

The doctoral student-supervisor relationship as a negotiated learning space¹

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Introduction

Doctoral education constitutes the most advanced educational level in the higher education spectrum. In this chapter we aim to explore the complex pedagogical learning space which doctoral education inhabits. The pedagogic relationship between the doctoral student and research supervisor(s) forms an important *relational* learning space. This relational learning space exists regardless of the doctoral programme format. As such, we utilise a more figurative, relational use of the concept “learning space”, rather than referring to a physical or virtual space.

This chapter contributes one perspective on how student-supervisor relationships in doctoral education can be conceptualised – that of a negotiated learning space. The contribution of this perspective lies in conceptualising an essential component of doctoral education – that of the relationship between the doctoral supervisors and their students – and theorising about the implications of such a conceptualisation. We argue that both doctoral supervisors and students take part in negotiating their relationship, but that supervisors often take the lead in establishing this relationship that forms the foundation of the learning space that is created. We present a framework for conceptualisation of the doctoral learning space characterised by key elements in the doctoral supervisor-student relationship. The framework provides a point of departure for understanding what implications a negotiated learning space has in such relationships, as McCombs and Whisler (1997, in Temple 2004:197) argue,

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Education involves relationships. The more positive and effective these are in educational contexts, the more likely it is that all members of the learning group will thrive both as individuals and lifelong learners.

Supervisors are often assumed to know what makes this pedagogic relationship in this learning space productive and ultimately successful, including which supervision styles are appropriate throughout doctoral candidature (Gatfield, 2005). However, other authors have alluded to the relationships within this learning space as: “*complex and unstable ... filled with pleasures and risks*” (Grant, 2003: 175); “*unpredictable and demanding*” (Grant, 2011:247); “*private*” (Manathunga, 2005:17); “*conducted behind closed doors in spaces remote from undergraduate teaching ... presumed but uninterrogated*” (MacWilliam & Palmer, 1995:32); the “*most genuinely complex*” and one of the “*least discussed aspects*” in higher education (Connell, 1985:38); and under-theorised (Green & Lee, 1995). Evidently the learning space created in the relationship between doctoral students and their research supervisors is problematic, which may be attributed to its “*peculiarly intense and negotiated character*”, as well as its “*requirement for a blend of pedagogical and personal relationship skills*” (Grant, 2003:175).

In this chapter we first explore the unique nature and challenges of the relationship in the context of the doctoral learning space, as is evident from the above quotations. Transactional analysis theory (TA) is used as a point of departure from which theory regarding supervisory styles can be developed. Functions of supervisors and responses in the student influences the dynamics evident in power and identity of each of the relational partners and underscores the need for creating a negotiated learning space in doctoral education. We furthermore argue that a negotiated learning space provides room for relationship convergence and ultimately relationship enhancement. A conceptual framework reflecting this negotiated learning space concludes the chapter.

Doctoral student-supervisor relationships: demystifying a private learning space

There seems to be concern about the high dropout rate amongst postgraduate students (Golde 2005; Lovitts 2005), which is commonly attributed to non-functioning interpersonal relationships between students and their supervisors (McAlpine & Norton 2006; McCormack & Pamphilon 2004). The importance of the positive constructive role of the supervisor in the postgraduate education process has been noted (Maxwell & Smyth 2011; Lee, 2008). At

each phase in the process the supervisor has a crucial role to play, which calls for a “*symbiotic orientation towards the maintenance of a cooperative relationship*” (Li & Searle 2007:522). However, the private nature of the supervisory relationship is at times problematic (see Manathunga, 2005, 2007; Pearson & Kayrooz, 2004), which adds to the difficulty in accessing and studying these relationships (Manathunga, 2005). Such private pedagogical spaces are fraught with underlying issues of identity and power (Grant, 2003). Conceptualising the interpersonal supervision relationship could facilitate what Manathunga (2005:24) calls compassionate rigour: “*a delicate pedagogical balancing of ... providing students with support, encouragement, and empathy, while at the same time giving them rigorous feedback on their performance*”. Delamont *et al.* (1998) indicate that supervisors sometimes find it difficult to balance the need for students to work independently and manage the student’s work towards completion, which Eley and Murray (2009) refer to as finding the balance between freedom and neglect. Gardner (2008) refers to the paradoxical quality in the interpersonal relationship regarding guidance and support needed by students and their increasing feelings of competence and independence. These challenges highlight the need for a clearer conceptualisation of the dynamics of the student-supervisor relationship within a doctoral pedagogy.

Creating learning spaces through negotiated relationships

In this chapter we draw on the work of Lusted (1986) and Green and Lee (1995) who conceptualise pedagogy in terms of relations amongst learners (in this case doctoral students), teachers (doctoral supervisors) and the knowledge generated through these relations (which, at the doctoral level, results in an original contribution in the form of a thesis or a collection of published or publishable papers). This conceptualisation of pedagogy implies both “*how we come to know*” (Lusted, 1986:2-3), and “*how we come to be*” (Green & Lee, 1995:41) – taking into account the complex interplay between student, supervisor(s) and knowledge at the doctoral level. Our conceptualisation of the relationship between doctoral students and research supervisors as a key element of doctoral pedagogy and as a negotiated learning space is based on Garfinkel’s (1967) notion of pedagogy as a social activity that occurs within social, cultural and institutional structures, relationships and actions. Inman *et al.* (2011) highlight the centrality of the relationship in the doctoral process illustrating the sphere of influence emanating from the quality of these interactions. Social (inter-) actions therefore govern processes, contexts, interactions and relationships with/between stakeholders, decisions, and

eventual outcomes – including those of doctoral students and their research supervisors.

We also take note of Tudor's (2009) view that traditional pedagogic learning spaces are built on a hierarchical model of training characterised by parent/child-like relationships between a teacher and pupil. The apprenticeship approach to doctoral education may contain elements of this model, which has inherent dangers for the development of independent researchers and original work (Mackinnon, 2004). Tudor (2009) argues in favour of a more andragogic approach, which builds on the learner's existing knowledge and develops self-directedness (based on the work of Knowles & Associates, 1985). Rogers (1969) argues that interpersonal relationships lie central to the facilitation of learning in learning spaces based on andragogic principles. Such relationships are characterised by open communication, clear contracts, as well as mutual authenticity, acceptance, empathy, and trust. This conceptualisation of learning spaces is reminiscent of Freire's (1972) notion of education as dialogue, where education transcends the divide between teachers and students. Of course such a view may threaten the notion of the teacher (supervisor) as expert and gatekeeper to legitimate disciplinary knowledge, but we agree with Tudor (2009) that education is meant to encourage curiosity, creativity, critique and reflexivity and therefore learning spaces need to be negotiated between doctoral supervisors and students. This view of pedagogy also aligns to Dobozy's work (this volume), which emphasises the role of power and agency in making pedagogical decisions.

The supervisor needs to adapt to facilitate the student learning process and support progress throughout (Maxwell & Smyth, 2011). A pedagogy of supervision therefore demands that supervisors are aware of, and sensitive to students' identity development, conceptual capacities, learning styles, and modes of intellectual processing beyond epistemological and methodological concerns (see Fataar, 2013 forthcoming, and Frick, 2010). Furthermore, Cree (2012) describes doctoral supervision as both a moral and an educational activity that needs to go beyond the current individualistic and competitive focus on throughput and completion to a more holistic pedagogy of care and support. However, supervisors often focus on roles and responsibilities instead of seeing the situation and various elements as a whole with the relationship at the centre (Emilsson & Johnson, 2007). This is unfortunate as supervision is obviously a dynamic process embodied in the interaction between the supervisor and the student. Accordingly, it is important to understand supervision as a learning space of negotiated relationships.

Identity positions as a basis for negotiating learning spaces

Various theories of interpersonal relationships have been reported across disciplines in the literature and provide possibilities for application in doctoral education. In this chapter we use transaction analysis theory (TA) of Berne (1961) as a point of departure to explore identity-power-relationships in negotiated learning spaces in the context of doctoral education. The theory has been adapted over the years (see for example Newton, 2012; Sills, 2006; Sills & Fowlie, 2011; Temple 2004), which will be taken into account in our conceptualisation. Although we acknowledge the clinical psychological origins and nature of the theory, we will argue that it has value beyond pure psychological application, as Newton (2011) suggests. Oates (2010) describes TA as a theory that is both robust and versatile. Cree (2012) applied TA autobiographically to PhD supervision in the context of Social Work, while Fataar (2005) reflexively focused on negotiating student identity in the doctoral proposal development process influenced. Both these authors influenced our conceptualisation of the doctoral student-supervisor relationship as a negotiated learning space.

The theory of TA (Berne, 1961) proposes that how we establish and maintain relationships depends largely on the identities of the individuals involved (based partly on our ego states), and the power we exert in these relationships when we communicate with each other. TA theory claims that all human interactions take place by means of transactions (the way in which people communicate with each other). Underlying these transactions are the communicators' ego states. Our ego states form the basis of how we interact with each other (and thus negotiate our relationships). Berne (1961) proposes that people's personalities consist of Parent, Child, and Adult ego states, each of which consists of positive or negative possible dimensions that could facilitate or hinder communication and personal growth. Ego states determine people's worldviews. Worldviews also influence behaviour and actions (Mezirow, 1991).

The Parent ego state relates specifically to thoughts, feelings and behaviours that is either nurturing (permission giving, but sets limits in a healthy way); critical (also sometimes called prejudiced); or rescuing (Berne, 1961; Solomon, 2003). We have chosen to re-conceptualise this ego state as either the Guide identity position (which guards the values and ethics inherent to the particular scholarly community but at the same time facilitates enculturation into the community), or alternatively a Warden identity position (as a gate-keeper into the scholarly community who could ward off or isolate potential entrants). For example, from the Guide identity approach, a

supervisor helps mirror the standards and rigour in the scientific process and acts as an objective monitor and guide towards a quality product. The supervisor could, however, be overly meticulous in their feedback and react in a rescuing mode in trying to fix the student's work, thus jeopardising independence and ownership of the student's work.

The Child ego state involves emotions, thoughts and feelings which may be Free (or Natural, in which people are creative and playful in situations where they feel safe and have the opportunity to play and enjoy themselves), or Adapted (parts of people's personalities that has learned to comply with, or rebel against, messages received). Both responses are adaptive to parental messages in some way (Berne, 1961; Solomon, 2003). For supervisors of doctoral students the Child ego state could be re-conceptualised as an Explorative identity position (which facilitates, fosters and rewards innovation and original thought), or a Pedestrian position (which cautiously mitigates risk rather than encourage imaginative experimentation). For example the supervisor in the Explorative identity position shows enthusiasm and engages with the student and their project. From the Pedestrian position, the supervisor may resist the student taking risks in a quest to retain control and thus stifling creativity in the student.

The Adult ego state centres on data processing and problem solving based on facts rather than on pre-judged thoughts or childlike emotions, but could come across as cold. How we communicate from each ego state may be helpful or not – which also has implications for how doctoral supervisors and students communicate (Berne, 1961; Solomon, 2003). We have chosen to re-conceptualise this ego state as an Autonomous identity position (where independent thought is paramount), or a Reliant position (when policies and structures dictate practice). In the Autonomous identity position, the supervisor retains objectivity based on the students' current work and stage of the project. From the Reliant position, the supervisor may be overly reliant on existing discourses in the field, prejudiced towards novel approaches, and/or inflexible and cold in their interaction with the student. They may also be too desirous to comply with external policies and may be excessively cautious in interactions with the student.

Communication from these identity positions can either be complementary (between people in the same ego state, which can continue indefinitely), or crossed (originating from different ego states, which may lead to difficulties in communication). It follows that complementary communication will make the negotiation of a learning space much easier in doctoral education, but supervisors also need to understand that different ego states may be

emphasized in the student and supervisor due to their earlier experiences. For the purposes of this chapter we have chosen to focus on how the dimensions of the above-mentioned ego states could be re-conceptualised as identity positions supervisors may take on in order to negotiate learning spaces. We acknowledge that the concept of negotiation may involve a conflict perspective and we therefore also account for supervisor identity positions that could hinder the negotiation of a productive learning space.

Understanding how people communicate based on such identity positions could help both doctoral supervisors and students negotiate more productive learning spaces (which we explore in greater depth later in this chapter). It can also help us to understand how different combinations of attitude, emotions and behaviour can affect learning, as well as how the working, interpersonal, thinking and communication styles of all participants affect learning. Supervisors have power in managing supervisor-student relationships. Ideally, such strategies should be used responsibly and creatively to facilitate learning, but Ernst (1972) warns that disruptive supervisor roles may also exist, which suggests that supervisors do not always operate from the positive dimensions of their ego states. In such cases the identity positions they take on may create disruptive learning spaces, based on a deficit approach to learning, as is also evident in the work of Cree (2012).

If we want to apply the notion of identity positions to how learning spaces may be negotiated in the doctoral context, it becomes necessary to explore how these identity positions may be conceptually applied to the dynamic doctoral student-supervisor relationship.

Relationship dynamics in negotiating a doctoral learning space

To visualise doctoral learning as a negotiated space, the various elements of this relationship need to be explored. We argue that dynamic flexibility of identity positions; relationship convergence and relationship enhancement are necessary elements in negotiating a doctoral learning space.

Dynamic flexibility

Even though students/supervisors have learned to have preferences for some identity position(s) as described above, these identity positions are not static but can develop over time and be used in various combinations. We see dynamic flexibility as a key concept in this process, which can only appear in a negotiated learning space. The identity positions we have proposed allow us the conceptual tools to visualise doctoral learning as a negotiated space, in

which student-supervisor relationships are a prerequisite for learning and the student becomes an active participant in (rather than a passive consumer of) learning (Tudor, 2009). As such, “*the facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner*” (Rogers, 1969:106).

Although we agree with Rogers (1969) that the attitudinal qualities that both supervisors and students bring to the learning space are equally important, and that students should voice what they want and need from supervision (according to Eley & Murray, 2009), it may be more difficult for students to shift supervisors’ identity positions than the other way around due to the differential power relationship typically found in doctoral education (Minor *et al.*, 2012). In this professional relationship the power dynamic is evident in an evaluative component whilst focusing on student development (Inman *et al.*, 2011). Students may furthermore not be aware or able to explicitly state what their needs will be throughout the process (Chinnock, 2011). Indeed, Fataar (2005) argues that the authority of the supervisor is paramount to the conversation and learning process. Therefore supervisors need to acknowledge the power dynamic inherent in the supervisory relationship, and plan strategies that will empower students to become independent and creative scholars (Frick *et al.*, 2010).

The supervisory relationship should ideally allow empowerment or emancipation of the student (Frick *et al.*, 2010; also see Lee, 2008). Students need to be aware of and conscientised regarding the ways in which empowerment or lack thereof impacts on the various aspects and given tools to reflect critically on their empowerment in their relationships (Albertyn *et al.*, 2002; Van der Merwe & Albertyn, 2010). Empowerment in doctoral education involves the development of the students’ academic and professional identities, as well as the successful completion of the research. Empowerment of the student thus means enabling the student through a process of transformation where the supervisor acts as the facilitator of transformation though providing the context for learning, enculturation and identity formation to take place. Mastery of a new identity as researcher does not reside within the supervisor, but supervisors need to facilitate this process as becoming a researcher involves acquiring new ways of thinking, acting and being (Dysthe *et al.*, 2006; Frick *et al.*, 2010).

Wright and Cochrane (2000) emphasises that doctoral supervision involves a complex negotiation of students’ identities, while Green (2005:162) argues that “[d]octoral pedagogy is as much about the production of identity, then, as it is the production of knowledge. At issue is the (re)production of specific

research identities". Fataar (2005) adds that a student's sense of self may influence the type of intellectual questions they pose. The notion of doctoral (and supervisor) identity implies that these stakeholders' identity positions (according to our re-conceptualisation of TA theory) are involved in the transactions that take place during the supervision communication and relationship building processes. Identity positions and the communication that takes place between these positions are not static. Cree (2012) notes that a student may take on a (helpless) dependent identity position at the initial stages of the doctoral process, which demands a (nurturing) Guide response. As the study progresses the idea is that the student becomes more independent and therefore able to communicate from an Autonomous identity position. And so the supervisor's responses need to adapt accordingly, what Fataar (2005:38) calls "*reflexive adaptability of the supervisory process*". In doing so, both supervisor and student power and is used to negotiate the doctoral learning space. Through this dialogue knowledge is seen as a process and product of the interaction of voices and is concerned with the construction and transformation of understanding through the tension between multiple perspectives and opinions (Dysthe *et al.*, 2006). However, problems may arise if the student and/or supervisor get stuck in an identity position that does not contribute to a constructive learning space.

Anderson (1988) and Gatfield (2005) propose four, and Rowan (1983) five, possible positions a supervisor can take in the supervisory process based on the extent of support and structure provided by the supervisor, which are compared in Table 1. Linkages to the supervisors' identity position are indicated in each case.

| Supervisory management styles (Gatfield, 2005:322) | Supervisor styles (Rowan, 1983:193) | Supervision styles Anderson (1988:41) | Supervisor identity position |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Laissez-faire</p> <p>Low in both structure and support, where the doctoral candidate has limited motivation and management skills and the supervisor is non-directive and does not engage in much personal interaction with the candidate.</p> | <p>Laissez-faire</p> <p>The supervisor lets the supervisee make progress with little interference.</p> | <p>Passive</p> <p>Supervision is characterised by having no input and not responding to student's input.</p> | <p>Although the supervisor could think they are operating from an Autonomous identity position by letting the student get on with the work independently, few students are able to complete their doctoral studies with no support. Curr (2001, p. 89) refers to this state as "benign neglect".</p> |
| <p>Pastoral</p> <p>Low in structure, but offering high support, where the doctoral candidate may have little management skills but uses all available support and the supervisor provides considerable personal care and support without being task-driven.</p> | <p>Feelings-Oriented</p> <p>The supervisor invites the supervisee to discover from his/her own experiences.</p> | | <p>The supervisor can be nurturing (Guide position), which may be appropriate in especially the initial phases when the student may be unsure and require more support (which aligns to the supervisor pastoral and feelings-oriented styles described here). However, the supervisor could also be rescuing (with reference to the Warden and Pedestrian identity positions), which puts the student in a dependent and helpless position.</p> |
| <p>Directional</p> <p>High in structure, but low in support, where the doctoral candidate is highly motivated and works in self-directed, task-driven manner and the supervisor has an interactive but task-focused relationship with the candidate.</p> | <p>Insight-Oriented</p> <p>The supervisor allows the supervisee to think about and search for answers her/himself.</p> | <p>Indirect passive</p> <p>Supervisor listens and waits for student to process ideas and problem solve.</p> | <p>The supervisor could use positive input to elicit Autonomous transactions, but needs to take care not to come across as cold (indicative of the Reliant and Warden identity positions).</p> |
| <p>Contractual</p> <p>High in structure and support, where</p> | <p>Didactic-Consultative</p> <p>The supervisor offers advice,</p> | <p>Indirect active</p> <p>Supervisor asks for opinions and</p> | <p>The supervisor could use positive input to elicit Autonomous transactions, but needs to take care not</p> |

the doctoral candidate his highly motivated and can take independent initiative and the supervisor is able to balance management and interpersonal input into the process.

suggestions, and/or interpretations.

suggestions, accepting and expanding the student's ideas, or asking for explanations and justifications of the student's statements.

to move into a rescuing (Warden) position.

Authoritative

The supervisor monitors and regulates the supervisee's work closely.

Direct Active

Supervision is characterised by initiating, criticising, telling and directing behaviour.

The supervisor may use either the rescuing (Warden), or an overly critical (Reliant) position, and need to take care that students do not rebel, or become dependent, helpless and disempowered.

Table 1: Supervisor styles (adapted from Anderson, 1988; Gatfield, 2005 and Rowan, 1983)

Despite the varied origins of the above-mentioned authors' work, the similarities in their conclusions on supervision styles are evident and can be linked to the different identity positions that we have proposed. The authoritative style may not be seen as appropriate to doctoral supervision where independent work is favoured, which may be a reason for its absence from Gatfield's typology. However, authors such as Anderson (1988), Cree (2012) and Curr (2001) suggest that this style is prevalent in doctoral supervision. It is interesting to note that Anderson (1988) did not include a supervisory style that could be aligned to the pastoral or feelings-oriented styles included by the other two authors. This may be attributed to either the context in which the work was produced, or the time period in which it was published when not much was written on the nature of the supervisor-student relationship in doctoral education.

Gatfield (2005) describes these positions as preferred operating styles. Although students' attitudes and responses may influence the supervisory management style, it is unlikely to be deterministic. Both Gatfield and Rowan found that supervisors may move between styles depending on the stage in the research process, which Gatfield (2005:324) termed operational flexibility. This idea is supported by the work of Erskine (1997) on practitioner development from beginning, through intermediate, to advanced stages during which supervisory styles needed to adapt to be appropriate to the different developmental stages. As such, the supervisor becomes "*an embedded participant in a mutually influencing supervisory process*" (Frawley-O'Dea & Sarnat, 2001:41), while "*honouring the emergence of 'implicit' experience*" (Sills, 2009:192). This illustrates the dynamic flexibility that is necessary in the relationship.

Relationship convergence

Whilst these typologies are useful in understanding supervisory styles, it does not take into account the role either supervisor or student identities play in negotiating the doctoral learning space. It also does not account for the power dynamic at play between supervisors and students throughout the candidature – especially not the potential influence doctoral students can have on determining the type of relationship (and thus learning space) that evolves. Minor *et al.* (2012) note that one of the major areas of dissonance of doctoral candidates is deciphering and managing multiple relationships. Lin *et al.* (2013) refer to power distance orientation that represents individuals' values of power. A student with a higher power distance orientation may more readily passively accept the imbalance of power. Understanding the dynamics

of their power may demystify and help to resolve dissonance in the student/supervisor relationship.

Foucault (1997) argues that power is never solely ‘top down’ – where there is power, there is resistance. Students therefore possess the power to change the supervisory relationship by means of resistance (Cree, 2012). Power imbalances could arise through conflicting expectations between the supervisor and the student that could influence the style of and approach to the supervision process (Frick *et al.*, 2010). Lee (2008) takes the debate further by taking possible student reactions into account in her framework for concepts of research supervision (see Table 2 below).

| | PROFESSIONAL ROLE | | | PERSONAL ROLE | |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| | Functional | Enculturation | Critical thinking | Emancipation | Relationship development |
| <i>Supervisor's activity</i> | Rational progression through tasks | Gatekeeping, encourages student to become a member of the disciplinary community | Evaluation, challenge, encourages student to question and analyse their work | Mentoring, supporting constructivism, encourages student to question and develop themselves | Supervising by experience, developing a relationship, enthuses, inspires and cares for student |
| <i>Supervisor's knowledge and skills</i> | Directing, project management | Diagnosis of deficiencies, coaching | Argument, analysis | Facilitation, reflection | Emotional intelligence |
| <i>Possible student reactions</i> | Obedience, organised | Role modelling | Constant inquiry, fight or flight | Personal growth, reframing | Emotional intelligence |
| <i>Student dependence characteristics</i> | Needs explanation of stages to be followed and direction through them | Needs to be shown what to do | Learns questions to ask and frameworks to apply | Seeks affirmation of self-worth | Seeks approval |
| <i>Student independence characteristics</i> | Can programme own work, follow timetables completely | Can follow discipline's epistemological demands independently | Can critique own work | Autonomous, can decide how to be, where to go, what to do, where to find information | Demonstrates appropriate reciprocity and has power to withdraw |

Table 2: A framework for concepts of research supervision (adapted from Lee, 2008:268, 277)

Lee's (2008) work starts to touch on relationship building as a key element of creating a doctoral learning space. Fataar (2005; 2013 forthcoming) refers to this relationship as dynamic and formative at the intersection of the student's personal approaches to research and how such approaches may influence the knowledgeability necessary for work at the doctoral level. It emphasises the function of the supervisor in helping the student move from dependence to independence, and provides space for the interplay between supervisors' professional and personal roles in doctoral pedagogy. Gardner (2008) notes this transition to independence and refers to graduate student socialisation where interpersonal processes (together with academic and professional processes) are an integral part of the transition. However, the supervisor may facilitate or hinder students' independence and integration into the scholarly community – a notion underscored by Dison (2004). Understanding the function of the doctoral supervisor is therefore essential to understanding how the supervisor-student relationship may unfold, even if it lacks showing the complete picture of how a learning space is negotiated by both parties. Aside from these processes and relationships involved in doctoral education, the supervisor is required to understand how the task can be completed successfully within the parameters of the system in which they are working (Vilkinas, 2002). The functions of supervision to enhance the relationship (which we call relationship convergence) and to achieve the goals in the doctoral context are thus relevant.

Relationship enhancement

From a clinical perspective, Hawkins and Smith (2006), Kadushin (1976), Newton (2012) and Proctor (2000) all argue that supervision has three main functions, as described in Table 3 below.

| Functions of supervision | | | | Supervision philosophy |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Kadushin (1976)</i> | <i>Proctor (2000)</i> | <i>Hawkins & Smith (2006)</i> | <i>Newton (2012)</i> | <i>Newton (2012)</i> |
| Administrative | Normative | Qualitative | Accounting Ensures appropriateness to context, ethical conduct and adherence to standards | Behavioural / Technological Emphasis on structure, competence, criteria and standards |
| Supportive | Restorative | Resourcing | Nurturative Offers recognition, encouragement and support | Humanistic Support and nurturing of personal growth |
| Educative | Formative | Developmental | Transformative Promotes reflection and exploration, which may include ways to implement theory, and develop practice and awareness | Radical Reflexive, theory-to-practice (praxis) Constructivist and co-creative approach to learning |

Table 3: Functions of supervision (adapted from Newton, 2012:104)

These functions are also applicable to doctoral education to some extent. The supervisees (or doctoral students in our case) may utilise these functions of supervisors to develop their own way of working and how they want to develop. Newton (2012) extends her theory further to the supervisee/student as having a need for structure, recognition and stimulus (based on the earlier work of Berne in 1961, and Clarke & Dawson in 1998):

- *structure* would ideally be met by the *accounting* function of the supervisor (akin to Lee's functional type research supervision);
- *recognition* by the *nurturative* function (encapsulating Lee's enculturation and relationship development conceptions of research supervision); and
- *stimulus* by the *transformative* function (which could be aligned to Lee's critical thinking and emancipation conceptions of research supervision).

Newton (2012) argues that supervisors need to balance the above-mentioned functions in order to meet supervisees' needs. Over-emphasis of a particular function may result in the supervisee experiencing the learning process as too rigid (if the supervisor becomes authoritative for the sake of accountability), too comfortable (if the supervisor is too nurturing), or frightening (if the challenges faced are overwhelming). Too little emphasis on any of the three functions may result in a sense of abandonment, isolation, or lack of connection. Conflict in the relationship could have deleterious consequences (Tepper *et al.*, 2011) in the doctoral process, which Cree (2012) refers to as imbalance in the supervisor relationship. However, Cree (2012) also notes that increasing student numbers and pressures to boost student throughput and publications may be indicative of a lack of institutional interest in students' affective needs and ultimately the functioning of the supervisor-student relationship beyond productivity. As such, Tronto's (1993) notion of care as attentiveness, responsibility, competence and responsiveness are useful, as it conceptualises supervisory care as encapsulating the nurturative, accounting and transformative functions of supervision.

Breaking the bonds of performativity in order to negotiate a doctoral learning space characterised by care (Tronto, 1993), morality (Cree, 2012), kindness (Clegg & Rowland, 2010), and freedom and friendship (Waghid, 2006) is not easy. Wisker (2005:192) aptly points out that there are "*discourses of power in the supervisor-university-student relationship*" at play. Supervisors and students therefore need to be compatible, which Rugg and Petre (2004) refer to as a workable relationship (even if it needs to be

worked at). It is thus important to make sure that the elements that constitute the doctoral student-supervisor relationship are understood so that effective functioning will benefit both parties. Effective functioning would culminate in successful completion of studies. Identity and power are key elements in the relationship between doctoral students and research supervisors, and these elements need to be negotiated in order to constitute an effectively functioning learning space – that which we refer to as relationship enhancement.

A framework for negotiating doctoral learning spaces

We have conceptualised the relationship between doctoral students and their research supervisors as a negotiated learning space. This conceptualisation proposes this learning space as a negotiation between the self and others based on identity and power within the doctoral student-supervisor relationship that facilitates compassionate rigour (Manathunga, 2005:24) and reflexivity (Cree, 2012). All supervisory relationships contain aspects of both parties' conscious and unconscious present and past (Chinnock, 2011). Being mindful of these relational complexities may allow supervisors and students to co-create relational experiences (Chinnock, 2011), which allows for a constructive negotiated learning space to emerge.

The literature cited in the introduction, however, suggests that this learning space is not always negotiated and/or constructive, which could result in a potentially deficient relationship where the potential negative effects of identity positions are encapsulated (as TA theory also suggests that each ego state/identity position has both a positive and negative side). Figure 1 provides a conceptualisation of the possible negative dimensions of supervisors' identity positions and how this may influence the learning space and ultimately the learning outcomes.

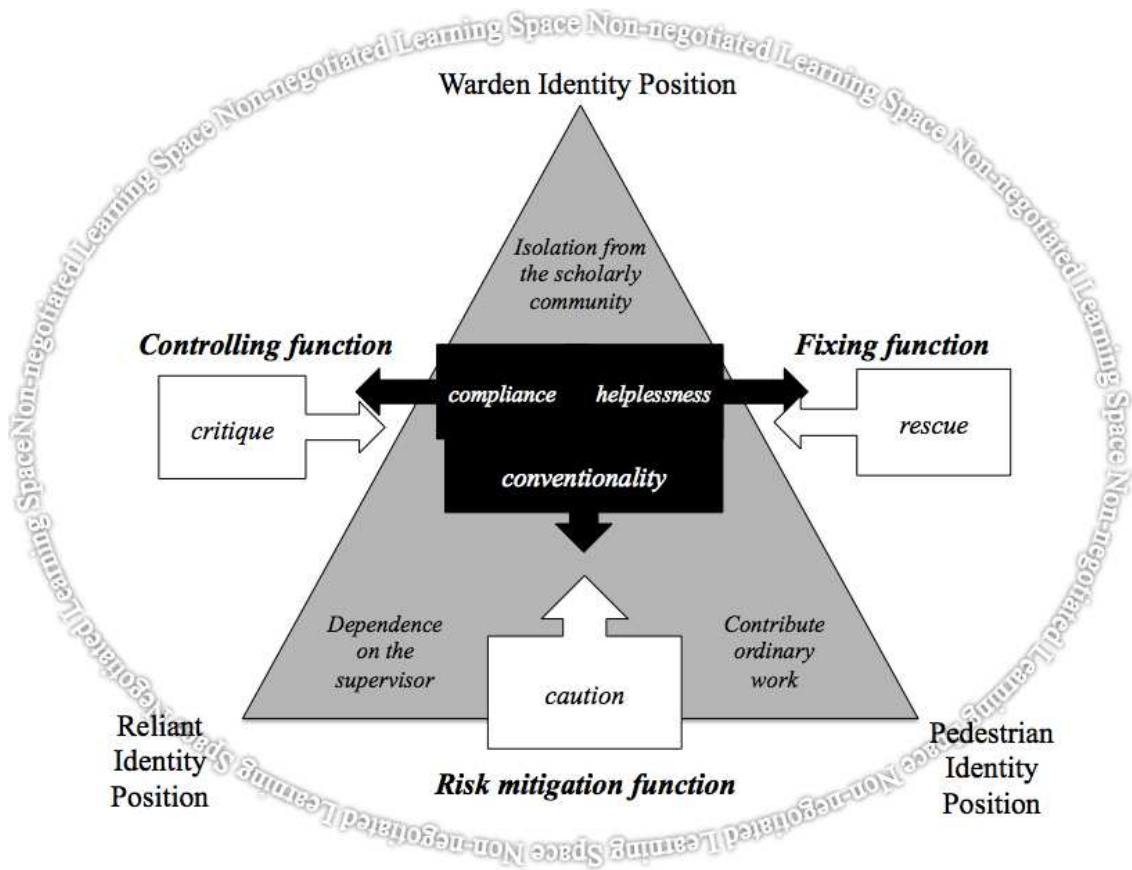


Figure 1: Doctoral supervisor-student relationship as a non-negotiated learning space

As Figure 1 indicates, supervisors may take on identity positions that do not foster a negotiated learning space. Supervisors who take on Warden and Reliant identity positions fulfil a controlling function and offer overly critical comments on their students' work. Such students may comply to their supervisors' instructions, but remain dependent on receiving instructions. If the supervisor takes on the Warden and Pedestrian identity positions, the fixing function is performed that may rescue students from difficult situations or problems, but does not enhance their ability to become encultured into the scholarly community as responsible scholars themselves. The risk mitigation function is performed when the supervisor moves between Pedestrian and Reliant identity positions, in which the supervisor enacts caution that may inhibit creativity and breed conventionality.

If students' are merely compliant and exhibit helplessness, they may find it difficult to become encultured into the scholarly community. A helpless attitude couples with conventional work may result in ordinary (non-original) contributions. Conventionality and compliance does not set the scene for students' move towards independence. Supervisors can thus also inhibit their students' development based on the identity positions they occupy.

Such non-negotiated learning spaces may result in conflict. However, conflicts do not have to be destructive if they are solved constructively. Figure 2 provides doctoral supervisors with a conceptual framework for understanding doctoral supervision interpersonal relationships in order to guide supervisors to more effective interactions while supervising doctoral students.

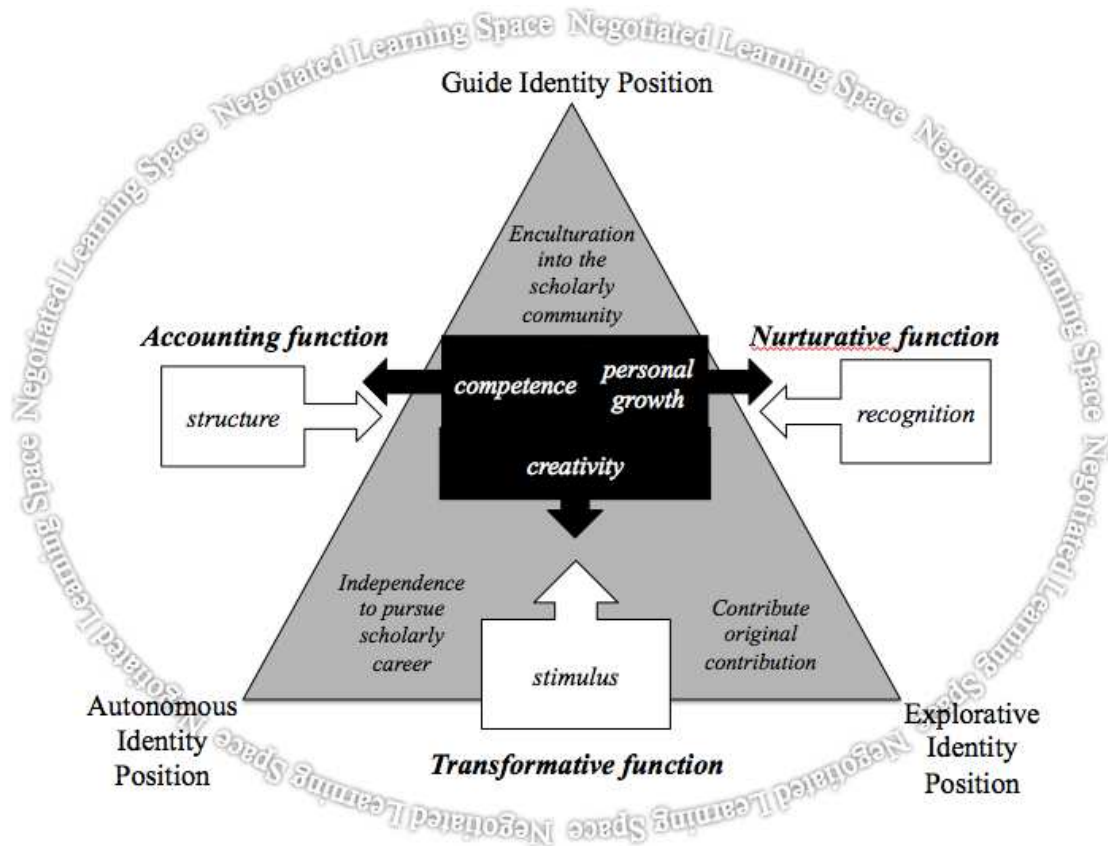


Figure 2: Doctoral supervisor-student relationship as a negotiated learning space

In figure 2 we suggest that supervisors need to achieve synchronicity between their own and students' identity positions and facilitate mutual sensitivity towards each other's backgrounds (as the work of Fataar, 2005 suggests) in order to negotiate a mutually satisfying and beneficial learning space. If there is synchronicity between the supervisor and the student, the student will develop competence, personal growth and creativity. The supervisor who is able to balance Guide and Autonomous identity positions will be able to activate the accounting function and provide structure to the student and develop their competence. If the supervisor takes on the Guide and Explorative identity positions, the nurturative function is performed that gives students recognition and encourages students' personal growth. The transformative function is realized when the supervisor moves between Explorative and Autonomous identity positions, which provides a stimulus for

students' creativity. If such synchronicity is achieved, relationship convergence emerges.

If students' competence and personal growth are enhanced, their enculturation into the scholarly community through the recognition of their doctoral work may be facilitated. A combination of personal growth and creativity may lead students towards making an original contribution to their field of study through their doctoral work. If students are both competent and creative, it may facilitate their transformation into independent scholars.

Supervisors need to recognize their own identity positions (which we have conceptualised as Guide/Warden, Autonomous/Reliant and Explorative/Pedestrian) and how this influences their supervisory function. Knowledge of the identity positions of their students at a specific stage will help supervisors to negotiate, be responsive and adapt to these relative positions. We furthermore make the proposition that supervisors do not often position themselves only within one of these positions, as supervision requires dynamic flexibility in the supervisor's own identity positions in order to fulfil their supervisory functions. As such, a supervisor may move between identity positions in order to fulfil facilitate student learning. Knowledge of the opposing dimensions could guide supervisors in adapting and negotiating learning spaces, especially since supervisors have the power to change and move between identity positions.

Supervisors thus need to be flexible in moving between identity positions when necessary in order to be accounting, nurturative and/or transformative as the relationship and stage of study requires. By enhancing the relationship between the supervisor and student – where the structure, stimulus and recognition a supervisor provides can be met by student competence, creativity and personal growth in return – supervisors can negotiate constructive, caring, and empowering learning spaces. Such learning spaces foster students' enculturation into scholarly communities, enhance their ability to contribute original work to these communities, and provide opportunities for them to develop into independent scholars.

Future research could focus on applying the conceptual framework presented here to empirical studies, and broadening our understanding of how such negotiated learning spaces operate in joint supervision contexts. Although our contribution in this chapter focused on a singular supervisor-student relationship, the application of our conceptualisation would also apply to joint and co-supervision contexts where supervisors (and students) can jointly negotiate their positions.

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