



## The Teaching-Research Nexus

A guide for academics and policy-makers  
in higher education

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### Examples from Australian universities

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#### **Explicit Linkages Between Pedagogy and Research in a First Year Cultural Studies Course**

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**Broad discipline area:**

Arts and Humanities

- Cultural Studies

**Year level:**

- First year undergraduate

**TRN strategy:**

- Building small-scale research activities into undergraduate assessment
- Designing learning activities around ‘real world’ research applications
- Linking research, community engagement and teaching

**Teaching and learning context:**

- Large class lectures
- Assessment item
- Community engagement

**Brief description of the initiative:**

*Introduction to Cultural Studies* taken in the first year of the Bachelor of Arts with typical enrolment numbers of 140 introduces students to contemporary cultural studies. Students examine the value of knowledge and its relationship to cultural and everyday contexts. Through engagement with social, political and cultural understandings of identity, the course, with its focus on power, place and ethics, aims to equip students with the necessary tools to engage critically in the complex world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A week is devoted to examining the nature of pedagogy and its relationship to research. This course aims to provide students with an introduction to research and the notion of producing knowledge. A democratic relationship between lecturer and students is fostered and there is a strong focus on community engagement. The students are encouraged to develop an understanding of how their learning and their knowledge is related to the community.

The course includes a community focused research project. Students devise their own project topic around the theme of locating themselves in society. One research project example was on the iconic Mooball general store. The student addressed the enculturation of that place and what it meant to them by collecting samples from the location, including postcards and local motifs. Another student devised a project on handshakes and human communication through hand contact, collecting and demonstrating almost 200 different types of handshakes.

**Benefits to students:**

- Students become independent learners who take responsibility for producing knowledge
- Students' interest in Cultural Studies is enhanced
- Students' critical thinking ability is developed
- Students develop the ability to apply learning to different contexts

**For further details:**

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