

From another place – factors that affect doctoral candidates and their supervisors in cross-cultural supervision

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Doctoral candidates and their supervisors increasingly work in cross cultural supervisory situations. Whilst there are many successful such supervisory relationships, candidates face complexities in adapting to the new cultural and academic environment. Similarly, supervisors can find challenges in providing quality experiences for their candidates. This paper reports on an innovative project based on the novel application of the “reality television” genre, and the research that underpins it. The project involved interviews with 46 candidates and 38 supervisors from three Australian universities. The interviews elicited the experiences of candidates and supervisors to produce multimedia resources to aid in improving the experience of higher degree research candidature and supervision. Evaluation of the resources involved observations, tests and surveys with candidates, supervisors and e-learning experts during resource development, formal summative evaluation, and road testing of materials in professional development seminars with candidates and supervisors at two universities, and at national conferences. To date we know of 10 universities in Australia and New Zealand that have used the resources in professional development, and there have been 6311 views of the Youtube video clips. Analysis of the data not only yielded firsthand stories of participant experiences, but also reveals eight “intensifiers” that make supervisory situations more complicated or difficult for candidates in a cross cultural context, including *language, cultural differences in dealing with hierarchy, and separation from the familiar*, amongst others. There are, however, significant differences in the perceptions of supervisors and candidates about the impact of these on the overall supervisory experience.