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**Research supervision and internationalisation: belonging to the global academy (0124)**

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The internationalisation of higher education and academic mobility pose new challenges to western universities. This paper explores these issues from the perspective of supervisors of research degrees and their students in an Australian university in which 'internationalisation' and 'academic mobility' apply to supervisors as much as to students. What does it mean to work in a 'multicultural academy' in this climate? What kinds of cultural competency are required in such a setting? How does this impact specifically on the supervision relationship? What kinds of subjectivities are being inculcated in research degree candidates as they move from student to researcher in order to enter the global community of their chosen discipline? Drawing on our previous work on the acculturation of transcultural researchers into the community of their disciplines, the current project extends our theorising around imagined communities, cosmopolitanism and research supervision.

Key words: internationalisation, academic mobility, research supervision, cosmopolitanism

**Research supervision and internationalisation: belonging to the global academy**

The internationalisation of higher education and academic mobility are generally seen to be posing new, and somewhat threatening, challenges to traditional western universities. In our work in researcher education and development, we are particularly interested in this from the perspective of supervisors of research degrees and their Masters and PhD candidates. The context for this study is an Australian research-intensive university in which 'internationalisation' and 'academic mobility' apply to supervisors as much as they do to students. In this climate it is no easy matter to spell out what it means to work in a 'multicultural academy' nor to specify the required kinds of cultural competency. In this setting we are concerned with identifying how research students make the transition from 'international student' to 'cosmopolitan researcher' and what degree of agency they display in the process. What kinds of subjectivities are being inculcated in research degree candidates as they move from the position of student to researcher, and how does his impact specifically on the supervision relationship? Drawing on our previous work on the acculturation of transnational researchers into the community of their disciplines (Guerin & Green 2009), the current project seeks to extend our theorising around global disciplinary communities, cosmopolitanism and research supervision.

In response to the increasingly multicultural milieu of higher education in Australia, Sanderson (2008) has described the necessity for the academic Self to be transformed into a genuinely cosmopolitan agent. While there is much to applaud in such a vision, this version of cosmopolitanism requires considerable unpacking. Is it something similar to the cultural competency that approaches Bennett's (1993) categories of 'adaptation' (Level 5) or even 'integration' (Level 6), or is the lived experience significantly messier? Our project seeks to understand more about how transcultural academics arrive at this sense of self. Given that our previous research suggests that this conception of oneself as

open-mindedly, tolerantly cosmopolitan has already been produced by the time an academic is working in a foreign language in a foreign university (Guerin & Green 2009), the supervision of international research degree candidates can be understood in part as a training of those individuals in this particular subjectivity. This training may be the reason for the apparent resolution of those issues faced by international students which, according to our earlier study, no longer appear (on the surface, at least) to trouble transcultural supervisors. Added to this is the notion that the process of writing a PhD necessarily involves entering and contributing to the current debates in one's discipline, and is thus an induction into the 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983; rev. 2006) of the globalised academy, as we have argued elsewhere (Guerin & Green 2009). These two key ideas combine into a sense of the cosmopolitan academic who belongs to a globalised disciplinary community peopled by similarly cosmopolitan, transcultural academics who share much the same cultural behaviours, conventions and expectations.

The focus of the current stage of this project is to delve below the smooth surface of the cosmopolitan, transcultural supervisor, fully fledged member of the globalised disciplinary community, and to uncover how these conceptions of self are played out in the supervision relationship. These issues are explored through a series of one-on-one interviews and focus groups conducted with international academic staff.

Ryan and Louie (2007) remind us that we need to consider the 'differences and complexities *within* cultures' (p404) before embarking on comparisons *between* cultures. In our context, this translates into a recognition that supervisors are also part of the international population of the university; that is, the culture within individual disciplines, and within the university as a whole, is already thoroughly transcultural. Thus, the challenges seen to be confronting today's academy may not really be so much the rapid changes imposed by internationalisation from outside, but a more gradual evolution from within the system that has gathered momentum over time and has now reached a critical mass that can no longer be ignored. A critical issue is then whether these 'insiders' constitute themselves as vigorous defenders of the culture they themselves had to 'learn' in order to fit in, or whether they are more open to change and welcoming of new and different cultural knowledges and approaches from those around them (including their research students)? Do they see themselves as gatekeepers of traditional standards, or do they have a broader bandwidth of tolerance for difference than their traditionally western/Anglophone colleagues? Perhaps the most interesting questions then are really around these transcultural supervisors already working in the academy, rather than the pressure being applied by the increasing numbers of international students coming into this system from outside. We suggest that these international, transcultural academics might play a key role as facilitators of the new knowledges that are struggling to emerge in the globalised academy.

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