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# Reflections on Student-Staff Research Partnership: Opportunities, Benefits & Challenges

Presentation by

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Partnerships in Teaching, Learning and Assessment  
in a Changing HE Landscape

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University of Cardiff

# Outline

- Opportunities for research partnership across the undergraduate learning journey
- Conceptualising student-staff research partnership as a borderland space
- Benefits of progressive engagement in research and research partnership
- Key considerations and challenges of engaging in research and research partnership
- Conclusions and implications

# Why Engage Students in Research?

**“Undergraduate research is the pedagogy of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”  
(CUR, 2005)**

- Undergraduates often believe themselves to be recipients rather than producers of research (Hill *et al.*, 2011; Healey *et al.*, 2014)
- Whilst recognising that they will develop their research skills most when they are actively engaged in the research process

**Tension needs resolving ...**

# Mapping Opportunities

- We still need to consider strategies to enhance the relationship between teaching and research (Hattie & Marsh, 1996)
- In particular, how and where could/should undergraduate students actively engage in research ...
  - individually, in groups, with staff?
  - in the curriculum, outside of the curriculum?

## STUDENTS ARE PARTICIPANTS

### Research-Tutored

Engaging in research  
discussions

### Research-Based

Undertaking research  
and inquiry &  
dissemination

**RESEARCH  
CONTENT  
EMPHASIS**

**RESEARCH  
PROCESS  
EMPHASIS**

### Research-Led

Learning about current  
research in the  
discipline

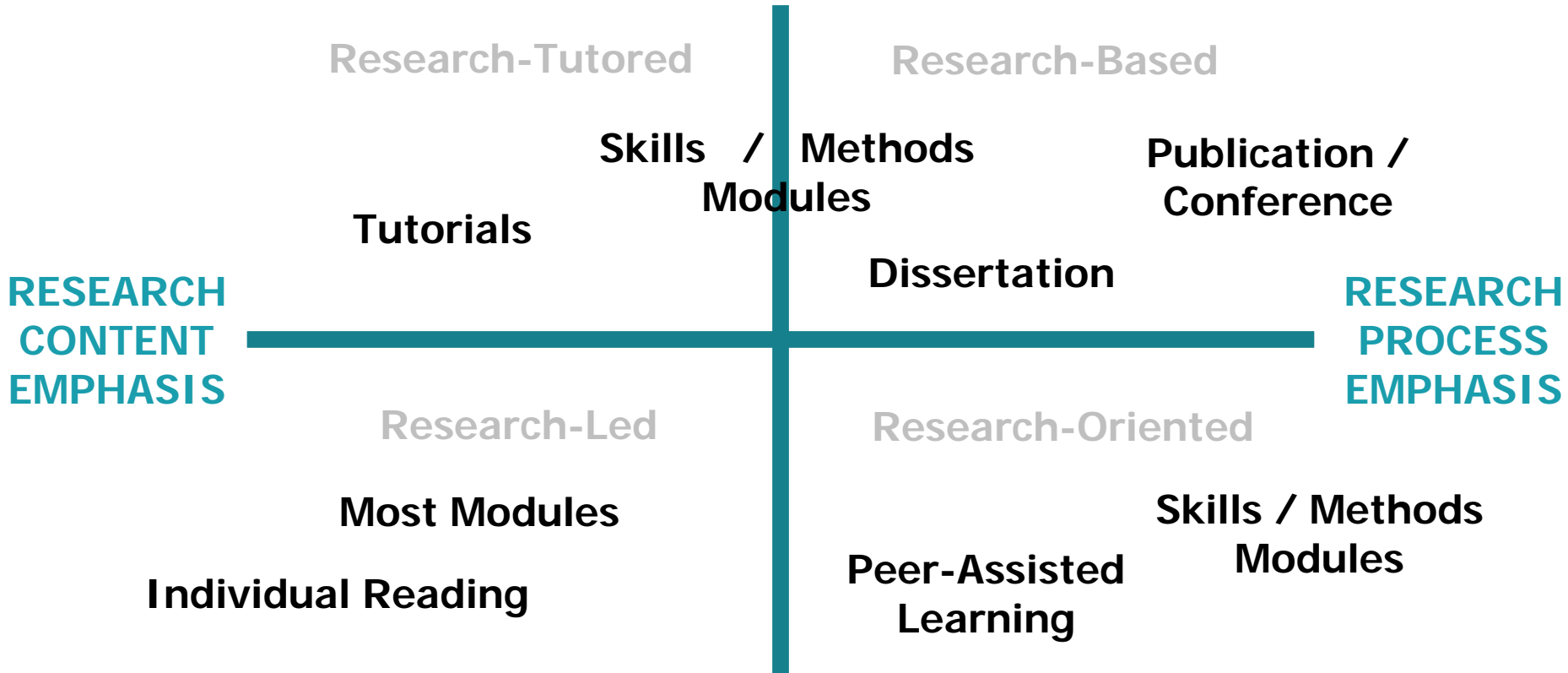
### Research-Oriented

Developing research  
skills and techniques

## STUDENTS ARE AN AUDIENCE

Adapted: Healey, M  
(2005)

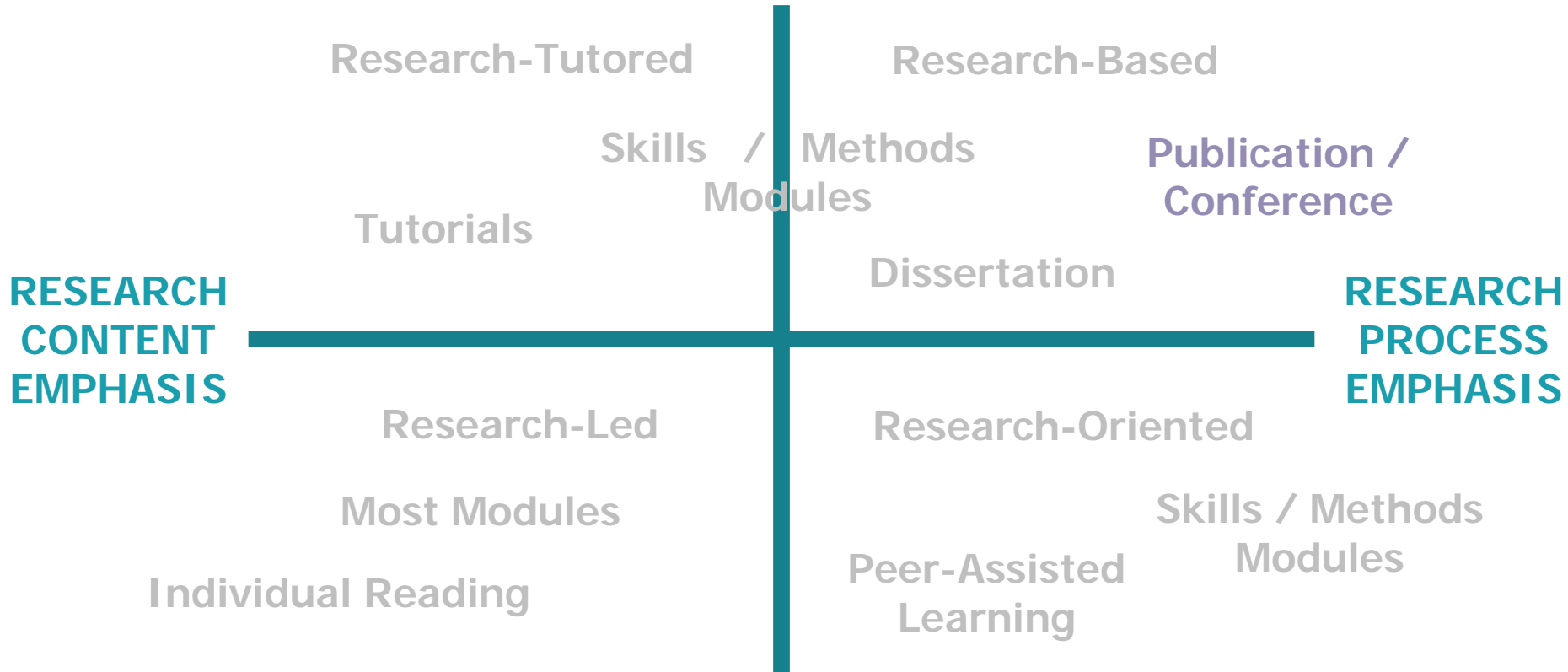
# STUDENTS ARE PARTICIPANTS



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Adapted: Healey, M  
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# STUDENTS ARE PARTICIPANTS



# STUDENTS ARE AN AUDIENCE

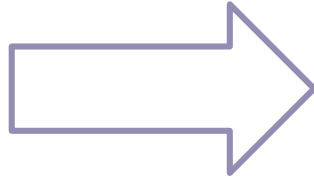
Adapted: Healey, M  
(2005)



## STUDENTS ARE PARTICIPANTS

**Borderland  
Space**

(Hill *et al.*, 2016)



Research-Based

Publication /  
Conference

**RESEARCH  
CONTENT  
EMPHASIS**

**RESEARCH  
PROCESS  
EMPHASIS**

## STUDENTS ARE AN AUDIENCE

Adapted: Healey, M  
(2005)

# Borderland Spaces

**We should be challenging our students to become border crossers**

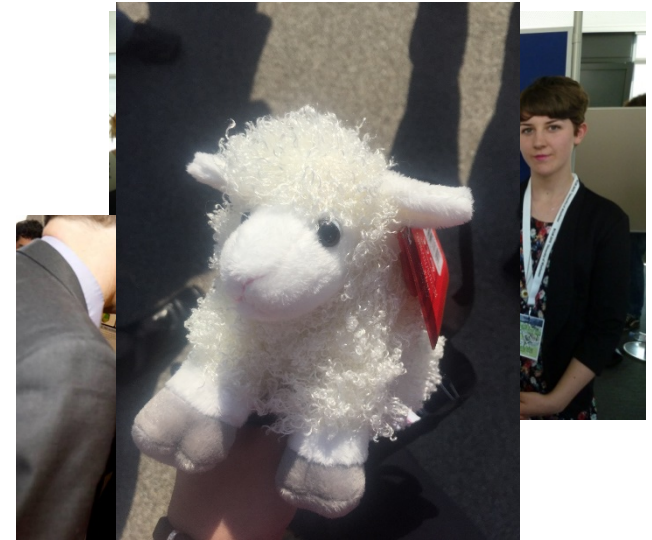
Familiar pedagogic spaces  Unknown and challenging spaces

How.....

- Enter novel partnership spaces (e.g. research conferences)
- Liminal, dialogic, challenges power hierarchies – productively disruptive

# Research Partnership Borderlands

**BC  
UR** BRITISH  
CONFERENCE OF  
UNDERGRADUATE  
RESEARCH



Hill & Walkington, 2016; Kneale *et al.*, 2016;  
Walkington *et al.*, 2017

# Research Partnership Borderlands



## **Original Paper**

**GEOVERSE ISSN 1758-3411**

The Impact of Land Cover and Sea: Breeze on Blackpool's Coastal Urban Heat Island

Damon Waterworth

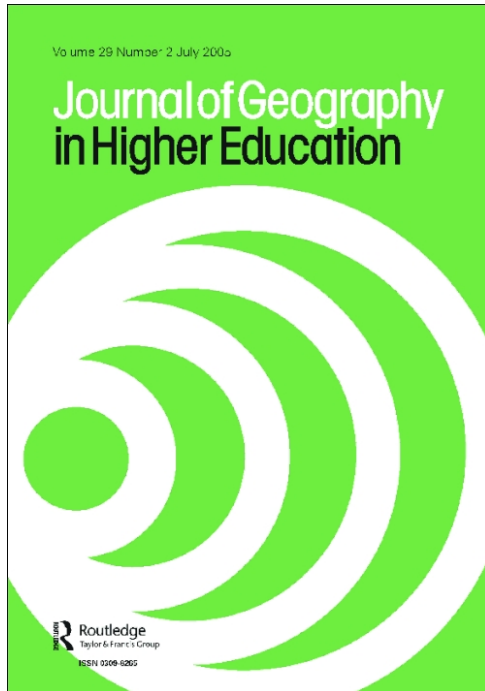
Department for Geography and Development Studies, University of Chester

[Full Text PDF](#)

Project Supervisor: Professor Derek France

Walkington, 2012

# Research Partnership Borderlands



For example West *et al.*, 2017:

JOURNAL OF GEOGRAPHY IN HIGHER EDUCATION, 2017  
VOL. 41, NO. 3, 459–465  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2017.1315384>

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group



## Becoming an effective Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Leader

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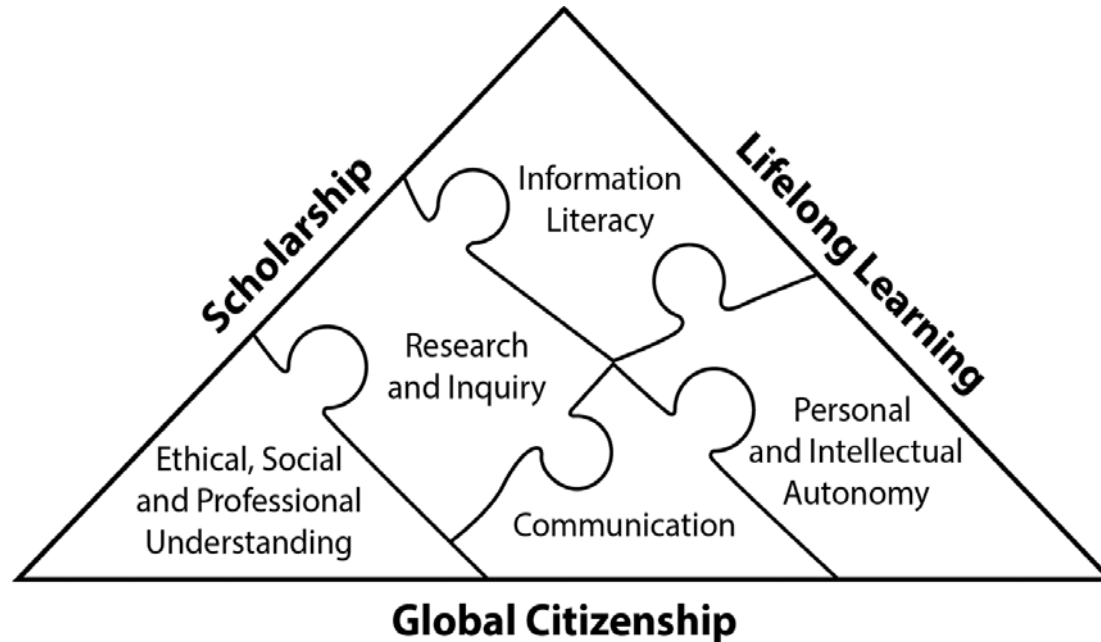
**KEYWORDS** Peer Assisted Learning; Peer Assisted Study Sessions; engagement; transition; employability

# Benefits

- **Successful navigation of the research borderland space brings:**
  - Student (and staff) CV enhancement and professionalization opportunities
  - Career defining experiences
- Transformative and lifelong skills development
  - Graduate attributes (Barrie, 2004)

# Benefits

- Successful navigation of the research borderland space brings:



Barrie, 2004;  
Hill & Walkington,  
2016

# Benefits

- **Successful navigation of the research borderland space brings:**
  - Student (and staff) CV enhancement and professionalization opportunities
  - Career defining experiences
- Transformative and lifelong skills development
  - Graduate attributes (Barrie, 2004)
  - Self-authorship (Baxter-Magolda, 2004)
- Enhanced resilience and positive wellbeing (Healey *et al.*, in prep)



# Considerations

- **Requires 'true' partnership**
  - All partnership is student engagement, but not all engagement is student partnership (Healey *et al.*, 2014)
  - Destabilisation of traditional relationships (Hill *et al.*, 2016)
- **Personal vulnerability (Healey *et al.*, in prep)**
  - Emotional challenge for students
  - Uncertain and messy space
  - Workload / stress of taking on extra co-/extra-curricular work
  - Expectation management

# Considerations

- **Can it ever be an "Inclusive Partnership" (Moore-Cherry *et al.*, 2016)**
  - Can all students be taken into the research borderland in the same way?
  - Possibly tackled through institutional options open to all students?
  - Do students/staff even want such a system for research engagement?
- **Institutional logistical support**
  - Funding
  - Reward and recognition of time and effort

# Conclusions

- Research-based experiences offer space for exciting and unique student-staff research partnership
- This can bring challenges and considerations for both sides of the partnership
- But successfully navigated this opens students up to novel, unique and transformative opportunities and experiences, leading to new skills and attribute development

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# Thank you for listening

# Questions?



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