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**West, Harry and Hill, Jennifer ORCID logoORCID:
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0682-783X> (2018) Reflections on
student-staff research partnership: Opportunities, benefits, &
challenges. In: Royal Geographical Society Annual
International Conference, 28-30 August 2019, London.
(Unpublished)**

EPrint URI: <https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/id/eprint/7854>

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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

RGS-IBG Annual International Conference
August 2018
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 21st 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

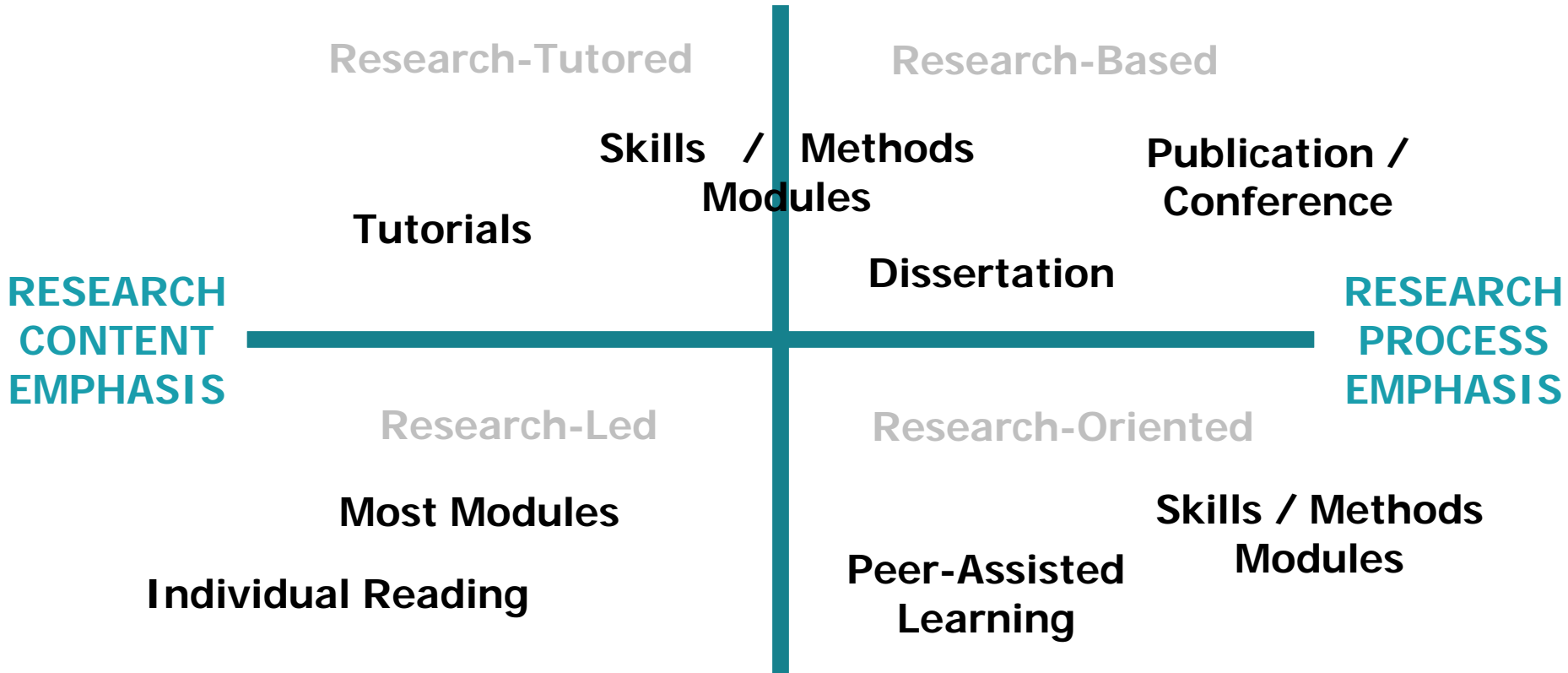
Research-Oriented

Developing research
skills and techniques

STUDENTS ARE AN AUDIENCE

Adapted: Healey, M
(2005)

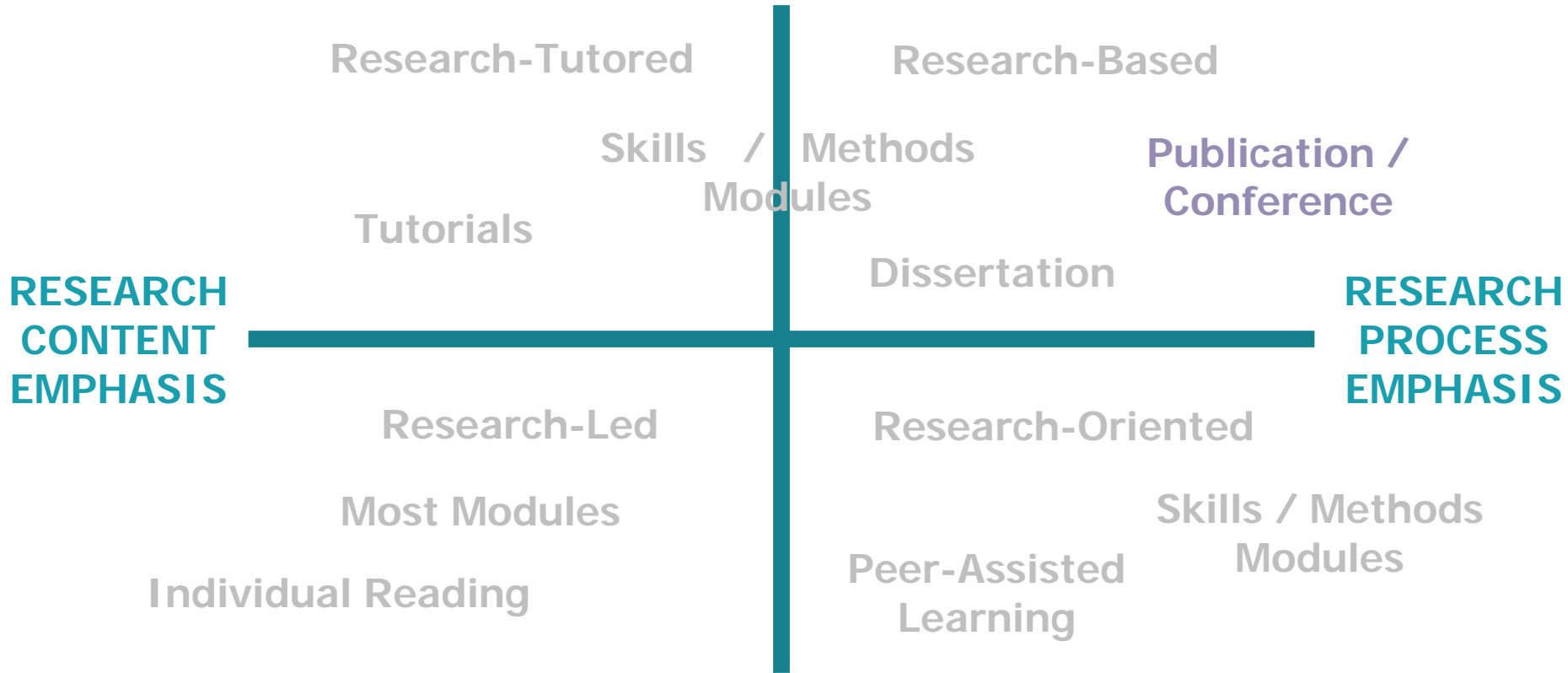
STUDENTS ARE PARTICIPANTS



STUDENTS ARE AN AUDIENCE

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STUDENTS ARE PARTICIPANTS



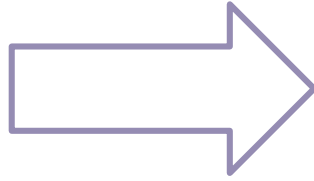
STUDENTS ARE AN AUDIENCE

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

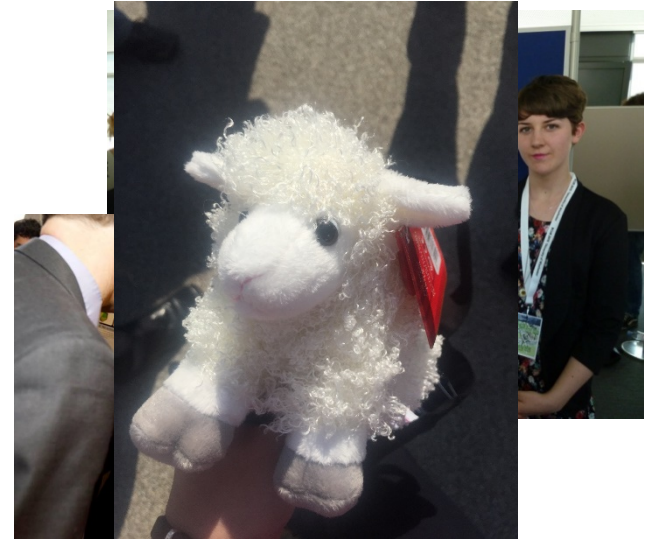
Familiar pedagogic spaces  Unknown and challenging spaces

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

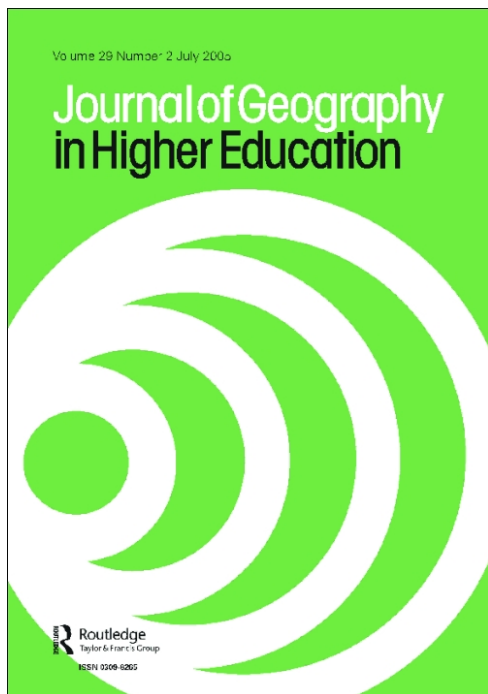
Department for Geography and Development Studies, University of Chester

[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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ARTICLE HISTORY Received 27 February 2017; Accepted 31 March 2017

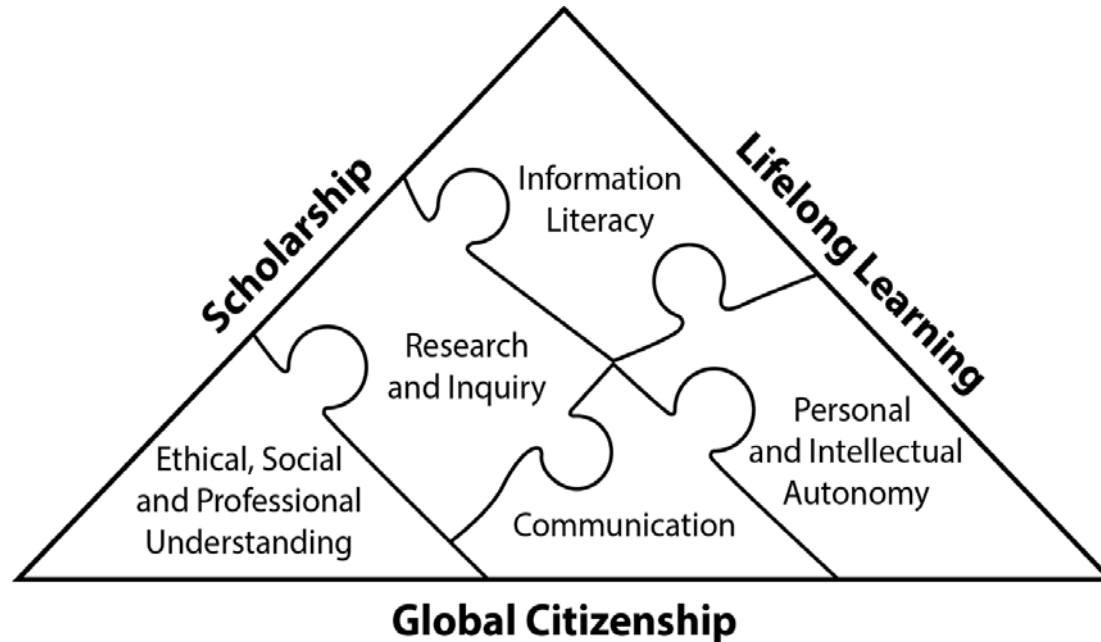
KEYWORDS Peer Assisted Learning; Peer Assisted Study Sessions; engagement; transition; employability

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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