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Creating a pedagogy for supervisor development: what do we do and why?

Abstract:

Although good practice in supervision is key to successful doctoral outcomes, supervisors are not always enthusiastic about engaging with professional development in this space. For some, this is because they have previously attended compulsory training delivered by Human Resources staff who are focused only on compliance with institutional policies; others appear to believe that having been supervised as a doctoral candidate themselves arms them with all they need to know about what and what not to do as a supervisor. When researcher developers arrive to provide services for supervisors, the intended audience can be reluctant to engage.

Failure to appreciate the role of researcher developers in enhancing supervision practice is partly because these positions are relatively new in most universities and are still not well understood by our colleagues. Researcher developers occupy the borderlands between academic and professional/administrative staff as third-space, hybrid educators (Whitchurch, 2008). As part of establishing our own professional identities, those of us working as researcher developers need to explain our value. Articulating our pedagogy is one way of doing so.

This workshop outlines a possible framework for a researcher development pedagogy based on the foundational work of Evans (2011) and Little and Green (2022). This is intended as a starting point to identify the what and why of the teaching done by researcher developers with the aim of establishing our credibility with doctoral supervisors. Once we are able to clearly describe our pedagogy, we are better positioned to persuade others of the advantages in engaging with the development opportunities we offer.

Participation:

The facilitator will provide copies of the suggested framework for discussion and the rationale of the approach explained. Participants will be invited to critique the categories and descriptions. They will then work together to provide examples of their own practice under the categories. The results will be recorded and shared with participants after the session.

References:

- Evans, L. (2011). The scholarship of researcher development: mapping the terrain and pushing back boundaries, *International Journal for Researcher Development*, 2 (2), 75-98. DOI: 10.1108/17597511111212691
- Guerin, C. (2021). Researcher developers traversing the borderlands: credibility and pedagogy in the third space. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 26(3), 518-524. DOI: 10.1080/13562517.2021.1894551
- Little, D., & Green, D. A. (2021). Credibility in educational development: trustworthiness, expertise, and identification. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 1-16, DOI: 10.1080/07294360.2020.1871325
- Whitchurch, C. (2008). Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: The emergence of third space professionals in UK higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 62(4), 377-396. Doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2008.00387.x