to their progression write, such as applications for funding and recommendations.

Genre stability

Myers (2000) noted the paradox that analyses of genres always look backwards. Because the study of genres focuses on “the stereotypical and conventional” (G. Myers, 2000, p. 178) it has less to say about why genre change, even though since Schryer (1993), there has been an awareness that genres are “stabilised-for-now” rather than fixed forms. One reason for genre change is technological change (G. Myers, 2000). Another is the reshaping of institutional structures, which for this study is the shift of art and design education over a long period of time from apprenticeship training to education within institutions of higher education. (Art and design practices changed substantially in the last century; these changes informed the new structures.) This shift will be described in the next chapter. However, genre theory argues that genres are repurposed to fit new communicative goals, that is, given a new need for writing to fulfil a community’s goals, an approximate existing genre will be adapted to fit the purpose. In the case of the Art and Design communities, the new context of education within higher education institutions created the need for FAP & D instructors to achieve parity within the universities, through a qualification that colleagues would recognise as comparable with their own. In the higher education context, the qualification that indicates professional status is the doctorate, which is earned through the production of a thesis. However, the re-purposing of the thesis to simultaneously fulfil the professional goals of the FAP & D communities while maintaining their distinctive character strains the flexibility of even a widely varying text. The form that the thesis in FAP & D should take and the effects of this disagreement will be described later.

Identity

When writing is used to do things, the role of the writer is implicated in the text. The conflation of text and identity is perhaps the area where genre studies and literacy studies most come together. Genre studies look at how identity is performed in the text, while literacy studies look at the writer's self-creation, the ways in which writers feel present—or not—in the text. The participants in this study had established identities as artists or designers. Chris Dorsett, the supervisor of the art seminar, regularly alluded to the acceptance of the doctoral candidates' work as artists. However, all of the candidates had to negotiate and establish written identities appropriate for their theses. Their written identities had to be consonant with their feelings of themselves, their existing identities, but also to allow them to project a new identity or cluster of identities, as scholars and researchers in art and design. The difficulties that the participants faced are one of the themes of this study.

The difficulties writers have in taking on new academic identities in their writing have long been an issue in the study of academic writing. The issue of identity becomes particularly visible for writers who are outside the dominant group in society. Essayist literacy is used by the dominant group to project their values in society. Like many aspects of writing at the intersection of literacy studies and genre studies, essayist literacy has been characterised socially, as reflecting educated males of European ancestry (e.g., Farr, 1993) or "modern consciousness" (Scollon & Scollon, 1981). Genre studies characterise essayist literacy by a set of common features. It is "linear, values a particular type of explicitness, has one central point, and is in Standard (American) English" (T. M. Lillis, 1999, p. 131; see also Johns, 1997, 58-64, for additional features including intertextuality). It fictionalises both audience and author: the reader is "a rational mind formed by the rational body of knowledge of which the essay is a part," while the author's "individual and idiosyncratic identity" is effaced (Gee, 2008, pp. 83-4). Both reader and writer are decontextualised.

Taking meaning from texts and writing in this manner are deeply embedded in parts of high modern society, and have been for a very long time. The construct of the decontextualised text created by the rational, disinterested author (Street's [1984] autonomous model) was supported by classical rhetoric, which valued the ability to argue either side of a dispute, thus disengaging writers from their beliefs. Cicero argued that the ideal orator must be able to argue both sides of an issue (in *utramque partem dicere*; May & Wisse, 2001, p. 12). Academic studies, as well as Anglophone legal systems, have placed the skills of argumentation and critical thinking at the centre of education from the time when rhetoric was part of medieval education, while valuing the classical rhetorical tradition projects powerful societal values. Writing and arguing essayist literacy remains "the privileged practice within formal institutions of learning" (T. M. Lillis, 1999, p. 131).

Essayist literacy has deep bases in individual learning, at least in parts of society. Heath (1982, 1983) identified the literacy practices that mainstream middle-class parents use to communicate ways of taking meaning from books to their children that support essayist literacy. Children in this community learn the importance of books, and the skills to find *what-explanations* from books and to respond appropriately to initiation-response-feedback questions. Heath characterised the skills as supporting an analytic, field-independent learning style (Heath, 1982, p. 55). The children of the other communities that Heath studied (which she called Roadville and Trackton) had skills that the schools did not recognise or value, but did not share in the analytic, field-independent learning style of the children of Maintown.

Essayist literacy is also supported by the developed style of scientific writing, in which personal details and idiosyncrasies are removed, and instead writers represented themselves as dispassionate, credible witnesses (Bazerman, 1988; Shapin, 1984). In order to depersonalise conflicting claims, texts are written in an author-evacuated style which also creates the impression of information described, rather than knowledge created. The evident power of science and the authority

granted to it in the dominant sectors of society support the autonomous model. Similarly, the genres that are based on scientific texts (the journal article, the doctoral thesis) have power and prestige in the parts of society that grant importance to knowledge obtained from books and other texts.

Writers from a variety of backgrounds have found it difficult to assume the identities imputed by the author-evacuated style of essayist literacy. As education has espoused a democratic and accessible ethos, these difficulties have been studied and deplored. Students from previously excluded groups who had not been naturalised to essayist literacy struggled for many reasons, including not finding a writing space for their identities within the new context, feeling that they lacked or rejected either the authority or agonism that essayist literacy called for, or that they had values that seemed incompatible with essayist literacy. Students also struggled because the form is not simple to write.

The presentation of a personal identity through academic writing reflects the importance that western societies attribute to individuality and identity. In US composition studies identity has frequently been discussed as an issue of voice, which Elbow (1981, p. 278) describes as writing that “capture[s] the sound of the individual on the page.” Voice, however, is a metaphor that implies a unique, singular and unchangingly recognisable quality. Identities have quite different characteristics from voices. We have multiple overlapping identities; as parents (two children were born to participants in the course of this study), as professionals (all the participants identified themselves as artists and designers), and as enthusiasts (one of the participants was taken to an auto race track for her birthday by other participants). These identities, and the activities associated with them, are laminated with the rhetoro-professional identities that a Ph.D. candidate is trying to assume. The following are some studies that are directly related to identity formation through writing among postgraduate students

Writing and identity: Ivanič (1997)

Roz Ivanič and her collaborators (1997, 2004, 2006; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Ivanič & Weldon, 1999) have extensively investigated and discussed how identities are performed in writing. She (1997, pp., pp. 23-30) described three aspects of identity for a writer:

- The *autobiographical self*, which is the identity that a person constructs from their personal history, with the constraints and possibilities this allows them.
- The *discoursal self*, which is the identity a person constructs through writing (or other semiotic texts).
- The third identity is the *self-as-author*, which reflects the boldness with which a writer appropriates the language of others to create an internally persuasive discourse (Bakhtin, 1981). This aspect of identity is particularly important in academic writing because of the emphasis on explicit intertextuality there.

She identified a fourth aspect, *possibilities for self-hood*, which did not reflect an existing aspect of identity, but rather the possibilities within the constraints of society for new identities. Formal education, even within the reductive framing of education as training for employment, is all about creating new possibilities for self-hood. As she emphasised, “‘possibilities for self-hood’ suggests a rather cosy, over-optimistic picture of unlimited alternatives” (p. 28) that the constraints of society do not permit. The alignments and choices that writers make, though, can increase or decrease the space for possibilities for self-hood for the writers themselves and for others.

Ivanič (1997) looked at the writing development of a group of undergraduates who were set off from the students who traditionally entered universities by all being the first in their families to go to university and older than students entering from secondary school. She described the conflicts that emerged as these writers tried to position themselves as members of an academic community while writing about identities and experiences that had shaped them. For example, she devoted a

chapter to discussing one writer negotiating her written identities as a feminist, an apprentice social worker and as a student. Ivanič identifies seven different subject positions (discoursal selves) in a single 2,500-word assignment.

Ivanič (1997) focused on individual responses to social change and the universities response to the widening participation agenda. Reder and Davila (2005) wrote,

when social groupings are in a state of flux (i.e., power players still forming alliances and meanings still have loose definitions) there is more focus on the players and their not-disinterested involvement is more readily apparent. When stable states of networks become institutionalized, the static (irreversible) relations of power seem “natural” and the influence of the tools of the powerful (e.g., literacy) seem to be inherent in the tools themselves” (p. 182).

Widening participation to some extent put social groupings in flux; in a similar way, the social groupings of the art and design education communities are also in flux as they become part of the university community and come to share its values. The tools of the powerful that this study will look at include the doctorate and its thesis.

The relationship among these multilayered identities (or aspects of identity) has been discussed in relation to student academic writing at undergraduate and, to a lesser extent, at postgraduate levels. While one would like all opportunities for learning to be fully meaningful and imbued with the writer’s intrinsic motivation, students regularly write to fulfil required tasks. As an undergraduate degree is increasingly seen as an entry-level qualification for white-collar occupations, students may be more likely to work to pass than to express their identities through their tasks. Postgraduate students, and particularly students embarked on Ph.D. study, are likely to see their work, and, to a greater or lesser extent the writing that they do toward their doctorate, as being part and parcel of developing congruence between their personal and professional identities.

Writing for postgraduate study and the discourse community:

Casanave (1995)

Casanave (1995) studied the intersection of identity, discipline and writing among a group of students entering a Ph.D. programme in Sociology. Her study investigated “how the writing tasks contributed to the students’ evolving sense of how (or whether) they fit into this community of sociologists” (p. 91). She found that, contrary to her expectations, the autobiographical self of the participants was more compelling than the discorsal self, the identities that the participants sought to create within the discourse community of Sociology. Her reading of writing studies had suggested to her that discourse communities were largely static, comprised of its shared language, beliefs and practices. Novices entered them through acculturation, a one-way process in which they learn the shared norms through an apprenticeship. Citing Chiseri-Strater (1991), she says that the process does not “demand much in the way of personal contributions of students’ own knowledge and interests, which tend to get repressed as conflicts arise” (p. 88).

In contrast, the participants in her study brought their personal histories to the process of acculturation and, to a large extent, rejected it. Of her twelve participants, five left the programme or found niches within it that reduced their interaction with it, while three students reduced their commitment to pragmatic conformity. In a series of local interactions, students rejected the identities of the lecturers as sociologists, rejected the lecturers’ views of the field, and rejected the process of acculturation as “indoctrination.” The students’ autobiographical selves were more significant than the writing tasks or the apprenticeship process of the Ph.D., in other words more important than the discorsal identity.

If the process of creating a discorsal identity that would be consonant with sociology failed, it failed for local reasons. Casanave (1995) is highly critical of the programme that she observed. Although her participants were diverse along a

variety of axes with only four students whom she identified as mainstream white Americans, the lecturers seemingly took limited account of this diversity. She does note that her lecturer participants had made small changes to accommodate the more diverse group of students in the programme. However, in spite of these changes, the programme might be called (in an analogy based on Street, 1984) an autonomous model of sociology, with theories and major figures being presented as neutral and universally valid. As she described the presentation, “the principles and skills... were meant to apply across cultures and languages” (p. 99). The students brought autobiographical identities that had been forged in contexts that the lecturers ignored. The apprenticeship model, which the lecturers described to her and which is so widely used to describe doctoral study (e.g., Green & Powell, 2005), meant for them that the students would become university lecturers in their mould. Some, at least, of her participants do not seem to have shared that goal. For this study, this raises the question, more relevant for art and design than sociology, of what is the purpose of a Ph.D. and to what end should the apprenticeship lead.

Writing for postgraduate study and the discourse community:

Prior (1998)

Prior (1998), too, investigated the entry of students through writing into a discourse community; like Casanave (1995) he studied postgraduate students in a sociology programme, though he looked at both Masters and Ph.D. candidates. Prior’s book-length study is more wide-ranging than Casanave’s and more diverse in its analytical techniques, but his focus, like hers, is on the identity shaping qualities of writing in a discourse community.

Prior (1998) extended Casanave’s (1995) critique of the concept of discourse communities. In this he drew on developing criticism of this concept from Cooper (1989; Casanave also cited Cooper) and Harris (1989), who argued that the metaphor of a community was a tacit way to enrol people in a process that obscured issues of power. Cooper’s and Harris’s criticism focused on the then-developing genre

approach to analysing writing, which described the discourse community as the owner of a genre and the novice, the apprentice, as having to learn the community's ways. Prior argued essentially that the discourse community metaphor was an extension of the autonomous model of literacy; instead of a fully decontextualised literacy, the discourse community metaphor created multiple decontextualised literacies, each with tacit rules that the learner writer had to learn and accept in order to participate in the community.

Prior (1998) drew on Bakhtin (1981, 1986), Lave and Wenger (1991), and others to emphasise the dialogic aspect of writing. His argument, demonstrated in a careful analysis of a candidate's (Moira, in his pseudonym) conference presentation (Chapter 8, pp. 215-244), showed that Moira resisted some changes that the supervisor proposed and that, to some extent, the supervisor became persuaded by the Moira's arguments. Largely, Prior documents a process by which Moira internalised and appropriated the supervisor's language and ways of thinking; her supervisor's words became "internally persuasive" (Bakhtin, 1981) to Moira. However, Moira's arguments, drawn from her autobiographical identity, became internally persuasive to the supervisor. She accepted Moira's resistance and her changes. This back and forth, two-way street better reflects Bakhtin's dialogism or the changing roles of participation that Lave and Wenger describe than the acculturation that the discourse community model implies.

Prior's (1998) detailed and careful analysis is persuasive. For at least some of his participants, dialogue between candidate and supervisor and genuine exchange occurred. He also describes various cases where participants did not achieve internally persuasive discourse; the language remained authoritative.

Untangling the differences between Prior (1998) and Casanave (1995) is difficult. Both criticise the discourse community model, but where Prior found dialogue, Casanave saw either resistance or tactical accommodation. In part the differences seem to reflect the different sites of the two longitudinal, ethnographically-based

studies, and in part different analytical frameworks. Prior's supervisor was deeply invested in the presentation and her candidate, far more than Casanave's lecturers. The candidates in the two studies were at different stages of their programmes, but Prior identified thirteen texts (drafts, memos and preliminary examinations of the data for the 25 page presentation) that the supervisor responded to or wrote herself. Casanave's describes a submission, feedback and revision cycle for an assignment in which the student initially resists following the task guidelines. The description ends with the student accepting the required changes and "com[ing] to understand the game" (p. 105).

Prior, of course, built on Casanave (1995), and his analysis was designed to look for dialogue. His choice of Bakhtinian dialogue and activity theory was intended to look for the sorts of change that he found. The extensive exchange around Moira's presentation (seventeen changes on one page of the fifth draft, for example) allowed Prior to track the changes in Moira's thinking and to tease out changes in her supervisor's writing. However, dialogic change is not always visible in a text. Instead, it may emerge indirectly and over time and leave no immediate trace.

A counterpart to the discourse community metaphor is the apprenticeship to learning metaphor. This model is widely used (e.g., D. Atkinson, 1997; Green & Powell, 2005) and was initially intended to be aspirational, as a positive description of the possibility of shared participation in doctoral study. As the metaphor has become conventional, the meaning has shifted toward Dickensian oppression or conduit-like transmission. However, the metaphor sought to encapsulate a shared immersion in a multifaceted enterprise⁷. Becker's (1972) "School is a lousy place to learn anything in" (one of Lave & Wenger's [1991] sources) elevated on-the-job training over formal schooling because learners become entangled in all the complexities of the activity they want to learn from the beginning, rather than learning through a curriculum structured according to the teacher's understanding.

⁷ I think few people would now use this metaphor for lower levels of study, as Atkinson (1997) or Becker (1972) imply. In most cases, the economics of higher education make this an improbable aspiration for undergraduate education.

Good apprentices fight to be taught what they need to learn, and there is no equivocation about joining a particular community of workers. For Lave and Wenger, the participants share an understanding about “what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities” (p. 98). This should mean a beneficent process of acculturation and gradual development of expertise as apprentices join a community they wish to belong to. However the meaning of the apprenticeship metaphor has shifted to become a convention, even as the doctorate has expanded beyond its original role of indicating that the holder is qualified to teach within a university (Green & Powell, 2005, p. 48) to be a qualification appropriate to enter a wide variety of jobs outside as well as within the university.

The metaphors of the discourse community and the apprenticeship to learning the ways of the community should not be dead, but they need to be used with care. Neither joining a community nor undertaking an apprenticeship is a benign process and they should not be represented as such. Understandings of communities and the goals of an apprenticeship to a discourse community are shifting. The older model involved candidates who envisage joining a community of lecturers in sociology just like their supervisor’s community. In the newer model, on the other hand, candidates envisage learning to think at a high level like sociologists, but may apply this thinking process outside the academy.

The analysis of writing in art and design

Writing within arts and design communities has not been extensively studied; however, some studies offer insight into the nexus of writing and identity. Mitchell, Marks-Fisher, Hale and Harding (2000) set out clearly the disjunction dancers and other art workers often feel at university between their practice and the writing that they are required to do. The tutor for the choreography module that Mitchell et al. studied shared this feeling; while “choreography was a creative activity involving the individual person, ... writing was an impersonal formal exercise” (p. 87). Students, too, had trouble understanding the purpose of writing about dance. Their

question was, "How could dance be known through writing?" Mitchell et al. proposed that the purpose of writing for dance was to make and justify a claim of newness on the part of the student's dance. By comparing their choreography with the work of other choreographers, they would set out a claim within the dance community that drew on the community's terms of reference and evidence. They felt that students could be brought to an understanding of the originality and creativeness of writing, as they already had of dancing. Drawing on Heath (1983), Mitchell et al. made the dance students aware of the similarities between designing a dance and organising an academic paper, and the similarities that both had to the ways that Heath's (1983) Middletown children learn to work with texts. One of the implications that Mitchell et al. drew from their study was that learning writing had to be grounded in the dancers' disciplinary community.

Peter Medway has written about the particular characteristics of the writing of architectural students (1996, 2000, 2002). Medway (2002) explored an aspect of differing approaches to genre analysis, approaches which Flowerdew (2002) described as *linguistic* and *contextually grounded*.⁸ While linguistic approaches foreground the language of the text, a contextually grounded approach emphasises the purposes of writer and the members of the discourse community. A linguistic approach focuses on the form; a contextually grounded approach focuses on the function.

Medway (2002) discussed the notebooks (black, hard-bound, generally about A5 sized) that architectural student kept; he did not describe their texts because it was characteristic of these notebooks that they were not seen. They were not required or assessed on the programme; they were only furtively glimpsed by other students. Viewed from a linguistic approach, they might not have been part of the same genre. However, Medway argued convincingly that these notebooks were members of the same genre. They shared a number of similarities including, significantly, aesthetic qualities such as "tiny little writing" and "little sketches" (p. 137). Students describe

⁸ In fact, *contextually grounded* is the editor's (Johns, 2002) alternative to Flowerdew's term, *non-linguistic*.

them as helping them think through their work, so having a reflexive importance. However, Medway thought that there was an implied future audience, those who would recognise the importance of the student work of a successful architect. They documented the sensibility of an architect, with the writing “another artistic artefact, alongside her designs” (p. 147). As he wrote, “what students like Emmanuelle are after is not just the technical knowledge of making buildings but some essence of being architect-as-artist. There is a shared exigency—to become an architect” (p. 147).

Another insight that emerges from Medway (2002) is that, at least in an artistic discipline such as architecture, a genre needs to be fuzzy, somewhat destabilised relative to Schryer’s (1993) “stabilized-for-now” construct of genres. Medway suggests that this lack of stability is part of the shared purpose of the genre. He sees the purposes lodged within each instantiation as too personal for a standard solution. However, within the shared community purpose of becoming architects is an embedded dedication to novelty. To be an architect is not simply to be a builder of different buildings, but a builder of new buildings. Each student is groping for individual expressiveness within the shared concept of becoming an architect.

Moving beyond the local

The study of literacy needs to reach beyond the text and also outside of the immediate context of use. As Brandt and Clinton (2002, p. 344) write, “local literacy events cannot exhaust the meanings or actions of literacy” Two theoretical frameworks that have been used to facilitate the analysis of the wider contexts of literacy and writing are *activity theory* and *actant-network theory* (ANT).⁹

⁹ Dressen-Hammouda (2008) used an alternative framework, the concept of *specialised embodied frames* derived from the ideas of the artificial intelligence scientist, Marvin Minsky (1975), to relate genre to identity in an important paper. She argues that genre knowledge is tacit, drawing on the “entire chain of shared semiotic resources in [the discourse community’s] common experiences [that] have [been] patternized as frames” (p. 238). Important as her paper is, she does not elaborate on the underlying conceptual structure, and in a major point relating identity and text, she quotes Bazerman (1997), who writes that “genres are not just forms. Genres are forms of life, ways of being” (p. 236). Genres as embodied tacit mindsets that implicate the writer’s identity are

These two are confusingly similar. Both are based on social constructionist interpretations of reality, and both attempt to local interactions (dialogues) to wider collectives and the tools that create and sustain these wider collectives. Activity theory and actant-network theory arose out of similar insights; Miettinen suggests that both can be traced back to the first of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* [1845/1888]¹⁰ (Miettinen, 1999). Although the two frameworks diverged historically, they shared important perspectives. Both believe that human activity and consciousness exist through interaction, and that this interaction is mediated by artefacts. Artefacts include material tools and semiotic systems (including language), and these need to be understood as actors (*actants* in ANT, to acknowledge the non-human participants) in the networks of interaction. Other principles that they share include:

- Explanations of actions within the world do not have only one cause;
- Artefacts and the environment, as well as people, must be taken account of in understanding activity;
- The unit of analysis must be the network. (Miettinen, 1999, p. 171)

Activity theory developed out of Vygotsky's concept of mediated action, in which interaction (between humans, between humans and artefacts) is mediated by cultural means and artefacts. More recent influences include work by Lave and Wenger (e.g., 1991), Wertsch (e.g., 1991, 1998) and by Yrjö Engeström and his collaborators, who have articulated and amplified activity theory (Engeström, 2001; Engeström, Miettinen, & Punamäki, 1999). In studies of writing, Russell (e.g., 1995,

consistent with both activity theory and ANT, and so Minsky's specialised embodied frames will not be discussed here.

¹⁰ The first *Thesis on Feuerbach*: "The main defect of all hitherto-existing materialism — that of Feuerbach included — is that *the Object, actuality, sensuousness, are conceived only in the form of the object, or of contemplation, but not as human sensuous activity, practice, not subjectively.* Hence it happened that the active side, in opposition to materialism, was developed by idealism — but only abstractly, since, of course, idealism does not know real, sensuous activity as such. Feuerbach wants sensuous objects, differentiated from thought-objects, but *he does not conceive human activity itself as objective activity.* In *The Essence of Christianity*, he therefore regards the theoretical attitude as the only genuinely human attitude, while practice is conceived and defined only in its dirty-Jewish form of appearance. Hence he does not grasp the significance of 'revolutionary', of 'practical-critical', activity." (Marx, 1845/1888; emphasis added)

1997, 2002) has used activity theory extensively; Prior (1998), Ivanič (2006) and Lea (e.g., Lea & Nicoll, 2002) have also drawn on this framework to analyse writing.

Actant-network theory developed out of social studies of science (e.g., Latour, 1987; Latour & Woolgar, 1987) and, unlike activity theory where it developed somewhat later, ANT has always had a strong interest in writing—the rhetoric of science—as a component of its analysis. ANT has tried to analyse how science is made, how a consensus on the meaning of findings is reached. In this process, texts have a central role, as they accumulate and fix understandings and are exchanged to transmit them; they are, as Latour wrote, “immutable mobiles” (Latour, 1987, p. 227). Latour, Callon and Law among others have developed ANT as a framework for analysing science and technology in society (Callon, 1991; Latour, 2005; Law & Hassard, 1999; Star, 1991). Miettinen (1999, p. 176) pointed out the similarity of ANT to symbolic interactionism, while others have noted the influence of Erving Goffman and Howard Becker on the theory. Researchers in writing and literacy who have explicitly drawn on ANT include Myers¹¹ (1990a, 1990b, 1996, 2000), Brandt (1998; Brandt & Clinton, 2002) and Baynham (1999, 2000).

As used in literacy research, both activity theory and ANT try to reconnect local literacies to what Brandt and Clinton (2002) call *globalising connects*. Globalising connects represent the ways that local literacy practices are linked to wider patterns of interaction, precisely because written texts are, as Latour described them, *immutable mobiles*, artefacts that are not altered by travel, though the meaning taken from them may be read differently in the new local context. Brandt and Clinton call for “more attention to the material dimensions of literacy, its durability, its capacity to connect, mediate, represent, and hold together multiple interests” (p. 355).

¹¹ Myers’s work (e.g., 1985a, 1985b, 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1991, 1994, 2003; G. A. Myers, 1992) is very much part of the social studies of science project.

Both theories place *literacy in action* in an intellectual context that goes back to Malinowski (e.g., Malinowski, 1930) and Halliday (e.g., Halliday & Hasan, 1989). Fairclough (1989, p. 25) created a graphic representation of the relationship of a text to its wider context (Figure 5) that has been widely shared and adapted (e.g., Ivanič, 1997; Kamler & Thomson, 2006; T. M. Lillis, 2001). As Ivanič (2006) and others have argued, the circulation of meaning in the interpretation of the text does not happen in one direction; the text

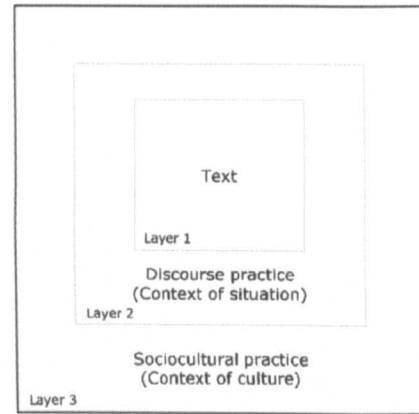


Figure 5: A framework for literacy in action (from Lillis, 2001, p. 35, after Fairclough, 1989, p. 25)

creates and changes its context of interpretation. In the specific context of this study, the participants' theses are shaped by, but also themselves shape the wider context of doctorates in Fine Arts and Design.

Activity theory and ANT, particularly as they are used in writing research, seem to me very similar, differing largely in the performed analysis of the writer, rather than in articulation of the theory. Miettinen (1999) and Prior (1998, pp. 212-14) have systematically compared the two approaches. Miettinen, who prefers activity theory, described the project of creating a symmetrical vocabulary of analysis (a book is to be treated as a person; both are actants) as flawed. By refusing to use insiders' vocabulary, ANT misses the opportunity to engage in dialogue with them. This criticism implied difficulties for studies trying to take an emic perspective, including studies of writing. Miettinen argued that ANT imposes a reductive vocabulary that he compared with early 20th Century behaviourism. Prior saw activity theory and ANT as being complementary; however, he believed that Latour had had to flatten some human actors (e.g., Pasteur in Latour, 1988) in order to achieve symmetry. In contrast, activity theory "suggests that it is equally important to trace back humans, to see them in the making as well" (Prior, 1998, p. 213). This criticism seems consonant with Miettinen (1999). On the other hand, Prior stressed the strengths of

ANT in dealing with language; ANT addressed the textual representation of activity in a way that activity theory did not, outside of those writers who look at literacy through the lens of activity theory.

As I have tried to understand and disambiguate ANT and activity theory, the comparison seems to me to be overly theoretical and distant, and both frameworks simultaneously abstract and obvious. Abstract, because the differences appear at the margins, rather than as part of the central insights of the frameworks, and because the failure to present fully rounded human actants that Prior (1998) identified is not evident in the studies of writing that draw on ANT. Both frameworks seemed obvious because I came to writing research from photography, which was shaped over its history and even within my working career by the possibilities of the tools available to it. Becker (1982, pp. 73-75) describes the limitations imposed on photographers who worked with commercially available materials, such as those supplied by Kodak or Agfa, and the new possibilities for image making that artists had created using colour photocopiers when these became available. I knew that the manufacturers of my cameras, film, and printing paper created the possibilities for my work, and when film or paper that I used stopped being manufactured, my possibilities shrank.

In order to apply these frameworks to writing research, I would develop as an example a simple genre that has been used previously, the shopping list. The shopping list as a genre was used for the first time that I am aware of by Witte (1992), who illustrated his article with a list showing an



Figure 6: A line drawing of a toilet plunger and a shopping list (after Witte, 1992)

outline sketch of a toilet plunger (an object easier to draw than to confidently name) to argue that the exclusion of images and visual presentation could not “yield a comprehensive or a culturally viable understanding of ‘writing’ or ‘text.’” (p. 240) Askehave and Swales (2001) used shopping lists and cited Witte (1992) to problematicise the central concept of “purpose” to genre studies. Russell (1997) made the most extensive use of this simple genre in order to contextualise his discussion of the use of activity theory in the analysis of writing.

Russell (1997) describes the reshaping of his family’s shopping lists as an example of a genre being altered over time. He traced the text form, as well as the typified activity (weekly shopping) from his mother. With his daughter, he codified the list by organising it according to the aisles of his supermarket and used the technology of photocopiers to copy it. In this form, it became a stabilised-for-now genre. Russell pointed out that this was not simply a written text; it was part

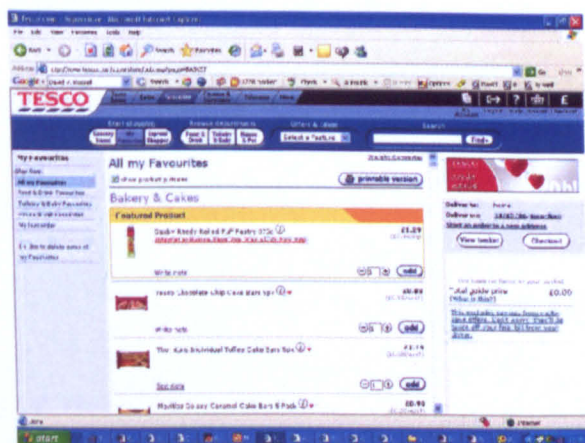


Figure 7: A web-based shopping list

of an activity network linking the recurrent activity of shopping to the site of shopping. Other family members (and outsiders) recognised the text as belonging to the genre of shopping lists.

I would extend Russell's network to include the supermarket, which gathers produce and goods from around the world that will attract shoppers like Russell and his daughter, and where the aisles are carefully sequenced to facilitate the purposes of the supermarket (e.g., maximising spending). The supermarket is knit together with texts—invoices, shelf prices, government mandated warning labels. The shopping list, too, has been transformed. The list (Figure 7) is maintained by the supermarket, so that ownership of the genre and, to some extent, its purpose has changed. While the purpose of supplying the food that the family wants continues, that purpose is now overlaid—sedimented, in Prior's term—with the buyers' purposes of avoiding physical shopping in order to save time and energy and the store's purposes of increasing return custom. Witte's (1992) simple illustrated text has become an interactive multimodal text, and the activity network that Russell (1997) described has extended to include the Internet and the layered ranges of support (broadband vendors, web and database designers, computer engineers) enmeshed in the network. Words are only one component of a text that includes numbers and pictures and which—until it is captured as a screen shot or printed out—has no physical reality, but instead exists as a digital construction maintained by electric energy.

This study uses actant-network theory as a framework to understand the connections between literacy in action in the seminar groups that are the site for the study and the wider context of higher education in Britain now. However, the analysis is informed by work such as that by Russell (1997), Prior (1998) and Ivanič (2006) who use activity theory, as well as by the work of Becker (e.g., 1982) and others who do not explicitly use either framework.

Conclusion

This chapter has tried to present a picture of literacy-in-action as a multilayered activity that is practiced on a local level but which is connected to a wider, global level. One part of literacy-in-action is identity formation, which is particularly relevant for doctoral candidates who are assembling professional identities. I discussed a small group of studies of postgraduates writing, which suggested resistance to, as well as acceptance of the apprenticeship model of doctoral supervision. I also discussed some studies of writing in FAP & D that suggested resistance to writing among art and design students. Other studies discussed here focused on identity formation through writing. Finally, actant-network theory and activity theory were compared and discussed as frameworks that linked local literacy-in-action to wider contexts.

4 The context of art and design education

Introduction

This chapter will situate the development of the Ph.D. thesis for Art and Design within the wider context of art practice and art education. That contextualising is necessary to understand the global connects that led art to become enmeshed in theory and art education embedded in universities. Understanding the changes in theorising art and in art education provide the necessary background to the development of the Ph.D. in FAP & D, and the local literacy-in-action of thesis writing that this volume describes. This reconceptualisation of art and art education left conflicts and contradictions that the candidates had to reconcile as they wrote.

Art can be taught—and, of course, through most of human history has been taught—by artists who did not write to teach what they knew. Artists have always talked about their art, and art practices have been transmitted by verbal instruction and guidance, but artists learn as much by looking at other artists' practices as they do through explicit explanations. In Europe and the regions most strongly influenced over long periods by European traditions of art (e.g., North America, Australasia), only since the beginning of the seventeenth century has art education been carried on in specialised institutions (art schools) and universities, rather than in workshops through apprenticeships. Design, although the oldest form of state funded higher education in England, did not exist as an activity separate from artefact creation until the industrial revolution.

The shift from considering art practice as a skilled manual craft to that of a practice in which the artist might have a role only as the conceptualiser and not the maker of an artefact occurred over the period since the Renaissance. This shift, which put

words at the centre of art practice, is a theme of Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's *Academies of art, past and present* (1940/1967), which is a history of art education, and which will be discussed in detail in this chapter. In this book, Pevsner described how, since the high Renaissance, theory has increasingly driven art practice. He described how theory elevated artists above manual craftworkers, and documented the changing role of artists in society.

However, Pevsner's role in art education went beyond documenting past practices. He played a crucial role in the shift of art education in England as a member of the Coldstream committee, which guided the development of art education from independent specialist institutions to degree-granting colleges and universities. Pevsner's belief in the importance of theory led to the inclusion of a requirement for a written component, *Contextual practice*, in post-secondary art education. As independent art institutions were incorporated for economic reasons into the polytechnics and those into universities, Pevsner's insistence on written texts as a necessary part of advanced art education altered the ethos and distinctiveness of that education. In that change, writing had an increasingly prominent role.

This chapter will look at art education, largely as seen through Pevsner's description. The chapter surveys the history of design education, which followed a separate trajectory before entering the universities. During the 1970's, most independent art and design colleges were integrated into the polytechnics. Although the primary impetus for this change was a desire on the part of funding councils to reduce costs, art changed in ways supporting this shift. These changes in the understanding of art and the site of art education led to the development of the Ph.D. in FAP & D. I then discuss the Ph.D. in these fields and a small group of early theses in order to establish the background for this study of writing theses in art and design.

The role of theory in art education

Pevsner's Academies of art past and present

Sir Nikolaus Pevsner (1902-83) was an important figure in the arts in Britain after the Second World War. He is best known for his series of books, *The Buildings of England* (e.g., Pevsner, 1967), in which he surveyed and described the architecturally important buildings of the nation. However, before emigrating to Britain in 1934, he began a pioneering study of art education, *Academies of art present and past* (published in 1940, reprinted in photocopy in 1967). In his introduction, he said that his central question was the “changing relations between the artist and the world surrounding him” (p. vii), seen through the lens of art education.

Although Pevsner (and this survey) begin in Italy in the fifteenth century, his wider study of art education across Europe will be slighted for a concentration on Britain. Besides the importance of *Academies* as a contribution to art history, Pevsner's view of the history of art education is illuminating because of his role in shaping art education in Britain after 1960 through his participation in the drafting of the Coldstream Reports on art education (Department of Education and Science, 1970; Ministry of Education, 1960), named for the chair of the committee, Sir William Coldstream. Pevsner provided continuity between the two Coldstream Reports; he was one of only seven members including the chairman on both committees (30 members in 1960; 19 in 1970). He was also one of two members (the other, only in 1970) who had earned a Ph.D.¹² What is most striking about Pevsner's reading of art education is the importance he gives to theory in the education of artists, and the importance of theory in justifying artists' role in society.

Before the fifteenth century, an art education was an apprenticeship:

¹² The Ph.D. had a much less developed tradition in Britain than in Germany, where Pevsner studied and earned his doctorate in 1924. The first Ph.D. programmes in Britain were established between 1917 and 1920 (Simpson, 1983).

At about twelve a boy could enter a painter's shop as an apprentice and would in two to six years' time learn everything necessary from colour-grinding and preparing grounds to drawing and painting.... After the end of his apprenticeship he could go out as a journeyman and then, when some more years had passed, obtain his mastership certificate from the local company of painters or the company to which the painters happened to belong, and settle down as an independent painter. (Pevsner, 1940/1967, p. 34)

In the early fifteenth century, the revival of interest in classical Latin and Greek led to the creation of philosophical circles that looked back to the Academy of Plato and his followers. These Neo-Platonic philosophical circles were distinguished from the universities of their time with their scholastic traditions of theological study by their interest in classical languages, literature and arts. According to Pevsner, Marsilio Ficino's (1433-1499) *Accademia Platonica*, which was sponsored by Lorenzo the Magnificent, set the pattern for these circles of like-minded scholars and patrons. Organised, sponsored art academies arose through a process closely related to the development of other specialised academies that promoted the study of language and science (e.g., the Académie Française in France and the Royal Society in Britain) throughout Europe.

Pevsner believed that the first academy of art may have been associated with Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). He linked Leonardo to a new role for artists in society and, as part of that, to a new conception of art education. Leonardo wished to establish a place for painting among the *artes liberales*, the liberal arts, which the humanists of his time were promoting. Summarising the ideas expressed in Leonardo's *Libro della Pittura*, Pevsner says that Leonardo wished to establish the "principle of the science of painting," which proceeds on the basis of mathematical demonstration and is based on "experience, without which nothing is certain"¹³. Acceptance of this argument would provide a basis for painting to be included as a

¹³ I have paraphrased and translated Pevsner's quotations from Leonardo from pp. 30-1 and later.

knowledge-based activity and not a craft. The inclusion of art among the liberal arts would have significant implications for the social standing of artists.

Leonardo's argument for painting as one of the liberal arts was part of a repositioning of artists within his own society. It was a form of social climbing. According to Pevsner,

humanists... began to praise individual works of art and individual artists to an extent incompatible with the medieval tradition of painting and sculpture as crafts in no way above others.... Thus, already during the Quattrocento [fifteenth century], *the bonds which held the artist in his class were loosened here and there.* (Pevsner, 1940/1967, p. 31 [emphasis added])

Newly ambitious artists were to be seen as creators, on a level with poets and scholars in the revival of classical knowledge. Pevsner goes on to develop this argument with the example of Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564). Michelangelo was chastised by his family for wanting to become a painter, since that was a profession beneath "the ambitions of a Florentine family of some civic tradition" (Pevsner, 1940/1967, p. 32). Michelangelo achieved his ambitions, and treated, if not as an equal, at least as a substantial person with Pope Julius II. In his goal of being recognised not as a craftsman but as someone superior, ideas were an essential element: "For painting to him as to Leonardo was not manual skill but spiritual expression just as poetry. 'One paints with the brain and not with the hand' was a saying to be found in one of his letters" (Pevsner, 1940/1967, p. 33)¹⁴.

It is theory that makes artists superior to craft workers in society. Therefore, Leonardo's concept of art education began with theory. Beginners should first study science, and only after mastering that should they learn the practical skills of painting.

¹⁴ The existence of Michelangelo's letters, like the description of Giotto in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, suggests that there were less formal texts that discussed art creation that preceded the development of the academies.

Perspective is the first subject to be taught. After this the student is to be introduced into the theory and practice of proportion, and then into drawing from his master's drawings, drawing from reliefs, drawing from nature, and in the end to the practice of his art. (Pevsner, 1940/1967, p. 35)

Pevsner notes that Michelangelo did not practice anything like this: "His own students were certainly not students but apprentices" (p. 33), while Leonardo's connection to the Academy that bore his name was tenuous.

However, linking theory to art created a fundamental shift in the social position of artists, raising them from the role of craft workers to valued and admired creators in their societies. It changed the relationship between artist and patron as well. Where previously the artist made artworks according to the specifications of the patron (and generally within the constraints of the church), now the artist could have a concept that the patron had to work to understand. Michelangelo said that his vision, embodied in stone, of Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici would be more important in a thousand years than whatever they might actually have looked like. "Here one is already faced with all that scorn of the great artist for his public and its desires which was to characterize the nineteenth century and the beginning of our century" (Pevsner, 1940/1967, p. 36).

In the period following Leonardo and Michelangelo, informal schools and discussion circles continued to be formed in Italy. A significant development came though when Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) persuaded Cosimo de' Medici to sponsor the *Accademia del Disegno* in 1562. The Accademia reorganised the traditional associations to which artists had belonged. These included the medieval guilds that oversaw the training of artists (sculptors belonged to the builders' guild, painters to the medical) and the religious confraternity that provided for their funeral expenses. The Accademia was intended to unite the best artists of the time, and also to educate

new artists. Although the new Accademia would not replace workshop training, Vasari's plan was

to do away entirely with the medieval system of guilds for artists. An artist, he felt, should not be in a dependent position, in the same way as a common craftsman. To make him a member of an academy instead would demonstrate that his social rank was just as high as that of a scientist or another scholar. (Pevsner, 1940/1967, p. 54)

The involvement of heads of state as patrons led to the development of the academies as instruments of the state. The goal of the academies became the advancement of knowledge in the area to which the academy was dedicated or, in the case of language academies, the refinement of the vernaculars that were now the languages of the newly constituted nation-states. The royal patrons saw the academies as solidifying national identity through the promotion of the vernacular and the systematic development of military and industrial technology through science. The first of the academies was the Académie Française (1635), followed by the Royal Society (1662). Pevsner saw these academies as manifestations of both the Counter Reformation and the Enlightenment.

Academies were an apposite expression of the philosophical spirit of the epoch, and as at the same time States were now convinced of the power of science and the importance of national enterprise in every field of human activity, they were bound to take a live interest in academically organized research bodies. (Pevsner, 1940/1967, p. 23)

Art was also seen as an expression of the nation that enhanced its prestige. Therefore similar processes of institutionalisation took place in this field as in the areas of language and science. The *Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture* was established in 1648 with the support of Louis XIV. It was given a monopoly on life drawing (a central element of art education since Leonardo). Students entered the Académie upon presentation of a certificate from their masters. They followed a Leonardian

programme of education that moved from copying drawings to drawing from plaster casts (taken from classical sculpture) to drawing from live models. Their education also included lectures on perspective, geometry and anatomy. This did not replace working under a master but rather supplemented it. The programme of education laid down by the Académie “remained valid right through the eighteenth and far into the nineteenth century” (Pevsner, 1940/1967, p. 92). One might add, “and beyond.”

Pevsner did not discuss the theory that was taught in the academies. Goldstein, in a later history of art education (Goldstein, 1996), saw the theory that underpinned copying as problematic and in need of explanation. The manner of teaching art in the academies continued largely unbroken across Europe from the Renaissance to the Second World War, though with significant national and local variations and also changes over time. Nevertheless, there was sufficient continuity that authors such as Goldstein and Phelan (1981) could discuss a relatively uniform programme of education. Students began by copying drawings and engravings. They progressed to drawing plaster casts of sculpture. They then drew the life model. This was not a progression from simpler to more complex tasks, but a progression from learning from masters to learning from life. The masters—Michelangelo and especially Raphael, but others as well—were felt to have a particular vision or insight that apprentice artists needed to absorb.

The progression was based on Neo-Platonic theories, which held that the goal of art was the imitation of nature. However, the proper imitation of nature was not an exact copy, but of nature refined and corrected. Plato held that art was an imitation of an imitation, that is, of reality which, like the shadows in the cave, showed an imperfect image of the ideal form. Neo-Platonism agreed that there existed an ideal, correct form, of which each example was a more-or-less inadequate copy. However, in Neo-Platonic thought, certain artists had selected and portrayed examples that more closely matched the ideal of “nature corrected.” They had gone beyond the inadequacies of reality to portray the ideal. In the academies, the imitation of nature

was secondary to the imitation of artists' work that improved on nature. Giorgio Vasari retold the story of Zeuxis from Pliny the Elder as an example of the effort to perfect nature. Zeuxis was a fifth century painter known for the realism of his paintings. In order to paint Helen, he selected the best features of five virgins since none could match the perfection that he envisioned for Helen (Goldstein, 1996).

The means of superseding nature, it was agreed [by those who taught in the academies of art], was to study select ancient and modern works.... The theorists were in basic agreement about one thing—namely, that visual art is an imaginative enterprise based on a vision of an ideal that “corrects,” perfects, and in other ways eclipses the forms of nature in which it had originated. (Goldstein, 1996, p. 118)

In Joshua Reynolds's painting, *Theory*, the figure holds a scroll with the inscription, “THEORY is the knowledge of what is truly NATURE,” a proposition that indicates how far Reynolds thought painting was from the simple imitation of nature. This was why the drawing of plaster casts of classical sculpture had such a central role in art education. Classical sculpture showed not naked bodies with their imperfections, but nudes. Goldstein (1996) labels this combination of the imitation and perfection of nature, *mimesis*.

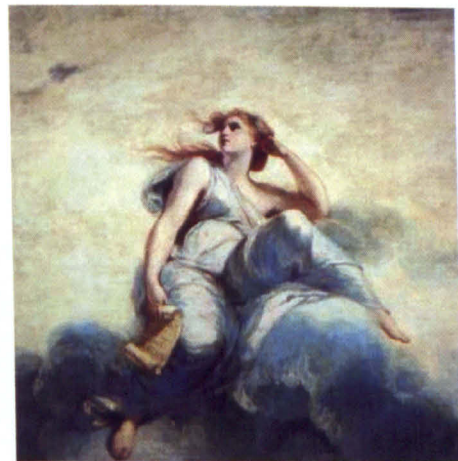


Figure 8: Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Theory*, 1776-79

This discussion of Neo-Platonic theory is intended to make two points. The first is that traditional art education was not atheoretical. Whether the theory was that of Leonardo's single-point perspective, which used geometry to create the illusion of depth, or the later Neo-Platonic theories that built upon this mathematical frame to relate the artwork to the visible world, art was engaged with theory.

However, the second point is that much of this theory could be taught visually. Perspective could be illustrated using lines on images, while students could copy the etchings of canonical artists' work, which is how Raphael's pictures were disseminated. Some artists understood these theories through reading while others would have absorbed the practice without studying the texts on which the theory was based. In addition, Goldstein (1996, pp. 88-91) wrote that during a disputation on the value of an artwork within the French academy, it was decided that practice—visual effectiveness—should trump theoretical flaws, such as Raphael's failure to use single-point perspective.

Britain's Royal Academy was established in 1768 "for the Purpose of Cultivating and Improving the Arts of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture" (Pevsner, 1940/1967, p. 185), and, to further these purposes, it established a school for students of the arts. The school followed a similar programme of education to that found in France. Pevsner described it as conservative in both its taste in art and in its manner of teaching. Describing the Royal Academy in the nineteenth century, Pevsner wrote that, "The social importance of the Royal Academy remained centred in its exhibitions and annual dinners. Educationally it was of little consequence" (1940/1967, p. 221). During the nineteenth century, the Academy, in Britain as in France, came to stand for an official style of art that rejected the shift toward realism in subject matter and style.

By the nineteenth century, a permanent revolution had begun to transform society (Gombrich, 1995). Patrons were more diverse, less often nobles, and more often newly rich industrialists who were unsure of their taste. Artists were responsive to the succession of revolutionary changes—the French revolution, the Napoleonic wars and the industrial revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Further, beginning at the start of the century, new pigments were created through the developing science of chemistry, and these paints were packaged in tubes, improving their storage and consistency (Bomford, Kirby, Leighton, & Roy, 1990).

This made the traditional skills of grinding and preparing paints less important, while the other new colours provided new opportunities for artistic creation, including *plein air* painting. Art education was carried on now in institutions rather than through guilds and apprenticeships. The immense social changes of the century slowly forced the academies of art to change. They followed the changes in style, from realism to impressionism, but slowly and begrudgingly, and modern artists and academics held each other in mutual contempt. One result of this, as well as of the romantic view of the artist, was rising doubt about the teachability of art¹⁵. Pevsner quoted James Whistler (1834-1903): "I don't teach art; with that I cannot interfere; but I teach the scientific application of paint and brushes" (1940/1967, p. 236). Pevsner went on to list other examples of artists' criticism of academies (that often had taught them) and to point out that, in spite of new terms of abuse, they echoed the complaints of earlier artists, a "hundred-and-fifty years of never abating assaults" (p. 240).

By the end of the nineteenth century, the artist was recognised as a self-shaping genius and art as a quasi-religion; the logical outcome, in Pevsner's view, should have been the abolition of the academies. Instead, though, the English Arts and Crafts movement revived art education through its emphasis on the close relationship between the arts and craftwork, and on the need for artists to understand and be able to work with a variety of materials.

This engagement with material processes contributed to the ideas of the Bauhaus, and their innovative approach to art and design education. Art and design

¹⁵ This attitude to art endures and remains influential. As I was writing this section in early 2007, the BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme broadcast a discussion between Andrew Festing, the President of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, and Rolf Harris, in his role as a portrait painter of the Queen. The occasion of this discussion was the creation by the Royal Society of Portrait Painters of a bursary for young artists. Festing said, "You can't really be taught to paint or to draw; you either can or you can't" (Thomas, 2007). Harris said that, even in the 1950's when he had gone to art school, painting and drawing had been in decline, and John Humphrys (the presenter who had been drawn into the discussion though he was not the interviewer in this case) who had taken part in a reality programme in which the participants had gone to art school, said he'd been considered "daft" when he said he wanted to learn painting and drawing. Art schools, they agreed, taught self expression.

education should not be a process of imitation, but rather of finding solutions to problems. This approach fit a modern approach that valorised “the scientific application of paint and brushes,” and later contributed to conceptualising art and design practices as research.

The influence of design education in the development of visual arts education

Pevsner begins his final chapter by saying that, although “the history of the craftsman’s or the decorative artist’s training as such is outside the scope of this book,” it played a crucial role in the reform of academies of art. Because craftworkers lacked a theoretical basis for their work, they remained untouched by the artists’ new relationship with society. Instead, beginning in the nineteenth century, their role was downgraded, and their guilds were abolished, leading to the loss of skills that had been maintained by traditional apprenticeships. In the national academies, the work of skilled craftworkers was appropriated and credited to the artists who sketched the figures or figural compositions that comprised the work. Subsequently, industrialisation (rapidly occurring in Britain) meant that skilled craftworkers were required less often; this, in turn, led to what was described as a lowering of standards of craftsmanship.

In response to this lowering of standards, in 1837 a Normal School of Design was opened in London¹⁶, which taught “elementary drawing and drawing applied to various industries” (Pevsner, 1940/1967, p. 248). This was the traditional art programme applied to design education; the skills taught were detached from their purpose and lacked practical application. In 1846, this school was evaluated by a parliamentary committee, and judged a failure; industry did not employ designers. Another attempt at improving design in Britain was the Great Exhibition of 1851. It celebrated the achievements of Britain’s modern industrial technology and design, which of course displayed the high Victorian style. Pevsner, expressing his

¹⁶ This was the earliest publically funded educational institution in the UK (E. Bird, 2000).

modernist judgement on Victorian style, writes that most items on display “seem tokens of a monstrous lack of taste” (p. 248). Pevsner’s opinion, expressed nearly ninety years after the exhibition, was to some extent shared in the time of the Exhibition. The proceeds of the Great Exhibition were used to found the Victoria and Albert Museum expressly to promote better design by showing historical examples of good design, and a Department of Practical Art was instituted at Marlborough House. The course of study, however, remained the academic progression from copying drawings to drawing from casts to life drawing, with no concessions to the applied nature of design.

In the period after the Great Exhibition, there was a reaction to the styles exhibited there. This was partly due to a revival of interest in medieval architecture led by Augustus Pugin (1812-1852) and others. Paralleling the Victorian gothic revival was the desire for objects that were hand crafted, unlike the industrially produced goods shown at the Great Exhibition. Building on this interest, William Morris (1834-1896), argued for and promoted by example the hand making of objects such as furniture and tapestries. According to Pevsner, Morris rediscovered “the organic inter-relation between material, working process, purpose and aesthetic form” (Pevsner, 1940/1967, p. 259). In 1861, Morris established a firm that would create objects for the public while promoting his ideas of design, and, in particular, his belief in the redemptive potential of hand-made objects of good design. He investigated the production of hand made goods, and learned to weave and print. Morris put the workshop, with no distinction between fine artists and craftworkers, at the centre of what came to be called the Arts and Crafts Movement. Although not directly involved in art education, Morris’s example strongly influenced art and design education.

However in spite of his socialist beliefs, Morris’s opposition to machine-made objects limited the dissemination of his design ideas to a narrow wealthy class. However, in Germany, his ideas about the relationship between knowledge of materials and good design were taken up and applied to manufactured goods. The

application of design to manufactured goods foregrounded the importance of educating designers who could work with materials and manufacturing processes. After the First World War in centres at Weimar and Berlin, art and design education were reformed on radical lines. Walter Gropius (1883-1969) founded the Bauhaus in Weimar as a school that would unite arts and crafts:

The ultimate aim of all creative activity is a building!... Architects, painters, and sculptors must once again come to know and comprehend the composite character of a building, both as an entity and in terms of its various parts. Then their work will be filled with that true architectonic spirit which, as "salon art", it has lost. The old art schools were unable to produce this unity; and how, indeed, should they have done so, since art cannot be taught? Schools must return to the workshop. The world of the pattern-designer and applied artist, consisting only of drawing and painting must become once again a world in which things are built. (Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin Museum of Design, 2000)

The history of the education of artists and designers at the Bauhaus is complicated by the many changes that occurred in its fourteen years in Germany and its subsequent history in the United States, but, in spite of these changes, there was a continuity of approach (Goldstein, 1996; Phelan, 1981). This approach embodied a new theory. In response to developments such as photography (Gombrich, 1995), modern art renounced the representation of reality, and mimesis, the theory underpinning that ambition. Modern art needed a theory of art education that was not based on mimesis, and found it in the analytic approach of the Bauhaus.

In the Preliminary Course, students systematically investigated the elements that comprised a work of art: point, line, geometric shapes, the spectrum. "The Bauhaus introduced the notion that there could be a number of 'correct' solutions of 'problems'" (Phelan, 1981, p. 7), a notion that would support research through design. Students received practical instruction in handling materials (e.g., stone,

wood, metal, glass and pigment), as well as classes in geometry, art history, science and design. Although life drawing was included in Oskar Schlemmer's programme, it took the form of encouraging students to recognise the geometric forms, such as cylinder, cone and sphere that made up the figure. The school attracted as teachers some of the greatest artists of modernism, including László Moholy-Nagy, Herbert Bayer, Marcel Breuer, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, and Lyonel Feininger. Students were equipped to

build models of objects, which could then be put into industrial production. There were also strong components of traditional craft training, including a requirement for students to pass a trade examination before the Board of Master-Craftsmen, and to work under the supervision of two "masters." The Bauhaus established a pattern for a new form of art and design education, and, though it ignored significant trends in Twentieth Century art, such as surrealism and expressionism, it successfully educated students in modernism (Goldstein, 1996).

In closing *Academies of Art*, Pevsner surveyed art education in the period immediately preceding the Second World War. He mentioned the Royal Academy and the Slade School as institutions teaching fine arts along the lines of the traditional academies, that is, focused on drawing. However, he found similarities to the Bauhaus style of education in the London Central School of Arts and Crafts (later incorporated into the London Institute and subsequently into Central St Martin's College of Art and Design) and at the Royal College of Art. In these institutions, practical design and craftwork were taught alongside general drawing and painting classes. Pevsner was convinced that traditional art education was a failure:

By 1900 it seemed obvious to most that no need remained for State-supported art education. For what interest would an artist, as convinced of

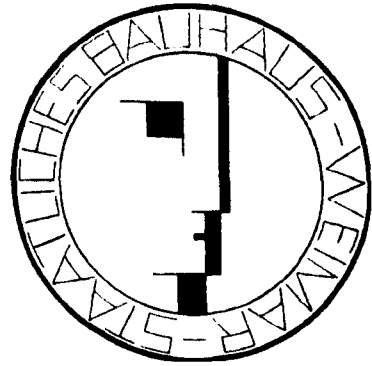


Figure 9: Oskar Schlemmer, Bauhaus Seal, 1921

that criminal doctrine of art for art's sake as were the Impressionists, have in State-interference, and what interest a liberal State in spending money on an art understandable only to a small set of connoisseurs? (Pevsner, 1940/1967, pp. 293-4)

In his view, art education could only be redeemed by a fine arts education that seamlessly and without condescension included practical craftwork embedded in materials and design. Only this would repair the rupture in "the relations between the artist and the world surrounding him" (p. vii) caused by "the criminal doctrine of art for art's sake." Pevsner, in other words, embraced the Bauhaus's programme for art and design education. This programme encouraged a systematic approach that framed art and design outcomes as the resolution of problems. This approach could be drawn upon to support research in art and design.

His pioneering survey of art education situated art education at the centre of a social history of art. It is also important as it provides insight into the thinking of a central actor in British art education since the Second World War, a period during which it was transformed. During that transformation, Pevsner promoted the inclusion of art history and contextual studies, that is, the components of the art school qualification that were assessed by written texts.

Two elements of his thinking should be highlighted. First, that, beginning in the Renaissance with the foundation of academies of art, theory separated artists from craftworkers and raised their status in society. Although Pevsner does not analyse the intellectual basis of this theory, he indicates that originally it was perspective and the realistic representation of space. Based in geometry, this theory was visual and could be demonstrated through images. However, theory was a taught component of an art education, and thus differed from the traditional apprenticeship training of artists. When the Coldstream Committee proposed a degree-level qualification, that qualification had a component that focused on theory, art history, and contextual studies. Theory became much more textual.

Second, the Bauhaus provided a new theoretical approach to art education. Art education should return to the inclusion of and appreciation of a craft-like working with a variety of media and methods, rather than continuing to teach art and design through a curriculum that had at its core copying drawings, drawing from casts and life drawing. In addition, systematic investigation in art and design, presented in a problem and solution framework, created the possibility of research in these disciplines. The Bauhaus approach to art and design education opened the door to research-based Ph.D.s in these fields, and the texts that would document the research.

The incorporation of art education into the university

Pevsner's history provides the background for discussing the changes that occurred in Britain in the post-war period. Before this period, art was taught in a limited number of dedicated art schools, with the Royal Society, unlike the academies on the continent, playing a relatively marginal role. Following the war, these schools were increasingly consolidated and integrated into the university system, first by being assimilated into the polytechnics and then later by the polytechnics becoming universities. There was significant but ineffective opposition to these changes from the artistic community, and today post-compulsory art education is ineluctably shaped by the values of the university. The changes and the resistance to them in turn create both the opportunity for and some of the difficulties facing Ph.D. candidates in Fine Arts Practice and Design as they write research theses.

In the preface to a collection of his writings on art and education (Heron, 1996b), the artist, Patrick Heron (1920-1999), who attended the Slade during the 1930s, described his own experience of art school beginning in familiar terms:

My brief days in the Slade life room were counterproductive in every sense. Nothing of what I did there survives. The interminable stroking with a faint

6H pencil, for weeks on end, of the same academic image of the nude; the prevailing admiration for the dead Edwardian Slade Professor Tonks; the total indifference to, indeed ignorance of, the greatest living painters...all this perfectly defines the climate of insular provincialism in this country. [...] So it is against this pre-1945 background of resolute British philistinism that the developments in British art schools, roughly from 1950 on, began, so utterly unforeseeably, to be so exciting and important. (pp. 8-9)

Heron's picture of art education before the war is consistent with other reports, both anecdotal and academic; see, for example, Candlin (2001), Evans and Le Grice (2001), Thompson (2005), and comments by Grylls at a conference at the Royal School of Art (Graham-Dixon, 2005), as well as the description of teaching at the Slade given by Pevsner (1940/1967, p. 289). Thistlewood (1992) describes the change in art education as a revolution:

What prevailed before the 1950s was a system devoted to conformity, to a misconceived sense of belonging to a classical tradition, to a belief that art was essentially technical skill. What came to exist is a general devotion to the principle of individual creative development. (p. 152)

In 1959, the National Advisory Committee on Art Education was established with William Coldstream (1908-1987) as chair. Coldstream was an artist and Professor of the Slade School of Fine Art, and the report that the committee issued in 1960 was known as the first Coldstream Report (Ministry of Education, 1960). The committee's mandate was to look into the system of examinations used for art and design. The proposals that it made changed post-compulsory art education in Britain fundamentally.

The first Coldstream Report (Ministry of Education, 1960) established the principle that "non-university institutions could be held responsible for devising and conducting their own examinations up to first degree level" (Ashwin, 1975, p. 92)

supervised by a board that would be separate from the education department. The qualification it proposed was the Diploma in Art and Design (DipAD), which would be equivalent to a BA degree. Students entering the DipAD should have five Ordinary level passes ("O" level) at in the General Certificate of Education (or the equivalent in combined O levels and Advanced ["A"] level passes), including at least one that showed evidence of the student's competence at English. (Although lacking further description, in this context *English* must be presumed to mean reading and writing in English as a first language at O level.) In exceptional cases, students could be admitted to the DipAD with less than these academic qualifications, on the premise that some talented students may have been "temperamentally allergic to conventional education" (Ministry of Education, p. 3) or might have lacked the opportunity to obtain them.

There were to be four main areas of study: fine arts, graphic design, three dimensional design, and fashion and textiles. Institutions awarding the diploma could specialise in only one of these areas, though fine arts should serve "as a focal point of strength and inspiration for the whole school" (, p. 4) and so would need to be taught to a high standard. A later review found that all institutions allowed to award the diploma, even when they did not offer a specialisation in fine arts, could have quickly developed a satisfactory course (The first report of the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design , known as the "Summerson Report" [1964] in Ashwin, 1975). "The aim [of the Diploma in Art and Design] should be to produce courses conceived as a liberal education in art" (Ministry of Education, 1960, p. 4). The phrase, "a liberal education in art" embodied a new perception of art education and the social status of artists. Evans and Le Grice (2001) describe the implications of a practical education in fine arts or design:

In Britain, an education as an engineer and in other fields of practical or applied knowledge had a lower status than an education in the theoretical, historical and philosophical subjects of the university. This powerful and

class-based division in education only reflected the lower status of these professions in Britain.” (p. 106)

As Pevsner saw, if artists were to achieve parity of qualification with undergraduate students of other, more traditional subjects with the concomitant change of social status, there would have to be a theoretical component in their programme.

Therefore as part of their recommendations, the Coldstream committee proposed that students study both art history and contextual studies, and that these should be assessed and comprise about fifteen percent of the total course. This was seen as giving “scope for practising written and spoken English” (Ministry of Education, 1960, p. 8). Candlin (2001) argues that this component both justified the academic integrity of the DipAD as equivalent to an undergraduate degree, and, at the same time, “exacerbated the divide between theory and practice” (p. 304). The Summerson Report (1964) described a few cases of opposition to the teaching of art history, “as if History of Art were some tiresome extraneous discipline which was being imposed on the natural body of art studies” (Ashwin, 1975, p. 112). Grove-White (2003; see also Pritchard, Heatly and Trigwell, 2005) describes how still today some visual students “perceive theory as something outside and beyond their own practice” (p. 64).

There is wide agreement that the two Coldstream reports marked a watershed in British art education (see, for example, Candlin, 2000a; D. Cohen, 1992; Evans & Le Grice, 2001; Graham-Dixon, 2005; Raein, 2003; Thistlewood, 1992; J. Thompson, 2005). For some observers, the changes inaugurated a new golden age. However, it did not last long. When in 1971, government-induced changes threatened the new art schools, Patrick Heron wrote a long opinion piece that was published in *The Guardian*. Heron’s article was, according to Vaughn Grylls (the head of the Kent Institute of Art and Design; graduated from the Slade, 1970), “pinned up on our lavatory door and elsewhere for many years afterwards” (Graham-Dixon, 2005). In it, Heron wrote “the brilliant success of the British art schools during the past 10

years is not a matter of opinion: the whole western world acknowledges it, even if Whitehall doesn't know what it's about" (Heron, 1996b, p. 30).

The change that Heron protested was the incorporation of the independent art colleges into the polytechnics. Local governments had tried to reduce the cost of support art schools by consolidating them during the period before the first Coldstream Report (Evans & Le Grice, 2001); the movement into the polytechnics continued the process of consolidation. The proposal for the creation of polytechnics (*A plan for polytechnics and other colleges*, DES, 1966) at the same time foresaw a reduction of specialist institutions engaged in full time education (Candlin, 2001). Seventeen institutions in the 1966 proposal for the creation of polytechnics included colleges of art (p. 48). However, a number of artists and art educators argued against the assimilation of art colleges into the new polytechnics. Students at Hornsey College of Art occupied administrative offices in 1968, in part because of their imminent incorporation into Middlesex Polytechnic.

Opposition to being another part of the university resonated with artists in the United States, where art education had already been absorbed into the universities. (Heron writes, "By and large it is the British who innovate and the Americans who academicize" [1996, p. 31].) The art critic of *The New Yorker*, Harold Rosenberg (1906-1978), pointed out that "only one of ten leading artists of the generation of Pollock [1912-1956] and de Kooning [1904-1997] had a degree" while the majority of artists shown in the exhibition "Young America 1965" had undergraduate degrees. Rosenberg writes that, when he pointed this out in a lecture, a young artist confronted him, suggesting it implied that he and his generation were academic artists (Rosenberg, 1972b, p. 39; artists' dates added).

Rosenberg was not necessarily opposed to educating artists in universities. He knew that the process would change artists, but believed that the time for "craft plus inspiration" (1972b, p. 47) had passed, and "art has become the study and practice of culture in its active day-to-day life" (p. 48). Art education, he felt, needs to "impart

to art students the ability to encompass the 'present scene' with critical comprehension" (p. 44). Perhaps he did not reflect on how art education, as opposed to artists, might be changed in the process of entering the university. Pratt notes that although art education raised the quality of teaching in the polytechnics, "art education was perhaps less distinctive at the end of this process [of assimilation] than at the beginning" (J. Pratt, 1997, p. 129).

Cohen (1992) puts the case of the opponents of the changes that followed the two Coldstream reports. He writes that the abolition of national examinations in drawing led to an erosion of craft skills in art education. Drawing had been central to art education since the Renaissance; after Coldstream, it was replaced by "free experimentation." Along with the decreased importance of drawing, barriers between media were dissolved; there were no longer separate classes for painting, print-making and sculpture, for example, but instead classes would focus on invention rather than refining control of a specific medium. Cohen quotes a sculptor, Glynn Williams, who argued that three-dimensional creation would lose out if there were no longer separate classes for the different media. Cohen also raises the issue of cost. He claimed that general art classes were more costly than media-specific classes and would not be economically viable in the future. Finally, citing the recognition achieved by Damian Hirst (first solo exhibition, 1991; inclusion in *Young British Artists*, Saatchi Gallery, 1992), Cohen writes that "Because students are seen as embryonic artists rather than people being educated through art, 'success' is often seen in terms of the immediate impact of young graduates on the art scene" (D. Cohen, 1992, p. 258)

There was a significant fear that the ethos of the art schools would be damaged, that visiting lecturers (who represented a continuation of the Bauhaus master/apprentice relationship and brought current practice to the schools) would be eliminated, and that the more generous funding enjoyed by the schools would be cut. Heron (1996b) argued that including the art schools in the polytechnics would result in decisions made in ignorance by administrators—"physicists-turned-director," in his phrase—

that would damage the teaching of art. He recounted the story of a new director of a polytechnic who asked if the art students (who wanted to work in the studio at all hours of the day) could leave after tea, thereby saving money since “students cannot concentrate for more than a few hours a day” (p. 34). According to a leader in *The Times*, as a result of Heron’s letter most of the fine arts panel, including the chairman of the National Council for the Award of Diplomas in Art and Design, resigned (Heron, 1996b, p. 39). Pratt (1997) agreed that Heron’s worries were justified, saying that the fine arts departments found themselves answerable to boards that did not understand the creative freedom that the art educators felt was necessary for the goals of art. However, again echoing Heron, he wrote that the design departments were less at odds with the new institutional structures. This split between art and design educators is replicated in discussions of Ph.D.s in FAP & D.

In spite of the protests, the inclusion of art colleges in the polytechnics continued. In 1974, the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design (NCDAD), the body that oversaw the DipAD, was incorporated into the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA), which oversaw the qualifications issued by the polytechnics. As a result, the DipAD became an honours degree; holders of the DipAD were allowed to exchange their diplomas for a BA. The distinctive art and design qualification disappeared.

Parity with other honours degrees and inclusion in universities changed the nature of art and design education. As Pevsner wanted, art education would have a theoretical component, which would be presented and assessed through texts. At the same time, art education moved further away from its grounding in skills. As Bonaventura and Farthing (2004) found in their survey of arts programmes, the only common requirement of undergraduate programmes was black and white photography.

Theory in visual practice

However, the introduction of theory was also consonant with the “theoretically informed art practices” (Candlin, 2001, p. 306) that had emerged following the war. That is to say, art from the early 1960s was infused with theory far more than art practice in earlier periods, including the early twentieth century (e.g., the Futurist Manifesto [Marinetti, 1909, in Flint, 1972]).

The aesthetician Arthur Danto described the role of theory in contemporary art (Danto, 1964). Danto first pointed out that representational art (which he labelled the Imitation Theory of Art) was based on a theory (as outlined above). Then, as a thought experiment, he imagined two identical paintings, vertical white rectangles bisected by a black line, which face each other in a gallery. Each represented a different law of physics. One painting represented the equal and opposite reactions of two masses, one above, one below the line (Newton’s Third Law); the other painting, the unchanging path of an isolated particle through space (Newton’s First Law). Only theory would illuminate either painting. As he explained, “To see something as art requires something the eye cannot decry—an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld” (Danto, 1964, p. 580).

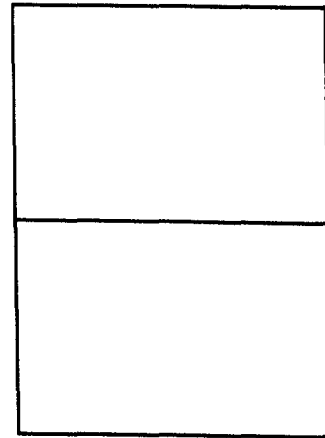


Figure 10: Newton’s Third, First Laws (after Danto, 1964, p. 577)

In 1969, Rosenberg published an article entitled “Art and words” (Rosenberg, 1972a), in which he described the importance of words, of theory, to contemporary art.

A contemporary painting or sculpture is a species of centaur—half art material, half words. [...] The secretion of language in the work interposes a mist of interpretation between it and the eye; out of the quasi-mirage arises

the prestige of the work, its power of survival, and its ability to extend its life through aesthetic descendants. (Rosenberg, 1972a, p. 55)

Rosenberg was ambivalent about this shift to theory; as an art critic he believed in theory and had promoted artists, particularly the Abstract Expressionists, through discussions of the theories behind their works. On the other hand, he believed that theory could mislead the eye, causing art works that were visually unsuccessful to be valued for the ways that they embodied theory. Criticising a painting by an artist he felt was overvalued in this way, he wrote, "It is weak visual matter in an envelope of aggressive critical language" (Rosenberg, 1972a, p. 64). He ascribed the importance of theory to the rejection of "literary" painting, that is, paintings that, like the academic paintings of the 19th Century, depended on historical or literary allusions. Literary, and subsequently realistic, subject matter were rejected in order to focus on what was specific and unique to painting. However, this turning away from mimesis required theory to underpin and explain it, and that theory, in Rosenberg's opinion, threatened to overwhelm the visual experience.

Another response to the relationship between art and words was that of the American poet, Frank O'Hara (1926-1966), a poet whose work is saturated with reference to art works and who, as director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, was well placed to mediate between the verbal and the visual. His poem, "Why I am not a painter" (Lauter, 1994, p. 2332 [originally published 1957]), is a meditation that ironically juxtaposes the means of creation in art and in poetry. O'Hara describes visiting his friend, the abstract painter Mike Goldberg, who is working on a painting. O'Hara notes the intrusion of an element from another semiotic mode, the word *sardines*, but as the painting develops, the word disappears ("It was too much," Mike says"), leaving only letters as a trace and *Sardines* as the name of the painting. Similarly, O'Hara's poem starts with an import from another mode, the colour orange. As he writes, the work grows to twelve poems: "My poem/ is finished and I haven't mentioned/ orange yet." He names the suite of poems *Oranges*. In the end, poem and painting mirror each other, each drawing on the

means of the other while creating within their own mode, the inter-modal appropriation leaving its only record in the titles of the two works.

Art education would have been irrelevant to the artworld if it had not responded to this new reality of art. However, in many cases, complementary studies were perceived as extraneous to practice. The second Coldstream Report (Department of Education and Science, 1970) emphasised that art history and complementary studies should be based on “intellectual disciplines and processes which are distinct from those of the studio” (p. 11). Still, Pevsner appended a cautious “Note of Dissent” to the second report, arguing that contextual studies were too easily slighted, and that the reservation of fifteen percent for contextual studies was “a dire necessity. It is clarity of thought and expression, it is unbiased recognition of problems, it is the capacity for discussion and it is ultimately understanding they must achieve” (Department of Education and Science, 1970, p. 48). Coldstream’s biographer (Laughton, 2004) thought that Pevsner could not have attached this warning without the tacit approval of Coldstream.

Theory would be embodied in written texts that were distinct from the values of the studio. Echoes of this continue and could be found in a much later report aimed at regularising Ph.D.s in creative practice:

Creative works, no matter how highly esteemed, cannot in themselves be regarded as outputs of research. They can only become so in association with explanatory or contextualising text. (UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997, p. 17)

Texts were crucial both in providing equivalence with other first degrees and increasing the rigour of those qualifications. Both Pratt (1997) and Evans and Le Grice (2001) agree that the inclusion of the art colleges, with their existing diploma qualifications, strengthened the polytechnics.

Pratt (1997, pp. 126-127) provides the data that illustrates the scale of the increase in the numbers of students earning the new undergraduate-equivalent degrees (see Figure 11, below). In the late 1960s, ten universities offered undergraduate courses in art and design,

enrolling less than 900 students. However, the introduction of a Diploma in Art and Design that was the equivalent of a Bachelor's degree

resulted in a significant application for the

qualification, with nearly 7,000 students enrolled, 53 per cent of whom were studying in polytechnics in 1970. By 1992, the year the polytechnics became universities, 22,300 students were enrolled in undergraduate art studies. In 1963, the Robbins Committee on the expansion of higher education could say that degrees (which, unlike diplomas, only universities could grant) were inappropriate for practical subjects, while by 1992, most advanced art education occurred in universities and artists earned bachelor's degrees.

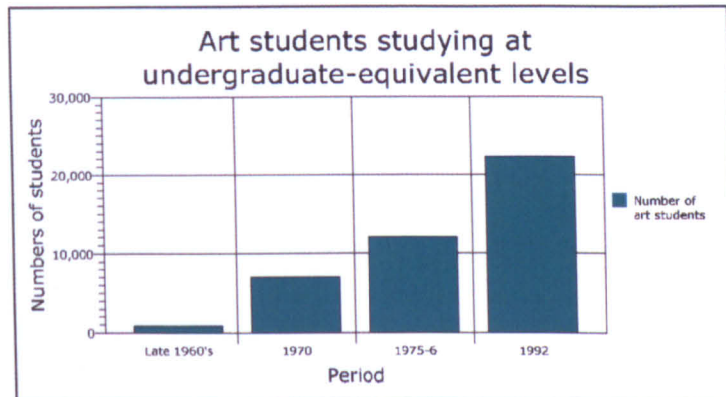


Figure 11: Students enrolled on undergraduate-equivalent study in art (from Pratt, 1997)

The new context and values began to influence the art departments now within the polytechnics. Full time taught Masters programmes in art and design were introduced, and 107 degrees were awarded in 1980-81 (Robinson, 1982, p. 213). In 1981, a Society for Research into Higher Education survey (Robinson, 1982, p. 212) found four Master's programmes, while in 1990 there were eleven, eight of which were in polytechnics (J. Pratt, 1997, p. 140). Robinson also reports that there were 74 research degrees registrations (MPhil and Ph.D.) in 1980-81, with three Ph.D.s and four MPhils awarded that year, for a cumulative total of ten Ph.D.s and fourteen MPhils. The SRHE survey that Robinson described covers a variety of arts, including

film/television, dance and drama. It does not distinguish the areas of the research degree registrations or awards.

Theory and texts in post-compulsory FAP & D education

Art education below the level of Ph.D. remains contested. In 2001, the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art and the New York Academy of Art began a survey of art education in Britain and the United States, looking first at Britain (Bonaventura & Farthing, 2004). The survey found little agreement on compulsory topics, or even those that were important but optional. As Frayling noted, “there is no ‘agreement’ on prerequisites, which makes the subject-area almost uniquely divided against itself” (2004, p. 40).

However, they found that most undergraduate courses required art history and theory. In comments solicited for the published report, many noted the tension inherent in modern education for creative practice. Frayling (2004, p. 41) described the “challenge [which] will involve breaking down the age-old (actually Victorian) boundaries between ‘theory’ and ‘practice’.”

In 2005, the Royal Society of Art sponsored a lecture, followed by a discussion under the title of *Is the art school dead?* (Graham-Dixon, 2005). Roger Wilson, the head of Chelsea College of Art and Design, and Brian Eno, the musician who graduated from Ipswich Art School and Winchester School of Art, were invited speakers. Although they disagreed in many ways, both Wilson and Eno referred disparagingly to requirements that art students must have “a basic standard of general education.” They agreed that the contrarian nature of artists may be ill-suited to the academy, and largely agreed that in Wilson’s words, “the nature of the future academy is that it becomes a kind of cultural observatory” (p. 7), a point from which to observe and comment on the culture¹⁷. Nevertheless, there were significant differences. Eno called for art schools to be as disciplined as an advanced science

¹⁷ This description should be compared with Rosenberg’s (1972b, p. 48) observation that “art has become the study and practice of culture in its day-to-day life.”

college, while Wilson favourably described the needs of art students for constructive neglect, little more than “a studio to work in, decent equipment, a certain degree of technical instruction and an amiable and encouraging atmosphere” (p. 4). In many ways, their discussion reprises the opposition, well more than a century old, to art in the academy, however much that academy has changed.

Writing became a component of post-compulsory creative practice education for a variety of reasons, both better and worse. Theory was thought to enhance the status of artists; writing was a value of the universities within which art education came to be conducted, and the relationship of art practice to theory changed fundamentally. Thompson (2005) quotes the UKCGE document (UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997) that sought to regularise the Ph.D. in creative practice, so that the creative work submitted for a doctorate would be accompanied by an explanatory or contextualising text. He goes on to write,

these [quotes] demonstrate very clearly scholarship’s attachment to what Guattari has labelled ‘linguistic imperialism’. Without a written commentary and analysis, the work that we do as artists cannot be accessed, given academic weight or properly evaluated. The most depressing aspect of this approach is the monumental ignorance that it shows about art in general and about the relationship that pertains between artists and the things that they make. Creative work in the visual arts starts with material and is consecrated in a pre-linguistic moment. (J. Thompson, 2005, p. 224)

Text creation may now be an inalterable element of visual arts education, but the texts that are created should reflect the values of the arts themselves, rather than the values of the institutions within which art education is carried on. The conflicting values apparent in discussions of the role of artists within society and the nature of their education continued below the surface to make difficult the writing of theses in art and design.

The development of the Ph.D. in fine arts and design

Introduction

The issues surrounding the Ph.D. qualification are similar to and largely derived from the issues found in art education. These include whether art can be taught; if it can be taught, how it should be taught, and, central to this study, what should be the role of research and writing in the Ph.D. The role of the text in art education has been an issue since the Coldstream report required a component of art history and contextual studies that would be assessed by writing as part of the DipAD. However, although there have been a variety of innovations in writing for art and design at both undergraduate and Master's levels (e.g., the Writing PAD project, <http://www.writing-pad.ac.uk/>), the Ph.D. has many stakeholders, and that wider ownership constrains innovation. Since much of the value of the Ph.D. is its perceived parity with the Ph.D. in other disciplines, Fine Art and Design, as communities new to conferring doctorates, have tried to demonstrate rigour comparable to that they perceived in more established academic disciplines in evaluating candidates' performance. As a result of this wider ownership, change in the thesis has been more limited than in the texts required of undergraduate art students. This section will sketch the development of the Ph.D. in fine arts and design and look at early definitions and examples. The next chapter will discuss the debate surrounding the relationship between creative practice, and writing, theory and research.

In order to begin, it is necessary to briefly characterise the *practice-based* (or *practice-led*) Ph.D. The precise meaning of this term is disputed within fine art and design and is one of the central issues of this study, so the discussion here can only be an introduction to the topic. The history of the Ph.D. in fine art and design will be outlined, and several examples of early theses in these areas will be discussed. These theses have been selected as being exemplary but broadly related to this study. The final section of this discussion of the development of the Ph.D. will briefly review

the substantial literature that argues the questions of whether there should be Ph.D.s in fine arts and design, and if there are to be, what sort of text should accompany the submission, and how that text should relate to the overall study.

Practice-based Ph.D.s

Central to the question of the nature of research in FAP & D and the text that is produced and defended through the *viva voce* examination is the *practice-based Ph.D.* The discussion here is intended only to sketch the terrain of a central concern of the participants in this study. Two types of doctorate can be characterised as practice-based. The first is a doctorate that is closely related to a profession. It indicates an additional level of study, usually after a period of professional practice. Professions in which practice-based doctorates are currently being conferred include fields as disparate as nursing and midwifery, engineering, clinical psychology, and business administration (Green & Powell, 2005; Winter, Griffiths, & Green, 2000). Although much of this literature is Australian (e.g., San Miguel & Nelson, 2007; Usher, 2002; Winter et al., 2000), it is not exclusively so. Further, Australia was one of the first countries in which Ph.D.s in Fine Arts Practice could be earned. Green and Powell (2005, p. 47) describe doctorates that are closely connected to professions as a Professional Doctorates, which they distinguish from the Practice-Based Doctorate.

The second form of practice-based doctorate (also called practice-led) requires a two-part submission: a permanent record of a creative work and a thesis that will ordinarily be significantly shorter than the textual submission required for Ph.D.s in other Humanities and Social Science fields. This is the usage that is commonly understood in discussions within Fine Arts Practice and Design, and Green and Powell (2005, p. 101) argue that it is useful to distinguish between “doctoral study in practical areas” (professional doctorates) and studies in which “knowledge is advanced by means of the practice itself” (practice-based doctorates). However, there are issues in relation to the fine arts and design practice-based Ph.D. that are illuminated by comparing them with professional fields that have practices, but do

not produce the distinctive artefacts that are recorded and preserved by fine arts and design in the submission for the doctorate. Therefore, this study will normally use the terms *practice-based doctorate* or *practice-led doctorate* to describe only the submission of a text plus a permanent record of the output of a creative activity.

The development of the Ph.D. in FAP & D

Once art and design studies were incorporated into universities, it was inevitable that these disciplines and the lecturers who embodied them there would adopt some of the values of their new context. That does not, of course, mean that the values would be adopted uncritically or by all lecturers in art and design; only that, with a new reward structure and a context with which many grew comfortable, some lecturers would tend to align their values with those of the university. Among these values were the importance of research and writing and the value of the Ph.D. as a relevant measure of achievement. Newbury (1996) described the relationship this way:

...to recognise the academic legitimacy of art and design research provides a useful impetus [to the creation of linkages between art and design and the universities]. It may also be argued that there is a degree of convergence between contemporary art and design practice and the social, economic and cultural role of universities that makes such an interaction extremely important, and perhaps inevitable. (p. 14)

In 1974, the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design was merged into the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA). From its inception, the CNAA was permitted to grant doctorates, which they also regulated and validated. Although there were institutions granting higher qualifications in art and design that were not under the remit of the CNAA (e.g., the Royal College of Art¹⁸, the Slade School of

¹⁸ According to the registrar at the Royal College of Art, the RCA granted its first Ph.D. in 1978, the year that Stonyer earned the first practice-based Ph.D. under the CNAA regulations. The fact that Coldstream was head of the Slade, an institution already granted first degrees, allowed him to be

Fine Art), most degree programmes were located in the polytechnics. In turn, many of these institutions continued to pattern their requirements for the Ph.D. on those of the CNAA (Langrish, 2000).

The CNAA defined four essential characteristics of the Ph.D.:

1. The systematic investigation of an identified subject
2. The openness of the methodology of the study to scrutiny by others
3. The openness of the results to verification by others
4. The outcome should be an increase in public knowledge or understanding (Chaney, 1994, p. 21 [numbering added])

In 1977, the CNAA decreed that "In appropriate cases the Council may approve a programme leading to the presentation of a thesis accompanied by material in other than written form" (Clark, n.d./1989?). This clause (Regulation G3.3, 7) permitted the inclusion of creative artefacts as part of the submission for the qualification, which the CNAA, in a later document, said, raises "the fundamental philosophical question of what constitutes research in art and design and the extent to which the propositional framework derived from the sciences is appropriate in practice and performance based subjects" (Council for National Academic Awards, n.d./1989?, p. 79).

In this later document, the CNAA attempted to clarify the implications of Regulation G3.3, 7. It was intended to encourage the recognition of research in art and design, but it was not intended to permit the awarding of a qualification simply for the creation of art or design work. Research degrees were to be awarded for the "systematic investigation of a predetermined subject or previously identified problem... [using] a methodology of sequential and progressive gathering, testing and evaluation of primary material" (p. 81). This conception of research is grounded in realist epistemologies and fixed design methods (Robson, 2002); the

seen as neutral when the committee he chaired recommended that art institutions be allowed to a degree-equivalent qualification.

appropriateness of these epistemologies and designs for research in art and design is one of the areas of contention in discussions of the Ph.D. within these disciplines.

Selected doctoral theses in art and design

The theses that I will describe below have been selected to give an indication of how the thesis in Fine Art developed. The theses were selected either because they are frequently cited (e.g., Allison, 1974; Hunter, 1992; Stonyer, 1978) or because they relate to the site of this study (Painter, 1987; Wheeler, 1996). They are exemplary rather than the result of a systematic survey, but they illustrate trends in research topics, methodology, and writing style that provide a background for the candidates' work to be described later.

Brian Allison

Brian Allison claimed to have earned the first Ph.D. given to a person from an art college background (Langrish, 2000), though his degree was earned at an old university. His study was entitled the *Intellectual factors in art education*, and was undertaken in the School of Education at the University of Reading (Allison, 1974). It was not a practice-based doctorate; instead, it was a study of the development of children's understanding of art. The study uses a fixed design (Robson, 2002) to correlate this developing understanding to their general cognitive development, through a series of tests of art vocabulary knowledge and picture appreciation. His text is over 600 typescript pages in length, and, with appendices comprised of articles that he had written while working on his study, the bound thesis is approximately 9 cm thick. Allison's thesis would lie outside of the scope of this study, except that he became an important figure in the development of the research degrees in art and design. From his post at Leicester Polytechnic (now De Montfort University), he promoted the idea that researchers should follow a research programme, and that research in FAP & D was best done, as in science, by working

in a research team and building upon the research of others, an idea that he pursued at De Montfort (Allison, n.d./1989?-b).

Andrew Stonyer

The first Ph.D. in Fine Arts certified by the CNAA that included a practice-based element was awarded in 1978 to Andrew Stonyer (Cornock, 2003). The title of this study was *The development of kinetic sculpture by the utilisation of solar energy* (Stonyer, 1978). It was earned at Leicester Polytechnic and was validated by the Slade School of Fine Art, University College, London. Stonyer described his study in 1986 (Stonyer, Ford, Hughes, & Linford, 1986). Two things about this first Ph.D. are striking and relevant for this study.

First, the study employed a systematic applied research methodology. Stonyer investigated a variety of ways of using solar power, both heat and light, to make sculptures that would respond to changes in their environment (kinetic sculpture). Stonyer (1978) describes a systematic process of experimentation. Initially he investigated the effects of using liquids of different densities that would not mix to create colour effects as the liquids were warmed and cooled by exposure the sun. He subsequently investigated the use of photoelectric cells which powered servo motors, causing elements of the sculpture to move. These motors altered the relationships between the photoelectric cells, the panels of the sculpture that moved, and the sunlight to create aesthetic effects, often effects intended to confound the expectations of viewers. For example, in the one sculpture that was built to full scale (*Crown Court Square, Leicester*), a stainless steel



Figure 12: Andrew Stonyer et al., *Crown Court Square, Leicester*

pillar held panels that would rotate and move to maintain a constant level of illumination. From the photographs accompanying Stonyer (1978), the sculpture looked vaguely flower-like, with square “petals” moved by the servo motors. However, the petals were fully open in low light such as dusk and mid-winter, and closed in full sunlight, “a response contrasting with that normally associated with nature” (Stonyer et al., 1986, p. 37). Choices such as this one reflect the aesthetic orientation of the study.

The methodology is applied experimentation, research that Gray and Malins (2004, pp. 20, 121) situate in a “realist” or “positivist” paradigm. As Gray and Pirie (1995, not paginated) note, early research in art and design “drew heavily on the existing and validated methods of the Sciences and Social Sciences.” Stonyer’s study does not involve social research, and, although the path is shaped by artistic goals rather than, for example, goals of efficiency or effectiveness, it is relatively clear. This is in contrast with many of the participants in this study, whose research outcomes are less clear or straight-forward.

Second, the study involves collaboration between artists and scientists. Both because the Ph.D. in fine arts and design is emerging, and because of the nature of current art practice—“art as a cultural observatory” (Graham-Dixon, 2005)—the Ph.D. in art and design draws on knowledge established in other areas. In a discussion of their collaboration, the contributors to Stonyer et al. (1986) say that few difficulties arose over fundamental differences in methodology or philosophy, but that collaborators’ “early ideas were too allied to their parent discipline[s]” (p. 38). However, both artistic and scientific collaborators came to realise that “their working methods are surprisingly similar; [and] that both pursue goals of enquiry in a determined and creative fashion” (p. 38). In contrast with the quasi-experimental methodology that Stonyer used, collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and an eclectic approach to research traditions are shared with the participants in this study.

Colin Painter

In 1987, Colin Painter received the third British Ph.D. in fine arts¹⁹ under CNAAG guidelines from Newcastle Polytechnic, which (as Northumbria University) is the site of this study (Cornock, 2003; Painter, 1987). It was very different from Stonyer's study; it was not a practice-based study. Instead, it was a study of the "objects and images" that people in five economically and socially discreet groups in Newcastle upon Tyne hung on their walls. It attempted to investigate "the gap between [the artworld's] concepts of art and those existing in the wider community" (1987; from the Abstract, unpaginated). Painter declared that, though the study drew on concepts and methodologies drawn from sociology, it was intended to address the concerns of his world, the artworld. His study was an attempt to understand why artworks that were appreciated by the artworld were so strikingly unappreciated by the wider population. With the help of the City Council and estate agents, he identified areas of the city with predominantly low cost rental accommodation, council housing, moderately priced private homes and more expensive private homes. He also included the homes of the members of the Northern Arts Visual Art Panel to provide a base of comparison from the artworld. He visited fifteen homes in each group (slightly fewer in the art group) and photographed the interior walls. He then analysed the "objects and images" that each group chose to display on their walls. Although he discussed with his participants why they had selected these objects, his method was primarily structured observation (Robson, 2002, p. 310). His stance was essentially external, as may be suggested by this passage from his conclusion:

It was landscapes that were the most common pictures in the middle-class Areas.

My interpretation is that the optic of 'tangibility' in the pictures in the middle-class Areas is less concerned with the possession of what is

¹⁹ This claim is supported by Cornock (2003); however, Allison (Allison, n.d./1989?-a) compiled a list of "all art and design researches submitted for the degrees of MPhil and PhD of the Council for National Academic Awards since the Council was granted its Charter" (p. 71). This list shows 47 Ph.D. degrees and 51 MPhil degrees awarded to 1988 in these fields.

depicted as with efficacy over it.... The most important characteristic of these pictures is not that they depict the possessions of their owners, or their way of life (though they sometimes do) but that, through their mode of representation, they confirm their version of common sense.... (Painter, 1987, p. 569)

Notable in his study is the drawing on other disciplines (primarily sociology) for both insights and methodologies. Art and design research were strongly interdisciplinary from the outset. Also notable is a continuation of the alliance with realist epistemologies (Robson, 2002) in the choice of research design. Painter compares positivist and humanistic approaches to research, and sees his perception as inevitably shaping the study, but he identifies the area in which this is most relevant as his reflection on his self-declared membership in the artworld.

Ian A. Hunter

Hunter's study (Hunter, 1992) was a practice-based investigation of how environmental sculpture might contribute to landscape architecture. He described his practice as

combining radical and progressive immersion with problem-finding strategies derived from sculpture [which] provides the basis for a holistic (or soft systems) approach to design and leads to the introduction of an ecological aesthetic in landscape architecture. (Hunter, 1992, p. i)

Hunter specifically rejected "a clearly formulated hypothesis" as his starting point, as well as quantitative data collection and analysis. These choices seemed to reflect a rejection of the CNAA requirement for "a systematic investigation of a predetermined subject or previously identified problem" described above. He took Schön's reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983) as his model, and built upon the work of

other fine arts Ph.D. candidates who had successfully studied the artist as participant-observers.

He discussed Schön's ideas at length, describing them as "a new epistemology," based on the "intuitive knowing implicit in action" (p. 53). Hunter used Schön's concept of the practitioner as researcher (Schön, 1983) in order to create "an intuitive and artistic approach in which the problem is discovered and defined" (Hunter, 1992, p. 50). Hunter drew on the small but growing body of research studies in Fine Arts, citing nine different MPhil and Ph.D. theses in his methodology section. Schön's approach has become a touchstone for many artists doing research (Gray & Malins, 2004), suggesting ways of using reflection on practice as a research method.

Hunter linked Schön's *reflexive practitioner* to Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi's (1976) distinction between the *presented problem* and the *discovered problem* to describe the nature of artistic discovery, and the methodology of his study. They studied the creative process among students at the School of Art Institute of Chicago, where they found that the creative process among artists had qualities similar to research among scientists. The discovered problem was characteristic of art practice and scientific research. Artists or researchers continued to look for new problems even after the initial problem had been solved, leading to "surprise, shock and serendipity." Hunter said that his "study will be based on the five stages of the dialectical research model proposed by Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi" (p. 55). These stages involved the artist experiencing mental conflict, formulating a way of articulating this conflict and expressing it in visual form. This led to symbolic resolution and a new perspective on the conflict. The artist could then repeat this process indefinitely by continuing to look for problems.

This dialectical research model depends on the artist inspecting his own mental processes. Hunter set out a linguistic demarcation of what he saw as dual roles: he referred to himself as the "sculptor," in his role as practitioner, but when he describes himself as reflecting on his practice he uses the term the "researcher"

(Hunter, 1992, p. 54). An example in which the two voices follow closely can be seen in this passage:

Such periods of 'blockage' or loss of direction are not uncommon in artistic practice, and can be regarded as part of the gestation period during which ideas take shape to re-emerge later in new work. The sculptor felt that his creative energy was being dissipated by the complex administration, fundraising and political lobbying (with the borough council) required to move such a scheme forward. The blockage slowly resolved itself as the researcher disengaged from the idea of a sculpture trail and began to take a different approach to the landscape and the communities with which the Groundwork Trust was involved. (Hunter, 1992, p. 67)

Langrish (2000), who was Hunter's supervisor, described Hunter's study as "an observer following around an artist in order to find out how the artist operated" (unpaginated, 7th sheet) with the singular feature being that both observer and artist were the same person. The use of two separate personae allowed Hunter to write in an author-evacuated style while maintaining an identity as an artistic practitioner. When Hunter described his own feelings ("The sculptor felt that his creative energy was being dissipated..."), he distanced himself to the third person, so that both biographical artist and researcher were present, "cloth[ed] in the language and rhetoric of positivist and postpositivist discourse" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 17). In this way Hunter (1992) is an example of the confluence of research methodologies and textual identity representation.

Hunter's study was part of a shift from the realist epistemology of earlier studies. Although this review of early Ph.D.s is not intended to be comprehensive, Hunter's study was not the first to adopt a constructivist epistemology. Hunter alluded to earlier studies that used the artist as a participant-observer, but his study is quite explicitly based on self-observation. As the FAP & D communities have accepted epistemologies other than narrowly realist, they have moved toward an implicit

acceptance of practice accompanied by a reflective text as fulfilling the requirements for a Ph.D. Hunter's study is also significant because his supervisor highlighted it for particular praise in a conference presentation in which he identified a knowledge of research methodologies as a privileged criterion for a Ph.D. of any type.

This study is informed by a constructivist epistemology and uses an emergent design. There was no initial hypothesis. The thrust of Langrish (2000) is that **"you cannot get a PHD for practice"** and "knowing how to research is more important than the actual topic" (unpaginated, 1st sheet, emphasis in original). However, it seems worth raising the question—since there is a strong current within the FAP & D research community that identifies the Ph.D. as training in research methodology—of whether reflection on practice as characterised by Schön, when used as the methodology for a study based on practice, creates a distinction without a difference if your major claim is that you cannot get a Ph.D. for practice.

Eleanor Teresa Wheeler

The final study that will be discussed as background is that of Wheeler, whose study was *The role of architectural ceramics in contemporary site-specific art* (Wheeler, 1996), carried out at The University of Northumbria at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Wheeler's study is emphatically practice-based. She wanted to create works that would be incorporated as architectural features in public buildings, and to consider this inclusion (promoted by the Percent for Art programme, which dedicated one percent of the cost of a new public building to artworks) from the point of view of a practising artist.

Like Hunter, she draws on Schön to use reflection on practice as a means to test her hypothesis, which is "that ceramic ornament, or ceramic sculptural features, can significantly improve or enhance contemporary built environments" (p. 4). She created a body of work that was included in buildings that she analysed as case studies to test her hypothesis, and staged an exhibition of her ceramic sculpture. Her

thesis reviewed historical and contemporary work that might contextualise her practice and discussed her case studies. She used a series of specific questions, such as might be posed of an artist seeking a commission, to question her own practice and provide a measure of objectivity to her reflection.

Besides drawing on Schön for her methodology, Wheeler referred to the eclectic approach to research advocated by a paper addressing the concerns of researchers in art and design, Gray and Pirie (1995). Gray and Pirie is one of the earliest papers to discuss methodologies for research in FAP & D; Gray has subsequently co-authored a volume to develop this topic (Gray & Malins, 2004). In addition, Wheeler referred to a widening circle of writers describing naturalistic methodologies, including Robson (1993) and Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Also similarly to Hunter, she reflected on the linguistic enactment of her dual roles as researcher and artist, though she found a different resolution. She said that she would use the term, *artist/researcher*, and third person references when she wanted to indicate her role as researcher. She referred to herself in the first person when she discussed her “personal vision and approach taken in the art practice” (Wheeler, 1996, p. 7).

Wheeler’s study is part of this discussion because it suggests the maturing of the practice-based Ph.D. in FAP & D. Her study draws on reflexive qualitative methodologies to look at the artist’s practice. Although having some features of fixed design studies, such as a hypothesis, the text largely sets her work in an historical context and documents her reflection on practice. She introduces herself into her text as an artist, without the enddistancing stance of referring to herself in the third person as “the sculptor,” as Hunter did. Finally, Wheeler’s study marks the beginning of contemporary influences on the participants in this study. When I found that Painter and Wheeler had done their studies at Northumbria, I asked Chris, the FAP supervisor, if he knew of either of them. He responded in an e-mail that, though he knew of Painter, he did not know he had a doctorate. However

Chris said of Wheeler that “When I arrived Eleanor Wheeler (think that is the right name) was just completing a PhD. Her topic was architectural ceramic sculpture. It has been quoted as an early example of high-quality practice-led research” (personal communication, 10 Mar 07).

Conclusion

As this chapter has tried to show, art practice was increasingly influenced by explicit theories. In Pevsner’s history (1940/1967), which is supported by other sources, theory became a necessary component of an artist’s skills during the Renaissance. The introduction of theory elevated the artist above the social level of skilled craftworkers. Mimesis, the imitation of canonical works of art as a step toward the creation of artworks that showed “nature corrected,” dominated art education into the twentieth century. However, as art practice turned toward the depiction of modern life beginning in the nineteenth century, artists felt that the goal of “correcting nature” was stultifying. They reacted against traditional art education and both practice and education might have reached an impasse.

However, the development of art and design education by the group of artists associated with the Bauhaus offered a way forward. By framing art and design innovation as finding solutions to problems, the Bauhaus suggested a new form of art education that was consonant with modern life. It also suggested how systematic research could be carried out in these disciplines. During the early part of the twentieth century, art practice became increasingly driven by theory (e.g., Cubism, Futurism), and less tied to artists’ skills. Artists such as Duchamp, with his “ready-mades,” impelled this shift. In Britain after the Second World War, these parallel changes in art practice and art education came together as art education was integrated into the university sector. The prominence of theory and a new site for art education led to requirements for a written component being included in art and design education. The movement into the universities eventually led to the development of doctorates in Fine Arts Practice and Design, while the Bauhaus

insight that design and art practices could be understood as problem solving facilitated the conceptualisation of these practices as research. An overview of early research projects shows that they initially followed fixed models of research, but later studies adopted flexible models.

5 Art practice and writing, theory and research

Introduction

The previous chapter described how Fine Arts education moved from an apprenticeship to an artist or studio into institutions that were dedicated to teaching art and design. In England, these institutions themselves were gradually absorbed into the universities and began to offer not simply first degrees but also Master's and Ph.D.s. This movement into universities entailed the adoption of many of the values of the university, and the diminution of some the distinctive character of art and design education. Artists, designers, and educators from within and outside the university sector debated whether these changes damaged art education and practice. Although the changes have affected many parts of FAP & D education, this chapter will consider these communities' development of and reflection on research qualifications. In particular, it will discuss the on-going debate in the Fine Arts and Design communities over the relationship between creative practice on the one hand and the nexus of writing, theory, and research on the other.

I will begin this chapter by analysing a central document in the discussion of practice-based Ph.D.s, the UK Council on Graduate Education's paper (1997), produced by a working group convened by Sir Christopher Frayling. This paper surveyed current practice and offered guidance on how a Ph.D. in Fine Arts or Design should be organised. Although Ph.D.s in FAP & D have been granted since at least 1978, they are found primarily in the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and Scandinavia. They are not common in the US, and academics who move between the US and countries currently granting doctorates question the wisdom of their development. I will look at some of the arguments against the doctorate in FAP & D made by these writers and others.

Since there are to be doctorates in FAP & D, I will discuss whether art and design educators believe they should be conceived as training in the ways of a specific discipline or a more generalised training in research methods and key transferable skills. One of the most contentious areas concerns the role of the artefact in the submission for the doctorate. I will look at two views as to whether the artefacts created by a practitioner can convey meaning in ways that are relevant to the doctorate or not. Finally, I will discuss in this chapter some of the perspectives on how the Ph.D. in FAP & D should develop.

Establishing the terms of the discussion

If Pevsner stood at the centre of changes in art and design education in the twenty five years following the Second World War, Sir Christopher Frayling has been at the centre of the changes that have occurred as FAP & D education has moved into the universities. He wrote a paper that has to a large extent defined the terms of discussion of research in FAP & D (Frayling, 1993) and was subsequently the convenor of the working group that issued the 1997 report on *Practice-based doctorates in the creative arts and design* (UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997). These papers, as well as his writing on other occasions on this topic (e.g., 2004, 2006) have shaped the development of the doctorate in FAP & D.

Frayling (1993) drew on Herbert Read's distinction of teaching *to* art and teaching *through* art to enunciate a parallel distinction of

- Research *into* art and design
- Research *through* art and design
- Research *for* art and design

Research *into* art and design included the categories of art and design research that are most firmly situated in the university, including art and design history, and research into theoretical perspectives on art and design. Painter's (1987) thesis on the

types of artefacts that were treated as art by different economic groups in Newcastle would be included in this category.

Research *through* art and design included materials research (e.g., glazes for pottery) and the development of new tools and technology for art or design creation.

Frayling (1993) also includes action research in this category. Action research in FAP & D documents and contextualises a process of practical experimentation. This type of research, producing an artefact and a research report, was in use at the Royal College of Art, of which he was Rector when he wrote this paper. Stonyer's (1978) thesis on the development of kinetic sculpture that was powered by solar energy exemplified this category of research.

Research *for* art and design, Frayling (1993) acknowledged, was the most difficult category. He quoted from an interview with Picasso in 1923 in which the artist emphasised the meaning of research as *searching again*: "In my opinion," said Picasso, 'to search again means nothing in painting. To find is the thing.'" (Frayling, 1993, p. 2) For Picasso, research was the gathering of reference materials; the end product had to be the artefact. As an example of Picasso's research, Frayling lists some of the elements that went into Picasso's *Les demoiselles d'Avignon* (1906-07): "visual memories of the red-light district of Barcelona, ancient Iberian sculptures, Cezanne's Mont-Sainte-Victoire, a recent Matisse" (p. 2)

In addition to research as referencing of experiences and artefacts, Frayling provided historical examples of research *for* art and design, work "where the thinking is, so to speak, embodied in the artefact, where the goal is not primarily communicable knowledge in the sense of verbal communication, but in the sense of



Figure 13: John Constable, *Weymouth Bay: Bowleaze Cove and Jordan Hill*, 1816-17

visual or iconic or imagistic communication” (Frayling, 1993, p. 5). In Frayling’s view, John Constable, George Stubbs and Leonardo da Vinci did research for art, but he did not identify any more recent artist-researchers.

Frayling proposed — and rejected — views of artists and designers as portrayed in films (the cinema is Frayling’s scholarly interest), and contrasted these with cinematic scientists. As portrayed in films, artists as inspired lunatics, designers as style-obsessed tinkerers and, on the other hand, scientists as detached rationalists did no credit to the analytic processes of artists, the systematic searching for solutions by designers, or the tacit knowledge of working scientists. While giving credit to artists and designers as rational researchers, Frayling nevertheless rejected the idea of doctorates for creative practice in itself, “an honorary Ph.D., *in absentia*,” for every artist since the Renaissance. He said, too, that the Royal College of Art, of which he was rector, rejected research degrees for work which was claimed to “speak for itself.” He saw the potential for research *for* art, research that would be embodied in the artefact, but he reminded doubtful, wondering why legitimate expressive work needed to be validated as “research.”

Frayling thought that the case for modern artists — as opposed to the historical examples he put forward — doing research in an expressive tradition was unproven, and itself in need of additional research. Research *for* art, as defined by Frayling (1993) remained an ideal and a spectre that was often referred to in the seminar discussions of the Fine Arts Practice group followed in this study.

In 1996, the UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE) convened a working group that Frayling led, which looked at practice-based Ph.D.s in the creative and performing arts. Some of the members of the working group were scholars whose writings on the practice-based Ph.D. will be reviewed separately. This report was part of a series commissioned by the UKCGE that looked at different aspects of research degrees. The group presented its report in 1997 (UK Council for Graduate

Education, 1997). It both described existing practice and proposed appropriate boundaries for practice-based research degrees.

The working group surveyed the UKCGE's institutional members; forty-five institutions indicated that they offered practice-based research degrees. All of the institutions that submitted full regulations either built on or had adopted entire the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) regulations for the doctorate, which called for a candidate to have "demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field" (quoted in UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997, p. 21). The working group also surveyed institutions on their current practice in awarding doctoral degrees in practice-based disciplines. The focus of the working group was on the Ph.D. qualification; in addition they discussed other doctoral awards such as professional doctorates and Ph.D.s by published work. They opposed the development of a separate practice-based doctorate (e.g., a D.F.A.) that would be parallel to professional doctorates that advanced practice, such as the EdD. Based on the experience in North America of the Doctor of Composition (a doctorate in creative writing), they felt that separate doctorates in practical fields, while of doctoral standard, were not equivalent to the Ph.D. and were regarded as second-class qualifications. This choice, as well as other comments in the report, highlighted their belief in the importance of maintaining the Ph.D. in Fine Arts and Design as an equivalent qualification. This choice also reflected their belief that a doctorate was primarily important for work in universities.

The working group looked systematically at a series of questions about Ph.D.s and "doctorateness." They identified three areas of contention: first, they considered whether only those subjects that used the "scientific method" (their phrase) could award Ph.D.s. While the group said that the scientific method was the "gold standard" (p. 8), limiting the Ph.D. to disciplines that followed this research paradigm was unnecessarily restrictive, as other disciplines already accepted qualitative and other research methodologies. Second, they distinguished between

practice-based disciplines that created artefacts and those, such as nursing and engineering that did not, and agreed that it was reasonable to exclude them from their review. Third, they considered whether or not the creative product itself could be the outcome of a Ph.D. study. The judgment of the working group had two parts: that the Ph.D. is training in research and that the “fruits of the research must be communicated” (p. 9). Therefore, the Ph.D. had a different purpose and audience from creative practice, and so the creative outcome could not, in itself, justify the awarding of a doctorate.

The paper then tried to define the principles underlying all Ph.D. awards. The working group identified three core features that defined the Ph.D.: a contribution to knowledge; a demonstration of knowledge of research methods, and the viva voce examination. The working group also noted that the purpose of a Ph.D. was primarily for career advancement in universities, and that this distinguished the Ph.D. from professional doctorates (including doctorates in creative practices, such as the DMus or DArt and Design). The practice-based Ph.D. “advances knowledge partly **by means of practice**” (p. 14, emphasis in original) but the report held that the submission must be accompanied by something, implicitly a written text, that would contextualise the practical submission and meet “general scholarly requirements” (p. 14).

The paper looked at issues that were not resolved by the survey of current practice, with written responses to the survey suggesting considerable differences of opinion. They rejected a separate award of a different standard for practice-based studies and instead called for a commonly agreed standard of rigour for doctorates, within an inclusive continuum of research methodologies. Within this continuum, practice-based research would be equivalent to scientific research, in a way similar to Ph.D.s in the humanities, which also did not use scientific methodologies.

The equivalence of the practice-based submissions to those of other disciplines was particularly contentious. The working group said that doctorates are comprised of

both process and product, and the judgement of the quality of the submission must be based on both. The product might be a creative output, but it must be the outcome of a process of research that was documented, either in written form or possibly through audio or video recording. This documentation was central to the award of the Ph.D. and might be used to differentiate between the Ph.D. and other named doctorates (DMus, DArt and Design) that did not receive recognition as equivalent. They posited that most research in creative practice would employ qualitative methodologies. However, in their judgement, “the presentation of practical work on its own, however original it may be deemed to be and whatever its critical acclaim, does not provide sufficient evidence on which judgement can be made to award a PhD” (p. 17). They found a consensus among the institutions responding to the survey that a text of 30,000 to 40,000 words when accompanied by a practical submission was considered equivalent to a conventional Ph.D. thesis.

The UKCGE report set down a marker for the practice-based Ph.D. that was remarkably close to the opinions expressed in Frayling’s earlier paper (Frayling, 1993), though with a significant difference. Frayling (1993) had described examples of artists in the history of art whose work had embodied research. The UKCGE working group rejected the possibility that a contemporary artist who wished her or his work to be accepted in an academic context could produce work that would itself embody research. The doctoral submission could include an outcome of practice, but it had to be accompanied by a text or recording that contextualised the creative practice.

Do we need a Ph.D. in Art?

As described in the previous chapter, until relatively recently artists and designers did not need university qualifications, and certainly not research degrees. Even in the last twenty-five years, the MFA in the US and the MA in other Anglophone regions was accepted as the highest qualification for art and design practice, with artists or designers occasionally choosing to get doctorates in related fields such as

art and design history. As Ph.D.'s for artists and designers have proliferated, some writers and art educators have questioned whether the qualification is necessary or appropriate. In a talk at his retirement, Thompson (2005) gave full throated voice to his opposition to research degrees in fine arts. His criticism ranged from the rejecting the incorporation of art education in the polytechnics through the concomitant changes that this incorporation brought, such as the loss of part-time practicing artists as tutors to professionalised academics. Overall, he felt that "the ongoing process of academicisation ... is forcing entirely the wrong kind of change on the teaching of fine art practice" (p. 224). Along with these large shifts, he saw art practice being mistakenly recast as research, in part to conform to Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) measurements. He argued that "works of art collectively or individually cannot be describable as 'measurable research outcome', with or without attendant explanatory text or illustrated catalogue" (p. 223).

Thompson (2005) presented forceful arguments, but he did not acknowledge the shift in art practice that contributed to the changes he deplored. He complained that art history had been replaced in many programmes by art theory, without accepting that this was a choice for a new type of art practice, and not simply a consequence of art schools having been incorporated in universities. As a result, his rejection seems cranky, an expression of a yearning for art education in the way it happened at the start of his career.

Other writers engaged with current art practice, while remaining doubtful about the Ph.D. in FAP, including Jones (2002, 2006, 2009a) and Elkins (2004, 2006, 2009d).

Both worked for periods on either side of the Atlantic. Both Jones, who is Dean of an art college in Ireland, and Elkins, the Chair of a Department of Art, have serious doubts about the wisdom of a Ph.D. in FAP but agree that "the PhD in visual art is inescapable: it is on the horizon" (Elkins, 2004, p. 22). In the spring of 2009, Elkins published an edited collection (Elkins, 2009d; Jones contributed two chapters) that built on the literature this chapter surveys and also contributed to the discussion. Elkins and Jones critically examined the doctorate in fine art, and offered

suggestions of how it might evolve. Within this similarity, their approaches differ because of the different contexts in which they work.

Having worked in the UK and the US and moved to Ireland, where academic practices strongly reflect those of the UK, Jones accepted many of the terms that Thompson rejected, including research as a meaningful term to use to describe art. Jones argued that the meaning of research needed to be reconsidered, rather than adopting standards and methods developed in the natural or social sciences. He set out a programme of research including aspects such as “a sociology of artists; a theoretical basis for intuition; [and] advanced theoretisation of how knowledge may be embodied in or represented by a work of art” (Jones, 2006, p. 230). He then offered the example of Glasgow School of Art, where he had worked, which had developed four alternatives for examination for the Ph.D. in FAP, ranging from an entirely text-based submission to “A portfolio with documentation and summary” in which the textual component documented the research process. Finally, he argued that the Fine Arts community needed to “establish our own pluralistic research-based paradigm for art and design” (Jones, 2006, p. 238).

Elkins is based primarily in the United States, and is deeply sceptical of the desirability of a Ph.D. in FAP, but he believes that the imminent development of this qualification in the US should be taken as an opportunity to rethink not art practices but the Ph.D. in the university. He rejected the terms *research* and *new knowledge* in discussions of art; he felt that both terms represent “UK administrative jargon” (Elkins, 2009b, p. 113) that tortured the meanings of the words to fit bureaucratic goals. On the basis of his teaching in the UK, he argues that the RAE and its outcome in research funding is

the elephant in the room in all UK discussions of the [Ph.D. in FAP] degree: people may sound disinterested, or motivated by ideas alone: but the raw fact is that institutions get money for PhD students, so it pays to set up these programs. (Elkins, 2009c, p. 145)

Criticism of the RAE as an impetus for the creation of doctorates in FAP and the recasting of art practice activities as research runs through Elkins's edited book (Elkins, 2009d; e.g., Harrison, 2009; Jones, 2009b). No study of the difficulty of writing a thesis in Fine Arts or Design can ignore this crucial driver for the Ph.D.

Elkins offered a suite of models of submissions for a doctorate in FAP, mixed with flashes of insight into the relationship between artistic practice and texts. For example, he suggested that artists regularly benefit from misunderstanding sources and influences. The fruitful misunderstanding he saw as a central problem in examining the doctorate. If an artist's misunderstanding helps their practice, how is the written text to be assessed? If the text is assessed by the normal criteria of the related field, such as art history, it should fail, while if it is assessed for its contribution to the practice, it cannot be evaluated. This insight led to perhaps his most interesting observation. He suggested that the creation of practice-based Ph.D.'s in FAP & D should precipitate a reconsideration of the unity of the university. Elkins (2009b) argued that universities already harbour incommensurable descriptions of *research* and *new knowledge*, such as those held by literature and physical sciences. If these terms were either dropped or confined to disciplines in which they were appropriate, new terms might be developed that could also fit art and design practice.

Ultimately, then, Elkins and Jones both accepted the inevitability of a doctorate in Fine Art and Design practice, unlike Thompson (2005). They predicted that the doctorate in FAP & D would come for competitive and economic reasons. However, they worried that fitting FAP & D into the Procrustes' bed of current administrative thinking about the doctorate would not help art practice, which would become "more involved with theory, possibly even more alienated from skill and technique" (Elkins, 2009a, p. x)

What should a doctor know or be able to do?

In essence, the question is whether the process of obtaining a Ph.D. in FAP & D should be a path which leads to a qualification in distinctive practices with specific, disciplinary forms of knowledge and ways of researching, or whether it should involve training in skills that, while relevant to the discipline, are also applicable and comparable to the skills acquired in other disciplines, and potentially transferable to other contexts. Those skills would be as relevant to employment outside of the education sector and apart from practice in Art or Design as those of Ph.D.s in disciplines that have been granting them for a much longer time.

To some extent, this discussion represents a paradox for this study. This study is grounded in studies that represent literacy as a practice that is ecologically adapted to the domain in which it is enacted. These studies of literacy practices have tried to reshape scholarly, public and institutional understandings of literacy not as the paradigmatic transferable skill, but as a set of practices specific to a context.

Literacy practices appropriate to a new context can be learned, but the process of learning is not simple. The extent to which successful literacy practices in one context can be transferred to another is a question that remains open. A contextual, ethnographic study of learning to write must to a large extent take this understanding of literacy as its premise. As described earlier, studies of literacy (e.g., Baynham, 1995; Geisler, 1994; Street, 1984) contrast the *autonomous* model of literacy with the *ideological* model. The autonomous model portrays literacy as a skill that is both isolable and neutral. In this model, literacy is a skill that one has or lacks, a skill that (in the strong versions of this model) changes cognition, encouraging abstraction, rationality and context-free thinking. In contrast, the ideological model of literacy sees multiple literacies, each embedded in a local context. Rather than a neutral skill, a better metaphor might be to see literacy as similar Darwin's finches, with separate species, each adapted to particular ecological niches. As the beak of the finch is modified to allow the bird to crush nuts or catch insects, literacy practices are similarly adapted to the social niche in which it is enacted.

If literacy practices create and maintain a discourse community, the question arises as to whether other practices, particularly those bearing on ontological and epistemological self-conceptions such as research methods are not equally embedded in the community. On the one side are writers who argue for an autonomous model of the Ph.D., as a qualification that prepares candidates with skills that are applicable not solely to a disciplinary context but also for a wider context. In this model, the qualification should be comparable to other doctorates throughout the academy; it prepares those candidates who may eventually leave art practice. In contrast, a smaller group of writers argue that a Ph.D. in Fine Arts or Design should be based on distinctive knowledge, generated in a distinctive way. These writers say that artists and designers should not be limited to the research tools that have been accepted in disciplines that may be quite distant from the concerns of art and design. Although they accept and even embrace the magpie nature of art and design practice and feel that appropriating research tools from other disciplines is part of the character of post-modern art and design practice, they argue that art and design should also have distinctive research methodologies, reflecting the distinctive nature of research in FAP & D.

To further link the discussion of the Ph.D. in FAP & D to models of literacy, Kress (1996) discusses the role of literacy in science. He noted that literacy practices in the representation of science had been shifting for two decades, away from an older pattern in which written language in a complex form (embedded clauses, high levels of nominalization) was the medium of communication. In the newer pattern, "images are the central medium of information: the role of language has become that of commentary" (1996, p. 244). Kress connects this shift to early claims in the study of literacy (e.g., Goody & Watt, 1963; Olson, 1977, 1996) that literacy itself enabled the development of science and critical thinking. He then asks a series of questions:

What is the effect of the mode of representation on the epistemology of science? Are different accounts of natural phenomena facilitated, made

possible, or ruled out? In other words, are theoretical accounts linked to modes as well as to forms of representation? (p. 244)

The Ph.D. with its written thesis had its origins in science and the scientific method, and, although many disciplines now accept studies that are not grounded in positivist methodologies, the epistemology of the thesis remains strongly linked to this paradigm. Kress's final question, of whether accounts of research are linked to modes as well as forms of representation, has clear implications for the Ph.D. in FAP & D.

Should the doctorate be training in research methodologies?

If the doctorate is considered as training in generalisable skills, this raises the question of which skills should be taught or learned. Governmental and institutional discussion about university education focuses on the need for students to acquire transferable skills for employment. Undergraduate education is the usual site for the discussion of transferable skills, but doctoral candidates are also expected to gain marketable skills. The *Framework for higher education qualifications* (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2001) defines the skills and abilities that the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) believes are expected at each level of study. In Annex 1, the *Framework* lists seven items that define the doctorate: four capabilities that must be demonstrated to earn the qualification, two typical abilities and one transferable skill.

[Capabilities:] A candidate must demonstrate:

- The creation and interpretation of new knowledge
- The acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of cutting edge knowledge
- The capability to devise, design and manage a research project

- A knowledge of research techniques and the ability to identify and use relevant existing knowledge

Typical abilities found in successful candidates include:

- The ability to make judgements of complex issues and communicate their ideas to others
- The ability to undertake research in new areas

Successful doctoral candidates should have the following transferable skills:

- The candidate will have the skills for self-directed work in complex professional situations.

One reason that the QAA discusses transferable skills is that the doctorate has become more widely relevant than simply as a qualification for university teaching. Approximately a third of arts and humanities Ph.D. graduates work outside of education, while in other areas sixty per cent work outside education (Haynes & Metcalfe, 2007). Reacting to this changed context of postgraduate employment, Usher (2002) argued that this changed context of postgraduate employment required a doctorate that is “legitimated by its performativity or capacity to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the socio-economic system” (p. 146). He described this new type of doctorate as practice-based. Basing his discussion on Gibbons’s et al. (1994) distinction of different *modes of knowledge*, Usher contrasts Mode 1 knowledge production, which is the traditional model of the thesis as “pure or curiosity driven research” that is set in a disciplinary framework, with Mode 2 knowledge production, which is trans-disciplinary, making “no distinction between discovery and application... [and is] inevitably performative” (p. 147). While he saw the traditional thesis as excessively narrow and inappropriate for modern conditions, the practice-based doctorate produced a short written text, the exegesis, and an artefact that has “direct tangible benefit to the workplace” (p. 150), while developing the transferable soft skills valued in the marketplace.

The changes that Usher encouraged clearly are relevant to the development of the practice-based Ph.D. in FAP & D. However, the literature within the art and design communities that argues against a distinctive doctorate for these fields emphasises that the doctorate involves training in one of the capabilities, “a knowledge of research techniques.” There is little discussion of other capabilities, abilities or skills to be gained through doctoral study that are identified by the QAA. Instead, the knowledge of research skills has been the focus of discussion. Understanding research methodology is identified as the component that establishes comparability to doctorates in other disciplines.

This narrowing has some justification in historical documents that define the Ph.D. The *CNAA Handbook*, which set out the regulations defining the Ph.D. in post-1992 universities, said that

The PhD shall be awarded to a candidate who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic resulting in an independent and original contribution to knowledge and *demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field*, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners. (quoted in UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997, p. 21; emphasis added)

The UKCGE built on this to identify one of its principles of the doctorate, that “the student must demonstrate a **critical knowledge of the research methods** appropriate to the field of study” (UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997, p. 9; emphasis in original). In both cases, though, it is one of three or four core elements of the Ph.D.

This emphasis on research training is not exclusive to the FAP & D communities. The argument that the Ph.D. should be training in research methodology is shared among institutional and governmental representations of the Ph.D. Park (2005) notes that the UK is following other nations, such as the USA and Australia, where for

some time the emphasis has been on research training rather than on the research results.

However, there are other issues relating to the Ph.D. that are specific to the FAP & D communities. In particular for the art and design communities, the relationship between creative practice, and writing, theory, and research revolves around questions such as whether creative practices (for example, drawing) are languages, and, if so, whether those languages can communicate claims relevant to the Ph.D. To put this another way, can creative practices make claims of new knowledge or are their communications in a different realm? In that case, are they relevant to the Ph.D.? Questions such as these lead to further questions, such as whether a model of research that originated in and remains in many ways committed to the values of scientific research (e.g., falsifiable claims) is appropriate to the arts. Other questions include whether research methods should be elevated above “the creation and interpretation of new knowledge,” which was the first item listed that doctoral candidates should demonstrate (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2001). Those members of the art and design worlds who teach, and particularly those who supervise Ph.D. candidates, and the candidates themselves are engaged in this discussion of the nature of the Ph.D. The discussion is sustained by conferences on the Ph.D. in FAP & D, journal articles and an increasing number of books.

Theory, research and writing

Theory, research and writing are linked in most conceptualisations of the activities needed to earn a research qualification. In a model of research leading to a Ph.D. that is regularly referred to (e.g., M. A. R. Biggs, 2002; Macleod & Holdridge, 2006a), a theory that is falsifiable is expressed in words, and research is undertaken to test that theory. A written body of literature is examined to establish a basis for the theory. The process of research is documented in words, and the outcome of the tests is recorded in a text. Although the text may be supported by mathematical

reasoning carried out in appropriate symbols, and also by visual documentation (e.g., graphs, charts, diagrams, and images), words are also necessary to make, limit and demonstrate claims. If the research documented in the text contributes to knowledge and the candidate successfully defends her- or himself through an oral examination, the qualification is awarded. In schematic form, this is “the gold standard” of research that the UK Council on Graduate Education (UKCGE) referred to when describing the development of research degrees in art and design (UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997). Nevertheless, the authors of the UKCGE report noted, conceptualisations of research have broadened from “the scientific method” to include exploratory and flexible design research.

However, in the UKCGE document, the authors say that practice alone, a creative product “of sufficiently high standard, as judged by a knowledgeable and appropriately qualified peers from the subject area” (p. 8), was not sufficient for the award of a Ph.D. To quote a central passage of their discussion,

the PhD award has at its heart the notion of training for research along with the expectation that the fruits of research will be communicated so as to make the contribution to knowledge and understanding indicated below. Thus, to make a PhD award requires a different judgement – and also a somewhat different peer group. (p. 9, emphasis added)

This passage encapsulates both the emphasis on research training and, by implication, that the communication of “the fruits of research” will be through words, not visual or other embodied creative practice. It also indicates that the appropriate evaluative group is not the art world but the academic community.

This judgement is controversial, and there are reports that existing practice in 1997 did not fully adhere to this understanding of a Ph.D., as they acknowledge. The rest of this chapter will look at the arguments that have been presented for and against a practice-based Ph.D. that conforms to their description.

Research is possible; therefore, the practice-based Ph.D. is possible

There is a significant split between design educators and fine art educators in their writing about research for the doctorate. Design educators generally see few difficulties in aligning design practice with research methodologies and research writing practices in use in the social sciences. Research *for* design, in the sense of the artefact embodying the research, does not seem to be a common ambition, and designers who write about the Ph.D. feel little need to address this category of Frayling's (1993) model. Art educators, on the other hand, while they easily accommodate research *into* or *through* art, struggle to find an opportunity for research *for* art. This section will look at how writers, primarily designers, have treated this third category, in which the artefact embodies the research.

A designer, Stephen Scrivener (2002) stated his thesis in his title: "The art object does not embody a form of knowledge." Scrivener was a member of the working group that wrote the UKCGE paper on practice-based doctorates (UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997), but his position in this paper was stronger than that of Frayling. He argued that "visual art is not, nor has ever been, primarily a form of knowledge communication; nor is it a servant of the knowledge acquisition enterprise." Given that art education has moved into a university setting, Scrivener acknowledged the desire to allow art making to be described as research. However the central question was whether art making can generate knowledge, and whether that knowledge can be communicated by the creative artefact. He worked through the definition of propositional knowledge as justified, true belief, and the difference between information and knowledge. While information could reside in an object (book, map, etc.), only humans could have knowledge. A knowledge object was a representation of an object (information) that was intended by its maker(s) to stand for that object (information) and was understood by its audience as being intended to inform.

Scrivener contrasted a map of the London underground system with an art object, *The Great Bear* (1992) by Simon Patterson that replaced the names on the familiar map of the underground with philosophers, film stars and other figures. He quoted Patterson as saying that it was important that the viewer should finish his work as “meaning is always shifting, anyway you can’t control the meaning of a work.” From this, Scrivener takes it that Patterson did not intend to inform, and “to take a representation as knowledge we have to recognise an intention to communicate knowledge” (Scrivener, 2002, unpaginated).

He went on to argue that knowledge was also organised so that it could be built upon, but knowledge from art works such as *The Great Bear* was not so organised, and viewers will take away their own meanings. New knowledge must be justified, and creative artefacts do not carry their own justification. Artworks could not consistently be “read,” and the art world did not discuss artefacts as if they conveyed or tried to convey knowledge. Instead, “art is one of those modes of experiencing that, rather than providing givens for dealing with situations, offers apprehensions that provide potential ways of seeing situations” (Scrivener, 2002, unpaginated). Art objects existed in a different realm from knowledge objects, and research in art had its own role, that of “original creation undertaken in order to generate novel apprehension.”

Scrivener in this way snatched research through art back through the door that he was rapidly closing. Research through art was possible, but it depended on the intention of the researcher to generate novel apprehensions and not justified true belief. However, at least two elements of Scrivener’s argument could be questioned. The first is that knowledge artefacts, unlike creative artefacts, did not need to be interpreted or constructed. The role of the audience for a knowledge artefact is to recognise that the maker(s) intended to create a knowledge artefact, rather than some other type of artefact. Then the audience extracts rather than generates or

interprets knowledge. This position is not consistent with widely held ideas of text (Fish, 1980), research (Robson, 2002), or epistemology (Polanyi, 1962).

Second, Scrivener's argument gives the creator of an artefact the power to determine the artefact's meaning, that is, whether the artefact was intended to create knowledge or to generate apprehension. These two areas of doubt suggest that Scrivener accepted what might be called a realist orientation toward knowledge, one in which knowledge was stable and discovered rather than generated or interpreted, and one in which the intention of the creator guided the interpretation of object. This second element is liable to the critique that it is both culturally- and time-bound. While some modern artists may create artefacts that are intended to be open to interpretation, works that are now widely accepted as art objects that were created by artists of other times or other cultures (e.g., most Christian religious art at least until the Renaissance) were almost surely not intended to create novel apprehension, but in all likelihood to convey knowledge of the facts as the maker understood them of her or his religion (cf. Pope Gregory the Great's [died 604] saying that "Painting can do for the illiterate what writing does for those who can read" quoted in Gombrich, 1995, p. 135). The artist's intention is slippery, perhaps unknowable or unknown, and irrelevant. Intention, though, creates the difference between what Scrivener calls "'everyday' art making" and research in art.

Scrivener's reintroduction of arts research in the final paragraphs of his epistemological analysis of the possibility of research through art may serve as a bridge to other writers who regard research as a possibility.

John Langrish (2000) argued passionately that a Ph.D. could not be awarded for practice (he allowed for the possibility of a doctorate in fine arts or design, a DFA or DocAD). He argued that, though designers or artists may do research as part of their practice, not all research is equivalent. The research done by designers or artists was different from that needed for a research degree. Picasso's gathering of reference materials would not have been adequate for a doctorate regardless of the quality of

Les demoiselles d'Avignon. Two elements separated research through practice from research for a Ph.D. The first was the training in research methodology that must accompany doctoral research; "knowing how to research," Langrish wrote, "is more important than the actual topic" (2000, unpaginated). Second was that, since the Ph.D. is a qualification for teaching, the knowledge obtained through research must be communicable. In his opinion, a novel itself was not adequate for a literature Ph.D.; one must write about an aspect of a novel.

Langrish did believe that it was possible to earn a Ph.D. in FAP & D. It would differ from a Ph.D. in other areas either by asking different questions, by using different methods to answer those questions, or by the evidence that was accepted by the relevant peer group evaluating the submission. He proposed a number of researchable topics, none of which involved research through practice. He also described the proper organisation of a thesis, which was essentially IMRaD (Introduction, Methodology, Results, and Discussion, American Psychological Association, 2001), a widely used social science organisation. He reviewed the brief history of Ph.D.s in FAP & D, noting that the earliest ones were done in association with other disciplines, such as education. However, in 1977, the Council on National Academic Awards allowed the inclusion of artefacts as part of the doctoral submission, an allowance that he felt led to confusion about the role of the artefact.

He then suggested that the boundaries that he described were not particularly narrow, and gave as an example the first Ph.D. submitted to his university under the CNAAC regulations, Hunter (1992; see Chapter 4). Hunter used reflective practice presented in a standard social science text form, satisfying Langrish's need for a text that demonstrated an understanding of research methodologies. Like Scrivener, Langrish seemed to let the Ph.D. by practice in by the door that he closed.

In two papers (2000, 2002), David Durling argued that research in art and design were possible, but that a Ph.D. must demonstrate a knowledge of research methodology. Like Langrish (2000) he identified different types of research,

including research for practice, research that is acceptable for the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), and research that can earn a Ph.D. The RAE assessment panel accepted exhibitions of artefacts as a research output for the purposes of the exercise. This acceptance did not mean that practice (or exhibition of practice) was adequate for the purposes of a Ph.D. Instead, he stated firmly that "The PhD has always been practice based. It is based upon the practice of research" (Durling, 2000, unpaginated).

He rejected for a Ph.D. the submission of an exhibition accompanied by a "thin text," such as an exhibition catalogue, though he noted that some universities accepted them, and he said that there was at least one institution that did not require a text at all. He also rejected changing the Ph.D. to fit FAP & D, and emphasised that a Ph.D. "is primarily a training in research" (Durling, 2002, p. 82), which required a comprehensive literature review. As a model for the Ph.D., he offered the requirements set out by his institution's School of Art and Design in awarding Ph.D.s. They included both general research methods training and training specific to the methodology chosen for the study, and clearly articulated research questions that are unambiguously answered in the final text. Candidates were also required to establish a theoretical framework and conduct an extensive literature survey. The research methodology must be described fully, including data generation, analysis of findings, and limitations on the study. Reflection on practice, "if conducted systematically and objectively" (2002, p. 84) might be an acceptable methodology. The requirements he presented would situate the permitted models of knowledge creation in Art and Design firmly within the patterns of the natural sciences (Bazerman, 1988, p. 257).

Durling and Friedman (2002) guest edited an early issue of *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education* that was focused on the Ph.D. in design. In their editorial, they emphasised their concern that practitioners were earning Ph.D.s without adequate grounding in research methodologies or the ability to undertake a rigorous literature search. They felt that these inadequately trained doctors were

moving into supervisory posts from which they would disseminate their own gaps and lack of preparation. Inadequately supervised Ph.D.s would undermine the standing of FAP & D within universities and might lead to English Ph.D.s being devalued internationally. Inadequate supervision and limited literature reviews were issues flagged by Elkins (2009b) in his discussion of the doctorate.

Katy Macleod and her collaborator, Lin Holdridge, published empirical studies of artists' research and theorised about research for much of a decade, culminating in an edited volume, *Thinking through art* (Macleod & Holdridge, 2006b). They interviewed research students and supervisors on the process of earning Ph.D.s in FAP, and, in Macleod and Holdridge (2006), provided space for research students to reflect on their own processes. Beginning from the point of empirical research into practice meant that they described an on-going practice, rather than questioned its possibility. However, some of their findings suggest some of the problems that they have observed. Describing a thesis on mimesis in artistic practice, they say that the relationship between the artworks and the written text is ambiguous in a manner similar to that of a poem. (Frayling [1993], too, noted that artists' communication generally was ambiguous.) They go on to say that "we may not yet be satisfied that this research into mimesis in practice presents theory which is communicable" (Macleod & Holdridge, 2002, p. 8; see also I. Biggs, 2006). They point out that this outcome is problematic for doctorates based on the UKCGE paper (1997) or the earlier CNA standard. Nevertheless, they feel that these poetic uses of language and art practice are essential components of research in art.

Iain Biggs (2006) also argues for "the centrality of poetic ambiguity" (p. 196), and offers as an example of this sort of research, a funded project that he undertook that used this type of ambiguity. He created a narrative that put "in question its own academic authority, while still remaining in close dialogue with scholarly research argument and critical reflection" (p. 198). Although not offered for Ph.D. examination, this would seem to be an example of one of Elkin's models of the thesis in which the text is to be read as an art practice (Elkins, 2009c). Elkins noted the

difficulty in examining this type of text, asking what would be the basis for the examination. Factual claims would be irrelevant, while theoretical assertions need not be supported.

Nevertheless, the possibilities presented by Langrish, Elkins, Macleod and Holdridge and Biggs suggest resources for practice-based researchers that are essentially writerly. Given a supportive supervisors and a favourable examination panel, fictive theses could exist at the intersection of words and art practice, while the logical alternative that Elkins proposes, a visual art practice without a text, offers no space for the writing student.

During the time that this study has been underway, two books were published that are explicitly dedicated to supporting research students in art and design. Sullivan (2005) was stronger on theory and situates visual arts practice as research within a wider frame. Although he provided sidebars throughout the book that give examples of research in the visual arts, he did not suggest how artists should go about their own research projects. Instead, he surveyed research models, discussing scientific methodologies in the light of postmodern theories to explain their limitations. He suggested that trying to reconfigure visual arts practices to fit scientific methodologies would not succeed. At the same time, he acknowledged that claiming that the visual arts are different from other areas of human knowledge reduces their contribution to society.

Sullivan (2005) also acknowledged that art is carried on within universities that have their own imperatives. Trying to establish comparability with other research practices is not likely to succeed, as the university remains in control of the terms of the discussion. Instead, he recommended forcefully arguing the position of art as research on its own terms. Following Refsum (2002), he argued that research on visual arts' own terms included understanding that "artists and the field of visual arts deal primarily with that which happens before artworks are made, this is their

specialist arena, what comes afterwards is the arena of the humanistic disciplines” (Sullivan, 2005, p. 87). Visual arts knowledge, Sullivan said, is:

- Transformative;
- Constructivist;
- Conceptual, and
- Contextual

On this basis, he wrote that “art practice can be claimed to be a legitimate form of research and that approaches to inquiry can be located within the studio experience (Sullivan, 2005, p. 109). All in all, Sullivan provides suggestive support, but relatively little guidance.

In contrast, Gray and Malins’ book, *Visualising Research* (Gray & Malins, 2004), was much more a how-to book along the lines of *How to get a PhD: A handbook for students and their supervisors* (Phillips & Pugh, 2005). It offered a roadmap for research, examples of research methodologies descriptions of previous research projects in visual arts, and a suggested organisation for the written component. They strongly promote visual approaches to organisation and presentation (e.g., mind maps) of the research process and the eventual outcome. The focus is on how to accomplish the task, with indicative guidance to, for example, research paradigms rather than theoretical discussion of the strengths of each. Gray and Malins (2004) contributes little to the discussion of whether the Ph.D. is possible, desirable, or how it might be conceptualised, but it provides further support for Elkins’ judgement that it is inevitable.

Theory and writing are problematic

In contrast with the design educators who felt that research could be pursued through the methodologies developed in the social sciences and that this research should be reported in theses that followed conventional patterns, educators who came from fine arts disputed these positions on a variety of grounds.

Candlin, in a series of papers (Candlin, 2000a, 2000b, 2001), argued that the UKCGE report (1997) privileged writing and theory over the artist's practice. The UKCGE working group "assume that artwork cannot be as intellectually clear and accessible as writing" (2000a, p. 97) Further, she argued that while art practices were presumed to need interpretation, which would be carried on through words, writing itself was portrayed a neutral and transparent medium for meaning. On the contrary, "academic writing is not simply a means of conveying information, but is concerned with establishing legitimacy through form as much as through substance" (2000a, p. 100). Rather than require a written text that would justify the art practice, Candlin argued that the academy should take the opportunity to rethink academic norms and include the practice-based doctorate, supported by an artefact alone, as a new alternative. Candlin explained that "as the heir of these conceptual and poststructuralist debates on theory and practice, the practice-based PhD starts to refigure the boundaries of what knowledge is considered to be in the university" (Candlin, 2001, p. 306). Rethinking the boundaries of knowledge within the university was a thread that Elkins (2009c) picked up.

Morgan (2001) saw the difficulty in developing and gaining acceptance for the practice-based Ph.D. as an outcome of an historic prejudice against manual work, which was reinforced by the Plato's criticism of artists as imitators of imitations and by the Judeo-Christian condemnation of graven images. She argued that as art practice became more explicitly theory-laden, "the artist invites the viewer to participate in the structuring of a symbolic, metaphoric or analogous 'truth' by means of an 'open-ended' enquiry" (Morgan, 2001, p. 14). Because of the open-ended nature of its enquiry, it needed different criteria from research in other disciplines, including her own practice of art history.

In two papers (2003, 2005), Kathryn Moore challenged the idea that there is a distinctive "visual thinking." Her argument, based in the pragmatic philosophy of Dewey and Rorty, was that there is no discreet form of thinking that is pre-linguistic and no thinking that can be usefully described as "the ability to think in pictures"

(2005, p. 179). In many ways, this is a liberating analysis for artists. Her criticism is similar to Frayling's (1993, p. 2) argument, that to describe artists as fundamentally emotional (the similarity to depictions of women is striking) disempowered them and does not reflect the analytical thinking in their work. Moore contrasted verbal thinking, "linear, analytical and logical" with "visual thinking [which] is considered to be subjective, intuitive and irrational" (2005, p. 181).

Moore denied the distinction between verbal and visual thinking: "'All of these separations', Dewey remarks, 'culminate in one between knowing and doing, theory and practice...'" (2005, p. 184). Her critique extends to Schön, whose *Reflective Practitioner* (Schön, 1983) is frequently favourably cited in texts on research methods in the arts (e.g., Gray & Malins, 2004; Sullivan, 2005). She finds that his emphasis on tacit knowledge obscures the issue of teaching or learning; is a student to blunder about till she happens upon the right answer and is rewarded? Instead Moore argued that all forms of knowledge are interpreted, produced by the act of knowing. Whether visual or verbal, "meaning is not embodied in the landscape, but is entirely dependent on the sense we make of what we see in front of us" (2005, p. 190). As a result in her view, rather than an after-the-fact supplement, practice was imbued with theory. Creative artists used different media of expression for theory from the words that critics use, but both think in fundamentally similar ways. By implication, a theory-laden creative work should be comparable to a theory-laden text.

Moore's argument sets out a similar position to Danto's (1964), that art is theory-laden and cannot be otherwise. It implies a resolution of a dualistic opposition between theory and practice or word and image, but it does not resolve the issue of whether a theory, embedded in an object, can be sufficient as an outcome of research. That judgement is a political judgement on the status of creative practice within the university system.

One of Moore's (2003, 2005) main concerns was to demonstrate that visual thinking was teachable, not inherent and beyond the reach of instruction. Raney (1999) had a

similar interest. She began by referring to the English National Curriculum, which included visual literacy as a goal of art education. Raney pointed out that visual literacy is a metaphor that is used to dignify visual representation. She noted a paradox in defending visual practice in this way. If visual artefacts are constructed and to some extent arbitrary, then their meanings, like those of other texts, are cultural and can be discussed. On the other hand, images are not identical to other meaning-making systems. She argued that Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006), in trying to counter the notion that “verbal language is the most eloquent, complete, expressive mode of communication” (p. 42), went too far in applying linguistic concepts such as syntax to visual artefacts. Their—and others’—attempts to define visual grammars, risked in her words “replicat[ing] the assumptions of an autonomous model of literacy” (p. 43). Visual communication has important differences from verbal communication, as well as similarities. Like Moore (2003, 2005), Raney (1999) highlights the meaningfulness of visual representation while not resolving the issue of whether it can carry the meaning appropriate to research.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the debate within the art and design communities about the Ph.D. It discussed Frayling’s views, which to a large extent defined the terms of the debate by describing three categories of research: research *into*, research *through* and research *for* art and design. While the first two categories are relatively uncontroversial, research *for* art and design, with the possibility of an artefact that embodied research, has proved highly controversial.

I have discussed some of the elements of this controversy, beginning with the question of whether there should be research degrees in art or design. Although there are writers who question the development of the Ph.D. in these disciplines, most accept that it is already beyond fruitful debate, and the issue now should turn to how the Ph.D. should be earned. Elkins suggested that the development of the Ph.D. in art and design should be an opportunity for a university-wide discussion of

the central terms of the degree, such as the nature of new knowledge and research. In the face of economic pressures on the higher education sector, this question has not been widely picked up.

Instead, discussion has focused on the purposes of the doctorate, with art and design educators largely seeing it as a qualification for teaching in universities, while some writers and government-supported bodies outside art and design see it as contextualised applied research. There has been a disciplinary split between design educators and art educators. Design educators who wrote about the doctorate emphasised the need for training in research methodologies, while art educators have suggested that the creative work can be the outcome of research. The issue remains contested, with some institutions offering Ph.D.s on the basis of creative submissions and a viva, but with most requiring a text of thirty to forty thousand words to contextualise the practice.

6 Methodology

This chapter will discuss the underlying logic of the methodology used in this study and the methods used to carry out the study. As an investigation of developing writers' perceptions of the writing process, it aims to describe the local contexts in which they write and the difficulties that they faced. The study is grounded in extended interaction with the participants, and the issues that I discuss emerged from my reflection on the interactions. My reflections were shaped by issues and framing concepts that I brought to the study, but also and more profoundly by the issues that emerged in the course of the study. The chapter begins with an overview of the research design, before providing an account of the tools used to generate the data.

Overview of research design

The research process for this study can well be described in Denzin and Lincoln's (1998) words as a *bricolage*. They traced the definition of the word to Levi-Strauss, but, unlike Levi-Strauss, who applied it to the "savage mind," they applied it to the process of qualitative research and called the researcher a *bricoleur*.

The *bricoleur* produces a *bricolage*, that is, a pieced-together, close-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation. "The solution (*bricolage*) which is the result of the *bricoleur's* method is an [emergent] construction" (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1991, p. 161) that changes and takes new forms as different tools, methods, and techniques are added to the puzzle. (p. 3)

Implicit in this description is the belief that researchers must understand the methods and tools they intend to use, but they may not know when precisely they will apply them. As the research process emerges, researchers may need to use or develop “different tools, methods, and techniques.” An example of an unanticipated tool developed for this study is the substantial historical review (Chapters 4 and 5), which describes how writing became a component of the study of Fine Arts Practice and Design at university, and the subsequent development of the Ph.D. as a qualification in these disciplines.

The importance of this historical background emerged from the participants and their experiences. It also grew out of working to understand the network of activity in which the qualification and its text are woven. No one’s thesis is outcome of an uncomplicated urge for self-expression, but because the qualification is still new in these disciplines, it has not been stabilised, and this became a central issue in the process of writing a thesis in FAP & D.

I will discuss the principle approaches that have been drawn on in the study. These include ethnography, case studies, reflective research and representation, and ethics. This chapter, then, surveys how the data were generated, and the tools that were used to analyse it.

Writing in context

The assemblage of frameworks (see Chapter 3 on situated literacy practices) that this study employs views writing not an individual process but rather a social process embedded in a network of activities. Writing is dialogic, but it takes place in a context that is maintained by intermediaries and tools. The Ph.D. thesis is an instance of writing as a social process. The text emerges from a multi-party discussion between the candidate, who brings her experiences, interests, and her reading, and her supervisors. This discussion is classically described as an expert researcher initiating a novice into the research process, the master-apprentice model.

The candidates also talk to other people, including friends, partners and fellow candidates, who are only recognised in the acknowledgements of the completed thesis. An example of this in my study is the support that some Japanese participants received from a retired lecturer who had an interest in East Asian cultures, and had befriended them when they studied for the MA.

The master-apprentice relationship between candidate and supervisor exists because of the wider frame of a university system that ratifies the process and maintains it with standards, procedures and funds. The university exists within the frame of a history in which universities appropriated the Humboldtian model of research, and a society, now world-wide, that accepts the Ph.D. as a valued qualification. These wider frames press upon the dialogue between the candidate and supervisor and shape the text, to the point that, for example, in Britain, the height of a lower case x in the text body of the thesis must be at least 1.5mm (British Standards Institution, 1990, p. 4). This trivial example indicates the involvement of a wide range of interested parties in the dialogue between the candidate and the supervisor.

This multi-party engagement with writing developed historically, and only by tracing this historical development to its partly stabilised current form can the process be understood, as well as the difficulties that writers face.

Ethnographic studies

Clifford Geertz identified

three characteristics of ethnographic description: it is interpretive; what it is interpretive of is the flow of social discourse; and the interpreting involved consists in trying to rescue the "said" of such discourse from its perishing occasions and fix it in perusable terms (1973, p. 20).

In addition, he added that for him, ethnographic description is “microscopic” (p. 21), that is, based on prolonged attention to small matters, which is the source of *thick description*, the term he borrowed from Ryle (1971), and that has now become a key concept in qualitative research of all types. Other descriptions (e.g., P. Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998) similarly emphasise the interpretive nature of ethnographic description, the study of social phenomena, and close observation of a small setting. *Interpretive description* means trying to understand what other actors mean by their actions, and then trying to convey their meaning and the sense of *being there*, that this “is an authentic account by someone personally acquainted with how life proceeds in some place” (Geertz, 1988, p. 143). Additionally, interpretive description requires reflection. Whatever is said is a judgement about someone else, and requires as rigorous an examination of oneself as of the person observed. *The flow of social discourse* emphasises the human element, that meaning-making is central to the participants, and understanding is central to the study. *The rescue and fixing of the discourse* suggests the inscription and generalisation that are the outcome of the study. Finally, *microscopic* implies the close, prolonged attention that can produce persuasive interpretations and theories grounded in the realities that participants understand.

Ethnographic methodologies have been used to study writing (e.g., Blakeslee, 2001; Ivanič, 1997; Prior, 1998), with Blakeslee and Myers (1996) arguing that naturalistic observation of the process of writing is a necessary step in understanding how actors use this tool to mediate their interactions. Swales (1998) separated his study of writers in different contexts from ethnographic studies by using the word *textography* in his subtitle to indicate that he did not claim to be an ethnographer and that his study focused on literate activity rather than lives lived. Like Swales (1998), this is not a full ethnographic description; I use ethnographic methods to describe one activity system within which the participants acted. Although not uncontroversial, Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999; see also Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998) describe the use of ethnographic approaches as appropriate to educational research, particularly in the context of studying writing. Lillis and Scott (2007) argue

that ethnographic approaches are the most appropriate tool for the study of writing as social practice.

Lillis (2008) described different ways in which ethnographic research had been used to investigate writing. She described a cline ranging from text-focused to writer-focused research, reflected in part in methodologies that range from one-off interviews to prolonged engagement. Lillis suggests that the use of individual interviews, while providing valuable insights, suggested a misunderstanding of the negotiated nature of interviews and the contextualisation of any single expression or attitude. One of the advantages of a part-time Ph.D. study is a reduction in time pressures. I was able to interact with the participants in the study over several years. Primary participants were interviewed several times, and I observed them in different contexts interacting with other people, as well as discussing their work with me. This extended interaction by no means eliminates partiality or my own misperception, but the observations that are reported here are based on multiple sources of evidence and prolonged engagement.

Case studies

Case study research is a well-developed methodology in educational research, and is frequently used in writing research. It's not, however, a simple process to identify the sites of this research. It seemed, at first, that there were two sites of literacy in action (Brandt, 1992) centred on practice-based meaning-making. These were the two research discussion groups that consisted of the lecturer who led the group and the doctoral candidates who took part in the discussion. Within each group, I focused on a number of students smaller than the total number of participants in the group. On reflection, I realised that the sites that I was looking at were contact zones (M. L. Pratt, 1991), rather than discreet communities. Easily identifiable contact zones included the MA Fine Arts Practice group that was the site of the pilot for this study. Chris ran a seminar, "Just talking," that flowed back and forth between the MA and Ph.D. students. In addition, there was a limited amount of contact between

the FAP seminar and the Design seminar; a participant who did not continue was a member of both groups. Some university-based postgraduate researcher events brought together the two groups as well. In a widening circle of contact zones, the process of doing a Ph.D. in FAP & D resembled a form of *transculturation*, which Pratt defined as “processes whereby members of subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted by a dominant or metropolitan culture” (M. L. Pratt, 1991, p. 36). The discussion of the nature of the Ph.D. for FAP & D is a discussion of the limits of assimilation.

A third site was my study at a different university, with its own titles and rituals that could be mapped onto those of Northumbria University, but not precisely. There was an absurdity—built into ethnographic observation in common places (M. L. Pratt, 1986)—of an outsider doing a Ph.D. representing what highly capable Ph.D. candidates did. I learned from the supervisors and candidates.

To prevent this study from drowning in self-referential circles, however, the stance, the fiction will largely be maintained that there were two sites for the study, while trying to find an adequate form for polyphonous representation. I obtained documents, interviewed participants, and in other ways looked at their writing processes in depth. For the groups as wholes, I participated in as many of their activities as possible, in order to observe how the lecturers taught and the candidates responded.

Given the implications of views expressed, a particular issue for this study is the possibility of generalisation. Mason (2002, pp. 194-200) distinguishes between empirical generalisation and theoretical generalisation, and offers a continuum of strategies for generalisations, from seeing one’s analysis as representative of a wider population to seeing one’s observation and theorising as resonant with other situations. Among the possibilities of theoretical generalisation that she describes is that of *an extreme or pivotal case or set of processes*. I would not wish to represent any person learning to write in a new way, and certainly not the capable participants I

knew working at Ph.D. level, as an extreme case. Nevertheless, the issues that they faced are less commonly described in writing research. In many ways, I came to see these participants as being at the “leading edge of change” (Schofield [1993] quoted in Mason, 2002, p. 196) in writing the doctoral thesis not simply in FAP & D, but in many interdisciplinary or practice-based fields.

Becker (1998, p. 194 ff.) discusses how unusual cases can be used to illuminate a wider range of phenomena. He suggests that a case can be interesting because it does not fit previous hypotheses:

Ethnographers commonly use the basic logic of AI [Analytic Induction] to develop descriptions of parts of organized activities and their interconnections. In this less rigorous form, AI is ideally suited to answering “How?” questions, as in “How do these people do X?” (p. 196)

The questions that I am trying to pose are pre-eminently “How?” questions, and the cases that I worked with are outliers in writing research, which has tended to look at fields such as biology, sociology and applied linguistics. Writing is an integral part of both the professional practice and academic assessment in these disciplines. Difficulties with writing and differences between professional and novice texts have been described by, for example, Myers (1990b) and Hyland (2002). However, the question of how writers—and particularly, novice writers—write without clear advanced models has not been studied, nor have the characteristics of their texts been mapped.

Reflective research and representation

This research project has lasted over six years, offering ample space to reflect. I have tried to fill that space with thought. This project engaged participants in a process that affected their lives, and I have tried to respond to that engagement throughout this research and in this text. In part, my reflection took the form of supporting the

participants' work, as well as sympathetically responding to their ideas. At the same time, their work has contributed to the momentary stabilisation of the doctorate in their disciplines, so it affects their wider community and those who give value to the Ph.D. I have tried to reflect this wider group of participants as well, and to return some of what was given to me through interested engagement with the community.

This text is ultimately the trace of this reflection. Among the practical efforts aimed at achieving the goal of reflection was the journal of my study that I kept from the beginning. This recorded feedback from my supervisors, insights from my reading and other experiences such as conference attendance, and reflections on the research process, including the choices that I made in my research. Portions of the study have been published to inform and test my ideas (e.g., Borg, 2004, 2007a, 2007b), but also to contribute to the idea of a doctorate in Fine Arts and Design.

As part of reflective practice, I have tried to consider how I might represent my participants, and, concurrently, myself. Denzin described ethnographic practice: "We are our own subjects. How our subjectivity becomes entangled in the lives of others is and always has been our topic" (1997, p. 27, quoted in Coffey, 1999, p. 13). Coffey describes the interplay of analysis, introspection and text production as both difficult and potentially rewarding. Writing up involved projecting myself into—and through—the research process of data generation and analysis and into the representation of the experiences of the people who agreed to help me and the representation of how they have changed me.

Cintron (1993) proposed that intersubjectivity mediates the formally opposed positions of subjectivity and objectivity, with researchers writing their perspectives disciplined by objects in the world. Cintron went on to describe one of the implications of intersubjectivity: because

...we live in a relational world, not a foundational one; hence, reality is not grounded in any particular place but in many places so that an

ethnographer's statements have a multiplicity of origins and not a single origin called the culture or community "under investigation." (p. 386)

(In what is a reasonable criticism of this thesis, he also said that writing researchers should avoid the use of the term, *ethnographic*, unless they engaged with the participants holistically and not simply through their writing activities.) I have tried to find a textual stance that reflects the limits and tentativeness of my perspectives.

Ethics

Bassey (1999, p. 74) identified three circles of ethical consideration: respect for democracy; respect for truth; respect for people. *Respect for democracy* described the dialectical relationship of mutual obligation between the society and the researcher. As Clare, one of my participants, said, "it has been such an indulgence to be able to study something that you're interested in for three years, and having the opportunity to sit and talk about it with somebody, some people who were interested as well" [13 Sep 05]. That has been my experience as well. The society creates the opportunities for research and dissemination; in turn, researchers are bound by obligations of truth-telling, and of doing no harm to their participants. *Respect for truth*, then, flows from respect for democracy. Data should be gathered in an honest fashion, and described in a truthful manner. Naturalistic approaches to research are based on the belief that there is not a truth "out there" to be described, but a trustworthy understanding that must be created. Rather than lessen the obligation on researchers, these approaches demand greater reflection as they try to instantiate their understanding in a report that respects the participants and is worth of trust. *Respect for people* closes the circle, for respect for the society must involve respect for the participants who agree to share their insights in to their lives and actions as well as for the reader. Cintron (1993, p. 404) similarly called for "an ethic of care." His call came out of issues of writing and representation, so making it highly relevant to me.

Bassy's (1999) guidelines, while expressed in different form, are substantially similar to the Ethical Guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (1992), and, in different form again, the guidelines of *TESOL Quarterly*²⁴ (Option B) for participation in research, which is one of the journals to which I might submit a report and which has explicit guidelines in this area. I obtained written permission of my participants. In line with the guidelines of *TESOL Quarterly*, I have made clear to my primary participants that I may seek to publish images, either of their work or images that they have created that throw light on their text-making practices, and that, in the light of this, I would like to use their names. All have agreed to this. Chris Dorsett, in fact, pushed me toward this policy, by saying he did not want to have his identity disguised. He said that, in a way similar to his work as an artist, he worked creatively as a teacher, and wished this part of work to be known. Nespor, in a paper that interrogates anonymisation (Nespor, 2000), discussed some of the problems with disguising locations and identities. He felt that anonymisation distanced participants from the researcher and reader, and removed the qualities that made them vital and individual. I would hope not to do that.

As I will be discussed in the section of this chapter on observation, I have returned my findings to my participants. I have not, in fact, received substantial feedback from them, but I plan to continue giving them my findings as they develop, as this respects their participation in my study, and as the possibility of their comments informing my representation would add to my representation of their actions.

Data generation

Over a period of three years, I observed literacy-in-action in Fine Art Practice and in Design. I observed and participated in seminars, and I interviewed and interacted in other ways with the participants in these literacy events. Besides the core participants in the study, I also interviewed other people, including academics, MA students, and Ph.D. candidates, who formed an extended perimeter of engagement.

²⁴ e.g., Informed consent guidelines (*TESOL Quarterly*, 2006)

These interviews and observation informed the study, and contributed to my understanding of research and writing in these disciplines.

Most of my observation and interaction with the participants occurred in the seminars or discussion groups that the supervisors ran for the Ph.D. candidates. In the pilot phase of this study, I also observed the MA seminars and small group discussions that Chris Dorsett ran for the MA students. Because of the interconnections between the MA seminars and the Ph.D. candidates, I continued attending these seminars throughout the study. The Ph.D. seminars were the focus of my involvement; I took notes and made audio recordings of what happened in them. I also participated to a limited extent in the sessions, commenting and offering suggestions. For example, when candidates in the FAP group discussed how to keep their Mid-Point Progression within the University's tight word limits, I described how Design students had used Gantt charts for their completion schedules, and how these added very few words.

The members of the seminar groups changed over time. Some members of the seminars stopped attending the seminars, while new members began Ph.D. study and joined them. Out of this shifting group, I will focus on five candidates and the supervisor in the Fine Art seminar and three candidates in the Design seminar, with the supervisor taking a much more limited role as the convenor of a functional seminar.

The data that were generated can be grouped in the following categories:

Documentary material

- Candidates' academic papers (drafts & final texts of assignments and Master's dissertations)
- Texts from supervisors (published and in-process articles, course material for students not in the Ph.D. programme, website information)
- Classroom handouts and material for seminar discussions
- My journal
- Additional documents, e.g., websites of candidates

*Observation
documentation*

Audio recordings of interviews

Audio recordings of classes and seminars (observations)

Notes made of observations

Slides & digital photos of blackboard & studio space

Interview data

Interview recordings

Other material

e-mails from participants

CD-ROM of lecture (video original)

Early theses in art and design

Historical documents related to art and design education (e.g.,
Heron, 1996b; Ministry of Education, 1960)

The candidates were generous in sharing their work. I was given drafts of work, drafts of annotated texts, feedback from supervisors, and theses. These texts comprised the basis for this study. Another major portion of the data consists of audio recordings of interviews with participants and of seminars and classes. Most interviews were planned, though in some cases they occurred opportunistically. When they were pre-arranged, I used a semi-structured interview schedule patterned on that suggested in Tomlinson (1989). Text-focused interviews were structured around written notes and Post-it notes attached to the text. I took notes during seminars that contextualised the audio recording and informed my transcriptions.

Another significant portion of my data was classroom and seminar handouts, and student texts. The University and candidates had websites that provided background information, such as the clients for the Centre for Design Research. I also reviewed five early theses in FAP & D.

Data that is in the public domain, such as candidates' theses and Master's dissertations or websites, have been referenced in a conventional manner. Data that is not in the public domain, such as interview transcriptions and texts-in-progress, including drafts and formal submissions such as Mid-Point Progression reports, have been referenced in the text with dates or short titles in [square brackets]. I have not indicated possible deviations from standard English in any text, but have endeavoured to reproduce the texts accurately.

Observation

Observation is so closely tied to ethnographic studies that Atkinson and Hammersley (1998) describe them concurrently. Mason (2002, pp. 84-87), poses the question, "Why might I want to use observational methods?" and answers it by suggesting that a researcher whose ontological perspective "sees interactions, actions and behaviours... as central," and who believes that the social construction of understanding requires the depth and complexity that can come from observing interaction, as well as through reconstruction (e.g., interviews) might want to use observation. When used as one method of generating data, observation can contribute to a rounded understanding of social discourse. Sharing these beliefs, I used observation as one of my methods for generating empirical materials.

Atkinson and Hammersley (1998) make the role of the researcher a central feature of their discussion of ethnography. They make two major points in their discussion of participant roles. First, that "*all* social research is a form of participant observation" (p. 111; emphasis in original). Second, granting the first point, then the role of the observer exists on a cline, running from complete observer to complete participant, with most research located on some point away from the edges. Although one can envision a cline of roles from observer to participant, there are no fixed points on it from which one could say, "I'm a bit more (or less) of an observer than that." However, using some of the dimensions of engagement that they map out, these

items below outline some of the ways that I was a participant in the process I am studying:

1. I identified myself as a researcher to all the participants in both sites and explained that I was researching their process of writing.
2. I participated to a limited extent in their writing practices and other activities. I helped participants by reading and proofreading papers. For example, I proofread drafts of artist's statements, journal articles and theses for lecturers, guest lecturers and candidates. I was a research participant in some of the studies that I observed. During the course of my study, the FAP group moved to a new research building and held an open house for University officials. I helped the group to move and exhibited a poster describing my work at the open house alongside the other candidates' posters. I took part in the discussion in the seminar groups.
3. I have been, in fact, a Ph.D. student just like the other student participants in the discussion groups I observed. Although I am registered at a different university, there is a broad similarity in the process, with its various checkpoints of proposal, midpoint evaluation and thesis writing. I learned *from* the discussion groups, as well as *about* the discussion groups.
4. To a lesser but still relevant extent, I am also a lecturer like the lecturers who led the seminar groups. I supervised Master's dissertations, and, like other lecturers, my life was governed by an academic calendar, with its teaching, marking and administrative dates.
5. As a former professional photographer, I have had a lifelong interest in art practice and share this passion with my participants.
6. Finally, I shared my findings and observations with my participants. In interviews, I discussed my emerging theories. I gave participants copies of my recordings and work. Besides the poster that I exhibited with the FAP students, at Chris's request I gave a talk about my study to a seminar group of Ph.D. and MA art students. In the Design seminars, I regularly reported on my progress.

After more than three years of observing the process of learning to write in FAP & D, my role as a participant-observer was well established. Although I did not meet with any of the participants outside of the context of the seminars and our interviews, we were engaged together on projects that we recognised as important to each of us. Nevertheless, although it was a shared process, the fact that there were three quite different types of doctoral study (including my own) going on kept any one of these from seeming normal. Gupta and Ferguson describe ethnographic research as “a form of motivated and stylized dislocation” through which we might find “new perspectives on things we thought we understood” (1997, p. 37). Looking at two sites that were strikingly different while being in a third maintained my sense of stylized dislocation all around.

Interviews

Interviews were crucial to this study. Because they are so widely used in social science studies, interviews have generated considerable thought and not a little controversy. One area of controversy is the extent to which interviews can be free of bias. Cohen and Manion (1994, pp. 274-5, citing Kitwood's unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1977) provide a taxonomy of constructions of interviews. These range from “pure information transfer,” to “a transaction that inevitably has a bias,” to social encounters in which the participants enact roles and positions to construct meaning. The last position suggests that “it is impossible, just as in everyday life, to bring every aspect of the encounter within rational control” (p. 275).

Other scholars writing about interviews (e.g., Kvale, 1996; Mason, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 1995) see them as embedded in social interaction and so inherently interpretive. Kvale, for instance, “emphasize[s] the constructive nature of the knowledge created through the interaction of the partners in the interview conversation” (p. 11), while Rubin and Rubin describe their model as interpretivist modified by feminist social criticism. These modifications include importantly the

fact that interviewers cannot be entirely neutral and so must reflect on their own role to inform the interview process. In a description that embodies my choices for using interviews as a means of generating data, Mason says that naturalistic interviews are always social interactions, and cannot be separated from the interactions that produced them. An effort to “eliminate bias” misconceives interviews. Instead, naturalistic approaches to interviews imply a joint construction of social phenomena, in which the interviewer must be an active and reflective participant. This description was congruent with my conceptualisation of the study, which focused on the interpretations of the process of learning to write. These interpretations are not self-evident, even to the participants, but may emerge in part through discussion of the process with other participant and with me. At the same time, I depended on other sources of information to throw further light on the participants’ actions.

Many of the interviews focused on the participants’ texts. I read drafts of the candidates’ theses or other work and we talked through the pages about the choices that they made, and discussed their options and motivations. Researchers who want to understand the process and thinking that lies behind a text frequently use text-based interviews in order to understand their participants’ perspective. Text-based interviews were originally described by Odell, Gowsami and Herrington (1983). Studies that use text-based interviews that I would relate to this study include Belcher (1994), Casanave (1995) and Spack (1997). Ivanič (1997) used extensive discussions of her participants’ writing to understand her participants’ self-construction and resistance to their academically enacted roles. Text-based interviews were an important source of data for this study. It is important to note that few of the texts that I saw were innocent; supervisors had read most, and I assumed all of them had been shaped by discussions with them. Reading drafts allowed us to probe why changes had been made: which were changes suggested by the supervisors, which reflected new understanding, and which were tactical, designed to bring a required task to a practical conclusion.

Using interviews to study the writing process is not without problems. Chin pointed that “interview data are just as susceptible to being an inaccurate account of what people do and think about in writing” (1994, p. 248) as other types of data, a point that Lillis (2008) extended to argue that one-off interviews can only offer limited insight, and that, too often, interviews are treated as unmediated sources of information about participants’ writing processes. Chin (1994) called for researchers to “reflect the messiness and complexity of interviewing” (p. 269). The operative word in that phrase is *reflect*; the research process throughout must be based on reflection.

Central participants were interviewed several times over the period of the study. For example, Joyce Yee was interviewed eight times, each for approximately an hour. While five of these were text-based interviews, focused on the final stages of writing her thesis, the other three interviews occurred two years, one year and six months before the last interview. Over this extended period, Joyce participated in seminar discussions and provided texts, such as her Mid-Point Progression paper, which provided additional information about her writing process.

Text-based interviews generally followed the text, though there were often wider questions that we discussed as well. Interviews that were not text-based were generally semi-structured, in that they began with questions or topics organised in a table (Figure 14) to indicate whether I had raised a topic or the participant had (Tomlinson, 1989). Occasionally, interviews were opportunistic, arising from occasions to have coffee and talk, and so no questions were pre-set. However, the extended

20 Nov 07

Interview questions about language and writing in art
 Part. = participant initiated topic or comment
 Me = topic or comment initiated by me

	Part.	Me
At the beginning of the semester, you said that you wanted to change the way writing was taught here to make it better fit the practice of art schools. Could you tell me what you mean by that?		
Questions about language in the arts		
What is the role of language in the arts?		
What is the role of discussion, talking about art?		
What are the goals of writing		
What is the relationship between writing and art making?		
What is the relationship between talking and art making?		
Questions about writing in the arts		
Why is writing required?		
Why was it dropped, why reinstated?		
How/why is it assessed? How does the assessment fit into teaching and learning about the creation of art?		
What are examples of good writing in Fine Arts?		
Questions about teaching these particular students writing		
Are journals like Keiko's usual or required?		
What kinds of writing do students do?		

112003interview-c-v-CD.doc

Figure 14: Interview prompt form

participation through the seminar meetings, as well as our shared engagement in Ph.D.s meant that we had common issues to discuss.

Data handling and analysis

This study generated an overwhelming quantity of audio data: weekly art seminars that lasted up to two hours, multiple interviews with central participants and single interviews with peripheral participants. These recordings were listened to, and interviews and important episodes were transcribed or partially transcribed. As the recorder and transcriber, I have tried to continually ask myself and answer for the reader the question, “what constitutes a ‘useful’ transcription for my research purposes?” (C. M. Bird, 2005, p. 231). As Bird and others argue, transcription is interpretive (e.g., Kvale, 1996; Ochs, 1979). Accepting that the transcriptions are part of a meaning-making process that began with the research questions and continued through the interviews, the passages included have been selected based on repeated expression of similar ideas. This reduces what Lillis (T. Lillis, 2008) described as the tendency to consider insider accounts as transparent and generally follows the pattern of transcription used by Swales (1998, p. 26) and Prior (1998, p. 312). Because the passages included here were chosen to illustrate repeatedly expressed ideas, the form of expression has not been the focus of the transcription. Capitalisation and punctuation have been added to facilitate reading, while pauses, false starts and backchannel talk indicate the jointly constructed nature of the interviews. Occasional insertions in square brackets have been added in the passages included here to clarify meanings for the reader that were apparent from the wider context.

The analysis of the data largely followed a grounded approach. Insofar as possible, I tried to begin researching writing in FAP & D without preconceptions and to let themes emerge that fit the data. Having failed to avoid preconceptions, however, I had to abandon some theories as excess baggage²⁵, while new ones emerged along

²⁵ An example of this is resistance or acceptance of computer technology. Hockey and Allen Collinson (2005) said that the fine arts candidates in their study resisted using computers. However, all of the

the way. Some theories emerged by paying attention to data that did not seem to fit either existing or new theories. Data analysis did not follow the model developed by Strauss and Corbin (e.g., 1998), but more closely followed a pattern of simplification while forming links that expanded theoretical explanation through abductive reasoning, in a pattern described by Coffey and Atkinson (1996; see also Kelle, 2005). Abductive reasoning contrasts with both inductive and deductive reasoning. Abductive reasoning is based on accepting that we live theory-laden lives, and that as we accumulate data (the basis for inductive reasoning), we try to fit theories that might interpret or generalise our findings. Because this is an open process, we test alternative theories that might explain disconfirming data and provide a better fit between theory and information. This process of theory testing to develop “new configurations of ideas” (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 156) or abductive reasoning can also be related to Becker’s (1998, p. 146) use of logic to “extract from what we already have that will give us ideas we wouldn’t have found otherwise.” I used abductive reasoning to move from my initial expectations of the difficulties of advanced academic literacy in art and design to an explanation that gave greater weight to the global context in which the candidates wrote.

An abductive approach developed while working with the data and publishing the results of the analysis during the data generation stage, and by the use of qualitative data analysis software (NVivo software from QSR Inc., versions 1 and 7). The data, transcripts and some texts were entered into NVivo. These were read closely and coded, using coding categories derived from the research questions and categories that emerged from the data. The categories were analysed and reconfigured—grouped, edited, combined, and split. The software allowed individual codings to be gathered, printed and read together, while providing access to the passages in their original contexts. Reanalysis of the categories as new interviews were added meant that my understanding of what I found changed. Interviews were linked in new ways to text passages, and the reconfiguration affected the implications of the data. The codings and the ways that they were gathered are shown in Appendix A.

candidates in this study wrote on computers, while several of them used computers as a part of their practice, so that the question was essentially uninteresting.

The initial codes derived from the early research questions, or they emerged from the data. As themes and the framework of the study developed, individual codes were gathered together. Grouping codes guided theory building, as I tried to understand the goals of the participants and the difficulties that they faced in attaining these goals. I came increasingly to see that the participants' goals were not simply individual goals, but rather what might be described as the shared goals of a network. While not denying the participants meaningful choices, they made choices within a social structure that provided work for artists largely in teaching, and that teaching occurs largely in universities, rather than, for example, art or design schools. The participants were enrolled or resisted being enrolled in the incremental process of earning a Ph.D., and found that this wider network shaped their choices to resist or not.

As I worked with the codes, more codes that had previously seemed discreet came to seem related or interconnected. As a result, codes such as the *Ph.D. qualification* and *biography* came to seem more closely connected, but also influenced by my deeper understanding of data coded as *identities*. In this way codes were gathered and simplified, but also transformed into a more complex configuration.

This understanding of coding was strongly influenced by Smagorinsky (2008), both as to the importance of coding and the need for coding to articulate the theoretical framework. He explained that his approach to coding reflected his use of Wertsch's (1991) framework, in which the unit of analysis was "volitional, goal-directed, tool-mediated action in social context" (p.399). While accepting this social constructionist approach, I saw my participants acting in a context in which their choices were constrained by artefacts, such as descriptions of the practice-based Ph.D. (e.g., UK Council for Graduate Education, 1997) and the (disputed) understandings that guided that document. Beyond that, of course, there were national choices, such as the decision to award an art and design qualification equivalent to the undergraduate first degree (embodied in Ministry of Education, 1960). These

observations led me to a framework that better integrates the embodied social context, actor-network theory. A participant begins a Ph.D. process and finds herself signed up for an ineluctable network of wanted and unwanted standards (Star, 1991).

The coding categories (*nodes*, in the terminology of NVivo) with brief descriptions are listed in Appendix A. Codes are sorted alphabetically from the right side (so, first *Gathered codes*, then *Gathering codes* and finally

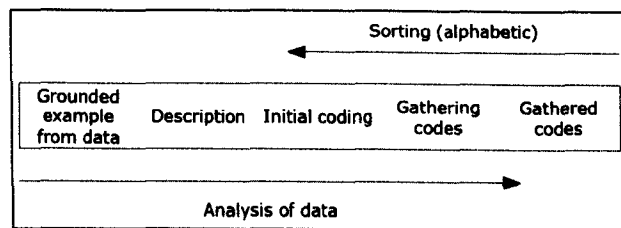


Figure 15: Data coding

Initial coding; Passage 17). At the left, there are examples of data that were coded with the initial category. The description that follows is a note to me indicating what types of data should be gathered under the code. The progression from left to right represents a chronological movement, from grounded data to reduced codes. As my research and thinking progressed, I grouped codes together (*tree nodes*, in NVivo) in the categories labelled here *Gathering codes*. The final stage was to group them in larger categories in a further stage of data reduction (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). In fact, the final stage (*Gathered codes*) does not fully represent my analysis because, as I tried to think about the relationships among the codes and with deeper familiarity with the data, I saw connections that made the links more complicated, not less. I have not been able to represent this increasing complexity graphically, but it did correspond with data complication that Coffey and Atkinson describe (1996, pp. 29-30). I have tried to represent these more complex links in the description of the data.

Text analysis

I have chosen to analyse passages of text in order to show how participants' experiences, observed in seminars and described in interviews, were instantiated in their texts. A goal of this thesis is not only to illuminate the experiences of the

candidates, but also to demonstrate that these experiences affected their writing process. While it might not have been possible to identify the hesitations, alterations, and omissions without the support of observation and interviews, the difficulties that the candidates had left traces in their texts as surely as the more developed research area of identity construction.

The primary tool for text analysis is based on a combination of theme analysis drawn from Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL; e.g., Halliday, 1994; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Martin & Rose, 2003; Thompson, 1996) and MacDonald's (1992) scheme for analysing sentence subjects. Although these approaches could be seen as separate and even in conflict, they can be used to complement each other. Theme analysis (Martin & Rose, 2003) looks at progression of information in a continuous set of clauses. Sentence subject analysis (MacDonald, 1992) looks at the topics of sentences as shown by the sentences. Each approach contributes to answering in detail the questions, "What is the writer writing about?" and "What have they chosen to focus on?" Both approaches seek to connect sentence-level features to the overall meaning of the text.

In systemic-functional grammar, the theme is the first element of an independent clause or T-unit (Crookes, 1990). Normally, the theme of a clause is also the subject, but it may be something other than the subject, in which case it is a marked theme. Marked themes have interpersonal, textual, or experiential functions, and often indicate a shift in the topic. Information flows through continuous text in a pattern of given information → new information, with the subject (unmarked theme) naming known or given information and the remainder of the sentence commenting by providing new information about the subject. Marked themes indicate shifts in the flow of information, by evaluating or framing the information.

MacDonald's (1992) approach categorised sentence subjects in professional academic writing in psychology, history, and literature into two broad categories, *phenomenal classes* and *epistemic classes*. These classes reflected whether the sentence

subject was an object in the world or an abstraction or concept that commented on or theorised the world. Within the two large classes, MacDonald developed seven subcategories (three phenomenal, four epistemic), such as “particulars” and “attributes” in the phenomenal class, or “reasons” and “audience” in the epistemic class. Underlying the large division into two classes, though, was the question of agency, of whom or what is seen as the actor in the research. Writers in science might remove themselves from the subject position, and “we should expect to find the data presented as self-explanatory” (MacDonald, 1992, p. 538). In contrast, if the writer sees the account as a construction, purposive empirical agents would form the topic of more sentences. Seeing the account as a construction and self-reflective is characteristic of the New Humanities thesis, that is, theses in which the writer projects their engaged stance in the thesis.

The two approaches, although they use somewhat different units of measure (themes vs. sentence subjects), are complementary. North (2005; see also Gardner, 2008) used themes for her analysis of undergraduate texts, while using MacDonald’s (1992) phenomenal and epistemic categories. The two approaches describe different things, information flow in the case of theme analysis and types of information that are significant for research in the case of sentence subject analysis. Both approaches will be drawn upon in this study.

Passages were selected for analysis based primarily on their relevance to the topic under discussion. In the cases of completed theses, passages were chosen for detailed discussion because they illustrated author-saturated or author-evacuated passages, or passages that illuminate the problems of describing an artistic practice without using the language of art history. In cases where no thesis had been completed by the time this project had ended, texts were chosen for discussion because they illustrated the progression of the writing process.

Visual data

Visual communication was to some extent the mother tongue of all the participants, and so a great deal of visual material was gathered. This included photographs of ideas sketched out on a blackboard and participants' notes, as well as the substantial visual component of the participants' texts.

The participants in the study used a variety of graphic means to convey information. Data ranged from one participant's use of charts to convey her information to another candidate's development of visual means to communicate with her participants. As will be discussed later, her designing of her thesis was an important part of her new identity formation. The FAP students sketched, doodled, and took digital photos to record seminar discussions, as well as to talk about their work. Apichart, the FAP candidate who completed his thesis during the time that I observed, illustrated his thesis extensively with photographs of his artwork, other peoples' artwork, and photographs of some of the participants who informed his study. Visual information was a crucial part of these students' lives, research, and writing practices.

The smaller role for visual information lay in the physical artefact of the thesis. This was largely because the integration of images into what are commonly called written texts is so naturalised as to be unremarkable. Powerful personal computers are responsible for this change, and the participants in all cases were comfortable working with them. Whereas in the past photographs were often placed in an appendix, in recent theses, photographic images, graphs, and charts have been scaled for the context and integrated into the text body. This increased visual content is also related to an increased role for visual material in many areas of information design. Studies such as Myers (1990a), Johns (1998), and Veel (1998) describe the increased role of visual information in science and education texts. Largely, writing with a computer means being an information designer.

The insights from the visual data were important, though in some cases only to the extent of noting that visual information played a relatively conventional role in the texts that the candidates prepared. The role that visual information played will be discussed as it relates to each candidate.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the ethnographically-based approach that this study used to understand how candidates for doctorates in FAP & D see writing in these emerging fields. Writing is a contextualised activity that can best be studied through prolonged engagement with writers, in order to understand their aspirations and constraints. I have described the global approach to the research project, as well as the immediate tools used for the study. Because the study unites a global understanding of writing with the local practices of literacy-in-action, the tools connect the context to the participant's writing. The methods used for the study were chosen to support this understanding of writing and to respect the accomplishments of the participants.

Section 2

**Writing in Fine Art Practice; writing in Design; Struggling;
Conclusion**

7 Overview of Section 2

The description of the candidates' process of writing has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter, a long one, describes the Fine Arts seminar. The seminar was remarkably cohesive; Chris, the seminar supervisor, had clear ideas about writing in Fine Art Practice and led discussions that shaped the writing of all the candidates. The chapter describes his approach to thesis writing, and then it provides an overview of the seminar interaction before describing four candidates in Fine Arts Practice.

This chapter is followed by a description of the Design seminar. The Design seminar was much more functional, and the seminar supervisor took a much more limited role in guiding the candidates' writing. One candidate's process of writing is described in this chapter.

Finally, a third chapter describes the differing experiences of two candidates who had particular difficulty at their Mid-Point Progression (MPP) stage. These two candidates, one in Design and another in FAP, found themselves facing particular obstacles at this crucial stage of their study, and their difficulties illuminate some of the problems of writing in emerging fields.

8 Writing in Fine Art Practice

Introduction

This chapter will present the fine art candidates in the context of the seminar that Chris led. It will begin with an extended description of Chris's ideas about the development and role of art in high modernity. These ideas were influential among the candidates and created the context within which they wrote. Also, because of a societal marginalisation of artists, his ideas may be less part of the currency of daily life than disciplines that have a longer history in the university. For these reasons, his ideas are presented at length. Then the four participants who became the focus of my fieldwork in the art seminar are briefly introduced. Because the seminar group was cohesive and self-supportive, and because their interactions were important to their writing, I describe some of these interactions. Finally, each of the four candidates is presented individually to outline their projects and the difficulties that they faced, and also to create a mosaic portrait of the group as a whole.

Fieldwork

My introduction to fieldwork among artists was nothing like I expected or planned. I had e-mailed Chris Dorsett to ask if I could observe how artists learn disciplinary expectations of writing; he responded quickly and warmly—“Yes, your area of research is a special concern of mine and I will be happy to meet. Speak to you soon.”—and we agreed that I would come to a seminar that he ran for MA students. I had a folder of permission forms for the seminar participants and a brief but informative statement of what I hoped to do and learn through my study of them. Arriving early at the small office where he ran the seminars, I took a seat in a room that always seemed too small and cluttered for the number of people in it, and especially so this first day, when I felt awkward and filled with anticipation. This was to be the site of my pilot study.

When they arrived, the four full-time art students were clearly curious about me—one student asked me who I was—but, mischievously, Chris intervened to say that he didn't want to keep on introducing me. I sat there, taking notes, as Chris and the students discussed their book lists that they were required to keep in a portfolio or file, and the abstracts that they had to write about their reading. He asked them to talk about the books that they were reading, focusing particularly on how they were written. Students named a wide variety of books, reflecting their different interests. One of the questions that he asked them was how the book was referenced, which involved both the referencing system and the source of its authority. After about an hour, they turned to a text that Chris distributed, a book review from *The Times Literary Supplement* (Persson, 2002). He used this dense, philosophical text, which began, "Suppose you lived a life that is worthwhile at every stage. When would death have been worst for you?" to discuss from what sources writers derived their authority, the metatextual elements of the text, and other elements of the text such as argumentative structure and the definitions provided. Eventually, Chris asked me to introduce myself and explain what I hoped to do. This was my introduction to fieldwork among the artists.

Chris's approach to contextual practice

Contextual practice

This small group seminar was part of the Fine Art Practice programme's realisation of contextual practice at MA level (see Chapter 4 for the inclusion of contextual practice in FAP & D education). Although this study describes students writing Ph.D. theses, there were many connections between the MA and Ph.D. programmes in FAP. Most of the Ph.D. candidates came directly from the MA programme, and, in turn, the candidates spoke to the MA students in Contextual Practice seminars.

Chris was very conscious of this relationship. Describing one of his most important goals for teaching writing in the MA programme, he said,

And so anything you hear me say to the MAs [against creating a text in which the practice is the illustration for a written theory, it's], because somewhere I'm thinking all the time, one or two or more of these students are going to end up doing a PhD probably with us, and I want, right from the start, to give them other possibilities." [20 Nov 2003]

The Master's programme documents, such as the *Course Handbook*, stated explicitly goals that were implicit in the doctoral seminars in which writing was discussed. As an example of this, one of three aims for the MA course spoke as much to issues of research degrees in FAP as to those of the MA:

Manage the life of this community [of advanced practitioners] in the studio, lecture room and exhibition space in such a way that profound self-reflection can be matched to the expanded field of methodological, critical and theoretical options made possible by developments within fine art research. (Dye & Dorsett, 2002, p. 3)

Chris had created the MA course, and, though he had handed its operation to a colleague while he became Programme Director for Research Degrees, he maintained a close involvement in it.

There were three formal components that brought together artists and written texts in FAP. The first was the small group seminars for Master's students. Three to six students would meet with Chris or another lecturer in a small seminar group every fortnight on the Master's programme, which was the site of my pilot study and which had approximately 40 students enrolled full. These seminars would last up to two hours. The small group would discuss their reading and develop an understanding of the expectations of writing in FAP.

The second component was large evening seminars, which Chris called “Just talking.” These were held one evening each week and the Master’s students were expected to attend. For full-time students, the first semester seminars were presented either by the tutors in the programme or by guest lecturers. The Ph.D. candidates were among the guest speakers, and in the third year of my observation, Chris tried to hand over more responsibility for the seminars to the Ph.D. candidates. These seminars were scheduled to last from 6:00 pm to 8:30, but regularly continued longer. In the second semester, the MA students gave their own presentations. These seminars were central to his vision of the life of artists. He described his goals for the seminar series as he designed them:

I was working on the assumption that the talking was already very good, and it probably is a key issue in our school, is to preserve as much scope just for talking at quite a high level as one can. Nearly all of [the students] could, in one way or another, carry on practicing in silence in their own, you know, studio or, you know, bedroom or spare room in the house, whatever, without having to say very much, except just to, you know, couple of notes, whatever. The point of being in an art school is this, sort of, focusing of discussion, in a way that I’ve heard in art schools, including those awkward silences where you sit and stare each other out. I remember... They go back for as long as I’ve been in it... been in the place. So I feel that’s important, and if it’s what we do, I’d like to preserve it. [20 Nov 2003]

In the MA course handbook, the large and small seminars comprised “Contextual practice.” Participation in the seminars and the production of a portfolio of writing and an essay counted for a third of the credits on the Master course; studio practice and exhibition practice made up the final thirds. Students had to develop their portfolio, consisting of short written texts (“tutorial and seminar reports, booklists and ‘artist statements’” as well as abstracts of books they read), and to write an essay of about 5,000-words, that the course handbook said would “transform their

intellectual deliberations (a set of ideas of unique personal interest) into a fully referenced and well-argued essay (that is, a document of general cultural relevance to its reader)" (Dye & Dorsett, 2002). The topics for the essay were usually based on students' seminar presentations, and were quite open, including topics such as alchemy or *Alice in Wonderland*. Several of the Ph.D. candidates who did their MAs at Northumbria went on to develop their MA essays into Ph.D. topics.

The third component was the Ph.D. seminars. These seminars occurred roughly every two weeks throughout the year except for the month of August. All the full-time candidates attended them, as well as, occasionally, part-time candidates. These sessions lasted up to four hours, with breaks for coffee and lunch in which discussion would continue. The number of people attending these seminars varied from six to more than twelve. Although other academics occasionally attended, and, for a period of four sessions a lecturer from Napier University hosted the seminars, Chris was the central figure in them.

Ph.D. seminar sessions fell into two types. In one, which were far less frequent, candidates discussed and reported on their work. The other type were seminars in which the candidates, led by Chris, discussed approaches to writing. Occasionally, there would be other topics, such as when the candidates tried to develop a talk for a conference to be held in Scotland, or when they organised a group exhibition. But the most common activity was a discussion of writing which was carried on at quite an abstract level, such as discussions about Peircian symbolic modes, or argumentation structures, using examples from a book on informal logic (Allen, 1997).

An art lecture

The process of writing a thesis in Fine Arts Practice followed the master-apprentice model closely. A group of artists came together every two weeks around an articulate, inspiring lecturer to think through the process of writing a thesis. Chris's

aspirations for writing in fine arts infused the thinking of the candidates, and the candidates responded to his vision of the role of the artist and the possibilities for writing the thesis. When the candidates were filling in a University form listing any unmet needs for their studies, Mark, one of the participants, said, what was needed was “five Chris’s, we love the one we’ve got, can we have some more?” [16 Feb 2005] Chris valued their work as practitioners and the work of artists in society. His vision of the thesis emerged from his own practice and experience, as which Mark noted, was both a strength and a limitation. He presented the doctoral thesis as a way for the candidates to extend their practice and to contribute to the project of art in society in new and significant ways. Because of his pivotal role in guiding the fine art theses, it is necessary to present his vision of the role of artists and the role of writing in artists’ practice. The next section will sketch this vision by describing a lecture that he gave for the “Just talking” seminars.

Throughout the seminars and discussions, Chris emphasised a few central themes, though his approach in presenting them changed significantly over time. Soon after I began observing and talking with the Fine Art Practice students, Chris gave a slide talk that set out many of the issues that would confront the Ph.D. students. He repeated the talk twice in about a month to different groups of MA students, as well as recording a version for “lecture listening for international students.” It was the first lecture in the large seminar series. The talk varied from almost two hours to just under an hour, and it seemed personal, a talk he was invested in, though he did not repeat it during the next three years. In it, he first described the nature of an art lecture, and how it differed from lectures in other disciplines, including closely related areas.

Whilst an art historian will show you a series of projected photographs, and provide you with all kinds of facts and insights about the art that you’re looking at, when you’re in an art school and somebody stands up and addresses you, they’re very likely to be the creator of the works of art that

you're looking at, and that's quite an important difference. It has a very different effect on the kind of talk that you get.

Firstly, the emphasis is on first-hand experience, and so the person talking to you will be trying to give you all kinds of insights into what it's like to make the kinds of works of art that you're looking at, with the idea that they're giving a student artist firsthand direct access to a creative process. [19 Mar 2003]

Speakers at art school lectures speak as authorities because they are the author of the works that they present. This different form of authority is significant for artists. In the seminar session with Master's students described earlier, Chris developed this theme as he tried to get the students to understand how the writers in the books that they were reading cited their sources. One of the students, a Japanese participant in my pilot study, asked why it was important to understand where the information came from. Chris explained that there were different sources of authority; for Merrily Baird's *Symbols of Japan* (2001), which was the book under discussion, the authority might come from a consensus of scholars including those from Japan, and so be based on lineages of authoritative debate. Authority might also come, as an anthropologist's would come, from having been there and spoken with artists and people of Japan. Finally, though, it might come from standing for a long time in, for example, the Victoria and Albert Museum

and just using your eyes. And saying, "I speculate that it could be like this..." and then a different kind of authority, that is, first of all, how does it persuade us? And what kind of mechanism of persuasion does it use in order to make us feel that? But in a way, in a way, the last option is quite critical for all artists do. They stand in a... you know they look at other people's paintings and they say, "To me this could be used in this kind of a way, I'm going to be influenced by it," and if it works, it works. [4 Feb 2003]

Chris felt that artists' texts could have a different intertextual basis and different purposes from the texts of other disciplines such as art history. And, of course, unlike the art historian's talk, the artist's talk was unresolved, since the speaker was still producing works of art, but "again, this is part of the pleasure of meeting the artist and learning about what it's like to be that person."

One part of art lectures, though, had been constant. The Kodak Carousel slide projector, with its tray of 80 slides dominated the way talks had been given. Because of the moment of darkness as the slides change, lectures with a Carousel had a particular rhythm:

To the audience it's a special kind of feeling, because each slide is like a little episode, represents some episode in that artist's career that they'll tell you about it. Suddenly the screen goes dark, and you're sitting in suspense, waiting in the dark for the next slide, wondering how the speaker is going to relate that or connect it to the slide you've just been looking at. All people who give talks at art schools become adept at using the expectancy of the audience in this blank moment, this gap between one image and another.

This gap—and how, in his words, to *radicalise* it—was central to art practice. Modern artists needed to astonish. This moment was the fulcrum for his talk, a brief definition of art as he understood it at that moment. Radicalising the gap was a clear, if difficult, goal for art practice, but the metaphor came from the slide talk, and suggested that artists who talked or wrote also needed to radicalise the gap in their discourse.

Artists' talk, even more than artists' writing, was central to his experience of art school, and was something that he wanted to pass on to his students. Art can be made in a studio or in a bedroom, alone. Art school should be different, he said:

the first thing you notice when you go to a foundation college, the [reason?] you go on a foundation course is just the way people start talking to you. It's just absolutely nothing like you've had before. That was my experience, I'm sure it's still the same today. This kind of movement from the kind of being talked to by a teacher or even engaged in discussion by a teacher, this sudden shift to somebody sitting there along side of you, who you know practices, I think that's important, who just talks to you about your practice, perhaps not even about your art sometimes, you know, but just, you're being kind of socialised in some kind of a way, as well as given information. [20 Nov 2003]

Having described the nature of the slide lecture in art as a personal but authoritative commentary on one's own practice, a commentary that should, like the art itself, astonish, Chris went on to describe his own practice, beginning with his desire in secondary school to be a sculptor. He realised while he was at art school that what people understood by sculpture had changed. He showed two slides, the first showing the pride of the civic councillors at the inauguration of the Battersea Sculpture Park in 1948, where beaming councillors stood next to a nude on a plinth. This contrasted with the next slide, of the viewers of a sculpture by L. Brower Hatcher in the Peter Stuyvesant City Sculpture Project in 1972, where the emotions now were curiosity and surprise. Hatcher's sculpture "looks as if it's just landed from Mars. It's a completely foreign object" [19 Mar 2003]. It was, he said, "a sort of intervention in the public space," and he went on to say that by the time he had left art school, he saw the nature of art and his own practice in a different way. "Increasingly I was looking for places where I could intervene, where I could put sculptural objects which would surprise people and change their expectations of the space that they're in" [19 Mar 2003].

Interventions were central to the view of art that Chris presented. As he said, in answer to a question at the end of the talk, "the main aesthetic, if you like of our time is to do with confronting expectations, lowering inhibitions, increasing

sensitivity, all kinds of things are the sort of aim that an artist might have." Artists were no longer modernist heroes that the public had to catch up with, "they're more seen as people who provide us with all sorts of doubts and mysteries, in the midst of a lot of certainties. So wherever there's a certainty, there's bound to be an artist undoing it." The Baltic Museum in Gateshead, across the Tyne from Northumbria was, he thought, an art intervention in an urban, industrialised landscape. In Chris's terms, by showing up at his seminar for MA students, I was a fortuitous intervention in the practice of teaching and learning writing in Fine Art Practice.

In the lecture, Chris went on to describe his early interventions. After graduating from art school, he moved to the Ruskin School at Oxford University, teaching sculpture and becoming its head of sculpture. Although founded by John Ruskin as a school of drawing in 1871, the Ruskin School had moved to a new site and established its first undergraduate programme while Chris taught there (The Ruskin School of Drawing & Fine Art, n.d.). In his talk, Chris emphasised the advantages of practicing with limited facilities for traditional sculpture. In order to create modern sculpture, he approached a number of institutions around Oxford, looking for places where he could create his interventions. The Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford agreed to work with him.

The Pitt Rivers Museum, which Chris spoke of frequently, is an anthropology museum that was established at the end of the nineteenth century, in Chris's words, to show "large numbers of ways of solving a problem, like how to catch mice." This levelling approach—all solutions were equally represented—tended to defeat the original imperialist mission of demonstrating the superiority of the British way of life, "and certainly makes it very interesting to artists. It seems to be about the human imagination more than anything else" [19 Mar 2009]. He set about creating his interventions, drawing his face as reflected in the mirrors in the collection.

I spent a period of time drawing my own reflection in these different mirrors. Then I began to use my imagination; I began to think, "If I was an

anthropologist, what would I be interested in?" And I started to work on the idea that maybe mirrors made in different cultures, made of different materials, and invented in different kinds of ways, would reflect my face in different kinds of ways, and that I would begin to detect the kind of identity that different people have established in different parts of the world. It's a mad idea, it can't possibly be true, but because I am an artist, rather than an anthropologist, I can, am allowed to engage with fiction in the midst of all this, these attempts in the museum to make facts stand for themselves.

The drawings were placed in the cabinets alongside the mirrors, and carefully labelled as though they were parts of the exhibition, because the texts alongside the objects were very important. What Chris was working with was not only the objects, but also the perception of the objects as mediated through texts. The result of the intervention was confusion and surprise:

As people went around the museum, they suddenly would come across these exhibits, but they wouldn't know that they were a work of art, they'd just take them as part of the collection, and they'd say, "Can this possibly be true? This is such a crazy idea." But given that the Pitt Rivers Museum is already full of so many remarkable and unusual things that don't seem to be possibly true, then, it sort of went with the way that... the character of the museum. [19 Mar 2003]

He then carved a series of small figures recalling angels or putti, which he placed in the Pitt Rivers Museum on long flexible rods that allowed the figures to hover above the glass cases.

They were made for the in-between space, the space between you as the viewer to the, of the museum and the actual collection itself. They were neither part of the collection, nor living visitors. They were in that in-between space. [19 Mar 2003]

In other words, his figures inhabited the gap between the object and its viewer, altering the perception of the object in the same way that the gap between slides could be used to play with the expectations of the viewer of the slide show.

Chris described his work in the Pitt Rivers Museum in an article in 1995, in which he wrote:

Imagine this. While browsing around the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford your attention is caught by a curious object. It appears at home in the collection but you find it inexplicable, so you question its status as an exhibit. An attendant tells you that some artists have got into the museum and hidden their own objects among the genuine displays. A guide can be obtained at the desk to help you track down their artworks. With this in your hand, you set out on a different kind of journey. Now it does not seem to matter whether or not you mistake art exhibits for the collection, or vice versa. The museum visit takes on an unexpected capacity for generating fiction; meaning is unfettered and every attempt at identification draws you into a state of free play with the act of interpretation. (Dorsett, 1995)

This paragraph emphasises the gap between the art exhibits and the collection, and the possibilities that art had opened with that gap. It starts with the act of imagining.

In the lecture, Chris went on to describe the development of his career as an artist. Much of his work involved intervening in museums, sometimes through his own work, but also as a guest curator for other artists' work. He felt that his interventions not only destabilised the experience of the viewers, they discomfited the museum staff. The exhibitions were

an opportunity to confront some of the difficulties of the job they have in hand, particularly in relation to truth, in relation to the fact that museums

now have to address a multicultural society and yet the collections were often put together during a colonial period when materials were just gathered from all around the world without too much care about the way in which it was done. [19 Mar 2003]

This talk crystallised a number of themes that continued to be relevant to his teaching of writing throughout the period of the study. One additional theme that he did not discuss in this lecture but which came up frequently in seminars and interviews was the relationship between texts and practice. He put this, too, in an autobiographical frame. When he had been in art school, art history had been the primary source of writing about art, “so you learned that Courbet [1819-77] would have been nothing if he hadn’t looked at Rubens [1577-1640] and Rubens would have been nothing if he hadn’t looked at... You just got these lineages all the way through.” However, the lineages did not help student artists. They simply posed more questions: should young artists look for someone to imitate or not? Lineages, too, started from a premise of what artists were not: like Mondrian or Brancusi, but *not*.

An example, parallel to Chris’s understanding of practitioners’ appropriate responses to new art is this, of Wassily Kandinsky’s (1866-1944) response to Monet’s *Haystacks* paintings, first shown in Moscow in 1896. He “perceived at once that the series pointed to the abstraction of colour and form as painting’s future,” and

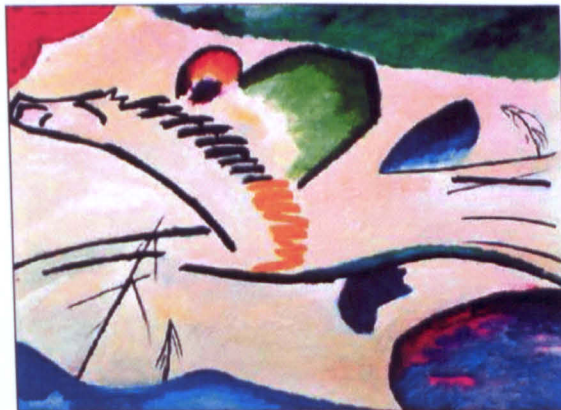


Figure 16: Wassily Kandinsky, *Lyrical*, 1911

announced, “Everything done so far is just copying” (Wullschlager, 2009, p. 12). A practitioner sees in new art new possibilities, not similarities to what has been done before.

Models of writing in Fine Art Practice

In the 1970's the model for writing about art began to change from art history to theory, often from linguistics. As a result, two different models emerged that provided different ways of talking and writing about art. One model was theory based, in which students became theoretically knowledgeable, often engaged with politics or gender relations. The other model was that of intuitive practice; in some schools, this led to the dropping of a requirement for a written text on Master's programmes. Chris, who earned his Master's during this period, said that he did not have to write for his MA at the Royal School of Art.

Now a lecturer, Chris felt that both models failed students. For the theoretically engaged students,

what I had to do was spend a lot of my time reintroducing those students, who were totally confused and often inept when it came to actually saying, "Is it any good or not," "What does it actually mean?" and had no range of intellectual equipment to be able to engage with what they made other than the recipe. [20 Nov 2003]

The intuitive model, which was less prominent in his discussion, was also inadequate guidance for students.

The sort of intuitive model, is also very, very problematic in the sense that is anti-intellectual, to such a high degree that it plays into the hands, I think, of the humanities, making artists kind of Uncle Toms to their interpretive skills. [20 Nov 2003]

This second model is the expressive artist that Frayling railed against: "the artist, by definition, is someone who works in an *expressive* idiom, rather than a *cognitive* one,

and for whom the great project is an extension of personal development” (Frayling, 1993, p. 2; emphasis in original). For Chris, this betrayed the intellectual life of artists that he had known and had worked with, and that he felt art school, in particular, should foster.

The theoretical model made the written text primary and the artwork its subsidiary, while the other transferred articulate expression to the humanities, which would

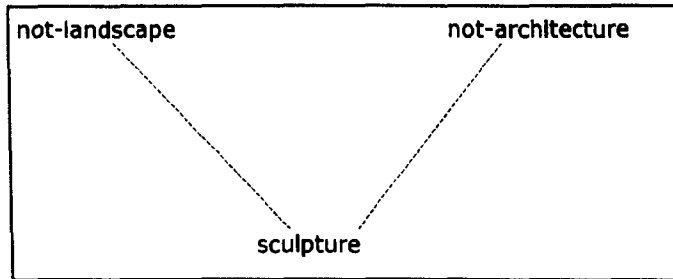


Figure 17: Sculpture's logical relationships, from Krauss (1983, p. 36)

impose their lineages on the artwork. An alternative model that did not reduce the possibilities of art was offered by Rosalind Krauss in her essay, *Sculpture in the expanded field* (Krauss, 1983). In the past, sculpture had been, as Chris described it, “a statue on a plinth, and as far as I was concerned, that’s what sculpture was about. It was an object stuck on a stand in some kind of public space.” [19 Mar 2003] If sculpture was no longer to be an object stuck on a stand, what was it? In this essay, Krauss used a mathematical model (a Klein group) to suggest how sculpture had expanded its possibilities. Modern sculpture is not-landscape and not-architecture.

This triangular relationship implied the possibility of further relationships.

Site construction included environmental works like Robert Smithson’s *Spiral Jetty* (1970; Figure 19), which was both architecture and landscape.

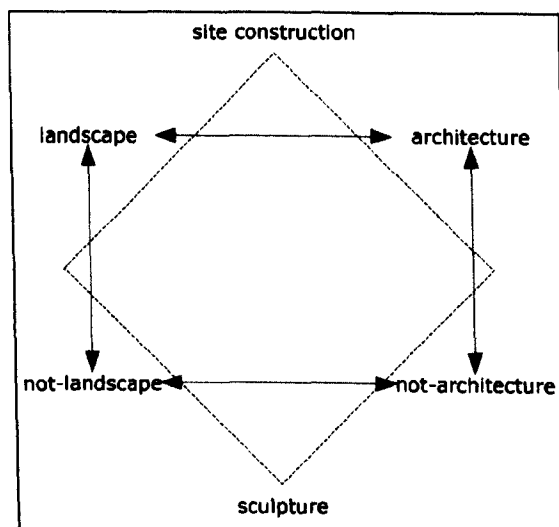


Figure 18: The expanded field of sculpture, adapted from Krauss (1983, p. 37)

Krauss (1983) used logical analysis to derive further possibilities for sculpture, possibilities that were not implicit through history and that were visually impressive, not illustrations of a theory. Krauss's analysis was expansive rather than reductive, and it was based on logical reasoning. It offered not only new possibilities for the creation of art, but also new possibilities for talking and writing about art.

That Chris was aware of new possibilities for texts as well as art can be seen in the aim (cited earlier) that he wrote for the MA students in which he called on them to match self-reflection "to the expanded field of methodological, critical and theoretical options made possible by developments within fine art research" (Dye & Dorsett, 2002, p. 3)



Figure 19: Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty*, 1970

Chris saw the problem of writing about art as central to the Ph.D., and within that, the problem of not subordinating art to the text. Writing for an artist should be fundamentally similar to art creation. An artist will "have this relationship, say a studio relationship with [their] practice, and its kind of intensity. But when they sit down at the computer or at a desk, open a book and read, or whatever, I think that's just the same, it's just a different zone if you like, rather a different zone of your creativity" However, artists' texts needed to be "sharply focused but smaller and neater in relation to whatever else they're doing, giving them scope to do it with the same kind of seriousness and intensity for doing... from their practice, without having to wander off into, become philosophers or become art historians." [20 Nov 2003]

I asked him for examples of successful writing by artists, and, in response, he suggested a number of artists who wrote well, including Paul Klee (1879-1940),

Wassily Kandinsky and particularly the English artist, Adrian Stokes (1902-1972). In writing about Venice, Stokes “just moved his gaze from the things in his studio to the page of the notepad and started writing.” Chris said he would have wanted the supervision students to read these writers for the way their texts were written, not for what they said. Perhaps because of the difficulty of making this leap, he seldom discussed or referred to writing by artists or about art in seminars. One exception was a discussion of William Hazlitt’s (1822) description of Poussin’s *Landscape with the blind Orion looking for sun* (1658). This passage was so distant from the task of writing a modern thesis that it required candidates to make the leap from content to form.

Chris saw ever-present risks of making art that illustrated texts. Discussing a candidate who had completed before this study started, he said that in the view of the examiners, the chapters on theory were exciting, but the descriptions of the artwork were merely adequate. This was a theory-led thesis, rather than a practice-led thesis, and “if you can’t write about your work, from a practice-led point of view in some kind of a way that then somehow demonstrates or makes it possible to cross the bridge from that interpretive area or that theoretical area, then we’re not really doing practice-led Ph.D.s.” [20 Nov 2003] As a result, the quest to write a successful practice-led thesis became a central focus of the FAP seminar discussions.

Candidates discussed how they could write about their practice in a way that was neither art historical nor theory-led, and presentations by other artists were also measured against this standard. Writing the practice-led thesis was seen as critically important, but extremely difficult. While empirical or action research, such as Stonyer’s (1978) or Wheeler’s (1996) studies, might make this easier, only one candidate, Hiro, had a project that might neatly separate her research from her practice. For the rest of the candidates, this was one of the most daunting hurdles of the thesis.

In summary, as Chris presented it, Fine Art Practice seemed like doing philosophy with your hands. Artists inhabiting the present moment needed to confound expectations, by inhabiting and radicalising the gap between what is known and what is anticipated. Like Frayling, Chris argued that artists have lively intellectual lives; their practice and the intelligence that infused it gave their discourse authority. That authority might be different from that of other discourses in universities. Writing by artists could be valuable—a different way of practicing—but, to be practice-based, it had to avoid talking in lineages, and it had to avoid making the art an illustration of a theory. Writing the practice-based thesis would be difficult.

How the candidates interpreted writing in Fine Art Practice

The rest of this chapter consists of descriptions of four candidates working toward writing their theses. The descriptions are individual and particular, reflecting the very different research projects that they embarked upon. Nevertheless, because the candidates shared a common seminar in which they worked with Chris and supported each other, there are commonalities. Many of these of course were articulated by Chris, such as the emphasis on their practices as their core identities. There was also a shared belief that art history was something that other people should do. There were also difficulties in common, including the challenge of writing a practice-based thesis. I hope that this chapter will be read not simply as a set of individuals struggling to write, but as a shared process in which many elements were difficult, but some elements in the process were more salient in one case than another.

This study took place against a background of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), which would occur in 2008. The RAE was an attempt to create a measure of research activity in order to distribute research funding based on merit.

Northumbria, having achieved university status in 1992, did not have a strong research identity, but Fine Art was an area in which “new” universities might

compete. Ph.D. candidates were important to universities as indicators of a research culture within an academic unit. Chris had compiled the Fine Art profile for the 2001 Exercise, and he discussed the implications of the exercise, which he saw as largely favourable for the candidates, in a seminar discussion in February, 2004. At the time this study began, Chris had helped three candidates earn Ph.D.s. The postgraduate research programme had expanded rapidly in 2003 on the success of these candidates and the awareness of the coming assessment.

Over the duration of this study, although there was some fluctuation in the number of candidates, the composition of the Fine Art Practice Ph.D. seminar varied significantly. There were approximately seven to ten candidates throughout the study, but between the end of 2003 and the spring of 2006, one completed, two stopped attending, and four joined the group. (Three candidates had completed successfully shortly before this study started, while two candidates who started while it was in progress have subsequently completed successfully.) Slightly more international students attended the seminars than home students, and all were full-time. Most of the participants had great difficulty writing the texts leading to their theses. Out of this large group, this discussion will focus on four candidates, with a fifth to be discussed in a later chapter. Only one candidate who completed during the period of the study is included, while the other three candidates produced texts and actively participated in the seminar group.

The four participants are Apichart Pholprasert, who successfully completed in 2006, Jane Park, Hiroko Oshima (who preferred to be known as Hiro), and Mark Hill. The titles of their projects were:

Apichart Pholprasert	The rural-based artist: An investigation into the creative processes by which artists have rejected the metropolitan context of contemporary art
Jane Park	

	The spreading of an idea: Can the evolution of an idea within and between social groups be defined as art?
Hiro Oshima	Artists' groups in Japan and the UK and their impact on the creative individual
Mark Hill	Drawing through technology: The contemporary fine art interface

The four candidates in brief

Apichart started his Ph.D. study in 2000 and completed in 2006. As an artist from a rural village in Thailand, he both felt the pull of creating art in the city and the countervailing pull of his home. His study investigated the possibilities of nostalgia as a source of art, and the ways in which the urban perception that nostalgia inevitably led to sentimental art could be overcome. His project had resonance not only across the rural-urban divide, but also across the centre-periphery axis of developed and developing nations. His artwork consisted of large manipulated photographs, printed on canvas and further manipulated with paint, then photographed again.

Jane started her study in 2002, though she had to take a break in her study because of the birth of her child. Her study can be seen as a continuation of the decentring of the heroic modernist artist, a process that might be said to have begun with Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917; Figure 1). Her project considered whether works created by unconnected individuals could be considered artworks. Her clearest example of this



Figure 20: Shoe tree, Armstrong Park, Newcastle upon Tyne

type of creation was a tree in a park near her home. Someone had once tied a pair of shoes together and tossed them into the tree, where they had hooked on the branches. This had inspired other people to do the same, and the tree had become known locally and attracted more shoes (Figure 20). Her investigation looked at whether tree or process could be considered artworks, and how ideas that are current contribute to an understanding of art in this way. She described her artwork as “a radical form of community arts by working within/between different kinds of social groups to see if it is possible to create artworks that only exist as contagious ideas” (J. Park, n. d.). Jane’s practice consisted of fostering communities and contagious ideas.

Hiro also started her study in 2002. Her Ph.D. project was quite separate from her art practice, and Chris would regularly mention this, both to people outside the programme and to the candidates in the seminar. He used this fact to argue that artists doing practice-led doctorates did not have to write about their practice. Hiro’s project involved a comparison of a loose grouping of British artists, the Stuckists, with a group of Japanese artists clustered around Toshihiro Hamano, the Ryu Group. The Stuckists were a group of largely figurative British artists who reacted against conceptual art and its success in public forums such as the Turner Prize and the Tate Modern. The name came from Tracey Emin’s complaint about a former boyfriend, that “Your paintings are stuck, you are stuck! Stuck! Stuck! Stuck!” The Japanese group was centred on Hamano, who had formed the Ryu Group from his students. In Europe, Hiro led the group, which had an exchange going back to the mid-1990’s with Northumbria University. Her work with the Ryu Group led her to compare the two groups, looking at their role in the practice of the artists who were members of each group, and to reflect on the relationship between individualism and group membership in her own practice. Her artwork consisted of abstract paintings; she taught life drawing and print-making at Northumbria.

Mark began his study in 2003. Mark wanted to take one of the most basic forms of art creation, drawing, and extend that to digital technology, theorising drawing

done by means of computers. He initially proposed to investigate how cybernetic technology, distributed among individuals and tools, might affect art creation. He intended to move beyond the descriptive framework that distributed cognition provided to create a platform for the creation of drawings that would be available to non-expert users. As he described in his Initial Project Application (IPA), this platform “extends and makes explicit the tradition of quotation and inheritance within fine art.” Though based on technological innovation, his vision of “an interventionist-based practice as an emergent system” shared many connections with Jane’s decentred model of art creation, as well as to Chris’s interventions. As he wrote in his IPA,

This research challenges the accepted notion of collaborative activity. When intervention and indeed art generally is treated as a non-privileged system ... then it only remains for this data to be passed to another artist for use as input into their own system.

As his study progressed, he focused more on the relationship between mark and ground, that is, the surface on which drawing occurs, in a computer-mediated context.

Understanding the seminar group

I led a seminar discussion in April 2005 in which I asked the candidates about their experience of writing and what they hoped to gain from the Ph.D. There were nine participants at the seminar that day; after discussing the RAE process with the candidates and his plans to move them into a new space where they would have a distinct identity, Chris took the opportunity to get some work done and left.

One of the most striking characteristics of the group was their ease with their practice. They felt confident and relaxed about it, even if they had temporary setbacks. As Jane said, “I don’t know what it is I want to do, but I always just know

when I get there and what I don't want to do" [13 Apr 05]. This was also reflected in the way their practice related to their Ph.D. study. Their artistic practice was assumed, or as Mark said, "I think the practice dimension can pretty much be taken care of by the kinds of people in this room, that that is not an anxiety that people in this room have" [13 Apr 05]. Throughout my observation, although candidates' artwork was regularly mentioned, I heard only one evaluation of another candidate's work, and none of their own. Once accepted onto the Ph.D. the candidates maintained their practice, but the focus shifted from their practice to their research. This was different from their experience on the MA, where

you bring a portfolio of work, and you could have brilliant work and not be able to say anything about it that makes any sense and still get onto an MA. You can't do that with a Ph.D. You don't bring any work along with you, you don't have a portfolio with you. It's about whether you've got a question... [Jane, 13 Apr 05]

As they moved into the research and writing that comprised doctoral study, they struggled. Several candidates mentioned the openness of doctoral study as a particular problem. Mark expressed what seemed to be a general experience of a lack of direction and a lack of limits: "How do I consume the library in order to know what it is that I need to know?" [13 Apr 05] They looked for guidance in books on writing a thesis (e.g., Dunleavy, 2003; Phillips & Pugh, 2005) or Internet searches for theses in Fine Art.

Writing was a particular problem. The candidates who had completed their MAs at Northumbria had written dissertations of five thousand words, while Mark had done a presentation rather than write anything for his MA. Iku, who had help from her supervisor in writing her MA dissertation said, "I found that the practice is more spontaneous, you can see the result, so feel I have done something, achieved, but writing to me is like I'm hopeless, helpless, and I don't know anything..." [13 Apr 05] Part of the difficulty they had in writing may have come from their expectations

of writing. They felt that it was different from their practices in that it was objective and would be assessed objectively. Both Jane and Mark described writing as being similar to mathematics; Jane said, "I'm trying to make an equation. Until the equation is balanced, how can I write anything? You know, and it's true just like the chapter headings should be an equation, which equal what it is I'm trying to say..." [13 Apr 05]. Chris fostered this belief that writing was like mathematics, in part because it allowed the text to be divided into manageable sections and because it emphasised clarity and objectivity.

I was curious if they had considered writing their theses in a way that might stretch the limits of a traditional thesis. Hiro spoke for the half of the room who were international students when she said, "I have never thought about that, because, you know, writing in English is itself is really hard. I don't want to, dare to, do something very strange and creative. It think it will be a disaster" [13 Apr 05]. The home students, too, planned new knowledge within a conventional form. As Jane said, "it has to be a completely unique way of approaching something, but it doesn't have to necessarily have [EB: to be physically new or structurally] doesn't necessarily be structurally new" [13 Apr 05]. They were ambitious about the results of their studies, hoping that their work would advance practice-based research.

Finally, I asked them about what they hoped to do with their doctorates. The consensus was that they wanted to teach at university, though the home students who were familiar with visiting tutors who combined their practice with teaching said that they wanted to teach and practice. The three Japanese candidates seemed hesitant about teaching, perhaps because of barriers that they foresaw, and Hiro said that, although she hoped to teach, she was doing her Ph.D. for the Ryu group, which she led. In a later discussion she said that she hoped to facilitate cultural and art exchanges.

The Fine Art Practice Ph.D. seminar was an unusual group, even for a research project that sees individual action as only part of a wider field of networks and

systems of activity. The candidates formed a strongly supportive group. Two participants were pursuing research projects that were based in different ways on social groups; their projects arose from their worldviews and influenced their behaviour within the seminar group. Jane's research involved intervening in groups, and interpreting these interventions as art. However, many of her interventions had a political content that remained undiscussed. For example, one project involved giving pink headbands to her daughter's school group for an antiwar protest, which helped make the school children more identifiable as participants, and thus better able to see themselves as effective actors within the protest. Hiro's research involved her being both facilitator of the Ryu group in Europe, and a researcher of the effects of artists' groups. As a result of the work of these two women in particular, the seminar group was mutually supportive and highly cohesive, even as new candidates entered the group and other candidates left.

Hiro and Jane were committed to positive social interaction and both enacted that commitment within the seminar group. Jane hosted seminar meetings at her home and taught the seminar participants games that they could play during seminar sessions that lasted up to three hours, without disrupting the central activity of the seminar. She also used her knowledge of the current artworld to mediate and reinterpret Chris's occasionally obscure comments for the other candidates.

Hiro led several seminar sessions in general discussions of another candidate's work or the general process of writing. No other candidate did this during the three years of my observation of the FAP seminar. Hiro found her role unusual, and to some extent uncomfortable. She taught home and international undergraduates print-making and life drawing, both in art and in programmes related to art such as fashion design. She had previously conducted a seminar session in which Apichart had discussed his thesis. However, she found directly questioning Apichart about his thesis difficult. In Japan, "even in the professional writing, you know, you have to guess between lines, what kind of language do we need" [10 Jan 2006]. She had

learned from the experience, both about thesis writing and behaving in a new way, one that would have been inappropriate in her own country.

It's worth looking at one of the sessions that she ran, as it provides an example of the candidates' co-operative approach, as well as illustrating some of the difficulties that they had in writing. In February 2005, after opening a seminar meeting, Chris had to go to a meeting. He asked Hiro to explain to the other candidates a new type of document he wanted them to prepare. This was a "Thesis Planning Review," a document that would help them organise their theses. Most discussions of writing involved talking about the problems of short texts, while Hiro's session focused on the architecture of the thesis. There were very few discussion of the large scale organisation of a thesis; this discussion was the most extensive, though Chris spoke individually with candidates about the organisation of their theses, and he had gone over this document organisation with Hiro immediately before this session. There were eight candidates in the seminar (plus me), but almost all the discussion was carried on between Hiro, Mark and Jane, with two other students contributing a bit, and three who remained silent for the session.

Hiro drew a diagram of a thesis on the office blackboard, and then explained how the thesis could be broken down into manageable sections. The thesis was expected to be about forty thousand words in length, with individual chapters on topics that were relevant

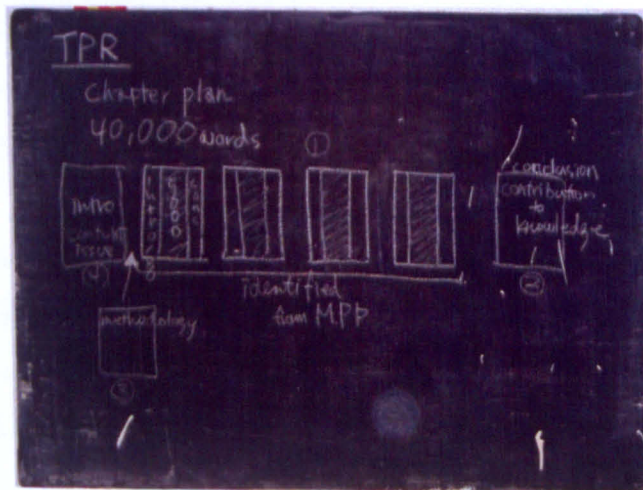


Figure 21: Hiro's diagram of a thesis

to the study, such as in her case, “one chapter will be self and selfness and groupness, one chapter will be my about my paintings”²⁷ and so forth. The number of chapters would depend on the topic. Mark pointed out that there would be an introduction and conclusion to the thesis, and Jane realised from Hiro’s drawing that “each chapter should have its own introduction and conclusion.” Hiro explained that, to help the reader, there should be a meta-narrative explaining the relationship of parts to whole, and

defining terms, analysing context, and claiming and justifying

Mark: claims and justification?

Hiro: Yep, then of course there is conclusion, we usually write up everything until conclusion then come back to the introduction

However, a problem arose when they discussed the methodology section. Hiro said, “in between, after introduction you have to have methodology.” Jane queried whether it should be part of the introduction. Hiro was sure that the introduction should have only the “issue and situation” of the study. Mark added that the methodology explained “how you’re doing it,” and had to be in between the introduction and the main body, somehow an adjunct. Jane objected that “you can’t do it between the introduction and the chapter, either has to be in there or it has to be in its own chapter, it can’t be in the space between.”

Hiro, Jane and Mark continued discussing how to include the methodology, with two other students joining in the discussion before Hiro added a chapter between the introduction and main body to her drawing on the board (Figure 1). She said, “You have to include methodology before the main. [Chris] also said we have, after, after writing these bits until this final bit you conduct your methodology.” The negotiation among the students was carried on with good humour, respect, and mutual support. However, the discussion illustrates some of the problems that the candidates faced. Their Master’s papers, at five thousand words in length, did not

²⁷ All direct quotes are from the session of 16 Feb 2005, unless otherwise noted.

have a specified organisational pattern. As Elkins (2009c) described, these candidates mined sources to further their practice, rather than reading for disciplinary acculturation or to develop a shared knowledge base. Most of their reading did not involve empirical research; even when it was based on empirical studies, like Dawkins (1989) which Jane was reading, the source summarised research outcomes rather than reported them.

However, the emphasis on writing and analysing short texts meant that the candidates groped for a structure for their own theses. Their reading did not provide examples of texts that followed patterns in the way that journal articles do for disciplines that use common organisational structures. While Chris understood and offered through Hiro a basic structure, the structure lacked detail, and as a result they turned to a default model of the scientific and social scientific journal articles which may not have fit their research. The lack of an appropriate genre that might have facilitated seeing the thesis as a task with separate parts made the writing process more difficult. Candidates had to envision a complete forty-thousand word thesis, based on a lightly structured five-thousand word Master's dissertation.

At the same time, this joint floundering toward a text organisation illustrates the mutually supportive nature of the seminar group. The candidates felt that they were embarked together on a project that was individual but also shared by the other artists in the group. Besides working with Chris, they worked together to develop their understanding of the thesis in fine art practice.

Hiro's session was unusual because of its focus on the architecture of the thesis. More often as suggested above, when the seminars discussed writing, the focus was on short texts, one side of A4 or less. These had different purposes, such as providing information for MA students who might consider undertaking a doctorate, but they also served the purpose of getting the candidates to think clearly and concisely about their research projects.

Individuals

Apichart

This section will discuss the individual projects of the four candidates introduced earlier, and the problems that they faced as they tried to write their theses. Both research and writing were difficult because they were enacting their research through their writing, rather than reconfiguring and reporting research that had been carried on in a separate process. This is similar to research in other humanities fields (c.f. Tucker, 2003), but art history, English and literature, and history are all text-based, while art practice works in other modes. The central issue of writing a practice-based Ph.D. for Chris was the issue of connecting writing and practice, of getting students to write like Adrian Stokes, who “just moved his gaze from the things in his studio to the page of the notepad, and started writing” [20 Nov 03]. Given Chris’s expressed feeling that artists’ practice should not be dominated by their texts, connecting writing and practice would always be a crucial issue in writing their practice-led Ph.D. theses.

Besides his practice, Apichart’s research project was driven by two interests, his practice and his dedication to helping his childhood village. He described his practice as being about “coping with change, i.e. the urbanisation of my home village” (Pholprasert, 2003). He was the founder in 2002 of the Banpao Rural Art Centre [BRAC], with the goal of promoting “truly contemporary forms of rural art through the inauguration of BRAC in my home village of Banpao [Thailand]” (Pholprasert, 2006, p. 126). BRAC was the origin of his research project.

Apichart’s project was shaped by a particular reading of art in Thailand in the twentieth century. Modern Thai art practices had been dominated Western art styles, which were introduced by an artist from Italy, Corrado Feroci (1892-1962) who founded a national art school in 1933, remaining there as a teacher, and eventually adopting a Thai name. In this school, students were taught to synthesise

local traditions with Western concepts and practices, leading to “a tactical rejuvenation of historic Thai culture using imported Western ideas” (Pholprasert, 2006, pp. 5-6). However, the result, as Apichart saw it, was art for the tourist trade. Thai art did not absorb the practices, such as abstract expressionism and the range of post-modern styles that had emerged in the West after Feroci (Silpa Bhirasri, in his Thai name) emigrated.

One result of this lack of artistic development was that art as it emerged in Thai cities, particularly Bangkok, imitated Western art and the predominantly urban orientation of Western art, while Thailand remained largely a rural society. As Apichart expressed it, “the notion of a vital, present-day rural life is still overshadowed by the traditional image of a static past seen in Thai classical art and the Western convention of the picturesque landscape” (Pholprasert, 2006, p. 12). Apichart, however, retained his affection for the rural countryside in which he had grown up. He wanted to create an art form that was contemporary, but which was appropriate to rural life. He established BRAC in order to foster this creative development, so that he would be more than an individual practitioner, but would also help other rural artists. He wanted to be “an adventurous artist (in a Western-international sense) and facilitate rural-oriented creative practices (in a manner recognisable to a present-day Thai farming community)” (Pholprasert, 2006, p. 13). Apichart’s thesis embodied his hope of rethinking the relationship between art and the metropolis, especially in a developing nation.

There has been a long tradition of British landscape art that extolled the countryside, including the work of artists such as John Constable (1776-1837; Figure 13), John Brett (1831-1902), and William Holman Hunt (1827-1910). However, these artists had been criticised for sentimentalism, anthropomorphism, and particularly, nostalgia. His research led him to look at the work of contemporary British environmental artists, such as Richard Long and David Nash. As Apichart wrote, “for many Western art historians a sentimental attachment to the past is linked to escapism and a sense of alienation from reality” (Pholprasert, 2006, p. 16), and he quoted

Raymond Williams to the effect that nostalgia is a way of “using the past, ‘the good old days’, as a stick to beat the present” (quoted in Pholprasert, 2006, p. 21).

Apichart wanted to persuade other artists, particularly in the Thai artistic community, that artistic practice could be both contemporary and rural, and that a proper understanding of nostalgia could help in this.

Apichart’s seminar presentation

Apichart presented his research project at a seminar session in October of 2003. Unusually, two lecturers besides Chris attended the session and participated in the discussion. One of these was another of Apichart’s supervisors (he had three), whose role was to supervise his practice. Apichart had prepared a discussion paper, copies of which he distributed around the room. Each single A4 sheet had a small cluster of basil leaves stapled to the corner to evoke the smells of Thailand.

In the paper, he provided an etymology of *nostalgia* and a brief tour of its development and current implication. He related this to his own practice, which was “about coping with change, i.e. the urbanisation of my home village,” and then described the relationship of nostalgia to his practice.

‘Nostalgia’ in my practice is first evident in the series of painting of iconographic images of village life. Although later my canvases became more abstract, they still remained the sense of smell and temperature of village environment. The current works combine abstract painting and images of rural life together, in order to achieve a poetic and emblematic interpretation within the same piece of work, which will enable it to communicate with people in the rural community themselves as well as urban and international audiences.

The subtlety of the juxtapositions between abstract painting and images of village life are made possible by an innovative technique of ‘digital

printmaking' (Whale and Barfield, 2001). This technique allows the images of artistic and agricultural practices to be equally presented on the same surface, to form a distinctive piece of artwork.

This passage was the focus of intense discussion in the seminar session. The discussion started with a question as to whether Apichart's work was modernist or post-modernist, that is, fully contemporary. Although the consensus of the group was that the labels were not important, Apichart said that he felt that he was a modernist, not a post-modern artist. Post-modernism was associated for Apichart with irony, and he did not want that association.

His recent practice consisted of taking digital photographs, manipulating them and printing them at large scale on canvas. The sources of the images included photographs that he had taken in his home village of people working and of surfaces he found there and photographs that he had taken in Newcastle documenting his practice, that is, photographs of thickly textured paintings. The resulting images look like abstract paintings—he compared them with the paintings of Pollock—but they are in detail and surface, photographs.



Figure 22: Apichart Pholprasert, *Picking leaves 2*

Apichart's goal was, in Chris's words, "to reach two audiences, an art audience and village audience" [31 Oct 03]. He would do this by taking "a kind of illustrative mode, or an image-making mode, which the village will understand, and [taking] an

abstraction process, [AP: yes] method of making art [AP: yes] for your art audiences.” However, the outcome of this process would be curiously post-modern. The final image was a picture of a villager’s work (picking leaves) and an artist’s work (putting paint on canvas). By stepping back from both, he created an ironic commentary on both. His practice supervisor described the result:

I find the work thrilling and I love looking at it, because there’s something about the sensation of the colours, the green, which is very fresh and leafy, so it’s like [someone’s] garden but there’s also something which is about appetite, which is about the isolation of pigment and these specks of brilliant colour. So, it’s actually the sum of its parts. [31 Oct 03]

Chris concurred that his work had made a creative leap, and in that moment process, goals and questions of whether his work was ironic became unimportant, “all that stuff that you’ve done sort of melts into just the history of this” (FAP seminar, 31 Oct 03).

However, both supervisors felt that the description, quoted above, was not adequate. Chris thought that the passage describing his work was

very reductive, and makes it sound like an explanation, which it can operate as, but it needs more layers to it. You see, when you’re describing actually this paragraph, it’s all about describing what we’re looking at. It’s getting the nuances into it, or the sense of a practice, the sense of discovery through practice, into it, that needs to be there. This could be an art historian’s writing about it.

The final comment is particularly telling. Compare Apichart’s description of his own work with this description of the work of Jackson Pollock (1912-1956), a modernist abstract expressionist in a classic art history text.

Apichart's text	A description of Jackson Pollock's art practice, from Gombrich (1995, pp. 602-4)
<p>The current works combine abstract painting and images of rural life together, in order to achieve a poetic and emblematic interpretation within the same piece of work, which will enable it to communicate with people in the rural community themselves as well as urban and international audiences.</p> <p>The subtlety of the juxtapositions between abstract painting and images of village life are made possible by an innovative technique of 'digital printmaking' (Whale and Barfield, 2001).</p>	<p>The resulting tangle of lines satisfies two opposing standards of twentieth-century art: the longing for child-like simplicity and spontaneity that evokes the memory of childish scrawls at the time of life before children even start to form images; and, at the opposite end, the sophisticated interest in the problems of 'pure painting.'</p>

Passage 1: Apichart's text and Gombrich's description of Jackson Pollock's practice

Phrases such as "poetic and emblematic interpretation" in Apichart's writing (Passage 25) are positively evaluative in a similar way to "child-like simplicity" in Gombrich's text, while "enable it to communicate with people in the rural community" projects a response onto viewers in a way similar to that "evokes the memory" does in Gombrich's text. "Subtlety of juxtapositions" mirrors "sophisticated interest." Both passages link description and explanation through what Tucker (2003, p. 296), quoting Baxandall, called a "guided act of inspection."

However, in this case the artist was doing the art historian's work. Apichart was not simply reaching for the nearest available tool or genre for the discussion of art. Apichart's third supervisor, an art historian who was not present at this session, encouraged him to write in this manner. Apichart felt himself caught between conflicting advice: "because I have an art historian [EB: as your other supervisor] so some of his questions keep ringing in my ear, but Chris is practitioner and some of his suggestions against that, so it's, so I'm kind of in between." [5 Feb 05]

It is not uncommon for supervisors to disagree in their advice to candidates, but in this case the conflict was between Chris's vision of writing from the point of view of a practicing artist, which Apichart would have to invent, and the art historian's ideas of writing, which were supported by examples that Apichart knew.

In written feedback on a draft text, this supervisor advised him that "some close analysis of particular works is needed. What kind of meanings do they generate and for whom? (Surely it's the case that different audiences – local, in Bangkok, at Northumbria – interpret them differently?)." He went on to suggest texts that would allow him to better contextualise his own work, for example "**Environmental Art**. You need to read up on this term. Malcolm Andrew's book on Landscape Art would be a good place to begin – also Krasner and Wallis's book" [written feedback, 23 Mar 04; emphasis in original]. Some of the results of this advice can be seen in Passage 1, where Apichart projects the reception of his work onto the villagers in Banpao and among urban viewers.

Writing the thesis

When Apichart wrote his thesis, he tried to balance the conflicting advice that he had received. The result was a chapter, "Practical research: From my early work to my use of 'immediate nostalgia'," that oscillates between a traditional academic voice and a much more personal voice. In the first passage (below, Passage 2) and in a similar passage later in this chapter, he situates his practice in an intellectual context. His text is dense with quotes and citations; in other words, it is writing typical of doctoral theses. The next passage (Passage 3), however, is personal and intimate, uncharacteristic of traditional theses, though similar to writing in the New Humanities thesis (Hodge, 1995; see also Starfield & Ravelli, 2006).

Comparing these two passages illuminates how Apichart moved between traditional models of art historical writing and attempted to create a new type of writing that would speak from his position as a practitioner. In order to compare the

two passages systematically, I will draw on McDonald's coding of the subjects of T-units (independent clauses). Her system of analysis divided clause subjects into *phenomenal* and *epistemic* classes. While the phenomenal class referred to things in the world, the epistemic class referred to reasons and arguments, abstractions from the phenomena. The implications of this division are found in the writer's projection of agency. Writers who create a stance of objectivity would use epistemic nouns as subjects, while writers who are constructing themselves as purposive agents would have more phenomena as sentence subjects. Accounts that are reflexive constructions are characteristic of New Humanities theses (Hodge, 1995; Starfield & Ravelli, 2006).

¹Nostalgia may be a 'universal catchword for looking back' (Lowenthal 1985: 4) and be associated with things and events from the past, but ²it is, in fact, created within our life in the present. ³Although the past, like the future, is beyond physical reach, it is integral to our imaginations. ^{Q1}['Reminiscence and expectation suffuse every present moment' (Lowenthal 1985: 3). ^{Q2}The past 'is not simply back there, in a separate and foreign country; it is assimilated in ourselves, and, resurrected into an everchanging present' (Lowenthal 1985: 412).

⁴Lippard says:

^{Q3}The past [...] is constantly being broken down and reintegrated into the present, reinterpreted by historians, curators, anthropologists, popular novelists, and filmmakers. Nostalgia is a way of denying the present as well as keeping some people and places in the past, where we can visit them when we feel like taking a leave of absence from modernity (1997: 85).

⁵It is not only old objects and historic sites that hold stories of the past. ⁵Our immediate experiences can also evoke memories of the past. ⁶Marcel Proust's famous novel, *Remembrance of Things Past* (Moncrieff and Kilmartin trans, 1983) is an extensive engagement with sudden occurrences of memory. ⁷Proust says 'the past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of intellect, in some material object (in the sensation which that material object will give us) of which we have no inkling' (Moncrieff and Kilmartin trans, 1983: 47).

⁹The novel 'is an account of the life and artistic development of a fictitious individual, Marcel, who is in many respects a replica of the author' (Miller, 1957: 24). ¹⁰Proust remarks that one part of the book is a part of his life, which he had forgotten and which suddenly reoccurred through a familiar sensual incident (Curtiss 1949: 312). ¹¹Proust shows us how immediate sensations can return our minds to other feelings from the past to relish our lives in the present.

¹²There is a famous incident in the novel that describes the process of recollection through an immediate sensation, which he calls 'involuntary memory' (Curtiss, 1949:231). ¹³Marcel tells us how the taste of a madeleine cake dipped in a cup of tea enchants him before he has even recognised the taste as one he had formerly known every morning during his childhood in the rural town of Combray. ^{Q4}This incident 'has become a universally accepted symbol of screen memory and how it may be evoked by a sudden, somewhat trivial sensation' (Miller, 1957:24). ¹⁴In the novel, Proust writes:

I raised to my lips a spoonful of tea in which I had soaked a morsel of the cake...

(Pholprasert, 2006, pp. 91-2)

Passage 2: An academic voice

Looked at more closely, the independent clause subjects (T-units) in Passage 2 are comprised either of terms that he wants to define in order to relate them to his practice, or sources that provide definitions or examples. They are identified by

superscript numbers, while direct quotes, including those introduced by a phrase such as "The past 'is not simply back there...'," are identified by a superscript Q followed by a number. Terms that are defined include "nostalgia," "our immediate experiences," (T-units 1, 6) and, through quotes, "the past" and "this incident" (Q2, Q4). An exception is T5, "old objects and historic sites," which describes evocative phenomena.

In Passage 2, most of the clause subjects can be categorised as "research," which is one of MacDonald's (1992) subcategories of the large group of epistemic sentence subjects. However, the category of epistemic sentence subjects would have to include the many references to Proust's *Remembrance of things past* (2006/1913). These references are less evidentiary than evaluative, in the way that Tucker (2003) argues good art historical writing must be. Apichart imported this evaluative language from his sources, for example, "Nostalgia may be a 'universal catchword...'" or "This incident 'has become a universally accepted symbol...'" The concepts that Apichart evaluates are his and our experiences: "nostalgia," "the past," "our immediate experiences." These concepts are significantly different from the theoretical frameworks that MacDonald categorises as research.

¹I am now going to describe my experiences of sensory reconnection and homeness. ²However, I must first make one qualification. ³In Proust, recollection was caused by the *same* sensual stimuli occurring to the narrator in the past and the present (e.g. the taste of the madeleine in the present mirrors the same taste in the past). ⁴However, during my stay in Newcastle, I found that the process of recollection involved *unfamiliar* stimuli that generated parallel associations.

⁵For example, the first time I walked along a street covered with snow, the sound and the feeling under my feet immediately reminded me of my family's farm. ⁶The sensation of walking on snow was linked to the experience of treading on the soft sand around our farmhouse and outbuildings. ⁷In particular, the frozen surface of the snow behaved in a similar fashion to sand that has just dried after being soaked by rain. ⁸As I crunched my way through the snow, the large tree that grows besides my parent's hut sprang up clearly in my mind. ⁹I could also see my father planting cassava trees in the nearby field.

¹⁰This seems such a surprising association to make on a bitterly cold winter day in northeast England. ¹¹Nothing could seem more distant than my tropical home in Thailand. ¹²However, the two locations of my practical research (having already helped me to understand the role of nostalgic yearning) now gave me an opportunity to reflect on the creative power of sensory experiences in both urban and rural environments. ¹³The fact that I could associate urban snow with rural sand had a liberating effect on my practical work. ¹⁴I stopped trying to create images about the incompatible nature of village and city life and began to take the interpenetration of urban and rural experiences more seriously.

(Pholprasert, 2006, p. 94)

Passage 3: A more personal voice

However, if we look at Passage 3, we see a strikingly different type of writing. "I" and Apichart's sensations ("the sound and feeling under my feet") are the topics of all the sentences except T3, T12 and T13. This is author saturated writing, highly self-reflective. While the first two subject "I"s orient the reader, the subjects of the other clauses lead to descriptions of experiences. T3 returns us to Proust, while T12 and T13 step back from his direct experiences to consider the experiences' effects on his practice.

Apichart was not entirely confident about writing in this way. He was aware that the result did not sound like what he thought a Ph.D. thesis should sound like. However, he hoped that it might be something that another artist might learn from and build upon. In a discussion about what he hoped his contribution might be from his Ph.D., he referred to a passage in which taking a bath in Newcastle with the shower left on evoked the rain on the village pond in Banpao:

Maybe someone might find that, say when I talk about, "I found this in Newcastle, I feel this, feel that," maybe it's not for some people, maybe for some people it might not look like thesis, but if the contribution go to the practice, practitioner... Actually my artist friend, Richard, thought that the evidence of the process is there, so when someone reads that, they learn and get something, when they talk about, you know, being in the bath, my friend says it's provocative, I probably embarrassed. "Why you want to be in the bath?" [thesis draft, p. 97] I'm not sure, but my friend Richard, even though I found this embarrassing, I think it's a wonderful experience, and it makes you think that you make something interesting out of ordinary life.

The intention to create something that other artists could build on is a point that Chris made regularly. Speaking to the seminar group, he said,

And again, I think, you know, you've got keep putting yourself in, you've got to keep on saying to yourself, I, my job is to advance knowledge for a particular field, and the field is people like us. That's really important. [19 Jan 05]

This vision of contributing to other artists through writing the thesis was a central part Chris's message to the candidates. The oscillation between an art historical mode and a practicing artist's mode is an indication of the tensions involved in advancing knowledge for artists while writing a thesis, with its accumulated enrolments.

Apichart's successfully defended his thesis and it was accepted with only minor corrections in April of 2005. His text had moved on significantly from the description of the relationship between his practice and theory that he presented in the seminar paper. Although his thesis tried to accommodate the advice that he had received from his art history supervisor, his description of his practice (Chapter 3 of

his thesis) was much more intimate than what would be characteristic in evidence-based art historical writing. The resources that he found in nostalgia were deeply personal, embedded in his life history and presented in that way.

Chris, however, continued to feel that Apichart had not cracked the problem of writing about his practice. In a discussion with the FAP candidates after Apichart had handed in his thesis, he said,

If you remember, when I, I use Apichart as an example... I just happened to be reading one of his chapters where he is trying to talk about his own practice, as though he's an art critic talking or an art historian talking about his own work, and it seems to me like... that's a huge kind of problem. [8 June 05]

I doubt many theses fully live up to the hopes of either supervisors or candidates; a hope that a candidate writing in a second language might write with the skill of a mature artist like Adrian Stokes is almost sure to be frustrated. It is particularly difficult when an artist must invent a way of writing appropriate to their innovative practice. However, as Chris went on to remind the candidates, even if they create a thesis with a clear structure and cogent arguments,

all the things we can do just like sums, actually, when it comes to writing up, none of them will count for very much if we don't have something going that's to do with being able to describe your practice.

Apichart's difficulties lay within the normal range of difficulties in thesis writing. Although Apichart's effort to describe his practice in a way that avoided writing like an art historian was particular to thesis writing in Fine Art Practice, receiving conflicting advice from supervisors is not. The effort to engage fully with his practice in the text led Apichart to write a thesis that was more intimate than it might otherwise have been if he had followed the guidance of his art historian

supervisor. The result was a thesis more reflective and more congruent with the new humanities thesis (Starfield & Ravelli, 2006) than it might have been without the contested advice.

Jane

According to Malcolm Gladwell, a connector is a person with “a truly extraordinary knack of making friends and acquaintances” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 41), while a salesman has “the skills to persuade us when we are unconvinced of what we are hearing” (p. 70).

Jane is a connector, a salesman, and an artist. In February of 2005, she wrote the rules for a game she called Killer on the blackboard in Chris’s office, passed around a bag with a draw for the role of Killer, and green and pink post-it labels for identifying oneself as either killed or knowing who

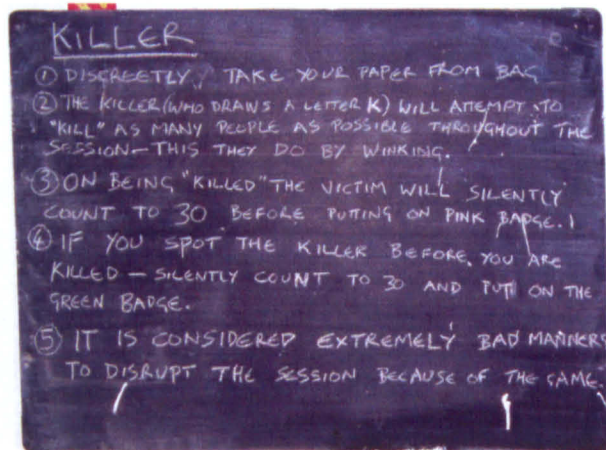


Figure 23: The rules for Killer

Jane, Chris and the other participants in the seminar played Killer for weeks thereafter, discreetly winking at one another. It was, in a way, an intervention in the seminar. Like her art practice, the game was characterised by a blend of altered social dynamics, play, and polite misbehaviour.

Jane explained how she had tried to answer the pub question one evening at a birthday party at her local. She told her questioner that, although she was doing a Ph.D. in Fine Art, she didn’t have a medium. Instead, she instigated events or happenings. When she was asked why, she said, “I suppose I’m looking to see if there’s another way of making art which stops it from being commodifiable and

questions ideas of ownership" [25 Aug 05]. However, she didn't see her artwork as a Marxist critique of the art world. Instead, she drew on neo-Darwinist theory, "the idea of everything happening with repetition and slight variations, and that you can make big things happen ... when things are repeated and the variations end up being a sort of you know, something else that happens" [25 Aug 05]. Her art depended on interventions, and the repetitions and variations that will happen as a crowd is affected by the interventions.

Art, she argued, was a form of communication. As a form of communication, it was comprised of ideas that were distributed within a social network, and within that network the ideas were shared, evolved, and altered. Other artists had positioned themselves as facilitators or curators of artistic practices. However, Jane wanted to decentre her practice even more radically, by instigating changes in behaviour over which she ultimately had no control. She began to look at what she called "collective repetitive action." Collective repetitive action was actions undertaken by individuals within a group or network. These actions might be instigated by an individual, but they would be repeated freely by other members of the group. By instigating the actions, Jane could claim them as her art practice, but the people who repeated and varied the action might not be aware of her role. They might feel that they were the instigators of the action.

There was an element of critique in Jane's art practice.

The art system as it is, the contemporary art system as it is is very elitist and marginalising, and it, there could be another way of doing it, another way of thinking about it or another way of exploring it, which isn't patronising...
[25 Aug 2005]

Listening to Jane describe her practice, with its mixture of observation, inventiveness, and generosity, it seemed impossible not to be captivated. Imagining how it could be transmuted into a research project seemed equally difficult. In

describing her project, Jane tended to fall back on explaining what she had done in order to describe her practice. One of the stories that she told was of her first project on her MA, which she had completed immediately before starting her Ph.D. She had made grey pyjamas in a range of sizes, and then asked friends and acquaintances (Jane in her salesman role) to pose in their front rooms, or in another place if they preferred, wearing the grey pyjamas, and then photographed them. Jane's story didn't end there, though. The lecturers on the MA programme including Chris insisted that she participate in the MA exhibition at the University; if she didn't, she wouldn't get a mark for exhibition practice and would consequently fail the course. Under duress, she had put up her pictures in the museum gallery. For her, the exhibition was a disaster:

I felt like I'd turned my friends and the people that I know in the sort of circle that I'm part of, into objects, so I'd made them to be, they were up there to be, in a place out of their control and on a white wall. [25 Aug 2005]

The initial reception of her show, too, was not good. One of her lecturers had said, "Oh, it's about Auschwitz and it's crap." That hadn't been her intention at all;

it was supposed to be a pleasant, funny thing about, you know... you know, about the fact that, you know, we're all similar but completely different, and actually if you blank one thing out, the clothes, then you start noticing decoration or what's behind people or, you know, the choices that people have made are the things that come out when you make repetition, you know, and actually the differences become more noticeable the more repetition there is. [25 Aug 05]

Later, she put the pictures up in her local and had a party for the people who had been in the photographs. Toward the end of her Master's, she had a studio visit in which lecturers and students came out to her home studio to evaluate her studio practice. They saw her recent work, which had developed from this early work, and,

after the visit, everyone went down to her pub. Her lecturers saw the photographs from Jane's exhibition of her friends and local people on the wall of the pub.

Both went, "Oh!" you know, as they were served half a pint by the woman who's in grey pyjamas in the thing and the pub that's owned by a guy that's in them and you know it's just sort of like, "Oh, right," ... At the end of that day they were both going, "yeah, it's great, it is fantastic, I understand what, you know, I understand the connection" and I'd been talking about repetition and variation from the beginning. [25 Aug 05]

As the person who made the pyjamas, asked friends to pose in them and took pictures, the grey pyjamas project was an artwork with more or less traditional roles: an artist, an art-making activity, and a product, the photographs. Her next artwork was more decentred, with participants taking full ownership of the work. Her daughter was one of the co-ordinators of school protests against the Iraq war. Jane got some bright pink fabric, cut it into strips and gave it to her daughter to distribute to the demonstration stewards, with the idea that they would wear the strips as armbands. The children wore them instead as headbands, giving them a visible identity within the protests. Jane got more fabric and passed that out, but other people began to act, and pink banners and pink graffiti began to appear at the protests. Jane tracked this collective action through the local newspapers and television reporting as others repeated and varied it. This was, she felt, a meme, a term coined by Richard Dawkins to describe "a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of *imitation*" (Dawkins, 1989, p. 192). The pink headbands, once released, had replicated and morphed into a variety pink manifestations of opposition to the war in Iraq, beyond her creation or control. However, it remained her artwork. She said in her Master's dissertation,

This is not object-based practise. I aim to instigate ideas that can develop within their natural environment. The artwork is a process by which ideas are transformed by existing situations, and situations are transformed by

ideas. The objects that spin off from the project belong to the participants. I use a camera to construct the situations. I do not construct situations to take a photograph. (J. Park, 2001)

Jane seemed an exceptional candidate for a doctorate in Fine Art Practice. She was articulate, thoughtful, and aware of current trends in art practice. She was particularly good at theorising her practice. She had been aware of this at least from the time of her MA, when initially she had earned distinctions for her seminar participation and thirds for her practice. She ended with a distinction overall and an invitation to start a funded doctorate, once her supervisors had come to understand her project. Chris came to see parallels between his own practice and hers, in that both practices depended on interventions, his in museums while her interventions happened in the social sphere.

She articulated her theory effectively. In her Mid-Point Progression document, Jane linked evolutionary theory (e.g., Dawkins, 1989; Sperber, 1996) to reception theory. She argued that repetition and variation happen both biologically and culturally, with Dawkins' memes working as agents of cultural transmission. An interpretive community (Fish, 1980) uses its shared interpretive strategies to understand that what is happening is art, rather than apply alternative plausible interpretations, such as a sociological frame. Gladwell (2002) provided a framework for understanding how a repeated idea could be spread at a social level. As Jane wrote in her MPP, "the role of the artist can be described not so much as a 'creator' of an idea but as a connector, consciously connecting and transmitting ideas across interpretive communities." This conception of the artist challenged the view of Walter Benjamin (1973/1935) that a work of art had an aura that could only be conveyed by the original artefact. For Jane, the idea of the work of art could be more important than the artefact. The idea of Tracey Emin's *My Bed* (1998), that is, the artist's unmade bed with "empty booze bottles, fag butts, stained sheets, worn panties: the bloody aftermath of a nervous breakdown" (Saatchi Gallery, n/d) was more vivid and more widely known than the bed itself. This was not the

particularity, the aura (Benjamin, 1973/1935) of a painting such as Picasso's *Demoiselles*.

Chris saw similarities between her ideas and those circulating in sociology or anthropology; what was different was that Jane made art "as a way of finding these things out differently; in other words, the process is different." There were similarities, too, with other artists. Jeremy Deller, who had won the Turner Prize in 2004, had been cited by the Turner Prize committee (Tate Britain, 2004) for his collaborative and participatory art creations, including *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001), a filmed re-enactment of a clash during the miners' strike in 1984.

Jane discussed Deller's work with me in April of 2006. She described a show that Deller had curated called *Folk Archive*. It had, she said, pictures of activities and artefacts like Cumbrian wrestling matches, hand-done tattoos from prisons, and bike helmets designed by Hell's Angels.

But, of course he put it in the Barbican and he's got his name on it, and that's made quite a huge difference and you see all the people walking around the Barbican, going, "He's a fantastic artist, isn't he Jeremy Deller." And this is by Joe Smith, in prison at Wormwood Scrubs and these helmets that have been designed by these Hells Angels [10 April 06]

Jane went on to say that she didn't believe the credit accruing to Deller was Deller's doing or fault; it was the result of an art world that elevated the Barbican and Turner Prize winners over the creativity of "people who don't consider themselves artists."

Many of the objections that she had to the art scene, such as its elitism or the modernist artist as masterful creator, could be transferred seamlessly into the academic context, including elitism and the researcher as the author of others' lives. She knew that her work might resemble descriptive work in the social sciences, and she was not inherently uncomfortable with that.

I completely accept that somebody would, somebody from a different field would be talking about exactly the same thing and you know could be talking about exactly the same things, and that would be as interesting to me as the art world, it wouldn't be any different. [25 Aug 2004]

However, as her understanding of social science research developed, she came to see that it might alter her relationship with her participants as ineluctably as putting their pictures on the walls of a gallery. The model of social science research with which she was familiar required detached observation and analysis. She had attended the University's required research training module for PG researchers, "and you're really aware that that they are talking about being objective and not making, not affecting what you're looking at" [31 Oct 03]. In a seminar session devoted to discussing how each candidate went about the process of writing about their research, Jane showed a folder that she had created to hold data on people who participated in a group of Harley-Davidson riders. However,

I've stopped this, cause I really don't like it, and it's actually, I actually sort of write down the day that I visited, how long I stayed, what I took, which equipment I used, how many tables people were sitting on [laughs], what I drank, you know, what coffee I had even, you know, who I talked to, and what they said and, and, what happened and which photographs I took and what the conversation was about, and I actually I stopped because it just feels horrible, 'cause come back and you do this, and you just go, "aiiha," I feel like I'm stealing people's lives. [8 June 2005]

Jane's role as a connector was central to her art and much more significant to her than being a detached observer. The second problem was that she did not want to be a detached social scientist; she was an artist and she intended to intervene in the situation. Her practice was the intervention.

Chris was aware of these problems, which were integral to her practice. He encouraged her by saying that,

what's wrong with that is the kind of sociology model [JP: yeah] inserting itself into your creative practice and, and just turning it into something completely different... and what's interesting is that, is that, it just shows you what an artist can do that's not reducible to a kind of normal research process, which is what we should all be struggling to make sure happens. [8 June 05]

Chris was anxious to develop new methodologies of research that would be appropriate to the arts. In the seminars, he worked to encourage the candidates to write small texts about their work to refine their ideas and to become fluent writers. He encouraged them to keep reflective diaries documenting their practice, and he suggested ways that they might write about their practice that avoided them taking on the role of critic or art historian. He encouraged Jane to follow her practice, that is, to ignore the resemblances to social science research and to pursue her own goals. He said,

it might actually help you if the start point and the end point looked just like a social science [JP: yeah] Ph.D. but the process is so alarmingly different and the kind of construct and feel and all those things within it, that people had to accept that it was an artwork [JP: yeah]. [31 Oct 2003]

The question of whether her practice created artwork did not come up in the seminars and was not raised by Chris. In her MPP, Jane discussed the questions that had come up in presentations such as one that she gave to the MA students on 3 February 2004. "There were no questions raised as to whether or not the headband project was 'art'. It seems that the act of introducing an idea as art to an arts interpretive community is enough" (J. Park, 2004). She had told her daughter and "about six other friends" that she intended to claim the spreading of the idea as her

artwork, but, she knew that many of the headband wearers felt that they had developed the idea. This, she thought, did not contradict or diminish her claim; she “was working in a space where the role of the artist was ambiguous and the meanings of the work were multiplied” (J. Park, 2004). Ultimately, though, “it’s bloody art cause I’m an artist and I’m doing it” [25 Aug 05].

Jane was somewhat concerned about whether she would face the same conflict that she had faced on the MA course, about how she would present her practice. Events or exhibitions were things that

I’m not comfortable with. [EB: right] though I might have been comfortable with at the beginning, but I wouldn’t be comfortable with now, to appropriate the work of other people, basically. Which maybe I’m sort of doing anyway by putting it into this context. [10 Apr 2006]

This had been a recurrent theme in our discussions. Two years earlier, she had said, “I’m not going to show anything for the exhibition, because I’m not going to objectify the people that I’m working with, I’m not going to turn them into objects for an art audience to look at in that way” [25 Aug 04]. She described a discussion with a friend about her work, in which the friend had said, “Ok, so you’re making artwork that you can’t have... [CD: yeah] you know, you can’t see, you can’t have and you can’t give to someone. That’s bollocks, Jane.” [8 June 05]

Ultimately, though, the question of how she would present her work remained distant. As expressed in her MPP document (J. Park, 2004), her research aims were:

- To investigate the communication structures within and between specific social groups
- To explore how ideas evolve in transmission and the significance of context in this process
- To consider the effect the transmission process has on the meaning of artworks

- To instigate and monitor ideas within social grouping

Jane took a suspension of her doctoral study while she had a child; she returned to the seminar group, but had not completed before I finished gathering data. Jane had not found a way to carry out her research on her own terms.

In trying to describe her research, Jane confronted problems that underlay the nature of research in FAP. In the eyes of her supervisors and her colleagues, her practice was unarguably at doctoral level. However, based on her experiences on the MA and her own strong predilection, she did not want to observe her participants in the ways she learned in the methodology classes that she took. Her supervisors—perhaps because of the relative newness of the FAP in granting Ph.D.'s—did not suggest alternative ways to configure her practice as research, and in spite of the strengths of her candidacy, she did not move to completion.

Hiro

Like a number of the students doing Ph.D.s, Hiro's project had grown out of her Master's study, and that in turn had grown out of her experience studying in the UK. She said, "I found it very difficult to express myself in a way that the students, the home students or, or the teachers asked us" [19 June 06]. Her experience of doing her undergraduate degree in Japan was very different from that of the British students:

in BA level we will be, we thought ourselves as students, not artists and then we believed that after this continuing practice we will get our individual thing, [EB: um hum] but here, I think, I thought, that's my impression, but we are asked to express yourself from the start [19 June 06].

Part of the problem, as she saw it, was different conceptualisations of the self. While the British students saw art, particularly visual art, as an opportunity for self expression, the "Japanese sense of self is always coming from groupness, the self comes, draws out of groupness. We don't have absolute self" [19 June 06]. Unlike the

British students, Hiro believed that “I’m not me without my environment, i.e., my group and maybe support of my group.” This personal experience of being different from other students on the MA Fine Art Practice course shaped her dissertation and ultimately her Ph.D. research.

Her Master’s dissertation was an investigation of *Images of selfhood East and West* (Oshima, 2001). Its purpose was to find out “whether we can grasp the true self, so-called, which never changes, to evaluate the significance of every moment of our being” (Oshima, 2001, p. 4). A central feature of her dissertation was a comparison of two recurring images. One was that of the rider mastering his horse, which ran through Western art at least from the Renaissance (Figure 24) through to Wassily Kandinsky’s *Lyrical* (1911; Figure 16). This visual image had its counterpart in Freud’s use of the image to represent the Superego controlling the urges of the Unconscious. Against this Western image of horse and rider, Hiro set a series of images of an ox herder. Ten images, originally created by a Zen master of the Sung dynasty [960-1279], illustrate the progress of spiritual development.

The ox herding pictures begin with the ox herder’s search for the ox, which is a metaphor for the self. The ox herd pursues the ox, eventually catching it and bringing it home, that is, understanding the nature



Figure 24: Andrea del Verrocchio, *Bartolommeo Colleoni*, 1479



Figure 25: Yokoo Tatsuhiko, *Picture 3, Ten oxherding pictures*

of the self and taming it. Understanding the self is followed by a realisation that the self and object do not really exist, and the ox disappears from the pictures. In the final image, “the enlightened man, who used to be the ox herd, now goes to the town and meets people. For him who got rid of his ‘I-ness’, ‘I am you’ and ‘you are me’ at the same time” (Oshima, 2001, p. 13). She linked this loss of self-identity to Jung’s Collective Unconscious, which, with its implication of a shared innate identity, she found much more compatible with her sense of group identity. In the contrast between the ox herder images and the Western rider mastering his horse, Hiro saw an analogy for artists in the two traditions.

The academic Western artist looked for his own personality by setting his ‘ego’ off against the outside world. The tradition in the Far East entails the artist seeking an ‘archetype’, turning in his research to the depth of Nature and the Self. (Oshima, 2001, p. 13)

In the abstract for her Master’s dissertation, she also mentioned the methodology she intended to use in her study: “the basic method adopted is analogical, that is to compare the analogies which have emerged in different cultures for dealing with this problematic topic” (p. 3). Although her reasoning was analogical throughout, she only made this explicit in a section in which she discussed Schopenhauer’s *The world as will and idea* (1818). Schopenhauer described a blind but powerful man carrying a sighted man with paralysed legs as a metaphor for the will carrying reason. At the beginning of the section she announced “The question that is before me is whether and how far it may be possible to conflate—if only by analogy—the oxherd and the ox with the *Idea* and *Will*” (p. 19). In concluding the section, she again explicitly discussed methodology, writing, “Returning to the ox analogy of Zen, the sighted man would be the oxherd and the blind will or instinct would be the ox. Schopenhauer’s own analogy seems to fit the Zen image...” (Oshima, 2001, p. 23). The awareness of methodology suggested by her making clear how her relationships were to be drawn indicates her readiness for doctoral study.

Her success in writing a dissertation that combined visual analogies and philosophical connections led her to undertake her Ph.D. However, she planned to extend her study of the self in East and West to the role of artists' groups in Japan and the UK. Hiro was the leader at Northumbria University of the Ryu Association of Contemporary Art, an artists' group founded by Toshihiro Hamano. Based in Kagawa, Japan, Hiro's home town, it was intended to encourage local artists and to provide them both with opportunities for cultural exchange—hence the Northumbria connection—and opportunities for artistic development without relocating to Tokyo. The Ryu group was composed of artists who had studied under Hamano, a number of whom came to Northumbria to continue their studies. Her research would compare the Ryu group with the Stuckist group of British artists.

Although artists' groups have been extensively studied—many, in fact, such as the Impressionists, were the creation of art historians—her project was distinctive because she brought a practitioner's perspective to the study. Initially, both Hiro and Chris were not clear how her study could be considered practice-based, since it did not emerge from or respond to her practice. However, they came to realise, and mentioned frequently, that she could not be a member of the Ryu group of artists if she did not have a practice, so an emic study of the group was only possible if she maintained her practice. As well as supporting younger artists from the Ryu group at Northumbria during the period of her study, Hiro curated exhibitions, including one that brought together work by the Ryu Group and the Stuckists, in Balifgate Museum, Alnwick, and another by her teacher, Toshihiro Hamano, at the Paris headquarters of UNESCO.

Hiro's research project seemed strong. The extension of the dissertation into a study of artistic groups from an artist's point of view seemed reasonable, and there were a variety of social science methods that she might have used for her investigation. She had shown methodological awareness by discussing how she drew the connections that she made in her dissertation. She planned to integrate her dissertation into her thesis as a chapter. However, she was unable to move beyond the short texts that

she wrote for the seminar sessions and her Master's dissertation to either research among the artists or a different approach that would lead to a completed thesis.

In her Mid-Point Progression document, Hiro drew on a schematic pattern that Chris introduced to the seminar sessions. Chris explained that, according to C. S. Peirce (1839-1914), there were three types of semiotic relationships between a signifier and the signified²⁸. The first relationship was indexical, in which the signifier is directly linked to the signified. A photograph or a handprint might stand in this relationship. The second relationship was iconic, in which the signifier resembles the signified. A painted or drawn portrait might have this relationship. The third relationship was symbolic, in which the signifier does not resemble the signified, but rather has an arbitrary relationship with it. Much of language has this type of relationship; for example, the word *cow* has an arbitrary relationship with the milk-providing animal. In the seminar discussions, these relationships became *firstness*, *secondness* and *thirdness*, and were frequently extended in discussions to other tripartite relationships. Hiro used this framework to "model the phases of my creativity as a form of 'firstness' that relates an external 'secondness' (my paintings) to a 'thirdness' (my group membership)" (Oshima, 2001, p. 8). As she went on to elaborate,

Firstness:	I am a creative person irrespective of cultural differences, but it is impossible to embody my creativity without a means of self-expression.
Secondness:	My paintings are a means of creative self-expression through the formal production of lines, shapes and colours. Looking at one of my paintings is an opportunity for me to reflect upon the 'self' who has created these artworks
Thirdness:	Through the Group I find meaning in being an artistic 'Self'. The Group provides a social context for the secondness of

²⁸ This represents, presumably for teaching purposes, a significant simplification of Peirce's analysis (see, for example, Chandler, 2002). I am trying to represent here my understanding of the discussion in the seminar, rather than Chris's full understanding or other interpretations of Peirce.

	<p>my self-expression and the firstness of my creativity. (Oshima, 2001, p. 9)</p>
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Hiro found herself caught between her upbringing, including her artistic training in Japan, and the artistic ethos that she found at Northumbria and in Britain. In Japan, an artist spent long periods in training, mastering skills such as drawing, and only after they had mastered these skills could they begin to express themselves. In Britain, on the other hand, students were expected to express their individuality immediately, whether or not they had mastered skills that she saw as fundamental to artistic practice. This was a problem that she faced as a teacher, when she had tried to teach the very basic skills of drawing, such as measuring the relationships of the parts of a body with a pencil.

when I was asked to teach life drawing [...] in the school of design, [EB um hum] [...], but it didn't work, because, you know, they didn't, the students weren't, didn't care really about that basic skill. They were interested in expressing themselves and I kind of struggled there, because I believe that without the basic skill you can't express yourself. [19 June 06]

She was aware that this difference in training had historical roots, described earlier in Chapter 4. She and the other Japanese students were polite about the skills of home art students, but they found the difference in training striking.

The research project that she proposed in her MPP largely extended the scope of her MA dissertation from individual experiences of selfhood to how group dynamics were affected by these experiences of selfhood. She hoped to explore these contrasts in training and in cultural expectations for the role of the artist and the expression of the self. Her wider scope, though, called for new methodological approaches, and here she proposed innovative methods to explore artists' groupness, including the invention of fictional groups as a thought experiment, as well as surveying artists' group members and bringing together Ryu group and Stuckists for seminars.

However, she never mentioned the thought experiments in our discussions of her thesis and her methodology, though we did discuss her activities with the Stuckists, including the exhibition in Alnwick that she organised. She planned interviews with members of the Stuckists.

She also described the distinctiveness of her study. This passage read in part,

Whilst there are published art historical views on artists' groups, nothing I have come across takes up this theme from the practitioner's perspective. Therefore this research is attempting to introduce an alternative view by investigating contrasting group situations amongst artists. I am working on the hypothesis that the field of practice-led fine art research will be advanced through a better understanding of how a single artist's practice fits within a shared group identity and how collectivity fits within the identity of a single artist. I think that in order to research this topic one also has to understand how the concept of creativity can be applied to the individual self and to group situations.

There is an extensive field of literature on group dynamics but, to the best of my knowledge, this material (drawn from sociology, philosophy and psychology) has not been applied to artists' groups or to the contrast between artists' groups in Japan and Britain. [draft, 19 Jan 05]

In a Ph.D. seminar session two days after her successful MPP panel, Chris asked the other candidates to write brief statements that would explain why MA students should consider doing practice-led Ph.D.s. He circulated this page of Hiro's MPP text and said that this section on the distinctiveness of her research, "did seem to me to be perfect," and he recommended it to the other candidates as a model for the texts that he was asking them to write. This was an unusual example of Chris providing a model, but the model related first to the immediate task of a short passage that could entice MA students to think about undertaking a Ph.D. and, second, to their conceptualisation of their research. He went on to say that

one of the key components is that the kind of information she's drawing together about artists' groups, she can safely say that no Japanese artist who leads an artists' group that's situated in a UK university has ever brought these ideas together [19 Jan 05]

He said that all the candidates needed to focus on the question of distinctiveness, because this would be

where you really make a definitive statement about your research, which is not exactly the research question, not exactly the methods, not exactly your aims and objectives, it's the kind of general statement about what you want, what the consequences, what you're after and what the consequences of it would be [19 Jan 05]

He saw Hiro's ideas as an example of research that could provide a platform that would allow other artists to build their own practices. In particular, he approved her contrast between the analysis of groups by an artist and the analysis of artists' groups by art historians. Hiro's work would be research for people like themselves, practicing artists.

Eighteen months later, Hiro gave me "her final chapter plan and summary of her research" [19 June 06], titled *PhD prospectus*. Her aims remained constant, in that she wanted to investigate "selfness" and "groupness" in a creative practice that would be maintained within a group. Her objectives showed her increased understanding of the similarities as well as the differences between the Japanese and British systems for educating artists.

The English Art School and its Japanese equivalent differ in their approaches to major criteria which they do, in fact, ultimately share, specifically: the independence and individuality of the artist. For the

Japanese, however, the emphasis is laid on repetitive and long-dedicated training to achieve such quality, whereas our western counterparts see students' risk-taking and the manipulation of ideas as more important than the development of skills. [PhD prospectus]

The description of the differing views of self that she had written for her Master's would remain a chapter of the final thesis.

Her methodology, though, had changed from her MPP. She now proposed to use action research, documenting her practice through a reflective journal that would record "my experiences of the studio moments when selfness begins to dominate groupness and when groupness starts to dominate selfness." To do this, she had begun keeping

my research diary, um, but I have two of them, one is for my own, my own practice and then another one relating to my group activity and so on, so I have two diaries, so I think I can, you know, use that in here [in her thesis, 19 June 06]

Methodology seemed to be one of the central issues in the writing of her thesis, as she had made no progress on generating data on other artists' experiences of artists' groups.

She hoped to finish in a year, and, in spite of being worried about her academic English, she said that "I'm excited as well to, to, to make my ideas clear" [10 Jan 06]. She had found more sources, such as Philip Pettit's *A theory of freedom* (2001) that supported her ideas of the importance of group relationships in understanding the self. Her work as a teacher, her role in the Ph.D. seminars and as co-ordinator of the Ryu group, and her experience of organising exhibitions had all contributed to her increased self-assurance and maturity. However, she had written nothing substantial toward her thesis since her MA dissertation. She recognised that not

writing from the beginning was a problem, one that Chris was beginning to address for new candidates joining the research programme. For her though, writing her thesis remained a significant problem.

I can only speculate on why Hiro did not progress toward completion. Two factors seem to be most significant. Hiro's situation in England and as a candidate was reasonably comfortable. She worked as an artist. At Northumbria, she taught skills that she loved even though she was aware that the students did not appreciate their importance. She worked with the Ryu Group, helping younger artists learn in Britain, and she had begun to create a professional identity as a mediator of Japanese art and culture, through projects such as the organisation of an exhibition of Hamano's artwork that travelled to Paris, Strasbourg, and Milan. On one occasion, she asked me as another resident in Britain how I felt about living away from my home country. She said that she did not like her native country and did not want to return there to live. Among other things she mentioned was that her opportunities as a woman in Japan would be limited. In Britain, she may have become comfortable with the lower level of groupness that she had fostered in Europe. She was still a member of groups, as the leader of the Ryu Group, and a member of the Ph.D. seminar, but she also had greater independence.

The other factor may have been that seminar activities such as small text writing encouraged a feeling of activity without demanding progress. A lack of focus within the seminar group on methodology, on answering the question, "How will this research be carried out?" meant that global issues for research projects could be overlooked while working on argumentation and logic. While writing in English was difficult for Hiro, her skills were adequate to the task, and had improved through the writing that she had done.

Mark

Mark's research interest was relatively clear. He was interested in the relationship between figure and ground in drawing.

The *ground* is the surface that supports the drawing. In modern convention, the ground is a piece of paper, but many surfaces have been used as grounds, with the earliest remaining drawings having been created on the natural rock faces of caves. Philip Rawson (1979, 1987), one of Mark's key sources, discussed the importance of grounds to artists. Natural surfaces such as rock walls or prepared bark have texture that frequently is

incorporated into the drawing, while the development of squared, manufactured paper led artists to treat the sheet as a frame to which the figure has a relationship. The sheet becomes a window, cutting off or including elements, and establishing relationships such as distance and scale between the observer and the figure of the drawing.



Figure 26: Drawing of bull, Lascaux Cave, France

Mark had been a computer programmer, but he was also an artist. He had become interested in the relationship between figure and ground, and "how one might think of the two as being separable at some point, which is possible at certain points, which is possible through kind of digital technology" [5 July 06]. In many ways, we already separate figure and ground through our reproductive technologies. We reproduce drawings made on rock wall surfaces on smooth paper; we re-scale large drawings to fit small books. As Mark's project developed, he focused on separating figure and ground in even more radical ways.

His initial project application (IPA) did not focus on this topic. Initially, he proposed interventions in “a large institution (such as a hospital or university)” that would trace or track networks of information flowing among groups and individuals. His proposed interventions would be mediated by computer technology, and might be represented by diagrams or other visual displays. The concluding paragraph of the introduction to his IPA surveyed the challenges that he saw facing artists in contemporary society: innovative fine art practice is about sharing the ability to interact meaningfully with rapidly changing technological tools “to creatively explore technology’s use(s) through our social and knowledge networks.” He hoped to challenge ideas of collaborative activity; art, he felt, should be “treated as a non-privileged system within a hierarchy of meta-systems, [... that] extends and makes explicit the tradition of quotation and inheritance within fine art in a new and exciting way.” Although vague about how this would be implemented, his suggestion of interventions linked to technologically enabled displays that would allow all participants, not just designated artists, to contribute to a dynamic artwork must have appealed to Chris.

During the course of his study, Mark’s research project changed more than that of the other candidates. This had begun when he was accepted on the Ph.D. programme. “I submitted a proposal and was interviewed and when I was offered a place, it wasn’t based on my proposal, cause my first proposal was rejected as not... not interesting” [13 Apr 05]. The committee was more interested in his work as a computer programmer than his art practice. The chair had said, “We can’t offer you a place based on your original proposal, will you please submit something that just states that you’ll be prepared to look at this area?” [13 Apr 05], and after he had been offered a place, Chris had told him, “Do what you like” [13 Apr 05]. However, he found this freedom challenging: “here’s a ticket to go and do a PhD, and basically you can go and do what you like. But it’s got to be very specific, and what is that, and that keeps changing and which makes it incredibly difficult to write about, because it’s so elusive” [13 Apr 05]. Besides his worries about the openness of the Ph.D. project, he may have been worried because his Master’s at another university

did not require a written text; instead he had done a presentation to contextualise his practice.

Within a month of submitting his IPA early in 2004, his study shifted from an intervention in an institution to the creation of a software engine that would allow artists to access a wide variety of resources across fields of knowledge by using JAVA object-oriented programming. He retained his commitment to a distributed activity that would not privilege artists, but which would allow them to interact in ways that might produce unexpected outcomes. By the beginning of 2005, his study had focused on drawing, which had only been mentioned as a possible documentation method in his IPA. In a brief statement that he wrote for Chris to circulate among MA students who might be thinking about starting a Ph.D., he said his research would situate “technology directly within the firing line, between the observer and the observed to become implicated within the process of seeing and drawing, after all what an artist sees is best revealed through the work s/he produces” [26 Jan 05].

In his MPP document, submitted in the autumn of 2005, Mark put Rawson’s writing about drawing (1979, 1987) at the centre of his study. Rawson’s books explored how artists created meaning through drawing by investigating, as he said, “the technical resources of drawing for their own sakes, as they appear individually or combined across the world’s great historical traditions” (Rawson, 1987, p. vii). Mark described Rawson’s argument as “an analysis of drawing as a set of procedural methods or structural principles analogous to the algorithmic procedures in computer software design” [MPP document].

Rawson analysed the technical resources of drawing systematically but not historically, though he used examples from a wide range of history. He separated the *tenor* of a drawing from its *topic*, that is, the nominal subject from its treatment, “in which, whatever it may be, a special numinous power is felt to reside” (p. 6). He also analysed the effect of the ground on the creation of the drawing: “its symbolism

is part of the symbolism of the drawing” (p. 39). The ground, as much as the marking implement, contributed to the power of the drawing.

Mark extended Rawson’s analysis to argue that both ground and marking implement were tools, extensions of the artist, in the same way that a blind man’s cane extended the senses of the man. They externalised the ideas of the artist, but also offered new opportunities for development. By thinking of drawings in this way,

drawing activity could be described as the property of an entire system in which artist, medium, and ground replace blind man, stick and environment; in this context Rawson’s definition of a ground could be modified to mean a unity or framework of components, across which drawing flows as an informational pattern. [MPP document]

This systems approach to drawing allowed Mark to reassign part of the drawing process to technological tools. The MPP document projected a research project that would investigate “the problems of automatic graphic extension and procedure [that] could usefully engage with posthuman discourse and subjectivity.”

Two other elements drew Mark to Rawson’s framework. The first was his own initial contact with Rawson as a mature undergraduate. He had enrolled as a painter but, in a drive to understand the basis of painting systematically, he studied drawing largely through reading Rawson and had only done paintings in his final months of undergraduate study. When he came to Northumbria, he learned that Chris and Rawson had been friends—Rawson had taught Chris as an undergraduate, and Chris credited Rawson as the source of his interest in reading and writing. Mark saw in Rawson a way to bring together two strands of his life:

[Mark’s research project] became very amenable to what I’m doing now, in terms of tying the two areas together, computing and drawing, because it’s

in that book where you really start to get somebody talking about drawing as research, a structure, methods and procedures, things that you can just find out through looking at drawings, and to start to understand it.

Rawson wrote about drawing in a way that was both systematic and practitioner-based. Some of the ways in which his approach was systematic have already been described, such as separating tenor and topic, and ground and mark. Rawson also argued that drawing was a form of communication carried on through visual symbols. He used Wittgenstein's analogy between communication and games to show that drawing, like language, was rule-based, or, as he preferred, had principles that had to be accepted by artist and audience for drawings to be meaningful. However, unlike the rules of games, the principles of drawing evolve, "for art seems to be continually at work revising and modifying its principles (rules), even whilst observing them." This is because, "as in other forms of human communication, intuited meanings override and modify the rules" (Rawson, 1987, p. 11). Because of Rawson's approach, Mark felt that "drawing is actually something you could learn systematically" [5 July 06].

Although accessible to readers who are not artists, Rawson wrote for practitioners. In his preface to the first edition, he said,

The standpoint I want to adopt is not primarily that of appreciation; nor do I wish to take a brisk academic trot through different fields of drawing. Instead I shall be writing as it were from the other side, from the point of view of the maker of drawings. I hope this will also offer new insights to those whose interest in drawing is purely appreciative.

I have tried to avoid using the cant terms of criticism which are so often uttered glibly without any explanation of what they mean, such as 'organic relations', 'significant juxtaposition', 'pictorial logic', and all words that refer to subjective, unformulated emotional impressions. The terms I do use, while many of them may be unfamiliar, are chosen because they designate

things that can actually be found in drawings by looking, and because they can be explained clearly and consistently. (Rawson, 1987, p. vi)

Echoes of this passage, with its focus on practitioners, distaste for the language of criticism, and emphasis on looking, could be heard in almost every seminar that Chris taught. They found resonance with Mark.

Unlike the other candidates, Mark was a fluent writer. He wrote a journal documenting his practice regularly, but struggled to find time to summarise and compress his writing to a manageable shape.

The openness of the research process contributed to his

difficulties in containing his writing. As a result, he looked for models that would help him structure it. Chris presented a number of alternatives that might help him and the other candidates organise their texts. One of the first was an introduction to informal logic or critical thinking, as presented in *Smart thinking* (Allen, 1997). Allen presents the linking of claims and evidence through diagrams, such as Figure 27. A claim (2) and its premise (4) form an argument for a proposition (1). The relationship between 2 and 4 was described in the seminar as *plusness*. Mark found this concept very helpful, saying,

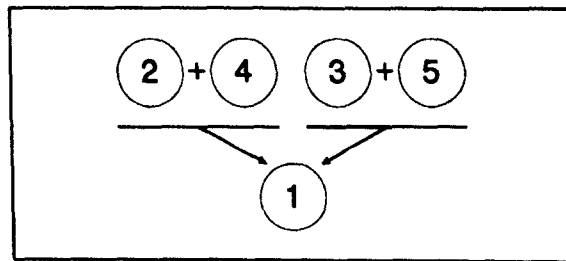


Figure 27: Claims and premises, from Allen (1997, p. 42)

I think that one of the things of his that I did find very useful was a very simple concept like plusness, things that I wasn't fully aware of in terms of writing. Which is brilliant, works for me. Just that idea, "Does that add up?" [...] when somebody mentions something kind of like that, quite simply that you can think of, that you can think of writing in terms of it being an equation, I think that's manageable, I can relate to that. [13 Apr 05]

An example of the use of Allen's system of analysis occurred in February, 2004. As Chris had requested the week before, Mark brought in a short list of premises for his IPA. A photocopy of his text, with his annotations from the discussion is below in Passage 4.

IPA-Smart Thinking 1-2-3

Smart Thinking

- 4 Space can be defined and experienced in many ways: socially, emotionally, politically, culturally and physically etc.
- 3 The application of technology, *the body of knowledge available to a society that enables it to shape and construct its environment*, produces a technological spatial configuration.
- 2 Numerous factors influence technological innovation and development, such as economics, science, politics and accidents etc.
- 1 Technological developments provide opportunities for new kinds of experience.

Understanding the causes of influence and change in our experience is power in the form of new knowledge. *FRAMING PREMISE*

FRAMING PREMISE CONJ C
 Spatial configurations frame and condition our activities and experiences to some degree, and are themselves subject to continual fluctuation by a variety of influences.

CONCLUSION
 Understanding what defines, characterises, and causes change in our spatial configurations provides insight into experience and new knowledge. *SAME AS 1*

Passage 4: Premises and conclusion, with Mark's annotations

Mark started the discussion by saying, "my number one, which is the conclusion is, [reads] 'Understanding what defines, characterises, and causes change in our spatial configurations provides insight into experience and new knowledge.'" [13 Feb 04] Chris objected that this was not a claim but rather an aim or objective. He suggested an alternative formulation that Mark wrote on the blackboard. Mark then turned to his premises, originally numbered two through six from the top down. Jane argued that this was wrong, "It's backwards. You've got, if you have... technical developments provide opportunities for new kinds of experience. Numerous factors influence technical development. The application of technology produces the technological and spatial configurations." [13 Feb 04] Mark found the analysis of his argument useful, saying, "The interesting thing about this is why I kind of really

tried to really reduce it down, was because of highlighting that kind of glaring error in the way which you go about organising it." [13 Feb 04]

A second possibility for writing that Chris presented was the use of scientific writing as a model²⁹. Chris was attracted to writing in science and suggested that it might offer a better model for the practice-based thesis than the humanities thesis. This may have been a metaphoric appropriation of a style of writing that would be distant from the style of art history and the humanities. Such a goal would put writing in a proper place, so that the writing would be shorter, cleaner, and more focused, and the practice would sit alongside it, rather than be the subject of the writing. Mark was attracted to this model. Describing his progress in July 2006, he said,

I'm kind of writing this outline in a fairly systematic, logical, painstaking kind of a way really, at the moment [...] I mean this is a scientific kind of approach, that, that I've been negotiating with a relative of mine who is a scientist and did a Ph.D. in chemistry in the 60's, because one of the discussions kind of we've been having in the seminars, increasingly it's about this idea of how more kind of, the scientific model has a closer resemblance to what we're trying to achieve than the humanities. [5 July 06]

In July of 2006, Mark had been enrolled on the Ph.D. programme for three years, and he was concerned about ending the process. He brought up the possibility of an innovative thesis, only to close it off:

one of the dangers for me would be thinking of innovative and creative ways of writing the Ph.D. thesis which engages the practitioner part of me too much. Would be a scoping problem. It would be, the danger would be, I would move beyond the scope of the Ph.D. as proposed and as kind of mid-

²⁹ This suggestion is not entirely idiosyncratic. Jones (2009b, p. 83) suggests the natural sciences, with their direct observation of phenomena, as a better model than the secondary source research characteristic of the humanities.

pointed, and start moving into a completely different area [unclear] and it's really about closure, saying you know, this Ph.D. is limited, you know, this is the scope, and keeping it within that. [5 July 06]

The scientific model limited the danger of opening an additional area of creative practice.

AN APPLICATION OF FRAMEWORKS TO RAWSON'S CONCEPTS

ABSTRACT

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Define implement as a mark-making tool

2.1.1.2. SUPPORT OR GROUND

Define the support or ground

2.1.2. INTEGRATED, DIALOGUE, CONFLICT, INDEPENDENT

Describe Barbour's 'conflict' model, used in the debate between science and religion.

2.1.2.1. IMPLEMENT

Virtual and actual implement through 'conflict model'

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2.1.2.2. GROUND

Virtual and actual ground through 'conflict model'

2.1.2.2.1. INTEGRATED

Passage 5: Mark's thesis outline, version B

Mark gave me two versions of the outline that he was working on, the first page of the more developed of which is presented in Passage 5. Both were highly detailed, and in some ways conventional, rather than closely following a scientific model. The

outlines were similar, but version B fleshed out some of the items with telegraphic text passages. He continued to struggle with structure and organisation, and he saw this model as providing a proven mould, one “seems quite amenable to the job of just getting that text and then just having it fit in the spots, just dropping the bits in” [5 July 06]. The alternative, of making the thesis a creative enterprise, offered, “an endless kind of searching for an interesting and novel way of writing a Ph.D. thesis” [5 July 06].

However, Mark was also attracted to a third possibility that Chris held up to the Ph.D. candidates, which was the use of diagrams,

how visual we can make our practice-led Ph.D., and I’m particularly interested in this idea of a really trim thesis, you know, I’ve really, kind of, you know, twenty five thousand words job, really but, it would be a thesis that’s heavily supported with visual material, that’s the idea. So yea, one of the things I’ve been doing is diagramming practice, frameworks, things that I’ve put together and made [5 July 06]

The use of visual support was consistent with the scientific model just discussed and again offered the possibility of organising his ideas.

Throughout our discussion, Mark repeated, as much to himself as to me, that writing the thesis was a limited project, “and it’s really about closure, saying you know, this Ph.D. is limited, you know, this is the scope, and keeping it within that” [5 July 06]. A little over a year later, Mark sent me a 24,000-word text that he had drafted for his thesis. The text was very much a work in progress, with passages repeated and notes to the writer. In order to convey something of the struggle of a writer to control his text, I am going to compare the titles and subtitles found in the first forty pages of the draft text with the outline, given above in Passage 5. Then I will compare two passages from the text to give a sense of the texture of the writing. This movement between a distant and close view is necessary to indicate his

progress in writing a large text. In the autumn of 2006, I moved away from Newcastle and could not attend seminars and so had only e-mail contact with Mark after that time. In his e-mails, he regularly alluded to the difficulty he was having writing and finding time for writing.

The thesis draft (Text 2), which was formatted for landscape printing, does not have perfectly clear titles and subtitles. In the first forty pages, headings are marked by being formatted in bold, and in some cases, identified by having *Section* in the heading. Later in the text, sections are less clearly marked, so that it is sometimes unclear whether a passage is a brief comment or a heading. As a result of the need for interpretation, what is being compared is a derived outline with a tentative or proposed outline. In a few cases, lower levels of headings in the *Thesis draft* have been represented by indentations. A blank cell has been introduced in the *Thesis draft* column to represent an introductory paragraph. Finally, conventional front matter (abstract, table of contents, etc.) has been removed from the proposed outline.

<i>Page</i>	Text 1 <i>Thesis outline, revision B</i> <i>July 2006</i>	Text 2 <i>Thesis draft, Section headings</i> <i>September 2007</i>
	1. INTRODUCTION	
1	1.1. THESIS TOPIC	General drawing statement
3	1.2. STRUCTURE OF THESIS	Rawson
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6	2. METHODOLOGY	Prepared
7	2.1. THESIS TOPIC: IDENTIFICATION OF THE CHALLENGE	Fabric
7	2.1.1. DEFINITIONS	Concerns
8	Describe 'conventional drawing's' basic tool set	Ground
9	2.1.1.1. IMPLEMENT	Ground
9	Define implement as a mark-making tool	Material
9	2.1.1.2. SUPPORT OR GROUND	Virtual
9	Define the support or ground	Definition of form in terms of analogic structure

10		Marks
11		Make the case for indexicality
11		Reading
12		Key points
12		Computer-based
14		Comparison
21	2.1.2. INTEGRATED, DIALOGUE, CONFLICT, INDEPENDENT	FUSION DOCUMENT BEGINS
22	Describe Barbour's 'conflict' model, used in the debate between science and religion.	Conclusion
23	2.1.2.1. IMPLEMENT	Section – Rawson-type drawing
23	Virtual and actual implement through 'conflict model'	Section – Hill-type drawing
24	2.1.2.1.1. INTEGRATED	Section – Software framework
25	2.1.2.1.2. DIALOGUE	Section – Categorisation of computer-based media
25	2.1.2.1.3. CONFLICT	Section – Definition of ground based on analogic structure
26	2.1.2.1.4. INDEPENDENCE	Section – Practice
26	2.1.2.2. GROUND	Section – Evaluation
26	Virtual and actual ground through 'conflict model'	Conclusion based on findings
27	2.1.1.1.1. DIALOGUE	Future
	2.1.1.1.2. CONFLICT	
	2.1.1.1.3. INDEPENDENCE	
31	2.2. THESIS TOPIC	_SECTION [Introduce Rawson]
34	Definition and description: Concerning the gap between the implement and ground in virtual drawing practices	_SECTION <i>First attempt at the classification of virtual grounds</i>
40	2.3. LITERATURE REVIEW	Drawing implement / Input device
	2.3.1. SURVEY METHOD	
	2.3.2.1. KEYWORD SEARCH	
	2.3.1.2. DRAWING RESEARCH NETWORK	
	2.3.1.3. DISTANT AND CLOSE READING	

The thesis draft (Text 2) can be interpreted to have three sections, an introductory section (chapter) running from page one to twenty, a section that develops the comparison between drawing by hand and drawing with a computer (p. 21, "FUSION DOCUMENT" to "Future," p. 27), and the section that begins the detailed examination of drawing with a computer (p. 31, "_SECTION"). These have been highlighted to make clearer the divisions that I have suggested imposing on the text. Some of the similarities between the two organisational plans are somewhat

obscured in this presentation. Sub-headings that would naturally be introduced are not clear. For example, in the *Thesis Draft*, under (p. 4) “Rawson’s taxonomy,” “Natural,” “Adapted,” “Prepared” and “Fabric” would be sub-headings. In another case, (p. 14) “Conclusion,” might better have been called “Claim” or “Argument.”

In both texts, there is a heavy use of taxonomy and definition, such as Rawson’s taxonomy of grounds or the “Section – Categorisation of computer-based media” (p. 25). On the other hand, the transference of Barbour’s (e.g., Barbour, 2000) framework of possible relationships between religion and science to the analysis of drawing has been dropped. The literature review, as a separate section, has also been dropped from the *Thesis draft*. These differences suggest the development of Mark’s thinking—or at least changes in his approach—between writing the *Thesis outline* and the *Thesis draft*.

On the other hand, particularly after the first section of the draft (pp. 1 – 21), significant portions of the draft remained under-developed, so that the “Section – Practice” (p. 26) is comprised of fifteen words, “What are the limits of the indexical process and groundness? If software // other elements // arbitrary” and the following “Section – Evaluation” has no content. There are 1,800 words in the eleven sections grouped under “FUSION DOCUMENT BEGINS” (pp. 21 – 30), largely comprised of notes, similar to that under “Section - Practice.”

Although the draft had fifty two illustrations, it did not have any graphic organisation of information, such as tables or charts. The illustrations either showed examples of his computer-generated drawings, which were his practice, or illustrated points that he was making, such as an image of a potsherd to show a drawing on an “adapted ground.”

Four years into a full-time doctorate, Mark seemed to be floundering. His draft text did not build on the outline that he proposed the previous year. It dropped theoretical elements, such as Barbour (e.g., 2000) that were previously important. The draft

circled around thematic concerns, such as Rawson, without progression.

Organisation was the concern of Hiro's seminar discussion on the architecture of the thesis in early 2005, but the session ended inconclusively and was not used as a foundation for further discussion.

A closer look at the draft thesis (Text 2) suggests that the problems were not confined to the larger structure, but were also present in the writing. A comparison of the beginning section of the draft with the beginning of the “_SECTION” (p. 31) illustrates some of the problems that Mark found in developing his draft.

This research compares traditional and computer-based drawing from the perspective of Philip Rawson's analytical framework for the appreciation of drawing. The reader learns about the complex practice of producing computer-based drawing through Rawson's thesis on the mark-making process (i.e. of the kind familiar when using traditional media). A viewpoint is established in which both drawing situations seem to be roughly equivalent (i.e. they are both capable of supporting what I call *direct indexicality*). This account closely follows Rawson's link between mark-making and creative action. However, an alternative standpoint is advanced in which the reader sees that interpreting computer-based drawing can differ considerably from the process of conceptualising traditional drawings. The limitations of Rawson's mark-making idea accounts for this distinction. //

Passage 6: Introductory passage

This introductory passage works in many ways as an abstract or introduction, as it provides a concise statement of the topic for the research. It is written in an author-evacuated style, with sentence subjects such as *this research*, *the reader*, and *the limitations*. It follows Swales's classic Create a Research Space model for article introductions (Swales, 1990, pp. 140-148). The first four sentences of the passage make topic generalisations, while the sentence beginning “However, an alternative standpoint...” raises questions, and the last sentence implies the research area. It is a solid statement of Mark's direction, written in a traditional positivist style.

[Introduce Rawson]

An implement such as a pencil (a) "acting as a surrogate for the moving hand with its fingers" leaves a mark (b) on the ground (c) that we are able to read. The implement makes direct contact with the ground // call this 'direct indexicality' [Peirce and CD]

Rawson offers a system of classification for such things //

1. Material support or surface

Natural
Adapted
Prepared
Fabric

2. Drawing implements

X – pigment-based
Y - inscriptive

This taxonomy is a chronology of the *Supports, Materials, and Implements* and its development and refinement as a set of material objects, and as a conceptual framework. [explain: conceptual framework]

I use computers to make drawings and computer-based supports or surfaces are usually thought of as virtual, which can be defined as: "not physically existing as such, but being made to appear to do so from the point of view of the software or user" [ref OED] //

[example from practice] //

This kind of support is absent from Rawson's taxonomy //

Taxonomy [ref] ought to be exhaustive, and if the *Supports, Materials, and Implements* of drawing continue to evolve as indicated by the above statement, then those changes must be accommodated by its system of classification even if the very system by which they are classified must itself undergo revision or extension.

Before we proceed, let us consider the proposal:

(P) Extend Rawson's original taxonomy in order to accommodate recent developments in the *Supports, Materials, and Implements* of drawing.

Why it should be done is necessitated by the fact that Rawson's taxonomy is out of date.

Whether it can be done is yet to be ascertained for including 'virtual supports' within Rawson's existing taxonomy must be more than merely adjunctive as there are criteria by which Rawson's drawing media are classified [have we made these clear?] and it is not known whether they are fulfilled by those found in computer-based drawing.

Passage 7: _SECTION

This second passage, taken from a different section of the *Draft thesis*, is written in a very different style. The passage is much less polished, with notes written by Mark to himself in square brackets, such as “example from practice,” and “have we made these clear?” Less apparent from reading this passage in isolation is its repetition. The listing of Rawson’s system of classification repeats the section shown in the section headings (pp. 4 – 7). This taxonomy was repeated again three more times in the full draft, while the quote from Rawson about a pencil “acting as a surrogate for the moving hand with its fingers” was repeated on nine separate occasions in the draft.

The passage beginning “Taxonomy [ref] ought to be exhaustive...” was repeated and highlighted with colour later in the text. This later passage reads,

Taxonomy [ref] ought to be exhaustive, and if the ground as material object has been undergoing continual refinement, being modified and adapted then those changes must be accommodated by its system of classification, even if that very system by which they are classified must itself undergo revision or extension. We are getting ahead of ourselves. I cannot at this stage make the claim that ‘virtual grounds’ are a missing part of Rawson’s taxonomy, for they may well be categorically distinct [Maynard].

The first sentence of this passage is quite similar to the sentence in the middle of Passage 36. The middle section of the sentence has been developed, moving from the brief allusion to Rawson’s chapter (“*Supports, Materials, and Implements*”) to a more complete explanation of the ways that grounds have changed. The ending of the later passage, though, consists of notes to himself, such as the suggestion that he needs to look at other sources besides Rawson. Elsewhere in Passage 36 there are notes and reminders, such as that after the proposal, “Extend Rawson’s original taxonomy...” saying “why it should be done.”

In this analysis of Mark's *Draft thesis*, I do not want to criticise how he wrote; every writer has different ways of getting to grip with their topic, and this text is clearly a draft. The problems of shaping an ungainly grab-bag of reading, research and personal insight into a text is daunting for every Ph.D. candidate. What I am suggesting here is the struggle this writer had in trying to master his topic. Mark had been enrolled full time in the Ph.D. programme for four years at this time, and as he said a year earlier,

one of the things that increasingly is kind of coming home to me is that approaching the a deadline on this thing is it's a limited project, limited purpose, limited scope, really it's a question of just getting the bloody thing done. [5 July 06]

His draft continues to circle Rawson's taxonomy of grounds without closing on his extension of the taxonomy to encompass virtual grounds, that is, the contribution of his research to understanding, theorising and practicing drawing. Struggling to bring a research project to a successful conclusion is not a problem limited to candidates in FAP & D; it is a problem for almost every candidate (e.g., Delamont, 2002; Kamler & Thomson, 2006; Murray, 2006). However, the openness of the process and the search for appropriate models contributed to the difficulties that Mark found.

At the beginning of 2009, Mark contacted me to say that his difficulties with his research had increased. "This is resulting in my withdrawal from the PhD programme, as to be honest I have lost faith in both process and product."

Mark's difficulties were to a large degree the result of difficulties in shaping an intractable and shaggy body of knowledge into a coherent text. However, overlaid on this were the difficulties of research in FAP, which was more open and less well defined than in disciplines with a longer history of research.

Conclusion

All of the candidates, and particularly Jane, Hiro, and Mark, struggled to write their theses. They were able to write short passages, and Jane's short texts became increasingly clear and focused. However, Jane, and Hiro were unable to write the longer texts that doctoral study required, while Mark was unable to bring his writing under control. The difficulties that they had were only partly related to "writing" problems such as procrastination or difficulties in finding an appropriate form for their ideas. Writing a practice-based thesis, with a description of their practice that did not employ the language of art history, was a secondary issue. More fundamental were problems in envisioning methodologies that could convey their new knowledge or translate the knowledge that they had created through their practice into an acceptable shape for a thesis. And behind this lay the questions related to the purposes of writing in FAP beyond equivalence to other Ph.D.'s.

Moving from practice to methodology affected all the candidates to different degrees. Hiro's study might have used routine social science methods such as interviews or focus groups to investigate the influences of groups on artists, but she did not grapple with the question of how she was going to do her study, how she would turn it from a topic to a text. This might have been connected with the outcome of successful completion, in which she would have had to decide on a new direction. Jane had a different difficulty with methodology. She could not see a way to describe her involvement with her participants from an emic perspective, while believing that other descriptive stances would have betrayed them. Mark, finally, could not find a way to investigate his topic or to harness his ideas in a textual framework.

9 Writing and research in Design

Introduction

In contrast with my introduction to research among artists, beginning research among designers was an orderly, even bureaucratic process. As reported in the “Minutes of PGR meeting Wednesday 25.2.04, taken by K. H. [Kevin Hilton, the supervisor],”

4. AOB: The meeting was joined for the first time by Erik Borg from English Language who is studying a PhD on differences in writing about research subjects. He has been studying Fine Arts and has come to Design to observe how we approach writing in relation to our own subjects. Erik will continue to attend these PGR meetings.

Four people met in a well-lit open-plan office, around an office table on which I put my tape recorder. Kevin, the supervisor, introduced me and asked me to explain my research to the two research students who were there. Then Clare Hussey, Emma Jeffries, and Kevin briefly explained their research projects. Clare and Emma had been enrolled on the Ph.D. programme for 4 or 5 months at that point, and were still working on their Initial Project Approval (IPA) documents, so their research projects were at an early stage, while Kevin had completed his Ph.D. at Northumbria in 2000. His current research, into the psychology of innovation, continued on from his doctoral studies.

After the introductions the meeting continued, following an agenda that had been circulated in advance. Clare had represented the Design group at a poster session for Postgraduate Research (PGR) candidates held by the University, and she reported on this. There was discussion of a similar session to be held at Newcastle University; the group decided to send posters but not to attend. There was also a discussion of

the training needs of the students and workshops available on the use of SPSS and Excel in research. The Design group existed within the Centre for Design Research (CDR), and when Kevin left the table, Clare and Emma told me about their personal facilities—offices with computers, specialised software packages (purchased with CDR funding), all housed in a modern annexe to a University building.

Later that day I received the minutes with action points and the date and time of the next meeting. Seminars were held approximately every two weeks; by June of that year, an administrator attended the meetings and took notes. In addition to Clare and Emma, there were several other Design research students who attended these seminars, while a few PGR students did not attend any during the period that I observed the group. Joyce Yee, who was absent from this initial meeting, became the third Design student I followed closely and was the first to complete her study.

Design seminars tended to be business-like, seldom lasting longer than the half hour allotted for them. The next seminar session was unusual in that it was extended in order to address issues that the PGR students wished to raise. One of the students had drawn up a list of *PGR Issues*, listing problems they had in dealing with the University. These included difficulties with the formal milestones in the progression to Ph.D., financial support for attending and presenting at conferences, and the University's stance on PGR students teaching while studying. All students within the Design programme whom I met received financial support from the University.

A parallel group within the CDR met on alternate weeks to discuss issues related to the contract design work of the CDR; Joyce and Kevin were also members of this group. I attended these sessions as well at Kevin's invitation, though on occasion I was asked to step out so that they could discuss commercially sensitive topics. The format of reporting current and prospective work seemed highly appropriate to this group.

Unlike the FAP seminars, the Design seminars were not a site at which I observed discussion of writing or thinking about the candidates' research. Instead, the seminars seemed modelled on professional workgroup meetings, with participants reporting on progress and issues. An exception to the general lack of discussion of writing or research occurred when Kevin asked the candidates to review and comment on the PowerPoint slides for an MA module on research principles and methods in Design. This discussion took a small portion of a few sessions, with candidates asked to give written feedback to improve the teaching material. More commonly, though, the Design seminars were the meeting point where I met the candidates, talked informally before and after the seminars, and arranged interviews in which we discussed their writing.

Although the design students were aware of the issue of practice-based research, which engaged the FAP students in many seminar discussions, it was not raised by Kevin in the seminar sessions, and practice-based research seemed largely tangential to the design students. Joyce discussed practice-based research in her thesis, but Clare did not, and, after attending a seminar on research in art and design (*Perspectives in practice-based research*, 23 Mar 05, which Jane Park and I also attended), she said that the issues raised seemed more relevant to artists than designers. She did not attend any more of the seminars in this series, though Jane and I did.

Theses in design

I followed the development of three participants' theses in Design. The first, Joyce Yee's research project, which will be further discussed in this chapter, developed a framework that would help graphic design educators in both traditional and new media (e.g., web and screen design) improve their understanding and teaching of typography, particularly as it applied to new media. Her thesis was called *Developing a practice-led framework to promote the practise and understanding of typography across different media*, and it was successfully passed in 2006.

Clare Hussey's research project initially set out to investigate the integration of a government-supported database of digital bodyscans into the manufacturing processes of small to medium enterprises in the clothing industry. She felt that these enterprises could improve their products by using this data, and that that would support regional development. Based on the feedback that she received after her Mid-Point Progression, she reshaped her study to look at the use of technology more widely within the clothing industry. The title of her study was *Investigating clothing sector interrelationships; a study focused on industry specific technology use*; it was successfully defended in 2007. Her project will be discussed further in a later chapter.

The third research project, that of Emma Jeffries, involved an action research inquiry into the teaching of visual literacy in a screen-based environment. Its title was *Visual education: Visual literacy skills within a digital environment*. Her study built on an earlier Ph.D. study (Avgerinou, 2001) that developed a scale of visual ability, skill, or literacy. Avgerinou's scale required participants to discriminate among twelve elements of visual design, including colours, textures, and composition. Emma used this scale as a basis for measuring change in visual literacy among design students. Her study comprised three phases. She carried out a baseline mapping phase using Avgerinou's scale to identify an "enhanced visual skills group" among design students compared to the wider population. The students in the enhanced visual skills group were further studied to identify specific visual skills deficiencies. They would then participate in an action research phase of teaching that would determine how best to improve their learning. Emma developed a variety of innovative tests to measure visual skills, in order to discriminate between paper-based and screen-based media, as well as teaching methods designed to improve visual skill and measure the outcomes of her teaching. Emma's study was submitted in 2009, and she successfully defended her thesis in November, 2009.

These three design theses had significant similarities. The projects did not involve the creation or submission of artefacts, and, unlike the projects of the FAP candidates, the relationship between the candidates' practice and their study was a significant issue only for Joyce. In response to my questions, Joyce discussed the relationship between her practice and her study. She also included a discussion of this relationship in her thesis, while Clare and Emma did not see the relevance to their work at all. The two completed theses were about 80,000 words in length, and heavily illustrated. The candidates used visual tools in the process of research and in reporting its outcomes. They used a variety of methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative, for their studies, and these methodologies were often innovative or unusual. Finally, in the cases of Joyce and Clare, their studies required negotiations of their identities.

Despite the similarities, each study was highly individual. The remainder of this chapter will discuss the methodologies, the visual component, and the negotiation of identity found in Joyce's research. Discussion of these topics will illuminate some of the ways that research in design was similar to Ph.D. research in other disciplines, but also areas in which it is distinctive in offering new means for identity elaboration. Clare's study will be discussed in Chapter 10. Emma's study will not be discussed in further detail.

Joyce's study

Joyce came to the second Design PGR seminar session that I attended, and, at Kevin's request, gave a brief summary of her research project. She had been registered for just under two years at this time. Much of the seminar was given over to a discussion of *PGR Issues*, among which were funding for conferences. Joyce argued strongly for increased transparency in the distribution of these funds. She had already given two internal presentations and a presentation in Barcelona at the European Academy of Design Conference on her literature review, and she looked forward to further presentations.

Joyce clearly enjoyed the process of studying for a Ph.D. She happily talked with me for over seven hours as she completed writing up, discussing methodology, thesis design, and language issues. She considered herself a non-native speaker of English (Chinese and Malay were her first tongues), but her fluency and accuracy were extremely high, and the language questions we discussed generally involved the precise formulation of her ideas. She was interested in research methodologies and we discussed extensively the theoretical bases of the tools that she used. This interest also came out in the thorough-going discussion of methodologies in her thesis. Her methodology chapter gave an overview of her strategy, while her thesis was organised as a chronological review of the methods that she used to investigate her research questions.

Through the Ph.D. process, Joyce worked to create a new identity, an identity as a designer who did publishable, theorised research. She was confident as a practicing designer, if somewhat bored with her practice, but she wanted to revise her self-image by learning the process of research and publishing it. She did not see herself as an educator, although design practitioners who teach have been part of design education since the 1930's (see Chapter 4 on the development of education in art and design) and her undergraduate school, Central St. Martin's, currently advertises teaching by practitioners as one of their strengths. Joyce taught throughout her Ph.D. study, and included an action research investigation of teaching as part of her study. But Joyce envisioned herself as a designer who did research within an academic setting. A Ph.D. in design allowed her to assemble this new identity.

The remainder of this chapter will describe how Joyce identified herself as a researcher to the exclusion of other academic roles such as teacher. It will also describe how she integrated visual approaches to research and reporting research into her thesis, and finally how she brought together her roles as a researcher and a designer into a new identity configuration that was enacted in her thesis both textually and visually.

Joyce's methodology

Over the two years that we talked about her research, Joyce emphasised several times that she undertook her Ph.D. study in order to gain experience in research, to increase her analytic skills, and to deepen her involvement with typography. In several discussions, she expressed variations on the view that she put succinctly in September of 2005: "I have to say that the whole reason why took up the Ph.D. was to get myself training in research methods." Along with training in research methods, she anticipated "increased research and writing skills, critical evaluation skills, [and] learn[ing] how to build a critical argument" [20 Apr 2005].

The methods that she used—she characterised her research both as "flexible," and "a mishmash"—allowed her to investigate as many research tools as possible. She conducted a design application review, looking at current use of typography in new (screen-based) media. She brought her information design skills to her literature review, making it part of her methodology by creating of a map of the networks of her literature. She then enlisted design educators to draw links suggesting additional connections and omitted sources. She also used questionnaire surveys, interviews and focus groups.

However, at the core of her study was action research. "The main approach, I would probably argue, is action research, although not in the complete sense" [13 Sept 05]. She related action research to the design development cycle of designing a product, testing, and reflection, which is followed by the implementation of design changes. In the action research phase of her study, she sought to teach the principles of typography to undergraduate design students. In three cycles of teaching, data analysis, reflection, and revision, she intended to increase students' "understanding of new media principles through formal (lecture-based) and practical (project-based) training" and to help them "integrate [their] understanding of typographic principles with new media principles" (Yee, 2006, p. 211). Her study concluded with peer reviews of the models that she developed. All of these were laid out in a diagram that showed the contribution of each stage to the research (Passage 37).

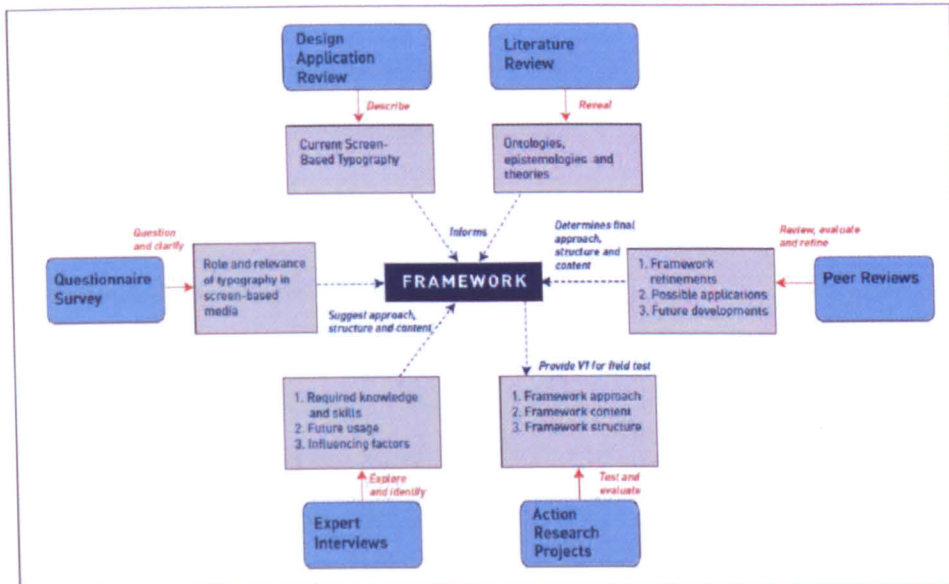


Figure 3.2. Research Stages Contributions

Figure 28: Research stages' contributions to the Framework (from Yee, 2006)

She described the selection of methods as having following the trajectory of research in typography, from positivism to flexible design, citing Robson (e.g., Robson, 2002). "I categorise [the shift in my thinking] from thinking I was a positivist [EB: um hum] to whatever else is in that spectrum to, I don't know, um... someone who sort of formulates and revisits the theory as it goes along" [13 Sept 05]. In her methodology chapter, Joyce began with a definition of research and an overview of research paradigms. At the conclusion of this overarching description she described the reconciliation of positivist and flexible paradigms in realist approaches to research (e.g., Robson, 2002, pp. 29-35). Realism, she felt, "presents a much more suitable base from which art and design methods can be developed" (Yee, 2006). She placed the development of research in typography within this large narrative, describing mid-twentieth century scientific investigations (e.g., legibility studies of typefaces) leading to a shift toward more interpretivistic approaches. She traced this shift in design research to the work of Donald Schön (e.g., Schön, 1983), and identified her own study within this strand of design research. She found support in the writings of Gray and Malins (e.g., Gray & Malins, 1993) and Bruce Archer (e.g., Archer, 1979), whom she quoted as writing, "...there exists a designerly way of thinking that is

both different from scientific and scholarly methods of thinking and communicating, and as powerful as scientific and scholarly methods of enquiry, when applied to its own kind of problems" (Yee, 2006, p. 65). Research would enrich and deepen her design practice.

The methodology chapter of her thesis provided an overview of research in the social sciences and the development of research in design. In the rest of her study, she discussed the application of the methods to the particular phase of her research. The descriptions of methods there, too, focused on theoretical issues in the use of a research method. For example, when she described using a questionnaire survey to elicit educators' and practitioners' beliefs about typography in new media, she began her brief discussion with, "According to De Vaus (2001), there are many different ways to conduct a survey research" (Yee, 2006, p. 78), and went on to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaire research, such as costs and the difficulty of contacting participants. In the chapter devoted to this questionnaire, the discussion of the data collection, sampling methods and analysis was 30% longer in word count than the discussion of her findings from the survey.

The next stage of her study was a design application review, which looked at how screen-based typography was used. While she linked this to "comparative product analysis," a design comparison widely used in the development of new products, she included this as part of her study in order to give the method more rigour and to make it more transparent. This method grounded her study in her discipline, but she separated her research practice from the way research had traditionally been conducted in design. Echoing one of the central issues of whether an art or design practice could be research in itself, she said, "the Centre will argue that our whole design process, and our whole designing is research, and my argument is that, well, it's only research if you if you reflect upon it and if you write up about it and you draw a conclusion from it." I mentioned that the Research Assessment Exercise recognised art and design outputs, such as exhibitions, as research and she came

back, "It's not research if it's not disseminated." [13 Sept 05] In this way she separated herself from the world of practicing designers.

On the other hand, she did not see herself as an educator. Although she described her study in the round as "action research," the chapter on the action research phase of her study (Chapter 8) focused far more on the methodological considerations of action research and the characteristics of the students than on the content of the lectures that she delivered. She provided sample PowerPoint slides in the appendix to her study (twelve slides each from three lectures comprised of 69, 40, and 37 slides) but no extensive discussion of the content of these lectures, though her goal was to "try to evaluate the effectiveness of the typographic framework (*new and different*) to students (*unfamiliar* to the framework) who have limited knowledge of typography" (Yee, 2006, p. 209; emphasis in original).

Instead, she emphasised her role as researcher. Action research, as she pointed out in interviews and in her thesis, is research by a participant, and she was a "friendly outsider," a researcher, not a teacher. Passages that describe her teaching quickly turn from that role to descriptions of research procedures and her role as researcher. However, she hoped to bring a visual sensibility to research.

Visualising research

For Joyce, information design was practice, method, and outcome. Designing the knowledge that she developed through the Ph.D. was one of the central themes of our discussion, and it was one of the ways that she affiliated herself with designers. She was particularly interested in clear displays of her information and in making that information accessible to her design peers. Describing the framework that she presented to the designers, she said, "...especially for designers or for people engaged in design, I think they want to grasp the concept of what I'm saying and why is that different from the existing approach first" [2 Mar 06]. Although she

wrote fluently, in many ways her thesis was a visual display of information, supported by text rather than a text with supplementary graphics.

One of the most striking examples of this was her literature review, which she described as part of her methodology. Joyce saw her map of the literature as an element of her research in part because she used a visual presentation to elicit new relevant sources. Through a series of iterations, she created concept maps of the literature that she was looking at and the links among the sources that she had identified. She presented these maps on a number of different occasions, refining her maps and adding sources and links.

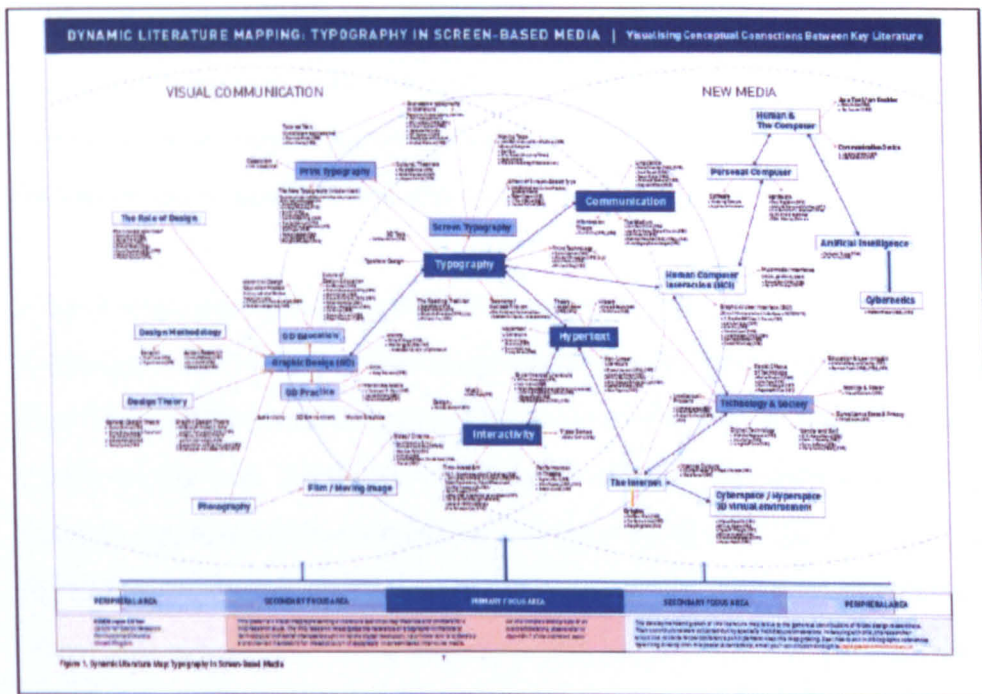


Figure 29: Joyce Yee, *Dynamic literature mapping* (2006)

She presented her literature mapping component at internal design conferences, where she encouraged other researchers to annotate the draft map, add new sources, make new connections and highlight areas that should be more important to her study. She later presented a report on the development and rationale for the literature map at the 5th European Academy of Design conference, where she again solicited new sources and links. In her presentation at this conference, she saw the

purpose of the visual literature map as “Finding relationships between the ideas, concepts and methodologies [which] allows the researcher to think analytically about the key ideas and to construct new knowledge structures in relation to the research subject” (Yee, 2003, p. 9). The literature map allowed her to communicate effectively with her design colleagues. It complemented rather than replaced her linear, text-based literature review, which was extensive.

The benefit of a concept map of the literature did not accrue solely to Joyce. By presenting it on different occasions, she felt she contributed to the development of theoretical thinking in design. The presentation of her map to Graphic Design students introduced “the richness of literature in a field traditionally deprived of quality and depth in its critical discourse” (Yee, 2003, p. 11). Through the creation of a visual literature map, Joyce positioned herself as a designer with skills as a researcher and an academic theorist.

In other ways, throughout her research Joyce used visual tools to communicate with the designers she involved in her study. She used these tools as well because she liked them and they seemed appropriate. In a discussion about changes in her final framework she said, “I enjoyed that, trying to design my framework [both laugh] trying to represent my framework, the only bit of designing I get, you see...” [2 Mar 06]. The description of this as “the only bit of designing I get” understates the visual component of her study. Her multilingual background was complemented by her multimodal communication.

The outcome of her study was in many ways a visual representation. Joyce presented her starting framework in a series of PowerPoint slides (appendix 9.1 of her thesis). In these slides, her initial interpretation of the framework is represented as a series of linked hexagons (Figure 30). Next to this, she presents an intermediate version, labelled “Post-Review Framework,” which is illustrated in the same figure. Her final version (Figure 31) seems to leap toward movement, toward the inclusion

of time as well as three dimensions.

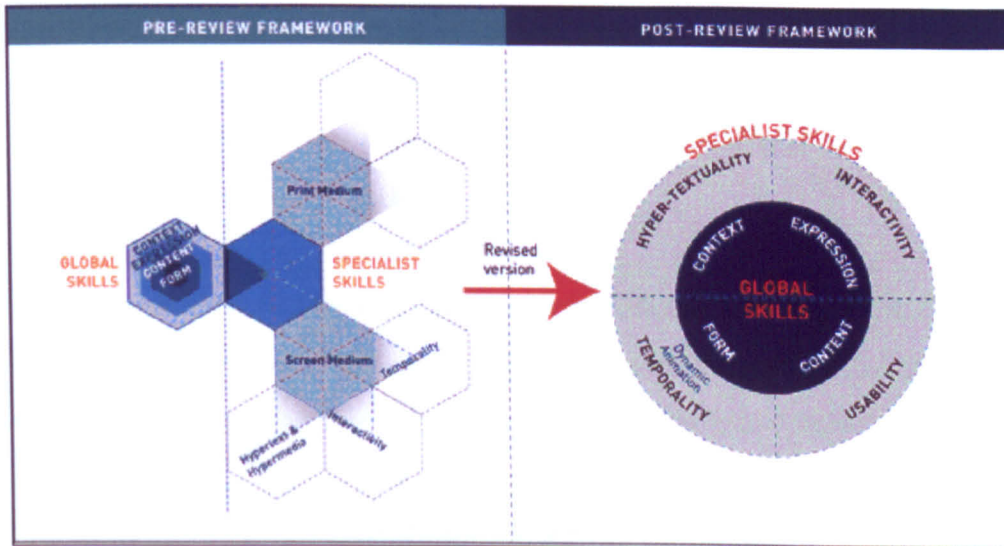


Figure 30: Joyce's initial and intermediate versions of her framework

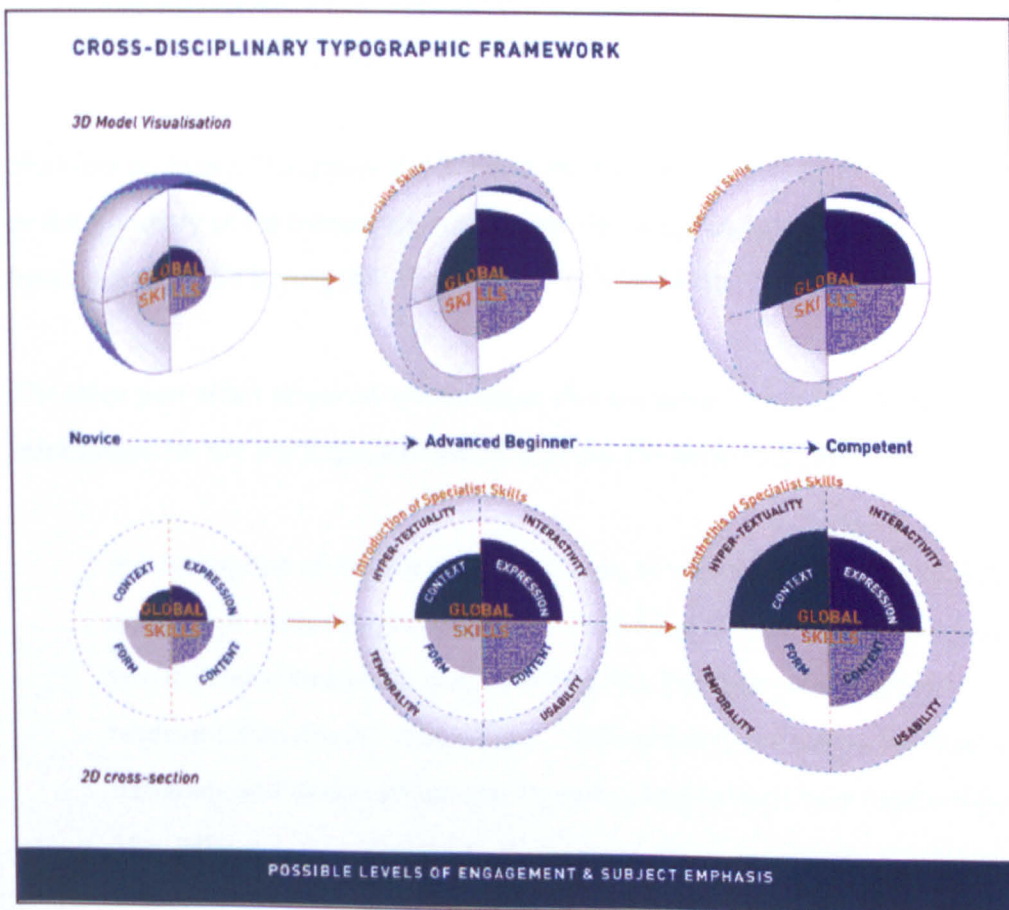


Figure 31: Joyce's final version of her framework

In her text, Joyce focused on the reviewers' reactions to the graphic, writing that "reviewers were adamant that the framework should reflect a future model of convergent media, instead of a continued separation between print and screen. They agreed that the visualization of the framework was misleading and reinforced this division further" (Yee, 2006, p. 287).

In our discussion of this section, I asked whether this made the graphic more important than the text. There were two parts to her response, first, that, the graphic representation of the framework probably was more important than the text:

I think the graphic framework, the graphic form, is useful to present the philosophy behind the framework, the structure, the approach to the framework, and the textual bit here is, a further, I suppose, a backing up of what I'm saying. [2 Mar 2006]

She went on to say, "I suppose the framework, the visualisation of the framework, or the summary of the framework comes from the diagram, not from this [the text], because this is a bit boring [EB: laughs] it is." [2 Mar 2006]

The other part of her response was to argue that the graphics carried significant information for her audience. According to Joyce, the reviewers said

my description of the framework was fine, but the representation caused quite a few confusion and there was some debate about "...but you're saying two different things here, you're saying this, but then your graphic representation doesn't reflect that..." [EB: un hun] and obviously these were designers and design educators, so, yeah, I had to make sure I got it right. [2 Mar 2006]

This was an argument for the intellectual content of the information design. The result of the peer review process, the visual display (Figure 31), was the finding of

her study. While Joyce wanted to become an articulate, theory-led researcher, she also wanted to remain a designer.

Identity work

Writing a Ph.D. thesis, more than perhaps any other academic task, involves the negotiation of a new identity. The thesis is the last task undertaken fully as a student (unless the candidate starts a new course of study), and candidates frequently begin Ph.D. study after having worked as professionals. Ivanič (1998) proposed three aspects of identity that could be projected in writing. The first of these is the *autobiographical self*, which emphasised the writer's life history. The *discoursal self* is the identity (or, more likely, cluster of identities) that the writer wished to project through their writing. Finally, there is the *authorial self*, which is projected through the responsibility that the author takes for the text that they create. It is the writer's authoritative presence in the text. Writers draw on socially maintained and mediated possibilities to construct their individual identities by creating affiliations or by choosing expressive forms that distance themselves from certain possibilities. As Hyland wrote,

Discourses are not self-contained, monolithic entities which interlock snugly without overlap. Each of us is constantly influenced by a multitude of discourses which are situated in the groups in which we participate and which mediate our involvement in any one of them. (2002, p. 1094)

All three aspects of identity are implicated in the discourse of a complex and sophisticated text such as a thesis, and cannot easily be teased apart. However, two aspects of identity are prominent in Joyce's work, her *authorial self* and her *discoursal self*. A number of studies (e.g., Harwood, 2006; Hyland, 2002) have looked at personal pronoun use, particularly concerning the creation of an authorial self. These studies have generally posited that the avoidance of the use of personal pronouns entails the avoidance of personal responsibility in the text. However, if the

same textual instantiation—little personal presence in the text—is an expression of the discursal self, the text may portray a writer who wishes to project objectivity.

Hyland (2002) suggested that student writers use personal pronouns less frequently than established academics, particularly in soft disciplines (Becher & Trowler, 2001). Students may avoid rhetorical functions such as elaborating an argument that involved taking responsibility for their position. Instead, they take less responsible stances within their texts through tactics such as passive voice and the attribution of interpretation to procedures and data. On the other hand, there is a strong disciplinary relationship between the avoidance of personal pronouns and the hard disciplines, such as the pure sciences. These disciplines have more influence within society than the softer disciplines, so that the choice of an author-evacuated writing style is to some extent the choice of a more powerful, socially validated stance, particularly for developing research writers.

A close reading of Joyce's texts and discussion with her suggest that she chose to project a discursal identity that was authoritative and objective. This was the identity that she wanted for her word-based textual self. However, the composite identity that she developed through her thesis drew on other semiotic resources to create a discursal self that bridged the design community and the academic community.

Designer

The relationship between her practice and her study, with its possible career implications, was an issue that emerged strongly in our discussions. On the one hand, her practice as a designer was her anchor, the role that she identified herself most closely with, "because I am, at the end of the day, I am a practitioner, and I feel that I want to better my own practice..." [21 Apr 2004], and, a year later, "I don't want to be a full-time academic" [20 Apr 2005]. Through her methodology and her visual research, she worked to create a new identity that would fuse her identity as a

designer with a new identity as a designer who did research. The understanding of research that she developed on the Ph.D. would contribute to her practice.

...that's why I started this PhD was because I had this issue with typography because you know I'm classically trained in print and I've learned it, but because I moved into new media, I found that there's this disparity between my knowledge and my experience and with what is required in new media, and because I'm still very much practice-based, I'm not going to be... pure academic or pure researcher [20 Apr 2005]

Another impetus, though, was increasing dissatisfaction with her professional practice.

I was a bit bored with the day-to-day designing [EB: process], the act of designing, because it seemed very surface [EB: um hum] so I felt research was another way to keep me interested in, in the subject, [EB: um hum] to keep me intellectually stimulated about this. [20 Sept 2005]

While she described herself as an outsider in education, she could be critical of designers. About her own work, she said, "it seemed very superficial and I feel design needs to have—I need to have—additional intellectual levels" [20 Apr 2005]. She felt that designers and design students would not read or engage in what she felt was true research. She described how a designer she contacted to take part in her peer-review focus panel asked if she would have to write anything, and Joyce responded, "No, no, you just sit there and it's like a design crit, you know, just tell me what works and what doesn't work" [20 Apr 05]. While she admitted knowing designers who wrote well, most, she felt, did not like to write. However, following her mid-point progression she realised that she would have to limit her study, and so she eliminated the practice-based elements. She continued to want to contribute to practice: "I don't want this to be purely theoretical, I want it to be something that

can be used or transferred for practitioners, so having the peer review is one way of trying to tease that out from them" [20 Apr 2005].

Educator

Joyce was ambivalent about her identity as an educator. Although she taught as part of the funding she received from the University for her Ph.D., she described her paid relationship with the University as most similar to a "design consultancy," though the University paid her as a researcher. (In this conversation, she said that the University had withdrawn the teaching role of the PGRs in a money-saving move, which may have contributed to her ambivalence.) However, she said, "I want to make that very clear that I'm not an educator. And my professional experience has not been full-time education" [6 Dec 2005]. As we discussed her use of action research as a core methodology, she emphasised her stance as an outsider to educational practice. Discussing her original focus on her own design practice, she said that her study had "changed somewhat and I can't say it's practice-based because I'm not an educator [EB: um hum] so I'm not looking at my educational practice, because I don't have one" [13 Sept 2005]. Questioned later, she admitted that she might have overemphasised being an outsider to education practice, as a way of warding off questions that might come up in her viva: "I suppose someone could come back and argue, well you know, 'you say you're doing action research, but... you're not doing it in your own practice, you're doing it in someone else's practice,' so is that legitimate or not?" [6 Dec 2005] Nevertheless, she never seemed comfortable identifying herself as an educator.

This self-portrait as an outsider in education had appeared in her MPP document, where she wrote of herself, "The researcher is considered as an outsider as she is not involved in the delivery and development of the Multimedia course curriculum" (MPP Report, p. 31).

In a passage in which she described the action research phase of her research project, the speed with which she moved from her role as a teacher to that of a researcher is striking. (This 300-word passage is followed by a further 150 words that did not discuss her teaching role.) This presentation melds MacDonald's (1992) sentence subject analysis with SFL thematic analysis (e.g., North, 2005).

Passage 8: The role of the researcher

	Marked theme	Subject/theme	New information
1		My task in the action research projects	was to deliver lectures as well as to provide support to the students as a secondary tutor during the duration of the module.
2		My role during these tutorials	was a combination of participant and observer.
3		My main objective	was to support the primary tutor, specifically, but not exclusively, on typographic matters.
4	At the same time,	I	observed and made filed notes on students' interaction and development during the module.
5	So, although there was a mix of data collection methods from both observational and non-observational techniques,	the dominant style of observation	was participant observation.
6		Participant observation	may be defined 'as the practice of doing research by joining in the life of the social group or institution that is being researched...thus the researcher has a twofold goal: to take on the role of a participant in a setting and to inquire into the ethnographic character of the setting' (McKernan, 1996, p.63).
7		Spradley	defines ethnography as 'learning from people' rather than the act of studying people (1980, p.3).
8		Gold (1958) as cited by McKernan (1996, p.62)	describes four kinds of observational role: 1. Complete participant 2. Participant as observer 3. Observer as participant 4. Complete observer
New paragraph			
9		I	took up the role of participant as observer and observed the group from within the study group.
10		The students and primary tutor	were made aware that

11		my presence	was a 'field relationship' and that
12		I	was only present for as long as the study continued
13	However,	it	was important to maintain a balance between the observation and the participation element.
14		Too much observation without participation	might alienate the participants
15	whereas	too much participation	may result in the loss of objectivity.
16		Robson (2002)	also acknowledges the difficulty in maintaining the dual role of observer and participant,
17	pointing out that	variable factors such as age, class, gender and ethnic background	can be important in certain circumstances.
18	However,	these factors	were not significant to the outcomes of this study.

In this passage, Joyce describes her teaching role in the first three sentences. In the fourth sentence, she shifts to her role as researcher and signals this by a marked theme ("At the same time..."). The following sentence completes the transition to data collection methods. After the paragraph break ("I took up the role of participant as observer..."), the passage discusses research issues related to observation. References either to sources (e.g., "Robson (2002) also acknowledges...") or to research topics (e.g., "participant observation may be defined...") outnumber references to her teaching role. In the second paragraph, self-references are all to her role as a researcher ("I took up the role of participant as observer..."). Throughout the passage epistemic topics dominate, either research methods (e.g., "participant observation") or scholars on methodology (e.g., "Spradley").

In this passage describing her actions in an educational action research project, she presents her role as that of a researcher, with a cursory nod toward her role as a lecturer (3. "My main objective was to support the primary tutor, specifically, but not exclusively, on typographic matters.")

This interpretation is supported by a discussion of whether her study was practice-based or not. In September of 2005, she said that, while initially she wanted to look at her own design practice, her study had become oriented much more toward education and was no longer practice based. Nevertheless, she repeated that “I’m not an educator [EB: um hum] so I’m not looking at my educational practice because I don’t have one.”

Researcher

The third role, that of researcher, was one that Joyce felt much more comfortable with. She was interested in research methodology and much of the impetus for undertaking the Ph.D. was to train herself in research methodologies and move beyond the type of research that is routinely undertaken in design practice, in which a research phase precedes design development. The research phase

is more looking at, looking at surface issues, we’re not talking about pure research. We’re talking about, you know, what is the other competitor doing, how are they doing it, what’s the functionality of the product, what’s the problem, so it’s more problem-solving rather than pure research. [13 Sept 2005]

However, much of this research consisted of product analysis and comparison, with the results remaining within the design studio. Research undertaken for product development that was never disseminated was for Joyce not fully research. Joyce wanted to contribute to the advancement of systematic, published design research.

Enacting her textual identity

Joyce written texts portrayed her as a researcher. In the chain of texts that she wrote leading up to her thesis, and in late drafts of her thesis, she identified herself as “the researcher.” This identification as “the researcher” contributed to and created her

new academic identity. While not necessarily agreeing with the characterisation, Hyland notes that “impersonality is seen as a defining feature of expository writing as it embodies the positivist assumption that academic research is purely empirical and objective” (2002, p. 1095). In her presentation on her literature map, delivered seven months after beginning her Ph.D., she wrote that the benefits of the map would be twofold: “Primarily, aiding the researcher to navigate and understand complex layers of information. Secondly, allowing the researcher to present and share representations of knowledge” (Yee, 2003, p. 2). This is not, I believe, writing without authority (Hyland, 2002; Ivanič, 1998). She established her affiliation with the design research community, offering benefits not only to herself, but also to all researchers within this community. Her stance is authoritative, and this contrasts with a passage in which her individual identity is more prominent later in the text: “This literature search and review was conducted as part of a PhD research degree currently undertaken by the researcher” (Yee, 2003, p. 3). She had not at this time passed her mid-point progression. Although she moved methodologically from positivism to a flexible design, in the chain of texts leading up to her thesis and in the drafts of her thesis, she continued to identify herself as “the researcher.”

I would like to consider an extended passage that illuminates how Joyce framed her identity in a late draft of her thesis (version 6; her supervisor had reviewed this version). In this passage from Joyce’s discussion of her methodology, she relates her practice to her research project. This passage is a portion of Section 2.2.4, from Chapter 3 of the draft thesis. In the completed and accepted thesis, Section 3.2.2.4 Practice-based Research, pp. 84-86, is the corresponding passage; it will be compared with the draft after this analysis.

In the chart below, the passage has been broken up into numbered sentences, with clauses presented on separate lines. Three projecting clauses (sentences 6, 15 and 28) have not been separated, but have placed in the thematic position, as they evaluate the subsequent clause (MacDonald, 1992, p. 565). Self-references have been highlighted in blue.

Passage 9: Section 2.2.4, Research Through Practice

	Marked theme	Subject/ theme	New information
1		Allison (1992)	outlines seven principle research procedures as follows: Historical; Philosophical (theoretical); Experimental (pre-, post-testing, 'control'); Comparative (cross-cultural); Descriptive (using surveys, causal-comparative methods); Naturalistic (interpretive, phenomenological, qualitative enquiry); Practical (creative, expressive / productive)
2	As Davies Cooper (1995) acknowledged,	most research	rarely falls neatly into one category
	and	often design researches	use a combination of procedures adopted from the sciences and social sciences.
3		The first four	could be termed as 'classic' research methodologies, having gained acceptance in the research community (Gray & Mallins, 1993)
4	In comparison,	the last three	can be considered to be less 'scientific' and more complementary towards a real-world model of practice.
5		A survey of past and current research	conducted on the subject of typography, revealed
	that	a majority of research	focuses mostly on the experimental (legibility of type on print and screen), historical (biography of typographers and printers, development of printing techniques, development of typefaces) and philosophical (discussions surrounding the role and purpose of typographer and typography).
6	It is still rare	to encounter typographic research	conducted in close relation to practice.
7		One exception	is Catherine Dixon's (2001) practice-led PhD thesis on developing a descriptive framework for typeface classifications.
8		She	uses design as a 'reflective conversation' and treats the design process of her framework as equivalent to a research process.
9	In comparison,	this PhD research study	uses a combination of descriptive, naturalistic and practical procedures.
10		The research questions of this study	are derived from practice-based concerns and hence the premise is that it is practice-led rather than researcher-led.

11		Frayling (1993)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. classified three types of research involving the study of practice: research ABOUT practice 2. research FOR THE PURPOSE of practice, and 3. research THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF practice.
12		This study	started out as inherently practice-led, involving research and deriving theory through the medium of practice.
13	As a result,	action research	was identified as the most appropriate method for this manner of research.
14		The initial objective of this research	was to conduct research through the medium of practice, in the researcher's case relating to professional design practice rather than educational practice.
15	However as the study developed and a clearer theoretical framework emerged, it was evident that	the research	would be unable to address problems within the professional design practice without first addressing fundamental issues within the educational practice.
16		This	resulted in a refocusing of research activity towards the educational environment.
17		This	had a noticeable impact on the research, in terms of the research's emphasis, methods and outcome.
18		Design education	was a secondary rather than a primary area of practice for the researcher and as a result raises the question on how much of the study would be 'practice-led'?
19	While this research has shifted from a design to an educational focus,	it	is still inherently derived from a <i>type of practice</i> , in this case a practice where the researcher is considered an outsider.
20	Hence,	the study	uses Greenwood and Levin's model of <i>co-generative research</i> via <i>co-generative learning</i> in which the action researcher as the 'friendly outsider' tries to bridge the 'world of scientifically constructed knowledge' of the outsider with the 'world of practical reasoning' vis-à-vis the 'local knowledge' of the insider (1998, p. 113).
21		Both professional design and educational practices	have similar limitations when used as action research subject.
22	In an educational environment,	the researcher	was limited to the kinds of projects
	that	she	could conduct
	as well as the	she	could spend with students.

	amount of time		
23		Access to the students	was dependent on the educational organisation and its tutors.
24	In comparison,	carrying out action research projects within the researcher's own professional practice	was more straightforward and only involved negotiation with her design management (which already supported this research from the beginning).
25	However,	the main disadvantage	is
	that	range of design projects that	can be studied is based entirely on the types of live projects operating during the research period.
26		This	is symptomatic of any research conducted through the medium of practice,
	where	practice	is often unpredictable and reliant on uncontrollable factors (for example clients, type of project, external collaborators and budget).
27	In addition,	conducting research during the act of designing or teaching (for example reflective practice)	is often difficult and obstructive to the respective activity.
28	In carrying out this study, it has been found that	the experience of conducting design research in an educational environment	has been invaluable to
		the development of this research and its modification from the original research emphasis	is representative of the iterative and reflective process of action research.
29		The decision to focus on an educational environment	was not made
	because	it	is easier to derive research outcomes
	but because	data generated from earlier research stages	supported this modification.

The passage is from the methodology section of her draft thesis, and the division in the sentence subjects between a phenomenal class and an epistemic class is shifted to

subjects and topics in methodology. Epistemic classes of subjects (“the methods, conceptual tools, and previous research that the researcher brings to bear on [their] material,” MacDonald, 1992, p. 543) include references to previous researchers, their research, or research methodologies (e.g., 1: “Allison (1992) outlines...” and 13: “...action research was identified...”). Phenomenal classes of subjects (“the material that the researcher studies,” MacDonald, 1992, p. 543) include both practical and reflective comments on Joyce’s own study (e.g., 12: “This study started out as...” and 23: “Access to the students was dependent...”). Sentence subjects, in other words, were either other people’s research or her own research procedures; her practice is never a subject in a passage entitled *Research through practice*.

The passage began with a discussion of previous research and researchers in design (sentences 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). Sentence 6 shifted the topic to Joyce’s own niche with a projecting clause in the form of a marked theme (“It is still rare...”). It was with Dixon’s study that Joyce wished to have her own compared. Sentence 9, which began a new paragraph, established the distinctiveness of Joyce’s study: hers was more “practice-led rather than researcher-led.” Joyce cited Frayling (1993) to situate her study in relation to her practice, and then turned to the methodology of the study. This brief passage, sentences 6 – 10, was the only passage in which she discussed her study in relation to her practice in a way that was personal and not strictly functional.

In this passage, “this PhD research” was used as a metonym for the researcher in a way that contrasts with the representation of Catherine Dixon, who is named and is the subject of sentence 8. In the passage, she used a variety of ways of referring to her research in order to avoid naming herself (e.g., sentences 12, 15, 20). This usage is consistent with Low’s description of a writer wishing to avoid the use of personal pronouns as part of “a strategy for avoiding or reducing subjectivity” (1999, p. 223).

As the discussion turned to the practicalities of the research (e.g., 14: “The initial objective of this research was to conduct...” and 15: “...the research would be

unable to address...”), Joyce presented herself directly, but as “the researcher.” For example, in sentence 18, she writes, “Design education was a secondary rather than a primary area of practice for the researcher...” The rhetorical function of these self-mentions is to position her practice in relation to action research as a method, and is most similar to Hyland’s function of *elaborating an argument* (Hyland, 2002, p. 1103), which is a relatively high-risk function. However, by distancing herself through the third-person reference to “the researcher,” she is able to maintain her self-representation as an objective researcher.

In the only sentence in which Joyce puts herself in the subject position (22), the researcher’s activity is largely procedural, which involves more limited exposure than elaborating an argument. In the subordinate clauses of this sentence, she is present as *she*, a direct actor in the conduct of the research. Overall, throughout this passage, Joyce positions herself as a distanced researcher, assessing other’s research and positioning her own research and practice in relation to this background. Given that the passage discusses both her practice and her study, this distancing was so marked that I asked how she came to make this choice. She said that “I did make a conscious decision to refer to myself as ‘the researcher’ rather than ‘I.’” The way she described thinking about it was,

“Do I want it to be more personal, or more objective?” and I guess I want... chose the more, tried to deliver a more objective point of view... it’s a question of wanting to bring more objectivity into the thesis [EB: (overlaps) into your paper] into the paper... maybe it’s this fear that design PhDs or action research PhDs are... have a problem with rigour in that sense. [23 Feb 2006]

She also said that in the reflective journal that she kept of her action research she did refer to herself as I, but she still tried to maintain her objectivity. Even with this degree of self-mention, her main supervisor said “that, you know, it just feels that I’m too objective in that.” As a result of her supervisor’s question and the fact that I

queried this aspect of her writing, she told me that she had changed the final version of this passage. Although there were other minor changes in the submitted version of the text, in the passage from sentence 18 to 24, Joyce has changed the form of personal reference (superscript numbers have been added, corresponding to the sentence numbers above):

¹⁸Design education was my secondary rather than primary area of practice and as a result raised the question of how much of the study would be 'practice-led'? ¹⁹Although this study has shifted from a design to an educational focus, it is still inherently derived from *a type of practice*, in this case a practice that I, the researcher, had only part-time involvement in. ²⁰Consequently, the study uses Greenwood and Levin's model of *cogenerative research* via *co-generative learning* in which the action researcher as the 'friendly outsider' tries to bridge the 'world of scientifically constructed knowledge' of the outsider with the 'world of practical reasoning' vis-à-vis the 'local knowledge' of the insider (1998, p.113). ²¹Both professional design and educational practices have similar limitations when used as action research subjects. ²²In an educational environment, I was limited in the kinds of projects that I could conduct as well as the amount of time I could spend with students. ²³Access to the students was dependent on the educational organization, the consent of its tutors and the availability and accessibility of learning resources. ²⁴In comparison, carrying out action research projects within my own professional practice was more straightforward and only involved negotiation with my design management (which already supported this study from the beginning).

She added personal pronouns that refer to herself, but, in sentence 19, she kept the self-identification as "the researcher". Rather than weakening her identification with the role of researcher, "I, the researcher," actually strengthens it. With the help of her supervisor, she established a discursal self that better fit the norms of the

emerging soft discipline of design research than the very distanced persona that she had presented previously in her Ph.D. study.

Designing herself

Joyce's primary affiliation remained with her practice and her identity as a designer. The discursal self that she wanted to create was that of a designer who read, wrote and researched. From an early stage as she carried her research forward, she also thought about the design of her thesis.

Before discussing Joyce's approach to the design of her thesis, I would like to give some background to text design, since this is normally outside the remit of writing studies. Book design, particularly for text-heavy books, is hidden in plain sight. Pages without images or other graphic content such as charts or graphs have been described as *densely printed pages* (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Kress and van Leeuwen argue that the densely printed page has "ceased to be a significant textual unit" (2006, p. 178); meaning has been transferred to the linear language. However, the words on the page are composed of designed letter forms, spaced across the page through choices that are socially derived and as expressive as the choices to write in an author-saturated style. Even for a text such as the Ph.D. thesis in which the design of the text is constrained by regulations, there are possibilities for variation. These variations allow alternative modes for the creation of the discursal self.

The development of the modern Ph.D. by research closely parallels the development of the typewriter (e.g., the Remington No. 1, 1876: Adler, 1973). With its fixed typeface, the typewriter narrowed the expressive possibilities of handwriting to a single typeface, but allowed the production of an extended, machine-produced text that resembled a type-set book. However, the development of the laser printer, PostScript language (1985), and "what you see is what you get" computers with word processing packages that allow choice of typefaces forced every writer who

uses a computer to engage with information design. To accept a default typeface (e.g., Times New Roman, for many versions of Microsoft Word) is to accept the unmarked choice, and, unlike writing in the era of typewriters, choicefulness is more apparent because of the unchosen options. The typographer, Robin Kinross (1985), claimed that there is no information without rhetoric, demonstrating this through a historical analysis of the typefaces of British railway timetables. There is rhetoric in the visual design of a thesis.

Typographers distinguish between *display type* and *text type*. Display typefaces are used for limited passages of text, such as those in advertisements or signs. They frequently draw attention to the typeface as well as the embodied meaning, so that texts that intend to evoke romantic feelings, such as perfume ads, may use a typeface that imitates handwriting. Text types, on the other hand, are used for long passages of text and are intended not to draw attention to themselves. A classic description of good page design (Warde, 1955) invoked the image of a well-chosen typeface as a crystal goblet that would hold meaning transparently. Most discussions of the contribution of typefaces to meaning have analysed display type (see, for example, Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Stöckl, 2005; van Leeuwen, 2006). However, text typefaces have expressive potential, and a typographer creating her own book would be strongly aware of this potential and would need to engage with it.

Theses are text-dominated documents, written and designed by doctoral candidates. Further, regulations specify limits on the design of the thesis (e.g., British Standards Institution, 1990). As a result, the range of variation in theses is relatively small. However, Ravelli and Starfield (2008; see also Starfield & Ravelli, 2006) have identified an association between a distinctive style (marked choices) in the design of elements of the thesis (e.g., title page layout and typeface choice) and what they call “the New Humanities” thesis, theses that use qualitative methodologies and frequently take an activist stance toward the subject of their research. They argue that the writers of New Humanities theses, having written a text that does not

follow traditional norms of research and stance, also select marked choices in thesis design. Joyce's response to designing her text was different from that of the designers of the "New Humanities" theses that Ravelli and Starfield studied.

Joyce's interest in the design of her thesis came up in our first discussion. I asked if I could look at her MPP document; she agreed and added, "please excuse it for being designed, 'cause I'm a designer." She went on to say, "I just can't stand in my final thesis I'm not able to design it" [21 Apr 2004]. A year later, I asked if she was still unhappy about the design of her thesis, and, after saying she still was, she explained that she wanted to use a typeface other than Times New Roman, and, rather than have equal margins on all sides of the page, to have margins that would accommodate the binding of a thick book. It was, for her, a question of her professional identity: "I think the appearance of professionalism matters, and, for me, designing it, because I'm a designer, shows that, hey, actually, I'm practicing what I'm preaching" [20 Apr 2005]. She went on to expand on what practicing what she preached meant:

yeah, I mean, aesthetic matters, aesthetic makes things... it is, there is, it should look nice. And it's not nice for the sake of looking, you know, colourful bow-wow, it's just well designed, easy to read, enough space for you to, you know, to rest your eyes, just very simple basic things, it doesn't have to be [emphasises] twelve point Times New Roman and it's just so vulgar to have twelve point Times New Roman all the way through, it just... as a typographer or a designer who likes typography, [whispers] it's just, "not that, it's horrible." So that's my piece on that. [20 Apr 2005]

I followed up this discussion by asking whether she planned an unusual document, to which she replied, "I think it's pretty conventional." The rest of her comment focused on content rather than form. She said that it would follow the general pattern of organisation of social science theses, with introduction, methodology, and conclusion.

In her day-to-day writing, Joyce used Arial, a face designed by Microsoft to

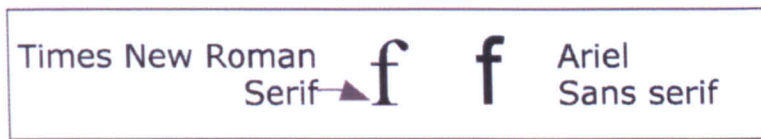


Figure 32: Serif and sans serif typefaces

closely resemble the iconic modernist typeface, Helvetica. Arial is a sans serif typeface; that is, characters do not have the fine lines that finish off the main strokes that make up the letter (Figure 32). Sans serif typefaces are associated with the Bauhaus and high modernism, and are more frequently found as a text face in books that intend to signal their modernity, for example, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). In contrast, serif faces such as Times New Roman reference the carved letters found on Roman inscriptions, signalling tradition and classicism. Familiarity and the contribution of serifs to the “flow” of the line make serif faces more readable (Jury, 2004); as a result, they are the unmarked choice for books, newspapers and other extended texts. Suggesting her affiliation with modern design, the drafts of her thesis were formatted in workaday Arial.

However, when Joyce came to design her thesis, she chose a typeface with serifs,

Minion Regular for her body text and Officina Serif Bold for her headings and subheadings. Officina, with its squared serifs, harkens back to Courier, the classic typewriter font that confers authority and enacts methodological precision (Blake & Harbord, 2008), evoking the new tradition of the doctoral thesis as the scholar’s book.

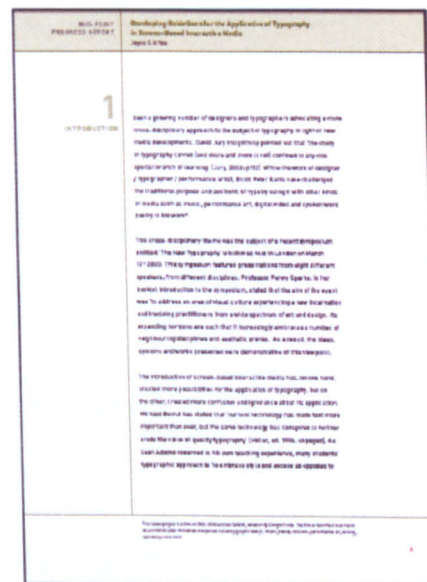


Figure 33: Page from Joyce’s MPP report

These choices gave her thesis a much more traditional appearance than her Mid-Point Progression document. The Mid-Point Progression document was in every way a beautiful modern text. In her thesis, on the other hand, the visual design is largely traditional, but there are subtle differences. Comparing her thesis with the examples in Ravelli and Starfield (2008), Joyce used unmarked punctuation and numbering, but she used coloured bands in the table of contents to separate the sections of her thesis in a way more similar to the marked treatment of the New Humanities theses.

Similarly, she chose serif typefaces to suggest a traditional approach to the text, but by subtly reshaping the thesis away from the implications of “Times New Roman,” Joyce established her identity as a designer who writes and does research.

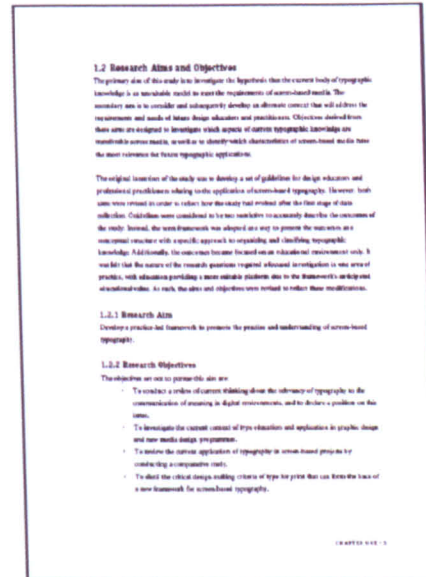


Figure 34: Page from Joyce's thesis

CONTENTS PAGE	
Sections	Page
Title	i
Abstract	ii
Contents Page	iv
List of Tables	xii
List of Figures	xiv
Acknowledgements	xvii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the Research Project	2
1.2 Research Aims and Objectives	5
1.2.1 Research Aim	5
1.2.2 Research Objectives	5
1.3 Definitions	7
1.4 An Overview of the Research Methodologies Used	9
1.4.1 Stage One: Definition of Research Questions	9
1.4.2 Stage Two: Typographic Framework Development	10
1.4.3 Stage Three: Typographic Framework Evaluation and Refinement	10

Figure 35: Thesis content page (detail)

Conclusion

Writing in Design was quite different from writing in FAP, because research in Design was compatible with existing social science methodologies. These methodologies allowed considerable scope for innovation through the use of visual information, for example, in communicating with participants and in generating data. At the same time, data could be described using the existing architecture of the thesis. Methodologies could be described and findings reported in existing report

formats. Again, existing research reports were amenable to the inclusion of visual information presented in innovative ways. Because of the development of powerful personal computers, including visual information in texts was relatively simple. Joyce was a professional designer, comfortable with desktop publishing software, and her use of complicated, colourful graphic displays was an example of the possibilities that have been opened for thesis writers in Design.

Writing in Design was also far less burdened by ambitions to make the thesis an extension of a practice than FAP or to comment on their practice. Even Joyce, who of the design candidates was most committed to a practice-based project, put her practice aside for her research, only bringing practice and research together in her designed text. The other designers felt that the category of practice-based research was largely irrelevant to them. Whether practice-based research and writing was uncontroversial or irrelevant, it did not substantially increase the difficulty of writing a Ph.D. thesis. Some designers may have felt, as Joyce believed and Hockey (2003) reported, that thinking through and externalising their process of design might jinx it, but in other ways, the process of writing a thesis in Design was a straight-forward if challenging task.

To say that research in Design is compatible with existing methodologies, though, is not to diminish the effort required of the Design candidates. Researching and writing a thesis in Design is demanding; opportunities for innovation may add to the difficulties, rather than reduce them. All the candidates that I observed struggled to accomplish their best. However, the congruence of Design research and writing with existing patterns of research and accepted genres of theses meant that the task was reduced compared with the art candidates.

One final concluding note to this chapter is that possibilities facilitated by computers can be used in a variety of ways. Starfield and Ravelli (2006) describe the “New Humanities” thesis as a challenge to the traditional construct of the researcher, and in another paper (Ravelli & Starfield, 2008), they link the textual challenge to a visual

embodiment characterised by marked fonts (e.g., sans serif), the use of colour and unconventional layouts. However, unlike the text designers of the New Humanities theses, Joyce wanted a traditional text, one that would set her apart from other designers and align her with academic researchers. Her textual choices strongly aligned her with academic researchers, but, by her choices in layout and typeface as well as the many visual components of the text, her thesis was a designer's thesis. By drawing on the differing possibilities of the semantic modes that she controlled, Joyce created an identity for herself between the academic and design communities.

10 Struggling

Two candidates, one in Design and the other in Fine Art Practice, had difficulty at the stage of reviewing their progress and evaluating their potential for continuing their study. At Northumbria, this stage is called the Mid-Point Progression (MPP). The difficulties that these candidates had in their progress are individual and particular. However, the struggles that these candidates experience may also illuminate wider issues of doctoral writing in new disciplines. These candidates are outliers among outliers; while most candidates progressed successfully through their MPP, these candidates had much more difficulty, and their particular difficulties open up the process of writing a doctoral thesis.

At the MPP stage, candidates wrote reports on their progress that outlined their plans for further work and also provided a timeline for completion. According to Joyce, the MPP reports were limited to 4,000-words. After the reports had been submitted, the candidates met with an examination panel comprised of their supervisors and two internal examiners. The examiners had reviewed the report and taken advice from the supervisors. They decided whether the candidate would be allowed to proceed with their study or whether they needed to make substantive changes in their plan for further study. If the candidates needed to make changes, as they did in these cases, they were required to submit an altered report and go before another panel. The process in each case took over six months, a substantial period for Ph.D. studies that were intended to be completed in three years. One other feature of the MPP process was that Northumbria regulations did not permit internal examiners to be involved in the viva stage of the process.

The Mid-Point Progression in Design

The first candidate that I will discuss is Clare, who was a candidate in Design. She had a promising, but not fully developed project at the start of her study. However,

when she submitted her MPP, her review panel asked her to substantially reshape her study. They asked her to resubmit her proposal, and in addition, they asked her to write a text that could stand as an introduction to her thesis. The introductory text, which was 13,000 words in length, delayed her for six months. Little of this was incorporated into her final thesis. Although delayed, she submitted her thesis and completed successfully.

Unlike the research projects of Joyce, Emma, or Kevin, the supervisor, Clare's research did not look at design education or innovation as a process. Their research projects theorised the design process, looking broadly at questions such as "How does design happen?" and "How can an understanding of the design process be fostered?" Her research was practically focused, and her IPA opened with very practical ambitions:

Imagine being able to buy off the peg clothes that really do fit well!

This research aims to develop guidelines to assist regional clothing industry, and associated stakeholders to contend within the barriers to, and opportunities for, the development of the manufacture and retail of better fitting clothes.

Because clothing sizes are often inconsistent and based on a limited set of measurements, consumers cannot buy clothing without trying on the garment. Further, factors such as changing diets, activity patterns, and



Figure 36: Creating the bodyscan

immigration have led to increasing variation in body shapes (e.g., height, girth and

proportions), which are not fully reflected in conventional clothing sizes.

Collaboration between the UK government and major UK retailers led to the creation of a survey of modern body shapes by using a scanning technology that scanned 11,000 people in three dimensions to extract more accurate data for clothing sizes (Figure 36). The data set was available on licence, but had been little used by small and medium enterprises (SME). Clare hoped to investigate how these enterprises could effectively use the data to cater to sectors of the population that were currently not being well served by the mass retailers. In addition to the needs of consumers, she hoped that her research could benefit regional manufacturers as well, such as the one that she had worked for after completing her MSc. in Clothing (Advanced Manufacture) (Hussey, n.d.).

Clare's project was an example of the changing nature of Ph.D. study, built in part upon the recognition that less than a third of Ph.D. graduates move into academic employment (Green & Powell, 2005). The changes in Ph.D. study and the types of qualifications awarded are reflected in the development of both the practice-led and professional doctorates. These changes have also been described as a new form of knowledge generation that has been called Mode 2 knowledge (Gibbons et al., 1994; Usher, 2002). Citing Gibbons et al., Usher defines Mode 1 knowledge as "pure or curiosity driven research" (p. 146) of the type that has been traditional in doctoral research. Mode 2 knowledge, on the other hand, is performative and trans-disciplinary, and linked to "applied and to tangible 'real world' outcomes" (p. 146). It is often commercially applicable. Usher describes the "intertwining of universities, government and businesses in the innovation process" (p. 147), a mixture that Clare's study could stand as a model for. She planned her university-based Ph.D. study to look at a government- and industry-funded database that existed because of new technological developments. Her research proposal clearly involved knowledge generation for commercial purposes, in one of a university's natural Mode 2 disciplines. The Centre for Design Research, Northumbria's research centre in design, designed for commercial clients including Pfizer, Nissan, Nokia, and Johnson and Johnson (Centre for Design Research, n.d.).

Starting out in Design

Clare's IPA did not set out a clear research programme, but it did suggest the directions she hoped to pursue. She later described this paper as "naïve." In the background section that is required for the submission, she set out an aim and a hypothesis; in another required section, her "Aims and Objectives," she set out somewhat different aims. Finally, her "Methodology" section provided another clear restatement of her ambition that only partly matches the previous statements.

Section	Statement
Background	This research aims to develop guidelines to assist regional clothing industry, and associated stakeholders to contend within the barriers to, and opportunities for, the development of the manufacture and retail of better fitting clothes.
Background	Hypothesis: Datasets for the clothing industry can be generated more effectively through the adoption of e-tailoring processes.
Aims & Objectives	The research aims to identify the advantages for both the retailer and ultimately the consumer, which could be gained by effectively utilising existing production facilities. Appropriate methods and means need to be identified that would enable manufacturers to excel in the provision of better fitting clothing for the ever-changing and diversifying global market places by adopting a process of e-tailoring.
Aims & Objectives	The objective for the programme of research are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine the current state of production development within the clothing industry [...] • To conduct a review of current studies being completed in the area of clothing size development [...] • To conduct case study interview with regional SME clothing manufacturers [...] • The data compiled in objectives 1-3 will be compared and contrasted to understand the patterns that exist within the results, and to assess the effectiveness and practicality of data usage. [...] • Draw recommendations and guidelines to assist different stakeholders. [...] • To determine the need for further improvement [...] • To conclude the programme of research, to discuss the further developments of the research and technical developments, to write up the thesis and submit.

Methodology	The research is based on the anticipation that SME clothing manufacturers could significantly improve the fit of their products through access to the SizeUK data or similar, supported by a pro-active regional infrastructure.
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These statements describe an area of interest, rather than a developed study. Related phrases that reoccur include “development of the manufacture and retail of better fitting clothes,” “excel in the provision of better fitting clothing,” and “improve the fit of their products.” In addition, she stated a goal of helping SME manufacturers in the North East region to make better use of the data available through the SizeUK bodyscan project. This is an initial proposal, rather than a worked out project, and the lack of clarity is primarily developmental. However, she had difficulties that came to seem characteristic of her project. She submitted her form soon after signing on for an internally funded Ph.D. but, along with colleagues including Emma who submitted at the same time, “we didn’t get an official feedback that we’d passed our IPA until over a year, October, end of October. So that’s over a year after we’d started” [13 Sept 05].

Four months after receiving notice that her IPA had been approved, she submitted her MPP. Her proposal was similar but significantly clearer. Through her research project, she hoped “to discover if digital bodyscan data can be used effectively by SME clothing manufacturers to make better fitting clothes for different market segments” [MPP, v1]. She identified two ways that she could carry out her investigation, one practical, and the other theoretical. If she had used the practical approach, she would have had to obtain a license for the data (a significant cost) and then analysed it in parallel with industry users to identify how the data might be used to make better fitting clothing. The alternative was to approach current users and regional non-users to investigate why they were using or not using the data set, and introduce “a process that through access would enable and encourage SME clothing manufacturers to increase the levels of innovation within their product range” [MPP, v1]. She chose the second approach, which involved working with users and potential users of the bodyscan database to understand their interests.

Clare's research project evolved from her life; it investigated an industry she had worked in and the region in which she lived. She hoped it would help this industry, which was struggling as manufacture moved to less expensive Asian sites. However, her writing style was that of traditional scientific research. She referred to herself as "the researcher," and adopted an author-evacuated style. In the following characteristic passage, she described her development of a term to represent her project.

The term 2FIT will function to encompass all the components of the research project in order to give readers a sense of continuity throughout the final thesis. In order that the appropriate term was identified, key words had been noted down, considered and discussed during an informal brainstorm session. One of the words predominantly being considered was fit. The aim of the brainstorm was to identify a recognisable name that could be transferable to non-clothing related products that could also benefit through the use of bodyscan data. Many of the phrases that were considered were very wordy, so it was decided that use of an acronym would be more appropriate, thus Fit From Information Technology became 2FIT.

Passage 10: The development of the term, 2FIT, from MPP, v1.

In this description, she has changed a "narrative of nature" into a "narrative of science" (G. Myers, 1990b) by using grammatical constructions such as passivisation in order to remove her agency from the process of choosing an apt term: "In order that the appropriate term *was identified*, key words *had been noted* down, considered and discussed during an informal brainstorm session." The narrative of nature might have said, "With a couple of other students, I brainstormed terms related to my project, eliminated the wordy phrases, and came up with an acronym, 2FIT."

The elision of her role seen in this passage was characteristic of her writing through to the completed thesis.

Clare planned to use questionnaires, interviews and focus group gatherings to collect her data in careful stages. Among the tools that she developed was an innovative research methodology that would allow her to investigate regional manufacturers' perceptions of the clothing sector and their place within it, as well as answering questions of use or non-use of the bodyscan database. Because of the craftsmanship involved in clothing manufacture and because Clare felt that visual communication would more effectively elicit the tacit knowledge of participants, she developed an elicitation exercise rather than a questionnaire. She would ask participants to sketch a diagram of their view of the relationships among design, manufacture, marketing, and technology. In addition though, she would ask her participants to choose and organise a set of words related to each of the sectors of the industry using a magnetic board. These would be analysed to generate a mind map showing links among the words.

Clare did not set out specific research questions in her first MPP report. Her goal remained "to enable and encourage SME clothing manufacturers to increase the levels of innovation within their product range" [MPP, v1]. She recapitulated the objectives from her IPA and proposed changes necessitated by its late approval. These changes reflected changes in the progression of her data generation stage, but they did not substantially alter her objectives. In her discussion of her project's contribution to knowledge, she focused on clothing that fit: "Ultimately, this investigation will identify whether or not the bodyscan data could be used by SMEs to make better fitting clothes for different market segments" [MPP, v1].

However, Clare's Mid-Point Progression panel did not go well. Although her MPP report had been read by her three supervisors, the two internal examiners felt that the research project was not rigorous enough, and said that she needed to resubmit her report. She had focused on SME businesses in the North East, and "it kind of

came out that maybe it would be appropriate for me to speak to [large manufacturers or large retailers], in order to gain a national context, which could be transferred to an international context" [13 Sept 05]. Extending the study to large manufacturers or retailers would require her to nurture new contacts in these large businesses. In addition, extending her study to current users might be difficult, as they might regard the bodyscan technology as a sensitive commercial advantage.

In addition to extending the range of businesses that she looked at, her panel said that she needed to broaden her study in another way; "They told me it was too specific, what I was trying to do was too specific, and I had to take into account all technologies" [4 Jan 06]. Specifically, the panel said that

my focus was a bit too narrow, and now it's been broadened out by saying I'm looking at the adoption of new technology, not just focusing on bodyscans, and in that way I can see how in the past I've used computerised cutting or machinery that does automatic sewing, or computers to monitor stock. [13 Sept 05]

She had been worried about the possibility of difficulty even before the MPP panel. One of her internal examiners had come to see her and had said, "'Oh, you've got to do this and you've got to do that and you have to have the international aspect and you have this,' and this was before I even went in to the interview" [4 Jan 06]. While not happy with either the delay or the refocusing of her study, Clare said, "that's fair enough, but I suppose, I should have known this beforehand, before I got into the situation" [13 Sept 05]. Worryingly, her supervisor raised the issue of a possible extension; she was vividly aware that one possible outcome might be that she would only be "allowed to do an MPhil. So if that happened, I'd probably just say, 'I'm not going to waste any more of my time doing this'" [13 Sept 05]. An extension would be almost as unfortunate, since an extension would require her to pay her fees and expenses.

She suspected that there were issues related to her study that were not being discussed openly. Her primary supervisor was not involved with clothing; she had a secondary supervisor whose area was clothing, but, in Clare's mind, she was

not particularly a clothing person; she's a fashion person, which, if you, once you read through it, there's quite a difference and there's a lot of kind of snob value in terms of fashion, they don't like to be associated with clothing, even though their designs have to be manufactured, which makes them clothing. [4 Jan 06]

Both examiners came from the University's fashion design department. Clare felt that this difference in perspective was one reason why her proposal had been poorly received.

Another issue that she identified was that the chair of the panel, who was one of the two internal examiners, was relatively new both to the University and to the UK, having previously worked in South Africa. Because of this, the examiner might have been less familiar with the practices of the University. The most experienced supervisor in Design was part of her supervision team, which had initially seemed an advantage, but had limited his ability to intervene in the review of Clare's progress. Clare received written feedback five months after the panel had met.

The panel said that she should address a series of issues, which fell into two groups:

- More factual information instead of general info
 - Clear and definite goals and objectives
 - Define and contextualise the SME clothing sector
 - What is SME nature / what is a micro enterprise
 - How do current SME companies interact or are driven by market / pricepoint / product type / distribution pattern
 - Historical contextualization – how did this region arrive at SME scale manufacturing vs large scale manufacturing
 - Profile of NE area
 - Mechanism support systems with region
 - What could be the contribution of knowledge from the programme of work
 - Can they use this knowledge in the field
-
- How will the title question be articulated and approached
 - Current industry analysis
 - Technology application analysis
 - Potential areas of research / usage / and why
 - Results of data and collective surveys
 - How to use this indicators
 - Results and conclusions

Passage 11: MPP panel feedback

Clare's notes on the feedback suggest that the first group of issues related to the quality of her scholarship and the need to demonstrate that she had advanced beyond her IPA. They largely entailed increasing the detail that she provided in the background to her study. The panel also wanted a clearer statement of her contribution to knowledge. The second group of issues were addressed to her approach to the study. She highlighted "Results of data and collective surveys" in the second group, noting that they were "asking [her] to predict findings."

She was asked to revise her MPP submission, but, because the issues they had highlighted could not be addressed within the limits of the MPP report, the panel asked her to write an introductory chapter that would address these issues. Clare said that "I was told a number of times by my supervision team that it's very un... extremely unusual [EB: right] and it's really not the norm" [4 Jan 06].

Clare wrote two papers, her revised MPP report and a sample chapter for her thesis. The MPP report was 5,300 words in length, while the chapter was approximately 13,500 words. While her revised MPP was submitted in May, writing the chapter took until November to complete, and so past the end of her second year of study. As she said, "the interesting part is still to come" [13 Sept 05]

The revised MPP report

The revised MPP report (v2) had substantial changes. It had research questions and the section discussing the contribution to knowledge had seven bullet points, rather than a narrative. It also included a contextualisation of the research and a more extensive discussion of the methodology, which increased the length of the report. These changes addressed issues flagged in the feedback, such as contextualising the SME clothing sector, the need for "clear and definite goals," and the identification of the contribution to knowledge. The more extensive discussion of the methodology reflected work on the project that continued in parallel with revising the MPP report.

The revised MPP identified five research questions.

- How can regional SME clothing manufacturers make better fitting clothing for different market segments?
- How could an RDA enable regional SME clothing manufacturers?
- Why would NE regional SME clothing manufacturers choose not to use bodyscan data?
- How important is better fitting clothing to regional manufacturers?
- What is more important in terms of competition and strategy?

Passage 12: Research questions, MPP v2.

Her original MPP report did not have explicit research questions. The new questions remained focused on helping regional manufacturers make better fitting clothing. The first question framed the overarching issue, while the subsequent questions addressed subsidiary issues. The overarching question was no longer about the adoption of the bodyscan technology, but situates the technology in the context of other possible changes. The research project remained concerned with the manufacture of better fitting clothing in the North East.

The contribution to knowledge shifted more strongly. Seven bullet points identify three distinct contributions:

- i. Assessment of utilisation of bodyscan data in the North East region.
- ii. Assessment of utilisation of bodyscan data in the National context.
- iii. Assessment of utilisation of bodyscan data in relation to uses within other design based industries.
- iv. Guidance for appropriate acquisition and usage of bodyscan data for development of niche market products.
- v. Development of process used to investigate technology transfer in SME businesses.
- vi. Development of process for mapping industry inter-organisational relationships.
- vii. Develop process to identify differences/trends in cognitive modelling of working practices.

Passage 13: Contribution to knowledge, MPP v2.

Three points related evaluating the utilisation of bodyscan data regionally, nationally and in areas other than clothing manufacture. The fourth point referred

the development of guidance on how the database could be exploited more fully. The final group (bullet points v – vii) referred to outcomes related to the proposed methodologies. This last group of items theorised her study and shifted it from evaluation and the provision of guidance, which could be implemented by a business or industrial sector, to the development of a process that could be generally applied. The addition of these items as part of her contribution to knowledge was a significant change from her original area interest, and away from the questions that she set out in her research question (Passage 47).

The changes introduced in the revised MPP report represented both a broadening of the study and greater explicitness in identifying goals and potential outcomes. Clare's interests were placed in a wider frame, represented by changes such as comparing technological changes regionally and nationally, and comparing the adoption of the bodyscan database with other technological innovations. The increased attention to methodological outcomes suggested that theoretical implications had increased in importance to stand alongside practical goals that might help the industry and region.

The other text that Clare was asked to write was longer and more difficult to write than the revised MPP report, because, rather than writing a specific chapter that would directly contribute to her study such as the methodology chapter, it was to be an introduction to the thesis, which would provide an overview of the study. The chapter was presented as Chapter 1: Introduction to *Applying Bodyscan Data Technologies: An investigation of clothing industry interrelationships and attitudes towards new technological development* (Chapter 1, *ABDT*). The implication was that this was the first chapter of her thesis, which had a new title. The chapter was submitted in November, six months after the revised MPP report. Clare described it as "a replacement for the MPP" [4 Jan 06]. The chapter addressed five specific areas, plus providing a summary:

1. Research question
2. Research context

3. Technology within the clothing industry
4. Stakeholders
5. Methodology
6. Summary

In addition to being much longer, the new text set out a new research question:

Research Question: By what means does the clothing industry keep abreast of technological developments, acquire, apply and evaluate the success of new technologies?

This shifted her research from better fitting clothing produced by more innovative regional SME manufacturers to a different and wider question of implementation and adoption. This topic had been one part of Clare's projected contribution to knowledge in her second MPP report (item v), but now it became the focus of her study. This research question would attempt to answer a very general question about an entire industry, rather than the specific innovations that could be implemented. In line with this change, she set out newly defined aims and objectives:

Aims	Objectives
Gain an understanding of how regional clothing industry businesses consider their position within the sector.	Complete programme of Knowledge Elicitation Exercises, implement homogenous focus group session, conclude with a final heterogeneous focus group session
Find out how bodyscan data is currently being used within the clothing industry (retail sector).	Conduct a series of case study interviews with retailers involved in the SizeUK survey.
Understand the potential gains from the use of technology within the clothing industry – focus on use the of bodyscan data	Generate three comparative business plan models - illustrating two potential applications of the existing dataset, also an alternative option for bodyscan data generation and use.

Passage 14: Aims and objectives, from the Chapter 1, *ABDT*.

The three aims reflected the central topics that had animated Clare's study from the outset, while the first and second objectives were part of her original research programme, but were here clearly connected to project aims. The final objective, the generation of alternative business plans, was new. Like the new research question, the final aim, when combined with its counterpart objective, theorised her study in a new way. Her findings could be "applied to design industries in other fields such as automotive, aerospace and furniture" [Chapter 1, *ABDT*].

She made new claims for her contribution to knowledge:

The research programme will generate new knowledge in the areas outlined below;

- i. Identify and define stakeholder interrelationships between industry sectors.
- ii. Produce a model for a process analysis tool to enable investment in new technology to be easily and accurately assessed.
- iii. Provide an accurate synopsis of digital bodyscan data use within the UK clothing retail sector.
- iv. Present three comparative business plan models to translate research findings.

In addition, the success of the combined developmental data collection processes used within the Element 1 will be fully considered to be suggested as a new process.

Passage 15: Contribution to knowledge, Chapter 1, *ABDT*.

The new claims for knowledge are much more generalised than the claim that she set out in her original MPP: "Ultimately, this investigation will identify whether or not the bodyscan data could be used by SMEs to make better fitting clothes for different market segments" [MPP, v1]. The first two items focused on her research methodology, with the first item, "Identify and define..." being expanded in the

additional comment about “developmental data collection processes,” the use of diagrams as an elicitation tool. The third item described a data gathering process, but nothing about the evaluation or the generation of guidelines for the use of bodyscan data. The final item, the business plans, was intended to generalise the technology adoption process in a way that could be applicable to a range of design-based industries.

In writing this chapter, Clare moved from the specifics that had interested her, the design of better fitting clothing in the North East region through the use of innovative technology, to a broader study of technology adoption. Her research methodology became more prominent while her findings illustrated the application of the methodology. If Mode 2 knowledge is performative, as Usher (2002) suggested, the performance within her thesis moved from the findings to the method for finding the result. This is consistent with claims that doctoral study in design should be training in research methodology (e.g., Durling, 2002), but may be inconsistent with the development of research appropriate to a knowledge economy (Usher, 2002). Clare’s study used a variety of methodologies, some quite innovative. However, her study no longer offered a contribution to a particular industrial sector but was more theoretically grounded and more oriented to the research community than the clothing industry.

Conclusion

Clare’s process also raises questions about the Mid-Point Progression process, questions that have implications for the doctorate in Design. The most important question that her experience raises is the question of what is expected both at the Mid-Point and at the conclusion of the research process. Is the shift from a contribution to knowledge situated in a particular industrial sector to a contribution to knowledge through the research methodology a necessary one to maintain “doctorateness”? Winter, Griffiths and Green (2000, p. 27) discussed “the widespread difficulty of getting agreement about what should count as

'knowledge',” pointing out that practice-based research will frequently be context-bound and so be different from “universal” Mode 1 knowledge. Winter, writing from the point of view of a supervisor, says, “I was haunted by the question (which I imagined others raising), ‘Is there a sufficiently broad “theoretical” analysis here?’” (Winter et al., 2000, p. 29)

There is also the question of experience within the supervision and examination teams. Durling (2002; see also Durling & Friedman, 2002), in discussing his belief that a doctorate should be training in research methods, also said that there were not enough supervisors who had doctorates for the number of candidates in Design. Clare was concerned about the experience of her supervisors and examiners. Experience is needed to develop a shared understanding within the disciplinary community about the appropriate standards of doctorateness and the rigour necessary for doctorateness. Similarly, choosing an examiner from fashion design may have reflected the lack of experienced examiners in design.

There was, finally, the question of local knowledge and local arrangements. Clare was asked to write an additional text, Chapter 1 of *Applying Bodyscan Data Technologies*. This was in addition to the MPP report, and was substantially longer than that report. Although portions of the chapter (largely graphics, such as flow diagrams) were eventually incorporated into the completed study, the chapter as a whole was not included. This issue goes back to what should be expected of a doctorate, and, in particular, what are appropriate additional requirements, given the limited period of funding. According to University regulations, the MPP panel must assess whether:

- the programme can be satisfactorily completed within the available time
- the programme meets the level required for the award and is likely to lead to a contribution to knowledge or understanding

These two goals can be in conflict when substantial additional submissions are required of candidates to assess the likelihood of successful completion. There is also

the question of whether the internal examination process is improved or hindered by examiners who have no subsequent role or responsibility in the doctoral process.

Many, though not all, of the issues derive from the unstable nature of the doctorate process in Design. On the one hand, examiners in Design may want to preserve the perceived rigour of the doctorate against assertions that practice-based disciplines are not in fact scholarly. On the other, practice-based disciplines such as design may be pioneering new forms of doctoral research (Mode 2 knowledge) that are more appropriate to societal needs. In Clare's case, although her study addressed a need that she perceived, that of the clothing industry in a relatively less advantaged region, she did not have a direct commercial sponsor, which might have strengthened her case.

In addition, there may have been issues to University procedures and the relative inexperience of examiners in an emerging discipline. Ultimately, though, Clare successfully submitted her thesis and passed her viva in October 2007. Clare's project may have been improved by the MPP process; it certainly was changed and lengthened. I did not interview other participants in her MPP process, and this limits my view of the process. However, most of the issues that arose—as well as Clare's perception of not being informed—seem to come out of a general lack of agreement on what a doctorate in Design should be.

The Mid-Point Progression in Fine Arts Practice

The other candidate who struggled at the MPP was a photographer, Ikuko Tsuchiya, who called herself Iku. She came into the Ph.D. process through her practice. While an MA candidate at another university, she had won an award for her photographs. This award led to a photographic project of documenting the NHS provision in Northumbria. The project was jointly administered by the University and a charity, and, as part of the award, she was given a grant by the University to pursue a Ph.D. On her MA programme, she was given substantial support in writing her

dissertation; in addition, the writing component was a relatively small contribution to the overall programme assessment. She intended to research how the exceptional empathetic insight that she brought to the photographic process might contribute to the healing process in people whom she photographed. However, her initial MPP report was referred to allow her to address concerns that the panel raised. She tried to address these concerns and wrote a revised report that was much more explicit about the ideas and connections that underpinned her practice. Although she worked with dedication on this revision, she was unable to frame her topic in way that was acceptable to her MPP committee, and she was told she would have to take an MPhil.

Starting out in Fine Art Practice

Iku's IPA proposed a study of "Therapeutic touch: the use of photo-based methodology as a healing practice within the context of healthcare." She elaborated this in her research question:

My proposition is that photography can address the widest possible concept of 'touch' in relation to the world of healthcare. That is, photographic methods can be used to represent and document the healing properties of physical 'touch' and generate well-being through the psychological state of being 'touched'. [IPA]

This proposition had two elements that were to continue to cause her difficulty throughout her study. On the one hand, photography could "document the healing properties of physical 'touch'." This was something that she had successfully done at a high level. She had taken photographs in a sheltered community for people who were learning disabled, and she had taken photographs that documented the work of the National Health Service. These pictures showed how compassionate touch could comfort and sustain people. Throughout her study, her practice was recognised as particularly strong.

She also felt that photography could “generate well-being through the psychological state of being ‘touched’.” She said in her aims that she intended to “enable those who cope with illness to aid their healing process with photo-based practice, knowledge, theory and artwork” [IPA]. Iku believed that photography, done sympathetically, had healing powers. She described how she was asked by an occupational therapist she had met while photographing in a hospital to take a nude photograph of her. The therapist had had a boyfriend in the Army in Iraq who had asked for the photograph, but the woman was self-conscious about her body and had asked Iku to take the picture. Iku described the process:

And she thinks that she could trust me, and I could trust her so she asked me to take photograph of her body and after finishing the session of taking photograph, she said that she feels more much better. I think that is because of the way I approach to her, or the way I communicate with her, but I think that there is some therapeutic effect, so she is more free from her mind. [24 Feb 2005]

Iku’s approach to her practice and her belief in the healing possibility of photography surely preceded her arrival in England. However, her experience in Britain strengthened these beliefs. She had arrived in England to visit her sister, who was working with adults with learning difficulties in Botton village, North Yorkshire. When she arrived, her English was very poor, but with the patients, “when I was there I don’t need to speak English, it’s more like communication with heart to heart. It’s, you know, that I found beautiful.” [24 Feb 2005]. She had taken pictures of the members of this community and submitted them as part of her practice when she had enrolled in a Master’s in Fine Art at Nottingham Trent University. She had also submitted a portfolio for the Observer Hodge Award in 2000. She won this prize, which was given by the Observer newspaper for young photojournalists in memory of a photographer, killed covering the Brixton riots, and the Jack Jackson Award. She had then applied to take photographs for the

Northumbria Healthcare Charity, which wanted to document the work that the NHS did. She was selected for this project, called *Images of Trust*, which was jointly managed by Northumbria Healthcare and Northumbria University. The award had been named for Jo Spence (1934 – 1992), who had taught photography at the then-Newcastle Polytechnic. Spence, who would be one of the sources that Iku would look to, had used photography to document her treatment—ultimately unsuccessful—for breast cancer. Iku’s Ph.D. study had been funded as part of the Jo Spence Award.

Shortly after beginning her Ph.D. study, the University held a reception for the publication of her images in a book (Tsuchiya, 2004). Her initial supervisors each wrote texts for this book, praising the compassion of the photographs. McGrath wrote, “Cameras are, perhaps then, more like hands that brush or touch the real and the instance of photographing instead of creating distance, is the spark of contingency, a moment of fusion and connection” (McGrath, 2004, p. 7).

Iku had earned a distinction for her MA, even though she had found the process of writing very difficult. She said that, “when I was doing MA, the eighty percent was my practice and just other twenty percent was writing, so that was more easy for me.” The Ph.D., with its substantial writing requirement was more difficult. One of the areas that posed the greatest difficulty was in articulating the distinction between photography as therapy and photography as a healing process.

A seminar discussion

In February 2005, Iku led a seminar discussion of a text that she had chosen, which was a portion of “Photography as therapy” (Cosden & Reynolds, 1982). As the title suggests, the article came from the field of art therapy, in which psychotherapists ask clients to create artworks in order to help their psychological rehabilitation. Because of the therapeutic focus, there is no inherent aesthetic interest in the artwork that is produced (British Association of Art Therapists, 2008). Iku began the

discussion by briefly describing the content of the text, and then she raised some questions that she felt came out of the reading:

how psychotherapists use photographs as their therapeutic activity for their patients, [...] and I just wonder if I could ask you how practice-led researchers use photography in this context or how practice-led researchers are aware of photography. [9 Feb 2005]

Mark said that he did not understand her question, while Chris's response was to focus on a passage in the text in which narcissistic patients are described as taking roll after roll of photographs of themselves, in some cases after dressing in costumes. He said that "I identify with the narcissistic patient who takes roll after roll of himself." As Mark commented, Chris was taking a piss at the article, but Chris's point was that the passage

could describe an artistic practice, that, but here, in here, in here it's a therapeutic practice of some kind. Just context is different. I mean you could take lots of little chunks of this and just change the context and you'd be talking about artistic practice. [9 Feb 2005]

It was a difficult session for Iku, who was baffled by Chris's reaction, while he was unusually sarcastic. Mark and Jane worked to explain what Chris meant and to moderate his comments. Iku had seen this article as a possible theoretical basis for her study and did not link it to the work of photographers who photographed themselves as part of their art practice, such as Cindy Sherman. Chris and the other candidates, in so far as they entered the discussion, saw Cosden and Reynolds (1982) as describing an instrumental, reductive view of art. The discussion shifted to the seminar participants' use of photography in their practices. Although Iku was the only artist among them who identified her practice as photography, all of them had to use photography to document their practices, and, in cases like Chris and Jane, photographs were the only record of the artwork.

Iku's approach to her practice was different from many of the other Ph.D. candidates. She worked only with photography, while others, such as Jane or Apichart, worked with different media. Jane said that if Iku had an idea that she wanted to express, but which she felt might better be expressed through sculpture, she would either take a photograph or pass by. But, as Chris said,

the problem is that within the arts, the arts themselves have changed quite a lot. And especially with the shift from the thing carrying the meaning to the concept carrying the meaning. It really makes it difficult to sustain that idea, that you need, that there are certain kinds of practices that privilege creative engagement. [9 Feb 2005]

In other words, neither sculpture nor photography is a practice that inherently creates art; the concept of the artist, however it is realised, creates the artwork. Chris went on to discuss the work of Helen Chadwick, a contemporary and former colleague:

there's an engagement with reception, as where the meaning is made, which an artist like Helen Chadwick, she was very sensitive to the act of reception as a creative thing in its own right, and, and so, if you're thinking, "How can I set up a really interesting act of reception for other people," that's all she thought about and once she had an idea about how that could happen, she had to kind of back-track and work out how to make it if you like, or how to get there at that point. [9 Feb 2005]

Jane added to Chris's description to say that one difference that could be seen between a media-based practice like Iku's and a conceptual practice like that of Chadwick (and Jane herself) is that a description of the conceptual artwork can convey as much as viewing the artwork itself:

I think it's significant that you can, you know, you can all feel like we just talked about, you know we've just seen the work whereas it's very hard to do that with one of your photographs, without seeing the photograph. [9 Feb 2005]

This seminar discussion, which happened about a month before Iku's MPP panel, highlighted some of the difficulties that Iku faced. She had difficulty theorising her practice, and she had particular difficulty distinguishing the difference between a practice that would help the practitioner, such as an art therapy practice, and a practice that, when practised by another person, would help the subject as well as create artworks that would confound expectations or provide new perspectives on the world.

Iku's MPP submission

Iku's initial MPP submission had three parts: a review of literature relating to therapeutic uses of photography and therapeutic touch; a description of her previous work that was infused with personal reflections, and, finally, future directions for her work.

The first section of this MPP described the uses of photography in therapy, beginning with a discussion of the work of Jo Spence. The following is a crucial passage in her MPP report; the seven paragraphs have been numbered to facilitate discussion of the passage.

Move	Text
Defines Spence's understanding of photo therapy as self-awareness and healing	<p>1. In her book <i>Putting Myself in the Picture: A Political, Personal and photographic Autobiography</i> (1986), Spence used her camera as a therapeutic instrument within her struggle to regain health. This process allowed her to analyze what was happening to her throughout the course of her illness following the diagnosis of breast cancer in 1978. Spence defined photo therapy as a means of promoting self-awareness and healing. By creating a range of self-portraits, she found a unique method of generating a dialogue with herself.</p> <p>2. In the article <i>Photo Therapy: New portraits for old 1984 onward</i> (p173-193), Spence describes a series of methods learned from co-counselling, psycho-drama, and a reframing technique borrowed from neuro-linguistic programming therapy. She demonstrated to herself that there is "no single self but many fragmented selves, each vying for conscious expression, many never acknowledged" (Spence 1986). As a result, Spence's method of photo therapy has been adapted by other photographers and visual artists. This has often happened when the practitioner in question was also a patient undergoing treatment within the context of conventional medical care.</p>
Distinguishes her own goals as helping herself and subject	<p>3. My own photographic activities have been influenced Spence's work in the sense that I use photography for healing purposes. However, my ideas as a researcher are different. My aim is to portray other peoples lives in order to improve the self-esteem of both photographer and subject. Much of this is achieved through the unspoken and unexplained levels of empathy that occur during photo shoots.</p>
Photography used for self-discovery	<p>4. Masumi Ichihara, a Japanese photographer and psychologist, applied Spence's concept to a form of expressive therapy. In her book <i>Phototherapy: How to change yourself in nine day</i> (2004), she provides a general guide to the use of photographic creative practice for self-discovery. I have sought to apply her method to my practice. Later in this report, I will describe this process.</p>
Photography not to be used for counseling	<p>5. In the field of clinical psychology, psychologists and art therapists have used photography as a supportive tool for counseling their clients. This is an entirely different approach from the work of Jo Spence.</p>
Another example of the use of photography for increasing self-awareness	<p>6. Judy Weiser (psychologist and art therapist) is the director of an institute in Vancouver, Canada called the 'PhotoTherapy' Centre. She describes her method as "the use of photography and personal snapshots within the framework of therapeutic practice, where trained mental health professionals use these techniques when counseling clients." She contrasts her work with that of Jo Spence in the following way:</p> <p>"Therapeutic Photography" activities are initiated and conducted by oneself, rather than precipitated during interactions with a therapist. [...] (Weiser 2001)</p> <p>7. In her book <i>Phototherapy Techniques: Exploring the Secrets of Personal Snapshots and Family Albums</i> (1999), Weiser claims that snapshots are a way of getting in touch with ones feelings and memories.</p>

Passage 16: Iku's first MPP report (selected)

In this passage, Iku tries to define the use of photography as an aid to therapy, and particularly as a means of facilitating self-discovery. In the crucial third paragraph, she says that she hopes to "improve the self-esteem of both photographer and subject." In the fifth paragraph, she also separates her practice from that of

“psychologists and art therapists” who are working from the outside to help the client. In contrast, her work is done “through the unspoken and unexplained levels of empathy that occur during photo shoots.”

The passage is constructed to create a research space; adversive connectors (“however,” in paragraph 3) and contrasts that distinguish her study (“my ideas as a researcher,” paragraph 3; “entirely different approach,” paragraph 5) are used to indicate areas for new research. However, she fails to develop some of the points that she needs to establish for her argument. Importantly, she refers to “improving self-esteem” and “self-discovery” without relating this to her practice or treating these ideas as propositions that need to be justified. Similarly, she aligns her work with that of Spence without relating her practice to Spence’s use of photography as a means of dealing with her illness and with disempowering medical and social structures.

The literature survey section then turns to therapeutic uses of touch. She draws on a variety of non-conventional frameworks that might explain how touch, in itself, can produce healing. These include theosophy and reiki, a Japanese healing practice in which the hands are used to manipulate energy fields. She compares this practice with her own manipulation of the light from an enlarger with her hands in order to improve the final photographic print. Nevertheless in closing this section, she had to admit that “I believe, but cannot yet prove, that touch therapy and photo therapy can be linked to underpin my photographic practice.”

This review had significant problems. There was no doubt that photography could encourage self awareness and self discovery in the photographer, or that it could be used in a process of personal therapy, either guided by an external expert, such as a psychologist or art therapist or led by the photographer, as Spence’s work was. However, insofar as her practice was a healing practice rather than an art practice, her study was probably not being carried out in the right discipline. The contradiction that was implicit in her initial proposal, that photography could both

document healing and generate well being, became increasingly apparent in her MPP.

The second section of her MPP comprised a very personal description of her experiences, first when she was living and taking pictures in the community for adults with learning disabilities. She told how her stay in the community had caused her to reconsider her life, because she had “felt warmth and peace there.” She then discussed in detail some of the photographs that she had made, describing the “unique personalities, talents, honesty and tenderness that fascinated me.” The community had been organised on the principles of Rudolph Steiner (1861 – 1925), and she had begun to read anthroposophy, finding in it empathy for the people living in the community.

She also described her feelings about the photographs that she had taken for the *Images of trust* project. The project’s steering committee had set out broad areas to be covered, such as “patients and their families,” “healthcare professionals,” and the diversity of healthcare services.” She had been particularly moved by the relationships that she had seen. She described a photograph that she had taken of a husband who visited his wife in the hospital:



Figure 37: Ikuko Tsuchiya, *Husband and wife*, 2003

I felt his tender heart and dedication to his wife (who suffers from Alzheimer’s disease). A great deal of this inner meaning is expressed through his hands (this was the starting point for my interest in touch therapy).

She then engaged in a process of explicitly reconsidering the photographs that she had just discussed, now in the light of her reading. She described how some of the pictures that she had taken in the sheltered community had conflicted with her upbringing in Japan, such as norms of looks. She also described a sequence of photographs that she had taken of a couple across four seasons. They stood in front of a cottage as the seasons changed, snow lay on the ground, and leaves fell off or were replaced on the trees. In her earlier discussion, she had focused on the affection expressed between the pair. Now she looked at the cottage, which was where she had lived while she was in the community. Looking at the pictures again, she saw that "I was trying to represent the couple but ended up with a representation of my own life at Botton." The husband and wife that she had photographed for the Images of Trust project, too, had surprised her, as "nobody in Japan would display such intense physical intimacy before a stranger."

The final section of her MPP report was relatively brief, focusing on the remaining work that she hoped to do in order to complete her study. She described three photographic projects, all related to her reading. For example, the books on the therapeutic use of touch led her to begin a series of photographs of therapists holding their palms up before the camera "in order to photographically visualize (a) my understanding of human energy and (b) my physical experiences and associated feelings for whilst receiving Reiki therapy." The section related to her written text was even shorter, listing five numbered points, which were gaps in her research that she planned to fill:

1. Medical education.
2. Find overarching theoretical structure for my interests in therapy.
3. Provide greater detail and analysis of reinterpretation process.
4. Explore relationship between Jo Spence and complementary therapists.
5. Explore relationship between my photographic engagements with complementary therapists (*'Focus'*) and touch therapy (*'Hands of complementary therapists'*).

These were linked to a Gantt chart in which she allotted herself five months from the time of her MPP panel to “find overarching theoretical structure,” while she allotted nine months for the photographic projects of documenting complementary therapists and touch therapy.

Iku’s MPP was sent back for revision. She was given four points on which to revise her MPP report:

- She needed to analyse the meanings of touch and trust;
- She needed to relate these words more clearly to her practice;
- She needed to address the issue of reflective practice, writing about subject and audience, and
- She needed to explore the impact of reactions to her work on her practice.

The revised MPP report

In her revision, she added significantly to the literature review, largely by adding paragraphs into her existing text that drew out some of the implications and links that had been missing in the original texts. These changes increased the section from 750 words to 1300 words in length. For example, she expanded the first paragraph of Passage 16 to two paragraphs:

In her book *Putting Myself in the Picture: A Political, Personal and Photographic Autobiography* (1986), Spence used the photographic medium (camera and photographs) as healing instruments within her struggle to regain her health, following the diagnosis of breast cancer in 1978. While she was in the hospital as a patient, she documented herself as the subject, in order to view herself objectively, to try to discover what was happening to her in the orthodox medical circles.

Spence argues that photography is about 'being the active subject' (Spence, 1986, p153) of her own investigation and about visualizing her own feelings by using the photographic medium (camera and photographs) and the process. It is also about self-awareness, self-discovery, and shifts the understanding of concept from the intellect to the gut. This is where Spence influenced my thinking.

Her original bland comment that Spence "found a unique method of generating a dialogue with herself," was replaced with a statement of Spence's goals and a statement of how her work related to Iku's own work. The rest of her literature review similarly tried to be more specific in connecting her other readings (e.g., Ichihara) to Spence, and in relating her reading to her practice.

Concluding the portion of the revised literature review related to therapeutic uses of photography, she added a paragraph that encapsulated and made explicit the relationship between the literature and her practice:

It is clear that all these three authors (Spence, Ichihara and Weiser) are concerned essentially with the photographs as part of an intimate transaction in the context of a special relationship where the subject grants privileged access to their personal space. Perhaps this access is even more revealing than a nude photograph, since it may reveal the inner life of the subject. The subject trusts the camera to tell the truth about themselves in the same way as we trust a mirror, and in this context the subject may not distinguish between the camera and the photographer. The relationship is one of trust. It may be that this trust is founded in knowing who will be looking at the photograph, or on knowing how the photographs will be looked at.

This paragraph described her approach to photography and suggested how her reading had informed her view of her practice. The last sentence, however, opened a

new issue related to the third task that the first MPP panel gave her, which was that of audience and reception.

The section of the literature review that described therapeutic touch more than doubled in size. She also became more explicit about the connections between her practice and complementary treatments. For example, in the following paragraph, Iku added the second (blue) section of the paragraph:

The first scholar to give attention to touch therapy was Dolores Krieger, Professor of Nursing at New York University. Krieger considers that human interrelationship is the most important element in her therapy. In her book, *Therapeutic Touch: How to use your hands to help or to heal*, (1979), she explains that the concept of therapeutic touch (TT) is derived from theosophy and Indian philosophy. By laying hands on her clients, Krieger directs and manipulates human “energies” towards the patients’ bodies, and provides comfort and support for her clients’ psycho- and bio-systems’ recovery. Krieger’s argument is that an affectionate heart is the key to the element of having trust within her practice. Her idea led me to consider the relationship between the issues of maternal instinct and therapy.

In the first MPP report, the paragraph ended with a sentence following “theosophy and Indian philosophy,” “Krieger’s study shows that TT has a good effect on both psycho- and the bio-system.” This sentence moved away from Iku’s study to evaluate Krieger’s results. The new version related Krieger to Iku’s study, bringing out important topics such as “the affectionate heart.” The revised MPP report was much more explicit than the first one in terms of the connections that it made between reading and practice.

In addition to the changes made in the literature review, in response to the third task set out by the MPP panel, Iku added a discussion of audience. She stated clearly that her practice had two purposes. The first was self-expression and self-discovery,

while the second was “to represent my feeling and thought about healthcare.” She noted that Spence had used her photographs to criticise the medical establishment. The basis for this description had been part of the expansion of her discussion of Spence earlier in the literature review. Here she separated her aims from those of Spence, writing that her aim was to “develop the awareness of both parties to the photographic transaction (photographer and subject)” and to assist the viewers of her photographs “to understand and appreciate other people’s lives in the context of healthcare.” These two aims created two relationships, one between photographer and subject, in which the artist may have an intuitive understanding of the subject. This understanding may even be “mystical,” even though this would be rejected in a therapeutic relationship. The second relationship was that between photograph and public. When the photographer was present at an exhibition of her photographs, she may receive valuable feedback, “though this relationship is not of primary importance at this stage of the project. (it may well be important at a later stage)”

This comment foreshadowed her plan to link her reflections on her photographs

with the feedback that she received from the subjects of her photographs and the viewers who were her audience. She introduced a diagram that illustrated her reflective practice, and she wrote a description of a method that would enable her to

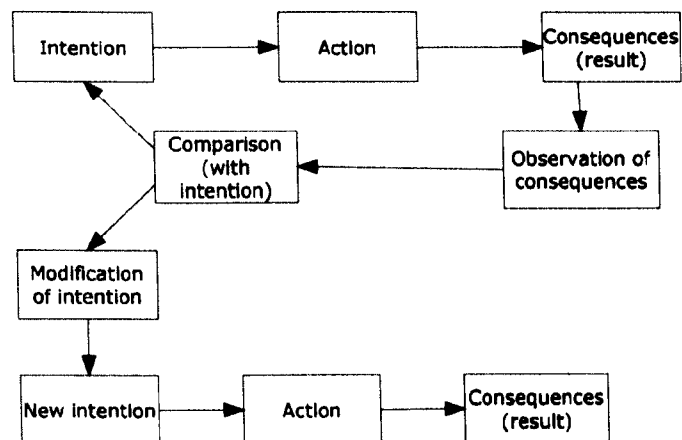


Figure 38: Iku’s reflective cycle (adapted from MPP2)

systematically use the comments of others in her work.

The “observation of consequences” would be formed of her reflections on her work and the comments of her audience. She would be able to write about her reflections as she had in the MPP document, but she would also go beyond that by collecting

the comments that she had received from gallery viewers and from reviews of her exhibitions. She went on to write, "The archive of responses and reviews I have collected during this research project allows me to compare my images with my original intentions, and then modify what happens in the next photographic shoot."

In a seminar session after her MPP panel, Chris had suggested a methodology similar to this in order to get around the difficulties that artists had in discussing their own practice. Iku had been describing how she found writing difficult in part because she was discouraged, but she said that she had taken heart from the favourable responses she had receive from an exhibition she had in Japan. Chris suggested that she might use the vocabulary of the comments to write about her work, "which would allow you to say things about your photographs, which are not just what you think, but things that you have some sort of evidence of how people respond to your photographs." Iku replied, "Sure. And also audience see my photographs more objectively, so that would be good idea [CD: yeah, yeah] to collect it" Chris agreed, suggesting that this way she would have two strands of discussion of her work, one that would be more objective and another that would be appropriately subjective,

because it may be that your studio diary is very subjective on purpose, because that's the only place it would ever have a chance to be the point, and it is pointless saying that studio practice doesn't involve subjective experiences. [8 June 05]

This blend of self-reflective discussion and comments drawn from external sources might have offered a methodology for research that would have been appropriate to a research project like Iku's that was highly subjective.

However, her second MPP panel did not feel that she had established "a methodological framework that will yield a PGR level thesis." They acknowledged that she had lost time as a result of having two major exhibitions of her

photographs, but she had “relied heavily on supervisory support to achieve an appropriate academic writing style and clarity of argument.” They felt that the revised MPP report was noticeably better than the original report, saying that she had “sought to identify a core question to address in relation to her thesis.”

However, they felt that

the student has still not recognised the distinctive potential within her academic work. This has meant that the theoretical knowledge underpinning the thesis is still limited and the links between theory and practice are not clear. There are also concerns that the process of doctoral research is holding back her core practice.

They recommended that she “celebrate her practice within an MPhil framework.”

Iku had already recognised some of the problems that the panel picked out. On her Master’s course, “my supervisor was very helpful, I had a meeting with him once a week” [24 Feb 2005]. On the Ph.D. programme, she had much less contact with her principal supervisor, who moved to another University during Iku’s study. The panel report had noted problems forming “an appropriate supervisory team.” Iku found Ph.D. study very difficult; “it’s a very heavy weight of thinking, reading, and writing” [24 Feb 2005]. The written component limited the time that she had for her practice. After the panel, she said that the panel felt that she didn’t have “a balance between practice and theory” or a core question. They said that the MPhil, on the other hand, would “give me more time to make my work, but also I don’t need to give contribution to knowledge” [10 Apr 2006].

Describing the relationship between Iku’s practice and her progress on the Ph.D. is difficult. She entered the programme with a number of awards; while on the programme she had a solo exhibition at the Nikon Gallery in Tokyo, as well as receiving the Miki Jun Award, Japan’s highest photography award, for her

photographs on the *Images of Trust* project (Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust, n.d.).

In the summer after her second MPP panel, Iku won first prize and £10,000 in a photo competition sponsored by Seeds of Change, the organic food distributor, and *The Observer Food Magazine* for a photograph of a woman in her kitchen. Her first supervisor said,



Figure 39: Iku's prize-winning image, *Observer Food Monthly*, August 2006

she's, she's having difficulties in terms of trying to, to articulate what... well, she's chosen something that's going to be very difficult to evaluate, which is, you know, the positive good of the therapeutic touch, but when you look at her photographs, they're, you know, she's just fab, you know, she's got such an eye, and she takes wonderful photographs, I mean, if I could do that, I wouldn't, that would be enough [laughs]. [7 Mar 2005]

Conclusion

While the excellence of Iku's practice was recognised by all the people who worked with her during her study, as well as being formally recognised by the MPP panel, her proposal for a written thesis was ultimately judged to fall outside of the appropriate range for a Ph.D. Both Iku and Clare were disciplined, hard working, and amenable to advice. Clare's study came into difficulty because of differing ideas

of the appropriate breadth of a Ph.D. study in Design, as well as apparent differences between areas of research in Design. Iku's thesis foundered because of a lack of clear understanding of appropriate methodologies in Fine Arts Practice, and the extent to which reflection could be the basis for research. Both studies suffered because research in FAP & D is still emerging, which affects both the local context of supervisors, candidates, and institution, and the wider context of the disciplines. However, because of the very unclear conceptualisation of research in FAP, Iku's study fell into a higher order of Lillis's "institutional practices of mystery" (T. M. Lillis, 1999), one in which the candidate's problem is not unpacking an essay question or interpreting a reader's comment, but in understanding what is to be done. And, as in the case of Clare's study, the mystery may envelop the supervisor as well as the candidate.

Iku's study and her failure to advance at the MPP stage raises questions that are not easy to answer. Iku may be an artist who works in an expressive mode (see the earlier discussion of this in Chapters 4 and 5). This belief seems to have been the basis for the supervisor's judgment that her practice should have been enough. Elkins (2009c) talked about the danger that Ph.D. study might have for an artist's practice. Elkins also noted that there are no robust criteria to determine which artists might benefit and which might have their practice hindered by undertaking a Ph.D. In Iku's case, it is unclear whether the judgement could have been reached before admitting the artist to a programme that required her to articulate her practice in a particular way.

Iku's claim about her practice, that taking photographs can be healing for the subject as well as for the photographer, was prominent in her IPA. This claim, which on its face suggests a form of complementary healing, is unlikely to be falsifiable through positivistic tests. Were there alternative bases from which the claim could have been evaluated? In her MPP, she was able to reflect deeply about her photography; she was empathetic and articulate in expressing her reflections. Self-reflection done rigorously seems inherently to be new knowledge; does it meet a standard for a

doctorate? Gray and Malins (2004) suggest that reflective practice (Schön, 1983) can form a part—a substantial part—of a research project in FAP & D. If reflection were carried out at a high level alongside a practice that was carried out at the level that external and internal evaluators assessed Iku's practice, should that be sufficient for a doctorate?

The failure of projects that exist in a network of communities ranging from the world-wide community that recognises the Ph.D. to the disciplinary community, the university, the supervisors, and individual candidate, is not an individual failure; it is a systemic failure. Individuals, of course, fail by their lack of effort, but this does not seem to have been the case with Iku. As Jane said of her, "Iku, who's so diligent, so hard working, so productive, and yet is sort of going, 'It's an MPhil, not a Ph.D.,' cause it doesn't have the particular ingredients that are needed" [10 Apr 06]. Those ingredients remain elusive.

11 Conclusion

The focus for this study has been “What does writing a doctoral thesis in emerging disciplines that have no strong traditions of either research or writing feel like to the writers and the other participants in the process? Where do the difficulties that they encounter arise?” I have tried to present an integrated picture of writing in Fine Art Practice and Design that would encompass both local practices of literacy-in-action and the global contexts for these practices. Writing doctoral theses in these disciplines in the local sites in which the research was carried out was challenging.

Two candidates, Apichart and Joyce, completed successfully and Emma, in Design, seemed to be moving toward a successful conclusion. Apichart and Joyce wrote theses that were interesting and in different ways innovative. Clare also completed successfully, having overcome the problems she encountered at her MPP stage. Although at this time Emma is awaiting her viva, her thesis has already been recognised by a professional body for its quality³⁰. I want to recognise this success among the participants who gave me their time and thoughts so freely. As I became immersed in their process of research and writing, I came to appreciate how difficult it was for them.

Researching and writing doctoral theses is difficult in every field. A normal thesis is a hard thesis. The respect that doctorates receive depends on a consensus that the outcome is the result of an extensive period of learning, reflection, and engaged writing. However, many of the candidates that I followed had difficulties beyond those of a normal thesis. After discussing some of the limitations on this study, I would like to look at some of the reasons for the difficulties that the candidates faced.

³⁰ In October 2009, Emma Jefferies received the International Visual Literacy Association’s *Student Research Award*.

Limitations

This study reports on the thesis writing from the perspective of the participants, and that primarily of the candidates. Although I have tried to present the network of actants that affect the process, I am aware that actors and their textual creations have not been treated with empathy equal to that given the local participants. Although I have tried to follow the network of actants in the process of writing theses in FAP & D, I have ultimately seen that network through the eyes of my local participants. That, as Becker (1967) said, is a personal and political choice. I have tried to represent the actants in this network accurately and as fairly as possible, but it is not a balanced picture. The sector is struggling, and actants who have tried to maintain the traditional rigour of the doctorate or to measure value for money by evaluating research quality, although they have been heard, have been criticised.

Because of the particularity of the study, its limitation is immediately apparent. The small group of candidates that I observed at one university confronted problems in writing that were both individual and general. Candidates in FAP & D are progressing at other universities, while struggling with other issues, as well, perhaps, as these. However, this account can stand as a description of particular problems that have resonance with other cases. Writing in institutional settings raises as many or more issues of the wider context as questions surrounding local literacy-in-action. I hope that it can illuminate some of the issues for writing in new areas.

Local problems

The most striking difference between the two sites in which the research was conducted was that the Fine Art Practice candidates had more difficulties than the Design candidates. The primary reason for this came from the fact that, although both disciplines have equally short histories within the university sector and with the process of research, research in Design was for all the participants in my study compatible with social science models of research. As a result, the genre of the thesis

for design had clear precedents that could be appropriated in order to describe the research process and results. Although the Design candidates used innovative visual tools to carry out their research and to report it, these could be accommodated within existing patterns of theses, as facilitated by computer technology.

When candidates in Design struggled, the problems that they confronted arose from the relatively recent emergence of the discipline. These problems included lack of agreement on what was an adequately theorised question in a practice-based discipline and implicit questions of rigour in an emerging area. There were also questions about the experience of the supervisors and examiners that were related to the lack of experience within the discipline. Some of these difficulties may have been exacerbated by institutional arrangements for examination.

The Fine Art Practice candidates faced additional problems. Candidates struggled to frame their practice within a research report. In the seminar group, this struggle took the form of trying to develop a way to write about their practice that did not depend on an art historical approach. This was a significant and admirable effort, an attempt to adhere to the current concerns of their own disciplinary community, rather than adopt the discourse of an easily accessible near community. This is a form of textual boundary work, similar to that described by Gieryn (1983) as occurring among scientists. The artists wanted to differentiate their work from that done by the academically much more accepted art historians. They wanted to claim or reclaim the distinctive part of their practice, the newness of art.

Seen from the outside, this effort may seem either quixotic or simply an unnecessary distraction from the central issue of completing the thesis. However, boundary work is an essential task for an emergent discipline, and the candidates were inspired by the supervisor and chose to focus on this issue. Park (2005) said that in addition to contributing to knowledge, a candidate's thesis should "demonstrate that the student has located the research within a discipline or an interdisciplinary context" (p. 198). One of the most significant difficulties that the FAP candidates faced

involved creating a textual instantiation for their new discipline, rather than accepting the model of another. Appropriating others' words (Bakhtin, 1981) and genres requires wrenching them to serve new intentions and is a necessary part of creating a new identity, in this case a distinct identity for artists within the university.

A related local problem seemed to arise from the lack of models for the architecture of a thesis in FAP. The lack of models reflected a deeper problem of suitable research methodologies for an emerging discipline. At this level, the problem existed as a problem of research and a problem of the representation of research. Neither action research nor fixed design research seemed appropriate for the topics that the candidates had chosen. None of the candidates chose a fully reflective practitioner model, such as might have been derived from Schön (1983), in which they recorded and reflected on their process of creation. Apichart included elements of this in his thesis, while Iku proposed to do this as part of her study and demonstrated it in part. While a focus on short texts strengthened candidates' conceptualisation of their studies, in the end this focus may have hindered progress toward an architecture fit for a 40,000 word text.

Finally, as in the case of the Design candidates, there may have been local problems of lack of experience in the supervision and examination teams. Chris was a fluent writer, and may have underestimated or misunderstood the problems that less capable writers struggled with. He had not written a long text himself. There were also local problems in the admission of candidates to the Ph.D. programme, problems that may have been exacerbated by the pressure of the Research Assessment Exercise, which encouraged programmes to demonstrate that they were research-oriented.

Certainly, individual candidates were responsible for their success or failure to progress, but candidates seemed capable and diligent. Their questions seemed interesting in the light of current preoccupations in the field of art. Some of the

reasons for their failure to progress may be found in the wider context within which they worked.

Global contexts

Art and design education

Although Design and Fine Art Practice are commonly linked in discussions of practice-based doctorates, in important ways they are strikingly different. Heron (1996a) described design departments as “Trojan horse enthusiasts for polytechnicization.” As suggested earlier, research in design is much more easily compatible with existing models of research within the university. The Bauhaus model of systematic investigation brought art and design education into alignment at the beginning of the twentieth century. It freed art education from the stultifying theory of mimesis, which was unable to adapt to the changes in art practice that had developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, art practice has moved on again. Harrison (2009, p. 142) argued that “art and design are on diverging trajectories,” and that while design may be fostered within the university, it is increasingly clear that art cannot be.

The linking of art and design in discussions of practice-based Ph.D.s seems inappropriate. While Design has many issues to clarify and it needs a deeper pool of experienced supervisors and examiners, this seems to be happening. The scholars reviewed in Chapter 5 from Design are focused on improving research training so that candidates will have a knowledgeable background, and as qualified supervisors and examiners become available, questions of rigour, theory and breadth can be answered in a disciplinarily acceptable fashion.

Fine Art Practice is not at this stage. While some practice-based projects in FAP can be pursued with widely accepted research methodologies, other projects that

involve current concerns in art practice seem difficult to investigate using these methodologies. If reflection-on-practice were to become an accepted methodology, it might resolve some problems. However, a more fundamental issue may be the term, *research*, rather than a methodology. Elkins (2009b) described how Bridget Riley systematically investigated the effects that different patterns of paint might create, but the outcome was not knowledge but a painting. Artists, including the participants in this study, produce engaging work that confounds expectations, but in many cases calling it research misses the point of its genuine contribution. Trying to force art practices into the mould of research does no favour to either.

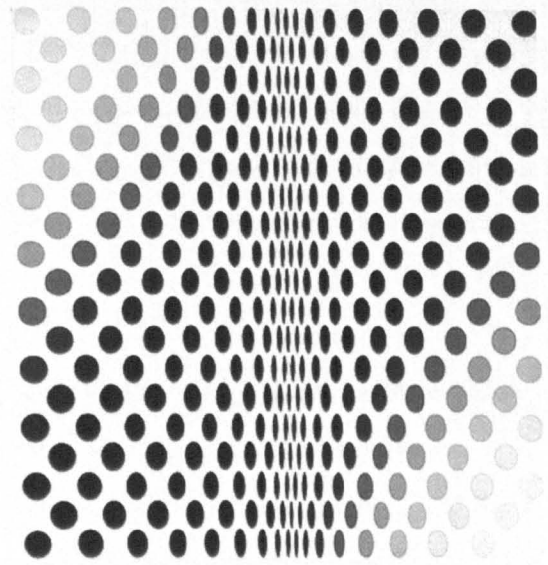


Figure 40: Bridgit Riley, *Metamorphosis*, 1964

The role of the Research Assessment

Exercise (RAE) must be mentioned here. With two income streams—teaching and research—for universities in Britain, and one chronically under-funded, universities rationally try to improve their performance in the second, research. The universities that have strengths in FAP & D, largely from having absorbed pre-existing art and design institutions, are frequently those that perform relatively poorly (and receive limited rewards) in centrally organised measures of research such as the RAE. It is not surprising these universities would support the interpretation of art and design practice as research. However, as measures of research quality are included in the RAE process, such as having research students, it is important that candidates not be encouraged to commit three or more years to a project that will likely not lead to a doctorate. The MPhil has become recognised as a consolation prize, even though the qualification has an honourable history in universities, and in the early years of research in art and design they were awarded seemingly without prejudice.

The purposes of the Ph.D.

As Usher (2002) and others (e.g., C. Park, 2005, 2007; Winter et al., 2000) have noted doctoral study is changing in response to societal needs. In the past, doctorates were seen as important primarily for people who planned to teach at university. The UKCGE report (1997) argued for a Ph.D. in FAP & D that would be comparable to other doctorates throughout the university because the authors assumed university teaching would be the candidate's goal. There was no consideration that the qualification would help artists toward any non-teaching goal, such as exhibitions or sales. Most of the participants in this study also projected university teaching as the outcome of their successful completion.

The doctorate is being forced to become a more capacious container for increasingly disparate skills. It indicates the highest level of training, and as more skills are brought into the university, doctorates will be sought by lecturers in more and more varied areas to teach these skills, while practitioners outside the university will want to demonstrate that they have received the highest levels of training available. In the case of FAP & D, they were brought into universities in Britain to reduce the costs and administrative burden on councils, rather than because of a principled belief that polytechnics and subsequently universities were the best places to teach these activities. In the end, bringing art and design into universities changed the way artists and designer thought of themselves and to some extent the values that they held.

Art and design were not unique in being changed by becoming integrated into universities. Doctorates are increasingly desired for other types of work besides university teaching. The traditional notion of the Ph.D. "privileges the creation of new knowledge over the application, extension, interpretation or questioning of existing knowledge" (C. Park, 2005, p. 199). However, as Park (2007) noted, there have been calls for a reconsideration of the doctorate for more than twenty years. He described the development of new types of doctorates, including Ph.D.s by portfolio, professional doctorates and practice-based doctorates. Besides the EdD,

professional doctorates have been developed for areas such as nursing and engineering. Professional and practice-based doctorates are both based in the candidate's practice and may be intended to demonstrate Mode 2 knowledge (Gibbons et al., 1994), that is, performative knowledge rather than the traditional creation of new knowledge that Park (2005) described.

Demonstrating appropriate doctoral knowledge generation in these new areas raises problems. Winter, Griffiths and Green (2000) say that because new knowledge in the workplace is so closely bound to its context, it is very difficult to examine by traditional means. Clare's proposed study seems to have been an example of this, an example that was rejected at the MPP stage. Questions of what new knowledge is implicate the wider question of what knowledge is. Elkins (2009c) and others such as Park (2005, 2007) argue that this question needs to be debated throughout the university and not simply within practice-based disciplines. I think that this is the right approach, though I do not expect it will happen soon. It isn't a question for which there is a simple answer.

Writing in context

The global context came to seem more important than local factors in the candidates' struggles to research and write their theses. Changing needs for doctorates, misconceived drivers such as the RAE process, and tortured meanings of key terms such as *research* affected the candidates' processes more than local issues. Local issues, such as creating textual instantiation of a new discipline in theses or developing a new identity that would represent both a candidate's practice and academic self, were significant, but existed on a lower order than the global issues described earlier.

Perhaps because other issues were less pressing, Design students seemed to have more success at including visual information in the research and writing processes. Innovation is easier from a stable platform. The visually innovative theses that

Ravelli and Starfield (2008) discussed were from Sociology and History, disciplines that are well established in universities (as were, of course, the comparison theses that were more traditional).

Personal goals

I had a personal goal in beginning this project as well. I hoped that I might reconnect disparate parts of my life. I had been a photographer before becoming involved in researching and teaching writing; working with artists and designers allowed me to reconnect with this part of my life. Although I did not work as an artist, I had personal projects that I exhibited throughout my career in photography. Like my participants, I did not write as part of my practice. Reconnecting with creative practice was made easier by reading Becker's *Art worlds* (Becker, 1982). Becker's view of the art world as an interconnected network supported my growing understanding of actor-network theory. His writings and his enthusiasm encouraged me in my study, and his view of art provided a counterpart to the views, inspirational and disappointing that I encountered in my reading and research. As I think about the difficulties my participants experienced in their own journeys toward a doctorate, I can't improve on his great liberating message, "that the troubles you may have are not entirely your own doing, ... but [are] something built into the organizations of academic life" (Becker, 1986, p. 167).

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Appendix A: Coding categories (Nodes)

Grounded example from data	Description	Initial coding	Gathering codes	Gathered codes
I think IT might have been easier because, a lot of designers tend to be quite computer savvy anyway, [Joyce, 21 Apr 04]	This node relates to papers by Allen Collinson (2005) and Hockey and Allen Collinson (2005) that found that FAP students were not comfortable with IT. This node describes either comfort with or lack of comfort with computers & IT systems.	IT knowledge		
my position is... to try to see how I can integrate the two, by being an art... by being a member of a group, but not having my name on it [Jane, 10 Apr 06]	Describing how the participant feels about what an artist should be or do. This is closely related to the identities node.	artists' roles	practice	artists' identities
because the whole idea of what, what what is the act of design, and what does a designer actually do, and there's a lot of talk about designing... it's very implicit, a lot of designers don't actually engage in a process of describing their process, they either don't want to or they're unable to. There's this fallacy, that we do, if you're able to describe it you will be able to do it anymore, [EB: um hum] this idea of the creative genius. [Joyce, 13 Sept 05]	The model of art or design creation as fundamentally intuitive choices	intuitive model	practice	artists' identities

	Codes descriptions of obsessive behaviour in the creation of art	obsession	practice	artists' identities
<p>the writing part, I don't have the same obsession [Mark, in FAP small seminar, 13 Apr 05]</p> <p>I threw about the eighth pair up, or something, but I threw the first pair of shoes up that were children's shoes, so I think I broadened [JP: laughs] the possibility of the shoe tree as a sort of, you know, general shoe tree [Jane, 10 Apr 06]</p>	<p>What artists or designers do, what the participant does as her practice, how the participant sees her own practice</p>	<p>practice</p>	<p>practice</p>	<p>artists' identities</p>
<p>The practice and the theory should be entirely interlinked, integral, so they've got to be... they've got to be connected. If it was just art historical, and that's why it's a very bad model of a practice-led PhD. [Jane, in FAP small seminar, 13 Apr 05]</p>	<p>Role of art history in Fine Arts Practice</p>	<p>art history</p>	<p>theory</p>	<p>artists' identities</p>
<p>What I'm looking for is all sorts of new ways to surprise a museum audience, so, for example, the types of museums I've tried to work with or the types of historical places or scientific places that I've tried to work with, has increased... [Chris, 19 Mar 03]</p>	<p>A node for a particular idea about what art or design should do: destabilise you; confront you; make you uncomfortable</p>	<p>destabilise</p>	<p>theory</p>	<p>artists' identities</p>
<p>[design] is a profession that is quite famous for not listening to rules and you know, wanting to break rules [Joyce, 20 Apr 05]</p>	<p>This node describes the community that the artists or designers hope to reach through their work. It's based on Stanley Fish's construct, and related to discourse community.</p>	<p>interpretive community</p>	<p>theory</p>	<p>artists' identities</p>
<p>What she tries to do is present a</p>	<p>This node indexes the ideas of Rosalind</p>	<p>Rosalind Krauss</p>	<p>theory</p>	<p>artists' identities</p>

kind of a formula that avoids the way that habitually we get caught in this, now we're interpreting art, now we're making it... [Chris, 20 Nov 03]	Krauss (& Arthur Danto) or to Krauss herself. Chris Dorsett referred to her article, Sculpture in the Expanded Field, frequently in seminars and his teaching.				artists' identities
one of the reasons is that, having experienced the reality of a course that entirely believes that there are theoretical recipes for every kind of art that you want to do and that you can just, it's between you and the theorist, then you can make the art. [Chris, 20 Nov 03]	Role of theory or philosophical thought in art or design creation		theory & philosophy	theory	artists' identities
I quite like the idea of knitting fire exit signs or things like that, [Jane, 10 Apr 06]	The participant (or source) tries to answer the question of what art is.		what is art	theory	artists' identities
I am, at the end of the day I am a practitioner, and I feel that I want to better my own practice based my own experience. [Joyce, 21 Apr 04]	How participants create & present themselves in interviews and texts, or discuss other people's identities that throw light on their own self-definition		identities	transition	goal
I'm a photographer. I have no idea. I have no confidence I can teach someone. [Iku, 13 Apr 05]	Participants thinking about the process of earning their Ph.D. and their identity as (potential, future) Ph.D. holders.		my PhD	transition	goal
I would say I'm a communication designer, I design communication materials, whether that be print, new media, sign boards [EB: sign bots?] sign boards, signage... [Joyce, 20 Apr 05]	This will overlap with "my PhD", but it indicates a practice outside of academia. Joyce has lots of these, and some of the artists may have them as well.		career	future	goals
a lot of design education is just not knowledge-based, it's very experiential, very about "just do it	What the participant hopes to accomplish through their research; their wider contribution, rather than their personal		goals & aims	future	goals

and you learn it," and I think my model hopes [?] to be a little bit more knowledge-based, [Joyce, 21 Apr 04]	ambition or purpose in studying.				
a university is a similar sort of strange factory, one that has always produced texts, but now is trying to produce art and texts. [EB annotation to Myer (1996)]	Experience of (own) A&D education, ambitions for future A&D education	art & design education	past		influences
I guess I come from a background where I don't write and I don't have any qualifications in writing, and I don't have GCSEs and I don't have any qualifications basically after school, so I turned up empty handed, [Mark, in FAP small seminar, 13 Apr 05]	Personal history affecting thinking about the creation of art or design	biography	past		influences
I feel that the written part of my PhD I need to be able to see it like that, I want to see it like an equation of what actually is, "it's that, that, that and that equals that." [Mark, in FAP small seminar, 13 Apr 05]	influences in art & design creation and in the research (or PhD) process	influences and models	past		process
You're supposed to have an established practice. You're an artist by the time you start a Ph.D. For an MA, you show a portfolio. For a Ph.D., it's whether you have a question [Jane, in FAP small seminar, 13 Apr 05]	This node links to discussions/information about the PhD in FAP & D, its history and nature.	PhD qualification	past		process
Using a reflective journal I will record (with photographs and texts) my	This node relates to how participants will conduct their research and answer their	methodology	research		process

<p>experiences of the studio moments when selfness begins to dominate groupness and when groupness starts to dominate selfness. It is my hope that the reflective process will provide opportunities to reconsider and elaborate the themes of my research [Hiro, in Ph.D. prospectus, 19 June 06]</p>	<p>research questions, or problems that they found with their methodology.</p>			
<p>So, yeah, one of the things I've been doing is diagramming practice, frameworks, things that I've put together and made, and making diagrams of those, those things [Mark, 5 July 06]</p>	<p>Describes the use of alternatives to writing</p>	<p>alternative representation</p>	<p>writing</p>	<p>process</p>
<p>She discusses how standards become stabilized over a long period of time (think of Schryer's [1993] description of genres as "stabilized-for-now"), and gives as an example Becker's (1982) discussion of maverick artists. [EB comment on Star (1991)]</p>	<p>Theoretical discussions of the nature of text types in writing.</p>	<p>genres</p>	<p>writing</p>	<p>process</p>
<p>Yeah, it is a new thing which doesn't necessarily make it a good thing, I guess, because it's not very, it's still a bit, you know, unsure as far as like what exactly you need to do on it. [FAP seminar discussion, 13 Apr 05]</p>	<p>Describes the indeterminacy and vagueness of the process of earning a Ph.D. Addresses questions like, "what should I do now, what should I do next?"</p>	<p>indeterminacy</p>	<p>writing</p>	<p>process</p>
<p>I dread writing up my literature review, though. It's really going to be</p>	<p>Description of the literature review or the process of writing this section</p>	<p>literature review</p>	<p>writing</p>	<p>process</p>

<p>a pain. [EB: why so?] I think I want to put a lot of things which, probably, at the end of the day, is not related, and I just need to focus on how I'm going to build up the arguments [Joyce, 20 Apr 05]</p>				
<p>In what I'm saying, I want to be saying something new, definitely. Because otherwise that's not new, the Ph.D. isn't new knowledge, so it needs to be describing or being a completely new way of approaching something, but it doesn't have to necessarily have [EB: to be physically or structurally] doesn't necessarily be structurally new. [Mark, in FAP small seminar, 13 Apr 05]</p>	<p>This node describes the candidates' (or supervisors') claim to the creation of new knowledge that is the criterion for a PhD.</p>	<p>original contribution</p>	<p>writing</p>	<p>process</p>
<p>I would probably argue that, while mine [research project] is not practice-based, it's practice-led. [Joyce, 13 Sept 05]</p>	<p>Reflections on practice-based research, including side-long glances at failures of (or failures to reach) practice-based research</p>	<p>practice-based research</p>	<p>writing</p>	<p>process</p>
<p>I found that the practice is more spontaneous, you can see the result, so feel I have done something, achieved, but writing to me is like I'm hopeless, helpless, and I don't know anything [Iku, 13 Apr 05]</p>	<p>Descriptions of the process of writing, how participants think of writing and difficulties in writing.</p>	<p>process of writing</p>	<p>writing</p>	<p>process</p>
<p>I'm also looking at the set principles of typography, you know, good practices of what is a good type.</p>	<p>This includes references (explicit or implicit) to the questions that participants intend to answer through their study.</p>	<p>research questions</p>	<p>writing</p>	<p>process</p>

<p>[Joyce, 21 Apr 04] I was very cross about that; I still am. [EB: um hum] I don't know that's changed, I think we still have to set it in the same format, but yes I am I don't, I just think that the format that it's in is just horrendous [Joyce, 20 Apr 05]</p>	<p>This node represents Joyce's interest in the visual appearance of her thesis. However, it could be broader, for instance, relating the visual artefact to the PhD artefact (thesis).</p>	<p>visual design</p>	<p>writing</p>	<p>process</p>
	<p>the role of writing in FAP & D</p>	<p>writing</p>	<p>writing</p>	<p>process</p>