

References

- Biggs, J. (1999) *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*. SRHE and OUP: Buckingham.
- Bloom, B.S.(ed.) (1956) *Taxonomy of educational objectives. Handbook 1: The cognitive domain*. David McKay: New York.
- LTSN-GEES. (2001) Case Studies in Problem Based Learning (PBL) from Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences. *Planet Special Edition*. LTSN-GEES: Plymouth
- LTSN-GEES. (2003) Linking Teaching and Research in the Disciplines WWW source: <http://www.gees.ac.uk/linktr/proforB.doc>. [Accessed 31/8/03]
- Healey, M. (2003) Linking Teaching and Research in Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences. WWW source: <http://www.gees.ac.uk/linktr/ltringees.rtf> [Accessed 17/10/03]
- Hydes, D.J. and Wright, P.N. (1999) *SONUS: The Southern Nutrient Study 1995-1997*. Southampton Oceanography Centre. Report No. 7.
- Kolb, D.A. (1984) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Prentice-Hall: New Jersey.
- Savin-Baden, M. (2000) *Problem Based Learning in Higher Education: Untold Stories*. The Society for Research into Higher Education. Open University Press: Buckingham.
- Wright, P.N., (2003) 'Mutant algal Blooms Wreak havoc on the South Coast' - A PBL exercise for marine pollution students. WWW source: <http://www.gees.ac.uk/linktr/Wright.htm> [Accessed 31/8/03]

Paul Wright

School of Maritime and Coastal Studies
Southampton Institute
Paul.Wright@soton.ac.uk

'Talking Heads', Teaching and Research: a View from the Chalk Face

LTSN-GEES

Introduction

During the 2003 LTSN-GEES Residential Conference on linking teaching and research and undertaking pedagogic research, in true *Newsnight* style, the LTSN-GEES Subject Centre invited a number of guest panelists to share their views with delegates on the conference themes. The four panelists and Chair of the session consisted of current and former Heads of GEES Departments from a range of UK HE Institutions. Between them, the panelists deal on a day-to-day basis with a range of student numbers, research and teaching loads and a diverse student intake, providing a snapshot of the present complexity of HE in the UK.

The session was chaired by Roger Lee [RL], current Head of the Department of Geography at Queen Mary, University of London. The panelists were: Sue Burkill [SB], Head of Educational Development at the University of Plymouth and former Head of the Department of Geography at the College of St. Mark and St. John, Plymouth; Carolyn Roberts [CR], Head of the School of Environment, University of Gloucestershire; Gordon Walkden [GW], Head of the Department of Geology and Petroleum Geology, University of Aberdeen; and Brian Whalley [BW], former Head of the School of Geography, Queen's University Belfast.

This manuscript is structured according to the key questions that Roger Lee posed to the panel. Finally, this article provides only a summary of some of the principal areas of discussion and is not intended to depict quoted speech.

What does the linkage between teaching and research mean to you as a Head of Department?

GW- Speaking as a Geologist working in HE, I would say that the link between teaching and research has always been there. It is a fundamental link that we maybe take for granted, as most geologists are used to incorporating research materials into their teaching. As in other areas of science, geology teaching is example-based. Therefore, as academics, we tend to select areas to teach that match our areas of expertise and draw from our own research experience.

CR- A culture of enquiry pervades both research, teaching and learning, and we want our students to become involved in this too. Research is already deeply embedded into teaching and *vice versa*, with teaching helping to raise new areas of enquiry, but we need time and effort invested into institutional and departmental practice to strengthen this link and to convey this culture to our students. Paradoxically, if a department consists mainly of researchers, then it is harder to show a clear link between teaching and research: we need to ask ourselves how we can foster synergy between such researchers and the teaching academics.

SB- I don't think we can 'unlink' teaching and research. If you are a researcher, but don't want to communicate your research, then there seems no point in doing that research. Teaching is a very important way of communicating and young teachers need help to gain confidence in their teaching and in linking their research. As a Head of Department, we can help them see that the research they do is important and interesting at all levels within the teaching arena.

BW- There is a historical legacy that links teaching and research, but this is now being eroded. The RAE has become the main driver for funding and kudos within HE and younger teachers often want only to do research. Their areas of expertise, their interest in research is now being brought into teaching only at Stage 3 or beyond. What we need to do is feed this research in at all levels.

Does this shift in thinking on the link between teaching and research matter with respect to the sustainability of departments and subject disciplines or does it also affect the future of HE?

SB - There will be implications for the career prospects of teachers; at many teaching colleges staff are already encouraged not to carry out any research. Despite this 'encouragement' however, staff still do research, subverting the system, as it is essential for their career paths. If you separate teaching and research in this manner, there is a possibility that you will no longer attract staff into the profession if they can only teach.

RL- I would like to add here that both the White Paper² and the Roberts Review of Research Assessment⁴ split teaching and research with an implicit drive towards research: undermining HE and scholarship in the process.

GW- It is misguided to try and divide the wide spectrum of institutions into teaching versus research. With respect to CPD, teachers should have the chance to follow both teaching and research and should not be forced down one path or the other. Their career will not start and end at their first institution.

Given this context, what are the roles of Heads of Department at present?

CR- The roles of Heads of Department within an institution should be seen as two fold: encouraging your staff and setting up a culture where all academic staff are expected to be involved in the full sweep of scholarly activities; and encouraging our own institution to develop this culture via policy decisions so that the right signal is sent out both within the institution and to the outside world.

GW- To achieve research and teaching equalisation, we should reconsider the use of the word 'elite'. There will always be elite institutions at the top of research, but, for example, some of the new universities are elite in pedagogy. This is never mentioned. This lack of balance must be evened out. We need to see pedagogy as a potential measure of "eliteness" as much as research.

CR- There are also issues of funding. For example, can departments afford to carry out pedagogic research as part of their research strategy? Where would an R.A.E. inactive department get funding for this type of research?

SB- There is a lot of money in teaching, but scholarship and pedagogic research does not bring in funding. Much of the money that is available is channelled into subject research. If this funding went to pedagogic research, where it was originally intended, then that would be a start!

RL- I'll now ask the panel some questions brought up by our audience.

What are the barriers and links between teaching and research?

RL- Can a Head of Department with serious RAE intentions allow their academics to carry out pedagogic research?

BW- I thought that pedagogic research was considered as part of the RAE. This brings to my mind a number of questions: if someone is interested in pedagogic research, should we stop them?; is pedagogic research really any different from subject research?; how can we, as academics, get this form of research accepted amongst our peers and the policy makers? We need to ask ourselves: could a Head of Department carry out pedagogic research in a research proactive department?

GW- We also have to consider where the impetus for carrying out pedagogic research comes from. If institutions were pushing departments in that direction, it would be easy for Heads to make that move. But the RAE still drives our work, and there has been no clarification as to how pedagogic research sits in this framework. If there is no place for this type of research within the RAE, then is it a waste of our time?

CR- I would also like to ask whether departments that are no longer RAE active are therefore banned from doing any research? Would this ban, if it exists, include high level pedagogic research? If this is the case, then carrying out such research appears to be a high risk strategy for a department. My feeling is that an institution that pushed pedagogic research over everything else would not be successful, as there is currently not enough funding in this area to make a financial difference.

As teaching practitioners, do we really need to do pedagogic research as well as subject research?

BW- If there is a question and you don't know the answer, then you need to research it. I think that the recent research into the pedagogic value of fieldwork is a good example. We have always assumed fieldwork was worthwhile, yet we are still dealing with threats to fieldwork funding. A scholarly approach to its use with students can only help in building a case for its continued inclusion in the curriculum.

GW- As practitioners, we ask ourselves whether we can afford time on pedagogic research. My answer to this is, if you want to teach better,

then pedagogic research is a tool for achieving this. We therefore need to find ways to develop pedagogic research and place it in the public domain.

So what are departments doing to encourage good teachers and get staff interested in teaching?

GW- At a departmental level, Heads have no control over promotions. In my institution, this is decided at a Faculty level.

CR- I see the 'promotions' issue as an 'end of pipe' solution, once teachers have displayed excellence. We should also ask ourselves how we can engender success in teaching. As Heads of Department we can encourage at an individual department level, but these aims have to be contextualized by the institutional and national climate.

Institutions are now looking for teaching criteria for promotional paths. What should criteria be? Can we, as Heads of Department, shape this?

SB- Most institutions now have at least some criteria for this type of promotional pathway. But most Heads have no knowledge of their institution's human resources policy. I have recently written an article in the Journal of Geography in Higher Education pointing out a number of examples in this area¹ and Graham Gibbs has also carried out research that may be of interest^{2,3}.

CR- Excellence in research, teaching and management are the main promotion criteria, with staff required to list two out of three. Having said that, to be promoted to Professor would certainly require staff to have hit research as one criterion, although this is not made explicit.

Regarding the Post-Graduate Certificate in Higher Education: do you have one and is it any good?

SB- I would say that most individuals do take away benefits and soon all new lecturers will have to go through it as a national standard. However, I do wonder if it comes at a hard time in a teacher's career. We must be realistic about how we assess the course, how much work can be managed by the academics on the course and how much training is actually needed.

BW- I don't have a certificate. I'm too old! As a warning, I do think that some staff gain the certificate and then think that that is all they have to do: that they don't need to reflect or develop their teaching any further. As scholars we should constantly deconstruct and reformulate our teaching and our views on learning.

In Conclusion

RL- I think that as Heads of Department sometimes teaching is at the front of our thoughts, sometimes research. We are constantly dealing with different Deans, different committees and different demands on our time. The current HE system is not organised to deal with teaching and research as a combined part of academic practice: yet we, the academics, have to live with this artificial rift. During this discussion we have made certain presumptions. Have we taken too narrow a view of teaching and research? As scholars, what are we doing about this putative link between teaching and research? Is this split of teaching and research the right one?

The impression we have received from HEFCE is that funding for pedagogic research will be crumbs from the table rather than solid funding. We as academics need to be explicit with regard to teaching and research links for political reasons: we want to encourage large-scale, well-funded pedagogic research into this area, not piece-meal case studies that have not been carried out in a scholarly fashion. I will leave you with a final question: how can we develop support and funding structures when pedagogic research is still not valued at the departmental, institutional or governmental level?

P L A N E T

LTSN GEES would welcome any comments you may have on the issues raised in this article. If you have an interest in the subjects covered in this discussion, please feel free to contact us. Finally, we would like to thank all of our panel members who contributed to this discussion.

Endnotes

1. Burkill, S. (2002) Recognising and rewarding excellent teachers: towards a strategy for geography departments. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, **26** (3): pp.253-262
2. Clarke, C. (2003) The Future of Higher Education White Paper, Department for Education and Life Skills. Available online at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/highereducation/hstrategy/foreword.shtml> [Accessed 03 November 2003]
3. Gibbs, G. (1995) How can promoting excellent teachers promote excellent teaching?, *Innovations in Education and Training International*, **32** (1): pp. 74-84
4. Gibbs, G. & Habeshaw, T. (2002) *Recognising and Rewarding Excellent Teaching*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press
5. Roberts, G. (2003) Review of Research Assessment, Joint Funding Bodies, available online at <http://www.ra-review.ac.uk/reports/roberts.asp> [Accessed 03 November 2003]

Jenkins, A. and Zetter, R. (2002) *Linking Teaching and Research in Departments*. York: Learning and Teaching Support Network Generic Centre.

The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University (1998) *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities*. New York: Stony Brook State University of New York. Available: <http://naples.cc.sunysb.edu/Pres/boyer.nsf/>.

Zubrick, A. Reid, I. & Rossiter, P. (2001) *Strengthening the Nexus between Teaching and Research*. Canberra: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

Available: http://www.detya.gov.au/highered/eippubs/eip01_2/default.htm.

Earth Science References

Available: <http://www.gees.ac.uk/planet/index.htm#P1>.

Lee, C. (2001) Problem based learning: a personal view name and locate that 'town' (La Muskah): A problem based learning (PBL) exercise in environmental geology, *Planet Special Edition 2: Case Studies in Problem Based Learning (PBL)*: pp. 10 -16.

Available: <http://www.gees.ac.uk/planet/index.htm#PSE2>.

McQueen, K. G. Taylor, G. Brown, M. C. B. and Mayer, M. (1990) Integration of teaching and research in a regional geological mapping project, *Journal of Geological Education*, **38**: pp. 88-93.

Environmental Sciences References

Alexson, R. G. and Kemnitz, C. P. (2001) The World Bank scenario - A problem-based learning activity in human geography and environmental science, *Planet Special Edition 2: Case Studies in Problem Based Learning (PBL)*: pp. 25-26.

Available: <http://www.gees.ac.uk/planet/index.htm#PSE2>.

Belt, S. (2001) Problem based learning (PBL) - A case study from environmental sciences, *Planet Special Edition 2: Case Studies in Problem Based Learning (PBL)*: pp. 17-18.

Available: <http://www.gees.ac.uk/planet/index.htm#PSE2>.

Blumhof, J, Hall, M and Honeybone, A (2001) Using problem-based learning to develop graduate skills, *Planet Special Edition 2: Case Studies in Problem Based Learning (PBL)*: pp. 6-9.

Available: <http://www.gees.ac.uk/planet/index.htm#PSE2>.

Healey, M. (2001) Teaching and the RAE: Response to HEFCE (2000) Review of Research 00/37, *Planet Issue 1*: pp. 4-6.

Available: <http://www.gees.ac.uk/planet/index.htm#P1>.

Hughes, P. Blair, D. Clear-Hill, H. and Halewood, C. (2001) Local sustainability and LA21: a vertically integrated research, learning & teaching activity, *Planet, Issue 2*: pp. 5-7.

Available: <http://www.gees.ac.uk/planet/index.htm#P2>.

Geography References

Abler, R. Adams, J. S. Booker-Gross, S. Conkley, L. Fernald, E. Griffin, E. Mercer, J. and Moline, N. (1994) Reconsidering faculty roles and rewards in geography, *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, **18**(1): pp. 7-18.

Alexson, R. G. and Kemnitz, C. P. (2001) The World Bank Scenario - A problem-based learning activity in human geography and environmental science, *Planet Special Edition 2: Case Studies in Problem Based Learning (PBL)*: pp. 25-26.

Available: <http://www.gees.ac.uk/planet/index.htm#PSE2>.

Linking Teaching and Research in the GEES Disciplines: A Guide to Key Reading

This bibliography has been compiled by Mick Healey, LTSN-GEES Senior Advisor for Geography and Joint Leader of the 'GEES Linking and Teaching Research Project'. An annotated version is available on the 'Linking Teaching and Research in the GEES Disciplines' webpage at: <http://www.gees.ac.uk/linktr/bib.htm>.

General References

Below are a few key generic references on linking teaching and research. A longer list is available at: www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/planning/LTRC/bibliog/bib-generic.htm.

For a more comprehensive list of references see Jenkins *et al* (2002).

Boyer, E. L. (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. New Jersey: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Brew, A. (2001) *The Nature of Research: Inquiry in Academic Contexts*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Healey, M. (2001) Teaching and the RAE: Response to HEFCE (2000) Review of Research 00/37, *Planet Issue 1*: pp. 4-6.

Healey, M. and Jenkins, A. (eds) (2002) Focus: Linking research and teaching, *Exchange Issue 3*. Available from November at: <http://www.exchange.ac.uk/>.

Jenkins, A. (2002) Designing a curriculum that values a research-based approach to student learning, LTSN Generic Centre, Imaginative Curriculum Network. http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/application.asp?app=resources.asp&process=full_record§ion=generic&id=163

Jenkins, A., Breen, R., Lindsay, R. and Brew, A. (2002) *Reshaping Teaching in Higher Education: Linking Teaching and Research*. London: Kogan Page and the Staff and Educational Development Association.