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## Data education for researchers: Designing for learner empowerment at a data skills Summer School

*Monday 13 October 2025 19:10 (20 minutes)*

This presentation explores ways of improving researchers' data skills by creating an environment that engages learners, helps them form networks and gives them greater control over what happens. It draws on three years' experience facilitating a national research data skills summer school for the Australian Research Data Commons (ARDC). The presentation is suitable for anyone who mentors, guides or trains researchers about data in any discipline.

The presenters are Kit Greenhill, Skills Development Lead (HASS and Indigenous) and Adeline Wong, Skills Development Lead (Learning Design) at the ARDC. With decades of experience in university teaching and learning design they will share strategies to design and deliver data skills training for researchers.

The ARDC provides Australian researchers with competitive advantage through data. Since 2023, the HASS and Indigenous Research Data Commons of the ARDC has run an annual three day Summer School to help researchers learn digital skills, network, and create new research outcomes.

Skills in data collection, analysis, governance and management are often not included in any depth in formal research training for Humanities Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) researchers in Australia. When data-intensive research becomes part of a project, new HASS researchers can feel isolated. It can be difficult to locate disciplinary mentors, discuss data issues with peers and learn data skills in an environment tailored to HASS, rather than a Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) background. Any data skills training for HASS needs to focus on building supportive relationships for future networking, not just transferring knowledge.

Designing the 2025 Summer School, Kit and Adeline reviewed participant feedback from previous years, addressing issues in levels of material, information available at registration, the structure of the day and opportunities for attendees to share their research. Potential attendees and presenters were more involved in curriculum design through online consultation before the programme was decided. The 2025 event had foundational 101 sessions for everyone, then workshop streams that progressed from introductory to more advanced. Learners determined the topics of several sessions on the same day, and collaborated on content. More time was scheduled during the event for attendees and presenters to network and learn about each others' research. These improvements to Summer School resulted in a 93.5% satisfaction rating from attendees.

Although the Summer School content was designed for HASS researchers, the presentation will invite the audience to consider whether this more social and learner-centred approach would improve data skills learning for researchers across all disciplines.

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