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PEDAGOGY OF RESEARCH SUPERVISION PEDAGOGY: A CONSTRUCTIVIST MODEL

Abstract: Graduate research is an integral part of higher education in Pakistan but formal training in supervision is not included in any standard teacher training curriculum. Hence, supervisors usually depend on their own experiences of how they were supervised as graduate students and so every supervisor builds his/her own model of supervision. In this paper we have used Weimer (2006)'s 'wisdom of practice scholarship' framework for describing our personal experiences of constructing a 3Ps-Pedagogical Research Supervision Model. Our model combines Zhao (2003)'s knowledge management approach to research supervision with Bybee and Landes' (1990) five E s instructional model for producing a written dissertation at a private university in Pakistan. It is informed by the constructivist philosophy of teaching and learning. Our basic purpose is to open for discussion the issues of research supervision in a context where the language of academic discourse is English but the students and supervisors hail from non-English speaking contexts.

Keywords: Constructivist model, higher education, in-service education, non-English speakers, Pakistan, Research supervision.

Introduction

In the world of academia, graduate research supervision has conventionally been treated as research (Taylor and Beasley 2005). It is geared towards producing a research based written thesis and the efforts of both parties; student and supervisor, are directed to reach the finish line in time. It is assumed that if supervisors can do research they can supervise as well (Rudd 1985). This view of research supervision which is focused on the content knowledge and research expertise of a supervisor ignores the pedagogical content knowledge of research. It does not take into account that supervision is more than overseeing students produce written research reports; it is a complicated and intensive form of one-on-one teaching of research which takes on a unique form of sustained interaction over at least one and a half years for Masters and three to four years for PhD students. The individuality of such an interaction stems from the element of choice, i.e., both supervisors and students can select whom they want to work with. The resultant relationship blends the personal with professional expectations and becomes one of the key factors in determining the kind of teaching and

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learning experiences both parties will have. The focal point of most of the research studies on supervision is this relationship and the expectations it entails (Belcher 1994; Heath 2002; Kam 1997; Nelson and Friedlander 2001; Zeegers and Barron 2004). Neglected in these studies are the various technical roles a supervisor has to take on in order to facilitate students' progress, e.g., instructor, mentor, coach, advisor and councilor among others which are all teachers' roles (Crawford 2000; Stronge 2007). Recent studies on research supervision, however, recognize that supervision is a distinctive and versatile form of pedagogy (Abiddin 2007; Bird 2001; Deuchar 2008; Ferman 2002; Frugoli 2001; Herman and Mandell 2004; Holbrook and Johnston 1999; Lange and Baillie 2008; Lee 2007; Skarakis-Doyle and McIntyre 2008).

Literature on graduate research supervision has identified different models of supervision, like functional, relation development/qualities, emancipation, enculturation and critical thinking and feminist (see Lee 2008 for detailed description of each). The variations of supervisory practices in these models are caused by the supervisor's own notions of research and the purpose of it, i.e., a supervisor falling under functional model of supervision is more concerned with giving students the academic skills of a researcher and his/her practices would be geared toward providing students with a 'toolkit' of research (Zhao 2003). Although Lee (2008) does not identify with the notion of supervision as a form of teaching, her work is still relevant to our stance in this research, as not only does she recognize the role of personal beliefs in shaping supervisory practices, but also provides space for personal experiences as a contributing factor. As most of us teach the way we have been taught (Frank 1990; Kerekes and King 2010), most supervisors also bring forward their past experiences of how they were supervised as graduate students (Ferman 2002; Lee 2008).

Purpose and Methodology

Evidence suggests that supervisors 'become' supervisors (Bills 2004; Halse 2011) by being supervisors as no formal training in supervision is part of any standard teacher training curriculum and very few universities offer regular formal supervisory training programs. Thus, the ultimate repository for majority of the research supervisors tends to be their own experiences. So there is room for the pedagogy of supervision being created by every pedagogue and should be accepted as 'applied scholarship' (Weimer 2008, 4), and made public for the purpose of improving practice. With this conviction, we share our journey on the path of constructing our supervision model at a private university in Pakistan using the framework of 'the wisdom of practice scholarship' suggested by Weimer (2006). We draw on 'personal accounts of change' (p.67) approach for relating our experiences of implementing a group supervision model in our context while critically analyzing the resulting change for our students and ourselves. We have used multiple sources of data for the purpose; besides our personal logs and reflective notes, we interviewed our students individually after each supervisory meeting and collectively after each workshop. Initially we asked them to share their experiences anonymously through a one-minute reflective paper but seeing their reluctance we settled for short verbal discussions instead. Our students' statements have been reproduced verbatim throughout the paper. The other source of student data was the evaluation forms filled at the end of each workshop and analyzed for the paper. Excerpts from our personal narratives of supervision both as a research student and supervisor are woven into the discussion in generalin order to explicitly locate the ideas and insights that have impacted our supervisory practices.

The context and experiences of our supervision

As students our experiences occurred in well-established universities ofthe North but the site for our experiences as supervisors is an institution of higher learning in Pakistan which was created in early 90's as part of a private university (the New Institute henceforth). The New Institute provides professional training to in-service teachers and teacher educators through offering Master's and PhD degrees in Education. Our experiences of supervision described in this paper relate to Master's Program only which is a two-year structured program and includes two taught courses in research as preparation (four credit hours) and a final Dissertation (eight credit hours) as part of degree requirements. The students enrolled in Master's Program at the New Institute are non-traditional students (Houser 2004); mature adults returning to school who are at various stages of their teaching career and have family responsibilities as well. Their academic characteristics are very similar to Rubdy (2005)'s account of Thai students which lower their academic achievements. The major trait of our research students that plays an important role in defining our supervision context is their (usually) extreme deficiency in skills required for critical thinking, meaningful analysis and deep comprehension of academic reading and writing especially in English. A large majority comes to the Institute with very limited prior experience of producing or consuming educational research and their interest and performance in research courses remains low (Vazir and Qureshi, 2011). Graduate research supervision in this context may have long term rewards for supervisors but short term impact is mental drain and physical strain.

Since the New Institute did not offer any regular formal training program for inducting supervisorswe usually sought guidance from our own experiences as research students. As reflective practice was part of our teaching culture we continuously evaluated our supervision pedagogy by keeping a reflective journal. We also compared notes from time to time as Lee (2007) while recognizing the "power of the supervisor's own experience as a student" (p.275), also presages of the productive and non-productive applications of these experiences.

Dysthe (2002) points out that 'non-competitive discourse among colleagues' could be a sourceof capacity building for researchers (by implication research supervisors). At the New Institute there was no formal or informal platformwhere supervisors could come together for discussing supervision-specific issues or concerns. Even in informal conversations very few colleagues talked openly about the styles and stories of their supervisory practices. Perhaps like our students we were also insecure in our craft of supervision and hence the opportunities for discovering effective pedagogy through collegial discussion and dialogue or formal/ informal sharing of experiences and learning from each other were almost non-existent for us. Moreover, the traditional model of supervision with primarily one-to-one relationship between student and supervisor was followed by all. In 2009 when supervisors were given a choice between single vs. group supervision on trial basis, we saw this as an opportunity to create our own pedagogical content knowledge of supervision by coming together and documenting our new experiences of group supervision.

Building a 'Pakistani' model of supervision

The prospect of creating a contextual model of research supervision informed by constructivist philosophy of teaching and learning was both exciting and challenging as well. As none of us had any practical experience of group supervision, we turned to the literature

on group supervision and came upon Viney and Truneckova (2008)'s account of their experiences of group supervision for the students of psychological counseling. The authors discuss two models; "led supervision group (LSG) and peer supervision group (PSG)" (Viney and Truneckova 2008, 132). In LSG, there is a group leader to serve as an expert and facilitator. We opted for PSG, the leaderless peer supervision planning to share the leadership tasks.

Just like the choice of leaderless peer supervision strategy and the purpose, the instructional strategies for our model of supervision also came from rather an old article written by Rodger W. Bybee and Nancy M. Landes (1990). The authors proposed 'BSCS-5E Instructional Model' for the teaching and learning of biological sciences. The model presents a 5-step course of action with each step focused on furthering learning through various educational tasks and activities. The five 'E' s refer to; engage, explore, explain, elaborate and evaluate. The application of these procedures creates a dynamic environment in which students are actively engaged in building their own understanding of existing information in order to create new knowledge while their past experiences are extended to their present learning by their advanced awareness of new ideas. This environment truly imbues constructivist philosophy of teaching and learning and helps create 'product' as tangible proof of the mutual efforts. The Bybee and Landes (1990), model provided us the modus-operandi which was missing in Lee (2008)'s model. For our purposes we labeled the five-step course of action as 'pedagogy' with the resulting 'product' which is dissertation. With the purpose, pedagogy and product identified, we got our 3Ps-Pedagogical Research Supervision Model presented in Table 1 below.

Table I: 3Ps-Pedagogical Research Supervision Model

Purpose	Pedagogy	Product
Critically manage knowledge	Engage	Introduction
Identify and exploit existing knowledge	Explore	Review of Literature
Create new knowledge	Explain	Methodology
	Elaborate	Conclusion
	Evaluate	Recommendations/ Oral Defense

Our research students were part of the class we had co-taught Research Methods earlier and had documented our personal reflections and lessons learnt (Vazir and Qureshi, 2011). Knowing our students' strengths and weaknesses helped us in determining their academic needs and play our role to facilitate them so that they experience research as a 'process' of extending their existing knowledge in order to create new. This was akin to our own experiences as students as through the guidance of our supervisors our ability to learn grew and we expanded our knowledge base. Their support and assistance in locating literature and gathering information from seminal and acknowledged books and studies in the field, made possible the cognitive and skill development of novice students like us. They combined the pedagogy of supervision with the content knowledge of research discipline under the philosophy of constructivism rather than providing the technical details of how to handle a research project utilizing the direct instructional method favored by traditionalists. We could still recall our own experiences that formed the basis of our supervision philosophy;

> *First author:*As a student I was given the freedom of choice and independence for managing my own learning along-with expert advice at strategic junctions. I offered the same to my students and it worked well with my first student. But soon I realized that a generic list of supervision skills would not work. Now that I have

supervised a large number of students I tend to agree with Murray (2003) that the dynamics of the relationship varies from individual to individual as each of them brings her/his own unique perspective into it.

Second Author: As a supervisor I have taken the best from all three supervisory experiences I have gone through for my three graduate degrees. I realize that meetings with students are essential; may be a weekly meeting between the supervisor and student, not necessarily face-to-face but contact and update via email also works. Similarly sharing timelines and expectations from each other and walking students through the process of dissertation writing helps while giving critical feedback at each stage results in improved work. Though none of my supervisors asked me to maintain an ongoing reflective journal, I really find it useful for effective supervision because this helps students in identifying gaps of and improvement strategies for their work while sharing their challenges and success stories. But the most important for a healthy relationship is to remove the labels of expert and novice. It is not only the development of the cognitive and skill domain but also the empathy and sympathy which matters—hence the dispositions. This surely results in better quality dissertations.

The purpose of research supervision (and the foundation of our model), was to enable students to critically manage their prior knowledge while identifying and exploiting the existing knowledge in order to create new knowledge (Zhao 2003). Building on the lessons learnt from our classroom interactions, we prepared our supervision road map around the dissertation writing checklist and chose appropriate strategies accordingly for testing out our new approach.

***Introduction*;** our first task was to engage our students in the twin processes of knowledge management. First, they brought forward their prior knowledge to bear upon the choice of research topic and provide the context for it. For a large majority, previous knowledge was gained through taking academic courses in general and research methods in particular. Second, focused engagement with a particular topic encouraged them to manage their current learning by blending it with past experiences and embedding into their fields of specialization. As they were mentally engaged in mapping the learning outcome (product), we constantly challenged them by raising questions and probing to elicit responses to find out what they knew or thought about their proposed topic and its conceptual scope. We encouraged our students to write down their initial thoughts and bring the drafts for discussion and feedback because literature reminded how important is the role of feedback in enhancing academic learning (Azman 2013; Poulas and Mahony 2008; Rae and Cochrane 2008; Rowe and Wood 2008; Wang and Li 2008; Wang and Li 2011; Weaver 2006 among others). In addition, we devised a series of three 'strategic' workshops with the purpose of introducing structured opportunities for students to connect through meaningful discussions in a non-threatening environment. At the end of each workshop, we thought students had moved forward in building trusting relationships which is a pre-requisite for peer learning as we noticed them discussing their progress collectively. But whenever they brought in their improved drafts they always requested for individual feedback and a thorough, one-on-one discussion. The relevant details of these workshops are given in the Appendix.

***Literature Review*:** this task required students to explore, identify and extend the existing knowledge by gathering, organizing, interpreting, analyzing and evaluating the existing

material on their topic. As facilitators we asked probing questions like our supervisors; 'what', 'why', 'so what' in order to assess their understanding of the concepts besides suggesting further readings to expand and clarify. We offered alternative explanations to challenge their theoretical/ analytical position while gauging their conceptual clarity of the linkages being proposed in their review. At this juncture, the second workshopwas conducted and we observed that the official presentation of the proposals went smoothly for our students

***Methodology/ Conclusions/ Recommendations*:** Between the second and third workshop were numerous individual sessions with few group discussions to ease the entry into the field negotiations and starting fieldwork. When our students entered the data collection phase their need for individual feedback and consultation increased. We accommodated by ensuring the discussion of their field experiences in both oral and written forms. In our group and individual meeting we created opportunities for them to explain, elaborate and verbalize their conceptual understanding as well as demonstrate their analytical skills and researchers' behaviors like, forming generalizations, considering transferability, debating validity and reliability issues and triangulating for explanations. We drew their attention to alternative explanations by probing, challenging, clarifying and evaluating as well. The language of discourse was now dominated by research jargons and formal definitions of relevant concepts and processes. Most of these were new concepts for majority of them and they spent considerable time in processing these new ideas.

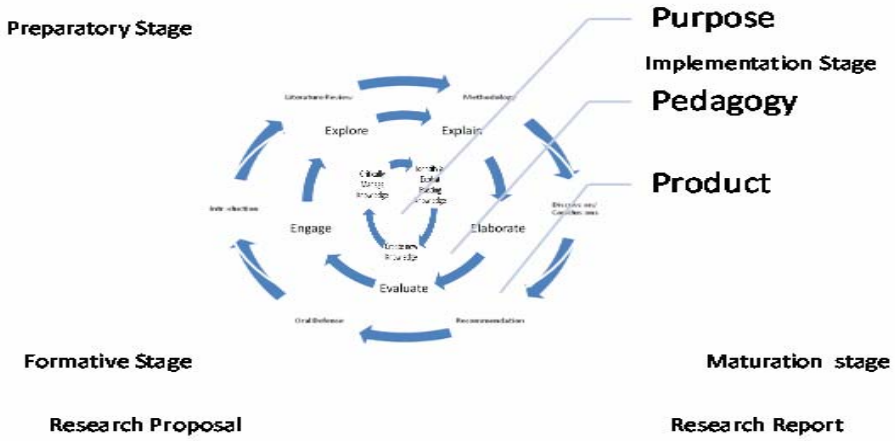
Recommendations/ Oral Defense: By now students had completed their data analysis in which was the second longest time span during their dissertation writing (first being the data collection). Our last task was to extend our students' conceptual understanding by challenging their prior knowledge. The quest for new knowledge allowed them further opportunity to practice desired skills and behaviors valued in knowledge based society of researchers. Through new experiences, students developed deeper and broader understanding and acquired more information and adequate skills and were ready for their final oral defense of their dissertation.

Sweet and sour tastes of the new experience

Our experience of the leaderless peer supervision using 3Ps-PRSM was rife with challenges and contained mixed taste of bitter-sweet successful and not so successful moments. No sooner had we started we realized that there was a discrepancy in our model; the way our purpose, pedagogy and product were lined up horizontally and vertically, we had literally divided the progression of research supervision into compartments with fixed boundaries and no allowance for back and forth movement. In practice, however, when our students were engaged in critically managing knowledge to select a suitable research topic (part of the 'Introduction' of dissertation), they were also exploring to identify and exploit existing knowledge on the topic in order to create a 'niche' for their research which is part of both 'Introduction' and 'Literature Review. Similarly when they were exploring the most suitable methodology for their own research they were also engaged in evaluating the ones used by others. When they were elaborating their conclusions they were also explaining the findings of others while evaluating the recommendations of both. The message was that research supervision is too muddled to be neatly compartmentalized. By boxing in the process, as in Table 1, we had overlooked the fact that the dissertation writing checklist (Product) was repeated by students twice; first, for producing research proposal they went through preparatory and formative stages and completed the foundational work. A Research

Proposalthough a shorter version in terms of product was more intense in terms of instructional pedagogies and students' needs and demands. Second, they went through Implementation and Maturation stages for completing the final report. The repetition of the checklist meant that the production of tangible proofs in a research supervision process is not sequential but circular; students produced shorter and longer 'pieces' of the final product in two cycles and four stages. Figure: 1below contains the modified version of our 3Ps-PRSM and is reflective of our new learning.

Figure 1: 3Ps-Pedagogical Research Supervision Model



Three circles of the model, in the foreground, demonstrate the spherical nature of each P of the research supervision process in its own orbit but the overlay with no hard boundaries reflects the interconnectedness of each circle. It also implies the flexibility of inter and intra-circular movements besides indicating the backward and forward linkages. In the background are the four stages of dissertation writing that share the same circles. In the left hand corners are the two stages for producing research proposal and the right hand stages help generate the final dissertation report. The implication of this model is that the research being a multi-dimensional process necessitates a multi-pronged pedagogy for research supervision. Keeping in mind the 'three-in one' purposes of research supervision, i.e., create new knowledge while managing prior and identifying and exploiting existing knowledge, the array of appropriate pedagogical practices increases the likelihood of producing complete dissertation. The ensuing pages contain our personal account of change from Table 1 to Figure 1. Our narrative of the factors that shaped the underlying dynamics is interspersed with connections to the experiences of fellow travelers found in literature on research supervision.

Career orientation

Lee (2008)'s model of 'emancipation/mentoring' conceptualizes research as 'journey' which is revolutionary in nature. For us it is also an avant-garde process that does not end with one product, i.e., dissertation only. It is enculturation involving more publications and repeat

experiences. But our vision was shared by two students only who were happy for being "initiated into the community of researchers" and "I know this is a one-time opportunity to write something meaningful" respectively. The rest of them did not see themselves as researchers in their future (Vazir and Qureshi, 2011). "In my workplace I am not required to conduct any research" was the most common comment. Like the students of Zablotsk (2001), our students were also reluctant to invest time and energy in searching and researching ideas and concepts; "I am bearing all this hardship to complete my degree. I will be so relieved when it is over." Another comment was not much different either; "I am glad it is one time only, thank God no more research for me." Although we tried to empathize with our students but when the majority said that it was a 'punishment' for them, we as supervisors felt disappointed. As students we also had frustrating experiences and considered the process 'grueling' but not in the sense of punishment. We reflected hard on our own practices questioning whether our pedagogy was appropriate for these students but exploring this issue needs further research and varied sample. However, Nkosi and Nkosi (2011) acknowledge that students with deficient research and academic background have difficulty in coping with the demands of a research degree like Masters. In our context students' frustrations are amplified for two reasons; a) their career paths do not require them to conduct research, and b) they are required to read and write in English which is not their native language.

Feedback

The role of feedback in teaching and learning is documented in educational literature (Price et al 2010), and is substantiated by our own experiences as the second author recalled; "For most of the work I shared with my supervisor, he gave his critical feedback with a positive note that encouraged me to move forward with more will to perform better and improve my work; to write the best according to my abilities and take ownership of my writing" But nowhere in our supervision was the clash of expectations more pronounced than in give and take of feedback; our purpose of giving feedback was to provide guidance, therefore, the feedback included probing, asking them to explain, extend, justify, give concrete examples, why the study was significant, what would it contribute, why the particular methodological tools were chosen, what ethical consent procedures were used. The questions were rigorous but were put in an understanding and non aggressive tones; e.g., "why so? How, give an example? Oh really, when did it happen? It reads as a claim-huh? Or this is an awkward statement; need to check." Students on the other hand were looking for confirmation of their ideas, extension of their arguments, correction of misunderstandings and editing. This was exactly opposite to the expectations of the students and their supervisors described by Orsmond and Merry (2011).

Our students' too much dependence on "is this correct", "tell me, am I right" was a constant source of concern for us as it was hindering their progress especially in synthesizing literature and taking an academic stance. Drafts after drafts were discussed where students' preference was 'do not guide us, correct us' which we did not want to do as the second author had negative experience of "when my supervisor holding my written work and telling me what was wrong, rather than sharing the document with me and beginning with what could be done to improve it." With help, push and shove, our students reached the finish line in-time but we had our share of frustrations and felt like reverting to the traditional 'functional' model of single research supervision (Lee 2010).

Keeping aligned with the nature of leader-less group supervision, we were leaning more toward group and peer- feedback as our main strategies. We planned group meetings for exchanging ideas and discussing the work in progress. We observed that students were reluctant to share their work on the pre-text of "we have different topics and methodologies." They did not realize (or admit) that they might be struggling to cope with similar problems despite their different topics, like how to search and locate material or how to synthesize literature to make a stance were common problems and they could have found ways to address these jointly.

It was evident that our students did not like the idea of their peers commenting on their work. Richards et al (1998) point out students' preference for individualized feedback and our teaching and supervisory experiences at the New Institute mirror it. Even in group supervision more than half of the feedback was given individually particularly during the initial phases of topic selection and proposal writing. However, only one student was genuinely appreciative of the feedback; "it really made me think along the lines I had not imagined." Unlike the second author who felt "more motivated" after receiving feedback from her supervisor, one of our students sounded bitter as she lamented; "you have spent so much time in probing and directing. I wish you had written it for me instead because it would have saved so much of my time." Another scoffed; "feedback was not of great help, all it contained was suggestions rather than telling me straight, do this or that."

Scott (2008) considers feedback a "unique moment for individualized learning" (p.7). We, on the other hand, were concerned that the individual feedback sessions while taking up most of our time and energy were actually depriving students of the benefits of becoming members of their community of practice (Wenger 1998) by not sharing their common experiences with them. At the same time, these sessions were also defeating the purpose of group supervision. The design of three workshops (in Appendix) was built around the idea of introducing structured opportunities for peer interactions and peer learning. The first workshop included a session for feedback which was modified for the second and dropped in the third as we reflected and adjusted our practices accordingly. The evaluation of these opportunities contained mix messages; the experiences were 'therapeutic' as one student put it; "at first it was intimidating, I was not willing to talk about my 'stupidities' but listening to others made me feel I am not the only one struggling." For some, listening to others' issues was irrelevant; "why should I sit in a meeting where a student is winning about not being able to find relevant material. It wastes my time as I do not have this problem and if I had I would come to you at that time only." Others thought that "workshops were informative."

Research and academic background

The research and academic background of our students had multiple repercussions for our 3Ps-PRS Model. In the spirit of constructivism, we saw ourselves as mentors while our students expected us to be tutors; we tried to guide them toward the process they wanted us to give direct instructions for creating the product. Meeting after meeting and discussion after discussion, still our students' preference for instruction and not guidance was apparent. Our students' frustration while apparently similar to that of the first author during the preparatory stage was actually dissimilar; the first author was troubled by 'her' inability to come up with a reasonable topic whereas our students at the New Institute waited for their supervisors' to 'select' for them. The constant, "Tell me" was similar to the behavior of Chinese students reported by Wang and Li (2011).

Similarly, we steered our group meetings to be more like a conversation in which both sides engage in explorations about research practice like what are you working on, where you are in the process, what kind of problems are you facing but this was not happening. Students were tight-lipped especially in the beginning so we probed. Various apprehensions came out; one student was very conscious of her limited ability to express in reasonable academic English felt vulnerable; "what if somebody else takes my ideas and writes them in a better language." Another was afraid of exposing her incomplete understanding of research terminologies; "I cannot bear them [group mates] making fun of me for not understanding the difference between describing and synthesizing literature or the context of my study." This was uttered more than once by one particular student and was echoed by many others in not so many different words. One of the students did not like the experience of receiving peer feedback; "It is insulting. I would much rather have a more 'private' feedback even from supervisors rather than 'public' humiliation in front of the whole class or even a small group of so-called peers." A group of our students, pre-dominantly urban teachers from private sector English medium schools, did not think much of their peers who were from remote rural areas of Pakistan and from public sector schools; "what do they know about our topics to give any constructive feedback."

Primarily, the limited proficiency of students in academic reading and writing in English affected our mutual efforts at every stage of the process. We observed that our students were mostly silent in group meetings so we held individual meetings as well. The meetings were bi-lingual and students' participation was greater as compared to group meeting. But it was like teaching a custom made course in research methodology (not in English) to one student at a time where his/her research topic was taken through the usual research cycle mostly by us as instructor and coach. These additional 'courses' on top of the regular semester load of teaching, research and service, meant investing extra time and energy in our supervisory duties.

Cultural diversity

Researchers on supervision agree that cultural diversity has an impact on the relationship between supervisor and student (Abiddin et al 2009; Abiddin and West 2007; Calma 2007; Crawford 2010). But the diversity is associated with either being foreigner like the international students with Australian supervisor (Ingleton and Cadman, 2002), with British supervisors (Chiang 2003); or being in foreign lands like the experiences of international students in universities of the North (Andrade 2006; Mehdizadeh and Scott, 2005; Yehi and Inose 2003). Largely neglected are the experiences of students from developing countries like Pakistan where globalization in higher education has created 'academic' sub-cultures because of the uneven educational landscape. There are enormous differences in skills, knowledge, and practices of students graduating from public, private, faith-based and other school systems (see Rahman 2005 for details). These differences are more pronounced in the institutions of higher learning where academic culture promotes research as an integral part of the curriculum and research supervisors perform the uphill task of inducting students to the 'mono' culture of the global community of researchers. Our experiences suggest that these cultural differences have profound impact on the stakeholders' relationship; our students' reluctance to share their work in progress with peers and dismissing feedback from colleagues with 'perceived' low capabilities are illustrations of such effects. Similarly, 'birds of feather' flocking together was another; sharing resources with 'friends' while holding them back from 'others' and hiding relevant books and dissertations were commonly observed

practices among students at the New Institute where cooperative teaching and learning approaches were emphasized by the institutional culture.

Our students' perception of the supervision revealed yet another dimension of academic cultural difference; our supervisors gave us space to work independently as the second author recalls; "My supervisor would always say; "but most of all it (research topic) has to be something you want to investigate for yourself; your interest should be close to your heart, only then will you produce a fine piece of work". Our students, on the contrary, asked us; "tell us what you want us to work on." Similarly, we put our students in charge of their own learning encouraging them to create, transfer, integrate and embed knowledge according to their own needs and capacities. This was in contrast to students' prior experiences; "my experiences of being a teacher and student are authoritarian. As a teacher I command, as a student I obey." Others added; "Our school culture is teacher-centered and students are expected to memorize the "right" answers." We, on the other hand were especially careful not to impose 'our way' on students because of the bitter experiences of the second author;

> "It was hard to 'write' with my supervisor; one always had to do 'right' as he wanted the best from his students. I wondered if everything I did was wrong and a pessimist and defeatist attitude was the result which stumped my growth and thinking. My mind was always blank and my eyes would easily fill up with tears of frustration and confusion."

With our students we started with scaffolding- giving cues, dropping hints and modeling think aloud etc. (Hartman 2002), but the concept of actively constructing meaning and having alternatives was new to our students who were in the habit of regurgitating someone else's meaning. "In our schools we as teachers give the 'right' answers just like we were given by our teachers but here I am given suggestions. What do I do with these" was how one student expressed her frustration when comparing the New Institute with her own professional context. Similarly, when we suggested that instead of looking for right answer they may consider alternatives because the world is made up of multiple social realities (Hsiung 2012), it did not sit well with students; "I like the freedom to think but it does not get my work done" was a frequent comment (compliment or complaint, one really wondered). Their constant request "Tell me if this is correct" was reflective of their quest for the right answer. Many a times we found ourselves doing handholding rather than scaffolding.

Pardhan (2007) has described her contradictory experiences of "otherness" and "belongingness" (p.254) while conducting research with Pakistani women in Chitral valley. We being Pakistani women 'belonged' to our students' social realm. When our students complained about their personal or familial responsibilities affecting their progress they always appealed to our affinity with them; 'you understand', 'you know our culture' 'our values' and so on. Our female students appealed to our femininity; "you know how we feel because you wear the same shoes." It seemed our students were more willing to seek our guidance in exploring choices to solve their social problems which (according to them), were causing delays in their academic progress and where we 'could' help because we belonged to the same culture.

This fellow feeling, however, was not there when it came to academic culture. We frequently heard our students mutter about how difficult research was for them but our advice for overcoming these difficulties was usually rebuffed; "You do not understand our problems because you have studied in the West" was often flung at us highlighting our 'otherness.' The

academic culture of the New Institute was the 'other' culture we belonged to but they did not. And to some extent they were right as some of the norms we took for granted at the New Institute, e.g., being on first name basis, were alien to most of our students. "We never addressed our teachers by their names; it was always Miss, Madam or Sir to show our respect. Here I feel I am being disrespectful and it affects my communication." Our knowledge of the academic language was also part of this 'other' culture they did not share;"you can read and write academic English and you expect the same from us without realizing our limitations" was the response of a student whom the first authorwas guiding through the writing of literature review. In our supervision context this spontaneous community of interests one moment and detachment the next gave our relationship a unique blend of formality and flippant attitude which at times was disturbing. For future research in supervision, we suggest exploring further the relationship between academic culture and the supervision experiences of students in the institutions of higher learning of the developing world.

Conclusion

In the academic world of higher education every dissertation completed reflects academic strength and the quality of academic support provided to students. Like a trophy it signifies success not only for the student and supervisor concerned but also for the institution which gets its credibility by the number of completed theses and dissertations. Behind these numbers are many untold stories of endless challenges that many of us are reluctant to talk for fear of exposing failed attempts. Under the subtle but persistent pressure for products many supervisors like us struggle alone to brave the odds. We feel that researchers from Pakistan and similar contexts need to open up about the issues of graduate research supervision in general and with non-traditional students in particular. The 'wisdom of practice scholarship' and the framework for presenting practitioner' knowledge provides tools for generating relevant discussion in this regard.

The 3Ps-Research Supervision Pedagogical Model described in this paper is informed by the constructivist philosophy of teaching and learning which is the most favored by educationists all over the world for all levels. Our experiences of the implementing the model in a context where students come from different 'local' academic cultures and are initiated into a community of practice that is shaped by 'global' academic culture has raised questions about the practicality of putting students in charge of their own knowledge construction in institutions of higher learning when rote memorization and direct instruction have shaped the (majority of) students' experiences of teaching and learning; when they are expected to explore scenarios embedded in Western culture and interact with imported text; where academic culture ignores the fact that cultural realities are embedded in the context and are lost in translation (Hsiung 2012), but most importantly, in a context where the whole academic discourse takes place in a foreign language and students are not articulating in their first language. Vazir and Qureshi (2011), have raised similar concerns about the teaching and learning of research as a discipline in such contexts.

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Notes

[1] Although our medium of instruction is English, our verbal discussion was usually bilingual. Therefore, some of the students' responses are direct translations.

Appendix

Three workshops were conducted.

1. First workshop was in the beginning when students were ready to initiate their research work. The purpose of this workshop was to help students narrow down their topic by finding a focus of the study and formulate research question (s). The output was students' presentation of 6 Ws (what, why, where when, who, what for) and 1 H (how) of their research study.
2. Second workshop was held toward the middle of the dissertation writing process when students' research proposals were ready. At this workshop there was mock proposal defense to assess the readiness of students as well as provide facilitators plus peers' feedback.
3. Third, the last workshop was towards the end when students were ready to begin their data analysis. The purpose of this workshop was to help students understand coding, clustering and theme identification. In this session a former graduate student shared his field work stories and conducted hands-on session using students' data. The output was that each student produced a sample of coded and clustered data and at least one theme identified from his/her own research.

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