



Research Methods Course Design and Teaching

Workshop 1: Design and Teaching Issues

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Aims of the Workshop Series

- 1. Build management research capacity by supporting academics in their secondary role as trainers**
- 2. Promote mutual support networks for sustainable development**
- 3. Inform practice through inputs, networking (substantive outputs)**

Aims of Workshop 1

- 1. Share experience, successes, problems with PG research methods course design and teaching**
- 2. Promote mutual support**
- 3. Explore research as a skilful performance, learning, and support**
- 4. Support planning and introduce preparation for Workshop 2**

Today's Sessions

- 1. Introduction and individual exchange (aim 1, 2)**
- 2. Exploring course design to cover content (aim 1, 2)**
- 3. Support for learning to become a management researcher (aim 3)**
- 4. Practical implications, planning, preparation (aim 4)**

Exchanging Experience

- **Please introduce yourself**
- **PG research methods training course provision in your institution**
- **Your role in contributing to this provision**
- **A success to share**
- **A problem to solve**

PG Training Curriculum: ESRC Expectations

1. General research skills

- bibliographic and computing**
- teaching**
- language (second language)**
- ethical and legal**
- exploitation of research and IPR**

2. Personal development / transferable skills

- communication**
- research management and team-working**
- managing personal and career development**

ESRC Framework for Research Methods Training (Content)

1. Learning outcomes

- principles of design and strategy**
- apply a range of methods**
- managing and disseminating**
- linking epistemological position and theory, design and analysis**

2. Principles of design

- questions and hypotheses**
- relationship between qualitative and quantitative methods**
- theory generation and testing**
- sampling and bias**
- generalisability, validity, reliability, replicability**

3. Data collection and analysis

- potential and pitfalls of different methods of data collection**
- recording, constructing data sets**
- analysing qualitative and quantitative data using computer packages**
- qualitative and statistical techniques**

ESRC Subject-Specific Training (Business and Management)

1. Nature of the field

- range of specialisms, paradigms, theoretical positions**
- trans-disciplinary research**
- practical and policy application**
- range of methods**
- ethical issues**

2. Diverse emphasis (indicative)

- accounting and finance**
- organisational behaviour**
- corporate strategy**
- economics**
- management science**
- operations management**
- public sector management**
- information management**
- international business**
- marketing**
- human resource management**

Research Councils' Requirements for Training Research Students

Generic skills and experience

- research skills and techniques**
- research environment awareness**
- research management**
- personal effectiveness**

Designing to Cover Content

- 1. How far does the content of your PG research methods course provision match Research Council expectations?**
- 2. How far should it do so?**
- 3. How might course content feasibly be improved?**

Support for Learning to become a Management Researcher

based on: Wallace, M (1991) *School Centred Management Training* London: Paul Chapman

see also: Wallace, M (1999) When is experiential learning not experiential learning? in Murphy, P (ed) *Learners, Learning and Assessment* London: Paul Chapman/Open University

Doing, Learning, Learning Support

- 1. What is entailed in *being* a competent management researcher?**
- 2. What is entailed in *becoming* a competent management researcher?**

The Skilful Performance of *being* a Competent Researcher

- 1. Performing real tasks in real time with real consequences**
- 2. Integrating knowledge and skill (knowing that plus know-how)**
- 3. Adopting a critical frame of mind, evaluating others' and developing one's own argument about what does or should happen**

The Learning Process of *becoming* a Competent Researcher

- 1. How did you learn to become as competent a researcher (and methods teacher) as you are now?**
- 2. How (if at all) could your learning have been supported more effectively?**

The Nature of Learning

- 1. No adult starts with nothing**
- 2. Talking and writing about performance and acquiring skills are not the same as performing**
- 3. Learning skilful performance entails trying it out in the real situation, so preparation can have limited impact**
- 4. Transferable skills cannot be transferred without further learning**

Implications for Learning Support

- 1. Learning starts from where the learner is**
- 2. Articulating principles and practising skills are not sufficient**
- 3. Integrating knowledge and skills requires real experience**
- 4. Learning is never complete, so it needs fostering as a habit**

Stages in learning

Existing performance of
management research tasks



Challenge to existing
performance



Increased awareness, and
justification for development



Rationale for development



Practical ideas on how to
develop



Practice in developing
performance



Improved performance of
management research tasks



Stages in learning

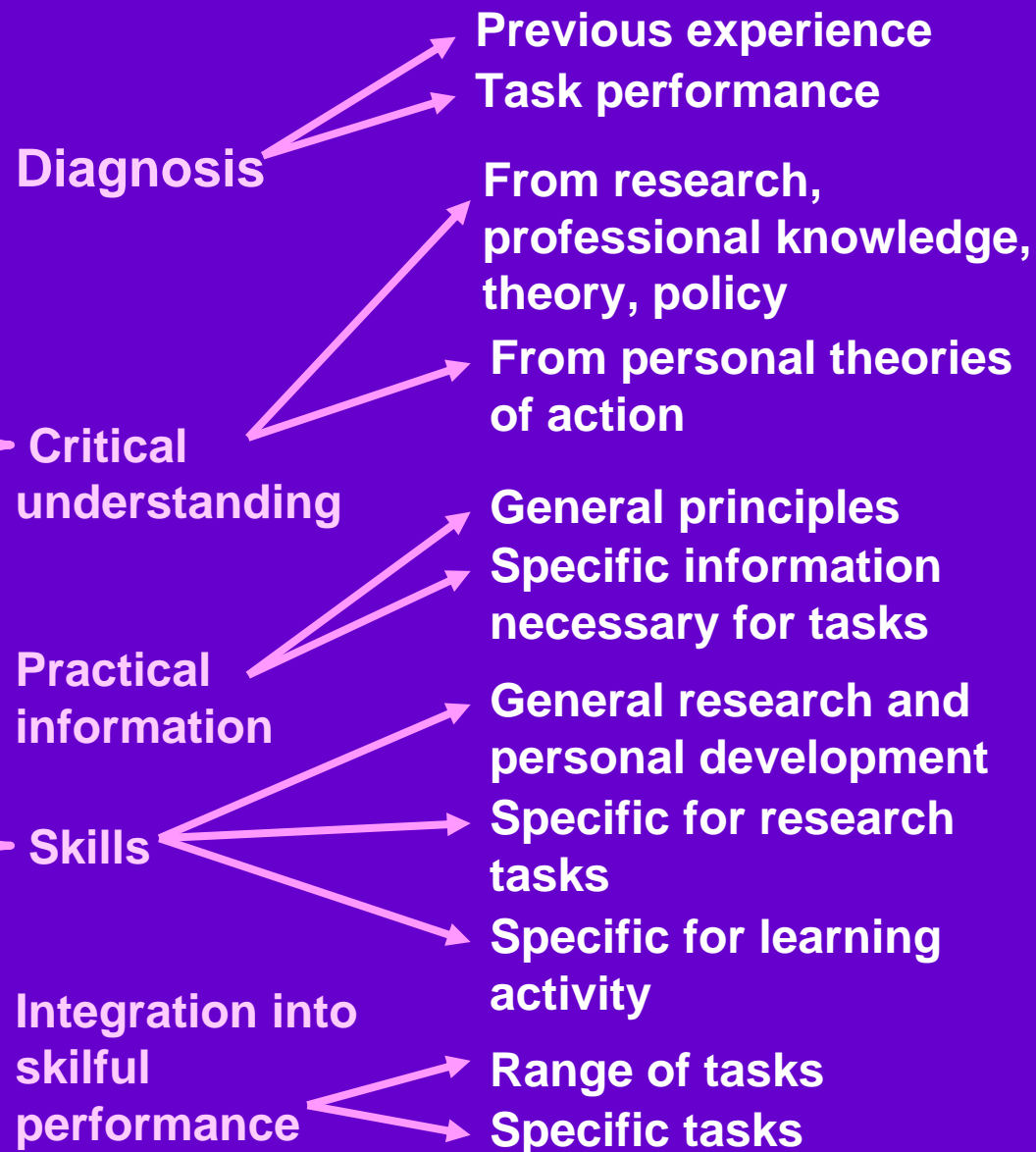
Components of Learning Support



Stages in learning



Components of Learning Support



<i>Learning support component</i>		<i>Examples of activities</i>
Diagnosis	Previous experience	Record of training completed, self-assessment questionnaire
	Task performance	Feedback on research methods assignment, seminar presentation and discussion
Critical Understanding	From research etc	Lecture on research paradigms, background reading of academic literature
	From personal theory	Personal learning journal, tutorial discussion, contributions to seminar discussions
Practical Information	General principles	Introductory lecture on statistical methods, guided reading of a research methods teaching text
	Specific information	Instruction on a computerised qualitative data analysis package, protocol for ethical clearance
Skills	General research and personal development	Collaborating on joint tasks, managing time, personal development planning
	Specific for tasks	Hands-on workshop on designing a survey instrument, e-learning tutorial on statistics
	Specific for learning activity	Structuring an academic paper, protocol for a dissertation or thesis proposal
Integration into skilful performance	Range of tasks	Fieldwork assignment, dissertation or thesis supervision
	Specific tasks	Piloting data collection instruments, coaching in a data collection technique

<i>Learning support component</i>		<i>Activities to Promote Transition between Stages</i>
Diagnosis	Previous experience	
	Task performance	
Critical Understanding	From research etc	
	From personal theory	
Practical Information	General principles	
	Specific information	
Skills	General research and personal development	
	Specific for tasks	
	Specific for learning activity	
Integration into skilful performance	Range of tasks	
	Specific tasks	

Modular Learning Support Sequence

Preparatory Work

Diagnosis through reviewing experience, present knowledge
Develop critical understanding through reading a key text



Module 1 Learning Support Activity

Link students' experience and knowledge to present activity
Activity covering component(s) of learning support
Support with learning skills to carry out activity (if appropriate)
Plan follow-up work



Follow-up Work

Activity to support integration into skilful performance
Activity to prepare for Module 2

Designing Learning Support

- 1. Which transitions between learning stages should be promoted through components of learning support?**
- 2. What activities could provide these components of learning support?**
- 3. How far could activities be sequenced to promote the transition between multiple stages?**

Developing a Critical Frame of Mind

What's the difference between expressing an opinion and developing an argument?

The Logic of Enquiry

Two-way critical academic discourse:

- **as a reader, evaluating others' attempts to communicate and convince through developing their argument**
- **as a researcher and writer, developing one's own argument that will communicate with and convince the projected audience**

Components of an Argument

- the conclusion rests on *claims to knowledge*, assertions that something is, or should be, true
- claims to knowledge are backed by *evidence*, the warrant for the conclusion
- *evidence* varies, e.g. from literature / own work:
 - research findings
 - professional experience
 - a definition of a theoretical idea

Promoting the Development of a Critical Frame of Mind

- 1. How far does course provision support learning to evaluate others' arguments and develop one's own argument?**
- 2. How far should it do so?**
- 3. How might learning support be improved?**

Preparing for Workshop 2

- 1. Informally interview a high-achieving and a low-achieving research or masters student about the quality of their learning experience**
- 2. Gather information on how students are taught to engage critically with literature**
- 3. Choose, read, and bring a front-line journal article or chapter reporting research (for a critical analysis)**

Teaching the Logic of Enquiry

