Statement of Philosophy of Supervision

It is an honour to be nominated for the Killam Graduate Supervision and Mentorship Award. In the following I describe the philosophy that shapes my practice as a graduate student mentor and supervisor. Since joining the Faculty of Social Work (FSW), University of Calgary (UCalgary) in 2004, I have had the opportunity to support students across numerous disciplines in research scholarships, Capstone (portfolio and case study), independent studies, and research placements. I have also had the privilege of supervising trainees at multiple levels, Master of Social Work (MSW) and Master of Arts (MA) thesis students, PhD students and a postdoctoral fellow.

Statement of philosophy of supervision and mentorship

My graduate supervision philosophy consists of three interconnected objectives: 1) to establish an active, collaborative, and respectful learning environment wherein students and I co-learn together; 2) to inspire students to identify, pursue and achieve excellence in their self-determined goals in teaching, research, policy, and community development; and 3) to provide consistent, effective, reliable, and supportive mentorship and supervision to students pursuing their academic goals. My mentorship approach is deliberate (Kleinhans et al., 2020), tailored to individual learning styles and supervisory needs (Eley & Murray, 2009; Kadushin & Harkness, 2014), informed by my own continued growth as a mentor (Fulton, 2018; Schmidt & Kariuki, 2019) and the best available practices in graduate student supervision (University of Calgary, 2020). My approach to graduate supervision follows six principles: focus on the student, focus on the teaching and learning process, focus on academic progress, focus on modeling and reflection, focus on communication, and focus on community (Hall et al., 2019).

Establishing an active, collaborative, and respectful learning environment requires first, and most importantly, a ***focus on the student***. "Students learn more effectively when supervisors acknowledge students' passions and questions, unique skills and abilities, experiences, and development—and when their interactions reflect an awareness of any personal, cultural, and structural challenges students may face" (Hall et al., 2019, p. 8). The second principle, ***focus on the teaching and learning process*** is premised on the provision of consistent, effective, reliable, and supportive mentorship and supervision to empower students to achieve their own academic goals. Skilled supervision to achieve this end requires striking a balance between guiding and encouraging students by offering critique to deepen their thinking and productivity to promoting student independence (Cherry, 2012). In combination these activities are designed to enhance the scholarly relevance and contributions of students' work (Hibbert et al., 2014; McCallin & Nayar, 2012; Petersen, 2007) and allow them to achieve their full potential as independent scholars (Baptista et al., 2015; Petersen, 2007).

Supporting students to become independent scholars is captured in the third principle, a ***focus on academic progress***. Engaging with students to support self-directed goals and therefore increase independence not only involves a focus on the research process but also requires attention to students' learning and the learning process. Supervisors may view themselves as primarily responsible for creating the necessary conditions for doctoral students to participate in the work of research practice, while others emphasize the learning process and supervisory relationship (Franke & Arvidsson, 2011). Various models of graduate student supervision have been described in the literature. Understanding one's supervision style is a key component identified in the models. Being a reflective supervisor, principle four, a ***focus on modeling and reflection***, as Hall et al. (2019) explains "includes thoughtfully selecting new graduate students based on an awareness of one's own strengths and weaknesses, areas of expertise, and available resources" (p. 14), the supervision process, doctoral education, institutional guidelines, institutional training courses and individualized learning.

The fifth principle, a ***focus on communication***, means that an effective supervisory process takes place when supervisors' and students' expectations about the process are communicated clearly and regularly. Outstanding supervision in line with the last principle, ***focus on community*** "integrates, and is embedded in, strong scholarly communities that assist in shaping students' scholarly identities, modeling scholarly integrity, and sharing the norms and scope of fields—while promoting diversity, inclusivity, intercultural understanding, and equity" (Hall, 2019, p. 18). "International students report higher sociocultural and academic stress when settling into a new university compared with their local counterparts" and "creating a supportive learning environment for international students" is therefore necessary (Penman et al., 2021, p. 832).

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