



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



The Theory and philosophy of graduate supervision: Reflections on supervision styles

Betty Ezati

Introduction

- Supervisors personal and professional experiences impact and shape supervisory relationships.
- **Should you impose your values on students?**

Supervision

A demanding practices that is hardly standardized

Supervision style is known during supervision

Approaches

Approaches used relies on supervisors' capabilities derived from experiences and personality (Amundsen and McAlpine, 2009; Bøgelund, 2015)

Relationship

Defined by the learning role of PhD candidates and the teaching role of professors.

What is supervision?

- A formal process based on the relationship between supervisor and supervisee (candidate), where the supervisor's role is to help the supervisee acquire appropriate professional behaviour and competence in professional activities (Loganbill & Hardy (1983)
- Is discipline and oversight of work (Lee, 2009)
- Is a two-way interactional process that requires the student and the supervisor to connect intentionally with each other and within the spirit of professionalism, respect, collegiality, and open-mindedness (Ismail, Abiddin & Hassan, 2011).
- **How do you perceive supervision?**



Supervision styles

Some theoretical perspectives

• 1



- Classical academic
 - Supervision as an issue of teaching

• 2



- Psychological
 - Supervision as an issue of individual talent

• 3



- Socialisation
 - Creating a working environment of togetherness

• 4



- Master—Apprentice
 - Learning as ‘best practice’, copying and ‘role modelling’

• 5



- Peer to Peer
 - Collegial and mutual learning

• 6



- Neoliberal
 - Focus on quality, publications, citations and time frames

Psychological

- Supervision is a question of talent or 'style'
 - Supervisors prefer to 'learn'
 - more about themselves
 - models and techniques
 - how to conduct supervision
- to be able to stimulate the PhD student

Supervision as an issue of socialisation

- Collective research culture
- stimulates ability to cooperate
- Includes necessity for social integration
- favours those whose values are consistent with the dominant paradigm in the group
 - regular meetings
 - encouraging collaboration instead of competition
 - the PhD students writing together

Master-Apprenticeship model

- Learning by best practice ('Community of Practice')
 - developing skills, values
 - education towards independence
- Critics
 - Tendency of unreflective imitation
 - unequal relation
 - works best with supervisor and students of similar background variables (Lee & Williams, 1999)
 - 'master – slave' (Grant, 2008)
 - It's a hierarchical relationship that provides an unidirectional mode of knowledge transfer from the powerful supervisors to powerless supervisees.

Peer to Peer model



Peer to peer

- Dynamic situation of negotiations about the research process than the production of research
- Mutual learning processes
- PhD students and supervisors learn from one another
- PhD students and supervisors work/conduct research together

Neoliberal

- Efficiency, quality, evaluation, follow-up routines
- Market driven
 - the production of PhDs (quantitative aspect)
 - to publish (quantitative aspect)
prestigious Journals (qualitative aspect)
 - to recruit capable students timely completions
 - apply for and get research funding
 - appear as excellent (individual/environment) defined by other actors/institutions
 - constructing oneself by participating in conferences, lists of publications, websites
- to become recruited as a supervisor for further career steps

Supportive Vs Directive (Gu, etal 2017)

01

Personal support, (caring for wellbeing, fostering friendship, emotional, boosting confidence)



04

Learner centered (Discovery – dialogue and inquiry)



02

Academic support (availability, provision of timely feedback))



05

Purpose is to develop individual potential
Promote deep learning



03

Autonomy support (recognizing student's viewpoint, encouraging them to express their thoughts openly, and giving them the opportunity to make their own decisions)

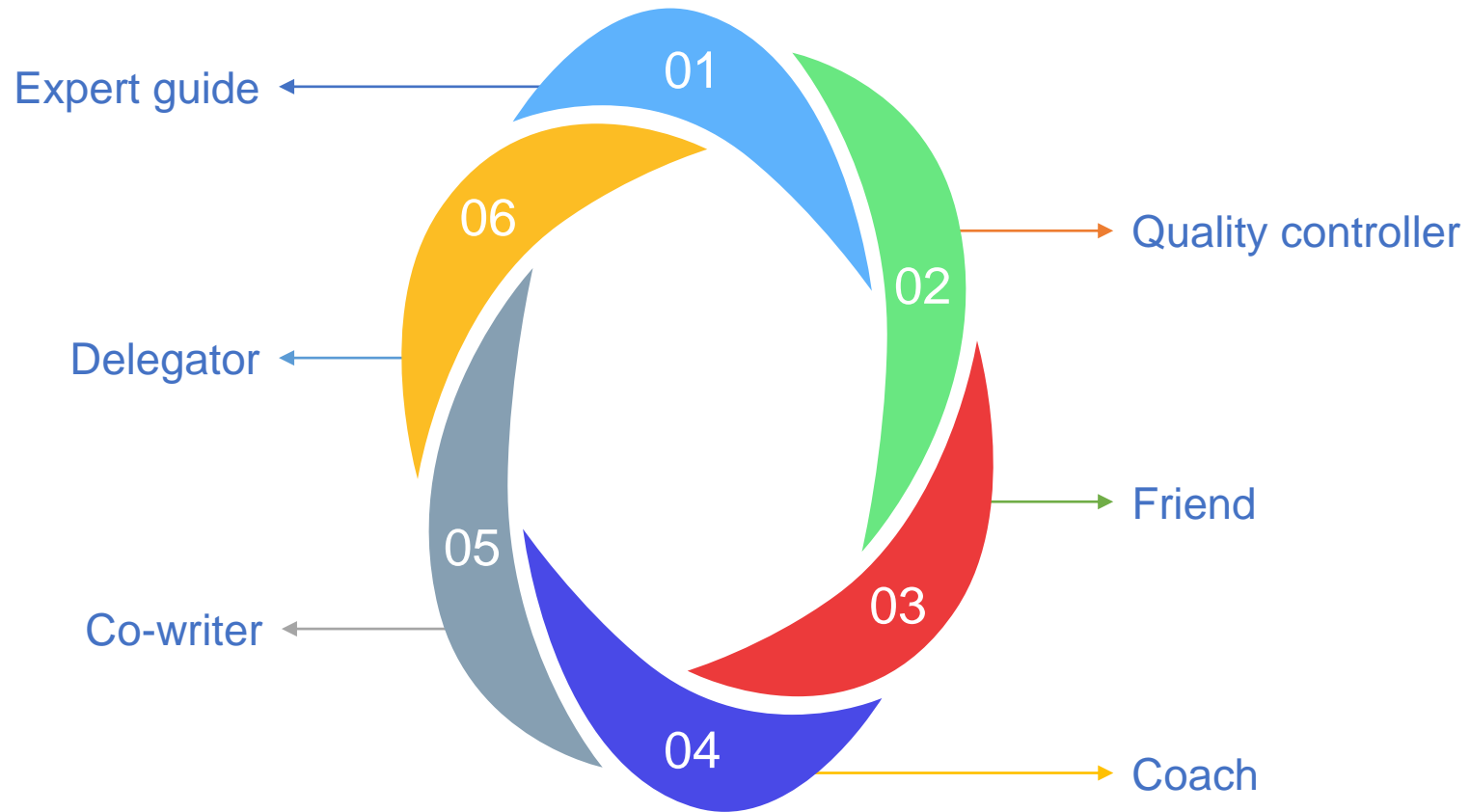


06

task-oriented aiming at providing framework for decision-making and action that is in line with the supervisor's vision (Somech, 2016)



Another way of viewing styles



Dynamics of supervision style

- Start:
 - If there is no prior contact often starts in a business like fashion, directed at process
- Data collection
 - By the time of data collection (in case of frequent contact of joint lab work/field work), a more personal style develops (if things don't go wrong).
- After the fieldwork
 - Style of supervision often shifts back to a more businesslike approach, guiding the PhD candidate in the appropriate data analysis

Dynamics of supervision style

- Thesis writing:
 - Relationship becomes more personal again, gradually shifting from a process approach to product supervision
- Final write up:
 - As one approaches accepting the PhD manuscript, the relationship has to become more formal again, culminating in the official defence ceremony
- After the formal defence
 - A more personal style, and the relationship often shifts back from product to a joint process of getting journal articles accepted, or of making policy briefs, conferences papers.
 - If the process goes well, a good personal relationship remains, and the supervisory task shifts to career advice.

Concluding remarks (Tian & Singhasiri, 2016; Waghid, 2015),

Supervisor is the closest person who can mentor and provide the support and guidance to the student

Supervision is a personal journey of discovery. A relational and empowering process

supervision is pedagogically a complex activity that is getting more controlled (regulations) (McGloin, 2018; Olmos-López & Sunderland 2017).

Supervision is a mixed of roles and practices. You never use one style

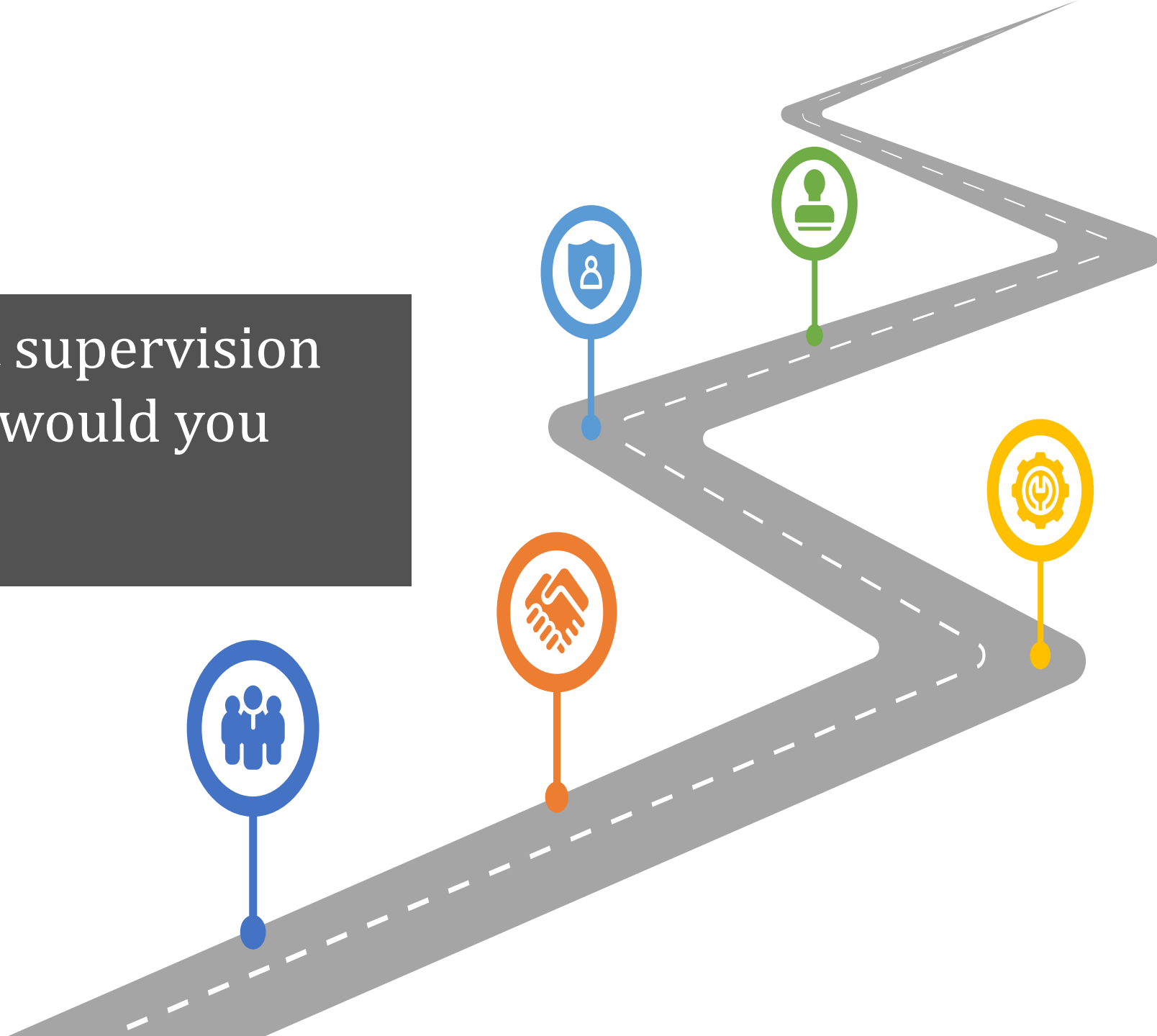


The student-supervisor relationship is embodied in power dynamics, and its complex nature is influenced by various socio-economic factors such as culture, gender, ethnicity, expertise, age and race (Green & Dekkers, 2010).



Note

What supervision
style would you
use?



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

