Supervision and cultural difference: hybridity, transculturation and assimilation

Gina Wisker⁴, Sally Knowles², Barbara Grant¹, Terry Evans³, Catherine Manathunga⁵

¹The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand, ²Murdoch University, Perth, Australia, ³Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia, ⁴Brighton University, Brighton, United Kingdom, ⁵University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

Supervision across cultures is a feature of new and older forms of globalised higher education. This 120-minute symposium brings related theoretical lenses to bear upon issues of identity and cultural difference within postgraduate supervision and doctoral education. Using theories of negotiating cultural difference (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1996; Pratt, 1992), moments of hybridity, transculturation and assimilation are explored in an effort to deepen our understanding of what counts as effective and ethical supervision across cultures. The overall intention is to facilitate an enabling interaction which allows the Other space to speak and be heard. This symposium seeks to throw light on intriguing and sometimes challenging dimensions of intercultural supervision, where the Other may be the supervisor, the student or the voice of the discipline.

Barbara Grant's presentation investigates the current literature on the supervision of indigenous research students in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia in the context of critical and post-critical accounts of intercultural supervision (Jones, 1999). Gina Wisker's presentation explores the experiences of Israeli doctoral students working at a distance in the British system. Terry Evans and Iris Liou's presentation investigates the social, economic, and educational features of Taiwanese candidates’ experiences studying in Australia. Catherine Manathunga's paper investigates the experiences of Confucian heritage culture students and supervisors in Australia (Manathunga, 2007). Sally Knowles' presentation investigates writing pedagogy, especially feedback, language and identity in relation to themes of mystery and transparency as experienced by newly arrived postgraduates from developing countries. Participants will be engaged in interactive activities designed to facilitate participation.