There are varied and sometimes conflicting views of the relationship between teaching and research in higher education, and whether it has a positive, neutral or detrimental impact on the quality of students' learning experiences. This frequently manifests in a complex and oftentimes contentious dialogue between them. This presentation explores three dimensions of the teaching-research nexus: research informed teaching, research through teaching, and research of teaching, and questions how they can best effect positive contributions to learning. Both research and teaching revolve around learning, by students and teachers, and the presentation critically reflects on research projects within each interpretation.

In research informed teaching, research contributes to the curriculum – even if conducted independently – ensuring that student learning embodies recent developments in its field and is at the forefront of knowledge. This is the most conventional interpretation of the nexus. However, it can result in a one-way path between research and teaching, thereby limiting students' agency within the process. Robinson describes research as the systematic enquiry for new knowledge, and questions why creativity – the process of having original ideas that have value – is often not considered to be research in an academic sense.(1) Research through teaching places students' work at the core of discipline-specific research, so that teaching becomes the catalyst for co-producing work by students and teachers. Students' projects become
embedded within wider contexts of real-world problems, grounding their work outside of the academy.
Whilst pedagogic research has gained considerable traction over the recent past, it is argued here that research in the methods and practices of learning and teaching can be perceived as having lesser significance than disciple-specific research. This undermines its legitimacy and currency, to the detriment of enhancing quality of students' learning experiences. Research of teaching explores the means and value of the students as participants in pedagogic research.


• Author(s) Biography:
Dr Smith is Reader in Creative Pedagogies at Liverpool John Moores University’s School of Art and Design. His research interests focus on learning and teaching within creative programmes, and in particular on assessment and feedback, and the student experience. He has published numerous pedagogic research projects, including: formative feedback methods in creative programmes, student-directed learning, problem-based learning in creative curricula, students’ critique of the design crit, and student retention and the early student experience. He also undertakes research in library architecture, focusing on how digitisation and new programmatic challenges are affecting these civic and cultural landmarks. His most recent study in this field explored how libraries constitute an integral part of the public realm.
Dr Smith has presented his pedagogic research at numerous national and international education conferences, and he contributes to evolving the learning, teaching and assessment experience at School, Faculty and University levels. In 2014 he achieved recognition as a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, and in 2016 he was presented with an Individual Teaching Award, acknowledging his outstanding, transformative and inspiration impact the education of students at LJMU.