

Giving and receiving feedback in HDR supervision: Matches and mismatches

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This showcase presentation reports on selected aspects of the OLT-funded project ‘Giving and Receiving Written Feedback in HDR Supervision: Enhancing Supervisors' and Candidates' Skills in a Cross-Cultural Context’. It focuses on language-specific issues that play a role in the communication between supervisors and candidates when giving and receiving feedback in a cross-cultural context. Our project extends an earlier ALTC funded project (CG7-507) that developed and evaluated resources to enhance supervisors’ skills in a cross-cultural context by focusing on aspects of giving and receiving feedback in cross-cultural HDR supervision. Feedback lies at the heart of any learning experience, and giving and receiving feedback is an important and integral part of postgraduate supervision practice. However, its complexity is not always recognized and the practice not discussed by candidates and supervisors. Students tend to be concerned by a lack of clear directions, while supervisors tend to complain about the lack of take-up of feedback. Often, cross-cultural differences between supervisors and candidates can add to such mismatches. This showcase will highlight some of these mismatches drawing on recent research in the field and our experiences when conducting workshops with supervisors and students during the first half of 2013. Our goal is to show that understanding such differences allows for the development of critical awareness of potential conflict due to language use and cross-cultural differences. Ultimately, such awareness will increase supervisors’ and candidates’ skills in giving and receiving feedback in a cross-cultural context and help to find out what works best for them, thus ensuring the students’ learning.