

RESEARCH STATEMENT

Original Creative Work

Citation: Mead, N. (2023) *Fight, Flight, Knit*, *TEXT Journal*, Vol. 27. No. 2.

Research Background

As a creative writer and researcher, I am expected to produce both creative work (NTROs) as well as publish more traditionally scholarly articles and chapters in my lecturing field of education. Consequently, there is a constant need to 'switch' disciplines when it comes to composing academic outputs. In this written textual piece, I build on previous work detailing my strategies for overcoming writer's block and consider how these strategies might help with the cognitive load between writing creatively and writing academically about education. The short story *Fight, Flight, Knit* documents the creative tension I experience in my role as a creative writer and researcher.

Research Contribution

I discovered knitting as a cognitive tool to combat writer's block during my Creative Writing PhD. The process of knitting allowed my mind to relax into a meditative state recognised as flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013; Lampitt Adey, 2018). However, this originally involved hand knitting with two needles. *Fight, Flight, Knit*, a creative piece, investigated if and how the same kind of flow could be achieved using a knitting machine, and if it could be used as a targeted practice to alleviate the tension and pressures of having to produce both traditional academic outputs alongside creative outputs as part of my responsibilities as an academic (Evans, 2013; Strange et al., 2016). My previously published short story, *The Thinking Blanket* (Mead, 2022), concluded that the act of creativity became the solution for other creative work such as writing. What was reassuring about this investigation was that the state of flow was still achievable with a knitting machine and was not limited to the act of hand knitting with two needles. The machine knitting still required repetitive physical movements but also had the added stimuli of repetitive sound and hypnotic visuals that allowed my mind to relax and become productive (Yoo, 2019). Also, the machine knitting process relieved the academic tension related to switching between writing voices and genres simultaneously.

Research Significance

The creative piece has been peer reviewed and published in a leading, quality journal of creative writing, *TEXT: Journal of Writing and Writing Courses*. It appeared in the October 2023 edition. As of 18th January, 2024, the piece has been viewed 940 times with 25 downloads.

Works cited

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Strange, S., Hetherington, P., & Eaton, A. (2016). Exploring the intersections of creative and academic life among Australian academic creative writing practitioners. *New writing (Clevedon, England)*, 13(3), 402-416.
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