

Tiptoeing around the institution? Doctoral supervision in the knowledge economy

Abstract

Students' doctoral experience can be seen as a journey of mystery, of working in the dark, of allowing the purpose of the research to lead the process. Contrary to this view, students' experiences of supervision described in this chapter are ones of being expected to follow a pre-determined path, a path that negates student engagement and agency. Using a case-study methodology and critical discourse analysis, this chapter explores two students' experiences, describing some unsuccessful efforts to engage their supervisors. It interprets these experiences in the context of their growing realisation of the constraints for students and supervisors working within the corporate university, within the knowledge economy. This analysis conceptualises new possibilities for the supervisory relationship in this unique journey within the context of the knowledge economy.

Introducing the context

This chapter explores two students' less-than-satisfactory experiences of their doctoral journeys in order to explain these experiences in the current context in which students, supervisors and universities in Western cultures, and increasingly across the globe, find themselves interpellated through the effects of internationalisation (Haigh, 2008; Häyriinen-Alestalo & Peltola, 2006; Lynch, 2006; Rizvi & Walsh, 1998; Tadaki & Tremewan, 2013). Through an analysis of these students' experiences, this chapter identifies discourses that influenced those experiences in order to offer greater clarity to these and others' doctoral journeys. This analysis offers an opportunity to re-think doctoral supervision through a greater awareness of the social, political and economic forces that impinge upon this journey, and a greater awareness of the needs of the doctoral student who is traversing the doctorate.

In the section that follows we provide some awareness of these social, political and economic forces by exploring the broader context in which contemporary Western universities are positioned, that is, the knowledge economy. We continue by identifying some of the implications of the corporatisation of Western universities (as players in the knowledge economy) in terms of doctoral students' experiences. The chapter then focuses on the starting points of the authors' doctoral journeys. We identify sources of data and means of analysis and the findings arising from this analysis. The chapter concludes with the insights gained that highlight the importance of the supervisory relationship and the agency and

engagement of the student within that relationship. We suggest that the representation of both supervisor and student play a crucial role in successfully traversing the doctorate. We begin this chapter by exploring the knowledge economy.

The Knowledge Economy

The knowledge economy has been made central to the work of the contemporary academic in the university faculty context as the result of institutional drives toward internationalisation (Altbach, 2013; Haigh, 2008; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Tadaki & Tremewan, 2013).

Internationalisation within the knowledge economy is largely the response of educational institutions to knowledge-based markets (e.g., knowledge and knowledge related activities such as learning, research, education, training) (Brancaleone & O'Brien, 2011; Yemini, 2014). The knowledge economy as enabled by neoliberalism, has created social and economic transformations (Harvey, 2005), creating a shift from state-led democratically driven economies to a borderless unfettered global economy. This shift has also changed the way in which universities have been funded - a change from reliance on state funding to that of having to seek privately sourced funding (Haigh, 2008). This shift in funding has initiated a transformation of the traditional university into being a corporate university (Marginson, 2006), one that has been and continues to be facilitated by managerialism (Lynch, 2014). As a decontextualised form of governance (where context-specific knowledge is regarded as irrelevant) managerialism focuses on outputs and outcomes, and how these serve economic interests (Lynch, 2014). The knowledge economy also creates a situation for universities where universities gain their relevance from the degree to which they serve the interests of industry (Bastalich, 2010; Kauppinen, 2012). This relationship of the corporate university with industry as a product of the knowledge economy has changed the way research and knowledge is now produced and valued (Bastalich, 2010; Kauppinen, 2012). In the knowledge economy, doctoral students are knowledge workers involved in knowledge production, while neoliberalism/managerialism constructs agency for doctoral students in terms of managing their research projects.

In this knowledge economy/neoliberal/managerial context doctoral students need to navigate two things: their own research project, and a subtle, unknown pressure (felt but not

understood) moving the student toward the academic world and its implicit ‘glocal’¹ demands (Robertson, 2012). This positions the doctoral student as serving their obvious needs of their own development and, less obviously the supervisor’s responsibility towards the academy and the institution’s internationalisation purposes and goals. From the student’s perspective (and possibly others’), the institution’s and supervisors’ stakehold in the doctorate is largely hidden. This creates a disconnect between the student’s experience and their expectations of their doctoral journey.

Drawing on accounts of two doctoral journeys, this chapter looks at these journeys in relation to these two students’ unmet expectations, and these as they relate to institutional narratives. In pursuing this empirically grounded exploration, the aim of this chapter is to evaluate strengths and limitations of institutional provision for the doctoral journey, of possibilities around this provision, and to assess whether such parameters are appropriate and sufficient for today’s research context - a complex work driven by the knowledge economy in a globalised world.

The Doctoral Student in the Corporate University

For the institution, the move toward corporatisation (as a consequence of the knowledge economy) can be seen to have resulted in changes in the relationship between student and institution. In the past, the student may have sought the status provided by one institution in comparison to another, however, as a result of the homogenisation of universities, a consequence of the Bologna project (Brancaleone & O'Brien, 2011; Keeling, 2006) the power over students through institutional status has been weakened. In the current Australian context, and specifically for the doctoral student, the institution has less and less to draw upon as means to develop the student’s allegiance to the institution. Students can become aware that they can be valuable assets to their own university, or another university if their experience is less than ideal². In corporate ways of thinking it is not in the best interests of the university to communicate these options to the students.

¹ The term *glocal* addresses the unhelpful tendency to view globalisation as homogenous by bringing the local nuances to the phenomenon of globalisation (Robertson, 2012).

² The Australian Government’s Research Training Scheme funds students’ doctoral program. Although it is the university that applies for this funding on behalf of the student, the funding is attached to the student as is therefore transferrable if the student changes institution.

In contrast, the doctoral student enters their study largely unaware of the economic and political agendas which shape their experience of engagement with the university. These agendas are entrenched within institutional discourses (Marginson, 2006). As a consequence of institutional discourses (Fairclough, 2012), students (and perhaps some supervisors and administrative staff) may be blinded to the layers of meaning within institutional policies that serve the needs of the institution beyond the students' goals of the doctorate. As well students are largely unaware of that the needs of the institution both as a corporation and international player in the knowledge economy which are even beyond the traditional goals of the doctorate itself (Marginson, 2006). It could be argued that the knowledge economy, its elements and their significance/impact/effects to/upon their doctoral program is something hidden from most students. For example, students may be aware of the pressure to complete their study within three years (full-time equivalent) without being aware of why the institution is placing such importance on this achievement, or what their options are in response to this pressure. Thus when students' attempt to understand their relationship with the university, institutional discourses and narratives are experienced as unclear and intangible. Institutional policies embedded in these discourses (that are directed toward seemingly non-doctoral goals) can prevent easy access to their meaning.

In the following section, we provide brief narratives of our perceptions and expectations of doctoral study that gave rise to the experiences of conflict that we describe in this chapter.

Entering the doctoral terrain

I (Researcher 1) came to doctoral study as a result of my research experiences as part of a postgraduate degree, which I undertook as part of a major career change. This first research project provided me with an opportunity to explore questions and ideas that I had been thinking about for a number of years. At the end of that project, I knew there was much more to know and I was keen to explore further. At the same time I was working at a university in an administrative capacity, which provided me with opportunities to engage with high-level academics who were experienced doctoral supervisors and examiners as well as active researchers. I also had academic colleagues who were completing their own doctoral study. These connections enabled me to develop an "inside view" of what it was to undertake doctoral study. From these experiences, I came to understand the freedom doctoral study could offer to pursue a specific area of interest, the significant personal cost in terms of time commitment, emotional commitment and unknown-ness of the journey. I heard many stories

about the challenges of remaining focused, motivated and maintaining interest in one's topic of study. I also heard stories of the challenges to one's person and in one's personal life that were a likely part of the journey. However, it was a culture in which doctoral study was regarded as the highest degree of the university, and that completion was the mark of significant personal and professional achievement. I also understood that not all PhDs were completed.

It was a long and winding road that took me (Researcher 2) to doctoral study: a desire that began in childhood, a desire based on my idea of a PhD as the highest form of intellectual pursuit. This desire appeared as only a dream because when young, I couldn't flourish in the schooling system. Relegated by the social system to work with my hands, I worked as a hairdresser and then in my hairdressing business for the next 43 years. During this time I experienced a transformation in my thinking, where I began to understand myself as capable of doing tertiary level study. With this new understanding of myself, I began and completed a masters in Theology as part of my drive towards growth and so towards personal development and a new future. This study did not lead anywhere. At age 58 I sold the business and went to live and work in China as a TESOL teacher for 4 years. While there I completed a M.Ed., and upon my return I gained employment as an ELICOS teacher. This experience, which added to my ongoing personal and professional growth, gave me a focus for doctoral research project. I did some background research of people in the area of TESOL/international education, then visited a number of universities/ potential supervisors. Nobody showed any interest in what I was interested in doing and how I wanted to achieve this, until I came to this University.

It was during our doctoral study that we (Researcher 1 and Researcher 2) met. Although each of us developed our ideas about the nature of doctoral study from different sources, we shared a common vision of the PhD as being about excellence, growth - both personal and academic, and about fulfilling one's own desires to pursue answers to questions. Each of us also understood that a doctoral degree required the development of knowledge that was innovative and at the cutting-edge of the field and desired the opportunity to be part of this. It was these beliefs and desires that led to experiences of conflict between our personal ideals and experiences, between narratives of professionalism and narratives of institutional functionalism, and between personal goals and structural constraints. A clarity of awareness

regarding these conflicts arose from our discussions and gave rise to further investigation of the data that are analysed in this chapter.

Our experiences of traversing the doctorate were not, until the latter part of our journeys, ones of excellence, growth and of fulfilling our desires for greater knowledge. Ours were experiences of “very little psychological oxygen” (Kegan, 1982, p. 123), and ultimately required changes of supervision and supervisory model in order to allow growth. However, our purpose in writing this chapter is not to vilify supervisors or universities; our purpose is to provide explanations regarding the mismatch between our understandings of growth and our experiences, explanations that identify the ways in which supervisors and universities, as well as students, are disempowered by personal, cultural and institutional discourses.

Investigating the doctoral terrain: Techniques and perspectives

The data we have analysed in this chapter are drawn from a number of sources that describe our experiences of supervision and include emails, personal diary entries, supervision meeting notes and reflections upon these experiences, and are therefore autobiographical. We have also drawn upon relevant policy and organisational documents from the university at which we studied. This case study has been approached collectively, that is, we draw upon two individuals’ experiences to form a single case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Merriam, 2009). By combining these two approaches we are able to bring each of our perspectives to both sets of data, which allows us to confirm, contest and enrich each other’s interpretations. Case study research also allows for explanatory interpretations of lived experiences (Harder, 2010; Yin, 2003). In addition, the use of discourse analysis has allowed us to identify the social practices that shape these experiences (Fairclough, 2012).

Initially, emails, personal diary entries and meeting notes were collated according to timeline to allow us to see our journeys as they unfolded. This process also allowed our reflections upon our own journey from the final phases of our doctoral study. The analysis of these data involved three distinct but recursive and interactive phases. The first phase identified key aspects of our experiences, which we described in short narrative statements or single word labels. These were initially identified independently, by each researcher for their own data. This process was iterative in that early narratives and labels were revisited and modified as the focus of the analysis became clearer. In subsequent iterations, we reviewed each other’s data.

The second phase analysed these narratives/labels across both researchers' data by identifying the personal, supervisor and university/institutional discourses that gave rise these narratives/labels. These were worded as statements which were then combined, revised or divided to produce a single set of discourses.

The final phase evaluated these discourses on the basis of their relevance to the focus of this chapter. Those that were not considered relevant, by both researchers, to that focus, or were beyond the possibilities available within this chapter, are not included in the discussion presented here.

In analysing these data, we acknowledge that our perceptions and interpretations, both of our experiences as recorded in situ (i.e., emails, meeting notes, diary entries), and our reflections upon these experiences at a later stage, necessarily arise from our particular world-views and cultural/professional discourses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011); discourses regarding being a doctoral student, making a significant contribution to a field of study, being supervised and discourses about supervisors and universities. It is these discourses that we make explicit in our analyses and identify ways in which these were reinforced or ways in which our needs/expectations arising from these discourses were unmet. We also identify discourses that are implied through our engagements with supervisors and universities. We acknowledge also that these implied discourses arise from our interpretations of our experiences, interpretations that are based upon our own world-views and that represent one interpretation of a range of possible interpretations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). We also identify discourses that are present in university documentation/policy, which are, to some degree, also subject to our ways of seeing the world. However, having acknowledged that our interpretations are *our* interpretations, we place that acknowledgement in the context of this chapter, which seeks to offer an analysis of our experiences, which arise from our particular interpretations. We do this in order to share experiences that may resonate with other students' and supervisors' experiences. By offering our own understandings of these experiences, we also hope to provide greater clarity for others' understanding of their experiences. However, the clarity in understanding our experiences and of the organisational contexts in which they occurred, which we present here, have enabled us to identify new ways in which supervision can be conceptualised. We conclude by presenting some of these new conceptualisations.

Traversing the doctoral terrain: Engagement and agency

We began our traverse with a vision of mystery and excitement. It was a beginning of not-knowing, and looking forward to the prospect of ‘finding out’ as the path revealed itself to us. This prospect painted a picture of adventure and excitement that promised personal rewards and challenges and exciting opportunities. Although it was about halfway through our doctoral journeys that we met, and from different fields of study, there was common ground on which we stood. Here was an opportunity for personal and professional growth, a unique opportunity to explore ideas and develop knowledge that could make a substantial difference, a response to this impetus that had led each of us, albeit independently, to this point.

I was extremely excited about being accepted into a doctoral program ... as part of my life’s journey.

(Reflection on doctoral acceptance process, Researcher 2)

I saw the PhD as a wonderful opportunity to ‘do my own thing’.

(Reflection on letter of offer, Researcher 1)

Much later, we discovered that this view is one also held by the university:

... you have taken the first step in what we hope will be an exciting, challenging, and rewarding journey.

(Research Candidate Guide)

... [the supervisor should] assist the candidate to develop a realistic program of study ... that is likely to offer sufficient scope for research training, and is likely to prove an intellectually rewarding investigation.

(HDR Supervision Policy, 5.2c)

As independent professionals in different fields, we came with skills, motivation, knowledge and inspiration. We had had sufficient experiences of institutions to know they were not without limitations.

In previous research supervision experiences, my supervisor made it very clear that I was to fit in with her way of operating... there was no space for flexibility in terms of deadlines... if writing wasn’t given to her by a particular time prior to meetings, then

it would not be discussed – no exceptions ... [however] I had sufficient skills to be able to meet those deadlines, or to work around the consequences...

(Reflection, Researcher 1)

Also as professionals, we understood ourselves a capable and resilient, so that we viewed supervision as being helpful to the work of thesis development but not essential to successful completion.

While we would value the supervision relationship, good students, we understood, were those who took responsibility for managing their project--and were ready for this challenge. This was also a view shared by the university (“research candidates will ... be responsible for managing the research”, Research Candidate Guide) and by experts in the field of doctoral study (Kearns & Gardiner, 2012).

From the beginning of the PhD process/journey, it became clear that there was a pre-determined path. This discovery was not overtly concerning as we independently held the belief that once we understood this path we could respond to institutional and supervisory challenges with integrity. Any threats or risks to good management could be managed through negotiation. In finding our way forward, we began to discover the centrality of nurturing the supervisor relationship and of engagement:

For the first time I could see some connection with [my principal supervisor’s] work;
I felt quite elated that at long last I could see some point of connection

(Reflection on email October 23, 2013, Researcher 2)

“If you could let me know you’ve received this, that would be fantastic ... Thanks for all your assistance, encouragement and advice”

(email to supervisor 28/5/2012, Researcher 1)

An unusual request [to request confirmation of receipt]... am I not receiving any feedback? do I feel as if my communication is going into a vacuum? Am I just being nice by thanking my supervisor? This seems such a contradiction...

(Reflection on email, Researcher 1)

and later come to understand the supervision/student relationship to be critical to the success of the doctorate. It was not a secret, the university knew it too (“The relationship with your supervisor/s is an important one”, Research Candidate Guide).

As the journey became clearer, the importance of the supervisor/student relationship began to take shape in terms of student learning needs. The kind of guidance and support needed was a recognition and valuing of the student’s (our) intellectual growth as part of the thesis development. We were both beginning to realise that even “good” students are not able to be independent of the institution, but relied on the expertise of the supervisor for quite a number of things, including institutional processes and their execution in a timely manner.

I had discussed with [my principal supervisor] a modification to my pilot study ethics application so that I could undertake further Pilot Studies. These were to be conducted with students in classes I was teaching, and the activities designed for data collection were also appropriate for the research concepts being taught in the classes.

(Background to experiences with supervisor, September/October 2013, Researcher 1)

“Not sure if you are checking your emails at present, but I have missed you in order to get my modification to ethics signed.....^[11]_[SEP] I’ve attached the forms. Would you be happy to approve via email?”^[11]_[SEP]

(email to supervisor 22/10/2013, Researcher 1)

“No time just at the moment, but I’ll attach my electronic signal a bit later.”

(reply from supervisor, 24/10/2013, Researcher 1)

“I just wanted to remind you that my opportunity to obtain permission to utilise the XXX cohort for research purposes is fast running out. If you could add your signature to the request for modification and the participant information letter that would be really fantastic.”

(email to supervisor 29/10/2013, Researcher 1)

As a consequence of [my supervisors] lack of response, it was not possible to collect data with either of two cohorts of students. A great opportunity missed!

(Reflection on experiences with supervisor, October, 2013, Researcher 1)

Expertise in the area of the students' research was also necessary to the supervisory relationship, as was advocacy. Our need for knowledge in navigating the normal dysfunctions of the institution began to slow our progress down:

I was realising that my supervisors didn't really know how to help me and I was becoming overwhelmed by the lack of understanding of my needs that they were demonstrating. Being overwhelmed slowed me down/taking my mental/emotional/intellectual energies away from my work.

(Reflection on email to supervisors, December 15, 2012, Researcher 2)

While recognising the need to fit in with the university there was also a recognition of demonstrating our own value to the institution. This was one of the greatest challenges Researcher 2 faced:

"It would be good if you can send through a well developed piece of work in which you have taken on the previous feedback provided by [co supervisor] and myself (including the advice to have a critical friend read your work)."

(email 11/10/2013, Researcher 2)

I didn't know what their ideas of a "well-developed" piece of work were – and I had asked numerous times for clarification – even to the point of providing a 'good writing' scale to seek clarification about what characteristics they were focussing on. So I assumed that what they wanted was a well-edited piece of work – one that read well, even if the ideas weren't innovative, scholarly or 'cutting-edge'

My supervisors emphasis the need for me to have "taken on the previous feedback" – are they doubting that I am working with their feedback?

Aside from this, it was incredibly difficult to combine two disparate sets of feedback into one revision so that both supervisors would be convinced that their advice had been followed.

(Reflection on email, Researcher 2)

On the other hand , Researcher 1 had the opposite experience:

"As I figured would be the case, I don't have any real substantive comments to make re your proposal ... it is certainly nicely laid out ... I am sure the [confirmation] committee will find it easy reading (which is really the main aim)"

(Email from principal supervisor, June 22, 2012, Researcher 1)

I asked my principal supervisor to review my ethics applications before I submitted them. He told me that he was sure that there was nothing that would need amending ... and that I should upload them directly to the system and he would approve them on-line.

(Reflection on ethics application, September 9, 2013, Researcher 1)

These two opposite experiences were of not being on the one page with the supervisor and proved to be a serious threat to the progress of thesis development: Researcher 2 experiencing mismatch....

I experienced my learning and knowledge production style clashing with [university] process of thesis development.

(Reflection on email from supervisor, November 28, 2011, Researcher 2)

Significant self-knowledge/insight: my need to externalise in order to conceptualise. No one seemed to be interested in my insights as part of the doctoral journey or about my style of learning – i.e., the way I produce knowledge. When I attempted to communicate my needs in relation to my learning and knowledge production style, not acknowledged by supervisors

(Reflection, May 25, 2011, Researcher 2)

I was dissatisfied with the doctoral process, being asked to work with someone in early childhood to develop my research project in ELICOS however I was also determined to succeed in obtaining a PhD.

(Reflection April 13, 2011, Researcher 2)

This was the beginning of theoretical conflicts as I was working with the idea of discourses and now [my co-supervisor] is suggesting using the concept of paradigms (which doesn't fit with discourse analysis)

(Reflection on email from co-supervisor, July 4, 2013, Researcher 2)

and Researcher 1 being the expectations of his supervisor being different to his own.

[My principal supervisor] provided some feedback regarding my methods chapter – but was not particularly keen on including epistemological ideas related to positivist approaches and flaws in hypothesis testing.

When I asked why, he wasn't willing to engage in discussion. He commented that he thought I was being a bit excessive, and suggested I leave it out.

(Reflection on Supervision Meeting, February 14, 2013, Researcher 1)

Researcher 2, in working towards developing complex ideas into a conceptual framework, found that all of her supervisors required each reading of her work to be easily read and understood (including thorough proof reading), thus precluding any chance of organising complex material.

“...are you indicating in your email that up to section 2.2.3 is your ‘polished’ piece of writing you would like our feedback on? Just want to ensure I give my attention to the piece of work in your document which you have refined”

(email from supervisor, October 21, 2013, Researcher 2)

There was a lot of pressure put on to me to produce a piece of polished work. This took quite a bit of doing. The request for polished work did not lead me to understanding my own work but led me away from what I was focusing on.

(Reflection on email, Researcher 2)

Built into the PhD experience was the university's policy of yearly timelines leading to an expectation of ‘timely completion’:

“carefully monitor the progress of the student and discuss the format of the thesis as well as timelines to aid timely completions.”

(HDR Supervision Policy: 5.3a)

In the case of Researcher 2, this was to cause ‘thesis anxiety’.

All this time the university made me aware of ‘time’ which over time created thesis anxiety

(Reflection on supervision meetings, September 2013, Researcher 2)

These experiences of supervision were the process whereby both of us had to admit that our initial belief that ‘we could do it on our own’ was rather naïve. We came to see that both

students and supervisors experienced constraints on what was possible. Realising that the university operates in the knowledge economy enabled us to recognise some of these constraints, particularly those of time, and a focus on outcomes, as a threat to substance (Gibbs, 2010). These constraints exacerbated the effects of ineffective supervision; the combination was detrimental to our doctoral projects and to our self-development.

Kearns and Gardiner (2012, p. 2) provide the following advice to doctoral students:

In our experience, when you look at completion rates and times to completion, one factor stands out - the quality of supervision. If you are fortunate enough to receive good supervision and have a good relationship with your supervisor, then your chances of finishing on time and, in fact, of finishing at all, greatly increase. We have also deliberately phrased this secret - it is you caring for and maintaining your supervisor, not them caring for and maintaining you. If you have a supervisor who does all the things we suggest below, great. Consider yourself fortunate and cherish them. But in our experience, most supervisors are very busy, some are even fallible (yes!) and this is when you need to take a more active role.

Our experiences suggest that even an active role, taken by capable students who are skilled in managing their work and working relationships was not sufficient to lead to effective progress. This is evidenced in that both of our projects ground to a halt. Something more is needed; something more than 'managing your supervisor'. What is needed is the experience of engagement and agency within a productive supervisory relationship. Is this possible within the knowledge economy?

Taking in the view from here

This analysis has highlighted that our scholarly needs of engagement and agency were largely not met by the models of supervision we experienced. Although aspects of these needs are addressed in university policy, the ways in which supervisors were able to enact them were limited by personal and systemic constraints. These experiences have led us to realise that an alternative model is required, one that places engagement and agency as essential considerations, however ways to make this possible within the corporate university, within the knowledge economy need further exploration.

Some of the things we have identified in this chapter, that has looked the concepts of engagement and agency, are as follows:

The doctoral journey needs to be rewarding, challenging and exciting. Some of the way towards achieving this is through successful student/supervisor relationship. This is so central that it can be seen to be critical to the journey and to the success of the project. Part of this journey needs to be the creation of a space in which the student can experience intellectual growth and intellectual companionship.

Student learning needs also need to be a central concern. What this study has also highlighted is the importance of expertise in supervision, and the opportunity to influence the way in which this supervision takes place. What is needed is a model of supervision that overcomes differing expectations through clear and intentional communication, a model rich enough to address the complexity of working in the knowledge economy and that is able to facilitate accelerated learning to ensure timely completion.

There needs to be a greater focus on purpose rather than time as driving the process. This can allow effective collaboration to accelerate completion; collaboration that reduces ambiguity and negative triangulation while maximising retention. We suggest a supervision model whereby students have more influence over the way in which the team operates, a model where the purpose of students' research interests is honoured.

It is our view that student agency and engagement are key factors in retention and completion, as is a personal identification of the student, rather than a generic perception of the doctoral student.

Journey's end...

Our journeys of traversing our PhDs are now complete, and through changes of institution and supervisors, we have been able to begin two trials of a model that embodies the aspects we have suggested above. Even in the early stages of our trial, we saw encouraging growth in the progress of each doctoral project. Looking back on our journeys, it is clear that this model was central to the achievement of the goals with which we began traversing the doctorate. This new process was not only academically rewarding but is also personally engaging for all members of the supervisory teams, with surprising benefits.

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