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### **«RESEARCH-LED TEACHING» WITHIN SOCIAL SCIENCE DISCIPLINARY CONTEXT**

*Research-led teaching plays a very important role for effective teaching in higher education. Research contributes to students' learning to large extent at postgraduate and doctoral levels. It is important for postgraduate students to be at the cutting edge of their subject. Writing research projects facilitates active learning which is much more efficient than passive. Exposing students to scientific debates can naturally facilitate and stimulate critical thinking.*

**Key words:** *students, research-led teaching, higher education, scientific debates, research.*

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### **ВИКОРИСТАННЯ НАУКОВО-ДОСЛІДНИЦЬКОЇ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ ВИКЛАДАЧІВ У ПЕДАГОГІЧНІЙ ПРАКТИЦІ В КОНТЕКСТІ СОЦІАЛЬНИХ НАУК**

*Науково-дослідницька діяльність викладачів відіграє важливу роль у ефективності педагогічної практики у вищих навчальних закладах. Вона найбільше сприяє навчанню студентів магістерських програм та аспірантури. Для студентів важливо мати доступ до найновіших наукових проєктів у межах їхніх спеціальностей. Написання наукових робіт студентами сприяє їхньому активному навчанню, що є набагато ефективнішим, ніж навчання пасивне. Залучення студентів до наукових дебатов природно стимулює процес критичного мислення.*

**Ключові слова:** *студенти, науково-дослідна діяльність, вища освіта, наукові дебати, дослідження.*

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### **ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ НАУЧНО-ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬСКОЙ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ ПРЕПОДАВАТЕЛЕЙ В ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКОЙ ПРАКТИКЕ В КОНТЕКСТЕ СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ НАУК**

*Научно-исследовательская деятельность преподавателей играет важную роль в эффективности педагогической практики в высших учебных заведениях. Она более всего способствует обучению студентов магистерских программ и аспирантуры. Для студентов важно иметь доступ к новейшим научным проектам в рамках их специальностей. Написание научных работ студентами способствует их активному обучению, что является гораздо более эффективным, чем обучение пассивное. Привлечение студентов к научным дебатам естественно стимулирует процесс критического мышления.*

**Ключевые слова:** *студенты, научно-исследовательская деятельность, высшее образование, научные дебаты, исследования.*

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Nowadays, universities are very often judged on the basis of their research rankings and top research-based universities are able to attract best students. Recruitment of new academic staff is often made on the basis of the good research profiles. At the same time, teaching and learning in universities are closely related to research. There was a widely accepted principle that "excellent researchers within a given discipline will by implication be better teachers" (Kinchin and Hay (2007)). The main reason for this that lecturers who are involved in research are often regarded as 'carrier' of knowledge and perceived by students as credible lecturer (see Lindsay et al. (2002)). Students also like to learn from people respected in their fields.

The conundrum in the relationship between research and teaching has been recently challenged by a series of recent studies. Faia (1976), Barnett (1992), Rowland (1994), Hattie and Marsh (1996), Kinchin (2005) cast doubt on the relationship between the two activities. Moreover, some authors, like Hattie and Marsh (1996) argue that the relationship between research and teaching might even be negative. The main factors supporting these arguments are limited time and commitment of faculty to do both teaching and research, teaching and research requires different personality characteristics, curriculum distortion towards the research field etc (see Qamar uz Zaman (2004)).

More modern views on this issue is that the relationship between teaching and research goes beyond simple linear causality. A number of authors, like Jenkins et al. (1998), Gibbs (2002), Scott (2002), Brown (2002), Zetter (2002) suggest that research and teaching do benefit each other and can be complimentary but academic relationship between research and teaching has to be well managed. "Research is the process of learning for academics - teaching is the promotion of learning for students" (Zetter (2002)). Institutions should not separate research from teaching separate and recognize a need in enhancing a synergy between the two areas.

So which of the three arguments is prevailing in reality? Can we see examples in our teaching practice supporting those points of view? Based on my own teaching experience and observations, I could see evidence consistent with all three points of view.

#### Support for zero or negative relationship

Most of logic behind the argument that research impedes teaching does take place in practice. Usually, junior members of sta have to complete the probation in order to get the tenure and the most important objectives to achieve during this period is to publish high-quality research. This creates a pressure on early-career teachers to use most of the time, energy and commitment towards conducting my research. This automatically decreases incentives to get developed as a good teacher.

Another evidence is that researchers have tendency to pitch their classes at rather high level. This can prevent students from an e fective learning as they might fail to understand and follow the lecturer during classes. This is especially relevant for undergraduate courses. Many research-active lecturers sometimes losing temper for why students cannot understand such a simple concept like "standard deviation". Also, very often undergraduate courses are referred to as boring and uninteresting to teach due to very basic material. As a consequence, teaching fellows { lecturers whose main duties is solely teaching (non-researches) } are much more successful in teaching undergraduate modules than researches. This is re flected in students' feedbacks as well as in the overall quality of modules they deliver. Teaching fellows devote most of their time to develop e ficient teaching techniques, very often engage in innovative approaches to teaching. There are also many instances even at post-graduate level where teaching fellows can be more successful as compared to their research-active colleagues.

#### Support for positive relationship

Most of studies criticizing research-led teaching approach base their arguments on empirical evidence from undergraduate studies. However, research contributes to students' learning to large extent at postgraduate and doctoral levels. Zamorski (2002) differentiate two concepts of research-led teaching: "teaching that is heavily informed by their or others' recent research, or where research with or by students forms part of the pedagogy or content of the course". Regarding the latter model, I cannot imagine PhD students to be e ficiently taught and supervised by someone who is not actively engaged in research. Given their main goal is to learn how produce and actually produce high quality research, it is critically important for successful PhD programme to have a number of academics who are at front of the research. One can, however, argue if having a good PhD programme

contributes to the reputation of the university overall, but this discussion of out of the scope of this essay.

At the same time, it is also very important for postgraduate students to be at the cutting edge of their subject. In most of master programmes, students have to write their master thesis at the end of the year. Students tend to cover the subject rather broadly during the first two terms, while writing their master thesis in the third term provides them an opportunity to go deep into the subject and become an expert in a specific topic. From my personal experience, I observed that when working on their dissertations they gain most of understanding of the theoretical concepts, students learn on practice how to apply their critical reading and writing skills, they enhance their data management and programming skills. Writing research projects facilitates active learning which is much more efficient than passive, as argues by Williams (1992), Sotto (1994), Exley and Dennick (2004) among others.

While working on their master thesis, students very often would have to deal with similar sort of practical problems as researchers do when writing their research papers. Therefore, being researcher myself and having experience in conducting research, I can very quickly and efficiently provide students with some tips on how to do programming and perform data analysis, help students with analyzing literature and critical writing. I usually guide students where to find relevant data and supply them with some sample codes of programming. Before they start working on their thesis, I usually give them some general recommendations to help them to get started with their research. Among others, I give them tips on how to write literature review efficiently. They appreciate this as it helps them to save their time and write more structured papers.

Furthermore, dissertations have a tremendous motivational effect on master students' learning. Having written a good thesis and gained additional knowledge becomes a very important selling point for their job market later on. First of all they can argue that they became experts in their specific topic which might be relevant for the particular organization. More importantly, given the variety of research topics students undertake, each particular student have an opportunity to stand out of the crowd and be different in his/her skills as compared to other students in the job market. I could see how selective in topics students are for their dissertations. As Zetter (2002) suggests:

“Acquiring research and consultancy skills enhances graduate employability and provides graduates with the resources and confidence to understand and adapt to a society whose knowledge-base is fast changing”.

Another great practice is to provide an opportunity for best students to write external projects offered by various financial institution like insurance

companies, investment banks, hedge funds, consultancy agencies, etc. These projects serve as substitutes for students' dissertations. Topics for the projects are provided by institutions and are usually within the scope of their interests. Each student gets a member of staff assigned as academic supervisor who guides the student through-out the project. At the end, students would normally present their results at the internal workshop where they have to defend the thesis in front of experts from the particular institution. This provides an additional motivation to learn every single aspect of the project as everything can be questioned during the presentation.

At the same, researchers tend to be more engaged with various consultancy projects funded by industry. Hence, they would be more aware of type of problems industry is trying to solve and kind of skills necessary for a successful job market candidate. This knowledge is very valuable and helpful when it comes to designing specific courses which are going to be delivered within the programme. This clearly positively related to the marketing of the entire programme as well as the reputation of the university. Similar points about the essential role of research in the undergraduate curriculum have been made by Boud et al. (2010).

Finally, some of master students, especially those who are interested in entering PhD programme at a later stage, can be invited to participate in research projects performed by members of staff as research assistants. Students main duties would be helping in performing literature reviews, collecting and managing data. This helps them to be exposed to actual research projects, learn how to search a good research questions, enhance their practical skills etc. This clearly demonstrates the importance of research aspect for higher education, at least in social science and business.

Coming back to the first model highlighted by Zamorski (2002), teaching by researchers is also, in my opinion, important for postgraduate students. In many relatively new disciplines, there may be no good textbooks and lecturers should be aware of the newest perspectives in their field. One of very clear examples of such issue is "Behavioural Finance" module which I used to teach within our master programme. This is rather new discipline, there is no good textbook that can cover well the entire curriculum. Therefore, students have to use scientific papers as their reading material. As results and experts' views of the discipline evolve very quickly there is a strong need for an update and clarification of various issues that students face while reading research papers. This is when students would definitely benefit from having a researcher in the classroom.

One may argue that this might not be applicable to most of the courses as there are textbooks available for vast majority of well established modules.

However, pushing students for reading research articles could have a stimulating effect on their learning. Very often researchers debate about various contradictory results and problems. Exposing students to these debates can naturally facilitate and stimulate critical thinking (see for example Sullivan and Glanz (2005)) as they have to analyze the material, make comparisons and form their own opinion about it.

An interesting and stimulating exercise I introduced to my master students is to distribute among students some relevant to the course curriculum research papers which were already published in high-rank research journals. As a homework, students had to write a 'referee' reports on the papers. This means that students had to read and understand the paper, read relevant literature in order position the paper and find weak places in order to criticize results, question assumptions made by authors and comment on the methodology. There are several positive aspects of such exercise: students should demonstrate ability to read and think critically; they should gain knowledge about current state of the research; they learn that even published by experts research papers can be criticized.

As asserted by Qamar uz Zaman (2004), students tend to appreciate teachers who present research that they have actually conducted. Research provides an authenticity to the presented material that differs from presentations by teachers who are only discussing the work of others in which they have no active involvement. I could see this in behaviour of my own students. Master students had to choose a topic for their master thesis and about 50% of my supervisees wanted to do their work in the area coherent with area of my own research. In most cases, projects they are proposing sound like continuations and extensions of my research papers. They want to be at front of the research as it leads to credibility enhancement. Furthermore, students have the desire to learn experts in particular fields. This has been documented by a number of studies, like Zamorski (2002), Deakin (2006), Boud et al. (2010). As Deakin (2006) states: 'students value the link between teaching and research, placing particular weight on research led teaching and the bearing which it has on the quality of their learning experiences».

#### Support for linking research and teaching at departmental level

At the departmental level, the link between research and teaching could be recognized and supported in various ways. As mentioned already, the administration could highly encourage external projects being undertaken by students, provide funding opportunities available to fund students' participation in research as research assistants. A potential policy that could be introduced to enhance research-led teaching is that most of non-research members of staff should be involved in teaching undergraduate course where

research-led teaching is pronounced to a lesser extent while postgraduate courses could be taught almost exclusively by researchers.

### **Summary**

In my opinion and based on my own experience, there is no doubt that research-led teaching plays a very important role for effective teaching in higher education. In particular, in social science discipline, research is an inherent part of students' learning. However, it is also clear that it is not sufficient for teachers to simply strengthen their expert knowledge. As argued by Kinchin and Hay (2007)... however comprehensive the teacher's expert knowledge framework, unless it is transformed appropriately to support dialogue with the novice student, it will not help student learning and will emphasize the gap between teaching and research».

Teachers have to develop effective teaching approaches so that research-led teaching delivers high quality learning and, as quoted by Kinchin (2003), «it is necessary to engage with the students and gain a deeper insight into their emerging knowledge framework».

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