

Please Share our Story

Students with Sensory
Processing Sensitivity call
for awareness

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Some ATLAANZ Stories

Ocean, VIC: Involving students with high impact practice

Rosie & Jan, IPU: Relationships

Jackie, VIC: Narratives and stories

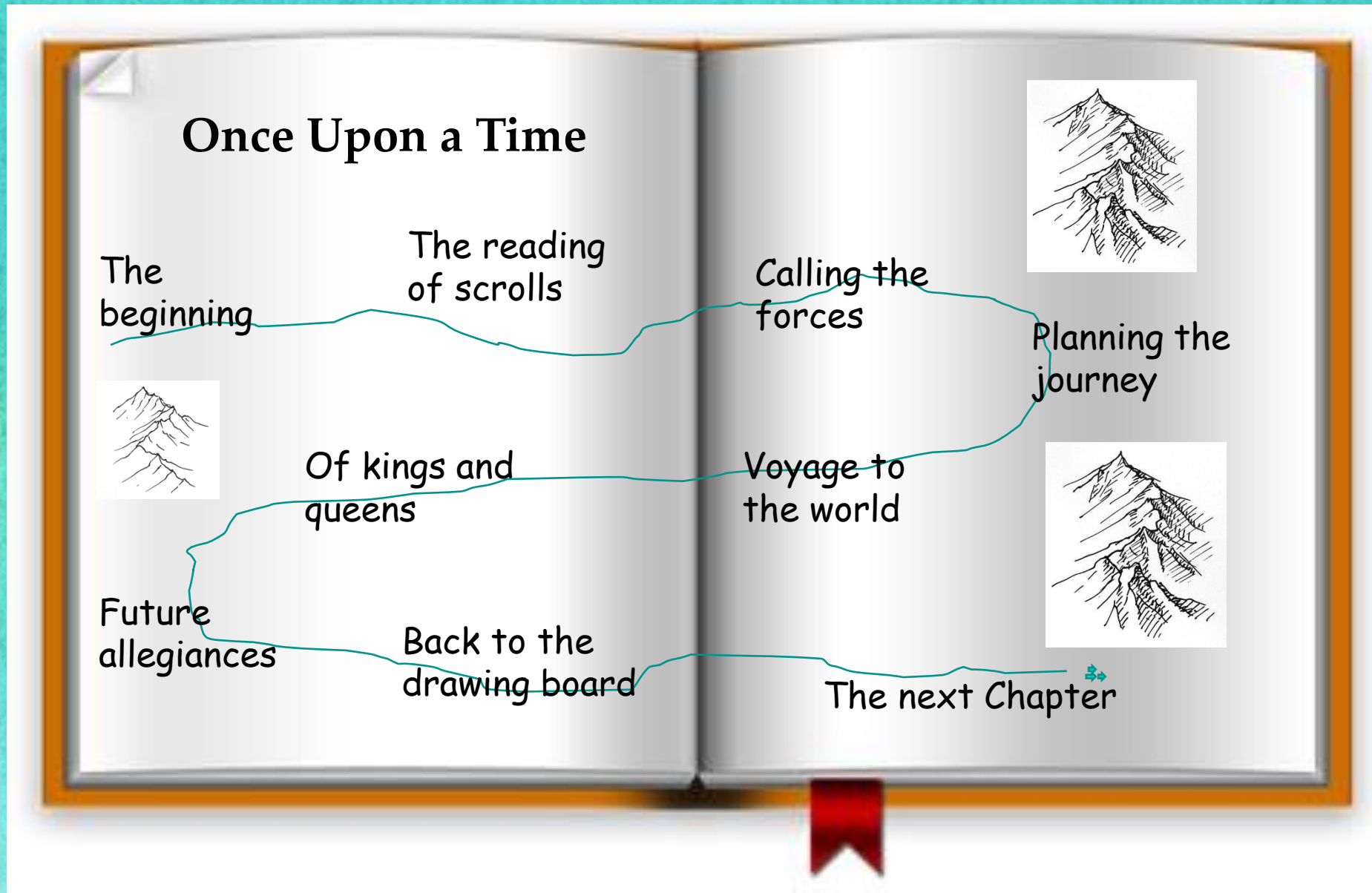
Sheilagh, Brandon: Diverse learners

Transformative Research

International Centre for
Innovation and Workplace
Learning (ICIWL)

Multidisciplinary research centre
at Dublin City University

Story of our Journey



The Inspiration



**Ako
Relationship is
key**









The Background



- 🦋 Noticed feelings of overwhelm in some students who were successful in their studies
- 🦋 Absence of learning difficulties
- 🦋 Recognised the markers of SPS
- 🦋 No research found linking SPS with teaching and learning

Prologue

Sensory Processing Sensitivity (SPS)

-  Innate genetic sensitivity trait responsible for processing internal and external stimulation
-  Finely tuned nervous system
-  15-20% of the population
-  Identified in over a hundred animal species
-  May contribute to species survival
-  Humans are referred to as Highly Sensitive People (HSP) as determined by the Highly Sensitive Person Scale (HSPS) developed by Elain Aron in 1996

Aron (1997)

The Context

- 🦋 **D**epth of processing information
- 🦋 **O**verwhelmed by stimulation
- 🦋 **E**mootional reactivity/**E**mpathy
- 🦋 **S**ensitivity to subtlety

Aron (2011)



The Theme

- 🦋 Longer to process information
- 🦋 Easily distracted, overwhelmed, exhausted
- 🦋 May tend to: have a negative education self-perception
 - been labelled or misdiagnosed
 - take a long time to complete tasks
 - need constant reassurance
 - over-think or over-work
 - start a lot of projects but have difficulty completing
 - become highly stressed when being watched or judged, and may not perform to their potential

The Study

Does an understanding of HSP help students who identify as Highly Sensitive People (HSP) to manage their learning?



The Participants

Convenience sample of 179
Whitireia students

134 Students self selected to
complete the HSPS

80 identified as HSP (60% of
participating students)

12 or higher on the HSPS
invited to participate

39 self selected to continue
with the research to interview



The Plot



First interview (39 students)

Likert scale (easy) 1 - 6 (difficult)
Growing up, school, tertiary study,
managing life and study



Information pack provided









Second interview (36 completed)

Likert scale (not useful) 1 - 6 (useful)
Knowing about HSP



The Student Script

-  75% "Do you get rattled when you have a lot to do in a short amount of time?"
-  76% "Are you annoyed when people try to make you do too many things at once?"
-  77% "Are you conscientious?"
-  88% "Do other people's moods affect you?"
-  100% rate the knowledge of SPS to be helpful in managing life and study and most students found the knowledge of HSP empowering and life-changing
-  100% said that knowledge of SPS should be available to all tutors and in-coming students

Students say...




"Wow! I feel normal!"

"Knowing about HSP helps me to deal with things better and build up ways to make me stronger as a person."

"This helps me to deal with ongoing stresses!"


"Thank you. This changes everything."



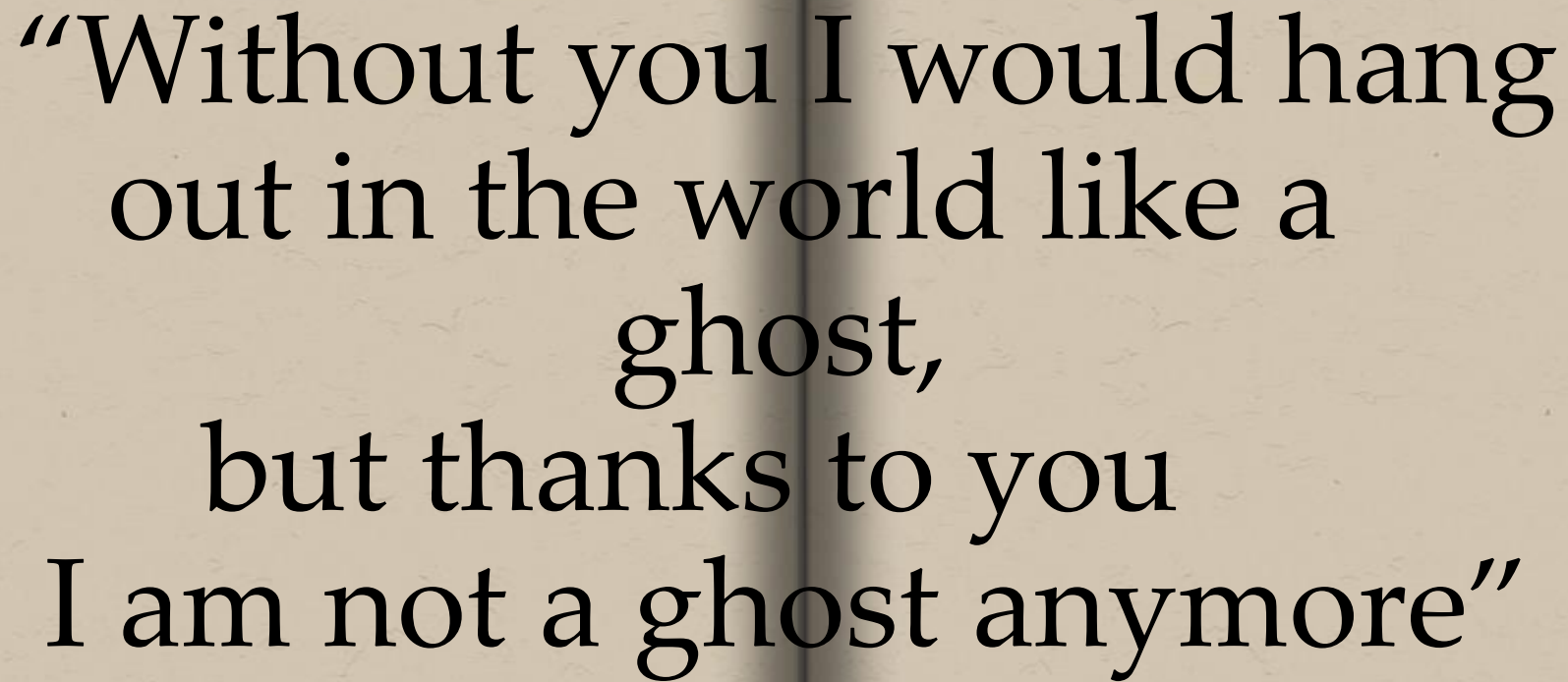
"So good to know what's going on!"

"Thank you. I can forgive myself."

"Now I know what I have to do!"



Students say...



“Without you I would hang
out in the world like a
ghost,
but thanks to you
I am not a ghost anymore”

The Orchid Hypothesis







Many people are like dandelions and
can thrive in any environment.

A minority wilt easily, but given the
right conditions, thrive into something
magnificent.

Cain, (2012)



The Next chapter

-  Three year longitudinal study
-  Exploring SPS subgroups*: help or hindrance
 -  Ease of excitation EOE (Do you startle easily?)
 -  Low sensitivity threshold LST (So you make a point to avoid violent movies and TV shows?)
 -  Aesthetic sensitivity AES (Do you seem aware of subtleties in your environment?)
-  International collaborations and cross-cultural studies

* Smolewska, (2006); Chen and Ruben, (1992)

Credits

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Thank you

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