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**E is for Editorial**

**A is for Abstract (and Abecedary)**

As the editorial for the first of these double issues has already shown, it has been difficult to decide how to organise the different contributions into two issues – how should we split them up? How should we order them? And then what would be a good way to introduce them in an editorial? Rather than give an overview of what is to come by signposting the order of the issues themselves, as is more conventional, for this issue we decided to draw out notable trends and aspects in stand-alone form and order them in the fashion of an abecedary. While this loses the traditionally developed linearity of a text (admittedly the order here is somewhat artificially imposed by the alphabet), it gains clear short sections that are subtitled to allow dipping into the text and identifying areas of interest. We have used ALL CAPS to denote names of entries to show linkages and wherever we make reference to an article in these two issues, have given the page number and the letter E (for this issue – the Egg – and C for the accompanying issue – the Chicken). As the editorial of the sister issue (C ?) takes the form of a more traditional one, we hope that readers will read both and in comparing them be able to reflect on the affordances of GENRES using these examples.

**B is for Blogs and Blogging**

Using blogs and blogging within education might be one of the most widespread uses of a non-traditional GENRE within academic writing. It is no wonder that we include two perspectives on this, both very different in their approach: Mhairi (C ?) gives a great overview of the use of blogs within education (edublogging) before she goes on to talk about her success in reGENRING sections of a dense text book as both lecture material and in blog form to make it more accessible to her students, while David and Lisa (C ?) analyse posts written by students on a communal blog as part of their research for an academic essay. Their discussion, which is itself presented as a blog, reports on the project itself and, using a blog comments section, shows attitudes towards blogging as an academic GENRE, from students and staff, both supporters and detractors.

**C is for Comic (and graphic novel)**

A comic is a form of sequential art and communication, often using panels of images to convey information or tell a story. While this GENRE is often thought of as concerned with humour and entertainment (and we probably can thank the Funny Pages in the newspapers for that), they are closely interlinked with the editorial cartoon, which, with its long history dating back at least till the 17th century including practitioners such as Hogarth and Gillray, conveys serious political commentary albeit in satirical form. Comics, and their sister GENRE the graphic novel, are becoming more and more popular within academia, as they potentially open up new audiences for research. This is shown by Annabel’s piece (C ?), which discusses her introduction of custom drawn comic books about business skills for her fashion students – presented as a comic. A slightly different use of the comic/graphic toolbox can be found in *UNFLATTENING*, a PhD thesis that was presented as a graphic novel.

**D is for Dissertation**

Particularly within creative practice, it is the dissertation that seems to be especially problematic, as writing is seen as something that is separated from practice by the students (and sometimes also by some members of staff). However, as Fiona (2015) shows, in her discussion about a Theatre Direction student who overcame her difficulties by producing her dissertation as an imagined interview with herself, alternative GENRES can be both facilitating and empowering as well as, in this case, being appreciated by the academic supervisory team. Within these pages you’ll find two contributions dealing specifically with issues around dissertation writing, particularly with the third year contextual and historical studies outcome/GENRE: Pat (E ?) explains how linking this written piece with a specific audience helped her students engage with the writing more fully, while Will (E ?) tells about how the dissertation 'beast’ was slain via first presenting the students with the option of splitting their dissertation into a shorter extended essay with a practical task; and then just getting rid of the traditional dissertation in order to integrate the students’ practices more fully into their final year.

**E is for Examples**

One of the key features of these special issues was always to try and present not just a number of theoretical treatises on and around the practice of GENRE and reGENRING, but also to celebrate and shine a light on the actual practice. To this end, we have encouraged and included contributions in a range of different GENRES, from COMIC work through fictional writing to traditional papers among others. Sandra, Sandra and Tom, whose work is distributed across this issue (E ?, ?, ?, ? and ?), have even put together some instructions on how to do some of the reGENRING practices they use in their teaching. GENRES discussed within these pages include BLOGS (C ?; C ?), exhibition and museum displays (E ?), POSTERS (E ?; E ?) , postcards (E ?), *FUROSHIKI* – a Japanese wrapping cloth (C ?), an art piece (E ?); and we have submissions produced in the GENRES of, as well as traditional papers, an academic BLOG (C ?), fiction (E ?; C ?), reflection and conversation (E ?), conversations (E ?), an open LETTER (E ?), a COMIC (C ?) – and of course this ABECEDARY.

**F is for *Furoshiki***

A *furoshiki* is a usually square Japanese wrapping cloth. When it came to preparing an exploratory workshop on GENRE and reGENRING, Alke, who had recently been to Japan, thought that this artefact perfectly embodied reGENRING, as when you are wrapping up something you cannot see the sometimes intricate pattern in its entirety anymore. Conversely, when you display the pattern, you cannot use it as a bag. Alke thought that this would make a slightly unusual ‘bag’ for workshop participants to take their materials home in, and she designed a pattern based on Fiona’s ORIENTATIONS of genre framework and had a limited edition made. In her paper, she analyses both the produced design and artefact using this framework (C ?).

**G is for Genre/genring/reGenring**

What kind of text is it: what does it look like, what is it for and what does it do? Genres are textual practices that have emerged from social, cultural and creative activity. We give them names such as poem, TV drama, joke, or interview. They develop through custom and practice because they are found (or thought) to be the best way to achieve whatever it is we want to ‘say’. In other words, genres become recognisable conventions so that to use a ‘wrong’ genre, is to break the ‘rules’ and upset the status quo. However, breaking the rules can open up opportunities for new ways of thinking. This is what happens with regenring.

Put simply, when we regenre, instead of using a conventional genre, the one typical of whatever it is we are producing, we use a different one. In doing this, we engage in an act of transgression which causes a kind of shock that forces us, by the very nature of the new genre, to think again and work out different ways of communicating our meanings. So if you are used to writing academic articles for scholarly journals it can be refreshing (or challenging) to write a BLOG instead or, as is well known among those who attend Alke’s workshops, making your own NAMETAG (yes a name tag is a GENRE) allows you to play with how you want to project your IDENTITY! And getting students to produce work in a range of different GENRES, alarming though that might be to some (teachers, students, academic managers and government ministers alike), really does help them unpack their disciplinary material, view it from different perspectives and understand its relevance to both academic and everyday worlds. It’s not an easy option, though, as many of us found out when writing for these issues!

**H is for Hollowed out**

In Shaun and Karl’s paper (C ?), they introduce a ‘hollowed-out’ GENRE as a (complementary) counterpoint to the traditional essay following academic WRITING CONVENTIONS. This is an interesting metaphor that positions itself opposite the dense academic writing which can come across to readers as straight forward fact. And this is not always appropriate for students, especially beginning students, who have yet to realise that academic writing follows on from a period of inherent unsure-ness contained within research. The idea of visualising this process of research as hollow makes it possible to think about tasks as safely contained within a (metaphorical and conceptual) space, which in turn allows these tasks to be de-orientating and de-stabilising. The hollowed-out GENRE celebrates the process of investigating practice and praxis – which is what the reGENRING process with all its affordances and ORIENTATIONS is all about.

**I is for Identity**

“Can I use ‘I’? I’ve been told that it’s not allowed in academic writing.” (The answer is “yes”, by the way, but it’s a proviso ‘yes’: ‘I’ if you’re talking about something you’ve done yourself, ‘we’ if you did it with others.) As was shown by Julia Molinari in her presentation at the TILT conference, the use of ‘I’ or ‘we’ is prevalent in published works. So how has the belief that its use is prohibited spread so widely? Perhaps it’s something to do with notions of subjectivity versus objectivity such that to be objective is never to use personal pronouns. This means we end up with tortuous writing which goes to extraordinary lengths to deny the self in the work by referring to ‘the author’, ‘the researcher’ or excessive use of passive forms to avoid any subject responsibility at all! However, as a result of reGENRING, students have the opportunity to avoid such problems and, as Fiona’s ORIENTATIONS analysis showed, the process enabled students to express identity and claim agency while working with their disciplinary material *‘doing it the way you wanted to’* (English 2011: 102) or communicating *‘the awkwardness of being a first year undergraduate and having a question like that’.* (ibid: 182). The possibility of presenting disciplinary materials in ways that link them to the personal, by being ‘authorised’ to be subjective and to display one’s *self* changes, not just the informational aspects of the work, the substance, but the sense of ownership over the material itself. When we reGENRE the NAMETAG we don’t just make another NAMETAG, we choose how we want to display ourselves on that day in that place with the available materials. Maybe we produce something elaborate and flamboyant or maybe we decide on something plainer even austere; in this way *showing* IDENTITY. Or maybe we focus on it explicitly, *reflecting on* identity, as discussed by Robin (C ?) in his triple GENRED contribution involving the conventional, the institutional and the personal. Or maybe we feel more courageous, take more risks and be ourselves, as David and Lisa’s students found with their BLOGS (C ?).

**J is for Journal Contributors**

The editors of these two special issues on GENRING and reGENRING, Fiona English and Alke Gröppel-Wegener met at the European Association of Teachers of Academic Writing (EATAW) conference held in Limerick a few years ago and, despite their different disciplinary backgrounds (Fiona in linguistics and Alke in design) almost immediately recognised each other as kindred spirits in their interests in encouraging students to ‘play’ with other kinds of writing than the traditional essay. Fiona had attended a talk Alke had given on using BLOGS as part of reflection-on-action for art and design students. (Gröppel-Wegener 2012) Having noticed Fiona smiling and nodding at the back of the room, Alke decided to go to Fiona’s talk on her ‘reGENRING’ work with a group of first year undergraduates and the analytical framework that she developed to explore the ORIENTATIONS and affordances of GENRES as discussed in her 2011 book. While Alke really considers it a design process, the terms and theoretical framework Fiona provided proved incredibly useful to describe and analyse her practice (as she has done in the *FUROSHIKI* paper, C ?). Fiona and Alke have stayed in contact ever since that first meeting, and presented together at a conference in Paris and workshops all over England culminating in the Playing with GENREworkshop in November 2016 and, the following June, the TILT conference that gave rise to these special issues.

The other contributors for these issues are mostly attendees from the TILT conference, which attracted people from all over the country (and a keynote speaker from the US) from a range of disciplines (e.g. business, bio-chemistry, education) in addition to the arts and design fields with which Writing-PAD and this journal is usually associated. It just goes to show that creative practice can be found in all areas of study! It is, then, a real pleasure to have the space within these pages to allow us (and you the readers) an insight into the varied and fascinating work that is currently going on when it comes to using GENRE and reGENRING within pedagogic practice.

**K is for Knowledge**

Knowledge is that strange thing that sits somewhere between information, thought and action. We can talk about kinds of knowledge such as skills knowledge or academic knowledge, everyday or scholarly. These pairings reflect many of the attitudes inherent in academic life where they are often seen in opposition and hierarchical. Such understandings of knowledge play a large part in debates around education, discourse and GENRES and it is here that we have located these special issues. Through the range of contributions using GENRES that are either conventional or unconventional when it comes to academic journal publication, we want to showcase different ways of producing knowledge and the different forms of knowledge that those ways allow. In other words, we want to explore how knowledge is shaped by the affordances and ORIENTATIONS of the GENRES we use. Paul (C ?) uses his novella approach to reflect on how you internalise knowledge and how it is possible to represent and disseminate this internalised knowledge using such a GENRE. Mhairi (C ?), realising the need to unpack the disciplinary discourse of scientific journal articles, creates a BLOG with which she can use everyday metaphors, images and analogies to guide her students towards understanding the concepts and accessing the articles themselves. And a conversation between Sarah and Sheila (E ?) about how an experiment using POSTERS as an assignment illustrates how it enabled arts students to produce and show knowledge by making rather than writing. The point is that there’s a lot more to knowledge and learning in academia than the predominance of essayist representations and academic WRITING CONVENTIONS might suggest!

**L is for Letter**

While a letter can mean any of the symbols used to write a language, in an alternative meaning a letter is a GENRE in itself that is a written message from one person to another. Or, in the case of Lisa’s open letter to colleagues (E ?), a written message to quite a lot of people. Letters like that are a great ‘starting’ GENRE for students, as most of them will be familiar with the sentiment, even if they might not send or receive actual letters through the post regularly, the related GENRES of e-mails, text messages and social media posts are close enough to give them an understanding of what is required here: it is personal, asking for their own IDENTITY to come to the fore, it can be far less formal than WRITING CONVENTIONS seem to dictate for an academic piece of writing, and the combination of these issues make it ideal for focusing on personal KNOWLEGDE and expertise.

**M is for Multimodal**

Every communication is multimodal. When we speak we use other modes such as gaze or gesture; when we write we choose things like typeface style and size, we arrange our words spatially as well as grammatically; when we draw or paint we choose colour, shape, arrangement. The discussions across these two special issues include articles that are, in themselves, what we call ‘multimodal ensembles’ (see e.g. Domingo 2014) where the interaction of different modes used in an artefact or text combines to produce a complete meaning as in COMICS (Annabel, C ?) and postcards (Emma and Alke, E ?) where they are used as resources in teaching. Some like the two Sandras and Tom (E ?) or Clive and Angela (C ?) show how students’ own multimodal ensembles such as POSTERS and SKETCHBOOKS help them reflect on their learning and Fiona (E ?) bases her discussion on mode, media and GENRE around her responses to an artwork. In fact, all the contributions concern multimodality in some way or another.

However, multimodality is not just about using different modes, but is about the effects of mode choice (and see our discussion on ORIENTATION). This is beautifully illustrated by Kress (2010, 16) with his example of a school child’s *spoken* explanation of what a cell looks like (It has a nucleus) and her quandaries when asked to *draw* it (Hum… what shape is a cell? What does a nucleus look like? Where does the nucleus go?). *Telling* and *showing* present different communicative challenges and afford different ways of meaning!

**N is for Nametag**

Making your own Nametag is a great icebreaking activity – and we started both the workshop and the TILT conference off with that. Not only does it engage delegates from the moment they arrive and get them talking, rather than hiding behind a cup of tea in that awkwardness of not knowing anybody, it is also a very simple way of reGENRING. People in academic circles are familiar with conventional nametags: the type is often too small to read the names and they can give a lot of emphasis to institutions – either the one hosting (with a logo prominently placed in a corner), or by listing the delegates institution with the same size as the delegates names, as if it was more important where you work than who you are. Making your own nametag allows you to take back your individuality and IDENTITY. You decide whether to introduce yourself with first name only, surname only or full name. You decide whether to include your title. You decide whether to add googly eyes or purple glitter. You decide whether to be flamboyant or modest. There are no marks for design, just the chance to have some fun being imaginative with something so mundane.

**O is for Orientations of Genres**

How do you feel when writing an essay compared to writing a short story or a BLOG? What happens when you get your cited authors to speak for themselves in a dramatised version of your essay? What extra work is involved if you write a play instead of a journal article following all traditional WRITING CONVENTIONS? What additional themes can you include when writing your dissertation as an imagined interview with yourself that you can’t include in ‘normal’ academic writing? What’s the impact on your sense of IDENTITY and confidence when you choose how to write and what to include? These are among the themes that have emerged from Fiona’s reGENRING work with students and they all concern her theory of the orientations of GENRES. The approach, arising out of an analysis of student work and interviews with the students themselves, captures the interaction between the *materiality* of what is produced and the experiences associated with doing the work, the *social*. Material aspects include things like topics and arrangements (thematic orientation) and the modes and materials used to produce the GENRE (semiotic orientation), while social aspects concern the circumstances in which the work is produced (contextual orientation) and how the producers position themselves as authors (discursive orientation). The analytical framework of orientation, as is shown in Alke’s *FUROSHIKI* contribution (C ?), is quite flexible and can be developed and expanded to encompass a wide range of GENRES produced with very different materials and for many different purposes.

**P is for Poster (and Poster Presentation)**

The poster is a slippery GENRE. On the one hand one tradition of the poster is very much within the VISUAL arts, specifically graphic design and advertising. But within academia there is also the academic poster, which seems to have grown up in the sciences and, contrary to the ‘art’ poster is often text- rather than image-heavy. Preparing posters of your research means you have to focus on your main message and it allows you the opportunity to use attention grabbing images. Sarah and Sheila’s conversation (E ?) explores the potential posters have to get students to communicate their research in a non-essay format, and Peter and Grace (E ?) take their discussion of the poster one step further, by also shining a light on the poster presentation, what they term an ‘occluded’ GENRE in their detailed discussion of their research with 3 different student cohorts. All part of the reGENRING process!

**Q is for Qualitative research**

What Polly and Julian show in their discussion of the project ‘The *US* in the museum’ (E ?), is an interesting way of engaging students with qualitative research, in this case around objects borrowed from the archives of a local museum. Their paper discusses the reGENRING of an assignment for use on a Creative Design programme which has been developed in collaboration with the staff at their local museum in St Alban’s. The reGENRED assignment offered students the chance for hands-on work with actual objects rather than the more traditional library approach previously in place and the paper considers the impact of the project from the three perspectives of the participants: the tutor, the curator and the student.

**R is for References**

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**S is for Sketchbook**

The Sketchbook is a GENRE commonly used within Art and Design at preliminary stages of work. It is here that practitioners capture ideas and takes notes. Clive and Angela’s paper (C ?) shows the use of the sketchbook as part of reflective journaling for management students and discusses the opportunities that including the VISUAL into note-taking techniques has for taking more effective notes and encouraging deeper reflection. In order to make it easier for students who may not be familiar with sketchbooks as a GENRE, they provide their students with a ‘sketchprint’ book, which includes prompts for the sort of notes that should be taken.

**T is for TILT**

The Trent Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT), based at Nottingham Trent University, hosted the reGENRE conference in June 2017 that most of the JOURNAL CONTRIBUTORS are drawn from. The collaboration with TILT allowed us to make the conference free to attend and also gave the further focus of HE assessment as a framework for discussion to the proceedings. With three keynotes introducing delegates to Julia Molinari’s work on WRITING CONVENTIONS, David and Lisa’s use of BLOGGING in the classroom (C ?) and Nick Sousanis’ *UNFLATTENING*, the ground work was set for lively discussions that started over lunch and continued during the afternoon, when a sharing session showed off a number of EXAMPLES, many of them also shown in these two issues. As Lisa, the co-organiser and host of the conference writes in her open LETTER (E ?) using the essay and its academic WRITING CONVENTIONS exclusively excludes some of our students, and this is something that reGENRING as a practice can potentially address.

**U is for *Unflattening***

An important milestone in what counts as academic came in 2015 when Nick Sousanis’ PhD thesis *Unflattening* was published by Harvard University press. What was so special about this was that this was a PhD thesis conceived as a graphic novel. It was not first written and then illustrated as a graphic novel, and it was not first drawn and then written up as a ‘proper’ thesis (as if there should be such a thing as a ‘proper’ thesis). As part of the process of the research this GENRE appeared to be the right way to communicate the ideas Nick was working with, so this was the way he went using the affordances of the COMIC and graphic novel to produce the kind of knowledge he wanted to develop. We were very lucky that Nick was able to present his work at the TILT conference, both by giving us an insight into the process of *Unflattening*, and by leading us through his ‘Grids and Gestures’ exercise. (Sousanis 2018)

**V is for Visual**

ReGENRING does not just concern written genres, but visual genres too. Of course writing itself is a visual mode, we view it as well as read it, but the affordances of image and graphic modes allows the chance to present knowledge as display where meanings are anchored by, for instance, arrangement and depiction rather than sentences and words. The use of the visual is of particular relevance within the creative practice disciplines, as can be seen in both Sarah and Sheila’s (E ?) and Peter and Grace’s (E ?) discussion of POSTERS, the EXAMPLES that Sandra, Sandra and Tom present (E ?. ?, ?, ? and ?) and Anabel’s use of COMICS (C ?). However, from the range of disciplines represented across these two special editions it is clear that it is not just useful in those disciplines. For instance, James (E ?) delivers an impassioned plea for the visual essay (in the voice of Alan Sillitoe’s Arthur Seaton) in relation to literary studies and, of course, scientific fields, such as discussed in Mhairi’s article (C ?), have always used graphic modes as a means of representation. The visual can also help students reflect on teaching, as discussed by Emma and Alke (E ?) when looking at and using postcards to teach essay writing tips, as well as Clive and Angela (C ?) as they are presenting their use of reflective SKETCHBOOKS for both students and lecturers within business education.

**W is for Writing Conventions**

A discussion of reGENRING in the context of writing in creative practice, is always closely linked with a discussion on writing conventions. It was important to start the TILT conference with an exploration by Julia Molinari of what academic writing actually is – and it is not that simple to define! What is certainly important is to make a distinction between writing as seen as a process and writing as seen as an outcome – and be aware of the different ranges (or shall we call them GENRES?) that both of these include. Julia’s own focus on finishing her PhD has meant she didn’t have the time or space to make her own written contribution here, but the historical perspective she brought in her talk where she considers the journey academic production has travelled from Socrates’s horror of the written monolith through Galileo’s *Dialogo* to the interpersonality of the scientific paper and the impersonality of the history article, to current developments such as *UNFLATTENING*, the graphic ‘novel’ thesis of Nick Sousanis or Pat Thomson(2015) using her BLOG to argue for the academic worth of the BLOG. Like other conventions of practice, academic writing conventions have and continue to change with the times, albeit, often kicking and screaming in resistance!

**X is for eXpectations**

We’re cheating here with our eXpectations but didn’t feel that talking about xylophones or xerography would contribute much, though perhaps xenon, which according to my dictionary originates from the Greek for ‘strange’, might have worked! However, a discussion of eXpectations allows us to consider whether and how alternative GENREs can find their place in academia across the board.

We know from our own work with and from the contributions in these special issues that having students work with a range of GENRES and representational modes helps them understand and engage with all aspects of their chosen field whether they are studying practice-focussed or academic-focussed fields. We also know that reGENRING as part of our own teaching activity such as described by Mhairi (C ?) with her BLOG or Emma and Alke (E ?) with their postcards helps students get to grips with the concepts and theories associated with their studies. However, although introducing apparently non-academic assignments for academic purposes is often met with enthusiasm from students, it is also met with anxiety and even disappointment. See, for instance, Peter and Grace’s (E ?) report on how students responded to making and showing POSTERS as assessed work or Shaun and Karl’s (E ?) work with their fine arts students. And it is not only students who find alternative assignments challenging. Colleagues worry about academic rigour (see e.g. Wood 2000 for a discussion in relation to design students) an issue raised by Lisa and David (C ?).

Shifting eXpectations of what constitutes academic work is definitely a challenge as we found when putting these issues together. Despite our contributors’ (and we include ourselves in this) enthusiasm for getting their students working with different GENRES, doing it ourselves proved quite difficult. Perhaps it was the sword of Damocles hanging over our heads and the worry that we couldn’t put across our scholarly thinking adequately if we used non-conventional GENRES. Or perhaps, more importantly, we worried that our readers wouldn’t recognise the scholarly in our work because it was not presented in familiar frames using academic WRITING CONVENTIONS. Whatever the case, we are very proud of all the contributions here because whether conventional or unconventional in GENRE, they all focus on change (or strange) in academia – not for the sake of it alone, but because it offers real opportunities for the representation of disciplinary knowledge. As editors our eXpectations have been well and truly met!

***Y is for Yippee and Yikes***

One of the criticisms that using non-traditional GENRES can bring with them is that they are ‘novelties’. Is it done to attract attention? Is it possible that the content really is as good as conventional academic GENRES such as the essay, the article, the report, the DISSERTATION and so on (something that Will describes in his article, E ?). As several of the contributions show, students’ initial delight at working differently can sometimes lead to worries about their ability to produce as well as they want to with these new forms of assignment – particularly when the new forms involve producing for a more public audience than the almost private nature of essays. Even making your own NAMETAG at a conference can be daunting despite the pleasure of being able to have fun being VISUAL with bits of paper and glue, particularly if you are not a professional artist or designer in a room full of such! It is also sometimes difficult to persuade colleagues that alternative GENRES will provide the ‘rigour’ that the essay and DISSERTATION is intended to promote. However, experiences show that work produced using different GENRES can surprise and delight reluctant adopters and students alike not just for originality but for intellectual quality too. It is, though, worth pointing out that you can’t turn a sow’s ear into a silk purse; using a different GENRE does not automatically lead to high quality work!

**Z is for Zeitgeist**

During the time we have been working on organising the workshop, conference and then these two issues, we have frequently sent each other examples that we have come across that could be classed as reGENRING. While not everybody might refer to this practice as GENRING or reGENRING, the idea of exploring the different outcomes that research can take and develop it beyond the traditional academic form has a lot of benefits for both production and dissemination, as is explored in these two issues. And whether you are using the theoretical framework of the GENRE or not, this is clearly an idea whose time has come. We hope that these two issues will make a useful contribution to readers’ teaching and research practices, whether you work in fields usually associated with creative practice or not and we also hope that you’ll enjoy reading them.