

Where do you think you're from? Provenance in Research Management

Rommany Jenkins, EU & International Funding Officer
University of Birmingham

Is Research Management a science?



I am interested in the role that Arts & Humanities-based research approaches can have in Research Management. I was first prompted to consider this when I encountered Huang & Hung's 2018 article advocating for the establishment of a Science of Research Management (SciRM). Huang & Hung draw on Educational models in order to create the foundation for an embryonic SciRM.

Research Management is a relatively new field, and one which is home to third space professionals who bring with them a wealth of expertise in a wide range of disciplines. It seemed to me that Research Management could only stand to benefit from welcoming in Arts & Humanities approaches as it seeks to define itself and establish itself as an area of enquiry.

Following events such as the recent SRA International 'Disruptive Trends in Global Research Management' conference, I am keen to see how Arts and Humanities-based approaches can play a role in the invigoration and evolution of Research Management.

Key references: Huang, J.S. & Hung, W. L. (2018) Building the science of research management: What can research management learn from education research? *Journal of Research Administration*, 49 (1), 11-30.

How can Literary Studies be relevant to Research Management?



I come to the concept of Provenance from a background in Literary Studies, where I encountered the idea of pre-histories, developed by Cave (1999). Within this approach, Cave emphasises the need for a willingness to listen attentively to what the past has to tell us, while resisting the temptation to see it as an inevitable prelude to the future.

When I encountered the idea of Provenance, it was clear that an understanding of pre-histories could be of value in the realm of reflective practice, given its inherent sensitivity when attempting to read the past.

Key references: Cave, T (1999) *Pré-histoires: textes troubles au seuil de la modernité*. Geneva: Droz.

Exploring the Provenance of my own Professional Practice

Investigations into the Provenance of a practice are predicated on the idea that by exploring the historical and cultural contexts in which a particular practice develops, we can better understand why certain activities or behaviours become part of the accepted tradition of that practice.

Provenance can also be used by practitioners themselves in order to better understand their own practice. By interrogating critical incidents in the development of their career, practitioners are encouraged to reflect on and question their own behaviours and assumptions.

Key references: Hill, G. & Lloyd, C. (2018) Articulating practice through provenance. *Action Research*, 1-16;
Schön, D. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action*. U.S.A.: Basic Books

The practitioner identifies 7 key moments - 'critical incidents' - in the course of their professional development

1. English as a Foreign Language / English for Academic Purposes Teaching

2. PhD Pre-histories & Afterlives / Keywords

3. Birmingham City University - Arts, Design & Media

4. Birmingham City University - Health, Education & Life Sciences

5. Co-writing with Geof Hill

6. University of Birmingham - EU & International Team

7. JRA Author Fellowship

The 7 critical incidents evolve into a Provenance document

Open me

The practitioner interrogates the principles and beliefs which underpin their practice

Want to get in touch?

R.Jenkins.1@bham.ac.uk

0121 414 8634

