Strategizing Beyond Educational Inadequacy In Connecting Research And Teaching: An Institutional Approach (0082)

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Abstract

The current assignment of vocational programs in higher education is to educate future evidence-based professionals. Often is presumed that a substantial connection between research and teaching is needed to be able to provide the right context and content to achieve this aim with students (Healey & Jenkins, 2015). As an effect in the Dutch institutes for higher professional education there is an increased attention for the connection between research and teaching as a carrier to develop these knowledge related competences. But what does it mean for an institute of higher vocational education to actively strategize towards integrating research and teaching in all bachelor and master programs for 45.000 students, while still standing in the tradition of being teaching-only? This paper presents the planning and analysis phases of a large scale institutional change in Amsterdam UAS, including a systematic analysis of 'research' in the profiles of all 70 vocational bachelor programs.

Introduction

The current assignment of vocational programs in higher education is to educate future evidence-based professionals. In the era of 'supercomplexity', this means they need to be able to gather, apply and create new knowledge (Barnett, 2012; Brew, 2010). Often is presumed that a substantial connection between research and teaching is needed to be able to provide the right context and content to achieve this aim with students (Healey & Jenkins, 2015). As an effect in the Dutch institutes for higher professional education there is an increased attention for the connection between research and teaching as a carrier to develop these knowledge related competences. With teaching being the traditional core activity, nowadays, research has an increased influence and importance, both as stand-alone activity, as well as part of the educational programs (Griffioen & De Jong, 2014). But what does it mean for an institute of higher vocational education to actively strategize towards integrating research and teaching in all bachelor and master programs for 45.000 students, while still standing in the tradition of being teachingonly? This paper presents the planning phase of a large scale institutional change in Amsterdam UAS, including a design for evaluation.

One of the main principles to achieve integration of research and teaching, is to provide a deliberate and unambiguous strategy on all institutional levels (Hazelkorn, 2005; Jenkins & Healey, 2005; Jenkins, Healey, & Zetter, 2007; Jenkins & Zetter, 2003). However, this presumption suggests a clear definition of what to aim for on all levels. And this provides the central problem in Amsterdam UAS: the educational inadequacy when it comes to research on all levels. Amsterdam UAS has – as most UAS in The Netherlands, and many abroad – a tradition as teaching-only institute (Hazelkorn, 2005; Huisman, 2008). This means a limited research-base in the competences of lecturers, in the related vocational fields,

among the educational developers, and often among the educational managers. A statement often made in Amsterdam UAS is 'we' should provide new goals in order to get ahead in integrated research into teaching, since then another type of lecturers (meaning with more research competences) will be hired, who can develop and teach in renewed (more research-oriented) curricula, which will also provide an outline for changing the organizational structures. But considering the described situation, one can wonder who are the ones to actually set the specific goals for the connection between research and teaching? How to unlock the potential of the combined educational programs of Amsterdam UAS (Hazelkorn, 2005)?

Method

Based on the principles of design-research (McKenney & Reeves, 2012) in this project an institutional strategy is being developed to iteratively provide the requested (but at the moment still implicit) changes in the balance between research and teaching. This procedure consists of three successive phases: in the first phase (2015-2016) the project outline will be designed in close collaboration with practitioners, educational managers, and educational staff. The second phase (2016-2017) consists of reformulating the vision of all <u>educational programs</u> on the function of research in their educational programs. In the third phase (2018-2020) all educational programs reformulate their curricula, in line with their afore reformulated visions.

Where the first phase of the institutional change programme is mainly a management phase, the second phase consists of two iterations, and the third phase of three iterations in which the cycle a) diagnosis, b) analysis and exploration, c) design, implementation and evaluation, and d) knowledge development and consolidation will take place (McKenney & Reeves, 2012). This paper presents the first planning phase, and part of the second phase with the analysis of the current visions of all 70 bachelor programs in Amsterdam UAS. Methodologically, for the second phase a thematic analysis is being executed of these formulated visions by the educational teams.

Results

The results of this study will first provide the developed plan for cross-institutional change towards the integration of research into teaching in all educational programs as developed in the first project phase, consisting of strategies to start off the requested activities in and between educational teams which are expected to result in the requested changes. These results will be explained and elaborated on.

Secondly of the second phase of the project, the results will provide insight in how a large number of educational teams currently position research in their vision on whereto they educate their students as future professionals, including potential disciplinary differences. Furthermore in the presentation will be explained how these results will be used to bring focus to the design, and implementation of the current iterative cycle.

All and all, insight in this hands-on and messy process will help to gain knowledge on how this type of large scale institutional development works combined in research and practice.

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