

# Publishing Pedagogies

## for the Doctorate and Beyond

Edited By  
Claire Aitchison,  
Barbara Kamler  
and Alison Lee



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Within a context of rapid growth and diversification in higher degree research programmes, there is increasing pressure for the results of doctoral research to be made public. Doctoral students are now being encouraged to publish not only after completion of the doctorate, but also during, and even as part of their research programme. For many this is a new and challenging feature of their experience of doctoral education.

*Publishing Pedagogies for the Doctorate and Beyond* is a timely and informative collection of practical and theorized examples of innovative pedagogies that encourage doctoral student publishing. The authors give detailed accounts of their own pedagogical practices so that others may build on their experiences, including: a programme of doctoral degree by publication; mentoring strategies to support student publishing; innovations within existing programmes, including embedded publication pedagogies; co-editing a special issue of a scholarly journal with students; ‘publication brokering’; and writing groups and writing retreats.

With contributions from global leading experts, this vital new book:

- explores broader issues pertaining to journal publication and the impacts on scholarly research and writing practices for students, supervisors and the academic publishing community;
- takes up particular pedagogical problems and strategies, including curriculum and supervisory responses arising from the ‘push to publish’;
- documents explicit experiences and practical strategies that foster writing-for-publication during doctoral candidature.

*Publishing Pedagogies for the Doctorate and Beyond* explores the challenges and rewards of supporting doctoral publishing and provides new ways to increase research publication outputs in a pedagogically sound way. It will be a valued resource for supervisors and their doctoral students, as well as for programme coordinators and managers, academic developers, learning advisors and others involved in doctoral education.

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# Introduction

## Why publishing pedagogies?

*Claire Aitchison, Barbara Kamler and Alison Lee*

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### **The pressure to publish**

It is an exciting time to be involved in doctoral education. There is an explosion of interest and innovation in higher degree research processes and practices, as universities seek to respond to local, national and international changes. In an increasingly competitive global economy, universities have been required to show greater accountability as governments and industry expect a good return for their investment: a more rapid and public dissemination of research results and the delivery of employment-ready graduates (Boud and Lee, 2009).

Within this context, earlier notions of what count as knowledge, research and ‘research training’ are being questioned and contested. As regional and national governments reassess research and higher education in the context of broader economic, social and environmental forces, there have been a range of responses. In Europe, we have seen the third cycle of the Bologna Process and the establishment of the Council for Doctoral Education (see [www.eua.be](http://www.eua.be)); in the UK, the *Report on the Review of Research Degree Programmes: England and Northern Ireland* (QAA, 2007); in the USA, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation *Responsive PhD Project* (2000) and the *Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate* (Carnegie Foundation, 2002); and in Australia, most recently, an *Inquiry into Research Training and Research Workforce Issues in Australian Universities* (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2008). At the same time, the doctorate has come under the direct influence of regulatory regimes for the management of quality – for example the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and the Australian Universities Quality Agency. Within the context of this increased scrutiny of doctoral education, areas of tension have been identified concerning high attrition and low completion rates (Golde and Walker, 2006) and debates have intensified about the quality of training for doctoral degrees and the competency of graduates (e.g. Park, 2007).

One result is broader recognition of the need for re-envisioning approaches to the education of research students (Boud and Lee, 2009). As Bitusikova (2009) notes, for example, a key question in all of the current debates about

doctoral education across Europe centres on the choice of the most appropriate organizational structures. In policy terms, structures must ‘demonstrate added value for the institution and for doctoral candidates: to improve transparency, quality, and admission and assessment procedures; and to create synergies regarding transferable skills development’ (Bitusikova, 2009: 202–3). Traditionally conceived individual study programmes based on an implicit model of a ‘working alliance between the doctoral candidate and the supervisor without a structured coursework phase’ are being increasingly critiqued as being ‘inappropriate to meet challenges of training for multiple careers in a global labour market’ (ibid.: 203).

Such developments mean that the experience of doctoral study for students and for supervisors is changing. Students are increasingly expected to complete their studies in a shorter time frame and be more ‘productive’ during the period of their enrolment (Lee and Aitchison, 2009). This demand for greater ‘productivity’ finds most direct expression in the push to publish their research (McGrail, Rickard and Jones, 2006; Lee and Kamler, 2008; Hartley and Betts, 2009). Increasingly these developments take place on an international stage, in an era of advanced communication technologies and international university league tables (Nerad, 2006; Bell, Hill and Leaming, 2007). Indeed, it could be argued that the intensity of global competition among universities and national systems, together with attempts to measure the quality of research through publications data and doctoral completions in addition to research income, has distorted the space in which doctoral work is done and research careers are forged.

Clearly, major questions arise about the implications of such shifts for our research programmes and courses. How are individual research students, their supervisors and institutions responding? What kinds of skills, attributes and competencies are required of doctoral students and those who work with them, in order to provide a rich and successful experience of entering the world of scholarly peer review and publication?

### **The focus of this book**

In this book we explore the questions, dilemmas and responses to the increasing expectation that doctoral students publish their research, both after their doctorate is complete and, more and more, it seems, along the way. We are interested in explicitly foregrounding the pedagogical practices that are at issue: what is to be learned about scholarly publication of doctoral research, and how is it to be facilitated, managed or taught? We are aware of the paucity of information about the everyday practices in the lifeworld of doctoral students and supervisors wishing to promote and develop writing for publication. And we are aware of the challenges for supervisors and universities in managing this new pressure in a principled and skilful way.

In the current climate, universities are often happy that their research

students are publishing, but often not skilful in recognizing the pedagogical work involved in bringing students into a productive relationship with the practices of publication. Our emphasis, by contrast, is on doctoral pedagogies that bring writing to the fore because our own experiences as practitioners convince us how powerfully learning can occur when students are writing *as they research and learn*. We are also acutely aware of how important it is to make the pedagogical work of developing writing and building know-how about scholarly publication visible when the focus of policy makers and institutional stakeholders is solely on ‘counting’ student output in publication audits and the like.

At the outset of this project we shared a hunch that new relationships were starting to emerge between student research and the expanded genres employed for writing about that research. We recognized that the traditional, almost sacred, status of the ‘thesis’ or ‘dissertation’<sup>1</sup> was rapidly altering, and that its prominence was being challenged. Certainly the contemporary market place, with its voracious appetite for new knowledge and new graduates, appears to be increasingly intolerant of the lengthy timeframes and the inaccessibility of the old-fashioned tome: the doctoral thesis.

As we envisaged this project, we were motivated by a desire to find out how students, their supervisors and institutions are responding to new pressures to make research public during the period of doctoral candidature. We wanted to explore in detail a relatively small number of examples of pedagogies that we knew were explicitly engaging writing for publication. And we were particularly interested in giving space to the complexities and nuances of the actual practices of teaching and learning. So this book does not pretend to be a handbook of practices or an instruction manual, and it certainly does not give an account of all that is exciting and innovative in this changing landscape of doctoral research education.

What this edited collection does do, we believe, is showcase the work of a group of dedicated academics who are exploring ways to build research cultures that incorporate and support student publishing. The stories laid out in these chapters reflect an unevenness in the development of doctoral education pedagogies – from pockets of innovation championed by individuals without strong institutional support to robust, innovative system-wide publication-focused doctoral programmes. Some writers engage in this pedagogical work because it is a normal and expected part of their work and others take it on as an extension to their supervisory role. In most cases it is clear that these pedagogical practices could not survive without extensive work carried out by (often already overworked) individuals, drawing on extensive cultural capital and pre-existing networks of scholars. What is common, despite their challenges and reservations, is the recognition of the value to research students of writing for a public audience.

This book deliberately and purposefully gives space to a select range of pedagogical practices from around the world, thus providing a record of



the operations, challenges and rewards of some new practices that otherwise remain invisible. By placing pedagogy at the centre of this discussion, we are attending to the working life of academics and doctoral students in a rapidly changing context. At the same time, we are contributing to the bigger conversations about the purposes of doctoral education. What kinds of researchers and scholars are being produced in a publication-focused doctoral curriculum? What practices might be valued, emulated and disseminated? How might innovation be nurtured and made sustainable and mainstream?

### **The challenge of writing about pedagogy**

From the outset, our goal has been to develop publishing pedagogies that move beyond ‘tips and tricks’ or technical elaborations of journal procedure, from the point of article submission through to final publication. As editors we have worked closely with our co-contributors to articulate what it is we do in our diverse educational sites to support early career publication. And yet the difficulty of writing about pedagogy remains.

It is difficult to be specific, to make the familiar strange enough to engage readers outside our context. Because our contributors write across diverse epistemological and geographic boundaries, we kept asking questions of their drafts – sometimes too persistently, occasionally to their annoyance. We wanted examples of pedagogy at work, rather than generalized accounts. We were hungry for narrative truth and texture, but we did not just want personal stories that could not be mined for broader principles.

We similarly struggled in writing our own chapters, even though we devised the book proposal and knew well its argument and stance. We regularly complained to one another that our drafts were banal, boring, too superficial, unable to capture the right data or telling incidents. Claire Aitchison, for example, who probably knows more than most about how to run writing groups – building intellectual rigour as well as emotional support into their fabric – struggled to make explicit what it was she did, how she modelled for students ways of reading and responding to writing-in-progress. If she ‘led from behind’, as she claimed, what did that mean and how might she convey this cogently?

We have no definitive answer about why the pedagogical rendering task is so hard, but we have three tentative explanations about why this might be so. The first has to do with the difficulty of writing as a cultural insider. When a terrain is so much a part of a teacher/writer’s skin, it is often difficult to conceptualize what it is we do. It is equally problematic to try to extrapolate the specifics away from practice. Too often what emerges is a colourless de-contextualized list, which can be boring or too technical. It is difficult as an insider to attain sufficient distance, to see pattern, particularly

in higher education, where writing about pedagogy is a fairly new and still less legitimate activity than writing about research.

Our second explanation relates to the problem of representation. For the most part, higher education practice is undocumented empirically, although this is changing slowly. There is not enough research that gives the texture, taste and smell of teaching and learning, the excitement as well as the failures. Tai Peseta (2007) develops this argument in the context of her work in academic development, in which she suggests that too many research accounts of practice have a deadening sameness that do not adequately capture its spirit and vitality:

we have tended to report victory narratives that defend and extend our relevance as a community, rather than making public the intense difficulty of our work, as if that somehow sullies the credibility of the project with which we are engaged. We often write, too, with a worry that this difficulty speaks of self-indulgence, as if the pain and hurt we experience . . . ought not to spill over into our practices and relationships proper.  
(Peseta, 2007: 17)

Our third explanation concerns the cultural dominance of the ‘how to’ genre, a genre which is ubiquitous in modernity and rife in the doctoral education field. Too often, the dominant mode of communication mobilized by experts is a transmission pedagogy, which reduces the complexity of writing to a set of tools and techniques. Kamler and Thomson (2008) have critiqued the advice genre for the damage it does to both doctoral researchers and a field seeking to establish a theorized practice of academic writing and publishing. Despite this critique, we acknowledge the difficulty of writing outside the habituated processes of the genre. We certainly aim to achieve a respectful stance in this collection and explore new ways to interact with scholars in the making. A key strategy we use is to *lightly theorize* our pedagogical work, following Kamler and Thomson (2006). We leave plenty of room for practice, but conceptualize that practice so that it does not simply default into another book of advice. Our aim is to articulate coherent principles or strategies that others might interact with as we engage in the collective work of building publishing pedagogies.

## **Theoretical framings**

We have adopted a broadly social, including socio-cultural and socio-discursive, theoretical framing in this book. Our starting point is a commitment to the centrality of pedagogy to the work of doctoral education. We take pedagogy both as a conceptual field, involving the relations among teaching, learning and the knowledge and practice being produced in that relationship (after Lusted, 1986; see also Lee and Green, 1997), and as a practice.