An Embedded Genre Based Writing Pedagogy for Early Stage Doctoral Students.

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Structured Abstract

Purpose

Writing is crucial to doctoral students. Increasing recognition of the importance and difficulty of doctoral writing has prompted a call for doctoral students to be better supported in developing writing skills and confidence and for writing to be taught within disciplines. We add to this call by presenting and evaluating an embedded genre-based writing pedagogy for doctoral students. We focus on early-stage doctoral researchers. Despite literature highlighting the importance of integrating doctoral students into scholarly practices from early stages of studies, there is a lack of writing research with these early-stage students.

Design/methodology/approach

We audio-recorded small group tutorials in the early stages of a professional doctorate and supplemented this data set with individual interviews with doctoral students. Data were analysed thematically.

Findings

In this paper we report on four main findings: how genre pedagogy (1) prompted students to revise their understandings of doctoral writing, (2) inspired students to express voice and stance, (3) helped students develop a conscious awareness of writing and (4) influenced (positively) students' identity formation and emotions.

Originality

While interest in doctoral writing has increased, there is little research about doctoral writing pedagogies for early-stage doctoral researchers. This paper also extends the literature on doctoral writing pedagogies by showing how a genre-based pedagogy helps early stage doctoral researchers understand doctoral writing and develop their own writing via analysis of genres within their disciplinary community.

Introduction

In this paper, we report on a project in a which a genre-based writing pedagogy was embedded within a Doctor of Education (EdD) programme in a planned and intentional way to help early-stage doctoral researchers develop an awareness of disciplinary writing.

Writing is crucial to doctoral students: it is a research activity (Kamler and Thomson, 2014) in which students engage in '*complex cognitive and social processes of knowledge construction'* (Sala-Bubaré *et al*., 2018: 328), and through which they achieve key milestones such as completion (Cotteral 2011; Roulston *et al*., 2016; Starke-Meyerring *et al*., 2014). Writing is also a demanding (Calle-Arango and Ávila Reyes, 2023), 'hard labour' (Kamler and Thomson, 2014: 16) identity process (Inouye and McAlpine, 2019) which enables students to join the academic community:

> *When doctoral researchers write they are producing themselves as a scholar. They write themselves into the institution* (Kamler and Thomson, 2014 p.17)

Writing can be a source of anxiety or fear for doctoral students (Baird *et al*., 2020; Cotterall, 2011; Holmes *et al*., 2018, P). Increasing recognition of the importance and difficulty of doctoral writing as well as students' desire for explicit writing instruction (Baird *et al*., 2020) has prompted a call for doctoral students to be better supported in developing writing skills and writing confidence (e.g. Ciampa and Wolfe, 2019; Roulston *et al*., 2016; Sala-Bubaré *et al*., 2018; Kamler and Thomson, 2014). In their recent review of literature on doctoral writing, Calle-Arango and Ávila Reyes (2023) conclude:

> *The evidence strongly suggests that institutionally promoted strategies and activities that address writing centrally and explicitly should be part of the doctoral curriculum* (p.143)

However, it is important to consider *how* to include writing in the doctoral curriculum. Scholars who are contributing to a growing body of work interested in interrogating and improving doctoral writing pedagogy (e.g. Cotterall 2011; Zeegers and Barron 2012; Danby and Lee 2012; Kamler and Thomson 2014) advise that doctoral pedagogies need to be planned and intentional, rather than ad hoc or accidental. In this article, we respond to this call by proposing and evaluating an embedded genre pedagogy for doctoral writing. To this we add a secondary contribution with our focus on early stage doctoral students. It is notable that in the wider literature on doctoral writing, there is little research into writing development for early-stage doctoral researchers. This gap is significant as the literature has highlighted the importance of integrating doctoral students into scholarly practices from the early stages of studies (Pyhältö and Keskinen, 2012; Mantai, 2017).

An embedded genre pedagogy

We adopt Kamler and Thomson's (2014) definition of pedagogy:

> … practice which encompasses the students, the teacher, the context, knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and assessment – and the ways these come together in identifiable patterns (page xi)

Sandri (2020) offers the useful metaphor of a pedagogy iceberg, with values, assumptions and a philosophy of teaching lying beneath the water line, forming an unseen foundation, with the educational approach (content framing, learning objectives, delivery structure) and the learning and teaching methods (activities, assessments, interactions) visible above.

The philosphy which underpins our pedagogy is that writing is a socially situated, disciplinary practice. Different disciplines have their own fundamental literacy practices, including specific forms and ways of writing (Lea and Street, 1988). To join a disciplinary 'discourse community' (Swales, 1990) writers, through a gradual process of socialisation, must understand and then produce these disciplinary literacy practices or common ways of communicating to achieve common goals (Swales, 1990). The situated, discipline-specific nature of academic writing means that it needs to be taught within the discipline and with disciplinary experts (Kamler and Thomson, 2006; Benzie *et al*., 2017; Murray, 2022). Students need to develop familiarity with the discipline's characteristic discourses, language, structures, values, epistemology, authorial intention, and audience expectations (McGrath *et al*. 2023) and position themselves in this disciplinary community through critical writing (Wallace and Wray 2011). This requirement problematises an approach common to many universities in which writing support is delivered outside the disciplinary context, segregated, and outsourced to peripheral provision such as study skills centres (McGrath *et al*. 2023; Starke-Meyerring *et al.* 2014). These 'idiosyncratic and ad hoc' (Wingate *et al.* 2011) extracurricular and generic practices are a result of problematic interpretations of writing as a universal skill which is mistakenly thought to be "acquired, possessed, and transferred unproblematically from one context to another" (Tuck, 2018, p. 8). This prevailing 'study skills' (Lea and Street, 1998) misconception of academic writing as unitary and applicable across different disciplines has led to teaching which is:

> atheoretical and arhetorical, uninformed by research, and located outside the disciplinary knowledge-making practices that shape and are shaped by research writing … these initiatives provide little opportunity for doctoral students to access any kind of dialogue about discipline-specific discourses and research writing practices, let alone to probe the

> normalized discourses that produce knowledge in their fields (Starke-Meyerring *et al*. 2014 p.24)

The fact that doctoral writing is often misunderstood and marginalized means that a defined pedagogical approach to writing is also lacking at institutional (e.g. curriculum) and individual (e.g. supervisor) levels (Cotterall 2011). To address this gap, we propose an embedded genre-based doctoral writing pedagogy underpinned by the belief that writing should be taught within the curriculum and by disciplinary experts:

> Knowledge and its expression cannot be disaggregated; they are mutually dependent and need to be taught concurrently within the curriculum (Murray, 2022 p. 1057)

Aligned to a disciplinary, socially situated view of writing is genre theory (Swales, 1990; Tardy, 2009) which rests on the premise that academic writing expertise involves learning to communicate via genres within a disciplinary community (Negretti, 2012; Johns, 2008; Tardy, 2009). Genres, e.g. a doctoral thesis, are conventionalised social and ideological practices which have evolved over time withing disciplines:

> individuals inherit genres such as the thesis - including a particular range of expectations of what a thesis can or must look and sound like - from previous generations and become gradually socialized into participating in them and reproducing them (Starke-Meyerring *et al*., 2014 p.15)

We adopted a genre-based pedagogy (Swales, 1990) which involved guided analysis of selected disciplinary texts aimed at raising students' awareness of the textual and rhetorical features of genres – the educational approach and teaching methods of Sandri's (2020) pedagogy iceberg. Central to genre pedagogy are tasks (Swales, 1990; Swales and Feak, 2023; Tardy 2009):

> … a set of distinct, sequenced, goal-directed activities aimed at rhetorical consciousness raising, the acquisition of genre skills, and meaning-making and preparation for an anticipated or emerging socio-rhetorical writing situation (Swales and Feak, 2023: 10)

We designed tasks for module teaching sessions and tutorials (see Appendices 2 and 3) which prompted early-stage doctoral students to recognise and discuss the conventions and features of disciplinary genres they were required to write (e.g. research proposal, literature review) in a process of genre awareness (Johns 2015). As well as helping them recognise and describe

conventional features ('rhetorical consciousness raising', in Swales and Feak's (2023) terms), tasks also aimed to help students see that genres can be flexible and complex (Badenhorst, 2018). Genres are '*living products of contexts, text assemblages, and circumstances, as well as writer and audience purposes*' (Johns 2015 p.116) and therefore have potential for creativity, variation, and even deviation (Tardy, 2016; Negretti and McGrath, 2020). Analysis was accompanied by reflection and discussion to further develop disciplinary literacy. Importantly, our genre pedagogy also aimed to prompt action or enactment i.e. 'the translation of ideas into the practices and products of doctoral work' (Danby and Lee 2012 p.21), in our case writing practices and products such as module tasks, formative assessments and assignments. Writing was included in module teaching sessions and taught by an EdD tutor i.e. a disciplinary expert.

In order to extend research into doctoral writing pedagogy and to address the neglect of early stage doctoral students in doctoral writing research, we answer the following question:

> Does an embedded genre pedagogy help early stage doctoral researchers develop their writing?

Methodology

Context

This paper reports on a study carried out on an EdD programme at a UK university. The study involved doctoral researchers from one cohort (n=10) in their first year of study. The EdD programme is part time with participants studying a minimum of four and maximum of seven years, and typically recruits HE lecturers from education and health science disciplines, and staff from education establishments in the local area (e.g. teachers, further education lecturers). A cohort of 10-20 students start every two years and the programme is divided into two main stages. The first two-year stage consists of four modules designed to help students develop knowledge and research skills through activities related to individual research proposals. Module foci are (1) situating students' research proposal within a critical examination of policy; (2) literature review; (3) methods and methodology; (4) data analysis. Each module has approximately 12 teaching sessions and two tutorials designed to create spaces for discussion and meaning making. Before each tutorial, short tasks and suggested discussion prompts are provided by the module leader and the cohort is divided into two smaller tutorial groups. Writing support was embedded in the four modules of the programme via taught sessions with analysis tasks, and tutorial tasks and discussions (see Table 1 for more detail). At the end of each module, students write a 6,000-7,000 word assessment. In this paper we report on genre-based writing activities in the first two modules (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: EdD Modules 1 and 2

Module title	Writing-focused teaching sessions (see Appendix 3 for a summary of session tasks)	Tutorial Task Focus (see Appendix 2 for details)	Module Assignment Focus (see Appendix 1 for details)
1. Developing your research focus	Flow and cohesion	Tutorial 1: Engagement with policy / Positionality Tutorial 2: Discussion of example assignments: writing and research questions	Identify a practice or professional issue and explore this through a critical analysis of broader education policy debates
2. Developing the literature review	Voice and stance	Tutorial 1: Voice Tutorial 2: Research question development / methodologies in reviewed studies / voice in your literature review	Conduct a focused and critical review of relevant literature and develop arguments to justify research focus

Source: Authors

Data Collection

The data presented in this paper comes from a study investigating the role of tutorials in developing doctoral researcher identities with EdD students in their first year of study (see Authors, 2023). With the same cohort of EdD students we also embedded a genre pedagogy approach to writing in response to student feedback from previous EdD cohorts about the difficulties they faced with writing. An unexpected result of the research study was that writing emerged as one of the prominent themes during data analysis.

For the research project, tutorials from the first two modules were audio recorded. All students in the cohort consented to be part of the study in the first module. We also conducted interviews with nine students after the end of Module 1 which were audio recorded. Although all ten of the cohort consented to be part of the study, we were unable to schedule an interview with one student. At the beginning of module 2, only five of the students elected to remain in the study so we divided the students into two groups accordingly and recorded only the group who had consented to remain (see Table 2 below). All recordings were transcribed.

Table 2: Tutorial Recordings

Module 1	Tutorial 1 Group 1 (n=5; 60 mins) Group 2 (n=5; 88 mins) Tutorial 2 Group 1 (n=5; 78 mins) Group 2 (n=5; 61 mins)
Module 2	Tutorial 1 Group 1 (n=5; 58 mins) Tutorial 2 Group 1 (n=5; 56 mins)

Source: Authors

Data analysis

We analysed data thematically using an adaption of Braun and Clarke's (2021) reflexive thematic analysis. We started by familiarising ourselves with the data, carrying out an iterative process of listening to recordings, checking transcripts, and making notes. We then carried out initial coding on a subset of the data (the Module 1 tutorials and four interviews), taking an interpretive approach in which we compared and discussed codes to establish an interim coding framework. For the second round of coding, we used the full data set (six tutorials and nine interviews) and we were joined by a research assistant. We all carried out independent coding using the interim coding framework as a basis and then met to compare, explain, interrogate and justify codes, adapting them in an iterative process before agreeing final codes. Each researcher then developed themes independently, following steps identified by Braun and Clarke (2021). We held a series of iterative meetings to compare and discuss themes and finally agreed the following:

- Talk matters
- Imagined future identities
- Forging your own way
- Connecting with other researchers
- Becoming an informed critic
- Interplay of writing and self

We have reported on the first five themes in two papers, the first of which focuses on the role of tutorial talk in developing doctoral researcher identities (Authors, 2023) and second on the role of dialogic activities in fostering community and belonging (Authors, in review). This paper focuses on the somewhat unexpected 'Interplay of writing and self' theme which had the following codes:

1. Shifting views of doctoral writing
2. Example assignments
3. Voice/Stance/Writing yourself in
4. Writing as a process
5. Writing as a means of helping thinking/understanding
6. Talking about writing

We have grouped and explicated these codes to answer the question posed at the beginning of this paper: *Does an embedded genre pedagogy help early stage doctoral researchers develop their writing?* This question was not part of the original research plan but as students talked about writing in the tutorials and interviews, the analysis has allowed us to evaluate our genre-based approach. Codes are grouped according to four answers to this question: students revised their understandings of doctoral writing (codes 1 and 2); students appreciated voice and stance (code 3); students developed a conscious awareness of writing (codes 4, 5, 6) and students' experienced identity formation and emotions (all codes).

Ethics

The project received ethical approval from the research site institution. From the beginning of the project we attended to potential risks to participants e.g. the possible disadvantaging of students who decide not to take part in the project, and threat to anonymity. We were careful only to record tutorials if all participants had given consent and to reiterate consent at the beginning of each tutorial before recording. We sent interview transcripts to participants and offered to redact any sections if participants wished (one participant took up this offer). We were also cognisant of our multiple roles. Author 2 was the EdD course leader at the time of data collection, and Author 1 led Module 2. Author 1 taught the two writing sessions and both authors led tutorials. There were two other tutors teaching on the programme who also led tutorials. Interviews were conducted by the four programme tutors, including both authors. We recognise that the intersection of tutor/researcher roles may have influenced students' interview responses and made them reluctant to be critical of the programme and tutorials. However, we believe that our pre-existing relationships with the interviewees gave us a useful depth of knowledge of them, their work and study contexts, and institutional processes and structures. The students were already used to talking to us about their studies, their problems, and their ongoing development and learning in teaching sessions and tutorials. Our knowledge and relationship meant students were very honest during interviews and often talked about confidential, sensitive information they would perhaps not have revealed to an unknown researcher. As researchers we have achieved some distance by looking

objectively at and discussing our data with our research assistant who was employed in the analysis stage.

Findings

In this paper we report on four main findings: how genre pedagogy (1) prompted students to revise their understandings of doctoral writing, (2) inspired students to find their voice and stance (3) helped students develop a conscious awareness of writing and (4) influenced (positively) students' identity formation and emotions.

Revising understandings of writing

Students brought preconceptions about doctoral writing to the EdD course and described how the genre analysis tasks adjusted their thinking and revised their understanding of writing. The most common preconception was that doctoral writing had to be 'clever' and 'difficult to understand'. One of the students, Eva, explains this:

> I thought we had to write in a way where people struggle to read your work, where you have to maybe read something three or four times … so when I started that was the assumption that I made, that I'd have to completely change my writing style and that's what worried me because I've been writing for a number of years, you find your own style and then all of a sudden someone's saying 'right, that's not how you do it, you now need to change', it would've been an additional hurdle to come over while you're a researcher (Eva, Interview)

Eva's preconception included a belief that there was a stipulated and accepted correct way to do doctoral writing which was different to the way she currently wrote. It is interesting that she imagined an authoritative figure policing this and telling her 'that's not how you do it'. Eva identified the flow session analysis tasks (see Appendix 3) as contributing to her revised thinking and adds that this gave her confidence, as she recognised flow and cohesion in her own writing and therefore her own skill and capabilities:

> I remember sitting in one of the sessions about academic writing and how to structure a paragraph, and I thought oh I've got this, this is how I write so that increased my confidence, because before that session I thought have I got the capabilities to write at a doctoral level, am I expected to write like I'm writing an article and, you know, they're very well structured. So having that session increased my confidence and then I started writing my assessment and I was good with that, I got good feedback (Eva Interview)

This process of shifting preconceptions was mirrored by Gwen who identified the session on flow and analysing example EdD assignments as the prompts which changed her thinking:

> I can tell you when [my understanding of doctoral writing] began to change and that was when we were shown the example essays. That really shifted my understanding. When we read the example essays, it shed further light on what [tutor] had said during [the session on flow], which was that it's not about the complexity of your writing, it's not about who uses the longest words or makes things deliberately opaque almost because they want to sound clever, it's actually the opposite. So I tried to apply that to my writing. And it was a bit of a nerve-wracking experience, if I'm honest, because I had been of the school of thought that I've got to sound clever and it felt risky almost, to deconstruct that a bit. (Gwen, Interview)

Like Eva, Gwen's shift in understanding started from the linguistic awareness gained through examining theme/rheme patterns in two journal articles in the session on flow and the ensuing discussion about clarity and cohesion. This awareness was then exemplified and strengthened when Gwen read the example assignments. Like Eva, Gwen also describes transferring this realisation into her own writing, a process which for her was 'nerve-wracking' and 'risky'. The rhetorical consciousness gained through these tasks led Gwen and Eva to a 'new place' (Swales and Feak, 2023) which they could then apply to their own writing (the Module 1 assignment), closing the important loop of action/enactment.

Part of the challenge to the 'clever and difficult' preconception was students' recognition that there is no single doctoral style of writing but that different styles can be accommodated within their discipline. We deliberately chose example assignments that had different writing styles but which had all achieved the assessment criteria, and this difference prompted much discussion during tutorials. For example, Dan and Eva describe feeling reassured and relieved as they recognised differences:

Dan I found it quite reassuring, I have to say, looking at them, because they're all written quite differently, stylistically, aren't they, I always struggle with, you know, what's the writing style supposed to be like and worry whether I've taken the right approach to things or not. So I found that quite reassuring.

Eva I sighed in relief because I thought 'ah thank god for that', because I write like [Example 1] does! So it made me feel a lot better and I've written, I've put it right at the top of my page highlighted top of my notepad on here, I've written 'my work is personal to me' and that gave me that additional confidence to carry on finishing that first assessment

(Tutorial Extract: M1,T2,G1)

Like Dan and Eva, Tess also realised that doctoral writing was achievable:

> Reading those essays made me think well maybe it's not so far away from what I can produce. I was thinking that I had to write something a lot more complex or a lot more difficult to achieve for somebody of my research experience, so that was very good for building my own confidence (Tess, Interview)

Tess summarises the students' shifting preconception, moving from a belief that doctoral writing is complex, difficult and beyond their reach to a realisation that what is needed is 'not so far away from what I can produce' which engendered reassurance and confidence.

Writing yourself in: Voice and Stance

The second main finding is that the genre pedagogy tasks inspired students to consider disciplinary use of voice and stance. Voice and stance refer to the ways writers express an attitude or point of view in relation to texts, readers and content (Hyland and Guinda, 2012). While writers anticipate their readers' views, expectations and responses, readers recognise the writer through voice and stance. Voice is important:

> This socially inscribed dimension of voice is crucial in academic discourse, where the written text as shared practice moves careers and sanctions what knowledge will be legitimated (Silver, 2012 p. 203)

Significantly, voice and stance differ between disciplines and being aware of how they work in a particular discipline can illuminate how knowledge is created and disseminated and how beliefs are justified.

Dan described how he previously believed that writing had to be 'neutral' with everything supported by literature:

> I always assumed I'd have to write very neutrally, but it seems that I don't, so that's OK as long as you do it in a certain way. So that's been a bit of a revelation in a way and actually made it easier I think because you don't feel like you're trying to, not justify every little thing you say but at least it's OK to acknowledge that you have a point of view, that you can take a view and that's OK. So, yeah, that's helped me for sure. (Dan, Interview)

For Dan, the recognition that he could express his own opinion helped him and made writing easier. For Mya, the same realisation happened after the taught session in on voice:

> I found it really useful as well, that [session on voice] it just suddenly went 'ahhh', you know, and I think I probably was a bit scared of my own voice actually, but I think that's coming. (Mya, Interview)

In a later tutorial discussion, Mya elaborated on the process of moving from being 'scared of her own voice' which she believed made her writing weaker ('probably quite stilted') to 'I think it's coming':

Mya I just felt like I you know, it's that thing of who am I to be saying anything really! And so feeling like I'm having to constantly drop in a reference all the time to sort of justify whatever I've said and actually, yeah, I'm realising that, you know, as long as you've – you need to have done the reading – but there needs to be that coherent argument that you're developing and then as you're doing that, you're kind of interweaving your own ideas and thoughts, but I was kind of, like, it was probably quite stilted what I was writing, because it was reference here, reference there. And I just, yeah, I needed to kind of draw connections really, which I don't think I was doing as well as I should have been (Tutorial Extract: M2 T2)

Mya's hesitation is tied to identity - 'who am I to be saying anything' - but we can see in this extract a move towards confidence to 'interweave your own ideas and thoughts' and 'draw connections' i.e. express her own voice. In addition to the taught session, the example assignments once again played a role in reinforcing the importance of voice and stance:

Gwen One of the other things I found really, really helpful in reading [the example assignments] was – potentially it's a confidence thing I think probably – but when I was reading them you got a really strong sense of who the writer is and a really clear idea of what their position was – and I don't just mean the positionality, I mean their sort of position in their research, their pursuit of what their argument was. And I found that really interesting and really helpful and I think that that's something that, for me, really stood out because I think in my own writing I've tended to stand back and, kind of, present other people's work because of course we need to do that loads, but actually it sort of highlighted this is my project and this is what my focus needs to be and the strand of interest is actually mine and it's OK and required to talk about our own reflections in a sort of measured and contained way. I found that really encouraging and also a bit scary. (Tutorial Extract: M2 T2)

Gwen recognised voice and stance in others' writing and was able to contrast this with her own writing, leading her to realise that she 'tended to stand back' and needed a stronger voice, a realisation that was both 'encouraging' and 'scary'. Gwen went on to describe how she applied this realisation to her writing:

Gwen I think [writing] still is a cerebral process but I think it's more personal than I had been making it. So I'm very glad I've done that because I think it's helped me to engage as a researcher, it's helped me to bring [Gwen], if you like, to the process, as opposed to being an outsider looking in. (Tutorial Extract: M2 T2)

In response, Lily also described consciously considering her own voice:

Lily Yes in my writing I'm trying to think about what I write not just summarising what everybody else thought but putting my voice in there as well. (Tutorial Extract: M2 T2)

Gwen also talked about carrying this learning into her teaching:

> It was an epiphany moment maybe, or certainly a lightbulb moment for me, where I hadn't really acknowledged the importance of my own voice. I've been thinking about this more recently in terms of my own teaching … it's something I've been mulling over because I would like potentially to work out if there's a way that we can bring in more of the student voice in some of the undergrad work (Gwen, Interview)

Conscious awareness of writing

The third main finding is that genre tasks prompted much discussion and thinking about writing which resulted in students developing a conscious awareness of writing processes and strategies. Lily described how guided analysis in the flow session combined with reading a recommended text raised her awareness of writing, a process she links with positive emotions ('I absolutely loved it; that was fabulous'). She also describes talking and thinking about writing:

> I have been thinking a lot of academic writing. Starting with [tutor]'s session on flow which I absolutely loved. It was amazing and then I went and read 'Detox your Writing' and thought that was fabulous. Then I had a load of conversations about academic writing and improving your writing and I've been spending a lot of time thinking about how to improve my writing. I think my writing is OK but I'm aware that we're now at [doctoral level] and what is [doctoral level] writing, so I've been thinking a lot about that and whenever I speak to [supervisor name], I'm thinking a lot about what it means to be at doctoral level about what makes good writing. (Lily, Interview)

This thinking and discussing transferred into action:

> I push myself and try to be a little bit more brave in my style and I think about what I'm writing for other people. I've never really done that before. I've never been able to think about good narrative or what makes good writing is about flow and it's really got me thinking about my writing. (Lily, Interview)

As well as considering her audience ('I think about what I'm writing for other people') and using her knowledge of flow and cohesion, she also pushed herself and tried to be 'brave' in her style. Students described how awareness raised through the genre pedagogy tasks prompted metacognotive awareness of writing processes. For example, Lily described a new way of starting writing:

Lily I think it is quite liberating because you do feel like you can just get everything out on a piece of paper and then I'll worry about the technicalities of it afterwards, whereas maybe

> when I was writing my Masters I was thinking OK every sentence has to be beautiful and every sentence has to be – now I'm just like right just get everything down and then I'll concentrate on how everything works afterwards. But I think it's been great. (Tutorial Extract: M2, T2)

Lily was positive about her new writing strategy: '*liberating'* '*I think it's great'*. In response to Lily, Mya described a similar process and positive feelings (''I enjoy the process'):

Mya I'm finding the editing stage taking a lot longer than I thought it would be. And I kind of had this sort of romantic idea that I would start to write and yes it wouldn't be perfect but when I go back it would just be quite a sort of easy process. And like Lily actually, I really do – although it takes time and I think it's really been helpful - I enjoy the process, I have to say I enjoy it, which is good because it takes me a long time to get it how I want it to be. (Tutorial Extract: M2, T2)

Tess also described a similar process but added a layer of analytic thinking as she applied the knowledge of flow gained from the taught session to her writing:

> I think these sessions have been really helpful because you feel like it's OK to just get everything out on the page and if you do get stuck OK then I'll sit and analyse it and I'll use all these techniques and try and figure out why does that sentence not work and the amount of times when I was writing my first assignment for module 1 and I would sit and think about OK how do I link these two sentences together and what does my first paragraph need to look like and the editing of it was actually really enjoyable because I was just literally sitting and going through those processes (Tess, Interview)

Fay and Ivy also describe applying new knowledge about flow and cohesion to their writing:

> [Tutor]'s session around flow, I've always read so much and … I feel like I've got quite a keen eye for what's good writing or a style so when [Tutor] spoke about that it was really interesting because I thought oh here we actually have almost like a linguistics theory which is actually explaining that there is actually a linking of ideas between one paragraph and another and how that supports the reader, so I found that really fascinating so that personally helped me to go back and look over my work in that way (Fay Interview)

> I've spent a bit of time trying to get the flow and what [tutor 1] did with us about having the connections between the bits and I've gone back through it to try and make sure it's all linking (Ivy Interview)

Tess also transferred her new knowledge into her teaching, as she told the tutor who taught the session on flow:

Tess You might find it quite amusing but in the Masters, I've really kind of made quite a big thing of it actually – and shared some examples that I thought really showed [flow] really nicely (Tutorial Extract: M2, T2)

Identity and emotion

Identity permeates these results. As students learn that doctoral writing is not something distant, complex and difficult to achieve, but rather something 'not too far away', they develop a sense of confidence as doctoral writers. As they realise the importance of voice and stance and move from a tendency to 'stand back' and remain an 'outsider looking in' to having the realisation and confidence to express voice and stance, students develop an authoritative writer identity. They describe the enjoyment of writing, of thinking, talking and learning about writing, and they consciously adopt new techniques and develop their skill and knowledge. Thus they start to view themselves as writers. This process of developing a doctoral writer identity is summarised by Fay:

Fay When I began this doctorate, we talked about academics and I thought I'm going to become an academic, that could be one of the sort of outcomes of it, work academically and a researcher, so sort of different identities. I hadn't thought that I might become a writer, a better writer and I love that because I … adore reading, you know, a life without reading for me is no life and to think that I could - obviously it's a different field to people who write novels but I think I might be sort of within that – it feels – I'm really surprised by that and that it's a really nice surprise – I just hadn't anticipated it and that's great. (Tutorial Extract: M2 T2)

Emotions are provoked by writing, as evidenced in this ('I love that') and other extracts in this section. Students feel confident, reassured, and relieved as preconceptions are revised, and they find learning and applying learning enjoyable but also risky, scary and nerve-wracking.

Discussion

The findings in the previous section indicate that an embedded genre pedagogy helps early stage doctoral researchers develop their writing. The genre pedagogy tasks help students revise preconceptions about doctoral writing and feel more confident that it is achievable. Genre analysis tasks help students realise that within their discipline, voice and stance are important. This is then translated into practice as students develop an authorial self (Ivanič, 1998) as they start to make claims and position themselves as experts and credible knowers. Genre analysis tasks and discussion help students develop a conscious awareness of writing and ways of talking about writing. Students report that this awareness influenced the way they wrote and helped them develop writing processes and strategies. The genre-based writing pedagogy also helps students build a writer identity as they better understand disciplinary writing practices and expectations and develop a sense of expertise and confidence in their writing. Although the doctoral writing literature describes students experiencing anxiety and fear about writing (e.g. Baird *et al*., 2020; Cotterall, 2011; Holmes

et al., 2018), the raised awareness of writing and the opportunities to think and talk about writing engendered by the genre pedagogy tasks inspire mostly positive emotions for the students in this study e.g. enjoyment, confidence, reassurance, relief.

The results in the previous section confirm appeals from the literature for doctoral students to receive explicit writing instruction and support (Baird *et al*., 2020; Roulston *et al*., 2016; Sala-Bubaré *et al*., 2018; Kamler and Thomson, 2014). However, the results also indicate that writing support should be planned and intentional (Kamler and Thomson, 2014), situated within the discipline and with disciplinary experts (Benzie *et al*., 2017; Murray, 2020) and, crucially, embedded in the curriculum (Calle-Arango and Ávila Reyes 2023). Danby and Lee (2012) contend that little is known about how the pedagogical work of doctoral programmes is designed and enacted. In this paper we make visible our design which centres around tasks, a fundamental feature of genre pedagogy (Swales, 1990; Swales and Feak, 2023; Tardy 2009). Swales and Feak (2023) present a taxonomy of features of well-designed writing tasks:

Tasks are

- sensitive to content, providing students with something interesting to work with
- 'relatable' in that they align with writing required in actual academic communicative situations
- lead students to a 'new place' by enhancing linguistic awareness and/or 'raising rhetorical consciousness' and/or helping students to see choices that can be made, leading to autonomy
- engage students by promoting analytical thinking and/or providing opportunities to make meaning

The results in the previous section show our tasks to be relevant and, by prompting thought and discussion (as well as positive emotions), interesting and enjoyable for students. Tasks are relatable as they are aligned with module assignments and anticipate future writing e.g. the thesis. Tasks develop both linguistic awareness (e.g. flow, cohesion) and rhetorical consciousness (e.g. challenge preconceptions, help students appreciate the variation allowed within their discipline). Finally, tasks engage students by prompting analytical thinking (e.g. analysing their own writing for cohesion, evaluating and changing their writing processes) and providing opportunities to make meaning (e.g. recognising the role of voice, stance and an authorial identity).

Returning to Danby and Lee's (2012) second concept of enactment, we have touched on how students reported that a genre-based pedagogy influenced their writing. Even though these students were at an early stage in their doctorate, they talked about how they translated learning into their

writing. Students talked about striving for clarity rather than complexity, developing confidence in their own style, expressing voice and stance, developing different writing processes, and revising drafts according to flow and cohesion. Somewhat unexpectedly, learning was also enacted in students' teaching.

Conclusion and recommendations

While there is much consensus in the doctoral literature about the importance of writing instruction, there is less research into practical ways of doing this i.e. pedagogy. There is also a lack of research examining writing development for early-stage doctoral researchers. This paper contributes towards filling these gaps by showing how an embedded genre-based pedagogy helps early stage doctoral researchers understand doctoral writing and develop their own writing. We join scholars calling for doctoral programmes to include a planned, intentional writing pedagogy (e.g. Zeegers and Barron 2012; Kamler and Thomson 2014; Cotteral, 2011; Danby and Lee 2012). We argue that a genre-based writing pedagogy is particularly suitable for doctoral students as it focuses on developing writing expertise via analysis of genres within the disciplinary community. We argue that writing support should be embedded in the curriculum and delivered by disciplinary experts who can help students become familiar with the discipline's characteristic discourses, language, structures, values, epistemology, authorial intention, and audience expectations (McGrath *et al*. 2023).

We recognise the limitations of our study. The most obvious limitation is that student writing is not included. As the original study was not focused on writing we did not collect or analyse any student writing. In addition, our participant number is small (n=10) and all are studying within the discipline of education. Our study is also limited to one course (EdD), in one university, with a time limit of one year. Nevertheless, we believe the results detailed in this paper present a convincing case for a genre-based writing pedagogy. Further research is recommended e.g. examining writing to see if there is any evidence of taught aspects such as flow, cohestion, voice and stance, as well as widening the focus to students in different disciplines and on different types of programmes (e.g. more 'traditional' PhD courses). A longitudinal study which extends beyond the first year of study would also be a fruitful avenue to explore.

The results of this study have implications for practice. One important recommendation concerns the development of supervisors' commitment and capacity to support students' writing. Many doctoral supervisors and tutors are not academic writing specialists and their disciplinary writing knowledge is often tacit (McGrath et al., 2019). If tacit, it is likely that supervisors and tutors will be unable to communicate this knowledge to others. Thus, an important part of developing doctoral

writing pedagogy is providing supervisors and tutors with professional development activities to help them, firstly, transform writing knowledge from tacit to explicit and, secondly, communicate this knowledge to students.

Our paper adds to a growing call to further explore doctoral writing pedagogies, while suggesting that a genre-based approach is particularly relevant to doctoral students. We also highlight the importance of developing doctoral students' writing practices and confidence in the early stages of study.

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Appendices (Source: Authors own work)

Appendix 1 Module Assessments

Module 1 Assessment
Building on your research proposal, you will identify a practice or professional issue and explore this through a 6000-7000 word critical analysis of broader education policy debates. Your discussion will be informed by current research, theoretical perspectives and drivers of education policy. You will make reference to ethical, historical and global factors which impact on your professional context. Contextualise this issue through a critical reflection on your own professional biography and values. Place a particular focus on your current practice context, informed by theoretical perspectives on reflection and professionalism. Your paper will culminate in the (re)framing of the research question(s) which you intend to explore further.

The threshold assessment criteria for this module are:

- identify a practice or professional issue that can be informed by research; demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate current education policy related to this issue, situating it in the context of key principles and ideological positions informing policy
- demonstrate a sound understanding of the way historical, ethical and global factors shape education policy in your professional context
- critically reflect on your position and values in relation to your professional practice, the context in which it takes place and the proposed research
- identify and refine appropriate research questions
- demonstrate the development of standards of oral and written presentation necessary to present complex analysis and argument to peers in professional and academic domains.

Module 2 Assignment
You will conduct a focused and critical review of relevant literature and develop arguments to justify your research focus (6000-7000 words).

The threshold assessment criteria for this module are:

- Critically review relevant literature in order to substantiate an argument for the proposed doctoral thesis and to inform the analysis of planned, focused research.
- Develop structured and critical perspectives on the current state of knowledge in relation to selected aspects of policy and practice in professional educational contexts.
- Synthesise the arguments and ideas from relevant literature in a manner that displays critical analysis of a chosen topic and/or a specified problem in a professional context in order to frame and justify research questions.

Appendix 2: Tutorial Tasks
Module 1 Tutorials
Tutorial 1
In preparation for the tutorial, please read/revisit Emery, C. (2014) Promoting researcher well-being: Emerging and changing identities (chapter 7) in Gunter, H., Hall, D. & Mills, C. *Education policy research: Design and practice at a time of rapid reform*. London, Bloomsbury.

Discussion points:

- How are you planning/beginning to engage critically with policy in your writing?
- One of the threshold assessment criteria for the module asks you to 'critically reflect on your position and values in relation to your professional practice, the context in which it takes place and the proposed research'. What do you understand by this?

Tutorial 2
Read at least two of the assignments from cohort XX

Discussion points:

- What questions do these assignments and/or feedback on your own writing raise for you?
- How is your engagement with the module supporting you to refine your research focus and questions?

Module 2 Tutorials

Tutorial 1

Before the tutorial, **c**hoose a section/sections of your Module One assignment which focuses on reviewing literature. Answer these questions:

- Whose voice is more dominant? Yours or the writers you are citing?
- Why do you think this is the case?
- Is there a balance between your voice and the authors you cite?

If your voice has disappeared, can you re-write the section(s) to assert your voice more strongly? Or, conversely, if your own views dominate, can you use additional citations as support?
Bring your original and re-written sections to the tutorial. You might like to draw on the ways of using voice we talked about in the sessions on voice, stance and engagement and citations. A helpful resource is Chapter 9 of Diana Ridley's book: Ridley, D. 2012. *The Literature Review*. London: Sage

Tutorial 2

For tutorial 2, can you think about and be prepared to talk about these questions:

- The journey of your research questions: Have they changed as a result of the literature review? Have they changed for other reasons? Or are they still the same?
- Review of empirical studies: What methodologies did they use? Does this give you an initial idea of any possible methodologies you might use to answer your RQs?
- In your literature review, who are you giving voice to? Who are you excluding? Why? Is your own voice present?

Appendix 3: Summary of Tasks

Module 1 Flow and Cohesion Session
In this session, students were prompted to do the following tasks:

Task 1: Read two provided journal article introductions one of which flows well while the other is disjointed and jumps from topic to topic. Identify which is easier to follow, in terms of information organisation.
Task 2: Do a guided analysis of the first introduction to identify theme/rheme or given/new information patterns.
Task 3: Analyse the second introduction to identify lack of flow and discuss how information could be reorganised to flow better.
Task 4: Read a paragraph from a third journal introduction to identify the point at which flow is disrupted. Re-write the paragraph to achieve better flow, using theme/rheme knowledge
Task 5: Go back to introduction 1 to identify ways the author achieves cohesion (word repetition). Discuss the lack of explicit linking words (because the author achieves cohesion through theme/rheme organisation and word repetition)

Module 2: Voice and Stance Session
In this session, students were prompted to do the following tasks:

Task 1: Analyse a journal article paragraph in which the writer discusses the viewpoints of different scholars on a topic but makes no statements about how each author builds on or challenges the

opinions of others and makes no connections between scholars. Notice that each sentence begins with the name/pronoun of the cited author, meaning that the text is dominated by source authors instead of emphasizing the writer's purpose for discussing the topic and that every sentence is attributed to another person so the author's position is not clear.

Task 2: Analyse an extract from an EdD Assignment (from Module 1) with clear authorial voice, written by a student on from the previous cohort (permission was gained from students to use assignments for teaching purposes), and answer (then discuss) the following questions:

- What is the overall theme of this extract
- How does paragraph 3 add to paragraph 2?
- Underline/highlight parts in which you can hear the writer's voice.
- Can you find any instances in which the writer conveys her opinion/stance/attitude?

Task 3: analyse a journal article introduction and an extract from another student assignment to identify other ways of expressing authorial voice.

Task 4: Evaluate a paragraph which has many direct quotes. Discussion of how this negatively affects cohesion and voice.

Task 5: Discuss ways of citing in different disciplines, using Hyland, K. 1999. Academic attribution: Citation and the construction of disciplinary knowledge. *Applied Linguistics* 20, 341-367

Task 6: Analyse extracts from a student assignment in which the student has revised a section of her literature review after feedback from her supervisor. Identify changes and evaluate them (the writer changed an initial draft in which she had listed studies with a paragraph for each study, to a synthesis of literature and paragraphs focusing on themes rather than authors/studies). Discuss how the changes affect voice.

Task 7: Sort a list of reporting verbs into groups according to function. Discuss reporting verbs which convey an author's attitude

Task 8: Analyse assignment and article extracts to identify stance. Notice how authors (1) select, state and relate information, (2) commit to information via endorsement / rejection, hedging / caution and aligning with or distancing from other voices, and (3) evaluate information for the reader through contributions from other voices: evaluative attribution, use of emphasisers, highlighters etc and choice of marked lexis