



The Teaching-Research Nexus

A guide for academics and policy-makers
in higher education

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Examples from Australian universities

Scaffolding of Research Tasks in an Applied Theatre Program

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Broad discipline area:

Education

- Applied Theatre

Year level:

- All year levels

TRN strategy:

- Scaffolding of TRN activities incorporated into program design
- Building a small-scale research activity into undergraduate assignments
- Linking research, community engagement and teaching

Teaching and learning context:

- Curriculum design
- Assessment item

Brief description of the initiative:

This academic, who teaches Applied Theatre taken in the first, second, third year and postgraduate courses in the Education program, progressively introduces research tasks at different year levels:

- Year one: Students conduct background research for an applied theatre project within set parameters, but do not implement the project. Students undertake a background literature review using journal articles, library sources and informal interviews with people who work with their target group. After this research has been completed, the students develop an idea for an applied theatre performance in consultation with the lecturer and prepare a two-page project proposal.
- Year two: Following set guidelines, students undertake a directed performance project under the guidance of the lecturer. For example, one group of students developed a performance, workshop and study notes for school children to support and exhibition at the State Library in response to a project brief outlining the Library's requirements. This activity is more challenging than

the year one activity because it involves the development and presentation of a performance, but is directed by academic staff members.

- Year three: In groups of three or four, students undertake a research project in a much more independent manner. Students:
 - select and approach the organisation with whom they want to work
 - conduct a background literature review of previous initiatives and practice with their target group
 - discuss the project with the organisation's employees
 - design and implement a theatre project, and
 - reflect on the project's effectiveness with supervision from academic staff members.
- Masters level: Students at this level have previous experience in either teaching or drama. They are expected to operate at a more sophisticated level to produce work that demonstrates a deeper level of reflection and analysis. The curriculum covers action research, ethnographic, case study and narrative enquiry research tools to help students engage in and understand the practical work in a more systematic and critical manner.

For further details:

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