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Feedback and Feedforward to Facilitate Socialization of Doctoral Students

Socialization is the process to which an individual learns to adopt values, norms, skills, attitudes and knowledge needed for membership in a given society, group or organization.

The old Romans had the well-known proverb “Non scholae sed vitae discimus”, we don’t learn for the school but for the life. In academic studies to-day this attitude still is important. Thus, entering the role of a doctoral student activates several other dimensions than to endeavour a PhD position. It is well known that those who today are doctoral students to achieve a PhD might tomorrow be active in the most important occupations of shaping our society, as politicians, innovators, decision-makers, powerful leaders and researchers (Gardner and Medoza, 2023). In the last three decades there has been a focus on research of the socialization process of doctoral students striving for better understanding of the development to an independent researcher (Weidman and Stein, 2003; Wilkin et al. 2023; Gardner et al. 2008). Furthermore, to create ways to support the development into an individual and collective academic identity and thereby become a professional faculty member (Austin, 2002; Sverdlik et al. 2018). The framework of socialization might explain some parts of the complexity of doctoral student’s experience. It has been stated that the process of socialization is important for a doctoral examination. The lack of understanding of socialization might lead to a lack of motivation like decreased self-efficacy and in worst case leading the doctoral student to breaks the education (Gunnarsson et al. 2013; Sverdlik et al. 2018; Austin, 2018; Gardner and Medoza, 2023). Being part of a research group and subsequently socialized into the group as a team member raises the odds for motivation, self-efficacy, self- confidence and finally transformation into an individual and collective academic identity

(Sverdlik et al. 2018.; Austin et al. 2002.; Wilkin et al. 2023). This is in line with the Integrated Model of Group Development (IMGD) identifying team development and team efficiency in five phases. Better structure and clarity in roles will develop trust and as a consequence less energy will be spent on emotional stress (Wheelan et al. 2022).

Moreover, the importance of feedback and feedforward to enhance learning can be used to facilitate not only

learning but probably also the process of socialization in doctoral education. To manage to give feedback in a fruitful way will increase motivation and self-regulating processes like self-efficacy (Hatti and Timberly, 2007.; Delamont et al. 2004).

In conclusion, the awareness of the socialisation process may lead us to reflect upon supervision and enhance us into the process of being good supervisors and beneficial co-creators of a healthy research environment. This presentation aims to integrate theories of feedback and group development in relevance for the socialisation process of doctoral students.