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Re-situation challenges for international students "becoming" researchers

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Abstract

This paper presents data generated during a semester-long programme to support international students from countries in Melanesia and Asia embarking on masters research in education in a New Zealand university. All were scholarship recipients. The researcher-and facilitator-of the programme, was interested in documenting and understanding the nature of the students' experience as they planned and wrote research proposals. The process of developing a research proposal, as one of the early stages of 'becoming' a researcher, highlighted a number of challenges for the six case study students. The challenges are viewed from a transition or 'resituation' perspective (Eraut in Stud Contin Educ 26(2): 247-74, 2004, 2008) rather than an adjustment one. A resituation perspective assumes that students brought with them 'personal expertise, practical wisdom and tacit knowledge' (Eraut 2008, p. 42) which needed to be reconciled with what was demanded of them by different aspects of the research planning process. The resituation challenges experienced by the students included situating a perceived problem or issue in the research literature; reconciling personal

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research goals with the limitations of one's own agency as a researcher; integrating new learning with research goals; and reconciling the new role or identity as a researcher with the previous role as colleague or community member. The paper presents a case for providing a context for postgraduate students in which explicit recognition of what they bring to the research task, and acknowledgement of the resituation challenges can take place. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Franken, Margaret, E-Mail: franken@waikato.ac.nz