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Summary of student needs and desired resources for publishing:

Discipline-specific guidance: Help understanding the publication process, peer review, journal selection, and expectations, especially for arts- and practice-based research.

Trusted peer community: Confidential space to discuss ideas, drafts, and challenges at different stages of publishing; support to reduce isolation.

Mentorship from experienced academics: Guidance and feedback from staff or alumni who have experience publishing in relevant fields.

Emotional and confidence support: Workshops or guidance on handling fear of rejection, vulnerability, and building resilience throughout the publishing process.

Key ideas and themes from the interview:

Publishing as exposure and risk:

- Publishing feels like loss of ownership.
- Strong fear around vulnerability and public sharing.
- Tension between visibility and self-protection.

Feeling of isolation and desire for connection:

- Research experienced is lonely.
- Publishing imagined as a way to build community and dialogue.
- Strong motivation to connect with other researchers.

Personal research and fear of rejection:

- Anxiety leads to avoidance and withdrawal from submission.
- Publishing perceived as slow, harsh, and judgmental.
- Need to develop emotional distance from feedback.

Perception of writing as process, not output:

- Writing happens through multiple modes: speaking, recording, drawing, diary writing.
- Flow fluctuates depending on emotional state.
- Writing is intertwined with mental states and confidence.

Community-based support:

- Desire for peer groups that support the *whole publishing process*.
- Importance of trust, confidentiality, and encouragement.
- Community seen as more valuable than isolated skills workshops.

Institutional support: present but insufficient:

- Academic support offers reassurance but limited depth.
- Structural constraints (time, access, experience) reduce effectiveness.
- Discrepancy between emotional needs and institutional provision.

Transcript (edited):

AT: Thanks for meeting with me, XX. Could we start with your experience of writing for publication?

XX: I don't really feel like I have experience of writing for publication. For me, writing usually feels more like free writing, or something private. Writing for publication feels different—it requires choosing a subject, positioning it, and thinking about an audience. I've never really imagined myself doing that.

I've been written about in newspapers or catalogues, where someone interviews me about my practice and then writes the text themselves. My work and research appear in the text, but I'm not the author. I'm not sure whether that counts as publication. [This is a common experience in practice-based and practice-led research. Artist-researchers are generally accustomed to making](#)

their work public, but they are often the subject of the text rather than its author. Translating practice into a written academic article is more complex, and many artists/students find this particularly challenging.

AT: And when did you start becoming interested in publishing yourself?

XX: I read a lot of publications, and they're a major source of inspiration and knowledge for me. Being part of that conversation feels important. Publishing feels like a way to enter dialogue with other researchers and debates, rather than just working alone.

At the same time, research can feel overwhelming and very personal. I feel a strong need to protect my ideas and my knowledge. Once something is public, it no longer belongs only to you, and that's frightening—especially when research draws on personal experience. This taps into anxieties around publication, particularly fears of losing control over one's ideas.

AT: So there's a tension between sharing and protecting?

XX: Yes, very much. I'm inspired by people who share personal stories as part of their research and turn them into publications. I've seen people whose PhDs became multiple publications, and that brought them opportunities, funding, and visibility.

But for me, sharing personal material feels embarrassing and risky. I'm still at an early stage in my research, and I worry: if I share everything, what will be left? What is my original contribution if everyone is using similar references?

AT: What makes publishing appealing despite those fears?

XX: Research feels very isolating. I expected that doing a PhD would create a sense of community, but after three years I still feel like I'm working alone. I'm hoping that publishing could help me connect with people who share similar interests and create future collaborations.

I've self-published before—small books combining drawings and diary writing—but that feels very different. It's more personal and contained.

AT: Are you interested in academic journals specifically?

XX: Yes. I want to understand how academic publishing works—peer review, journals, expectations. My research sits between movement, improvisation, drawing, embodiment, and choreography. I don't know where it fits, but I imagine journals in performance or dance would make sense. Not understanding the publication process, or knowing which journals are available, is a common experience. While the UAL Doctoral School's Padlet lists a range of journals, this is not extensive, and additional guidance from someone researching in the same area could be particularly helpful.

I haven't published yet because writing feels very hard. Publishing demands originality, argument, structure, and rules. You put something very personal into the world and then wait months for feedback that could be very harsh. This is very common: at the beginning, all stages of publishing

can feel daunting, particularly without prior experience of the process or involvement in academic publishing.

AT: What kind of support do you feel you need?

XX: **Community. Support during different stages—choosing where to submit, writing, waiting, receiving feedback. A group where people can talk honestly about difficulties and fears, while respecting confidentiality.**

I also need encouragement. If no one tells me I can do it, I start believing I can't. Fear of rejection is a big issue. I've even withdrawn a paper because I was too scared to receive a rejection.

AT: What happens emotionally when work is rejected?

XX: It feels very personal. You submit something that feels like part of yourself, and rejection feels like rejection of you. I know intellectually that it's not the case, but emotionally it's very hard.

I'm learning that publishing requires distance—treating feedback as part of a process, not as a judgment of worth—but that's difficult.

AT: How do you experience writing itself?

XX: Writing is a long and uneven process. Sometimes I write freely, record myself speaking, or write in Chinese to get ideas out. When I'm in a good state, writing flows. When I've received harsh feedback, I lose confidence and struggle to continue.

At those times, I seek support—academic services, colleagues, conversations—but that also makes me feel vulnerable. Asking for help feels risky because feedback can hurt again.

AT: How do you experience institutional support?

XX: Academic support can help with structure and reassurance, but it's limited. They don't proofread, and some staff haven't published much themselves. Sometimes the feedback is encouraging but not deeply useful. I heard this several times. There are relatively few academic support tutors with experience of publishing, which can sometimes feel disconnected from PhD work.

There are also practical limitations: short sessions, few appointments, and restrictions to specific colleges. That makes sustained support difficult.

AT: If you could design additional support, what would it be?

XX: **A trusted peer community, combined with guidance from more experienced academics who understand publishing cultures. A space where ideas can be talked through safely, without pressure to immediately share everything publicly.**

Publishing feels less about originality alone and more about character, perspective, and how you approach a topic. Even if others work on similar ideas, everyone arrives there differently.

AT: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

XX: If I decide to publish, I want to do it carefully, with people I trust. I want to learn how to share without losing myself in the process.