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Summary of student needs and desired resources for publishing:

Overview of publishing opportunities: journals, calls for articles, and editorial expectations.

Guidance for practice-based research: translating visual or practice-led work into structured academic writing.

Mentorship from experienced academics: advice and feedback from those familiar with publishing in relevant fields.

Normalising publishing: normalising publishing as part of doctoral research - PhD supervisors to be involved.

Key ideas from the interview:

Publishing as accidental:

- Publication emerged *by chance*, not through a transparent or accessible system.
- Opportunities often depend on visibility at conferences rather than open calls.
- Publishing feels random and opaque to PhD students.

Practice-based research vs academic writing

- Practice-based research often prioritises storytelling over argument.
- Writing for publication forces clearer articulation of research questions and problems.
- Writing should be treated as its own form, not as support for images or slides.
- Removing visuals exposed gaps in argument and reinforces critical thinking.

Lack of institutional support for publishing

- Conferences are well promoted; publishing opportunities are not.

- Students lack awareness of journals, editorial cultures, and submission pathways.
- Supervisors rarely initiate conversations about publishing during the PhD.

Confidence, validation, and academic identity

- Publishing provided major validation and boosted confidence as a researcher.
- It reframed their sense of belonging within academia.
- Publishing helped unlock stalled thinking and move research forward.

Need for normalisation and transparency

- Publishing should be normalised as part of doctoral culture.
- Doctoral School could provide:
 - Lists of relevant journals and publications
 - Peer learning around publishing practices

Transcript (edited):

AT: Yeah, it's recording now.

XX: OK, great. So—writing for publication?

AT: Yes, writing for publication, meaning making material with the intention of making it public. I'm mostly focused on writing for the PGCert research, but you mentioned that you've written something for publication as well?

XX: Yes. I gave a presentation at an international conference in September 2023. It was a hybrid conference, and my session was online. They didn't record it properly, so they asked me to re-record it afterwards, which was painful.

There were very few people attending live, which I think is a problem with hybrid conferences—you can present many papers, but audiences are fragmented because people watch later on demand.

Months later, I was contacted by a well-established scholar in the dance sector. She said she had seen my presentation and invited me to apply to contribute a chapter to a renewed *[journal]*

published by Routledge. I applied—it was largely a formality—and recently I was told the publication will be out next year.

It's been an interesting journey in terms of **time scale and how accidental it was**. This is probably the highest-profile scholarly publication in the dance and choreography field.

The chapter fits exactly where I want to position myself—interdisciplinary practice—and it's essentially a condensed 5,000-word version of my PhD. It ticked so many boxes.

AT: (laughs)

XX: I initially thought that poor conference engagement was all I'd get from the experience—just something to list in my annual report. **Instead, it turned into an incredible opportunity, possibly more significant than my PhD itself.**

AT: It will certainly be more widely read.

XX: Yes. It was very fortunate, and I'm extremely grateful. But it also raises questions about how these opportunities arise—whether I would have been published if there had been an open call.

AT: If there had been an open call, would you have applied?

XX: Honestly, I don't know. **Being invited was a huge boost to my confidence. I never really saw myself publishing academically.**

AT: Why was that?

XX: I come from a journalism background—writing reviews, arts and culture pieces, opinion writing. **I associate writing with something reactive and current. Academic writing feels very different, especially within practice-based research.**

Understanding and articulating practice-based research is so challenging that it shifts how you see yourself—you don't quite feel part of an academic community.

If my PhD had been by publication, I might see myself differently. Most of my engagements have been workshop-based or practical. **Even conference contributions were presentations, usually PowerPoints. Over time, research gets reduced to slides, and writing becomes secondary. Again, this taps into how writing for academic publishing is so different from other types of publishing - and support is needed.**

AT: Because the work is so visually led?

XX: Exactly. Visuals do a lot of the work for us, which actually undermines confidence in writing. Writing feels difficult because images carry the meaning.

AT: So how did you approach writing for the Routledge publication?

XX: It was after my confirmation, and only two images were allowed. I had to think purely through text. **That forced me to see writing as its own medium, not as support for visuals.**

The text had to convey everything—argument, problem, analysis—without relying on images. That shifted my mindset away from storytelling toward articulating a clear research problem.

AT: So you had to foreground the argument.

XX: Yes. Images encourage slick storytelling, but storytelling isn't the same as argument. Writing forced me to analyse and pull out strands properly.

AT: What stage of your PhD are you at now?

XX: I'm writing up and preparing for submission. I haven't had my viva yet.

AT: Had you published before this?

XX: I had presented at conferences—maybe three or four over the course of my PhD—but not published academically. This opportunity aligned perfectly with work I was already doing, which made it possible.

AT: I'm trying to understand how institutions like UAL can support students in writing for publication.

XX: What's widely publicised are conferences, but what's missing is visibility of publication opportunities—calls for articles, journals, edited volumes. If I hadn't presented at that conference, I would never have known the reader was being updated. Publishing feels random and inaccessible unless you're already inside those circles.

AT: Yes, and sometimes editors just invite people directly.

XX: That's fine, but people still need to know what publications exist. Doctoral students should have an overview of major journals and platforms relevant to their fields.

AT: Who do you think should provide that support?

XX: The doctoral school is best placed to do it. Not by doing the work for students, but by providing a compendium of publications—high profile, low profile, academic, hybrid—and demystifying editorial cultures.

Student journals don't solve the problem. They can feel patronising. Writing should be good enough to exist in real publishing contexts.

AT: [Name] from the doctoral school said publishing should happen during the PhD, not only afterwards.

XX: In theory, yes. In practice, publishing isn't part of the conversation. Supervisors focus on practice, confirmation, and submission. Publishing rarely comes up, especially when supervisors don't publish themselves or work across disciplines.

AT: So publishing isn't normalised.

XX: Exactly. And when it does happen, the validation is enormous. That one article boosted my confidence, my research, and my sense of belonging as a researcher.

It's like realising how hungry you were only after you've eaten.

AT: Congratulations—it's very impressive.

XX: Thank you. I still feel slightly ridiculous being alongside scholars I deeply respect, but that just shows publishing isn't only about seniority. It's about fit, relevance, and editorial context.