The Processing and Interpretation of Feedback by PhD Candidates

Judith Gliddon

Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia, Australia

This workshop is based on the findings of the presenter’s own recently completed PhD which examined the characteristics of feedback received by PhD candidates and explored how they then interpreted that feedback. Two hundred and twenty-one Australian PhD candidates participated in the study by providing data over a six month period via a custom-built Internet-interfaced database. Membership ranged across disciplines, ages and stages of enrolment as well as including representatives from every Australian state and 26 of the 38 PhD awarding institutions.

Each candidate completed a self-concept test both at the beginning and again at the end of this period. In between, they completed an ‘e-diary’ in which they recorded quantitative and qualitative data about every feedback interaction that they experienced over the six months. The diary recorded contextual information about feedback as well as attempting to capture resultant feelings and reactions to the feedback. The relationships between the candidates’ experiences and the resulting affective and behavioural outcomes were described using a set of four sequential models.

The facilitator will present and explain these models before inviting participants to form special interest groups (e.g. members of DDOGS, supervisors, post-graduate students, post-graduate administrators and policy-makers) to discuss the implications of these findings for their area of practice. Interest groups will then report back to the general group in order to share their findings. If requested, results will be formally documented for distribution to group members.