**Inclusive pedagogy meets research methods pedagogy – reaching out to learners**

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**ECER 2016 Abstract**

The need to build social research capacity, and with this to build competence in research methods, is felt across Europe (Kottmann, 2011) in response to the challenges of the global knowledge economy. Only recently, however, has interest grown in the pedagogical aspects surrounding research methods. This reflects the realisation that simply delivering courses may not be enough (Strayhorn 2009) and that educationalists can make a critical contribution to capacity building strategies (Nind, 2015). If our attentions are turned to the pedagogical dimension, then pedagogy needs to be understood in context - social, cultural, historical and political (Williams, 2009) and questions about the inclusiveness of the pedagogy arise.

The research discussed in this paper is part of an overall package of research with the aims of: (i) advancing an emerging pedagogical culture and content knowledge for social science research methods teaching; (ii) creating a typology of pedagogical approaches for social research methods; and (iii) developing a coherent theoretical framework for methods teaching to inform national practice. The broad questions include: How is the subject matter of advanced and innovative research methods taught and learned? When, and how, does methods learning produce practical benefits? How can methods teachers’ methodological and pedagogical craft be most powerfully articulated? In this paper the aim and research question relate to the above, but the questions are more specifically focused in the agenda of inclusion. Thus, what do methods teachers know about the barriers to developing methods/methodological competence? What inclusive practices have they adopted? Is it helpful to bring in theories of inclusive pedagogy when theorising methods pedagogy?

Values, according to Alexander (2009, 18) ‘spill out untidily at every point in the analysis of pedagogy’. Applying a lens of critical or inclusive pedagogy to a consideration of the teaching and learning of research methods means that such values are made explicit. For Alexander, pedagogy is ‘the act of teaching together with its attendant discourse’ (p.11), and the discourse of inclusive pedagogy is not often associated with adult learning of research methods, where the pedagogical discourse generally is under-developed (Kilburn et al., 2014). Research indicates that learning research methods is hard (e.g. Howard & Brady, 2015). For teachers, challenges are exacerbated by the lack of pedagogic culture and curriculum (Earley, 2014) with added complexities of international differences in preparation and priority. Of the challenges associated with research methods pedagogy, the question of the perceived fear of methods (and statistics) (e.g. Baloglu and Zelhart, 2003) has led to a deficit discourse in which ill-prepared, fearful learners are blamed for making teaching them difficult. An inclusive pedagogical lens is helpful ‘for shifting from deficit to asset perspectives’ (Hattam et al., 2009, 306).

The stance adopted in this paper is that pedagogy is more than technique or method (Sellar, 2009) and ‘the coming together of the teacher and learner and the production of knowledge is a political process with inherent implications for teaching practice’ (Nind, Curtin & Hall, in press). The way the study is being conducted involves bringing together a community of stakeholders to understand pedagogical practice as reliant on community knowledge, the development of which they contribute to through collaborative theory building and praxis. Embodying an inclusive pedagogical perspective has led to our concern within the wider project with pedagogies that connect across the diversity of learners and to some extent echoing Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011, 814) by exploring teachers’ craft knowledge ‘in terms of what they do, why and how’ including what they ‘know and believe’, especially when this takes an inclusive turn.

**Methodology**

The research design incorporates connected linked parts:

1. using an expert panel approach (after Galliers & Huang, 2012) to elicit and advance the craft and pedagogical content knowledge (see Shulman, 1987) of pedagogic leaders (see Lucas & Claxton, 2013);
2. combining this with teachers’ and learners’ video-stimulated recall and reflection to drawn out the hard to know (Nind et al., in press);
3. using diary methods (see Bartlett & Milligan, 2015) within a learning journey diary circle (after Broderick et al., 2012) to facilitate methods learners’ individual and communal reflections on their teaching and learning opportunities and materials; and
4. conducting in-depth case studies of pedagogical innovation.

The paper draws primarily on the first, completed part and the third, longitudinal part. The methodology values teachers and learners and their communities of practice. In keeping with the spirit of inclusive (education and) research, it involves them rather than judges them (Nind, 2014), and creates spaces to engage them in deepening the conversations (Stacey, 2012) about pedagogy.

The data discussed in the paper were generated through semi-structured interviews with two panels of pedagogic leaders or experts, one from the UK (n8) and one of methods teachers working across locations in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia (n13). Emergent themes were discussed amongst the panel members, three focus groups of methods teachers, and an online panel of methods learners to establish their credibility and to suggest useful lines for more in-depth analysis. Simultaneously, data generated in the longitudinal online diary circle of methods learners’ reflections on their learning journeys allowed for an additional lens on key issues. It is not just the recurrent themes that are of interest, but the importance key ideas have for individuals, and responses to them in dialogue. The lens of inclusive pedagogy has been applied to the data rather than emerging from it as a dominant theme.

**Findings & Conclusions**

Among the participants, there were concerns with addressing social injustices within and through methods learning experiences. The data provide a reminder of Freire’s education as politics. The concept of praxis encompasses the critical reflection and action necessary within educational practices ‘with the goal of creating not only a better learning environment, but also a better world’ (McLaren, 2000, 3). The goal of creating pedagogical situations that empower (would-be) researchers to conduct ethical, worthwhile research echoes across the data.

One important emergent theme connecting inclusive pedagogy and methods pedagogy surrounds the concept of research paradigms as methodological standpoints, which was very important to some of the pedagogic leader participants. Understanding research standpoints was central to critically engaging with (or challenging) Western-centric (and other) dominant methods of doing – and teaching – research. Standpoints were also personal, with the need for connecting the standpoint of the methods teacher as a researcher and the standpoints of the learners well recognised by some.

Another theme surrounds changing the deficit-oriented positioning of methods learners, recognising that fear of methods/statistics may reside in the teachers as much as the learners; that it is the responsibility of teachers to counter anxiety and foster methodological/statistical imaginations. Through deepening the conversation and enhancing pedagogic dialogue and culture a range of pedagogic practices devoted to interrogating biases in the methods curriculum and reaching out to very diverse student groups have been illuminated. While methods teachers (in common with other teachers, see Sellar, 2009) need support to articulate their pedagogies, their pedagogic approaches are often reminiscent of hooks’ (1994) engaged pedagogy or Corbett’s (2001) connective pedagogy. The data indicate that the idea of inclusive pedagogy meeting methods pedagogy has merit, and that this is particularly important in the complex international, socio-political context of research methods capacity building.

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