NCRM
National Centre for
Research Methods

Teaching Research Methods – Building research to develop expertise

Workpackage 5: Pedagogy of Methodological Learning Event 30 Nov 2016, RIBA, London

Workshop 3 Making constructive use of an emergent typology of methods pedagogy

Aim: As a learning community collaborate to make explicit and therefore shareable the expertise of the group, and to engage you in making best use of the research evidence alongside your professional knowledge.

3 key readings: Please add to the list!

i. Geoffrey C. Bowker & Susan Leigh Star (1999) *Sorting Things Out: Classification and its consequences*. MIT Press. (Useful theoretical text when considering typologies)
ii. Sarah Lewthwaite & Melanie Nind (2016) Teaching research methods in the social sciences: Expert perspectives on pedagogy and practice. *British Journal of Educational Studies* http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00071005.2016.1197882 (Some findings from the study)
iii. Catherine Dawson (2016) *100 activities for Teaching Research Methods*. Sage. (Prime example of focus on tactics and tasks)

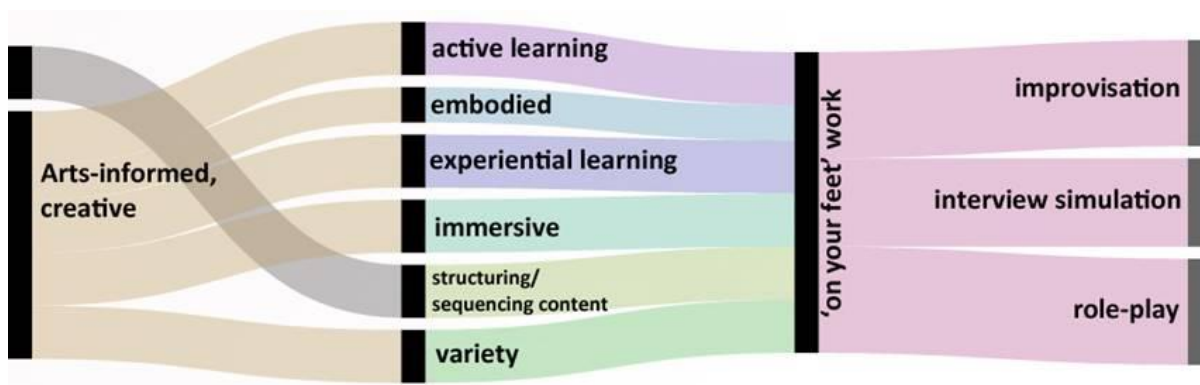### 1. What the research tells us: An emergent typology

The typology has emerged from our data analysis process and the struggle to group the thematic codes into a coherent framework.

Specifically, the pedagogic themes in the data reflect a different 'order' of pedagogic business from approach, through strategy and tactic to task.

We can envisage this as a vertical matrix.

Approach	Fluidity	Level reflecting values, theory and who I am as a teacher. An approach can reflect a group of strategies that cohere around an aspiration or belief.
Strategy	Getting closer to the action	Goal directed level, usually reflecting plans for implementing the approach (goals may be to motivate/engage/manage cognitive load/facilitate reflection etc. More over-arching than tactics and less visible to the learner.
Tactic	↓ ↓ ↓ ↓	Procedural level, usually reflecting the actions and behaviours needed to follow the strategy. Tactics may respond to feedback in situ in the dynamic of the classroom. More immediate than strategy.
Task		Learner action or activity level, what learners (or teachers) are required to do or actually do.

Horizontally there will be types too, creating a matrix style typology.

Stages in the process of working with the typology

i.   Identifying that there are different orders of pedagogic business
ii. Trying to label them appropriately
iii. Teasing out the distinctions between them
iv. Crafting operational definitions for the Codebook
v.   Applying them to the data starting with one expert panellist interview transcript and ultimately moving to whole dataset
vi. Using the concepts in the focus groups with methods teachers as provocations for discussion and to explore resonance.
vii. Testing it out with the case studies and further refining the model.

Additional work

viii. Investigating how these terms are used in the pedagogy literature
ix.   Discussing the typology with the Advisory Group
x.   Exploring its usefulness in methods pedagogy workshops.

2. **What does your engagement with our data tell us about the typology**

Activity: Which of our levels would you apply to the following excerpts of interview data?

	Approach/strategy/tactic/task
'I use film clips frequently in my teaching'	
'We show that clip because it is exactly parallel to what qualitative data analysts try to do with their own data corpus.'	
'When it comes to teaching theory, I've got it reduced down to four major elements'	
'From my experience as a teacher, it's just simply finding relevance, because we will be more engaged with the	

content when it's meaningful to us personally, and so I try to choose things that as many people in my classroom can identify.'	
'It's a very student-orientated approach, and it's not where I am the all-wisdom dispenser of knowledge, but I am the shaper, I help sculpt, if you will, a way the students framing things, to improve them, to strengthen them.'	
'the fact that they're using their own data gives them a sense a personal ownership, and so they're better able to analyse the data, because it comes from them'	
'When it comes to conceptual frameworks, I use the metaphor of the umbrella, I use anything that I can to try to make it clear.'	
'Because I'm a theatre and drama educator, my profession demands that we be on our feet for studio work, and so again I transfer that same pedagogical practice into my research methods classroom. On-your-feet work might consist of such things as … improvisation perhaps … role play'	

Does our Codebook help?

Description	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria	Exemplar	Close but no
Anything that describes how the teacher goes about their pedagogic task which coheres around a theory, set of values, principles, aspiration or identity as a particular kind of teacher.	The approach can be named (active learning etc) or unnamed; it may or may not include the descriptor *approach*.	A collection of strategies that do not cohere in some clear way.	'So it was a sort of verbal approach to quantitative methods'	Reference to an approach that is in fact one of several strategies employed as part of an overall approach

And what about these excerpts from video-stimulated recall and reflection?

	Approach/strategy/tactic/task
Learner: 'I think you signposted, which again is a really nice strategy, so you would give hints that you were going to do something. So when I said I'm still to be convinced of something, you were giving me enough security that I would get it by the end of the day that I didn't stress about it.'	
Teacher: 'We didn't do super-technical things, but I think that's important because otherwise you get people that don't understand and then you lose half the group, so it's important that the tasks are feasible for everybody, but that they give you the technique so you can go home and do it yourself.'	

Teacher: 'my main objective wasn't actually to do with the exercises. It was just to get you to realise how hard it was, and then realise that that's, right, it's hard, that's fine, now work together to make it manageable, and that can be done as well, you can begin to start to do that, and that's really all I wanted out of the session.	
Learner: 'I'm constantly thinking about how this relates to my work. So it's having a bit of space to write your own notes.'	
Learner: 'I'm a much more reflexive learner, so … that was really important for me, and I want to go away and know I've got something conceptually that I've grasped and I can apply, whereas as you say, the minutiae of the software actually I get lost'	

We could also code our data in terms of principles, tools, actions, beliefs, style, aspirations, or techniques. Would you have preferred to use these or other alternative concepts?

3. **What does your experience as methods teachers add to our understanding?**

Discussion:

   a) Can you name your approach, strategic, tactics and tasks?
   b) Which is easiest to know and to discuss?
   c) What influences the approach, strategy, tactic and tasks you use?
   d) When you innovate/make changes, at what level is this?
   e) In working with methods teachers do all the levels matter equally?
   f) Does this work for qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods?

4. **To take away for further reflection:**

Could this typology support methods teachers in reflecting and developing our practice?