

(Why) Should we value teaching in research-intensive universities? Reflections on academic work, initiatives on teaching, leadership of teaching and Teaching Excellence Frameworks

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Introduction

- 🌐 Why(should we) value teaching in research intensive universities?
- 🌐 How have some recent changes to academic work affected this?
- 🌐 The UK (English) context in relation to valuing teaching
- 🌐 Leadership of teaching; some myths and realities
- 🌐 The future: England's Teaching Excellence Framework

Apples for the teacher?



Why should research-intensive universities value teaching?

- 🌐 It's an important part of the purposes of universities
- 🌐 Both teaching & research involve learning
- 🌐 It is an opportunity to bring together in a synergistic way, the two core activities of academics
- 🌐 Teaching students about research from a researcher's perspective is an important justification for having universities which carry out both research & teaching

Why don't some academics value teaching?

- It's not always well rewarded or institutionally valued
- It's seldom linked to high academic status
- It can be a very routinised activity
- It is often seen as taking academics away from their research
- Some academics believe teaching has become a form of training for jobs, not an education
- It's not a good basis for promotion in research-intensives

On the other hand

- 🌐 Teaching is becoming a more demanding & important activity as participation rates increase (Kreber 2010, Akerlind 2007)
- 🌐 Students in some HE systems see themselves as consumers (Naidoo et al 2011) but need to be reminded they are students, not purchasers
- 🌐 Government and transnational bodies are slowly waking up to the importance of teaching (e.g European Commission 2013)

Teaching?



or research?



How does rewarding teaching excellence compare with rewarding research excellence?

- 🌐 Research excellence usually has more money attached; teaching excellence often has token amounts
- 🌐 Clearer agreement on how to evaluate research than teaching
- 🌐 Research excellence initiatives often pay for future research, while teaching initiatives tend to reward past work
- 🌐 External referees more prepared to comment on research excellence
- 🌐 Research excellence exercises tend to cost more
- 🌐 Rare for either type of exercise to be fully evaluated (Pruvot & Estermann 2014)




Academic work: some recent changes

- 🌐 Casualisation (Lama & Joullié 2015, Courtouis 2015)
- 🌐 Collectivisation (Nyhagen & Baschung 2013)
- 🌐 Mobility/globalisation (Kenway & Fahey 2008)
- 🌐 Specialisation (Nyhagen & Baschung 2013; MacFarlane 2012)
- 🌐 Speed- up (Ylijoki 2013)
- 🌐 Increased intensity of research activity (Kyvik 2013)




Academic work also differs by country







How do changes to academic work affect its meanings?

-  **Casualisation:** academic work is precarious, even in permanent posts; gender & ethnicity affect this too. Precarity may alter commitment to teaching & student outcomes
-  **Collectivisation;** more interdisciplinary centres/teams, doctoral schools (Nyhagen & Baschung 2013); could increase interest in teaching
-  **Mobility/globalisation:** high job turnover, 'on-line but out-of-office' academics, distance learning, MOOCS. May distance academics from their teaching in several senses

How do changes to academic work affect its meanings? (2)

-  Specialisation e.g teaching-only, research-only, management- only. This tends to separate different kinds of academic work more than in recent decades
-  Speed-up: three responses: work and non-work blurred; distinguish between real work and non- real work; work and personal life clearly demarcated (Ylijoki 2013) ; may be perceived differently by those who mainly teach?
-  Research intensification: now includes networking, collaboration, managing research, doing research, publishing research, evaluating research (Kyvik 2013). This may crowd out teaching preparation time

The UK context

-  The UK (especially England) famous for developing HE policies which then get borrowed by the rest of the world
-  Have been many recent teaching initiatives BUT not all initiatives have succeeded, others prematurely truncated
-  Current right-wing government thinks academics in public universities are lazy & wants to use 'paying students' to stir up competition as introducing for-profit sector didn't achieve this (Sector response to QA consultation – for-profits need more stringent quality assessment)
-  An unexpected side-effect of this is the Competition and Markets Authority policing public universities in England for unfair marketing of programmes & limiting how programmes change








Plus ...



Brexit

The word "Brexit" is displayed in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The letters are filled with a pattern of red, white, and blue horizontal stripes, reminiscent of the Union Jack flag. The letters have a slight 3D effect with a white outline and a soft shadow. The word is centered on a white rectangular background.

Teaching excellence initiatives & types of expected change (Saunders 2015)

-  Change by examples of good practice (NTFs)
-  Contagion – change is catching (CETLS)
-  Resource driven – given money to change (CETLS; Scottish QAA enhancement themes)
-  Institutional rhetoric: values buy-in (UKPSF?)
-  Professional imperative through collaboration (FDTL/HEFCE)
-  Technological determinism (Moodle/Blackboard, ipads, MOOCs)
-  Market driven pressure – league tables, student satisfaction or engagement e.g NSS in UK

Some recent UK teaching initiatives

- Since 1997 Dearing Report, all universities train early career academics to teach
- Courses accredited by Higher Education Academy(HEA) lead to Associate/Fellow of HEA
- Can also apply for Senior/ Principal Fellow HEA by individual route
- All awards benchmarked against UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)
- National Teaching Fellowships from HEA (annual competition)
- HESA planning to publish % of staff by institution who hold a teaching qualification when data are more reliable

But the UK has 4 different countries

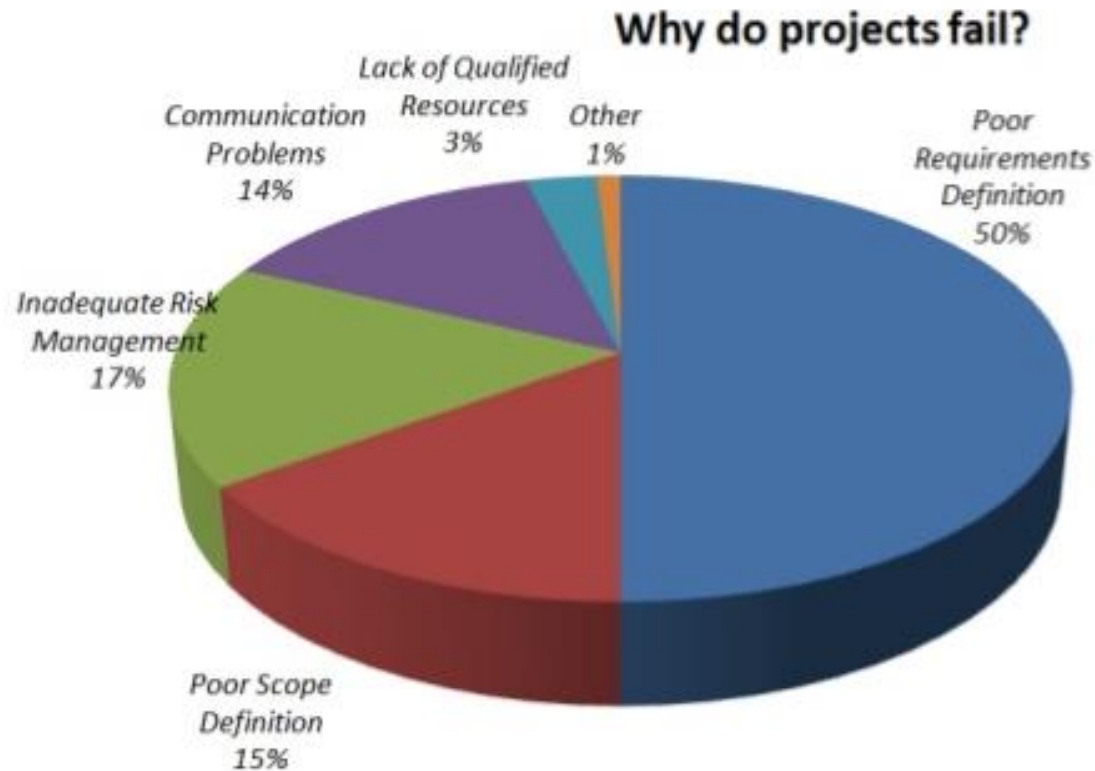


UK also 4 different HE systems





- 🌐 England , Wales, N. Ireland obliged to participate in the National Student Survey :Some Scottish HEIs choose to participate
- 🌐 NSS covers Teaching , Assessment/Feedback, Academic Support, Organisation & Management, Learning Resources, Personal Development, overall Satisfaction
- 🌐 TEF is an English invention; Wales and Northern Ireland coerced, Scotland may choose
- 🌐 Undergraduate fees complex; England £9000 per year ; in Wales students pay £3,810, in Northern Ireland NI pay£3,805, in Scotland it's free to Scottish/EU students but not the English



Success and failure of projects









Truncated UK teaching initiatives

-  Institute for Learning & Teaching in HE (membership organisation for those with HE teaching qualification) 2000-2004, absorbed into Higher Education Academy but not a separate group any more
-  QAA teaching inspections/observations England, N.Ireland, Wales 1997-2002 phased out (expense, controversy?)
-  Learning & Teaching Support Network had 24 Subject Centres until 2004, then HEA ran them to 2011, now gone
-  74 Centres of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) 2005-2010, £315million. Some universities sacked the staff as soon as the money ran out.








Leadership of teaching: some myths

- 🌐 You can only change things if everyone agrees to it
- 🌐 You need to be very charismatic
- 🌐 You have to know everything about teaching
- 🌐 it's all about telling heroic narratives (Deem 2012)
- 🌐 Changing structures is unimportant
- 🌐 Every HE teaching leader has been highly successful with no failures

Gibbs et al (2009), Case Studies of Excellence in Leadership of Teaching at HoD level

-  2 outstanding departments in each of 11 research intensive universities in 8 countries (US, UK, Europe, Australia)
-  Found only 2 cases where leadership role unimportant in supporting teaching excellence
-  9 characteristics of leading teaching excellence usually combined
-  HoDs highly credibility as teachers or worked with those who had
-  Entrepreneurial culture less conducive than Collegial one
-  Change planned in Science Depts, emergent in Arts & Social Sciences

Gibbs et al (2009): Key Features of Excellence in Leadership of Teaching :

-  Establishing credibility and trust
-  Turning teaching problems into opportunities.
-  Articulating a convincing rationale for change.
-  Devolving leadership, building community of practice
-  Marketing the department as teaching success,
-  Recognising/rewarding excellent teaching, involving students
-  Supporting change and innovation



Teaching leadership:

- 🌐 Comes in lots of guises, formal and informal
- 🌐 Doesn't thrive unless supported
- 🌐 Is contextual and contingent
- 🌐 Takes everyone's perspectives/views into account
- 🌐 Acknowledges that everyone sometimes gets things wrong or makes mistakes
- 🌐 Celebrates success as a joint effort

Royal Holloway

Royal Holloway: founded as Women's College 1886; joined University of London 1900; became mixed in 1965, merged with Bedford College 1985. Last woman principal was Dorothy Wedderburn from 1985-1990.

Currently has 9000 students, 3 Faculties (Arts & Social Science, Management, Economics & Law) just under 700 academic staff



The starting point

- When I arrived at RHUL in 2009: no teaching workshops, no postgraduate credit framework, little CPD at Masters level and no promotion pathway based on teaching
- August 2010 new Principal appointed (3 principals 2009-2011!)
- 2011-12 I became VP (Education) after 2.5 years as a Dean
- Teaching was what got in the way of research
- RHUL had never won a National Teaching Fellowship
- Teaching prizes low key, no use made of them afterwards
- Small, overworked but energetic Educational Development unit

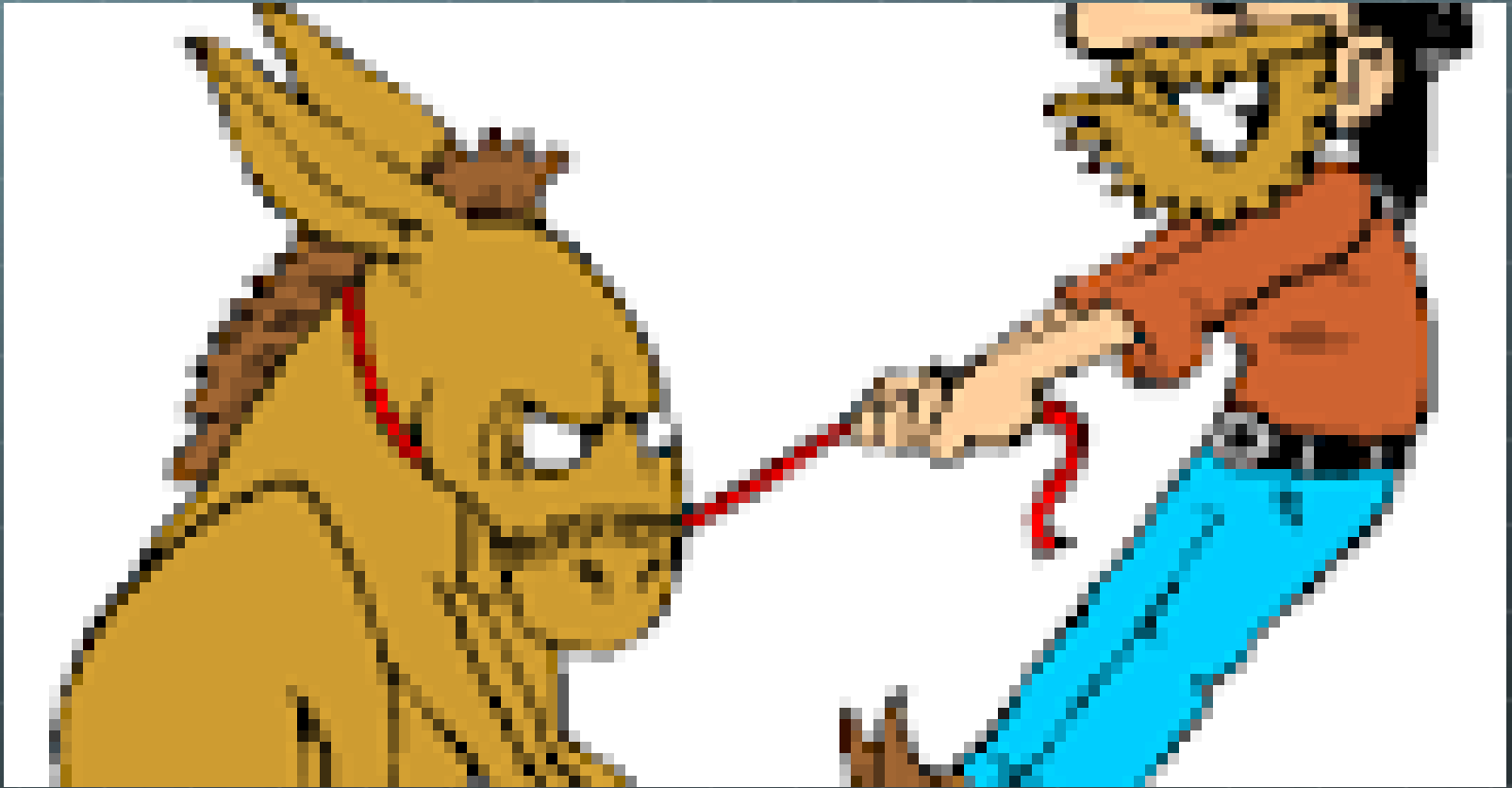
What has been done at Royal Holloway 2009-2016

- Put much more emphasis on teaching than before 2009
- Introduced new promotion routes based on teaching
- Made teaching more prominent in all promotion criteria except for research-only contracts
- Tried to develop more of a culture of CPD for teaching
- Introduced a postgraduate credit framework
- Finally in 2014 someone won a National Teaching Fellowship from the Higher Education Academy

Changing the structures & cultures

- 🌐 Now have more teaching workshops/symposia
- 🌐 Previous year's teaching prize winners judge next year's applicants & take part in annual symposium
- 🌐 HE teacher training less resisted
- 🌐 A new scheme to help fund draft applications for NTF or other awards
- 🌐 Teaching prizes given out at graduation (some resistance to this)

Resistance can be hard to overcome



Cultural change comes *after* structural change

- In first three years of the new Teaching Fellow and Lecturer (Teaching Focused) pathways, the take up of this has been good (no-one forced to do it) by existing staff
- Some depts are now appointing TF lecturers from outside
- BUT: idea of teaching excellence in promotion still resisted by some & teaching workshops attract small proportion of staff
- Credit framework also a source of tension –squabbles over minimum unit credit size but all Masters programmes now have certificate and diploma exit routes
- Centralised timetabling resisted because will disrupt research

What next?



Remaining RHUL challenges

- 🌐 Getting academic staff on standard contracts to fully engage with CPD for teaching
- 🌐 Raising proportion of staff with a teaching qualification
- 🌐 Reducing dominance of exams over other forms of assessment; having 2 exam periods each year (failed working group)
- 🌐 Making teaching equal in status to research
- 🌐 The TEF: to be continued

Lessons learned

- 🌐 Enlist those with experience of what you are trying to improve (eg Teaching Fellows)
- 🌐 Identify people to work on academic opinion in departments
- 🌐 Get students on side; they like teaching being more rewarded
- 🌐 Working groups with a limited life are useful (include student members)
- 🌐 Don't wait for complete consensus; be clear and persistent
- 🌐 Ignore people who are scornful & who tell you they did what you are doing decades ago and you are out of date

The Future: Teaching Excellence Framework

- Following 30 years of a Research Excellence Exercise, the UK is to have a Teaching Excellence Exercise
- No agreement on what teaching excellence is (Land and Gordon 2015, Deem 2015, Tsui 2015) or why we need it ('coasting students', high fees, addressing imbalance created by REF, lazy academics)
- From Autumn 2016 it will be metrics based (despite the 2015 Wilsdon report recommending we don't just use metrics for the REF)
- As the TEF is embedded in the UK system, the meanings of teaching and what they bring to it (training, CPD, scholarship related to teaching etc) will start to change (teaching to the test)
- Support for teaching from administrative staff omitted from TEF



Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice

*Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills
by Command of Her Majesty*

November 2015

TEF



Success as a Knowledge Economy:

Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility
and Student Choice





May 2016


Department
for Business,
Innovation & Skills

the Teaching Excellence Framework

- Mentioned in Conservative Election Manifesto 2015; ideologically driven
- Green paper then White paper, Higher Education bill in Parliament now to create Office for Students
- Now clear what coercive power it will have – no international students for bronze awards?
- Could rival costs of UK REF (Jump 2015)
- Does not reward excellent teachers but does punish students by awarding right to charge higher fees
- Some former polys may do better than Russell Group

England's TEF 2 : initial indicators

-  National Student Survey results for teaching and assessment and feedback
-  6 months after graduation Destination of Leavers in HE (DLHE)
-  Student progression rates
-  Every HE benchmarked on the data

England's TEF 3 etc:

Possible future indicators:

- 🌐 Learning gain (current HEFCE pilot)
- 🌐 National testing of all undergraduates on entry & exit?
- 🌐 Widening participation benchmarks
- 🌐 Student loan pay back rate
- 🌐 Graduate salary size
- 🌐 Subject based and postgraduate taught from 2019-20?



TEF measures:
**Writing lines would be a useful
metric**

(How) will it work??

- Annual, paper based, after year 1 will be self assessment part too
- Appears to be voluntary but conflicting messages on this
- Levels of achievement: Gold, Silver, Bronze
- Main incentive is to be able to charge higher fees but maybe international recruitment too
- No actual reward for any teachers
- May affect perception of English HE if only a few 'winners'? Added to Brexit this seems like an own goal

Will English research-intensive universities embrace TEF?

- Probably most, yes, so they can charge more
- But many of the likely metrics are about anything but teaching excellence
- Also linked to future Quality Assessment arrangements
- Government only listens to Russell Group universities & post Brexit not even to them

UK TEF

How likely is gaming?



Will a TEF make research intensive universities care more about teaching?

- 🌐 Only for those aspects that TEF includes, many of which are not about teaching excellence
- 🌐 Depends partly on next incarnation of RAE/REF
- 🌐 'Gaming' of TEF will be inevitable
- 🌐 Will focus on quick fixes
- 🌐 May value teachers less as this exercise is so instrumental
- 🌐 Unlikely to result in HE teachers being better rewarded