

Developing student and supervisor relationship

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Australian Government

**Department of Communications,
Information Technology and the Arts**

Australian Research Council

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Regional Development



The University of Sydney

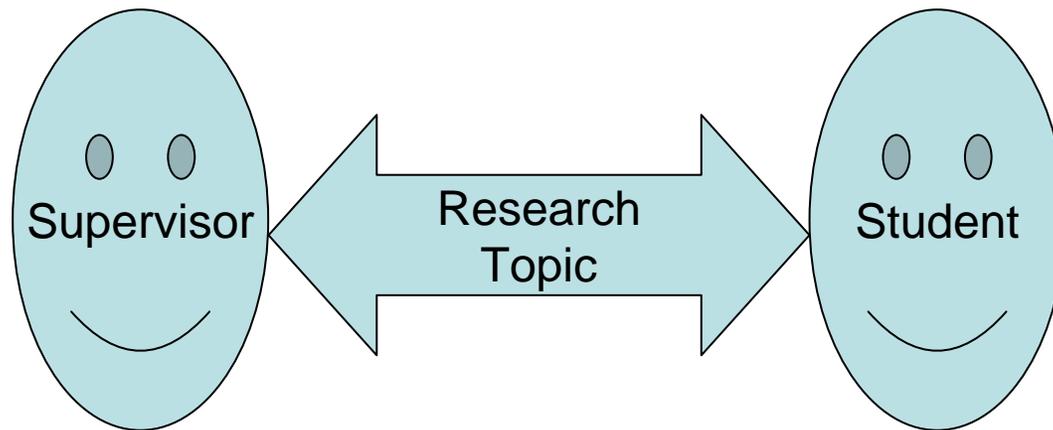


Queensland University of Technology

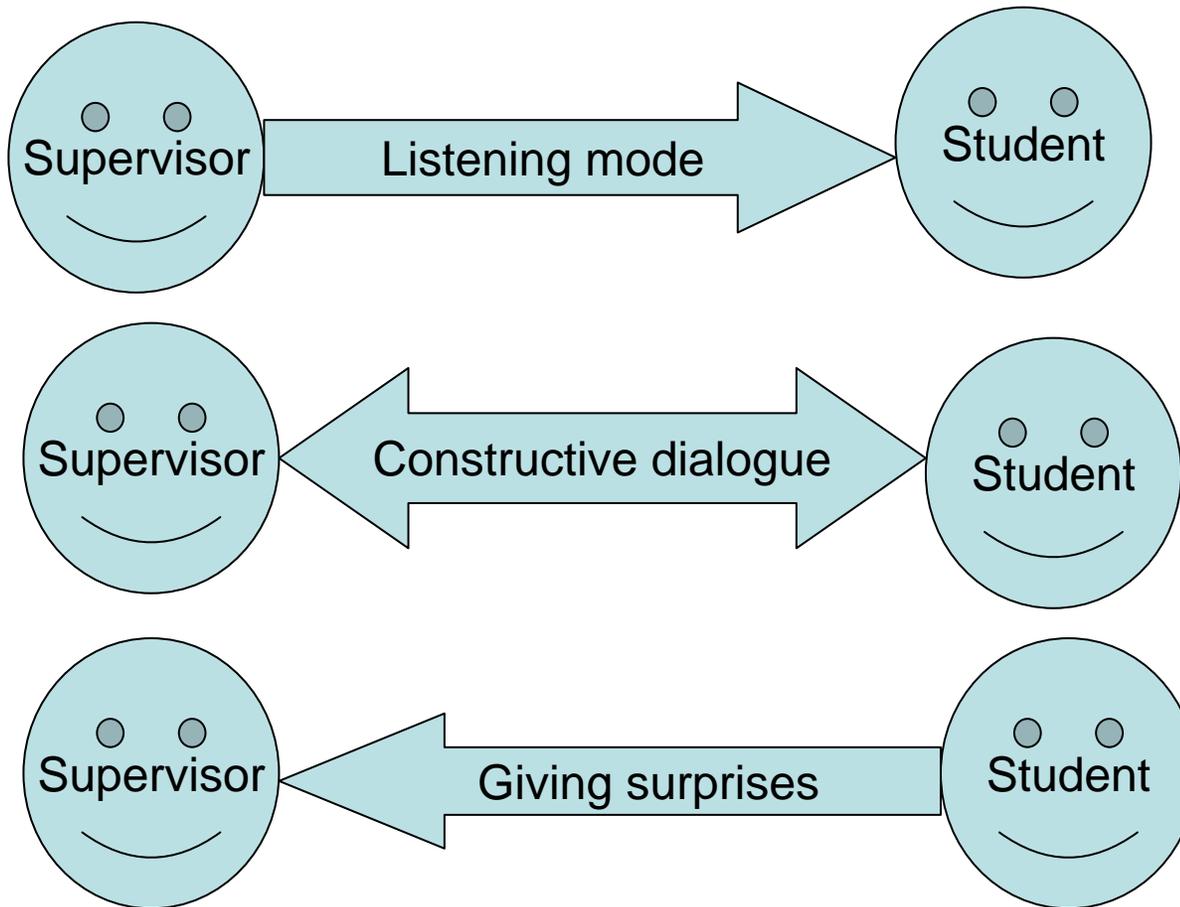


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Linking through research topic



The key three phases



Research

- What do you want to do?
- Why do you want to do it?
- How will you do it?
- How will it relate with rest of the world?
- What will it be good for?

Selecting a supervisor

- Whom do you want to be your supervisor?
- Why do you want him/her?
- How will he/she make you realise your goals?
- Where does he/she stand in the research community?
- What benefits will you get from him/her?

Whom do you want to be your supervisor/advisor?

- should have at least a PhD degree in the field
- willing to seriously commit --- means not leaving the university next semester!
- Recommended by your graduate chair/Head of Deptt./Faculty Dean
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Why do you want him/her?

- Two kinds of supervisors:
 - ✓ giving you a topic to work on
 - ✓ asking you to find a topic
 - ✓ pros and cons of the above
- Supervision approaches
 - ✓ compliance of university rules (Manager)
 - ✓ creative/imaginative/inspiring (Leader)
 - ✓ perhaps bit of both is needed
- Open vs close door policy
- genius vs obnoxious personalities
- honest and elegant nature
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How will he/she be useful in your mission?

- ensuring that you develop sound answers to all of the five questions, regarding your research topic
- provide you technical advise as well as emotional support
- provide/arrange financial support/scholarship etc
- defend your work to others in the community
- help you to develop strategies for timely completion on the one hand, and ensuring that your thesis is being built upon solid foundation
- giving you right advise for publishing papers in quality journals/conferences; writing thesis
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Where does he/she stand in the community?

- Active researcher in the field, and regularly attending / organising major conferences etc...
- have published at major venues
- knows a lot of top class researchers in the world (good network)
- have produced successful graduates in the past
- have examined PhD theses
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What benefits you will get from him/her?

- financial support for conference travel, etc
- high quality research, a world class thesis
- becoming part of his/her network of researchers
- support for future career/jobs/post docs/commercialisation of the research etc
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Supervisor's expectations

- seeking bright students who have serious commitment to do research
- want to build his/her academic family; feel pride
- of course, producing more papers, winning grants etc..
- good supervisors wish to see their PhD graduates as good research leaders
- balance between the quality, quantity and time ...
- seeking students who are good team workers, but can also work individually
- ...

Interacting with supervisors

- Supervisors are busy people
- They may have many students, and many other tasks to do; schedule regular meetings ... may consider reminding them!
- Treat them like CPUs, more jobs you submit, more output you will get from them
- Don't wait for them to come to your office, and asking you about the progress; be proactive!
- Often your senior fellow PhD grads are extremely useful
- ...

Supervisor and Student relationship

- It is similar to what we expect between a parent and child (academic family)
- Supervisors see students' success as theirs
- Two way street: initially students learn from supervisor, but then later supervisors learn from students
- Good relationship mostly turns into a life-time friendship; after graduation, indeed the supervisors and students are in the same boat!
- ...

Supervisor and Student: conflicts

- It is normal to have often conflicting situations
- Keep clean communications
- Keep up at the front: differences and agreements
- Ignore petty matters, which might have no ill-intentions
- If differences can not be resolved, talk to the second supervisor
- Divorce between supervisor and student is better than not having good/productive relationships
- If there are some ethical/moral issues involved, don't hesitate to consult the appropriate authority in your organisation
- ...

Conclusion

- Student and supervisor relationship is extremely important to the success of doctoral programs
- You don't get things for what you know; you don't get things for whom you know; But you get things for what you know and whom you know!
- You should make a choice of your supervisor based on what you want to do; and how your supervisor can really make a difference in your efforts.
- Keep your goals high, but remain realistic.
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Questions?

