



The Teaching-Research Nexus

A guide for academics and policy-makers
in higher education

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Examples from Australian universities

Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners

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Broad discipline area:

Education

- Educational Leadership

Year level:

- Masters Coursework

TRN strategy:

- Drawing on personal research in designing and teaching courses
- Conducting and drawing on research into student learning to make evidence based decisions about teaching

Teaching and learning context:

- Student-lecturer research collaborations
- Large group lectures
- Small group classes/tutorials
- Mentoring of individual students
- Assessment item
- Curriculum design
- Course evaluation

Brief description of the initiative:

This initiative is embedded in the teaching and research experiences of the authors as a consequence of their experiences in the Pilot Project “Leaders Transforming Learning and Learners (LTLL) (2004-2006) and the follow up Phase Two of the Project (2007-9). This Program is an initiative of The Flagship for Creative and Authentic Leadership at the Australian Catholic University in partnership with six Catholic Education Offices in New South Wales. The purpose of the initial project was to explore the impact on the processes and quality of learning in nine Secondary and Primary schools across NSW of the implementation of a framework for linking leadership and learning on a strong and explicit platform of moral purpose. The fundamental belief that underpinned the LTLL Program was an explicit approach to values and ethics could inform leadership and learning in schools in such a way as to contribute to authentic, transformed learning. Researchers and participants engaged

in the development and implementation of a new framework which embraced values, ethics, leadership, learning and an explicit sense of the transformed learner.

The insights gained through the numerous research and teaching activities associated with the Project have directly influenced the teaching and learning of the Masters of Educational Leadership at ACU in the following ways:

1) The development, implementation, research and redesign of the conceptual model linking leadership and learning has led to changes in the curriculum and teaching practice within specialist units of the Masters degree, especially EDLE 633 *Leading Authentic Learning*, EDLE 637 *Shared Leadership*, EDLE 636 *Leading The Catholic School* and EDLE 635 *Authentic Leadership*. In particular elements of the conceptual model related to teacher leadership, values and ethics and the underlying moral purpose underpinning the model, the nature of authentic learning and the influence of educative leadership have all been incorporated into content and methodologies of these units.

2) The reflective process utilised to develop an insight into each of the project schools as authentic learning places, has been incorporated into the teaching of EDLE 633 *Leading Authentic Learning*

3) The research and experiences of the LTL Project schools and participants gave insights to the impact of the program on learning for school students but also on the total educational communities involved. The experience of changed approaches to leadership and the resultant ownership and commitment to the various learning projects utilised by project teams and other teachers in the schools to implement the new framework for learning influenced the way the authors viewed and teach about leadership for learning in masters units indicated above.

4) The differentiation of leadership roles played by the researchers and their school and system partners has led to reexamination and emphasis on the core constructs of educational leadership. Theories which have been variously labelled shared, distributed, parallel, transforming, visionary and teacher leadership have been reconsidered in the light of experience, and have led to the use of different teaching resources, including some of the materials generated by the research.

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