

The Hidden Curriculum of Doctoral Advising

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We examined the hidden curriculum of doctoral advising by conceptualizing the advisor as a teacher. Using autoethnographic methods in this case study, we simultaneously explored both sides of the advisor-student relationship. The constructivist paradigm permeated all aspects of the research: data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The significance of this study lies in new understanding of the zone of proximal doctoral development and the exploration of barriers to building positive multiyear advising relationships. Findings and implications resulted in new understandings of how doctoral advisors can minimize obstacles by making expectations explicit, listening by hearing, creating relationships of trust, and judiciously negotiating power. Making the hidden curriculum explicit can be accomplished with purposefully scheduled meetings, supportive caring relationships, and ethical practices.

KEY WORDS: advising as teaching, autoethnographic research, constructivism, graduate students, zone of proximal doctoral development (ZPDD), Lev Vygotsky

In doctoral programs, students and their advisors develop multiyear relationships that can significantly impact students' progress through the program, opportunities to publish and present research, and postdoctoral access to jobs. Inherent tensions for both students and doctoral advisors often emerge as a result of the hidden curriculum of advising. However, despite how smooth or rocky their past relationships, both students and doctoral advisors benefit from a postdegree debriefing (Pierro, 2007) to reflect on positive aspects of their efforts and areas that needed improvement.

In this study, we report on the debriefing of our experiences as a doctoral advisor and two doctoral students whose journeys intersected. Harding-DeKam, hereafter referred to as *Advisor*, is a recently tenured associate professor who guided her first doctoral student, Hamilton (*Advisee 1*), through the program. Loyd (*Advisee 2*) was a peer doctoral student who was the first advisee for another recently tenured associate professor. Prior to assuming her formal role as a graduate-student

mentor, Advisor served on dissertation committees in different programs and understood the various paths of the graduate student journey. Advisee 1 entered the program as a seasoned educator. Loyd developed relationships with Advisor and Advisee 1 during the dissertation proposal and postproposal periods of her graduate program, when her progress stalled. Analyzing the reflections of a novice doctoral advisor and two doctoral students adds to the discussion of practices that graduate student advisors can implement to strengthen experiences for students.

Theoretical Stance

The premise for this research is based on our stance that doctoral advisors are teachers. Our backgrounds as teachers as well as doctoral studies within a school of teacher education inform our perspective. In addition, the word *teacher* connotes a multiplicity of rights and responsibilities encompassing the advisor roles as identified through literature on doctoral advising; however, previously published work on doctoral advising does not reference doctoral advisors as teachers.

Doctoral Students' Realities

At least 40 to 50% of students enrolled in American doctoral programs do not complete their degrees (Lovitts, 2005). Researchers identified four primary reasons: financial concerns, lack of preparation and opportunity for research, personal family or health concerns, and difficult relationships with doctoral advisors (Maher, Ford, & Thompson, 2004). Students benefit when doctoral advisors are accessible and helpful, demonstrate care, and promote socialization. Lack of these behaviors contributes to negative relationships between students and doctoral advisors (Barnes, Williams, & Archer, 2010).

In a study of first-semester doctoral students in an education program as they transitioned from professional employment to full-time doctoral studies (as Advisee 1 and Advisee 2), Austin et al. (2009) identified five themes: loss of professional identity, need for integration into the community of the university, importance of support systems both within and outside the university, uncertainty

about belonging in a doctoral program, and doubt about competence despite successes. Unsuccessful management of one or more of these issues early in the doctoral program often results in withdrawal from the program.

Doctoral Advisor Role

A doctoral advisor, as a construct, is difficult to characterize because of the multifaceted roles associated with it within the field of higher education. Many researchers define the doctoral advisor role and all of its attributes based on the job responsibilities and relationships with doctoral students; however, no single, clear definition has earned universal acceptance in academia. To further the confusion, doctoral advisors typically receive no training, practice, or mentoring; presumably anyone who researches and publishes manuscripts has gained enough knowledge to mentor doctoral students. Therefore, most doctoral advisors adopt their advising styles based on the one previous experience they have had with the process: their own history as doctoral students (Knox, Schlosser, Pruitt, & Hill, 2006).

Many researchers have attempted to define the roles of doctoral advisor and the best methods for supporting doctoral students. Vilkinas (2008) posited that doctoral advisors give “intellectual, emotional, and structural” support for doctoral students (p. 303). Baird (1995, pp. 26, 28, 29) defined three stages of support for doctoral students as the a) beginning stage for understanding the program’s structure; b) the middle period for mastering academic language, choosing a committee, and preparing for exams; and c) the dissertation phase for planning, completing, and evaluating the research study. Spillett and Moisiejewicz (2004) maintained that doctoral advisors hold four challenge and support roles referred to as a) the cheerleader advisor, who builds trust and encourages students’ efforts (p. 248); b) the counselor advisor, who identifies and removes blocks, focuses on the work process, and normalizes the experience (p. 249); c) the coach advisor, who connects to the big picture and builds research skills (p. 250); and d) the critic advisor, who provides constructive evaluation and builds a student’s sense of ownership and voice (p. 251). Barnes and Austin (2008) suggested that doctoral advisors are charged to mentor, advocate for, collaborate with, and chastise students to develop them as researchers and professionals.

We posit that by defining doctoral advisors as teachers who provide multiyear individualized instruction for doctoral students we incorporate all

the inherent advisor and mentor roles described in the literature. Ideally, doctoral advisors incorporate a purposeful and visible curriculum for enhancing students’ growth and learning.

Doctoral Advisor Curriculum

When seen through the lens of teachers and learners, doctoral advisors and advisees interact with an advising curriculum ripe for exploration. Curriculum theory distinguishes between the official institutional designation of a curriculum and the unofficial one transferred implicitly from teacher to learner. Through the official doctoral curriculum, professors advise students about completing course work, meeting deadlines, and completing official paperwork. They also intervene with academic issues if needed. Depending on the discipline and program traditions, doctoral advisors may shoulder additional responsibilities such as hosting weekly meetings or supervising assistantships (Golde, 2007). The unofficial, or hidden, curriculum covers the values, attitudes, beliefs, and patterns of behavior learners absorb without the conscious knowledge of the teacher or learner (Martin, 1976).

Knox et al. (2006) noted that because universities provide so little preparation for the advisor and rarely publish a manual or syllabus for advising, doctoral advisors typically draw on their experiences as graduate students or on-the-job experiences, including observations of colleagues with their advisees. However, many interactions between doctoral advisors and students happen privately, frustrating the opportunities for novice doctoral advisors to learn from observation.

Reading the research about doctoral advisors helps professors construct plans for advising. Some research studies have addressed aspects of the advisor-advisee relationship: the socialization of doctoral students (Gardner, 2008; Protivnak & Foss, 2009) and their development as independent researchers (Lovitts, 2005), mentoring (Bean, Readence, Barone, & Sylvester, 2004; Protivnak & Foss, 2009), and addressing social isolation (Ali & Kohun, 2007). Other studies address how the relationship contributes to doctoral student attrition or satisfaction, potential cultural and academic mistakes (Grover, 2007), first semester transitions into doctoral programs (Austin et al., 2009), positive and negative attributes in doctoral advisors (Barnes et al., 2010), and perceptions of minority students (Maher et al., 2004). Few, if any, researchers discuss the hidden curriculum of advising.

Purpose of the Study

Every doctoral advisor and advisee enters the relationship with preconceived and unexpressed notions of the expected relationship, and while these anticipations, which form the hidden curriculum, may cause avoidable misunderstandings and disappointments, they are difficult to uncover. To find these unintentionally placed pitfalls, we probed practices and procedures for underlying conventions and assumptions. Our insights were always limited by our experiences. In addition, the study is not exhaustive, but reflects an attempt to find a coherent perspective that makes sense of the hidden curriculum infused in our own advising relationships. By making this examination of the hidden curriculum public, we hope to encourage others to explore the issue as well.

Methodology

Researchers have typically studied the advising relationship from the viewpoint of either the doctoral advisors or advisees. We explore both sides of the relationship simultaneously through a case study of our own graduate-school experiences. The research is grounded in an epistemology of constructivism, which holds that learners understand by seeking meaning from their experiences as individuals and that this understanding is mediated by social context (Richardson, 2003). The constructivist paradigm permeates all aspects of the research: data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Although multiple descriptors apply to the scope of the case study, the one we undertake may be considered *intrinsic* (Stake, 1995), *holistic*, and *representative* (Yin, 2009). The study of doctoral advisor relationships holds intrinsic interest for us (the authors), is presented as a whole and not embedded parts (holistically), and focuses on a typical or commonplace situation (representative). We chose a single case design of one doctoral advisor-advising program bounded by participants (doctoral students and novice advisor), location (one Rocky Mountain university), and program (teacher education).

Using autoethnographic methods, we met as a focus group on nine occasions, for 2 to 3 hours each time, to probe our memories of the doctoral advising relationships; review papers, journals, and e-mails relating to our doctoral and advising experiences; and share insights about emerging themes. The dialogue grew intensely personal, with frank discussions of misunderstandings, previously unexpressed expectations, and perceived failures. After each focus group, we reflected indi-

vidually on the conversations to determine themes and patterns that emerged, which we discussed at subsequent meetings. Reading the research also influenced conversations about doctoral advisor relationships. Individual analyses and collaborative dialogues converged into a list of themes.

Findings

Zone of Proximal Doctoral Development

As teachers, doctoral advisors can mentor their adult advisees through the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1986). In explaining ZPD, Vygotsky (1978) described “the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance” (p. 86). In the field of adult education, Warford (2011) built on Vygotsky’s idea by making the case to instruct “teachers within the zones of proximal teacher development (ZPTD)” (p. 252). We advocate that advisors take this idea further and consider a zone of proximal doctoral development (ZPDD). The suggestion to mentor doctoral students within the students’ ZPDD offers an innovative view of advisor-advisee relationships because Vygotsky’s idea is rarely addressed outside the K-12 arena, except in terms of apprenticeships. We propose that advisors differentiate mentoring to learners at the doctoral level by creating a “temporal frame that relates retrospective action (what is known) to potential action (what can be learned)” (Baquedano-Lopez, Figueroa, & Hernandez, 2011, p. 184).

Working within the ZPDD, advisors acknowledge that doctoral students come into the graduate school process with established knowledge in the field, conceptions about research, and scholarly dispositions. Doctoral advisors need to know when to support and when to challenge each doctoral student (Reiman, 1999, p. 601). This area within each individual’s ZPDD, which must be determined by doctoral advisors to establish students’ capacities and aptitude in knowledge and skills, can be reached through mediation, scaffolding, and teaching.

For example, in the conversations documented for this study, Advisee 2 shared,

After only a few meetings, my advisor was able to determine my capacities and aptitude within my ZPDD. I wanted to study children’s literature, but didn’t have academic knowledge of or analytic experiences with literature. He mediated my growth by advising me to

take multiple courses from the English department to build knowledge about literary theory.

Advisee 1 expressed a different need, and her advisor offered a different solution from the one received by Advisee 2:

I was ambivalent about a postdoctoral career, unsure even of what the possibilities were. My advisor suggested I explore teaching at the university level by co-teaching a class with her. The experience did more than enhance my vita; I eventually accepted a teaching assistantship for my final year and then taught as an adjunct.

Within the ZPDD paradigm, doctoral advisors can mentor differentially by making expectations explicit, listening by hearing, creating relationships of trust, and judiciously using power and authority.

Unacknowledged Expectations as Hidden Curriculum

The unacknowledged expectations carried by both the advisor and advisee often create a barrier to positive multiyear advising relationships. Individuals enter relationships with explicit and implicit expectations (Reina & Reina, 2006). Universities make some requirements transparent through course catalogs, institution web sites, and orientation sessions or seminars, but leave other components to the discretion of doctoral advisors. The basic requirements, or explicit expectations, are clearly outlined for prospective students.

More problematic than the clearly outlined university expectations, the implicit expectations of advisors and advisees may be based on previous experiences in education, observations of others, or personal needs. Unwritten and unspoken, these needs often go unnoticed by advisor or advisee, who subsequently do not realize that they remain unmet (Reina & Reina, 2006). Yet, failure to negotiate implicit expectations satisfactorily can result in strained relationships, misperceptions about the intent of questions or advice, and for some students, program attrition (McCormack, 2005).

While debriefing on our doctoral advising experiences, we often confronted the hidden curriculum of implicit personal expectations. This process led to self-examination to determine whether our occasional frustrations had been fed by unexpressed, unmet expectations. Sometimes we created tensions by failing to articulate wants or needs in the relationships.

Advisee 1 entered the advisee role with low

expectations for Advisor:

In all my schooling experiences, advisors had been simply signatories on school paperwork. I didn't even ask my advisor to help plan the first semester schedule. Assuming a full load would be 15 credits, I signed up for five classes. I remember her shocked look when I told her. "A full load is three classes," she told me. "You're taking on a lot." I was puzzled by her concern. As a mature student devoted full-time to the doctoral program, I thought she was too conservative. Since I saw my advisor as simply a course counselor—and thought I could manage my courses myself—I kept a protective wall between us. That belief about the advisor's role influenced my response when my advisor wanted to meet weekly. "Why?" I wondered. "What would we talk about? Did she think I was failing?" I never posed those questions to my advisor, though.

One unspoken expectation I had was my advisor would create a time line so that I would stay on track for the program. It's the one thing she didn't do—she urged me to take time to think and reflect, while I wanted to race through the experience. In retrospect, she was wise in urging a less hectic pace.

Advisor entered her advising relationship with Advisee 1 by being approachable, open to questions, and willing to serve as a guide for navigating the program. She felt like the lines of communication were open in terms of interests, educational backgrounds, personal experiences, dissertation ideas, and procedures for paperwork. She remained unaware of a wall between them until Advisee 1 faced a difficult problem halfway through her program and let her defenses down:

Advisee 1 brought a rigid time line for completion of the program, including the dissertation, in 2 years. I doubted her whole program could be completed at a quality level in this time frame with additional experiences, such as becoming a graduate research or teaching assistant, and publishing research. I believed the time line would unfold and the experiences act as catalysts to impact the length of time needed to acculturate the knowledge necessary to be successful in higher education; furthermore, I believed the process experience is more important than the end product of pro-

gram completion. My unspoken expectations included believing there was not a protective wall between us and there was enough trust in the relationship to let the time line unfold.

Advisee 2 based her expectations of her advisor on the experiences of peers in the program, even though they had different doctoral advisors than she did.

I had high expectations for my advisor that I never articulated. I expected professional mentoring that extended beyond the dissertation process. I desired coauthor publication opportunities and clear guidance navigating the political system of academia. When these unspoken expectations were unmet, tensions on my side of this student-advisor relationship grew and my professional self-efficacy decreased.

Working in the midst of doctoral programs, neither doctoral advisors nor advisees may realize the implicit expectations they bring to the relationships, but those expectations affect the level of trust that results from their multiyear relationships. Doctoral advisors address and solicit expectations during meetings with their advisees by outlining management issues such as protocols for contacting, setting meetings, and submitting paperwork; academic issues such as concerns about specific classes and research questions; and departmental culture. The need for explicitness should not be underestimated.

Listening by Hearing

Through our research, we identified a way doctoral advisors can provide assistance through the ZPDD. We suggest listening by hearing the message articulated by the doctoral student during meetings, in e-mails, and via phone calls. This means asking questions in a manner to build the relationship and ascertain the individual supports needed as students move through the doctoral process. In the process of developing this paper, Advisor and Advisee 1 grew aware that the use of explicit questions would have clarified for Advisee 1 ways her advisor could help her. Advisee 1 explained,

During our weekly meetings, my advisor always began with the question: "How can I be supportive?" I could tell her question was sincere, but I didn't know what to say. Before I entered the program, I had been an educa-

tional leader, but I had lost that identity when I first experienced academic language, research methods, theory, and an overwhelming awareness that, despite all my experience, I had so much to learn. Politically, I was wary of asking questions about professors or department policies. As to my personal life, I thought that was probably off-bounds. So, I inevitably said what was safe: "I'm just fine. Everything is going well."

Advisor extended the conversation:

I thought I was always being open about supporting Advisee 1 because I asked her the question "How can I support you?" Advisee 1's standard answer was she was fine and everything was going well. I believed I was doing an adequate job of supporting her. I had no idea what was behind her answer until we began this research. It was an eye-opening experience to learn this question was so overwhelming for Advisee 1 to answer that she didn't even know how to begin. I was asking the wrong question. It's clear my questions to future doctoral students need to be more specific, so they can merit answers.

Creating Relationships of Trust When Advising

The complex, multiyear relationships between doctoral advisors and advisees require trust. To make trust possible, doctoral advisors as teachers must demonstrate certain ethical qualities to students as made evident through consistency of behavior over time. According to Charles (2000), ethical qualities leading to a trusting student-teacher relationship include the following: kindness, consideration, faith, helpfulness, fairness, honesty, and patience. In doctoral advising relationships, as in any teacher-student relationship, the burden of initiating trust lies with the advisor. Students' primary instincts are self-protection, so they may be slow to place trust in doctoral advisors. Advisor built trust with Advisee 1 through weekly meetings: "Having conversations with Advisee 1 demonstrated to her I cared about her by asking what she thought as well as sharing my observations about her accomplishments."

Occasionally, trust is betrayed in relationships. If trust has been broken, doctoral advisors and advisees should acknowledge the mishap and create a plan of action for the future. This idea aligns with Covey's (1989) conceptualization of the "emotional bank account" (p. 188). Individuals make

deposits into trust accounts every time they speak in a friendly manner or show kindness, consideration, helpfulness, or patience. With high account balances, partners can communicate well and work easily within a relationship of trust.

However, trust is lost more easily than gained. Withdrawals from the emotional account occur when individuals behave in ways perceived as unfair, inconsiderate, impatient, dishonest, or harsh. The balance drops quickly. Two or three violations of ethical principles may entirely wipe out the trust account that took weeks to build. If the account goes into the red, the relationship may never recover. One of the most difficult aspects for maintaining advising relationships is the continual effort to keep the account flush.

Power and Authority in the Hidden Curriculum

Productive advisor-advisee relationships require both authority and power. As in teaching, doctoral advisors' authority is conferred by the educational organization. Doctoral advisors hold signatory authority, which they can use to advance or delay students' progress through doctoral programs.

Whereas authority can be conferred, power must be negotiated. Teachers face this reality regularly: They assign work, but students choose whether to complete it. In the same way, doctoral advisors may, based on advisees' ZPDDs, recommend specific actions such as course work, scheduling, or research, but advisees decide whether and how to implement the suggestions. Between students and faculty members, power inequality inherently favors the latter (Meloy, 2002). Burbules (1986) asserted that if students accept doctoral advisors' recommendations as serving their best interests, the need for power becomes merely academic. If, however, advisees resist their influence, doctoral advisors may exert power to gain compliance. For some students, power issues in advising relationships become the primary reason for dropping out of doctoral programs (Friedman, 1987; Lovitts, 2001).

Advisor clarified the idea of power:

Power in an advising relationship should be used with caution. Power can be a means of accomplishing something or it can create a barrier to having something accomplished. In the dissertation process, the advisor holds all of the power because her signature is needed for the student to complete the process. Certainly, policies and structures are in place to protect students; however, the judgment rests on the shoulders of the advisor. I believe in

the doctoral advising relationship, doctoral advisors do not need to hold the power over students or to be unkind because doctoral advisors already hold all the power. With Advisee 1, I was able to be kind to her and share the power as a way to negotiate the research project while guiding her to completion.

Seldom do doctoral advisors secure unconditional commitment to the decisions they make (Reed, 1989). Six types of power can be used to influence others (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 2008; Shrigley, 1986): referent, expert, informational, reward, coercive, and legitimate.

Referent power: Doctoral advisors gain referent power when they are likeable and cultivate human relationships. Advisee 2 shared,

When I entered the program I had a favorable disposition toward my advisor. My second semester in the program, I took a course under his instruction and enjoyed it very much. He had referent power. I was willing to work hard to meet his expectations.

Expert power: Expert power accrues because doctoral advisors possess superior knowledge in one or more fields. Advisee 2 explained how, over time, referent power shifted to expert power:

My advisor had a deep knowledge of reading, literature, research, and teaching. He appeared to derive pleasure in conveying his knowledge to students and to me as his advisee. His enthusiasm was contagious. As I interacted with and became more aware of his expertise, the power in the relationship shifted to expert power. I felt compelled to get involved in his areas of expertise.

Advisee 1 used her advisor's expert power in developing a supportive committee:

Advisor and I agreed to discuss potential members for the dissertation committee before I approached anyone. Her knowledge of department politics enabled us to avoid potential mismatches on the committee. As the time drew near, though, we realized my course selections had placed me with professors who often were not available for the committee. In the end, two committee members agreed to serve because of their relationships with my advisor. They trusted her recommendation of me.

Informational power: Although not originally

acknowledged as a type of power (Raven, 2008), informational power is characterized by knowledge of the program culture and requirements the advisee may not yet understand. Advisee 1 explained,

While I survived the first semester load of five classes, for the following semesters, I discussed the courses with my advisor before registration opened. Then, when I was ready to write my dissertation, Advisor knew from other doctoral students' experiences that conferring in advance with someone in the graduate school office about dissertation formatting would smooth the way later. A 30-minute consult where I negotiated key formatting exceptions saved me hours of reformatting my dissertation.

Reward power. In some respects, reward power reflects the joy advisees gain from the relationship or the inspiration they get from an advisor-directed learning experience. It may also be earned through an advisor's sponsorship for academic recognition, publication credits, or conference presentations.

Reward power worked well for Advisee 1:

When my advisor won a grant for a cross-departmental research project, she recommended me as their research assistant. This experience enabled me to learn from the discussions of the professors and led to several conference presentations and an article.

Positive feedback is another reward doctoral advisors have power to dispense. Praise from doctoral advisors with referent or expert power means more to advisees than compliments from doctoral advisors without these types of power. Genuine praise, specifically targeted to accomplishment, may lead to more favorable dispositions toward doctoral advisors who provided the accolades (Iverson, 2011).

Coercive power. If rewards influence academic relationships, so do punishments and loss of rights and privileges. Coercive power is the ability to mete out negative consequences. When advisees resist their suggestions, doctoral advisors may resort to coercive power.

Advisee 2 shared,

Writing the dissertation felt like a power struggle, especially the structure and content of the final chapter. I felt like the only way I'd ever gain my advisor's approval and move on to the next step was to just write it his way. His delayed approval felt like a form of coercion.

As he continued to delay his approval, his referent and expert power diminished. I followed his advice not because I agreed with it or because he was the expert, but just so he'd let me move on.

Legitimate power. Doctoral advisors may also employ legitimate power to obtain cooperation. In contrast to the other modes of power that emanate from doctoral advisors, legitimate power arises from advisees' beliefs that doctoral advisors have the right to prescribe requirements. In this sense, advisees accept their doctoral advisors as leaders.

Power may not always be an issue requiring much attention, as Advisee 1 experienced:

Although Advisor had signatory authority conferred by the university, I never felt as though power were an issue between us. In fact, until we began debriefing our experiences, I had not considered when and where my advisor exerted power. I felt as though we were always working toward consent. I recognize now my advisor must have been aware of her power but chose not to use power as a means of gaining my cooperation. The respect she afforded me allowed us to work in partnership.

Discussion: Explicit Curriculum for Doctoral Students

Purposeful Scheduled Meetings

The time doctoral advisors and advisees spend together becomes a key component of the curriculum of doctoral advising. Purposeful scheduled meetings provide educational space for doctoral advisors to foster the educational relationships necessary for advisees' optimal growth. At these meetings, expectations can be made explicit, doctoral advisors can listen by hearing and thereby support and challenge doctoral students through the ZPDD, and both doctoral advisors and advisees can invest in the relationship of trust and negotiate power. The cognitive and affective domains impact doctoral students' growth. Meetings encourage students to share their experiences, questions, and struggles; this information enables doctoral advisors to support and challenge students' growth.

Purposeful meetings support the constructivist aspects of learning. Doctoral students need to make sense and construct purposes for their own learning as well as continue to develop a knowledge base and tasks that demonstrate it. Many doctoral students experience a fractured program in which the progression of courses does not flow coherently,

research projects may not advance directly to the eventual dissertation, and the courses they teach may change every semester. Students benefit when knowledgeable others (doctoral advisors) help integrate the pieces into meaningful understanding.

Listening by Hearing

The advisors can effectively initiate conversation between the advisor and advisee by letter (see the example in the Appendix). At this point, they should ask two specific questions of doctoral students (in writing or during a conversation):

- What do you feel best prepared to accomplish in the doctoral program?
- Where do you think you will require the most support?

The knowledge learned from these queries allows doctoral advisors to assess students' needs and develop a plan of action to individualize the process, including establishment of clear expectations for this relationship. By making explicit the expectations of doctoral advisors and clarifying the advising model, advisors help students acculturate into graduate school. Doctoral students' goals and priorities can be established within the ZPDD and reviewed each semester. After goals are accomplished, new ones can be created.

Doctoral advisors and advisees need regular contact to listen by hearing. During ongoing meetings, doctoral advisors gain awareness of the students' ZPDD by asking:

What can I do to support you with

- academic language?
- content knowledge?
- research (literature review, methodology, data analysis, findings, etc.)?
- department or graduate school culture?
- your personal well-being?

These questions are four-fold. First, they allow doctoral advisors to focus on the whole individual by gaining information on student content knowledge, disposition, research abilities, attitudes, and pedagogical experience. Second, they encourage doctoral students to contemplate ways they develop and demonstrate the importance of these aspects in the doctoral process. Third, they encourage doctoral advisors to give guidance, offer positive feedback and correction, build confidence, and serve as an advocate. Finally, they specifically direct doctoral students through transitions in their program (requirements, paperwork, comprehensive exams, dissertation, etc.). Listening by hearing

is an organic process led by doctoral advisors to support doctoral students.

Creating Relationships of Trust When Advising

Doctoral students expect doctoral advisors to act as experts who care about students' individual successes in terms of course work, program, and dissertation. Initially, trust arises when parties treat each other well (Charles, 2000), but the relationship requires monitoring. As doctoral advisors work within the ZPDD, the advising pair should plan for discussions after each semester to celebrate accomplishments (to counter feelings of incompetence students often feel), engage in frank conversations about the advising relationship (to monitor trust levels), and target new goals for the following semester. Meetings should focus on the following:

- students' perceptions of accomplishments over the semester in course work, research, publication, and personal life;
- doctoral advisors' perceptions of students' accomplishments in academic language, content knowledge, research, program culture, and personal well-being;
- goals for the next semester;
- evaluation of what is going well and what needs attention in the advising relationship.

Power and Authority in the Hidden Curriculum of Advising

Doctoral advisors need to be aware of the types of power they possess over their advisees: referent, expert, informational, reward, coercive, and legitimate (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 2008). Coalescence of several forms of power produces the best results and increases doctoral advisors' influence (Fairholm & Fairholm, 1984). Iverson (2011) suggested imagining a triad of power: "The [advisor] likes, and is liked by, [advisee] (referent); is valued as a resource for academic knowledge (expert); and is sought out as a source of affirmation for personal achievements (reward and/or legitimate)" (p. 43). Power is constructed and negotiated as doctoral advisors and advisees struggle with tensions in this interpersonal academic relationship.

Supportive Caring Relationship

Incoming doctoral students often experience loss of professional identity, feelings of incompetence, and uncertainty about their fitness for a doctoral program (Austin et al., 2009). Because

students' professional and academic experiences qualified them for the doctoral program, acceptance acknowledges their competence. However, the demands of the doctoral program typically do not resemble their previous experiences with academia. Advisees may benefit from reading and discussing the letter in the Appendix. Doctoral advisors can also make significant contributions to students' well-being by explicitly acknowledging doctoral students' funds of knowledge. "The concept of *funds of knowledge*... is based on a simple premise: People are competent, they have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge" (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005, p. ix-x). Students who seem discouraged or bewildered may need to recall when their own professional experiences demonstrated their competence.

The knowledge funds create a differentiated curriculum for each doctoral student to leverage for knowledge and support. The advising task may seem overwhelming, but just as classroom teachers continually look for resources to improve their instructional practices, doctoral advisors can also access resources (articles cited within) to strengthen the advising relationship through the advisee's ZPDD. Developing a list of resources, including a who's who in the department, can benefit advisees.

Ethical Practices

The nature of dissertation research is collaborative. Generally, doctoral advisors facilitate research projects in their expertise areas, which inspire students to invite them to guide their own research. These past experiences introduce complications because both parties have labored with the creation of the research and methodology, the analysis of data, and the development of implications and conclusions. The areas of research are passions for both advisor and advisee. Doctoral advisors need to disconnect from their own identities in research efforts and allow the students to own their projects. Ethical issues can surface regarding presentations, publications, and grants when dissertations tie exclusively to the doctoral advisors' research agendas, and while we were unable to find research defining these ethical boundaries, we recognize that graduate students new to the research process and trusting in their doctoral advisors for guidance will likely initiate their own projects unaware of these potential ethical issues or ways to prevent problems due to competing agendas.

Each university has its own traditions and protocols for research, publications, presentations, and

authorships. We recommend doctoral advisors and advisees have early conversations regarding these expectations, procedures, and policies.

Conclusion

The doctoral advisor-advisee relationship is a delicate organism that must be mutually crafted with articulated, explicit expectations. Listening to establish a caring relationship, the partners must build upon trust and judiciously negotiated power through ethical practices. They can maintain their relationship by acknowledging and using the ZPDD within purposefully scheduled meetings. The advisor is a teacher who guides the doctoral student from the beginning to completion of the program and has the opportunity to minimize barriers during this process. By making this examination of the hidden doctoral advising curriculum public, we hope to encourage others to explore the issue as well.

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Appendix. Sample letter to doctoral student from advisor

Dear Doctoral Student,

You are embarking on an exciting journey that will lead you to an elite level of scholarship. Along the way, you will engage in invigorating discussions and encounter perplexing challenges. No two students experience the same journey, but most, if not all, doctoral students grapple with common roadblocks. Being prepared for challenges can help overcome them.

Be prepared, for instance, for a significant increase in the level of scholarship you will be expected to demonstrate. Academic language includes theories and theorists you will not know. Academic papers will be analyzed not only for their adherence to a particular style, but also for the depth of your thinking. If your papers do not reach the level expected for doctoral students, professors may not give specific feedback to boost your capacity; you may need support from other graduate students or your advisor. If you are unfamiliar with research protocols, you may struggle with course or assistantship expectations.

With persistence, you will develop your knowledge base and build your reputation within the university. Doctoral students, particularly in their first years, often struggle with a loss of identity. Although you enter the program with a professional reputation and a wealth of knowledge, at times it will feel as though those attributes are undervalued. You will be aware of students who publish, present at conferences, and win academic awards, and these honors may seem out of reach. Invariably, you will compare yourself with others and feel inadequate. Recognize those are common feelings; even the students you admire have struggled with their identities as scholars.

Each doctoral program has its own culture, and you will be a new resident in that community. Ask your advisor and other doctoral students to explain cultural traditions, and understand entering any community takes time. If you are a part-time student or live a distance from campus, make time to get to know other students, so you do not feel isolated.

The following suggestions may minimize the effects of common doctoral student obstacles:

- Surround yourself with people who reinforce your professional reputation and uphold you when you are discouraged.
- Seek help from your advisor or other doctoral students when you lack academic knowledge. They may know of resources you have missed.
- Tread carefully until you know the politics.
- Build trust with your advisor; poor advising relationships are a common reason for quitting doctoral programs.
- Read research on doctoral student experiences to gain insight about potential pitfalls.

The doctoral journey is a joyous time of learning. Celebrate!

Your Advisor