Integrating research into a module: individual activity

Collection: Course design

Resource: Designing an innovative English Literature module

Approximate duration

One hour to 90 minutes

Learning outcomes

Completing this activity should help you to

1. be able to navigate the usage of your own research in the light of pedagogic need;
2. revise or develop one of your modules in a reflective fashion;
3. develop a willingness to take risks in trying a new pedagogic strategy.

Introduction

The balance between research and teaching is at the heart of the modern university. In subjects like English, in particular, many lecturers are keen to stress the interrelatedness of active research and pedagogical responsibility. Students can benefit from lecturers' research expertise in the content of their modules; student insight, meanwhile, can refresh the parameters of a lecturer's ongoing research project.

For many years, one standard way of integrating research into teaching has been for lecturers to offer second- and third-year option modules closely linked to their next monograph. There are some dangers in this approach--it can present students with an eccentric choice of module topic and can lead to unduly predetermined class discussion.

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Increasingly, lecturers teach modules in which students undertake their own small research projects, either individually or in groups meeting outside class (as in Dr Hannah Crawforth's module, a description of which is linked to in this activity). This activity will help you think about ways in which you can help students to develop research skills through work on a module. We are very grateful to our colleagues for allowing us into their classrooms, lecture halls and offices to observe and discuss their teaching. As you work with these examples of teaching and course design please keep your commentary focused upon the activity and refrain from criticisms that would be unhelpful or unkind in a face-to-face encounter.

The activity

1. Think about your own research work. Write down its key topics. What are the main activities this research involves? Archival work, involving deciphering difficult handwriting? Extensive assessment of secondary materials? Close textual analysis? The construction of complicated arguments? Heavy use of online newspaper databases? Make a list.
2. Watch the video below, in which Professor Marion Wynne-Davies (University of Surrey) discusses the importance of research to teaching.

Designing an English Programme 7
(http://vimeo.com/22342033)

3. Watch the interview below of Hannah Crawforth (King's College, London) describing a module that makes extensive use of student research.

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Interview with Hannah Crawforth: Shakespeare's London – Module design
(http://vimeo.com/19706652)

You can find out more about Hannah's module by reading the module handbook which you will find in the same folder as this resource in HumBox.

4. Is there a module you teach on your degree programme (or that you would like to teach) where the methods underpinning your own research, if undertaken by students, might substantially help in the attainment of the learning outcomes? Write some notes about the possibilities and how research methodology might relate to the more conventional parts of an English module.
5. Think about assessment. What ways of assessing the students' use of research techniques might there be? The student essay or unseen exam may not be the best method. Devise an assessment strategy.
6. Will the students work individually or in groups (as in Hannah's module)? Write some notes about teaching format to finish the exercise.

Relationship to the Professional Standards Framework

- **Core Knowledge 2:** Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- **Professional Values 3:** Commitment to the development of learning communities
- **Professional Values 4:** Commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity

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More information about the Professional Standards Framework can be obtained from the summary factsheet in the *Subject & Pedagogy* collection in HumBox.
http://humbox.ac.uk/2731/

Resources in the Course design Collection

- Course design: introduction to the collection
- Designing an English degree programme: resource overview
    - Designing in employability: individual activity
    - Designing in employability: group activity
    - Managing transition from A Level: individual activity
    - A delicate balance: group activity
    - A delicate balance: individual activity
- Designing an innovative English Literature module: resource overview
    - Location, location, location: individual activity
    - Location, location, location: group activity
    - Questions, questions
    - **Integrating research into a module: individual activity (*you are here)**
    - Integrating research into a module: group activity
- Filling the gaps: resource overview
    - Filling the gaps between sessions: individual activity
    - Filling the gaps between sessions: group activity
- Adapting a module: resource overview
    - Adapting a Literature module: individual activity
    - Adapting a Literature module: group activity
    - Pacing it out: individual activity
    - Curriculum framing
- Mapping and applying desirable student attributes: resource overview
    - Imaginary modules: individual activity
    - Imaginary modules: group activity
- Designing a creative-critical module: resource overview
    - Thinking about modules: individual activity
    - Thinking about modules: group activity

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