Ryan M, Saunders C, Rainsford E, Thompson

Improving Research Methods Teaching and Learning in Politics and
International Relations: A 'Reality Show' Approach.

Politics 2014, 34(1), 85-97

Copyright:

This is the authors accepted manuscript of an article that has been published in its final definitive form by Sage, 2014

DOI link to article:

<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9256.12020>

Date deposited:

08/11/2017

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/)

*Later version published in 2014 in *Politics* Vol. 34(1) pp. 85-97.

Improving research methods teaching and learning in politics and international relations: A 'reality show' approach

Abstract:

Student dissatisfaction with undergraduate research methods courses in Politics and International Relations is common across the sector. We suggest methods' teaching suffers from an unhealthy disassociation between research in theory – which we call 'method acting' – and research in practice. Our critical interviews with eminent researchers expose the compromises professional researchers make when designing their research. Students appreciate these insights when combined with first-hand research opportunities. We call this approach a 'reality show'. Our analysis based on survey data and students' evaluations of our approach suggest these aids can provide an effective resource to improve teaching and learning of research methods.

Key words:

Research methods, pedagogy, audio-recorded interviews, experiential learning

I Introduction

Research methods teaching is an integral part of the common core syllabus for many British undergraduate degree programmes in political science (Parker, 2010). European political science organisations recommended to the Bologna Process Meeting in 2003 that 'methodology (including statistics)' be taught alongside other key elements of the discipline as a minimum requirement of a Bachelor's degree in the subject (Reinalda, 2008, p.391). Few would argue that research methods modules should be denied this status. To know 'how we know what we know', and 'how we can find things out' is foundational to all scientific learning. A need to understand research methodology, then, is, by definition, common across all scientific disciplines, not exempting social sciences. Despite its emerging recognition in the Bologna process, the way research methods are taught varies widely across institutions. Research methods components of degrees vary between 'anything from a short series of seminars or workshops to courses that run for a semester, a year, or even over several years' (Garner et al, 2009, p.2).

Flexibility is not necessarily a bad thing, for practicing research in politics and international relations is rarely straightforward, requiring bespoke rather than rigid approaches. The same holds for the teaching and learning of this process. But research methods training, we argue, should not be merely an add-on or an afterthought. It should be integral to the student learning process because of its importance, at a minimum, for helping students to understand the output presented in books and journal articles they read across the whole of their curriculum. Teaching research methods provides an interesting challenge requiring a student-centred approach (Edwards and Thatcher, 2004, p.195) and plenty of innovation. Perhaps it is a challenge that some teachers of research methods are not rising to as best as they could.

Undergraduate student dissatisfaction with research methods training is a general phenomenon across the sector. According to Winn (1995, p.203),

teaching research methods to social science undergraduates presents a number of dilemmas, including the development of effective means of providing students with practical research experience and the difficulty of engaging the interest of students in a subject which for many is not intrinsically appealing and to which some have a long-standing aversion.

Furthermore, in institutions where research methods courses are not treated seriously, they are often left in the hands of early-career researchers with heavy teaching commitments. This is not to deny that some are often most suited to the role, and that their enthusiasm and talents often make up for their relative lack of experience. On the other hand, in institutions where the teaching of research methods is considered an important and serious endeavour, senior research staff may bring wisdom and depth, but lack enthusiasm (Garner et al 2009, p.3). While it might be a stretch to say that teaching a research methods module is actively avoided by many, and it is of course a passion for some, it is a struggle for many.

Garner et al's (2009) summation of the ills affecting methods teaching holds that it is 'inchoate', with individuals working in isolation, that it lacks pedagogical skill and a network of support, has no overarching framework, no debates around key issues, and provides no clear guidance for new teachers. We argue that this rather sorry state of affairs can be at least partially related to the development of a culture of 'method acting' in the teaching of research methods. Methods tend to be taught lecture by lecture, by researchers who attempt to assume, based on formal knowledge gained by non-experiential means, the character of other researchers who have experienced using the method. For sure, there are good and bad method actors. Yet, this approach tends to separate the theory and practice of research. Consequently, it presents different methodologies as 'distinct' and holds that particular methods have generic strengths and weaknesses that can be learned by rote rather than through practice and/or critique. The effect can be to reinforce unhelpful barriers to creative and complementary research strategies that have dogged the discipline for centuries. It can dazzle students with jargon and rhetoric and tends to emphasise research output (data, results, analysis and recommendations) rather than processes. Method-acting, we argue – even when it is performed at its best by enthusiastic and knowledgeable teachers – needs to be supplemented with a 'reality show'.

In reality, the research process is messy and requires compromises. Students need to know that researchers are often forced to make difficult decisions in their research design and that these decisions are often specific to certain research problems. Consequently, the much touted generic strengths and weaknesses of particular methods do not always apply when methods are studied in context. Furthermore, some scholars are firmly stating the case for methodological pluralism, making it 'important to introduce students to different ways scholars are presently doing research without a priori privileging one over the other' (Howard 2010: p.393). By promoting a 'reality show' that involves critiquing and practicing a range of methods in context, our article is a much needed contribution to the development of what should be a field in its own right: research methods

teaching.

II Theorising the causes of the malaise

We put forward both supply side and demand side explanations for deficits in, and dissatisfaction with methods teaching. In so doing, our arguments resonate with the approach of Bos and Schneider (2006), who found evidence of both students' anxieties (demand) and teachers' concerns about imparting skills and knowledge (supply). It is therefore necessary to address both students' real anxieties *and* methods teachers' understanding of these anxieties to make teaching of methods useful and relevant to students.

On the supply-side, research methods teaching is often seen as a task for the research methods module convener and individual dissertation supervisors rather than a core learning objective across degree programmes. For example, very few British Politics modules will include the learning objective 'students will learn how research is undertaken in British Politics'. As Dickovick (2009, p.140) states, module outlines...

...that orient a student to the sustained importance of methodology present a crucial first step in an approach that seeks to make a course about the integration of method, theory and evidence. It also signals that students will be assessed upon the development of analytical skills and not simply the capacity to retain information.

If we are serious about teaching methods, module designs across the board require integration of methodological learning.

Healey and Jenkins (2009: p.7) distinguish devices employed within a teaching programme that may be research-led (focusing on highlighting up-to-date research expertise within a discipline) or research-based (focusing on allowing students to experience doing research). We agree that there is danger in adopting a research output approach to research methods teaching across substantive modules. Perhaps research-led teaching needs to mean more.

'Research-led teaching' clearly evokes the idea that those at the cutting edge of any field are best placed to deliver unique, exciting and accurate teaching of that subject matter. They are most likely to have vast and up to date knowledge of the specialism. They are, after all, in their own research, extracting data and developing theory, refining it through engagement with the broader research community and gathering knowledge on advances in the discipline through activities ranging from conference attendance to reviewing journal submissions. The dominance of 'methods acting' approaches, where research-led teaching does not often include testimony of how researchers themselves undertook their research, means that the importance of research output is too often abstracted from the importance of the process(es) that produced it. This reduces the teaching of methods in politics and international relations to imparting knowledge of political argument and rhetoric at the expense of scientific argument. Secondly, teachers are unfortunately often inclined to see students as neither part of the research community nor trainee researchers-in-waiting. Even if they do not engage in academic research themselves (and most should), students' degrees ought to bestow on them the ability to understand and critique research as future end-users of it.

On the demand side the common finding among scholars is that students find methods classes 'dry' and 'irrelevant' leading them to not engage with the material as much as they would with a topic-based course. Students consistently underperform and give low ratings in module evaluations (Edwards and Thatcher, 2004; Burgess, 1981; Schutt *et al*, 1984). Furthermore students whose general concern is with post-degree employability fail to grasp connections between employability and research skills. Qualitative data from formal evaluations of our research methods module at [anonymous university] revealed that some students, across a range of abilities, were unimpressed with any part of their methods training that was not directly beneficial to 'dissertation preparation.' It became clear that students (like some of their teachers) failed to see a connection between an ability to understand, critique and do academic research and practical problem-solving in a real world context.

To us, this seems a sad state of affairs. Research methods should certainly not be thought of so narrowly by students or their teachers. On the contrary, research methods should be associated with opening up opportunities rather than being conceived narrowly as a means to an end. Research methods pedagogy can be used to bring people within disciplines together in an era of increasingly problematic specialisation - sharing teaching, research and subject-specific skills. Moreover a pluralistic approach to methods in general can open up the possibility for communication and learning beyond traditional disciplinary or sub-disciplinary straight-jackets. Perhaps it is a culture shift within the discipline that is needed first and foremost.

III Strategies for change

As a step towards realising this culture shift, it is important to engage students in the teaching of research methods. Student engagement is considered to be:

concerned with the interaction between the time, effort and other relevant resources invested by both students and their institutions intended to optimise the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students and the performance, and reputation of the institution.

(Trowler 2010, p.3)

Although much of the literature on student engagement is concerned with student *involvement* and how it may improve student experience, some scholars, for example Fredricks *et al* (2004) and Bloom (1965) discuss engagement in terms of behavioural, emotional and cognitive dimensions and how these are linked to student performance (Trowler 2010). Student engagement is considered to be achieved through active and collaborative learning, participation in challenging academic activities, formative communication with academic staff, involvement in enriching educational experiences and feeling legitimated and supported by university learning communities (Coates 2007). Our approach aims to use these techniques to engage students via active learning that makes

research methods increasingly relevant and real to students, addressing both supply and demand drivers of dissatisfaction.

What is the potential for improvement that could address both the supply and demand side of the problem? An emerging body of literature showcases different strategies for teaching research methods.¹ However, out of nearly 40 articles the Political Studies Association list under research methods on their online resource for teaching and learning, nearly half of them deal with teaching a specific methodology rather than research methods more generally. In particular, strategies and resources for teaching quantitative methods have been given special attention (see for example MacInness, 2009), with calls for and development of resources for integration across the curriculum (Parker *et al*, 2008, Clough, 2012). This is because, as Parker *et al* (2008, p.10) argue, 'For too long, quantitative methods teachers have carried out in isolation the difficult job of teaching a topic both feared and disliked by many students'. We argue that this is also the case for research methods in general. Although it is high time that the challenges of teaching quantitative methods were recognised, focusing on one particular approach to political science could be said to contribute to the prevailing culture of 'method acting'. This may help students understand a set of methodologies in the abstract, but does little to enrich their understanding of the processes that lead to the choices of method and the challenges faced during the life of research projects. Our contribution builds on existing literature by exposing these processes and challenges across a range of research methods, including but not limited to quantitative methods.

The idea of an 'integrative approach' of training in research methods across the curriculum is also more widely promoted in the literature (Parker *et al*, 2008; Dickovick, 2009; Bos and Schneider, 2006). Dickovick (2009, p.140) argues that this is important because:

if content is not simply an end in its own right but rather is a vehicle for instruction in how to work with theories, methods and evidence, then transparency about theoretical and methodological questions should accompany transparency about the empirical content.

Such an approach has two main advantages (Dickovick, 2009). Firstly, it signals to students that methodology is something they are expected to learn; its relevance is not restricted to those who conduct primary research. Secondly, it encourages critical thinking as it 'redirects attention from the assumption that readings are fundamentally about given facts; it emphasises scholars' choices about how factual interpretation happens and how these interpretations may be more or less limited' (Dickovick 2009, p. 141). Upon making such changes to his own courses, Dickovick found that student satisfaction with methods training improved dramatically. In this instance, changing the 'supply' side of methods teaching had positive impacts on students 'demand' to understand research methods.

There are various ways that research methods can be taught to address the demand side problem. Recently, Ashe (2012) has shown that an innovative yet straightforward potential remedy of the demand problem, where students do not see the relevance of research methods beyond their current studies, is to harness the critical foundations of politics as a subject discipline within appropriate modules. In that instance, students were able to draw upon political theory to challenge and evaluate perceptions of post-university employability, reflecting on its consequences for their approach to learning.

Another way of addressing the demand side problem, which is also linked to the active learning proposed in the student engagement literature, is a shift in the method of teaching from traditional lectures to student's involvement in real-life research projects (Parker *et al*, 2008; Winn, 1995). Experiential learning has been shown to improve the learning experience and deepen students' knowledge, while providing them with practical experience at conducting research and showing them benefits and setbacks of methods, rather than merely having a theoretical understanding (see for example Parker *et al*, 2008; Anderson and Sutton, 2011; and Leston-Bandeira, 2010).

Moreover, experiential learning can empower students to think creatively and critically about research problems and give them ownership of genuinely innovative personal solutions to research

problems. This experience should increase employability as many jobs for politics and international relations graduates do involve either primary research or, at a minimum, require use and/or evaluation of secondary material. There are various ways of doing this, ranging from full-on work placements to making research projects an integral part of courses (Leston-Bandeira, 2010). If time and resources are limited (Edwards and Thatcher, 2004), a compromise is to make use of real-life examples, which is known to be effective in the teaching of social science methodology (Nguyen and Lam, 2009: 168, Adeney and Carey, 2009: 196).

IV Process/Method

At the time the authors took over the Research Skills in Politics and International Relations module (2009), students' overall satisfaction with the course, as measured by course evaluations, was very low (Figure 3). To address this, one of the authors, [anon], redesigned the module substantially. The new learning outcomes were for students to understand and apply the activities relevant to designing and conducting research projects in politics and international relations. In particular, we set out to improve their understanding of the relationship between research questions, research design, methods and results. Emphasis was given to research skills with utility beyond academia, of use, for example, in future careers.

As we illustrated above, progress has been made elsewhere in addressing causes of the malaise in teaching research methods. At [anonymised location] we try to take this further through a 'reality show' approach that aims to demystify the research process for the students to show that it is not something that only senior academics do, but also something students can, and should, engage in, thus inviting them to (be able to) engage with academics on a more substantive level. Our approach involves students evaluating methods in practice rather than in theory, application of that knowledge to their own research projects, and peer reviewing (through a structured questionnaire) one another's project work.

Firstly, interviews were undertaken with seven prominent researchers, quizzing them on their methodological approach in a piece of published research. Audio-recordings of the interviews were provided and students were asked to critically review two of these articles/interviews as part of summative assessment. Interviewees were sampled purposively – participants and articles were chosen by lecturers on other modules taken by the students on the basis that their article i) was a key resource for their module, ii) used a distinct method and iii) they were known to be good communicators. This approach allowed us to link research-led teaching across the curriculum. We also made sure that we covered not only a range of methods, but also diverse issues likely to engage our students. The issues included political participation in the UK, social capital and political trust in Europe, environmental direct action, transnational networks, and the concept of social justice – representing the key strands of politics research: comparative politics, international relations and political theory. For ethical reasons, the articles and authors are anonymised for this article, but they covered the following research methods: political theory, case studies / the comparative approach, experiments, document analysis, internet research, elite interviews and surveys.

It should be noted that our approach to teaching research methods involves training students in the use of a variety of methods across the quantitative-qualitative divide, and that the quantitative material covered on the course is not especially demanding. Although this makes it difficult for our results to be generalised across different types of methods courses, we see no reason why the reality-show approach cannot be applied to methods courses that are purely quantitative or qualitative. Arguably, our emphasis on a broader spread of research methods increases rather than reduces the generalisability of our approach.

Students were encouraged to listen to all of the recorded interviews, covering a broad range of methods. Audio-recorded material has been shown to usefully augment research methods teaching, and to significantly improve achievement of learning outcomes (Roberts, 2008).² In their critical

reviews, students were asked, after listening to interviews, to critically evaluate the research design deployed in two of the articles. This exercise was selected because research shows that students who are asked to critique an article as part of their research methods training rate their ability to use that method significantly more highly than those who are not asked to do so (Strayhorn, 2009, p.126).

As this type of assignment is beyond the scope of what students are usually asked to do in Politics and International Relations assessments (although there are exceptions), the research team created a mock-critical review exercise. This involved the co-authors interviewing [co-author anonymised] about one of her research articles and discussing and critiquing this interview and research in a designated seminar. Students were afterwards provided with an annotated copy of an example critical review. In this example, we stressed the need for students to address a number of points: What were the research questions being addressed? How did the justification for research relate to the broader literature? Which method(s) of data extraction and analysis were used and why? What were the advantages and disadvantages of the method? What were the key research findings? How might methodological shortcomings be resolved? And finally to show an appreciation of the idea that research requires compromises. In this way, the task ticked most of the boxes of the 'broad consensus' on what constitutes essential research skills in social sciences. It helped students to develop 'capacities to evaluate research literature, formulate research questions and understand how data is relevant to answering research questions' (c.f. Garner and Sercombe 2009: 82).

In the second element, we set the students a group research project to measure and/or understand the degree of student satisfaction with the module itself. This provided an experiential research-based learning opportunity. Students presented the findings of their group projects in the final lecture of the course giving them practice in the process of disseminating research results. This project was also peer-reviewed to give students' an experience of assessing one another's research with the hindsight of their own experiences.

V Evaluation and Analysis

In their group project presentations, students appeared confident in applying a wide range of primary research methods, some even designing and undertaking field experiments. Not surprisingly, with groups of students applying various methods of data collection, we were able to access information (particularly qualitative), about the delivery of the course, which we could not have hoped to have gleaned through fixed formal evaluations. The students' findings suggested an improvement in satisfaction with the course compared to previous years. Only one project evaluated the audio-recorded interviews, and did so in a positive light. In addition, students conveyed a preference for seminar- over lecture-style sessions, and complained that there were too many different forms of assessment on the module (including a library test, dissertation proposal, critical reviews, learning log *and* group project/presentation). Since then, we have reduced the number of assessed pieces of work required for satisfactory completion of the module.

Along with the students' own evaluations, the success of teaching innovations was evaluated in two ways. Firstly, we distributed a survey to students who were enrolled on the course, asking them to consider their experience of the use of the audio recordings in assisting their learning about research methods, and assisting them in writing their critical reviews. Of the 110 students registered on the course, 94 responded to the survey, representing a response rate of approximately 85%.

Secondly, the course was evaluated in accordance with the University's formal evaluation process, the results of which have been compared with previous years in order to provide an impression of overall satisfaction before and after the implementation of our method.

Our survey asked students eight questions, detailing their use of the recorded interviews³, expressing how useful they found them and asking them if they had any suggestions for improvement, including whether or not they thought video recording would be more useful than audio. We asked this to see whether Roberts' (2008) finding, that US students prefer audio-visual

‘vodcasts’ to audio podcasts, could be generalised to British students at [anonymised location]. Quantitative and qualitative elements of the survey demonstrate student satisfaction with the recorded interviews, both as a general learning tool and as a resource for the critical review. The headline figures are that 96.8% had used the recorded interviews at least once, 86% of respondents listened to only two of the interviews (note that eight students registered on the module did not submit a critical review at all), and only 3.2% listened to all seven interviews.

It is clear that students preferred to engage with particular methodologies and/or topics more than others; in particular interviews associated with articles using case studies or a comparative approach (social trust in the EU), experiments (canvassing voters) and surveys (political participation) were most popular (Figure 1). Such a finding perhaps reflects the popularity and success of such methods within the learning material they have previously explored, or of particular topics. Irrespective of this, the overwhelming majority of students reported finding the interviews to be either ‘useful’ or ‘very useful’ (Figure 2).

[Figure 1 and Figure 2 about here]

Unsurprisingly, the overall picture is that the more interviews students listened to, the more useful they found them as a supplementary tool. All of the students who listened to two or more interviews rated them at least ‘useful’. Students who listened to more than two interviews found them to be either useful or very useful, with a single exception. When asked whether they would prefer a visual aid in place of audio material, no consensus emerged; roughly equal numbers of students thought it would be useful and thought it would not be useful. Given the content and nature of the discussions, such responses may demonstrate the feeling that a visual aid offered no real additional value to the utility of the tool, but merely represented individual preferences relating to audio versus visual. Some recent exploration also indicates that depending on the type of visual aid, one category of student may find it of great value while it is of little use to others (Holland, 2012).

The survey included a qualitative element where students were asked how we could improve the recorded interviews and what, if any, their preferred alternative tool would be. The most common request (18 respondents) was for better quality recordings. The second most common response (8) was that the interviews were good and needed no improvement. Other suggestions for improvement included provision of accompanying interview transcripts; and the interviewer using a standardised set of critical questions, with fewer crossovers with what they may have been able to glean themselves from the written article. Students differed in their preferences regarding interview length and detail with equal numbers claiming that they wanted it either more or less detailed or condensed in length. When asked what a preferred alternative tool might be, with most students responded that either that transcripts would be useful or that they felt the audio recordings were already more than satisfactory. It is interesting that a number of students expressed an interest for transcripts either in place of, or in addition to, the audio recordings. Although students on the whole reported the audio recorded interviews useful, it is possible that it was the *content* of interviews that was most useful, rather than the *medium* of audio material.

We are also keen not to alienate less technologically minded students. 'Curing' the technophobe is not necessarily the role of political science teachers and our aim is to establish a bridge between innovation and universality. In any case, it may be that students are satisfied by the alternative option of reading a transcript. Audio technology has some advantages over visual. Sound clips can be simply retrofitted and replayed via a variety of devices and benefit from a comparative ease and inexpensiveness of recording and editing. With this in mind our short-term focus is on improving the quality of the sound recordings rather than introducing visual media.

(Figure 3 about here)

The second additional way in which we monitor our approach is through University's formal evaluation process. We compared the overall rating of the module before and after the innovation was introduced (academic year 2010/11). We also compared the trend between 2006/7-2011/12 for

this module and also the average score for all other politics and international relations second year, non-methods courses as well as the statistics methods course which is compulsory for all single honours social science students. Figure 3 represents these findings⁴. It is clear that compulsory methods modules are rated much lower than any other second year modules in politics and international relations, which is disappointing, but no surprise. It should be noted that the statistics module evaluation score includes students not only from politics and international relations, but from across social science disciplines for which the course is compulsory. What is crucial here though is that the gap between our methods course and second year politics and international relations modules has decreased over time. For the purposes of commenting on our innovation, the overall satisfaction for the module has increased considerably since the point of implementation. Whether this is a direct result of our approach cannot be proven, though clearly the changes that have been made are coinciding with improved student satisfaction with research methods training.

To sum up, in light of the feedback we have received, experimenting with audio technology and experiential learning in methods teaching has proved to be a largely positive venture. However, we are aware that there is further work to be done to enthuse students in the study of research methods. Unfortunately, students continue to view methods as something useful only in the short-term, to the extent to which it can help them with their dissertations.

VI Conclusion

We began the paper by deploying supply and demand arguments to explain undergraduate student dissatisfaction with research methods training in Politics and International Relations. On the supply side, research methods training is sometimes seen as an add-on rather than being thoroughly embedded in the curriculum. On the demand side, students can fail to see the value in methods teaching. In an attempt to address these issues, we created a critical review assignment based on

audio-recorded interviews with eminent political scientists and sequenced it ahead of an assessed research-oriented task for students. To embed methods training into the curriculum, we interviewed key authors that students had previously come into contact with in the broader curriculum across the key strands of Politics and International Relations research: political theory, comparative politics and international relations. Moving from general lectures to a 'reality show' helped to make the methods come alive for students, demystifying the research process and increasing its broader relevance. Our evaluation of the audio-recorded interviews shows that, whilst students prefer to focus on certain methods rather than others, they found them very useful. Unfortunately, though, many students continue to view our research methods course as irrelevant beyond its utility with their dissertations. We would like to share our success and failures in the hope that we could work with colleagues from across a range of institutions to i) increase the relevance of methods for undergraduate students and ii) develop higher-quality, open-sourced materials for critical reviews. We hope that the general malaise we have identified in the teaching of research skills in Politics and International Relations can begin to be reversed by building on our preliminary work.

Bibliography

- Adeney, K. and Carey, S. (2009) 'Contextualising the teaching of statistics in political science', *Politics* 29 (3), pp.193-200.
- Anderson, A. and Sutton, C. (2011) 'Embedding a Methods Toolkit within a Sociology Field-trip'. Paper presented at CSAP Showcase Event, Birmingham, 24th October.
- Ashe, F. (2012) 'Harnessing Political Theory to Facilitate Students' Engagement with Graduate 'Employability': A Critical Pyramid Approach, *Politics* 32 (2), pp. 129-137.
- Bloom, B. S. (ed.) (1956) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: the Classification of Educational Goals*, New York: D McKay & Co, Inc.
- Bos, A.L and Schneider, M.C. (2009) 'Stepping around the Brick Wall: Overcoming Student Obstacles in Methods Courses', *PS: Political Science and Politics* 42 (2), pp.375-383.
- Burgess, R.G. (1981) 'Objectives in teaching and using research methodology', *Sociology* 15, pp. 490-495
- Clough, E. (2012) 'Integrating research methods into substantive coursework', paper presented at the University of Southampton, Making Methods Matter workshop, 23 May.

Coates, H. (2007) 'A Model of Online and General Campus-Based Student Engagement', *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 32 (2), pp.121–141.

Curtis, S. (2009) 'Short Politics Placements and Employability', paper presented at the Political Studies Association Annual Conference, Manchester, 7–9 April.

Dickovick, J.T. (2009) 'Methods in the Madness: Integrative Approaches to Methodology in Introductory Comparative Politics', *Journal of Political Science Education* 5 (2), pp.138-153.

Edwards D. and Thatcher, J. (2004) 'A student-centred tutor-led approach to teaching research methods', *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 28 (2) pp. 195-206.

European Commission (2003) *The Role of the Universities in the Europe of Knowledge*, Brussels: Commission of the European Communities.

Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C. and Paris, A. H. (2004) 'School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence', *Review of Educational Research* 74 (1), pp.59–109.

Garner, M. (2012) 'There's madness in our methods: The pedagogical culture of research methods teaching', paper presented at the University of Warwick, Higher Education Academy Teaching and Learning Summit, 21 June.

Garner, M. and Sercombe, P. (2009) 'Research as social relations: Implications for teaching research methods' in Garner, M., Wagner, C. and Kawulich, B. (eds.) *Teaching Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, Farnham: Ashgate, pp.81-90.

Garner, M., Wagner, C. and Kawulich, B. (2009) Introduction: Towards a pedagogical culture in research methods, in Garner, M., Wagner, C. and Kawulich, B. (eds.) *Teaching Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, Farnham: Ashgate, pp.1-12.

Healey, M. and Jenkins, A. (2009) *Developing Undergraduate Research and Inquiry*, York: HE Academy

Holland, J. (2012) *Video Use and the Student Learning Experience in International Relations*, Paper presented at the University of Hull, 5th Annual PSA and BISA Learning and Teaching Conference, 18th September.

Howard, P. (2010) 'Triangulating debates within the field: Teaching International Relations research methodology', *International Studies Perspectives* 11, pp.393-408.

Leston-Bandeira, C. (2010) 'Research methods teaching: Effective learning through a discipline embedded approach', paper presented at The Student Voice: Teaching Politics and IR in the New Millennium Conference, PSA Teaching and Learning Specialist Group Conference, 14-15 September.

MacInness (2009) *ESRC Undergraduate Quantitative Methods Initiative list of resources for teachers*, available from <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/779/> [Accessed 10 April 2013].

Nguyen, T.D. and Lam B.T. (2009) 'Teaching research methods to trainee practitioners' in Garner, M., Wagner, C. and Kawulich, B. (eds.) *Teaching Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, Farnham: Ashgate, pp.163-170.

Parker, J. 2010, "Undergraduate Research-Methods Training in Political Science: A Comparative Perspective ", *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 43 (1), pp.121-5.

Parker, J., Dobson, A., Scott, S., Wyman, M., Sjöstedt Landen, A. (2008) *International bench-marking review of best practice in the provision of undergraduate teaching in quantitative methods in the social sciences*. Final Report to the ESRC, Swindon: ESRC. Available

from http://www.esrc.ac.uk/images/International_benchmarking_undergraduate_quantitative_methods_tcm8-2725.pdf [Accessed 10 April 2013].

Reid, A., Dahlgren, M.A., Petocz, P. and Dahlgren, L.O. (2011) *From Expert Student to Novice Professional*, Dordrecht : Springer.

Reinelda, Bob (2008) 'The Ongoing Bologna Process and Political Science', *European Political Science* 7 (3), pp. 382–393.

Roberts, M. (2008) 'Adventures in Podcasting', *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 41 (3): 585-593.

Salmon, G., Edirisingha, P., Mobbs, M., Mobbs, R. and Dennett, C. (2008) *How to create Podcasts for education*, Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Strayhorn, T.L. (2009) 'The (In)effectiveness of various approaches to teaching research methods', in Garner, M., Wagner, C. and Kawulich, B. (eds.) *Teaching Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, Farnham: Ashgate, pp.119-130.

Schutt, R., Blalcok, H.M. and Wagenaar, T.,C (1984) 'Goals and means for research methods courses', *Sociology* 11, pp. 235-258.

Thies, C.G. and Hogan, R.E. (2005) 'The State of Undergraduate Research Methods Training in Political Science', *PS: Political Science & Politics* 38 (2), pp.293-297.

Winn, S. (1995) 'Learning by doing: Teaching research methods through student participation in a commissioned research project', *Studies in Higher Education* 20 (2), pp. 203-214.

Notes

¹ Many of these feature on the database IPED compiled by the Political Studies Association (PSA) Teaching and Learning Group. See: <https://sites.google.com/site/psatlg/Home/resources/journal-articles>, last accessed 02/10/2012.

² Although the audio-recorded interviews might be said to constitute 'podcasts' – which, strictly speaking are digital media files that play audio; are made available from a website and can be downloaded to a portable player (Salmon et al 2008) – we elect to avoid that word given that the term has been used to refer to a variety of types of audio-visual material (see, for example, Roberts 2008).

³ Students were asked initially if they had made use of the accompanying recorded interviews (and if not, why not), which interviews they listened to and then on a scale of 1-5 how they rated the usefulness both of the individual interviews and the whole concept of recorded interviews as a supplement to the articles for the purpose of writing their critical reviews. They were then finally asked how they would like to see them improved, if they would prefer audio-visual recordings (on a scale of 1-5), or if they would prefer any other alternative tool

⁴ NB. No data was available for academic year 2008/09 for the research methods module.