In search of a social science research methods pedagogy for the digital era: the story so far

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What I am going to talk about

• Introduction
• Definitions
• What we know (and what we don’t)
  – Factors influencing choice of digital technology
  – Whether digital technology is enhancing or changing the ways in which social science research methods is being taught & learnt
  – How digital technology supports pedagogy
• Reflections and ways forward
About me and my research

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I'm a #PhD student @NCRMUK @unisouthampton looking at the role of digital technology in the teaching and learning of social research methods.

THE PEDAGOGY OF METHODOLOGICAL LEARNING
How are advanced social science research methods taught and learned?

http://pedagogy.ncrm.ac.uk/
Evidence review

- In-depth literature review
- Papers from 2006 onwards
- Deep reading
- Thematic analysis
  - Themes developed based on wider reading of the literature
Key terms
Advanced social research methods (ASRM)

- taught (short) courses
- aimed at PhD students & practitioners
- assume prior knowledge
- methods more difficult/innovative
Digital technology in teaching & learning

• the use of computer technology (devices & software applications)
• the use & or storing of data & information
• the semantic web (Berners Lee et al., 2001)
• managed learning systems
• social-media systems
Pedagogy

“what people do in teaching and learning situations …what they perceive to be meaningful, important and relevant”

Teaching & learning ASRM
What makes the teaching & learning of ASRM challenging & distinctive?

- **Theory & practice**
  - Assumes prior knowledge & skills

- **Critical thinking**
  - Complex decision making

- **Multi-disciplinary**

- **Teaching through data**
  - Methods typically complex & sophisticated

More difficult to master
## ASRM pedagogic goals & strategies

### Active learning
- Making the research process visible
- Actively engaging students in aspects of the research process
- Highlighting connections between theory & practice

### Learning by doing
- Facilitating learning through the experience of conducting research

### Critical reflection
- Encouraging critical reflection on research practice

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Kilburn, Nind & Wiles (2014)
What is the state of knowledge about the role of digital technology in the teaching and learning of ASRM
What digital technology is being used in the teaching & learning of ASRM?

**Generic**
- VLEs
- assessment tools
- discussion forums
- collaboration tools
- MOOCs
- social media

**ASRM-specific**
- data collections tools
- data analysis software
- data visualisation tools
- online data sets & resources
Factors influencing choice of digital technology in teaching ASRM

- Socio-technological-political environment
- Institution / department
- Teaching space
- Teachers & learners
- Digital technology affordances
Is digital technology enhancing or changing the ways in which ASRM is being taught and learnt?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active learning</th>
<th>Learning through doing</th>
<th>Critical reflection</th>
<th>Additional affordances</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstrating techniques &amp; methods</td>
<td>• Designing, collecting, analysing data</td>
<td>• Using data to discuss theory</td>
<td>• Collective learning space</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Practising</td>
<td>• Experimenting</td>
<td>• Comparing different data sources on a topic</td>
<td>• Identifying problematic threshold concepts</td>
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<td>• Testing knowledge &amp; understanding</td>
<td>• Peer review</td>
<td>• Reflecting on own/others research</td>
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How is digital technology supporting/developing ASRM pedagogy?

Supports & promotes pedagogical goals:
- facilitating active learning, learning through doing and critical reflection

Builds student/teacher confidence:
- developing students understanding of data analysis software architecture & skills in using its features
- creating web interfaces that allow students to explore survey data with minimal guidance
- using interactive/collaborative tools to create collective, safe learning spaces
How is digital technology supporting/developing ASRM pedagogy?

| Helps students achieve their learning outcomes | • practising ASRM skills & exam technique  
|                                             | • receiving regular, fast feedback  
|                                             | • identifying problematic threshold concepts |
| Facilitates communication                    | • between students, students & teachers, students and the outside world |
| Assists with breaking down barriers to learning | • facilitates access to learning resources  
|                                             | • time & space |
Reflections and ways forward
My research questions

- Are different pedagogic strategies needed for different ASRM learning environments (completely online or blended?)
- What role can digital technology play in the teaching and learning of concepts and ideas that underpin ASRM?
- What role can digital technology play in ensuring ASRM students have threshold concepts in place?
- Is digital technology being used to facilitate students in becoming fluent in the language of ASRM? Does this fluency facilitate new ways of thinking & forms of practice?
- How is digital technology being used to facilitate ASRM critical thinking?
- How can digital technology support the learning through doing of ASRM?
Questions for you

How are you using digital technology in your teaching?

How is the use of digital technology affecting/developing your teaching practice?

How has your use of digital technology in your teaching helped your students’ learning?
Your questions
Thank you

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