Investigating learning in the doctorate: notes towards a transnational research agenda

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This paper takes as its point of departure two questions: How can the place of learning as a key element of doctoral education be better understood? How does it fit in relation to research and to supervision? The authors’ aims are to develop empirical ‘country’ studies of the environments for doctoral learning. While there is now a great deal of work on doctoral supervision, there is relatively little research on student learning. Work referring to students is often couched in terms of the ‘doctoral student experience’, which may or may not provide a useful lens on the questions of learning that concern this group (e.g. Leonard et al 2006). As noted by Green (2005), what remains largely uncharted territory in conceptual terms is the set of questions in the space opened by Burton Clark’s (1994) idea of the ‘unity’ among research, teaching and study, which lies at the academic ‘heartland’ of the modern research university.