

The challenge of supervision-mentorship – whose journey is it?

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In New Zealand, and indeed internationally, many higher education institutions are seeking to increase both the capacity and capability of postgraduate supervision. Subsequently there has been a spotlight placed on all supervision issues, including how to best support and develop new and less experienced supervisors. Research is in process exploring current practice, policy and protocol in order to enhance the quality of supervision, and inform strategies for change. One of the ways in which new supervisors and those who have not supervised to completion at either a masters or doctoral level are supported, is through the appointment of a mentor. A mentor in this instance is an experienced supervisor who acts a support through the supervision process. This showcase presents some of the early findings of a study of current supervisor-mentor processes at a New Zealand university, and how this is being understood and experienced in practice. Early findings indicate multiple interpretations of the roles and responsibilities of the mentor, alongside the need to rethink the models in use, and provide a process that gives clarity and consistency. Having provided a space for the voices of both the mentors and mentees, this research raises questions about how best to support those involved in supervision – whose journey is it? Implications of this research will influence future institutional support, processes and policy.