SHARING COLLEGIAL PRACTICES IN DOCTORAL SUPERVISION IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

creative arts doctorates: 'an experimental encounter with the terrain of practice'
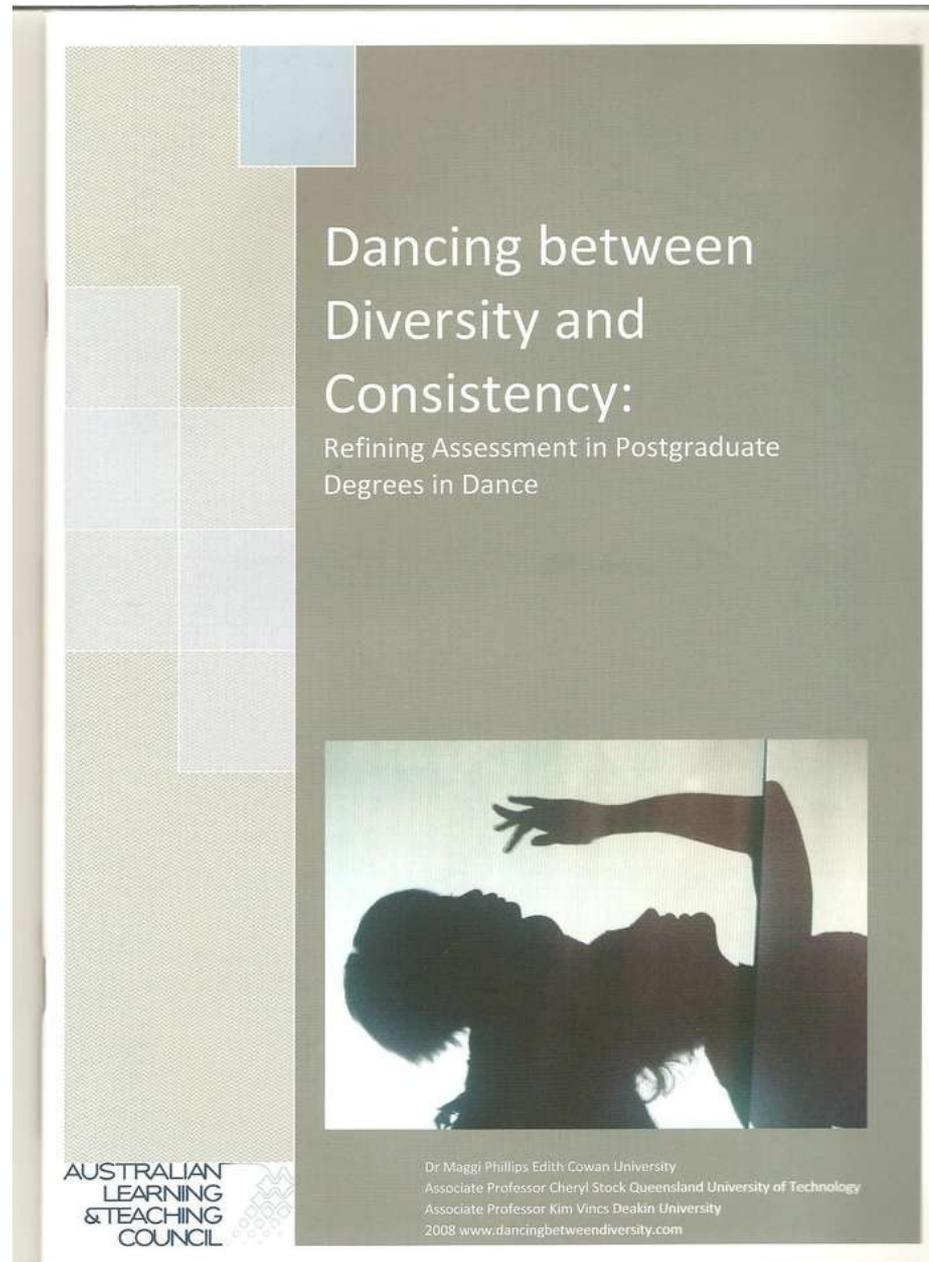
(Sharon Jewell, PhD candidate in Visual Arts)

Cheryl Stock

Where do supervisors come from?
a personal example

Cheryl Stock in Picking Out the Glass, Dancing Lives, Photo Jeff Atkinson

Researching practices - an exemplar

Dancing between
Diversity and
Consistency:
Refining Assessment in Postgraduate
Degrees in Dance

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2008 www.dancingbetweendiversity.com

Dancing between Consistency and Diversity
Refining Assessment in Postgraduate Degrees in Dance

Priority Programs research grant (2007-2009) funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC)

Chief Investigators:
A/Professor Maggi Phillips (Edith Cowan University)
A/Professor Cheryl Stock (Queensland University of Technology)
Associate Professor Kim Vincs (Deakin University)

Investigation into key issues and challenges in developing flexible guidelines lines for best practice in Australian Doctoral and Masters by Research Examination, encompassing both written and multi-modal theses.

2 year research project resulted in a set of guidelines in the form of a complex dynamic system for both product and process oriented outcomes of multi-modal theses, along with a series of publications.

www.dancingbetweendiversity.com
http://eprints.qut.edu.au/view/person/Stock,_Cheryl.html

COMPLEX DYNAMIC SYSTEM
FOR CHOREOGRAPHIC PERFORMANCE OUTCOME

Originality or the imaginative treatment of embodied/physical practice as a means to evoke an, or many idea(s)

Potential meaning-making via the physical composition

Phrase and/or sectional development/cohesion/dynamics across the total structure of the work, or via interactive compositional techniques

Micro-structural choices/development/invention within a phrase or small units of movement

STATED RESEARCH DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Potential meaning-making via extra-physical elements: music/sound, design/performance site, text/dialogue, object use, interactive media

The work's capacity to illustrate the conceptual and/or theoretical underpinning of the research

Extra-ordinary features: culturally specific orientation or anti-dance/performance positions

Cohesion/integration of all elements and levels of production in terms of the stated intention/framing/choreographic notes

Appropriateness/quality of dancers and production elements

COMPLEX DYNAMIC SYSTEM
FOR PROCESS-ORIENTATED RESEARCH
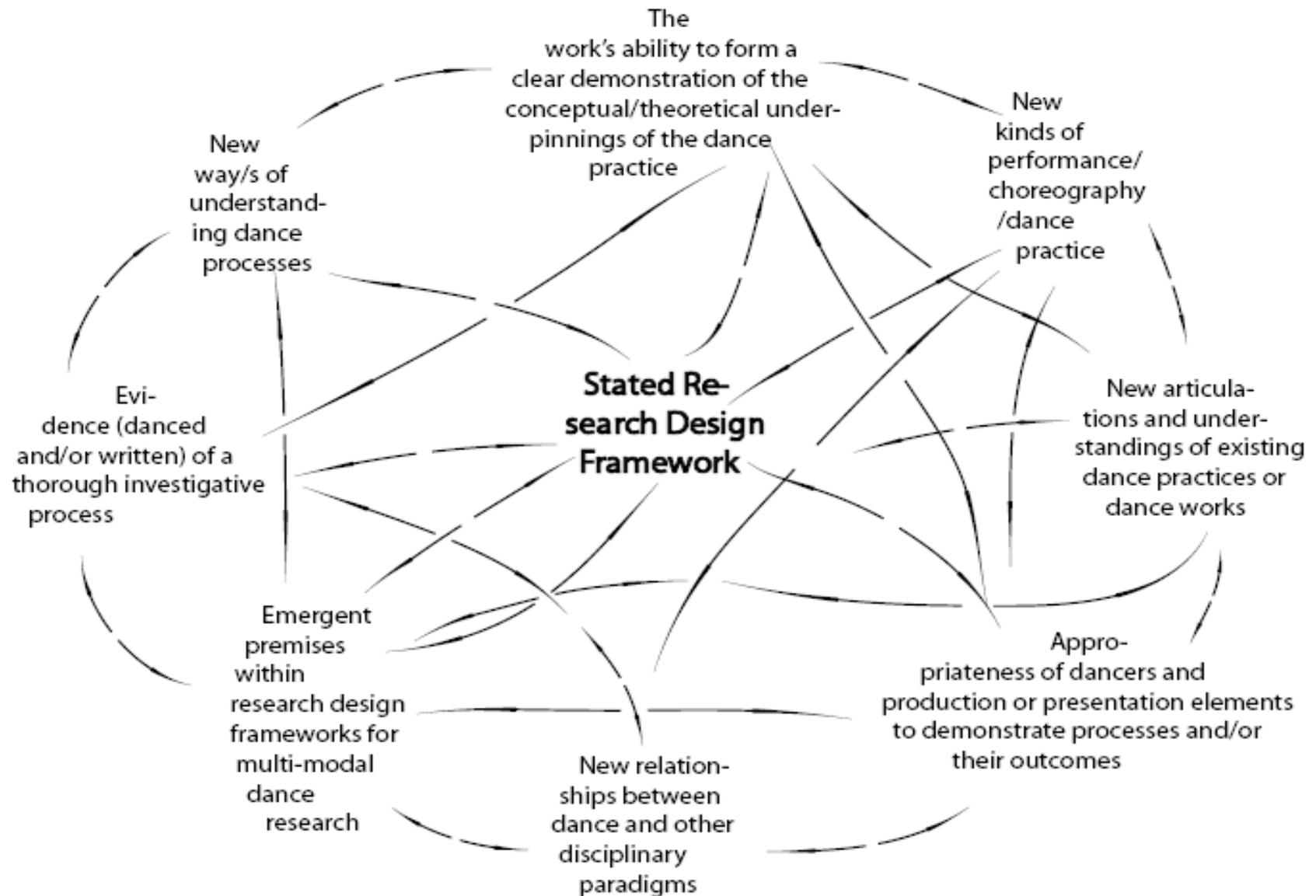
supervisory challenges
in time-based embodied performance

How do we represent embodiment in dance?

an integrated network encompassing neural elements, memory, perception, attunement, affect, kinaesthetic, somatic and mimetic responses (Block & Kissell, 2001, Warburton, 2011)

How do we re-language what is meant by embodiment in research that is centred in dance practice?

Warburton proposes the construct of *dance enaction* (2011, 67-70) to build a theoretical language embedded in practice in which dance is acknowledged as a relational and emotional situated activity.


Lizzie & Zaimon Vilmanis
Photo: Fiona Cullen

enacting 'talk from the body'

'dynamically embodied action in semantically rich spaces' (Drid Williams, 1991 in Warburton, 2011, 68)

An enactive approach:

❑ privileges emotional and relational experience and acknowledges co-presence in meaning-making

❑ views knowledge as 'constructed in action through emergent and self-organising processes' (Warburton, 2011, 69)

❑ elicits kinaesthetic 'feeling of', somatic 'feeling in' and mimetic 'feeling for' responses and perceptions leading to 'empathetic connected knowing' (2011, 73)
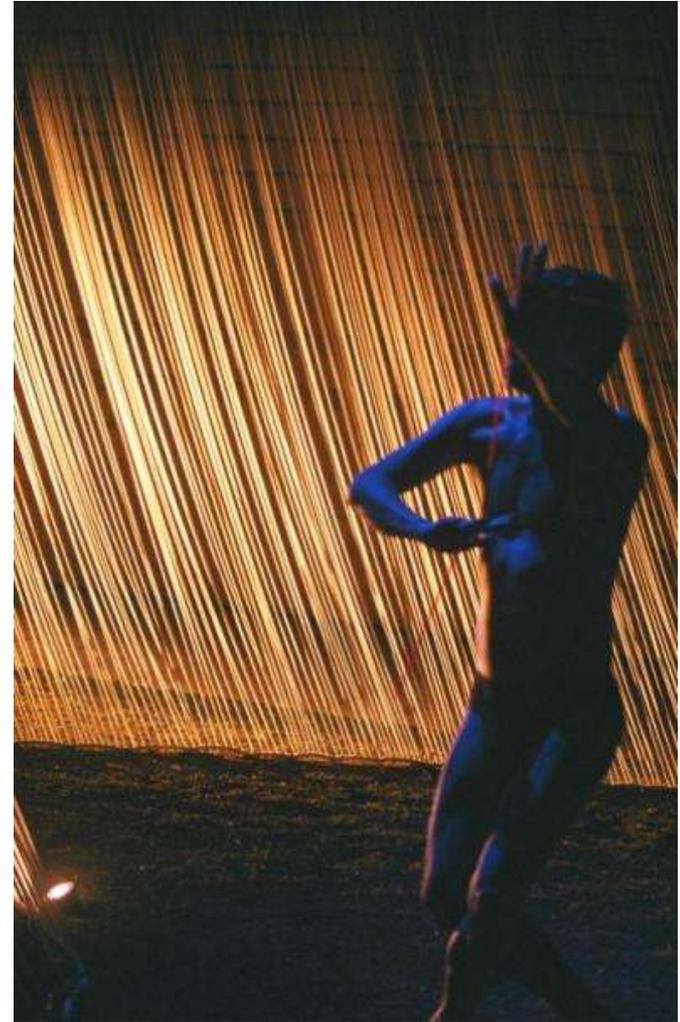
Tony Yap *ether*
Photo: Conwell

capturing the architecture and the poetry

if dance is 'materiality grounded in bodily experiences' (Warburton, 2011, 74) and thought made visible, how do we represent that beyond the dance itself?

Propositional text distorts the meanings embedded in experiential research wherein knowledge is mostly tacit, residing:
❑ in the expert practice of 'performance mastery' (Melrose 2003, 2006)
❑ through its aesthetic dimensions
❑ via expert technical skills which are a 'gateway to non-linguistic thinking' (Siegesmund, 2004: 80)

'more flexibility in matching written language with conceptual thought expressed in practice' (Philips, Stock, Vincs: 2009) with articulation that is:
* ❖ allusive
* ❖ metaphoric
* ❖ poetic
* ❖ liminal

Kopei Lin Photo: Ian Hutson

lost in triple translation?

How do supervisors guide this experimental, experiential knowledge through embodied research into a vehicle for sharing with others?

Immersion in the processes of the studio – reflective co-presence

Support and negotiate the tricky terrain of translation, approximation, elucidation, interpretation, illumination from the primary medium of dance to other mediums…

Probe serendipitous and intuitive discoveries, critical moments to contribute insights to the field and articulate emergent theory


Raka Maitra Photo: Fiona Cullen

representing (triple) translation?

'Dance exists at a perpetual vanishing point.' (Marcia Siegel, 1973)

Leaving a trace, a memory, a lingering image, the sensation of movement ....

Representing such immateriality:

❑ digital documentation – from 3D to 2D

❑ interactive navigation of textual, audio and image to articulate contexts, concepts, methods , processes and emergent theory.

❑ memory of the work itself captured via the above
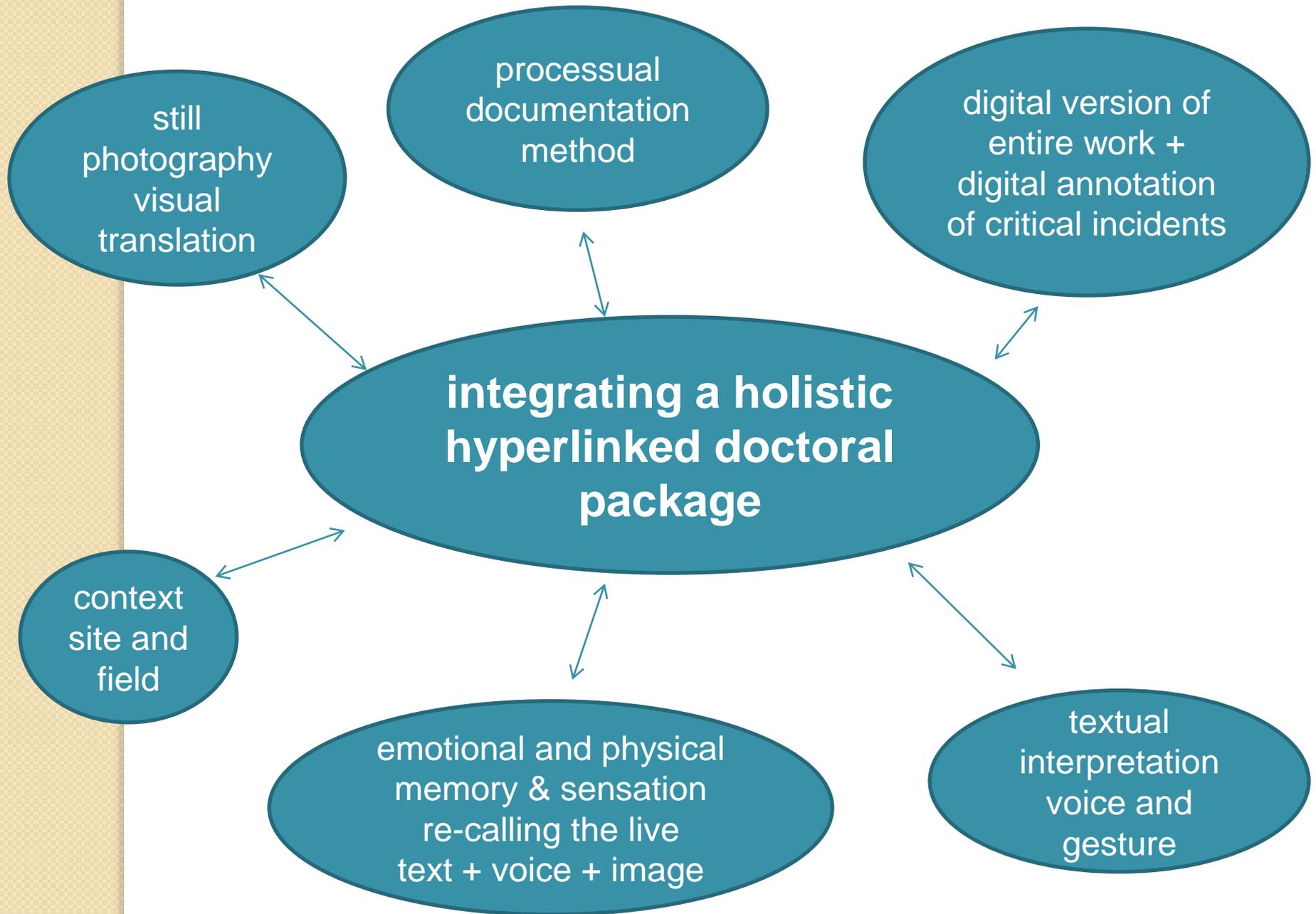
case study
Creative Industries supervisor retreat

Tuesday 4th December 2012, Old Government House

Based around a series of **'dialogue vignettes'** experienced supervisors and novice supervisors shared their experiences around 6 major themes as a catalyst for group discussions for the 55 participants from 14 disciplines.

These themes encompassed:
❑ strategies for attracting quality students;
❑ communication styles between students and supervisors;
❑ **developing a well balanced supervisory team;**
❑ timing, pacing and organisation of candidature;
❑ managing relationships with diverse cohorts;
❑ **supervisor mentoring**.

This case study extrapolates 2 areas of particular relevance to creative arts doctorates.

Context – Faculty of Creative Industries

❑ schools of Design and MECA (Media, Entertainment & Creative Arts) each with 7 disciplines

❑ around 300 higher degree research students – 35% practice-led

❑ gap between long standing supervisors and those who are newly embarking on doctoral supervision

❑ long history of supporting and leading practice-led research in the creative arts

❑ transdisciplinary nature of many study areas has seen a rise in interest in practice-led approaches beyond the creative arts

❑ conversely, an interest by creative arts students and supervisors in a range of hybrid methods to support creative and reflective practice

challenges – environment and expectations

❑ how to balance an artist /designer's priorities and expectations, which may be to deepen and extend practice, with those of the supervisors & university expectations of doctoral research & impact?

❑ why do artists undertake a PhD if they do not wish to pursue an academic career?

❑ does a PhD make artists better practitioners?
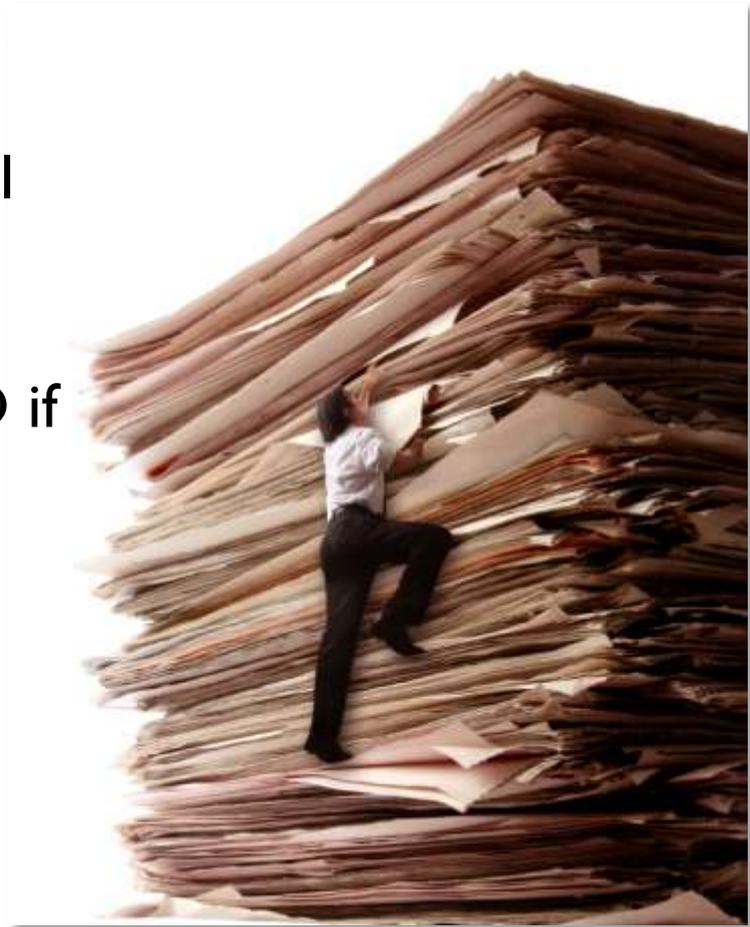
challenges – balancing the supervisory team

❑ how to balance content/practice, method/process and theory?

❑ does a theory and a practice supervisory expert bifurcate the interdependency of praxis?

❑ do we consider an industry-based artist on the team?

❑ how much time do supervisors spend in the studio?

❑ separate or joint meetings with students?

❑ unified approach, differentiated roles

challenges – balancing the supervisory team

(with thanks to Laurie Buys and Mark Radvan - dialogue vignette 3)

The team:
student
supervisors
industry partners (or artistic mentors?)
informal advisors /sounding board

How people work together is crucial and at beginning of supervision intensive discussion necessary to:
❏ build relationships
❏ balance student and supervisors' expectations
❏ ensure everyone is on the same page to forge a strong partnership.

Source: University of Sussex Doctoral student support site…
http://rustleblog.wordpress.com/2012/01/11/supporting-doctoral-students-at-home-and-away/

Challenges – balancing the supervisory team

(with thanks to Laurie Buys and Mark Radvan - dialogue vignette 3)

Principle motivation is to support the student – keeping the dialogue going and keeping the students connected

Issues of content and structure need to be agreed between the team

Importance of maintaining the professionalism of the student/supervisor relationship

Separate meetings but whole team meeting together at key points

different students require different supervisory styles

# challenges – countering self-referentiality

collaborative cohort meetings - outside view from the inside

- ➢ between students to share ideas and provide peer feedback
- ➢ between supervisory team to discuss progress, approaches
- ➢ with student and supervisory team – set agendas, collegial discussions
- ➢ view the work in progress and provide feedback
- ➢ share writing and co-publish (as relevant)

mentoring and support – coffee conversations

❏ supporting the team to support the student

❏ mentoring as a regular dialogue between supervisory peers, no matter what the experience level

❏ fresh voices and different perspectives provide dynamic and effective partnerships leading to new teams and collaborative possibilities

❏ maintaining collegial feel especially with inclusion of both traditional and practice-led supervisors

❏ joint discussions where interrogation of approaches are beneficial to engender shared understandings
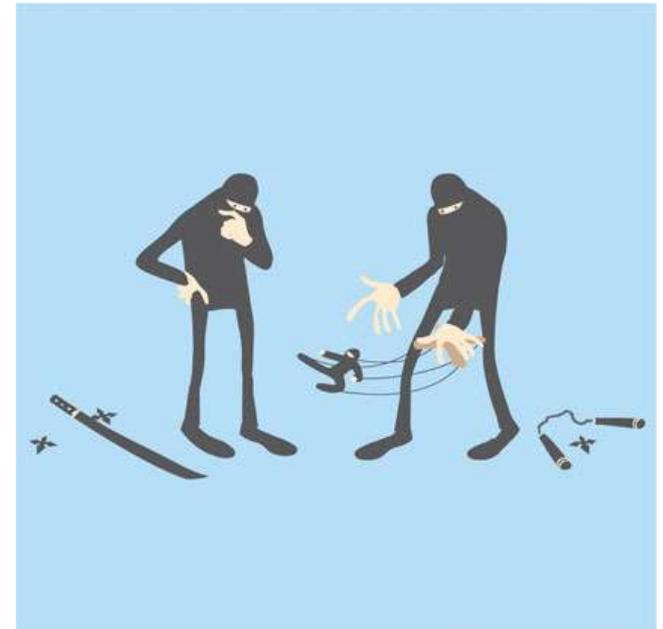
Bored ninjas from shirtstain.com

mentoring and support

(with thanks to Barbara Adkins and Oksana Zelenko – vignette dialogue 6)

reflective and self-reflective process of continuous dialogue

operational and instructional processes are important as well as philosophical and relational aspects of supervision mentoring

dealing with student anxieties but also dealing with staff fears around those anxieties

edaustralia.com.au

mentoring and support

(with thanks to Barbara Adkins and Oksana Zelenko – vignette dialogue 6)

recognising and applying which aspects of supervision are transferable and can be applied to other settings.

mentoring outside the supervisory team or discipline / Faculty

creating frames of reference for each supervision

shoestring.com.au

mentoring and support

(with thanks to Barbara Adkins and Oksana Zelenko – vignette dialogue 6)

tool should be fit for purpose (Richard Sennett 2009. The Craftsman, Yale University Press) but tools challenge us when they are not fit for purpose, so being able to adapt your tools is crucial to good supervision

acknowledge and work with indeterminacy and fluidity within the team

shoestring.com.au

outcomes – the CI supervisory Toolkit

ACIF digital supervisory toolkit to assist supervisors navigate the complex supervisory landscape of the Creative Industries.

explicitly aims to support supervisors to identify and work through the challenges that confront the supervision relationship.

identifies and provides resources on key dimensions of supervision affected by the interface between greater complexity and variety in doctorates and requirements of strategy and timely completions

thenewnewinternet.com

outcomes – the CI supervisory Toolkit

builds on 6 key issues informing the retreat:

1. core elements of supervisory practice: insights, guidelines and policies
2. understanding and addressing the contemporary challenges of supervision: conversations and recent literature
3. general resources and literature on HDR Supervision with a separate section on practice-led research and reflective practice

thenewnewinternet.com

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