Nurturing students research skills: from research-led teaching to research skills development

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For students research led teaching is about discovery


Outline of today’s session

• Who are we? Who are you?
• Research Led Teaching?
• A way of doing RLT is the Research Skills Development (RSD) framework.
• What we have done.
• What could you do?

Who are we?

• Senior lecturers in the Department of Management, Faculty of Business and Economics.
• We do discipline-based research as well as research on teaching and learning
• Co-founders (with Dr Glen Croy) of the Business Education Research Network
• Collaborators with Dr John Willison on the Research Skills Development project

Who are you?

• Department/Discipline?
• ECR?
• Teaching award winner?
• Interested in trying something new?

What is Research-Led Teaching?

• It has many dimensions….
  – Research-active staff;
  – Research-enhanced teaching and learning;
  – Research-aligned teaching;
  – Teaching-led research.

For further ideas see www.itl.usyd.edu.au/rlt/
Why bother?

- Student engagement through research activities
  - Community of scholars
  - Discover and integrate knowledge
- Academic staff engagement and service
  - Scholarship of teaching and learning
- Graduate attributes and student employability
  - Critical and creative scholars

What do you think?

- What does research-led teaching mean to you
  - In your discipline?
  - In your department?

6 Facets of researching:

A. embark on an inquiry and so determine a need for knowledge/understanding
   Curious
B. find/generate needed information using appropriate methodology
   Determined
C. critically evaluate information/data and the process to find/generate
   Critical
D. organise information collected/generated and manage research processes
   Organised
E. synthesise and analyse and apply new knowledge
   Creative
F. communicate knowledge and the processes used to generate it, with an awareness of ethical, social and cultural issues.
   Persuasive

Levels of Autonomy

- Research may be closed to open in terms of
  - Beginning
  - How to proceed
  - End points
- Level 1: highly prescribed by lecturer, low student autonomy.
- Level 5: high degree of student autonomy (in line with the discipline)
Human Resource Management: Guided Tutorial Reading Assignment & Essay:

- I wanted to help students.....
  - Become “curious” (as opposed to resigned learners)
  - Develop their own knowledge and understanding of the subject (as opposed to remembering “stuff”)
  - Give them skills to do the above

Critically evaluate the following statement:

"Human Resource Management (HRM) has come a long way from personnel management to the contemporary models of human resource management (HRM) discussed in the literature and your textbook. Moreover, it is argued by HRM scholars that HRM can be used as a vital strategic tool for organisations who want to develop and sustain competitive advantage. This is particularly important in the face of the unpredictable external environments faced by organisations brought about by the global economic crisis."
Issues and outcomes

- It takes time and effort to develop the rubrics.
- But it does make you think more carefully about learning outcomes and how to achieve them.
- Makes marking a breeze.

(Good things) the students said……

- “The required reading/literature review task where we summarised and referenced journal articles was extremely helpful in all of the major assignments, group assignment and exam preparation.”
- “My ability to go through the steps of summarising a research paper has allowed me to understand the context [of HRM] more.”
- “The format of how to critically analyse a journal article has helped.”

Postgraduate Business ethics unit

Topics included the ethics of:
- Corruption,
- The forestry industry,
- Piracy of media products,
- Gift giving in China,
- Green marketing/ green washing,
- Specific cases such Exxon Valdez, James Hardie,

Research methods used by students

- Development of online surveys in English and in Chinese,
- Surveys,
- Semi-structured and structured face to face interviews and telephone interviews,
- Web searches,
- Scholarly journals.

Positives (from my perspective)

- The value of providing an audience for their research projects;
- Engaged with each other and with their research;
- Struggled with their research question/s and their interview questions;
- They begin to speak the language of researchers eg. Our research questions, our research participants, our data sources, our sample, our research findings and so on.

Positives from the students’ perspective

- I think the group one was the best research one we’d done, because we actually did independent research. We did a web survey...[and] we had to come up with hypotheses and things like that, so that was really good. We have used some of that in our group assignment we’re working on now.
Student's perspective

- ... that poster presentation...that Jan did, was very effective—very, very effective, and a different way of doing things. Like, it was hard work, but it was worth it, getting it professionally printed off and it looked fantastic, and you actually stood back and thought, 'That’s a fantastic piece of work; we’ve done a real research project there', so I thought that was good. I would encourage that, even though it’s a pain in the arse. It’s a lot of work.

Selected References