What the neglected ‘how to’s’ of research have to do with ethics and integrity

Petra Boynton
There are a broad range of issues that *should* be covered in research training.....but aren’t
I don’t know how to...

“....select a research topic”

“....be more productive”

“....remain motivated when my manuscript is rejected, or respond to reviewer feedback”

“....advocate for myself in research meetings”

“....network”

“....collect data”

“....manage my time”

“....agree authorship”

“....obtain ethics approval”

“....communicate with colleagues”

“.....avoid plagiarism”
“I’m the first in my family to go to university and in my final year of my PhD. My supervisor has been absent throughout my analysis and writing up. The doctoral programme has some online materials on writing that I’ve used but it does not feel adequate.

I’m due to submit my thesis soon but worry major problems will only be revealed in the viva. I asked my supervisor what standard a thesis needs to be to pass but they say this cannot be determined until the viva. How can I prepare more effectively?”
How many complex skills are expected to be undertaken by scholars of all levels of experience working in an unsupported and pressurised environment?
Who’s disadvantaged when we leave out the how-to’s? Students and staff that are

- Low income
- Estranged
- From an ethnic minority
- Disabled or have learning difficulties
- Physically or mentally ill
- Parents or carers
- Self-funding
- Part-time

- LGBTQ+
- On placement or doing fieldwork
- International
- Older/mature
- Working or studying remotely
- Women
- First-gen
Image from UKRIO

(Based on The Concordat to Support Research Integrity, 2019)
<table>
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<th>Have you ever been formally taught how to…</th>
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<td><strong>Email a colleague or participant</strong> (and manage replies)</td>
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<td><strong>Manage projects from start to end (including obtaining funding)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Effectively address emotional and physical safety for students and staff</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Enter, clean, maintain and store data</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Effectively use social media and other dissemination options (beyond a peer reviewed paper or report)</strong></td>
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And have you been taught any of these things in a way that....

- ensures all aspects of your work are inclusive and accessible to participants, staff, students and other colleagues/communities
- proactively avoids inequalities, precarity and other inbuilt harms (e.g. bullying)
- prioritises diversity of needs and requirements, respect and dignity; while challenging unfair, outdated, unequal and unethical systems
- informs how to give pastoral support and signpost to appropriate sources of care (a single helpline number doesn’t count)
- doesn’t expect ‘something for nothing’ or working ‘for exposure or experience’ (as in, have you fully costed and budgeted your work)
Ways to fix this
- Time
- Money
- Accessible instructions and guidelines (aka ‘what to expect’)
- Places and spaces to work and study
- Training and supervision
- Support and encouragement
- Reflection and feedback
- Opportunities for practice and making mistakes
- Spaces to ask for help - with help given
- Strategies when things (inevitably) go wrong
- Managing expectations
- A focus beyond the university/STEM
What else might we do?

- Research
- Teaching
- Pastoral care
- Address poor or inconsistent delivery of research tuition and supervision
- Rethink how research methods are taught across all sectors
- Focus on ‘real world’ research skills (e.g. sourcing, synthesising and sharing)
- Use responsive, exciting, creative approaches, featuring dilemmas/case studies
- Ensure welfare, rights, dignity, respect and wellbeing are central
- Check that EDI is more than just a tick box activity
- Hold research institutions more accountable for policies, practices and promises
- Focus on proactive not reactive approaches (particularly on harassment, bullying, safety, whole-campus practices and research culture)
- Target specific problems (e.g. misuse of online surveys)
In order to prioritise ethics and integrity....

....we urgently need a greater awareness of joined-up and whole-organisation approaches; accessible and inclusive practices; that prioritise safety and wellbeing within research methods teaching and practice....
We the how
Thanks for listening!

@drpetra

info@drpetra.co.uk

www.theresearchcompanion.com