Research-led Teaching: Theory, Practice and Policy

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• 1) What is Research Led Teaching?
  - Research to Teaching v. Teaching to Research direction of fit
  - Activity - Consider definitions of research led teaching

• 2) Research to Teaching
  - Promoting students as active researchers
  - Activities - the nature and extent of student engagement in research activity

• 3) Teaching to Research
  - Enhancing research development of academics through teaching
  - Activity - feasible policies to promote evaluate research through teaching

• 4) Research Led Teaching and Branding
  - How an effective Research Led Teaching policy can support growth
  - Activity - how could research led teaching be used in branding your department?
1.1 What is research-led teaching?

- Standard definitions focus on instrumental benefit of research to teaching
  - ‘Research-led teaching reflects and makes use of the teacher’s disciplinary research to benefit student learning and outcomes.’ (Trowler, P. & Wareham, T. 2008)

- The research has to fit the teaching
  - How to we package our disciplinary theories, methods, concepts, norms for student learning?
1.2 Fitting Research to Teaching

- Emphasising development of students as active researchers is of great value
- But, research led teaching should not be reduced to making research fit our teaching and learning
- Research led teaching should also effect development of researchers
1.3 Fitting Teaching to Research

- Research led teaching may also involve designing curriculum and policies to support development of researchers
- *Not only:* how we can make our research applicable to teaching and learning
- *But also:* how we can make our teaching applicable to research
1.4 Examples to Difference

- **Research to teaching direction of fit**
  - Research activities designed to suit students
    - Dissertations, research design tasks
  - Outputs part of student assessment

- **Teaching to Research direction of fit**
  - Curriculum (in part) designed to promote research
  - Outputs part of staff development/assessment

- We advocate equal importance of both
1.5 Implications of Reciprocal View

- We see teaching and research as related reciprocally
  - ‘Research Led Teaching’ only partial view
- Main implications:
  - Research ➔ Teaching (section 2):  
    - Curriculum design/pedagogy
  - Teaching ➔ Research (section 3):  
    - Staff Research Management
1.6 Activity: What is Research Led Teaching?

• In groups, discuss the following question:
  - ‘What is the appropriate relationship between research and teaching?’

• Consider the following:
  • Is ‘research led teaching’ an appropriate way to conceptualise the relationship?’
  • Is it appropriate for research and teaching to evaluated in an integrated way?
Section 2. A ‘research active’ curriculum

- All undergraduate students in all higher education institutions should experience learning through, and about, research and inquiry.
- Curricular experience should and can be mainstreamed for all or many students through a research-active curriculum.
- This can be achieved through structured interventions at module team, departmental, institutional and national level.
2.1 Student Developmental Journey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paradigm</th>
<th>Approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Telling students what they need to know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Engaging students in learning how to learn; emphasis on learning what they need to know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovery</td>
<td>Encouraging students to seek and discover new knowledge</td>
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Hodge et al. (2007, p. 3)
2.2 Benefits of research-lead teaching

- Deeper understanding of the knowledge bases of the disciplines and professions which they are studying, including research methods, and the research challenges and issues these disciplines and professions currently face.

- Development of intellectual capabilities, enhancement of their skills for employment, and expansion of their capacity for lifelong learning.

- Experience of independent research and inquiry - with benefits for employers and future study options.

- Enhanced engagement in their studies and development of their capacity for independent learning.

(Teaching-Research Nexus, 2009)
2.3 Why does high-quality teaching matter?

- University-level study represents more than just a path to a qualification

- Experiences along the way shape future interests, employment options and desire for further learning

- Enable students to become ‘creative and critical thinkers...with the capacity to learn both independently and collaboratively

- Engender a life-long interest in learning

(University of South Australia - www.unisa.edu.au/policies/codes/goodprac/univ.asp)
Position yourself on the line according to the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. Talk to a neighbour about why you have positioned yourself where you have.

**Undergraduate research is for ALL undergraduates.**

Strongly Agree  ----------------------------------------  Strongly Disagree

**It would be easy to ‘mainstream’ undergraduate research and inquiry for all students in my department at the University of Leicester.**

Strongly Agree  ----------------------------------------  Strongly Disagree
2.5 Activity: Engaging students in the 1st year

In pairs read the 1st Year case studies

Discuss whether and how any of the ideas may be amended for application in your teaching team or departmental contexts.

10 minutes
2.6 The nature of student research & inquiry

(Healey & Jenkins, 2009; Healey, 2005, p.70)

STUDENTS ARE PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research-tutored</th>
<th>Research-based</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMPHASIS ON RESEARCH CONTENT</td>
<td>EMPHASIS ON RESEARCH PROCESSES &amp; PROBLEMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research-led</td>
<td>Research-oriented</td>
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</table>

STUDENTS FREQUENTLY ARE AN AUDIENCE
2.7 Inquiry-based learning: a conceptual framework
(Based on Levy, 2009)

- **STUDENT-LED**
  - Pursuing (information-active)
  - Authoring (discovery-active)

- **STAFF-LED**
  - Identifying (information-responsive)
  - Producing (discovery-responsive)

EXPLORING AND ACQUIRING EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

PARTICIPATING IN BUILDING KNOWLEDGE
2.8 Teaching team and department strategies

- Review understanding and practice of undergraduate research and inquiry
- Develop a set of related curricula interventions starting in year one
- Offer undergraduate research and inquiry as a pervasive and early element of the curriculum
- Give students experience of undertaking research and inquiry with different levels of independence
- Link undergraduate research and inquiry to student employability
- Ensure assessment practices and policies support students as researchers
- Include all and be selective
Section 3: Fitting Teaching to Research

- What role should teaching play in research development/assessment?
  - Exploration
  - Execution
  - Evaluation
3.1 Teaching, Research and Exploration

• Teaching should (at least in part) be integrated into individual research strategy

• Most academics will have a medium-term research strategy synchronised to REF

• Modules synched to research strategy can serve to open up new areas of research
  - Curriculum/modules designed to fit research strategy
  - Teaching instrumental to research
3.2 Executing Research Through Teaching

- A curriculum that promotes students’ research skills provides valuable resource to assist in research

- Engaging students in research projects promotes research activity for both teachers and learners
  - Reading/discussing draft articles
  - Performing suitable empirical research
3.3 Evaluating Research through Teaching

- Teaching can be used in management of research
- Research Management:
  - What research outputs have followed from modules?
  - Are draft outputs taught on modules?
  - How is module design supporting research?
  - Do modules taught complement research strategy?
    - Early warning for research from teaching
3.4 Activity: *Feasible policies*

- Provide an example or two or ways teaching can be used to promote research

- Provide an example of how teaching can be used as a tool to manage development and evaluation of researchers.
4.1 Research Led Teaching and Branding

• As competition increases, universities will need greater differentiation and successful branding to thrive

• Research led teaching should be central to this strategy
4.2 Research and Credentialising

- Recent research emphasises importance of research profile to UG recruitment

- From external point of view, University education is largely a credentialising process

- Value of credentials linked to value of research
4.3 Research and Growth

- As student body diversifies (different degrees, more DL, more DL/Campus blending) market will segmentalise

- Certain segments will have significant work/life experience, and will seek research training as much as substantive knowledge
  - E.g. Politics/IR DL growth
4.4 Research, Branding, Growth

- University and Departments will benefit from emphasising the research credentials and their relationship to curriculum

- Research active curriculum also has benefits to employability (HFCE Key Indicator)

- Emphasises reciprocal relationship between research, teaching, and outputs
  - Growth
4.5 Activity: *Research Led Teaching and Growth*

- Consider how your department/unit can use research led teaching in branding and growth.
References


Once you have learnt how to ask questions - relevant and appropriate and substantial questions - you have learnt how to learn and no one can keep you from learning whatever you want or need to know.”

(Postman & Weingartner, 1971, p. 23)