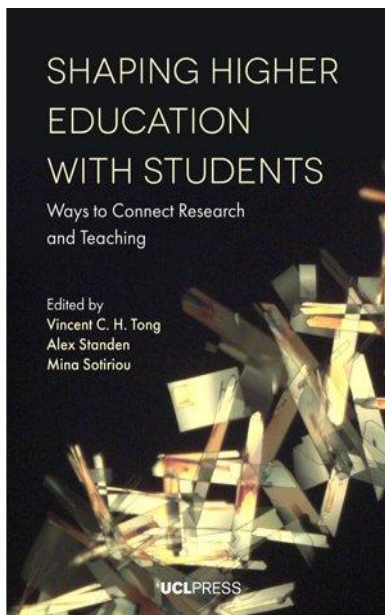




This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 Licence](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/). As an open access journal, articles are free to use, with proper attribution, in educational and other non-commercial settings.

Vincent C.H. Tong, Alex Standen and Mina Sotiriou (Eds.) (2018) *Shaping Higher Education with Students: Ways to Connect Research and Teaching*, London: UCL Press (ISBN 978-178735-112-7) [Pbk], 346pp)



Shaping Higher Education with Students is about linking research and teaching through collaborative relationships between students and staff. The central tenet of this expansive book is that student learning should be anchored in the kind of active, critical, and analytic inquiry traditionally undertaken by researchers. Unpacking the complexities of research-based education, this edited collection documents a University College London (UCL) project that challenges the conventional roles of students and teachers and proposes that

research and teaching are not disparate undertakings, but that research equals teaching ($R=T$). In a contemporary academic environment, that seems to prioritise skills for employability in order to improve student satisfaction and league tables standings, the notion of converting students into co-producers of knowledge is captivating. $R=T$, as interpreted at UCL, proposes developing students' voices academically in a way that allows them to transform their ideas into actions, whether in the sphere of politics, society, business, or science.

The book's first section focuses on the context of research-based education through student-staff partnerships, the centrepiece of the $R=T$ framework. These partnerships engage students and staff in working toward a common goal, and require both parties to embrace students' natural ability to question assumptions and engage in divergent thinking. In other words, to endorse students' legitimacy as co-producers of knowledge or, in the framework of service-dominant logic, to make students co-creators of value in their own education. The second section conceptualises research-based education as a cycle of theory, action, and reflection that occurs for both students, staff, and connects research and teaching not only within the university but also beyond the classroom, enabling students to apply theory to action in any context. The third section emphasises the importance of communities of practice, in which students and staff interact to learn how to perform

research-based praxis while simultaneously making sense of transformations to institutional contexts, social relations, and identity roles.

This is not a book that needs to be read cover to cover. In fact, and following the advice of the book's editors, I first read the introductions to each of the three sections, followed by the epilogue. This approach provided an overview of the book's main argument for student–staff partnerships. After each introduction are a series of student-authored chapters that address topics linked to the theme of each section. These essays derive from a far-flung assortment of disciplines: engineering, mathematics, linguistics, anthropology, physics, astronomy, molecular biology, management, education, and computer sciences.

Given the capacious variety of subjects of these essays, my advice would be to choose from the topics and sections that most interest you. Thus, I delved immediately into the chapters that seemed relevant to marketing or business. While I found the essays to be of varying quality and depth, what they attempt to produce demonstrates what can be created through the student–staff partnership, and the range demonstrates both the opportunities and challenges of the R=T initiative.

In many ways, the UCL initiative and R=T framework bring research back to earth, arguing that the hierarchal model of teacher-as-superior (active) and student-as-subordinate (passive) has become outdated. However, particularly in institutions that prioritise teaching activities over research, shifting power relations between the student

and teacher in a way that enables students to contribute meaningfully to a research project can be challenging, as many authors in this book acknowledge. Lauren Clark, in the introduction to Section Two, notes that research-based teaching locates students and staff in different identity roles, and she contests the traditional power structure of learning and teaching relationships. I find this assessment of student learning and teaching to be compelling, making higher education a place for more equitable and empowering collaboration between students and staff.

Another highlight for me was from the third section of the book, where Ljiljana Marjanovic-Hallburd and Yekatherina Bobrova address final-year projects as a vehicle for delivering research-based education. Here, an eager teacher may be interested in gathering undergraduate and postgraduate students together in research projects, to aid in data collection, and to nudge towards dissemination, such as publication or conference presentations.

Reconstructing the academic perception of students as consumers to co-creators of knowledge is a powerful proposition, but it risks being lost in the colonisation of British higher education by neoliberal forces—a colonisation that tends to leave higher education more instrumentalised and stripped of its transformative capabilities. As a result, each of the authors encourage micro-changes. Starting small, even in one class, student–staff partnerships in research-based education can overcome conventional approaches to pedagogy and gain traction throughout the institution.

Overall, the book offers a useful set of tools that inspire new ways of connecting with students through research projects, and will appeal to a range of practitioners – experienced or otherwise.

Reviewed by **Jack S. Tillotson**
Liverpool Business School, LJMU