Supervising Research writing

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Aims

• Identify the main challenges and needs related to writing supervision

• Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of different types of supervisory research writing support profiles

• Relate the supervisory writing profiles to what you usually do to support research writing
Contents

• We as supervisors (...and writers)
  • Background, current position, writing and supervisory experience, main worries

• Supervising research writing
  • Research writing during the PhD studies
  • Supervisory (research writing) support

• Evidence-based strategies for supervising research writing.
Three main issues to reflect on and discuss

Why is writing important for PhD students? What is the role of writing in doctoral students’ development?

What is the type of writing support you, as supervisors, offer to your students? Why?

What are your concerns and main challenges regarding 1) and 2)?

- Take 10’ to reflect on the three issues individually
- Then discuss them with the other group members
Aim of Research Writing

- **Relational**
  - To socialise, networking

- **Undefined**
  - Important

- **Epistemic**
  - To learn

- **Instrumental**
  - To produce texts
Meaning of Research Writing

Tool as researcher
- Specific

Transforming knowledge
- Epistemic value. To learn

Telling knowledge
- According to certain discursive and rhetorical conventions
Focus of Research Writing

- Process
  - Communicating knowledge
- Process
  - Creating knowledge
- Products
  - Texts: Thesis, articles, ...
## Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Instrumental</th>
<th>Epistemic</th>
<th>Communicative</th>
<th>Undefined</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aim of Writing</strong></td>
<td>To produce good and appropriate texts (thesis, articles...)</td>
<td>To promote learning</td>
<td>To channel research communication, visibility and socialisation</td>
<td>Important but neglected</td>
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<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
<td>Writing is shaped by linguistic and discursive skills</td>
<td>Writing is an epistemic activity</td>
<td>Writing is a tool to develop as researcher</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Texts of quality</td>
<td>Process to build knowledge</td>
<td>Process to communicate knowledge</td>
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## Type of writing support

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<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Telling What to do</th>
<th>Revising &amp; Editing students’ texts</th>
<th>Discussing collaboratively</th>
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<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Texts, quality</td>
<td>Processes: revision strategies</td>
<td>Relating processes and products: planning collaboratively Processes: knowledge and Regulation of the WP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Verbal instructions Models Courses /.../</td>
<td>Verbal instructions Oral feedback/ Written feedback on partial products</td>
<td>Developing collaborative revision Co-authorship Written feedback on partial products and on processes</td>
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Can you relate the support you provide to some of the profiles?

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### Telling what to do

| Instrumental | Telling what to do: 38.5% | Revising and editing students’ texts: 61.5% | Discussing students’ processes and products collaboratively: - |
| Epistemic   | 15.4% | 53.8% | 30.8% |
| Communicative | 33.3% | 66.7% | - |
| No clear role | 9.1% | 81.8% | 9.1% |
Writing feedback

I made a few tweaks to the draft paper you sent me.

You... re-wrote the entire thing.

Yes, it's easier for me to re-write it than to point out all the things you did wrong. I call it learning by demonstration.

What are we demonstrating?

That you're a bad writer.

www.phdcomics.com
Writing feedback

• Focused on strategies INSTEAD on solving problems
  • What do you have done (to deal with a doubt, a challenge an issue)?
  • What are the strategies you have tried? Why?
  • How did you....?
  • Have you considered....?

• Focused on processes INSTEAD on products
  • Including feed-back and guidance on reading not only writing
  • Starting from Planning
  • Discussing early drafts
  • Discussing WHYs? Not only WHATs?
Useful resources

- Sharing expectations about writing: processes and products
- Writing diaries
- Discuss evolving versions and track changes
- Provide students opportunities to play different explicit roles: reviewers, writers, readers
- Guide them through these roles (Collective writing supervision)
Writing diary

Before starting to write
  What are my expectations for today’s writing session?
    I would like...
    My objective(s) is/are...
    I think I’ll be able to...

When I finished the previous session,
  I felt...
  I got the impression...

When finishing to write
  I’ve struggled with...
  I’ve dealt with some/few challenges....
  What I’ve done to solve them is...
  I finish the writing session satisfied/unsatisfied... because...

My plans for the next writing session are...
Challenges and incidents

• Article rejection:
  https://www.researcher-identity.com/single-post/2017/05/18/Video-paper-rejection

Our website:
  www.researcher-identity.com
• What you have learned?

• What action items do you take away from the workshop?

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References


