

# Northumbria Research Link

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The Research-Teaching Nexus and its potential to enhance the opportunities of those teaching HE in FECs  
*"Upholding the promise of fertile territory"* (FEFC, 1997; Smith and Bocock, 1999)

## Working with HE in FECs



- A natural evolution having being a non traditional student of HE in FE, and an employee with several roles in HEIs
- I had “*broken the code*” (Brookfield, 1996) of academia by crossing the HE sector divide, then returned with the aim of “... *developing a strategy to address the challenge of building a research culture in an HE environment in FECs*” (Goss, 2012, p. 2)
- The premise of the study was possible due to
  - Insider knowledge of HE in FE
  - Insider knowledge of HE in HEIs
  - Familiarity with, and Insider knowledge of, the Research Informed Teaching (RIT) agenda
- Generally the teaching was suggested as not “...*stretching learning capacity*” (Claxton, 2007 p.122). HE distinctiveness was viewed as fragile in the FECs (Parry, Davies and Williams, 2004)
- There were some exceptions to this rule...

# Introducing the Research Teaching Nexus



## Students-HE in FE Lecturers as Participants

R E S E A R C H	<p><b>Research tutored</b></p> <p>Curriculum emphasis is learning focussed on student writing and discussing papers or essays</p>	<p><b>Research based</b></p> <p>Curriculum emphasises students undertaking enquiry based learning</p>	R E S E A R C H
	<p><b>Research led</b></p> <p>Curriculum is structured around teaching and subject content</p>	<p><b>Research Orientated</b></p> <p>Curriculum emphasises teaching processes of knowledge construction</p>	
C O N T E N T			

## Students HE in FE Lecturers as Audience

Model amended from the original of Healey and Jenkins (2009)



- Lower level offering of sub degrees forming a minor part of the portfolio (Yorke, 2005)
- Lowly level and ratio of post graduate staff (Brand 2007; HEfCE, 2009)
- Managed rather than led (Young, 2002; Goddard-Patel and Whitehead, 2000)
- Little resonance with conditions of employment with HEI peers yet, claims a quality standard, a standard that has parity with that of an HEI (Trowler, 1998; Yorke, 2005; Brand, 2007)
- Research linked to teaching does take place, it may not be conventional or traditional in nature. The greatest problem is that it fails to get aired in the same way as research from the HEIs (Widdison and King, 2009 cited in ESCalate 2009; Davy 2009)
- The success of HE provision and research projects is determined on the insight and abilities of those supervising the students (Trowler, 1998).
- Seen to have a research deficit culture (Davy, 2009)



## Sample

7 Colleges /range of Lectures of HE in FECs  
Students/ mentors included

## Data collection

- Video diaries
- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Observation

## Paradigm

- Interpretivist
- Deductive

## Underpinning theories

- Research teaching nexus, Human active approach

Method Cumulative Case Studies (Yin, 1994; 2003)			
Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3	Case study 4
5-4/7	4/7	3/7	1/7
HE-FE Lecturers	HE-FE Lecturers	HE-FE Lecturers	HE-FE Lecturers
22	10	3	25
35	HE-FE Students	2	HEI Mentors or Specialist staff
3	135	1	
17		HE-FE Students	6
		18	
		12	
		22	

# Interactive and collective activities, new pedagogical approaches...



1. Do HE lecturers in the FECs understand  
HE culture?  
HE Knowledge

2. Understanding HE assessment for learning  
HE Judgement

**Crafting the four case  
studies**

3. Building HE peer practice with FEC staff  
and students  
HE Practice

4. Embedding sustainable peer practices for  
HE in the FEC  
HE Ownership

# Research Process

# Research Content

Research Tutored

Research Based

**Collaborative but also independent;  
Keen to build on their performances;  
Reflective, thoughtful and self-evaluative  
Both methodical and opportunistic;  
Critical, sceptical and analytical;  
Open-minded, flexible, imaginative and creative;  
Resilient, determined and focussed;  
Curious, adventurous and questioning**

**Building Learner Knowledge and Capability using the definitions of Claxton (2007, 117) as presented within the Healey and Jenkins Model (2009)**

Research Led

Research Orientated

# Locating the findings in the Research-Teaching Nexus



- Case studies one and two highlight that knowledge and judgement capabilities are amply demonstrated and connected; what is more difficult to validate is the evolution of practice as a separate entity, an entity that is closely tied to that of knowledge capability and a strong research base.
- The staff all claimed to be more confident (capable) in their teaching, learning, assessment and with the use of e-learning technologies...
- Multiple dilemmas and practical issues of engagement that arose. This suggested a lack of harmony between the management and the lecturing staff.
- The achievements of certain capabilities are not necessarily distinct; nor do they imply a linear progression, hence they cannot be fitted perfectly into any model or framework. This reflects the learning process as a journey is interwoven, complex and super-complex (Mortimore, 1999; Jackson, 2008, cited in Barnett, 2010).
- Expansive transformation did occur in one particular college through a collaborative journey, interconnected activities energised by many contradictions...
- CONCLUSION - led to my MANIFESTO for change

**Research tutored**

A strengthened research base enables research that is tutored



**Research based**

Case Study 4. Embedding sustainable peer practices for HE in the FEC

**KNOWLEDGE, JUDGEMENT and PRACTICE when OWNED**

strengthens the research base

Ownership of Learner Capability around the Research Teaching Nexus

**Research led**

Case study 1. Do HE lecturers in the FECs understand HE culture?

Case study 2. Understanding HE assessment for learning

The evolution of capability began here with **KNOWLEDGE** and early

**JUDGEMENT**

**Research Orientated**

Case study 3. Building HE peer practice with FEC staff and students

**KNOWLEDGE** informs **JUDGEMENT** through both theory and PRACTICE

this in turn enables venturing upward into the higher quadrants of the nexus



# The Research-Teaching Nexus: leading to a Manifesto for change



The anecdotal evidence beyond the study... and my research design (control) is worth noting.

## **A significant number began ...**

- **their own doctoral studies;**
- **to write for academic publication**
- **to produce materials worthy of publication, then one college established their own in house journal “Praxis”**
- **to present their ideas in a wider academic forum**
- **to adopt new teaching pedagogies**
- **these teaching pedagogies were cascaded in teams, and for in-house staff development**

## **While others**

- **continued to use the resource pack developed for use in case study three**
- **the artefacts and posters developed from case study one remain on display within the HE departments of the FECs and are used as a mechanism to explain the concepts of HE study**

## **There was also observable career development**

The promise of fertile territory continues (FEFC, 1997; Smith and Boccock, 1999) with the enhancement of scholarship capability through a “...critical mass of HE practitioners” (Turner et al., 2009, p.261).