**A Taste of Research: Reflections on a summer Vacation**  
**Research Assistantship**  
Jo Smith and Dr Gabriela Misca  
Psychological Sciences

**The Purpose of Research in Student Learning**
Research is vital in higher education and students’ engage in research either through participation or actually conducting research (Healey & Jenkins, 2009)

Fundamental requirement for Psychology degrees according to the British Psychological Society [BPS]

**Theoretical Standpoint**
- **Teaching Research Nexus**
  - Research-led
  - Research-oriented
  - Research-based

- **Learning Communities**
  - Gain identity
  - Share goals and knowledge
  - Develop strong working relationships

(Healey, 2005; Robertson et al., 2012)

**“VRA”**
- A ‘taste’ of what research entails
- Experiential approach to learning
- Student and educator as partners in the research process
- Vehicle to promote student development and researcher identity
What do students say?

- Students become less passive and more active in research under supervision (Roberts, Ertubey, McMurray & Robertson, 2012)
- Facilitates self reflection (Landrum & Nelsen, 2002)
- Enhances confidence, communication skills, time management (Lei & Chuang, 2009), motivation and work ethic (Boyd et al., 2010), ethical boundaries in research

- Facilitates critical thinking and analytical skills (Hughes, Brown & Calvert, 2008; Landrum & Nelsen, 2002; Partridge & Sandover, 2010)
- Increases preparation for further study (Lei & Chuang, 2009) and gives students excellent foundations and experience to enhance career prospects (Hughes et al., 2008)
- Enhances the link between theory and practice (Salsman, Dulaney, Chinta, Zascavage & Joshi, 2013)

Educator Perspectives

- Student-lecturer interactions were beneficial
- Educator supervisory & mentoring skills were enhanced
- Leadership skills developed

Negatives?

- Additional commitments (educational, familial, work)
- Poor pay
- Lack of interest in the research topic
- Student’s lack of experience
- Time spent ‘training’ student’s
- Insufficient funding

(Lei & Chuang, 2009)
VRA
Reflections on a busy summer...

References


Partridge, L., & Sandover, S. (2010). Beyond ‘listening’ to the student voice: The undergraduate researcher’s contribution to the enhancement of teaching and learning. Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice, 7(4), 1-14
