

Meeting the challenge of diversity among learners

Findings from the Pedagogy of Methodological Learning study

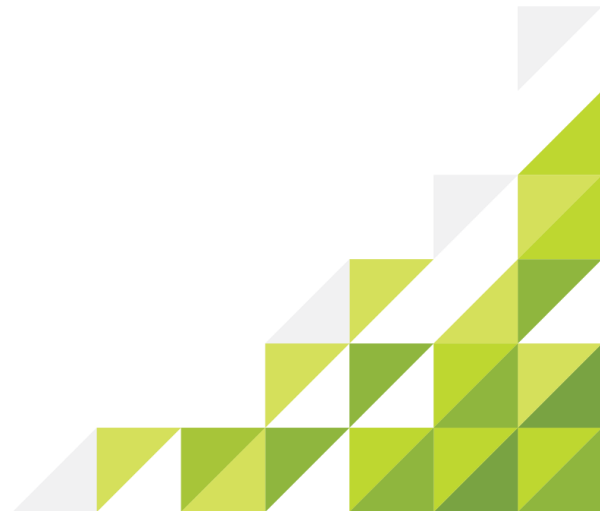
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Key resource

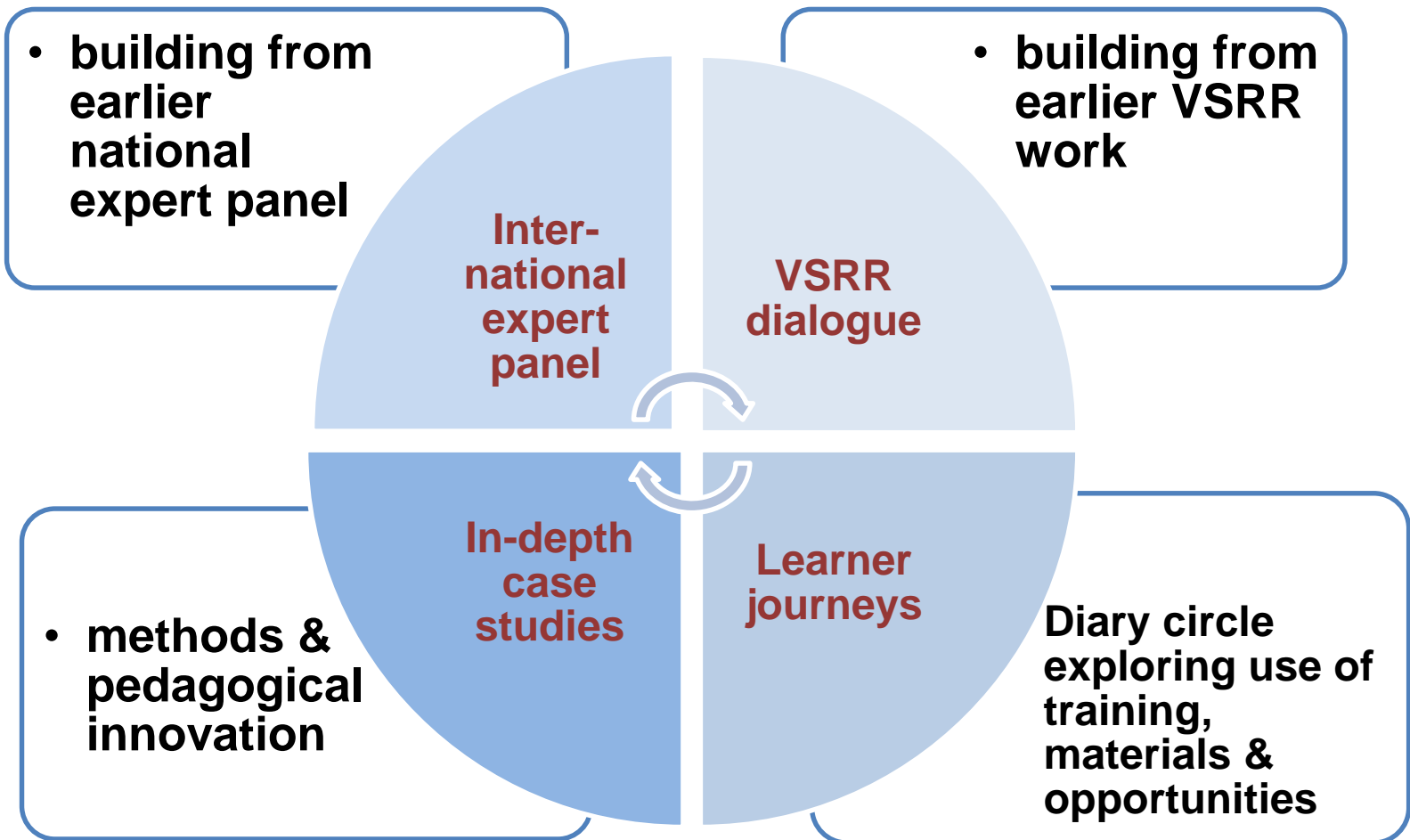
Nind, M. & Lewthwaite, S. (2018) Hard to teach: Inclusive pedagogy in social science research methods education, *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 22(1): 74-88.

Some background first

- i) Our methods
- ii) Doing, knowing, believing



Studying research methods pedagogy



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Our concerns today

What do methods teachers know about addressing diversity among learners?

What inclusive practices have they developed and adopted?

Doing, knowing, believing

- Rouse (2008) has observed a close interrelationship between what teachers do, know and believe
- The way in which learners and pedagogy are positioned depends not just on our values and ways of knowing, but the cultures we have been immersed within.
- No special needs culture in ASRM but plenty of deficit discourse

The diversity challenge

- Learners are **problematic** because they are different from each other
- Different disciplines and research problem interests; different preparation, training, skill and confidence levels

vs

- Learners are a **great teaching resource** because they are different from each other

Findings

- i) Practical solution-focused strategies
- ii) Holistic approaches



Addressing diversity: Practical strategies

- Practical ways to reach out to learners and connect them to the subject matter
- ‘I try to find themes that may cut across as many different audiences as possible’ (Saldaña)
- Making time to find out who they are, what hats they are wearing, can be within - or prior to - the session
- Ensuring vigilant monitoring re keeping up
- Using more experienced learners as a pedagogic resource in co-teaching key concepts or skills

Teaching with, through and about data

- Doing ‘anything that gets students interested in data’ (MacInnes); ‘first try to get people to a realisation that data can tell you something interesting’ (Wild)
- Developing non-technical translations (Vogt) or visual metaphors (Wild) as pedagogic hooks
- Using the students’ own data as ‘connective’: ‘you try to ground what you’re doing in what they’re doing’; ‘nothing works better than hands-on work on something they’re interested in’
- Or using the teacher’s own data, stories and identity as a point of connection

Addressing diversity: Holistic approaches

- Similarly located in terms of ‘what teachers know as a result of their experience as teachers’ (Fenstermacher 1994) - practical, personal, situated, local, relational, and somewhat tacit
- But more wholesale, joining up years’ worth of strategic moves, aided by a commitment to a pedagogic principle or passion, to develop an approach that becomes coherent or holistic.
- Often learning through doing, student-centred, active or problem-based learning

Wild's approach

- Managing cognitive load: 'I want the time between getting that idea and seeing something to address it to be as close to that as you could get'
- 'growing the visualisation first', approaching 'everything through things you can see, and, or metaphors which are often largely visual, and then backfill that with more technical things later if you need to'.
- 'chunking learning into small, small parts' & making software to show 'what happens at each stage of the process and the relationships between them'

Addressing diversity: Standpoints

Finding out the
learners'
standpoints

Connecting
learners' and
teacher's
standpoint

- ‘the importance of stressing reflexivity; knowing not only your own standpoint as a researcher but where your students can understand their own standpoint ... They take themselves as an object of reflection’ (Hesse-Biber)
- ‘trying to work from their [learners’] cultural understanding as much as possible ... trying to get into that cultural space’ (Creswell)
- This enables culturally responsive pedagogy & supports critically engaged learning

Discussion

- No bell-curve thinking or simple differentiation
- Mostly teachers using own agency to build craft knowledge
- Pedagogic leaders critically reflexive in developing their strategies into an approach
- Working through data provides a bridge for connecting people, evidence and ideas

Conclusion

- Neither inclusive pedagogy nor methods pedagogy are particularly well-understood; both are being generated on the ground
- Data and standpoints are used in inclusive teaching to make connections and to support learning among diverse groups
- Through enhancing pedagogic dialogue, we are beginning to get to know the pedagogies a little better

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