

*“There’s too many students who think I’ll read  
and then I’ll write”:*

# Supervising Undergraduate dissertations in the Humanities and Social Sciences

*Please note that sound files have been removed from these slides post-  
presentation to increase anonymity*

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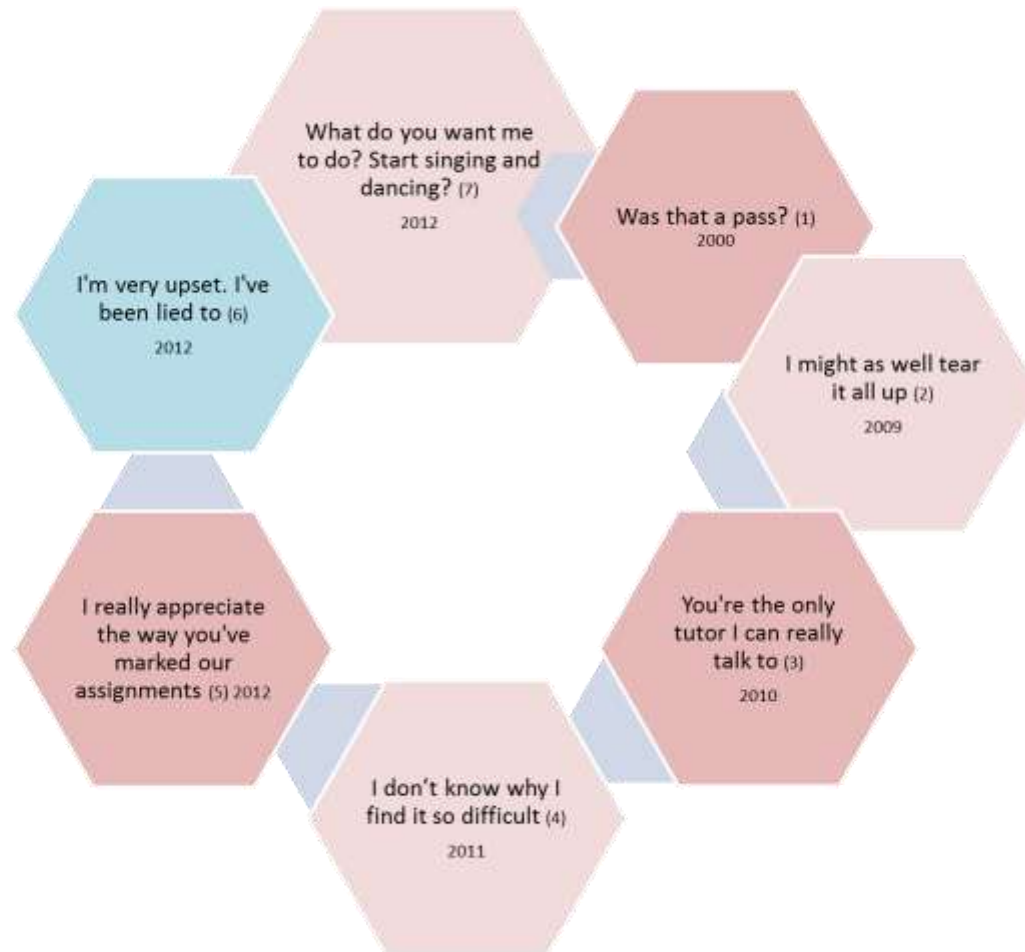
# Overview

1. Why the interest in staff-student interaction?
2. Conceptualisations of the final year project (FYP)/ dissertation
3. Research Setting, Design & Methodology
4. Institutional discourse & Advice
5. Findings and Discussion
6. Implications for practice?

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# Why my interest in staff-student interaction?



*What sounds fine to me might not  
sound fine to you*



Genie immediately after rescue UCLA Library,  
Department of Special Collections

From the literature:  
space to talk about and around text (Lillis 2003)  
emotion and alienation (Mann 2005)

- S You assume the lecturer should know. I'm getting marked down for this obviously I don't know how that works. If some other lecturer was reading it, I could understand them asking Who's Genie? The lecturer that taught me, she's asking me Who's Genie?!=
- T It's playing the academic game, isn't it? We know who Genie is. But you're doing this academic writing and that's what we all have to do=
- S right because I'm actually thinking I'm saving word count here by not telling you who Genie is because=
- T But in fact you could have just had a little citation, an author a year. It would have taken you two words=
- S I thought that sounded fine; what sounds fine to me might not sound fine to you

# Conceptualisations of FYP



I have my ideas but I'm not going to tell you, yeah? Because you need to think about it.

Okay.

It's your project, right.

# Institutional discourse

Drew & Heritage 1992

formal - quasi-conversational - everyday

Goals

Restrictions & entitlements

Inferential framework

TUT Err, (0.4)I've I- I've read the lot.  
(0.4

STU The [whole thing.]

TUT [ (yeah) ] yeah=

STU =Uh [huh ]

TUT [It's] it's interesting stuff but (0.2) err I ↑think  
(0.2) y- y- coul- you can improve on it.

# Studies focusing on Advice in:

- Health visiting: Heritage and Sefi 1992
- HIV counselling: Silverman 1997
- Medical interaction: Maynard 1991/2
- Careers counselling: Vehviläinen 2009
- Peer tutoring: Waring 2005, 2007a & b, 2012, Park 2012, 2014
- Staff-student Office hours: Limberg 2010
- Finnish Masters: Svinhufvud & Vehviläinen 2013
- International Masters Students: Bowker 2012
- Mothers advising their adult daughters: Shaw 2013



# Accounts

Waring 2007b

1. Pre-advice
2. immediately post-advice
3. Post-problematic uptake
4. Post-acceptance
5. Hybrid: most commonly pre-advice plus post-acceptance

## GP visits

1. Is there **anything** else you want to address today?
2. Is there **something** else you want to address today?

Heritage et al 2007

## My data

- T      **Any** other [ques]tions or query from (°you°.)
- S      [erm]
- (1.0)
- S      Well ↑ basically because, (1.0) this one is about four thousand words now.

# Research Setting & Design

- Final Year Projects in Social Sciences and Humanities 20 credits submission deadline end April
- Data recorded Autumn 2013 & planned for 2014
- English Literature, History, Law, Media, Philosophy from 12-37 minutes



# Research Questions

- How do tutors build their advice? Which formulations do they use? How do they fit advice to the student?
- How do tutors minimise resistance and react to any resistance?
- How do students ask for and respond to advice?
- Is advice managed differently depending on whether the student initiated it or not?

# Methodology

- Conversation Analysis (CA)
- *Why That Now?* Sacks
- Sensitising concepts from CA literature
- Not researcher-provoked but naturalistic data
- No simple way of assessing whether client acts on advice

# transcription

## Conventional orthographic

. I'm just wondering whether, yeah, I think an introductory chapter that talks about the critical reception is a good idea. What is it?

## Jeffersonian for C.A.

[Er:] (0.8) I'm just wondering whether:, hh (2.6) Yeah.=I think an introductory chapter that talks abou::t (1.6) <about the> critical reception, (1.3) er::m: (1.7) i:s::: a good idea, (0.6) erm: (1.1) WHAT IS IT-

# Advice formulations

...may throw light on the tutor's assumptions regarding the student's experience, knowledge and rights, and hence invoke asymmetry

(Butler et al 2010:270)

They've got to be central haven't they?

Could you?

I was wondering if

Have you tried?

I want you to

You should

I would

If you...

You need to

I think

# Extract 1

- S: Is it okay: (0.6) erm: well-=for the chapter breakdown.=Is it okay: (0.4) that I <talk about> erm: how people criticise erm (0.4) his use of women:, erm: how he::,
- T: Yeah.=**You'd need to do that. You'd 'ave to do that.**=



# Extract 2

- 1 T: [Er:] (0.8) I'm just wondering whether:, hh (2.6) Yeah.  
2 =I think an introductory chapter that talks abou::t (1.6)  
3 <about the> critical reception, (1.3) er::m: (1.7) i:s::: a  
4 good idea, (0.6) erm: (1.1) WHAT IS IT- You know,=w-  
5 (0.5) can you- can you- (0.3) take me through >some of that  
(0.5)
- 7 T: Well in terms of- of t-=thinking more character ty:pes.  
8 (0.3)
- 9 S: So, e-=you want me to na:me,  
10 (1.0)
- 11 S: [°People in there.°]
- 12 T: [NO:.. No not-] not necess-=Well, you could if you want.=To  
13 illustrate. (0.3) Y- Use examples if you want, but I'm- I'm  
14 thinking not so much



- Tutor entitlement & normativity
- Student's contingency/ optionality
- Student's life world (Schütz)

Heritage 2012 a & b Epistemics

access, primacy & responsibility

# Taking stock & Agenda setting

1. T [.hh hh ] (0.6) So you've come today to talk about you:r (.) er final
2. year pro<sup>↑</sup>ject?
3. (0.4)
4. S Yes:
5. T Yes::
6. (0.2)
7. T Erm and (0.8) <sup>↑</sup>all we've done so fa:r is, (0.2) just discussed (0.2)
8. [the] rough topics or the broad topic,
9. S [mm ]
10. (.)
11. T and you want to talk about, (0.2) dirty hands in politics.
12. (0.2)
13. S Yeah [I've, ] (0.4) <sup>↑</sup>got just (0.6) a sma:ll (1.2)
14. T [(Yeah)]
15. S outline of what (0.8) I want to [do.]

# Check in

- 1 T: You need to be a little further down the  
2 road here. You've only got one, two...
- 3 S: Yeah. That was early stages.
- 4 T: Right. Yeah. There are only four texts  
5 there.
- 6 S: I've got a lot more now.
- 7 T: So, you need to get a lot further down  
the road.

# drafts

1. T: [(it's a good] start. so) you had a disadvantage because I haven't
2. <seen this.> An:d so you're trying to talk me through it, an' it's
3. there's obviously lots of
4. (1.4) ((papers rustling))
5. T: texts (.) in thee:, in the WOrd processor. let alone thee: (0.7) stuff
6. in the margins that you've obviously:, added, an:d, (1.1)
7. [re: ]CAst some of it. So,
8. S: [ffhh↑m.]
9. (0.7)
10. T: Eh:m: (0.7) I'm just tr<sup>↑</sup>y:ing to get the ↓sense o::f,
11. S: ((cough))

Svinhufvud and Vehviläinen (2013:162) urge more “recurrent agenda-talk” so that the student is more in the driving seat, with more opportunity to raise concerns and shape the direction of the interaction.

# *It's an interesting topic but..*

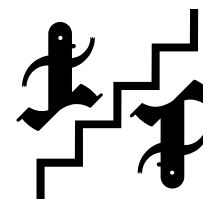
1. TUT .hhhh Urm (0.8) .tch (0.2) ↑oh it's an interesting, (0.2)  
topic,
2. (.)
3. TUT the whole thing erm
4. STU °Yeah°
5. TUT Erm (0.8) but you're talking about the intelligentsia so  
somewhere, (0.4) in the: (0.2) introduction I'd have  
thought
6. STU Yeah.
7. TUT You need to say,
8. (.)
9. STU define it [(define)]
10. TUT [define ]the intelligent↑sia,
11. (.)

# Stepwise advice 1



1. S: Okay I think that's all I have for now
2. T: Yeah. I think you should try an' I- (.) Well, two things I think. First of all,
3. start writing.
4. S: Start writing, okay.
5. T: Really start writing. I can't emphasize .hh cause **too many students think**
6. **(.) I'll read**
7. S: Yeah
8. T: An' then I'll write
9. S: **But then I've got- I'm confused of all the readings I have**
10. T: Then er yeah
11. S: Like yeah
12. T: Well if you start writing, (.) **because I know you've read a lot**
13. S: Yeah
14. T: Then: **that will help you (.) clarify what you're going to do, an' then actually will- will- (.) focus your reading more specifically on**
15. S: Yeah
16. T: What you're trying to achieve
17. (.)

## Stepwise 2



- 1 T: Er: (.) an' then (.) wh- what it should be is, you know at the beginning read, read read read, an' then, you start writing an'- an' then over the c- the course until April (.) you'd do more writing and the reading gradually tails
- 5 S: Okay
- 6 T: Tails off (.)
- 7 T: Erm (.) but it (should be th-/shouldn't be d-) (.)
- 8 T: Read write
- 9 S: Yeah. Cause I have found that I'm- I'm- like always reading but then I find I have so many different things, I'm reading so many different like
- 12 T: Yeah
- 13 S: subjects around food, so I'm getting I think more confused than
- 14 what I want to



# Stepwise 3



T: Yeah s'- definitely definitely start writing

S: Okay

T: Er: then (.) an' don't worry if it doesn't get into your final submission, it's- always a valid exercise to do

S: Okay

T: Like whenever I write an article I always have a folder that says edits (.) but by the time I'm finished that folder is probably bigger than

S: hhhehhhh

T: the actual article itself, of stuff that I've cut out

S: Okay

# Accounts in pre-advice position

- 1 T Er ↑ oh yeah okay er (.) The Fire-Eater
- 2 aspect I didn't,
- 3 S .tch ye:ah I probably need to (0.2) explain  
that more as well.=

*Because a lot of students don't really understand  
what a literature review is*

1. T: You can if you want to, if you decide that you
2.     want to do a literature review
3. S: Mm,
4. T: Come an' see me first.
5. S: Oh- okay
6. T: Right, because
7. S: Okay
8.     (.)
9. T: Er:: a lot of students don't really understand
10.    what a literature review is

# Advice-implicative interrogatives; telling my story

1. T Have you ↑used that other one where,(0.2) >you know< (.) you don't repeat the title, (0.5)
2. so that'd be Mitchell (.) [Upjit ]
3. S → [Oh yeah,](.) It's >probably< because urm (0.8) well I've been like  
moving paragraphs aro↑und
4. (0.2)
5. S Cause [>it's quite] funny really < because when I=
6. T [oh right ]
7. S =started, (0.8) I started like wa:y back down the line
8. T and then I was kind of working up backwards,
9. T Yeah.
10. (0.2)
11. S It's cause (0.4) (well) there's that much I'm trying to work with I'm, (0.2) like moving around  
the rest of but urm,
12. (0.4)
13. T [(↑okay .hhh) ]
14. S [I do need to:, ](0.4) reorganise [this] for [another(?)]
15. T [Yeah,] [yeah that ] needs (.) a bit of attention but °it's not a° (0.4)  
°major ↑thing°



# Script proposals:

Idiomatic language, contrast, three part lists

Emmison, Butler and Danby (2011) childline counselling

D'you know:, (.) it might be better, (.) to just write  
(.) Blts and pieces an' just say to yoursel:f, >rather  
than< try to write at the start >or the beginning  
an'< just keep writin' it, why don't I write a bit that I  
know about.=So for example. .hh I've got some stuff  
here on Kennedy an' I found this article an' I found,  
(.) sorry, Cato, I found Kennedy, I [foun' this]  
article,

# From Research to Action...

## Implications

- Agenda setting
- Balancing empathy and advice
- Space for students to tell their story
- Tailoring advice; recipient design
- ?

*Thank you; I am keen to hear from colleagues who are interested in collaboration or who have feedback/ comments*

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*With acknowledgements to colleagues and students at Wolverhampton*

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