

Using master's projects to evaluate researcher development

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**Please write what you hope to get
from this workshop on a post-it!**



Please add your post-it to the flip-chart

Introductions

Workshop Outline

- Introductions
- Group discussion on evaluation
- The approach used:
 - Background to these projects
 - Student selection
 - Project design
 - Supervisory approaches
- Impact identified (What we found out!)
- Further work.....
- Group discussion on what you might do with thi

Show of Hands!

- Have you supervised a Masters student project?
- Other supervisory experience (eg doctoral or UG)?

Round Table Discussion 1



What evaluation experience
do you have?



Background

- Researcher Development at Heriot-Watt
- Impact Evaluation Group (Rugby Team)
- Vitae Impact Framework
- University of Edinburgh MSc in Training & Development Management

University of Edinburgh MSc in Training & Development Management

Work Based Learning Projects (WBL)

- 20-24 days duration
- learning agreement between supervisor and student/UoE
- Student submits a report including a reflective learning section,
- project report is an extra requirement for these projects (not a module requirement)
- Supervisor submits a report on student performance

Dissertation Projects

- Professionally relevant research project
- Some classroom elements to introduce necessary knowledge and skills
- 2000 word research proposal; 15000 word report,

Student Selection

- I Provide project outlines in advance (variety of evaluation projects)
- First meeting with student and course leader
- Indicate possibility of dissertation project at start of WBL project

The projects to date...

Four WBL projects

1. Effective Researcher Evaluation (2009)
2. Enterprising Summer School Evaluation (2010)
3. Induction programme evaluation (2011)
4. Effective researcher evaluation (2012)



Three dissertation projects

1. Perceptions of research staff's CPD (2009)
2. International Research Students' Skills Development (2011)
3. LEADS evaluation (2012)

Project Selection

- A flexible approach is required
 - Student needs to have ownership
- Offer a choice of projects
 - Methodology similar in all, but the choice element reinforces student ownership

Project Design 1

- Need to match student objectives with activity/learning
- Need to identify different Impact levels to be evaluated and the tools/methods to do this
- Need to ensure that Masters Learning Outcomes can be achieved
- Three levels designed into each project...

Project Design 2 – the 3 levels

At outset- unsure of student ability, commitment etc...

Project designed with three possible levels of success:

1. An ok project – good enough for student to pass but nothing special, have enough data to start with
2. A good project with student heading towards distinction, survey & interviews/focus group, useful results for scope for student to shine
3. A great project – possibility for further more in-depth research, all you could wish for from it, great insights, publishable? Vitae workshops etc...

Project Design 3 – the methodology

Method	Data provided	Student to collect data	IF Levels
Engagement data	√		0, 1
Happy sheets	√		1
On-line questionnaire		√	1,2,3,4
SKIPI		√	2
Semi-structured interviews		√	2,3,4
Focus groups		√	2,3,4

Collect and use a variety of data sets to collect evidence of impact at the different levels of the impact framework.

Supervision: A situational leadership approach

Directing - supervisor defines the role and tasks of the student, and provides close supervision. The student has little input into the decision making.

Coaching - supervisor defines the roles and tasks but seeks input from the student and provides context and explains the reasoning behind the decisions that they make.

Supporting - day to day decisions are made by the student. The supervisor facilitates and provides support for the student but the student is mainly in control.

Delegating - While the supervisor is still in control, the student decides how and when the supervisor will be involved.

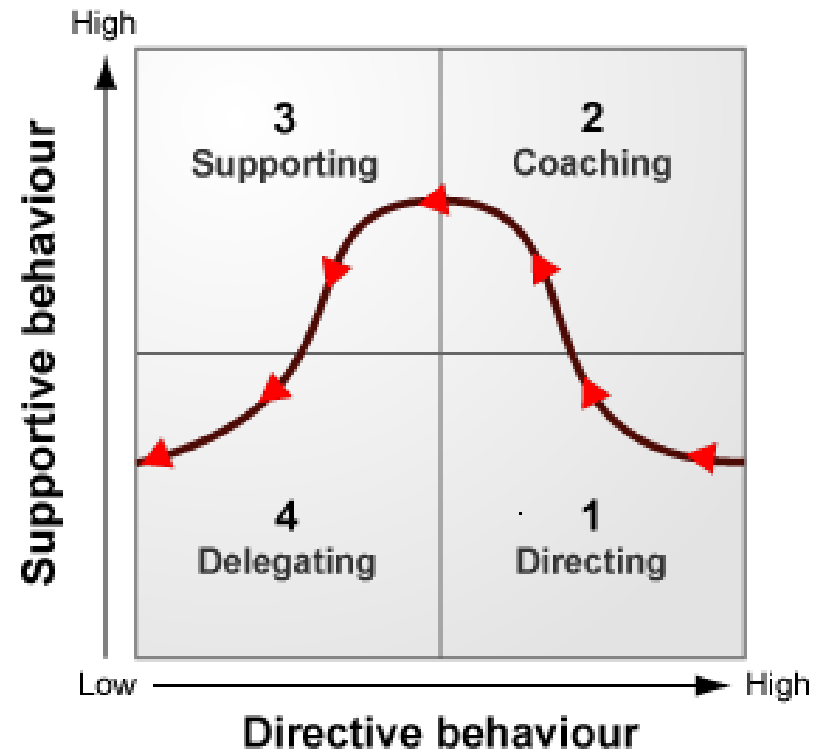


Diagram taken from Vitae: <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/14884/Managing-and-supporting-your-researcher.html>

Supervisory stages- Stage 1:

Desk Based: identify background reading, develop project plan (Gant Chart) analysis of engagement data (quantitative), student writes a short report, starts literature review.

Allows me to check the student understanding, their writing and analytical skills and to ensure that any training required can be instigated early in the project.

Supervisory style mainly directive!

Supervisory stages- Stage 2:

Further analysis of engagement data, analysis of happy sheets (quantitative and qualitative), development of on-line survey, more short report writing. Improvements, edits and additions to first report. Modification of project plan if required. Further develop literature review

Student develops their skills through coaching supervisory approach. Deepens their understanding of data the analysis and how to identify evidence at different levels of impact framework (Mainly 1 &2). Further focus on report writing and data presentation/analysis.

Supervisory style - coaching/directive

Supervisory stages- Stage 3:

Run on-line survey, analyse survey data, identify participants for focus groups/interviews, start focus groups/interviews. Continued report writing, plan final report.

Student should be becoming more in control, supervisory focus on improving analytical skills and reporting skills.

Supervisory style - supporting/coaching

Supervisory stages- Stage 4:

Finish focus groups/interviews and analyse data, write final report.

Student should be in control, supervisory focus on supporting final report writing.

Supervisory style - supporting/coaching

NB: for WBL projects this stage might overlap with dissertation project planning

Overall impact identified

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Eff. Researcher 1	√	√	√	
Eff Researcher 2	√	√	√	
Summer School	√	√	√	√
PGR Induction	√	√	√	
LEADS	√	√	√	

Case Study: Enterprise Summer School Evaluation

Level 1 Evidence

- the majority of participants having found the workshops enjoyable.
- participants indicated that they had many opportunities to participate in the workshop discussions and found the pace of the workshops appropriate.
- 100% of the on-line survey respondents indicated that they would recommend the summer school to other researchers.

Case Study: Enterprise Summer School Evaluation

Level 2 Evidence

- 100% of the respondents found the skills and knowledge gained on the summer school useful in their research.
- 100% of the respondents indicated that they had improved their: knowledge of research commercialisation, understanding of entrepreneurship, knowledge of knowledge transfer
- 71.4% indicated that their project management skills had improved .
- 100% of respondents indicated that their understanding of their research area had improved.

Case Study: Enterprise Summer School Evaluation

Level 3 Evidence

- 100% of the respondents had opportunities to use this knowledge, with 71.5% having such opportunities often /very often.
- 71.4% of the respondents had shared what they had learned with research colleagues
- 85.7% of the respondents had been stimulated to attend other courses on enterprise and knowledge exchange.
- 71.4% of respondents had been stimulated to enter enterprise, knowledge exchange based competitions (e.g. RCUK business plan competitions)
- 71.4% indicated that they had made changes to their research as a result of attending the summer school.

Case Study: Enterprise Summer School Evaluation

Level 4 Evidence

- 28.6% of respondents indicated that they were involved in enterprise or commercialisation projects since attending the summer school.

Changes made to programmes

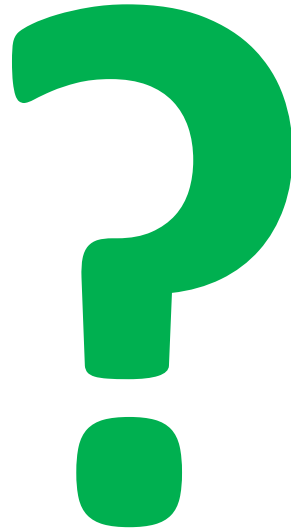
- Change in timing of events:
 - ER split into 2 separate days;
 - LEADS split into weekly workshops (not on Fridays)
- Significant improvements to the LEADS organisation and administration
- Enterprising Summer School run with increased support for business planning competitions

Much of the what was being offered was well received and needed little change findings reinforced that

Post project work

- Further analysis of the data
- Further data collection (e.g. SKIPI for ER)
- Re-run evaluation after changes
- On-going evaluation
- Sharing the learning: (Publishing/workshops?)

Questions



Round Table Discussion 2



How might you use this approach in your institution?

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Acknowledgements

Shona Morse (University of Edinburgh)

The Students

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Links

- University of Edinburgh MSc in Training & Development Management - <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/education/graduate-school/taught-degrees/mtd>
- Vitae Impact Evaluation group - <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/1418/Rugby-Team-activities.html>
- Vitae Impact Framework - http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/IEG_Report_2012.pdf

Thank You!

An alternative approach...

- Soft Systems Methodology
- details of Matra's Project