How to Manage Graduate Supervision

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Session introduction

- Is based on the framework by Anne Lee (2008): How are doctoral students supervised? Concepts of doctoral research supervision

- The framework is a combination of literature and interviews that integrate theory and practice

- *The supervisors were asked to describe what they actually did in their meetings, what they expected students to do, what problems arose and how they were coped with, what their objectives were and occupationally what their students have subsequently gone on to do*.

Session outcomes

By the end of the session, participants should be able to

- **Distinguish between 'Techne' & 'Phronesis' in supervision**
- **Identify the five steps** of managing graduate supervision
- **Describe** how each of the approaches plays out itself in them supervision experience
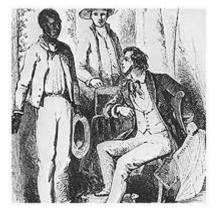- **Analyse** some of the tensions that supervisors try to reconcile

5 Steps to managing supervision

1. Functional role: Structuring the process

2. Enculturation: Guiding the supervisees to become members of the disciplinary community

3. Critical Thinking: Supporting the supervisee to analyse their work

4. Emancipation: Encouraging the supervisees to question and develop themselves

5. Developing relationships: Getting supervisees enthused, inspired & cared for

Managing Supervision as "Techne"

- Supervisor as a 'Platonic Kingly Techne'
- Treats supervisees as metal to be formed & controlled towards predictable ends
- Streamlines the basic rules of procedure
- Gives direct instruction

Managing Supervision as 'Aristotelian Phronesis'

- Supervision is guided by achieving an understanding

- Weighs the research traditions and customs against the supervisee's unique circumstances

- Endevours to make a 'good judgement' about how research norms can be applied to daily decisions

Platonic Supervisor (Techne)	Aristotelian Supervisor (Phronesis)
Knowledge determines the character of supervision	Having knowledge is not enough but acting on it
Character of supervision is determined and progressive	Character of supervision is negotiated
Focuses on the provision of physical things, instructions, required materials	Draws from both physical resources and inner resources of the supervisee
Associated with efficiency / correctness	Associated with effectively dealing with uncertain human behaviours, beliefs & events
A technician/technetes imposes an "external efficient cause," e.g. wood will never on its own accord a shape of a chair without a carpenter	Activates an "internal efficient cause." i.e. members can change themselves willingly into good people provided that they are placed in the proper environment

Functional role: Structuring the process

- Professional role of the supervisor – technical rational role

- Supervisor is a director and manager

- Focuses on giving practical advices, agreeing on the ground rules, introducing supervisee to new colleagues, project expectations, study plans, ethical issues

Enculturation: Guiding the supervisees to become members of the disciplinary community

- Supervisee is an apprenticeship learning after the 'skilled craft man / woman'

- Orientation to institutions, the community and the discipline- the 3 layers

- Social dimensions of research / cultural context of the field in which the research is taken

- Supervisor is like a 'family doctor' – provides specific expertise

- Is a gatekeeper to learning resources, specialist opinions and networks

Enculturation: Guiding the supervisees to model the way

- ► Decides which gates to open, especially in the early states of the researcher's life

- ► Wielders a great amount of power

- ► Both the supervisor and the supervisee are 'visible & present'

- ► Gradually the supervisee is given legitimate peripheral participation

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Critical Thinking: Supporting the supervisee to challenge the process

- Is at the heart of graduate education and research

- Enables supervisee to apply rational criterial to the reasoning of speakers and writers

- Aids the supervisee to address questions like:

a) What is the underlying conceptual framework?

b) What are the arguments for and against?

c) What has been considered and what has been left out

d) What are the gaps in knowledge?

Critical Thinking: Supporting the supervisee to challenge the process

Critical thinking role involves the Socratic Inquiry – the supervisor guides the supervisee to

▶ cleverly question and cross-examine,

▶ peeling away layers of half-truths,

▶ exposing hidden assumptions

▶ to gradually accepting that there is 'no one right answer'

❖ There are six types of Socratic Questions

❖ Questions for clarification: Why do you say that?

❖ Questions that probe assumptions: What could we assume instead?

❖ Questions that probe reasons and evidence: What would be an example?

❖ Questions about Viewpoints and Perspectives: What would be an alternative?

❖ Questions that probe implications and consequences: What are you implying?

❖ Questions about the question: What was the point of this question?

Emancipation: Enable the supervisees to act and develop themselves

- Supervisor play a facilitative process requiring support and challenge

- Gives educational tasks

- Supports the progressing of the candidature

- Mentors and coaches

- Sponsors supervisee in academic practice

- Supervisor recedes in the background as supervisee takes the centre stage

- Supervisor is guided by belief in the self experience and self discovery of the supervisee

Relationship development role- inspire a shared vision

- Supervisor uses emotional intelligence and flexibility to steer the research project

- Interruptions and dissatisfactions derail the process

- BUT good relationships do not necessarily imply friendship at the beginning

- 'Friendship' can get in the way of a good supervisory relationship because it might blunt the ability to be critical

- But close contact is inescapable

- Relationship includes a desire to enthuse, encourage, recognise achievement and offer pastoral support