



Learning Research by Example

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ABSTRACT

This poster illustrates an individual unexpected outcome from a larger interdisciplinary collaborative project (TReST) being conducted within the School of Computing and Information Technology (SCIT) at UNITEC. The TReST (Time for Research, entrepreneurship, Service and Teaching) project has been set up to investigate the multiple time dimensions and the multiplicity of demands placed on teaching staff as they endeavour to align themselves with the strategic direction both within SCIT and the Faculty of Business (FoB). The REST (Research Entrepreneurship, Service and Teaching) model has been adopted strategically by the FoB. Each academic within the FoB is required to perform a mix of duties within REST. For most academics the main focus remains with teaching. Whilst there has been resistance to incorporating REST at an operational level, research outputs in SCIT have escalated in the last five years as a direct result of this strategic direction. The TReST activity cycle (AC) (Fielden et al, 2002) was applied to the Research Methods(RM) paper in the Masters in Computing program (Mcomp) in the first block of ten hours teaching. It was discovered that the process of scoping, data collection, analysis, interpretation and feedback required within the TReST project clearly demonstrated an action research process within a qualitative methodology. Because balancing multi-dimensional time is the major focus for TReST, this was an unexpected outcome and it provided an additional means to the students early in the paper to learn about the process of research.

In this poster the first individual AC for RM in the Mcomp program within the TReST project will be described. Unexpected outcomes were the opportunity to demonstrate an action research process to the RM class via this first AC within the TReST project. Learning by example demonstrates process as it happens as well as providing content knowledge from answers to questions that have been analysed and interpreted. Providing a meta-analysis example within feedback given demonstrated critical thinking and conceptualising abstract thought from concrete examples. Both meta-analysis and reconceptualising are necessary research skills to learn. The feedback sheet was modified to include meta-analysis as the shape of the research process for this AC emerged. Interpretation and analysis for each question is considered to be the content output for this individual AC, whilst the meta-analysis provides insights for the students into learning about research process by example. Feedback was posted onto the online learning site for the class within two days. Time was also allocated in the following block course for open discussion on the feedback to the questions.

Keywords: Postgraduate Education, Research methods, Collaborative Research, Emergence

