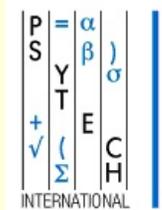


# Research Methods for the 21st Century: A Specimen Curriculum



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## The Positives

1. Methods not too intrusive into the psychology content of the course.
2. Sufficient general methodological knowledge is imparted to enable a student to be a **consumer** of typical psychological research.
3. Most current Masters, APSY, and clinical training relies only on this level of methodological and computational proficiency.

## The Negatives

1. The vast majority of students are not really capable of doing research which requires computational, algorithmic, or advanced statistical analysis, except as stats-package “button-pushers”.
2. APSY and Clinical Students will be unable to approach those areas of their chosen domains which rely upon advanced methods of computational analysis and modelling.

## The Positives

1. Students are now research-capable and ready to develop research strategies which are no longer limited by their limited research-methods knowledge.
2. These students would be extremely valuable “commodities” as the methodological skills they would now possess are easily transferable across applied domains.

## The Negatives

1. How many psychology students actually want or need to be this competent in research methodology?
2. The teaching load of such an increased methods loading would require team-teaching and guest experts from other faculties. Expensive in both money and time.

## The Questions raised by Model 1 and 2

1. Is the current degree structure simply out-of-date in that as quantitative and computational methods of scientific research have evolved over time, methods-teaching in psychology faculties has not kept pace?

## The Questions raised by Model 1 and 2

2. Is there a conscious decision being made within psychology faculties that theoretical knowledge and practical skills in *substantive* quantitative and computationally-based research methods are not something with which students should be competent before they embark upon Masters/APSY/Clinical research?

## The Questions raised by Model 1 and 2

3. The sometimes bitter debate between those who advocate quantitative or qualitative methods and their underlying philosophies, may betray a far deeper rift of understanding – between those who espouse psychology as a mainly “*literary-constructivist*” kind of subject, and those who look upon it as a kind of “*cognitive physics*”.

## The Questions raised by Model 1 and 2

4. What do we do about the dropping standards of numeric literacy in psychology students? Merely adjust the methods curriculum to suit?

*Mulhern, G. and Wylie, J. (2004) Changing levels of numeracy and other core mathematical skills among psychology undergraduates between 1992 and 2002. British Journal of Psychology, 95, 3, 355-370)*

## The Questions raised by Model 1 and 2

5. Perhaps the advances in more technical methods-associated sciences (statistical, mathematical, physical, biological, engineering, and computational) are now so specialized that psychologists can no longer be expected, *or indeed should be expected*, to be experts in psychological issues as well as research methodology?

## My answer .1?

- ★ Create a Model 2 degree pathway for the 10 or so students out of the 1000 who enter the psychology faculty in the first year, who are already personally motivated to become outstanding research scientists/high-flyers from day one. [Cross-overs from one to the other methods pathway is possible in the first year. From then on, the gap becomes too wide too quickly].

## My answer .2?

- ★ Maybe accept that psychology as a discipline has now fundamentally changed forever – in that psychology is already split into such specialized sub-domains that to all intents and purposes, each is a discipline in its own right. So, the first 5 years (an undergraduate and Masters degree) is now “preliminary” with a extra 3-4 years PhD or professional qualification required to imbue expertise?