SELECTED READINGS ON PH.D. SUPERVISION

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The project upon which this paper is based is a qualitative study of the supervision [thesis advising] of research students [graduate students] in departments of education and psychology in three British universities. Two models are apparent in the literature of supervision. The technical rationality model gives priority to issues of procedure or technique, while the negotiated order model conceptualizes supervision as a process open to negotiation and change. We look at supervisory style, reporting findings on the nature of tutorials [meetings] between supervisor and student, the extent of direction given by the supervisor to the project, and the nature of the interpersonal relationship between the parties. We also consider student strategies. Our findings suggest that although the technical rationality model has much to recommend it, a negotiated order model is a better description of what happens in practice.


This article examines the stages graduate students in sociology pass through on their way to a Ph.D. and the status of academic professional. The authors relate their experiences in graduate school as well as 25 years of teaching in college. They accumulated data from a dozen current and former students to augment their own thoughts and experiences. The article studies the bonding effect of the cohort structure in graduate school and students' movement away from their cohort as they select areas of specialization and bond more closely with their key faculty members and older students in that network. Students' teaching and conference experiences influence them in adopting the identity of professional sociologists.


Reports that educational researchers have focused a lot of attention on the topic of power. Explanation about the selection of an academic program; Analysis of the importance of power in faculty-student interactions; What graduate education is frequently portrayed as; Definitions of power; Examination of the power of graduate supervisors as perceived by graduates students.


In his article on the administration of the Ph.D. degree, Mr. Ferber restricts his remarks almost entirely to the dissertation. He argues that in their work with dissertations (I) professors are overloaded, and the burden they carry is not recognized fully by the administrators of the institution; (2) professors are unfair to their students, either because of overload, "pet projects," or indifference to their interests; and (3) the standards for dissertations are disturbingly varied among institutions and by areas within an institution.

Cognitive psychology, artificial intelligence, and computer technology have advanced to the point where it is feasible to build computer systems that are as effective as intelligent human tutors. Computer tutors based on a set of pedagogical principles derived from the ACT theory of cognition have been developed for teaching students to do proofs in geometry and to write computer programs in the language LISP.


Background. An aspect of teaching and learning that has been seriously overlooked in higher education is the process of research supervision. High failure rates for research dissertations in the social sciences have been partly attributed to student dissatisfaction with supervision and poor student-supervisor relationships. One personality variable that has been shown to be partly responsible for shaping the effectiveness of supervisory relationships is cognitive style.

Aims. The study examined the effects of supervisor cognitive style on the quality of supervision for students undertaking a research project in the field of management education.

Sample. Both parties in each of 118 supervisor-student dyads within a university business school in the UK participated in the study.

Method. Data were collected using the Cognitive Style Index to measure subjects on the analytic-intuitive dimension of cognitive style. A self-developed Thurstone attitude scale was used to measure students' perceptions of the quality of supervision. The scale's validity was assured by making extensive use of subjects' (N = 100) judgments from the population of interest in the scale's development. A second parallel scale was developed to test the instrument's reliability characteristics.

Results. Findings revealed that students perceived the quality of supervision to increase significantly with the degree to which supervisors were analytic in their cognitive style. Students whose supervisors were more analytic also achieved significantly higher grades for their dissertations.

Conclusions. Whilst there may be many factors influencing interpersonal relationships of this nature, this study demonstrated the potential relevance of cognitive style, which may prove to be a fertile area for further investigation.


This paper examines Oxford University students' conceptions of the role of the tutorial in their learning. An analysis of interviews with 28 students constituted four qualitatively different conceptions of the 'Oxford Tutorial'. These ranged from the tutorial involving the tutor explaining to the student what the student did not know, to the tutorial involving the tutor and the student in exchanging different points of view and both coming to a new understanding of the topic under discussion. These different conceptions also appeared to be related to variations in students' views of the role of the work done in preparation for the tutorial, their view of the student's and tutor's roles in the tutorial, and the conception of knowledge that students adopted in relation to the tutorial. The implications of this study are discussed in terms of the relations between students' conceptions of tutorials and their anticipated learning outcomes and its implications for contexts outside of Oxford in terms of students' conceptions of academic tasks.
This paper discusses theories of postgraduate pedagogy through analysing the narratives and metaphors used to represent relationships between supervisors and candidates. It examines current dominant discourses to find the use of hierarchical models and often combative dynamics based on unequal power relations prevail. Some narratives also replicate oppressive patriarchal and Oedipal family dramas. Using an experiential and feminist methodology, the paper then suggests ways around this familial model. It offers some alternative and creative strategies of representation which could shape new forms of supervisory relationships. With an emphasis on the pleasures, rather than the pain of intellectual knowledge making, such models are suggestive rather than prescriptive, and seek to cater for diverse student backgrounds to make the experience of postgraduate research enjoyable, strengthening and completable.


Examines the applicability of the micropolitical perspective to understanding various dimensions of instructional supervision. Discussion on the centrality of micropolitics to supervisory structures, processes, and practices; Review of research on the micropolitics of teaching and instructional supervision; Implications and suggestions for further research.


This reader supplements a workshop for teaching staff wishing to improve their skills in working with international students. This workshop is the result of a UCU project which started out by collecting stories and experiences from teachers, students and tutors on 'diversity issues'. The participants of the workshop distinguished six categories of intercultural differences: language and communication; learning styles; teaching methods; assessment, feedback and grading; teacher-student relations; content matter.


Psychoanalytic supervision is more than teaching some practical knowledge in patient management. Beyond education it serves to form and to train psychoanalytic identity. This identity should not be limited to locality towards teachers or to an attachment to
certain theories, but should encourage deviance. For "application" of any theory in psychoanalytic practice can't have any other meaning than staying on the illuminated fields of knowledge and thereby missing the unconscious. Not the rejection of any theory is meant here, but a theory is needed which is open to surprises: a theory without the claim to omniscience. In this sense recommendations are given for psychoanalytic supervision.


This article focuses on the dissertation and attempts to analyze and demystify the process of writing one. The author discusses the supervision of dissertations, preferring to use that term over mentoring, advising or directing. He relates the process to a battle as much with the internalized supervisor as well as the actual supervisor who has an interest in the creativity of the student writing the dissertation. At Berkeley where the author teaches, the model is called the "independent scholar" in which the ethos has been to encourage graduate students to develop their own projects without faculty research.


The Collaborative Cohort Model (CCM) for research supervision was developed and piloted as an alternative to the Apprentice Master Model (AMM), which is currently used with most doctoral dissertations. The CCM was developed in response to concerns about completion rates and the quality of research supervision. The feedback from the initial cohort of doctoral students who have experienced the model is presented.


Objective: The aim of this study was to develop and trial a method of trainee evaluation of the supervision and training experience. Method: A questionnaire was developed and applied at the end of each of four 6-month clinical rotations. Results: The evaluation demonstrated areas of strength (punctuality and reliability, encouragement, educational value, clinical guidance) and weakness (journal club, clinical meetings). Many supervisors were not observing diagnostic or management interviews of trainees. Psychotherapy supervision received the highest ratings. Conclusions: Because of the privacy of supervision and the occasional nature of evaluations, reliability of scores cannot be demonstrated. However, within the context of a model of quality improvement, and supplemented by the education and supervision of supervisors, trainee evaluations can be useful in targeting specific areas of deficiency in training and supervision.

Most research on faculty productivity focuses on the research ability of faculty members. This paper provides a new means of looking at faculty productivity by analyzing a second responsibility of faculty members: producing new Ph.D.’s. The authors first utilize a Lorenz curve analysis to establish that graduate student supervision is most equally distributed among faculty members in the physical sciences and least equally distributed among social science faculty. The second part of the paper uses a negative binomial regression model to investigate what faculty attributes affect how many graduate students a faculty member will supervise in a six-year period. The results suggest that, on average, a faculty member's prestige and her length of time at the institution are significant factors in predicting productivity.


The article explores how different kinds of social science students from two universities, Woodside and Hillside, access and experience a variety of research cultures in those universities. Previous research on research students has noted considerable differences between science and non-science students, with the latter much more likely to work as lone scholars meeting regularly only with their supervisors. Though other researchers have examined academic cultures and their transmission, more generic peer cultures and research training cultures have not always formed part of these studies. The research involved interviews with 26 home and international students, studying both full- and part-time. Four focus group discussions were also conducted. The data suggest that international students and part-time students have the most difficulty in accessing peer cultures and academic cultures. However, international students are much more favourably disposed rewards research training cultures than other students. Some evidence of gender differences affecting student experiences was found but was not as widespread as other differences. The article ends by suggesting sonic practical changes that could be made in universities to provide more equal access to research cultures by all research students.


The area of responsibility of the supervision and evaluation of instruction in Foreign Language Teaching and ESL Training has received scanty attention in the professional literature of the field. What can be found are either very judgmental or very non-judgmental proposed formats for the evaluation of teaching and learning. This article suggests that both ends of this range appear to be based on presumed roles or philosophies of the evaluator and evaluated. In order to aid those concerned with the design and/or implementation of evaluational systems, the article also discusses the differences which exist between two major approaches to teacher evaluation and supervision. A synopsis of the characteristics considered essential to effective teaching as well as a synthesis of the major assumptions and philosophies underlying the two approaches are presented. Finally, concluding suggestions concerning the realities which impede the instructional and evaluational environment are made.


Presents a paper which discussed problems experienced by supervisors of doctoral (Phd) students in trying to create a balance between dominating and neglecting student's research. Success and failure of supervisors in managing the balance;
Comparison of the supervisors experience as students; Information on several interviews conducted with supervisors.


Discusses the importance of quality supervision and organization for quality teaching. Recommendations for organizational development; Four ways that supervisors can bring about improved learning; Proposals for teachers to improve teaching methods.


Presents a firsthand account of the initiation and evolution of a study group composed of psychotherapy supervisors. Experimental supervisory program at the Clark Institute of Psychiatry in Toronto; Introduction of psychotherapy supervision; Teaching and learning of psychodynamic theories and psychotherapeutic skills; Discussion of standards for psychotherapy practice and supervision.


Abstract In the department of mathematics of the Luleå University of Technology in Sweden, a dynamic model for the education of doctoral students and guidance of supervisors in research groups has been developed and applied for several years now. Presently groups in mathematics as well as a group in mathematics education are working according to this model and treated in the same way. Moreover, both the students and the supervisors get some education and experience also in elements, which usually are not included in more traditional models for supervision in the mathematical sciences in Sweden. In this paper, we describe our model as well as some experiences of it. Moreover, the results of a questionnaire addressed to and answered by all doctoral students (both finished and still in the program) are presented, evaluated and compared with some related investigations in Sweden. We claim that the students in general are very satisfied to be supervised and guided in this way. In principle, there have been no cases of dropping out of the Ph.D. programs, students obtained their degrees within the stipulated time and the careers after the studies have been successful. We hope that this positive experience will stimulate other universities to test and evaluate our model (or relevant parts of it) under different conditions.

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There is an acknowledged problem with high non-completion rates of PhDs in the UK. Studies show that one of the major reasons for this is deficiencies in the supervision received. However, the unique and one-to-one nature of student/supervisor relationships makes it difficult to investigate the extent of these deficiencies. This article proposes a framework to evaluate the supervision requirements from the students' perspective. The supervision is divided into three elements: personal, indirect research-related and direct research-related help. The perceived shortfalls between expected and provided supervision for each element are then identified. A questionnaire survey is designed to act both as a test of the framework and to assess supervision requirements and their provision for PhD students in the construction management and engineering discipline in the UK. In addition, the student population is characterized and selected attributes; age, sex, industrial experience, full- or part-time status, nationality and funding sources, are compared with their supervision requirements. The results showed that the biggest discrepancy between expected and provided supervision was in direct research-related help. The framework is most valuable at individual level and for the framework to be effective communication is seen as being critical.


This article is part of a larger scale project on some aspects of the process of academic socialization of a group of Iranian Ph. D. students studying in five UK universities, particularly focusing on the relationship between these students and their supervisors. The study included eight engineering and five social sciences/ humanities students, as well as four engineering and two social sciences/ humanities supervisors. The overall methodology of the study has been a constructivist version of grounded theory, which is based on a rigorous approach to working with qualitative data and a constructivist epistemology according to which the results of the study are not `realities out there' but the result of the interaction between the researcher and the data. This study looks at the relationship between students and supervisors as legitimate peripheral participation. The main features of this are that novice members are given enough credibility to be considered as `legitimate members of their target communities and are given `less demanding' practices to perform to learn the craft of their `masters'. It is argued that this concept is a productive tool to understand the nature of learning at the Ph. D. level, but it is realized differently in various fields of study. It is also argued that legitimate peripheral participation is in line with informal routes to learning, an
aspect which seems to be partially ignored in recent Ph. D. training guidelines by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Focuses on the problems of role management encountered by Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD) supervisors in Great Britain. Two principal dimensions of intellectual expertise and counselling practices; Tension from the intellectual dimension; Need for erection of boundaries; Effects of particular forms of communications with students.

Since 1985 the social science PhD has undergone various changes instigated by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the main indigenous funder of social science doctoral education. These changes involve the imposition of a more restrictive time limit for the submission of PhD theses and, perhaps more radically, the introduction of compulsory training courses in research methods for students. The responses of PhD supervisors to these changes are portrayed in some depth and include views on the functions of the PhD, the costs and consequences of research training and stricter time limits. In addition, various disciplinary differences in relation to the above issues are examined. The paper concludes with the proposition that the impact of such changes is already significant and may well result in the delay of the development of research creativity amongst doctoral students.

Discusses the potential for excessive emotionally involvement of PhD supervisors with their students. Supervisory duties and involvement; Problems with pastoral care; Costs of over-involvement.

Suggests that graduate students in Great Britain should have a contract with their supervisors. Problems in the process of supervising research students; Troubles experienced by supervisors; Outline of the contract; Criticisms to the strategy.

Effective supervision of research students is acknowledged to be a crucial factor in the latter's successful completion of the social science PhD. How well supervisors supervise is likely to be linked to why they choose to occupy their role. These reasons constitute the supervisor's vocabulary of motives and are examined in same detail from the perspective of interpretative social-psychology. Three dimensions of the vocabulary are depicted: intellectual, functional and subjective. The vocabulary is then situated within its specific locus, namely the institutional context of higher education. Links are then made between the vocabulary and various aspects of the formal value system of academia, a value system which legitimates the depicted vocabulary of motives and declares others to be illegitimate. The Paper concludes with some comments on the relationship between why supervisors supervise and the quality of that supervision, citing a range of factors influencing that relationship.

Background There exist a number of textual sources of advice concerning the provision of effective doctoral supervision. This academic material aimed at both supervisors and students makes assumptions both about the conduct of science and the contemporary nature of higher education as a setting for inducting students into the academy.

Purpose This paper aims to explore and critique received ideas about supervision, and seeks to elucidate their implications for intellectual originality and the nature of research-based knowledge production. This aim is situated in the context of governmental discourses of performativity.

Sample The sample consists of one doctoral student who is advanced in the progress of her studies. She is based in a Scottish university and is of overseas origin. She is a mature student whose previous education took place outwith the UK.

Design and methods A case-study design is adopted within which a supervisor has the stance of a participant observer. It is through participant observation that the data are collected. These qualitative data are then subjected to an appropriate analysis which aims to characterize their meaning.

Results The findings suggest that the conflicting array of ideological discourses exercising authority over the university sector may undermine the concept of scholarly originality and the underpinning academic skills as well as dispositions. It is concluded that supervisory strategies vary, but the received ones premised upon a different historical landscape which championed academic autonomy may bring supervisors into a tense relationship with their institutions and policies of performativity.

Conclusions The evidence indicates that current models of research degree supervision, as presented in published textual sources, are guilty of neglecting to engage properly with the effects of discourses of performativity and commercialization which now, arguably, exercise a controlling influence over significant parts of higher education.


This article is concerned with the processes that lie between the sensing of an idea and its subsequent presentation in a written 'academic' style. It is based on the experience of writing a PhD thesis that set out to explore a 'felt-reality' concerning the relationship between community education and spirituality. Central to the paper is the description and analysis of a critical incident, involving a supervisor's feedback, which caused the thesis to be abandoned for over a year. The article describes why and how the writing was eventually resumed using a deliberately reflective style. This produced new insights and ideas out of the very process of writing. The paper highlights a number of parallels between the content of the thesis and the process of writing it. An illustration is given of how the experience of writing the thesis can be 'mapped' against three different models of 'ways of knowing'.


This article reports part of an Australian longitudinal study which examined the patterns evident in the relationships Ph.D. students and supervisors developed and the ways they worked together. The participants were 21 Ph.D. students and their main
supervisors. This report focuses on the allocation of supervisors to students and continuity of supervision in relation to students' progress and satisfaction with supervision. From this small sample it appears students who felt involved in supervisor selection, whose topics were matched with their supervisor's expertise and who developed good interpersonal working relationships with supervisors were more likely to make good progress and be satisfied. This was more likely when supervisors were experienced and senior academics or the student had two active supervisors. Disruptions caused by a temporary change of supervisor created problems and delays. Suggestions to overcome this are made.


Interventions in the quality of research training provided in universities today focus largely on educating supervisors and monitoring their performance as well as student progress. More private than any other scene of teaching and learning, postgraduate supervision—and more generally the pedagogic practices of the PhD—has largely remained unscrutinised and unquestioned. This article explores the problematic character of ideas of autonomy and the independent scholar that underpin the traditional practices of postgraduate pedagogy, particularly in the humanities and social sciences disciplines. These ideas are found to guide the practices of several different models of the supervisory relationship, whether they be of a pastoral care or more distant kind. The gendered character of the ideas of autonomy and the subject of knowledge that underlie these practices of postgraduate pedagogy are examined, as is the paradoxical nature of the processes of the production of the autonomous scholar self. The article concludes by suggesting some possible lines of thought for the future in addressing the problems in doctoral education identified through this analysis.


Research degree supervision is a bi-lateral process, a complex interaction between the supervisor and the student. This interaction plays a significant role in affecting the quality of the supervisory process. Using 250 responses to a mail-out questionnaire sent to 932 post-graduate research students, this study examines the extent to which students of disparate characteristics are dependent on their supervisors in a range of research-related tasks, and how that dependency affects the research supervision process. It finds that a student's reliance on her or his supervisor for guidance and motivation on work organisation and problem solving, research preparation, and communication exerts a significant effect on the relationship between style and quality of research supervision. This finding suggests that appropriate research supervision has no set prescription. Rather, the interactions among quality and style of supervision, role expectations of student and supervisor: field of study, and other characteristics, have all to be jointly considered.


The writing of academic abstracts is more than a tiresome necessity of scholarly life. It is a practice that goes beyond genre and technique to questions of writing and identity.
In this article we deconstruct a series of abstracts from a variety of refereed journals to `read' for the representation of data, argument, methodology and significance. We describe one strategy for writing abstracts, developed as part of a long-term project on postgraduate writing pedagogies. We propose that the art of writing abstracts is neglected in the academy, is given scant attention by journal editors, and has produced a motley and often bland array of conventions and genres. We suggest that abstract art should be an important aspect of supervision if graduate students and novice researchers are to stake a claim in the academy.


Context Clinical supervision has a vital role in postgraduate and, to some extent, undergraduate medical education. However it is probably the least investigated, discussed and developed aspect of clinical education. This large-scale, interdisciplinary review of literature addressing supervision is the first from a medical education perspective. Purpose To review the literature on effective supervision in practice settings in order to identify what is known about effective supervision. Content The empirical basis of the literature is discussed and the literature reviewed to identify understandings and definitions of supervision and its purpose; theoretical models of supervision; availability, structure and content of supervision; effective supervision; skills and qualities of effective supervisors; and supervisor training and its effectiveness. Conclusions The evidence only partially answers our original questions and suggests others. The supervision relationship is probably the single most important factor for the effectiveness of supervision, more important than the supervisory methods used. Feedback is essential and must be clear. It is important that the trainee has some control over and input into the supervisory process. Finding sufficient time for supervision can be a problem. Trainee behaviours and attitudes towards supervision require more investigation; some behaviours are detrimental both to patient care and learning. Current supervisory practice in medicine has very little empirical or theoretical basis. This review demonstrates the need for more structured and methodologically sound programmes of research into supervision in practice settings so that detailed models of effective supervision can be developed and thereby inform practice.


As individuals mature, increasing responsibility is taken for life events, but there is variation in this maturation from one individual to another. These individual differences can be observed in the doctoral candidate's acceptance of responsibility for completing the doctoral dissertation. The Responsibility Scale was completed by 142 graduates and 97 nongraduates (all but dissertations [ABDs]) in a college of education. A principal components analysis of the scale indicated that two factors underlie responses. The scale appears useful for assessing attitudes of doctoral candidates toward responsibility for dissertation tasks and for planning student advising based on these attitudes.


Recent government intervention in research higher degree policy across the globe has sharpened universities' focus on the quality of their students' research education experience and on timely completion rates. Studies have sought to highlight the factors that predict research students’ timely completion of their studies. Many universities have sought to tighten their selection processes as a way of improving completion rates, even verging on adopting a risk analysis approach to selecting students. Instead this paper takes a preventative, interventionist approach to improving timely completions. It explores how experienced supervisors detect and deal with early warning signs that their research students are experiencing difficulty. It also investigates the wide range of reasons some students nominate for not discussing these difficulties directly with their supervisors. It proposes that supervisors may be able to improve timely completions if they are aware of these reasons and if they adopt a range of explicit pedagogical strategies to support students' learning.


Universities throughout the world are undertaking benchmarking exercises in which they compare themselves to other universities on appropriate indices in order to establish their current levels of performance and to initiate continuous self-improvement overview by McKinnon, Walker, & Davis, 2000, for a description of Australian benchmarking; related information from other countries can be found through relevant websites for the United Kingdom [www.niss.ac.uk/education/qaa/], NZ [www.aau.ac.nz/], and the USA [www.chea.org/]). In order to pursue benchmarking exercises, there is a need for a comprehensive set of benchmark indicators that focus on outcomes; measure functional effectiveness rather than superficial criteria (i.e., are chosen because they are easily “countable”); are systematically developed to have good content (and “face”) validity; and differentiation between universities to provide appropriate standards as a basis of ascertaining excellence and continuous improvement. In the present investigation we explore some of the issues, complexities, and challenges in attempting to benchmark the quality of research supervision of research and PhD students across a large sample of universities and across similar disciplines in different universities.


This qualitative study examined Chinese international laboratory-based research students' experiences of supervision during the first six to eighteen months of their candidature in Singapore. The experiences of marginalization in student/supervisory relationship identified in the study, particularly in the first six months, may very largely be understood in terms of unrealistic or unfulfilled expectations being brought to the new study context but grounded in the home culture. Negative experiences of the student/supervisory relationship were stronger in those with previous postgraduate experience. They also tended to be stronger in those who had irregular supervisory meetings and assigned stronger importance to language difficulties. The findings highlighted the fact that different students require different supervisory relationships, ranging from a high level of dependency to a high level of autonomy. Implications arising from the study inform the suggested intervention programmes that are directed to the points of tension identified in students' experiences.


Research to date on the examination process for postgraduate research theses has focused largely on the deconstruction of examiners' reports. This article reports on a study of the processes that experienced examiners go through, and the judgements they make before writing their reports. A sample of 30 experienced examiners (defined as having examined the equivalent of at least five research theses over the last five years), from a range of disciplines in five universities was interviewed. Clear trends emerged with regard to: the criteria used by examiners and the levels of student performance expected by them; critical judgement points in the examination process; the examiners' perceptions of their own role in the process; the influence on examiners of previously published work, the views of the other examiner(s) and their knowledge of the student's supervisor and/or department, and the level of perceived responsibility between student and supervisor.


This study of the impact of doctoral adviser mentoring on student outcomes was undertaken in response to earlier research that found (a) students with greater incoming potential received more adviser mentoring, and (b) adviser mentoring did not significantly contribute to important student outcomes, including research productivity [ Green, S. G., and Bauer, T. N. (1995). Personnel Psychology 48(3): 537-561]. In this longitudinal study spanning 5 1/2 years, the effect of mentorship on the research productivity, career commitment, and self-efficacy of Ph.D. students in the 'hard' sciences was assessed, while controlling for indicators of ability and attitudes at program entry. Positive benefits of mentoring were found for subsequent productivity and self-efficacy. Mentoring was not significantly associated with commitment to a research career.


This paper presents some of the findings from two national research projects which focussed on Ph.D. research in Britain. Through interviews with graduate students, supervisors and department heads, it explores the characteristic structures which index natural science and social science doctoral study in both single and multi/inter-disciplinary fields. By comparing and contrasting a research group approach to Ph.D. research with the 'one-to-one' model, the research findings highlight ways in which doctoral study can be organised to minimise some of the problems routinely faced by graduate students.


Ph.D. student numbers have been increasing in Australia as has government interest in the economic and social outcomes of graduate education (Moses 1994, Cullen et al. 1994). Yet the position of Ph.D. students can still be seen as marginal within universities and the institutional organisation of Ph.D. education as problematic. This situation can be related to the highly individualistic nature of research and supervision which is both a barrier to and part of the argument against efforts to examine and discuss in general the processes of research training and supervisory interactions
across disciplinary and departmental boundaries. This article positions all Ph.D.
students, in all fields of study, as learners in a form of professional education - a
perspective which offers a way out of this apparent dilemma. Drawing on data from a
study reported in Cullen et al. (1994) the following topics are explored: Ph.D. students
as learners of the knowledge and skill of the professional practice of research and
scholarship; the role of the supervisor in assisting students to become independent
practitioners; and the complementary professional role of student participation in the
academic community. Implications for policy and practice to professionalise Ph.D.
education and enhance the quality of the student experience are discussed.

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Provides an analysis of the 1996 Harris report of postgraduate education in Great
Britain. Five-year research program's focus on the socialization and supervision of
doctoral students; Code of practice for postgraduate education; Defining joint
supervision; Models of joint supervision.

Doctoral students seeking faculty mentors have few tools available to assist them. The
Ideal Mentor Scale (IMS) is a new measure designed to help graduate students
consider the qualities they as individuals most value in a potential mentor. Ph.D.
students at 3 different universities (AIs = 82, 250, 380) contributed to the development
and cross-validation of the 34-item IMS. Item frequencies indicated that 2 universal
qualities were central to graduate students' definitions of a mentor: communication
skills and provision of feedback. Principal factor analysis of the IMS indicated that 3
individual differences dimensions reliably underlaid graduate students' importance
ratings of mentor attributes: Integrity, Guidance, and Relationship. In one sample,
Guidance and Relationship were significantly related to student satisfaction with their
mentor. The IMS is an assessment tool that could individualize the initiation and
maintenance of mentoring relationships, enhance communication, and ultimately
improve the satisfaction of students with their doctoral education.

Graduate students differ in their conceptualizations of mentoring. This study examined
the relationship between students' demographic and academic characteristics (age,
gender, citizenship, academic discipline, and stage of persistence) and their
preferences for three styles of mentoring assessed by the Ideal Mentor Scale (IMS):
Integrity, Guidance, and Relationship. Students enrolled in Ph.D. programs at one of
two Midwestern Research I Universities (n = 537) completed the IMS, rating the
importance of each of 34 mentor attributes on a 5-point Likert type scale. MANCOVA
yielded significant differences for demographic but not academic variables: women
scored higher than men on Integrity, international students scored higher than
domestic on Relationship, and age was inversely related to Relationship scores. No
group differences were found on the Guidance scale. These findings indicate that
graduate students' perceptions of the ideal mentor are influenced somewhat by major socio-cultural factors, but also suggest that individual differences may play a larger role.


Mentoring skills are valuable assets for academic medicine faculty, who help shape the professionalism of the next generation of physicians. Mentors are role models who also act as guides for students' personal and professional development over time. Mentors can be instrumental in conveying explicit academic knowledge required to master curriculum content. Importantly, they can enhance implicit knowledge about the "hidden curriculum" of professionalism, ethics, values and the art of medicine not learned from texts. In many cases, mentors also provide emotional support and encouragement. The relationship benefits mentors as well, through greater productivity, career satisfaction, and personal gratification. Maximizing the satisfaction and productivity of such relationships entails self-awareness, focus, mutual respect, and explicit communication about the relationship. In this article, the authors describe the development of optimal mentoring relationships, emphasizing the importance of experience and flexibility in working with beginning to advanced students of different learning styles, genders, and races. Concrete advice for mentor "do's and don'ts" is offered, with case examples illustrating key concepts.


This article reflects on mentoring graduate students and discusses the author's experiences interacting with them. The author gradually developed relationships with students after becoming a full professor and then later chair of his department. He taught the main graduate research methods course where he followed the rules for preparing students for the challenges they would face when doing their thesis research. It was during this period that a sense for his role as a graduate adviser developed as he helped students complete their research requirements for the Ph.D. Graduate students are closer in age to the young professor which poses an academic equivalent of sibling rivalry.


This article reflects on the content of the issue which is focused on understanding the importance of the informal professional norms through which people actually practice the sociological craft. Informal professional socialization occurring in graduate school through faculty mentors, individual entrepreneurship and chance is important. In the article by Michael Burawoy and Allan Schnailberg, the thoughts of Ph.D. mentors on supervising different types of students are revealed. The sequential social roles that graduate students tackle as they complete graduate school and enter into profession are identified and analyzed by Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler. Gabrielle Ferrales and Gary Alan Fine examine the appraisal of reputations in graduate school.


Several studies indicate that there are differences between fields of learning which impact on both teaching and research. Data from a survey to all regular faculty members at Norwegian universities show significant field differences in the time spent on teaching and preparation, and in the distribution of time between different types of teaching and teaching levels. Some, but not all, of these differences may be due to genuine characteristics of disciplines.


In the humanities and the social sciences master's and PhD students take more time to complete their degree than in the natural sciences. This article examines the reasons for the difference. The findings suggest that field differences in knowledge structures and in the organisation of research have significant implications for research training. 'Hard' fields are characterised by a directed supervision model and a close relationship between students' and supervisors' research. Even though this model appears to be effective, it seems to be difficult to implement in 'soft' fields where team organisation of research is rare and where professional authority and judgements are more subject to discussion.


A reviewing of the research literature reveals arguments that both support and contradict the assumption that female supervisors are important for supporting academic careers of female graduate students. The present study supports the claims that gender matters when supervisory relationships are established. Data from a survey among all regular faculty members at Norwegian universities show that there is a significant same-gender tendency in graduate supervisory relationships, and that this tendency is stronger among women than among men. The tendency varies between fields of learning and between departments with different proportions of female faculty members. The results are discussed in relation to different explanations of same-gender relationships.


In this paper, four experienced researchers from the UK, China and Australia offer guidance in research supervision based on their experiences and the recent document, Improving standards in postgraduate research degree programmes [Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2003. Improving standards in postgraduate research degree programmes. Formal consultation. Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland, Higher Education Funding Council for England, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Scottish Higher Education Funding Council, HEFCE, London]. Supervision is an important aspect of not only the development of the neophyte researcher, but of academic staff and research activity in general. With increased academic accountability, good supervision should be an integral component of a quality research governance framework and resourced as such.

Recommendations include: adoption of these standards; rigorous selection of research students and supervisors and development of projects; development of departmental procedures for monitoring, feedback and intellectual property; and transparency, rigour and fairness in examination procedures. (c) 2005 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.


Using the framework for graduate and professional student socialization developed by Weidman, Twale, and Stein (2001), this study addresses socialization of doctoral students to the academic norms of research and scholarship. Data are presented about the perceptions doctoral students in a social science discipline (sociology) and in educational foundations at a major research university have of the scholarly and collegial climates of their departments. Data on students' social relationships with faculty and peers as well as their reported participation in scholarly activities are also reported. A multivariate analysis provides support for the framework, affirming the importance of social interaction among both students and faculty as well as collegiality among faculty for creating a supportive climate for doctoral study that also has the potential to provide a strong foundation for subsequent academic and/or research careers by stimulating students' research and scholarly productivity.


Results from action research conducted at APU largely with Israeli PhD students, start to identify good practice in supervisory dialogues, peer support and in facilitative strategies as part of research development programmes. Our results, focusing on learning conversations between students and supervisors, students and peers on research development programmes, identify strategies, supervisory relationships and support, which aid completion. This research builds on earlier studies (Wisker, 1999; Wisker et al., 2003) into PhD students' development of research methods and conceptual frameworks, and on the work of others (Moses, 1984; Pearson, 2000) into supervisory relationships. Focus groups, workshops, questionnaires and individual supervisory dialogues with PhD students, have been conducted using an action research format. This paper concentrates on elements of the action research taking place at completion stage in students' PhDs and during the research development workshop programme (stage 3, 2000, 2001, 2002).

Examines the three classes of definition of good teaching. Examination of the nondefinition of good teaching; Proposed definition for good teaching; Implications for school supervision.