



Researcher Identity Development

Strengthening Science in Society Strategies

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Workshop

Supervision of doctoral theses.

How to prevent and cope with problems and incidents.

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Expectations

- What do we expect from a PhD student?

What do students expect from their supervisor?

For him/her to...

- *be available when I need him/her"*
- *"for him/her to be an expert in the topic of my research"*
- *"be interested in the topic of my research"*
- *"be engaged in my thesis"*
- *"be recognized in the scientific field" "*
- *"guide me"*
- *"solve my doubts"*
- *"have clear thinking"*
- *"change his/her mind about research"*
- *"respect my interests and points of view"*
- *"be empathetic"*
- *"be honest"*
- *"be understanding"*
- *"be patient"*
- *"..."*

What characteristics do you think the “ideal doctoral student” should have?



What characteristics do you think the “ideal supervisor” should have?



How would you define a good supervision process?

Both the supervisor and the doctoral student dialogue and comply with the agreements.

Planning and commitment of supervision throughout the different phases of the research

Clear objectives to be performed from the beginning of the thesis and a good visualization of the different parts that it will have. At the same time, frequent contact with the thesis supervisor.

A constant process, of debate on the proposals of the doctoral students, of collaboration in other projects of the research group to understand what doing research is...

A relationship of support, help, feedback, and, above all, a lot of dialogue.

Good initial orientation of the topic (suitability and scientific contribution and general structure of the research) and the methodology, and resolution of doubts, obstacles, etc. that arise in the development of the research proposal. Also, taking good care of the revision of the final product: sections that are "essential" (good discussion, good lines of research) and style of presentation adapted to the quality of the content.

Initially agree to the conditions of supervision and make the rules of the game clear.

The supervisor mentors and the doctoral student decides.

Being attentive to the doctoral student's needs of the moment, giving the indications and resources that allow him/her to be autonomous, giving room to the doctoral student to make the decisions. In short, I understand the mentoring as standing next to the student, with rigorous criteria, without being too directive.

The one who makes the doctoral student think about the solution to the problems that he/she wants to solve and also gives him/her security in his /her decisions

The collaboration process that allows to obtain the best research possible, depending on the abilities and circumstances of the doctoral student. Continuous mentoring.

What do you think is the most interesting and positive aspect of supervising doctoral theses?

The joint reflection. Most interesting: to accompany the process of learning and research in topics related to mine.

Most positive: to progress at the same time in the CV. What is the learning done? I have only been doing this for a few months ... The supervisor's ability to provide improvements to the theory and methodology work in a constructive way. Mentor and help the student, while learning yourself. You learn together with the doctoral student: the process with him/her and also the production of knowledge (the content of the thesis). Learn about the attitudes and abilities of the doctoral student. Shared learning process. Joint learning, the opportunities to advance in your line of research and mentoring the student towards a goal. Mutual enrichment based on the work of the doctoral student and the supervisor's work. The dialogue and reflection shared with the doctoral student on the different parts of the thesis (topic, research question, instruments, results, analysis, etc.). The dialogue that can be established with the doctoral student in relation to their progress, new knowledge generated by the thesis.

What do you think is the least interesting or negative aspect of supervising doctoral theses?

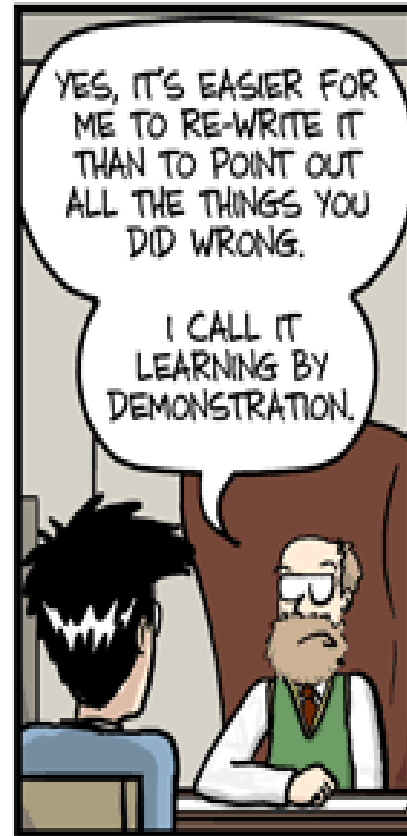
Reading many times the same thing, indicating changes that are not implemented. The rhythm of the student. It is not exactly "negative or less interesting" but an important difficulty is not knowing how to respond to the "theoretical / methodological" demands of the doctoral student. In the my case, on-line tutoring. When doctoral students do not respond to the expectations. I am worried that the mutual cooperation with the doctoral student might not work. Emotional aspects of the students and aspects not anticipated. The volume of revisions that must be done if you want to mentor them with the maximum engagement. The solution of bureaucratic obstacles; the little academic recognition that supervision has. The successive corrections of the manuscript. Lack of time. When the work of the doctorand is not constant and goes through ups and downs.

Meetings

- Frequency
- Purpose/format
- Roles:
 - Before meetings:
 - Clarify doubts and process followed to solve them
 - Define the agenda
 - During:
 - Take notes or record
 - Show the solutions explored
 - Plan the following steps
 - After:
 - Define and share agreements
- Dairies

Feedback, guidance and guidance

- More focused on strategies than on solutions
 - What have you done (regarding a doubt, problem)? What solutions have you explored? Why?
 - How did you do it?
 - Have you thought about ...?
- More focused on processes than on products
 - Writing and reading (Planning texts, draft analysis)
 - Data analysis (decision analysis)



JORGE CHAM © 2011

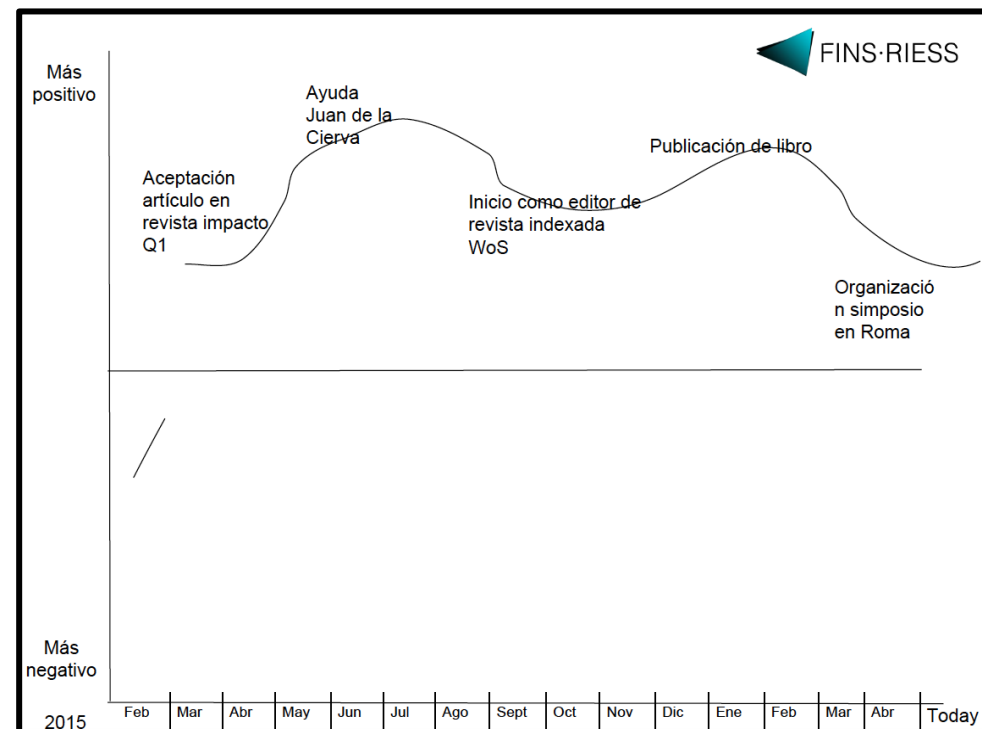
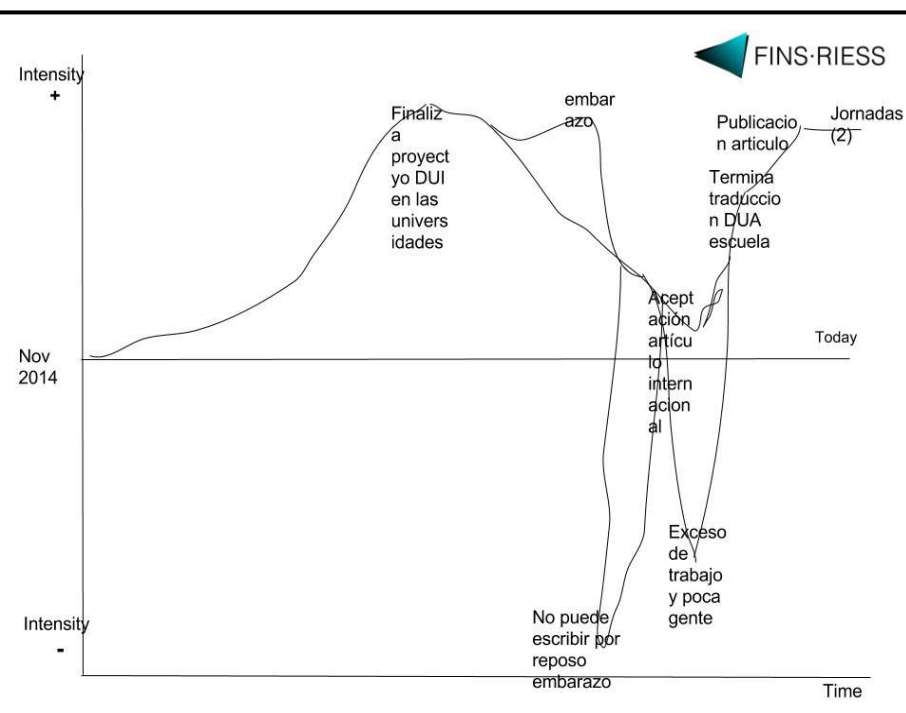
Supervision throughout the trajectory?

Supervising a thesis is a process

- Relational
- Of learning
- Of socialization

Specific characteristics

- In academic contexts
- Professional role
- Dynamic (different trajectories)

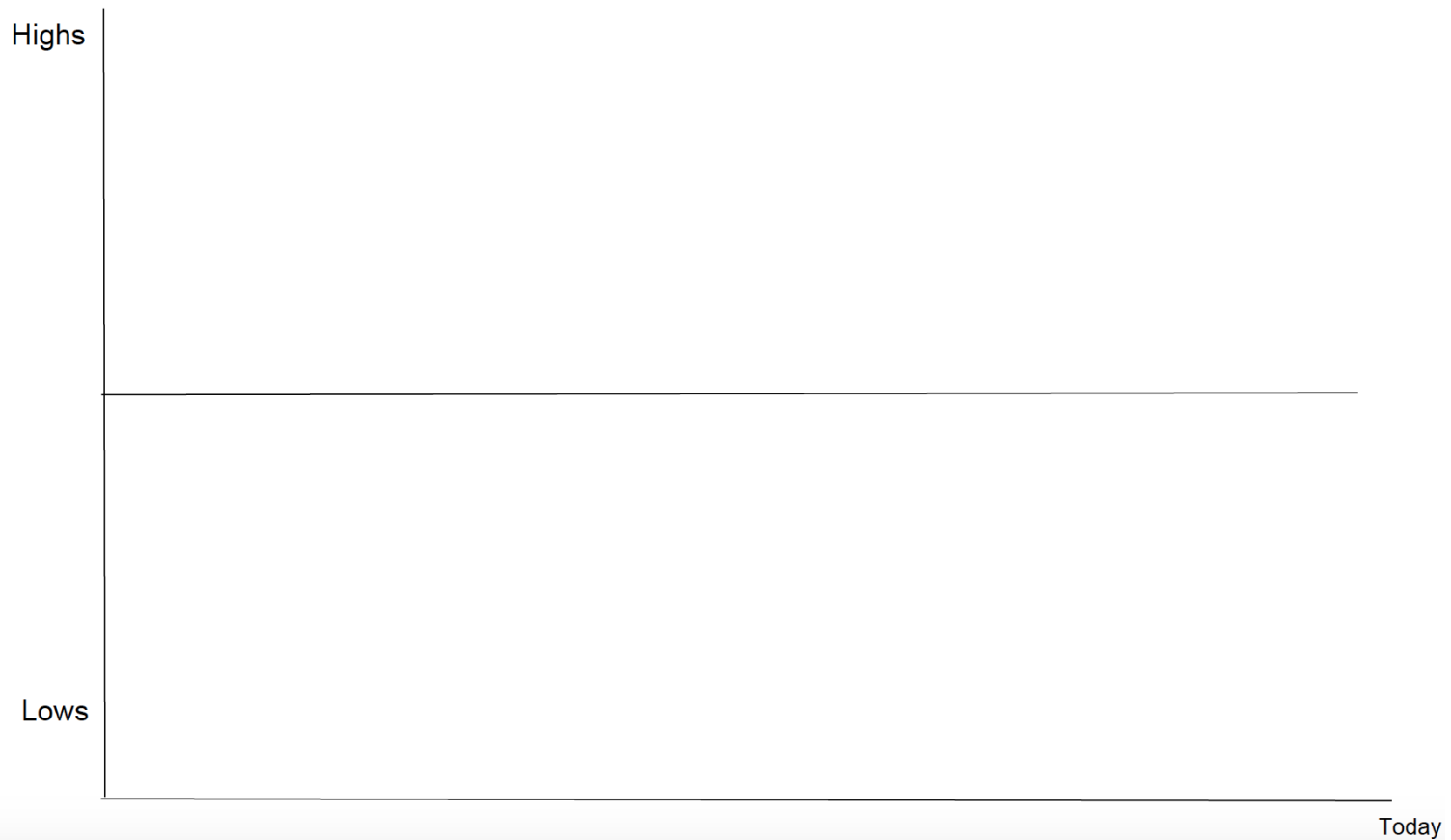


Our experience

Journey Plot



Turner, Gill (2015) Learning to Supervise: Four Journeys. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 52 (1): 86–98. doi:10.1080/1470329031000088978.
Sala-Bubaré, A. & Castelló, M. (accepted). Exploring the relationship between doctoral students' experiences and research community positioning. *Studies in Continuing Education*



INCIDENTS

Describe a maximum of 3 incidents which you faced (or you are worried you will) in relation to the thesis supervision process:

Relationship

- The relation established with the student. In my case, the age difference. I am a lot younger. Having to “direct” / “guide” the student as a result of his /her dispersion. Both the co-supervisor and myself try to make our messages very concrete, but sometimes we find that the student does not just understand us. Could it be because of the cultural difference?
- Not knowing how much the supervisor needs to help. Finding the limits.
- Good coordination (when there is co-supervisor).
- The student who does not follow your instructions (and does not tell you that he does not follow them).

Abandonment, wear, loss of meaning

- that after months of work the doctoral student ends up leaving for personal reasons;
- that once the thesis is defended, the student does not “feel like” publishing it.
- The student drops out
- The thesis does not progress: little continuous work, student’s block.

Final quality

- Having supervised a thesis with little scientific value (in my opinion).
- That the result does not have the expected quality (and have to defend it in front of other researchers).

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Describe a maximum of 3 incidents which you faced (or you are worried you will) in relation to the thesis supervision process:

Supervisors' competences

- Not knowing how to respond to theoretical or methodological issues and, intentionally or unintentionally, steering the topic to your comfort zone.
- Not having enough knowledge of the area.
- Not knowing about methodology.
- Not being able to answer a question.
- Not knowing how to respond to the student's expectations
- Not being able to find the key theoretical framework. I always fear that I will miss methodological details.

Doctoral students' competences

- Documentary or instrumental digital competence of the doctoral student (important technical issues); Methodological questions (not initially expected or in the plan); Emotional aspects (on the other hand, very normal and that it force us to change deadlines);
- Some doctoral student who has needed me too much at his side when starting field work (interviews, use of analysis tools ...)
- The student does not quite understand what it means to do a doctoral thesis, his conceptions about research
- Serious difficulties in academic writing

Incidents and difficulties

Students' diaries:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/professional-development/arena-open/research-supervision/phd-diaries>

Interviews with students who have already finished the doctorate:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/careers/specialistsupport/researchers>

Videos IC in the supervision of the doctoral thesis:

<https://www.critic-edu.com>

To explore further...

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More references

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- <http://recerca.blanquerna.edu/estrategias-lectura-escritura-academica/en/ultimos-5-anos/>