

Title: Mapping a new way of learning and experiencing research

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Construct concept maps
- Understand the use of concept maps as a research and an educational tool
- Explore Barnett and Coate's model of engaging curriculum
- Consider the differences in the way staff and students experience and conceptualise research
- Explore the concept of a junior research institute and how it can be transferable to their particular discipline and/or institution.

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

Have you ever explicitly considered what research means to you and your academic practice? Or how students view and experience research within HE? What about the way academics' research is often kept separate from students? Or how students struggle with their final year projects/dissertations? This session will focus on contrasting and comparing between staff and student conceptions and experiences of research. We will examine together, the implications for the way research is taught, learned and experienced at university.

Like many other universities, we have spent considerable amount of time thinking about research informed teaching, and how students research skills can be better developed (Jenkins et al., 2007). We share in Brew's (2006) vision of inclusive scholarly knowledge building communities. Yet, we felt that transforming this vision into reality, requires exploration of where we are at currently, so that we are better able to map our future work. We argue that a key step in this process, is the understanding of how staff and students experience and conceptualise research. Only then, would our own practice be informed by research, and our strategies will have a clear foundation and direction of work.

This workshop will give you an opportunity to use a concept mapping tool to capture your conceptions and experiences of research (Kinchin and Hay, 2000). It will raise a discussion about how students' conceptions compare to those of academics. In discussion and brainstorming, a plan for the future will be outlined.

Through this workshop, we will share how we used concept mapping as a research tool (Somekh and Mavers, 2003), the findings that we uncovered, how they mapped against Barnett and Coate's (2005) characteristics of engaging curriculum. We will reveal how we re-invigorated our work in the area of research informed teaching; not by sustaining one-off interventions, but by changing the way we see ourselves and our students in relation to research. - how we created an opportunity for scholarly knowledge building communities to prosper by piloting a junior research institutes scheme.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

Introduction to the workshop (10 min)

This will include a brief overview of the workshop, the theory and our methodological approach, as well as introducing concept mapping

Construct concept maps of 'what research means to you' in groups (20 min)

Groups of around 4 individuals, ideally with one member who is experienced in concept mapping

Consider areas of similarities between these groups (15 min)

Depending on the layout of the room, this can be done on the basis of the ambassador system, or by simply having an opportunity to walk around and explore others' maps.

Identify areas which may/may not feature on a student map (15 min)

This will be done in discussion within the groups. Sample student maps will be presented.

Discuss the way the outcomes from our research and the theory have informed our current work (10 min)

Show how we mapped our findings against Barnett and Coate's (2005) characteristics of engaging curriculum. Open discussion with all the participants.

Share views and experiences with the audience (10 min)

Outline our junior research institutes pilot, what we were hoping to achieve and our lessons learned to date. Open discussion with all the participants.

Ask the audience what (if anything) they will take away with them from this workshop (10 min)

This gives an opportunity for the audience to reflect on what they have learned from this session, and for the presenter to learn about what aspects of the workshop they have found useful and why.

References

Barnett, R. & Coate, K. (2005) *Engaging The Curriculum in Higher Education*, Maidenhead, Mcgraw-Hill and Open University Press.

Brew, A. (2006) *Research and Teaching: Beyond the Divide*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

Freeman, L. A. (2004) The Power and Benefits Of Concept Mapping: Measuring Use, Ease of Use, and Satisfaction. *International Journal of Science Education* 26, 151-169.

Jenkins, A., Healey, M. & Zetter, R. (2007) *Linking Teaching and Research in Disciplines and Departments*. York, The Higher Education Academy.

Kinchin, I. M. & Hay, D. B. (2000) How a Qualitative Approach to Concept Map Analysis Can Be Used to Aid Learning by Illustrating Patterns of Conceptual Development. *Educational Research*, 42, 43-57.

Somekh, B. & Mavers, D. (2003) Mapping Learning Potential: Students Conceptions of ICT in Their World. *Assessment in education*, 10, 409- 420.