

A creative relationship with your supervisor

How to be **creative** about your relationship
How to develop your **relationship** to be creative

Carole Goble + the students



[Richard Butterworth].



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- Think about the roles & responsibilities of you and your supervisor
- Identify the issues in this relationship and how they change over time
- Exchange ideas and strategies

Issues

- False expectations
- Failure to see whole picture
- Personality clash
- Other pressures
- Lack of communication

Supervisor Classification

- Professor Never There
- Dr Slave Labour No Research
- Dr No New Ideas Since 1995
- Professor Changes Direction
- Dr Lone Worker
- Dr Overbearing Interferer
- Dr Test til you Break
- Prof Perfect Supervisor (Uli)
- Dr Never Satisfied
- Dr Happy to be Mediocre
- Prof Different planet

- Any others?
- Supervisors are humans too.

What motivates your supervisor?

- Good research results for publication
- Sign up to our brilliant work.
- Originality, finding new ideas
- Positive relationships with co-workers
- Avoiding trouble with students who fail
- Test their wacky theories they haven't the time to test themselves
- Enjoy being a pedagogue
- Competitive advantage
- Competition through collaboration

What are the stresses on students and staff?

- Deadlines
- Poor direction
- Finding something novel
- Trying to understand the problem
- Coping with undergrads
- Feeling not getting anywhere
- Alone in the dark
- Hate your office mates
- Fear of failure
- Too many directions at once

Plus for Supervisors

- Multiple students who want all their attention
- Guidelines keep changing
- Want the experience to be positive
- Being unappreciated
- Guilt
- Insecurity

Interaction with your supervisor

- Push vs Pull
- A supervisor contract
- Multiple supervisors
- Loners vs teams



- How many PhD students does it take to change a light bulb?
- One.
- The student holds the bulb and the world rotates around them.

What should a PhD student take responsibility for?
Or: what really annoys supervisors...

- Ask questions no matter how obvious
- Find people who know the answers
- Self-motivated
- Be Cooperative
- Be Honest
- Communicate
- Respect
- Being late

What should a supervisor take responsibility for?
Or: what really annoys students....

- Being scared!
- Writing never read
 - Get someone else to read it
 - Pieces of writing: Executive summary
 - Complain about it to someone
 - Poorly written or Boring
 - Final versions only or intermediates?
 - Extreme reading together
 - Text readers or read out loud
 - A Template for good writing

Overall

- Good communication
 - Regular meetings / ask for feedback
- Be honest
 - Nipping things in the bud
- Be professional
- Show your enthusiasm
- Learn from your mistakes
 - Reflection
- Keep things in perspective
- You AND your supervisor are human

Acknowledgements

- Dr Lynn Clark & Dr Louise Innes,
University of Liverpool Graduate School
- Richard Butterworth
 - <http://www.cs.mdx.ac.uk/staffpages/richardb/PhDtalk.html>
- Diana Bental
 - <http://www.dmst.aueb.gr/dds/rese/phd/phdsups.htm>