

What

Research informed teaching can take a number of forms. The most common is making reference to relevant academic research in the course of subject teaching; this is what Griffiths (2004) terms “research led teaching”. Research informed teaching also focuses on the processes through which knowledge is produced, places emphasis on developing skills of research and enquiry, and on developing a research culture in which students are encouraged to think about how knowledge is developed and how they can be engaged in that process.

Why

Linking research and teaching has a number of advantages in enhancing student learning. Students’ knowledge about a subject can benefit from exposure to the cutting edge of a discipline. However, immersing students in the relevant disciplinary and departmental research cultures and the process of doing research and enquiry can be of wider benefit. Designing research strategies, collecting and analysing data and discussing and presenting research findings provide vital transferable skills, which are useful for subsequent careers both inside and outside the academic environment. There is also evidence to suggest that students who are actively involved in the process of research are more engaged (Baldwin, 2005).

How

- 1 Share your enthusiasm for doing research through talking about your own motivations and experiences and drawing on interesting demonstrations and examples from your own research experience.
- 2 Emphasise the process of knowledge production in your field, by explaining different methodological approaches within the discipline and how these have evolved.
- 3 Include current research findings and issues in your teaching, for example, by regularly updating the syllabus to include cutting edge research and identifying the key questions being explored by current research in the field.
- 4 Provide opportunities for students to acquire research methods and skills, for example, by building small-scale research activities into group work or analysing data from existing ‘real world’ projects.
- 5 Involve students in research activities, for example, by offering research placements to students or encouraging students to attend research seminars by visiting scholars.
- 6 Promote undergraduate research through publishing student work in departmental newsletters or in-house journals, putting student work on websites and exhibiting student work at conferences or university events.

These ideas are based on a booklet named *Eight principles for linking research and teaching* developed by the Department of Curriculum and Quality Enhancement and the Center for the Study of Higher Education at Nagoya University.

Selected references and websites

Baldwin, G. (2005). *The teaching–research nexus: how research informs and enhances learning and teaching in the University of Melbourne*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne.

Griffiths, R. (2004). Knowledge production and the research–teaching nexus: the case of the built environment disciplines. *Studies in Higher Education*, 29(6), 709–726.

Jenkins, A., & Healey, M. (2005). *Institutional strategies to link teaching and research*. York: The Higher Education Academy. Retrieved 20 May 2010, from:
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Further advice

Further advice and guidance is available from the Academic Development Consultancy service (**acdev@port.ac.uk**)
