



## **More than Ticking a Box: Interdisciplinarity in Doctoral Education**

Tara Brabazon<sup>1</sup> & Lauren Gray<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor of Cultural Studies, Flinders University, Australia

<sup>2</sup> Regional Library Manager, Libraries Tasmania, Australia

Correspondence: Tara Brabazon, Flinders University, Australia

Email: tara.brabazon@flinders.edu.au

DOI: 10.53103/cjess.v6i2.471

### **Abstract**

The examination of a PhD is saturated in experiential ideologies and subjectivity. For students, these events summon anxiety, fear, and worry. These emotions are intensified in interdisciplinary theses. This article develops a matrix to present, track, and verify interdisciplinarity in doctoral theses. Reflecting on the experience of defending the interdisciplinarity of a doctoral thesis situated within the socio-legal tradition, the imperative of this paper offers wider relevance and resonance, probing the management of subjective examination processes and protocols. In the case study of the socio-legal doctoral thesis explored in this article, the interdisciplinarity was questioned by one examiner who asked for verification. In response, a process for evidencing interdisciplinarity was developed, constructing a matrix of scholars, theoretical influences, and disciplinary intersections. Extending and disseminating this matrix as an exemplar to ‘prove’ interdisciplinarity, this article offers insights into the practical demonstration of interdisciplinarity and the epistemic tensions it continues to provoke within traditional disciplinary assessment frameworks, including doctoral education.

Keywords: Interdisciplinarity, Socio-legal Studies, Doctoral Studies, PhD Examination

### **Introduction**

Much research is routinized and de-intellectualized. Cliches replace content. Stakeholders usurp citizens. Mass authorship pummels authenticity. Impact squashes importance. There are boxes to tick and platitudes to summon in the daily acts of academic research. What Becher and Trowler describe as “academic tribes and territories” reinforces the “culture of disciplines” (2001). One concept that unsettles these tribes, territories and cultures is interdisciplinarity. This term summons a fresh box to tick, showing that one

discipline – and one group of gatekeepers – did not hem or restrict the priorities of a project. But this intellectual boundary crossing must be mapped by a series of “boundary objects” (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011: 132). For example, to understand the labour market, researchers require economics, mathematics, geography, politics, and sociology, to name a few crucial paradigms and approaches.

In doctoral education, interdisciplinarity is increasingly common. There is a reason for this growth, as a significant original contribution to knowledge (SOCK) requires innovation in methodology, epistemology, and ontology (Brabazon, Hunter and Quinton, 2022). The challenge is that interdisciplinarity, particularly in doctoral education, is asserted and assumed, rather than evaluated and explained. The disciplines that have fought for their interdisciplinarity – of which Socio-Legal Studies is a potent example – are marginalized whenever the tribes, territories and cultures re-establish the centrality of traditional knowledge systems.

This article explores the challenging work required to ‘prove’ interdisciplinarity. Written by a recent higher degree graduate, who is also an experienced information and library professional, and an experienced supervisor who has written doctoral examinations policies, procedures and training programmes, the goal of this article is to understand the granular issues involved in the construction and examination of interdisciplinary theses. We investigate what interdisciplinarity looks like in practice, and how it is demonstrated rather than merely claimed. Using the example of Lauren Gray’s socio-legal thesis, we explore a hybrid genealogy, porous boundaries and the ongoing negotiations between disciplines, from the thesis design through to its examination. The goal of this article is to render this “boundary work” (Choi, 2017) visible, coherent, transparent, and accountable. A matrix is proposed to demonstrate interdisciplinarity through the examination process.

### **Interdisciplinary: Meaning, Imperative and Definitions**

Interdisciplinarity emerges when different disciplines are combined and integrated. Particularly, interdisciplinarity occurs when the methodologies and assumptions from one discipline blend with another and change a researcher’s approach to a problem. The goal is to mix and modify the tropes and research strategies in one discipline to enable the creation of new tools that will answer research questions that cannot be solved in one discipline. At its most powerful, Strober demonstrated how building interdisciplinary conversations challenges “habits of thought” (2011). We train in disciplines. Interdisciplinary interventions retrain researchers.

The more intricate question probes how these habits of thought are created and then disrupted. Put another way, as Choi and Richards asked, how do we find “the ‘inter’ in interdisciplinarity” (2017, 4)? To answer such a question, there must be a concrete discussion of academic disciplines and how they are transcended. Strathern described disciplinary distinctiveness as a “convenient fiction” (2007, 125). They are required to

measure and evaluate research and to organize knowledge. But further, as Henkel has shown, disciplines organize institutions, academics and modes of working (2000). Disciplines orient knowledge into a hierarchy of importance. Therefore, disciplines are epistemological anchors, labelling a body of knowledge with tethered methodologies, validating particular ways of locating information, and representing it (Aldrich, 2014, 16). Disciplines are not only a way to discipline knowledge but an imperative to configure what is valued and evaluated. This disciplining has a potent impact on the examination of PhDs. Disciplines are also cultural formations and behaviours, gathering a community of scholars through ways of thinking, learning, teaching and producing knowledge (Becher, 1981: 109). Ylijoki described this disciplinary culture as a “moral order” (2000, 341), determining what is acceptable to value and assess. This combination of orientation, efficiency, culture, and morality not only builds Strathern’s “convenient fiction” but activates political guardrails on the professions. When academic disciplines and professions align – such as in medicine and law – the parameters of valuable knowledge are reinforced by both academic and professional gatekeepers. O’Neill and Meek argued that,

The self-regulation of professions has as much to do with the politics of knowledge as with anything else. This is especially so for the academic profession, with its stake in controlling knowledge production and dissemination (1994, 97).

For professions such as law, these disciplinary boundaries are patrolled. Socio-legal studies, built from the productive alignments of sociology and law, provided the foundations for teaching, learning and researching law in context. This was a progressivist movement. Such a shift moved a homogeneous way of teaching and learning into valuing diversity and heterogeneity. Significantly, different nations contributed different histories and threads to this interdisciplinarity. As Alfons Bora showed, the German-speaking sociology of law peaked in the 1970s, with a specific intervention through “reflective theory” (2024, 61), inspired by the publication of Luhmann’s *A sociological theory of law* (2013). Through this specific lens, “empirical and normative sciences” (Bora, 2024, 21) were evaluated.

Interdisciplinarity repositions the professions through the (re)formulation and (re)regulation of social relationships. Interdisciplinarity creates new scholarly working practices, including doctoral supervision and examination, and challenges the assumptions within each discipline. Sustainability, for example, requires that a series of disciplines align and alter the relationship between epistemology, methodology, and ontology through specific requirements for research design (Brabazon, 2023). These disciplines include ecology, economics, sociology, medicine, chemistry, food science, soil science and earth sciences. Econophysics is another provocative example, taking methods from physics to

address economic problems like uncertainty or nonlinear dynamics in financial markets. Econophysics was first used by Eugene Stanley in the mid-1990s (1996), and there are now journals devoted to this area. While arguments can be made that the originating relationship between physics and the economy started with John Maynard Keynes and his elasticity theory (2018), it is also clear that the controversies and ‘border wars’ remain. As Macasaet and Powell argue,

Despite the massive expansion and relative opening of science, disciplinary boundary-crossing remains challenging. Although interdisciplinarity is often favored rhetorically, bibliometric research finds relatively few cases of meaningful, sustained dialogue between disciplines. To understand why, this study explores such disciplinary boundary-crossing through borrowed concepts in the relevant case of entropy - disorder or uncertainty - at the intersection of economics and physics: ‘econophysics’ (2026).

Significantly, econophysics is still listed within inverted commas. The interdisciplinary status and credibility are questioned, and questionable. What Macasaet and Powell confirm is that while interdisciplinarity is “favored rhetorically,” few cases – or research projects – demonstrate that meaningful alignment. This current article configures that alignment, and offers a strategy to verify it.

At its best, interdisciplinarity moves beyond rhetoric and involves studying a problem, challenge or phenomenon from combined points of view, creating new tools for analysis. It is both a process and a theory (Repko, 2008). Therefore, some of the challenges and transformations emerged from social justice movements, requiring innovative strategies to ask and answer difficult and defiant questions. Interdisciplinarity was a radical movement, often aligned with the progressivist 1960s. The impact of postcolonialism, the civil rights movements, and feminism provided a new lens to ask innovative questions. Scholars from the traditional disciplines took risks to build different alignments between methodology, epistemology and ontology. Many areas we take for granted now - nanoscience, cultural studies, sustainable development, socio-legal studies, leisure studies, sport studies, and critical money studies – involved committed people thinking differently, defiantly, courageously, and passionately.

Interdisciplinarity, particularly for PhD students, requires reflection on positionality and how to solve future research problems. Doctoral education aligns teaching and research through policies and regulations. PhD students are, indeed, students. Through doctoral supervision, interdisciplinarity is “created” through a powerful alignment of teaching and research (Lattuca, 2001). Our task in PhD programmes is to ask provocative and important research questions that matter to other researchers, citizens, and stakeholders. Disciplinary parameters configure particular shapes for research questions. Interdisciplinary approaches configure new ways of shaping research questions, and novel

modes of answering them through innovative theories of thinking, reading, writing and interpretation. But also, these interdisciplinary approaches enable challenges to, and reflection on, the methodologies that researchers repeat with few questions.

Interdisciplinarity matters so much, beyond ticking a box in a grant application or a publishing contract, because it challenges and critiques – and reveals – the frequently dire impact of excessive specialization. The consequences of an array of research assessment or evaluation exercises ensure that narrowness is required. Research codes demand precision and a clustering of interests and funding. Interdisciplinary stands for something different: cooperation, consultation, intellectual generosity and intellectual curiosity.

This is a different mode of scholarship and being a scholar, with the focus on discovery, questioning, testing, poking and probing, rather than reinforcing the gatekeepers and established way of ‘doing knowledge’ in the disciplines. The integrity of disciplinary parameters is reinforced through national policy instruments, publishing keywords, and research categories. As Donald argued, disciplinarity is a way to think. Indeed, it is “learning to think” (Donald, 2002). New knowledge is created beyond this mode of learning (and thinking). Innovative methods are formulated. Complex problems are addressed. For example, tourism studies and leisure studies are complex and important fields. No single discipline can study tourism or leisure and offer concrete policy solutions or strategies for regional development.

Interdisciplinarity is not simply a cliché, a term to show currency or edgy scholarship. It activates movement, dialogue, and meaningful changes in methods and methodology with the purpose of creating new ways of thinking about information and data sets, and new strategies to gather them. But also, it builds provocative new theories for interpreting the data sets that have been gathered and incisive language through which these results are communicated. It is a recognition that scholars must think about research dissemination in a way that speaks to a diversity of researchers, and makes it easier for the next scholars and projects to continue this interdisciplinary work.

Disciplinary power is maintained by only publishing in particular journals, with specific methods, modes of citation, language, and vocabularies. Grant structures, metrics and funding schemes are built on the established parameters of disciplinary publishing, review and evaluation. Many interdisciplinary fields from the 1960s and 1970s have calcified. The once radical fields now have their own gatekeepers and boundary patrollers. The interdisciplinary interventions have built the solid boundaries between disciplines, with their own journals, conferences and research codes. Moran (2010) summoned a provocative image: all disciplines are positioned between the abyss and metamorphosis. All disciplines contain their own capacity for disintegration and destruction, through fixity, conservatism, and a refusal to change. Indeed, as Huber has argued, disciplinary cultures create “social reproduction” (1990: 241-261). Interdisciplinarity, if not questioned, can also limit and reduce the development and discussion of alternative theories and

methodologies.

The alternative methodologies, epistemologies and ontologies matter. They test. Probe. Agitate. But such un(der)patrolled interdisciplinarity has consequences, particularly for PhD students, as it is difficult to measure, evaluate, or situate in research metrics. Gergen stated in 2009,

If innovative scholarship is the outcome of hybridity, or impurity, or blurring the boundaries between disparate realms of reality, disciplining is its enemy. There is no thinking outside the box without risking banishment from the box.

For PhD students undergoing examination, they are being assessed ‘in the box.’ That box may be constructed from disciplinary parameters or validated interdisciplinary alignments. To assess how the box operates in doctoral education, the case study of Lauren Gray’s thesis is now evaluated.

#### **A Case Study of Doctoral Interdisciplinarity: A Reflection from Lauren Gray**

Reflecting on my PhD journey, ‘[inter]-[disciplinarity]’ is intellectually generative at the in-between juncture of the traditionally pure disciplines. My thesis explored the concept of transparency, specifically governmental transparency within Freedom of Information (FOI) laws and practices. I entered my PhD candidature having achieved a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Sociology, a Master of Information Services specialising in archives and records, and with about twenty years of government public service practicing knowledge management, FOI, archives and records management. I did not have a law degree, yet my candidature and thesis were situated in the Faculty of Law at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). I was fortunate to have two supervisors who encouraged my exploration of transparency at the juncture of law, philosophy, political science, sociology, archives, recordkeeping, documentality, and practice.

Interdisciplinarity encompasses the gritty synthesization and conflation amongst the disciplines, revelling in this friction and unease. It is cognitively demanding and at times disorienting. For me, interweaving these frictions between hybrid epistemologies, empirical methodologies and practice, the originality of my research into transparency emerged. Governmental transparency, FOI, and governance are complex phenomena that, from my standpoint, could not be understood, argued and extended within the confines of a single discipline. However, entering a law faculty to pursue a PhD on *Transparency in Australian Law and Practice* meant bringing my positionality and prior experiences into a jurisprudence disciplinary context where doctrinal reasoning, statutory interpretation, and hierarchical epistemologies dominate. My professional and academic positionality, as an interdisciplinary researcher in the faculty of law, shaped the questions I asked, the methods

deployed, and the original contribution to knowledge generated.

This research conjured an innovative methodological approach to examining access to governmental information under Australian FOI laws. The research design was directly informed and inspired by professional positionality. It arose from an FOI application in Western Australia that I coordinated, which resulted in a refusal of access to shark jaws. That FOI application and the refusal of access decision to governmental information inspired my scholarly research into how the concept of a “document” is defined, operationalised in governmental practice, and accessed under FOI laws.

By design, the FOI process itself was used as a research method. I constructed twelve FOI applications and submitted these across multiple Australian jurisdictions seeking access to shark jaws and other specimens. These applications generated a primary empirical dataset. Analysis extended beyond statutory interpretation and the legality of access to examine the sociology, bureaucracy, and administrative practices of governmental decision-making during the application of FOI laws. To further enliven this research, interviews were conducted with the Information Commissioner who would have determined the case at external review, and with the original FOI applicant ten years after the refusal. This layered design enabled examination across time, roles, and levels of decision-making. The result is a unique methodology, data set, and way of thinking that operates across legal and sociological disciplines, integrating analysis with lived administrative practice.

My socio-legal thesis, by design, integrates interviews with FOI practitioners, the submission and analysis of twelve FOI applications and case law to understand, challenge and extend transparency conceptually as both a legal principle and social practice. By drawing on theorists from law, sociology, political science, philosophy, and information studies, my thesis investigates transparency situated within administrative, social, historical, philosophical, and legal frameworks. Socio-legal research is interdisciplinary in title, and is epistemologically, methodologically, and analytically hybrid by necessity.

My research into governmental transparency required from readers an integrated lens that considers the interplay between law, administrative practice, and social norms. Herein lies yet another challenge for the interdisciplinarity researchers, in particular PhD candidates – the examination process. One of my PhD examiners, who had an interdisciplinary information and archival background, expressed an appreciation of my research, awarding my thesis a top score. This means that the thesis required no amendments. Another examiner, who had a legal background, questioned whether my thesis was interdisciplinary and awarded my thesis the second top score. This grading confirmed that there were no substantive corrections, but a specific list of amendments as confirmed by the examiner. My thesis was over 97000 words, with multiple sections on my positionality, methodology, methods, and references drawing from law, case law, philosophy, political science, sociology, archives, recordkeeping, documentality, and

practice. So with this critique and question, how does a PhD student prove interdisciplinarity?

In this case study, I present my experience with interdisciplinarity and the examination process, and then illustrate my method and explain the matrix that I developed to prove the interdisciplinarity of my thesis. I wrote this case study to give those who are considering an interdisciplinary research thesis or project insights into intellectual work, experiences, challenges, and benefits.

### **Interdisciplinarity – Testimony from Doctoral Education**

My experience of interdisciplinarity during my eight-year, part-time PhD candidature can be productively understood through the intersections of “boundaries.” Governmental transparency operates within administrative law and executive FOI practice. Exploring this concept involved researching how professional practitioners and scholars demarcate what counts as legitimate knowledge and the authority of access or obfuscation. In navigating law, sociology, political science, communication studies, philosophy, and information studies, I encountered shifting boundaries between legal doctrine, administrative practice, and information governance. These boundaries were not fixed but actively maintained through institutional norms, pedagogical expectations, and identities.

Similarly, FOI practitioners themselves operate at the intersection of multiple epistemic domains, engaging simultaneously with law, records management, ministerial liaison, risk assessment, and organisational policy. Through interviews and submitting twelve FOI applications, it became apparent that FOI work involves continual negotiation between legal compliance, social and administrative pragmatism. FOI Practitioners draw on legal rules, but their decision-making is equally shaped by ministerial and political pressures, public sector memory, recordkeeping systems, procedures and norms. This FOI practitioner’s boundaries are mirrored by the interdisciplinary position as a researcher moving between scholarly, legal, and information domains.

Boundaries and intersections are also evident in how interdisciplinary methods were received and carried within the law faculty. Empirical approaches required justification as ‘legal’ within socio-legal research, revealing implicit boundaries around acceptable evidence and methods. These boundaries operated through expectations about scholarly voice, AGLS citation practices, and argumentative structure and constant feedback loops.

Occupying an interdisciplinary position offered unique analytic advantages. By researching across disciplinary boundaries, I was able to map the complex interactions between law, administrative practice, and information governance that structure transparency. Engaging with FOI practitioners as both an insider and an outsider enabled a nuanced understanding of decision-making processes, procedural norms, and

professional reasoning that would have been invisible from a purely doctrinal perspective. The ability to straddle these epistemic knowledges and practitioners also facilitated triangulation of empirical, archival, and legal evidence, producing insights that a single-discipline approach may have overlooked.

Interdisciplinarity also highlighted the contested nature of knowledge production within FOI and transparency scholarship. The ways FOI practitioners reconcile statutory obligations with organisational priorities and public interest, is mirrored in the navigation and intersectional scholarly dance between the boundaries of law, sociology, philosophy, political and information sciences. Just as practitioners negotiate governmental disclosures within bureaucratic constraints and citizens, interdisciplinary research involves continual negotiation of methodological and epistemological standards, and scholarly voice. The overlap between these processes underscores how reflexivity is not simply methodological but epistemic: knowing how to know, how to read and analyse, and recognising which knowledge counts within each discipline to synthesise and create original knowledge.

Applying interdisciplinarity enriched my doctoral research. FOI in Australia comprises multiple, overlapping communities with shared norms and beliefs - legal scholars, public servants, information commissioners, archivists, historians, journalists, and citizens - each with distinct assumptions about what constitutes valid, meaningful governmental transparency. By situating my research within an interdisciplinary framework and approach, I could interrogate these assumptions and identify points of tension, such as discrepancies between legal formalism and administrative practice or between archival standards and statutory timelines. This approach enabled the thesis to articulate both normative ideals and practical realities, bridging gaps between theory, law, and practice.

Interdisciplinary work poses challenges to coherence and credibility. Each discipline creates, ranks, and evaluates scholarly literatures and Non Traditional Research Outputs (NTROs) differently. Literatures and methods considered rigorous in one domain may be questioned in another. For example, interviews and FOI-generated data sets were highly valued for their insight into administrative practices but were examined and initially treated with caution in doctrinally oriented contexts. Navigating these tensions required constant reflexivity, explicit methodological justification, and careful alignment of evidence with research questions.

My experience of interdisciplinarity conjures a complex researcher's lens and a method. A lens for conceptualising transparency as a legally, socially, bureaucratically, philosophically, politically, and historically embedded phenomenon, and a method for negotiating, integrating, and translating knowledges across disciplines. The scholarly boundaries and epistemic intersections provide conceptual tools for understanding the dynamics of knowledge creation and legitimisation both within FOI practice and within socio-legal scholarship. My experience underscores that interdisciplinary socio-legal

research is cognitively demanding and analytically generative, producing insights inaccessible to single-discipline approaches. It also demonstrates the value of positional reflexivity, as my prior expertise in FOI, sociology, information services and practice enabled productive engagement with multiple epistemologies, enhancing my empirical and socio-legal analysis.

My doctoral experience of interdisciplinarity also illustrates the dual nature of such research: it simultaneously requires navigation of complex interdisciplinary boundaries while producing understanding of transparency within law and in practice. This integration and synthesization enables the intellectual rewards of interdisciplinary socio-legal research. For my research into transparency and FOI, this approach yields a research methodology that is empirically sound and critically attuned to FOI practitioner realities and practices. Interdisciplinarity is employed and featured in my socio-legal research. It is a central epistemic and methodological strategy for researching governmental transparency.

### **Interdisciplinarity: Transparency as an Interdisciplinary Problem**

Interdisciplinarity frameworks explore complex societal issues whilst transcending the boundaries of single disciplines. This resonates with Transparency Studies, as the concept itself challenges hierarchical and opaque systems of power. Interdisciplinarity is a pathway to reimagining transparency with the inclusion of FOI practitioner's perspectives, documentality, and FOI laws. It integrates methods, theories, and perspectives from multiple disciplines to address the complex questions, expanding the confines of a single field. It enables researchers to draw on the strengths of diverse approaches (Aboelela et al., 2007; Nystrom, 2007). By exploiting and integrating philosophical insights, high theory, my positionality and data sets, my doctoral research released disciplinary silos to construct a nuanced understanding of transparency. Applying interdisciplinarity frameworks sees the convergence and transcendence of the diverse disciplinary fields of law, philosophy, political science, sociology, media studies, and archival science. It synthesizes literatures and practitioner perspectives, to challenge methodologies and offer a novel approach to Transparency Studies.

My doctoral thesis moved across the disciplines. Philosophers such as Lani Watson and Emmanuel Alloa examine epistemic goods and the ethical dimensions of information access (Watson, 2021; Alloa, 2022). Similarly, I examined the scholarship of Paul Otlet, Maurizio Ferraris and Bernd Frohmann to then expand the discourse on documentality (Otlet, 1990; Ferraris, 2013; Frohmann, 2009). The research of legal scholars was also accessed, including Mark Fenster (2017), Ida Koivisto (2022) and political scientists Christopher Hood and David Heald (2006), who highlight paradoxes, inefficiencies, and administrative resistance that impede transparency. Australian FOI laws and are evaluated

through the insights of Judith Bannister (2020; 2015), Moira Paterson (2015), Rick Snell (2001; 2006), and Johan Lidberg (2009). These theoretical perspectives challenge the reductionist view of transparency as merely administrative. Incorporating datasets gathered through FOI-Practitioner interviews and the submission of FOI applications, reveals the tension between the ideals and implementation of transparency. This multimodal granularity provides depth and rigour to the pages that followed.

With the thesis written and ready for submission, I now entered the examination process. My doctoral story will now pause to assess the parameters of examination, and the behaviour, expectations, and assumptions of examiners who begin their evaluation.

### **The Examination Process**

Higher degree examination is a dark art. It is subjective and variable. It is one of the few areas of higher education where professional development is rarely available (Brabazon, 2025a; Brabazon, 2025b). ‘On the job’ training (during the oral examination or viva) dominates. Examiners learn to examine by examining. Similarly, the process through which examiners are selected and validated, while varying between national systems and institutions, maintains particular characteristics.

- The examiner must hold the qualification that is being examined. In nations with a qualification framework, this is measured and ranked. Examples include the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency, 2024), the AQF (Australian Quality Framework, 2013) and the NZQF (New Zealand Quality Framework, 2026).
- The examiner must be research active, with the definition of activity varying between nations but clustering around a required number of publications per year or over a five-year period.
- Expertise in the thesis’s field, verified through the proxy of publications.
- No conflicts of interest exist between the student, supervisors and examiners. These CoIs include shared publications, grants, prior working history, or personal relationships.

Some national systems, such as the United Kingdom, have an internal examiner (from the student’s institution but not the supervisor) and a single external supervisor. The North American system maintains two or more external examiners, with the supervisory panel also involved in the oral examination.

Most systems require the doctoral assessment to be composed of two parts: the evaluation of the thesis document and an oral examination to provide verification of research integrity and wider intellectual competencies. Australia remains an outlier to this written and oral assessment. Most universities in Australia still do not deploy an oral

examination for a doctorate. Therefore, Lauren Gray's thesis was assessed as a written thesis. There was no oral evaluation. An oral examination is particularly useful for interdisciplinary theses, as the examiners must share their specific lens on interdisciplinarity, and then be verified in that determination by other examiners. Lauren Gray's thesis was assessed by two external examiners, both based in Australia, but they never met or conversed, as no oral examination was in place. Therefore, the self-regulation of examiners – through the process – was not enacted. Further, because the two examiners never met and did not read the report of the other examiner, a mechanism for self-correction and self-reflection was not present. While Lauren Gray received a “passed without correction” assessment from one examiner and minor corrections from the other, the latter questioned the interdisciplinarity in this interdisciplinary thesis. Therefore, in her revisions on this thesis, she presented a table that made the case for this interdisciplinarity. This verification was important and meaningful, but may not have been necessary if there had been an internal discussion between examiners to reflect on their expectations, experience, and background. For Australian examiners who are rarely called into international examinations, their personal assumptions dominate, uncorrected by colleagues in a viva, and continue to be applied onto Australian-based students.

Examining an interdisciplinary thesis requires unique skills from traditional theses. The best interdisciplinary work activates epistemic discomfort, disrupting disciplinary cultures that recognize particular research design choices, methodology and referring styles. With socio-legal research, for example, reviewers may privilege the legal over the social, depending on their experience and background. The most important personal and professional mitigation is a recognition of the areas of knowledge that are not covered. In socio-legal studies, if one examiner is a sociologist and another an administrative lawyer, there must be a recognition that one examiner does not cover the full field of the thesis. A necessary recognition in academic life is to grasp – with self-efficacy - the boundaries of our knowledge and to not extend a commentary beyond a singular expertise. However, with no oral examination, the capacity of an examiner to maintain clear limits and boundaries to their knowledge is not in place. It is crucial that the interdisciplinary thesis be read multiple times. The first review explores how the examiner is situating themselves in relation to the research. This confirmation of positioning then allows an evaluation of the student's work in terms of the specific expertise of the examiner. Has the student completed sufficient research to show expertise in the key areas of the thesis?

One way to confirm interdisciplinary expertise is through references, which are a proxy for interdisciplinary coverage. But examiners of interdisciplinary theses are tested, intellectually and professionally. Coverage of often disparate knowledge systems is required, and there must be an awareness of blind spots or the marginalization of particular researchers, theories, or histories. The reference list of interdisciplinary theses is often much longer than that of traditional disciplinary theses.

As shown in this section, interdisciplinary theses are not easy options to select in a doctoral portfolio. They are much more difficult to research, write and assess. Examiners must confirm sufficient coverage in the originating disciplines. For example, examining nanoscale science requires attention to physics and chemistry. A student may hold a greater expertise in one or the other, but the coverage must be there. In oral examinations for PhDs, the examiners will ask questions to ensure literacy in the feeder disciplines.

Seongsook Choi and Keth Richards captured this challenge for examiners in their 2017 book *Interdisciplinary Discourse*. They argued for the power and importance of valuing and validating differences: not simplifying disciplinary differences, but working with the differences. Choi and Richards describe it as “finding the ‘inter’ in the interdisciplinary” (2017). Interdisciplinarity begins with the disciplines, and examiners must assess the care with which the student manages the conceptual, methodological, and theoretical differences. As Henkel argued (2000), disciplines organize knowledge, often in a hierarchy, and students will be examined for their subtlety in presenting the theoretical, practical, and / or productive orientation of this knowledge system, agitating the assumptions of that hierarchy.

Interdisciplinarity must be logged, benchmarked, and confirmed in the thesis to ensure it can be examined. Pulla and Schissel’s research is powerful as it shows how knowledge changes when interdisciplinarity is applied in doctoral programmes. They stated that, “doctoral scholar/practitioners can no longer afford to direct their work to an ‘inside’ audience” (2018, 5). This is a direct questioning of examinations and examiners, as examiners remain the most significant and visible insiders. Instead, Pulla and Schissel suggested that, “the skills required to write accessibly often come from feedback from outsiders” (2018, 6). They reveal that examiners are implicated in patrolling the boundaries of disciplines. Similarly, for interdisciplinary research, particular ‘acceptable’ alignments, relationships and linkages are validated, with other others questioned, marginalized or dismissed. Therefore, it is necessary to monitor insiders and outsiders in knowledge, and insiders and outsiders to disciplines.

Interdisciplinary theses must be carefully constructed, but in a way that enables transparent and accountable assessment. Bijsterveld and Swinnen stated that we as examiners must recognize the courage in trying something new, discovering the surprises, and valuing the failures. Research design, data collection and analysis, alongside writing and drafting, are different. This is what Appadurai described as the “ethics of possibility,” carrying “the capacity to aspire” (2013: 649-650). Such goals are truncated in doctoral examinations. Examiners must complete verifications, check the research and references, and ensure that arguments are presented rather than assumed. But the courage and risk must be respected and value this Appadurai-inspired “ethics of possibility.” There are also contextual transformations that are changing the parameters of successful doctoral research.

### **The Examination Process in Practice (Lauren Gray)**

The question of interdisciplinarity raised during my examination illuminates broader epistemic tensions within traditional disciplinary assessment frameworks. Highlighting the disciplines of philosophy, archival and information science, law, political science, sociology, history, communication and journalism, the examiner asked: “Are all these areas included in this thesis? Where?” Socio-legal studies have a hybrid genealogy, with permeable peripheries that challenge ongoing analysis and negotiation in between disciplines, methods, and theoretical assumptions and conventions. By situating my thesis within this interdisciplinary frame, I illustrated that the socio-legal approach merges legal analysis with social science methods and theories, interrogating law’s autonomy while embedding it in social, institutional, and political contexts. Scholars such as Gerhard Anders (2015), Jeanne Gaakeer (2012), Audrey Plan (2024), and Reza Banakar and Max Travers (2005) argue that such engagement with social theory is intrinsic to socio-legal inquiry, and that interdisciplinarity is not incidental but constitutive of the field law.

Transparency is a multidimensional concept, spanning epistemology, ontology, and methodology. It requires insights from the disciplines of philosophy, archival and information science, law, political science, sociology, history, communication and journalism, as well as evaluating the effects of digitization, globalization, and neoliberalism. Operating across, within, among, and in between these epistemic sites allowed the thesis to construct a significant contribution to knowledge, integrating practical, historical, bureaucratic, social, legal, and normative dimensions that could not be captured by a single disciplinary lens.

The examination process made clear that demonstrating interdisciplinarity in practice requires explicit articulation and a considered, focused reader. Mapping disciplinary intersections, explaining methodological arguments, and situating empirical research within legal and social frameworks provided concrete evidence of integration. It also highlights the risk that interdisciplinary research is sometimes misunderstood by disciplinary reviewers, who may expect doctrinal conformity or methodological uniformity. Engaging critically with this critique allowed for reflexive articulation of the thesis’s epistemic and analytic contributions. It dared and tested the demonstration that interdisciplinarity strengthens rigorous research into the complex bureaucratic, social legal phenomena of transparency.

In reflecting on the examination, observations arise for socio-legal scholarship. Interdisciplinarity is a defining characteristic and epistemic necessity for researching transparency, which exists at the intersection of the disciplines of philosophy, archival and information science, law, political science, sociology, history, communication and journalism, and social practice. The examiner questioning and testing interdisciplinarity, as well as the process of my response, provides practical guidance for researchers

navigating similar epistemic and research challenges. There is an ongoing negotiation required between disciplines, evidencing the ways socio-legal research both respects and transcends traditional academic boundaries. The examination process contested that interdisciplinarity existed in my socio-legal research, which required affirmation on my part.

Despite socio-legal research being inherently grounded in interdisciplinarity, an examiner questioned whether my thesis had genuinely achieved it. This challenge prompted the development of a process for evidencing interdisciplinarity, and this current article. It involved constructing a detailed matrix of scholars, theoretical influences, and disciplinary intersections. The matrix explicitly mapped the contributions of sociology, law, archival and recordkeeping studies, political science, and philosophy, pinpointing where and demonstrating how each perspective informed the research questions, methodology, and analysis. This process underscored that interdisciplinarity in socio-legal research is not merely a methodological option but a necessary approach for investigating complex social-legal phenomena such as transparency.

Interdisciplinarity frameworks explore complex societal issues whilst transcending the boundaries of single disciplines. This resonates with Transparency Studies, as the concept itself challenges hierarchical and opaque systems of power. Interdisciplinarity is a pathway to reimagining transparency with the inclusion of FOI practitioner's perspectives, documentality, and FOI laws. It integrates methods, theories, and perspectives from multiple disciplines to address the complex questions, expanding the confines of a single field. It enables researchers to draw on the strengths of diverse approaches (Aboelela, 2007). By exploiting and integrating philosophical insights, high theory, my positionality and data sets, this research expands disciplinary silos to construct a nuanced understanding of transparency. Applying interdisciplinarity frameworks sees the convergence and transcendence of the diverse disciplinary fields of law, philosophy, political science, sociology, media studies, and archival science. It synthesizes literatures and practitioner perspectives, to challenge methodologies and offer a novel approach to Transparency Studies.

In response to the examiner's critique, 'proving' interdisciplinarity became a component of my doctoral process, ensuring that the examination component concluded, and the completion and graduation could be actioned. To move beyond assertion, I developed a matrix designed to make visible how interdisciplinary scholarship informed the thesis. The matrix mapped and pinpointed scholars, disciplinary fields, theoretical frameworks, and conceptual contributions.

The process of constructing the matrix required alignment with elements of the research: sociology provided tools to understand organisational and social dimensions of transparency; archival and recordkeeping studies informed the operational information management infrastructures of FOI; FOI laws are the legal administrative frameworks;

political science contextualised democratic governmental and policy dynamics; and philosophy contributed ethical epistemic analysis. Beyond listing disciplines, the matrix demonstrated how and where in the thesis each field contributed to the construction of arguments, showing how methods, evidence, and theory interacted to create original knowledge. This process overtly displayed what is often implicit in socio-legal research.

The matrix illustrates the integration of scholars and theoretical traditions. The explicit mapping of theoretical influences and disciplinary intersections allowed the research to show methodological coherence, epistemic pluralism, and intellectual stamina, reinforcing that interdisciplinarity was central to the design and arguments of the thesis. But this matrix also reveals why interdisciplinarity remains a challenging concept for examiners. Doctoral evaluation is often centred around singular disciplinary norms, privileging either doctrinal research in law or methodological consistency in social science. Interdisciplinarity disrupts these conventions by introducing multiple epistemologies, methods, and diverse forms of evidence, NTROs including empirical interviews, FOI-generated data, archival records, and doctrinal sources. This disruption can create epistemic discomfort: reviewers may struggle to reconcile pluralistic evidence with traditional standards of disciplinary authority, leading to questions about coherence. Socio-legal research illustrates this tension. Legal examiners may/often privilege legal doctrine over social analysis. In the context of transparency research, this can manifest as undervaluing FOI applications or practitioner interviews while emphasising appellate case law.

The matrix addresses this challenge by clearly linking each methodological choice to disciplinary logic and theoretical justification, demonstrating that interdisciplinary scholarship was not tangential but tacit and integral to understanding transparency in law and in practice. It made overt and explicit how the epistemic scholarly contributions of each discipline informed the argument. It is transparent articulation of interdisciplinarity to an examiner steeped in conventional disciplinary expectations.

Interdisciplinarity is challenging to assess because it spans multiple epistemic disciplines, each with different assumptions, language, referencing, methods, and scholarly writing. The matrix approach is a model for making interdisciplinary integration visible, showing that research does not require conformity to a single disciplinary lens. By mapping scholars, methods, epistemologies, and conceptual contributions, it provides clarity, affirmation, and defensibility with transparency and precision.

Therefore, one strategy introduced in this article is to promote the use of a matrix where interdisciplinarity is specified with precision and transparency for examiners.

Table 1: Scholars and academic disciplines referenced and their placement in the thesis

Scholar	Disciplinary Area	Chapter(s)	Focus/Context
<b>Lani Watson</b>	Philosophy	Chapters 1, 3, 4	Conceptualising the right to know and the ethics of transparency
<b>Emmanuel Alloa</b>	Philosophy	Chapters 1, 3	Ethics of visibility and transparency
<b>Dieter Mersch</b>	Philosophy / Media Theory	Chapter 1	Critical perspectives on defining transparency
<b>Dieter Thomä</b>	Philosophy	Chapters 1 and 3	Transparency and modernity
<b>Byung-Chul Han</b>	Philosophy / Cultural Theory	Chapters 1, 4	Critique of transparency and neoliberal ideology
<b>Paul Otlet</b>	Archival/Information Science	Chapters 1,	Origins of documentation theory
<b>Maurizio Ferraris</b>	Philosophy / Information Theory	Chapter 1	Documentality and the ontology of documents
<b>Bernd Frohmann</b>	Archival/Information Science	Chapter 1	Theorising documents and power
<b>Mark Fenster</b>	Law / FOI	Chapters 1,2, 3, 5	US Law, Conceptualizing transparency and FOI
<b>Ida Koivisto</b>	Law / Administrative Law	Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5	Transparency, legality, and FOI
<b>Rick Snell</b>	Law / FOI	Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5	FOI systems, practitioner insights, and Australian law
<b>Moiria Paterson</b>	Law / FOI	Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5	FOI legislation and legal frameworks in Australia
<b>Judith Bannister</b>	Law / FOI	Chapters 1, 3, 5	Australian Administrative law and FOI practice
<b>Danielle Moon</b>	Law / FOI	Chapters 3, 5	Operationalization of FOI in Australia
<b>Margaret Allars</b>	Law / FOI	Chapters 1, 3	Australian FOI Theoretical legal frameworks
<b>Christopher Hood</b>	Political Science / Public Admin	Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Transparency as a tool of governance
<b>David Heald</b>	Political Science	Chapters 1, 2, 3	Concepts of fiscal and operational transparency
<b>Robert Hazell</b>	Political Science	Chapters 1, 3	Westminster systems and FOI

Scholar	Disciplinary Area	Chapter(s)	Focus/Context
<b>Ann Florini</b>	Political Science / Global Studies	Chapters 1, 3	Governance and transparency
<b>Albert Meijer</b>	Political Science	Chapters 1, 3	Transparency in the digital age
<b>Daniel Naurin</b>	Political Science	Chapter 3	Transparency, accountability, and deliberation
<b>Gillian Oliver</b>	Archival/Information Science	Chapters 3	Records, information governance, pro-disclosure
<b>Suzanne Briet</b>	Documentation Theory	Chapters 1, 4	The nature of documents
<b>Michael Buckland</b>	Library/Information Science	Chapters 1, 4	Information concepts and documentation
<b>Sue McKemmish</b>	Archival Studies	Chapters 4	Records continuum and socio-cultural documentation
<b>Frank Upward</b>	Archival Studies	Chapters 4	Records continuum theory
<b>Barbara Reed</b>	Archival Studies	Chapter 4	Recordkeeping and governance
<b>David A. Wallace</b>	Archival/Information Science	Chapter 4	Social memory and recordkeeping
<b>Amitai Etzioni</b>	Sociology / Policy Studies	Chapters 1, 3	Balancing and defining transparency and obfuscation
<b>Max Weber</b>	Sociology	Chapters 2 and 3	Bureaucracy and institutional power
<b>Casper Hirschi</b>	History	Chapter 1	Intellectual history of transparency
<b>Heather Brooke</b>	Communications / Investigative Journalism	Chapters 1, and 3	FOI and public interest journalism
<b>Johan Lidberg</b>	Communications / Journalism Studies	Chapters 1, 2, 5	FOI culture in Australia; comparative analysis

Such a table verifies the interdisciplinary strands that formed the doctoral thesis. The cited scholars, the rationale for their inclusion, and their positioning in the thesis are demonstrated, not assumed. While Lauren Gray constructed this matrix of interdisciplinarity to answer the query of an examiner, we propose in this article that such a table has value being included in the thesis itself, or indeed in an appendix. Through such overt and transparent presentations, the pervasive power of interdisciplinarity is verified and meaningful.

### **Conclusion - Claiming and Proving Interdisciplinarity**

Academic disciplines provide frameworks and expectations, including the normative shapes of research design, methodological selection, and the platforms for research dissemination. Yet research is not simply ‘done.’ It is measured, evaluated, ranked, and judged. Such metrics remain what Bauer described as, “barriers against interdisciplinarity” (1990, 105). Since Bauer’s research, the flooding of policies and clichés around impact, engagement and ‘wicked problems’ has meant that innovative methodologies, epistemologies and ontologies have been necessary to construct a research design and deliver diverse research outputs to ‘stakeholders,’ even citizens.

Interdisciplinarity, as revealed in this paper, not only disrupts knowledge generation but reveals provocative questions about how that new knowledge is interpreted, examined, and evaluated. Bijsterveld and Swinnen logged, “the courage to try something new or an openness to unexpected findings” (2023, 2). Hierarchies are unsettled. Writing styles are challenged. New modes of evidence are offered. While socio-legal studies has a diverse and international history, particularly since the 1970s, an array of interdisciplinary alignments are not only being developed but valued, including the relationship between law and literature – and law in literature – activating “legal counterfactuals” (Juster, 2025). Lauren Gray’s thesis opened the spaces for meaningful relationships between Information Science, Information Studies and Administrative Law. Clearly, though, the parameters of law remain patrolled.

The difficulty of the interdisciplinary approach of law, in comparison to other disciplines therefore primarily lies in conceptual, terminological, and linguistic problems when it comes to developing common terms, methods, and concepts, understanding the same terms in the same way, and making legal terminology more accessible to other disciplines (Juster, 2025, 44).

Juster has confirmed the key gift of interdisciplinarity: accessibility. By working with terms – such as Lauren Gray’s theorization of “transparency” – clarity and precision are attended by action and applicability. New knowledge is created through an innovative conceptualization of terms that require revision to be more appropriate to a new legislative landscape, and the institutional processes that emerge from it.

The question remains: what happens to doctoral students and their theses through the assumptions and expectations of interdisciplinarity? What this article has shown is that ‘being’ interdisciplinary and ‘proving’ interdisciplinary through a doctoral examination are radically distinct formations. The positioning of interdisciplinarity in doctoral education is not limited to simple applications or assessment of methods and methodology. Actually, it must activate much wider discussions about how interdisciplinary research contributes to broader debates and practice. The discussion of transparency and research,

and how it feeds into the Freedom of Information, requires complex engagement with diverse disciplines, researchers, and practitioners. It is an ideal example to show the value of an interdisciplinary lens on research questions, to address social-legal challenges in the workplace, institutions, and citizenship.

After Lauren Gray's examination, it was necessary to 'prove' interdisciplinarity. Her table confirmed the scope and scale of her innovation, research, referencing, and interpretation. What is proposed through this article is that such a table not be deployed reactively after examiner's comments, but proactively and presciently, as an appendix in the thesis itself. We propose four headings to map, track, and verify interdisciplinarity in doctoral education.

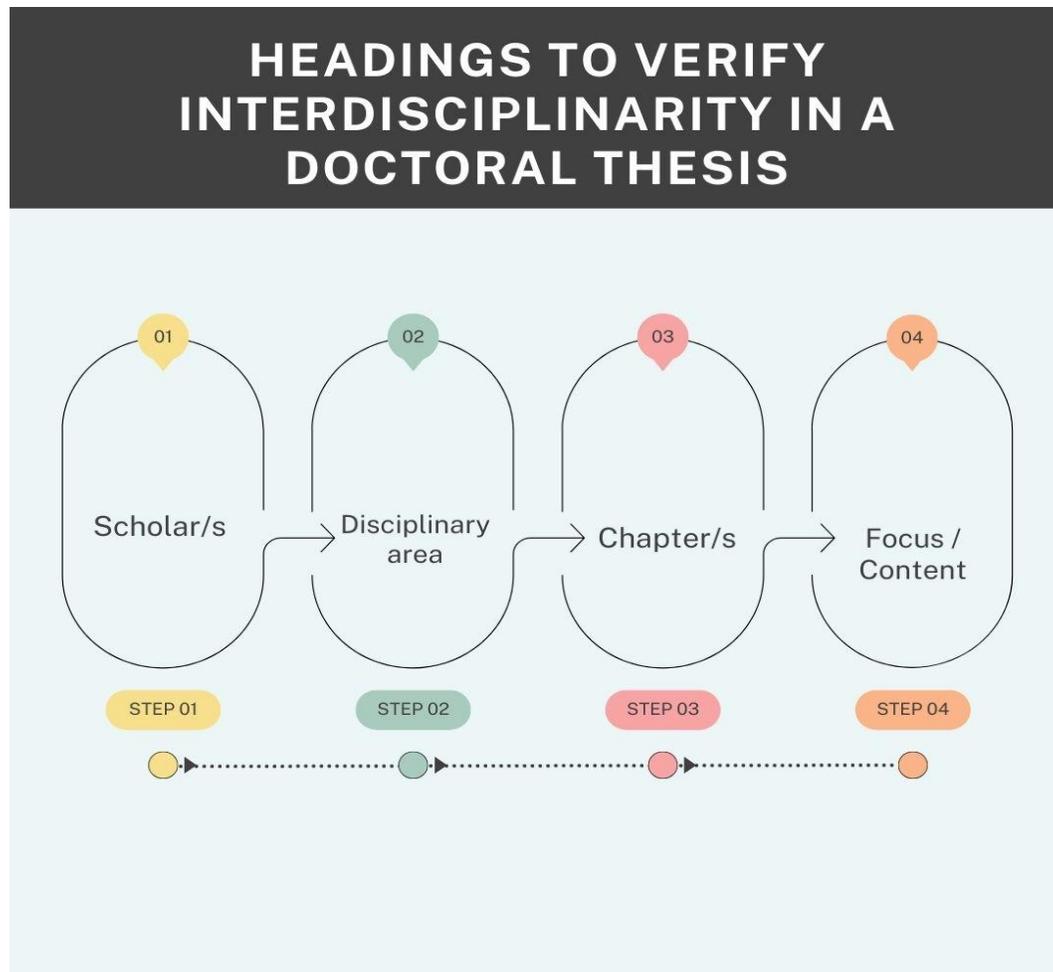


Figure 1: Headings to verify interdisciplinarity in a doctoral thesis (Tara Brabazon and Lauren Gray)

The matrix developed and presented in this article shows – with rigour, accountability and transparency – interdisciplinarity. It provides a model not only to ‘answer’ a critique from PhD examiners, but to address and present interdisciplinarity before moving into an examination.

This matrix offers PhD students a way to present a methodological tool and conceptual contribution, to manage the anxiety and concern about how interdisciplinarity will be read and assessed by examiners. As we argued at the start of this article, it is easy to use the word ‘interdisciplinary.’ It is much harder to prove it, particularly when considering the subjectivity of examiners. The lack of an oral examination for Lauren Gray’s thesis, as is common in Australia, meant that reflection and recalibration between the examiners was not possible. Therefore, such a matrix offers one strategy to reduce subjectivity in examination, and build a more robust way of thinking and assessing doctoral research.

### References

- Aboelela, Sally W., Elaine Larson, Suzanne Bakken, et al. (2007). Defining Interdisciplinary Research: Conclusions from a Critical Review of the Literature. *Health Services Research*. 42.1: 329–46.
- Akkerman, S. F., & Bakker, A. (2011). Boundary crossing and boundary objects. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), 132–169.
- Aldrich, J. (2014). *Interdisciplinarity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Alloa, E. (2022). *This Obscure Thing Called Transparency: Politics and Aesthetics of a Contemporary Metaphor*. Leuven University Press.
- Alloa, E. (2018). Transparency: A Magic Concept of Modernity. In *Transparency, Society and Subjectivity: Critical Perspectives*, edited by Emmanuel Alloa and Dieter Thomä. Springer International Publishing.
- Anders, G. (2015). Law at Its Limits: Interdisciplinarity between Law and Anthropology. *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*. 47.3: 411–22.
- Appadurai, A. (2013). The future as cultural fact: Essays on the global condition. *Rassegna Italiana di sociologia*, 14(4), 649-650.
- AQF. (2014). Australian Qualifications Framework. <https://www.aqf.edu.au/publication/aqf-second-edition>.
- Banakar, Reza, and Max Travers. *Theory and Method in Socio-Legal Research*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2005.
- Bannister, J. (2015). *Accountability or Participation? Disentangling the Rationales for FOI Access to Deliberative Material*. December 1: <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2760155>.
- Bannister, J. (2020). Failure to Disclose: What Are the Consequences When Open

- Government Founders? In Weeks, G. and Groves, M. (eds) *Administrative Redress In and Out of the Courts Essays in Honour of Robin Creyke and John McMillan*. Federation Press Australia.
- Bauer, H. H. (1990). Barriers against interdisciplinarity: Implications for studies of science, technology, and society (STS). *Science, Technology, and Human Values*, 15, 105–119.
- Becher, T. (1981). Towards a definition of disciplinary cultures. *Studies in Higher Education*. 6.2: 109-122
- Becher, T., & Trowler, P. (2001). *Academic tribes and territories: Intellectual enquiry and the culture of disciplines* (2nd ed.). Buckingham: Open University Press/SRHE.
- Bijsterveld, K., & Swinnen, A. (2023). *Interdisciplinarity in the Scholarly Life Cycle: Learning by Example in Humanities and Social Science Research* (p. 337). Springer Nature.
- Bora, A. (2024). *Sociology of law: Towards a responsive theory*. Springer Nature.
- Brabazon, T. (2023). *The three wise monkeys of research: Epistemology, ontology and methodology*. Author's Republic.
- Brabazon, T. (2025a). How to examine a PhD. Tara Brabazon's YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/IDkHZ1RYg4Y>
- Brabazon, T. (2025b). How to examine a PhD through the oral examination. Tara Brabazon's YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/BGUjYHnVIvs>
- Brabazon, T., Quinton, J., & Hunter, N. (2022). The Scientist, the Artefact and the Exegesis: Challenging the parameters of the PhD. *International Journal of Creative and Arts Studies*, 9(1), 47-68.
- Choi, S. (2017). Collaborating beyond boundaries. In J. Angouri, J. Holmes, & M. Marra (Eds.), *Negotiating boundaries at work: Talking and transitions*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Choi, S., & Richards, K. (2017). *Interdisciplinary discourse: Communicating across disciplines*. Springer.
- Donald, J. (2002). *Learning to think: Disciplinary perspectives*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fenster, M. (2017). *The Transparency Fix: Secrets, Leaks, and Uncontrollable Government Information*. Stanford University Press.
- Ferraris, M. (2013). *Documentality: Why It Is Necessary to Leave Traces*. Fordham University Press.
- Frohmann, B. (2009). Revisiting 'What Is a Document?' *Journal of Documentation*. 65.2: 291–303.
- Frohmann, B. (2011). *Communication Matters*. Routledge.
- Frohmann, B. (2008). The Role of Facts in Paul Otlet's Modernist Project of

- Documentation. In *European Modernism and the Information Society*. Routledge.
- Gaakeer, J. (2012). Reverent Rites of Legal Theory: Unity-Diversity-Interdisciplinarity. *The Australian Feminist Law Journal*. 36: 19–43.
- Heald, D. (2022). *This Obscure Thing Called Transparency. Politics and Aesthetics of a Contemporary Metaphor*. Leuven University Press.
- Henkel, M. (2000). *Academic identity and policy change in higher education*. London. Jessica Kingsley.
- Hood, C. (2006). *Transparency: The Key to Better Governance?* British Academy.
- Hood, C. and Heald, D. (2006). *Transparency: The Key to Better Governance?* Proceedings of the British Academy. Oxford University Press.
- Huber, L. (1990). Disciplinary cultures and social reproduction. *European Journal of Education*, 25(3), 241–261.
- Juster, A. (2025). *Law, Literature and Legal Counterfactuals: A Method of Contrastive Discourse Analysis Using the Example of Contemporary Literature*. Springer Nature.
- Keynes, J. M. (2018). The Theory of Prices. In *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money*. Cham: Springer International Publishing: pp. 261-276.
- Koivisto, I. (2022). *The Transparency Paradox*. Oxford University Press.
- Lidberg, J. (2009). The International Freedom of Information Index: A Watchdog of Transparency in Practice. *Nordicom Review*. 30.1: 1.
- Lidberg, J. (2015). Closing Down FOI: A Case Study in Sneaky Government. *The Conversation*, October: <http://theconversation.com/closing-down-foi-a-case-study-in-sneaky-government-47424>.
- Lidberg, J. (2019) Freedom of Information. In *The International Encyclopedia of Journalism Studies*. American Cancer Society.
- Lidberg, J. (2016). Information Access Evolution: Assessing Freedom of Information Reforms in Australia. *Australian Journalism Review*. 38.1: 10.
- Lidberg, J. (2016). Information Access Evolution: Assessing Freedom of Information Reforms in Australia. *Australian Journalism Review*. 38.1: 73–82.  
[http://scholar.google.com/citations?view\\_op=view\\_citation&hl=en&user=Xw2SBx8AAAAJ&citation\\_for\\_view=Xw2SBx8AAAAJ:qxL8FJ1GzNcC](http://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=Xw2SBx8AAAAJ&citation_for_view=Xw2SBx8AAAAJ:qxL8FJ1GzNcC).
- Lidberg, J., Bradshaw, E. and Paterson, M. (2022). Gatekeeper or Facilitator? The Culture of Implementing Freedom of Information Law in Victoria, Australia. *Ethical Space: The International Journal of Communication Ethics*. 19.1: 19–30.  
<https://research.monash.edu/en/publications/gatekeeper-or-facilitator-the-culture-of-implementing-freedom-of->.
- Lidberg, J., Paterson, M., Bradshaw, E., Romano, M., and Davison, S. (2024). *The Culture of Implementing Freedom of Information in Australia*. Report. Monash

- University: <https://apo.org.au/node/327233>.
- Lattuca, L. R. (2001). *Creating interdisciplinarity: Interdisciplinary research and teaching among college and university faculty*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Luhmann, N. (2013). *A sociological theory of law*. Routledge.
- Macasaet, B.T., Powell, J.J. Beyond borrowed concepts: a semantic analysis of entropy's half-century cross-disciplinary journey between physics and economics. *Scientometrics* (2026). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-025-05489-7>
- Moran, J. (2010). *Interdisciplinarity* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Nyström, P. (2007). Disciplinarity, Inter-Disciplinarity and Post-Disciplinarity: Changing Disciplinary Patterns in the History Discipline. 620-.
- NZQF. (2026). Qualifications and Standards. <https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-and-standards/about-new-zealand-qualifications-credentials-framework/>.
- O'Neill, A., & Meek, V. L. (1994). Academic Professionalism and the Self-Regulation of Performance. *Journal of Tertiary Education Administration*, 16(1), 93-107.
- Otlet, P. (1990). *International Organisation and Dissemination of Knowledge: Selected Essays of Paul Otlet*. With W. Boyd Rayward. FID 684. Elsevier.
- Paterson, M. (2015). *Freedom of Information and Privacy in Australia*. LexisNexis Butterworths.  
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uts/detail.action?docID=6221423>.
- Plan, A. (2024). Taking Law Seriously: The Challenges of Law as Research Data in Socio-Legal Scholarship Symposium: Law as Data, Data as Law. *Law, Technology and Humans*. 6.3: 46–59.  
<https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/lwtchmn6&i=255>.
- Pulla, S., & Schissel, B. (Eds.). (2017). *Applied Interdisciplinarity in Scholar Practitioner Programs: Narratives of Social Change*. Springer.
- Repko, A. F. (2008). *Interdisciplinary research: Process and theory*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Snell, R. (2006). Freedom of Information Practices. *Agenda - A Journal of Policy Analysis and Reform* 13.4: 291–307.
- Snell, R. (2001). Freedom of Information: The Experience of the Australian States - An Epiphany?" *Federal Law Review* 29.3: 343–58.
- Stanley, H. E., Afanasyev, V., Amaral, L. A. N., Buldyrev, S. V., Goldberger, A. L., Havlin, S., & Viswanathan, G. M. (1996). Anomalous fluctuations in the dynamics of complex systems: from DNA and physiology to econophysics. *Physica A: Statistical Mechanics and its Applications*, 224(1-2), 302-321.
- Strathern, M. (2007). Interdisciplinarity: some models from the human sciences. *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, 32(2), 123-134.
- Strober, M. H. (2011). *Interdisciplinary conversations: Challenging habits of thought*.

Stanford: Stanford University Press.

QAA. (2024). The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications.

[https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/the-frameworks-for-higher-education-qualifications-of-uk-degree-awarding-bodies-2024.pdf?sfvrsn=3562b281\\_11](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/the-frameworks-for-higher-education-qualifications-of-uk-degree-awarding-bodies-2024.pdf?sfvrsn=3562b281_11).

Watson, L. (2021). *The Right to Know: Epistemic Rights and Why We Need Them*. Routledge.

Ylijoki, O. H. (2000). Disciplinary cultures and the moral order of studying—A case-study of four Finnish university departments. *Higher education*, 39(3), 339-362.