



CHALLENGES IN CONTEMPORARY DOCTORAL SUPERVISION: WITH A FOCUS ON INTERDISCIPLINARITY

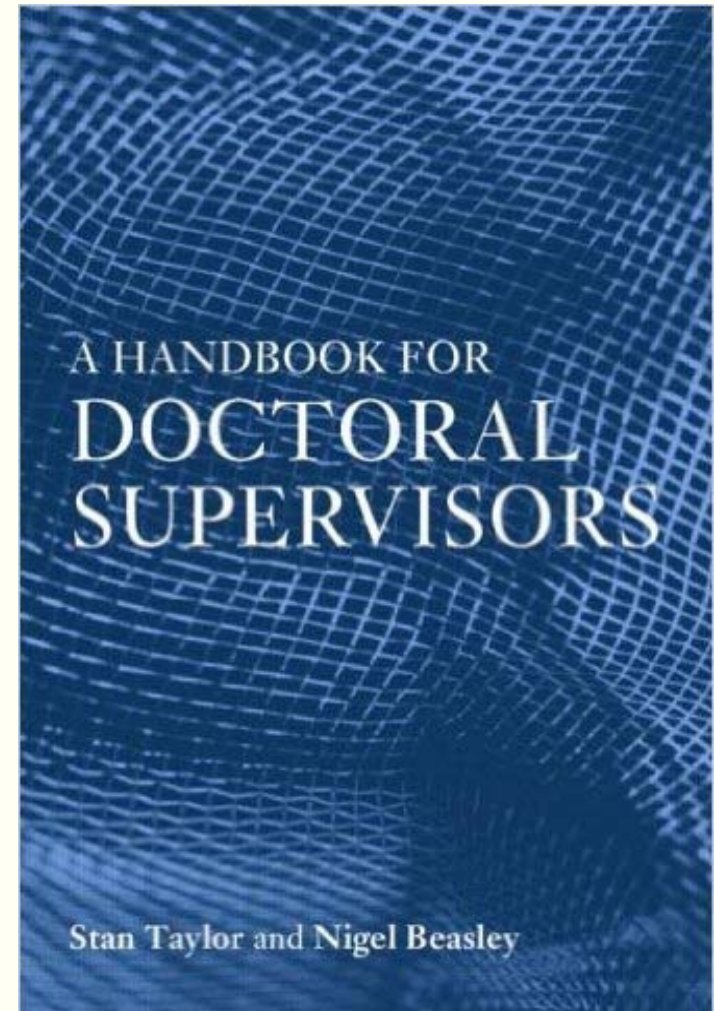
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Structure of Presentation

- My Involvement with Doctoral Education
- A Brief History of The Doctorate
- Challenges in Contemporary Supervision
- Supervising Interdisciplinary Doctoral Candidates
- Conclusion: Doctoral Supervision in a Post-Humboldtian World

My Involvement with Doctoral Education



Wilhelm Von Humboldt establishes First DPhil, 1811



PhD adopted around the Globe



Changes in Doctoral Supervision

Survey of experienced doctoral supervisors: They found that all of their respondents:

Described doctoral supervision Between 1970s and 1990s

- ‘as an intellectual and social enterprise, where personal boundaries were sometimes blurred but the roles of supervisors and students were clear: the supervisor provided oversight and guidance; the doctoral student was responsible for producing a seminal thesis that would secure his or her place as an authority within the field ...’
- Described Current work with doctoral candidates:
- ‘...as significantly different from their former experiences. They spoke of actively fashioning students’ development to address deficits in expertise; deliberately intervening to ensure timely completion; purposeful provision of tutoring or research assistance to minimise the risk of financial distress and withdrawal; and the deployment of personal networks to facilitate completion and ensure post-graduation employment.’

- Halse and Malfoy (2010: 80)

Major Global Developments in late 20th and 21st Centuries

- Formalisation (Completion Rates, Regulations, Supervisory Teams, Structured Programmes, Graduate Schools and Doctoral Training Centres)
- Growth and diversification of candidate population (Domestic ‘non traditional’, International)
- Diversification of modes of study (Part-time, Distance)
- Diversification of purposes (Reproduce academic workforce – Supply human capital for knowledge economies; Proliferation - Publication, Professional, Practice-led, Collaborative, Interdisciplinary)

(Hammond et al 2010; Taylor 2012)

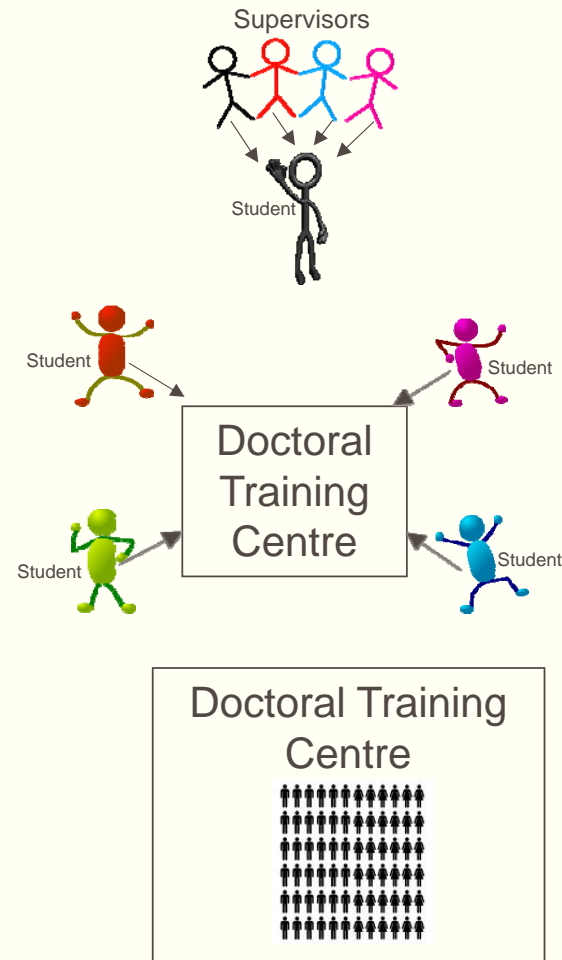
Interdisciplinary Research

A mode of research by teams or individuals that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of practice.

(The United States National Academies 2004)

Types of Interdisciplinary doctoral environments

- Traditional
 - Doctoral candidate located in one discipline, supervisors from different disciplines
- Durham
 - Doctoral candidate located in one discipline, supervisors from different disciplines, spend time in interdisciplinary Doctoral Training Centres
- Kyoto
 - Doctoral candidate located in interdisciplinary Doctoral Training Centres, supervisors from different disciplines



Challenges of Interdisciplinary Doctorates

- Supervisors limited understanding of other's disciplines and different expectations of doctorate;
- Disciplinary boundaries removed - complexity overwhelming for candidates;
- No disciplinary framework, '...there are no handrails [for candidates] to hold on to' (Gardner 2011);
- Resources be scattered and difficult to access;
- Different disciplinary writing conventions;

Challenges of Interdisciplinary Doctorates (2)

- Inconsistent Feedback;
- Few colleagues working in similar fields for mutual support;
- Take longer and more active time management to meet completion targets;
- Difficult to find outlets for interdisciplinary research;
- Risk in appointing Examiners;
- Difficulties in starting careers;

Strategies for Effective Supervision of Interdisciplinary Doctorates

- Developing and maintaining a supervisory team committed to interdisciplinary research
- Building foundations, setting boundaries, and ensuring the provision of resources
- Structuring and writing an interdisciplinary thesis and giving feedback
- Guidance on time management

Strategies for Effective Supervision of Interdisciplinary Doctorates (2)

- Building an interdisciplinary network
- Identifying appropriate examiners
- Developing a publications strategy
- Mentoring and career guidance

Supervision in the Post-Humboldtian World

- Professionalisation
- Supervisor Training
- Recognition
- Shift in Supervisory Pedagogy

Shift in Doctoral Pedagogy

- From Relational to Processual Grounding (Humphrey and Simpson 2013)
 - Away from 'Master/Apprentice' Relationship
 - Towards process of ensuring doctoral candidates submit and complete on time within an institution's regulatory framework that includes monitoring progression, maintaining throughput, quality assurance and quality enhancement.
- Supporting Complexity (Taylor, Kiley and Humphrey, Forthcoming)