



**Linking Teaching and Research Workshop
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC)**

A report of a workshop led by Professor Alan Jenkins (Oxford Brookes University) to investigate staff perceptions of linking teaching and research in the Welsh School of Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism Management

Background

This case study complements the University of Gloucestershire case study exploration of student perceptions of the links between research and teaching also to be found on the LTSN Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism (HLST) website (http://www.hlst.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/linking_glos.pdf). Together these two case studies contribute to the HLST contributions to the LTSN Generic Centre project on Linking Teaching and Research in the Disciplines. This case study report provides a summary of the findings of a workshop held in Cardiff in April, 2003.

The Workshop

A morning was set aside during a staff development awayday jointly organised by the School's Director of Learning and Teaching and the Director of Research and Graduate Studies. (The Appendix provides a short summary of the context of research activities in the Welsh School of Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism Management). It took the form of a series of iterative small group conversations and feedback sessions around a series of 10 questions introduced, periodically, by Alan Jenkins. Staff sat in small groups of 5-7 and took turns to be time-keepers, scribes (using flip charts) and reporters for the group. Alan strictly controlled time for discussion on each question and conversations were generally incomplete when the reporters were called on to feedback. High levels of energy were maintained through the 90-minute session.

The Questions and Responses

As academic staff what for you are the key questions or issues about linking teaching with research?

Staff thought that a key issue was whether linking teaching with research was concerned with using substantive research-based knowledge within teaching or about students becoming researchers and sharing in the creation of knowledge process themselves. It was suggested that both perspectives on the question were valid and that research into the body of knowledge of a subject could inform teaching and that students could learn through inquiry-based approaches. It was thought that there was an implicit complementarity between knowledge creation (research) and knowledge dissemination (teaching), so it is necessary to be clear about what might be meant by 'linking'.

There was a general feeling that as an aspiration the School processes should lead the promotion of research within the activities of both staff and students, through attention to both research process and the creation of knowledge.

Some staff observed that research in the School has become embedded in the curriculum and that this enhances the student experience via the knowledge of doing research ie. the process. It was recognised, however, that an explicit requirement to link teaching and research may be difficult partly to the nature of hospitality, leisure and tourism subjects (see below), and partly because of resource limitations (staff time and limited access to dedicated research funding, despite QR funding in School for the first time in 2002/3 following 3a in RAE2001). As a special characteristic it was thought that the HLST links with industry through for example workplace learning, encourage application of the research process within learning.

Do you consider it important to link teaching with research?

Groups reported that experience of where informal links between teaching and research had been established then it; enriches the student experience, makes teaching more exciting for staff, motivates students and staff, and adds to knowledge within the subjects, and so enables the curriculum to be up-to-date. The complementarity of teaching and research means that one activity often feeds into the other and this was a consistent theme of comments. It was thought that training in research skills facilitates a student-centred approach to learning and ensures that research processes (vital skills for graduates) are embedded in the curriculum and encourages inquiry-based learning. Referring to the vocational aspiration of the School's courses, it was noted that a problem-based learning approach, if adopted, will support the development of research skills by students. It was acknowledged that for staff, research is perceived as an important activity for career enhancement and progression, but that in considering the links to teaching, staff's research interests are likely to add interest and add excitement

to the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. It was recognised that this might be made more explicit. For example, the dissertation module could be used more effectively through greater collaboration between staff and students. It was thought that staff could form groups, publicise areas of expertise and these could be used to fire selection of undergraduate dissertation research.

Emergent Themes of discussion:

- Biaxial nature of the question;
- Natural 'complementarity' or managed 'link';
- Student learning experience role in 'linking' teaching and research;
- Staff making research interests more explicit important to 'linking';
- Collaboration between staff and students important.

The credibility factor of research in HLST and the fragility of the research ethos in some subjects act as constraints. It was recognised, however, that LTSN HLST subjects are at different stages of research community development.

What do you do as a department, course teams and individuals to link teaching with research?

Responses here were more diverse. Some staff thought that the research process is an important foundation on which courses are designed, making the process of knowledge creation explicit. The involvement of postgraduate and staff researchers in teaching supports the link between research and teaching. However, at the moment research is often an activity of an individual, and more could be made of the collective influence of research upon teaching. It was felt that currently there is not an active strategy to promote linkages, it is more ad hoc than planned. It was pointed out that the staff review process might effectively be used to encourage reflection upon teaching and research links. Another group confirmed that there is no explicit policy / strategy to ensure that the link is made and warned that there is perhaps a risk that the development of any prescriptive systems might quash the links between teaching and research. It was reiterated that more communication and knowledge of what research is taking place within the School would possibly enable more linking between teaching and research. Students need more encouragement to think – look – and then think again.

In your programme and the modules on which you teach, what are some of the examples of (good) practice in linking teaching with research?

The following were identified as specific activities which support the link:

- Research seminars – (for staff or students or both)

- Gregynog – the School’s annual research colloquium, now in its 6th year
- Mentoring of ‘young’ researchers
- Higher degree registration and supervision experience (for supervisor and student)
- Team teaching to enable research strengths to infiltrate teaching (use of specialist knowledge)
- Producing case studies
- The research culture within the School
- The research process is reflected in the design of modules through construction of assessments and learning and teaching strategies

Research Methods 1 / Research Methods 2 places spotlight on research – and feeds research, methodologies and subject knowledge into the student learning process, helps students to understand the research process (and has demonstrated the team approach strengths). In these modules, active researchers talk about their research, the methods they have used and the successes and challenges.

Several other modules were identified where informal links are made eg. CIMM, Dissertations, ITHP, IAHM, CIHM, Sociology in leisure and tourism, Marketing teaching, use of ‘wacky backy’ methods and branding in tourism discourse, licensed premises using ‘Servewise’ as a case study.

What do you see are the factors that help/hinder you to link teaching with research in the School?

There is a positive and strong research culture in the School, this initially came from the top down, but is now being replaced by a bottom-up research culture. There are good role models for research active staff and the effect of this has permeated within the School. There is a School ethos that is committed to research and innovative teaching and learning methods within the School.

Team teaching enables dissemination of research activities if researchers are involved in teaching, but can also hinder the research process (pragmatism / struggle over resources).

Links with industry and with the associations and other teachers in the subjects help to facilitate links between teaching and research. In relation to the student role within linking teaching and research, this could be more central within the School and could be achieved by making students more central within research, through for example including more about staff research within programmes and involving students in more research activities.

In order to help promote the link between teaching and research, there is a need to:

- emphasise research through the teaching methods and assessment practice within courses;
- include consideration of the link within the staff review and development process;
- include linking within the activities of the research and enterprise committee;
- ensure a supportive environment for research and maintain the research ethos;
- maintain the strong project ethos (eg European funding);
- further develop a supportive culture for pedagogic research.

Current hindrances to the linking of teaching and research reported by staff and listed under three themes were:

Time

- Targets and time pressures and subsequent impact on staff timetabling
- The need to provide opportunities to staff for research to build their experience and confidence in undertaking research
- Lack of time for communication and sharing of research
- Time for research is not built into timetables

A 'Separation' state

- Lack of strategy to emphasise link between research and teaching in the (undergraduate) programme
- The individualism / loneliness of the long distance researcher
- Staff may feel in or out of the research club
- At the moment the research culture is not effectively promoted to students
- The applicability of research to the teaching programme needs further consideration.

Cultural conditions

- The modular structure of the programme does not support 'reflection' by students
- Student expectation that staff should be imparting their knowledge and not present a 'don't know' face to students
- Vocational nature of the courses and vocational rather than research backgrounds of many of the staff

- Lack of confidence within the subject communities

Are there particular issues about linking teaching and research because of the nature of the disciplines you teach?

Firstly staff referred to the vocational and professional nature of the courses and the industry background of the staff that provides relevance to the subject areas. In some areas, notably hospitality, the craft FE origins of many staff who have come into education through non-university routes with industry backgrounds.

Second, mention was made of the underdeveloped nature of research in the subjects and what seems like the long period of development necessary to become a legitimate and respected academic subject area. The interdisciplinary / multidisciplinary nature of hospitality, tourism and leisure is seen as somewhat unhelpful in comparison to traditional disciplines that have established research cultures, funding mechanisms, Units of Assessments in the RAE, and access to research council funding. The mismatch between the industry contribution to GDP and availability of research funding streams hinders development.

What's different about teaching and research in hospitality leisure and tourism? Do you think it is different than say in history or health care? If so, why / why not?

Tourism and leisure has a growing and well developed body of knowledge to use as a research base, eg the number of tourism related journals. Increasingly academics from related disciplines are also moving into leisure and tourism research, for example, in the anthropology of tourism.

Hospitality does not have such an extensive research base, so needs support and encouragement to enable development. Hospitality programmes in some aspects are concerned with practical learning, it is necessary to give thought to how to move this on to include a research mode, staff need to break into this. In addition, students enrolled on hospitality programmes may also be more practically focused.

Within the subjects there are also other subjects which staff may have affiliation with in terms of teaching or research interests, for example, marketing or human resource management. In short, it is the interdisciplinary nature of the subjects.

Do you consider it important to link teaching with consultancy? What do you do as a department, as course teams and as individuals to link teaching with consultancy?

Staff began by questioning the place of consultancy in the portfolio of the School. Where does consultancy fit? Is consultancy important? The view taken depends on why we are doing it. In the industry it is often based on problems and live projects, so it

is context specific and demands subject expertise. The benchmark statement emphasises links with industry, so industry driven applied research and consultancy is one way to evidence this. Consultancy can link to teaching and research through student industry projects (eg Springboard and National Museums projects). The industry partner gets the benefit of the work being done and the university gets the benefits from input into the curriculum and knowledge creation.

Sometimes the lack of credibility with industry means that it is difficult to get consultancy work. Also the industry is not in the habit of going to academia for consultancy, and has been known to explicitly criticise universities for not meeting industry needs. This is beginning to change, with 'real life' projects being undertaken within the School and incorporated into the M level curriculum.

It was felt that there is a stronger relationship between teaching and research than teaching and consultancy, or teaching, research and consultancy, but consultancy is seen as similar to research and can link learning and teaching with applied research and industry priorities.

In your programmes (ie the overall courses) and in the course/ units / modules you teach individually, what are some of the examples of (good) practice in linking teaching and consultancy?

Integrated projects give stronger links between teaching and research than teaching and consultancy. Historically, staff were paid to teach and saw consultancy as paid work in addition to their contract. Students may recognise consultancy more than research, due to explicit industry links.

The Cyprus project work is a good example. The integrated project modules at levels 1 and 2 where students work in the role of consultants / researchers are also valued by students.

In what ways could the School help to foster better links between teaching and research and teaching and consultancy?

Several suggestions were made:

- Mini-sabbaticals to support projects that link teaching and research
- Creation of new modules to link teaching and consultancy - new module L2 I&P, L3 consultancy. At level 3 a consultancy module could follow on from the experience of the students on their work placement.
- Make explicit that staff will be involved in teaching, research and consultancy.

- Don't 'label' staff, instead communicate, share and break down barriers in relation to good practice. Work in teams, involve and participate, support and create synergy.
- Encourage live projects.
- Plan to move more formally to link Research and Enterprise and Learning and Teaching committees of the university and School
- Produce guidelines and share good practice
- Make explicit statements on links between teaching, research and consultancy within internal and external communications ie. School plan, promotional material and web pages etc.
- At course level, carry out a mapping exercise to demonstrate the links
- Integrate 'linking' teaching and research through staff development activities and subject group activities
- At module level better exploit the expertise knowledge and research-based contributions of colleagues, look for and see the links, create better awareness of what research and consultancy is happening in the School.

Closing statements

In a closing statement Alan Jenkins observed that from a student perspective - to link to this staff perspective – there is good research evidence from the University of East Anglia, University of Gloucestershire, and Oxford Brookes University - that many students did perceive clear benefits from (staff involvement in) research - but that too often they perceived (staff) research as an activity totally separate from them, in which they did not perceive themselves as stakeholders. One implication of that research is to make the links / benefits more explicit to students.

In terms of the staff perspective of this workshop: if staff and senior management accept / adopt Alan's perspective on the research evidence that securing effective teaching / research links does not mean that all staff need to be involved in high level research, then the crucial areas for action are the student experience and department organisation. Then he referred to two critical issues for School level management:

1. It is the student experience where the link can be best evidenced, but how will the tensions be managed between staff availability to students and staff and student involvement in research?
2. How can the School best distribute its resources to achieve the link in the context of changes to the funding regime that suggest, in England, a separation between research?

The workshop closed with staff working in pairs and threes to identify 'a way in which they would progress the link between teaching and research'

Professor David Botterill

July 2003

Appendix

Research in The Welsh School of Hospitality Leisure and Tourism Management

The Welsh School has developed a unique position in Wales in relation to its Research and Graduate Studies portfolio. Since 1993 it has built an extensive portfolio of critical and applied research evidenced through formal research outputs (research degrees, publications, contract research) and a developing international network of doctoral and post-doctoral researchers. This achievement was most recently recognised by the awarding of a '3a' outcome in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise. Tourism submissions at best achieved '4' and '3a' ratings, so the '3a' locates the School amongst the top 10 UK higher education institutions (HEIs) for tourism research. Several senior research staff serve on the editorial boards of leading international research journals and are active as external examiners for taught and research degrees at other UK HEIs.

The School is home to a suite of European projects designed to assist tourism businesses in Wales that are funded through partnerships with a range of economic development agencies including the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) and the European Union under its ADAPT, ERDF and ESF programmes. Two researchers working on these projects were able to develop PhD theses from their work and thus enabled the European projects to contribute to the research agenda. Work is also underway on the development of a website for the Tourism Training Forum for Wales, *whodoiask.com*, that promises to deliver training; in-company and using the latest in ICT backed up by mentors. A project with the BBC will enable the School to evaluate the effectiveness of digital interactive television training solutions for tourism SMEs. Paul Barrett leads the Centre for Enterprise and has enabled the School to secure three Teaching Company Schemes, pioneering the concept of these schemes in the tourism sector in Wales and providing opportunities for the Teaching Company Associates to undertake a research degree. Teaching Company Schemes form an important part of the School's knowledge exploitation and technology transfer agenda.

The School is closely associated with Capital Region Tourism, the regional tourism partnership for South-East Wales and the Tourism Training Forum for Wales. These important partnerships facilitate knowledge exploitation and technology transfer to the tourism sector through applied contract research. The School has recently completed a study for the WDA on the future of agricultural shows as visitor attractions and a study of gender equality in the tourism workplace for TTFW.

Research is undertaken in the School in a number of networks that involve staff in collaboration with colleagues in many universities across the UK, Europe, North Africa and Australasia. The research activities of the School are represented by the Welsh Centre for Tourism Research under the leadership of Dr Annette Pritchard. Senior researchers in the School lead research networks focussing on:

- Destination development and marketing including destination image, branding, and special event management;

- Sustainable approaches to tourism development;
- Critical approaches to tourism research;
- Competitiveness and quality in a tourism-SME economy.

The School provides support for research-oriented staff sabbaticals, the outcomes of which are clearly identified as contributions to international peer-reviewed journals. The Welsh School was the lead partner with the Wales Tourist Board on a major tourism research conference held in Cardiff in September 2002 attended by over 250 delegates from 30 countries. Output from the 8 themed panels is currently being prepared for publication.

The Welsh School's postgraduate community has a distinctly international flavour with students from Egypt, Libya, Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania and Malaysia, as well as the UK being currently registered. A recent key feature of the School's research degree portfolio has been the development of strong links with universities in Egypt (particularly the University of Cairo, Helwan University and the University of Alexandria) and Sri Lanka. Each summer, the School hosts a visiting Research Postdoctoral Fellow from Egypt and there are now four students in the School funded by the Egyptian government to undertake research degrees. The School has a growing track record of research degree completions (15 PhD and 3 MPhil) and many of these researchers have gone on to academic careers at UWIC and other HEIs. There is a very healthy portfolio (20) new and ongoing research degree registrations, the supervision of which will involve nine members of School staff.