

# Reimagining Teaching Excellence

Newcastle University  
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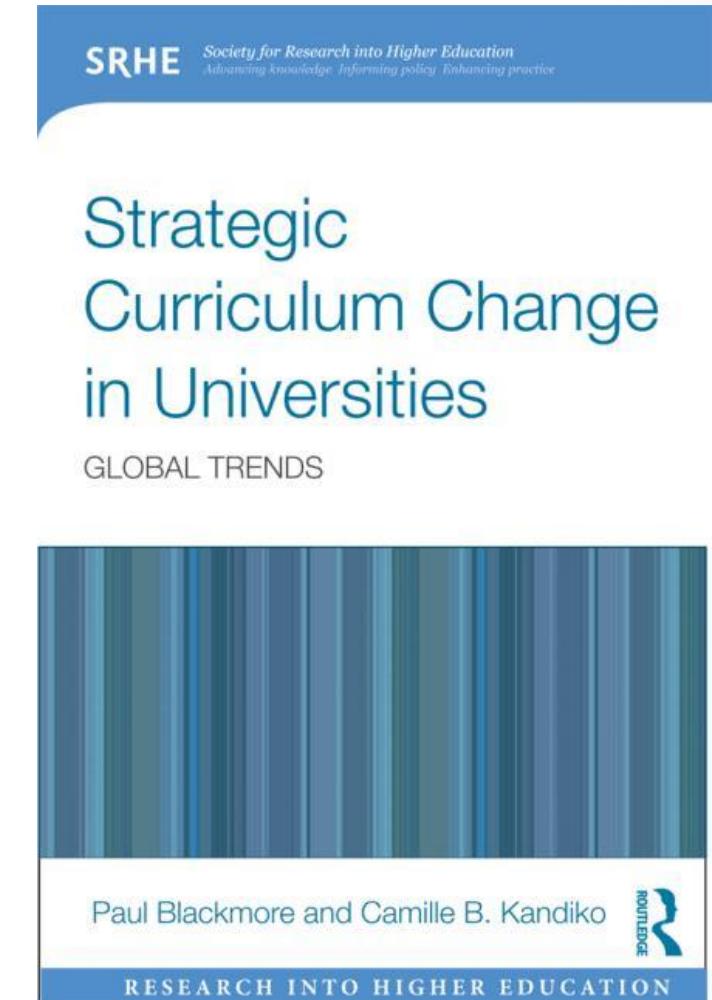
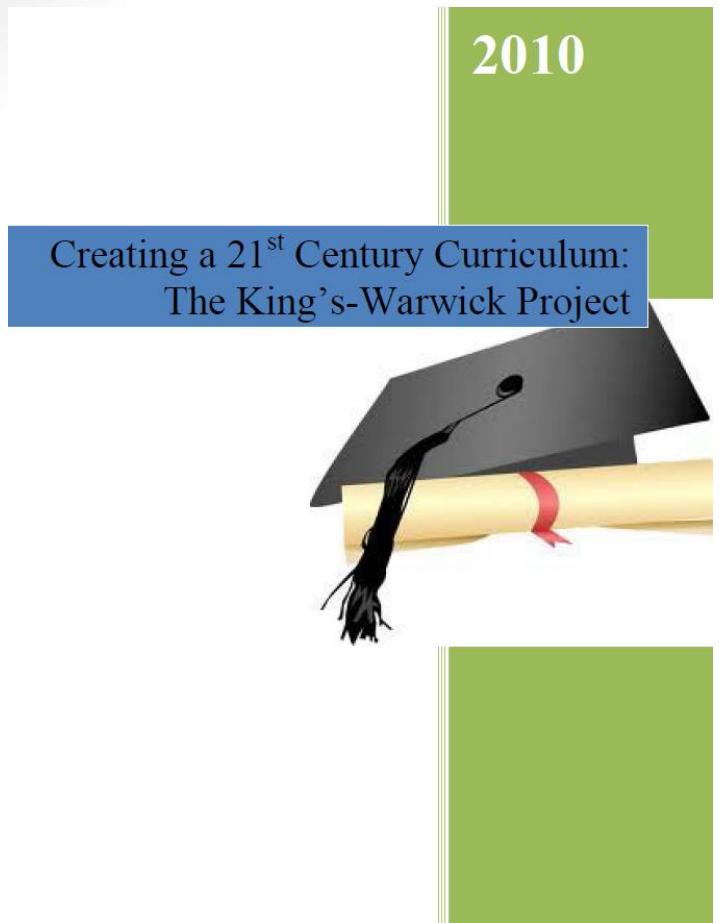
# The session

- Why all this fuss about curriculum?
- What others have done
- Key issues
- Making the most of who we are  
(or say we are)









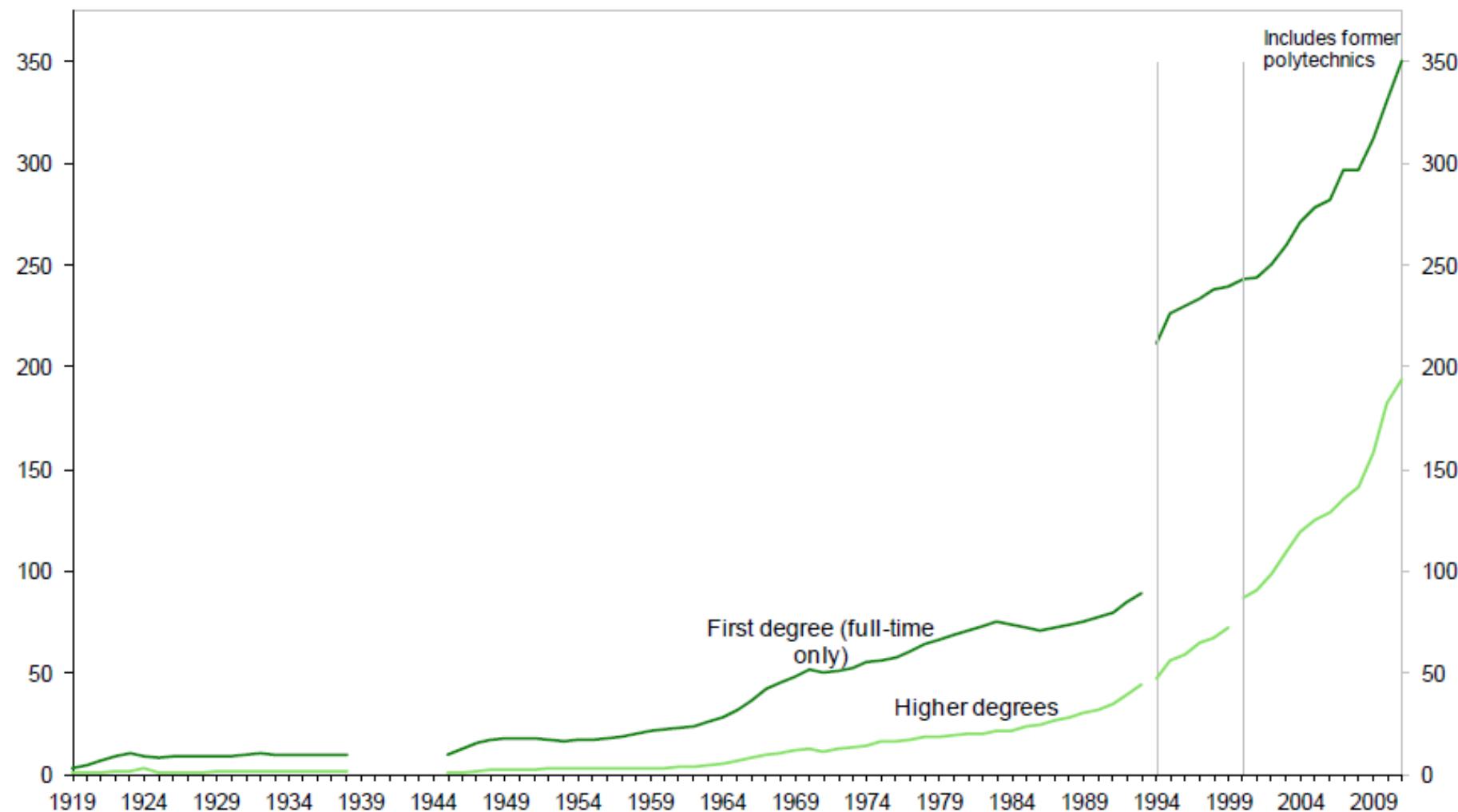
<http://kingslearning.info/kwp>

# Dissolving boundaries

- Mass education system
  - skills and employability
- Education as a market commodity
- Applied research
  - Mode 2 knowledge
- Globalisation



## Students obtaining university degrees in the UK -thousands



# Education as a commodity

- Competition for students
- Transferable academic credit
- Modular curricula
- Learning outcomes
- Student as a consumer with rights

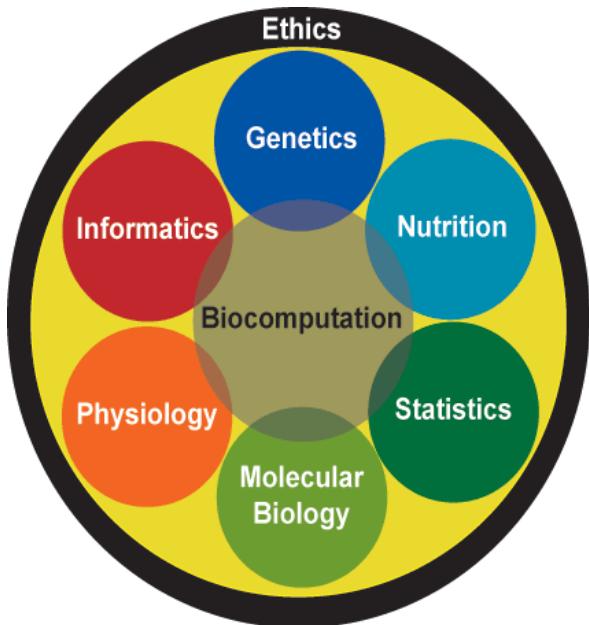
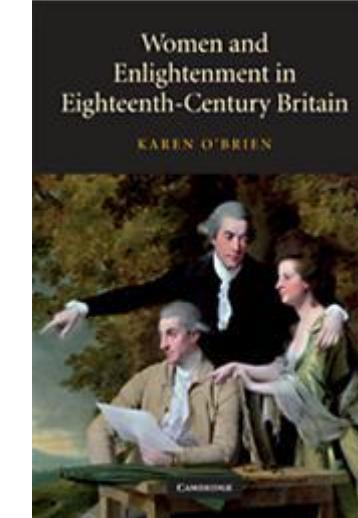




- Staff are good at explaining things
- Staff have made the subject interesting
- Staff are enthusiastic
- The course is intellectually stimulating
- Criteria used in marking clear
- Assessment and marking fair
- Feedback on work prompt, detailed, clarifying
- Advice and support with studies
- Able to contact staff when needed
- Good advice available for study choices
- Course, timetable and changes
- Library resources, IT and specialist equipment
- Improving presentation and communication skills
- Tackling unfamiliar problems

# Interdisciplinarity

“a means of solving problems and answering questions that cannot be satisfactorily addressed using single methods or approaches”



Mode  
2  
knowledge



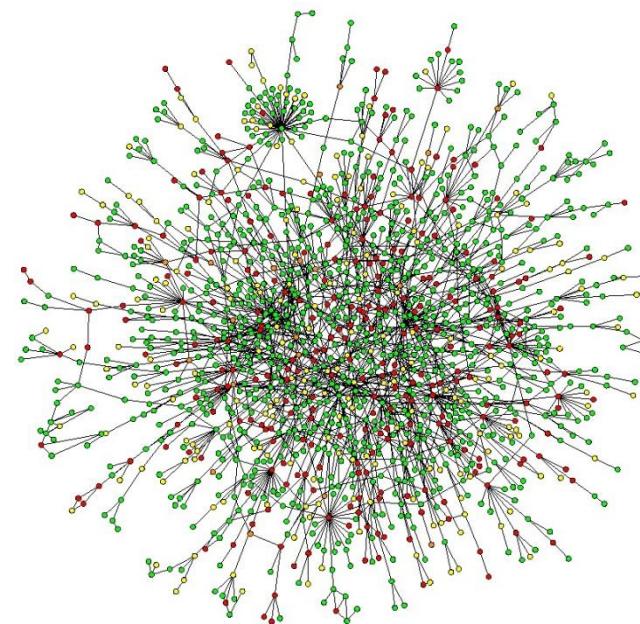


## Globalisation

- Competition
- Staff and student flow
- Whose culture?

## Networks

- Information speed and complexity
- Knowledge communities







# What do we want from a university?

- Strengthen the national economy?
- Safeguard all that is best in cultural life?
- Distribute educational opportunity fairly?
- Reproduce the academy?
- Conduct pure research that has no commercial value?
- Critique aspects of society?
- Make knowledge freely available to all?
- Be useful?
- Encourage international understanding?
- Contribute to the local community?

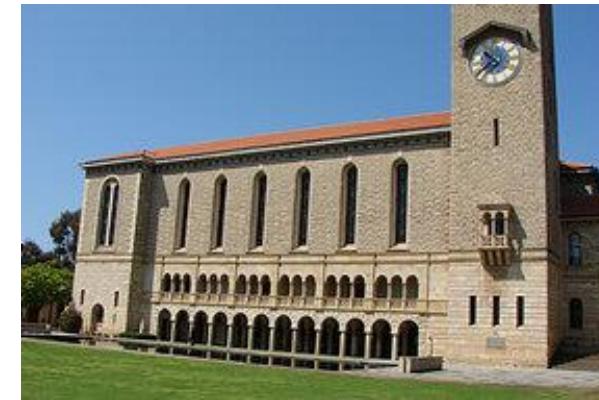
Problems are only  
opportunities in work  
clothes

Henry J Kaiser



# Universities studied

- Aberdeen
- Southampton
- LSE
- UCL
- Manchester
- Queen Mary
- KCL
- Warwick
- Cape Town
- Witwatersrand
- Stellenbosch
- Utrecht
- Maastricht
- Chicago
- Wisconsin
- Harvard
- Brown
- Pennsylvania
- Temple
- UCLA
- Melbourne
- Sydney
- Western Australia
- Hong Kong
- CUHK
- HKUST



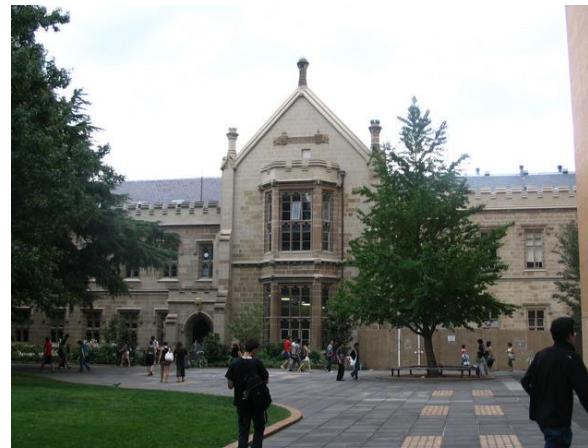
# Reasons for review



- Student satisfaction
- Skills - life & employability
- Market advantage
- Strategic planning
- Restructuring
- Finance
- Crisis – social upheaval / change
- Following the herd



- The Melbourne Model

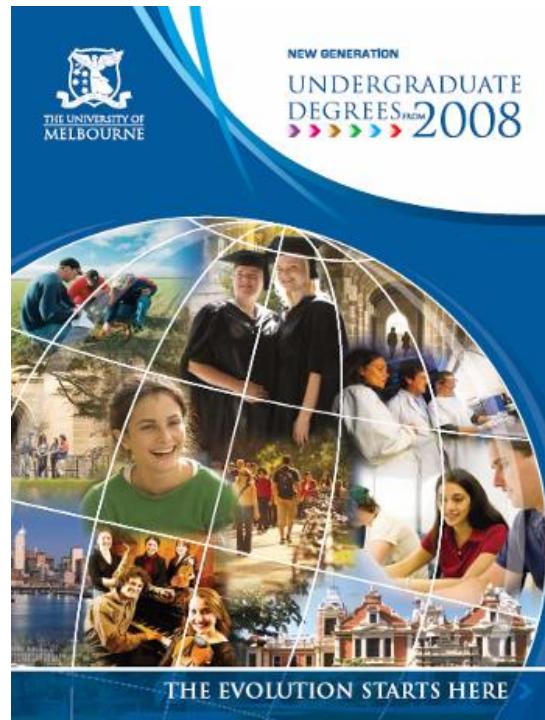




# Undergraduate degrees

From 2008, the University will offer six 'New Generation' undergraduate degrees:

- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Biomedicine
- Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Environments
- Bachelor of Music
- Bachelor of Science

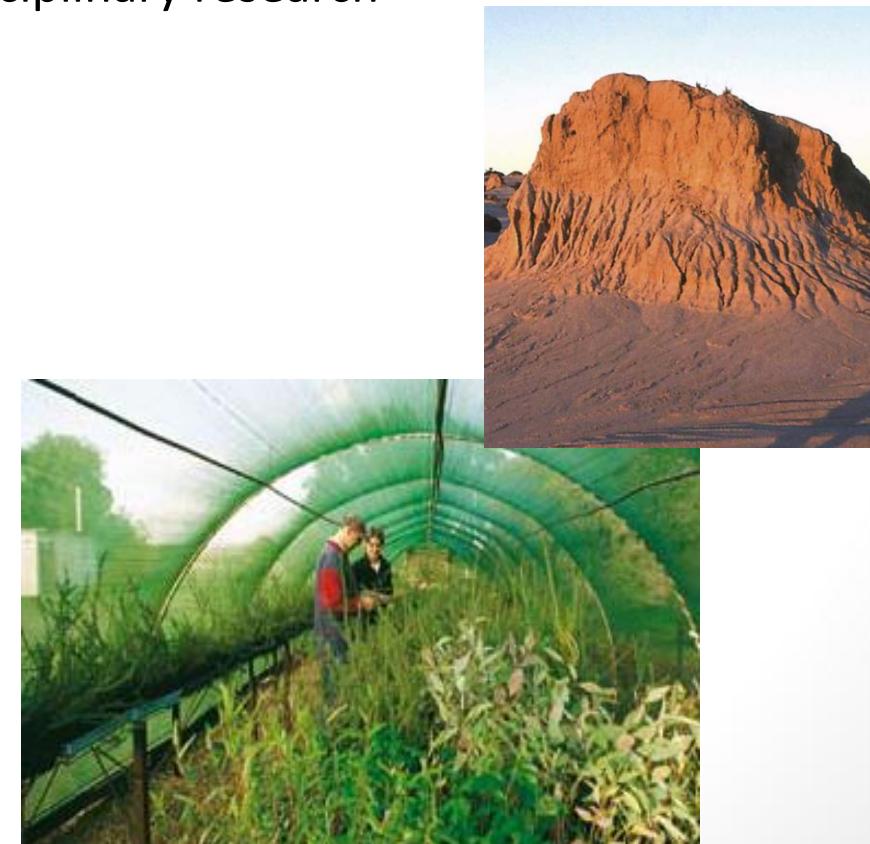


Students undertaking New Generation degrees will complete at least one major sequence and take at least one-quarter of their degree from 'breadth' subjects outside their core program

# University-wide Breadth Subjects

University-wide breadth subjects are multidisciplinary, often exploring the ‘big issues’ facing the world today and building on cross-disciplinary research

- *Examples include:*
  - Climate Change
  - Australian Indigenous Studies
  - Food, Water and Wine
  - “Growing up in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” – The Changing Landscape of Child and Youth Issues
  - Catastrophes, Cultures and the Angry Earth
  - Drugs that have Shaped Society



# Hong Kong

- Four-year degrees
- First year experience vital
- Liberal arts / general education
- Global perspective
  - East-West relationships



# Being a social scientist



“You will learn the core elements of social scientific reasoning and how they are applied across a broad range of social sciences. Whichever course you take at the School, your studies will touch on the common themes the use of evidence, methods of enquiry and strategies for conceptualising problems. **LSE100** uses important issues and debates to explore each of these themes.”

- **Module 1: How should we manage climate change?**
- **Module 2: Does culture matter?**
- **Module 3: Why are great events so difficult to predict?**

# A new American university?

“We measure ourselves by those we include, not by those we exclude”



- ARWU 120
- THE 131
- QS 222
- Research income: \$458m in 2015

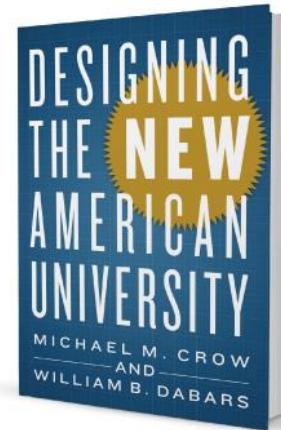
47466 students

- 17% PG; 83% UG
- 53.9% White; 18.5% Hispanic/Latino
- 91% on financial aid
- 2614 staff



# Leadership and situation

- Geography:
  - Conservative, rural state
  - Few other institutions or out-of-state study
- Consistent senior leadership over fifteen years
- A strong central vision – “New American University”
- Restructuring / new developments
- “Management of multiple objectives”

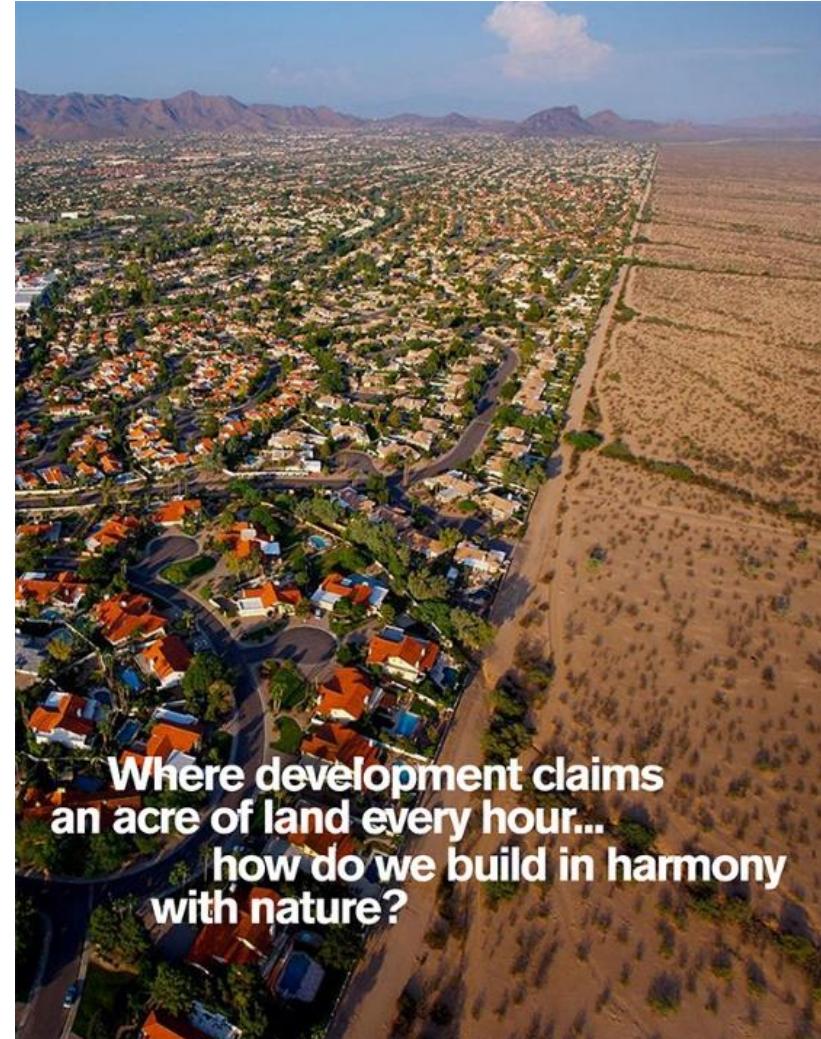


# Managing students

- **Selective inclusion**
  - Honours College; Community college links; Faculty entry; placing in less demanding subjects
- **Pipeline access**
  - Support for schools, inc data sharing; Parent education programme “American Dream”; Community college links
- **Curriculum**
  - “Outward-facing”; Research links
- **Online learning**
  - \$5000 to lead on “package”; expanding academic influence; instructional therapists; online replacing night classes
- **Data systems**
  - Major maps; Student 360 information

# Research and Community

- **Research**
  - NB: from a teaching-led base
  - Impact now a national issue “knowledge mobilisation”
  - ASU Foundation: enterprise-focused fundraising arm
  - Depts removed from Arts and Sciences and Engineering structure
  - Special hires – eg SW Borderlands initiative
- **Community**
  - “Fundamental responsibility”
  - Value to the State: tax base, needs and education.
  - 500 local supporters
  - Sponsors and donors: Gates, Ira Fulton



# Staffing, tenure & recognition

- Traditional approach
- No targets for inclusion – would be resented?
- Little incentivising – leads to gaming?
- Divided views on the internal influence of rankings
- Many more teaching only posts – not tenured



# Some key issues

- What is the curriculum?
- What is its purpose?
- What is at its heart?
- What is a graduate?



# What is a curriculum for?

- The passing on of the best that is known
- Social change
- Economic development and wealth creation
- Individual self-fulfilment



# Changing purposes

From “is it true?” to “what use is it?”

“...doing rather than knowing, and performance rather than understanding ... there is a mistrust of all things that cannot easily be quantified or measured”

Barnett

# What is the curriculum?

# Cohering around:

- Subject / discipline?
- Attributes?
- Professional competence?
- Personal development?



# What is a graduate?



- **QMUL**
- Engage critically with knowledge
- Global perspective
- Learn continuously in changing world
- Rounded intellectual development
- Clarity of communication
- Research capacity
- Information expertise

## Glasgow

- Subject specialists
- Independent and critical thinkers
- Effective communicators
- Adaptable
- Ethically and socially aware
- Investigative
- Resourceful and responsible
- Confident
- Experienced collaborators
- Reflective learners

# What is a graduate?

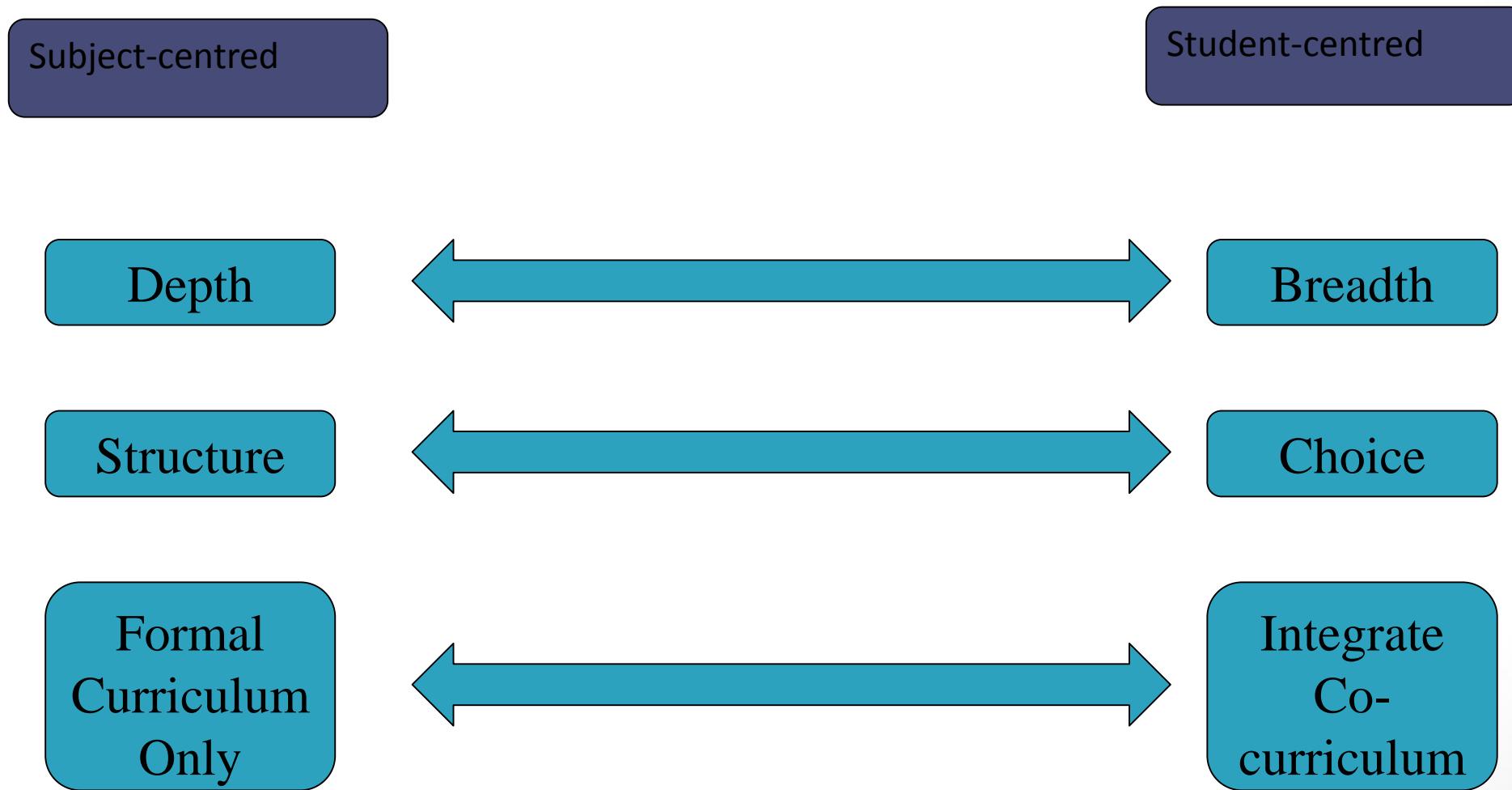
- Terminology
  - Attributes
  - Capabilities
  - Skills
  - Competenc(i)es
- Just how precise should (can) we be?



# Is there a core?



- How much in the formal curriculum?
- How much alongside the formal curriculum?
- Is a core course / strand needed?
  - What would it focus on?
  - Would it operate at institutional or school / dept level?



# Student-centred?



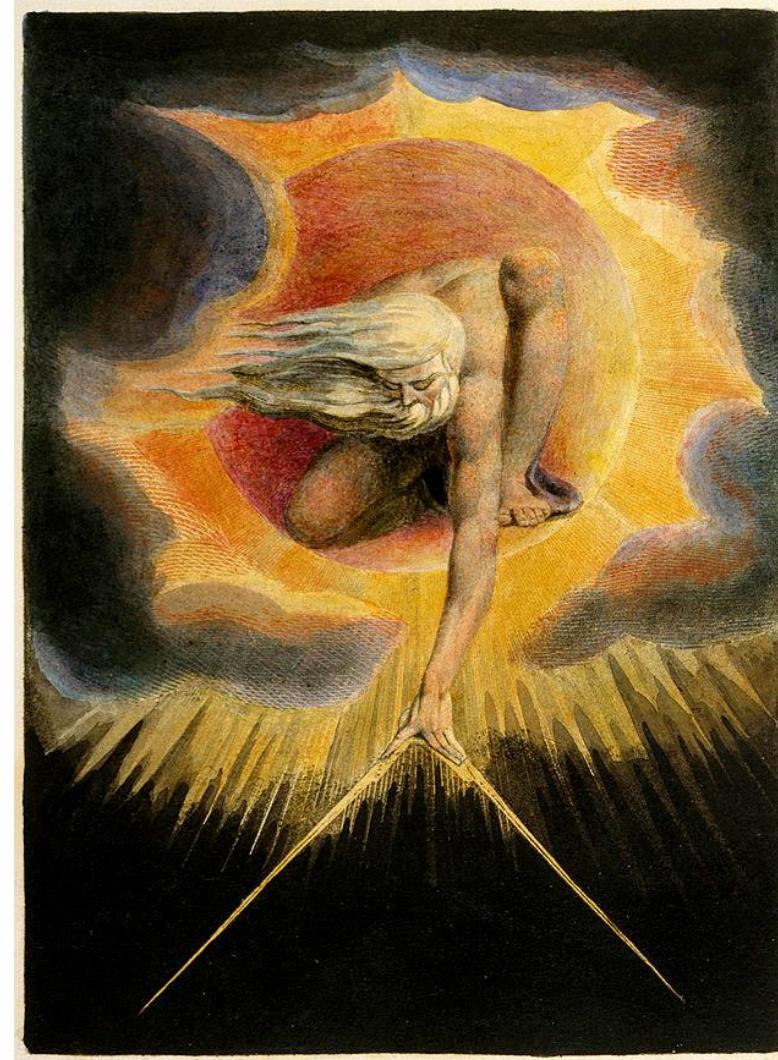
When we put together in one scheme such elements as:

- A prescribed curriculum
- Similar assignments for all students
- Lecturing as almost the only mode of instruction
- Standard tests by which all students are externally evaluated
- Instructor-chosen grades as the measure of learning

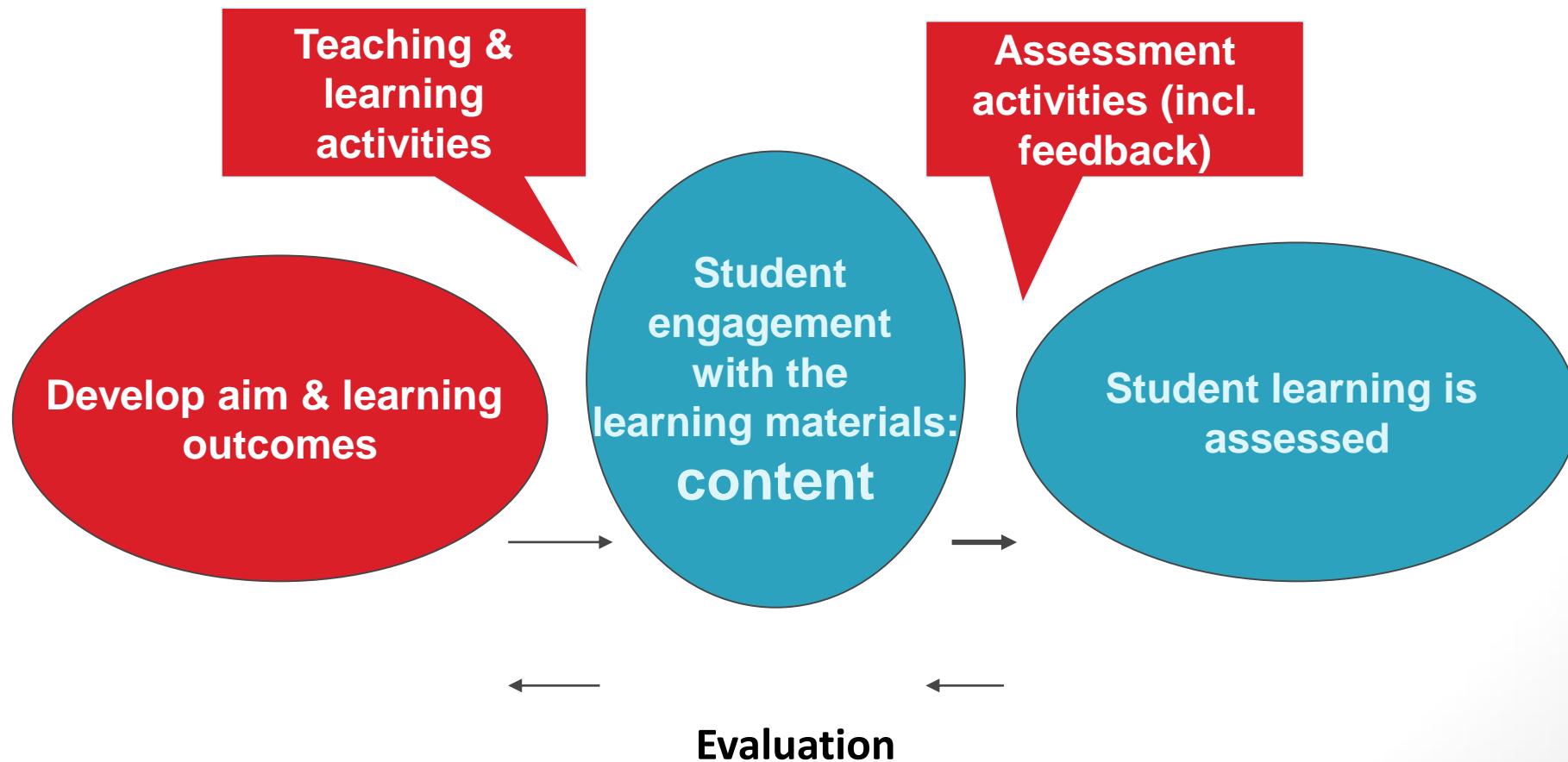
Then we can almost guarantee that meaningful learning will be at an absolute minimum.

Carl Rogers

**Rational Planning  
Model: now the  
dominant model  
across HE**



# 'Rational' Planning Model: curriculum as product



# Constructive alignment

- “The teaching methods used and the assessment tasks, are aligned with the learning activities assumed in the intended outcomes...
- we specify the desired outcomes of our teaching in ... topic content (and) ...the level of understanding we want students to achieve.
- We then set up an environment that maximises the likelihood that students will engage in the activities...
- Finally, we choose assessment tasks that will tell us how well individual students have attained these outcomes...”

(Biggs)



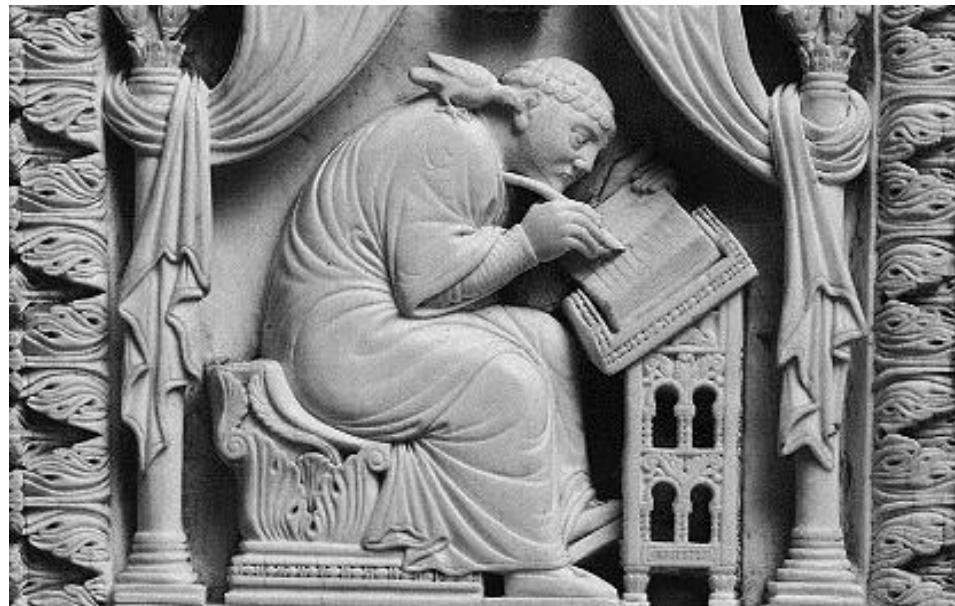
Everything is known ...  
I know and you don't ...

# Limits of the rational?

- “Complex learning is indeterminate, non-linear and contingent” (Knight, 2001)
- “In higher education we should be seeking to generate unpredictable outcomes...” (Barnett, 2000)
- Fundamentally teacher-centred

# The disappearing academic?

The prevailing discourse of 'outcomes', 'alignment' and 'achievement' has, from critical perspectives, been deemed to serve managerialist imperatives without necessarily engaging discipline-based academics in significant reconceptualisation or review of their practice.



(Ray Land, 2007 Seminar, Belfast)

# Research and teaching

- “... the research universities have often failed, and continue to fail, their undergraduate populations. Thousands of students graduate without seeing the world-famous professors or tasting genuine research” *Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1998*
- “.. The precise relationship of the link between teaching and learning seems not to have been addressed in any concerted way... there was very little systematic reflection within the University about just what was meant by the claimed interdependence of teaching and research.” *Audit report (re University of Exeter)*

# It ain't necessarily so ....

- Most empirical studies show little or no relationship between research and teaching effectiveness, especially in:
  - Natural sciences
  - Research-intensive universities
- Higher (but low) correlations in
  - Social Sciences
  - Colleges or liberal arts institutions

Hattie and Marsh

# Student voice 1

- “It’s reassuring that you’re being taught by people who are well respected in their field”
- “Good that you can know really up to date stuff. It’s also quite cool just seeing articles and stuff written by people in the department.”



# Student voice -2

The most interesting course I've done this year has been a guy who's writing a book and developing his theory and taking feedback from us, and you get that feeling that you're part of his developing theory.

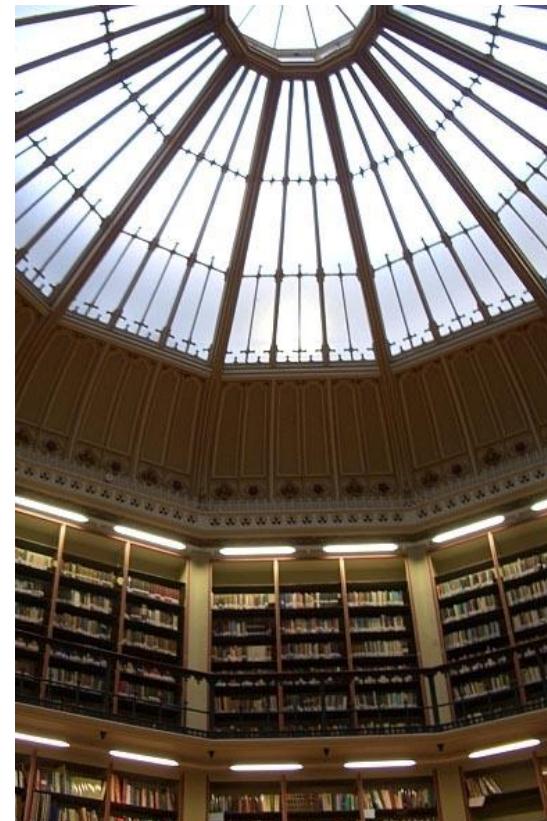


Photo: Jacqueline Banerjee

# Student voice -3

You could so obviously tell he knew what he was saying and he thought there was nothing complex about it whatsoever and it was so obvious to him and we're all sitting there going, I don't know, I don't get it...



# Student voice -4

I feel that the lecturers who are very involved in research are a little bit carried away and they're less able to focus on the teaching side and ... they wander off. I mean it's very interesting but it's not something that you can use or discuss ...



# Student voice 5

“I don’t think he teaches anything in (the dept), you don’t see him anywhere near a lecture but at least people know about him, he’s in the Times, the FT and the Economist, people know about the University because this amazing man is theoretically here, and it makes your degree worth more, I think.”



# Student voice -6

“Personally I’m not too bothered to be honest because I’m not really into (the subject), I’m here to get a degree, my motivation is to get a job ... But having said that, when I’m forced to do things I do enjoy it. ... when you’re ... doing everything on your own it’ll probably help you out a lot later on as well to do your research, find a topic and then find your data and stuff without getting it from the department, looking for places to start from ... it’s good to be forced to do something like that”.

# Research-teaching benefits

## ➤ Motivation

- Inspiration from experts in their field, who convey enthusiasm for the subject

## ➤ Active learning

- Students tend to learn most when they are actively involved in developing their knowledge

## ➤ Skills development

- Intellectual skills of critical analysis
- “Transferable” skills: group work, time- and resource-management and data handling



# White Paper aims

“For too long, teaching has been the poor cousin of research. Skewed incentives have led to a progressive decline in the relative status of teaching as an activity”



“We will act to ensure teaching and research remain coherent and coordinated at the national as well as the institutional level”

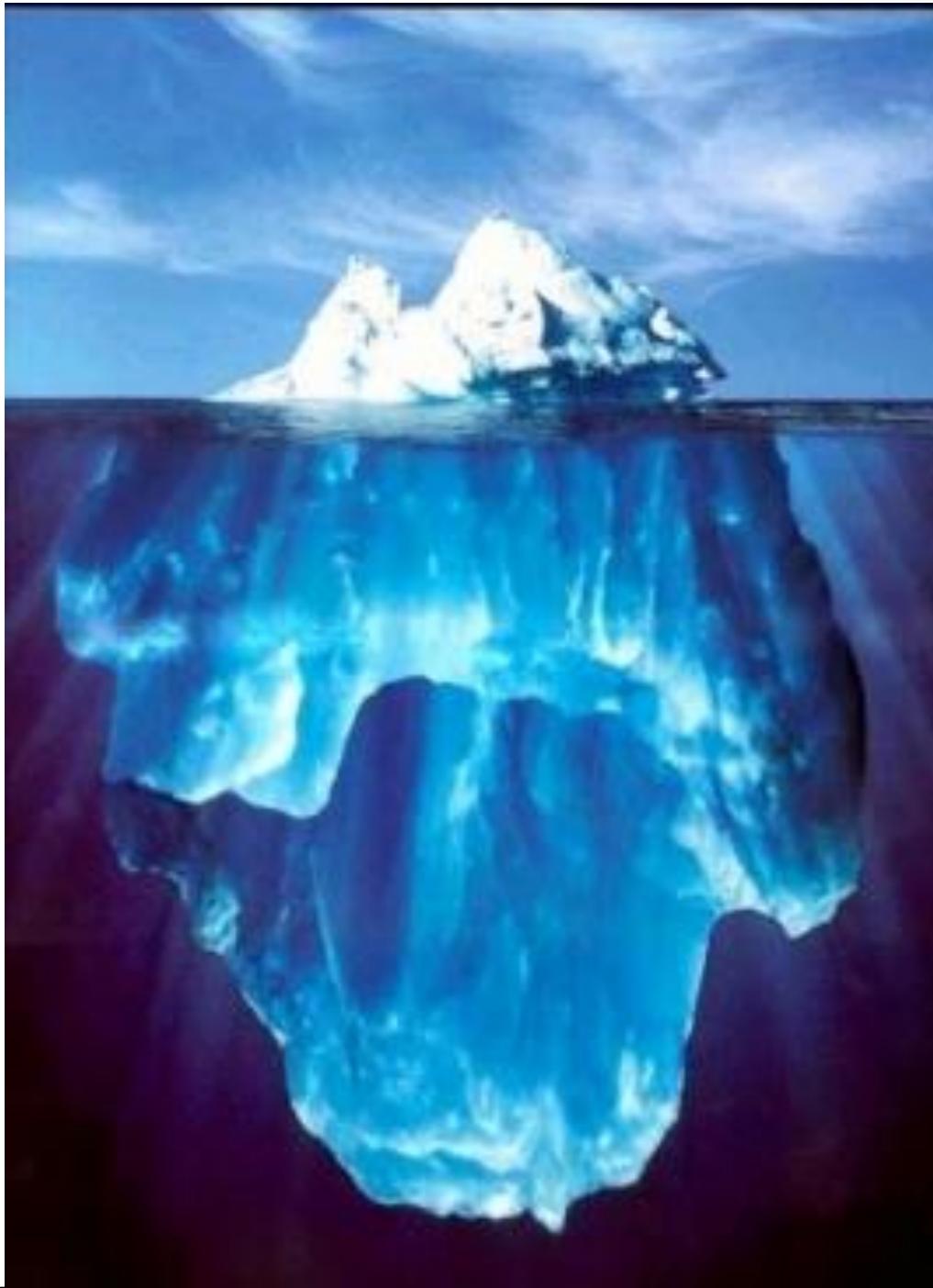
# Coherent and co-ordinated?

- Office for Students  
(Choice, competition, social mobility)
- UK Research and Innovation





Prestige



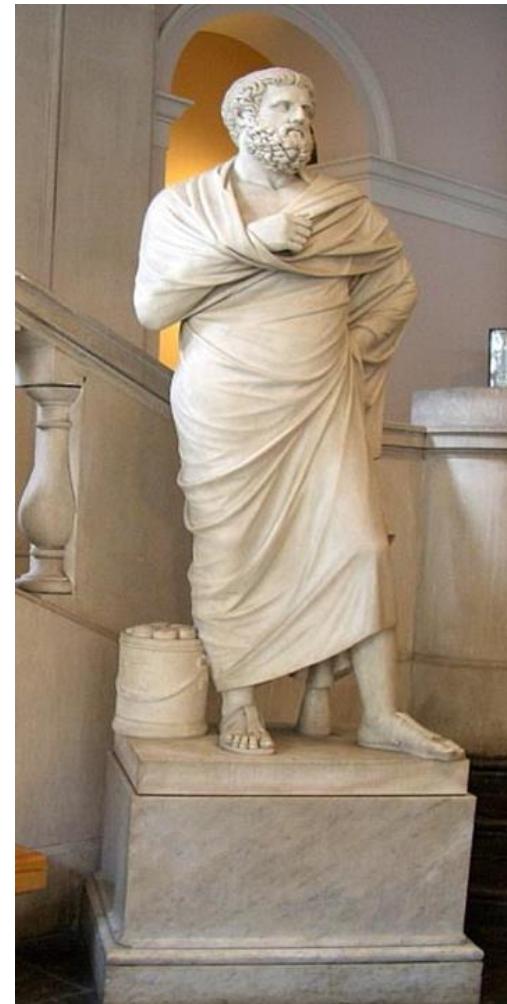
# What does it now mean to be “academic”?

The tripartite role .....

- Teaching
- Research
- Administration / service

Now what do we profess?

(Complex learning and its development?)



# The same thing?

“We read, scan, dig into sources, calculate, ponder, disentangle others’ work and our own, try to put it together again to different effect; deconstruct, reconstruct, tear our hair over the intractability of the worlds ... that it is our business to try to grasp. This is a case for teaching *and* research.”

Westergard

The true aim of everyone who aspires to be a teacher should be, not to impart his own opinions, but to kindle minds.

Frederick William Robertson

# Boyer's scholarships

- Discovery
- Integration
- Application
- Teaching and learning



# What we could do ....

## **Nationally**

- Institutional R/T strategy for QR funding?
- Require research grant teaching impact?
- Reflect an R-related conception of teaching in NSS

## **In universities**

- Promotion on basis of proven R/T linkages
- Flexible, equal-status career paths
- Discipline-led discussion of what R/T means

