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A Supportive Approach to Supervising Students Reading for a Phd in Systems and Software Engineering

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ABSTRACT

Supervising a PhD student is a complex teaching task as it involves a very unstructured environment and many intellectual challenges and stimuli, and it often requires a compatible student/supervisor relationship for successful outcomes. It is therefore not surprising that it has been reported that an aspect of teaching and learning that has been overlooked in higher education is research student supervision. Typical problems of poor supervision include: high rates of dissatisfaction with supervisors and high attrition rates and slow rates of completion for students. It has also been reported that there is no set prescription on appropriate and successful supervision; rather, the interactions between quality and style of supervision, and the field of study have all to be considered. It is not easy to know what a student and his/her supervisor should be doing in order to succeed. We are thus motivated to present in this paper our approach to supervising students reading for a PhD in systems and software engineering. This approach is centered on motivating students to learn and to do research by having supervisory activities that support their development throughout their candidature.

KEYWORDS

PhD; Supervision; Systems and Software Engineering; Motivation

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