



'MAXIMISING THE PHD SUPERVISION EXPERIENCE: TWO SIDES OF THE STORY'

Dr Noelle Higgins (Maynooth University, Ireland)
Dr Gerard Maguire (Nottingham Trent University)

The Relationship between Supervisor and Supervisee

- One of the best indicators of a positive or negative PhD experience (Wellington and Sikes, 2006; Hemer, 2012)
- Unique Relationship
 - 'Tailoring' (Spronken-Smith, 2018)



What PhD Students Want?

- **Guidance**
 - On Research Question; Methodology; Structure; Career (Madan, 2021)
- **Clear and Timely feedback** (Woolderink *et al*, 2005)
- **Trust and Respect** (Gunnarsson *et al*, 2013)
- **Support**
 - Not solely from supervisor - “learning community” (Giddens, 1987)
- **Career Advice** (Spronken–Smith, 2018)



Meetings

- Gunnarsson et al (2013): ‘the student thinks about nothing else, and you [the supervisor] think about it sometimes for one hour every three or four weeks. So it is difficult in a PhD supervision session to get up to speed as quickly as you need’
- Supervision over coffee (Hemer, 2012)
- Covid
- Problem v Process (Hemer, 2012)
- Intellectual v Pastoral
- ‘Compassionate rigour’ (Manathunga, 2009)

PhD Supervision Meeting Agenda

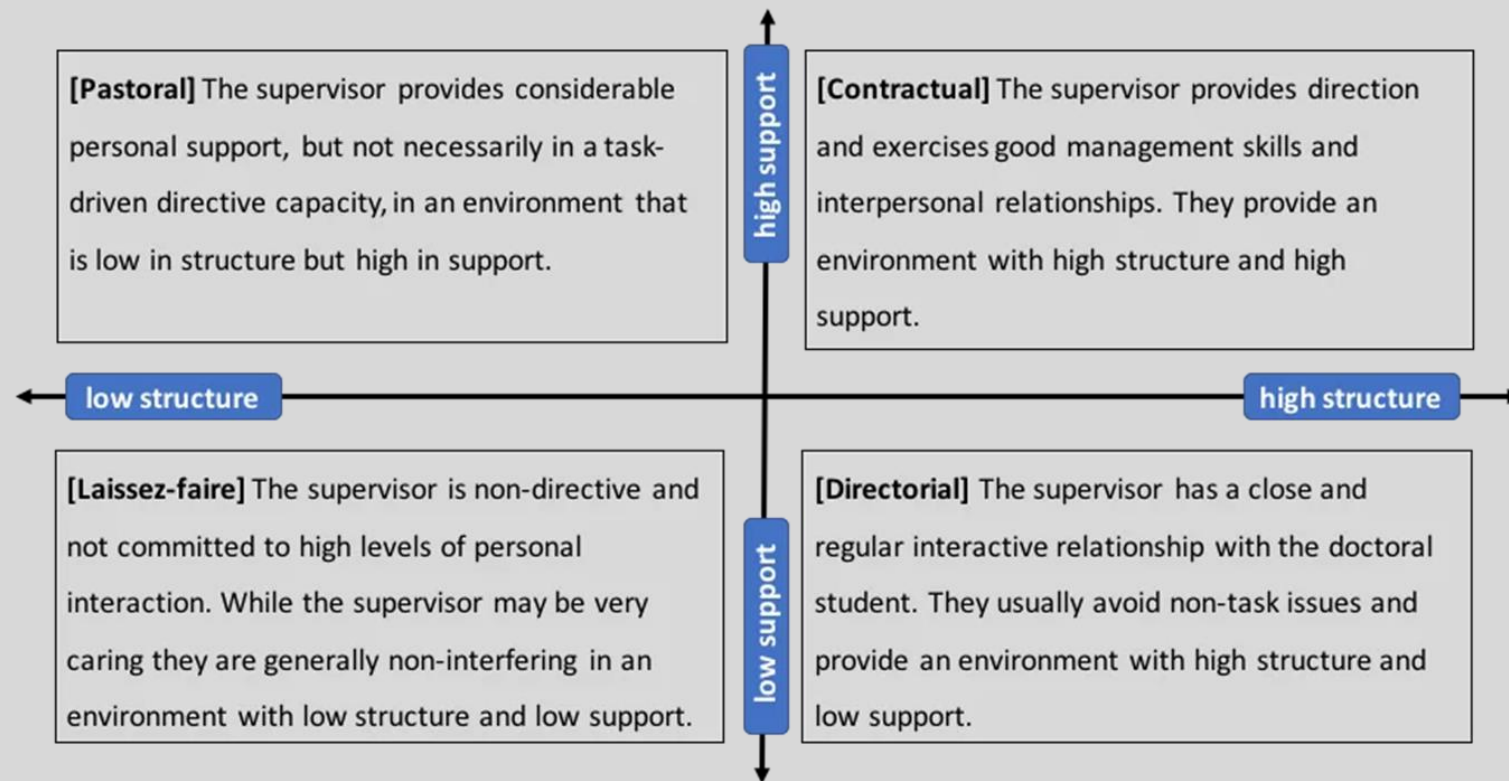
Supervisor: Dr Noelle Higgins

Student Name: Ger Maguire

Meeting Date: 12/03/2020

Agenda Item	Comments
1. Work completed since last meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation for SLSA redrafted• Selected to present paper at RIA – Underway• Detailed letter of support issued from UNCW for research• DTL approached re: funding opportunity• Approached by TCD & DSAI re: being lead on International Study Group• Made significant headway on TJIN Conference• Thesis contents page redrafted• Chapter 1 of thesis almost ready to submit• Chapter 2 of thesis almost ready to submit	
2. Questions / Issues arising None at present, need to finalise which two chapters will be submitted for PhD progression.	
3. Feedback N/A	
4. Next project Continue with write up plan as discussed in meeting one of semester 2.	
5. Work planned before next meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have Chapter 1-3 + Contents page submit• Concrete plan for research visit to UNCW/UNCP including timeline and expected research output.	
6. The Next Meeting	

Gatfield's (2005) supervisory management model



'Apprenticeship Model' v 'Structured PhD Programme'



- The PhD Process is not just about the Thesis, it should be about the process of 'becoming an academic'
 - Research
 - Teaching
 - Publications
 - Conference Organisation
 - Mentoring (Moonie-Simmie *et al*, 2012)

Maximising the Relationship



Alison C. White
@al33sun

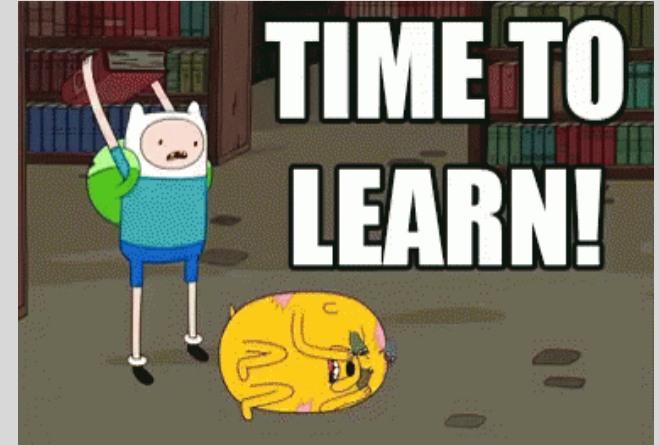
I spent last night anxious about attending a prof's office hours this morning. I went, we chatted for 10 minutes, got the answers I needed, then back home I went. Now I have this post-anxiety comedown & I can't relax enough to come back to a healthy baseline 😊 #PhDVoice #PhDLife

17:56 · 07/02/2022 · Twitter for iPhone

- Spaces of Supervision (Hemer, 2012)
- Collaboration Opportunities
 - Conference Presentations (4 International)
 - Co-author Opportunities
 - Article Collaboration (1 international)
 - Contributory Chapter
- “If supervision is successful transition out of University into employment should be expected” (Sponken-Smith, 2018)
- Onus of responsibility for skills acquisition (Duke and Denicolo, 2017)

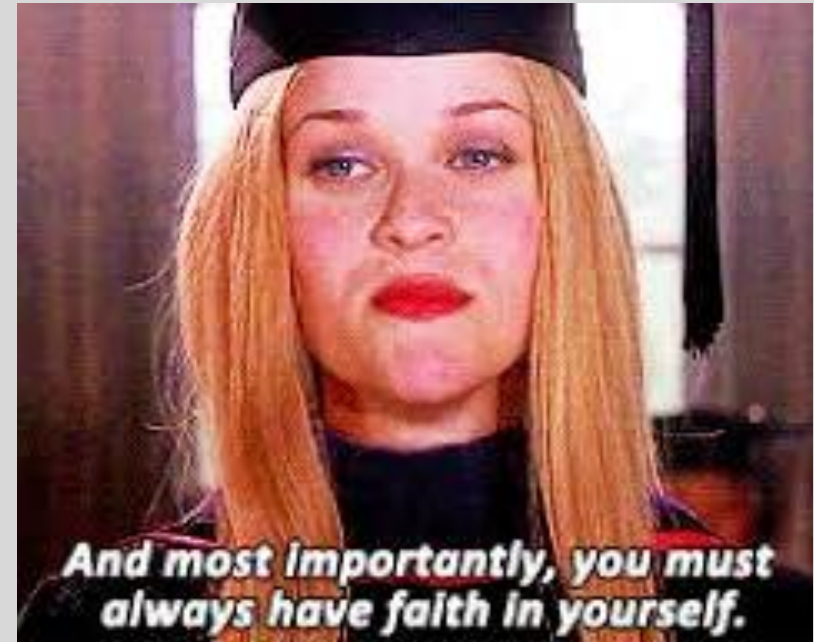
The Role of the Supervisor is Not to...

- Provide a Research Question or Tell a Student exactly what to do
- Track-down student work
- Correct spelling, typos etc.
- Iphofen (2001) argues that doctoral students need to have a realistic view of the role of the supervisor and states: 'I cannot be all things to all students...I cannot be your counsellor, mentor, therapist, friend and boss - my primary responsibility is to supervise'
- Rather, instil students with a holistic set of attributes (Wood and Breyer, 2017)



The Role of the Supervisee is to...

- Meet **Deadlines**
- Come to Supervision Meetings **Prepared**
- Be **respectful** of Supervisor and Supervisor's Time
- Become an **Independent Researcher**
 - 'the PhD is yours. It is not mine. I can advise, guide, suggest and warn. I will not write it...You own it. Not me, so if you choose not to take my advice, that is your prerogative' (Ipholen, 2001)



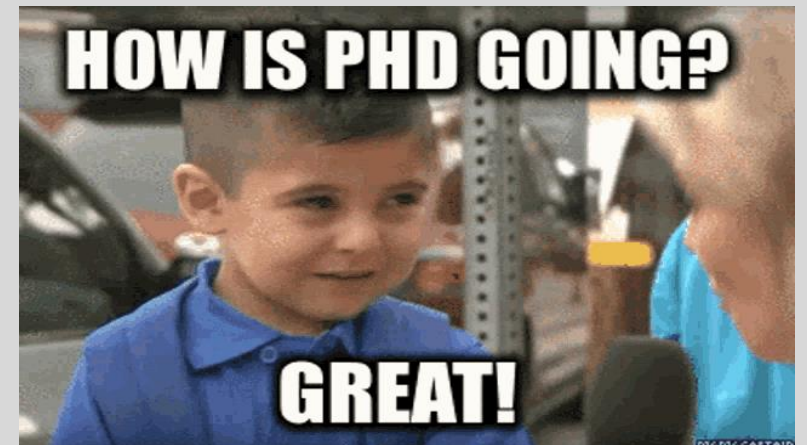
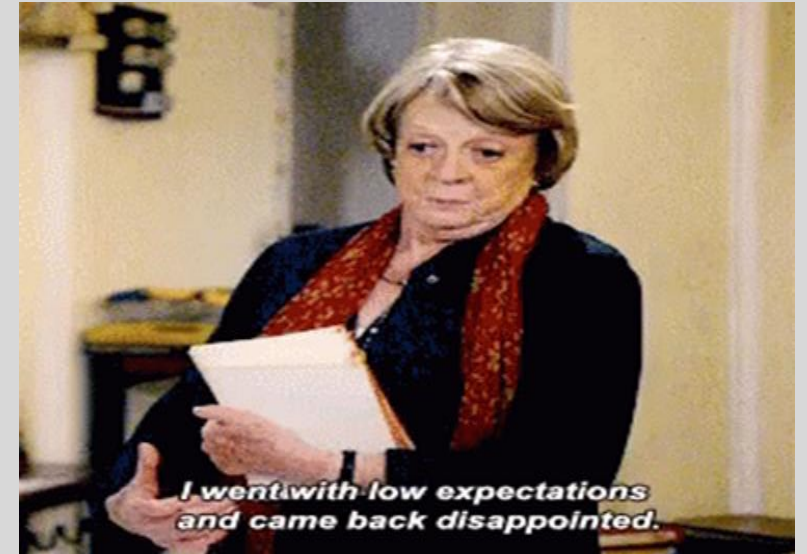
The Reality

- A hybrid model of problem v process meetings (Hemer, 2012)
- Structured Meetings
- Discuss challenges being faced at the time
- Trust and engage with career based practice and knowledge given by supervisor (Spronken-Smith, 2018)



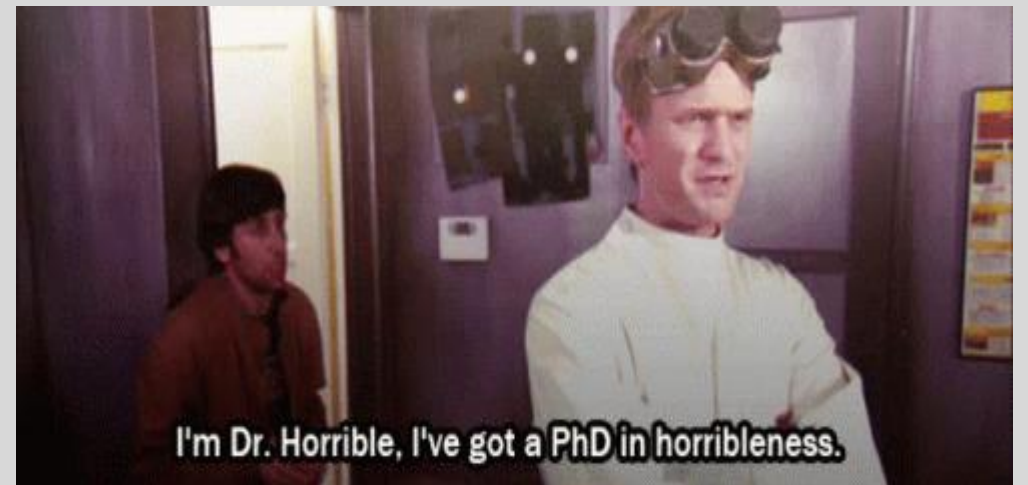
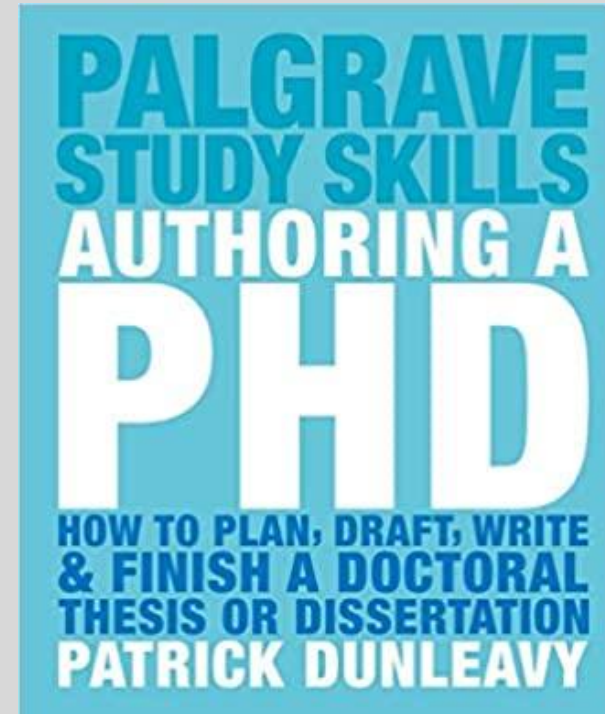
What Worked For Us

- Problems in the supervisor-supervisee relationship can be due to differences in '**expectations**' (Parker-Jenkins, 2016)
 - Need to be on the 'Same Page'
- Matching Students with Supervisor (Orellana, 2016)
 - Supervisor as a teacher and learning style considerations.
- Collaboration & Opportunity
- Supervisor as director, facilitator, adviser, teacher, guide, critic, freedom giver, supporter, friend and manager (Brown and Atkins, 1988)
- Clear Communication is Vital



Some Recommendations

- Be Clear on Role and **Expectations** from the Start
- Keep **Notes** on Meetings and Feedback
- Raise any **Concerns** with Supervisor – Early on
- Be **Honest** and **Frank** at Annual Progression Meeting (Phillips and Pugh, 2010)
- **Contact** Director of PhD Programme / PhD Committee / PhD student representative (Brabazon, 2013)



Resources

- Websites

- <https://www.ithinkwell.com.au/resources/PhDToolkit>
- <https://supervisingphds.wordpress.com/>

- Twitter

- [Hugh Kearns @ithinkwellHugh](#)
- [Academic Chatter @AcademicChatter](#)
- [PhDStudent @PhDStudents](#)
- [PhD2Published @PhD2Published](#)



Thank You for your
attention.

Any questions?

(this is the part where
you run)

somee cards
user card

