

# Developing an HE ethos in FE Colleges in England: issues and dimensions

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# Projects

**1 *Higher education in further education: capturing and promoting HEness.*** (Lea and Simmons 2012)

**2 *Capturing an HE ethos in college higher education practice.*** (QAA)  
(Simmons and Lea 2013)

**3 *Developing research-based curricula in college-based higher education.***  
(HEA) (Healey, Jenkins and Lea 2014)

**4 *Supporting Higher Education in College Settings.*** (SEDA) (Lea 2014)

**5 HEFCE/AoC Catalyst project** (2015-2018)

# Some Propositions

- *“For the students who are the professionals of the future, developing the ability to investigate problems, make judgments on the basis of sound evidence, take decisions on a rational basis, and understand what they are doing and why is vital. Research and inquiry is not just for those who choose to pursue an academic career. It is central to professional life in the twenty-first century” (Brew 2007, 7)*
- *“[We should] Encourage and enable students to learn in ways that parallel or reflect the ways academic staff themselves approach research and learn in their disciplines or professional area” (Healey and Jenkins 2009, 28)*
- *“A positive research and teaching link primarily depends on the nature of the students’ learning experiences, resulting from appropriate teaching and learning processes, rather than on particular inputs or outcomes” (Elton 2001, 43)*

# Voices from the past

*“The relationship between teacher and learner is ...completely different in higher education from what it is in schools. At the higher level, the teacher is not there for the sake of the student, both have their justification in the service of scholarship” (von Humboldt 1810)*

*“It [a university] is a place of teaching universal knowledge. This implies that its object is, on the one hand, intellectual, not moral, and, on the other, that it is the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than the advancement. If its object were scientific and philosophical discovery, I do not see why a University should have students...” (Newman 1854)*

*“What we urgently need today is a more inclusive view of what it means to be a scholar – a recognition that knowledge is acquired through research, through synthesis, through practice, and through teaching. We acknowledge that these four categories – the scholarship of discovery, of integration, of application, and of teaching – divide intellectual functions that are tied inseparably to each other.” (Boyer 1990)*

*Is CHE well positioned on these three fronts?*

# Orientation

- *HE in FE - between two cultures?*
- *HE in FE - a hybrid form of pedagogy?*
- *HE in FE - a hybrid form of scholarship?*

# Cultural differences between HE and FE?

- Universities (tend to) validate their own awards - this has many dimensions and implications;
- University academics (tend to) have strong allegiances to their disciplines - and these create powerful professional bulwarks;
- University knowledge is (or tends to be) 'edgy' - centred on what isn't known as much as what is.

*Are there any significant CPD implications here?*

# Professional Frameworks – Mind the Gap, or a Tale of Two Cultures?

- *A framework of standards* vs *A framework for Standards*
- *Licence to practice* vs *Enhancing practice*
- *Being competent* vs *Being scholarly*
- *Teaching Observations* vs *Peer Review*
- *Criterion referencing* vs *Ipsative referencing*
- *Managerial model* vs *Collegial model*

(Lea 2011: Price 2011)

# The wider significance of that student profile...

- “As providers of a limited range of higher level programmes, the institutional choices and economic returns available to these [HE in FE] students are different from those who occupy other parts of higher education, although the wider social benefits of participation might be considerable.” (Parry 2009, 339)
- “...it has been pointed out that those studying for a degree in a further education college are: more likely to be over 25, more likely to study part-time, and more likely to come from areas with low rates of participation in HE than students in HEIs” (HEFCE 2006, 9).

*What are the pedagogical implications here?*



# College voices from the present

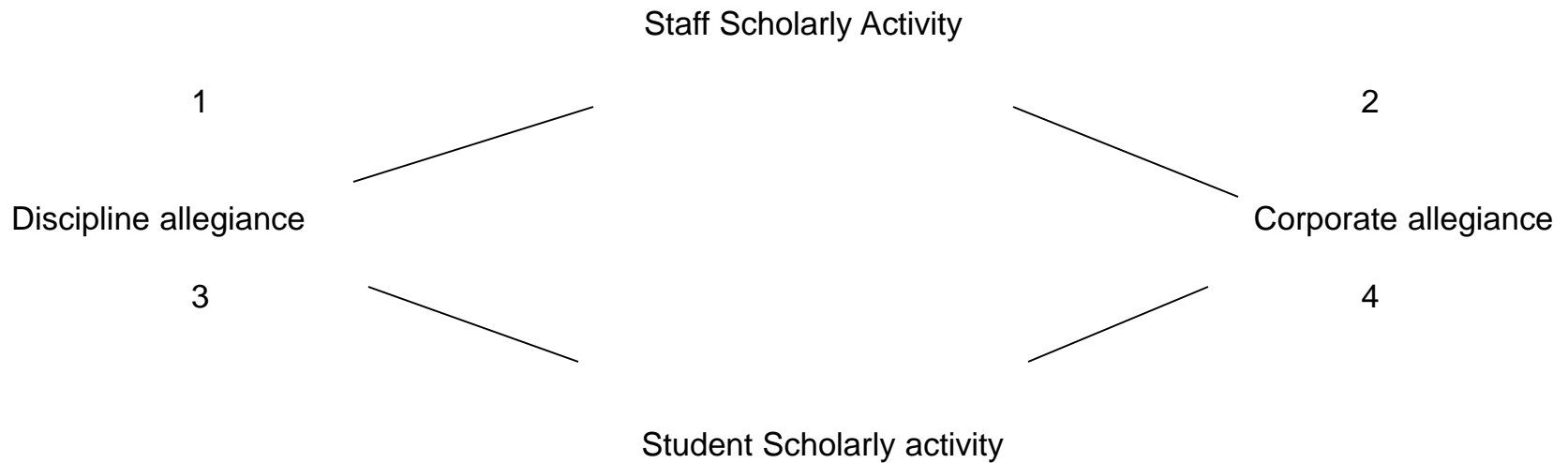
- “...the main difference between the two learning environments [FE and HE] was a real sense that one could work *with* the HE students, rather than have to manage their learning...That environment however also continued to **nurture** the kind of support which had been offered on the FE programmes, and this benefited a number of the HE students”
- “The College sees its HE provision as very much a response to **local** need – giving local students access to HE (particularly those identified as ‘hard to reach’), and providing local industries with a highly skilled workforce. In this regard the College does not see itself in competition with universities, but seeks to offer complementary courses, well suited to particular types of students and responding to particular employer needs”
- “...although all the HE teachers were on FE contracts (teaching around 860 hrs per year), ...this was not a real constraint, because most staff recognised the **context** in which they were working, and it was right that scholarly activity should revolve around enhancing pedagogical effectiveness and supporting students to succeed”

(Quotations from case studies in Simmons and Lea 2013)

*Is CHE its own unique hybrid?*

# Context-based research tensions

(Healey et al 2014)



- 1 Where the allegiance to discipline often results in a REF type definition of research, and often takes academics away from students altogether
- 2 Where allegiance to corporation pushes scholarship towards evaluation of practice in order to enhance corporate goals
- 3 Where students are often taught with a research-led teaching focus
- 4 Where students are often taught with a research-informed/minded teaching focus

*Are these tensions real and/or manageable and/or problematic?*

# But...what is a scholar?

- *A rather quaint term for someone who sits between a researcher and a teacher?*
- *A public intellectual as opposed to a closeted academic?*
- *Someone who 'knows', but pushes us to enquire further?*

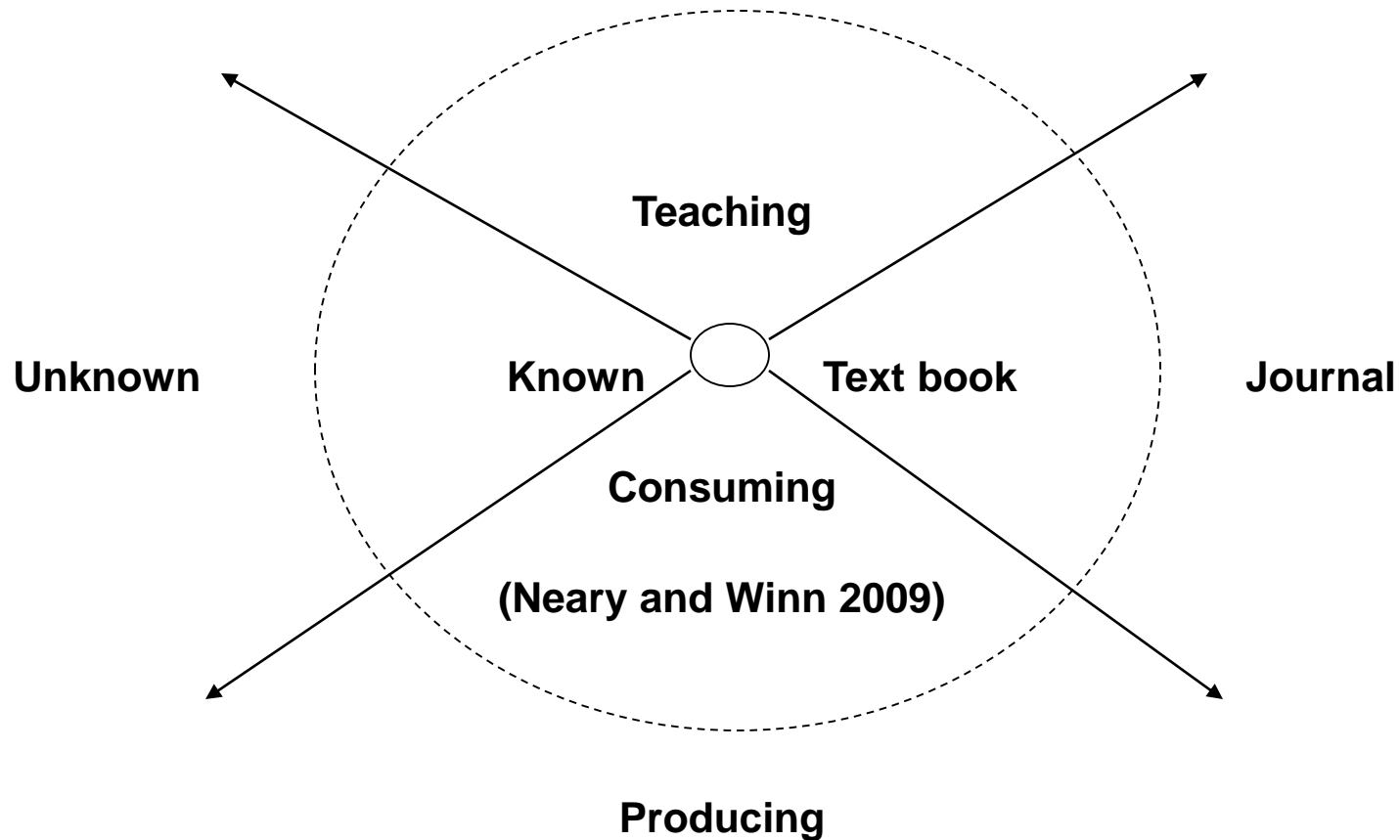
...Boyer, Jacoby, von Humboldt

# Nurturing HEness

*“to boldly go...” from core to threshold*

(Lea 2014)

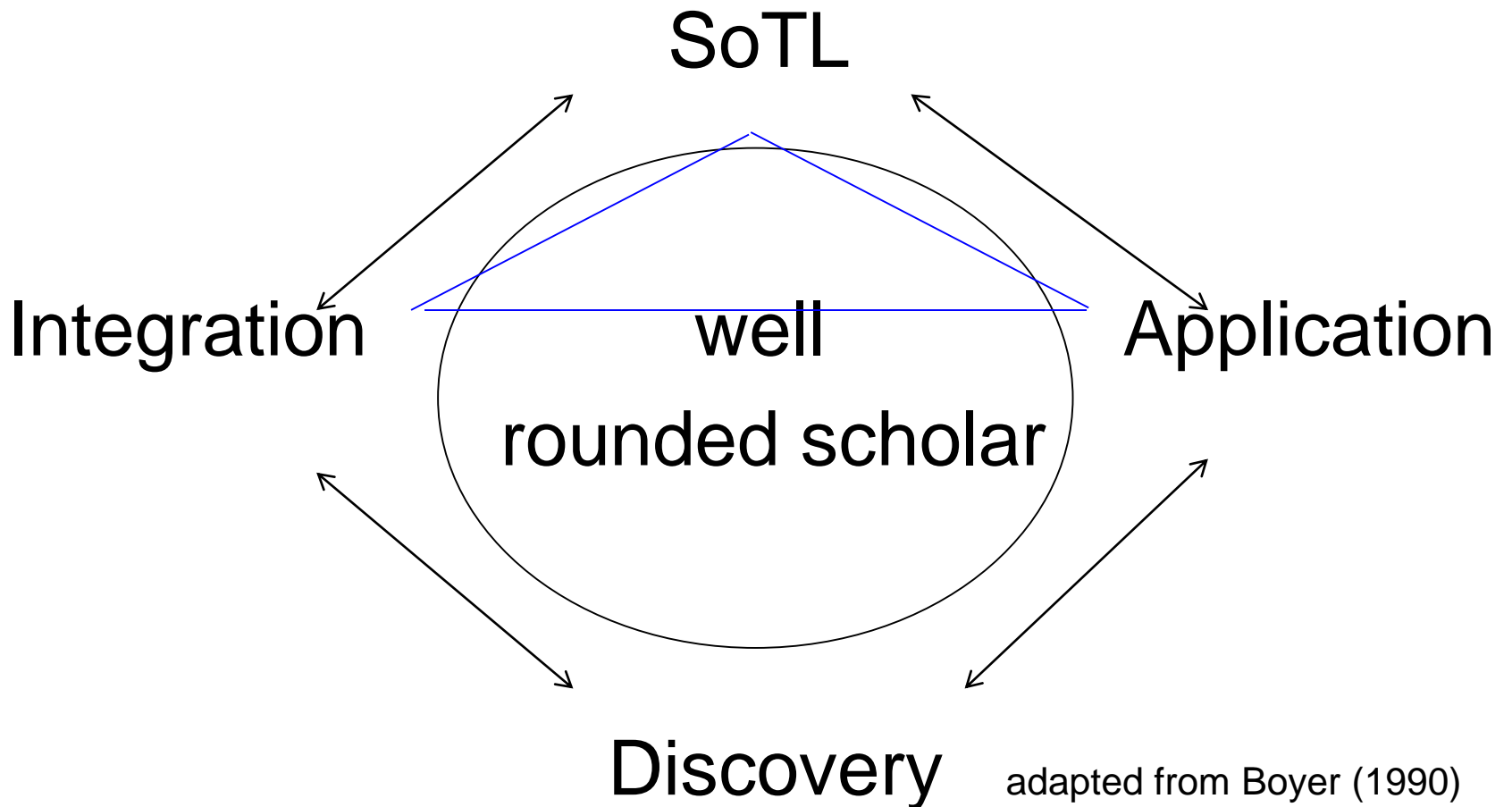
**Learning**



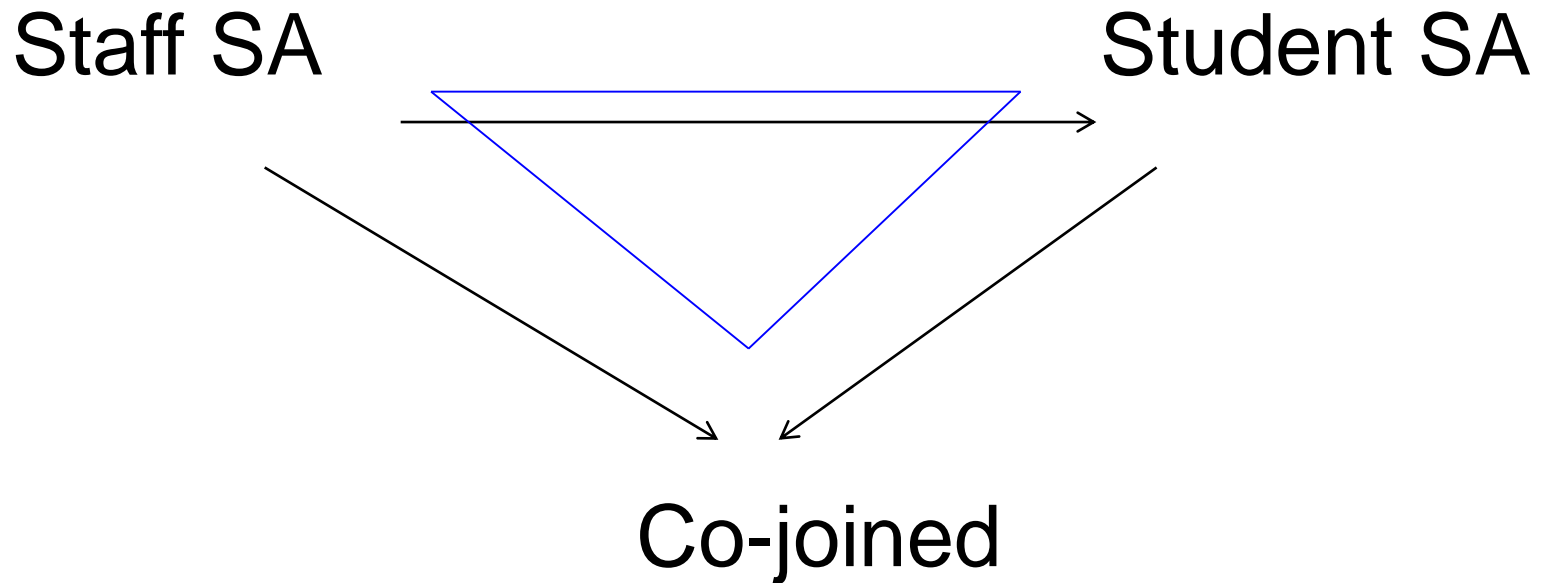
# Enhancing Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (Lea 2015)



**The QAA project**  
*nurturing HEness through staff SA*  
(Simmons and Lea 2013)



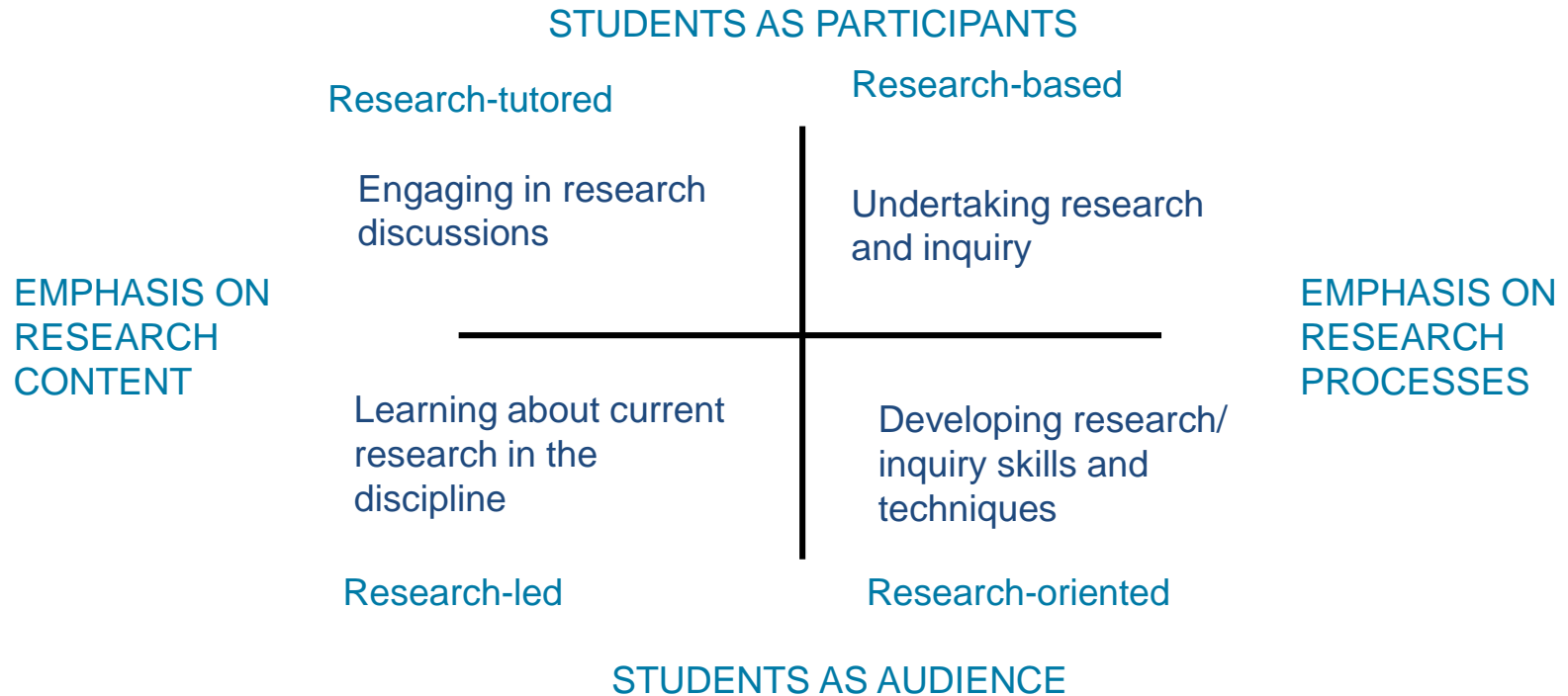
**The HEA project –**  
*nurturing student scholarly activity*  
(Healey et al 2014)



*Just for some HE students or all students, including FE students?*

# Student SA and the curriculum

- *a template?* (Healey and Jenkins 2009)

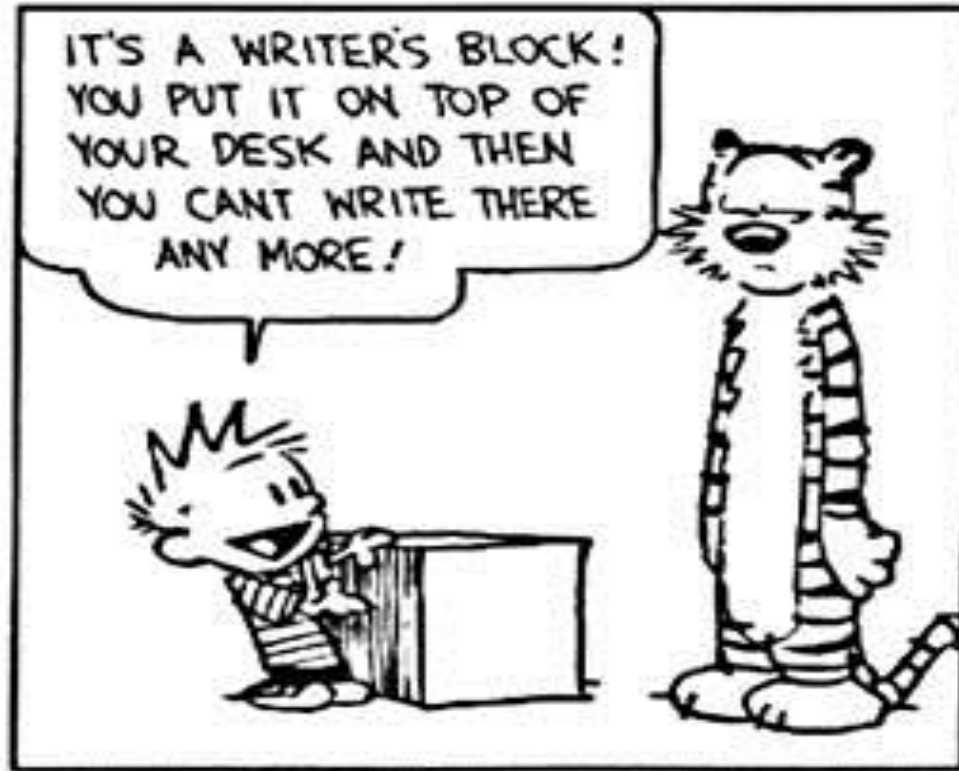




**SEDA project**  
**Supporting scholarship in CHE**  
(Lea 2014)

- *SoTL and 'going public'*
- *From peer observation to peer review*
- *Recontextualisation and a pedagogy of vocational HE*
- *The UKPSF and CPD as forms of scholarship*

# *Unblocking some Chi?*



Bill Watterson

Calvin and Hobbes

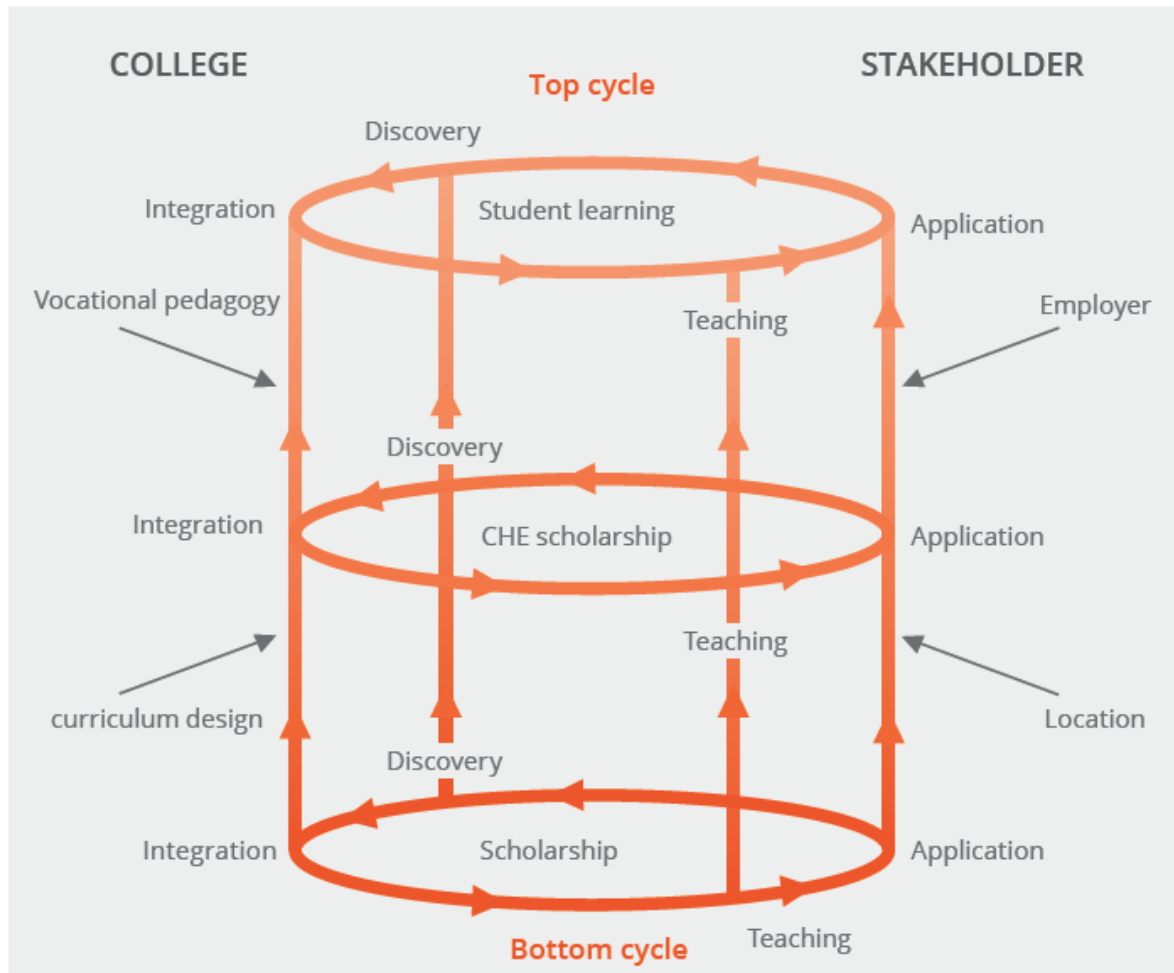
[calvinandhobbes.co.uk](http://calvinandhobbes.co.uk)

# Embedding scholarship...

*taking the block off the desk*

- *Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate – colleagues, consortia, students;*
- *Going public – doesn't have to mean 'peer reviewed journal article' – could be a conference poster, opinion piece, etc.;*
- *Could peer observation and review become a more scholarly exercise? – (SoTL);*
- *Could curriculum development become a more scholarly exercise? – (Integration);*
- *Could partnership working become a more scholarly exercise? – (Application)*
- *Engaging with the UKPSF in scholarly ways*

# The Catalyst Scholarship Project - Conceptual Underpinning



# Another voice from the present

*“The Quality Code notes that 'Scholarship and research lie at the heart of higher education', while acknowledging that the precise nature of these scholarly activities is determined by subject differences as well as by differences in focus, level, scope and [provider context](#).*

*In the case of bachelor's and master's degrees, the presumption that subject knowledge is to be acquired and extended leads to an expectation that [teaching will be informed, if not led, by the research/scholarship](#) interests of staff working in the field. Consequently, for taught degree-awarding powers, the majority of staff are expected to be actively engaged in scholarly activity (leading to scholarly output, for example) that [informs their teaching and contributes to the development and enhancement of students' understanding of their subject](#). Such activity does not necessarily mean doing original research but it does mean doing more than simply professional development. An applicant for taught degree-awarding powers is required to provide evidence of productive scholarly activity by its staff, demonstrating active involvement in the generation or [reformulation of academic knowledge](#) and [the dissemination of understanding or ideas](#) to both internal and external audiences.” (QAA 2013)*

*[We may not all be researchers but we are all scholars, aren't we?](#)*

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