

BASPCAN Congress 2015

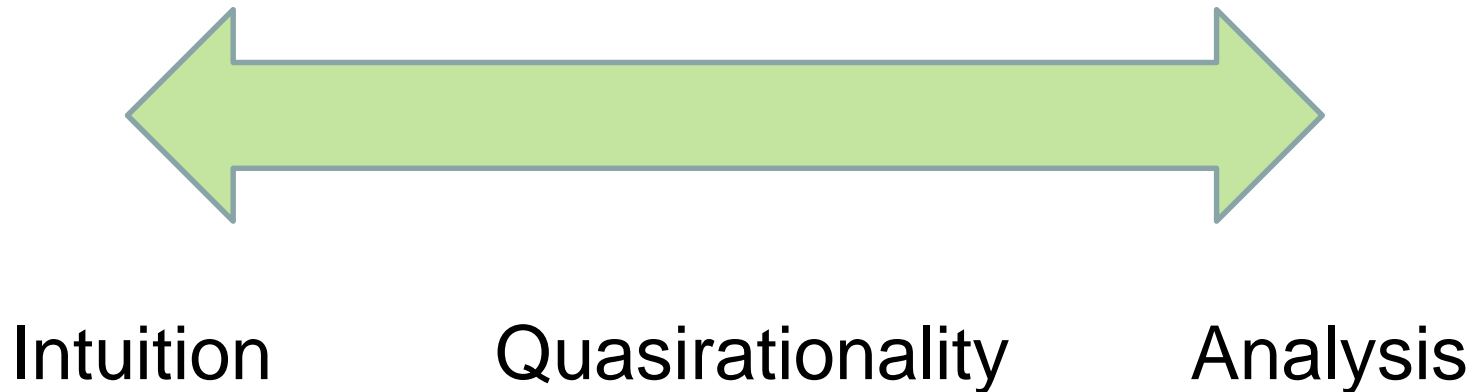


The ecology of judgement in child welfare and protection

Duncan Helm
Senior Lecturer
School of Applied Social Science

How do social workers move between intuition and analysis without losing their grip on either?

Hammond's theory of task structures



Hammond, K. (1996) *Human Judgement and Social Policy: Irreducible Uncertainty, Inevitable Error, Unavoidable Injustice*. Oxford, OUP.

Some properties of intuition and analysis

Features	Intuition	Analysis
Cognitive control	Low	High
Awareness of cognitive activity	Low	High
Amount of shift across indicators	High	Low
Speed of cognitive activity	High	Low
Memory	Raw data or events stored	Complex principles stored
Metaphors used	Pictorial	Verbal, quantitative

Findings

- Cognitive activity matched the features of the task: intuition predominated
- Informal ‘peer-aided’ judgement common: quasirationality was practiced
- Corporeal co-presence or “being there”: spacial and temporal considerations

Importance of informal face-to-face communication

- Containment
- Embodied ways of knowing
- Reorganising information

Proximity and choice; availability and accessibility of peer support

- Sharing rooms – sharing “information cocoons”
- Movement and “go to” people
- Ethos – door open / door closed
- Opportunities for public and private sense-making

Changing environments for sense-making

- Losing common ground?
- Deficit model for peer contact
- “go to” people and self-selection
- Containment and challenge
- Traditional hierarchies

Contact

Duncan Helm

Senior Lecturer

School of Applied Social Science

University of Stirling

T: 01786 466 302

E: duncan.helm@stir.ac.uk