Leadership for researcher development: 
what academic developers need to know and understand 

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Dr Linda Evans
University of Leeds, UK
How do academic developers support researcher development?

Networks, courses and workshops

Courses and Workshops

- Attracting research income
- Company Director Programme
- Effective research student supervision
- Managing research projects
- Planning a career in research
- Presenting and publishing research results
- Research methodology and ethics
- Research with impact
Research & innovation

To enable the achievement of an influential world-leading University research profile, SDDU supports the development of research skills and research careers by providing a continuum of courses spanning research students, postdoctoral research staff, early-career academic staff and senior staff with research management and leadership responsibilities. These courses, some of which are tailored to suit different disciplines, cover:

- Research methodology and ethics
- Managing your research degree
- Attracting research income
- Planning and managing research
- Presenting and publishing research
- Supervising research students
- Research career development

The Research and Innovation team also play a key role in developing and embedding National and University policy such as the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and Policy on the Employment of Researchers, with several of the team representing the University on National groups.
How do academic developers support researcher development?

- Development and training focuses on:
  - the ‘bureaucracy’ of funded research
  - general (universal?) requirements of research activity within a broadly NPM framework:
    - accountability
    - user engagement
  - careers for research staff
What is generally missing?

- Development / ‘training’ in ‘creative’ research skills:
  - how to write better/more effectively
  - how to conduct research interviews effectively, as data collection
  - how to apply in-depth qualitative analysis to research data
  - how to generate theory or theoretical perspectives from research findings
- Development/ ‘training’ for mid-career and senior academics and researchers
What is generally missing?

‘I doubt whether there exists a single higher educational institution in the United Kingdom that does not run a dedicated staff development service, offering an extensive programme of courses and workshops on an array of topics considered relevant to the developmental needs of its staff—particularly its academic staff...

‘Yet relatively little of this provision seems to be devoted to developing researchers’ creative skills and, by extension, research practice.’

‘as Gordon (2005) observes, research training and development provision is traditionally concentrated on the early stages, even the pre-stages, of researchers’ careers’

(Evans, L. (2009) S/he who pays the piper calls the tune? Professionalism, developmentalism and the paucity of in-service education within the research profession, *Professional Development in Education*, 35 (2))
What is generally missing?

‘One obvious gap is that of a formal requirement for evidencing the continuing professional development of researchers’

Future development agendas need to:

‘foster further evolution in the prevailing research culture, more explicitly valuing creativity and competence, coherent Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and high-quality developmental provision that draws upon all of the expertise available to HEIs’

Gaps in provision?

‘Despite being a published methodologist and a very experienced teacher of research and scholarship skills, in the past year I have travelled to two different universities to attend three events that were publicised as research training events. In each case I was the most senior participant—both in terms of age and academic status. My fellow participants were predominantly research students; a minority were lecturers or junior contract researchers. None was a senior lecturer or professor; I was the only reader. What was even more disappointing was that these events offered very little or no actual “training”. None offered participant interaction other than opportunities to pose questions to the presenters. All were, in fact, nothing more than thematic collections of research dissemination seminars, with perhaps a slightly greater emphasis on methodology than may be expected.’

(Evans, L. (2009) S/he who pays the piper calls the tune? Professionalism, developmentalism and the paucity of in-service education within the research profession, *Professional Development in Education*, 35 (2))
Three development cases

- **Dr Green**
  - 2* publications
  - needs to move up

- **Dr Brown**
  - holds a small research grant
  - is inexperienced at collecting data through interviews
  - interviews aren’t generating the kind of data that address research questions

- **Mr White**
  - hasn’t got a doctorate
  - isn’t interested in research
  - just wants to teach
Meeting researcher development needs

- How do we meet the needs of these three individuals or of their departments?
- Do academic development units generally make suitable provision for such needs?
  - or parallel needs for researchers who aren’t social scientists?
- If not, why not?
- How and where do these members of staff – or their research leaders - find help?
Good Practice in Research Mentoring: Guidelines for Faculties and Schools

These Guidelines were drawn up by the Research Board in April 2005 following a survey of current practice in faculties and schools, a web search of practice at other universities in the UK and elsewhere, and discussion in various Faculty Research Committees and the Research Board. They have been updated to reflect the University’s revised procedures for staff review and development. The Research Board asked each faculty to:

- agree how research mentoring should be implemented in the Faculty as part of its repertoire of processes for developing individual research performance;
- customise the example ‘research leadership’ framework [Appendix 1] to its own requirements.

A. University policy

1. The University’s key principles underpinning staff review and mentoring state that:

- Every member of staff will have an annual review with a reviewer selected from a team of trained reviewers designated by their faculty or school.
- For academic staff, the staff review meeting will be the mechanism that brings together and synthesises information and plans on all the activities of the member of staff. The staff review meeting will therefore
Gaps in the mentoring system?

- No explicit mention of how researcher development occurs
  - Is mentoring informed by such knowledge?
  - Should it be informed by such knowledge?
- Is mentoring alone enough to develop researchers’ creative skills?
- Can professional developers (university professional development services) also make a useful contribution?
A role for professional developers

- Providing – and disseminating – knowledge and understanding of how researcher development occurs:
  - to research leaders
  - to research mentors
  - to institutional and departmental policy makers

- Incorporating this knowledge and understanding into the training and development that they provide for researchers
  - a sound theoretical basis for their (professional developers’) practice
Understanding researcher development

- How may we best develop researchers?
- How does researcher development occur?
  - What does the process involve?
- What do we mean by ‘researcher development’?
What do we mean by researcher development?

- The concept of professional development: a point of departure
- My ‘umbrella’ definition:
  \[\text{Professional development is the process whereby people’s professionalism may be considered to be enhanced, with a degree of permanence that exceeds transitoriness.}\]
- This definition requires an understanding of what is meant by \textit{professionalism}. 
Key components of professionalism:

- What practitioners do
- How they do it
- What they know and understand
- Where and how they acquire their knowledge and understanding
- What kinds of attitudes they hold
- What codes of behaviour they adhere to
- What purpose(s) they perform
- What quality of service they provide
- The level of consistency incorporated into the above
professionalism

behavioural component
- processual dimension
- procedural dimension
- productive dimension
- competential dimension

attitudinal component
- perceptual dimension
- evaluative dimension
- motivational dimension

intellectual component
- epistemological dimension
- rationalistic dimension
- comprehensive dimension
- analytical dimension
What is researcher development?  
The definition  

“Researcher development is the process whereby people’s capacity and willingness to carry out the research components of their work or studies may be considered to be enhanced, with a degree of permanence that exceeds transitoriness.”

Professionality orientation: teachers

Eric Hoyle, 1975

‘Restricted’ professionality

- Skills derived from experience
- Perspective limited to the immediate in time and place
- Introspective with regard to methods
- Value placed on autonomy
- Infrequent reading of professional literature
- Teaching seen as an intuitive activity

‘Extended’ professionality

- Skills derived from a mediation between experience & theory
- Perspective embracing the broader social context of education
- Methods compared with those of colleagues and reports of practice
- Value placed on professional collaboration
- Regular reading of professional literature
- Teaching seen as a rational activity
‘Restricted’ and ‘Extended’ Professionals
(adapted from Hoyle, 1975)

‘restricted’ professionals:
- adopt an intuitive approach to practice
- use skills derived from practical experience
- do not reflect on or analyse their practice
- are unintellectual in outlook and attitudes
- avoid change and are set in their ways

‘extended’ professionals:
- adopt a rational approach to practice
- use skills developed from both theory and practice
- are reflective and analytical practitioners
- adopt intellectual approaches to the job
- experiment with and welcome new ideas
‘Restricted’ and ‘Extended’ Professionals
Applying the professionality continuum to researchers

- Can the ‘extended’-‘restricted’ professionality continuum be applied to researchers?

- What would a ‘restricted’ researcher ‘look like’?

- What would an ‘extended’ researcher ‘look like’?
Characteristics of ‘extended’ & ‘restricted’ researchers

The researcher located at the ‘extended’ extreme of the professionality continuum typically …

The researcher located at the ‘restricted’ extreme of the professionality continuum typically …
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The researcher located at the ‘restricted’ extreme of the professionality continuum typically:</th>
<th>The researcher located at the ‘extended’ extreme of the professionality continuum typically:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>conducts research that lacks rigour;</td>
<td>conducts highly rigorous research;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>draws upon basic research skills;</td>
<td>draws upon basic and advanced research skills;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fails to develop or extend her/his methodological competence;</td>
<td>strives constantly to develop and extend her/his methodological competence;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>utilises only established research methods;</td>
<td>adapts established research methods and develops methodology;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fails to develop basic research findings;</td>
<td>generates and develops theory from research findings;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perceives research methods as tools and methodology as a task-directed, utilitarian process;</td>
<td>perceives research methodology as a field of study in itself;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>applies low level analysis to research data;</td>
<td>strives constantly to apply deep levels of analysis to research data;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perceives individual research studies as independent and free-standing;</td>
<td>recognises the value of, and utilises, comparative analysis, meta-analysis, synthesis, replication, etc.;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perceives individual research studies as finite and complete;</td>
<td>constantly reflects upon, and frequently revisits and refines, his/her own studies;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>struggles to criticise literature and others’ research effectively;</td>
<td>has developed the skill of effective criticism and applies this to the formulation of his/her own arguments;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>publishes mainly in ‘lower grade’ academic journals and in professional journals/magazines;</td>
<td>publishes frequently in ‘high ranking’ academic journals;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is associated mainly with research findings that fall into the ‘tips for practitioners’ category of output;</td>
<td>disseminates ground-breaking theoretical issues and contributes to, and takes a lead in developing, discourse on theory;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perceives research activity as separate and detached from wider contexts requiring interpersonal, organisational and cognitive skills.</td>
<td>recognises the applicability to a range of contexts (including, in particular, work contexts) of generic skills developed within and alongside research activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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‘Restricted’ and ‘Extended’ Professionals
Be behavioural development is: the process whereby people’s research-related behaviour or performance are modified.

Processual change is about change in relation to the processes that constitute people’s research practice – how they ‘do’ or ‘go about’ research-related activity.

Procedural change relates to changes to capacity to deal with or manage procedures within research-related practice.

Productive change refers to change to people’s research output: to how much they achieve, produce or ‘do’.

Competential change involves the increase or enhancement of research-related skills and competences.
researcher development

behavioural development
- processual change
- procedural change
- productive change
- competential change

attitudinal development
- perceptual change
- evaluative change
- motivational change

intellectual development
- epistemological change
- rationalistic change
- comprehensive change
- analytical change
Attitudinal development is: **the process whereby people’s research-related attitudes are modified.**

**Perceptual change** refers to change in relation to people’s perceptions, viewpoints, beliefs and mindsets – includes self-perception.

**Evaluative change** is about changes to people’s research-related values, including the minutiae of what they consider important: i.e. what they value.

**Motivational change** refers to changes to people’s motivation and levels of (job) satisfaction and morale in relation to research practice.
Intellectual development is:

*the process whereby people’s research-related knowledge, understanding or reflective or comprehensive capacity or competence are modified.*

Epistemological change is change in relation to the bases of what people know or understand about research and researching and their knowledge structures.

Rationalistic change is about change relating to the extent of and the nature of the reasoning that people apply to their research practice.

Comprehensive change involves the enhancement or increase of people’s research-related knowledge and understanding.

Analytical change refers to change to the degree or nature of the analyticism that people apply to their research activity.
Illustrating the multidimensionality of researcher development

Armstrong's development as a researcher (Armstrong, P. (2001) Becoming and being a researcher: doing research as lifelong learning, paper presented at the SCUTREA annual conference)

“In my naivete I was not prepared for research that was going to be presented to policymakers and funders who were going to make important decisions based on their own interpretations of my story. However objective I believed myself to be in all aspects of the research process, I did not anticipate that the readers of the research were not going to be as objective in their interpretation of my interpretation.”

“Ultimately the potential impact of my research seemed to hinge around one phrase – ‘relatively expensive’. As part of the research I looked at how the voluntary organisation provided its training for volunteers, and taking a range of factors into account, I concluded that the training they provided, per capita, was ‘relatively expensive’ compared with other voluntary organisations and other ways of providing the training. I was asked by the management committee of the voluntary organisation if I would mind changing the phrase to read ‘relatively cheap’ on the grounds that the local policymakers and funding bodies would only skim the report and would focus on words like ‘expensive’.”

“No textbook learning had ever prepared me for that life changing moment.”

“Experiences I have recounted have been important sources of learning about the process of becoming a researcher. None of them can be dealt with by reading methodology textbooks (though some do warn of the dangers, even if they cannot tell you what to do). And so the only way to learn to be a researcher is through doing, and importantly being aware of how the doing has been constructed through praxis.”
Armstrong’s development as a researcher

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• Comprehensive change
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- Perceptual change – self-perception:
  - he implies having previously failed to recognise his naivete
Armstrong’s development as a researcher

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- epistemological change – Armstrong’s denouncement of methodology textbooks as sufficient bases for researcher knowledge and his acceptance of praxis as a more reliable knowledge base.
Armstrong’s development as a researcher: summary

Armstrong’s case provides evidence of intellectual and attitudinal development by demonstrating a complex interplay of three second tier change dimensions: comprehensive, perceptual, and epistemological.

Comprehensive change is evident in his increased understanding; through this experience he grasped something that he had previously been unaware of: that others may interpret his research differently from how he interpreted it – (‘I did not anticipate that the readers of the research were not going to be as objective in their interpretation of my interpretation’). His understanding of the politics of the ‘research game’ also increased: he better understood the importance to different stakeholders of their own (political) agendas and how research might be intended to be utilised within these agendas.

Leading on from this comprehensive change, perceptual change manifested itself through Armstrong’s changed perceptions of: the functions that research may be assigned to by others; others who play their parts as stakeholders in the research process; and himself (self-perception) – he refers, for example, to his own naivete, which he implies having previously failed to recognise. Moreover, as such self-perception underwent the slight shift that transformed it into self-awareness, it, too, then illustrated comprehensive change.

The epistemological change that Armstrong experienced is evidenced by his denouncement of methodology textbooks as sufficient bases for researcher knowledge and his acceptance of praxis as a more reliable knowledge base. Since this specific example of epistemological change resulted from increased or enhanced understanding it also fuses with comprehensive change.
Ron’s development as a researcher

“I was appointed to teach on the PCET course [Post Compulsory Education and Training] but since I came here in around ’93, ’94, research has come to be much more of a priority. Whereas before it was optional, it’s definitely expected that you do it now. Over the past few years I’ve got involved in research and writing, I’ve started a doctorate and I’m starting to think that I might be able to call myself a researcher!”

“In response to the RAE climate I’m conscious that I’m now spending more time than ever before in research-related activities. I’m still engaged in the usual pedagogical research, the kind of stuff that supports my day-to-day teaching activities and without which my teaching would suffer. However, I’m now spending much more time doing research for outcomes other than this. I’ve been writing a chapter for a book that I’m also an editor of, and writing papers for four conferences I’ve been accepted at, and so on. This is not divorced from my teaching practice, as I use a great deal of material from my research reading in my teaching, but I am conscious of this difference of purpose! And I welcome it.”

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- Processual change
- Perceptual change
- Evaluative change
How researcher development occurs

- ‘Micro-level’ development
- Occurs in individuals
- Relates to single ‘episodes’
- ‘Micro-level’ researcher development is defined as: individuals’ acquisition, through a consciously or unconsciously applied mental internalisation process, of research-related knowledge and/or understanding and/or attitudes and/or skills and/or competences that, on the grounds of what is consciously or unconsciously considered to be its/their superiority, displace(s) and replace(s) previously-held knowledge and/or understanding and/or attitudes and/or skills and/or competences.
The professional development process in individuals (model 1)

1. Recognition of work-related deficiency or imperfect situation – something not quite ‘right’
2. Recognition of what is perceived as a ‘better way’ (of ‘doing’ things)
3. Motivation to adopt perceived ‘better way’
4. Adoption of perceived ‘better way’
5. Evaluation and refinement of adopted alternative
6. Recognition of new practice as an improvement

Linda Evans (2011) – work in progress
The professional development process (model 2)

Recognition of what is perceived as a ‘better way’

Recognition of work-related deficiency or imperfect situation

Motivation to adopt perceived ‘better way’ (of doing things)

Adoption of perceived ‘better way’

Evaluation and refinement of adopted alternative

Recognition of new practice as an improvement

Linda Evans (2011) - work in progress
Three development cases

- **Dr Green**
  - 2* publications
  - needs to move up a gear

- **Dr Brown**
  - holds a small research grant, but …
  - is inexperienced at collecting data through interviews
  - interviews aren’t generating the kind of data that address research questions

- **Mr White**
  - hasn’t got a doctorate
  - isn’t interested in research
  - just wants to teach
Dr Green’s case

- Most publications are 2*
- Needs to move up a gear – 3* publications

What dimensions of researcher development may be applicable?
- Needs to know what 3* publications look like:
  - what is required
- Needs to recognise that her work is currently not 3*
- Needs to recognise why her work is currently not 3*
- Needs to recognise producing 3* work as ‘a better way’
- Needs to believe that she can produce 3* work
- Needs to develop the skills to produce 3* work
- May need to change her approach (e.g. to analysis or writing)
- May need to do more – e.g. do more reading of other work
- Needs to be motivated to do what’s required (to improve)
Three development cases

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Effective leadership for researcher development:
what academic developers need to know and understand

- In order to effect researcher development successfully it is important to understand and appreciate its breadth, its multidimensionality and its complexity.

- This understanding will help elucidate the nature of individuals’ development as, or into, researchers, and how the development process occurs and is influenced.

- This elucidation should inform researcher development policy and practice.

- Researcher development policy and practice that is underpinned by understanding both of the breadth, multidimensionality and complexity of researcher development and of the researcher development process will potentially yield greater productivity and output.
Further reading


Dr Linda Evans

University of Leeds, UK
l.evans@leeds.ac.uk