# Evaluating Student Learning Gain: An Alternative Perspective

**Dr Martyn Polkinghorne[a,b] Dr Gelarah Roushan[a] Dr Julia Taylor[c]**

[a]Faculty of Management [b]Faculty of Health & Social Sciences [c]Doctoral College

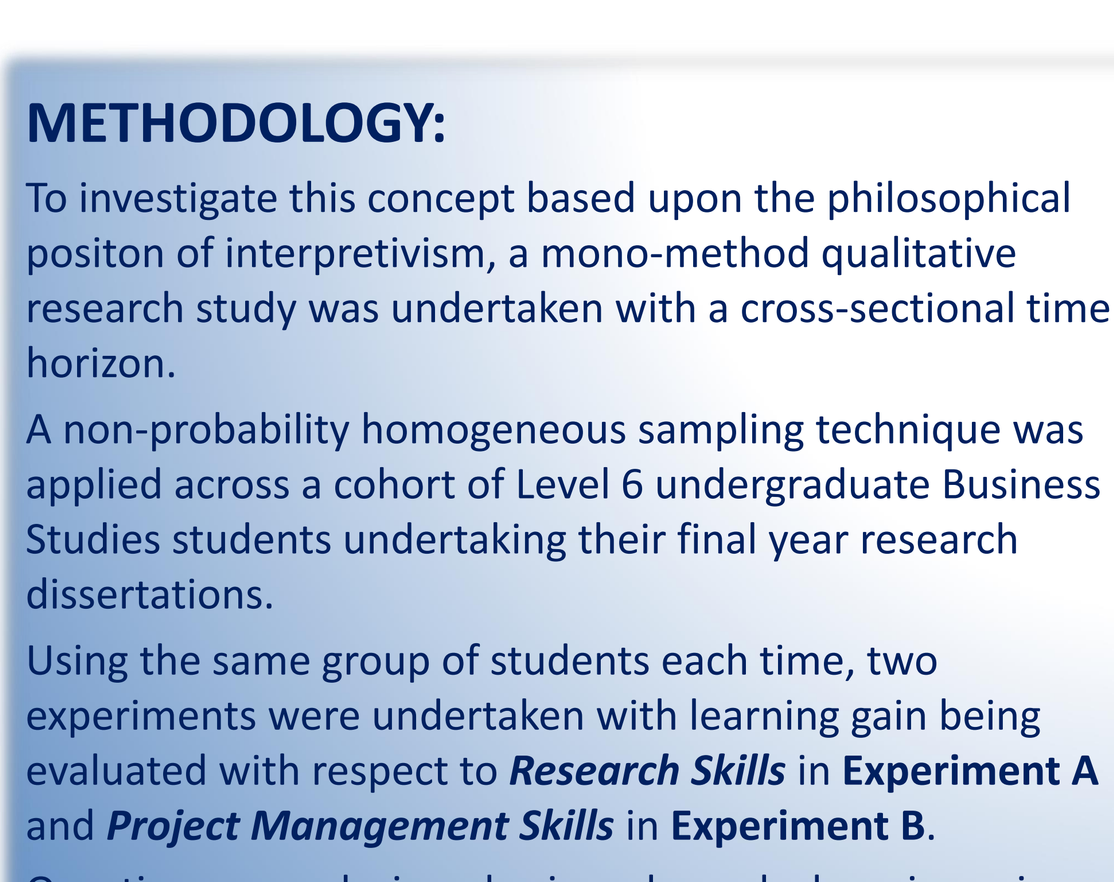
Bournemouth University

**Evaluating the learning gain of students is a Teaching Excellence Framework metric that will become of pivotal importance to universities, students and employers.**

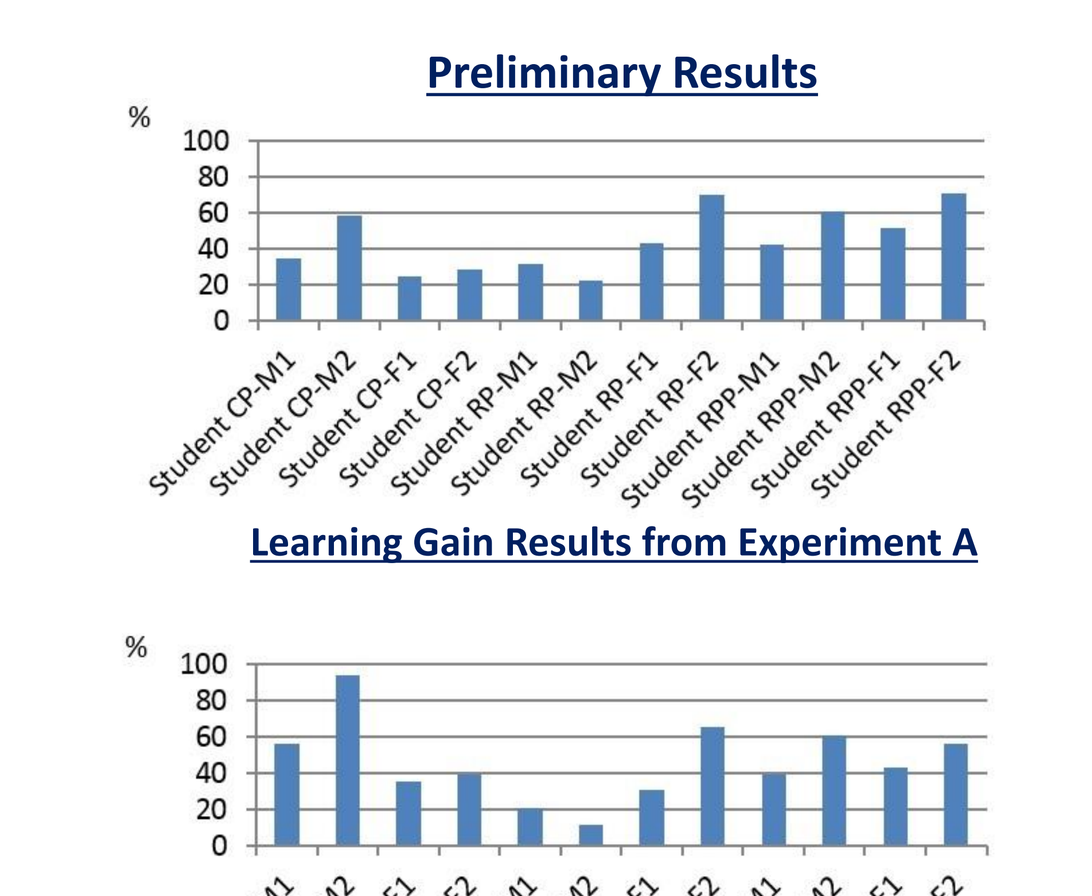
**1.** Current proposals for evaluating student learning gain are to use data collected from existing sources including the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) and the National Student Survey (NSS) to understand the learning of students at university.

**2.** The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has considered more focussed models, defining learning gain as being the **Distance Travelled** by a student in terms of skills, competencies, content knowledge and personal development.

**3.** This proposed alternative perspective of student learning gain considers it to be evaluated by a two-dimensional paradigm, determined by combining a student's **Distance Travelled** (*explicit knowledge*) with their **Journey Travelled** (*tacit understanding*).




**Proposed New Model for Evaluating the Learning Gain of Students**




## METHODOLOGY:

To investigate this concept based upon the philosophical positon of interpretivism, a mono-method qualitative research study was undertaken with a cross-sectional time horizon.

A non-probability homogeneous sampling technique was applied across a cohort of Level 6 undergraduate Business Studies students undertaking their final year research dissertations.

Using the same group of students each time, two experiments were undertaken with learning gain being evaluated with respect to ***Research Skills*** in **Experiment A** and ***Project Management Skills*** in **Experiment B**.

Questions were designed using a bespoke learning gain schema balancing higher order thinking skills and subject specific content. Representation employed linguistic labels. Students self-certified their learning using a survey approach.

## Preliminary Results




**Learning Gain Results from Experiment A**




**Learning Gain Results from Experiment B**