

New Relationships between Research and Teaching

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Research: key feature for universities?

- Research is commonly seen as a key feature differentiating universities from non-university higher education institutions.
- Humboldtian ideal of the unity of teaching and research as the basis of the university is still widespread.
- Many HEIs wish to intensify their research activity because it is seen as a sine qua non of higher education.

Student-centred HEIs

- Concept of research-led teaching finds itself under pressure.
- Quite ironically, research has shown that there is little if any scientific evidence for the thesis that 'research has a beneficial effect on teaching'.
- Teaching-only HEIs have become respected players in the field of HE.
- New relationships between teaching and research

Outline

- Why undertake research?
- Scholarship and new modes of research.
- Questioning unity of teaching and research.
- Teaching as a self-contained discipline?

Bibliography

- “Reshaping the University, *New Relationships between Research, Scholarship and Teaching*”, ed. Ronald Barnett.
- Ellen Hazelkorn (DIT)

Why do research in the new HEIs? (1)

- New HEIs established as part of regional economic strategy.
- Originally 'teaching only'.
- Growing demands of knowledge economy.
- Bound up with and to growing research capacity.

Why do research in the new HEIs? (2)

- Sustain academic and professional reputation in knowledge-based economy.
- Align academic activities to economic development of region.
- Provide useful skills for the economy.
- Academic excellence in a professional context.
- Eligibility for specific funding opportunities.
- Retain and improve position.

Barriers-to-entry

Unlike established universities

- most new HEIs were not traditionally resourced for research and have poor infrastructure
- academic staff at new HEIs were originally hired to teach, so that in general they often lack the necessary research skills
- higher academic workloads
- many new HEIs are active in fields that have no or only a limited research tradition.

New modes of research

Range of definitions for

- basic or fundamental research
- strategic research
- applied research
- scholarship
- consultancy
- creative and professional practice

Mode 2 research

- University research: the search for something new, 'basic research'.
- New HEIs, with a mission for regional and community commitment: research that is conducted in the context of application and usefulness.
- Linear-sequential model of research and innovation has been increasingly challenged.
- More recent perspectives see basic and applied science and technology as a single interrelated activity, whereby all forms of research are a partner at all stages of the innovation process.

Scholarship

- 'Work which is intended to expand the boundaries of knowledge and understanding within and across disciplines by the analysis, synthesis and interpretation of ideas and information, making use of a rigorous and documented methodology'.
- 'Gleaning information and responding critically to what has already been done in the field'.
- Role for the new HEIs as a partner in local and regional commitment and in the support of SMEs.
- Bridge between research and teaching: disciplinary inquiry typical for research as well as for higher education teaching.

Unity of teaching and research? (1)

- Most staff point out how their research findings are integrated in their courses.
- Should one consider a single individual and his/her teaching and the way it draws on her or his own research?
- Other relationships are certainly present: the teaching may draw on the research conducted in the individual's department or on research conducted elsewhere, in fact all over the world.

Unity of teaching and research? (2)

- Not only content as such is responsible for the teaching-research nexus. Students undertaking inquiry-based learning and curricula that emphasize the teaching of processes of knowledge construction are also relevant.
- Academics need to be committed to their disciplines. Good teachers must communicate a sense of intellectual excitement to their students. Good teachers should be 'reflective practitioners' (David Schön, 1995).
- However, the link between 'reflective practice' and 'research' is far from univocal.

Unity of teaching and research? (3)

- Research-active teachers as a role model for their students, rather than detailed mapping of the synergies between their research and their teaching.
- Teaching-research nexus not questioned.
- Mass higher education: producing knowledge workers who have an active ‘inquiry capacity’.
- Research-led teaching not as an alibi for the neglect of good teaching.
- Traditional research-led universities and new HEIs with a student-centred learning approach with a research focus, are not incompatible.

Teaching: a self-contained discipline? (1)

- How could one enjoy teaching without being fascinated by the subject and wanting to find out more about it?
- Opposite perspective: teaching and research are fundamentally different activities. Research consists of the discovery or creation of new knowledge whereas teaching is the passing on of established understanding.
- Other pedagogical approaches and methodologies imply, enhance and stimulate critical inquiry and other attitudes that are similar to that triggered by active research.

Teaching: a self-contained discipline? (2)

- Traditional universities see themselves as research centres first, with teaching as a derivative business only.
- Universities say they esteem good teaching, but when it comes to promoting committees, research assessment often turns out to be much more important.
- New HEIs should stimulate a culture in which teaching and learning are respected as such, a culture in which research, teaching and learning can be mutually enhancing.

Conclusion

- Unity of teaching and research in the Humboldtian sense is not the exclusive way to develop an atmosphere or an attitude of 'inquiry' among students.
- Good researchers are not necessarily good teachers.
- But, if the new HEIs want to educate knowledge workers they are challenged to create spaces for genuinely open inquiry where scholarship and teaching can be mutually enhancing.

Thanks

Have a good workshop!

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