



Disseminating student research findings

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Introduction

This resource is for academic staff wanting to develop a 'students as researchers' pedagogic approach. It focuses on the importance of research communication, as a fundamental part of the research experience. The resource is designed to develop your thinking about the wide variety of formats through which you can support student research dissemination.

Completing the research cycle

Considering the research process in its entirety is essential if we are to support a 'students as researchers' pedagogy.

"Every university graduate should understand that no idea is fully formed until it can be communicated, and that the organisation required for writing and speaking is part of the thought process that enables one to understand material fully. Dissemination of results is an essential and integral part of the research process."

(Boyer Commission, 1998: 24)

Meeting the needs of a broad student population with differences in disciplines, backgrounds, types of institution and levels of infrastructural support, requires a range of opportunities for disseminating research.

Research dissemination formats

There is a growing interest in students sharing the outcomes of their research and inquiry more widely, for example through conferences, websites and undergraduate research journals (Spronken-Smith et al. 2013), and this can add to the authenticity of the publishing experience. However, a multitude of formats and styles of research dissemination exist and are being continually developed, ranging from informal to formal and professional formats and settings. See Box 1 below.

Box 1: Research dissemination formats for student researchers

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Blogs➤ Video diaries➤ Podcasts➤ Online conferences➤ Client presentations➤ Simulations➤ Exhibitions and shows➤ Displays➤ Competitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Poster and paper presentations➤ Group wikis➤ Wikipedia pages➤ Trail guides➤ Web pages➤ Journals and books➤ Consultancy reports➤ Face-to-face conferences (e.g. Departmental/ National /International) |
|--|--|

Activity 1

Complete the 'Current Practice' column of the task sheet below by describing what you already offer to students in terms of research dissemination for each format, or by investigating the possibilities already open to your students to engage with each of these formats, e.g. which journals accept undergraduate researcher submissions in your discipline? Does your learned society have a competition you could direct your students to?

Activity 2

Thinking about the 'Future Practice' column of the task sheet, how could you alter the assessment brief for one or more of your assignments/modules in order to open students up to the possibility of publishing their work?

Activity 3

Table 1, below, includes a range of strategies for engaging students with research dissemination. Using this table, explore how these strategies have been (or have not been!) used to support student research dissemination. You may choose to interview a colleague who you know is involved in supporting the dissemination of student research or instead use the table as a checklist to explore an established form of student research dissemination (e.g. the annual British Conference of Undergraduate Research www.bcur.org or a dedicated student research journal <http://www.bcur.org/research/undergraduate-journals/>). In either case identify how the chosen strategies are being employed to make the sharing of research successful.

Task sheet: Dissemination formats checklist

Format	Example	Current practice	Future practice
Blogs and online video	Assessed blogs that peers can comment upon		
Podcasts	Podcasted student presentations housed on a VLE		
Conferences Poster and paper presentations Online conferences	Departmental conference for undergraduate researchers		
Client presentations	Presenting consultancy project findings back to clients within class		
Exhibitions and shows, theatrical performances	Art exhibition, within or beyond the university		
Journals and books	A collaboratively written book by staff and students in partnership		
Web pages, wikis, or adding to existing Wikipedia entries	A group wiki to share class data from which individuals write their own assignment		
Competitions National / international	A learned society competition		

Table 1: Strategies for enhancing engagement with undergraduate research dissemination

1. Build publication into dissertation and honours-level requirements
2. Building publication into course and programme requirements
3. Define 'research' broadly
4. Use digital technology to create a repository of work
5. Define 'publication' broadly
6. Embed the results of student publication into the curriculum
7. Involve students in the publication process.
8. Highlight the employability benefits of undergraduate research.
9. Link publication opportunities to allow student progression
10. Co-create a culture where students want to participate and expect to be involved
11. Generate transparent rules on the quality of work necessary for dissemination in partnership with students.
12. Ensure students submit their work before leaving the institution
13. Ensure that the publication format can accommodate a large volume of submissions
14. Invite submissions from external partners
15. Allow co-production with staff and/or peers
16. Allow students to retain the copyright to their work
17. Involve all members of the university community in celebrating undergraduate research outputs

References

Boyer Commission (1998) *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities*. Stony Brook, New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Spronken-Smith, R. A., et al 2013. Completing the research cycle: A framework for promoting dissemination of undergraduate research and inquiry *Teaching & Learning Inquiry. The ISSOTL Journal* 1 (2) 105-118.

Resources

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