



New Approaches to Postgraduate Supervision and Supervisor Development

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8 September 2008 for UK Vitae

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Background to this workshop

- Supervisors' approach to supervising research has a profound influence on how they will supervise.
- Shared experience, there are often no right or wrong answers, but there are a range of approaches from which we can choose.
- Discussion, and using the Surrey and Harvard research results will help to create that range of approaches.
- Approach to supervision can be linked to core beliefs about what research is.
- This is only the beginning of a dialogue.

Some Influences on Supervision

- Disciplinary pedagogy
- Departmental practices
- Conceptual approach of supervisor
- Codes of practice
- Employers/funders' requirements
- Full or part time students?
- Experienced or inexperienced students?
- International or home students?
- PhD, professional or practitioner doctorate?
- Supervisor/co-supervisor

A framework for concepts of research supervision

	Functional	Enculturation	Critical Thinking	Emancipation	Relationship Development
Supervisors Activity	Rational progression through tasks	Gatekeeping Master to apprentice	Evaluation Challenge	Mentoring, supporting constructivism	Supervising by experience, developing a relationship
Supervisor's knowledge & skills	Directing, project management	Diagnosis of deficiencies, coaching	Argument, analysis	Facilitation, Reflection	Managing conflict Emotional intelligence
Possible student reaction	Organised Obedience	Role modelling, Apprentice- ship	Constant inquiry, fight or flight	Personal growth, reframing	A good team member. Emotional intelligence

Advantages and Disadvantages

	Functional	Enculturation	Critical Thinking	Emancipation	Relationship Development
Advantages	Clarity Consistency Progress can be monitored Records are available	Encourages standards, participation, identity, community formation	Rational inquiry, fallacy exposed	Personal growth, ability to cope with change	Lifelong working partnerships Enhanced self esteem
Disadvantages	Rigidity when confronted with the creation of original knowledge	Low tolerance of internal difference, sexist, ethnicised regulation (Cousin & Deepwell 2005)	Denial of creativity, can belittle or depersonalise student	Toxic mentoring (Darling 1985) where tutor abuses power	Potential for harassment, abandonment or rejection

Dependence and independence

	Functional	Enculturation	Critical Thinking	Emancipation	Relationship Development
Dependence	Student needs explanation of stages to be followed and direction through them	Student needs to be shown what to do	Student learns the questions to ask, the frameworks to apply	Student seeks affirmation of self-worth	Student depends on supervisor's approval
Independence	Student can programme own work, follow own timetables competently	Student can follow discipline's epistemological demands independently	Student can critique own work	Student autonomous. Can decide how to be, where to go, what to do, where to find information	Student demonstrates appropriate reciprocity and has power to withdraw

Observations on developing supervisors

- Supervisors have learned most from how they were supervised themselves
- Understanding a range of approaches is important
- Co-supervision can be helpful if the roles are clearly allocated
- Those who need training can be the most affronted when the suggestion is made that they need it

Occupational influences

METHODS OF SUPERVISION

department norms,
co-supervision,
team supervision,
group supervision

TOPIC
occupational
fertility

STUDENT

previous experience,
contacts, knowledge
aptitude, skills,
financial aims

SUPERVISOR'S CONCEPTIONS

contacts, own PhD
experience

UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES

recruitment,
upgrading,
networking
financial support

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Useful web sites include:

- Quality Assurance Agency web site and code of good practice at: www.gaa.ac.uk
- UK Vitae web site and handbook 'Supervising a doctorate' at www.vitae.ac.uk

Some further information

Forthcoming books by Anne Lee:

Helping New Postgraduates: A guide for academics

(Publication 2009 OUP/McGraw Hill ISBN 978-0-335-23558-2)

Supervision Teams: Making them Work

(Publication Autumn 2008 SRHE ISBN 978-0-946376-13-1)

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