

## Enhancing the research process through the practice of gratitude by supervisors and HDR students

This highly interactive workshop is for both graduate research students and supervisors and explores the application of recent research that demonstrates the part an increased attention to the practice of gratitude can play in building both personal resilience, stronger relationships, and improved research outcomes. The workshop builds upon two decades of research by the facilitator (eg Howells, 2012; Howells, 2014) who has presented seminars and workshops on the role of gratitude broadly defined here as the act of giving back with acknowledgement of what has been received, in ways that are not necessarily reciprocal' at eleven different universities around Australia and internationally. One of the issues that the workshop addresses is the high attrition and non-completion rates of PhD candidates, who often cite poor relationships with supervisors as the main reason for their withdrawal ((Unsworth et al 2010; Grant and Graham, 1999).

The workshop offers practical strategies to enable participants to bring greater focus and intentionality to their relationships, and thus take leadership in a domain that is given little precedence in academia up to this point. Admittedly, there has been a recent movement towards considering supervision as a pedagogy and a sophisticated skill, rather than solely a part of the research process that should just happen through osmosis (Grant, 2010; Walker, 2010). This is reflected in the many university programs that have been developed to provide instruction and support to both supervisors and students. However, many supervisors would be aware that we need to consider supervision as more than performing a purely structural role, and would concede that there is a social-emotional aspect (Manathunga, 2009). Most programs that support postgraduate students traditionally tend to focus on areas such as research skills, time management, the socialisation process, and clarification of goals and expectations. There is, however, little attention given to the ontological dimensions of higher degree supervision relationships and underlying pedagogical support or resources that need to be directed at facilitating a flourishing relationship between the supervisor and the candidate.

A particular focus of the workshop is how resentment which is conceptually the opposite of gratitude (Roberts, 2004) can undermine both the creative process as well as personal and relational wellbeing. Positioned in the context of supervisor-student relationships, participants will explore proactive ways of expressing complaint, and see how this is a powerful means of also expressing gratitude. The workshop will draw on data that captures experiences reported by students and supervisors in a recent pilot study in the Faculties of Medicine and Physical Sciences at the University of Tasmania. Outcomes from this study have highlighted themes of enhanced social and personal well being; clearer thinking processes; and improved productivity, when students and supervisors more fully recognise what they receive from the research process and actively give back from this acknowledgment. The workshop will also address the identified challenges in taking up gratitude in this context: lack of trust; cross-cultural differences; and conceptual misunderstandings.