

JOY HIGGS

1. RESEARCH TRAINING AND PUBLISHING

A Partnership Approach to Liberating Scholarship

Doctoral research programs have several core purposes. In many places these programs are labelled “research training” because it is through them that future researchers who are capable of independent and team research contributions are trained. Graduates from research programs enter a new realm of research participation that builds their performance capacity and that of the institutions, professional communities and societies that supported their training, and provide spaces for their postdoctoral research and work. Next, doctoral programs are places where research is performed with every expectation that significant benefits will be produced, particularly the addition of new knowledge to the field, and direct benefits to practice or recommendations for others to implement in practice. A key means to achieving many of these outcomes is the sharing of research findings. Researchers are accountable to those who fund, support and participate in research to publish and disseminate their findings.

This chapter focuses on the connection between doctoral training programs and building capacity for publishing. This can be viewed as the research candidate learning to be a scholar and learning how to publish as well as the research program embedding publishing of research findings within, and arising from, the doctoral research candidature. Scholarship (as capacity and research outcome) can be liberated through partnerships inherent in doctoral programs, including supervisor(s)/candidate interactions and peer collaborations among doctoral candidates. Scholarship is also a liberating process in that beyond publications being seen as records and artefacts of research, they are also conversations and negotiations among co-authors and critical friends. Further publications are launching points, through the review phase and after publication, for wider academic communities’ critique and discussion of the research and knowledge claims. Finally, publications are a means of liberating change in the knowledge and practice spaces they illuminate.

To illustrate these arguments, I have structured this chapter around two partnership approaches to liberating scholarship with doctoral students. During the past 30 years I have supervised to completion 40 postgraduate research students. Throughout this journey, I have evolved an approach to supervision that includes writing as a core ingredient (Higgs, 2006). This approach is built firstly on my own doctoral research (Higgs, 1989, 1993), which examined the partnerships that can be

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fostered between research students and their supervisors, and secondly on what I have learned from experiences, critical reflections, and conversations with my students and research supervision partners. This learning has resulted in the iterative development of a model of liberating program systems for research candidatures (see Higgs, 1999, 2011), that is presented below in relation to research candidatures and liberating scholarship.

The second liberating approach to scholarship involves the publication of books with current and recently graduated research candidates, both my own students and other early career researchers who are part of my working and academic networks. In the second part of the chapter, I explore the strategies adopted within this partnership and team building endeavour.

LIBERATING RESEARCH CANDIDATURES

The *liberating program system model* (Higgs, 1989) is based on four core arguments and theoretical perspectives:

- Postgraduate research students enter their research candidatures with different levels of readiness for the research challenges that await them, including publishing. Learners (in this case doctoral candidates who are early career researchers or emerging researchers) can have different capabilities across different tasks and situations within their doctoral research and publishing. I developed the term *learner task maturity* (Higgs, 1989) to refer to:

the learner or novice's capability and readiness at given times and situations to learn, grow and deal within the demands of their learning arena, such as research tasks and learning to do academic writing. This term recognises that novices not only have different abilities (in comparison to other novices) but also different abilities (within themselves) across different situations, and different levels of confidence with particular tasks and different context challenges.

- Roles like teaching, mentoring and supervision ideally involve flexible adjustment to the novice's ability and needs, both in general and in relation to specific tasks (and the learner's task maturity). This argument is built on situational leadership theory (see Hersey & Blanchard, 1993).
- Learning programs can be thought of as *open systems*. Coming from systems theory, the notion of open systems provides for interactive subsystems or agents working interactively to achieve collaborative goals. In research mentoring situations, this involves pursuing a co-management strategy between research mentor and novice. Ideally they co-manage the mentoring process through negotiation, communication and shared responsibilities. To be successful and liberating, the facilitated or co-managed system for research mentoring needs to be dynamic and individual, adapting to changing task demands, contingency factors, and the novice's changing perceptions and goals.

- Learning programs (like research training) that aim to build independence, confidence, and capabilities for future complex and unpredictable situations need to incorporate a range of approaches to help students learn under guidance as well as through self-direction. This requires a blend of teacher/mentor management and learner/novice management of learning situations. Achieving these goals requires a dialectic liberating system (Higgs, 1989) that blends *freedom* for the novice to explore and take risks with the *control* or structure provided by the mentor, and increasingly by the novice through the use of scaffolding methodological and conceptual frameworks.

Structure can be provided (by supervisors) and pursued (by students) in research training through contracting activities such as negotiating, advising and collaborating on the development of the student's research proposal. It involves planning schedules and timelines, and regularly reviewing and presenting the student's work for critique and feedback. The community of research practice, such as a group of supervisors, other researchers, visiting scholars and the students, also helps to scaffold the student's research by creating expectations, norms, shared language and research cultures. Such communities frequently share research paradigms (see Higgs, Trede, & Rothwell, 2007) and thus induct novices into the community through peripheral participation, moving to core participation, and from entry skills and knowledge to increasing levels of ability. Writing in ways that match the research strategy, and framing justifiable research questions and approaches are also valuable scaffolding strategies (Trede & Higgs, 2009).

Freedom can be facilitated and sought by allowing and pursuing risk-taking, by learning about the learner's capabilities and matching task demands and goals to these capabilities, by self-directed learning and reflection to consider what the student wants to achieve, and by seeking help when needed. Freedom as liberation of ideas and choice of strategies, even construction of new research strategies, is an important part of the "stretch" of students in research training programs. To become independent and to earn a doctoral award, a student needs to demonstrate that the thesis produced is the product of their work. Liberation is necessary to claim such achievements. Liberation of ideas, and the confidence that flows from such success and raised awareness, are inherent and vital to successful doctoral training. If we distinguish scholarship as academic writing and communication from the research process of producing knowledge, then scholarship is both a part of research and a means of communicating it. This book is the product of scholarship and research. This chapter provides a way of realising research and scholarship as training and achievement.

The *liberating program system model* presented here incorporates four broad approaches to mentoring (Higgs, 1989). These freedom-control blended approaches can be utilised to promote novice researchers' growing research and scholarship capability, and to respond flexibly to students' current learning and mentoring needs. The approaches are described below (with examples of how they can promote scholarship ability), then incorporated into the model in [Figure 1.1](#). Each approach has two titles, which reflect the perspectives of the mentor and the novice.

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Approach (a) Mentor-managed open-ended inquiry

Novice pursuit of guided risk-taking and experimentation

The situation: Learner task maturity (experience and capability) is low due to lack of experience/capability/familiarity with the task. The task has limited structure, is non-prescriptive, open-ended.

Mentoring style: Provide guidance but promote open-ended inquiry.

Novice response: Being liberated/encouraged to take risks, comfortable to be adventurous, feeling free to experiment. Pursuing multiple ideas and strategies without pressure to find a particular answer or reach imminent deadlines.

Writing example: Students are asked to bring a range of papers they enjoyed reading to discuss in group why they liked the writing style.

Approach (b) Mentor-managed structured challenge

Active novice pursuit of goals and quality

The situation: Learner task maturity (experience and capability) is low due to lack of experience/capability/familiarity with the difficult task.

Mentoring style: The mentor provides a clear framework to promote focus and structure, guides/assists with decision making and task framing, and encourages the novice to work independently within the boundaries/scaffold provided.

Novice response: The novice actively pursues the goals and is task-focused. The quality of the work is a particular, strong consideration. Limited risks are taken. Learners are “on-task”. Deadlines are important.

Writing example: Students asked to present their draft findings to other research students and supervisors in a student workshop. Mentor organised a master class on writing for publication.

Approach (c) Novice-managed organised challenge

Novice pursuit of focused inquiry and goal pursuit/attainment

The situation: Learner task maturity (experience and capability) is high due to greater experience/capability/familiarity and confidence with the task.

Mentoring style: Learners/novices are encouraged to identify and articulate the goals, structure and boundaries of their task, and then pursue the task independently of their mentor.

Novice response: Novices rise to the (high) challenge of the task within their clearly constructed framework and actively pursue focused inquiry and goal attainment. The focus is on search for meaning.

Writing example: Students as a team prepare a writing group where they share written drafts of papers for feedback by peers and invited academics.

Approach (d) Novice-managed open-ended inquiry

Novice pursuit of independent exploration and reflection

The situation: Learner task maturity (experience and capability) is high due to high degree of self-confidence and experience/capability/familiarity with the task. The task is non-prescriptive, open-ended and non-threatening without imminent deadlines.

Mentoring style: The mentor leaves the novice to set goals and construct boundaries independently.

Novice response: Novices pursue independent exploration and reflection in an open-ended and time-rich manner. They can adjust boundaries and timelines as they pursue deeper understanding and meaning making.

Writing example: Research students, after a number of writing experiences, aim to submit a paper to a high ranked international journal. They investigate journal options and relevance, seek critique before submission and learn to deal with peer review.

Looking at each of these approaches in relation to their position in the model (Figure 1.1), it can be seen that approaches (a) and (b) are advocated when the learner's task maturity (LTM) is low. Importantly, low LTM is not a phase that occurs only early in the candidature; later year candidates also encounter tasks (such as presentation at an international conference) that they have not encountered before, and they frequently benefit from extra mentoring and support. By comparison, approaches (c) and (d) can be adopted when LTM is high.

Approaches (b) and (c) occur in situations of high task demand and respond better to increased structure. Where the LTM is low, this structure is usefully provided by the mentor. Where the LTM is high, students can, and ideally, do, provide their own increased structure and focus; they are more goal-directed and less exploratory. When the demand of the research task is low, greater freedom (and less structure) is feasible and desirable. Approaches (a) and (d) are used in these circumstances, matching mentor management to low LTM and student management to high LTM.

The focus of this section on liberating research candidatures was on the research candidature as a place for training, which includes helping students to write for publication of their theses as well as papers and chapters. While different disciplines and professions have different cultural norms in relation to authorship

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of publications, and different countries and institutions range in their expectations concerning whether publication is required or optional during the candidature, some key points are relevant. First, writing is a learning process and a way of shaping research arguments. Students develop their theses by writing them, rather than having everything clear in their head and writing it down like transcribing a lecture after the research is finished. So, writing should be encouraged as a way of meaning making, not just an end (task). While theses are typically required of research candidates, journal papers or chapters that help the research argument develop or the student polish their academic writing ability clearly help both the process and outcome of the research candidature.

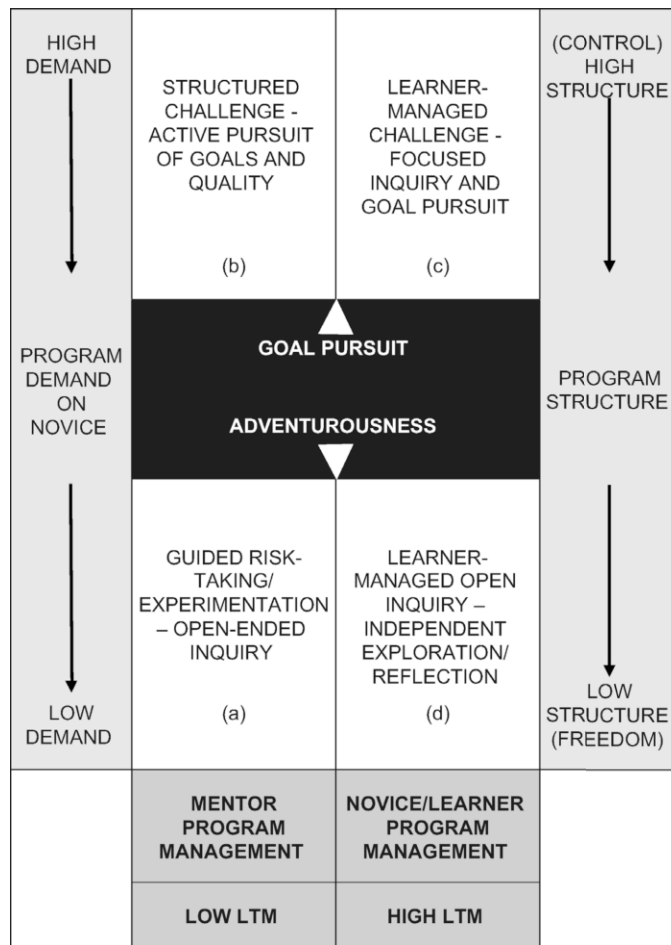


Figure 1.1. Model for liberating program systems

Second, writing for publication is an act of sharing intellectual property with the wider academic and practice communities. As such, a key element is to recognise, through attributed authorship, where shared endeavour has occurred in relation to ideas development and writing of the work. In my experience, this outcome is usually achieved by the research candidate being the first author and supervisors who have contributed to the paper being subsequent authors. In the preceding pages, there are many links to this idea of the candidature in general and writing linked to the candidature being a partnership. Writing partnerships involve overt, contextualised and empowered decision making.

BUILDING WRITING ABILITY AND WRITING TEAMS

A key aspect of the current research training era (such as with the Research Training Scheme for postgraduate research students in Australia) is that there has been a shift from PhDs involving individual students being supervised in isolation from other students to situations where teams of students and supervisors create a community of research practice. Apart from writing directly from the thesis during and after completion of the doctoral candidature, it is desirable to consider research and scholarship training and mentoring as an ongoing journey flowing into postdoctoral work, early career research phases and on to advanced performance, mentoring and leadership in scholarship. In this section I present three examples of strategies to foster the ongoing building of writing ability and teamwork: “join the book authorship team”, “writing up” and “writing retreats”. Each of these has dimensions of liberating scholarship and partnerships.

I am currently completing my thirty-third academic book. Of the over 400 authors who wrote chapters in these books, many were my doctoral students, doctoral graduates, junior staff members and researchers in my work teams, and research colleagues. Three book series are part of this book collection. In saying these things I am illustrating my belief in building teams and mentoring emerging researchers through inviting them to be part of scholarly projects. My two current series with Sense Publishers in the Netherlands are “Practice, Education, Work and Society” and “Higher Education Horizons”. This book is part of the second series.

Join the Book Authoring Team

One of the advantages of writing a book instead of a single journal paper is the creative process of producing the whole-of-book message and the capacity to draw a team together to produce a marketable product that people want to buy (see Higgs & Ajjawi, 2009). Book purchasers want to buy a work that is interesting or useful, which is why book planners (editors or authors) need to consider all of the following factors. The book will need a content scaffold, a large purpose and message, and an organisational framework. Within the book structure, the book editors also need to make choices about voices, messages and content they want to feature, and whether these will generate, critique or be directed by the overall theme. Another decision is whether this is a book written by highly experienced scholars and/or whether there is a place for emerging research, an opportunity for

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novices to grow into the demands of book writing and production, and a place for conversations involving practitioners and questioners as well as polished writing.

This book provides such an opportunity for inviting doctoral students nearing completion or recently completed to write about their theses and, at the same time, reflect on their theses experiences. Some of this is reported in the next chapter. Each voice and book chapter contributes to the book's overall message – the place of publication in doctoral research training.

An example of books produced by my teams is the third edition of *Clinical reasoning in the health professions* (Higgs et al., 2008). This international book featured leading researchers and authors in this field from around the world and spanned key health professions. On the face of it, this was a daunting book to draw doctoral students and recent graduates into. Their research was on the cutting edge of the field; it had something important to say, extending understanding of the phenomenon beyond the status quo. Their research candidatures had involved intensive training in writing their theses and publications, so they were ready to write at an advanced level. Their work had been presented for critical feedback at national and international conferences, so they had confidence that their research had merit and their research arguments/theses were strong and credible. As a result, they entered this strong international field of returning authors as valued and capable members of the team. Two of the editors were derived from the PhD contingent; one two years post graduation and the other about to submit. As well as joining the ranks of experienced authors, they admirably met the extra challenge of editing. The book provided an excellent opportunity for a liberating structure that featured a mentor-structured challenge while empowering the emerging scholars to co-create the writing targets and actively pursue the joint writing goals.

“Writing Up” and Sometimes Writing Out of Our Comfort Zone

In paper and chapter writing, there are times when liberation, in terms of helping emerging scholars rise to the next level of challenge, is just what is needed. Following their early scholarship *highs* (successful publications) and dealing with the *lows* (harsh critiques, rejections) of publishing, what is needed for these emerging scholars to take the next step? “Writing up” is one of the strategies that assists these people who are ready for the next challenge. It can take the form of pairing an emerging writer with a highly experienced writer. By co-authoring, the novice can learn from the expert. The expert typically benefits also. In the following example, Rola Ajjawi, who graduated in 2006, contributed significantly from her doctoral journey and writing, and also learned a great deal from writing with Angie Titchen, a very experienced author, to produce *Writing contemporary ontological and epistemological questions about practice* (Titchen & Ajjawi, 2010). Another example in this mentoring approach is to invite people who have not written together before and perhaps do not know each other to co-author. This can benefit the publication by having competing viewpoints brought together in dialogue or asking people from different disciplines to write about a topic from their different discipline backgrounds. A delightful example of this was when two

exceptionally creative and courageous writers met for the first time to write in a book about multiple perspectives on professional practice. Their writing synergies led them to produce an exquisite chapter called *Finding the fifth player: Artistry in professional practice* (Andresen & Fredericks, 2001).

Writing Retreats

Writing retreats can be magical, but require considerable work in orchestrating writing synergies and inspirations. For current and recent research students as well as supervisors and experienced scholars, they provide the opportunity for time out from regular work (preferably with phones and Internet turned off to avoid work interruptions) and opportunities for intense engagement with writing. This could be a mix of quiet writing time, collaborative writing (pairs and teams), think tanks, and debates to shape ideas and structure writing tasks (papers, chapters, books) or student thesis writing and training. An example of such retreats is as follows.

Two doctoral supervisors and eight doctoral students headed off for five days to a retreat venue in the New South Wales Southern Highlands. Well away from other people in a lovely bushland retreat, each student gave presentations on their thesis writing and research to the group and spent time writing their theses, sometimes in the shared lounge area or on a shady veranda, in the garden or a small open picnic building. The value for each person was immeasurable. They achieved epiphanies and quantum leaps in understanding, and overcame writers' block.

CELEBRATIONS AND CREATIVITY

Writing for publication can be very challenging. It can bring disappointments and angst. I end this chapter by encouraging writers and those who are mentoring emerging writers to take time to enjoy the creative process and to celebrate writing achievements. To learn more about this, I invite you to read our reflections on *Celebrating writing* (Grace et al., 2009) and to read how five inspired and inspiring graduates wrote about their doctoral journeys in: *Journeys from philosophy and theory to action and back again: Being critical and creative in research design and action* (Higgs, Trede, Ajjawi et al., 2007). In the end, we have liberated valuable writing, and liberated research and practice through taking on the challenges and opportunities presented by academic writing and writing partnerships.

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*Joy Higgs AM PFHEA PhD
The Education For Practice Institute
Charles Sturt University, Australia*