Designing and supervising final year research projects

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Purpose

Balancing assessment and research
Design and management
Roles and responsibilities

Final year project

Student educational transitions

Learning what is already known
Understanding what we know
Discovering something new

1 2 3
School University Real world
Undergraduate research project

Independence
Subject ownership
Deep learning
Skill development

Projects as partnerships

Student
Supervisor
Others

Postgrads
Postdocs
Technicians
Extern. Collaborators
Placement staff

A final year project should be

Purposeful → Real research
Doable → Realistic goals
Risk-limited → Well designed
Time-limited → Well designed
One chance ← Ability-neutral
Chance to shine ← Opportunity-rich
Who's involved?

Roles and responsibilities

Student

Supervisor

Others

Who does what?

Roles and responsibilities

Student

Work hard
Think hard
Take ownership

Supervisor

Give guidance
Take responsibility

Others

Give support
Take defined roles
Resist responsibility

The assessment problem

Balancing assessment and research

The student is learning
Research is uncertain
Every project is unique
Every student is unique

How to assess fairly and equitably?

Assess process, not outcome