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The supervisor-student dynamic: Creative collaborations

Abstract:

This paper considers the challenge of supervising the creative writing doctorate in the twenty-first century. Researchers (Kiley 2011; Walker et al 2008) have found that in all fields timely completion and postgraduate satisfaction is tied to effective supervision. In creative writing, the Principal Supervisor bears a variety of responsibilities, key among them guiding both creative and critical work. Unlike the hard sciences, co-authorship is not the norm in the Humanities or Creative Arts, and yet supervisors have significant structural input into the creative and critical components of the thesis that is not formally acknowledged. They undertake creative manoeuvres, which can be conceptualised as a form of collaboration, in order to encourage students to produce their best work while allowing them to retain ownership. This challenge of implicit or explicit collaboration necessitates modified forms of supervision. A diverse student cohort and evolving modes of research condition the choice of supervisory model. The paper then engages with what collaboration means in the context of those models. Both writer-academics and candidates participating in the supervisor-student dynamic should function as reflexive practitioners; doing so will benefit their understanding of research, creative work and pedagogy. This reflexive process can result in co-authorship of critical and creative products that open up new research spaces and possibly prepare the groundwork for future joint projects. New models of collaboration are needed in order to maximise the benefits to both postgraduate and supervisor.

Biographical note:

Professor Jeri Kroll is currently Dean of Graduate Research at Flinders University where she established the Creative Writing Program. She has published over 20 books for adults and young people. *Swamp Soup* (2012, for children) and *Workshopping the Heart: New and Selected Poems* (2013) are recent books. *Research Methods in Creative Writing* (Palgrave Macmillan 2013) and 'Creative Writing and Education' in the Wiley-Blackwell *Companion to Creative Writing* are recent scholarly works. A staged reading of her verse novel, *Vanishing Point*, took place at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts 'Page to Stage' Festival (2011). Puncher and Wattman will publish the book in 2014.

Keywords:

Reflexive practitioner – Co-authorship – Creative arts collaboration – Knowledge production

Introduction: The new breed reflective practitioner

This paper considers the challenge of supervising the Creative Writing doctorate in the twenty-first century. Principal Supervisors must take account of multiple responsibilities, among them the key tasks of overseeing both creative and critical work. In this sense they collaborate with students in order to produce a coherent product. Effective supervision in general maximises a research postgraduate's educational experience (Kiley 2011; Walker et al 2008). In new disciplines, it becomes pivotal, especially where staff and students try to pin down the nature of research itself and appropriate forms to disseminate it (Brien 2004; Dibble and van Loon 2004; Woods 2007; Harper and Kroll 2008; Smith and Dean 2009). *TEXT* devoted a *Special Issue* (6, October 2009) to creative arts supervision in Australasia and the UK that explored the myriad of pedagogies available. Editors Brien and Williamson summarise the stresses for staff, students and universities, noting that 'unclear or differing expectations of supervisor-student roles and relationships, a factor that seems especially prevalent in the so-called 'nontraditional' discipline areas' (2009: 1), heighten these stresses. In order to face this challenge, faculty and students should function as 'reflective practitioners' (Schön 1987), to use the term coined twenty-five years ago, which, nevertheless, is still relevant, indicating how writers must understand their artistic practice and how, as supervisors, using that experience they must aid students to generate appropriate theoretical frameworks to understand their own.

Recent studies of 'professional development programmes...that draw on the model of supervisor as reflective practitioner' (McCormack and Pamphilon 2004) support this view, finding that groupwork for supervisors offers productive experiential sharing, cohort support and 'the potential for more creative solutions to be achieved' in supervisory practice (McCormack and Pamphilon 2004: 24). In addition, as a consequence of this networking, groups might generate 'reflective writing for publication' (24). By becoming a more reflective practitioner and considering the myriad forms collaboration can take, supervisors might reconceptualise their understanding of pedagogy and research. This reflexive process might result in co-authorship of critical and creative products that open up new research spaces. In a competitive international environment, refreshed supervisory models of collaboration are needed in order to maximise the benefits to both postgraduate and supervisor. The paper considers supervisory models current in the academy, therefore, and then explores implicit or explicit collaborative models that modify the conventional student-supervisor dyad. The creative manoeuvres that these facilitate encourage doctoral candidates to produce their best work while allowing them to retain ownership.

Supervising the doctorate in the twenty-first century

In the past twenty years, the doctorate has been reassessed globally (Walker et al 2008; Aitchison, Kamler and Lee 2010; Webb and Brien 2010) to ensure programs that produce graduates who can exploit knowledge and technology of all types. This mission has driven the 'massification' of doctoral degrees'¹ (Holbrook, Bourke,

Lovat and Fairbairn 2008: 37) to some extent, including practice-led and professional doctorates, which grew in popularity in the UK and Australia (Morley, Leonard and David, 2002: 264; Boyd 2009; Webb, Brien and Burr 2012). This increase was followed by Commonwealth drives to open higher education to what it terms ‘non-traditional’ students – those from lower socioeconomic levels, and mature-age students returning to study from diverse backgrounds in industry, commerce or the arts (*Defining Quality for Research Training in Australia* August 2011a; *Research Skills for an Innovative Future* 2011b). Concomitantly, stakeholders recognised that alternative entry pathways were needed to cater for the influx of non-traditional students who, although intelligent and motivated, might not possess either requisite disciplinary knowledge or up-to-date skills in research methodologies (Kiley 2010; Marsh et al 2010; Universities Australia 2013: 41). Once admitted, these students in particular required best-practice supervision, which is integral to facilitating satisfying postgraduate experiences and, thus, completions (UK Concordat 2012; *European Accountable Research Environments for Doctoral Education* 2012; Luca and DDoGS Good Practice Framework 2013; TEQSA guidelines). Supervisors face a complex job, especially in new and emerging fields, some of which require practitioner knowledge.

These factors have all influenced the environment for research higher degree study in the Australian academy that now graduates doctoral students who are ‘notably older than the profile among the professional workforce’ (Edwards, Radloff and Coates, ACER 2009: x). The Creative Writing doctoral program demonstrates this change too by attracting retirees, professional authors and those switching careers, in addition to conventional Honours graduates. All supervisors must service this diverse cohort but, in particular, those who might have begun their apprenticeship in the academy when the single supervisor-sole student model prevailed face reassessing their practice because of increasing administrative and teaching workloads and the pressure to publish. Add to the mix an atypical but motivated postgraduate student body with a range of needs and the difficulties become clear. Ineffective supervisors do not produce confident researchers who can take over stewardship of the profession (Hall and Burns 2009: 50; Walker et al 2008), indispensable for academia, let alone produce those who might succeed in the communication industries or as professional authors.

Supervisory models with mentorship or professional development as an acknowledged feature have developed over the past twenty years in all disciplines (Kroll and Finlayson 2012: 2-3; Walker et al 2008: 89-119), therefore. This focus has been intensified by the trend for students to think of themselves as consumers (Baldwin and James 2000; Franz 1988); some postgraduates arrive in the academy with high expectations of candidature and its outcomes. On their side, universities have begun to recognise that they should be responsible for preparing their graduates for the future (Kroll and Brien 2006). Creative Writing, in particular, with diverse program models and healthy enrolments (Boyd 2009), has needed innovative strategies given staff shrinkage and workforce casualisation. Fewer faculty members remain who can perform as supervisors and who can deal with a mixed postgraduate body, some of whom might be external to the university, living in other cities, remote locations or overseas. A new generation of global nomads expects, as Graham Mort of

Lancaster University says, innovative technology to facilitate ‘work[ing] across geographical and political borders’ (2013: 219).

As a consequence of these changes, Creative Writing administrators have discovered that the old supervisory models are not always sufficient, especially where Principal or Associate Supervisors might not be practitioners. Some doctoral candidates will be admitted, perhaps without a major in literature or writing, perhaps without having studied the latter at all because of ‘equivalent professional qualifications’. That catchall term can refer to the credentials of published authors, professionals in the communication industries and those with TAFE or coursework degrees in writing or associated fields. These students might have little understanding of theoretical frameworks or how subjectivity influences their work. Among possible supervisory models, this paper focuses on the traditional master-apprentice model, common in the arts as well as in academia; the collegial or team model, common in laboratory-based disciplines; and the collaborative model, which incorporates aspects of the first two and which can sometimes replicate the way in which artists work together on a project. Finally, it conceptualises the student-supervisor relationship as an ongoing project itself with its own attributes; the creative manoeuvres it requires can lead to adaptive behaviours that result in enhanced outcomes for all parties during and after candidature.

Models of supervision: The master-apprentice dyad and the team

The master-apprentice dyad has been the standard configuration of the candidate-supervisor relationship, and not simply because it follows established practice in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The concept of a master who took on apprentices, slowly passing on knowledge and practical skill, was embedded in the medieval guild system; this social and economic structure was adapted during the Renaissance to the studio of a master artist (Sennett 2008: 53-80; Sawyer 2006: 12-13). An apprentice’s craft was learned over many years, their progression structured by milestones for advancement from novice to master, someone capable of establishing their own studio. The Master Class (and the type of instruction it facilitates) is a dominant mode in the visual and performing arts (painting and music, for example). The craft workshop common in Master of Fine Arts as well as undergraduate degrees in Creative Writing also has embedded the notion of the practicing writer as master, who has the ‘domain-relevant skills’ (Dacey and Lennon 1998: 81) and knowledge of the artistic field (including style and fashion; Sawyer 2006: 28-29; 123-125) to induct apprentices into the discipline. These institutional structures can foster creativity to a degree: ‘...creativity demands expert knowledge of one type or another – of sonnets, sonatas, sine-waves, sewing’ (Boden 2004: 23). The Master Workshop offers training that grounds artistic development, therefore, but given its limited time span (one or two semesters, for example) and composition it can only provide a modicum of aesthetic and literary context and probably little or no introduction to the art form as a research discipline.

In the contemporary research higher degree structure, the master-apprentice paradigm still functions to some extent, depending on the personalities of the parties involved;

some postgraduates work well independently from the start and others require more direction. For example, professional authors who are versed in publishing practices might be confident about setting goals and acquiring requisite skills for projects. Novices, on the other hand, might desire insight into that world during candidature, as their future goals include publication, and welcome a high level of oversight. Yet supervisors can encounter emotional and psychological difficulties with trained postgraduates, as Banagan, Hecq and Theiler (2011: 45) attest. For one thing they will need guidance as they orient themselves in an academic terrain with unfamiliar conventions and value systems and might require reassurance. They might resist what they perceive as inappropriate control by an authority figure, finding it hard to accept constructive feedback (Banagan et al 2011: 48). Academic control, however, must always be in the hands of the Principal Supervisor who begins in a superior position in the hierarchy in terms of status and administrative and discipline knowledge.

In Humanities and Creative Arts Departments, where students from diverse backgrounds can choose interdisciplinary subjects and/or work in a range of genres, finding enough ‘masters’ to offer supervision can be problematic. For supervisors to be able to pass on the knowledge and practices necessary to foster creativity, they must first maintain a complex profile – that is, if they want to perform to the highest standard – functioning as informed professionals who comprehend relevant literary and cultural contexts – what Dacey and Lennon call ‘historical embeddedness’ (2009: 245). With both a critical and artistic profile, these supervisors can teach apprentices to discriminate between artifacts and, therefore, to realise the standard that they have achieved in their own work. If departments do not have enough members who embody the ideal supervisory persona, they must find alternative strategies to source craft, professional and critical skills in order to provide appropriate guidance and support the primary supervisor-student relationship.

In addition to the above limitations of the master-apprentice model, those working in Creative Writing must keep up with developments in creative research. The supervisor enables the student to discover viable research questions and suitable methodologies and theories to underpin the project. Grasping Creative Writing’s research dimension can be difficult for those who have entered the academy as published writers or who have only been exposed to the undergraduate craft workshop. Misunderstanding of research standards or reluctance to engage with theory is not uncommon among commencing postgraduates. Sennett summarises this challenge at a cultural level: ‘History has drawn fault lines dividing practice and theory, technique and expression, craftsman and artist, maker and user; modern society suffers from this historical inheritance’ (Sennett 2008: 11). The informed supervisor can explain how those seemingly opposed identities need to be reunited in order to produce a creative dissertation that has significance for the culture and community as well as achieves a professional standard.

Let me turn now to the collegial or team model, common in laboratory-based disciplines and research centres. Typically a Chief Investigator or investigators direct research and decide how individuals fit into the unit. Supervisors in this context are interventionists in a number of ways. First of all, they might actually suggest the thesis topic, which ‘is often more continuous and predetermined than in the Social

Sciences or Humanities’ (Sinclair: 2004: 13; Neumann 2003; Latona and Browne 2001). This suggests that students will experience a seamless flow from Honours (in Australia) or Masters degrees to doctoral study, especially if they remain in the same institution. By focusing on the question of authority, Sennett compares historical master-apprentice compacts and the laboratory’s form of academic organisation: ‘Authority in the generic sense relies on a basic fact of power: the master sets out the terms of work that others do at his direction. The Renaissance artist’s atelier differed little in this form from the medieval workshop or the modern scientific laboratory (Sennett 2008: 69). This heritage results in what are usually known as ‘hands on’ (Sinclair 2004: vii) supervisors, who might exert a high degree of control over postgraduates.

Second of all, those science supervisors who are well funded might establish a hierarchy of individuals (junior colleagues, postdoctoral fellows, et al) under their pedagogical or research umbrella to mentor candidates – sometimes in other research techniques or disciplinary areas – thereby dispersing power and expertise among the team (Brien 2007). Third, they foster group projects and thereby offer co-authorship opportunities to candidates to facilitate completion and at the same time provide professional development. This model encourages collaborative creativity of a kind that has made not only scientific and technological discoveries flourish in the past hundred years, but also some art forms, including new media platforms (Sawyer 2006: 208-218); for example, collaborative structures that encourage ‘group flow’ (Goldsmith 2007: 39-57), such as jazz ensembles. In sum, this team mentality combined with structured relationships and physical proximity work positively for the sciences. These integrated teams are difficult to replicate in the Humanities and in some areas of the Social Sciences, whose funding environment differs.²

Establishing regular School Seminar Series and postgraduate reading and writing groups as well as setting up supervisory panels that include three or more staff with expertise in various subject areas can offer similar benefits, but only to a degree. Nevertheless, structures to break down postgraduate isolation are becoming widespread, judging by research exploring postgraduate group support, senior and peer mentorship (Scaffidi and Berman 2011), along with other forms of professional development (Brien 2007: 159) that attempt to ‘reconfigur[e] workplace culture’ (160).

Before moving to more collaborative models of supervision, this paper considers how the collegial or team model has been extended to campus and online environments. Although the incorporation of coursework into doctoral degrees is outside the scope of this paper, it is worth noting that the Doctoral Training Colleges in the United Kingdom and similar initiatives in Australia have begun to address the lack of community often felt by doctoral students and the neglect of generic and transferrable skills. These courses face the challenge of multidisciplinary research projects that might require a range of methodologies (quantitative and qualitative, for example), adequate communication and numeracy skills and career development that helps students become workplace ready (*Universities Australia* 2013: 42, 53). Supervisors usually cannot provide all of these and some only a few. In addition, common courses

build a sense of identity among the postgraduate body and provide some support mechanisms available to teams, including alternative mentors.

Finally, the creation of a collegial online environment that offers expertise can be another solution to address deficiencies. The University of Lancaster (UK), for example, has reconfigured its approach to higher degree study in order to exploit innovative communication channels. It has formed online communities of practice where face-to-face workshopping or one-on-one mentorship is no longer the norm, extending the possibilities of the American low-residency format or the external student model, the latter still relying on the conventional master-apprentice dyad. Graham Mort has developed a Virtual Research Environment for Creative Writing, which allows the university to offer ‘an MA by distance learning (or eLearning)’ (2013: 204) as well as a doctorate, both of which necessitate online research training. The conventional on-campus educational mode for an international student body has been replaced by ‘websites with facilities for online research training, informal café exchanges, personal and research profiles, review of reading and WIP conferences [that] offer new possibilities for cultural interaction via personal and creative exchange’ (Mort 2013: 213).

Collaborative models of supervision

In the past decade some explorations of the Student-Supervisor Dyad conceptualised the doctoral journey as shared, extending the idea of role reversal – that by the end of candidature the student knew more than the supervisor and was now the expert in their own field. Dibble and van Loon (2004) devise the metaphor of the ‘three-legged race as a paradigm for the student-supervisor relationship’ (1), which emphasises not only the coordination necessary to cross the finish line (graduation), but also the serendipity that inheres in a structure that must be created “‘on-the-run” (1). In the ideal version of this model, during this marathon the master(s) and apprentices learn together (van Loon was a postgraduate, a staff member and an Associate Supervisor at the time) about the dynamics involved in supervision and about the project itself. By race’s end, students break away, however, sprinting over the line until they stand on the podium alone.

The concept of collaboration in academic and creative work is complex, but outlining possible structures and types of artistic and critical outcomes offers a starting point. First of all, we must ask if teams produce work that can be deemed collaborative in a sense useful to creative writing, where individual, rather than group, projects are the norm, especially in a hierarchical institutional unit (Brien 2007; Evans and Gandolfo 2009). Brien suggests that management theory offers instructive ways of conceptualising how teams function in the academy, applying it to the postgraduate-supervisor relationship and peer-to-peer interaction, among other models (2007: 159-160). More recently, Kroll (2013) considers the supervisor-student-examiner triad as another type of team, where synergies exist between the responsibilities and outputs inherent in each role. This integrated perspective of supervision accords with the enhanced focus universities now have on generic and professional skills training.

If we set aside creative work for the moment, likely collaborative activities that could produce public outcomes could be research about the pedagogy of RHD study (as multiple papers in *TEXT*, among other journals, demonstrate); co-authored essays about discipline-specific areas not central to the critical component of the thesis; and alternative research pathways that the prime material throws up but that might not fit into the focused exegesis. The two latter cases compare with what occurs in laboratories. Additional papers might be written not germane to the central project or, in fact, viable research directions materialise that funds or staffing make impossible to pursue in the short term. University guidelines surrounding co-authorship of academic papers testify to the challenge of attribution in collaborative academic work, because it raises the issue of originality (and priority in knowledge production) in doctorates explicitly; implicitly it raises the question of how group environments function.

University RHD Student Information Manuals, often informed by DDoGS *Best Practice Guidelines* and the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (2007: section 5), offer similar advice about dividing credit among postgraduate researchers and staff co-authors. How well these are adhered to can be difficult to judge as subordinates will not openly criticise superiors who might use them as lab ‘slave labour’ or as vehicles for boosting their own publication output. Co-authorship, however, has been embedded in academic culture since the advent of the modern university. On the positive side, it can work to advance scientific discovery and enhance postgraduate careers; on the negative, it can lead to ‘exploitation [of juniors] and abuse of intellectual property’ (Crafton 2004: 239). Nevertheless, students at Flinders University, for example, are advised:

Multi-author papers may be included within a thesis; however, the student is expected to be the primary author of these papers. A clear statement is required for each publication documenting the contribution of each author to the paper (from conceptualisation to realisation and documentation). (Flinders University 2013: 31)

Collaborative creative work can be characterised by integrated or overlapping responsibilities (‘messy’ is a term often used). Certain art forms lend themselves to joint development in the academy as that model replicates what occurs in the marketplace. This applies to the performing arts, screen and media in particular, where labour has always been divided among multiple creative and technical talents. Templates can be created for projects that facilitate clear attribution, even if there is cross-fertilisation of ideas, such as in a realised film or play. In fact, three Flinders doctoral candidates (two of whom are also staff members) worked on a low-budget feature film, interrogating whether this was a viable model for other university screen programs. One wrote the script, another produced and a third directed (this structure holds for a stage play and other media). This format exemplifies a collaborative creative arts project where enough separation exists between roles (identified by job titles).

Evans and Gandolfo (2009) explore creative writing supervision in the context of cross-disciplinary collaborative projects, but first offer a table that summaries four collaborative models:

1. Minor ‘Traditional academic model’ (8) – with a team leader or CI.

2. ‘Thematically linked project’ – ‘‘The collaborative vision is at a conceptual level’ (8).³
3. One Project – ‘One product with joint vision and commitment’ (8) where ‘it is possible to distinguish between the contribution made by different participants at the level of technique, medium, style and/or discipline’ (8).
4. ‘One product’ – ‘...no distinction between...participant[s]’ (8).

The first three models do not entail much sorting out by an accrediting institution where reward is based on individual achievement and academic co-authorship has accepted guidelines. The fourth model appears problematic. Not only universities but also the various artistic ‘fields’ attribute value according to individual contributions. Multiple egos can make this difficult for assessors.

In a generic sense it might be true that: ‘The construction of a new way of thinking in a creative project, the inventing of a new work, benefits from this kind of collaboration – from joint commitment, ownership and responsibility’ (Evans and Gandolfo 2009: 12). This statement also applies to the conventional project where dialogue, information sharing and a team milieu facilitate individual and joint productions. How are ‘ownership and responsibility’ (Evans and Gandolfo 2009: 12) for creative and critical work, however, divided between supervisor and student? The word ‘responsibility’ permeates RHD policies and procedures, applying to students, supervisors and institutional divisions. When paired with ‘ownership,’ the meaning of both words becomes unstable. The default position for any doctoral project is that students own their Intellectual Property (IP), unless funding, industry partnerships or other commercial circumstances dictate that they sign it over. Even in performing arts, such as drama and film, where staff and students work together on a production, responsibility and ‘ownership’ will be demarcated based on position descriptions determined by skill and knowledge. The material that collaborators exploit as research data primarily stays in their own area of expertise. The production facilitates a species of ‘co-authorship’ understood in terms of the art form.

The world of the visual and literary arts has its own rules for valuation that reflect upon this division. Stephen Wright argues that

...the symbolic economy of recognition that characterises the artworld is highly competitive, and based on the strategic exploitation of disparities in talent and social capital...[so] attempts at collaboration are seriously thwarted. This is all the more the case in so far as the art economy is based on the exchange of object-based artworks. So long as the physical and social architecture of art-specific spaces [including the commercial ‘space’ of the publishing house] remains the dominant reference for art practice, co-authorship can only be perceived as a hindrance to the sort of possessive individualism underpinning authorship. (Wright 2004: 534)

This description also applies to the academy, where a collaborative model comprising equal partners whose contributions cannot be delineated would not allow the production of an artwork that could easily take the place of all (or part) of a creative component of a PhD thesis identifiable as the result of one student’s work, although new forms of community-based research suggest that alternative templates are now developing (MacDowall 2012).

Perhaps a more fruitful avenue is to look at supervision as a species of complex collaboration with its own characteristics. Evans and Gandolfo enumerate ‘three specific relationships’: between student and supervisors, between co-supervisors of different disciplines and, for the student, between the theoretical and practical aspects of the project’ (2009: 12). This paper develops and refines those observations by postulating that all parties form part of an umbrella group that has come together for one purpose – to direct a postgraduate; by analysing its interactions, we can identify work that can be undertaken individually or collaboratively. This approach has already been trialled to varying degrees in papers over the past decade dealing with creative arts supervision. What this research focuses on is the pedagogical and psychological aspects of the supervisory relationship and, whether explicitly or implicitly, conceives of it as a type of creative project with its own attributes. This conceptualisation also lends itself to analyses through the lens of creativity theory. So the critical and creative outputs result from studying not an artwork itself but rather the relationship and its by-products – the offshoots of academic and creative arts production.

The exemplary outputs below cover possibilities (co- or single-authored) that might eventuate, but the list is indicative, not exhaustive:

- ‘reflective practitioner’ pedagogical criticism;
- interdisciplinary supervisory criticism;
- policy and standards development (including improved doctoral structures, supervisory and research training);
- theoretical criticism (artist and artform);
- historical criticism (style and genre studies);
- sole creative projects suggested by avenues raised in dialogue – ‘You follow this strand and I’ll follow that’; and
- collaborative arts projects that might begin either before or after candidature but that do not impinge on the student’s creative thesis.

The above possibilities engage with one or more of the myriad ‘knowledges’ that characterise the creative writing doctoral candidature: craft; practitioner; disciplinary; pedagogical; aesthetic; and cultural. In sum, the forms that *epistêmê* and *technê* – or knowledge and craft⁴ – take in the academy and into which apprentices need to be inducted. They also exemplify the three fundamental types of creative arts research summarised by Strand in his groundbreaking report back in 1998: research ‘about,’ ‘in’ and ‘of’ the artform (1998: 40).

Conclusion: Creative manoeuvres

The collaborative supervisory doctoral relationship functions in a relatively new field where disciplinary goalposts shift and conceptions of research develop in a climate of healthy debate. Supervisors encounter candidates with their own conceptions of research and practice and perhaps a desire to work in multidisciplinary areas.

Collaborative conversations that allow the give and take of viewpoints are a necessity. Nevertheless, students undertake doctorates within an academic structure that demands someone takes charge, ensuring that standards are met. Within these parameters, as this paper argues, personal, artistic and professional development can occur. Supervisors can identify critical and creative opportunities, all the while keeping their primary responsibility – to help their apprentices to ‘timely completions’ – in sight.

In sum, the student-supervisor relationship can be theorised as an ongoing project, characterised by adaptive and creative manoeuvres that guide stakeholder behavior and facilitate outcomes that can occur during and after candidature. Since practice is at the heart of the creative writing doctorate, supervisors have to face these challenges: to encourage a student’s art and to foster intellectual and professional development. As the Masters of the past, they must inspire on two fronts. Looking back at the original ‘Latin meaning of the verb ‘inspire,’ [which is] ‘to breathe into,’ reflecting the belief that creative inspiration was akin to the moment in creation when God first breathed life into man’ (Sawyer 2006: 12), might make supervisors baulk. Yet in the most effective interactions, that is what supervisors do, especially during the long doctoral journey when candidate enthusiasm often wanes. A supervisor functions as a kind of super-ego who prods when writer’s block, laziness or depression stop the creative and critical flow. Creativity theorists refer to “‘mini-insights” (Sawyer 2006: 285) that occur only when frequent immersion in a project happens. Supervisors must strive to keep the benefits of revision (the perspiration that must follow inspiration) in the postgraduate’s consciousness, using personal strategies for re-immersion gleaned from their own experience as critics and practitioners. This ability to refresh intellectual and artistic engagement, which might inspire supervisors themselves to plunge in again to creative work, is another type of creative manoeuvring that points to future research.

Endnotes

1. The nation ‘should strive to at least double the number of PhD graduates employed in the broader economy’ (Universities Australia *Agenda* 2013, 42). HEPs must ‘review how best to train PhD graduates’ (UA 4).
2. Humanities and Creative Arts funding tends to be restricted to ARC Discovery and Linkage Grants. Few give supervisors discretionary funds for equipment, top-up scholarships and travel grants.
3. The ‘Icarus extended’ panel at the 2010 ‘Strange Bedfellows and Perfect Partners’ AAWP conference demonstrates this model: <http://aawp.org.au/files/Icarus%200%20Intro.pdf>.
4. These overlap in Plato and Aristotle as well (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*; Randall 1960).

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