

Teaching, learning and assessment in HRD: Innovation and creativity or more or the same?

BMAF / UFHRD Special Interest Group on HRD

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Aim: to discuss 'assessment and standards' implications of small-scale projects undertaken by the HRD SIG

- Objectives

- To share findings of learning and teaching projects
- To evaluate learning and teaching strategies designed to enhance reflective and experience-based learning
- To discuss current SIG activities and ways to develop its membership and contribution

HRD Special Interest Group

- Aims to improve teaching, learning and assessment in HRD courses through research and dissemination
- Jointly funded by UFHRD and BMAF
- Membership
 - UFHRD members
 - HRD / LTD lecturers in HEIs
 - HRD-interested colleagues from HE, FE, employers groups and professional groups

Pre-Induction Project for the NBS MSc IHRM programme

- Context
 - Conversion course
 - Most students have little or no experience of HRM or even general management topics
 - Majority are from overseas

Induction Aims

- Develop a basic understanding of what HRM is.
- Early opportunity to study the subject in English
- Opportunity to test their understanding of HRM topics
- Find out about what to expect in class – lectures and seminars
- Identify useful websites and case study examples to provide information on contemporary HRM issues
- Emphasise the expectation of wider reading and independent study
- Help them get to know classmates before the term starts
- Give more information about the City in which they will live

Website

- Limited access page on NBS website

<http://www.newcastlebusinessschool.co.uk/pre-induction.aspx>

Contains:

- Information on Newcastle
- Four PP presentations (modules) with sound commentary – one on the programme and three on HRM basics (each ending with self assessment questions)
- Additional self assessment materials and handouts
- 'Mini' assignment brief for an assessed piece of work
- Invitation to contact a tutor and be a 'Facebook' friend

Survey results

Pre-course perceptions

- 56% rated their existing knowledge good or average, 44% as poor
- 50% did not feel very confident that this knowledge level would be good enough
- 50% felt nervous about the course – a further 31% felt very nervous

Accessing materials

- Feedback indicates that students would have welcomed earlier availability of the materials
- Majority accessed website on more than 5 occasions (suggesting they were sufficiently interesting)
- 69% felt the addition of a soundtrack was 'valuable'

Survey Results

Post-modules perceptions

- 93% felt all PG programmes should have a pre-induction website
- 81% felt the information helped them feel more confident about the course
- 63% wished they had spent more time on the website
- 69% enjoyed the time spent working on resources (investigating HR in real companies by using reading materials)
- 83% felt the mini assignment would be useful for their studies

Content

- 53% wanted to know about NBS facilities in advance
- 100% wanted information about their course
- 88% found this information helpful
- 80% wanted to know what to expect in the classroom
- 94% found this information useful
- 62% found the link to Facebook a good idea
- 27% wanted to meet their new colleagues before the course

Survey Results

Pre-Induction Basics Modules

- 87% used the introductory session
- 75% used Module One (56% the self assessment and 44% the reading)
- 69% used Module Two (56% the self assessment and 50% the reading)
- 63% used Module Three (56% the self assessment and 43% the reading)
- Only 13% felt that none of the content was new to them!

Practice what we preach?

- Learning and teaching HRD within a professionally accredited curriculum
- One-year 'action-enquiry' project to evaluate the introduction of an experience-based learning and teaching approach
 - 65 students
 - 5 tutors

Project and research goals

- To deliver a CIPD accredited Learning, Training and Development module through
 - Active learning
 - Experience-based learning
 - Student-led learning processes
- To critically evaluate the learning and teaching approach taking into account
 - Students' emotional and intellectual responses
 - The experiences and reflections of tutors as they adapted to the new approach to learning and teaching

Main findings

- Initial 'nervous enthusiasm'
 - Be more energised
 - Propel outside comfort zone
 - Enhance engagement and transferable skills
- Half-way point 'divergence'
 - Tutors remain enthusiastic
 - Student stress and anxiety about
 - Workload
 - Assessment
 - Lack of subject clarity
- Divergence between student groups
 - Different degrees of acceptance and rebellion
 - Escape from anxiety?
 - Projection?
 - Relationship issues
 - Students – tutors
 - Tutor - tutor
 - Assessment issues
 - Professional identity issues
 - Role of the tutor
- Learning-in- action and 'learning inaction' (Vince, 2008)

Main conclusions

- Experience-based learning and teaching differently understood and experienced by students and tutors
- Emotions change significantly over the life-cycle of the module
- Negative impact of anxiety may affect:
 - What is learned
 - How learning takes place
 - The depth of learning that is achieved

Implications for practice

- Emotions and the affective domain are overlooked in much HE practice
- Hidden curriculum of assessment is a very powerful influence on student expectations and priorities
- Experience-based learning requires effective and transparent team-working by tutors
- 'Holding' and alleviating emotions are key (and overlooked) skill areas for tutors

- *it (RL) seems to be constantly emphasised...its become too much*

- *I do reflect but informally...these techniques are artificial and lack relevance to work*

“Not another learning log”

- *... a few weeks ago I organised a 'challenge' event at work... whereby a panel would critique progress made from development areas identified within a recent external review. I supported the panel members with a list of reflective questions they needed to ask in order to ascertain 'critically' the appropriateness and value of the actions. Without doubt I would not have been able to identify or co-ordinate this activity before attending the HRM course and the subsequent development of my reflective learning and critical thinking abilities.....In*

reference to my reflective learning this has been my greatest success to date

of the processing of it happens away from paper...it stays in my head for a long time...

Some research based reflections on teaching and assessing reflective learning within a HR programme

If you're asked to reflect and you're going to do it properly it means more or less you're going to open your heart out... and on paper and ...I tried but after a while I thought oh no do I really want to disclose all that and for me doing that it was bit like... no, I can write it but not write it and then someone else look at it and so I was always hedging. ...There needs to be a certain type of relationship between the person doing the reflection and the person reading it...then you know your thoughts are safe

and it has... it has become a habit...I do it when you're walking the dog for example.....but that's the point....an awful lot

Teaching, Assessing and Transferring RL

- Repetition and fatigue
- Teaching about... v developing skills ...
- Different techniques of reflection...different outcomes?
- Description v Depth
- What are we assessing: knowledge, skill, attitude?
An ability to write about RL?
- Ethics and ownership
- RL: *the* tool of ongoing cpd?

Engaging HR students in RL.....

- Clarity of purpose and positioning
- Different techniques, e.g. audio diary; unsent letter
- Harnessing the social dimension
 - reflective dialogue
 - the critical friend
- Modelling

Assessing HR students in RL....

- Getting the brief right....avoiding complexity and multiple purposes
- A 'formative' assignment helps
- Quality control within assessment team
- The value of a framework (description to depth; e.g Bain et al, 2002)

Transferring RL into the workplace.....

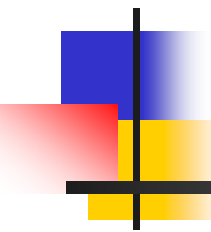
As they complete the programme.....

- Some say they are skilled HR reflective practitioners / 'Thinking Performers' ...overtly part of their cpd at work
- Some purport to be 'informal' reflective practitioners... 'doing it' when they drive to work
- Some argue it is only pertinent to the course

A concluding question

How should we judge our effectiveness in teaching RL to HR students ?

- Some clear curriculum enhancements on basis of action research enquiry
- But...in relation to transfer, an ambivalence remains. Is such an outcome good enough if HR graduates are the 'gatekeepers' of organisational reflective learning?



Doctoral supervision: Towards a typology of supervisor relationships

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Doctoral supervision: Towards a typology of supervisor relationships

- to further explore the relationships between two key aspects of doctoral supervision: power and emotion for HRD supervisors and their students,
- to further explore an emergent typology of student-supervisor relationships (Sambrook, Stewart and Roberts, 2008) and a matrix of potentially influencing variables, and
- to inform HRD theory and practice for Higher Education and beyond in terms of negotiating supervisory relationships and managing this as a function of HRD.



Doctoral supervision: Towards a typology of supervisor relationships

- Review of literature relating to PhD supervision
- Two separate questionnaires (supervisor and students)
- Piloted
- Distributed UFHRD JISC email distribution list (n=165), employing convenience sampling
- Supervisors were asked to send the link to their students
- Several email reminders and promotion during the UFHRD/AHRD European conference in June
- Response rates were low with 13 supervisor and 19 student respondents.



Doctoral supervision: Towards a typology of supervisor relationships

- Technical and social support This support is generally explicit (technical) and implicit (social) in nature.
- Developing rapport, meetings and through the feedback process (implicitly). Explicit social support is less frequent and may occur on-demand during times of crises.
- Emotional Intelligence is constructed differently by different people; from a more informal-emotional, to more formal-procedural. Students may have a psychological contract with their supervisor, with their university, with their school. Supervisors may be more familiar with the concept of EI, and its relevance and importance in the supervision process.
- Careful balance between being too familiar or too distanced. Students feel more 'familiar' with their supervisors yet feel that they are not as interdependent in their supervisory relationship.



Doctoral supervision: Towards a typology of supervisor relationships

- Providing and receiving feedback is a delicate process and requires both student and supervisor training and development.
- Supervisors receive some training for this, but it appears that students do not receive training that they perceive to be useful within this process.
- Providing and receiving feedback is a source and site of power and emotion; however supervisors perceive themselves as less powerful in this process than students do
- Supervisor experiences as a student significantly influence how they supervise, most especially through negative supervision experiences



Doctoral supervision: Towards a typology of supervisor relationships

- should be aware of both the technical and social requirements to achieve a doctorate
- should carefully consider the match between their preferred research philosophies
- both need to develop emotional intelligence, through relevant training
- need to carefully manage the degree of closeness within their relationship
- need training and development in giving and receiving feedback
- need to recognize the power and emotion involved in the feedback process
- need to develop good communication skills
- should recognize and manage the power dynamics and shifting dependencies
- should explore the extent to which they have implicit/explicit expectations and obligations



Where now?

- Something for next year?
- Small-scale research or development project ideas?
- Topics for future SIG workshops?
- Ways to encourage potential new SIG members?