Disciplinary approaches to connecting the higher education curriculum

TEMPLATE FOR RECORDING EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO RESEARCH INFORMED TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM IN THE HUMANITIES

This template has been designed to capture a range of examples of research-informed approaches to teaching and learning ('RIT') in the Humanities, and will be used alongside cases studies from other disciplines to illustrate how RIT manifests to reflect disciplinary differences and similarities, and to inspire others to adopt similar approaches to the undergraduate curriculum across the whole of the student 'lifecycle'. Our aim is to construct a composite table from all the contributions received for the Humanities, so we will be sharing your information with others in due course. In particular, the composite tables will form part of a scholarly chapter to be published in an edited collection on disciplinary approaches to connecting the higher education curriculum.

When filling in this template there is no expectation that you will include examples for all five types of research-informed teaching and learning, though you are welcome to do so if you are able. Please add short descriptions for any activities that you feel fit one or more of the definitions, and which represent typical, interesting or innovative ways of providing students with a research-informed learning experience in your discipline. The article at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/teaching-academy/documents/public/eip-dec15/mclinden.pdf has examples of the level of detail needed (it needs to be brief!) We are especially interested in examples that span one or more years of study, and illustrate how approaches to RIT can be structured and developed for students at different stages of their studies. Please do also add some comments at the end of the table to say in what way the example activities you describe are particularly useful for helping undergraduate students to think like, and develop as, a Humanities scholar.

Thank you for your contributions!

If you wish to be acknowledged in the publication, please give your details here:

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Description	Relationship to curriculum design and content	Student learning experience	Examples of student learning activities
1. **Research-led teaching** Learning *about* the research of others	Research interests and / or outputs from activities of institutional staff are included in curriculum. Research interests and or outputs from activities of staff external to the institution are included in curriculum content. Research interests and / or outputs from research activities of students are included in curriculum content.	• Students learn about the research of staff on their programme or in a particular department. They have opportunities to learn about this research through curriculum content that reflects staff or current disciplinary research interests. • Students learn about research findings through curriculum content which draws on the work of staff external to the institution. • Students learn about research findings through content which draws on the work of student research.	The programme about which information is given here is Classical Civilisation BA for which I am programme convener. **Pre-entry work:** students can take part in an applicants' day in March/April for which content includes staff research material and discussion about it. Current Students talk about their dissertation research. **Year 1:** students attend classical association branch lectures to hear expert guest lecturers talking about their latest research. They write a blog entry in their eportfolios on each lecture (compulsory). There are research days where students can hear research from all levels (usually year2, year3, Masters, PhD, staff). Opportunities to read student research in our online student journal. This applies to all year groups. **Year 2:** Most modules have research-led curriculum at this level. Students hear about staff expertise and learn about research of Roehampton staff and others through set reading. Students hear presentations by year 3 students based on their dissertation research. Research days and journal as above. **Year 3:** all modules at this level are based on current research expertise. Staff papers from conferences shared online. Students share dissertation research through their dissertation groups. Research days and journal as above.

2. Research-oriented teaching Learning about research *processes*	Information about contemporary and historical research methods and techniques developed and used by institutional staff, staff external to the institution and students are included in the curriculum	• Students learn about the research methods used by staff and students on their programme or in a particular department or discipline • Students learn how research methods and techniques have developed over time, the challenges associated with developing robust and ethical research methods, and the likely future developments of research methods in their discipline	**Pre-entry work:** current students talk a little about research techniques they use at applicants' day. **Year 1:** compulsory module 'Introduction to Classical Civilisation' teaches research techniques to prepare students for assessment. Range of techniques taught. **Year 2:** compulsory module focuses on research methods used over the last century or so in researching classical myth. In modules some discussion of different research methods. **Year 3:** compulsory module Dissertation with group sessions which discuss and explore the research process. Staff share their experiences. Former students and Masters students visit to share their process experiences.
3. Research-based teaching (enquiry-based learning) Learning *as* researchers	The curriculum focusses on the learning process as much as on content, with students learning in research or enquiry mode.	• Students are guided through a structured process of enquiry within a supportive environment, designed to promote collaborative and active engagement with problems and issues; examples include case studies, problem-solving activities, field trips and simulations • Discipline content is acquired through a process of student research and enquiry • Students develop and practise a range of research skills appropriate to their discipline	**Pre-entry induction/transition work:** **Year 1:** for their compulsory module students prepare a short research project. The aim is to encourage students to see themselves as researchers from day one. Students get support from staff, PG students on the online forum, and peers. They present and discuss their research. **Year 2:** assessments on some modules including Homer, and Gender and Sexuality in Ancient Greece, ask students to develop their own research questions for their assignment with the support of staff. Staff encourage student risk taking to develop research like projects. **Year 3:** assessments on some modules and esp. dissertation encourage student research. E.g. Students taking Violence and Law in Ancient Greece research a group debate which they present in class. The class then discusses. Students for Athena prepare group posters on their research to learn this method of research presentation

4. Research-tutored teaching Learning through *critiquing* research	The curriculum includes the critical consideration of both research methods and research findings	• Students are tutored to undertake the critical appraisal of the research of discipline experts, their peers and their own research. • Students learn to identify limitations, gaps and flaws in research and make proposals for moving forward research in their discipline • Examples include critical literature reviews and critical discussions about research designs and research papers	**Pre-entry induction/transition work** **Year 1:** book review and article review assessments **Year 2:** considerable work in class on opposing or different research approaches to the same topic, e.g. Through class debate, set questions for class preparation. Consideration of the context in which scholars were writing their research and his this affects their outcomes. Discussion of ways forward with research. **Year 3:** similar approach with higher expectation of student engagement in these debates in their written work and presentation. Explicitly done in Violence and Law class debates.
5. Scholarship of teaching and learning / reflective learning Enquiring and reflecting on teaching and learning	The development of lifelong learning skills, scholarly and critical approaches to learning, and reflection on teaching and learning in the discipline are included in the curriculum	• Students are involved in the process of critical reflection on, and enquiry into, their tutors' teaching (eg as informants or participants in classroom-based action research) • Students reflect on their approaches to learning and actively work to develop their capacity to become more effective learners	**Pre-entry induction/transition work** **Year 1:** students in all year groups get opportunities to participate in funded pedagogical research projects at disciplinary and university level. These have included BME attainment, transforming assessment practice, feedback and feed forward, teaching sensible subjects in the classics classroom, employability in classics, webpages as assessment in classics, equality and diversity in classics. Opportunities include focus groups and surveys and in some cases internships. **Year 2:** students develop the curriculum of the Roehampton campus module in collaboration with tutors. The module is a research project module. Students decide on curriculum as a group. They present their research to the public. **Year 3:**

In what way do the activities you describe help students to think and develop as a Humanities scholar? (Please comment on how they achieve 'pedagogic resonance' between the course design (learning *design*), the subsequent learning and assessment activities the students engage in (learning *experience*), and the practices and traditions of the discipline into which the students are being inducted (learning *discipline*).

Our Classical Civilisation students are encouraged to think for themselves and instructed that they can engage in learning as researchers from the start of the course, our best students produce original research arguments and often move on to PG studies. Students are encouraged to read material by staff and other students and develop ways to critique this work. They are taught a variety of research methods and encouraged to experiment with them in a range of assessment types including reflecting on research and creating research of their own. Students can achieve well in reflective assessments, presentations and debates by engaging with research and research processes. Underlying our approach is an idea of students as potential partners in our research and so we include the best student research in research days and our online journal where others can see their achievements and understand that research is not limited to staff. Cross-Engagement through all levels year 1-PGR helps students see how their skills develop. Peer learning and discussion is key in this approach.

Describing Research Informed Teaching

There is no unitary definition of research-informed teaching. The term means different things to different people and meanings ascribed can differ depending on the context. For the purposes of utilising the terminology with a common understanding in this project, working explanations of each of five key dimensions of research-informed teaching are given below. These are based on the work of Griffiths (2004) and Healey (2005) and have been developed through collaboration with a number of academics at the University of Birmingham – see https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/teaching-academy/documents/public/eip-dec15/mclinden.pdf.

What is research-informed teaching?

Research-informed teaching is fundamental to our approach to undergraduate and postgraduate learning in the UK and can include one or more of:

1. *RESEARCH-LED TEACHING: Learning about the research of others*
   − Students learn about research findings through a curriculum content which consists largely of staff or current disciplinary research interests;
   − It can provide examples and ways of illustrating ideas, concepts and theories;
   − Traditionally in this approach, some or a lot of the teaching may rely on information transmission, for example through traditional lectures or set reading. There may be a focus on memorising the key facts that have emerged from research in the discipline;

2. **RESEARCH-ORIENTED TEACHING***: Learning about research processes*
   − Learning emphasises as much the processes by which knowledge is produced as knowledge that has been achieved, for example learning about, and critiquing, different research methods;
   − Students learn about how to undertake their own research within their discipline and staff try to engender a research ethos through their teaching, for example by encouraging students to begin to think like researchers, and not simply accept others' research findings as given;

3. **RESEARCH-BASED TEACHING OR ENQUIRY-BASED LEARNING***: Learning as researchers*
   − Learning is largely designed around enquiry-based activities;
   − Enquiry-based learning can be described as learning that arises through a structured process of enquiry within a supportive environment, designed to promote collaborative and active engagement with problems and issues; examples include case studies, problem-solving activities, field trips and simulations;
   − The differentiation between teacher and student roles is minimised: both are participants in the enquiry process, with the teacher acting as the more experienced 'partner';

4. **RESEARCH-TUTORED TEACHING:** *Critiquing others' research*
   − Focuses on the critical appraisal of research and moving research forward;
   − Students typically participate in small group discussions with or without a teacher to consider research findings;
   − Examples of this include critical literature reviews and critical discussions about research papers

5. *SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING: Enquiring and reflecting on teaching and learning*
   − Teachers engage in critical reflection on, and enquiry into, their own teaching, and approach their teaching as a scholarly activity informed by the research of others;
   − Learners reflect on their approaches to learning and actively work to develop their capacity to become more effective learners;
   − The processes of critical reflection and enquiry can apply to all types of teaching and learning.