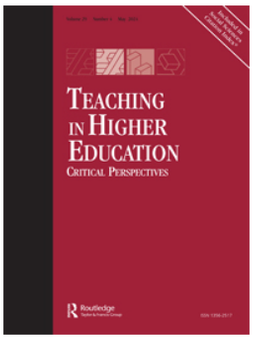

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Embracing hybridity: the affordances of arts-based research for the professional doctorate in education

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ABSTRACT

Despite the growth of the professional doctorate in education (EdD), its potential for capturing practice is restricted by academic tradition. In this hybrid paper, we argue that arts-based research (ABR) can help rectify this. We bookend the paper with creative non-fiction of our own EdD experiences, where ABR is restricted and afforded. We develop our argument through a position paper mapping the theoretical similarities of the EdD and ABR. We then undertake a scoping review identifying existing research into ABR on EdD programmes. We analyse six articles using the 5A's theory of creativity [Glăveanu 2013. Rewriting the language of creativity: The Five A's framework. *Review of General Psychology* 17, no. 1: 69–81] to see how these theoretical similarities are afforded. Using ABR on the EdD promotes reflexivity and co-creation, impacting upon diverse audiences. We conclude with a challenge for further research into ABR on EdD programmes through hybrid research.

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Professional doctorate of education; arts-based research; creativity theory; practice-based inquiry; hybrid forms

Prologue

We open with a small roundtable discussion at a postgraduate educational research seminar. The talk is facilitated by Professor Russell, an experienced education researcher at an esteemed university.

Professor Russell: (laughing quietly) Right then, that was an interesting video on the use of poetry to explore the lived experiences of GCSE pupils. Personally, I'm not sure what it achieved, but now it's over to you. On each table there is a Discussant who will lead you in a discussion about the place of arts in education research.

(Professor Russell sits down at the nearest table and greets the four students)

EdD student 1: I get that it was a positive experience for the students, but does that really make it research? I mean I can't imagine our headteacher changing pedagogy based on poems.

EdD student 3: If I'm honest, I didn't know we were allowed to use approaches like that. I don't think my supervisor would even agree to me writing in first person, let alone using poetry.

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EdD student 2: This frustrates me. Because who was her research for … the headteacher, the supervisor, the pupils?

EdD student 4: Or perhaps herself?

Professor Russell: Ultimately it needs to pass, doesn't it? Is your doctoral research really the best place to push boundaries or take risks? Don't we need to learn to demonstrate basic research skills first?

EdD student 1: I just can't imagine how people would react if I spent 3 years doing doctoral research and ended up with a poem or a play. I want my work to have impact.

EdD student 4: But she did have an impact, didn't she? And she engaged and involved her students in a way which wouldn't have been possible with interviews or questionnaires.

EdD student 1: Are people outside of that classroom going to listen though?

EdD student 2: All people or just academics? I mean, I work in a school and I can see how that would be much more accessible for parents and colleagues. I struggle with what 'counts' as research.

Professor Russell: If you're doing a doctorate, you have to accept that defending your work to academics is part of a rigorous process. I don't know how you would defend the rigour of a poem!

Introduction

We start and end this hybrid research article with two pieces of creative nonfiction, co-constructed by both authors to capture our lived experiences of the professional doctorate in education (EdD) programme. Creative nonfiction is a form of art-based research (ABR), which captures, fictionalises and distils experience to make research 'more engaging' for audiences 'outside of the academy' (Leavy 2018a, 192). Ethically, in imaginatively recasting lived experiences, creative nonfiction also ensures anonymity, allowing us to create conglomerate characters, constructed from different lived experiences.

Our opening piece of creative nonfiction in the form of a playscript performs some of the ways in which the affordances of ABR are precluded by universities where the EdD is structurally dominated by the PhD (Maxwell 2003). This means that the knowledge produced by EdD students is 'mode 1' (Gibbons et al. 1994) – led by the university rather than the context of practice. ABR, we argue, disrupts this, allowing knowledge to become 'mode 2' (Gibbons et al. 1994) – produced by practice and the university and 'hybrid' in nature (Vaughan 2021; Wisker 2017; Wisker and Robinson 2014).

Our paper embodies hybridity, mixing ABR with traditional academic approaches. Following our playscript, we provide the Introduction you are reading now before moving onto a position paper mapping the theoretical underpinnings of the EdD and ABR to highlight similarities. We then identify what is already known about the use of ABR on the EdD through a scoping literature review, analysing six articles using Glăveanu's (2013) 5A's theory of creativity. In doing so, we illuminate how aspects of our theoretical mapping are afforded when ABR is used on EdD programmes. We finish with a second piece of creative nonfiction – a monologue from the perspective of an EdD student from the initial playscript, which performs some of the affordances captured in the review.

Position paper

The rise of the EdD

Over the last two decades there has been a global proliferation in the number of students undertaking professional doctorates (Hawkes and Yerrabati 2018; Jones 2018; Wildy, Peden, and Chan 2015). This growth has arisen from a need for a 're-examination of purpose' (Jones 2018) driven by questions of political, economic and social relevance (Wildy, Peden, and Chan 2015) and an emphasis on the role of universities in relation to the wider 'knowledge economy' (Fink 2006). The doctorate in education (EdD) is widely recognised as the most popular professional doctoral degree both in the United Kingdom (UK) (Hawkes and Yerrabati 2018) and internationally (Wildy, Peden, and Chan 2015). Introduced in the UK in the 1990s, the EdD is characterised as a 'post-experience' (QAA 2020) qualification, facilitating 'mid-career professionals' (Boud and Lee 2009) to situate and develop their professional knowledge within an 'academic framework' (QAA 2020) to support personal, professional and organisational development (Lundgren-Resenterra and Kahn 2019). The majority of EdD students are part-time and the programme structure usually includes a taught phase, which precedes a supervised practice-based research project. This taught phase is significant, because a core focus is the introduction of methodology and research philosophy where students develop their proposal for the research phase. Therefore, this teaching has significant potential to shape and create expectations relating to methodology in, and writing of, the EdD thesis (Clark 2022; Dobson 2022).

Theorising the EdD

There has been much discussion about the distinction, and conflation, of the EdD and the PhD (Foster et al. 2023; Guthrie 2009). The EdD lacks clarity of articulation (Robinson 2018), exacerbated by its infancy, historical notions of inferior value (Perry 2012), its broad and interdisciplinary nature and the proliferation of programmes. Due to this, the PhD can become the primary reference point for regulations and systems (Costley 2013), notions of 'intellectual rigour' and understandings of 'knowledge' creation (Wildy, Peden, and Chan 2015), meaning the EdD risks being constrained by potentially inappropriate understandings of methodology and writing (Brodin 2018; Dobson 2022; Vaughan 2021; Wisker and Robinson 2014).

Concepts of knowledge creation, and the implications of this for methodology and writing, have the potential to be informed by practice and the interdisciplinary nature of the EdD (Rolling 2010; Drake and Heath 2011). The traditional PhD encompasses what Gibbons et al. (1994) conceptualised as 'mode 1' knowledge. Mode 1 knowledge is characterised by homogeneity, is 'disciplinary', generalisable, focused on 'theory building' (Cruickshank 2016) and governed by the 'largely academic, interests of a specific community' (Gibbons et al. 1994). This conceptualisation is at odds with the EdD which may be seen to align much more readily with 'mode 2' knowledge, which is trans-disciplinary and situated within the 'context of application' (Gibbons et al. 1994). As Tennant (2004, 433) argues, the function of professional doctorates means that relevance should no longer 'equate with the `application' of knowledge `to' the workplace, rather, the workplace itself is seen as a site of learning, knowledge and knowledge production.'

Yet the EdD is constrained by an expectation of the adoption of mode 1 methodologies and writing practices.

This potential for mode 2 knowledge creation has implications for the nature and structure of the EdD. Previous discussion has highlighted that these aspects hinge on a need to shift the 'balance of power between the academy and the workplace' (Wildy, Peden, and Chan 2015). The evolution of the professional doctorate has progressed through three 'generations' (Maxwell 2003; Scott, Brown, and Lunt 2004; Stephenson et al. 2004; Wildy, Peden, and Chan 2015): 'first generation' doctorates that are reminiscent of the PhD and 'structurally dominated' by the academy (Maxwell 2003, 280);'second generation' doctorates from Australia (Maxwell 2003; Scott, Brown, and Lunt 2004), which embrace the doctorate as a partnership, with a capacity for reflecting contextual complexity, leading to flexibility in the conceptualisation of the thesis itself; and 'third generation' doctorates (Stephenson et al. 2004), which prioritises the autonomy of the professional learner to directly address questions of appropriateness and partnership themselves. This potential to reduce institutional control and structure increases opportunities for contextually and philosophically appropriate models of research and knowledge creation. However, academic regulations and expectations constrain the viability of second and third generation conceptualisations (Vaughan 2021).

In keeping with the idea of third generation professional doctorates, others have argued for the development of 'hybrid' theses (Vaughan 2021; Wisker 2017; Wisker and Robinson 2014). The argument is that the impact, utility and relevance of the thesis can be enhanced by including writing and research practices reflecting the origins and audiences they serve. This extends the epistemological argument, which assumes that education is grounded in interpretivist and socio-cultural ideas, to create a pragmatic argument for reconceptualising structures and expectations. If from a pragmatic perspective the primary function of research is utility and relevance rather than 'truth' (Feilzer 2010), these aspects should be driven by the purpose and the audiences which they intend to serve. Given the intention for professional doctorates to focus on advancing professional practice, meeting the needs of the profession in which they are 'rooted' (QAA 2020) and addressing questions of societal relevance (Jones 2018), the EdD must be accessible and impactful to a broad range of stakeholders within a broad range of educational contexts. This requires a reframing of the doctoral researcher as a researching professional and not a 'future scholar' (McCarty and Ortloff 2004), and a shifting of accountability to their professional 'communities of practice' rather than the academic 'disciplinary community' (Usher 2002).

The embedded, emergent and typically insider nature of EdD research creates a complex entanglement between research and practice, the workplace and the academy, the researcher, participants and audiences. Dennis, Chandler, and Punthil (2023) refer to this as the 'uniqueness' of the EdD due to relational complexity between the researcher and their participants (Costley 2013). The doctoral researcher should develop 'critical reflexivity' (Burnard et al. 2018; Robinson 2018) and the on-going critical consideration of power structures and positionality (Costley 2013). This also has implications for the development of EdD researchers – as Dragovic (2016) highlights, there are distinct aspects of the 'art and craft' of undertaking a professional doctorate which challenge understandings of practice and relationships, and result in developments and shifts in

identities (Savva and Nygaard 2021). This theorisation provokes consideration of the prevalence of creative and participatory ideologies in education and the conflict between these and the exclusive nature of aspects of traditional academic practice and constructions of knowledge.

Theorising ABR

To define ABR, we use Leavy's *Handbook of Arts-Based Research* (2018a) as the most recent overview of ABR since Knowles and Cole (2008). We adopt Leavy's (2018b, 4) broad view of ABR as research where ABR practices are used as 'methodological tools … during any or all phases of research.' ABR is transdisciplinary, covering 'expansive terrain' and taking a 'process approach' by mirroring 'the unfolding nature of social life' (Leavy 2018b, 4–10). In Irwin et al.'s chapter in the same book (2018, 38), ABR is seen as a form of a 'living enquiry'.

For Leavy, the transdisciplinary, process-based nature of ABR means ABR requires 'a novel worldview' and constitutes a paradigm in its own right (Leavy 2018b, 5). Leavy (2018b, 5) defines this paradigm as 'aesthetic intersubjective' and, drawing upon the research of Chilton, Gerber, and Scotti (2015), highlights how ABR recognises 'the use of the arts as critical in achieving self-other knowledge'. Intersubjective understandings of self and other are facilitated through ABR, meaning that ABR is 'relational and reflexive in character' (Irwin et al. 2018, 50) and that 'identity work' is undertaken – the researcher learns about themselves through living enquiry with art and other's responses; others learn about themselves through engagement with the researcher enquiry. ABR promotes 'critical consciousness' by enabling the researcher and the audience to forge new 'micro–macro connections' (Leavy 2018b, 9–10).

The nature of arts-based living inquiry means ways of knowing are not mandated as intersubjective dialogue always already holds the potential for 'multiple meanings' through providing a 'participatory' role to its audiences (Leavy 2018b, 11). This participatory nature is enhanced through ABR being both 'evocative and provocative' (Leavy 2018b, 10), increasing the 'dimensions of engagement' with audiences due to the 'various ways a form of representation can draw an audience into its reality' (Gergen and Gergen 2018, 64). According to McNiff (2018), the participatory nature of ABR means it represents a direct challenge to traditional research by promoting 'format freedom', reaching diverse audiences and potentially making research accessible. McNiff (2018, 32) argues that within Higher Education where 'IMRaD (introduction, methods, results and discussion)' dominates, format freedom is 'a defining issue currently facing the future of art as research' (McNiff 2018, 32).

Mapping the EdD to ABR

Having outlined the theoretical underpinnings of the EdD and ABR, we undertook a comparative analysis of these underpinnings by thematically grouping areas of similarity. These areas of theoretical similarity are mapped in Table 1. Whilst the word 'practice' is used in relation to both the EdD and ABR, we acknowledge the differences in the application of this term: 'practice' in relation to the EdD denotes the practice of teaching and learning; 'practice' in relation to ABR denotes the practice of art.

Table 1. The theoretical similarities of the EdD and ABR.

Theoretical similarities	EdD	ABR
Practice	The researcher explores their own practice, which is an embodied, dynamic experience (Dennis, Chandler, and Punthil 2023)	The researcher explores their own practice as an ongoing, embodied 'living enquiry' (Irwin et al. 2018)
Knowledge	The knowledge produced by the researcher is cross-disciplinary and mode 2 (Gibbons et al. 1994)	The knowledge produced by the researcher is transdisciplinary, 'covering expansive terrain' (Leavy 2018b)
Relationality	The research can be participatory as research into practice foregrounds the relationships between the researcher and their participants in a practice context (Costley 2013)	The research is participatory as the researcher explores their relationship with their audiences through practice within an 'aesthetic intersubjective paradigm' (Chilton, Gerber, and Scotti 2015)
Reflexivity	Research into practice foregrounds greater self-awareness (Robinson 2018), a critical understanding of power structures and positionality (Costley 2013), leading to identity development (Savva and Nygaard 2021)	Research into practice is 'reflexive in character' (Irwin et al. 2018), involving 'identity work' and 'promoting critical consciousness' and 'social justice orientated research' (Leavy 2018b)
Audience	The audiences for the research can include those situated in practice to impact upon future actions (Boud and Lee 2009)	The audiences for the research can be diverse as the research is marked by 'public scholarship and usefulness' (Leavy 2018b)
Modes of expression	The research is presented using modes of expression informed by participants and stakeholders in the specific context of practice (Stephenson et al. 2004), meaning that the resulting thesis can be 'hybrid' (Vaughan 2021; Wisker 2017; Wisker and Robinson 2014)	The research embraces format freedom (McNiff 2018) to engage audiences and be open to multiple interpretations (Gergen and Gergen 2018)

Scoping literature review

Table 1 provided us with a theoretical rationale for identifying what research had already been undertaken into ABR and the EdD. It also provided us with a language of theoretical similarities to look for when analysing existing research.

In identifying existing research into ABR and the EdD, we adopted the processes of a systematic review as outlined by PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). We received institutional ethical clearance and followed PRISMA protocols to identify, screen and analyse research. Ultimately, we undertook a scoping literature review. This was due to practical reasons of limited time and resources (Gough, Oliver, and Thomas 2012, 39), which meant that we limited our identification of research as outlined below. It was also due to our research being exploratory, meaning we had not honed specific research questions prior to commencing the search (Munn et al. 2018, 2); instead, we were looking more broadly at what research existed.

Identification

Search terms were developed using synonyms for the EdD and synonyms for ABR, based on Leavy's lexicology (2018b, 5): ('prof* doc*in education' OR EdD) AND (creativ* OR a/r/tography OR 'Alternative forms of education' OR aesthetic* OR art* OR 'critical arts-based inquiry' or 'living inquiry' OR perform* OR PSS OR 'practice-based research' OR RBA OR 'research-based art' OR 'research-based practice' OR scholartistry OR 'transformative inquiry through art').

To make the scoping review feasible, we limited our search in several ways. Firstly, we restricted our search to two prominent and relevant databases relating to education – British Education Index and ERIC. Whilst these databases have a global north bias, we understood that most of the countries where the EdD is offered are in the global north (Wildy, Peden, and Chan 2015). Secondly, we limited the search to English articles. We felt justified in doing this as the EdD is most prominent in English speaking countries (Wildy, Peden, and Chan 2015). Thirdly, we only included peer reviewed research journal articles. Whilst this excluded peer reviewed books and book chapters, we were aware of research into academic publishing identifying the perceived higher status of peer reviewed journal articles as opposed to books (Savage and Olejniczak 2022). Accordingly, we felt that this restriction could highlight how these specific outputs featured research in this area. Fourthly, due to the rise of the EdD over the last 20 years (Hawkes and Yerrabati 2018), we restricted article publication dates from 2004 to 2023.

Screening

Despite the restrictions of our scoping review, 99 articles were returned by the search strategy, with 13 duplicates removed. 86 articles were screened by both researchers, who read the abstracts against the inclusion and exclusion criteria, which were initially synonymous with the search criteria. Those articles which were not focussed on the EdD and at least one aspect of ABR were excluded. After discussion, we agreed to exclude a further 76 articles that did not focus on the use of ABR in the context of the EdD. This left 10 articles, read in full by both researchers. Discussion of the 10 articles enabled us to further develop our inclusion and exclusion criteria and exclude 4 articles, 2 of which involved academic researchers using ABR to theorise the EdD. This left 6 articles included in our review.

Analysis

To illustrate our approach to analysing the 6 articles, we return to our opening playscript, which we analyse in relation to our theoretical mapping outlined in Table 1. In this piece of creative nonfiction, we are: actively exploring our former *practices* as supervisors (Professor Russell) and students (EdD student 4); generating *knowledge* from that practice, which is cross-disciplinary, relating to education theory and sociological identity theory; exploring *relationships* between different supervisor and student participants; being *self-reflexive*, highlighting the power structures shaping the practice of these relationships, with Professor Russell enacting the constraint of the EdD by the traditional PhD (Brodin 2018; Dobson 2022; Vaughan 2021; Wisker and Robinson 2014); writing for you, our audience in a special edition of this journal – an audience who is perhaps more sympathetic to methodological innovation than Professor Russell's 'academics'; and using a mode of expression which performs the how conversations about what counts as knowledge in education research play out in universities.

As ABR our playscript performs our ecological view of how sociocultural context can shape how EdD students approach their research. Accordingly, to analyse the articles included in our scoping review, we draw upon Glăveanu's 5A's theory of creativity – an ecological theory that foregrounds social context by viewing creativity as 'embedded

in the field of social relations specific for any community and society' (2013, 72). In the context of the EdD, we see students' use of ABR as resulting from the dynamic interplay of Glăveanu's (2013) 5A's: 'actors', 'actions', 'artifacts', 'audiences', and 'affordances'. By 'actor', Glăveanu refers to a person 'shaped by a sociocultural context' who is 'simultaneously learning and performing societal scripts' (2013, 72). An 'actor' performs 'actions' which have both 'an internal, psychological dimension and an external, behavioural one' (2013, 72). These 'actions' produce conceptual and material 'artifacts' – 'artifacts' that are not a result of the 'actions' of this single 'actor' but should be understood within their dynamic sociocultural context of production. This context includes: an 'actor's' relations with other 'actors' and their 'actions'; other cultural 'artifacts' produced by other 'actors'; and 'audiences', whose expectations shape an 'actor's' 'actions' and their 'artifacts'. Glăveanu's view of creativity also recognises that an 'actor's' ability to be creative in their 'actions' and 'artifacts' takes place in a context which is not equitable and where material 'affordances' are only available to certain 'actors'.

Our playscript can also illustrates how we analysed the 6 articles using Glăveanu's theory. In this piece of creative nonfiction, the 'actors' in a university research seminar are provided with the material 'affordance' of a video 'artifact' outlining the use of poetry as ABR. This 'artifact' is devalued by Professor Russell – an 'actor', who, in this context, has more power and material 'affordances' than EdD student 'actors'. Accordingly, the majority of the EdD student 'actors' are influenced by Professor Russell's 'actions' and perform similar 'actions' that produce similar conceptual 'artifacts' relating to what research in education should look like. These 'artifacts' are shaped by Professor Russell's construction of 'academics' who will be the 'audience' for their doctoral thesis 'artifacts'. The only 'actor' whose 'actions' indicate access to other 'affordances', and the potential to produce a different doctoral 'artifact' for a different 'audience', is EdD student 4.

When analysing the 6 journal articles we took a three-stage abductive approach. Firstly, we read the articles, noting key similarities and differences. Secondly, we applied our theoretical mapping (Table 1) to see where the theoretical underpinnings were evidenced by students on EdD programmes. Thirdly, we applied Glăveanu's (2013) 5A's theory to understand why aspects of the theoretical underpinnings were afforded to students and their EdD research. Our analysis aimed to illuminate:

- how ABR provides affordances for creativity and how these are experienced by different actors;
- the nature of barriers to creativity and how these are experienced by different actors.

Following this process of analysis, we developed three interrelated themes, which are discussed below.

Findings and discussion

Overview

The articles, their methodological approach and focus, and the use of ABR on the EdD programmes are captured in Table 2. In five of the articles, the term dissertation is used instead of thesis.

Table 2. Included articles with their methodology and focus.

Article	Article methodology and focus	ABR and EdD programme
Atabay et al. (2017)	Reflections from students and supervisors on the EdD	Programme ethos encourages students to find 'voice' in writing; one student also uses other ABR methodologies for data collection (e.g. art, chanting, meditation)
Borkoski and Roos (2021)	Evaluation of the EdD by programme leaders	Storytelling taught to all students
Chan et al. (2014)	Supervisors' analysis of dissertations by 3 EdD students	Programme ethos promotes narrative; narrative used in by 2 students in their dissertations
Kiili (2017)	EdD student reflection on practitioner research	Programme ethos influenced in general by ABR; one student reflects on becoming an 'artist practitioner'
Kramer (2022)	EdD student reflection on using ABR in their dissertation	'Non-fiction fiction' writing adopted by one student
McGregor et al. (2010)	Ethnography of student experiences on EdD taught module	'Reflective narrative' used as a methodology by supervisors to illuminate identity transformation of students

The dearth of research into ABR on EdD programmes is not only indicated by the small number of articles (6) included, but also by: the nature of those articles; where they are published; the limited nature of ABR used; and the way in which ABR is not often a primary focus of investigation. To start with the nature of the articles, only one (McGregor et al. 2010) has a methodology section. The others do not make their methodologies explicit, comprising of student/supervisor reflections (Atabay et al. 2017; Kiili 2017; Kramer 2022), a programme leaders' evaluation (Borkoski and Roos 2021) and supervisors' analysis of EdD dissertations (Chan et al. 2014). These articles come from a limited number of journals (four), with two appearing in the same journal about the EdD programme in Hawaii (Atabay et al. 2017; Kiili 2017), two from Impacting Education journal (Borkoski and Roos 2021; Kramer 2022), one from a special issue on the EdD (Chan et al. 2014) and two about the same EdD programme at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (Chan et al. 2014; Kramer 2022). In terms of ABR, except for Kiili (2017), who speaks about becoming an 'artist practitioner' (Kiili 2017), the other five articles focus on different forms of creative writing on EdD courses: storytelling (Borkoski and Roos 2021); narrative (Chan et al. 2014); reflective narrative (McGregor et al. 2010); non-fiction fiction (Kramer 2022); and finding a 'voice' (Atabay et al. 2017, 13). Whilst Atabay et al. (2017, 13) do mention the use of other methodologies – 'sitting meditation, walking meditation, art, hula, interviews and chanting' – other forms are not used or explored. Whilst all six articles use ABR on EdD programmes, ABR is only the key focus in two articles (Borkoski and Roos 2021; Kramer 2022). Once again, this is indicative of the lack of research into the EdD and ABR. The fact that ABR was not the key focus in four articles made thematic analysis more complex, as disentangling the affordances of the EdD itself from the use of ABR on the EdD was difficult. Accordingly, where the use of ABR is not the explicit focus on of the articles, this is emphasised.

ABR as an affordance for reflexivity, identity alignment and relationality

All articles indicate how ABR on EdD programmes affords students as actors reflexivity in three ways. Firstly, McGregor et al. (2010, 184) demonstrate how 'reflective narrative' illuminates the ways in which EdD students as actors at the University of

Wolverhampton transform from 'educator[s] to researcher[s]'. What is missing from this study is how this illumination through ABR shapes the students as actors' identity transformation. The ability of ABR to shape student actors' identity transformation is, however, demonstrated in three articles (Atabay et al. 2017; Kramer 2022; and Kiili 2017). Interestingly, in these articles ABR is shown to afford actors reflexivity to transform their identities by allowing them to align their identities as students with authentic identities they hold outside of university.

Reflecting upon her experiences of the EdD programme at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Kramer (2022, 20) identifies a 'disconnect' between the university's expectations of her as an actor and her self-perception based on 'previous experiences'. Kramer reflects upon how her inability to perform actions expected of her as a student removed agency and made her vulnerable to failure – a vulnerability she overcame through ABR and 'non-fiction fiction writing'. This affords Kramer a 'pathway out', enabling her to 'demonstrate inquiry through a means [she] was more familiar with – writing and theatre', aligning her present identity as a student with her past identity as a writer (2022, 24). A similar affordance as an actor undertaking an EdD is experienced by Jocelyn on the UH Manoa EdD programme in Hawaii (Atabay et al. 2017). Whilst the nature of the affordance of ABR is more difficult to identify as it is part of a programme ethos explicitly valuing actors' 'voices', within this context Jocelyn is afforded the opportunity to be reflexive and reconnect with her writer identity. Scarred by early experiences of her actions in 'sharing' her writing, Jocelyn reflects how becoming an actor on the course enabled her to become a writer 'again' – 'a gift as a result of the EdD process' (Atabay et al. 2017, 12). Kiili (2017) experiences identity change, coming to see herself as an 'artist practitioner researcher' on the UH Manoa EdD programme in Hawaii. As in Atabay et al. (2017), this new identity is afforded by the ethos of EdD programme, which includes ABR, rather than because of the specific adoption of ABR (Kramer 2022). As an actor, Kiili experiences the 'alignment of both [her] personal and professional positionalities' (2017, 49).

Kiili's identity transformation as an actor is more reflexive and, like the remaining two articles (Borkoski and Roos 2021; Chan et al. 2014), involves a wider consideration of relationality. The ABR ethos of Kiili's EdD programme affords her actions as an actor whereby she can authentically reconnect and reposition herself in relation to her culture and her past. This includes developing a deeper understanding of her native Hawaiian culture, the trauma of generational genocide and her own dysfunctional family. As a result, Kiili (2017, 12) sees her 'role as an artist practitioner for the benefit of [her] community'. In line with a focus on the relationship between self and other in identity transformation, Chan et al.'s (2014, 281) analysis of three dissertations undertaken by students at the University of Nebraska Lincoln demonstrates how narrative affords students the opportunity to 'defamiliarize' their own and others' experiences as actors, taking on 'different points of view' and developing a deeper understanding of relationships. In Borkoski and Roos's (2021) evaluation of the John Hopkins University's online EdD programme (2021, 35), reflexion does not just lead to a transformation of self through understanding others, but also holds the possibility of students as actors transforming the actions of others. This is the only course where a specific form of ABR (storytelling) is mandated and, from the programme leaders' perspectives, transforming the identities of students to become 'storytellers' affords students as actors the agency to

undertake actions that lead to them becoming 'activists'. As agential actors, storytelling affords students the ability to 'craft and share convincing stories of complex problems in education that lead to action through intentional intervention' to implement 'change' (Borkoski and Roos 2021, 33).

ABR as relational, affording participation to value alternative perspectives and move towards the co-creation of artifacts

The articles reflect the methodological, and axiological, affordances of ABR as a participatory approach, which values alternative perspectives. In keeping with the relational and practice focused nature of the EdD, five of the articles address the value of ABR in supporting meaningful engagement with different actors. There is a consistent use of participatory language in all articles, implying shared ownership of artifacts and knowledge creation. This theme is most succinctly addressed by Borkoski and Roos (2021, 24), who conceptualise the EdD and storytelling approaches as implementing change by 'engaging *with* stakeholders, rather than *at* stakeholders'.

The capacity for ABR to be relational in eliciting and embracing the alternative and authentic perspectives of others is explored by four articles (Atabay et al. 2017 Borkoski and Roos 2021; Chan et al. 2014;; Kramer 2022). In Chan et al.'s (2014) exploration of student dissertations, this aspect arises on multiple occasions, notably where one student's narrative approach is used to characterise the relational aspect of the research as 'talking among friends, so she can better understand those others' (280). In addressing the impact of the complex nature of research into practice, the authors argue that the thesis as an artifact requires 'a literary sensibility rather than a technical one, to fully appreciate the nuances' (281), using the technique of 'defamiliarisation' through capturing different viewpoints. Alongside this, Kramer (2022) credits ABR as providing 'a break in the clouds', allowing marginalised students 'to speak' (21). Atabay et al. (2017) focus on the significance of EdD programmes supporting actors to find authentic voice, illustrating this with a student who recalls her work being sensitively rejected 'because of my inability to speak my voice' (15), highlighting the significance of this experience in learning to 'share their voices authentically' in her EdD research.

The positioning of the perspectives of other actors within the articles is consistently participatory in nature and most prominent in three articles (Borkoski and Roos 2021 Kiili 2017; and Kramer 2022). In identifying as an 'artist researcher', Kiili (2017) outlines the potential of ABR in the Hawaiian context as culturally relevant, utilising participatory language to assert that it has value 'as we reimagine our lives in this postcolonial period, adding our voices and perspective to tell our stories' (51). For Kramer (2022), ABR allowed her to reposition her students. From initial uncertainty regarding how to engage them, she frames them as actors who are 'critical agents for change' (22), utilising her contextual understanding to successfully shift their role from research objects to active participants in the review of a nonfiction artifact she had created.

Artifacts arising from ABR capture 'alternative perspectives' (Borkoski and Roos 2021), 'share their voices authentically' (Atabay et al. 2017), and collectively (Kramer 2022), and provide an active role for stakeholders (Borkoski and Roos 2021; Kramer 2022). There is a synergy between these understandings and the relational, practice-based, mode 2 knowledge generation that is central to the EdD model. Through utilising

ABR to value authentic, alternative perspectives, there is a sense that the theses as artifacts are co-created and co-owned with other significant actors within the professional context. For example, for Kramer (2022, 21) this co-created 'artifact' takes the form of a 'non-fiction fiction' script, whilst for McGregor et al. (2010, 169) imagery, metaphors and reflective narrative are positioned as products of 'shared meaning making'.

ABR as affording hybrid artifacts, which reach and impacting wide and diverse audiences

The articles demonstrate the affordances offered by the adoption of ABR on EdD programmes to reach diverse audiences. These affordances are conceptualised in different ways. McGregor et al. (2010) and Chan et al. (2014) illustrate how the use of ABR can help supervisors become reflexive and think about their own actions as actors and the affordances these provide their students as actors on EdD programmes. For McGregor et al. (2010, 72), reflective narratives can be used as artifacts and actions to communicate effectively with student actors in 'educational settings', allowing supervisors as actors to think about how they afford student development as actors over time. Similarly, in analysing their students' dissertations as artifacts to explore different points of view through narrative, Chan et al. (2014) are afforded a way of thinking about how their actions as supervisors as well as their role of academic audience afford their students as actors ways of reaching other audiences. Together, these articles identify how ABR can be used to transform the actions and identities of supervisors from audiences to actors on EdD programmes.

Borkoski and Roos (2021) and Atabay et al. (2017) focus on how ABR affords hybridity in the EdD dissertation and research plan and what this means in terms of simultaneously reaching practitioner and academic audiences in line with the second generation thesis. In Borkoski and Roos (2021, 35), storytelling directly affords students as actors the skills to 'convey their research to different audiences' – audiences who can be 'engaged and persuaded' and mobilised as actors because of their experience with dissertation artifacts (2021, 33). Atabay et al. (2017, 35) identify how hybridity can be prevented in the development of a research plan due to tensions between different audiences, with the 'Institutional Review Board' requiring a 'clearly structured' plan, and teachers as actors requiring open-endedness to 'share their voices authentically'. Unlike Borkoski and Roos (2021), the ABR programme ethos brings to the surface rather than transcend this tension between audiences.

In the other two articles, this tension between academic and practice-based audience is overcome by conceptualising the artifacts produced by actors as third generation theses, whose audience is always firmly outside of the university. For Kiili (2017, 51), the transformation of self afforded by ABR leads to the writing of third generation thesis which is 'for the benefit of [her] community' rather than the university. For Kramer (2022), the use of non-fiction fiction means the thesis becomes a third-generation artifact whose audience is in practice, and which can 'engage colleagues and administrators as we try to troubleshoot our current challenges with teaching' (22). Here the audience in the context of practice is not only impacted by the final artifact, but, as identified in theme 2 above, is also given affordances to shape the artifact in co-creation. For example, in producing resources for reluctant readers, Kramer (2022, 22) realises

the participatory potential of her non-fiction fiction by empowering student actors to read the artifact and give feedback, commenting on what was 'like me' and 'not realistic'. This enables Kramer (2022, 22) to 'rework and expand the script to better represent the students' (22) and more effectively reach and impact upon her practitioner audience.

Conclusion

In this article, we have used creative nonfiction to show how mode 1 knowledge production structurally dominates the EdD (Maxwell 2003; Vaughan 2021). We have then mapped key theoretical underpinning shared by the EdD and ABR to argue that ABR should be embraced on EdD programmes to move students to mode 2 knowledge production and embrace hybridity. Finally, we have undertaken a scoping review, which evidences the key affordances relating to our theoretical mapping experienced by students when ABR is embraced. These are:

- Student actors' identity transformation (Atabay et al. 2017; Kiili 2017; Kramer 2022) being afforded by ABR through reflexivity, with identities beyond the university aligned with student identities;
- Reflexivity affording a deeper understanding of the transformed self as an actor in relation to others (Chan et al. 2014; Kiili 2017), developing cultural and contextual sensitivity;
- The reflexivity afforded by ABR mandated on an EdD programme impacting positively on the actions of other community actors (Borkoski and Roos 2021);
- The change in the actions of other actors being afforded by the participatory nature of ABR, with other actors' experiences and perspectives valued so that they can co-construct artifacts (Borkoski and Roos 2021 Kiili 2017; and Kramer 2022);
- The thesis artifacts becoming either second generation and hybrid (Atabay et al. 2017; Borkoski and Roos 2021) or third generation, appealing to community (Kiili 2017) and practice-based audiences (Kramer 2022), with the potential to change and mobilise these audiences as actors;
- Supervisors as audiences being afforded reflexivity (Chan et al. 2014; McGregor et al. 2010) as they think about the impact of their own actions upon students as actors and become mobilised as actors for the benefit of their future students.

Our scoping review also demonstrates a lack of research into the use of ABR on EdD programmes. The research we did find explored creative writing methodologies rather than other forms of ABR (e.g. the performative or visual arts). To help realise ABR's potential for promoting hybridity on EdD programmes, more participatory research, which considers forms of ABR beyond creative writing, should be undertaken by key actors. Furthermore, more hybrid research that embodies and performs the theoretical underpinnings of the EdD and ABR should be undertaken to help you, the academic audience, think about what constitutes educational research.

We end our hybrid paper with an Epilogue for which we offer no analysis. In line with ABR's potential to be open to different interpretations (Gergen and Gergen 2018), we leave it up to you, our reader, to make of it what you will.

Epilogue

After five long years of false starts, dead ends, desperate splutterings, finally the words are coming. Coming so fast they won't stop.

Who'd have thought it?

I once went to a research seminar where a student was using performance poetry to represent their pupils' lived experiences. I loved the idea, but I could neither write nor perform poetry. Can you imagine? There can't be too many things worse in life than me taking to the stage …

Mercifully, I went for a different form. Something that works for me. A play script. And it's right. Theoretically, ethically, aesthetically, it's right.

Who'd have thought it?

Not Professor Russell. Not most of those other academic writers I've been told to read. Upholders of tradition, architects of the establishment, producers of conventional artifacts. Listen and you can hear their mutterings.

What are you doing?

That isn't a thesis!

Remember your audience.

The literature! Research questions must be grounded in a review of the literature.

But it wasn't like that, I told him. *That's not how my project went. You're superimposing a structure on something fluid. I didn't review the literature, frame my research questions, think of a methodology to answer my research questions. I was teaching children for goodness' sake!*

And it's not how the project went for them either. It's not the lived experiences of the young people in my classroom. What would *that* thesis mean to them?

In my playscript they are characters with voices. Protagonists in their own stories of school.

Who'd have thought it?

I listened to them. I heard their voices. I tried to capture them.

And as I write, their voices become your voice. The audience of my play.

It's funny, you doing this.

Is that supposed to be me?

You've got a point – there's a massive problem with how schools are run.

You've misunderstood me. That's not what I meant.

With your voices in my head, I press Delete.

Who'd have thought it?

With your voices in my head, I try again.

Then there are other voices. The voices of teachers, thinking about how they might change things. Thinking about what all of this might mean for them.

If you listen carefully, you can hear them.

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