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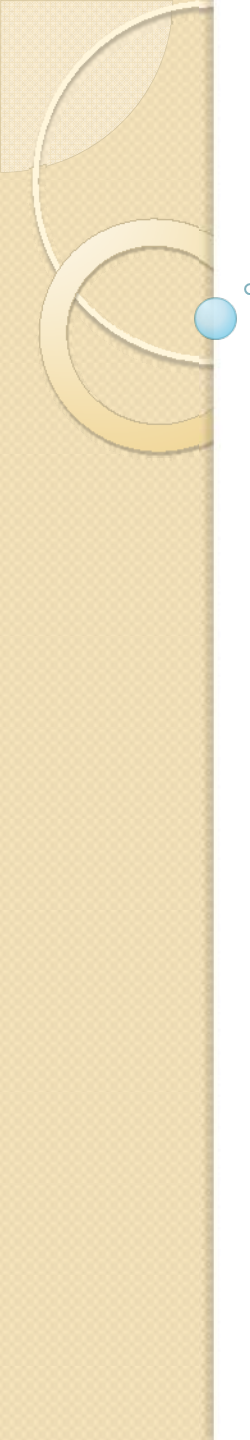
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# Teaching, learning and assessment in HRD: Innovation and creativity or more or the same?

BMAF / UFHRD Special Interest Group on HRD

Contributors: Valerie Anderson, Vivienne Griggs, Rick Holden, Jim Stewart, Geoff Tame

# 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

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

# Induction Aims

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- 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

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- 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

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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.....

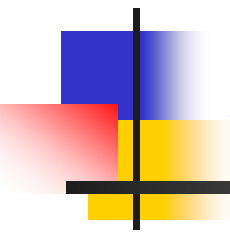
As they complete the programme.....

- 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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Professor Sally Sambrook

Dr Clair Doloriet

Professor Jim Stewart



# Doctoral supervision: Towards a typology of supervisor relationships

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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?

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