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TEACHING @ SYDNEY

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Myth-busting: Do great researchers make great teachers?

A recent [article](#) by a University of Sydney student raised interesting points about the relationship between university teaching and research.

Commonly held opinions about university teaching include 'world-class' researchers also make great teachers, or to be a great university teacher you also have to be a great researcher.

These opinions are just that: "judgement or belief resting on grounds insufficient to produce certainty" (Macquarie Dictionary). They are myths.

We have known for some time from comprehensive meta-analyses (Hattie & Marsh, 1996; Marsh & Hattie, 2002) that teaching effectiveness and research productivity are almost uncorrelated. This means that just as many good researchers are bad at teaching as are good at it. Research performance is not an indication of teaching potential.

The reality is that "if students want to be taught by outstanding teachers, they need to focus on measures of teaching effectiveness rather than reputations based on research performances" (Marsh & Hattie, 2002, p. 635).

So if being a good teacher doesn't depend on being a good researcher, what might it depend on? Well, we could do worse than consult Fitzmaurice (2008) who in a study of lecturers' teaching philosophies found that "the moral stances of honesty, respect, responsibility, care and compassion are fundamental to good teaching" (p. 341).

Many academics value both teaching and research. For good teachers, teaching well is a moral practice that is worth time and effort.

Fitzmaurice, M. (2008). Voices from within: Teaching in higher education as a moral practice. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 13(3), 341-352.

Hattie, J. & Marsh, H. W. (1996). The relationship between research and teaching—a meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 66, 507-542.

Marsh, H. W. & Hattie, J. (2002). The relation between research productivity and teaching effectiveness: Complementary, antagonistic, or independent constructs? *The Journal of Higher Education*, 73(5), 603-641.

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