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Understanding applied research in the context of TAFE NSW HE

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In this presentation

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Background and rationale

- Growing national interest in applied research
- Government innovation and STEM agendas
- Different understandings - AR in T&L
- Opening opportunities for students
- Benefits for staff scholarship
- Building industry relationships through collaboration
- Overall interest in the current situation in TAFE NSW HE

Problem

* AR is understood differently and managed in different ways.
* Unclear how AR relates to curriculum development, student learning and teacher scholarship

* Unclear recognition of outcomes and effort
* Lost opportunities in terms of student and staff activity

* Need clarity - what does 'applied research' mean in the context of HE and what counts as AR?.
  * What , who, how, when? Outcomes? Future?

Argument

* A better understanding of AR and how it is used in HE learning will highlight ways to:
  * facilitate innovative practice
  * open opportunities for industry connections
  * contribute to national innovation agendas.
* Is important to know the current situation.
* Research questions
  * What is AR in the TAFE NSW HE?
  * How is it applied in learning and teacher scholarship?

Literature

Research in learning

* Guided learning using research
  * Research – oriented: developing research skills
  * Research –led: learning about research in the discipline
  * Research –tutored: engaging in research discussions
  * Research – based: undertaking research and inquiry
  * (Healey, Jenkins and Lea 2015)

AR in TAFE NSW HE T&L

* Introduction to research skills
* Stepped and staged skills development through Yr 1, 2, 3 subjects
* Group work, challenges, individual work
* Problems posed by teachers
* Embedded in WIL
* Alignment with the overall student demography, curriculum design and organisational objectives through scaffolded iterative learning.
* Strong link with the object

How students participate

* As learners through curriculum
* As informants for others
* Case studies or work-based observations
* Problem development
* ‘extending student knowledge’ which is new to students– not creating new knowledge
* ‘practical investigation’ skills

Limits and limitations

* A this stage industry input, contact or collaboration is limited
* Recognition of research activity in terms of preparing students for or moving toward 'applied research' is in early stages

* Undefined recognition of staff involvement and scholarship
* Raises questions:
  * Understandings of AR
  * Recognition of different types of participation

Limitations - students

* Time for skills development
* Time to conduct research projects, write and report and be assessed.
* One semester subjects
* Acknowledgement of the value and time invested in AR project design.

Other issues

* Management infrastructure – policy, processes, funds and ethics.
* Recognition and ownership of student work?

Scholarship

* Opportunities for teacher scholarship at all stages
* Limited active scholarship beyond teaching
* Understanding is building

and

* Scholarship opportunities lie in initiation of ideas, design, conduct, analysis and reporting and ongoing collaborations for future projects.

Conclusion

* AR in TAFE NSW is preparatory research related skills development - ‘practical investigation’ skills

* Redefine AR and scholarship in the context of T&L to better recognise early stage learning AR skills

Questions and comments