

Title: **Turning policy and research into practice: taking advantage of a captive audience!**

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Abstract:

This discussion paper demonstrates how policy and research can be of mutual benefit and, with a little bit of cunning, can be turned into developmental resources and let loose on a captive audience.

SEDA Values

Indicate which SEDA Values may be relevant to your proposal:

An understanding of how people learn	✓	Scholarship, professionalism and ethical practice	✓
Working and developing learning communities		Working effectively with diversity and promoting inclusivity	
Continuing reflection on professional practice	✓	Developing people and processes	✓

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

1. Identify ways of linking research and policy
2. Explain how research can be turned into developmental resources
3. Comment on the benefits of using teaching and learning programme audiences as vehicle to develop practice more widely across the institution

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

Policy and strategy are mechanisms intended to help Higher Education move forward (Rowley and Sherman, 2001). These policies are influenced by government initiatives (Crosier, 2007), funding streams (Barr, 2004) and an increasingly competitive global market (Deem et al. 2008) in which students are becoming ever-more selective about their Higher Education choices. As a result universities can be both responsive and reactive to university rankings (Hazelkorn, 2008) resulting in policies on 'hot topics' which can sometimes feel rushed and ill-informed.

This paper suggests that tying research to policy and the strategy development process, can serve to enhance the outcomes. The example given in this discussion paper demonstrates how researchers were invited to assist with the development of an 'internationalisation' strategy and were tasked with supporting its implementation. The research undertaken helped to inform the strategy, and findings were also used to shape the development of a range of teaching and learning resources (Magne, 2012; Collings and Magne, 2012). These resources were tried and tested on a captive audience of new lecturers and made more widely available across the institution. Thus, what began as strategy linked with some research, was eventually used to disseminate findings and spark discussion in a research informed teaching environment (Healey, 2005).

This discussion paper suggests this model as a useful way to forge closer links between research and policy, and use research outcomes to develop useful resources which help to disseminate information and implement better informed policy.

Session Activities

The session will offer a brief overview of the model which used research to inform strategy at a local level. It will identify pitfalls, lessons learned and the benefits of such an approach. Participants will be shown examples of the resources that were developed to assist in the implementation of the strategy and asked to:

- Critique the approach taken
- Discuss how such a model might be adapted or used within their institutions
- Identify opportunities in their own institutions to link: research, policy, strategy and resources that assist in implementation

References

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