Developing Research-Led Teaching: Two Cases of Practical Data Reuse in the Classroom

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Abstract
Research-led teaching is an area that has gained attention and prominence within higher education. This article reviews two teaching resources developed from archived research data and demonstrates how this type of data reuse helps teachers establish a clear connection between research and teaching. The two teaching resources, developed by the authors in their time working at the UK Data Service, were created for use in higher education, and use Annette Lawson’s 1980s study of adultery and Stanley Cohen’s 1960s study of Mods and Rockers. The authors describe the resources in detail, explain how and why the content was developed, and explore the potential value that preserved real-world research data can have when using research to teach. The reviews of these resources point to the great possibilities for future development of teaching resources using archived data to support a range of teaching modules, from methods to topical undergraduate courses, as well as demonstrate the value of archived data and documentation for research practices.

Keywords
research-led teaching, data reuse, active learning, collaborative teaching and research

Introduction
In 2005, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) introduced funding to support research-informed teaching, sparking a new peak in publications about “research-led teaching” and an expansion on strategies aimed at achieving a perfectly formed, research–teaching nexus within a higher education setting. Research projects exploring innovative teaching methods, including projects like Project LINK (Griffiths, 2004) and Research-Led Teaching and Learning Project (Zamorski, 2002), have raised new questions about how to expand on the methods that lean toward actively engaging students in their learning. This article outlines how archived research data, whether quantitative or qualitative, can be reused to further develop teaching methods that incorporate research into the heart of student experience.

Before introducing some of the kinds of resources available, it is important to understand the pedagogical literature that explores the challenges of achieving a balance between research and teaching in higher education courses, as well as the great value of including lessons of research in teaching. Zamorski (2000) distinguished between two ways students learn about research: through being an audience of research and by being actively involved in research activities, rather than simply being passive recipients of information. Despite the different formats of teaching, the method of “learn by doing” is often recommended as the most effective technique of teaching, as is, importantly, making learning relatable to students’ real lives (Pfeffer & Rogalin, 2012).

In the spirit of active learning, social science courses often advocate a small-scale research project within their mandatory research methods modules, fulfilling the fourth type of research-led teaching advocated by Healey and...
Jenkins (2009). Students are asked to develop a research question, collect a small amount of data, analyze the data, and write a research report, often which serves as the final piece of assessment for the module. While this method provides hands-on experience and allows for some decision making within the research process, it is also usually preceded by an internal, ethical review board. The process can take up valuable class time and place conditions on research activities. Recent years have seen a movement toward proportional review, which aims to streamline the ethical review process (Hunter, 2007). However, there is still variation in the guidelines for a student-friendly ethical framework (see, for example, Lowney, 2014, for a discussion on ethical consideration for student research projects), highlighting the tension between assessing risk and encouraging students to learn about research by “doing.”

In addition, while ethics reviews are done in the name of student (and participant) safety, which should always be at the forefront of any educational exercise, there still exists a gap between how a teacher can practically introduce students to the useful complexities of the research process and how the student can (easily) have a personal experience of those real-world aspects. Perhaps more importantly, as Elman, Kapiszewski, and Kirilova (2015) also pointed out, “simply carrying out a research task, isolated from the research design and epistemological justification which motivated it” (p. 39) does not necessarily teach the most important aspects of research and its impact on knowledge creation. Without adequate time and preparation to go through these processes, students can lose out on a nuanced understanding of the very lessons meant to be taught by research-led teaching.

This article offers a diverse reuse of data which demonstrates not only a world beyond research for data but also the ways it can contribute to research-led teaching. By reusing precollected, high-quality data that are accompanied by comprehensive contextual information about the research design, students can experience the real world of research methods. The two cases detailed in this article highlight how and why archived research data were chosen specifically for teaching.

Teaching Resources Available Through Social Science Data Archives

Advocating and promoting teaching with data has been and continues to be a key feature of research data services, with excellent resources for quantitative data already being provided (Bishop, 2012; Corti & Wathan, in press). Nestar (NSD: Norwegian Centre for Research Data, 2016) and SDA: Survey Documentation and Analysis (University of California, Berkley, 2016) are examples of tools which allow users to explore survey datasets and calculate basic descriptive statistics. Fortunately, there are also an increasing number of online resources dedicated to qualitative data across several data services. These include data exploration tools and specially prepared datasets and user guides. The Timescapes Archive has developed numerous guides and multimedia resources, including the Timescapes Methods Guide Series, which reuse qualitative, longitudinal data (University of Leeds, 2012). These resources aim to address specific research skills, such as how to formulate interview questions and how to use timelines and relational maps to visualize time. The Irish Qualitative Data Archive also has a series of resources for students and makes available audio and text extracts from life history interviews to help students learn key concepts in the classroom (Irish Qualitative Data Archive, 2015). The UK Data Service (2015c) provides an online qualitative data browser, QualiBank; a number of teaching resources, including workshops and webinars; themed teaching packs; and online, multimedia teaching aids for all types of data. All of these resources can be used and adapted as needed by educators; popular case studies published on the UK Data Service website demonstrate examples of how teachers have used them in the classroom and in assignments (UK Data Service, 2015a).

These resources not only present new information to students but can also help them to build their own analytical skills. For example, students can use real interviews and interview schedules to see how researchers build rapport and how research questions build up to answer larger research questions. In one specific example, Hollway and Jefferson’s (2003a) study “Gender Difference, Anxiety and the Fear of Crime, 1995,” students can see how researchers initially piloted a style of interviewing which did not lead to the results they had anticipated. They found that participants displayed defense mechanisms when discussing sensitive issues and that a standard interviewing style was not the ideal way to explore these issues. From this pilot study, they developed an alternative style called the “Free Association Narrative Interviewing” (FANI) method, which was a unique and highly successful way of accessing these more difficult and emotional stories (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). They state in their “Aims and Objectives” of their study that

in psychoanalytic theory, anxiety precipitates defenses against the threats that it poses to the self, such that ideas and feelings which arouse anxiety are lost to conscious thought. This proposition has profound implications for method. We aimed to develop an appropriate interview method (which at the beginning we called “quasi-clinical”). Our development of the “narrative interview method” is probably the most important outcome of this project, because of its widespread implications for social science research. (Hollway & Jefferson, 2003b, p. 6)

Through highlighting the trials and errors of their original method, and demonstrating their redevelopment of the interviewing technique, Hollway and Jefferson document the often-disordered nature of doing qualitative research and how this can lead to some of the most important research outcomes.
From the UK Data Service data collections, students are able to explore a range of social research methods, including focus groups, visual methods, diaries, online data collection, observation, as well as a variety of interviewing styles. In the last 5 years, there have been notable cases of where teachers have designed lessons which give students the opportunity to reuse data—a method that arguably gives students a much more nuanced understanding of the research process than other more traditional methods of teaching. Bishop (2012) pointed out, “having access to the data underlying research outputs allows students to understand in greater depth how a previous researcher developed research questions, defined samples and conducted analysis” (p. 342). Engaging with the context and outputs of a study allows students to make connections between methodological decisions and their effects, in addition to giving students high-quality models of how research can be done.

More recently, there has been a shift from providing more instructor-led resources and guides to more interactive learning resources. Kilburn, Nind, and Wiles (2014) stated that the most effective learning of data skills within social science research methods teaching is best achieved through one of three means: active learning by making processes visible, directly experiencing methods, and critical reflection on practice. Sloan (2013), in his investigation into research methods assessment in the social sciences, found that diversification could improve the student experience of a typically “unpopular” subject. He also found that reorienting research methods modules as learning environments helped students to develop competencies (such as computer skills) as well as critical skills. Equally, dramatic improvements in the digital accessibility of research datasets can be seen over the past few years, particularly for qualitative data, which increase the potential of reusing data for teaching (see Corti & Fielding, 2016). Using this accessibility, recently developed resources have sought to encourage students to independently take up a reuse project.

In 2010, Jackie Turton and Bethany Morgan-Brett of the University of Essex collaborated on a Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TALIF) project to create a template for an assignment, which allowed students to apply research methods knowledge in a data reuse project. The project came about as a result of the Essex University’s Sociology Department’s continuing need to develop new and innovative digital student assessment schemes and assignments. The intent of the assessment, piloted for a second-year module on Crime and Social Control, was to allow “students [to] follow a piece of academic research right through the data life cycle, from conception to publication” (Morgan-Brett & Turton, 2013, p. 37). Students explored the whole process: from the development of the proposal, how research methods were chosen, how pilots were carried out, what questions were asked, how interpretations were made, and how this resulted in an academic publication. The aim was to incorporate the use of research methods with the practice of accessing and analyzing archived qualitative data and then apply the findings to an appropriate criminological question. Students were tasked with exploring several data collections; writing original, applicable research questions; choosing an appropriate dataset to reanalyze; and writing up their findings. The template that was created guided students through the search, selection, and reanalysis of a dataset related to the topic of crime and control.

The TALIF project took place in four stages, starting with a pilot project accompanied by a full evaluation, and followed later by redesign of the original assignment template. In the next stage, a generic template was developed, which could be adapted for new assignments in other sociology modules and in other disciplines. The final phase of the project involved working with the Health and Human Sciences Department at Essex to implement this template in their Health Policy and Practice module. The project resulted in a final portfolio of resources, which includes two model assignments, a generic template, a marking template for tutors, a tutor’s guide, and a range of thematic guides. A follow-up evaluation of the assignment via a focus group and questionnaire revealed that the students were enthusiastic about the task they were set and reported that it provided a kind of insight into the research process that textbooks could not give. One of their students explained, “I don’t know how I would have done [interviewing] if I hadn’t had those transcripts to read through, because it gives you an idea of how an interview might go” (Morgan-Brett & Turton, 2013, p. 37). In addition to seeing “how it’s done” by professional researchers, students were encouraged to critically evaluate the choices made throughout the research process by the original researchers, demonstrating to students the fluidity of the research process from start to finish.

Jo Haynes of the University of Bristol developed a similar resource for her postgraduate students. Faced with the task of getting students engaged with qualitative data analysis as part of a 12-week course, Haynes (2011) asked students to undertake a secondary analysis assignment from a selected number of datasets held at the UK Data Service. As part of the assessment, Haynes explained that the students had the opportunity to come up with an original research question or find a new way to work with the data. Part of the motivation to have students reuse data, rather than collect their own, was to allow them more time to develop analytical skills. In addition, students benefited from having to generate multiple perspectives of their chosen dataset and craft diverse arguments and findings out of the data, beyond what the original researchers found. Haynes (2011) noted that it was “also a really good way to engage with research that has already been done and to reach a critical dialogue with the British research.” The project was such a success that one of Haynes’s students published her output, bringing new meaning to the idea of research-led teaching (Haynes & Jones, 2012).
In addition to the wide array of teaching resources, the infrastructure for access to qualitative data has also improved. The UK Data Service holds almost a 1,000 datasets arising from qualitative research (see Bishop & Kuula-Luumi, 2017, for a discussion of their content breadth and usage), which are available to registered users via web download. In 2014, the UK Data Service developed QualiBank, an online tool developed for searching, browsing, and citing of the content of qualitative data. With this most recent advance in accessibility of data, students can now immerse themselves in a world of qualitative data and research methods with a few simple clicks (UK Data Service, 2015b). This system is highlighted across the Special Issue as it has opened the dynamic engagement for users with research data. QualiBank has made research-led teaching with archived data a much more accessible task; students can quickly search through data using an interface that refines and sorts much like more familiar search engines. It does more than just searching and browsing, however; QualiBank is also able to relate pieces of data to each other (e.g., match up a transcript with related photo or audio clip of the interview), search across collections (potentially gathering datasets on a topic that spans disciplines and data types), and produce a fully formatted citation (ready for copy/paste into a bibliography) for an extract of textual data. The citation feature, in particular, helps to teach students the good practice of citing data and evidencing claims made in their writing. In university teaching, where engagement with research is one of the defining features of education, tools like QualiBank allow students the opportunity to actively engage with research through guided learning activities that meet the students at their level.

In the next section, we introduce two cases developed especially for teaching undergraduate students, using data from well-known studies in U.K. sociology. These accounts offer an account of the development of the teaching resource, as well as an account of the reception by students in the classroom. Rather than focusing on methods which assess changes in student knowledge, these accounts focus on the experience of learning and teaching, and some of the problems and solutions when using data in teaching. Feedback from the students, teachers, and the authors who developed these resources explore the benefits of reusing data in the classroom. While the aim of the resources is certainly to build student knowledge, these reuse cases demonstrate the flexibility of archived research data for creative uses in the classroom and offer solutions to issues that arise when reusing data for teaching.

Case 1: Developing a Teaching Resource on Folk Devils and Moral Panics

Teaching resources using archived data can be usefully employed to explore substantive themes and theoretical ideas, as well as teaching research methods. Stanley Cohen’s (1972) publication Folk Devils and Moral Panics, with its focus on criminality, youth culture, and its depiction by the mass media, has been a core text for criminology in A-level and university classrooms and has captured the imagination of students for the past 40 years. The UK Data Service saw enormous value and potential in digitizing this popular collection and developing it into a teaching resource for further education and higher education students, where they could access some of the original research materials connected to the published work.

The original research developed from an event on Easter Bank holiday 1964, when thousands of young people from the Mods and from the Rockers gangs descended on the beach at Clacton-on-Sea in Essex. The media were caught off guard and did not cover the events until the following day when they reported that a major riot had occurred. This caught the attention of Cohen, who at the time was a young PhD student, and when the youths met again later in the year, he seized the opportunity to see for himself what was happening. On Whitsun Bank Holiday, the Mods and Rockers once again descended upon the beaches of Brighton and Margate, and the media reported riotous, criminal behavior and numerous arrests. Yet, this did not match with Cohen’s own observations, which he found to be somewhat tamer than what was being reported.

It was this disjuncture between his perceptions and media reporting that led to the publication of his seminal work. In his study, he focused on the genesis and development of social typing associated with the 1960s phenomenon of Mods and Rockers. He described how particular social groups become marginalized when they are perceived as a threat to social order, and this led to the coining of the terms “folk devil” and “moral panic.” He looked in detail at the ways in which their deviant behavior was perceived and conceptualized—whether there was a unitary or a divergent set of images, the modes through which these images were transmitted, and the ways in which agents of social control reacted. Behavioral questions, such as the emergence of the Mods and Rockers’ particular styles, were explored, but the primary concern was in the moral outrage to this manifestation of youth culture.

Cohen’s original fieldwork legacy, which comprised observation notes, questionnaires, correspondence, handwritten notes, interviews, and extensive press cuttings, was donated by Stanley Cohen to Qualidata (now part of the UK Data Service) in the mid-1990s. The two boxes of materials were donated to Cambridge’s Institute of Criminology’s Radzinowitz Archive for preservation and access for visiting researchers. It was briefly cataloged by the UK Data Service as Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers, 1964-1967 (Cohen, 2004). As part of the digitization efforts of the Economic and Social Research Council’s (ESRC) Digital Futures 2012 project (which also funded the development of QualiBank), an opportunity arose.
to visit the Radzinowitz archive to photograph and digitize the entire Cohen fieldwork collection. The collection was then used as the basis for an innovative teaching resource with substantive learning exercises based on extracts of real data as well as other online resources.

The Folk Devils and Moral Panics teaching resource was constructed by Morgan-Brett to guide students through a series of activities designed to develop a critical approach to using secondary sources, discover Cohen’s collection in depth, and enable students to make links to other related topical social issues and theoretical concepts (UK Data Service, 2013b). There are short video clips on the Mods and Rockers, articles written on the topic, and extracts from Stanley Cohen’s life story interview which was recorded as part of the Pioneers of Social Research, 1996-2012, project (Thompson, 2014).

Perhaps the most revealing feature of the resource is the wide selection of newspaper clippings that report the events, which can be contrasted with Cohen’s typewritten observational notes directly from the scene. While the papers reported headlines such as “More violence as ‘Mod’ meets ‘Rocker,’” “The shame of the Whitsuntide,” “Rioting mods and rockers at Margate,” and “Send the ‘Wild Ones’ to the Foreign Legion says M.P.,” Cohen himself wrote, in his Participant Observation Notes, of the same events, “I was struck by the sheer innocence of the activity. Typical incidents include: putting a girl in a dustbin, boy jumping on another’s shoulder to greet a friend, throwing stones at a paper policeman’s hat floating on the sea.” He further reports, “Saw a policeman reprimanding a boy who was shouting a greeting to his friend across the street,” “Many acts certainly caused inconvenience—but this was caused by sheer numbers: it was not so much that individual acts were inherently offensive or inconveniencing,” and “If the stereotype of two groups deliberately coming down to fight each other was true, there would have been many more battles” (UK Data Service, 2013a). The teaching resource asks students to assess the similarities and differences between the ways in which the events were reported and to account for how and why these differences arose. In the final section of the resource, students are directed toward the reporting of a comparative event in the London Riots of 2011. They are asked to observe the way in which the events and participants in the riots are described and to think about whether the young people involved could be depicted as “folk devils” and how events might be viewed as another “moral panic.” Students can glimpse aspects of the context of fieldwork through an encounter with the original data and with the investigator’s own reflections at the time of analysis.

The teaching resources creators at the UK Data Archive faced several challenges with this project. Primarily, it was important to identify the terms and conditions under which Cohen deposited his original collection, identifying who now held the rights to the collection since its transfer between repositories, and finally what purposes it could be used for—in particular, could it be used in an open access manner for teaching purposes? Another significant challenge involved the newspaper clippings, which were subject to copyright and could not be legally shared in an open access resource. There was the option of tracking down every original newspaper to ask for permission to share the clipping, but with over 140 different papers—many of whom had since closed—this proved an unmanageable task. Specialist newspaper archives, such as http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk, offer ways of finding the original clipping, but this again did not always offer the permission to share it. Moreover, it did not reflect the authenticity of how Stan archived the clip. There was something “real” and transporting about seeing the clips as Stan had collection them, which captured the imagination of the reader. One could imagine Stan cutting it from the original paper with a pair of scissors, taping it or stapling it to sheets of paper, and surrounding it with his own handwritten notes about its source and significance. Without being able to use those clips in that form and without copyright, the only workaround was to recreate the newspaper clip for the teaching resource as a typed document, trying to retain the original look and feel of the document, while having the photographs of the original clips under a more restricted access. Despite the challenges, the final product still gives a glimpse into the work behind analysis of these kinds of documents.

Case 2: Delivering a Teaching Resource on Sampling

Rather than focusing on a substantive theme, like Folk Devils and Moral Panics resource, the second teaching resource focused on a particular aspect of the research process; in this case, the focus was on sampling. For this resource, Annette Lawson’s (1988) study of adultery was used, which is a comprehensive data collection available through the UK Data Service (Lawson, 2004a). In total, it comprises 364 questionnaires, 67 audiocassette recordings, 34 interview transcripts (some of which are focus group discussions), as well as documentation such as letters, newspaper clippings, correspondence, and the researcher’s field notes. In 2014, the paper-based interview transcripts were selected for digitization and published into QualiBank. The quality of the data made it ideal for digitization, but it was the quality of the related documentation that made it a valuable source for the teaching resource.

During the digitization process, it was discovered that Lawson had written a comprehensive, 56-page guide to her methods, with the sampling method being a specific focus (Lawson, 2004b). This incredibly valuable resource covered not only basic process of recruiting participants but meticulously detailed the practical, ethical, and theoretical issues associated with sampling. Often sampling procedures are summed up in a single paragraph within a methods section of a journal article, making it difficult to find good examples of
this process. In this study, the sampling method for this study proved quite a challenge, as Lawson wanted to find people to speak on a topic that was not only sensitive but, particularly at the time of data collection, a topic that people would go great lengths to conceal. Consequently, sampling was a central theme within her documentation and covered in a detail not normally seen within study reports and articles.

The teaching resource was used in a 4-hr long introductory research methods module in the second year of an Early Childhood Studies course at University of Suffolk. Fifty-six undergraduate students participated in the session which was divided into three parts, each covering a different aspect of sampling. One of the aims is to teach students about globalizing ideas of family and childhood, and, given the nature of this topic, the material from the data collection was carefully vetted before introduction into this module. The resource was divided into three sections, each focusing on methodological decisions made by Lawson during the sampling procedure for the study.

Part 1: Valid and Reliable Recruitment

After receiving a basic lesson in sampling and becoming generally acquainted with the study, students used the UK Data Service teaching resource to delve into the sampling procedures of Lawson’s study. Students were guided through how to define the population and consider ways to access the selected population. Afterward, students investigated recruitment materials from Lawson’s chosen sampling method, such as an advert in the newspaper, and discussed the validity and reliability of this kind of sample recruitment. Although most students were quick to note some of the problems with recruiting through a newspaper (e.g., potential problems with representation), Lawson provided a lengthy, 50-page discussion justifying her sampling method and comparing her sample against national averages. In short, she explained that despite the challenges of recruiting through a newspaper, her choices offset some of those problems. Notably, in the documentation, she argued,

> If it is intended that general statements about the incidence and prevalence of “adultery in Britain today” are to be made, then a sample would need to be drawn which represented the distribution of people “in Britain” today. However, when a study is being undertaken in a new area, when it refers to an illicit behaviour which is surrounded by much secrecy, when it is intended not to make such grand statements but rather to look in depth and in detail at adultery, then this sample has certain advantages. (Lawson, 2004b, pp. 63-64)

This justification and amendments to the sample demonstrated to students how a researcher revisits research design decisions throughout the research process and how every choice made within the research process, including the sampling method, needs to reflect on the research project as a whole. While experienced researchers know this to be true, teaching this kind of reflexivity is not easily done. Having access to this thought process available alongside the dataset and publications demonstrates the level of “behind-the-scenes” thinking needed to carry out a research project. While students could easily find alternative methods of sampling and list the pros and cons of using newspapers, this example showed them how to take this knowledge to a deeper level. Perhaps more pertinently, Lawson’s thorough justification provides a lesson for all researchers about the level to which methodological choices are explained and examined.

The data from the study also posed valuable insight into the sampling procedures of this study. For Lawson’s project, students again quickly noted the sensitivity of the topic and problematic nature of sample recruitment for this kind of project. However, examples from interview transcripts were useful in demonstrating to students why people do participate, such as respondent who commented, “Well to be honest I just wanted confirmation that there are other people like me about that indulged in [adultery]—how can I put it—without necessary feelings of guilt” (Lawson, 2004d). Within small research projects previously completed by this group of students, students would, almost inevitably, single out the “sensitivity of topic” as an ethical concern or practical challenge to sampling. As Lee (1993) argued, almost any topic in social research can be classed as “sensitive” and getting students to think beyond these bounds can be a challenge. Examples like this one helped to inspire students on how one might successfully recruit participants, as well as see the value research could potentially have for participants.

Part 2: Representation Within a Sample

The next part of the teaching resource looks at the demographics of Lawson’s sample and the comparisons she made between her sample and national averages. Students identified the gender bias in Lawson’s sample and were, again, invited to read her notes responding to the bias criticism. Lawson hypothesized that more women responded to her call for participants because women faced far more severe consequences than men for committing adultery; thus, the study provided a way for women to discuss the issue in confidence. Students expanded on her discussion and drew on background reading of the study (e.g., Lawson’s publications and reviews of her study) to discuss how social structures of the 1980s, and specifically the social positioning of women, may have impacted responses. Perhaps the most surprising aspect of these discussions was students’ venture of applying knowledge gained from other modules to hypothesize on the social factors that might influence sampling designs today. Among the topics of discussion were the shifting nature of family structure, the increasing numbers of divorce and cohabitation, and the changing social status of women (many students believed women today would not be penalized or judged for committing adultery). This second section pushed
the students to critically analyze the dataset, documentation, and publications simultaneously, an opportunity that cannot be replicated by having students create their own data or use research reports on their own. Furthermore, the analytic connection students made from engagement with Lawson’s study to the possibilities of future research reanalyzing the issue today demonstrated the lasting value research has when it is archived and reused.

Part 3: Ethics Within Sampling

After a full discussion on representation in sampling, the resource then moved to a discussion about the ethics of sampling. This is done to incorporate the idea that ethical decisions in research occur throughout the research process and are not limited only to confidentiality, anonymity, right to withdraw, and informed consent. In Lawson’s notes, she described two situations which highlight the ethical dilemmas associated with sampling. In one of these scenarios, Lawson is contacted by an unhappy woman. She wrote,

We had, in August 1982, sent out the major “pilot” to “Sunday Times” readers. We received an irate phone call from a lady asking what all this was about. Her husband had never said he would participate in any study. Where had we obtained his name? What was the study about? I was able to tell her the study was about marriage and its difficulties and . . . attempted to convince her . . . if she would agree, also she, should participate . . . Unfortunately, she would not be convinced. It was a gross invasion of their privacy—not the study itself, I hasten to add, but our having “obtained” their address by unknown means. As it happens, that particular name and address had been given to us as half of a “couple.” We never heard from the female half who had described the man as her lover and informed us he would be happy to co-operate. Perhaps she neglected to tell him. Perhaps she was a woman scorned. Perhaps just a joke. (Lawson, 2004b, p. 104)

After reading the scenarios that unfolded during the study, students were encouraged to reflect on the ways in which the sampling method opened the door to ethical considerations unique to this research. They also discussed safeguarding possibilities from these kinds of scenarios and alternative sampling methods which could have avoided these kinds of situations, which included eliminating snowballing from the sample procedure (and using only those who initially inquired about the study), using means other than a newspaper to identify a population (including court records and support groups), and “screening” participants for inclusion in the study. Students began critiquing their own solutions with each other, thereby quickly establishing the complexity of methodological choices.

The extensive documentation provided alongside the data in this study not only served to provide future researchers with a more comprehensive understanding of the methodology but, when used creatively in the classroom, also presented students with the opportunity to think more dynamically about the research process. Part of what made Lawson’s dataset so useful in this classroom exercise, however, was the comprehensive documentation provided alongside the data and publications. While data archiving has become a mandatory policy of ESRC funding, there still exists a huge variation on the comprehensiveness of documentation (for a full discussion on what makes contextual information “comprehensive,” see Bishop, 2007; ESRC, 2015). Reusing data in the classroom clearly held benefits for the learning experience of students, and module evaluations proclaimed that such class activities “brought research to life.” However, supplying enough contextual data for students to effectively make methodological connections between the data and methodological choices is challenging unless datasets are archived with detailed documentation. Moreover, when such documentation is available, sifting through documentation, data, and publications to find the most relevant pieces for teaching can be time-consuming. The UK Data Service has put together a page of teaching resources to give teachers a starting point and inspiration for teaching resources, and hopefully lead the way on embracing research-led teaching through data reuse.

Since the design and implementation of these interactive teaching aids, other applications of the Annette Lawson teaching aid were considered. The students were particularly intrigued by the topic of family structure and the impact of adultery on family life. Many of them found the study as a whole to be enlightening and spent as much time discussing family structure and women’s changing status in society as they did sampling. Even though it was conducted in the 1980s, the contentious topic exposes gender differences and inequalities in, as one participant in Lawson’s (2004c) study explained, “how society uses it and manipulates it when it chooses to . . .” Importantly, this study provides a reminder of how ideas about marriage are steeped within historical values and offers a comparative framework to help reveal students’ own assumptions about marriage, relationships, and social values. There is scope to develop other teaching resources from Lawson’s adultery collection focused more broadly on the subject of sociology of the family, perhaps looking at individual versus institutional definitions of marriage, family, and adultery throughout time, and how these can vary based on gender, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation. Alternatively, there is also an opportunity to analyze marriage using different theoretical models and to bring in feminist discussions of societal pressures faced by women in relationships.

Future Implications and Conclusion

In terms of learning outcomes, the teaching aids discussed in this article enable students to develop a number of transferable skills. First, they learn how to navigate and search through official websites for the resources needed to complete the activities. Through exposure to the UK Data Service, where data and methods are available for a host of
prominent research projects, they also learn about ethics and confidentiality when dealing with data. The teaching aids allow students to learn how ethical awareness is a thread that runs throughout a whole project and impacts all decisions made across the research life cycle. They also tap into the creativity needed to solve problems in situations where access, resources, or knowledge may be limited. Finally, students can better appreciate how even seemingly small decisions made within a larger research project can have an enormous impact on the interpretations and results of the research as a whole.

Reusing data for teaching inspires the dynamic discussion, investigation, and evaluation of research design and facilitates the “pedagogical culture” advocated by Wagner, Garner, and Kawulich (2010). Reusing data allows students to learn by doing without facing the enormous and ethically challenging task of collecting data in the field within the limited period typically allowed by teaching modules. Moreover, reusing data for teaching enhances the value and need for archived data, demonstrating that primary data from a single research study can provide more than a single set of analyses or interpretation. With the increasing call for research-led teaching and innovative practices, particularly within research methods courses, the resources and data that we have presented clearly demonstrate a contribution to this endeavor and offer the potential for more creativity in this exciting space.

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