314 Re-inventing research-based teaching in a time of performance governance: Examining the premises for linking research and teaching in Danish higher education since the 1990s

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Abstract

Over the last three decades, a concern with invigorating the links between research and teaching has re-emerged in scholarly and political debates about the university. This happened during a period when policies of higher education were characterized by new modes of governing by measuring performance. This paper explores how policies, research and practices concerned with linking research and teaching have been affected by this introduction of performance governance policies in Danish higher education.

Examining the *problematisations* in discourses and practices on linking research and teaching in Danish higher education, the paper shows how concerns with linking research and teaching since the 1990s in various ways have been affected by policies of performance governance. It calls for a broader approach to the issues of linking research and teaching that takes such policy contexts into account and discuss their implications.

Full paper

Linking research and teaching is often described as a key principle of the modern university. Over the last three decades, a concern with invigorating these linkages has re-emerged in scholarly and political debates, often referring to German scientist Wilhelm von Humboldt's famous principles for the Berlin university (cf. Jenkins & Healy 2019 [2011], Dohn & Dolin 2015:43). What such linking involves, or should involve, has fuelled debates over definitions of scholarship (Boyer 1990), how to organize the university (Barnett 2005, Jenkins & Healy 2005), and teaching and learning (Brew 2003, Fung 2017:39ff, Healy 2005, Healy & Jenkins 2009, Hattie & Marsh 1996, Weller 2019:101ff).

Interestingly, the preoccupation with linking research and teaching in higher education has flourished during a period when higher education policies have focused on organizing research, teaching and learning around researchers and students' performance on specific measures (Brew 2003:4, Colbeck, C.L. 1998, cf. Espeland & Sauder 2007, Power 1999, Wright 2014). In Danish higher education, this change in governance structures is particularly pronounced, as university governance since the 1960s has been characterised by progressive ideals stressing democratic forms of governance and independence in research and education (Nielsen 2015, cf. Pedersen 1987, cf. Ryberg et al. 2022).

The aim of this paper is to explore how concerns with linking research and teaching have been conditioned by the ambitions and effects of performance governance policies in Danish higher education since the 1990s. Combining approaches from the later Michel Foucault on studying problematisations (Foucault 1998[1984]:389) and studies into the anthropology of policy in Danish higher education (Wright & Shore 1997, Wright et al. 2020) the paper examines the changing problematisations that are associated with linking research and teaching - across policies, research and practices in this period.

The paper draws on vast material, including political and scholarly debates, policies and ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with scholars and students, to show the development in how ambitions and effects of performance governance policies have shaped the re-invention of ways of linking research and teaching, since it became the subject of policies in the 1990s. More specifically, it examines the problematisations surrounding first, the policy making from the late 1990s, 2) the emergent research on linking research and teaching from the 2010s, and 3) concrete teaching and learning practices in the early 2020s.

Tracing the problematisations across these contexts from policy, over research and to practice, the paper finds that: First, the political debates in the 1990s were characterised by an aim to preserve implicit values of discovery and independence in research and teaching at the university, leading to the notion of research-based education being made explicit in the university act of 2003. Second, that a concern with different student expectations and students and teachers' co-creation of knowledge as a means of linking research and teaching in research emerges from the late 2010s in the face of new policies for measuring research output. Third, based in a strategic project involving 54 courses experimenting with integrating research and teaching in a research-intensive university, the paper shows how for teachers and students linking research and teaching becomes a question of exploration and discovery in the face of students' engagement oriented towards performance in exams.

On the basis of the studies of these problematisations from national policy-making to research and local teaching practices, the paper shows that an important aspect of the current efforts to link research and teaching is premised on the ambitions and effects of policies of performance governance introduced in this period.

The paper thus shows that the re-invention of Humboldt's principles of linking research and teaching should be considered in relation to these modes of governing based on performance measures, as they appear not only to have premised policy making and research agendas, but also local practices of teaching and learning. It argues that the concern with linking research and teaching is not taking place in a vacuum, but is embedded in a context, affected by policies as well as local circumstances and actions. The paper calls for an approach to linking research and teaching that takes such policy contexts into account and evaluate how they premise the ways ambitions of linking research and teaching take form, and what this means for research, and for teaching and learning.

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