

Introduction: postgraduate studies/postgraduate pedagogy?

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In recent years, the nature and quality of postgraduate studies in higher education has become a matter of increasing interest and concern. This has been partly produced out of the collapse of the binary system in the mid eighties and the subsequent restructuring and re-positioning of the higher education sector, following the interventions and decisions of the then Minister for Education in the Federal Labor Government, in direct relation to new and changing economic imperatives. What has emerged on the scene is a greatly expanded number of universities, within an across the board re-assessment and re-organisation of the academic-institutional agenda to take more explicitly and formally into account notions of accountability, efficiency, performativity, professionalisation and vocationalism. More broadly, the shift to a 'post-industrial', knowledge and information-based economy has meant increasing emphasis on educational credentials and the formation of a multi-skilled, flexible, 'informed' workforce and citizenry. More recently, however, there have been signs of a shift in national priorities and preoccupations, away from a more or less exclusive emphasis on economic issues and imperatives towards matters of culture, citizenship and social identity, and a new understanding of the relationship between culture and economy.

Within this broad re-organisation, the question of postgraduate education looms large. In recent years there has been a considerable upsurge in activity and, as Zuber-Skerritt and Ryan (1994) point out, "intense debate" around the question of postgraduate study. In Australia and overseas, there is now a substantial body of research of various kinds into postgraduate education. In the context of increasing government pressure for universities to be both more 'productive' and more accountable, however, much of this attention is focused on policy issues and questions, and on the organisation and administration of the postgraduate research degree, addressing concerns such as "completion rates; completion percentages; the quality of programs, supervision and students; and the costs and benefits of postgraduate education" (Holdaway, 1994). In accord with the scrutiny of educational practices and programs elsewhere, in schools and related sites (eg TAFE), universities have been encouraged to rationalise their undergraduate programs and the like, and alongside this has come increasingly a call to re-evaluate similarly postgraduate programs, with reference particularly to research-oriented higher degree studies. Within this latter, the PhD program in particular has been the subject of debate, with, as well as issues already gestured at here, growing interest in matters of 'composition' and higher-order literacy, and of course thorny questions about 'relevance'. The scene is set for new and innovative forms of imagining and thinking about how best the intellectual and learning resources of the nation can be harnessed in the service of genuinely significant social productivity.

To date, however, as we've suggested, much of this debate and its attendant forms of research have concentrated more on matters of administration and procedure, protocol and policy, finance and governance, within what might be described as a new functionalist agenda organised increasingly around notions of competency, contractualism and control (Marginson, 1995). Along similar lines, more practice-oriented research conducted to date has also focused largely on

collecting information about postgraduate research students' experiences that can inform guidelines about good supervisory practices (eg Parry and Hayden 1994; Powles, 1993), as well as on across-Faculty understandings and practices regarding postgraduate research supervision and study (eg Whittle, 1994), with the Zuber-Skerritt and Ryan 1994 collection on 'quality' in postgraduate education being a significant and representative text in this regard. The indications are that such orientations and regimes in research are likely to be further institutionalised if rational 'science' models of research and supervision are adopted uncritically as normative across the academic-institutional spectrum, as seems to be the trend, in accordance with new bureaucratic logics of funding and accountability. Furthermore, it seems that at least some of the currently available or popular staff development models and practices focussed on supervision, although ostensibly quite distinct from this orientation, nonetheless often still fall into its general compass, sometimes rather awkwardly working with 'technologies' of human relations and group dynamics that unfortunately can be full of sound and fury, so to speak, with little marked gain or effect. What may need to be taken more into calculation in this regard, then, are those aspects of postgraduate research and education, and academic staff development and training, that are *not* so amenable to these kinds of investigation and assessment, or—more actively—are effectively thus de-valued or glossed over, or refused as having marked significance, at the individual candidature, institutional and national-systemic levels of operation. Alternative lines and forms of research are therefore needed as a matter of some urgency, addressing precisely these omissions and absences, and geared therefore to the possible reconceptualisation of postgraduate study, specifically at the PhD level.

This Special Issue presents a range of views, arguments and proposals in this regard. It has been consciously set up with reference to Bob Connell's much-read and much-discussed account of PhD supervision, published in this journal's predecessor in 1985. His was then a relatively lonely voice, and it could be claimed that it remains so even now, a decade later. In particular, his point that supervision needed to be taken much more seriously as 'teaching' seems to us absolutely crucial, and yet it names what is still a complex and curious phenomenon: the fact that teaching as such remains a marginalised and de-valued activity in the Academy, notwithstanding recent emphases through CAUT and other agencies on improving the quality and effectiveness of university teaching. This is so, it could be argued, even in those circumstances where the teaching activity is ostensibly valued, because often this is still oriented at least implicitly towards what we describe in our paper in this volume as a 'metaphysical' view of research. That, in fact, is what we see as an important matter for reconceptualisation and debate at this time: the discursive opposition between 'research' and 'teaching'. This in part, we suggest, might be most appropriately engaged by a systematic revaluation and re-assessment of the concept of 'pedagogy', specific to the university context in this instance, and conceived explicitly as subsuming the opposition referred to here.

Relatedly, account needs to be taken of the trend towards a re-emphasis, worldwide, on increased specialisation in the university sector. As Burton Clark indicates (1994), this takes the form of the establishment and consolidation of separate 'research universities' and 'teaching universities'. For us in Australia, this means in effect a move back towards a reconstituted binary system—with indications all around us that this is already happening by default, if not (yet) as a formal matter of policy. The question that needs to be explored in this regard is not so much the fact effectively of this renewed division of labour (although history tells us that it is always also a 'dividing practice' in terms of privilege and power) as it is addressed to the substantive issue of whether this is to be seen as regressive or progressive. That is, restoring the academic-institutional order of things may not be in the best interests ultimately of the new university (or the new society) that is arguably emerging at this present time, poised as we are on a new century and another millennium.

Furthermore, as Clark also indicates, and as taken up to some extent in this volume by Shannon, the reworking of the nature and relations of 'teaching' and 'research', whether inside particular institutions or across the system as a whole, may well require rethinking the idea of Graduate Schools. Yet can it be simply assumed that Graduate Schools as presently constituted and conceived represent anything more than a continuation of the traditional idea of the modern(ist) university? That may of course not be such a bad thing. But it certainly needs to be debated openly and rigorously, and there doesn't seem to be much sign of this happening at the moment. Perhaps it is an imperative at this time to rethink the theory and practice of Graduate Schools, taking into account new understandings and problematics of 'research' and 'teaching', and also of pedagogy and disciplinarity?

A further matter that is becoming more and more of an agenda item is the appearance on the Australian scene of new kinds of doctoral research and accreditation. This development is fuelled and generated on the one hand by the emergence of different kinds of universities, following the restructuring of the higher education sector, and on the other by what might be described as an increasing *secularisation* of university work. By this latter, we mean the increased emphasis on professional studies of one kind or another, and what might be called the vocationalising of higher education in this country. That is, the seemingly inexorable push evident in other sectors towards vocational education is impacting similarly on universities, traditionally oriented more towards knowledge and inquiry in its own right, as an end in itself. Hence attention is turning to the particular issues and problems, as well as possibilities, associated with *professional doctorates*, as they can be called, to be distinguished from what Hodge in this volume describes as *disciplinary doctorates*. Something of this distinction has been discussed elsewhere in terms of "the debate about the training-based PhD as opposed to the knowledge-based PhD" (Burgess, 1994: 3). However, this does not seem adequate in accounting for the likelihood that professional doctorates in areas such as education, engineering, law, nursing and architecture might well represent new forms of research, and new alignments of research and praxis, and hence constitute a significant alternative to disciplinary work in this regard. Marie Brennan and Terry Evans usefully raise questions of this kind here, as does Bob Hodge from a somewhat different angle of attack.

The papers in this collection address a range of the concerns sketched out briefly here. They fall into three broad groups. The first group we might call texts *for* pedagogy. These papers address a range of issues concerning teaching practices at the postgraduate research degree level. They are indicative of a process of demystification and increasing professionalisation of this aspect of the university's work, aimed at making public what has until very recently been essentially privatised and personalised. As new kinds of students—mature age, part-time, often instrumentally oriented, and so on—undertake postgraduate research study, they place new demands on the institution, rendering problematic what Yeatman identifies here as the "tacit culture of academic research and writing" characterising the "patrimonial-liberal" model of supervision pedagogy. What she pro-

vides in her paper, then, is an alternative, an account of what she describes as a new 'contractualist' model of supervision, and she accordingly outlines a strategy for realising this in practice.

Leder's paper provides a useful map of the field, including in this a historical overview which begins the important task of situating the PhD in its institutional history, while also outlining the issues involved in what might be called the craft knowledge-in-practice of supervisors and supervision—'technical skills', in a quite specific sense, based partly on experience and partly in reviewing what other people have said about them. She points out that there is "remarkable consensus" among those who write about such matters, a point that is at some odds with prevailing informal beliefs about the specificity of each and every supervisor-supervisee relationship and with the 'heroic' model of postgraduate research and education more generally. From a different angle, the papers by Tony Shannon and Sue Johnston look to the enabling and constraining conditions associated with enhancing the quality of postgraduate supervision and the practice of research and teaching at this level. This too needs to be regarded as the proper province of *pedagogy*—in this case, relating to 'teaching the teachers', as it were.

The second group of papers address some of the emerging issues of the 'postmodern' university. These papers are addressed, beyond the immediacy of praxis, viewed in the first instance in terms of relationships between supervisors and students, to a consideration of the institutionalised conditions of possibility of that relationship. In this respect, the links back to Shannon's paper, in particular, are very clear. These papers lay out some ways of productive (re)thinking of the changing conditions of postgraduate education within the emerging 'new order' of higher education more generally. Marie Brennan's paper considers issues of professional doctorates, focusing in the first instance on the EdD, as the first and arguably the currently most developed of these new forms of research credentialling, and provides some important lessons for further developments in the fields of law, nursing and business, pointing to important issues of professionalism, new forms of research and pedagogy, and the prospect of challenging new partnerships with industry, bureaucracies and other agencies. Terry Evans similarly focuses on the emerging 'open universities', the increasing emphasis on distance education and open learning modes of operation, and the impact and significance of new technologies. Along the same lines, Peter Taylor points to the current privileging of technical and technological issues and rhetoric over educational perspectives and practices in university restructuring and reform. As he indicates, it is the 'teachers' themselves, the academics in the actual field, who are all too often last in line as points of authority and expertise when it comes to seeking advice about what's needed and what's possible. Another way of seeing this, perhaps, is in terms of the priority and privileging of policy over pedagogy.

Our final group of papers seeks to introduce into discussion and debate new theoretical perspectives, languages and initiatives, and offer distinctive and what might well appear to some as idiosyncratic and even 'monstrous' accounts of the matter at hand. That may, indeed, be their principal value: making unfamiliar or strange what seems at first glance something essentially familiar. That is, these papers draw on contemporary theorising to 'make strange' the present, in order to begin to provide a vocabulary for questioning the apparent naturalness and givenness of contemporary practices in postgraduate education. Although they arise more from the humanities side of the Academy than the sciences per se, this doesn't mean that they don't have relevance and implication for theorising and understanding postgraduate pedagogy more generally. At the very least, they raise issues that warrant consideration within the general research economy of the university. Drawing on contemporary feminist theorising of the human/technology interface and clearly referring back to previous papers on 'open learning' contexts and initiatives, Erica McWilliam and Patrick Palmer explore more closely issues raised for postgraduate pedagogy by the shift to 'open' pedagogical events, asking how might changes in communication systems be experienced by teachers and learners, and what might be the effects of the interface of corporeality

and technology at work in the teleconference, the vis-a-vis seminar, the e-mail network, the on-line delivery? They raise important albeit much neglected questions of the *body* and of embodiment in and for postgraduate pedagogy, and thus point to the ways in which, as feminist scholars and critics have argued, academic-intellectual work is characterised by unproblematised notions of 'mind' and rationality.

A curious feature of postgraduate research is a seemingly paradoxical relationship between, on the one hand, widespread dissatisfaction with the PhD experience and an intense and continuing attachment to existing structures and processes. A similar tension exists in the way in which the PhD functions as reproduction/production of (inter)disciplinary knowledge institutional contexts. This final group of papers begins to address some of these questions, and their implications for the very concept of 'research', and for rethinking pedagogy. Hence Bob Hodge writes of "the meticulous peripherality of research" in the course of presenting an avowedly provocative account of the different kinds of doctoral work characteristic of what he calls the 'New Humanities'. Our paper explores questions of pedagogy and disciplinarity in postgraduate contexts, with particular reference to higher-level research work, and seeks to provide ways of thinking more systematically about the nexus between knowledge and identity in higher-educational practice—a dimension arguably all too often lost or muted in accounts of university research and research training. Finally, Terry Threadgold reviews a recent publication from the Humanities Research Centre at ANU, addressed specifically to questions of 'graduate pedagogy' in the context of issues arising from the contemporary confluence of feminism and psychoanalysis. In so doing, she sounds a timely warning about the kinds of theory and theorising that a field such as this seems to attract. In various ways, her paper returns therefore to some of the concerns expressed in both Yeatman's and Leder's papers about the riskiness involved in the characteristically intense and complex relationship of supervisor and doctoral candidate, 'master' and 'apprentice', while reminding us that the question of gender remains crucial to understanding academic work, research practice and supervision, and university education more generally.

Our hope is that the volume as a whole contributes to the quality and rigour of discussion in this increasingly contentious area of postgraduate studies, education and pedagogy. There seems little doubt that universities are currently in a state of crisis, as befits the moment of intense change and complexity we are all living through. Much remains to be done, of course, and in that regard, this whole volume is best conceived as an initial gesture towards a practical and theoretical project that has now become both urgent and compelling.

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