

Spark: UAL Creative Teaching and Learning Journal

Editorial

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This special issue arose from two drivers: the expansion of doctoral supervisory expertise at UAL and secondly, an awareness of the need to share our practices, not only across the UAL community, but more broadly. It is in this very process of sharing experiences, feelings and views on supervision that we can build upon our community of practice, whilst challenging preconceptions and opening up new possibilities, new insights and new avenues.

This issue brings together different experiences, approaches and methodologies. Importantly, it brings together sensitivities that are very much aligned. Contributors to this issue offer questionings and reflections about what the doctorate is, what it means to do research, to create practice, the role academics have in the process of doctoral making, and academic and artistic becoming.

It is very much with this view that Professor Malcolm Quinn's piece asks us to reflect about what it means to supervise in an age of globalising forces, where we need to critically consider which voices are given spaces and audiences, and which aren't. Who's got permission to research? This consideration should then be the focus of *how* we supervise students in arts, design and communication. How are students developing their own space(s), their permission(s) for research? All parties in the supervisory relationship need to consider the dynamics between student and supervisor.

It is this space between the supervisor and the supervisee that Paul Jackson's piece occupies. It positions itself at the intersection of studying and supervising, a space he currently inhabits and navigates. A space or, better still, spaces, which are constantly monitored, constantly observed, constantly surveyed. Or, at least, like Bentham's panopticon, offer the possibility of surveillance in the most economical of ways: self-surveillance. So, he asks, what is the role of the supervisor, that of an art director or someone who supports the students within a constructivist model of learning and making? Perhaps, Jackson suggests, supervision is above all a call to action. Paul's piece is called 'I supervise and I am supervised' which aligns very closely to Ingham *et al's* contribution, which also identifies this duality, with their text 'Becoming-Supervisor Becoming-Supervised' highlighting, like Jackson, the process of becoming. Through a Deleuzian approach where becoming a supervisor is reflected through, and reflexive of, an assemblage of parts which become a meaningful text, the authors bring together diverse experiences of academics who became supervisors. The article, based on questionnaires, asks respondents how and why they became PhD students and supervisors. Whereas the path to doctoral supervision seems to have been similar for many, the paths to becoming a PhD student were rather more diverse. These sharings are followed by relevant and useful advice for practitioners, and for supervisors.

In reflecting about the ritual of confirmation, John O'Reilly's article explores issues of researcher identity as part of the making of the PhD. He centres the researcher at the core of the PhD process rather than that of an outsider who adopts others' discourses which may seem to legitimise doctoral work. This 'jump' requires a questioning and redoing of ontologies and epistemologies, practices which art and design schools are ideally placed to enable. In seeing the confirmation as a liminal process, he explores the ritual itself as a threshold concept, a transformative moment in the making of the researcher and doctorateness.

Zoetanya Sujon's article follows on considering what constitutes good supervisory practice. Her text highlights a substantial gap between the supervision pedagogy literature and lived experience, and explores various factors that affect the emotionally dense journey through the PhD project, and the finding of one's voice. She draws a parallel between the relative lack of emotional support and the lack of support to find one's own voice through their writing. Sujon notes that "Engaging with your doctoral students' relationship to their authorial voice and (professional) identity through their writing practice can be an important component of good supervision".

In their article Andrea Zimmerman leads us onto a poetic and sinuous road punctuated by some of their experiences as a supervisor. Centreing art as a process of creation, destruction and recreation, she challenges the formats, institutional processes, power dynamics and limiting structures surrounding the PhD journey. Through this reflective process Zimmerman highlights the need for doctoral approaches that give space to the new, in defiance of ethno-centric, colonial, patriarchal, oppressive practices. The space for, and of, the new is that which we should all strive for, one where agency lies with the student-creator-practitioner.

One of the elements that brings all these texts together is a sensitivity that reflects a doctoral supervision which is centred in a pedagogy and practice of care. Another is that of journey, of becoming. As supervisors, as researchers, as practitioners, the authors reflect (on) the process of our own identity. This is *our* journey.

Biography

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