

IS IT THE TIME TO DECOLONISE POSTGRADUATE  
SUPERVISION TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES FACED BY  
STUDENTS IN THEIR STUDIES?

by

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# INTRODUCTION

- Decolonisation of higher education (SA 2015 & 2016 student protests).
- Socially excluded?
- Postgraduate enrollment increased significantly.
- Transformation- research output.
- Decolonised research supervision?
- Increase black academics in HEI.

# POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

- Matured students
- Adults returning to postgraduate.

# RESEARCH SUPERVISION

- Postgraduate student & supervisor.
- Provide advice, guidance and quality assurance.
- Knowledge production process.
- Recognized postgraduate research degree.

# WESTERN EPISTEMOLOGY

- Universities knowledge production.
- Eurocentric knowledge.
- Denies legitimacy to the knowledges and cosmologies of former colonised territories.
- HEI research procedures and rules & supervision.

# DECOLONISATION OF HE

- Social justice
- The epistemological transformation
- Increase of Black, Coloured and Indian academics at universities
- African continent professoriate have largely been schooled in the white tradition.
- Imprinted the culture of whiteness.
- Western education.
- White supremacy.
- Majority of professors at HE in SA are White males.
- Culturally competent to supervise diverse students (ethnicity, language, culture, race, religion, age and gender)?

# CHALLENGES

- What are the challenges students experience in research supervision:
- Progress on completion of postgraduate studies.
- Supervision and completion rate.
- Underprepared in research.
- Enrollment increases for postgraduate studies
- Yet research output is low

## STUDENTS CHALLENGES CONT....

- Length of time taken
- Low submission rate
- Throughput rate low.
- Expected to be independent scholars
- Professors do not teach at undergraduate level.



# CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY SUPERVISION

- No single factor as the poor completion rate
- Academic & Technology Skills.
- Organization of Students work.
- Supervisor-supervisee Relationship.
- Poor planning
- Communication as a challenge.
- Supervisor's level of Commitment and Interest
- Inadequate or negligence supervision
- Lack of experienced supervisors.
- Methodological difficulties
- Writing up
- Isolation & individual or personal issues
- Knowledge and expertise in the Field of Study.
- (CHE: 2009, Ganqa: 2012, Nkosi & Nkosi: 2011, Wadesango & Machingabi: 2011;Bock-Gilbert: 2013; Wright & Cochrane: 2000).

# SUPERVISOR'S ROLE

- Oversee the work of the student.
- Supervise the student.
- Advise him/her in the management of the postgraduate project.
- Guide the student through the research process.
- Scientific quality is achieved.
- Emotional and psychological support.
- Administrative and logistic support .

# MODELS OF SUPERVISION

- Usually traditional model of supervision.
- Single supervisor.
- Topic for investigation.
- Benefits and hindrances.
- Overdependence of postgraduate students.

# REASONS/MOTIVATION

- Varied backgrounds(diverse)
- Preparations, expectations and motivations differ.
- Late entrants or mature students.
- Other personal reason.

# DECOLONISE RESEARCH STRATEGIES

- Implement indigenous epistemologies.
- Accommodate African ethics in research.
- Provide students with grounding research techniques.
- Evaluate supervision quality and completion within available time-frame (Wright & Cochrane:2000).
- Restrict power- relations in research.
- New policies that speak to equality, equity, transformation and change(Heleta:2016).
- Institutional research rules to take cognisance of the culture of the student and the community where research will be undertaken.
- Institutional culture and epistemological traditions on research supervision to change.
- Theories relevant for Africa and its people.

# DECOLONISED STRATEGIES

- Traditional, indigenous way of doing research.
- Epistemological change in the higher education sector.
- Jansen in Pillay (2015) states the failure to increase the number of black academics and decolonise the curriculum (including research) have left unchallenged the Achilles heel of white institutions, the kind of knowledge (and authority) which is passed on to African students as unquestionable truth and inscrutable value.
- Power relations in supervision is entrenched in the form of decolonised research procedures during supervision.

# CONCLUSION

- Research supervisors need to embark on a decolonial trajectory.
- Decolonial theory urges scholars to think of the possibility of another way of knowing that does not privilege western epistemologies.
- Focus more on qualitative studies

Thank you  
Ngiyabonga  
eNkosi  
Baaie Bankie  
Kealeboga



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