ISSOTL Towards a Learning Culture October 25 2018

Dr Grant Bage and Dr Peter D'Sena The Uneasy Marriage Between Research and Teaching? Working towards an understanding of the culture (s) of research-rich education
SECTION 1
PARADIGMS
Research + teaching get married = a child called university learning?

In theory this equation is simple

“Research means learning to see two different sides of the same thing at the same time, without judging either of them, to get unbiased results.”

Words and image by Nirjaree Patel, year 1 undergraduate University of Hertfordshire
In practice ... marriage is a cultural act
Culture is Queen, Queer and King
In education … theory becomes practice via culture

“Thoughtful people have been forever troubled by the enigma of applying theoretical knowledge to practical problems.” (Bruner 1996 p.44)

“As some anthropologists like to put it, culture is a toolkit of techniques and procedures for understanding and managing your world.” (Bruner 1996 p.98)
Ways to think about research-teaching marriages in HE

Healey and Jenkins (2009) A model of undergraduate research

- A model that grew from a 2004 empirical study (Griffiths)
- Was then supported and extended by multiple case studies and accounts (particularly 2009)
- Has become a powerful development tool – it makes sense’ to higher educators
- Might it also have become an article of educational and cultural faith?
Ways to think about research-teaching marriages in HE

Levy and Petrulis (2012)

- Developed at Sheffield University with 29 humanities/social science undergraduates
- ‘Inquiry-led learning’ as an educational philosophy spans all phases and age ranges
- Impressive, grounded inquiry work by Spronken-Smith et al in New Zealand HE settings
- Is ‘student inquiry’ synonymous with ‘student research’?
Ways to think about research-teaching marriages in HE

Fung et al UCL 2015-18

- Educational and curriculum development across multiple HE disciplines in an elite university (UCL)
- Several online publications freely available via UCL website.
- Crosses undergraduate, postgraduate and professional (to a smaller extent) and teachers and students
- All start from an assumption that ‘learning through research and enquiry’ is essential to Higher Education
Ways to think about research-teaching marriages in HE

University of Hertfordshire 2017 (Bage – see handout)

• Maps the terrain of research-rich education
• Derives from theory and reflection on practice alongside empirical research
• Attempts to show inter-dependency of teaching, learning, curriculum and assessment
• Argues for diverse research-rich pedagogies, rather than a single approach
• Emphasises teachers’ and learners’ choices
Ways to think about research-teaching marriages in HE

USA (1990) Bowyer, E. *Scholarship Reconsidered*
SECTION 2
EVERYDAY LIFE

We are teaching and researching with a wide range of higher educators in our university: old hands, new starters and many in-between.

Here we ask you two questions – and select a few extracts from our own data to prompt a debate about ‘the cultures of research-rich education’.
‘Undergraduates and trainee professionals need more opportunities to learn about and through research’

- Strongly agree?
- Agree?
- Undecided?
- Disagree?
- Strongly disagree?
Responses from faculty and students in our workplace

Although the question was leading … a consensus appears

'Undergraduates and trainee professionals need more opportunities to learn about and through research.' To what extent do you agree with that statement?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of Established/senior academic staff (51)</th>
<th>% of Newer academic staff (56)</th>
<th>% of Y1/2 undergraduates (44)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
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But what are the ingredients of that consensus?
‘How do you currently see (or experience) the relationship between research and teaching?’

- Please write on the handout your name, email address and university
- In the part of the university where you work how do you currently see the relationship between ‘research and teaching’
- Don’t overthink this – trust your instincts
- You will not have to defend what you offer
- You are not attempting a universal definition
- We just want to exchange practical and experiential thinking
- If you do this we will share these descriptions by email - along with a copy of this presentation
Four ways of conceptualising research-rich and informed teaching in HE (micro)

University of Hertfordshire (2018 Bage and D’Sena)

- An empirically-based model
- In 2017 51 experienced, senior higher educators in UH told us what ‘research-rich and informed teaching’ implied to them personally
- Responses were broken down into 71 different statements – no omission or repetition
- Statements were categorised & sub-categorised by researcher 1. Then re-categorised and sub-categorised by researcher 2 - resulting in the current model

**SURVEY 1 Q7** Without attempting a universal definition what does the phrase 'research rich and informed teaching' imply to you personally?

- Students doing research
- Students understanding research
- Students using research
- Teaching the best of others’ research
- Teaching our own research
- Improving our teaching via educational research
- Improving our practice via educational evidence
- Symbiotic research-teaching relationships
A model for conceptualising and making research-education links in HE (macro)

University of Hertfordshire 2 (2018 Bage and D’Sena)

1. STUDENTS doing, understanding or using research (29)

2. TEACHING about our own (8) and others’ research (17)

3. USING EVIDENCE TO IMPROVE our teaching and practice (13)

4. SYMBIOTIC research-teaching relationships (4)

Research-rich education involves one or more of...
Examples of things colleagues said:

1. STUDENTS doing, understanding or using research (29)

2. TEACHING our own (8) and others' research (17)

- ‘Student partnerships in research processes’
- ‘Exploring with learners complex content and the process of knowledge creation in a discipline.’
- ‘It means sharing your research papers/findings with students as part of your teaching, and learning from student research.’
- ‘Knowing and using current thinking in teaching.’
Examples of things colleagues said:

3. USING EVIDENCE TO IMPROVE our teaching and practice (13)

- ‘I see it as teachers reading, discussing, learning about and doing research into their own teaching’
- ‘Evidence based teaching helps to professionalise what we do and keeps us abreast of developments especially from neuroscience.’

4. SYMBIOTIC research-teaching relationships (4)

- ‘Coherent, cyclical and dynamic processes of learning, with staff learning from students as well as students learning from staff.’
- ‘A mutually beneficial and rewarding relationship, co-dependent’
How do you currently see the relationship between research and teaching in your workplace?

• What did you write down on that handout?
• We want to exchange practical and experiential thinking
• We will sample a few now
• We will email all these to everybody if you give us your email address
• Perhaps you would like to be part of our next survey?
The world is changing rapidly – and Higher Education along with it.

In this last section we glance at some changing attitudes towards the marriage of research and teaching, voiced by higher educators.
From Gatekeeping to Mass Education?

Sorting?  Educating?
Recently-appointed higher educators (43/56) described the main:

‘benefits to be gained from linking your teaching with research?’

14% of statements said student jobs:

- ‘Increases student employability chances.’
- ‘Helping graduates be more prepared for employment by understanding current industry trends.’
- ‘Particularly as an adult nurse lecturer, providing evidence based teaching ensures that the correct practice is taking place outside of lectures.’
Recently-appointed higher educators (41/56) described the main:

‘benefits to be gained from linking students’ learning with research?’

33% of statements said student jobs:

• ‘This is an important part of practice in the real world.’

• ‘Informed, current practitioner who can innovate and challenge practice.’

• ‘Helps ... conduct research in their future careers.’

• ‘Better prepared for work challenges.’

• ‘This [also] means that in practice they [students] can justify their actions using the latest research findings.’
85 less/more experienced faculty also imagined changes to up the ‘amount & quality of research & informed teaching & learning’

50% IN BOTH - LEADERS & MANAGERS NEEDED TO CHANGE!

‘We need to secure a **commitment** to this and create a more RRIT culture.’

‘More **recognition** for research into teaching (pedagogic research).’

‘Academic management ensuring that staff have **time to think and reflect** on the modules, teaching, and literature.’

‘A **focus on exploring** own practice and educational issues in pairs or groups.’

‘**More collaborative** research, especially with outside bodies.’

‘**Consistently** used across all modules within a programme.’

‘Students must be made to engage with research skills from year one.’

‘Module content **should be reviewed** after each completed module to ensure all content is fully up to date. This should involve all staff due to deliver the next module.’
Married to a higher cause? Another cultural construct: Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) and ‘the service of scholarship’.

‘The relationship between teacher and learner is ... completely different in higher education from what it is in schools. At the higher level, the teacher is not there for the sake of the student, both have their justification in the service of scholarship’. (von Humboldt, 1810).