

Threshold Concepts in the Digital Humanities

This session explores a method of analysing research training needs through **threshold concepts**. These are concepts that underpin our learning experiences, and when encountered, can have an irreversible effect on how we think. Understanding methods, tools and approaches in the digital humanities provides many encounters with 'troublesome knowledge', both in terms of the technical skills required and the application to research.

By reflecting on the previous sessions of the introductory workshop, students will examine what have been the most transformative experiences so far, and which areas of knowledge they would like to build on to unlock specialist skills and approaches for their research. The end of the session will involve developing a training plan related to the Arts and Humanities in the Digital Age programme and their own research outcomes.

Exercise 1: Understanding Threshold Concepts

In your group, discuss the following questions and provide the answers in the box below.

1. What are the key characteristics of threshold concepts?
2. How are they different to any other 'core concepts' of a discipline?

Exercise 2: Identifying Threshold Concepts in Your Research

1. Using the box below, identify key dates/events along a vertical timeline from the moment you started your doctoral studies to now
2. Consider the characteristics of a threshold concept
3. Try to identify some of your past, and possibly present, thresholds. These should be based around methods and approaches and tools (some might be very practical) and consider where they need to take you (the next threshold)

Timeline	Threshold Concepts

Exercise 3: Identifying Threshold Concepts in Digital Humanities

Discuss the following questions in your group:

1. Reflecting on yesterday's sessions, can you identify any ideas that resemble threshold concepts for you?
2. In what ways do you think these threshold concepts are different from those in your research practice?
3. If you are undertaking digital humanities research, how do you think these threshold concepts affect the methods, approaches and tools a researcher might use?

References

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- Kiley, M. and G. Wisker (2009). Threshold concepts in research education and evidence of threshold crossing. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 28(4): 431-441
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