Links to the R=T Framework

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• Eirini’s chapter explores the key role of technology in approaching research-based education, in promoting engaged and active learning. Technology can be implemented to make research activities interactive, and in some cases, such as 3D printing, to allow students to interact physically with research objects. This allows staff to make their own research more accessible to students as well as encouraging students to participate actively in the research process, and even in some cases to create teaching materials for future classes. Students can take on a tutor’s role among their peers, leading research-based learning activities. Staff and students become researchers working together with objects and technology to create learning through research, moving away from the traditional model of teacher as active provider of knowledge and student as passive recipient. Technology should not replace traditional learning methods, but be used alongside them, in order to augment engaged and active learning and create a more fulfilling experience for staff and students.

• The implementation of this message faces several challenges. As outlined in the joint framework, a lack of resources may be an issue: technology can be expensive and funding difficult to secure, particularly in fields where it is not viewed as ‘essential’ such as in my own field of Classics. As Eirini mentions, some fields will be more receptive to advances in technology than others. Students may require training to use new technologies which would necessitate additional teaching hours, and there may be the danger of damage to expensive equipment.
A primary benefit of the message would be the reduction in planning time for staff able to rely on technology for a portion of their teaching, allowing them to focus more on content and research-based learning. The active and engaged learning encouraged by technology transfers out of the classroom, promoting greater academic engagement and enthusiasm for the subject and learning and research more generally. The use of practical technologies keeps students and staff at the cutting edge of their fields, and prepares students for careers where these technologies are used every day. The use of new technologies leads to innovative research which is beneficial for staff as well as students, giving them wider opportunities for their own research.

- Staff and students should work together to find successful ways to engage with new technologies, as appropriate to their own field of study. Staff can facilitate students in working with technology in ways which not only promote focused, engaged research-based education, but also allows both students and staff to reflect on learning methods, and encourages students to take on the role of the tutor among their peers. Staff should make technology-based research accessible to students, and students should be willing to learn to use it productively and engage with the benefits it offers. The emphasis should be on the partnership throughout the process: although the staff member may lead the group, the students should be encouraged to engage in the selection and implementation of technology in research as well as its use, to promote a more inclusive and productive research-based learning environment.