Practices & challenges in developing IHDR research(er) literacies

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This paper …

1. Identifies issues associated with the growth in UTS international student numbers
2. Outlines UTS IHDR support
3. Examines research at UTS as an ‘ecology of practices’ (Kemmis et al. 2014, p. 11)
4. Discusses how we plan to investigate (research) practices in situ
Growth in international research student numbers at UTS

UTS has seen considerable growth in doctoral students particularly since 2009. In particular the growth in international doctoral candidates as a percentage of overall numbers has grown significantly. UTS views this as positive development and KickStart@UTS is a specific initiative aimed at working with international HDR students in developing their research needs.
UTS response to ≥ numbers of IHDR students

- KickStart@UTS is intended to provide additional support for the increasing numbers of international HDR students at UTS
- KickStart@UTS is intended to improve UTS international HDR students’ research experience and research outcomes

Preparation for KickStart@UTS
- We conducted a Program Improvement Survey July 2014
- We collected data from 26 current students, 11 supervisors and six Doctoral Assessment (DA) presentations
In collaboration with faculties, UTS library, etc. Kickstart@UTS seeks to address:

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<th>Categories</th>
<th>Issues raised by students</th>
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<tr>
<td>Academic progress</td>
<td>Where to begin, what direction to go in, how to obtain guidance, find assistance with research related reading and practise speaking and writing</td>
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<td>Research culture and practices at UTS</td>
<td>How to find out what is required, what is going on; how to understand research at UTS</td>
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<td>Research skills</td>
<td>How to undertake research at UTS, how to conduct literature searches etc.</td>
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<td>Research communication</td>
<td>How to improve written and spoken communication skills</td>
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<td>Social and practical issues</td>
<td>How to reduce social and cultural isolation, how to network</td>
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Kemmis et al. describe how in their view, education is a complex interrelated ‘ecology of practices’ (2014, p. 11) that overlap, intersect and work with each other, particularly:

– student learning
– supervising
– professional learning
– leading and researching
Introducing ourselves to each other in groups and altogether

- Documenting your journeys
- What are your needs

- Journal
- UTS support
- Development
- Research(er) Literacies

KickStart@UTS (International students)

UTS support for the development of research(er) literacies

- Faculty end of thesis polishing/financial assistance for editing
- Faculty compulsory or optional writing subjects
- Faculty orientations

- Doctoral Study Plan
- Mentoring
- Researchers’ Cafe
- Supervisor workshops
- Winter and summer research literacy schools
- Writing workshops & Thesis Talk
- HDR Development program

Supervisor workshops

Researchers’ Cafe

Mentoring

Doctoral Study Plan

Winter and summer research literacy schools

Writing workshops & Thesis Talk

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One student’s experience

I just recently realised myself that my speaking ability is kind of slowing down, and I'm making more mistakes when I speak. Yeah, just because we don't have any classes, we don't interact with each other that well. We work with the computer and the [unclear] and writing, then we read what we write...
Meanwhile in Faculty A…

- Language (aware) supervisors
  - Develop language and metalanguage – use models and talk about language
  - Recognise that students can benefit from attending regular seminars, presentations, meetings

- Non-language (aware) supervisors
  - Might not know how or what to develop in IHDR students’ language

- Understand the need for students to be co-located with supervisors and other students – this facilitates talking (and writing)

- Might not recognise need for students to access spoken presentations, schedules of the faculty

- Might not recognise that students are isolated spatially (and linguistically) from others
#2. actual experience using a specific language is a stronger predictor of bilingual success than age
Defining research literacies as practices – doings, sayings and beings (Kemmis, 2009, p. 23)

Practices are not just what **individuals** do...

- They are ‘extra-individual’, i.e. collective
- They unfold in actions - words, discourses, interactions - ‘sayings’, ‘doings’ and ‘beings’ – embodied and enacted
- In physical and material space-time and
- In networks of relationships
How we intend to investigate the development of research literacies...

1. Examine learning arrangements - formal and informal
2. Analyse sayings, doings and beings as they unfold in situ with different faculties (disciplines) and with different supervisors
3. Examine the ‘practice ecologies’ (Kemmis et al. 2014) of faculties

4. Examine how all these set up different opportunities for action in developing practices
Summary

1. Viewing the growth in IHDR numbers as positive
2. Finding new ways to investigate the development of research literacies – through practice-based approaches
3. Building on others’ work (Lea & Street 2010; Barnacle & Mewburn 2010; Barnacle & Dall’Alba 2013; Kemmis et al. 2014; Green 2009 etc.)
4. Exploring the social and material ecology of doctoral learning practices at UTS
Our challenge is...

To examine the normative processes of doctoral education – how we emphasise skills, socialisation, identity-formation etc. as practices as they relate to IHDR students...

What are your thoughts?


