

PROFILING THE 2009 RECIPIENTS OF THE TERTIARY TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE IN TERTIARY EDUCATION



Excellence



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I N T R O D U C T I O N

Tertiary teachers make a valuable contribution to our society. They build on the good work of early childhood, primary and secondary teachers.

This publication profiles ten outstanding tertiary teachers. It gives a glimpse of the philosophies, practices and perspectives of the recipients of the 2009 Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards. It also has contributions from students endorsing the skills, attitudes, knowledge and sustained commitment of the ten.

The Honourable Anne Tolley, Minister of Education presented the 2009 Awards at a ceremony in the Grand Hall of Parliament on the evening of 21st July. The Minister acknowledged the many demands on tertiary teachers and the creative and enthusiastic ways the 2009 recipients have faced those demands and delivered high quality learning experiences for their students. The Minister also acknowledged the fine work of the 2009 Awards Committee, which was led by the new Chair, Emeritus Professor Noeline Alcorn. The other members of the committee for 2009 were:

Dr Peter Coolbear – Ako Aotearoa
Greg Durkin – Industry Training Federation
Dr Lisa Emerson – Ako Aotearoa Academy of
Tertiary Teaching Excellence

Dr Sally Hunter – Tertiary Education Union
Jordan King – New Zealand Union of Students'
Associations

Dr Marjorie Manthei – Institutes of Technology
and Polytechnics of New Zealand

Dr Michael Roberts – New Zealand Association
of Private Education Providers

Dr Mary Simpson – Teacher Education Forum
of Aotearoa New Zealand

Alieta Uelese – Association of Maori Providers
of Training Education and Employment.

The following pages contain a foreword by Minister Tolley and comments from the Committee Chair and the Director of Ako Aotearoa. The remainder of the booklet consists of the ten recipients describing aspects of their work as teachers.

Any organisation teaching tertiary students is eligible to nominate teachers for these awards. A nomination form and full details of the criteria and process for applying for the 2010 awards are available in the "Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards" section of the Ako Aotearoa website, www.ako.aotearoa.ac.nz

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MINISTER'S FOREWORD

HONOURABLE

Anne Tolley

MINISTER FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION

As Minister for Tertiary Education, I am delighted to introduce this publication that recognises our 2009 Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award recipients. Within these pages you'll find examples of excellent teaching across our diverse tertiary education sector.

I congratulate Ako Aotearoa for creating this fantastic publication and the Tertiary Teaching Awards Committee for once again selecting a high calibre group of award recipients.

Over the past decade we have seen marked trends in tertiary education. The number of people taking up tertiary study has increased rapidly. Our students are from increasingly diverse educational and cultural backgrounds. There is also greater emphasis on second-chance learning and innovative methods such as learning in the workplace.

Combined, these trends place greater demands on our teachers to meet the diverse needs and learning styles of modern learners. In such an environment, commitment, enthusiasm and creativity are valuable qualities for our teachers and it is very encouraging to be able to celebrate such fine examples of these in this publication. When you read the teachers' profiles, you get a keen sense of creativity and enthusiasm. These

teachers have gone over and above just 'doing a job' and have made it their mission to give their students the tools to achieve in education and other areas of their lives.

Clearly, they appreciate the power that education has to expand their students' world and what they believe is possible. For that reason, excellent teaching is a truly magical gift.

Excellent teachers put their students at the centre of their teaching. This is where we share a common goal – to see the needs of both students and the economy drive training and education. This publication provides others in the sector and the public with a valuable insight into quality tertiary teaching. It fits well with this Government's desire to see more information made available about the quality of tertiary education organisations so that students can make well-informed decisions about what and where they study.

I am happy to be a part of recognising and encouraging our excellent tertiary teachers.



CHAIR'S COMMENT

Noeline Alcorn

CHAIR TERTIARY TEACHING AWARDS COMMITTEE

My warmest congratulations to all the winners of Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards for 2009, especially Selene Mize, winner of the Prime Minister's Supreme Award.

It was an honour and privilege to be part of the committee that chooses the winners of these awards and to work with such a thoughtful, discerning, hardworking and cooperative committee. There were a number of stunning portfolios which demonstrated outstanding creativity and commitment and we wished it were possible to have a larger number of winners.

Teaching is not easy and the award winners provided ample evidence of the work they put into the task. They thought constantly about how they could improve their teaching, how they could help more students overcome blocks and difficulties, how they could inspire students with a love of the subject they were teaching and how they could design innovative assessment tasks and resources that would challenge and engage students. Their reflections resulted in new ideas, new strategies, new collaborations with others and new uses of technology to assist learning. A number of them confessed that their first attempts at tertiary teaching were both scary and humbling but that failure made them determined to learn more about teaching and to aspire to follow mentors they admired.

This year's winners come from diverse backgrounds, and teach a variety of subjects in different kinds of institutions. Their roles range from second chance education for those whose earlier educational experience has been

unsuccessful to supervising highly talented doctoral students. They teach in police education preparation, science, law, music, communication, computer science, statistics, religious studies, early childhood education, and geography. But they have a number of attitudes and attributes in common.

They all regard relationships with students as crucial to the learning process. Even those who teach very large classes at a time are concerned to make a difference to all their students, to allow for different levels of initial attainment, different backgrounds, different cultures and linguistic groups, and different learning styles. They are supportive of students, helping them to believe in their ability to learn by providing successful steps along the way, presenting material in forms that aided understanding and relating more abstract concepts to everyday life. At the same time they all challenge students to believe in themselves and their ability to learn, to achieve more than they thought they were capable of. They also challenge



students to think for themselves, to question ideas and assumptions, to be creative, and to become independent of their teachers.

The winning portfolios also demonstrated that those who excel in teaching love what they do. Many indicated how lucky they felt to have such a great job. They are enthusiastic about learning themselves, they have a passion for what they teach and they take genuine pleasure in working with students, often maintaining contact with them

long after their classroom connection is over and expressing gratitude for the ways in which students shape them and enable them to learn more about their subject and themselves. Outstanding teachers are the lifeblood of our tertiary system, enthusing, challenging and inspiring students and sharing their enthusiasm and knowledge with colleagues. New Zealand is fortunate to have teachers of the calibre of these awardees.



DIRECTOR'S COMMENT

Dr Peter Coolbear

DIRECTOR, AKO AOTEAROA

It was an immense privilege to be on the selection committee for the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards again this year. It was also a privilege to serve under our new Chair, Professor Noeline Alcorn. My sincere thanks go to her for her deft facilitation of a process made delightfully difficult because of the overall strength of the field of inspirational teachers nominated by their tertiary education organisations. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the other members of the awards panel for all their hard work in evaluating nominations and their careful deliberation.

The awardees come from diverse backgrounds and teach in diverse disciplines. While all have demonstrated sustained excellence, some are well established in their profession and others have the greater part of their teaching careers still before them. Some have come into teaching from other careers and bring those perspectives with them into the learning environment. If they share two things, it is their absolute commitment to enhancing their students' learning and their willingness to try a range of approaches to ensure that each student has the best possible opportunity to achieve in their classes.

The need to strengthen the evidence base for the enhancement of the quality of tertiary education in New Zealand is an important area of debate in New Zealand at present (as it is in other English-speaking education systems). All too often research

on tertiary education is limited, both in terms of robustness of methodology and its lack of focus on informing practice. We encourage tertiary teachers to be professionals, to be reflective practitioners; but often, even with the best of intentions, this can default into self-reference.

In contrast, the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards process requires nominees to develop a rigorous evidence base to demonstrate their sustained excellence as tertiary teachers. During their careers these awardees have challenged themselves to demonstrate that their undoubted innovation and commitment to teaching is in fact of benefit to their learners. What's more, this challenge is one they set themselves every time they engage with their students. These awardees represent the pinnacle of their profession: Ako Aotearoa is proud to present their stories.

A W A R D *Recipients* 2009



Selene Mize



Jean Crane



Paul Denny



Dr Rachel Fewster



Sam Honey



Dr Heather Kavan



Judy Magee



Dr Chris Marshall



Norman Meehan



Dr Eric Pawson



PRIME MINISTER'S SUPREME AWARD

Selene Mize

SENIOR LECTURER, FACULTY OF LAW ■ UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO

Passion for the law coupled with a deep commitment to teaching underpins Selene Mize's exceptional practice. Selene is an excellent teacher who designs learning that engages and stretches students. For more than 20 years she has demonstrated sustained excellence and is regarded by students and colleagues as an inspirational teacher. Her teaching draws on her nationally and internationally recognized expertise in client interviewing, client counselling and legal negotiation. The outcomes of Selene's skills are clearly evident through her coaching of New Zealand teams from the five law schools to achieve great success in international counselling and negotiation competitions.

Selene places a high priority on staying current with respect to her teaching practice and to her discipline. She has embraced innovations that can enhance her teaching and she shares her expertise through participation in a range of university and New Zealand-wide teaching initiatives. Described by one of her past students as "an inspiration, and an irreplaceable gift to the legal profession", Selene is a shining example of an outstanding tertiary educator who is creative and innovative in her practice.

I had already decided by my early teens that I wanted to teach. Through helping friends at school, I had discovered that I was good at imagining myself in another's position, figuring out where he or she was having the most trouble, and finding ways to explain clearly and surmount the hurdle. I discovered a love for teaching based on the joy of seeing students grow and develop.

Being passionate about teaching has led me into some very interesting experiences. While my

main University teaching responsibilities are in the law – Legal Ethics, Media Law, Negotiation and Civil Liberties – I have also taught scuba diving, breastfeeding and religion. I have given guest lectures to film, journalism and medical students, supervised psychology research, and provided training in communication skills to community organisations, including the Dunedin Community Law Centre. I have worked with people one-on-one, in small groups, in medium-sized optional

classes and in large compulsory lecture classes with more than 200 students, and at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level. I have found that I can be successful in all these diverse areas by taking a problem-solving approach to my teaching.

Abstract theory is not my particular forte. Instead, I am a very practical person who is good with details. I strive to imagine the educational and real-world challenges that students are likely to face, and design innovative ways of addressing them. My focus is on providing students with a toolkit of information and techniques that will help them to succeed – as students, and in their personal and professional lives. I spend a lot of time reflecting, seeking feedback, critically evaluating my teaching and then refining it. I am constantly designing improvements, whether it is new content to be taught, a new way to teach existing content, or a way to make assessment fairer. Some of these innovations do not turn out as hoped, but even these experiences help lead me to later success.

Keeping Students Interested

One challenge to which I've applied this approach is the need to actively engage students. To encourage students to think about the relevance of course content to their future careers, I try to place them directly into hypothetical scenarios, e.g. "You are in court and without warning your

co-counsel lies to the judge. What do you do?" Avoiding "legalese" is also important, as is breaking difficult concepts down into smaller parts and using examples, case studies and quirky analogies (e.g. "Should lawyers be like Big Macs?"). I use topical focuses for legal analysis (e.g. censorship of violent video games in Civil Liberties and All Black contract negotiations in Negotiation), and television and movie clips also help to maintain interest. During the first Ethics class I use a clip from *Boston Legal* showing the protagonist undermining the confidence of opposing counsel, a close friend, by mocking his disability in order to win a court case. Students are asked to write 1-3 sentences on why this is – or is not – good lawyering. This exercise produces wonderful results.

Encouraging Participation

I use modern technology to encourage student participation: for example, "clickers" – feedback remotes that are given to students. I pose multiple choice questions in class and the students' anonymous answers are instantly collated and projected on the screen. There are many uses for this technology, including checking how much students have retained from earlier classes, surveying their opinions, and testing their ability to apply difficult concepts to new situations. Clickers help students learn by giving them an easy and enjoyable way to participate actively in class, and



by warning students who give incorrect answers that more work is needed. To promote wide-ranging class discussion on sensitive topics, I encourage students to discuss ideas without owning them (so instead of divulging personal views e.g. “I don’t think pornography should be censored”, they can speak in the abstract, e.g. “an opponent of censoring pornography might argue that it has value as free speech”). Anonymous class discussion boards on the internet also facilitate discussion of sensitive issues.

Promoting Ethical Reflection

I want students in Legal Ethics to reflect and develop their own personal ethical standards, within the bounds of the law. To promote the development of moral reasoning abilities, I avoid advocating my own personal beliefs, eschew dogmatic statements and instead tell stories of actual lawyers who have faced ethically-challenging situations. I present a range of appropriate but different viewpoints in class, ask thought-provoking questions, and encourage discussion about the methodology of making ethical decisions. I challenge the assumption made by many students that they would never be tempted to behave unethically by referring to experiments showing the strong influences of authority and peer groups on decision-making. We discuss strategies for resisting these and other real world pressures such as the need to make a living. Students have told me that class debates have continued outside of class at social events, and I see this as evidence that the course is stimulating some deep thought.

Improving Exam Technique

Like many teachers, I am not very fond of marking. One reason has been my frustration at reading examination scripts that did not accurately reflect student abilities, often due in part to poor exam-writing skills. My approach to this problem has included using past exam questions as application examples in class or tutorial; providing handouts on what is expected on exams, including a list of common mistakes; providing optional on-line quizzes; and giving detailed individual written feedback on optional midterm exams. Additionally, I have begun providing a post-exam handout with

actual typed and anonymised student answers receiving different marks (e.g. A, B and C answers) for each exam question – often annotated with ways in which the answer could have been improved. These handouts are made available to students both in that class and in subsequent years. Model answers written by the lecturer can be seen as unattainable; actual good student answers are given more credence. Encouraging students to compare answers usually makes the differences between A and B answers clearer to them. This approach turns a final exam into formative as well as summative assessment. I attribute a significant improvement in exam answers to lessons learned by students from seeing others’ good and bad practice in the context of a real exam.

Enhancing Cultural Awareness

I work with students preparing for competitions in client counselling and negotiation skills by conducting training programmes prior to the local competitions, and then intensively training the winners in preparation for national and international competitions. The teams I have coached or assisted have done extremely well at the international competitions. I am always looking for ways in which these competitions could be improved. For example, at the International Client Counselling Competition in 2001, I observed a judge criticise the Hong Kong team for offering the client business cards at the start of the interview. As students are told to pretend that the interviews are taking place in their home country, steps needed to be taken to raise the cultural awareness of judges. As a member of the international executive committee, I presented a paper on cultural differences and successfully advocated for changes to competition procedures and assessment.

Caring for Students

A problem-solving approach is only part of being a good teacher; it is also of course necessary to care deeply about students and their progress. Whether I am teaching one-on-one or in a very large compulsory lecture class, I try to view and respond to students as individuals. Amongst other things, this means allowing them to develop their



own personal approaches wherever possible, and interacting with them in a respectful and accepting way. It is also important to be available to students for both educational support and pastoral care, and I have taken steps to be very accessible.

Plans for the Future

I am extremely grateful for the financial support associated with this award. I have always planned, if I won, to secure videotapes demonstrating key dispute resolution techniques. I teach on my own, and demonstrations usually require at least two people, so either commissioning my own videos or purchasing some from overseas will give me a great classroom resource. I place a high priority on searching for technological developments that

could facilitate teaching and staying current with respect to teaching practice. Meeting with like-minded individuals and sharing ideas is invaluable in this regard. I will be using the grant to fund attendance at a conference in America in mid-September focusing on a recent major report urging changes to the way lawyers are trained. I may also attend an international symposium in November concentrating on the best ways to teach Legal Ethics. These are just some of the wonderful possibilities now available to me.

Winning this award has been the highlight of my career and a tremendous honour. It would not have been possible without the generous support of wonderful students, colleagues and role models. I am extremely grateful to you all.

PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

"Selene has a very positive and interactive approach to her teaching that is hugely valuable and in my experience sets her apart from many other lecturers. Throughout my time at university I have witnessed how hard it can be to get students to play an active role in their own learning and it is great to see how Selene is able to foster the confidence in her students that facilitates this. It takes a special and dynamic teacher to achieve this and Selene is exceptional at what she does. Selene makes herself incredibly available to her students with her 'open door' office policy and is always willing to give up her time for her students. ...Selene stands out as someone willing to adapt and mould her teaching style to fit the students, the issues and the technologies at her disposal."

Tom Clark, current student

"Selene is truly an exceptional educator with a real commitment to her students. She is a warm and embracing person, with a unique ability to inspire young minds. Her negotiation class was an excellent blend of theory and practice with real-life exercises, and I believe is the best of its kind in New Zealand. She was continually able to distil complex concepts into ideas that were understandable to her students. Her obvious enthusiasm for her subjects was infectious, and she was able to motivate students with a real desire to learn. Selene was always willing to provide advice and mentoring, and engage students on their wider interests and future plans. ...I have no doubt the skills which I learned from Selene are a key reason why I now successfully represent New Zealand in United Nations negotiations on a daily basis."

Scott Sheeran, former student, currently Legal Adviser, New Zealand Mission to the United Nations



S U S T A I N E D E X C E L L E N C E

Jean Crayne

TUTOR ■ INSIGHT LEARNING ACADEMY

Building on her extensive teaching and leadership experience in early childhood education in the Pacific, Jean has developed and led the delivery of the National Certificate in Early Childhood Education (Level 3) at the Insight Learning Academy since 2004. Most of her students have had little prior academic success, and Jean is extraordinarily effective in working closely with them to develop their confidence and learning skills. In many cases the students have gone on to achieve at levels they originally thought were well beyond their capabilities.

Jean is highly supportive of her colleagues and also works extensively with external service agencies for the benefit of her students and their communities. Jean relates how fortunate she is “to have had such rich and varied learning experiences throughout my life and how drawing on this knowledge and sharing these wonderful experiences with others has enabled me to assist students to catch the vision for their own lives and move on to realise their own potential”.

Jean won the New Zealand Association of Private Education Providers’ *Tutor of the Year Award* in 2008.

Professional Development

Throughout the years my professional development has been an ongoing, ‘on the job’ learning process. From 1965 to 2009 there have been many factors that have had a profound influence on this growth.

From an early age, my one desire was to be a teacher and during my childhood many hours were spent ‘teaching my dolls’. Upon leaving school in the mid 1960s I undertook Community Nurse training as I was not successful in my application for Kindergarten Teacher Training. In 1968 I relocated with my husband to Fiji, where we remained for 33 years.

In due course I completed my Early Childhood Education training and went on to manage my own multicultural preschool and then moved on to coordinate the University of the South Pacific (USP), Continuing Education, Pacific Preschool Teachers Certificate programme (PPTC). As PPTC Programme Coordinator I supervised approximately 300 tertiary level students per semester. The training enabled isolated teachers who had no access to financial support or face-to-face training to receive at least basic ECE training via extension studies.

Visiting the students to run workshops and

summer schools was one way I had of helping the students understand the course content. Many of these visits were to outer islands, where working conditions were very primitive, but seeing the students' enthusiasm and keenness to learn made it all worthwhile. Just being with the students was a wonderful learning experience for me. To facilitate the observation of quality care and good teaching practice I was active in helping set up model ECE Centres in some Pacific Island countries.

In 2000 I provided the ECE component as part of the Marshall Islands' School to Work Basic Teacher Training Programme. This was a joint initiative between the Marshall Islands Government and the USP. I also coordinated and developed a basic ECE Curriculum for the Head Start programme for the Marshall Islands Department of Education. Emphasis was placed on the extensive use of environmental materials, as many ECE centres operate on small atolls at some distance from the main island, limiting access to resources.

In 2004 I joined the Gracelands' Insight Learning Academy, a Private Education Provider in Hamilton NZ, as the tutor for the *Caring 4 Young Children* programme. Students taking the course are working towards the National Certificate ECE Level 3.

Empowerment

My teaching philosophy has been influenced to a large extent by the lasting impression my high school testimonial had on me. This document stated that I was below average academically and would never accomplish much in my life! This of course did little for my self-esteem. It did however make me very determined as an educator to inspire my students to develop in knowledge and skill, so they feel empowered to make a valued contribution to society.

Because the students in my training programme are unemployed adults, the main focus of the programme is to prepare them for employment or further training. To do this I work closely with them to support and encourage them as they each embark on their own wonderful journey of discovery. I see my role as that of a facilitator, sharing ideas with students but not dominating them, setting up a supportive learning environment, having a consistent, warm relationship with them and providing learning resources.

My learning environment is a large, airy room full of natural light. It is set up to create a positive atmosphere and to display the cultural values of ECE. Students have their own allocated learning space and I encourage them to be fully involved





in creating a classroom environment that is inviting and culturally relevant. This promotes ownership of the room and a sense of pride.

Having a diverse range of cultures and abilities in my learning environment, I cater for each student's individual development and personal dignity through good tutor-learner relationships and fostering of good peer relationships. I provide inspiration by being a good role model. I am passionate, committed and have an open door policy. One on one meetings with students are an on-going daily occurrence with their learning needs and pathway plans being discussed. This helps me recognise student concerns and build mutual respect and trust. By creating an environment where students feel empowered, rapport is built between everyone. This is vitally important because students are together from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the same learning environment all year and need a supportive, safe and caring place, where they enjoy learning.

Various methods are used to measure the students' performance. These include a combination of formative and summative assessments. Students undertake a combination of unit standards as set down by NZQA to

complete the *Caring 4 Young Children Programme*. These cover the National Certificate ECE Level 3 units, as well as pathway planning and employment skills units. The unit assessments evaluate the extent to which the students have understood the content covered in the teaching process. As students work towards their certificate they are also heading towards their NCEA Levels 1, 2 and 3.

Delivering a unit is either done in small groups or individually. During these sessions I clarify the concepts by using techniques such as demonstrating, describing, encouraging, listening and questioning. These techniques help students think about things in a new way and this in turn extends their understanding. One of the main techniques I use is scaffolding. To do this, I also work in collaboration with the students, so there is a connection between them as learners and me as the educator. I take into account the learning styles of the students involved and mix the use of visual, kinaesthetic and auditory learning aids. Ample opportunity is provided to reflect on what they are learning and to receive and give feedback. All these techniques empower the students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and in doing so develop their confidence and self-esteem.

Another means of helping students gain valuable practical knowledge outside the classroom environment is work experience. Students are able to apply theory learnt in the classroom to real-life situations. At regular intervals throughout each practicum I meet with the student and centre supervisor to discuss progress. This experiential learning helps students consolidate their learning.

Throughout the programme students are encouraged to compile a portfolio of resources they can utilise in the future. This is a very popular activity and some excellent work is produced. Students also learn children's songs and rhymes, present play activities workshops and participate in Maori culture sessions.

When students complete their course they attend a special graduation ceremony. For many students this is the first time they have ever received a certificate, so it is a very proud moment, not only for the students but for their families and for me as well.



In 2007 I nominated one of my students for the New Zealand Association of Private Education Providers' *Student of the Year Award* and she was the successful candidate. Winning this award inspired her to enrol at Waikato University and undertake a B.Ed. Primary. This was something she presumed to be beyond her capabilities when she enrolled in the *Caring 4 Young Children* course.

In 2008, when I was honoured with the New Zealand Association of Private Education Providers' *Tutor of the Year Award*, I thought I had reached the pinnacle of my teaching career. But winning an Ako Aotearoa Tertiary Teaching Excellence

Award has now opened up a whole new world of possibilities as far as my future professional development is concerned. I now have the potential to pursue avenues of learning I never thought possible. Attending conferences and seminars relevant to ECE will be high on my priority list, as will further studies in ECE and Adult Teaching. I feel very privileged to have won the highest accolade that a tertiary educator can achieve and to have had such a rich and varied career with so many wonderful opportunities for growth and development.

PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

"This is the first time I have done any study since I left school 10 years ago because I didn't think I could, but with Jean's help I am enjoying this course."

Jessica Pegler, GIL Student, 2007-8

"...I have worked with Jean at the Insight Learning Academy since 2005 and have great admiration for her dedication to her students, her professionalism and commitment to her work...She has an infectious laugh and a relaxed attitude, is very supportive of all staff and a real pleasure to work with..."

Annette Van Lamoen, Literacy Tutor GIL 2009

"... Jean gives time and thought to her colleagues, gladly sharing ideas and being willing to learn from them. All with the one purpose: to encourage and be encouraged without any sense of competition. Jean has no interest in promoting herself as she is tirelessly involved in giving support to others."

Katryna Latif, Tutor, National Certificate ECE Level 3, Onehunga College, Auckland, 2009

"...I have appreciated Jean's expertise and support. She has a wealth of knowledge, which she generously shares, always with a smile..."

Jean has created many of the resources, which help the students navigate the programme successfully.

A parent of a student Jean tutored about 5 years ago told me recently that her daughter

is now studying for a Social Work degree and said that without Jean's non-judgmental approach there would have been a far different outcome for her..."

Colleen Bolt, Tutor, Community Support Services, GIL, 2009

"...Jean is an excellent tutor who goes the extra mile with students, and is a wonderful role model for both our students and staff. Jean faces a variety of challenges in her position. Over the past 12 months she has had a number of students with English as a second language and a variety of students with mental health issues, physical disabilities and learning problems. At our graduation ceremonies, the success of Jean's programme is evident in the number of students receiving a National Certificate, and the number moving into employment or further education.

Jean is continually looking at ways of improving her programme. She creates innovative and student-friendly workbooks and resources to assist them with their unit achievement. Her classroom is a visual delight – her students are assisted by her to bring forth their creativity and this is of the utmost advantage to them, when going on to work with small children in childcare centres.

Jean is also an inspiration and a great help to staff – she listens to problems, is generous with her time, is compassionate and caring and is always there for any of us if needed."

Chris Russell, Manager, Graceland Insight Learning, 2009



SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

Paul Denny

SENIOR TUTOR ■ DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE, THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

Students say that Paul brings to his classroom “unparalleled enthusiasm, confidence, and charisma”. Paul has been teaching computer programming since 1999, and his teaching is characterised by its creativity and innovation plus genuine empathy for students. One of his students comments, “I’m sure that one day during a lecture we’ll see a sequin-clad assistant and several white rabbits leap from his computer, such is his magic”.

Paul describes his teaching as being motivated by “identifying barriers to student learning, and designing approaches and innovations to break these down”. His range of strategies and tools to help students engage in new ways of learning is truly remarkable and includes: voluntary programming competitions, on-line peer assessment forums (for which Paul has gained international recognition), an interactive on-line instruction tool, and the use of wiki reports as a form of assessment. He uses this diverse range of approaches to encourage student autonomy in very large classes and at the same time creates opportunities for him to give individual attention where needed.

Teaching Computing

My teaching career had a less than ideal beginning. The classroom itself was quite normal – a small 24-seat tutorial room with a whiteboard. By the end of the fourth week of the course more than 40 students were attending. Students sat on the concrete floor, stood around the edges of the room, and spilled out into the hall. As a new teacher I wanted to honour their willingness to learn, but I had no formal teaching training and only enthusiasm and intuition to rely on. I felt an obligation to evaluate and develop my teaching ability and effectiveness. As a result, over the last ten years I have pioneered ways to foster communities of students engaged in online

collaborative learning, initiated strategies to include and celebrate students with diverse backgrounds, and designed and developed learning software used around the world.

I teach introductory computer science at The University of Auckland. These classes are typically very large, and it would not be uncommon to have 600 students split across three lecture streams. Learning to program is difficult, and it requires incredible precision and patience. Unlike humans, who can make sense of essays containing multiple spelling and grammatical errors, a computer is completely unforgiving – the smallest errors can render a program unusable. While the science of computing is heavily theory based, the practice is

very much an art form, requiring creativity and experience. For a long time I have been interested in ways of motivating students, particularly in very large classes, to engage with concepts that are difficult.

Teaching Philosophy

I believe that involving students in community oriented activities, in which they are responsible for creating and sharing learning resources, is an effective way to promote deep learning. It helps build self-awareness of learning processes and gives students a sense of control over their learning. I integrate activities and assessments into my courses that foster the development of such communities. This kind of engagement emphasizes higher-order cognitive processes such as evaluation, reflection and critical thinking. It helps to transform students from being passive receptors of information, a natural consequence of the traditional lecture environment, to becoming active and critical members of a community engaged in the process of constructing knowledge.

PeerWise

For many students entering university today, using the web to access information is second nature. They are familiar with the value of user-generated content, the lifeblood of Web 2.0. They watch videos on YouTube, and use social networking tools such as Bebo, MySpace and Facebook. As an extension of my teaching philosophy I created

an online learning tool, PeerWise, which aims to exploit the familiarity students have with social software while engaging them in a learning community.

PeerWise allows students to create, share, critique and answer multiple-choice questions in a web-based environment. Students create an original multiple-choice question stem, one correct answer with up to four distracters, an associated model answer and a clear written explanation, which can then be answered and critiqued by their peers. This process supports student learning in a number of ways.

In choosing a topic and composing a question, students must focus on the learning outcomes of the course. They need to consider specific misconceptions when designing effective distracters, and writing an accompanying explanation for their question requires students to express their understanding of a topic in their own words.

When answering questions on PeerWise, students receive immediate feedback on their answers and are encouraged to make critical judgments regarding the contributions of their peers, bringing important analysis skills into play. Many self-assessment and peer comparison opportunities arise as students can see how their answer to a question compares with other students in the class, and can compare the quality of their questions and explanations with those of their peers. By the end of the semester, through their





collective efforts, the class is able to build a large repository of multiple choice questions that can be used for exam revision.

As a student-driven resource, PeerWise requires very little moderation from staff. While I originally developed PeerWise for use in my own classes, it has proven transferable across both disciplinary and institutional boundaries. It is now regularly used across a range of departments at The University of Auckland, and at more than 10 institutions around the world.

Community-oriented learning

The “knowledge economy” demands that students develop skills to work independently, to filter and critically evaluate large amounts of information and to use online tools to communicate effectively. One activity that I use to build these skills has students develop exam revision resources collaboratively on the class wiki. Students must communicate effectively using the wiki to coordinate the efforts of their team. They develop skills in filtering and evaluating the quality of the wiki content, enabling the wiki to serve as a useful revision resource. The community focused aspect of the activity helps to develop a spirit of collaboration and is a central theme of my teaching philosophy.

A related activity, which leverages the experience and interests of my students, involves them publishing online a reflective report about a

program they have written. They are free to choose the topic and the scope of their program, in line with their interests and capabilities. These reports are accessible via the class wiki, which exposes students to solutions to a diverse range of problems. The ability to read and comprehend code is an important learning outcome, and this is an engaging and social way of promoting that skill. The creativity and variety produced by students in this exercise is astounding – and each semester’s reports are archived and available to inspire students in future semesters.

When students submit solutions to their programming projects, I have them peer review one another’s work. Students review a selection of projects from their peers, giving them insight into the assessment process and allowing them to reflect on the way that their own work will be assessed. The peer review activity also means students receive very timely feedback – within a matter of hours they can read reviews on the project that they submitted – which would not otherwise be possible in a very large class.

In each of these community-oriented activities, students are encouraged to support one another’s learning, and this helps to build a sense of community in my classes.

Student diversity

One challenge that arises when teaching a large, diverse student population is catering appropriately for the range of abilities. Carefully designed open-ended assignments allow flexibility in the solutions, but also remain appealing so that students are interested in what they are doing and encouraged to engage in independent learning.

One example of such an assignment gives students the freedom to develop their own interactive games. My involvement in the assignment includes providing the software framework, and giving advice to students and helping them develop their ideas, including discussing many advanced topics which are well outside the curriculum. Students are very proud of the work they produce, and the showcase lecture in which I demonstrate the submissions to the class is always very well attended. The quality of the students’ work is often well above the standard expected from first-year



students, and is strong evidence of the deep, independent learning which has taken place.

Future Directions

In the immediate future, I will continue to share my work on PeerWise with colleagues throughout the institution, New Zealand and further afield. I am committed to furthering the impact of this educative tool in diverse contexts. I am also currently in the early stages of designing a new tool which I hope will provide an engaging way for novice programmers to learn and think about programming.

Preparing my teaching portfolio highlighted for

me that while not all ideas I explore have been or will be successful, investigating them and evaluating their effectiveness is important. It has reinforced for me the value of finding relevant contexts to ground course content and motivate students.

I feel a great deal of gratitude to the students I have been fortunate enough to teach over the years. Amongst them I have seen a capability and willingness to support the learning of their peers, and this community oriented approach to learning is now a central aspect of my personal teaching philosophy. It is my students who have had the greatest influence over this philosophy, and it is with them that the real rewards of my teaching are found.

PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

"Wow, what can I say, PeerWise is one of the best learning tools I have used. The neat thing you have done is encouraged the PeerWise community, in a similar fashion to social networking sites, by allowing feedback to be provided; and utilising a leaderboard. It is the sort of thing that gets people addicted to PeerWise"

Anonymous feedback from PeerWise survey, ENGGEN 131 (2007)

"Having already sat through two degrees of lectures and a teaching diploma (BA, MA, DipTchg)... it is not given lightly when I say that Paul Denny is the best lecturer I have encountered. I'm sure that one day during a lecture we'll see a sequin-clad assistant and several white rabbits leap from his computer, such is his magic. He conveys an understanding that learning Java is difficult for beginners through his winning combination of humility and humour."

Kim Maree, COMPSCI 101 (2004)

"He has the ability to continue with the flow of the lecture quickly after questions, interruptions, and the like. Throughout the lecture he requests feedback from the students on your understanding, and will revisit any topic should it be necessary... Paul has without a doubt the most dynamic and

modern lecturing style I have attended here at university and other learning institutions."

Andrew Johnson, COMPSCI 101 and COMPSCI 105 (2002)

"Paul's attitude and enthusiasm were the best ever. I never understood so much simply because of somebody else's enthusiasm for the subject"

Anonymous student feedback, COMPSCI 105 (2000)

"I have worked in the same teaching team as Paul since I first started as a tutor in 2000. Paul is simply the best colleague and mentor that anyone could hope to have. He has provided constant support, encouragement and guidance to help me develop my teaching skills. Paul is a brilliant lecturer and a very kind, caring person. He is a superb role model for other tutors and lecturers, and gives his time generously to help colleagues to improve their teaching delivery and to develop more effective teaching materials. I feel very proud and honoured to be part of Paul's teaching team as he is so highly regarded by both students and staff."

Ann Cameron, Senior Tutor, Department of Computer Science, The University of Auckland



S U S T A I N E D E X C E L L E N C E

Dr Rachel Fewster

SENIOR LECTURER, DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS ■ THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

Rachel loves statistics and wishes to share its fascination and fun with her students. Her enthusiasm is evident in the phenomenal amount of creative energy and sheer hard work she has put into her delivery during the ten years she has taught at The University of Auckland. Rachel's students appreciate her ability to transform potentially dry and mundane numbers into something relevant and practical. She is a very popular teacher and students are attracted to her programmes. Colleagues respectfully refer to this as the "Fewster effect".

A superb teacher at all levels, the impact of Rachel's teaching goes well beyond her classroom: she maintains a strong interest in her students long after they leave her course and is also involved in numerous teaching activities in the community. Rachel believes every teacher has insights and experiences to contribute and she hopes her experiences will inspire others just as she acknowledges others have helped her. Her most important piece of advice to all those continually striving to be great teachers is "to enjoy it".

Beginnings

Not many people start their careers intending to be statisticians, and I'm no exception. My statistical career began when I was an undergraduate in Cambridge, studying mathematics. None studied statistics by choice: it was a compulsory component of our maths degree, and one regarded with disdain by the student body. I remember one time when the lecturer said, 'We're not going to prove this result rigorously', and a posse of students staged a walk-out. For me, though, the subject began to gain appeal. Whatever the walk-out students thought, we were seeing for the first time deep mathematical development that also had

concrete application in the real world. I realised that this was my ticket to a career that would combine my chosen subject of mathematics with my desire to be useful.

From Cambridge I went to St Andrews in Scotland, to start a PhD in statistics. By the end of my PhD, the most striking thing I had learnt was how little I knew. My training was in maths and theory, and I knew next to nothing about statistics in the real world. The idea of me teaching applied statistics to classes of 300 first-year students was downright comical. I looked for research jobs instead, and in 1999 joined The University of Auckland as a postdoctoral fellow,

not realising that teaching applied statistics to classes of 300 first-year students was exactly what my new job would entail. Thus began my teaching career, on the basis of a lucky misunderstanding.

Learning to teach

The Stats 101 team comprised about 10 lecturers and three thousand students. Being propelled into this environment for my first teaching experience was one of the luckiest breaks of my career. The teaching team was inclusive, supportive, and ultra-organised, and it created constant on-the-job mentorship. The team was honoured by a National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award in 2003, and I was fortunate enough to walk right into it. Meanwhile, as I scrambled to learn the material often only a few days before the students, I had no illusions of grandeur or aloofness. This foray into applied statistics was a joint undertaking. Educational axioms, such as valuing the intellectual input of the audience and establishing a sound rapport within the class, were matters of necessity rather than philosophy. It's striking how many excellent teachers feel that they started off on the back foot, and perhaps this is no coincidence. My interactions with students were formatively defined, and they haven't changed since. There is no 'them and us': it's all 'us'.

The most important lesson I learnt from the Stats 101 team was, however, something a little different.

Bringing the subject to the students

As a mathematical student, I had given scant thought to the job of the lecturer. I had certainly never perceived that I might be the object of anybody's 'teaching philosophy'! The key to good teaching was obvious: you gave out clear lecture notes, with clear headings – Theorem – Proof – Theorem – Proof. The only possible thing that could go wrong with a lecturer was if you couldn't tell where their theorem stopped and their proof started. That was it.

When I looked at the lecturing materials of the Stats 101 team, however, theorems and proofs were conspicuously absent. Instead, there was motivation, insight, and example. Quietly horrified, I thought to myself that I'd soon fix that up. I started making extra lecture slides to show the class, dispensing with the motivation and showing the theory instead. The result was 300 blank faces. It finally dawned on me that what I was seeing in the Stats 101 lecture book was good teaching! The team was working with thousands of students who, by preference, would rather be elsewhere, and was convincing them that statistics was fun, interesting, and relevant to their lives. I've never looked back. Motivation, insight, and example form my overriding philosophy. As teachers, we have to bring the subject to the students, not the other way round. Our job is to gauge our audience and work out how best to present the material to resonate with them. Those protesting students all those years ago in Cambridge were making the same point: if you don't teach us the way that we like, you'll lose us. Without realising it, I myself had been drawn to statistics because the lecturer presented it as a subject that I already liked – mathematics.

Making statistics fun

These days, I mainly teach mathematical statistics at Stage 2 and 3 levels, to classes of about 80 students. One of the main challenges is diversity in student backgrounds and aptitudes, especially with respect to mathematical ability. I need to



maintain the interest of the specialist mathematicians, while simultaneously engaging students who don't share an interest in theory for its own sake. Somehow, I need to present the material so that all of these students think that they are studying the course the way they like it. This is tricky when the class has lovers and haters of mathematics in equal measure.

Here are my guiding principles in trying to make the course fun and accessible for everyone:

If people are enjoying themselves, they will think of the material as enjoyable.

The subject that interests everyone most is themselves.

Focusing on *conceptual understanding* of the material enables a course to be intellectually challenging regardless of mathematical background.

I try to make the course enjoyable in many ways. Firstly, I learn all my students' names. This takes time and effort, but is probably the easiest and most effective way to make everyone feel instantly valued. Most of my students grew up overseas, so I ask them about their home countries, and try to find out about special festivals for different cultural groups. I like surprising the students by announcing the appropriate greetings in class – and surprising myself, when they understand my

amateur pronunciations!

I try to make my coursebooks look and feel attractive, peppering them with cartoons and comical pictures – hoping that students will *enjoy* opening their coursebooks and be *curious* about the material behind the pictures. I aim to pick examples that will intrigue and be infectious: the sort of thing students will tell their friends about outside class. *Do plants grow better when you play them heavy metal music? Are vegetarian women more likely to have daughters?* The scientific literature abounds with quirky or surprising studies, and using these to illustrate statistical concepts makes the material fun and memorable.

It's a safe bet that everyone loves hearing about themselves, so I'm an ardent reader of popular psychology books as a source of ideas to illustrate statistical concepts. I like to pick up ideas for experiments that I can do with the class, creating an atmosphere of fun by pitting myself against the students. *Can you tell which of these people is lying? Can you fake election results well enough to fool me?* Some experiments are more elaborate, for example showing the class videos to 'clear our minds' before a stats quiz. It turns out that they perform consistently better in the quiz when shown videos of gifted children than they do when shown videos of soccer thugs!





The environment of learning is crucial to success. If our students are weak at maths, they need to practice. But this is the Internet generation – they won't be enthralled at working endless exercises from some musty library book. We have to create an environment in which the exercises become enjoyable. With the help of my department's website expert and colleagues, I developed an online Maths practice system where students can do practice exercises while interacting with listen-and-watch movie snippets. The unusual environment makes it fresh and appealing. Students know that they can get 20 minutes of practice – as social as a session on Facebook – and emerge with the skills needed to tackle the current assignment.

Last words

My courses follow a very traditional model of lectures, assignments, and exams. I don't do anything very much out of the ordinary. My excellent colleagues showed me the potential of the traditional methods. My inspiring students showed



me the rewards. Given an interesting problem and a few token marks, students will explore to great depths and share their spirit of discovery. If we just go to the trouble of learning their names in class, they will reward us for years to come with their stories of success and adventure. Pursuit of knowledge and understanding is a wonderful way to unite cultures from all over the world, and my daily lecture theatre is an amazing opportunity for intellectual and cultural exchange. It was a happy day indeed when I picked the wrong job and found myself teaching applied statistics to 300 first-year students.

PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

"I raised many questions and realized how willing Rachel was to step beyond her responsibility as a lecturer and just teach. Often we strayed from the theoretical course material and explored real world applications. I was being schooled in the subtleties and limitations of statistics, all because of Rachel's willingness to assist tirelessly. Her true gift is beyond teaching; she empowers her students to learn for themselves."

Manav Jaura, BSc student, 2008

"Rachel has an unparalleled ability to transform potentially dry and mundane material into interesting and real examples, in a unique and memorable way. We left her classes not only with a firm understanding of what we had been taught, but also intrigued by the topic and looking forward to finding out more in the next lesson."

Robyn Scott, BSc student, 2001 – 2003

"Our entire class was amazed at how Rachel made theoretical statistics approachable and engaging to all of us."

*Dr James Russell, BSc student, 2002;
PhD student 2003 – 2007*

"Rachel is a truly awesome lecturer – really enthusiastic – the love of the subject in every single lecture."

Anonymous student feedback, 2005

"I have also had the opportunity to observe Rachel lecture to a Stage II class. I have never seen anyone present theoretical concepts so concisely and clearly. In a few brief minutes, with a teaching prop consisting of a bread roll and a drinking straw she was able to connect with her audience and successfully convey the fundamentals of the arcane multivariate technique of principal component analysis."

Matt Regan, co-leader of the Introductory Statistics Team which won a National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award in 2003.

"Her novel assignments, year after year, continue to astonish me with their inventiveness, and always test the students' ability to both do the mathematics, and think critically about building models."

Dr Ilze Ziedins, Senior Lecturer in Statistics



SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

Sam Honey

SENIOR ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBER ■ BAY OF PLENTY POLYTECHNIC

Because Sam is responsible for the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic's preparation programme for aspiring police officers, her curriculum is strongly contextualised and based on an understanding of student purpose. She believes that as a teacher she must embody what she is asking for from her students, even going back to policing work and passing the police physical requirements with her students.

Sam's teaching is characterised by her caring, empowering relationship with her students, and this has a deeply lasting impact on their careers and self-belief. As one student comments, "Every time I do something towards my career I think to myself, I know I can do this, and I hear Sam saying, you go girl!"

With her teaching grounded in research, Sam generously shares her expertise with other programmes. The hallmark of her teaching is communicating her faith in her students. In the words of one student: "She relates to students as if she already knows that we are going to make great police officers".

"A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." Henry Adams

My passion and purpose is to inspire students to achieve their goals, ensure they believe in themselves, and develop a drive for continual personal growth.

Throughout my career I have always got a buzz witnessing people positively change their life direction: as an ACCESS tutor in 1987 for women returning to the workforce, a frontline police officer then police education officer in schools from 1992 until 2001, through to eight years (and 25 classes) as programme coordinator and tutor for the Certificate in Preparation for Law Enforcement Level 3 at Bay of Plenty Polytechnic.

I have had the pleasure of watching more than 250 students come through my programme and develop career skills, self belief and a willingness to keep learning, and I have been fortunate to have been a part of their academic and vocational successes as well as their personal development. Alumni continue belonging to the programme and the journey, returning as guest speakers and motivating new students.

My programme benefits from the great diversity in the backgrounds of my students. Many come with no formal qualifications from school and their educational, upbringing and cultural backgrounds are as diverse as their ages, ranging from 17 – 40 plus years. An early priority is getting to know

students and their strengths and learning style preferences.

The concept of Ata and its underpinning principles described by Pohatu (Forsythe & Kung, 2007) is the direction I am currently exploring as I continue to develop my teaching practice.

Extending learning opportunities and broadening horizons

Development of my formal education includes a Bachelors Degree in Social Sciences, Diploma in N.Z. Policing (1994), Certificate in Adult Learning and Teaching Level 5, Certificate in Mauri Ora Level 2, Introduction to Conversational Te Reo and working towards completing the National Certificate in Adult Literacy Education Level 5.

As teachers we are learners, and constantly reflecting on what works and what doesn't work for my students leads to improved experiences for us both. Familiarity with programme content means I reflect on the energy of the class and have the flexibility to plan lessons yet adjust to the dynamic culture of the class that day. Research projects I have undertaken focus on improving teaching delivery to enhance student learning and engagement. Professional growth also includes contributing to the polytechnic as a whole by being actively involved in our Academic Standards Subcommittee, Learning Advisory Committee,



Harrasment prevention network and other short term working groups as well as facilitating on tutor training days.

Cultural awareness

Noticing that non-European students were often hesitant in participating in classroom discussions and activities, I initiated polytechnic-wide conversational English lunchtime groups where such students meet, converse and learn colloquial language in a relaxed, nonthreatening environment. Students reported that learning, practising and questioning the meanings of even everyday sayings heard in class made them more relaxed around their fellow students and more prepared to contribute to group discussion. "No worries you guys?" now has meaning!

Cultural awareness is imperative in policing and I include units in understanding cultural differences as well as the Treaty of Waitangi. Beginning with a knowledge continuum of the Treaty, many students huddle in the 'it's a public holiday' section. After 12 hours of 'learning', discussions and a guided trip to the battle sites and other historical cultural places around Tauranga, students comfortably acknowledge a much greater appreciation of the history of New Zealand's founding document and its relevance in New Zealand and its laws today.

Facilitation of learning

Lessons focus on what the students need to know first, and what I need them to know second. An experiential approach to learning is used and lessons that engage student participation to enhance their understanding are achieved.

A key outcome of my programme is students graduating with a realistic appreciation of the mahi they are getting themselves into, so it is imperative that I maintain absolute currency in my subject. I return to policing (only in an observer role now) at least every 18 months and the last two times, I was taken out on nightshift patrol by ex-students who are now police officers. Fantastic to be the tutor learning from her students!

Resources are developed so that aspects of policing are encompassed in most classroom sessions. A large portion of the programme focuses on students' preparation for police entry testing.



Police tests cover general, numerical and abstract reasoning questions in a tight timeframe. It is always interesting creating mathematical questions with a police story to them! I develop student understanding of maths without calculators – a new process for many and I also teach basic foundation skills of root words, prefixes and suffixes. I tell students that no matter how little they studied at school, they will soon be reading vocabulary enrichment books and doing maths ‘for fun’. They look at me like I’m crazy, but inevitably they fulfil my prophecy!

It is part of my practice to assess for learning so I provide many opportunities for students to show their understanding of topics covered in the programme. Many students who participate in my programme have histories of failing academically at school, so it is important that they now see assessments as a positive opportunity to show their knowledge.

Students are taught processes to be able to think on the spot, as they will be required to do in the police. Two minute impromptu speeches, scenario role plays and students presenting information to the class happen daily. Teamwork focus includes students teaming up for role plays, small group discussions, simulation exercises, poster work, study groups and inquiry learning.

A contextualised approach to teaching sees students attend police fitness testing days to experience police physical tests first hand with a police physical testing instructor, serving police officers and recruits. We also watch and report on cases the District Court to anchor knowledge

of the NZ justice system. Some classes also participate in Armed Offender Squad training days.

Surprisingly to my students, at 42 I can still pass the police physical requirements! Students see that physical fitness is for a lifetime, not just for the present. Many students comment that they would never have reached their fitness goals without me training and running alongside them. Perhaps there will be a day when I get on a bike instead of running, but I am challenged by having to stay fit to keep up with them!

My philosophy and passion

I believe that if I expect the best from students then I must give my best. If I want students to be present and enthusiastic then I must be present and enthusiastic. If I want students to take opportunities offered and work hard to achieve their passion, then I must show them that I am doing that too. No matter how I feel on my drive





to work, when I enter my classroom and face my students I am totally aware of being what they expect me to be – an inspiring, motivational, personable and knowledgeable tutor who has fun

and is rewarded by what happens with learning.

I intend to use some of the award money to attend presentations and workshops of world recognised keynote speakers in adult education.



PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

"I thank Sam largely for me being in the Police, a career where I am truly having a positive impact on the youth of my community. Sam gave me the confidence to "be somebody" and it's this same confidence I am trying to develop with the troubled youth of my community."

Constable Akerei Malesala, Manurewa, graduate 2005

"Sam gave a damn about our success. She helped me achieve to a high standard. After completing Sam's course I felt like my career was just beginning and I could achieve anything that I set out to do."

Constable Amy Bateman, Hamilton, graduate 2007

"Sam's teaching is very hands on. She took time to help me with course work outside of the class timetable. She taught me not to underestimate my ability and helped me realise my true potential."

Jason Moller, graduate 2008, police recruiting process

"She is very encouraging and understanding. She has great knowledge of other cultures."

Student evaluation 2008

"We never have a dull moment in our class. The lessons are organised, planned and fun."

Student evaluation 2008

"The best tutor I have had, has great knowledge and the best support for her class, an awesome teacher for both teaching and support."

Student evaluation 2007

"Sam delivered sessions in Poutiriako, Certificate in Tertiary Teaching Level 5, on innovative teaching and learning approaches and pastoral care activities. Sam's student retention and success is one of the highest in the Polytechnic. Her passion, enthusiasm, humour and advanced practice are easily recognised in her delivery and we get positive feedback on (tutor) student evaluations after her sessions."

Judith Honeyfield Team Leader, Pikiarero Teaching and Learning Development



SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

Dr Heather Kavan

LECTURER, DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION, JOURNALISM AND MARKETING
MASSEY UNIVERSITY

Heather thinks what might differentiate her from other dedicated teachers is her “tremendous gratitude for my job as lecturer”. For her, the overall meaning of teaching is “to liberate” and she bases many of her methods on the writings of Paulo Freire. “My perception of excellence is action-based, evoking a life-long love of knowledge, bringing original perspectives, and enabling students to find their own best path.”

Over eight years, Heather has taught a wide range of subjects in religious studies, communications and research methods. She is aware that students attend university for many different reasons including “the need to belong, to create meaning and forge an identity”. Heather works hard to create a positive environment, help students explore new possibilities and learn from constructive feedback. “Nobody is going to get an idea if I don’t first grab their attention”, she says.

One of her students sums up Heather’s commitment and impact: “You clearly have impeccable standards for both your work and research. Personally I find that enormously inspiring!”

Not quite a revolutionary

Before I gave my first lecture at University, I probably spent more time deciding what to wear than contemplating my educational philosophy. I know that sounds superficial, but I was excited. I’d been asked to give eight lectures at Massey University, and, as I got off the train at Palmerston North, I knew that even if I was only doing what I loved for four weeks of my life, I was happy.

The students gave my lectures fabulous ratings and I was invited back. Eight years and over 3,000 students later, I am still teaching. I’ve taught courses as diverse as Zen Buddhism and Media Law.

Throughout this time an old yellow and red

paperback has never been far from my consciousness. The book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was a familiar sight in student flats in the seventies, next to Pink Floyd LPs and posters of Che Guevara. Author Paulo Freire had been thrown in jail by the Brazilian military police, and in this book he made his famous call for education for freedom.

My idea of freedom may not be as revolutionary as Freire’s, which was incited by a military coup and nurtured in a prison cell. Nevertheless, the aim of my teaching is to liberate students, whether this be liberation from a restrictive world view or simply the freedom to create the career they want.

I am fortunate that I teach subjects, like Communication, that empower people both in everyday life and the workplace. I show students how the success of all their ideas, from small suggestions to grand designs, depends on how they express them. By learning how best to convey their thoughts, and ensuring that their ideas aren't cast aside simply because they're not pitched correctly, many students find the value of my courses spills over into their lives.

My favourite subject is *Speech Writing*, a course that I developed out of my previous experience as a speech writer. Like music, great speeches can move us to tears and lift us to heights within seconds. When I share footage of a brilliant speech with students and see them engaged by its soulful rhythm, or entertained by its humour, there are few things that I would rather be doing.

More than an intellectual hunger

Earlier this year, 15 graduates from my *Speech Writing* course got up at 5 a.m. to re-unite in an email discussion group as President Obama's inaugural address was broadcast live. Their work made it on to the front page of the *Christchurch Press* on Inauguration Day, featured in seven additional newspapers, was on international

websites, and quoted on radio. The students' discussion ignited national debate, including a blog on whether there are any New Zealand speeches as eloquent as Obama's speeches.

Several of the graduates expressed a desire to meet again to discuss further speeches. The sense of community we experienced reminded me that students come to University to satisfy more than an intellectual hunger. We all have basic needs: the need to belong, the need to create meaning, and the need to forge an identity. In class I'm conscious of these, and aim to create positive emotional experiences and a sense of belonging, where students can explore deeper paths and extend their reality.

Einstein's light beam

My smaller classes usually run for two to three hours. I'm aware that if students don't participate at the beginning of the class it becomes harder for them to engage later. Therefore I ask students to prepare something to discuss at the start of each class. I choose tasks that are enjoyable and that they can easily do without impinging on their other academic commitments.

I use several methods, such as asking them to recall relevant experiences or giving them a





puzzle to ponder. However, the method that seems to work best is thought experiments.

My interest in thought experiments was sparked many years ago when I read the story of Einstein imagining he was riding on a beam of light, and in the process reinterpreting light, time, energy and gravity – the nature of the universe. I use thought experiments myself when grappling with a seemingly unsolvable research problem, and find them the best way of getting insights into things that I can't know directly.

For example, to prepare for the *Speech Writing* class on rhythm, I ask students to think of their favourite piece of music and identify the feelings this evokes in them. Then they imagine giving a speech that stirs up the same feelings in the audience, and examine whether their imaginings give them clues for writing their speeches.

By getting students to articulate their ideas and experiences before they've learned about the topic or read the textbooks, I can begin where they're at. Another advantage of thought experiments is that students tend to synthesise other concepts of the course during the experiment. Insights emerge and all students have to do is daydream, which they seem to like!

Celluloid

I've found film clips invaluable in helping students link theory to practice. This is especially the case with *Speech Writing* where writing a great speech when you had never heard one would be like writing a song when you had never heard music. Therefore I incorporate relevant speech scenes

from movies, documentaries and TV programmes into my classes.

As it's important to me that distance students experience the interactive elements that internal students enjoy, I've created DVDs for all my distance courses. The DVDs contain a series of engaging film clips for each week's topic. I send them to students so that they receive something extra with the course – a 'free' gift that they can keep when it ends. Several students have told me of positive experiences they've had sharing the film with family and friends, and studying collaboratively within their social setting.

Students are always keen for variety in assessments, so I incorporate film in assignments as a way of intensifying learning. For distance students I also have weekly online discussions that require them to choose a clip from the week's selection and discuss it in the light of theory. The variety of film I've put together incorporates a range of tastes, and students who dislike a particular programme, actor, or film genre, have the choice of analysing another clip instead.

Scheherazade

When I was a child I was fascinated by the story of the Persian woman, Scheherazade. According to the story, Scheherazade was married to the King who was going to behead her, but she postponed the execution by telling him a riveting story and stopping on such a suspenseful note that he delayed her beheading for a day so that she could resume the story the next night. The cycle of stories, suspense and delays continued for 1,000 nights.

Perhaps because of my childhood fascination, a characteristic of my teaching is that I often tell stories. For me, stories are the best way of humanising concepts. They also ignite interest, make information memorable, and help me create a bond with students. As I often spend as much as 10 hours a week in fieldwork for my research, I have a storehouse of stories that I can use.

Money, money

I was thrilled to get a National Tertiary Teaching Excellence award, and I'm using the money to buy an audience response system for *Speech Writing*. When listening to speeches, students will be able



to record their moment by moment reactions by turning a dial on a meter to indicate which parts they are responding to favourably or unfavourably. Their combined responses will be displayed on a graph, which will allow the class to identify the words, phrases and rhythms that strike a chord or leave them unmoved.

Overseas this technology has been used in a variety of settings from film making to speed dating. Speech writers also use information from audience

response systems, but the research so far only tells us the words and phrases that audiences in the United States love to hear, such as 'all American'. Here in New Zealand, the students and I will be able to do joint research – gathering information on speech preferences that will not just be invaluable for political and business oratory, it will also help ordinary Kiwis prepare a speech.

Back to the sartorial future

I began by commenting that before my first lecture I probably gave more thought to what I would wear than my educational philosophy. The comparison is apt because educational philosophies are, in my view, a bit like clothes. A model can wear the most unbecoming clothes and look like a million dollars; conversely another person may look unsightly in even the most elegant attire. I think that, at the end of the day, it doesn't matter so much what philosophy we adopt, it's the grace and dignity with which we carry it that counts.

So my plan for the future is to walk tall.

PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

"Not sure what to say – I'm blown away. I feel overwhelmed but liberated this paper is so relevant – I see all the facets of communication every day I just want to know more!"

Anonymous student comment on extramural survey, 2007

"It was encouraging to hear Obama use the very same writing and speaking techniques that we used in our course. Even better, it was fantastic to see that they really work and can achieve amazing results."

Speech writing graduate, Grayson Coutts

"Heather gave thought-provoking lectures which generated class discussions that often continued on outside of class, usually until the next lecture."

Communication graduate, Mark Dittmer

"Heather's passion for the subject meant that not only was she clear and coherent, she was also vivacious."

Marie Elliott, peer evaluation of lecture

"This has been a fantastic course and has used a variety of medium to reinforce the theory. The lecturer has been extremely responsive and flexible and has offered personal comment and guidance. This is the best paper and most valuable learning I have undertaken."

Anonymous comment on extramural survey, 2008

"In terms of "the best lecturer", I not only mean that she has great professional teaching skills, but also mean that she has the most gracious and inspiring personality that influenced me to become a more diligent and successful person."

Communication graduate Bin Hu



S U S T A I N E D E X C E L L E N C E

Judy Magee

SENIOR LECTURER, SCHOOL OF FOUNDATION LEARNING ■ OTAGO POLYTECHNIC

Judy Magee's love of science and her practical application of its disciplines are hallmarks of this highly motivated and excellent teacher. Her ongoing passion for her subject area is second to none. Judy teaches difficult concepts in innovative, collaborative and memorable ways. She makes learning engaging. Working with distance and on-campus students, Judy has developed successful learning opportunities for a range of learners, including those who may not previously have had positive educational experiences.

Judy provides a learning environment that builds learners' confidence and acknowledges their unique and diverse backgrounds. For her, "satisfaction occurs when students take their first steps along the road of life-long learning to reach goals they had not yet thought of". This commitment to continuous learning also extends to her own practice. Judy says, "I accompany my students along their own path to become life-long learners". Judy employs innovative learning approaches and models exemplary teaching practices. She willingly shares her creative ideas with colleagues.

Introduction

I am currently programme manager and a senior lecturer in the Certificate in Health at Otago Polytechnic. This is a qualification developed to provide a pathway for those without relevant qualifications, and to meet the academic entry criteria to the degree programmes within the Health Group.

In my teaching role I work alongside students, both distance and those who attend on campus, who are primarily second chance learners of varied age, ethnicity and academic backgrounds.

Patience, sensitivity and understanding are required, combined with a student-centred learning environment: one that builds their confidence and acknowledges each diverse and unique individual as an adult and as an equal.

The main influence on my teaching practice comes from the students themselves. By valuing their place in the learning process, I work to provide opportunities where they can become more aware of themselves as learners and ultimately, use that knowledge to assist them to complete their desired qualification.

Creating a supportive learning environment in a flexibly delivered programme

Personal experience has revealed that many students begin their studies with a high level of motivation and enthusiasm which can wane as the year progresses. I have noticed that students' motivation is easier to nurture and sustain if they come into the programme with a clear appreciation of what is expected of them. They need to feel they have a personal relationship with their lecturers and that they are valued and supported as individuals. They also need to feel they are part of a cohesive learning group in which individuals can collaborate with one another.

I have identified and implemented several strategies that give early support to students, such as an initial welcome letter which describes not only the advantages but also the reality of studying in a flexibly delivered programme. In the letter I explain blended delivery in terms of lecturer-to-student contact time and the types of support I can provide. The students also receive a study guide that provides crucial information related to feeling part of a class rather than being isolated from classmates. It gives suggestions on how they might bridge the physical gap between each other with various technologies. Other strategies that work to manage feelings of isolation include establishing early email relationships and phoning

the students before the programme begins and again before the students' first major assessment. I assist students to feel supported and valued both on and off campus, by teaching them how to plan and manage their 'at home study time', coupling this with interactive weekly tutorials that follow the teaching outline. I provide the students with assessments that are spread out, small and regular, enabling them to move forward and I also send out spreadsheets of marks regularly to keep the students informed of their current progress as they work toward completion.

Along with these strategies, student engagement with the programme is closely monitored. I track attendance, physically and online, and monitor the "Summary of Usage" facility on *Blackboard*. I act on data collected with phone calls, follow up emails and arrange for a meeting with students to discuss any issues they may have that could adversely affect their learning.

Facilitating learning in the Certificate in Health programme.

Adult learners bring rich and broad learning experiences to the classroom. They are often self-directed and expect to take responsibility for their decisions. They learn with enthusiasm when they recognise the value their own experience has to the learning of the whole class. Adult students also tend to be experiential learners: they learn by doing.



To maximise these attributes, I choose strategies and activities that are task-oriented, as well as requiring the students to reflect on their own knowledge. For example, chemical reactions are difficult to memorise and this type of learning is best facilitated by demonstrating the reaction in the laboratory where students can work and reflect in groups on what they know from the world and their classes. This approach allows them to use each others' understandings and reflections, to help make links between the symbolic world (the equation on the board), the unseen world (the molecular interaction) and the real world (what they are seeing happening in the test tube).

I provide opportunities for experiential learning activities that suit various learning styles. To illustrate, a kinaesthetic exercise I utilise is an extremely effective exercise to support understanding of how ions form, the use of the symbols to represent them and the proportions that interact to form the ionic compound. The students themselves become the ions. The students write the symbols for the ions on paper and sellotape them onto the front of their bodies. Students who are $1+$ ions then hold their fist on their waist to form a hole (to mirror the loss of an electron that occurs when an atom forms a positive ion). Students who are $1-$ ions then wave their arm about (this mirrors the gain of electrons when an atom forms a negatively charged ion). All the ions interact until there are no arms or holes left and all the ionic compounds are formed (i.e. neutrality).

Wherever possible I choose teaching materials and activities that encourage learning, boost self-esteem, relate to the students' needs and future goals and provide lots of interactive fun.



Assessment strategies.

My assessment strategies aim to achieve a balance of formative and summative assessments. Students work toward a passing grade while obtaining an emerging picture of where they are relative to the learning outcomes. The more information I can gather about individual students, the better I can adjust the assessment processes to ensure they continue to achieve and move forward in their learning.

Delivering my programme flexibly also allows me to design technologically driven assessments, so that students increase their technical capabilities and develop confidence in accessing online information. This is a giant leap for those who have not used a computer prior to beginning the course. It is crucial that all students feel comfortable and safe putting their comments and questions out electronically into the public arena. I have developed an assessment strategy that is based on an online discussion. For some students, this will be their first attempt at engaging in an online discussion. The students are assigned an object which may be represented as a visual image invoking a physical sensation, or it may be represented as a graph that illustrates the information or, it may further be offered as a question or a piece of text. Students choose the version (that suits them) that acknowledges and accommodates their personal learning style. They write and post comments about the object and then comment on a different object, not their own. The object itself is of relevance to the students and the course. To ensure the experience is positive and to provide a sense of safety, I offer it in a small tutorial setting. Students see only their own posting and response and those of two other classmates. In this way they feel less exposed.

This assessment significantly caters for self-directed adult learners. It provides them with opportunities to gain acknowledgment and recognition from peers and lecturers, allowing them reflective opportunities to reassess their assumptions about themselves as learners. Many other assessment strategies in the course are explicitly included to build up student confidence and capability in the online environment.



Closing statement

Dalton described the atom in 1803 as simply a particle. Likewise, I walked into my first classroom assuming the students would be merely the sum of what I observed. I was motivated by my passion for chemistry but it did not occur to me to consider what was happening in the minds of the students. However, this view changed two minutes into the class when a student asked a question. Completing my teaching portfolio has given me a rare opportunity to spend a significant amount of time reflecting on my teaching practice. The result has been to recognise that my understanding of the student-

lecturer relationship has evolved significantly from that aligned with Dalton's atom. I have learned to reflect on what I am doing in the classroom and how it affects the students. Much that was happening for the students I have learned to incorporate into their learning experiences. No two classes are ever alike. To revert to my analogy, each class, like each type of atom, is unique. It provides an individual snapshot. Satisfaction for me occurs when students take their first of many significant steps along the road of lifelong learning, a road with countless opportunities to become all they can be and to reach goals not yet thought of.

PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

"Hey Judy

I just wanted to say thank you so much for everything you've done for me this year, you've been such a great lecturer and so helpful and have been there for advice whenever I've needed it. I think this is such a great course for people like me, I didn't know what I wanted to do with myself at school and instead of keeping all my options open I stuffed around and shut a lot of doors, thankfully there was the certificate in health! I don't know what I would have done this year if it wasn't for this course! It's been the best year of my life education-wise because I actually have applied myself because I now have a goal, being a nurse.

So thank you so much for everything!!"

Student email, 2008

"Judy has always been proactive in seeking support for individual students who she felt would benefit from Learning Centre services, frequently bringing the students along personally and introducing them to us, thereby removing the shyness barrier that sometimes stops students from making an appointment. Students often give us unsolicited feedback about their lecturers and many students have spoken not only of Judy's professionalism but also of her enthusiasm and sense of fun which has helped to engage their interest.

Judy is totally student-focused and works extremely hard to promote effective learning for all her students. Her passion and enthusiasm for her subject and her

commitment to her students makes her a great teacher and a valued colleague."

*Janet M C Black B.A., M.App. Ling, Dip Tchng, Cert TESOL
Senior Lecturer
Learning Centre*

"I have known Judy for more than 20 years. Firstly, when she was my student studying for the New Zealand Certificate of Science. Following that, as science supervisor, I employed her as a tutor for introductory chemistry. Over the following years we were colleagues, teaching a variety of chemistry courses between us.

When Judy was a student early in my teaching career, I was astounded by this young woman who was so dedicated to learning, had such a deep interest in science, and such an empathy for others.

I could see that such qualities were those that would make her an excellent teacher, and after her graduation we employed her. My research related to teaching in tertiary education and it was obvious that in her work, Judy indeed showed all the attributes of an exceptional teacher. She had limitless enthusiasm, huge empathy and patience with students and a strong desire to improve her teaching. She liked using interactivity as well as having a great sense of humour. Judy was an inspiration, in fact she became a role model to many, such as myself."

John Waddick BSc, Dip. Tchng, Dip. Bus. Admin. MEd(Hons), PhD



SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

Dr Chris Marshall

RELIGIOUS STUDIES PROGRAMME ■ VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

For over twenty years Chris Marshall has taught Christian studies at all levels of tertiary study and also worked nationally and internationally to translate theory into personal practice, especially in the area of restorative justice. His blend of teaching and scholarship has inspired many others to become involved in justice and peace work. He believes that the way teachers act and react in the classroom, and the values they demonstrate are crucial.

Chris lists six principles which guide his teaching: presence, conviction, content, respect for students, preparation and delivery. Respect for students is particularly important given that his classes include students from a variety of cultures and faiths. He regards students as his co-learners, and tries to establish relationships with them founded on humility and trust. He says, "Anything I have given to students, I have received back in double measure. I have learned from them more than they have learned from me, and I have been shaped by them every bit as much as I have inspired them".

There is an old debate about whether good teachers are born or made. The choice is specious of course, for in most areas of human experience nature and nurture exert their influence by way of mutual interaction. The ability to teach well is fundamentally a gift. But gifts never come fully formed, and even the most naturally ungifted of communicators can still lift their game considerably by acquiring some basic pedagogical skills.

As I have reflected on my own teaching practice, I have arrived at several conclusions about the key ingredients that go into the mix of successful teaching.

Personal presence

The first prerequisite for good teaching, I believe,

is neither in-born talent, nor masterful technique, but rather personal presence. Good teachers do not just teach about their subject; they "in-dwell" their subject, so that when students encounter the teacher, they experience someone who has been personally formed, even transformed, by their field of knowledge, and who teaches out of the centre of that experience. Great teachers do less to persuade students of the value of learning their subject than to parade it before their eyes.

It is a mistake to believe that the practice of teaching derives merely or wholly from the intention to teach well. Much of human communication is in fact unintentional; most human learning occurs unconsciously from what we observe and participate in. The same applies to teaching.

Teachers teach as much by the way they conduct themselves in the classroom, by the way they act and react to people, by the things they value and the values they embody, as they do by conscious didacticism.

Conviction

From this comes a second prerequisite for effective pedagogy, which is authority or conviction on the part of the teacher. Before they give it, teachers must first get it, and get it deeply. Paradoxically the true evidence of having got it is humility. It is a humility born of the teacher's awareness of being dwarfed by the grandeur of the knowledge he or she is dealing with, together with a confidence of having gained at least some true insight into it.

What makes teaching so satisfying for me is that it constantly renews my enthusiasm for my subject; it replenishes my awareness of the worthwhileness of knowing this kind of stuff, and of the value of inviting others to discover it too.

A student recently commented of my classes that I teach as though it matters. And it does matter to me. I consider the things I teach to be important, so that imparting my understanding of them as clearly as possible is not only a pleasure but also a responsibility – a responsibility to the discipline I am part of and towards those encountering it for the first time.

There is a world of difference, I believe, between being a good teacher and a good entertainer. Good teaching is not simply good theatre. A good entertainer will amuse or impress the audience by his or her rhetorical or comic abilities; a good teacher should impress them with the beauty of knowledge, and the satisfaction of seeking to understand it.

Content

This is why I am old fashioned enough to believe that content is still important in teaching. Certainly classroom teaching should never be reduced to the mere transfer of information, especially in this electronic age. Students need to learn how to learn, not just what to learn, and more than ever they need to develop the critical skills to evaluate the almost infinite amount of information now out there. But one important way of acquiring this capacity is to see it modelled by their instructor, observing how the lecturer navigates through the terrain, what information is chosen as significant, and what explanatory relationships are considered most persuasive.

Adult education specialists are sometimes scornful of lectures as a method of teaching. But what a good lecture can still do, better arguably than any other mode of instruction, is to impart wisdom – the wisdom needed to turn information into reliable knowledge.

This requires the lecturer to say something substantial in each lecture. My lectures are always generous in content. I want students to leave feeling they have learned something new, and that they could not have done so any more effectively than by being in this class. This is one important way of showing respect for students. To waste students' time with ill-prepared or disorganised or boring lectures is fundamentally disrespectful to them.

Respect

Respect for students, then, is the fourth essential feature of my approach to teaching. So called "student-centred learning", to my mind, basically comes down to the matter of respect – respect for them as co-learners, if not yet co-equals, in the enterprise.





Respect also entails the obligation to support and encourage students, and to be available to them out of class hours. I strive to be approachable to and welcoming of students, and work very hard at creating a non-anxious environment in the classroom, since performance anxiety, especially in public, is a huge block to learning. “There is no such thing as a silly question”, one of my own lecturers used to say, “only silly answers”. That may not be entirely true. But if students are afraid to ask questions for fear of looking silly, their learning will suffer.

Preparation

Respect also demands good preparation for teaching. The preparation needs to be of two kinds. One kind is academic. Throughout my career I have never accepted any rigid distinction between teaching and research. Much of the initial spade work for my publications has come from lecture preparation, while lectures frequently become the occasion for drawing on my research.

The other kind of preparation is pedagogical. I spend a lot of time thinking about how to organise the content, how best to explain the ideas, what examples or illustrations to use, what scholarly disputes to cover and how they should be assessed.

The structure of the lecture is incredibly important. It needs to be logical and have a clear

progression, without becoming formulaic; the subject matter needs to be presented in distinct and manageable sections; and within each section, it is important to enumerate the distinct ideas or facts that are pertinent. The real skill (especially in my area) is to itemise the key points of learning while developing a larger coherent narrative about the topic. Itemising the key points brings understanding, while the unfolding narrative sustains interest.

Delivery

Finally, delivery is fundamental to pedagogical success. I visit and revisit my lecture notes many times before stepping into class. I rehearse delivery in my imagination before doing it in practice. Part of this rehearsal is anticipating the interactive components that may enhance student engagement. Over time every teacher builds a repertoire of such techniques, and brings out of the tool bag what will work in each setting.

After almost a quarter century of teaching I am still amazed by how different every class group is, and how distinct each lecture performance is, even when repeating familiar material. Scholars have found that the transmission of oral tradition in oral societies is simultaneously conservative and creative; the same essential content is conveyed each time the tradition is narrated, but every telling has creative features, since every linguistic event is unique. Something similar applies to lecturing. The chemistry of each class is different, so the delivery of each lecture is also different, even if only subtly. There is therefore an irreducible role for spontaneity in even the most carefully prepared lecture. It is this that prevents the lecture from degenerating into a speech and the lecturer not merely going through the ropes but communicating directly with them, as individuals, on this occasion.

Which brings us back to respect. Excellent teaching is grounded in respect: respect for the subject area and the importance of understanding it, and respect for students as human persons who – to pinch Aristotle’s words – “by nature desire knowledge”. It involves respect for them as co-learners in the process; respect for their intelligence, and their ability to discern depth and sincerity in their teachers; respect for their capacity to see things the teacher fails to see, and also for their



right to see things differently; and respect for the special relationship that is created in the classroom through the shared endeavours of teaching and learning.

The Future?

I feel honoured to be included in the ranks of TTEA recipients, but I doubt I will ever become blasé about my capacities as a teacher. I can still get

butterflies before a class, and I rarely attempt to wing it, even with familiar material. There is also much for me still to learn about teaching – especially about the place of technology in teaching and about how to be more effective in small group settings. I am also aware that as my courses diversify in the coming years, I will need to develop new methodologies to match. I hope to use my prize money for such purposes.

PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

“I have completed nine years of tertiary education: five at Victoria University (BA/LLB); three at Bible College of New Zealand (BD); and one at The University of Auckland completing several additional papers required for ordination. I can confidently say that Chris was the most inspirational lecturer that I had during nine years of study.”

Jo Kelly-Moore (former student)

“In my mind a good teacher is one who is able to communicate their subject in ways that the student will understand and be able to apply. In contrast, a great teacher not only communicates clearly, but also inspires and models a commitment to enquiry and learning as a way of life; their influence continues long after their teaching days are done. I have had many good teachers in my life, but Chris Marshall stands out as a truly great teacher.”

Karen Kemp (former undergraduate student; current MA student)

“I am writing to say thanks for the course. It was excellent... Thanks for your organisation. Thanks for your quiet enthusiasm which grabs a person's interest but gives them space to think... Thanks for your commitment to clear communication, and not getting wrapped up in the sound of your own ideas... If there were more courses of this genre I'd take them.”

P. Carew (former undergraduate student; current MA student)

“In the whole of my five years at Victoria University I have so far only ever been tempted

to write to a lecturer because of a brilliant course on about two occasions, and so far you are the first lecturer to tempt me out of procrastination to actually write something! I took your paper at the end of last year ...and I can categorically say that it is one of the best, if not the best, paper I have attended at university so far. I was transfixed from the first day. I have never enjoyed sitting still for two hours, let alone being in a 2 hour lecture, but I had no problems at all sitting through your lectures... The content was riveting, but more so I think because of your lecturing style and presence...”

Melanie Phillips (former undergraduate student)

“Chris's lectures are unfailingly interesting. He manages to traverse the fraught territory of New Testament scholarship with clarity, wit and enthusiasm. Some would consider such subjects as the study of Pauline theology to be entirely esoteric. Chris manages, however, to make these subjects alive to all students, whether or not they have a background in theology... In academic matters, he maintains a lightness of touch that is nonetheless rigorous and can never be accused of “dumbing down”. As a mentor and academic guide for students, Chris's performance is also exemplary. He provides his time unstintingly to students, listens carefully to them, and treats their inquiries with respect and honesty.”

Dr Tim McKenzie (tutor and colleague)



Norman Meehan

SENIOR LECTURER, NEW ZEALAND SCHOOL OF MUSIC ■ MASSEY UNIVERSITY

Norman is very clear about his approach to teaching. He wants to “help students really understand music and develop their own ideas about it”. The confidence to express their ideas is “the greatest gift I can give them”. Students say they feel “extended, challenged and encouraged to take the material head on, to be critical and to value our own judgement” and are “starting to amaze themselves at the ideas they are coming up with”.

Questions and discussion in classes are “the meat and potatoes of my classes”, says Norman. During the eleven years he has worked in Jazz education, Norman has become increasingly committed to life-long learning, something he wants to encourage for others. Through staff seminars, journal articles, published textbooks, radio interviews and music reviews, he reaches a wide audience in an accessible, user-friendly way. Norman’s commitment was summed up by a colleague who commented on his “genuinely held belief that he has the best job in the world!”

Teaching

Many years ago New Zealand jazz pianist Mike Nock – who has taught for the Sydney Conservatorium for more than 20 years as well as maintaining an international performing career – said to me: “You don’t learn to be a jazz musician at school. We don’t turn out jazz musicians; jazz musicians turn themselves out. But we can widen their musical knowledge and give them a broader field of awareness.”

He went on to say that jazz musicians don’t come to terms with the deeper aspects of the art in the classroom – that happens on the bandstand – and he elaborated on his own understanding of

what was most important in the music. “Jazz is about freedom – express yourself, be yourself, try to find your own stuff – that was what it was all about. Find your stuff, not try to sound like anyone else.”

Those ideas have become central to the way I teach. When I started teaching at the Wellington Polytechnic in 1998 I taught a mixture of practical and critical papers. These days I almost exclusively teach historical/critical/analytical papers, largely because I believe if we do that well, we can create an environment where students will have the opportunity to ‘turn themselves out’ as jazz musicians; to develop ‘their own stuff’. I’m not

interested in training people to sound like Stan Getz or Louis Armstrong; I'm committed to training them so that they will sound like themselves.

My own experience as a student led me to this. As an undergraduate (and reasonably experienced musician) at a Conservatorium (i.e. receiving practical training) I was skeptical about the value of journals and critical papers and edited volumes and all that; I couldn't see how that was going to help me on the bandstand. But I really wanted to understand the music, so after graduating I attended music school in Philadelphia and later Boston where I undertook Masters' study. As a graduate student I took papers that led me to engage with the academic literature and the ideas it explores. What I discovered was that with the knowledge and – more importantly – the understanding I gleaned from that study, I played differently. And I played better. That was because I was now *thinking* differently.

So what I want to do for my students is to help them really understand the music, and develop

their own ideas about it. Facilitating them to develop their own ideas and the confidence to express/attempt those ideas is the greatest gift I can give them.

So, how do you do that?

It's not very fashionable to say it, but I think being a successful teacher is about love: love for my work as a teacher, for my subject, and for my students. I'm not sure I could do my job very well at all if I felt anything less than love.

I have described the priorities of my teaching practice as 'the three Es', for expertise, enthusiasm and empathy. Really knowing your stuff (expertise) requires loving your field; well, it does for me anyway. I remember as a student, one of my teachers talking about the content of a paper he taught and saying "I think about these ideas everyday." I was pretty impressed by that, but find that it is now something I do myself. I really love jazz; it's so interesting. And I'm sure that has helped me stay current with my field, and helped me have useful things to say about it to students too.

I think that my love for the music, coupled with the enjoyment I get from teaching combine to make me an enthusiastic teacher. Enthusiasm and passion are compelling, and there's not as much of it about as we might hope. It's great to inject some of that into the classroom (of all places!). There are days when I don't really feel like being enthusiastic (you know – when you have a headache and a two-foot pile of papers to mark), and on those days, I sort of 'put enthusiasm on' – like a coat I guess. Anyway, when I do that – which is basically professionalism – I find that pretty soon I am enthusiastic. It seems to be a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, and has the same effect on the students too. Well, most of the time.

Empathy can be a bit harder. Much of what I teach now is at upper levels, which means my classes are smaller, and I can get to know my students personally. Having 15 or 20 students in classes that mainly comprise of discussions and debate makes it pretty easy to get to know the students and establish some rapport with them. When you have 120 or more students in a lecture theatre it's basically impossible to enjoy that kind of relationship with them. I've tried a few things:





having students say their names before answering a question; breaking into smaller groups among which I circulate. But I have never been able to learn all the names or know who all the people are in cohorts that size. However, with groups of up to about 50 students I have been able to get to know them. It takes a bit of determination and homework but I have found it's possible.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. But what do you actually do in the classroom?

One thing I think about when teaching is stories. Margaret Mahy has suggested that 'stories confer structure upon our lives.' That's an idea I have applied to my teaching, and I try to use stories to add shape and structure and context to the ideas I'm working on with my students. I think the stories do two things. First, they kind of 'humanise' concepts because they are usually about a person and something that has happened to them. For example, when I talk with students about the need for space when they are improvising, I'll tell a story about Miles Davis and John Coltrane. Coltrane was a fantastic saxophone player, but he really 'ran at the mouth' when he improvised. Miles once asked Coltrane why he played so long, and Coltrane said, "Well, once I get started, it's hard to know how to stop." Miles suggested, "Why don't you try taking

the saxophone out of your mouth?" Now, that's pretty funny, but it makes the point that Miles, who is a really important person in the field of jazz, thought brevity had value in the music.

The second valuable thing about stories is that they are memorable, and can become a kind of mnemonic for the ideas we explore in the classroom. For example; off the cuff I can't remember much about the technique of Arnold Schoenberg's music, but I can clearly remember the stories my teacher told me about Schoenberg and his debt to Beethoven. When I think about those stories, they remind me of some of the details of Schoenberg's twelve-tone music, and its relationship to the musical techniques we can find in Beethoven's music.

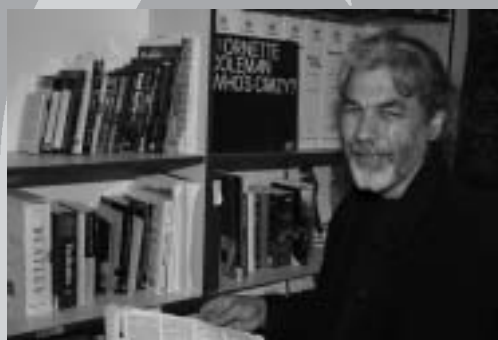
Another thing I think about is questions. The intellectual values I most want to inspire in my students are curiosity and skepticism, and our discussions are usually directed toward those values. I'm not too interested in offering students answers, but I'm very interested in helping them to develop enquiring minds and a determination to find their own answers. One student in the Jazz Literature 2008 (300-level) class sent me an email in which she wrote: "You said half way through the paper that 'you go to university to get better questions', and I really believe this to be true. This



paper is certainly connected to that.”

I think if students can formulate their own questions, then in the true jazz tradition, they’ll find their own stuff. I can’t ask for more than that.

I too hope to continue formulating better questions, and to continue learning from my students. I’m not sure they realize just how much they teach me each year.



PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

“Norman is a brilliant teacher! His articulate way of explaining himself and his ability to draw out the thoughts of his students so that their ideas are clarified is amazing. He is not just knowledgeable, he is able to share his knowledge humbly and constructively.”

Student, Studies in Jazz Literature 2008 (300-level)

“He was great in stimulating my thoughts into the deeper ideas covered; as a result I feel my thinking process has gained so much. Thanks... my willingness to discover and learn has deepened through your involvement.”

Student, Studies in Jazz Literature 2008 (300-level)

“People are encouraged to, not only take in the information given, but, to seek for themselves and create their own ideas on topics.”

Student, Jazz History 2004 (100-level)

“Norman is awesome. He is considerate, compassionate, enthusiastic, caring and knowledgeable about his subject material. I rate him highest out of all my lecturers over all my (6) years at Uni.”

Student, Studies in Jazz Literature 2008 (300-level)



SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

Dr Eric Pawson

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY ■ UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Eric is an excellent and scholarly teacher who has taught geography at the University of Canterbury for over 30 years. As a Professor, Eric teaches courses at all levels and has supervised over 50 Masters and Doctoral students. He is committed to student-centred learning and as a reflective teaching practitioner, his aim is that as his students become more experienced they will become increasingly confident learners. Past students now in senior academic positions credit Eric with being the inspiration for their own careers.

Eric is recognised as a “leader and supporter of the learning of his colleagues in the discipline internationally”. Having a special interest in the first year geography curriculum, he has taken a leadership role in identifying the skills portfolio that students will build as they progress through geography’s curriculum pathways. Eric is involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning and has made a significant contribution to higher education in geography that goes well beyond New Zealand.

My approach to learning

I well remember the excitement of finding an essay by Alan Jenkins that put into words what I had known, but not articulated. He characterised education as a process of “drawing out” rather than “filling up”, and he described the distinction between being “an authority” and being “in authority”. This crystallised much of what is important about my teaching role for me.

Consequently I have framed my teaching within the progressivism, social constructivist tradition, with a focus on the discovery of knowledge as personally meaningful, the development of problem solving skills in cooperative environments, and the acceptance of responsibility for one’s own learning.

In sum, my preoccupation is not with what people learn, or how much information they retain. It is with how they learn, how they think, and how our encounter might help them to make more sense of their own worlds.

This is the privilege that I was accorded when I was a student in Oxford. My purpose since has been to find ways that replicate elements of this for my students at the University of Canterbury.

100 level

As a result I have long been engaged in an ongoing series of experiments in teaching and learning at all levels in the curriculum. 100 level is particularly important to me: I would be very unhappy not to

teach at this level because it is so necessary to try to transmit a sense of enthusiasm to new students and to show them that they matter.

Over the last twenty years, I have led the framing of 100 level geography at Canterbury around a series of “integrated” courses. We intentionally teach together as physical and human geographers. This builds bridges between the science and social science approaches to our discipline. It enables us to spark off each other in pursuit of our underlying aim to advance understandings of environmental sustainability amongst students. We try to do this in critical areas such as climate change, urban and population growth and the cultural use of resources.

Student-centred learning

At all curriculum levels, I feel it is important to be as student-centred as possible and to use methods of active learning and student engagement. To a certain extent this can be done through conversation in the classroom, lecture hall and field, but in recent years I have also adopted a range of techniques to encourage students to read, research and reflect more actively for themselves. At 200 level I use reading journals, which require students to read key articles and discuss these in lab sessions. They are also asked to make presentations in small groups about key thinkers in human geography. This brings all sorts of creativity to the fore, including one group this year who called up an eminent American professor on the phone and interviewed him on the spot!

At 300 level I am a proponent of Problem-Based Learning (PBL), and with my colleague Simon Kingham have recently recast our capstone research methods course using service learning combined with PBL. Student groups work with

community groups on topics chosen by the community groups, be these the making of a neighbourhood map, the assessment of household carbon budgets, analysis of the impacts of the Lyttelton Farmers Market, or the potential for Sumner School to act as a community hub.

Teaching without walls

My ideal is a classroom without walls. PBL and service learning are excellent for this purpose and it’s an experiment I have tried in many ways and in many contexts over the years. With a colleague I always take all of our 100 level students out onto the Port Hills and to Birdlings Flat on the second weekend of their first semester. This engages them socially and allows us to work as a class and in groups on a carbon cycle exercise and discussions about the effect of climate change on local landscapes.

I have in the past encouraged students to work in groups of their own making in a 200 level human geography course, undertaking “geographical expeditions” in which they designed a programme of field work in the local urban landscape (for example to see how the privatised space of a shopping mall is structured, or how a gated community or retirement village works). I have run classes in rooms with no desks, and if we have to have them, prefer not to sit at the head of the table, the point being to de-centre authority in an obvious way.

Postgraduate supervision

One of the joys of teaching is to see students coming through the ranks, and taking on the challenge of writing an Honours project, or a Masters or PhD thesis. I currently have a group of





postgraduate students from several different parts of the world, including New Zealand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and France.

I have supervised about 15 PhDs and over 40 Masters theses. Again my aim as a supervisor is to encourage people to be self-starters and to think for themselves about how they would like to frame and carry out their research project. This is an area of teaching where feedback and encouragement is no less important than for younger students: in many respects, it is more so, particularly for the growing numbers of postgraduates who are working in English as a second, or third, language.

Mentoring

I was Head of Geography at Canterbury for six years until 2005. A central aspect of this role was to mentor new and existing staff about teaching, research, and wider professional roles. After discussion with colleagues, I introduced a department-specific form of PDR (Personal Development and Review), some years before the university followed suit.

Our method was rather simpler than the official format that succeeded it, but enabled us to discuss

goals for the coming year, to assess progress over the last year and to think about the broader shape of careers.

Scholarship of teaching and learning

In recent years I have developed an interest in the scholarship of teaching and learning and, with a colleague in the UK and one in Washington DC, co-direct the International Network for Learning and Teaching Geography in Higher Education (INLT: www.geog.canterbury.ac.nz/inlt).

My interest in PBL was initially stimulated by leadership of an INLT team on the topic at a workshop in Glasgow. This led to two peer reviewed publications in international journals. The team included faculty from five different countries, and we are keen to reignite this work. This is one of the projects for which I will use some of the award money.

I organised an INLT workshop for 50 people at a congress in Brisbane in 2006 on the theme of active learning and student engagement. The three of us who co-chair the INLT have been asked to republish the papers from that workshop and the one in Glasgow as a book entitled *Active Learning and Student Engagement* (Routledge, 2010). Our next workshop in Washington DC in April 2010 will look specifically at some of the wider contexts of teaching and learning in the form of the constraints and opportunities that currently face geography teaching programmes around the world.

Co-learning

One of the great thrills about winning this award is the recognition that it gives to quite a long teaching career. In fact, as my Vice-Chancellor announced to the university the next morning, I started in 1976! Needless to say it hasn't seemed anything like that long. There are always new students to work with, and new colleagues to teach alongside. Almost all of the teaching that I do these days is as part of a team, which is very much how I like it. As I said in my short speech on the Awards night, teaching for me is co-learning, and co-learning is an ongoing adventure.



PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

"One of the joys of teaching with Eric is that he comes with a great mix of ideas based on research and practical experience, coupled with a willingness to listen to other people's ideas. Out of all the people I have taught with over the years he is the most innovative, thoughtful and fun to teach with."

Associate Professor Simon Kingham, Department of Geography, University of Canterbury.

"Being treated like a peer has been an enormous boost to my confidence. His example of student-centredness, energy, generosity, commitment as a teacher, and his active role as a researcher of teaching as a practice, has been inspiring. I could not have hoped to have had a better mentor during my entry into university teaching."

Dr Lee Thompson, Otago Medical School, Christchurch.

"Eric has been a key influence on my academic career. Perhaps the most important aspect of his style is his realization that one size doesn't fit all: he is excellent at recognizing, supporting and rewarding the particular strengths and abilities of specific individuals. He is a superb academic leader and tactician who guides proactively and constructively but also, importantly, by example."

Dr Jamie Pearce, School of Geosciences, University of Edinburgh.

"I had the pleasure of being a student in Professor Pawson's geography courses at University of Canterbury from 1986-1988. He is an inspirational lecturer who has had a profound influence on the sort of academic work that I have done ever since – historical, cultural, and feminist geography. He has also had an influence on my teaching of New Zealand history. He is a generous and open-minded encourager of diversity and independent thought. He has now equipped generations of students with an all-encompassing geographical toolkit and has fuelled many life-long geographical imaginations."

Associate Professor Katie Pickles, History Programme, University of Canterbury.

"It is coming up to 30 years since I finished my Masters thesis. In that period I have learned many different things from a large number of fine scholars, including my PhD supervisors and research collaborators on numerous papers and monographs. But among all those friends, collaborators and advisors, I cannot think of anyone who had a more profound impact on my understanding of the nature of academic scholarship and the commitment to teaching which is an integral part of it."

Professor Neil Quigley, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Victoria University of Wellington.