**Principle 3**
*Emphasise the importance, relevance, and integration of theory and knowledge with professional practice to develop solutions to real world issues.*

**Case Study 1**

**Dr Eddo Coiacetto**, School of Environment  
Winner - 2008 ALTC Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning

Urban and environmental planners can help shape a better environment, better cities and a better future and quality of life for people. Innovative approaches and courses, which are practice-based and informed, help build resilient and astute planners who will flourish in this challenging environment, without losing their idealism.

I designed the Planning Practicum courses to facilitate the transition to professional practice. Most planning schools have a work experience component, but this course is unique in that it is highly structured and integrates work, reflection and theory and prepares students emotionally and ethically for professional practice. It involves several integrated elements that combine to achieve the course aims: (1) six months of pre-enrolment preparation including grooming to impress the market-place, counselling and a structured, guided, shared-learning process for finding a placement in professional practice (2) a practicum placement forming the basis for fieldwork (3) formal teaching sessions and assessment that require the class to reflect on and integrate theory, their experience and that of others in investigating topics like professionalism and ethics, the job search process, the nature of planning and (4) a formal Practicum Forum showcasing project outcomes that brings together the students, their Placement Supervisors and School staff. In meeting the course aims, students undergo an impressive metamorphosis, as staff in the School observe at the Forum and in the 2nd semester courses which follow.

Seven years before the Planning Institute of Australia (2004) identified the need for appreciation of land development processes in planning education, I created *Development Processes Studio*, a project based course that gives a comprehensive, fine grained realistic understanding of this issue. The *Studio* prepares planners to work on complicated, multidimensional real-world problems characterised by situations of uncertainty, imperfect information and multiple potential solutions. This is achieved by teaching in guided ‘studio mode’ modelled on real world consulting processes and authentic projects. My *Studio* is a radical departure from the way much planning is taught because it emphasises and penetrates the real urban development world of land owners, property developers and finance as opposed to taking a naïve, normative and idealistic approach. The defining feature of the studio is that it is work under the supervision and guidance of a teaching team. The studio includes a field visit, guest speakers, question times, progress reporting time, and student presentations. Most of the time, however, is working time with the teaching team helping the student teams through the various tasks. Studios are an exciting way to teach and an exciting way to learn! They are different to other kinds of teaching and learning. Studio teaching is more like coaching than conventional lecturing but involves both. It is very interactive and involves guiding students in real projects for realistic clients — experiential learning at its best.

Hear Eddo speaking about Student studies in Environmental Planning  