‘Students think I’m one of them but I’m not’: the complexities of intercultural supervision

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Intercultural supervision is a complex pedagogy. There has been a lot of research about Western supervisors supervising culturally and linguistically diverse students, especially international students (Aspland, 1999; Ryan & Zuber-Skerritt, 1999). Few researchers, however, have sought to explore intercultural supervision from the perspective of culturally and linguistically diverse supervisors working in Western universities (Manathunga, 2007). This paper explores the experiences of a Chinese supervisor based in Australia supervising Chinese international and Australian-based students who automatically assume his/her cultural allegiance. This positions him/her in a liminal space as a supervisor where ‘students think I’m one of them, but I’m not’. Drawing on post-colonial theory and several case studies, this paper investigates the complexities and deconstructive possibilities of intercultural supervision to challenge stereotypes about Western and Eastern supervisory approaches.

