

Basic and Applied Research

Research:

- (i) Diligent inquiry or examination in seeking facts and principles;
- (ii) Laborious or continued search after truth;
- (iii) Investigation.

Source: Webster's Dictionary of the English Language

Where does "University Research" belong?

Basic or Applied Research?

Technocrats' view:

Basic (or fundamental) research is experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundation of phenomena and observable facts, without any particular application or use in view.

Applied research is also original investigation undertaken in order to acquire knowledge. It is, however, directed primarily towards a specific practical aim or objective.

Basic or Applied Research?

Alternative view

All research is applied.

Why?

Because it is carried out in order to settle a question.

Half of success is to pose the correct question, to identify what it is that you do not know or do not understand.

(Formulate thesis and defend it)

Basic or Applied Research?

Alternative view (cont.)

Confusion in the fields of inquiry commonly referred to as Engineering regarding the meaning of research.

Why?

Because there seem to be an implicit expectation that the outcome should result in “building a device, or a process”.

(and do not tell anybody what you do, keep it secret, patent your device, sell your device).

Basic or Applied Research?

Alternative view (cont.)

How to settle confusion?

Set (conceptually) time horizon for possible application of results of our inquiry.

Where we should be?

Immediate application?

One year horizon?

Ten year horizon?

What is the difference between research and consulting

If a good consultant can do the job, should professoriate be involved?

What is the role/expectation for professoriate?

News

Publish or perish mentality pushes university professors to be 'dishonest'

Sarah Schmidt

The Ottawa Citizen

389 words

11 April 2005

Ottawa Citizen

Final

A4

English

Copyright © 2005 Ottawa Citizen

MONTREAL

MONTREAL - In a devastating assessment of Canadian universities, an education specialist at a leading institution says the pressure to **publish** is leading professors to "grab and take unto themselves items that they have not produced."

Magda Lewis, professor of education at Queen's University, is blowing the whistle today at the prestigious American Educational Research Association conference in Montreal, arguing in a research paper that graduate students are the collateral damage.

"There's an inclination to find more products that you can demonstrate are yours," Ms. Lewis said in an interview.

"We can put fancy words to it -- co-authorship, collaboration -- you can put words to it that hide the fact that this isn't necessarily your work. I see it as a kind of dishonesty, without being too harsh on my colleagues."

Ms. Lewis's paper, to be published in the next edition of the Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, traces how the push to commodify knowledge has transformed higher education from a place where knowledge is created and shared freely for the common good to where it is hoarded and sold for a price.

Professors are judged and compensated according to how much they produce. Ms. Lewis recounts a recent exchange with a graduate student at Queen's to illustrate her point.

"Last month was not the first time that a graduate student asked me for advice having to do with university protocols and practices," Ms. Lewis writes.

"She had collected data; she had written a paper; she was hoping to **publish** it. But, it seems, her senior faculty supervisor assumed that she, who had not collected the data and had not written the paper, would be first, or, at the very least, second author on her publication."

This push to produce is doing a great disservice to the pursuit of knowledge, argues Ms. Lewis.

"(These) conditions encourage people to grab and take unto themselves items that they have not produced; it encourages people to overproduce the packaging in order to hide the meagreness of the content; it encourages people to value quantity over quality; and it encourages people to efface the real implications of what we know in return for the more sellable quietude produced by not knowing," she writes.