Understanding applied research in the context of TAFE NSW HE

Carmel Ellis-Gulli
Rosalind Carter
In this presentation

* Background and rationale
* Argument
* Literature
* Findings and discussion
* Conclusion
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
* 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?
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?
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.
* 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