

HDR Resilience: The Role of Self-awareness When Commencing Your PhD

Marie B. Fisher
University of New England
Australia

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to identify preparatory steps to build self-awareness strategies to help you manage your online PhD journey more effectively. Research on PhD students' unique study journey is well documented. However, there is little research on the development of self-awareness. While previous research on PhD students is informative, most of it, except for some mature aged students who have shared reflective accounts, focuses on younger students who proceed from honours to the PhD or choose to study for the qualification for career development or personal interest. Questions arising: What are the preparatory steps to build self-awareness strategies at the commencement of your online PhD? Why reflect on the commencement of the PhD journey? When and where should I take stock of progress? The aim of this paper is to reflect on the preliminary steps and processes for building self-awareness at the commencement of a PhD.

1. Introduction

In this paper strategies for developing self-awareness will be explored from the perspective of a mature age student to identify the key support role in managing commencement in one's fully online doctoral journey. Whether you are a younger student who just finished honours, older and taking a break from your employment or a retiree, self-awareness is important to help regulate behaviour, satisfaction, and performance in personal and professional learning. Recent literature suggests that there is no single definition of the concept of self-awareness that is evident in multidisciplinary literature due to the complexity of the construct [1].

Self-awareness has multiple definitions and is sometimes confused with the concepts of self-consciousness and self-knowledge [2]. The concept of self-awareness is applied in business leadership programs to help leaders improve their team management and promotion prospects [2]. In this paper, self-awareness will be defined in an educational reflective context. This paper will offer a definition that enables higher degree by research candidates to reflect upon and improve the commencement stage of the doctoral journey and at the same time challenge the stereotypes of Australian

HDR students as being young, full-time with few commitments [3]. In this paper self-awareness will be defined as the ability to reflect on one's feelings, motivation and learning when faced with academic challenges, building collaborative relationships with stakeholders, navigating the administrative processes during the beginnings of your PhD, and progressing one's studies [2]. Self-reflection occurs when the individual takes time to think, consider, examine, and review oneself as a strategy for increasing self-awareness [4].

Stakeholders refers to academic supervisors and significant members of staff within the university (and family) with whom I, the student, needed to build a rapport and working relationship.

Key questions to guide this exploration: What are the preparatory steps to build self-awareness strategies at the commencement of your online PhD? Why reflect on the commencement of the PhD journey? When and where should I take stock of progress?

This study is a self-reflective review of an academic's strategies for development of self-awareness through experiential learning at the commencement of a fully online PhD.

2. Background

Completing a thesis was always a key goal in my academic studies. Despite reading all the books, journal papers and blogs about completing an MPhil and a PhD project, I was unsure whether I would be able to produce a thesis [5], [6]. I misunderstood the requirements and I was not as self-aware as I should have been. The Higher Degree by Research (HDR) journey was a mystery. There are many rules and regulations that guide and support the process and completion of one's research thesis that are helpful to the candidate and important to know.

However, when one reflects on the experience during the MPhil prior to commencing a doctoral thesis, it is evident that diverse candidates require different levels and types of support, encouragement, intrinsic motivation, and endurance [7]. An important question to ask yourself is 'Why do I want to study and complete a thesis?' Is it to determine motivation to navigate the twisted, perilous journey or something

else? Finishing a thesis is a rite of passage to working in academia for many aspiring academics [8]. By documenting my journey, I hope to help other mature aged students reflect on HDR processes and develop their personal self-awareness approach to make a strong start to their MPhil or PhD.

3. Theoretical Framework

Transformative learning becomes evident during our doctoral journey as one's studies progress. At the commencement of study, a student could transform how they engage in self-help, particularly in relation to engagement in training programs, finding and completing academic administration forms and building a strong collaborative relationship with the supervision team [9].

Using the transformational model proposed by Mezirow (1991) assumptions and interpretations of learning experienced by students change over time. In the first phase of Mezirow's model, disorientation, students may experience feeling overwhelmed or confused at the commencement of their PhD [10]. However, through interaction with their supervision team and involvement of others, who support their learning, over time the student transforms from being dependant to more self-directed learner [11].

4. Literature

Dispositional self-awareness has informed the development of a reflective approach to manage the process of beginning your PhD. This type of self-awareness is conceptualised through insight, reflection, rumination, and mindfulness [12]. Sutton's quantitative research indicated that self-awareness is achieved through self-reflection and mindfulness. Results of the study indicated that participation of respondents in self-awareness activities increased well-being and achievement of outcomes.

There are several limitations, some of which are identified by Sutton [12] such as: testing the self-awareness questionnaire with more diverse groups; and inviting participants who are not engaged in paid work. In addition, selection of a smaller sample for a qualitative, thematic research may reveal hidden benefits of self-awareness in higher degree research students and their supervisors.

Pausing and reviewing the PhD journey, using a reflective framework, provides an opportunity to examine and consider emotions, behaviours and collaboration that support improvements in learning for the whole person and not limited to educational achievements [7].

5. Reflective Framework for the PhD

Completing training and administrative requirements gave me a sense of accomplishment and

confidence at the commencement of the PhD process [13], [9]. However, it is not necessarily the case for all higher degree by research students who come from varied personal, educational and professional backgrounds [14]. Deep reflection on my own journey and scholarship related to the doctoral journey has led me to offer an adaptive framework to help students and supervisors support a strong start to study [15].

To reflect in a scholarly way, it is important to plan or adopt a reflective model to help you scaffold and know the learning and adjustments you need to make to your study techniques to maintain resilience and momentum at the commencement of your PhD [15]. In the diagram below the six steps to achieving a strong commencement in the first semester are shown.



Figure 1. Higher Degree by Research Preparatory Steps Framework using Gibbs' 1988 Reflective Cycle [Fisher, 2023]

The six planning steps represented in the above diagram supports organisation and achievement of goals. These goals may be operationalised in a self-awareness planning template under concepts such as: personal resilience, education and scholarship, administrative processes and relationship building. The focus in this article is to show how personal resilience as well as education and scholarship may be maintained in each step.

In each step examples have been included to show activities that the student can participate in to increase personal resilience, education and scholarship achievement as well as keep up-to-date with university administration and build relationships with their supervisors, university, and peers.

6. Engagement in the Process of Reflection Using Gibbs' Model, 1988

The process of reflection as a scholarly approach to building self-awareness needs to be guided and supported by a researched model [12]. Self-reflection

is beneficial to students and educators as it provides a deeper perception of themselves with specialist education challenges, strengths, and competence [4], [16]. In this paper Gibbs' model of reflection has been chosen as a 'baseline' model [17]. Baseline refers to a simple, informative set of questions to enable a person new to the process to set realistic goals for their study and learn from the experience of commencing the PhD [9].

Here are some introductory steps to help HDR students to structure their reflections based on Gibbs' model of reflection [17]:

6.1. Describing the Experience

The first phase would be: Describe the experience which could be reflecting on a meeting with your PhD supervisors. Consider questions such as: What happened? When and where did it happen? Who attended the meeting? What did you and the supervision team do? What was the outcome of the situation? Why were you there? What did you want to happen. A strategy for writing this as a reflection follows and is drawn from the author's own experience of commencing her PhD and supported by additional scholarship detailing other students' experiences where relevant [13], [8]:

'I met with my supervisors for the first time to get to know them, set up a plan of research and asked lots of questions. The supervisors listened to my concerns and proposed actions, provided useful feedback, and helped me set my initial goal, namely, to commence a literature search on my topic which focused on how academics engage in resilient practices. This was useful guidance as I was not sure where to start when I commenced my PhD.'

Kolb's cycle of learning could provide scaffolding to support the uniqueness of the HDR journey for students starting with a concrete experience, reflecting on it, adjusting how they solve challenges through experimentation and research which informs students' development of new knowledge [18]. Diverse experience, age and social background make it challenging to know where to start. A different type of student who is younger, older or from another culture may experience confidence at the beginning and then they may struggle at later stages to transform their uncertainty into resetting their goals.

6.2. Thoughts and Feelings

Exploration of the thoughts and feelings that I had during the experience of the first PhD supervisors' meeting helped me realise that they wanted to help me achieve and transition to independence in my studies [9].

Key questions used in Gibbs' (1988) model: What were you feeling before and after the situation? What do you think other people were feeling about the

situation? What do you think other people were feeling about the situation now? What were you thinking during the situation? What do you think about the situation now?

Thoughts and emotions about the commencement experience are communicated by the author as follows:

'I was nervous at the commencement of my PhD as I was a part-time student. It was unclear how I would be able to organise my time, given I had a full-time lecturing role at another university. My previous experience of HDR supervisors in an MPhil research degree was, at times, a worry for me as I had little contact with them and did not know what support I needed or how to ask for it. The supervisors who took me on when I commenced my next higher degree, the PhD, assured me that they were very pleased to have me as a student due in part to my motivation and commitment. I felt confident communicating my concerns to them (with an action plan). In addition, they showed a keen interest in my thesis topic. This was reassuring.'

Fear of the unknown and unexpected changes to employment served as a catalyst to reimagine how I communicated and engaged with a new supervision team and adapted to full-time study. Feedback from my supervisors, academic colleagues from Australia and the London International Conference on Education, has helped me move forward with my studies. In addition, my family and friends continue to support my PhD journey as a UNE postgraduate research student and independent scholar.

6.3. Evaluation

I am continually evaluating what worked and what did not at the commencement of the PhD. The author shares her evaluation of these experiences as follows:

'Looking back, I feel much more confident about working every day due to my supervisors' support and know that if I make a mistake, it is an adjustment I need to make, not the end of the world. My work circumstances changed unexpectedly and quickly late in 2023. I was fortunate enough to present my research at an ePortfolios Australia conference in Darwin, Australia in late 2023, straight after my job was abolished, where my academic contribution and collaboration was affirmed. Within a month I was chairing the LICE 2023 conference at Oxford University in the UK, where I felt valued, respected as a scholar and about to support new researchers. I was where I needed to be. Processing feelings of shock after this disorienting dilemma regarding my employment was slow and at times upsetting but I am recovering.'

Losing my employment turned out to be the best thing that happened to me as it was a 'jolt' to reset my priorities and goals. I was able to switch from part-time to full-time study and focus on my research. In

addition, I felt much better about my achievements as well as physical and emotional health (not being overloaded with marking and other academic work). I transformed my learning when hit with an unexpected hurdle in ways that I did not foresee or imagine.'

A strong network of friends, colleagues and family helped me turn a challenge into an opportunity.

6.4. Analysis

Making sense of situations and events needs to be guided by a reflective model or framework so that a person can learn from experience to meet current and future goals. In this case, making and maintaining a strong start to their PhD.

Ensuring that I had a supervision team that was a good fit for me made all the difference. When I struggled to grasp a new strategy for research, I knew that I could ask my supervisors for reading suggestions to follow up unfamiliar approaches. The research work is hard, but I don't mind that as I am learning so much and improving my research knowledge and publishing. I feel like my achievement is being scaffolded.

6.5. Concluding remarks

I learned that my past experiences in HDR study are not necessarily going to be repeated in this PhD journey. It is my responsibility to drive the research and the work and be guided by the supervisors. As I was well organised at the commencement of the PhD, I have found it easier to plan and adjust goals and milestones during this study period. In addition, I have reflected on and documented my journey, as well as dilemmas, through recent publications. These actions have helped me adjust my approach to HDR study.

6.6. Action plan

The action plan for the next phase of study has been implemented. Supervisory meetings were set for 2024 at the end of 2023 in consultation with the supervisors. Now that I am working on my PhD full-time, I will ensure I participate in more scholarly events at UNE, HERDSA (Higher Education Research and Development Association of Australia), and international research organisations to network, form collaborations, support new academics and adjust my practice.

As a mature age student, I know that the academic support I need is different compared to younger students who may be transitioning from their honours year. The main reasons are that I have worked as an academic lecturer for nearly fifteen years, I have life experience and travelled on an unusual pathway to get to my PhD journey. I realise that I must drive this PhD and ask for guidance when I need it.

7. Self-Awareness Preparatory Steps

The six self-awareness preparatory steps have been operationalised to explain how one may increase personal resilience and their education and scholarship strategies in this paper.

Step 1: To develop internal self-awareness which manifests as being conscious of your mental state and thoughts [2]. This can be achieved by maintaining personal resilience, self-care such as taking breaks from work is essential to thrive. Students should take regular exercise, socialise, set up a reflection template, reading and writing routine.

Step 2: Develop a commencement plan. In this plan you will need to build in completing orientation, induction, research, and information technology training and devise a schedule for each week of study. Begin to refine your research topic (one that interests you) and research questions, guided by your supervision team.

Step 3: Develop your proposal. At this step you need to work closely with your supervision team. They will guide your extension of the initial PhD proposal.

Step 4: Refining the proposal will take time and many revisions. Organising your digital storage so that you can keep track of the different versions of the refined proposal will help scaffold progress. Editing and adjusting each section of the proposal requires extensive reading, review, and integration of new material. Consult regularly with your supervision team.

Step 5: Keeping up to date with university administration relieves anxiety associated with and expanding 'To do' list. Ensure you check email every day so that your enrolment, payment of fees, completion of online forms as well as other postgraduate responsibilities are discharged and are up to date.

Step 6: Preparing for your CoC presentation (Confirmation of Candidature) is an important milestone in an Australian PhD. The CoC is a process that requires PhD students to develop a formal thesis proposal in the first six to eight months of their candidature and present it to a panel of experts. The purpose for this process is to determine whether the research project indicates a strong likelihood that the final thesis will be high quality and completed on time. Working on it regularly, and frequently communicating with your supervision team about your progress keeps you engaged with the process.

8. Self-Awareness Opportunities vs Challenges

Self-awareness during the PhD journey can highlight advantages and disadvantages for the student.

Development in emotional and cognitive awareness, such as increased confidence in pursuing an individual, self-directed project and its planning and action, may result if the appropriate support has been selected and the student adjusts their practice to develop new knowledge and skills. These new (or existing) skills such as negotiating productive working relationships, professional conversations and improving communication are examples of positive impactful activities.

Students could consider how they will move their project forward if HDR supervision, their personal circumstances change, or they encounter communication difficulties [15]. The commencement of the PhD should be an experience where the student is empowered by the process of building or adjusting cognition, collaboration, and writing. In my own case I found that being a mature age student, with prior HDR experience of being a student and supervising a student, helped me develop self-awareness strategies guided by questions [19].

According to Bamgboje-Ayodele et al. [3], there are various research articles that have investigated the challenges that PhD students experience. However, she suggests that locating articles written by the PhD students themselves is more difficult, especially if they publish with their supervisory team. If they are publishing with their supervisory team they may 'hold back' issues of concern, so they do not present themselves in a negative light in front of more experienced academics.

Self-awareness, if used successfully enables the student to improve their capacity to seek relevant information to help them achieve their goals and keep well mentally and physically. Here is an extract from one of the author's reflections that shows the value using self-awareness to improve your thinking:

'As a student commencing a PhD, I found that, without realising it, I had developed in-built coping strategies designed around 'what if?' scenarios such as a change in personal responsibilities, employment, or health. In addition, I found out about university support services, strategies at the commencement of my PhD that I would pursue, and questions I needed to ask my supervision team should I encounter specific obstacles to my goals.'

Without realising it I needed to work as an academic for many years before I was ready to undertake a doctorate. Understanding the process was the main (but not the only) building block for me. With other students the foundation or cornerstones may be different. It is important to note that the author acknowledges that no one size fits all. The approach described in this article may be adapted to suit different types of student commencement.

Challenges at the commencement of the PhD journey can occur when students do not engage in self-awareness, or they focus on negative aspects of their experience rather than positives, which impede

their progress. Imposter Syndrome or Impostor Phenomenon (IP) is defined by Cisco as '*an individual's belief that he or she is an intellectual fraud who will soon be exposed*' [20]. In his study he states that IP may be exhibited by individuals who need to be the best, possess superhuman expectations, fear failure, deny their abilities, dismiss praise for a job well done and may be afraid or feel guilty about success [20].

In my studies (and when working as an academic) I have gone through phases where I have experienced some of these IP characteristics and found strategies to move forward [20]. Some of these strategies for managing these impediments to successful study or academic work I have found by conducting research into IP to better understand these challenges. Additional strategies have been sought through my networks and locating appropriate guidance. Most postgraduate students and academics will experience self-doubt at some points in their journey or career [20].

Deeper reflection about one's competence, acknowledging areas of improvement and being conscious of competence and the need for humility is a strategy that will help students overcome barriers to their learning and development as a scholar [14]. In my own case I have considerable experience working as an academic for several universities but need to undertake the process of acquiring a PhD. This transformative study has meant that my mindset has had to shift from being an academic to learning how to be a more effective researcher [21].

Critical thinking and problem-solving help us work through self-doubt and transform our understanding of phenomena [3]. How we manage a situational dilemma, in my case commencement of a PhD necessary to improve my research and progress my academic career, transforms our thinking and challenges our ideas. In my first year of the PhD, I have had my conceptual and theoretical approaches to research challenged in ways I would not have necessarily encountered if I had not embarked on this study.

Embarking on a regular self-awareness, reflective process tied to your study is essential for personal, emotional, and cognitive growth. However, to transform your personal and intellectual journey it is essential that you adjust your approach, as necessary, based on what strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats emerging from the review of how you are tracking with your goals.

9. HDR Supervisor support

Appropriate support from HDR supervisors is essential if the mature age PhD student is going to be successful. However, this relationship should be two-way relationship. The HDR supervisors are busy, senior academics who teach, conduct research, and

usually supervise a group of research students. Working as a full-time academic at a university I am aware of the workload that HDR supervisors carry. However, not all students are like me. Their support and feedback needs will be different to a mature aged student. Supervisors do not have a lot of time to spend with HDR students, therefore when preparing for your meetings it is wise to send them a summary of work a few days in advance and questions arising from your study [22]. Working closely with your HDR supervisors will help you build a multifaced academic identity or, if you are working as an academic, extend and deepen connections with research partners and students.

Maintaining your wellbeing as a student and HDR supervisor is an important part of the doctoral or MPhil journey. It places physical, cognitive, and emotional demands on both the student and supervision team. Therefore, I established a wellbeing physical and study plan which I enact every day to ensure that I keep well and move forward. Most of my PhD work is completed during the week, which includes some work on the weekend if need to finish off a paper or section of my work. Weekends are for family, friends and connecting with others. Wellbeing has been linked to higher productivity and overall health, so it makes sense to integrate a plan into your study goals [3].

10. SWOT Analysis

Education and scholarship involve setting smart goals and using a SWOT analysis to help you identify enablers and deterrents that impact upon your PhD project.

By consistently writing and reviewing (daily or weekly) your narrative about the commencement of the PhD you will uncover strengths and weaknesses. Strengths may exhibit your intrinsic motivation to keep doing the work and adjusting practice. Whereas difficulty staying on task or lapses into procrastination may show weaknesses in organisation or goal setting. Integrating a SWOT analysis to appraise the value of one’s reflections should reveal areas of strength and weakness that need to be addressed [15].

Table 1. SWOT Analysis of Phase 1 – Commencement of the PhD

Strengths	Weaknesses
1.PhD student had high intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. 2.PhD supervisors were highly engaged and supportive	1.PhD student’s employer was not supportive of postgraduate research study for operational reasons.

3.PhD student had a strong publishing record so she had experience conducting research. 4.Student had strong collaborative networks. 5.PhD student’s work was being published in journals.	2.PhD student was part-time which meant the doctorate could take longer to complete. 3.Student may need reminders to critically reflect on the PhD experiences regularly.
Opportunities 1.PhD student had the opportunity to switch to full-time and focus on study in 2024. 3. PhD student given opportunities to chair a conference at a prestigious overseas university.	Threats 1.PhD student’s full-time academic job was abolished unexpectedly 2.Personal and Family commitments were changing 3.Possibility of financial pressure due to job loss.

In Table 1, the SWOT Analysis is a worked example of how it helped the author navigate the commencement stage of the PhD. The SWOT analysis can be a useful tool for taking stock of progress in your project. However, it was more useful to use the analysis when guided by self-awareness reflections identifying action.

11. Conclusion

The commencement of the fully online PhD may seem like a daunting proposition to those students considering this first step. It need not be daunting. This paper provided worked examples using Gibbs reflection model’s guiding principles [17] framed as questions to support development of a self-awareness strategy . There are many reflection models identified in key literature. So do not feel you should only use Gibbs’ Model. This strategy could be a means of maintaining your motivation, wellbeing (both physical and mental) and progression in your project. A self-awareness strategy provides you with opportunities to succeed by adjusting the study process when things do not go to plan.

Learning from the challenges experiences you encounter at the commencement of your PhD or MPhil may take the form of ‘getting it wrong’. But asking for guidance from your supervisors if you

cannot find the answer yourself is a positive way forward. Taking stock of what is working or not working using the SWOT Analysis and regularly reflecting on your progress will enable you to navigate commencement and the first year (or 6 months if you are part-time). Self-awareness requires deep thought, writing and practice and is a transferable skill from academia to another professional milieu. So set up your reflective template and use it to monitor your self-care and work output.

The next paper will consider key milestones to prepare for after your successful commencement phase.

12. References

- [1] M. London, V.I. Sessa and L.A. Shelley, “Developing Self-Awareness: Learning Processes for Self and Interpersonal Growth”, *Annual Review of Organisational Psychology and Organisational Behaviour*, 10, Open Access, Creative Commons, 2023. pp. 261-288.
- [2] J. Carden, R.J. Jones, & J. Passmore, “An exploration of the role of coach training in developing self-awareness: a mixed methods study”, *Current Psychology*, 42(6), 2021, pp. 6164-6178.
- [3] A. Bamgboje-Ayodele, M. Ye, H. Almond, H., & S. Sakulwichitsintu, “Inside the minds of doctoral students: Investigating challenges in theory and practice”, *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 11, 2016, pp. 243-267.
- [4] S. Brownhill, “Asking key questions of self-reflection, *Reflective Practice*”, 23(1), 2022, pp. 57-67. DOI:10.1080/14623943.2021.1976628.
- [5] M.B. Fisher, “HDR Supervision 2: Reflection on Support of a Mature Aged Student with Diverse Needs”, *International Journal of Technology and Inclusive Education (IJTIE)*, Special Issues, 3(1), 2016, pp. 956-961.
- [6] C. Brownlow, C. D.C. Eacersall, N. Martin & R. Parsons-Smith, “The higher degrees research student experience in Australian universities: a systematic literature review”, *Higher Education Research & Development*, 42(7), 2023, pp. 1609-1623. DOI: 10.1080/07294360.2023.2183939.
- [7] H. Horta, “PhD students’ self-perception of skills and career plans while in doctoral programs: are they associated?” *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 19, 211-228. DOI: 10.1007/s12564-018-9532-y.
- [8] B. Callary, P. Werthner, P. Trudel, “The lived experience of a doctoral student: The process of Learning and Becoming”, *The Qualitative Report* 2012, 17(86), 2012, pp. 1-20. <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR17/callary.pdf> (Access Date: 12 April 2023).
- [9] A. McCulloch, A., & W. Bastalich, “Commencing research students’ expectations and the design of doctoral induction: introducing the inflection of collaboration and pleasure”, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 47(5), 687-698. DOI: 10.1080/0309877X.2023.2185772.
- [10] L. DeAngelis, L. “Enabling the Exploration of Disorienting Dilemma in the Classroom” *Journal of Education*, 202(4), 2022, pp. 585-600. DOI: 10.1177/0022057421991865
- [11] V. Rowtho, S. Gopee & A. Hungun, “Doctoral boot camps: from military concept to andragogy”, *Education and Training*, 62(4), 2020, pp. 379-392.
- [12] A. Sutton, “Measuring the Effects of Self-Awareness: Construction of the Self-Awareness Outcomes Questionnaire”, *Europe’s Journal of Psychology*, 12(4), 2016, pp. 646-658. DOI: 10.5964/ejobv12i4.1178
- [13] M.B. Fisher, “Higher Education Academic Resilience: Preparing you HDR Application”, *International Journal for Cross-Disciplinary Subjects in Education (IJCDSE)*, 12(3), 2021, pp. 4534-4541.
- [14] D.L. Elliot, “a doctoral compass’: strategic reflection, self-assessment, and recalibration for navigating the twin doctoral journey”, *Studies in Higher Education* 48(8), 2021.1652-1665. DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2021.1946033.
- [15] M. Fisher, “The HDR Process: Reflection on the Motivational Factors, Academic Model, Influences and Challenges That Enabled an Academic to Complete Her Thesis Part-Time”, *International Journal for Infonomics (IJI)*, 13, 2020, pp. 2018-2025. DOI: 10.20533/iji.1742.4712.2020.0209.
- [16] B.F. Klimova, “Self-reflection in the course evaluation”, *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 141, 2014, pp. 119–123. DOI:10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.05.022.
- [17] Gibbs G., *Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods*. Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK, 1988.
- [18] M. Wijnen-Meijer, T. Brandhuber, A. Schneider, & P.O. Berberat, “Implementing Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle by Linking Real Experience, Case-Based Discussion and Simulation”, *Journal of Medical Education and Curricular Development*, 9(1-5), p. 1-3, 2022. DOI:10.1177/23821205221091511.
- [19] H. Flavian, “Towards teaching and beyond: strengthening education by understanding students’ self-awareness development”, *Power and Education*, 8(1), 2016, pp. 88-100.
- [20] J. Cisco, “Using academic skill set interventions to reduce impostor phenomenon feelings in postgraduate students”, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 44(3), 2020, pp. 423-437.
- [21] C.L. Liardet, “Navigating the transition into higher degree research: an exploration of candidates’ experiences”, *The Australian Educational Researcher*, Open Access, 2023.

[22] R. Chugh, S. Macht & B. Harreveld, “Supervisory feedback to postgraduate research students: a literature review”, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 47:5, 2022, pp. 683-697, DOI:10.1080/02602938.2021.1955241.