
How wider benefits of learning have been measured for research purposes

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Benefits of Learning

Aim of the day

- To explore how to measure wider benefits of learning in institutions / by practitioners

How?

- Not giving answers
 - Issues from research on the wider benefits of learning – there may be some useful lessons to learn from
 - Application of these lessons to measurement of wider benefits in institutions / by practitioners to be discussed in the round tables
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What we'll cover this afternoon

- Measurement of success in practitioner settings
 - Lessons from researching the wider benefits of learning
 - Application of these lessons to measuring wider benefits in institutions during round table discussions
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Measuring Success in the Learning and Skills Sector (2004) DfES, LSC, Ofsted, ALI

- In order to:
 - “properly recognise and celebrate learners’ achievements”
 - “evaluate the effectiveness of providers”
 - “be able to report at national levels on trends”
 - “provide more extensive national benchmarking data”
 - “We aim to achieve consistency but recognise that some measures may not apply in every setting”
 - Success measured at the levels of individual and institution (measures “take into account a provider’s mission, the range and scope of the curriculum offered and the effectiveness of the provider in meeting its learners’ diverse needs and abilities”)
 - Value added and distance travelled
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RARPA (Recognising And Recording Progression and Achievement), LSC, NIACE, LSDA.

Five steps:

- Clearly stated learning aims for all programmes
- Initial assessment
- Identification of learning objectives
- Recording of learner's progress and achievements during the programme
- End of programme assessment and review

Involves initial, formative and summative assessment

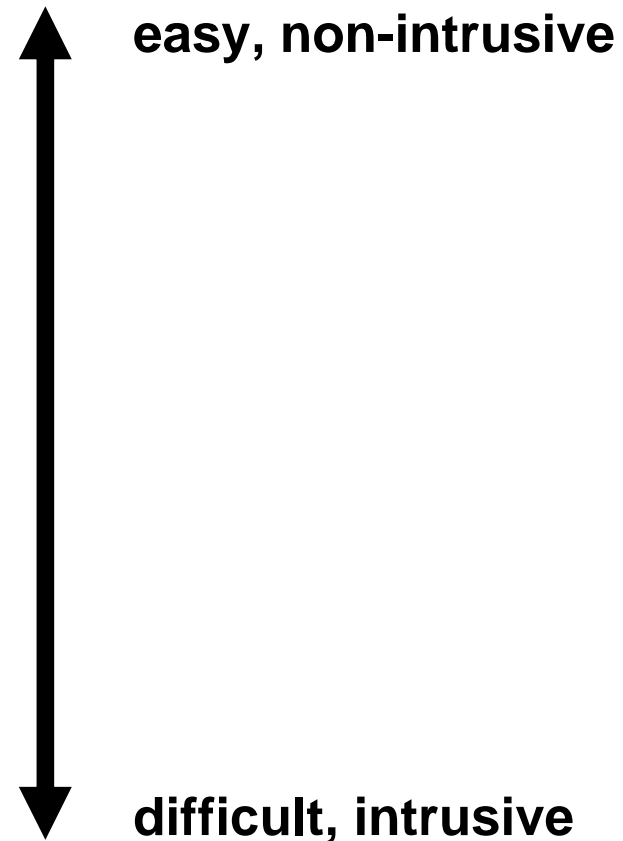
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- Mixed methods
 - Validity and triangulation
 - Life course approaches
 - Ethics
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Quantitative measures

Used for statistical analyses of large datasets

Used in survey methods

- giving up smoking
- taking more exercise
- social and civic activities
- attitudes
- family relationships
- efficacy
- malaise



What quantitative approaches can do

- Estimate average sizes of effects
 - Make comparisons
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Qualitative measures

used in case study and ethnographic research

apply to learner-centred counselling, guidance, and formative assessment

- Unstructured
 - Not intrusive if sensitively handled
 - Not necessarily predicted
 - In the terms of the individual
 - Context dependent
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What qualitative approaches can do

Detailed understanding of complex relationships and processes

- personal journeys (progression) through participation in learning
 - full understanding because takes context into account
 - identify unexpected processes and outcomes
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Advantages of combining quantitative and qualitative approaches

or form-filling and formative assessment with guidance

- **Complementary** answer different specific questions, rounder picture
 - **Triangulation** test validity
 - **Challenge** apparent paradoxes challenge interpretations and lead to new RQs
 - **Development** results from one approach inform the methodologies of the next
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Validity and triangulation

- Self-report
 - Reports from practitioners
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Life course approaches

- Biographical case studies
 - Statistical analyses of cohort data

 - Take context into account
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Ethics

- We are using them
 - Informed consent
 - Can opt out
 - Keep as fully informed as possible throughout
 - Confidentiality protected
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