

CHAPTER 2

From Cultural Entrepreneurs to an Apprenticeship Practice

Examining Legacy Effects through Three Case Studies:

Arcade Publications (2007–12),

The Lifted Brow (est. 2007),

The Bowen Street Press (est. 2016)

TRACY O'SHAUGHNESSY, ROSE MICHAEL, RONNIE SCOTT

Introduction

Small independent start-up presses have always been instrumental in providing a platform and offering apprenticeships for many of Australia's publishing professionals—from writers and editors to other emerged and emerging positions. The disruption of the 1970s—changes in book trade practices (the abolition of resale price maintenance and rights allowing the production of local editions of many US-originated books) and technology (the increasing affordability of offset, and ultimately offshore, printing)—paved the way for the “emergence of a swag of pacesetting independent publishers, such as Outback Press, Lonely Planet and McPhee Gribble”.¹ The ‘aughts’ disruptors—again, changes in trade practices (self-publishing and globalisation) and technology (print-on-demand and ebooks)—created another wave of entrepreneurship and opportunity.

1 Jim Hart, “New Wave Seventies,” in *Paper Empires: A History of the Book in Australia*, ed. Craig Munro (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2006), 53.

Small independent presses are agile and experimental and, of necessity and inclination, take risks on new writers and innovative ideas. The individuals involved develop varied skill sets and learn on the job in an iterative process of experiential learning—wherein concrete experience and reflective observation are synthesised into conceptual understanding, leading, in turn, to active experimentation—that has always underpinned the publishing profession.² As Thompson notes, “The publishing industry—both in literary agencies and in publishing houses—remains largely an apprentice-based industry.”³ Our key point is that this process is an evolution of, and variation on, formal and informal apprenticeship practices often associated with other trades.

We are three academics from RMIT University who teach into The Bowen Street Press. Established in 2016, The Bowen Street Press is the student-led teaching imprint operating within and out of RMIT’s Master of Writing and Publishing. Rose Michael (co-founder of Arcade Publications) and Ronnie Scott (founder of The Lifted Brow) teach writing, editing and research courses that support the press, while Tracy O’Shaughnessy (previously publisher at Melbourne University Press and Allen & Unwin) is publisher.

In 2017 we undertook the case studies presented here to reflect on our personal experience of skills acquisition via on-the-job learning in publishing, and document how we drew on the specific form of these apprenticeship experiences—“entrepreneurships” if you will—to create the model that underpins The Bowen Street Press. A spirit of entrepreneurial initiative is the foundation for the work-integrated-learning student experience of The Bowen Street Press. Our model emphasises independent and collaborative problem solving, and is predicated on the principle of learning by doing. We see these as

2 David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning* (New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2015).

3 John B. Thompson, *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 78.

“legacy skills” insofar as they represent a valuable inheritance, not a superseded software.

Our own experience as publishers and culture entrepreneurs—including the accidents and emergencies that typify entrepreneurial publishing—enabled us to build specific skills and establish practices that we still rely on today in our work as writers, editors, publishers and teachers. This chapter explores the different approaches taken by our respective start-ups (including key drivers for forming a start-up, such as perceived opportunity, impetus and the importance of community); details the findings (articulating an apprenticeship model built on a process of iterative work and experiential learning); and summarises the benefit accrued by cultural entrepreneurship and apprenticeship practices—for individual editors and publishers, and the vitality of the publishing industry.

Case studies

The Lifted Brow, now more than ten years old, is a literary organisation that started out as a journal and has recently expanded into book publishing as Brow Books. It is well known for its mixed focus on genre fiction, experimental and lyric forms of nonfiction, high and popular culture, visual arts, comics, and music; for a character distinctive in Australian publishing and initially influenced by mid-aughts US publishing organisations such as McSweeney’s; and, initially, for its independence from government or institutional funding. In this chapter, we focus on its establishment and early growth period, from 2007–12.

Describing itself first as a “journal of letters, arts, sciences, etc.” and soon after as “an attack journal”—a subtitle dropped and then reinstated by later editors—*The Lifted Brow* originally brought out two issues a year, first a substantial saddle-stitched zine and then perfect-bound A5 journals. It moved on to a newsprint format, publishing

six issues a year, and now comes out quarterly in a perfect-bound, magazine-style format on matte uncoated paper. The book publishing arm launched its first novel in 2016 and, in 2017, sold international rights to its second.

The Lifted Brow has been a significant publication/brand/presence/platform in both Brisbane and Melbourne, the two cities it has made its home, and has been identified as a member of the renaissance of the litmag movement in Phillip Edmonds's *Tilting at Windmills: The Literary Magazine in Australia 1968–2012*.⁴ According to the *Times Literary Supplement*, the organisation is “provocative, contrary, historically literate and unremittingly idealistic”.⁵

Arcade Publications was a “micro” press that ran for the same period, from 2007–12. It published a dozen titles during that time, the content of which largely consisted of mini-biographies of unconventional characters from Melbourne's history—such as bookseller, publisher and builder of our well-known book arcade, E.W. Cole; brothel owner, Madame Brussels; and Fitzroy chocolatier, Macpherson Robertson—as well as broader histories such as *The Making of Modern Melbourne*, *Melbourne Remade*, *Hoax Nation*, and a collection of Oslo Davis's “Melbourne Overheard” column.

In keeping with its slogan, “small books, big stories”, Arcade published practically palm-sized A6 editions. Most were mono-colour productions, printed digitally and locally. The press also experimented with early ebooks—embedding video files and distributing PDFs direct at a higher than usual price-point—and became well-known for its events, such as walking tours that ran during the Melbourne Writers Festival, in conjunction with Hidden Secrets Tours, which the press shared an office with in the famous Nicholas Building.

4 Phillip Edmonds, *Tilting at Windmills: The Literary Magazine in Australia 1968–2012* (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press, 2015).

5 Houman Barekat, “Ribbons of Argument,” *Times Literary Supplement*, October 25, 2017, <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/private/ribbons-of-argument-lifted-brow/>.

According to Simon Caterson, Arcade “identified a gap in the market for short, inexpensive, carefully designed books covering aspects of Melbourne’s hitherto unexplored history”.⁶

Tracy O’Shaughnessy, a trade publisher with many years’ experience, developed her craft through a wide-ranging apprenticeship practice across a host of small-to-medium-sized presses (John Ferguson Publishing, Lesley McKay Publishing, Susan McCulloch Publishing, Lothian Books, Reed Books, Hardie Grant Books, Melbourne University Press, and Allen & Unwin). Starting as a publisher’s assistant, she worked within both the editorial and production disciplines, learning on the job and being mentored by her community (both peers and elders). She used her own apprenticeship experience to establish The Bowen Street Press, the student-led teaching press operating within and running out of RMIT’s Master of Writing and Publishing, in 2016. It is a compulsory subject: an inclusive internship program. This vertically integrated “studio” is supported by complementary technical and theoretical subjects (echoing the way entry-level publishing employees learn the broader cultural context of their business from meetings and conversations—which they may participate in or simply be witness to). It is a pedagogical practice explicitly based on the on-the-job learning that Tracy recognised as having been the cornerstone of her own industry experience. First- and second-year students come together on a range of projects for a full day’s work each week in a dedicated office space, and there is a stated expectation that the cohort will spend the same amount of time doing independently directed activity—such as content creation (writing and sourcing images) or book production (structural and copyediting, proofreading, collating corrections, press checks, etc.).

6 Simon Caterson, “From Little Ventures Small Wonders Emerge,” *The Age*, January 24, 2009, <https://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/books/from-little-ventures-small-wonders-emerge-20090124-ge7n2x.html>.

During their time in The Bowen Street Press students work across diverse projects in a wide variety of genres, including fiction, non-fiction, journals, anthologies, poetry and digital publishing (iBooks/web-based content). They work with industry mentors, RMIT programs and not-for-profits, to produce a suite of publications in various formats, from colour to black-and-white, custom publishing ventures to websites and marketing materials. They assume different roles in different publishing departments at different stages throughout their degree. By the end of its second year the press had published twenty titles, ranging from handmade zines to issues of *Rabbit* poetry journal, as well as academic research collections and trade catalogues.

The common ground between Arcade Publications and The Lifted Brow, as cultural enterprises, and then The Bowen Street Press, as both a cultural enterprise and a teaching press, is the collection of skills learned on the job, how they are passed between practitioners, and how they are used to publish books and magazines. The remainder of this chapter examines the makeup of this on-the-job learning and suggests it can collectively be called an apprenticeship practice, a model common to publishing—an industry typified by individual initiative and ad hoc opportunities.

Methodology

Key Drivers

Start-ups, as most small independent presses initially are, have always been an important part of the Australian publishing community. In the early 1970s Australian publishing experienced one of its most exciting periods with the aforementioned emergence of Hart's "pacesetting independent publishers", whose influences can still be seen today.⁷ There were, among others, Outback Press (founded by Morrie Schwartz, who went

7 Hart, "New Wave Seventies," 53.

on to set up Black Inc.), Lonely Planet (the venture of Maureen and Jim Wheeler, patrons of The Wheeler Centre), and McPhee Gribble (the initiative of Hilary McPhee and Diana Gribble; the latter who went on to play a key role in the establishment of Text Publishing).

These cultural entrepreneurs, fresh out of their university degrees, took advantage of the foundations laid down by their predecessors in the 1950s and 60s, and this—coupled with shifts in trade practices and copyright—created an environment ripe for experimentation and growth. According to Magner, this boom in local publishing “continued well into the 1970s with the value of Australian publishing doubling three times over the period 1961–1979”.⁸

The impact of small, independent presses on the industry’s ecosystem has been historically significant (think of Greenhouse, Allen & Unwin, Text, Scribe, Hardie Grant, Affirm, Spinifex, Kill Your Darlings, etc.), and this influence continues today. As *The Lifted Brow* has been identified as part of a resurgence of “litmags”,⁹ so *Arcade* was described by Caterson as coming at a time when the Melbourne micro-publishing scene “was very attractive. Dozens of tiny publishers are producing everything from handmade recipe books, fiction and poetry to popular nonfiction and even book-like objects that defy classification.”¹⁰

According to *Forbes*, the American business magazine focused on finance, investing and marketing, the essential elements for a successful start-up are strategic perspective, being cash conservative, customers and commitment, integrity and transparency.¹¹ Translating these

8 Brigid Magner, “Anglo-Australian Relations in the Book Trade,” in *Paper Empires: A History of the Book in Australia*, ed. Craig Munro (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2006), 7.

9 Edmonds, *Tilting at Windmills*.

10 Caterson, “From Little Ventures Small Wonders Emerge.”

11 Cheryl Conner, “5 Sure Signs a Start-Up Firm Will Succeed,” *Forbes*, July 12, 2012, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/cherylsnappconner/2012/07/12/5-sure-signs-a-startup-firm-will-succeed/#1cd949d9c1da>.

elements into a publishing context, we have analysed our start-ups through the lens of perceived opportunity, impetus, and community.

Discussion

Perceived Opportunity

For Ronnie Scott and the small group of Arts students at Queensland University of Technology with whom he established *The Lifted Brow* in 2006 (to be launched in January 2007), there was a shared perception that few literary magazines were being published in Brisbane—and that there was a gap in the market nationally for non-traditional content and unconventional genres.

That same year, further south, lecturers Rose Michael and Dale Campisi started publishing from the office they shared at the University of Melbourne, similarly believing they saw a unique opportunity—in their case, for books that blurred the distinction between storytelling and history. They believed, as Allen Lane did, in the existence of a reading public (which did not need to be vast) for low-price small-format books—which, they thought, would be designed around, and appreciated for, their content rather than aesthetics.¹² The pair believed larger publishers were making unnecessarily conservative choices—in terms of authorship and format—in response to commercial pressures, such as the impending Global Financial Crisis and collapse of Borders, which would lead to its ill-conceived purchase by Pacific Equity Partners. They were convinced there was room for a different kind of quick, cheap, creative publishing.

A decade later two main factors prompted the establishment of The Bowen Street Press: the launch of the RMIT's new Master of Writing

12 Anne Trubeck, "How the Paperback Novel Changed Popular Literature," *Smithsonian*, March 30, 2010, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/how-the-paperback-novel-changed-popular-literature-11893941/>.

and Publishing—incorporating the university’s well-respected Graduate Diploma in Editing and Publishing, which was established in 1988 as the inaugural higher-education editorial qualification in Australia—and the diminishing capacity of the industry to offer traditional in-house editorial apprenticeships.¹³ Informed by her twenty years of industry experience across a number of the independent publishers cited here as stalwarts of the trade, Tracy O’Shaughnessy developed a program based on a formal apprenticeship model—enabled by the establishment of Australia’s first functional teaching press—designed to mirror industry best practice.¹⁴

For Ronnie and Rose, a degree of “productive” ignorance played an important part in their perception of opportunity: if they’d had more industry experience, or an awareness of prevailing market conditions, they might have been dissuaded from their enterprises at the outset. If Ronnie’s peers had known where to publish revisionist historical fiction and speculative fiction in rhyming couplets, they may not have persevered with launching a platform themselves; if Rose had been able to find creative curated tales in bespoke, bookish packages, she may not have ventured into publishing.

The Impetus

But it wasn’t only a (possible) gap in the market that prompted these start-ups; it was also a desire on the part of the individuals in question not just to produce something, but to be part of that production experience. While Tracy had been lucky enough to have a traditional apprenticeship, and was keen to provide that opportunity to future publishing professionals in turn, both Ronnie and Rose felt no such options were available to them at that time. Instead, they took it upon

13 Louise Poland, “The Business, Craft and Profession of the Book Editor,” in *Making Books: Contemporary Australian Publishing*, ed. David Carter and Anne Galligan (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2007), 107.

14 Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

themselves to learn by doing, involving friends and partners in their ambitious endeavours. According to Paul Carter, material thinking—thinking through doing—and collaboration between peers are natural bedfellows; indeed, collaboration “is what begins to happen whenever artists talk about what they are doing, in that simple but enigmatic step, joining hand, eye and mind in a process of material thinking”.¹⁵

There was a strong wish on the part of all three authors to work the way they wanted to—which was not necessarily according to convention. These publishers’ acts of cultural entrepreneurship sprang not only from political, personal and aesthetic convictions, but from the simple pleasure of making creative cultural artefacts with others, which was quickly followed by a wish to keep on doing and developing that. The fun of first projects kept all three publishers going, extending perceived opportunity and impetus into ongoing professional concerns.

In a 2002 interview with Eve Vincent, Gribble noted that, “Publishing in Australia was a real boys’ club: they were intelligent, beer-drinking blokes. And women were editors and secretaries and publicity people, but they weren’t publishers.”¹⁶ For all three of our authors there was an active desire to propagate a diversity of voices as well as provide an opportunity for those words to be read.

The Community

Authors

For *The Lifted Brow* the city of Brisbane offered “Goldilocks” conditions. It proved just right for the formation of a literary enterprise: it was large enough to support a venture like *The Lifted Brow* but small enough that the market was not crowded. It was possible to create

15 Paul Carter, *Material Thinking: The Theory and Practice of Creative Research* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004), xiii.

16 Elizabeth Howcroft, Eric Beecher and Michael Heyward, “Gribble, Diana (Di) (1942–2011),” *Obituaries Australia*, October 22, 2011, <http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/gribble-diana-di-16650/text28549>.

and sustain a literary journal consisting of writing by non-writers (i.e. friends and acquaintances who did not aspire to write professionally), diverse visual material (including comics), and—from the second issue and in intermittent issues thereafter—music in the form of CDs, which included commissions from local bands. For those involved—the editors, illustrators, designer, regular and irregular contributors—the project formalised an established practice of hanging out and conducting literary activities—like reading nights that sometimes were and sometimes were not connected to institutions such as universities, writers festivals and bookstores.

In Melbourne, Dale and Rose had discussed publishing fiction for some time; unable to find the right manuscript they began—as *The Lifted Brow* had—to approach friends and acquaintances (fellow academics, generally) who they thought would have good stories that the duo could help tell. Unbeknownst to them then, this is how most publishers begin commissioning nonfiction: by approaching industry experts, frequently through personal connections. Arcade's first title would be by Lisa Lang, who was writing a novel about the author of Cole's *Funny Picture Books* at the time and whom Dale knew from Deakin University connections (*Utopian Man* would go on to co-win the Allen & Unwin/Vogel award). Arcade asked her to write a brief history of the man himself from the extensive research she had undertaken, and set about securing a City of Melbourne grant as an author fee. The rest, as they say, is (micro)history.

The Bowen Street Press gets its authors and projects from a broader range of sources, but they too tend to come through the publisher's personal and professional connections: there are student anthologies from RMIT's undergraduate (creative writing and professional communication) and postgraduate (communication design and communication) programs; publishing proposals passed on from smaller presses (in particular, authors whose projects are not viable in a commercial environment); and books for not-for-profits, such as the wellbeing

book *Hearts in Mind*, produced for Darebin City Council's Mindful Art Project.

Readers

From the beginning *The Lifted Brow's* community of contributors, subscribers and one-off readers was sourced partly from a "traditional" literary community—people who found literary magazines in bookstores, at reading nights and writers festivals—and partly from a broader community of musicians, fans and visual artists. Its editors became aware that the magazine was selling outside a trade market, and began to see it as a publication that occupied a non-traditional market position, which, in turn, influenced the kind of work being produced for and published in *The Lifted Brow's* pages. As an early point of difference, the editors decided—at first informally, but it was then articulated more formally—that content would not relate to the practice of creative writing, i.e. no "writing about writing". This is one example of a creative decision that was made on the fly, which then became policy and stood the magazine in good stead with its readers.

The readership of *The Bowen Street Press* varies with each title, but largely falls into two categories: the creative communities of the individuals involved, who are for the most part writers and artists, and niche communities that are identified by or identify with a particular publication—such as *Silver Linings: True Stories of Resilience from a General Practitioner*, which has sold over two thousand copies (a respectable print run for a small press with no formal distribution network) through targeted bookshop and local community sales.

As with the other presses, *Arcade Publications's* readers were also its contributors—writers and illustrators etc.—and their friends. Unusually, for a book publisher, these individuals made it clear they were committed to the imprint, rather than specific titles or even authors—they asked whether they couldn't subscribe to the press, as they might to a literary magazine like *The Lifted Brow*, saying they trusted the publishers

to create and curate a list. Basically, they were offering to crowdfund future titles by pre-ordering sight unseen. That brand loyalty showed the imprint's popularity and possible significance for the community it came from and published into.

In retrospect, the Arcade venture was most successful where it challenged extant processes and changed the conventional economic model by moving from a traditional sale-or-return deal with an established distributor, through individual firm-sale arrangements with non-traditional book outlets, towards direct-to-consumer sales at events (where the buy-before-publication idea was mooted). By the time their “business” model had evolved in this way, Dale and Rose had learnt that they were not that interested in distribution or sales—let alone chasing payments. As well as teaching what you want to do, and how to do it, an apprenticeship is an effective way of learning what you don't want to do. It became clear to the pair that they were drawn to the conception and creation side of bookmaking: writing, editing, design and production.

The diverse, yet not so dissimilar, audiences of these three publishers evidence what Emmett Stinson has described as “prosumer” culture: “contemporary literary audiences are increasingly made up of prosumers who are themselves engaged in the creation or mediation of literary works”.¹⁷ The communities reached by smaller—and especially the very smallest—publications are, to a considerable degree, composed of readers who already have some connection to the literary sphere: as writers, editors and publishers, or those who aspire to such positions (such as students in creative writing programs, members of writers' centres and the like). The participatory audiences of the presses we have been investigating play(ed) a key part in the success of each.

17 Emmett Stinson, “Small Publishers and the Emerging Network of Australian Literary Prosumption,” *Australian Humanities Review* 59 (April/May 2016): 33.

Findings

Apprenticeships

Neither *The Lifted Brow* nor *Arcade Publishing* was established as a learning opportunity for its staff, and they never evolved into “proper” apprenticeships for Ronnie or Rose. Few if any of the key players in these start-ups had any formal training in editing and publishing; running the organisations constituted that training. In this way these presses satisfy Lave and Wenger’s definition of an apprenticeship model—providing an opportunity to learn “through interactions between individuals, cultural tools and social communities”¹⁸—and this chapter argues for their recognition as an incidental amalgam of apprenticeship practices: collections of activities that constitute a range of experience, which, when recognised and recorded, can be passed on.

Early editions of *The Lifted Brow* were produced and edited primarily by undergraduate creative writing students. There was no formal process. The editing of each piece constituted a form of peer-to-peer mentorship, with an inexperienced editor (or sometimes more than one) negotiating the final form of a work through various versions with an often more experienced writer. These editorial practices were effectively on-the-job training, some of which built on skills formally acquired via a degree program—such as a second-year subject focused on the writer–editor relationship at Queensland University of Technology—but most of which evolved through a process of trial and error, where the process was a key part of what was learnt, as much as any final expertise.

Only the designer, who also worked part-time in-house for a non-publishing business, had relevant specialist tertiary training (interestingly, this was the same for *Arcade*).

18 Lave and Wenger, *Situated Learning*.

Between the fourth and fifth issues of *The Lifted Brow*, the staff was reduced to one and the magazine began to take on volunteers in specific roles—as publicists, proofreaders, guest editors, special project officers and interns. From that time on more traditional mentorship structures began to emerge, generally clustered around a small group of tasks, a specific day of the week, and a limited span of time. Slowly *The Lifted Brow* developed the larger, clearer structure that it has today, where many editors work within different arms of the organisation.

The editors at *Arcade* developed hard and soft skills through the same organic, responsive process: developing author contracts (with the help of the brother of one of the founders, who was a barrister) and researching territorial rights (when an advertisement in *Think Australian* unexpectedly produced interest) as the need arose. As at *The Lifted Brow*, there were many mistakes that proved extremely educational: those involved learnt that books were printed in sixteen-page sections when an edition came back from the printer with blank pages at the end, and discovered the long lead time for selling-in to traditional channels when their distributor demanded marketing materials in advance of manuscripts.

These relationships with career printers and distributors—combined with the way *Arcade*'s two editors and two designers (who now constituted its four directors) shared knowledge and resources—provided a contemporary, collaborative, peer-networking version of an old-school, top-down traditional apprenticeship.

The *Bowen Street Press*, in contrast, was consciously established according to an apprenticeship model in order to provide students with an opportunity to learn-by-interning. Mirroring Tracy's own career—from assistant (first to a managing director and then to the production department) to editor, and ultimately a publishing role—the *Bowen Street Press* studio cycles individuals through different projects each semester and, over the course of their degree, typical publishing

departments. Students acquire technical skills and practical experience in the same way that she did: by receiving mentoring from more experienced editors (whether second-years, already-employed peers or tutors). They learn what can go wrong, and how to make things right—a large part of publishing is, after all, problem-solving—via an iterative process of continual making.

For every hard skill—such as copyediting, proofreading, laying out pages or seeking copyright permissions—there is an equally important soft skill that future producers need to master: from basic professional communication to diplomacy, persuasiveness, resourcefulness and time management. Academic understanding is not necessarily the only or, indeed, most effective way to develop such subtle but essential attributes for a career in our industry, which is so fundamentally based on relationships.

By contrast with *The Lifted Brow* and *Arcade Publications*, *The Bowen Street Press* is intentionally structured as an apprenticeship practice, conceived and communicated to students as such by Tracy—as providing an opportunity to learn “through interactions between individuals, cultural tools and social communities”.¹⁹ The pedagogical approach that underpins *The Bowen Street Press*’s iterative process—where skills are acquired on a case-by-case basis—reflects Kolb’s “Cycle of Experiential Learning”:²⁰ experiences suit the learner and are supported by reflection, critical analysis and synthesis; experiences are structured for the learner to take initiative, make decisions and be accountable. At every stage, the learner is actively engaged in posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative and constructing meaning.

Learning that progresses in line with Kolb’s cycle (from concrete experience to reflective observation to abstract conceptualisation to

19 Ibid.

20 Kolb, *Experiential Learning*.

active experimentation) both reflects the way our industry works—as producers move from project to project—and is well-suited to the current challenging publishing context.

The cycle of experiential learning can be seen in action through an itemisation of the task of checking corrections in The Bowen Street Press—a seemingly simple activity that in fact involves a mix of hard and soft skills:

1. First, the junior editor is given the task of checking corrections (a concrete experience).
2. Then, the junior editor sees corrections made by someone with more experience, studies both the type of editorial corrections and the technical proofreading mark-up (the learner makes observations and reflections based on that concrete experience).
3. Then, the junior editor starts to develop a list of editing, proofreading, and typesetting principles or best practice, as well as mark-up language (i.e. the learner synthesises observations and reflections into a new conceptual understanding and interpretation of experience).
4. Finally, following more iterations, the junior editor is able to edit and proofread other texts as well as understanding mark-up and undertaking their own (in other words, they apply their conceptual understanding and use it to guide new and purposeful experiences).

Legacy Skills

Although neither Arcade Publications nor The Lifted Brow were formal apprenticeships—they were not recognised as such in advance, regardless of whether they might be co-opted as such retrospectively—the individuals involved built up a substantial bank of experience, much of which quickly moved into the area of tacit knowledge and was

thereafter only visible upon reflection and, in the case of this chapter, comparison between individual experiences.

Regardless of the kind of knowledge acquired, and how they came by it, in the case of both Arcade Publications and The Lifted Brow, the final skill sets were such that their respective editors were able to secure new situations in paying workplaces, proving their hard and soft skills were robust and relevant.

From Arcade, Dale continued in the direction in which the business had been evolving, going on to create a range of distinct titles for New South Publishing that he and partner (in life and business) Michael Brady continue to develop and promote today. Rose took up a position in-house at Hardie Grant Books, where she project-managed a diverse range of titles and wide variety of authors—some of which would have fitted well with Arcade’s list (most obviously, *Cole’s Funny Little Picture Book*, a best-of collection curated by Dale and Michael, and a reprint of the press’s original guide to parenthood: *Sh*t on My Hands*).

While working at The Lifted Brow may have left Ronnie with distinct gaps in his editorial experience—when first freelancing for a trade publisher, he had to hunt for a guide to standard proofreading marks—the ranging responsibilities of a publishing start-up (from conceiving issues and reading submissions to commissioning content and artwork, from copyediting to managing budgets and promoting content on social media) has allowed him to pursue a varied career. Like Rose, he is a published fiction and nonfiction writer, has copy-edited for trade and commercial clients, and now lectures in creative writing and publishing, as well as conducting academic research in these areas.

It is perhaps no surprise that both Rose and Ronnie have found themselves particularly interested in the intersection of writing and publishing—teaching writers how to edit, editors how to write, and both groups how to be effective “prosumers”—frequently finding themselves drawn to or hired for those jobs that exist somewhere between

the categories of commissioning, copywriting, rewriting, ghostwriting and copyediting: the type of work that requires “legacy” skills to be used in an intuitive and responsive way.

According to Tony Gleason of the Australian Institute of Management, where graduates were once mentored into more well-rounded workers “companies now want job-ready individuals”.²¹ Apprenticeship practices train workers to adapt to contemporary conditions and to be continually adaptable; to learn on the job, and to expect nothing less than to keep learning—on one job or via a range of jobs.

Conclusion

This chapter shows how cultural entrepreneurship can constitute an informal apprenticeship practice that may be purposed towards a communication and dissemination of on-the-job skills—perhaps chief among them being the ethos that skills *are* learned on the job, i.e. through models of apprenticeship, as well as via complementary theoretical courses. Although editors and publishers may develop a range of hard and soft skills via an ad hoc mix of mentoring, experimentation and serendipity, each pathway takes the individuals involved to the same place, resulting in a publishing-specific skill set—see the list of legacy skills and specific knowledge acquired through the authors’ apprenticeships in Appendix 1—particularly relevant in today’s fast-changing and challenging times.

Through their apprenticeships the authors have developed a range of legacy skills and acquired specific knowledge (encompassing research, making books, marketing and promotion, event management, social media, advertising, sales, distribution and business management—in

21 John Elder, “The Rise of Soft Skills: Why Top Marks No Longer Get the Top Jobs,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, March 15, 2015, <http://www.smh.com.au/national/the-rise-of-soft-skills-why-top-marks-no-longer-get-the-best-jobs-20150314-1440ds.html>.

other words, cultural entrepreneurship skills, which are listed in Appendix 1) that they are passing on to others through their Bowen Street Press teaching, and continuing to develop via their own now-habitual creative and professional practice.

The aim of any apprenticeship is to learn enough to advance to the next stage. According to Richard Sennet, “All craftsmanship is founded on skill developed to a high degree... As skill progresses it becomes more problem-attuned”.²² The skills attained through an apprenticeship predicated on case-by-case vicissitudes are beyond rote learning; they allow editors and publishers to engage deeply with the fundamentals of our trade—problem-solving and people skills.

Apprenticeship practices, which may move between formal models and ad hoc practices, are particularly well-suited to the writing and publishing industry—an industry of novel ventures and original personalities. From gentleman publishers to collaborative presses, publishing has always been a close community, and cultural entrepreneurs, apprentices (including via informal, possibly unintended peer-to-peer networks), teaching presses and start-ups all stand to benefit from this history, built from valued relationships within established networks. As our industry comes under increasing financial pressure—needing to produce different outputs, and more quickly—outsourcing has become the norm. Yet the quality of our industry depends on small, independent cultural entrepreneurs that offer not only new, diverse voices, but a proving ground for future professionals and leaders. The Bowen Street Press now provides students with what Arcade and The Lifted Brow once offered their founders: an apprenticeship with in-built mentoring (by industry professionals), experimentation (with university peers), and an opportunity to glean legacy skills and relevant knowledge by working on iterative projects. These skills are crucial for the ongoing development and professionalism of our industry. Passing them on is critical.

22 Richard Sennet, *The Craftsman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 20.

Appendix 1

A non-exhaustive list of legacy skills and specific knowledge acquired through the authors' apprenticeships

commissioning fiction, nonfiction, interviews, poetry, experimental works, and illustrations; conceiving themes and ideas; submission call-outs; reading and evaluating submissions; giving feedback on submissions; undertaking research to identify story ideas; approaching fiction writers, journalists, experts and academics; liaising with existing authors and readers about potential future titles; production; image sourcing; contacting libraries, newspapers and individuals; briefing designers and typesetters on covers, images and text; checking pages; fact-checking; taking in changes in InDesign; checking printers' proofs; scheduling; developing and posting AIs and press releases; managing a marketing database; writing irregular newsletters and promotional copy; designing counter packs, posters and business cards; sending out media and review copies; following up to confirm receipt; confirming print promotional opportunities (ads and reviews); booking media events for authors (radio, TV, walking tours and launches); supplying programming for writers' festivals; preparing and delivering guest lectures and industry panels; booking venues for events; hiring bands and associated artists; designing and distributing invites; decorating venues and sound-checking; booking interstate flights for artists; designing, developing and maintaining a website; creating social media profiles; updating social media; developing press packs and media kits; developing advertiser packs; cold-calling prospective advertisers; invoicing advertisers; negotiating distributor arrangements; liaising with readers and subscribers; physically stocking bookstores; physically collecting stock from bookstores; researching and engaging distributors; cold-calling prospective firm-sale outlets; invoicing stockists and following up on outstanding payments; registering a company; establishing partnership agreements; opening and managing bank

accounts and company cheque books; purchasing domain names, ISPs and email servers; buying ISBNs; generating barcodes; securing office space; managing a lease; drafting author contracts; paying royalties; lodging books with library services such as the National Library of Australia, the State Library of Victoria and Trove; registering for ELR and PLR; purchasing, addressing, packing and posting envelopes; applying for and acquitting grants; and fixing printer jams.

Works cited

- Barekat, Houman. "Ribbons of Argument." *Times Literary Supplement*, October 25, 2017. <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/private/ribbons-of-argument-lifted-brow/>.
- Carter, Paul. *Material Thinking: The Theory and Practice of Creative Research*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004.
- Poland, Louise. "The Business, Craft and Profession of the Book Editor." In *Making Books: Contemporary Australian Publishing*, edited by David Carter and Anne Galligan, 96–115. Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2000.
- Caterson, Simon. "From Little Ventures Small Wonders Emerge." *The Age*, January 24, 2009. <https://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/books/from-little-ventures-small-wonders-emerge-20090124-ge7n2x.html>.
- Conner, Cheryl. "5 Sure Signs a Startup Firm Will Succeed," *Forbes*, July 12, 2012. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/cherylsnappconner/2012/07/12/5-sure-signs-a-startup-firm-will-succeed/#1cd949d9c1da>.
- Edmonds, Phillip. 2015. *Tilting at Windmills: The Literary Magazine in Australia 1968–2012*. Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press.
- Elder, John. "The Rise of Soft Skills: Why Top Marks No Longer Get the Best Jobs." *Sydney Morning Herald*, March 15, 2015. <http://www.smh.com.au/national/the-rise-of-soft-skills-why-top-marks-no-longer-get-the-best-jobs-20150314-1440ds.html>.
- Epstein, Jason. "Publishing: The Revolutionary Future." *New York Review of Books*, March 11, 2010. <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2010/03/11/publishing-the-revolutionary-future/>.
- Hart, Jim. "New Wave Seventies." In *Paper Empires: A History of the Book in Australia*, edited by Craig Munro, 53–7. Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2006.

Book Publishing in Australia

- Howcroft, Elizabeth, Eric Beecher, Michael Heyward, “Gribble, Diana (Di) (1942–2011)”, *Obituaries Australia*, October 22, 2011. <http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/gribble-diana-di-16650/text28549>.
- Kolb, David A. *Experiential Learning*. New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2015.
- Lave, Jean, and Etienne Wenger. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Magner, Brigid. “Anglo–Australian Relations in the Book Trade.” In *Paper Empires: A History of the Book in Australia*, edited by Craig Munro, 7–10. Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2006.
- Sennet, Richard. *The Craftsman*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Stinson, Emmett. “Small Publishers and the Emerging Network of Australian Literary Prosumption.” *Australian Humanities Review*, 59 (April/May 2016): 23–43.
- Thompson, John B. *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Polity, 2012.
- Trubek, Anne. “How the Paperback Novel Changed Popular Literature.” *Smithsonian*, March 30, 2010. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/how-the-paperback-novel-changed-popular-literature-11893941/>.