Slide 1

Models of doctoral supervision in health professions education: process and power

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Slide 2

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First some history ...

The PhD Discussion Groups –
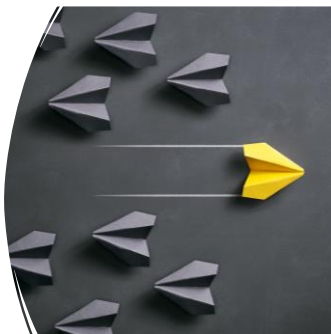a small beginning in July 2010

Van Schalkwyk S. (2014). Evolving doctoral identities: understanding 'complex investments'. In: Bitzer, EM, Frick, BL, Albertyn, R, Grant, B & Kelly, F. (eds). *Pushing boundaries in postgraduate supervision.* Stellenbosch: SunMedia. 215–227.

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Slide 3

My premise

The process of supervision is central to the doctoral journey as it seeks to facilitate student's negotiating their transition into their chosen disciplinary community.

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Slide 4

AMEE GUIDE

The supervisor's toolkit: A framework for doctoral supervision in health professions education: AMEE Guide No. 104

SUSAN DANIELLE VAN SCHALKWYK[a], DEIDRAH MUREDOH KATOR[b], ANA TEKIAN[c], CEES VAN DER VLEUTEN[d] & FRANCOIS CILLIERS[e]

Borders and Tensions in the Context of Doctoral Writing
Susan van Schalkwyk and Cecilia Jacobs
STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY, SOUTH AFRICA

A scoping review of the changing landscape of doctoral education
Sioux McKenna[a,b] and Susan van Schalkwyk[c]

A systematic analysis of doctoral publication trends in South Africa

Excellence in doctoral supervision: an examination of authoritative sources across four countries in search of performance higher than competence
Alistair McCulloch[a], Vijay Kumar[b], Susan van Schalkwyk[c] and Gina Wisker[d]

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

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A conceptual framework

Doctoral endeavour:
- Extending the boundaries of what is known; making a knowledge contribution
- Being and becoming 'legitimate' within a chosen disciplinary community

Postgraduate supervision

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An initial scoping review

- A variety of terminology (one-on-one; Oxbridge model; team; cohort; etc.)
- A move towards 'curriculum'
- Increasing evidence of structure (NB inclusion of coursework)
- Collaborative approaches (even with master's and postdocs)
- One-on-one model less suitable for low-income contexts where capacity is limited

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Drivers for these shifts

- Demands of the knowledge economy – efficiency across the system
- Linked to funding and incentives
- Changing relationship with industry
- Focus on internationalization, globalization, research mobility
- Emphasis on interdisciplinary work
- Technology
- Lower completion rates when one-on-one model is adopted versus collaborative and structured models

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Benefits of more collaborative, structured approaches

- Mitigate against the sense of isolation (Carter-Veale et al 2016), feeling like an outsider (Lau et al. 2019)
- Power dynamics that positioned the student under the 'watchful eye of the master' was challenged (Zeegers and Barron 2012)
- Collaborative approaches allow for nurturing spaces (De Lange, Pillay, and Chikoko 2011); creates a doctoral community
- Exposure to wide range of skills; to different methods and methodologies (Doonan et al 2018)

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Challenges collaborative, structured approaches

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- Functioning of the team requires 'harmonious power relations' (Robertson 2017);
- Student needs to manage diversity of opinions (Guerin and Green 2015) – could also be a strength
- Can be contestations around legitimacy of knowledge (Wilmot 2021)
- Differing rates of progress become more noticeable (Carr 2021)
- Tension between completing coursework and generating publications (Bursztyn, Maury and Litre 2016)
- Significant investment in time and resources (Choy, Delahaye and Saggers 2015)
- A culture of collegiality and supportive criticality is key

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Research question: *what are the mechanisms that influence the doctoral supervisory relationship in* **health professions education**

Phase two

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Methodology

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- Critical paradigm recognizing socially constructed nature of individual realities (Scotland 2012)
- Series of individual or dyad in-depth interviews
- 1 focus group discussion
- 23 doctoral candidates and 10 supervisors
- 10 different countries
- Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2021)
- Focus in this presentation is on the doctoral candidate's responses

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Aspects of structure (process)

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- '… you are the leader … the chair of the meeting, you guide it …' (FG5)
- 'My supervisors, one supervisor is well experienced, and one … just got their PhD … there is a hierarchy between them' (FG8)
- 'So it's always hard to see where I fit in that dynamic, because they are still trying to figure out their dynamic …' (FG6)
- 'I started my PhD here with the Writing Course. It was like an adventure for me …' (P16)
- ' … a PhD platform, which is a six weekly meeting where PhDs come together on the Friday afternoon …' (P2)

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Being supervised (power)

CROWDING: 'I felt quite lonely with my supervision … I have three supervisors and they're all medical professors, are very renowned in their field … I've no clue what I'm doing' (FG2)

TAKING TIME: 'But those four meetings, … they gave me that space, to be able to work with the ideas until I could actually explain to someone what I wanted to do …' (FG3)

LANGUAGE/CULTURE: 'And then they will come up with an analogy that is supposed to help me that I also don't understand … it's actually when we have the written conversation, that I actually then understand what they're saying, because … I can't hear the words, its almost like there's too much information coming at me when they're speaking' (FG1)

RELATIONSHIPS: '… the relationship was always good and that was … kind of misleading because it felt like we were doing well, but we weren't making any progress, maybe not doing so well (P11)

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An individual journey (power)

- **BEING EQUAL?:** 'We just had some coffee … and after five minutes they had these amazing next level, intelligent conversations … and then they were like, … you can say something, we're on the same level. I was like, you can't see that we're not? I'm totally not on your level' (FG7)
- **STRUGGLE:** ' … **they** framed it as being an integral part of your PhD journey that you first have to struggle, you cannot do your PhD and not struggle … They are really just actually facilitating this struggle. (FG5)
- **HAVING AGENCY:** '… if I need to code or I need to use Atlas software, I didn't ask my supervisor. I consult tutorials for example' (P17)
- **EXPECTATIONS:** 'I guess what I always was expecting was the metaphor of flying underneath the wings of your supervisor … that wasn't the case in my case' (P11)

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What does this all mean?

There's a need for supervisors with adaptive expertise	Reframe 'the struggle'
	Slow scholarship
	Open conversations/acknowledge expectations (more than once)
	Acknowledge, and then manage, the power

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forward together
sonke siya phambili
saam vorentoe

thank you
enkosi
dankie

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