подобного рода берёт на себя машина, что без сомнения экономит усилия и время конечного пользователя.

Круг предъявляемых требований довольно широк. Он охватывает весь спектр задач, начиная от зачисления студентов и формирования групп по определённому критерию, до выставления оценок успеваемости по составленному учебному плану, отчисления, восстановления и ведения архива студентов после окончания периода обучения. Они решаются в рамках данной СУБД, с максимальной простотой, удобством и скоростью.

Все функции, выполняемые СУБД, были тщательным образом проверены и протестированы в процессе разработки.

Таким образом, особенностями «Электронного деканата» являются:

- осуществление непрерывного сопровождения процесса обучения;

- простота в использовании, так как основная настройка информационного обмена между ее компонентами реализована внутри программы. Дополнительная настройка необходима лишь в отдельных случаях и может осуществляться с помощью разработанного для таких случаев инструментария. Благодаря правильному разбиению информационных потоков и всей совокупности документов на отдельные базы данных, добавление новых пользователей сопровождается просто созданием для него соответствующих БД;

- четкое разделение доступа пользователей к различным компонентам «Электронного деканата».

В заключение отметим еще одно важное качество «Электронного деканата»: использование автоматизированного документооборота является оптимальной технологией информационного обмена в системе ОСДО.

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TRAINING STAFF TO TEACH SOCIAL SCIENCE RESERCH METHODS BY DISTANCE LEARNING

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Abstract
This paper describes the problems encountered and the methods which are being used to try to overcome them in developing and piloting a course in Social Science Research Methods for use (in the first instance) in a distance-learning masters degree in Environmental Management at Tomsk State University. The degree is being piloted with the universities of Omsk, Surgut and Yakutsk.

Rieke Leenders played a large part in developing and delivering the face-to-face course on which the distance-learning course is based, and is continuing to support Judith Marquand and Vera Tolstova in developing the distance-learning version. Judith Marquand, as well as taking lead responsibility for the distance-learning course, is responsible for the overall co-ordination of the project to develop and pilot the degree.

There is a fourfold transfer problem in assuring effective delivery of this particular degree course:
- the material - Social Science Research Meth-

ods, paying at least as much attention to qualitative as to quantitative methods - is for the most part very new in Russia and there is no Western course to transfer which is entirely suitable for our purposes;

- the course uses student-centred learning methods which are in large part new in Russia;

- the distance learning version of the course retains and builds both on the content and on the student-centred methods of the face-to-face course which preceded it;

- tutors have to be trained to whom all three aspects - the content, the methods and the use of distance learning for teaching - are unfamiliar.

The paper discusses each of the four problems and the methods used to try to overcome them.

Introduction

This paper describes the problems encountered and the methods which are being used to try to overcome them in developing and piloting a course in Social Science Research Methods for use (in the first instance) in a masters degree in Environmental Management at Tomsk State University. The degree is being piloted with the universities of Omsk, Surgut and Yakutsk.

The work has been funded by the European Commission's Tempus Tacis programme throughout. The purpose of this programme is to transfer know-how from West European universities to universities in the former Soviet Union. The series of projects which has supported the development of the Tomsk State University masters programme in Environmental Management began in 1996, when the partners were the universities of Sheffield (where Judith Marquand worked at that time), Utrecht and Tomsk. A masters degree programme using face-to-face methods was developed and delivered to three successive cohorts of students.

One of the courses in the degree is a course in Social Science Research Methods. It was developed by Rieke Leenders (Utrecht) and Ludmila Gurjeva (TSU), and first delivered by them in 1999, to the first cohort of students near the end of their formal coursework, to help the students prepare their dissertations. It became clear at that first delivery that the course needed to

be longer and to be delivered earlier in the degree course.

The distance learning version of the degree has been under development since the beginning of 2000. The partners in the project are the universities of Oxford, Utrecht and Tomsk, with Omsk, Surgut and Yakutsk as pilot sites. Judith Marquand is responsible for the overall coordination of the project. The first courses are now being piloted with tutors and the remainder are in an advanced state of preparation.

In the distance-learning degree, Social Science Research Methods is as full a course as any of the others. Ultimately, it is intended that it will be studied by full-time students in their first semester (along with a course on «Introduction to Ecology» and a course on «Environmental English») and by part-time students in their second semester. It is being developed by Judith Marquand and Vera Tolstova (TSU), with support from Rieke Leenders and Ludmila Gurjeva. The author's draft will be given to the technical developer at the end of September and it is expected that it will be piloted at the beginning of 2002.

The Social Science Research Methods course faces particular problems, which make it more difficult to design and deliver than many of the others. There is a fourfold transfer problem in assuring its effective delivery:

- the material - Social Science Research Methods, paying at least as much attention to qualitative as to quantitative methods - is for the most part very new in Russia and there is no Western course to transfer which is entirely suitable for our purposes;

- the course uses student-centred learning methods which are in large part new in Russia;

- the distance learning version of the course retains and builds both on the new content and on the unfamiliar student-centred methods of the face-to-face course which preceded it, which make it demanding to design;

- tutors have to be trained to whom all three aspects - the content, the methods and the use of distance learning for teaching - are unfamiliar.

In addition, the work is time-constrained, in that the funding finishes at the end of 2001 and we shall not know until then whether further funding will be made available.

The paper discusses each of these four problems and the methods used to try to overcome them.

The material

In the face-to-face course which Rieke Leenders and Ludmila Gurjeva delivered they designed a course which included both quantitative and qualitative methods. To work with both quantitative and qualitative data in social science research is not an obvious approach, even in Western Europe. Quantitative methods are techniques like surveys abd some forms of document analysis; qualitative methods are techniques like open interviewing and participant observation. The fact that the qualitative part of the course was mostly delivered by Rieke Leenders and the quantitative part by Ludmila Gurjeva was not an accident. Rieke Leenders, as a West-European cultural anthropologist, was largely trained in qualitative methods; Ludmila Gurjeva, as a Russian sociologist, largely in quantitative methods. This division of labour reflects the current situation in Russia. Cultural Anthropology in Russia, as an empirically based social science, still has a long way to go. Russian sociology more often than not works with quantitative methods. In our course we not only tried to combine the best of both worlds, but we also wanted to show the two methods to the students as an integrated whole. As LeCompte and Schensul (1999/1:158) state:

'When [social scientists] ... collect both qualitative and quantitative data, the qualitative data are continuously analysed, providing the basis for survey or other quantitative research to follow. Sometimes, the qualitative data stand alone; sometimes, they provide working hypotheses that guide the construction of the quantitative research. Qualitative data can also supplement, extend, or provide context or explanation for the quantitative data.'

Especially, the collection and analysis of qualitative data provided a lot of problems. First of all, most research questions from the quantitative tradition are not suitable for qualitative research. The two approaches are complementary. Qualitative researchers are above all interested in the Why? and the How?, and less in the How Much?, or the Where? The point is to

take up the challenge to try to reformulate the proposed research questions, often conceived in Russia only with quantitative approaches in mind, in such a way that qualitative research is also possible. This enlarges the chance of new and independent research that generates data which add something crucial to existing opinions and theories. Especially in a course designed for professional environmental managers, we think it important to pay special attention to this skill. For managers need to know at the very least how to commission and use the results of research. Moreover, the mental processes entailed in reflective, forward-looking management are very similar to those required for good social science research, particularly good qualitative research.

In addition, the combination of social science theory and social science methods in one and the same course is not an obvious approach. In the traditional handbooks, both are often separated and time and again the students do not know how to integrate them in such a way as to provide a complete picture of the problem or situation to be explored in the research. However, the problem still has to be solved that most of the theories we used are Western based and the illustrations also come largely from Western countries. Current Russian literature still has to be added - and, indeed, as far as we can judge, has not yet been produced in the environmental management area to any significant extent.

A special problem is presented by the necessity of making extensive notes while doing qualitative research. Half of the success of the technique of open interviewing and participant observation exists in making 'good notes'. Except for paraphrasing the words of the teachers in their notebooks, Russian students do not seem to be familiar with the process of making effective notes of a lecture. Maybe this has to do with the fact that Russian University culture for a great part exists as 'oral culture'? Sufficient time has to be allowed to learn to make 'good notes'.

The last point we want to mention here is the attention which has to be paid to the skill of reflexion, where the researcher reflects on the research process which actually occurred in order to make sure that the judgments made are robustly rooted in the phenomenon which is ob-

served. This applies as much (although in slightly different ways) to quantitative methods as to qualitative ones. Our course supposes the presence of a kind of research mentality, a kind of curious mind which is intrigued by the truth behind the surface, the facts behind the official, the obvious and the visible. It is hard for us to estimate if this 'wish really to know' is present. In any case the first step has to be to spend a lot of energy on learning the technique of reflexion.

The student-centred learning methods

For us, Environmental Management is about how people manage the environment. It entails a lot of social contacts and relationships between persons, groups and organisations. Effective functioning in these contacts in different roles - like the manager, the researcher or the functional staff officer in an organisation - implies, generally speaking, a strong orientation towards social processes. It implies also having social skills at your disposal. The Western partners saw it as their main task to help to introduce theories, methods and especially skills from the social sciences into the Masters degree. The results are to be found in this course (and one or two others) particularly.

We are astonished at the willingness, if not eagerness, of our Russian colleagues to introduce social skills - reflective practices and student-centred learning methods - into their own lecturing. During the years we worked with them they showed more and more interest in the ins and outs of the issue of social skills. In addition, the students turned out to be enthusiastic about these skills. From the student evaluation sessions, we learned that they too only want 'more': more types of skills, more time invested and more practice.

Notwithstanding this overall encouraging context, we want to discuss here also a problematic aspect of our contributions, namely the structural reluctance we felt that we encountered really to apply these skills in social life. This especially holds for the students. This reluctance we perceived as a contrast between the process of learning in an 'academic' atmosphere and the process of applying this learning in 'real life'.

In our view, an important condition for open communication is the willingness to receive and to give feedback. To receive 'feedback' means to get information from others about how they perceive and interpret my behaviour and actions. To give 'feedback' means telling others about my observations, interpretations and feelings about their behaviour. Practising feedback during the training sessions turned out to be complicated, not only during the training sessions but even more not during the regular evaluation sessions within the different project groups of the students during the course. During these meetings, the students were provoked to give their opinion about the development of the work and the contributions of their co-group members. Some students were clearly not satisfied about the contributions of some of their colleagues, but they showed a strong resistance to speaking about this openly. According to them, this only could do great damage to their colleagues. Most students preferred to communicate their dissatisfaction about colleagues to their lecturer. By doing only this, they missed an excellent opportunity to exercise some important management skills like exchanging information, consultation, decision making, team building and negotiation in a rather safe environment.

In the Social Science Research Methods course the student not only learns the techniques of doing a document-analysis or making a survey, but is also trained in 'good behaviour' during 'real life' empirical research. The main characteristic of this last type of research is the use of yourself as a measuring instrument.

To understand what is really going on in a special field of interest the researcher does face-to-face interviewing, participates physically and 'on the spot' in all kinds of social activities and observes what is going on. In Cultural Anthropology, this is called 'participant observation'. In general, this implies not only an attitude of reflection about what you are doing, but also an attitude of introspection about who you are as a person, what your qualities are and how your own social and cultural background possibly influences your opinion about the area of research.

Besides the very important skill of reflection, this type of researcher needs also other social and mental skills. To apply the technique of open

interviewing effectively, you need for instance to master the skills of 'good hearing', 'good listening' and 'good questioning'. Even the processes of quantitative research require these skills if the collection of new data is included in the work. For the technique of participant observation, you need, as well as these skills, also the skills of 'good observing' and 'good participating'.

Environmental managers have to identify themselves as far as possible with the full range of problems an entrepreneur encounters while managing the enterprise. However, they have to identify themselves also, as far as possible, with the professional community of environmental managers. This requires a kind of schizophrenic attitude. In the social sciences we call this the skill of 'involvement & detachment'. 'Involvement' is especially needed in a situation where it is difficult to identify with the entrepreneur because he is 'not like you'. 'Detachment' is especially needed when you have really succeeded in identifying yourself in a deep-reaching way with the entrepreneur. After that, you have to withdraw from the scene of action into a scene of contemplation and reflection and decide for yourself and together with members of your professional community about what you actually experienced 'in the field'. The skill of involvement and detachment can only be learned by indoor exercises, real life experiences and continuous reflection on one's own behaviour and ideas.

However, the exercises with these research skills in the classroom seemed to be experienced by the students as a game rather than as a preparation for real participation in the social world. Rieke Leenders did not get the idea that the students really wanted to implement such skills as open interviewing and participant observation in their own work context. It looked for them like something which belonged only within the walls of the university. It seemed that their attitude was that they thought that, outside these walls, nobody wanted to be observed and nobody wanted to be questioned in an open way about what he or she is doing. An illustration to support this idea is given by the experience that for the students the skill of 'involvement & detachment' seemed to be more attractive and relevant when applied to exotic cases,

like the experiences of Rieke Leenders as an anthropologist in a small community in Spain. The students gave the impression that they only wanted to play at being social researchers, but not really to be researchers themselves. Perhaps this is because in real life they thought it would not be possible to apply what they had learnt? For environmental problems 'outside', these kinds of social skills seem too threatening. The students believed, so it seemed, that the outside world did not want them.

On reflection we experienced the problems described, among other things, as a tension between two paradigms: the 'western' and the 'eastern'. The social science skills we introduced in the Masters are in a very high measure rooted in Western values and norms with regard to effective operation in social processes. These values and norms seem not always to be identical or even sometimes to conflict with the values and norms in Russian society. Modern Western theories of organisational development presuppose a positive worldview and a positive portrayal of mankind. Russian everyday life experience, at least outside the social circle of family and friends, presupposes, as far as we could see, distrust and cynicism regarding the world in general and Russian people in particular.

We realise that our own observations in this matter are only loosely based on real knowledge about Russian life. We think the reluctance of the students has to do with a general perception of the world as a bureaucratic and 'paternalistic' social environment. Therefore, as a rule, the general social attitude is to interfere as little as possible in the affairs of other people. This conflicts with the desire, often expressed with only limited understanding of what it entails, to transfer as much as is relevant from good Western management practice to the Russian context.

To clarify: we don't think the problem described is unique to the Masters project or for Russia. We ourselves experience every day how difficult it is to apply in real life what you have learned in the classroom we ourselves experience every day. Theoretically, for instance we know that an international project as the Masters 'Environmental Management' provokes many unintended changes. Rieke Leenders, for instance, experiences these changes most clear-

ly in the personal relationships between Russian and Western partners. In spite of her knowledge of and training in the skills of 'feedback' and 'involvement & detachment', with every visit West-East or East-West she finds herself again and again highly surprised by all the changes which have taken place in the interpersonal sphere.

The most important task for us - and we acknowledge that we did not pay much attention to it until the end of the project to design the face-to-face degree - is to provide an efficient link between the training context inside the university and the outside world where the student has to apply the skills as an employee or as a manager. In our view, the starting point can be the microcosm of the learning group in the classroom. In the context of distance learning, this poses yet further problems, since it becomes more difficult to create a learning group rather than a collection of separate learning individuals.

Developing the distance learning version of the course

If face-to-face teaching is to be effective, the teacher needs to consider all the time the relationship of students to the material, the relationship of students to each other and the relationship between the student and the teacher.

In distance learning, these relationships become more complex. The direct relationship between the student and the material becomes more important, since access for the student to other means of learning is more restricted. Relationships between students, still an important source of learning and especially of reinforcing what is being learnt, become more difficult to achieve. The relationship between student and teacher is replaced by the relationship between student and local tutor, but the contact with the tutor is more restricted than that with the teacher in face-to-face learning. Moreover, the tutor is not the author of the course material - this is the teacher - and the relationship between tutor and teacher becomes critically important if the tutor is to be able to understand fully and to carry out the teacher's intentions.

In developing the distance-learning degree in Environmental Management, the first training requirement was to make sure that the course

authors - the teachers - understood all these new relationships. It was necessary to learn that you did not need to design the course assuming that the restrictions of the technology made the advantages of face-to-face contact impossible to attain. It was also necessary to learn the various ways in which these restrictions could be overcome and hence the implications for the way in which the course should be designed.

At the start of the project, the main authors for the distance learning courses and some of the technical developers attended a two-week workshop given by the Technology Assisted Lifelong Learning Department (TALL) at the Oxford University Department of Continuing Education, where they learnt what some of the technical possibilities were and how to use them. They learnt about good practice in course design - and that many course developers who should know better still do little more than transfer a lecture course to compact disk. We learnt that the majority of students, faced with extended material on compact disk which is designed to be read or which is more comprehensible if read with care, very sensibly print it off to read it. We learnt that the proper use of placing material on CD or on-line is to exploit methods of presentation which complement the part of the material which is best studied by reading. And we saw an evaluation which TALL had carried out of distance learning courses at a sample of North American universities, some of them very prestigious. The universities have to remain unidentified because the quality of most of the courses was so poor - their authors had given relatively too much thought to the academic content of their material and far too little, if any, to the way in which the students would experience it and the need to think explicitly about the learning process at every stage.

When Judith Marquand and Vera Tolstova (both of whom attended the TALL course) came to design the Social Science Research Methods course, building on material from Rieke Leenders and Ludmila Gurjeva, they tried to take account of the four relationships and the need to make sure that the students had the opportunity to reinforce their knowledge gained from more or less conventional materials, even if conveyed by CD, with doing (including discussion) in order to understand what they had read or heard

or seen, and more doing in order to practise the skills with which the course was designed to equip them.

The course, when complete, will be made up of 13 units, each intended to comprise about one week's work for the students. The first three and the last two units are completely new; the middle 8 units draw heavily on the face-to-face courses delivered by Rieke Leenders and Ludmila Gurjeva. At the time of writing, the first eight units, which include four units concerned exclusively with qualitative techniques, have been prepared ready for translation and technical development; work is under way on the four quantitative units. The 8th, 11th and most of the 13th unit are assessed exercises; the remainder comprise text, with the occasional audio or video insert, and many exercises for the students which are not assessed, but which in most cases are sent to and discussed with the tutors. Such exercises include several where there is direct interaction between small numbers of students, and several group discussions facilitated by the tutors. There are two occasions within the course when the students in each centre will need to be brought together for a workshop - at the end of the second unit, when a video too large for a CD or on-line transmission will be shown and discussed, and a workshop associated with the tenth unit, when the students will learn how to use statistical techniques designed specifically for social scientists, ready for their assessed exercise in the eleventh unit in using quantitative methods to hypothesise, test and appraise critically the relationships within a substantial body of statistical data.

Two examples of the learning objectives set out at the beginning of each unit are shown in order to illustrate some of the combinations of activities used:

Research Methods Course:
Unit 4: Analysis of Documents

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1st screen (Navigation)

Learning Objectives.
After studying this unit, you should:

1) Understand the distinction between primary and secondary documentary sources, the types of primary documentary sources which the social scientist is likely to use, and the problem of reliability:

Text, small exercises (not assessed)

2) understand concepts of 'culture' and 'institutions' and how cultures generate documents which social scientists may use

Text, video, small exercise (not assessed)

3) Understand the concept of 'organisation', the difference between formal and informal culture in an organisation, and the role of documents in studying an organisation.

Text, reading, small exercise (not assessed)

4) understand that the methods of analysis used for the literature review (see Unit 3) can be used for primary documents as well as secondary sources, and know how to apply them (traditional document analysis)

Text, exercise (not assessed)

5) understand and be able to undertake quantitative content analysis.

Text, exercise (not assessed)

6) Group Discussion: the procedures and outcomes of the exercises in Sections (4) and (5)

Text, group discussion

* The horizontal bar below the heading indicates the nature of the data with which the unit is concerned. The left hand box indicates circumstances where the researcher has had no influence at all on the generation of the data. As you move to the right along the spectrum, the researcher has progressively more influence on the structure of the data when they are collected. The box which lies furthest to the right of all indicates quantitative data collected under experimental conditions, mimicking experiments in the natural sciences.

Research Methods Course:
Unit 6: Open Interviewing

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1st screen (Navigation)

Learning Objectives

After studying this Unit, you should:

1 understand the conceptual basis of open interviewing

Text, reading, exercise (not assessed)

2 know how to prepare for interviewing

Text, audio, 2 exercises (not assessed)

3 be able to conduct a simple interview

Text, reading, optional reading

4.be able to transcribe interview material

Text, audio, 2 exercises (not assessed)

5 understand the concepts of validity and reliability for interview data, and be able to write a reflexive account of a simple interview.

Text, reading, exercise (not assessed)

* The horizontal bar below the heading indicates the nature of the data with which the unit is concerned. The left hand box indicates circumstances where the researcher has had no influence at all on the generation of the data. As you move to the right along the spectrum, the researcher has progressively more influence on the structure of the data when they are collected. The box which lies furthest to the right of all indicates quantitative data collected under experimental conditions, mimicking experiments in the natural sciences.

It is important to note how the exercises are interwoven with the material presented. They are not multiple-choice exercises or other simple questions to test whether the student has read the material; they are integral to the understanding of what is being taught. For example, the exercise in Section 4 of Unit 4 asks the students to apply the qualitative methods of document analysis about which they have been reading to two short texts. The exercise in Section 5 of Unit 4 asks the students to apply quantitative methods of document analysis to the same texts. Then, in the final Section of the Unit, the tutor facilitates a discussion (by e-mail) between the students about the two different methods they have been using.

Similarly, in Unit 6 Section 4, whilst the first exercise requires transcription of audio material, the second exercise is transcription of a simple interview designed and conducted by the student, after the preparation given in the earlier part of the Unit and in an exercise in observing and taking notes on a related topic in the previous Unit 5. The reflexive account which the student writes in the final section relates to the same interview.

It is intended that the course be assessed by 3 extended exercises, each taking up an entire unit, for which the facilitated, non-assessed exercises will have prepared the students. It is expected that tutors will provide a first marking for these exercises, under guidance from teachers. Teachers will provide a second marking, by checking a random sample of the texts, plus any where the tutors are uncertain about the grading of what the student has done. In the first delivery of the course - to potential tutors - teachers will of course have to do all the marking. In the first delivery of the course to students, teachers will have to double-check all the tutors' assessments, in order to assure themselves that the tutors are able to undertake the assessments adequately.

When we have piloted the course, we shall see whether it is pitched at an appropriate length and level. But there can be little doubt that the active methods used are themselves appropriate.

However, there is the potential problem that such interactive methods of teaching and assessment place too difficult a burden on the tutors. How are we preparing them to undertake their work?

Training tutors for the distance learning version of the course

The first and obvious point to make is that the material and methods are very unfamiliar to the tutors, even without the distance-learning format. So we are requiring all those who will tutor the course to follow it first. Indeed, as far as possible, all the tutors for other courses are expected to follow this one too, since they will need to understand the material in this course and indeed to be able to use the methods taught, if they are to be competent to take part in supervising dissertations for this degree.

Thus the tutors will be the first pilot students for the course. This both gives them the

opportunity to experience the methods and to master the material for themselves, at least to the level which will be expected of the student. Moreover, it will provide the opportunity for feedback between them and the teachers. This will be further reinforced and developed by a three-day workshop in Tomsk planned to take place at the end of the tutors' study of the course. This will cover both the course content and methods, as experienced by the tutors as students, and the requirements for and potential problems in tutoring the course.

When the tutors study the course, the teachers will have the opportunity to test the guide that will be written for tutors. It will not be a true pilot because the teachers, to the extent that they are authors of the course, have privileged understanding of what is written in the tutors' guide. Even so, they will have the opportunity to learn a great deal about its adequacy or otherwise, in time to revise it before the true pilot, when the tutors first start to deliver the course to students.

Present plans are that the tutors start to study the course early in 2002, that the workshop be held in May or June 2002 and that the course is first delivered to students in Autumn 2002.

Discussion and Conclusions

Any attempt to transfer modes of behaviour from Western countries to Russia has to confront the problems of post-Communist society in coming to terms with «living in truth» (Havel). It has to proceed sensitively; it must not simply try to impose Western practice but rather to grow new Russian behaviours which draw on such practice to the extent which Russians themselves find useful.

The problem of how much it is right to impose is particularly acute when what is being transferred are methods of conducting «scientific» activity. This applies both to social science research methods and to methods of distance learning. What validity is it proper for Westerners to claim for the methodologies they are teaching?

A partial solution to the problem is found in this particular project, because of the extent to which the Russian staff have taken «ownership» of the new teaching and learning methods used

in the face-to-face degree. But perhaps the Western partners have not yet succeeded sufficiently in demonstrating why we believe that the social science research methods which we are teaching are integral with these? For those who are familiar with both, it is clear that the «reflective practitioner» in teaching (and indeed, in all forms of professional practice, including management) is a very close cousin to the «reflective researcher» in social science research methods.

The essence of «living in truth» is to close the gap between appearance and reality. This is also the essence of good practice in social science research methods. The results of the research are of no relevance unless the researcher can demonstrate the validity and reliability of the methods by which they were obtained. An important part of achieving and then demonstrating validity and reliability is found in the researcher's own, reported, reflexive practice. There are other dimensions too: the results of quantitative research are only valid to the extent that the sampling procedures are satisfactory, that explicit measures are taken to reduce misunderstanding and interviewer/subject bias when collecting data, and to the extent that the statistical significance of the quantitative results is examined. Yet the original face-to-face version of the quantitative methods part of the course did not pay much attention to any of these, and the computer program widely used in Tomsk for the analysis of social science research results does not include the most widely used tests of statistical significance.

Why do the students need this emphasis on social interaction - feedback and reflection - in their social science research methods course? Are they perhaps correct in their implicit assumption that the world outside the university will not allow them to use the methods they are learning? In many cases they may indeed be disencouraged from attempting to use methods which take account of what people say and do - but they will probably also be surprised at how much interest there is in learning to work in these ways. Judith Marquand has had some experience in working with Russian (administrative) bodies outside the university; what she has found among a certain leaven of managers there is the same enthusiasm to learn about, to adapt and to

adopt the best of Western practice as has been found among the TSU staff course team. If «living in truth» is to grow, it has to start somewhere, and the best places are wherever the ground is fertile.

Not only students, but also teachers who have not been much exposed to Western practice, show surprise that we believe that often there is no correct answer, only good or bad methodology. Students tend to ask, at the end of a complex discussion drawing out all the main viewpoints: «But tell us which one is right» They find it hard to learn that there is always room for discussion, always a need to understand the different points of view, and always (as managers) a need to reach decisions which are understood and negotiated rather than «optimal» and derived directly from theory.

So the training of all three groups - teachers, tutors and students - to understand and use social science research methods is closely interwoven. Such training is also closely related to the good practice use of distance-learning as a technique. Distance learning is not a particularly good vehicle for teaching by conventional methods. The student, «out there», isolated, loses the benefits of face-to-face interaction with peers and teachers. What distance learning does allow readily is for students to explore and experiment with the material in ways that are difficult to achieve by conventional means. This advantage needs to be exploited, but teachers and tutors need to learn how to exploit it.

The tutors «out there» need not only to be able to read the tutors' guide, but really to understand the four relationships set out at the beginning of the paper. They need to understand the material, but they do not need to be experts in it. They do however have to be well on the route to becoming expert in the learning and teaching methods used. This entails learning how to introduce reflection and feedback, and how to compensate as far as possible for the difficulties introduced by physical separation. The difficult aspects of distance learning as a technique have little to do with computer hardware and software. They concern relationships and learning processes. Teaching technology is concerned primarily with transfer of learning, not with hardware.

Good use of the new teaching technologies places major demands, first on authors (or teachers) and then on tutors. And indeed teachers in the West are far from having a universal understanding of good ways to make use of distance learning possibilities.

Evaluation, reflection and feedback over the first piloting to tutors and then the first piloting to students will allow us to judge how far the processes set in train by this time-constrained, resource-constrained project are successful at all. We are conscious that we are only at the beginning of a very long learning process for everybody involved.

Learning to «live in truth» is a long and difficult process in every society. Distance-learning is potentially a powerful tool to disseminate its methods widely. But distance-learning with modern techniques is still in its infancy. The experience of this project has shown that it is a demanding and rewarding infant for all those interested to help it to develop.

The sections on «The material» and «The student-centred learning methods» draw extensively on a paper entitled «»Inside and outside reality»: Western experience with training in social science skills» prepared by Rieke Leenders and Hans Knip in September 1999.

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