

Post-Doc Early Career Workshop: Methodological Issues and Emotional Labour in Co-Produced Research

Date: 4 and 5 December 2018

Location: University of Sheffield

Overview

This workshop, taking place over one and a half days, is for post-doctoral early career researchers in universities who engage in co-produced research with varying external partners and pursue different topics. The focus is upon learning from practice through discussion. There will be a maximum of twenty-five attendees to allow for participation and you are asked to prepare short presentations in smaller groups on the first day (please see below the questions for orientation).

The workshop is jointly organised by the Sheffield Methods and the Urban Institute and the Jam and Justice Project (ESRC), with partners in Birmingham and Manchester Universities, as well as Mistra Urban Futures. For those who cannot obtain funding from their institutions or grant awarding bodies, it is possible to apply for a maximum £50 bursary towards travel and accommodation. Aside from lunch on the first day and refreshments, the workshop will also provide a dinner on the 4 December for all participants to attend.

When applying for the workshop please include the following: your name; full contact details; date of obtaining your PhD; institutional affiliation; the topic of your research; the partners with whom you work; your sources of funding and if you wish to apply for a £50 bursary.

Please send your application to: Amy Clare, Sheffield Methods Institute (amy.clare@sheffield.ac.uk).

Background to the Workshop

The impact and engagement agendas, REF and now TEF, embody the need for the social sciences to be both excellent and relevant to users. Research Councils UK defines academic impact as: “The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to academic advances, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in understanding, methods, theory and application”. Academic beneficiaries are expected to be outlined in applications, although an exception is: “where academic impact forms part of the critical pathway to economic and societal impact”. Societal and economic impacts are defined as: “The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy”. (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/innovation/impacts/>). However, RCUK is one of many funders of research who have different expectations with the ‘value’ of research varying among groups.

In this climate issues associated with co-production include who owns the knowledge and who can be attributed with having produced it? These can seem in tension, even contradiction, to the very spirit of its methodology leading to questions such as: how are the values of different methods of inquiry recognised, negotiated and acted upon? How are the boundaries between justification and application in research negotiated and understood, from what positions and



what implications does this have for its process and judgements of value? At the same time the practice of co-produced research, whilst apparently in accord with the need to demonstrate relevance and impact, can be labour-intensive, time consuming and requires constant negotiation in order to build trust, ensure clarity and work towards commonly agreed outcomes. Recognition and the value attributed to such work in academic cultures are variable with resulting tensions between credibility and applicability and the pursuit of excellence and relevance.

Aim

In view of the above issues, the aim of this workshop is to create a context for discussions among early career researchers who engage in co-production. The wish is to enable collective reflection, in a supportive manner, on practice. It starts with a consideration of experiences. Therefore, those attending the workshop are requested to reflect on their motivations for doing research, what outcomes they seek in doing the work and how they practice in its process. In doing this we hope that the discussion will examine the issues that regularly arise in such work and shed light on how they are negotiated and with what implications for practice.

Day 1 – Morning: Issues

Coffee and Registration:	10:30-11:00
Introduction:	11:00-11:20 (Tim May and Beth Perry).
Biographical Exchange in Groups:	11:20-12:30
Plenary Session:	12:30-13:00

Following an introduction to the workshop, participants will be divided into groups and each person will be asked to speak to the group for ten minutes oriented around the following questions: 1) what are the topics of your inquiries? 2) How did you become involved in these and with whom do you normally work? 3) From your experiences, what issues and obstacles have you encountered in the conduct of your work?

There is no expectation that you present a finalized and polished paper in advance. Instead, you are asked to bring with you a one-page summary for participants (eight copies please) addressing the above questions which can be elaborated upon during your presentation in the group sessions. The purpose is to provide reflection on your experiences and generate discussion on the issues associated with practice and how they are addressed. After time for these discussions, we will come to a more collective reflection and discussion at the end of the morning.

Lunch: 13:00-14:00



Day 1 – Afternoon: Learning from Practice

Introduction:	14:00-14:15
Group Focus:	14:15-15:45
Comfort Break:	15:45-16:00
Plenary Session:	16:00-16:30

The afternoon session moves from consideration of your topics, involvement and the issues and obstacles you encounter, to examine what you hope to achieve from your work and how you seek to resolve the issues you have identified in your practice. The aim is to consider experiences, including similarities and differences and learn from each other. Two questions may assist in orientating your presentations and discussions: 1) what do you think is important about the work you do and how, personally, do you judge its success? 2) Given the issues you identified in the morning, how have you sought to address those in your practice and what have you learnt from your experiences? Again, participants are asked to present a one-page summary to the group. After allowing time for group discussions, there will be collective reflection and discussion at the end of the afternoon. We will then have sufficient time before meeting for dinner.

Dinner: 18:15

Day 2: Emotional Labour in Research

There will be a talk given by Dr Kate Read (Reader in Medical Sociology, University of Sheffield), who will discuss emotional labour in research practice (<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/socstudies/staff/staff-profiles/reed>). This will be followed by a discussion among participants and provide an opportunity to consider how the process of dialogue among participants might continue in the future.

Coffee/Tea:	10:00-10:15
Kate Reed:	10:15-11:15
Questions:	11:15-11:30
Group Session:	11:30-12:30
Sum Up and Ways Forward:	12:30-13:00
Workshop End:	13:00



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