

Excellence

SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE IN TERTIARY EDUCATION



AOTEAROA
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
TERTIARY TEACHING
EXCELLENCE

Tertiary Teaching
Excellence
Awards
2007



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

This is the seventh year the Government has recognised outstanding tertiary teachers. The awards recognise and encourage excellence in tertiary teaching and provide an opportunity for teachers to further their careers and share good practice with others.

The selection process is undertaken by a Tertiary Teaching Awards Committee appointed by the Minister of Tertiary Education, the Honourable Dr Michael Cullen. The process has been supported by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, from 2008 that support will be from the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence: Ako Aotearoa.

The 2007 Committee members were –
Emeritus Professor Graeme Fraser, Chair
Dr Sally Hunter, Association of University Staff
Phil Ker, Institutes of Technology and
Polytechnics of New Zealand.
Joseph Randall, New Zealand Union of
Students' Association
Dr Michael Roberts, New Zealand Association
of Private Education Providers
Turoa Royal, Te Taihu o nga Wānanga
Alieta Uelese, Association of Māori Providers
of Training Education and Employment.

This year's awards were announced in May. The awards were presented at a formal ceremony held in the Grand Hall of Parliament on 12 June. The ceremony celebrated the success of the awardees and promoted excellent teaching in the tertiary sector.

There were nine awards of \$20,000 each, and a supreme award – the Prime Minister's Award of \$30,000.

This booklet profiles the excellent practice of each of the 2007 winners. They were selected as excellent tertiary teachers due to their commitment, subject knowledge, enthusiasm; and, ability to stimulate learners' interest and thought.

Any organisation teaching tertiary students is eligible to nominate up to three teaching staff for the 2008 awards. A Nomination Form and full details about the categories and criteria for 2008 are available on the Ako Aotearoa website www.akoatearoa.ac.nz in the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards section.

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MINISTER'S FOREWORD

HON DR

Michael Cullen

MINISTER FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION

It is a pleasure to have been part of celebrating the achievements of our top tertiary teachers whose skills, passion and commitment to teaching contribute to what is best about New Zealand's tertiary education system.

In the 21st Century, skills and knowledge are becoming increasingly important as the foundation of our modern economy. Excellence in teaching, therefore, also becomes more valuable.

The following pages showcase the recipients of the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards for 2007. These teachers have demonstrated a commitment to connecting with their students and a passion for passing on knowledge from, among others, a scholar-baker determined to build confidence and capability, to a champion of flexible learning. Not only do they inspire their students to perform to the best of their abilities, but they also inspire other teachers in the way they rise to the challenge.

Research tells us that the quality of the engagement between teacher and student is one of the most important components of successful outcomes. New Zealand promotes high quality teaching in a lot of ways - recognition through these awards is one example.

There are few better ways we can invest in tomorrow than through the quality of our education. The government's vision of the future is for a highly skilled, innovative economy capable of competing in a globalised world.

The tertiary sector reforms that the government is putting in place will equip the tertiary education sector with a funding framework and quality assurance arrangements that better support quality, rather than quantity.

Past winners of the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards have been invited by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority to form a focus group to consider some of the challenges relating to the quality assurance of teaching in the tertiary sector.

It has been extremely useful to draw on the collective wisdom of people who have been recognised for their outstanding impact on student learning.

I hope this publication, which documents the approaches, experiences, methodologies and excellent teaching practices of this year's award recipients, serves to facilitate that flow of information and discussion between teachers.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Tertiary Teaching Awards Committee, whose members have dedicated a great deal of time and commitment to the difficult task of choosing winners from the many outstanding entries received.

The National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence – Ako Aotearoa – will now take over the responsibility for the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards and the Tertiary Teaching Awards Committee, from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. Establishment of the National Centre is further acknowledgement of the importance of excellence in tertiary teaching.



CHAIR'S COMMENT

Graeme Fraser

CHAIR TERTIARY TEACHING AWARDS COMMITTEE

What are the qualities of outstanding teachers, the people who have the most profound effect on our learning? I believe it is their enthusiasm that would stand out. Indeed, more than enthusiasm, it is their passion and commitment to their subject, an ability to stimulate their students' thinking and interests, and to do so irrespective of the varying abilities of those students. They are ever alert to the teachable moment and have a profound commitment to enhancing the achievement of their students - not as objects to be stuffed with information, but as creative learners who are exploring their horizons. These are the attributes epitomised by the awardees.

The portfolios they submit in support of their nominations are remarkable documents: demanding to read, but richly rewarding. Each is clearly the product of hard work and creative thinking; the distillate of years spent striving to develop a student-centred design for active learning- a process of learning from failure and building on success. Each demonstrates the multi-faceted nature of the teaching-learning process.

My warm congratulations to all the winners of the 2007 Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards especially to the winner of the supreme award, the Prime Minister's Award: Selena Chan, Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology.

As always it is an honour to be a member of a committee that chooses the people who appear in this publication. And, as always, the depth and breadth of the commitment, experience and creativity of the nominees meant that the task of deciding who were to be the recipients of the

Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards for 2007 was, once again, a difficult one.

As in previous years, we have looked for unequivocal evidence of the response of students to their teachers. Student testimonials, the results over time of the nominees' institutions procedures for obtaining systematic student evaluation of teaching performance are the "voices" of their students and were a critical factor in the decision making of the Awards Committee. They revealed a consistent pattern of students being tested to their limits and of achieving things they never thought possible; of students recounting life-changing experiences because a teacher cared about them, often not just as students, but also as people. It is their dedication to striving to ensure that people of diverse abilities, ages and backgrounds are able to participate inclusively in tertiary education that sets the teachers in this publication apart: the distinctive honour of excellence.

In commending these outstanding teachers to you, we need to remember that excellence in teaching is not just about one event. It is a complex and demanding process that goes far beyond performing in front of a class. It is about integrity, passion, resilience and continuing reflection on the nature and scope of the teaching- learning process. It is honourable and fulfilling. The awardees in this publication are testimony to that. Many of the teachers nominated for this award draw attention to the changing nature of the tertiary education landscape in New Zealand; of the real challenge in meeting the learning needs of a student population that is more diverse and discerning

than in the past. To achieve this, teachers must be approachable and accessible, both on campus and on-line, for significant periods of time. They must also strive to maintain academic rigour and credibility through scholarship, by keeping up-to-date in their subject and carrying out their own research.

In many respects this publication is the most visible and valuable part of the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards, because it is a guide to those meeting excellence in tertiary teaching. To do so contributes significantly to that valuable resource, the human capital of Aotearoa/New Zealand.



DIRECTOR'S COMMENT

Dr Peter Coolbear

DIRECTOR, AKO AOTEAROA

As the newly established National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence, Ako Aotearoa now has the privilege and responsibility of taking over the administration of the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards from NZQA.

Ako Aotearoa's purpose is to assist organisations and educators to enable the best possible educational outcomes for learners in the tertiary education sector. While we will seek to do this in various ways, none is more satisfying than recognising and celebrating the diversity of teaching excellence that already exists within New Zealand's tertiary education system.

Each year these awards have demonstrated that there is plenty of great teaching practice out there. The best tertiary education experiences expand learners' horizons way beyond their original expectations. The impact of such experiences on the individuals, their families and their communities often has value too great to measure.

As these awards illustrate, just as there is a huge diversity of learners across the tertiary education sector, there is no one model of teaching

excellence. Part of the role of Ako Aotearoa will be to foster exchange of ideas and debate about what constitutes exemplary practice across the breadth of tertiary education - which, we must remember, extends well beyond the education providers and into the workplaces and the communities of this country.

Finally, one thing that emerges clearly for me from the profiles in this publication is that while some may be born good teachers, being a great teacher – as these awardees undoubtedly are – requires huge commitment, hard work and much self-reflection. These awardees are people who share, above all, a love of learning both for its own sake and for the opportunities that learning can provide.

It is both humbling and inspirational to read the award winners' stories. This is exciting stuff!

AWARD *Winners* 2007



Selena Chan



Margo Barton



Dr Donna Buckingham



Dr Katharine Dickinson



Dr Diane Johnson



Dr Angus McIntosh



Peter Mellow



Dr Tracy Riley



Dr Christine Rubie-Davies



Dr Bryan Walpert



PRIME MINISTER'S SUPREME AWARD

Selena Chan

PRINCIPAL ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBER ■ CHRISTCHURCH POLYTECHNIC
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Selena is a dedicated scholar baker who has worked at CPIT since 1980. She is an outstanding professional teacher with a wide range of experience and talents including the ability to develop programmes of study that are heavily focussed on learning outcomes. Selena's skills in curriculum development were invaluable in creating on-line courses that had teacher, student, and cognitive presence in the Blackboard learning management system. An overriding element of Selena's approach is a determination to build both confidence and capability. Selena has also worked in partnership with industry to complete the reviews and development of the new In-Store/Franchise Qualification. She is a skilled assessor who employs a range of formative and summative assessment techniques.

Introduction

I have been teaching for quite some time and many aspects of good teaching have become intuitive. These include the need to treat all students with respect, the continual work towards engaging students into self-directed learning and multiple reiterations of syllabi and teaching plans to reflect the changing needs of industry, student profiles, teaching delivery and teaching context.

The collation of a portfolio for the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award provided me with the opportunity to reflect more deeply about the foundation of my teaching practice. What follows is therefore an attempt at providing a description of how I match and mesh a teaching philosophy with my teaching context, which is in turn informed by the discipline of baking.

Beginnings

I have had the good fortune in my career of being able to hone myself in two exacting crafts. Baking is a good springboard into teaching, scholarship and research. In baking, many skills and attitudes pertinent to teaching and research are practiced on a daily basis. The most important is that one must continually work at producing a good product. A good product does not just come about because one follows the recipe verbatim and the production process and equipment settings blindly. To bring a product from mediocre to excellent requires an application of all the skills that a baker has in a synergistic manner. An excellent product has to be produced in large volume, consistently on each and every batch and on each and every production day. Therefore, both baking and teaching present

ongoing daily challenges and the continual and ongoing work towards meeting these trials provide a great deal of satisfaction.

My students are an avenue for continual exploration. Many come to tertiary education with poor learning experiences from their secondary or primary schooling. Some are also returning to a formalised learning environment many years after their initial schooling. Fortunately, most of my students are keen to learn about baking; I use this shared interest as a lever to encourage students to return to learning. In learning about baking, they also learn about themselves, their strengths and their motivations. Therefore, each teaching session is a shared learning environment: the students learn baking and about themselves, and I learn more about teaching and about myself.

Becoming

In learning and researching about how young people 'become bakers', I have been able to continually improve my delivery of teaching as I better understand how the 'whole baker' eventually emerges. I use the principles of 'cognitive apprenticeship' (Collins, A., Brown, J.S. & Newman, S.E. (1989)) as a foundation to my teaching because learning a craft also includes the need to learn how to think, plan, behave and move like a craftsman. This teaching philosophy permeates all my work, which includes teaching baking to apprentices and full-time students; on-line teaching and content development; mentoring computing and business tutors in converting face to face courses to on-line delivery. At present, my on-going research projects include how apprentices become bakers, mLearning and trends in baking.

Cognitive apprenticeship steps include **modelling, scaffolding and reflection**. In order for young people to 'become' they need to be shown how principles work, why certain techniques are used in certain circumstances and why other ways of completing a process or task can also be used. As a teacher, it is important to **model** the ways in which we make judgement calls more visible to the learner. In teaching baking, I am continually trying out various ways to externalise my internal thought processes in a manner that is

accessible to the learner. In essence, my team and I at the NZ Baking Training Centre are trying to help our students enter into a specialised community of practice. We need to unwrap our understanding of things that are taken for granted and regarded as 'common sense', so that our students can attain some of this 'sense' which is, to them, not 'common'.

Building an attitude of continued improvement using skills at **product evaluation**

The ability to look at a product and 'read it' encompasses many tactile skills that have to be married to one's mental database. With full time students who have as yet not worked in a bakery, product evaluation does not as yet hold an element of importance. I need to illustrate to them the emphasis bakers put on product consistency and quality and the role product evaluation plays in quality control.

To do this, I collect products from several students after their first practical sessions (usually rock buns or scones). I say to them that everyone has used the same recipe and method but all the products laid before them not only look different, but also would eat and taste different. This is because some students have not been as careful with weighing up, or taken enough care in handling their product or in baking their product at the correct temperature or for the correct amount of time.

We then work out which one was caused by poor weighing up or poor processing. At the start, the students find it all too much, but by the end of their first module, after four weeks of learning the basics of baking and evaluating each others products, the majority of students will happily self-evaluate their product and tell me how they have to improve. Building up this culture takes time. From this foundation, we form the stepping stones towards becoming an effective baker.



Example of using scones in the first practical session to help students critique their product and to work out how to improve their baking practice.



Although this second batch is better, there is still room for improvement. This is the beginning of student learning about product evaluation and improvement.



An example of student work during the first practical assessment, four weeks into the full time programme. Note that the need for consistency of shape and size is already established.

Scaffolds need to be built with learners in order for them to move on towards becoming self-directed and reflective. It is especially important for learners, new to a trade, to be offered many opportunities for scaffolding their existing knowledge structures on to new concepts. Only then will they be able to make links between theoretical knowledge and the practical application of that knowledge to what actually takes place in the workplace.

With understanding and application comes **reflection**. Again, it is important to model this. In baking, I use sessions on product evaluation to show how a baker is able to draw inferences about what has not been correctly followed through with a process in order to improve the production process the next time around. It is not enough to just tell students how and why, but to actually show them how links are made between product external, internal or eating profiles and in turn to bring up pointers to what is not quite right with the product. This process of deduction must be shown via product samples, board work, the use of 'self talk' and links illustrated using coloured pens, verbal cues and the marrying of tactile clues with ones mental database. Students then need to practise these skills themselves, first with guidance and then on their own. In doing so, they improve their own meta-cognition, but first the teacher must draw them into becoming conscious of how the process might take place inside their brains.

Continuing

Added to the above, is the need to ignite passion for the trade in students. As in gathering yeast for use in artisan bread making, passion is infectious and can be caught. Once caught, it has to be carefully nurtured and the passion provided with incentives to expand, until the passion becomes so much part of one's life that one lives and breathes one's passion.

Learning to teach, as in learning to bake, is an ongoing process. One is never able to completely control a dough, only to try bring the best out of it by recognising the signs when the dough is mature and ready for scaling, moulding, final proof and baking. Learners can not be controlled either; they need time to mature and then be proved in the workplace before their skills are tested in the oven of commercial reality. A teacher's role is to provide the impetus for learning to occur, to help consolidate the foundation and then provide the guides or incentives or pathways to further learning. Every time I make bread, the dough teaches me more about bread making. The same holds true with my students. To teach is to continually learn.



PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

"Selena's skills in curriculum development were invaluable in helping to create on-line courses which had teacher and cognitive presence in the Blackboard learning management system. Selena's assistance enabled several of the lecturers to explore the use of on-line interactive enquiry methods such as the use of discussion boards and Wikis, and to create an on-line learning community with the community technicians employed in remote rural schools such as Opononi, Ohakune and Gisborne."

Chris McCarthy (project leader, Comtech project) and Diane McCarthy (academic staff member)

"I now have two apprentices working for me. They have recently been taught by Selena during their block courses. They came back from polytech and were impressed with the amount of knowledge Selena had and how she passed it on to the class. They appreciated the questions she asked, so that they could think about why different things happened."

Michael Kloeg (ex-apprentice and now owner of Ten O'clock Cookie bakery café in Masterton)

"When I first started to attend classes for my course, I felt nervous because I had never done the course before. I was worried that I might not be able to understand or follow the teacher. But fortunately, Selena always

starts the class slowly at the beginning, and asks at the end of the class whether we have any questions. She always provides us with prompt backup."

Yu Han HO, International student for Certificate in Baking (2006)

"Working alongside Selena for many years has meant we have benefited from the enthusiasm and passion she brings to the classroom. She is a good role model and her passion for the subject and for teaching and learning in general is an inspiration."

Karen Te Puke, Head of School & Evelyne Baumgartner and Mike Meaclem (academic staff members – baking)

"Selena makes everything easy to understand and provides easy ways to do the tasks we are given."

"Selena has done a wide variety of baking work & conveys it to students in a way that they can relate to."

"Selena shows us what to do in a very easy way to follow, checks to see if we're up to standard."

"I find her very good, I enjoyed myself because she is a good tutor."

"Approachable, never puts anyone down."

"Selena has such varied knowledge, she makes everything interesting."

Student comments from tutor evaluations – apprentice year two block course 2006



SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

Margo Barton

ACADEMIC LEADER, FASHION ■ OTAGO POLYTECHNIC

Margo is a Principal Lecturer and the Academic Leader for Fashion in the Department of Design. Margo's knowledge and expertise is recognised nationally and internationally. She has demonstrated to a high degree her passion and dedication in every aspect of her academic role. Margo is highly skilled in programme design and delivery; she is also immensely supportive of colleagues within the Department of Design. She team-teaches on a regular basis, believing that modelling collaborative processes encourages learners to think and work together in similar ways.

Context

Fashion is an area of the creative disciplines in which everyone is involved, to varying degrees, on a daily basis; it is the product we interact with the most closely. Regardless of our culture or our time in history fashion is a way to express ourselves. Wearers are in control of their look in the same way that learners can take control of their learning. I see my role as providing learners with multiple opportunities to work in creative, innovative and individualist ways, while also developing skills to meet industry expectations.

My practice as a learning facilitator is informed by what I do and believe as an educator, as well as my experience as a designer and as a continuing student. Taking a hands-on approach ensures that I am in touch with the realities of learning, designing and teaching and can use my knowledge and skills to constantly evaluate practices.

Experience

My teaching career has evolved out of my experiences with many fine role models: family,

friends, colleagues, teachers and importantly students. Experience has taught me to believe in myself and I have carried this value into my work with students. My variable performance at secondary school helped me to truly understand what many of our students go through and at the same time shows them that they too can succeed within academia.

Students who study fashion design tend to be practical, hands-on people. They like to make things, not write about them, as often they have not yet found their academic voices or the value of theory within their practice. My role, therefore, is to support them during this journey of academic discovery and understanding.

Learning and Teaching Philosophy

The overriding philosophy and aim behind my learning and teaching practice is to support learners to find their own way from an informed point of view. All students bring different perspectives to the learning experience. I celebrate these differences and treat students as valuable

individuals who deserve respect and the chance to develop creatively, believing the key to being a successful facilitator of learning is to support the development of confidence in themselves and their designs. Students often ask,

What do you want in this design?

My reply to this question has always been,

I want what you want. I want honest designs that come from within and that you can rationalise.

I encourage learners to engage in critical thinking processes and to contextualise and rationalise the design within their self-defined framework, to develop an individual design identity. Encouraging students to have the confidence to take risks with their choices is not confined to the design of the product; for example, it can occur through philosophical standpoints such as model sizes for fashion parades.

Having an individual design identity is important, but equally important is the ability to contextualise designs within the fashion world. To support these processes I facilitate conversations which enable learners to develop their own personal aesthetic and opportunities in fashion. I stress that designers have a right to contextualise their work as they see fit and this confirms the protocol of respecting everyone's ideas as unique and important to that individual and market segment.

One approach is to ensure that design concepts are contextualised, by integrating all parts of the process in a concurrent designing-

and-making practice, as it is my belief that each action is implicitly linked to the other. The principle stems from my experiences as a designer in industry and also as a PhD candidate, and is the heart of the developments of the delivery modes and paper outlines of the Bachelor of Design (Fashion).

Design for learning is an opportunity to promote transformation in fashion education and industry practice. I actively encourage creative leaps and support risk taking, as innovation can come from students with fresh sets of eyes who can spontaneously come up with new processes and products. My aim is to produce graduates who are innovative, able to make a positive difference to the fashion industry and to undertake postgraduate study.

I also reflect upon my practice as a designer, learner and learning facilitator, asking myself if they are still congruent. To assist this self-conversation, I write brief reflections on my lesson plans at the end of each class, project or direction of study. Through collaborative teaching practices I extend this discussion to colleagues and students and take their multiple viewpoints into consideration, informing the way forward.

Current Practice

I currently teach in a studio situation with a team approach which evolved through reflections on the practice of teaching, learning and designing. Since 2006 this shared space has offered me the



opportunity to facilitate learning from different perspectives concurrently, with gradually more people / viewpoints entering the conversation. Now, in 2007, there are four lecturers and one teaching assistant working with year three students. Learning is streamlined into one project, giving meaning to the work and demonstrating the importance of the integration of knowledge. The diversity of subjects highlights to the students the overlaps in our knowledge, and our shared understanding. Through these collaborative teaching practices, with multiple viewpoints being taken into consideration, we model the qualities students need to succeed in the fashion design industry. This new way of working further supports student individuality, the value which I strive to achieve in all my learning and teaching practices.

I believe that if students are failing, so am I. I endeavour to find an approach that recognises individual talents, while meeting assessment requirements. Assessment, and more importantly, feedback, assists students to gauge how their learning is progressing and highlights areas that need attention, as well as aspects that could be utilised for further developments.

Reflective questions are posed, such as:

What is the significance of...?

Where do you see this design fitting...?

Assessment is seen as a space where feedback can occur in a collaborative framework. Students enter dialogue candidly and their exchanges generally contribute to the successful completion of projects. Seeing students challenge expectations often indicates exceptional individual design understandings, and sometimes gives me, as a teacher, that goose bump moment:

Wow, I never saw that one coming!

On-going Commitment

My commitment to lifelong learning is demonstrated through continuing professional development, formal study and collaborative projects with industry. Industry collaborations occur through two main settings, firstly as a milliner and secondly, with a sense of community spirit, as a committee member of the id Dunedin Fashion Incorporated Society. For the past few years I have acted as a member of the voluntary organising committee for id Dunedin fashion events which highlights the collaborative and community working environment in Dunedin. It also provides students with valuable opportunities to evaluate their own designs in a stimulating environment, to raise their profiles and to network with top industry people.

A relatively new addition to the calendar of fashion design awards is the id Dunedin Emerging Designers Award, which I first proposed in 1999 and, with considerable support, had the opportunity to put into action in 2005. The awards have added a new dimension to the events; I designed them specifically to promote graduating students' collections and to encourage a space for cross cultural dialogue. The third year of the awards recently occurred with 140 entries and 35 finalists from diverse countries, such as Holland, Hong Kong, Israel, Thailand, Malaysia, Italy, Australia and New Zealand.

Supporting emerging design communities is of special interest to me, and I look forward to further developing the awards to encourage dialogue between other design and art recent graduates, e.g. product design, jewellery, textiles and communication design. In addition, with colleagues I hope to establish a scholarly design symposium, taking advantage of the opportunity of visiting fellow





design educators, and continue to facilitate discussions around design education issues.

Dialogue with students does not conclude on their graduation day. I believe that as a learning facilitator it is my job to continue to use my professional knowledge and interact with and advise graduates on their place in the design world. Keeping up contacts and prospective links is good practice for the entire school, students, graduates and fellow staff. It confirms for me that our teaching practice is relevant, and contributes to our shared knowledge. Our graduates reinforce this perception by stating publicly that they are well equipped to enter the industry.

Following the completion of my formal studies, I plan to build upon the knowledge gained and to take further advantage of my natural inquisitiveness

and energy. I will continue investigating fashion designing and making as a concurrent process, and extend my understanding of fashion design by exploring how it is represented within different cultures. I envisage learning throughout my lifetime and will be immensely satisfied if my students do likewise.



PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

As a lecturer and individual she is a truly inspiring, intelligent leader who is always supportive and encouraging to students, lecturers and the design department as a whole.

Margo consistently creates a positive learning environment and is sensitive to the needs of each student, which is especially necessary in such a creative atmosphere. Margo is extremely mindful of nurturing the style of each individual without impressing her own personal taste onto a student's work.

The fact that she is studying herself towards her PhD shows her dedication and passion for her field. Margo is modest, always approachable, warm and kind, and she relates and interacts well with everyone. Margo is more than a teacher; she has been and will continue to be our mentor.

Fiona Ralph, Helen Adam and Kate Anderson, Year 3 Students, 2006

Margo has an amazing ability to inspire and encourage her students to reach and push the boundaries of their own potential. I benefited greatly from Margo's hands-on attitude to all her subjects. She always brought genuine encouragement and innovation to the teaching space, inspiring me to reach my full potential.

Margo rewarded students for their hard work, instilling a strong determined work ethic. As a graduate Margo and I have kept in close contact; she is always my first port of call for advice on business decisions and a great source of critical thinking.

Anjali Stewart graduate

"Margo is an inspiration to us all; not only as a highly respected person in the fashion industry but as a person as well. She has always got time for every individual, not only with school work but anything we need her for. She goes well out of her way to help us achieve to the best of our ability. Margo is someone we all look up to and admire".

Sharn Blackwell, a Year Three student who completed an exchange programme with IED in Milan

"Margo is such a fantastic teacher, she actually takes on board everything that you say. Any issue that we have is immediately addressed by her; that makes everything so much easier for us. Her enthusiasm is contagious and really helps to inspire me".

Current student Penny Kingan



SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

Dr Donna Buckingham

SENIOR LECTURER, FACULTY OF LAW ■ UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO

Donna has taught the first year law course for 18 years to groups of between 500 and 600 students. Amongst her peers she has a reputation as an outstanding teacher that is founded on her roles as manager and lead teacher in LAWS 101. As evidenced in many testimonials, Donna has embraced technology by developing on-line statutory interpretation problems which students can use in their own time to further advance their skills. Donna has also been recognised for her outstanding work in 2005 by receiving the Otago University Students Association Teaching Award.

My commitment to the learning community

Each year, as I stand before my LAWS 101 class, I am one year older and the average age of this learning community remains the same.

“Community” is used deliberately – because the goal is to build exactly that. Actual ages of its 600+ members can range from 17 to 67 – there can be no assumptions about collective prior legal knowledge, socio-economic background, learning expectations or study habits. In addition, only 200 of those members will qualify to complete the LLB programme.

Legal advocacy is a ritualised skill that can run counter to private and hard-won feelings about justice and morality. In an adversarial system, lawyers do not generally choose which side of a legal issue they take. In recognition of this, legal training imposes the obligation to question, evaluate, argue, or persuade without necessarily believing in the rightness or wrongness of a position taken on behalf of a client. Sometimes it must be done in spite of that personal belief.

Becoming a member of this learning community is therefore transformative and my teaching

philosophy is a direct response to that dynamic. I must justify the transformative challenges it will face, acting as questioner, coach, and synthesiser of theory and practice. In one sense the community forms my client base and I seek the best outcome for each member – as I would for a professional client. I must therefore commit to ensuring that, as far as humanly possible, each member of this community can look back upon his or her individual transformative experience, without regret.

My teaching practice - building towards a learning outcome

Using a statute to predict a legal outcome requires acquisition of a new practical art. Rules may be clear in the abstract, but opaque in their application because the language used is capable of more than one interpretation. So the community must learn to tolerate uncertainty of outcome. Applying legislation to a fact scenario where there are arguments for and against the position of the client is an experience that members respond to with differing degrees of comfort. A few seem innately attuned to the process; for others it is internalised with a stern commitment to work; for some it

remains a formidable barrier. My obligation is to maintain a watching brief upon that process, to acknowledge the differing rates at which members will respond and to maintain their commitment in the meantime.

Teaching strategies

Building an environment where members will freely offer comment – in a large class, in an unfamiliar discipline, and while painfully self-aware – is the first challenge. I do not select members for individual responses. I do work hard to instil the notion that I cannot model the legal process without the community's active engagement. My consistent practice is to triangulate – in each class the legal domain remains at the apex; my students and I engage with it together. 'We' is the vehicle for problem solving – never 'you'.

Because 'law' is largely foreign territory, members may suspend their personal world view, assuming that it is not relevant. However the ability to think 'legally' requires marrying individual personalities, language abilities, creativity and sense of 'justice' with the overlay of analytical and interpretive legal skills.

Those skills cannot operate in a vacuum and I consciously orchestrate that realisation in a pivotal early class. Together we tackle a final examination problem, before any of the theory of the process of applying and interpreting statutes is explored.

Never yet has the community failed to invent, from their collective resources, the different techniques of choosing meaning for ambiguous terms (the bread and butter of judicial life). Members then begin to abandon their perception of dissonance between 'law' and the often-undervalued conventions of 'common sense', collective social standards and personal morality. Reaching this point sharpens the sense of inquiry and builds confidence in generating argument as we then begin the long rehearsal and legal naming of those legal conventions or principles.

Specific strategies in curriculum development

These are some of the content strategies for building the 'we' ethic which underpins the community concept:

- Using fact situations to which the community will easily relate when exploring complex legal principles (to help them feel they are learning some 'real law' along with developing a legal technique)
- Connecting with the community's deep assumptions about what law should offer a society by choosing a wide variety of topics in which to explore legislation: eg. rights of arrest; duties as drivers; family breakdown and state intervention; accommodation of Maori and other cultural values; degrees of culpability in



the criminal law; consumer rights; and the values inherent in the Bill of Rights Act. Stressing members' burgeoning ability to analyse, apply and critique that law, particularly sensitising them to the balance between the role of the courts and the role of Parliament.

The structural aspects of embedding legal technique are reflected in a variety of ways:

- Each class has a name (eg. Gift Horses, Reluctant Doctor) which allows students to easily isolate a particular learning difficulty;
- PowerPoint is used to provide the formative backbone of each class - the conceptual raft for reiteration of and self-reflection on the problem solving process;
- Lectures are taped so a student can rehearse again the process of problem solving in a particular legislative context.

Maximising the success of learner outcomes

Practising for success (formal)

My tutorial programme is allied to the rate at which skills are practised in formal class and is designed to reduce anxiety about how 'well' a member is learning. I work closely with 25 tutors (usually honours students). Supporting tutors in their new role of peer teaching requires building a collegial sub-community, whose guiding principle is to prepare LAWS 101 members for final assessment. This sub-community is vital, as there is a correlation between tutorial attendance and a highly successful learning outcome.

Practising for success (informal)

I encourage each community member to reflect on his or her own learning and to self-assess progress outside the formal learning structures. But committed members often also wish to work collectively. I have established informal sub-communities, which allow members to disperse their performance anxiety and practise their skills together. One such sub-community consists largely of members who repeat the course, often having passed but not having achieved to the level required to complete the degree. The decision to try again, without point credit, demonstrates a drive towards excellence that I felt compelled to acknowledge. In 2006, 50% of that sub-community entered second year law, 67% with a grade in the A range.



Practising for success – formal pedagogy and pastoral care

Pastoral and professional care in the guise of pedagogy is inevitable – first time law students often get practical exposure (voluntary or otherwise) to the legal system. If I am required to give legal advice, my practice is to explore with the member how the legal technique they acquire in their first semester of legal education can be used to predict the legal outcome. Professional confidences are always respected.

Success – the search for transparency

Transparency is paramount, especially in a limited entry professional programme. Modelling and reinforcing successful legal submissions in formal class and tutorials go part of the way towards establishing performance levels. But that environment does not cater for self-directed, self-paced transformative learning as well as the active use of digital learning environments. One of my computer programs, "Panic Stations", allows the user to serially undertake the process of analysing, applying and interpreting particular legislation or to go directly to that part of the process which they self assess as most challenging. The program also provides paradigm legal opinions ranging from a fail, a competent response and an excellent attempt, with marking commentary on both the form of the opinion and the content of each.



Final comment

Use of the rightly valued phrase - 'transformative learning' - tends to obscure the logic and heart of my commitment to my learning community - a simple passion for the process of law and lawyering. My role is not simply to construct a coherent body of knowledge. It is also about fostering intellectual courage and independence, preserving creativity, and modelling the ethical and process skills that define my discipline.

I now plan to explore how transformative learning is approached in other teaching institutions, to enrich the process I engage in. The 'e-teaching' discussion lists (both general and legal in their focus) in which I have 'lurked' for some years (operated by Stanford University, the Carnegie Institute and Warwick University) will provide the direction for exploration. I am looking forward to joining those communities physically, rather than electronically, for the first time and to being a student again – even if only for a little while.

PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

Students in large classes can easily become alienated unless the lecturer shows, by their teaching and by their engagement, that they are interested in every student in the class. In every aspect of her teaching, from the meticulous course materials, the on-line practice materials, the mentoring of students who repeat the course through to the organisation and encouragement of a strong body of tutors, Donna creates an atmosphere in which students are encouraged to do their best work.

Professor Mark Henaghan, Dean of the Faculty of Law

Donna's personal passion for all things legal is evident in her teaching. Her lectures are always very well prepared, structured and magnificently articulated. However any organised human being is capable of this. What made Donna a particular standout lecturer was the excitement she exuded. She was infectious and made all students want to be able to master the content so they would be able to experience what Donna felt.

Alexandra Fraser LAWS 101 student

Her commitment to ensuring that her students understood the material was evident. She always made herself available out of class time and was renowned as being an approachable, friendly lecturer who genuinely cared about her students. Even though "Evidence" was a difficult paper, I look back on it as one of my favourite classes from my time at Otago.

Bridget Wright, Honours student, now in practice

Donna rounds off the package by providing pastoral advice to any of the students who seek it. She has devised a system which maintains her own professionalism, does not breach confidence, preserves the teacher/student relationship and provides an incentive to the student. She sees this as part of her teaching role – helping students get back on track, helping them achieve the goals that caused them to enrol in her paper in the first place.

Professor Stuart Anderson, Teaching mentor

To me, Donna was a mentor, helping me shape my law career in the direction I wanted. Donna took time out of her busy schedule to help me with scholarship applications, law recruitment interviews and general questions about working in the legal profession. She was there to encourage me when job interviews were unsuccessful; keeping me motivated to strive for the things I wanted. She was also there to celebrate my success when I finally landed the dream job I wanted.

Charmian Oh, former student, now in practice

To my mind, this is a woman who has an absolute passion and enjoyment for the law. It is because she has that passion that she is able to communicate and teach so well. She knows the reality of practice and the world that the profession exists in and her teaching reflects that. This is not the love of the law in ivory towered isolation but in an everyday existence.

Joanne Hambleton Former student, now in practice



SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

Dr Katharine Dickinson

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY ■ UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO

Katharine has been teaching tertiary students for 18 years, of which the last ten have been at the University of Otago. From 2000 until 2005, she directed the Ecology Teaching Programme and led the re-design of the undergraduate curriculum. Now, the degree is based on a set of core team-taught courses that are research-informed with student learning building cohesively from first to third year. Kath is committed to 'learning by doing' where students learn through their own inquiry. She works with a wide range of colleagues and is rated by her research students as an outstanding supervisor.

Beginnings

I had my eyes opened to ecology at the age of 17; you could say that I found my niche. It did not happen in the classroom, or with a trained teacher, it was outdoors in an amazing place where my fascination for the natural environment opened up. It was one of those life defining events that was not anticipated and, importantly, it was dependent on the knowledge, support and enthusiasm of a key teacher. Such teachers over the years have had a fundamental effect on my pathway through life, which I joke with students as reflecting 'careering' rather than following a particular 'career'.

The support that I have received at crucial times, the subsequent choices I have made, and the pathways that I have followed since, have influenced my own teaching practices. These experiences, tempered with those of others' have led to reflection and a forming and re-forming of my teaching philosophy over the years. In particular, I have learned that both positive and negative experiences have been instrumental in shaping and refining my approaches. To err is human, and

to learn from one's mistakes is as important, if not more so, as learning from one's successes.

A philosophy of teaching

Teaching and research are both very important to me. Each informs the other; this is what signifies a university and university teaching.

A core value is to treat each student as an individual and with respect, together with an understanding that they have a life in which study is only a part. As a teacher, I encourage them to become independent both as people and as learners, in thought and action, and to be critical and lateral thinkers. My teaching practices are also designed to maximise the chances for a student to reach their full potential. Each student is different. There is no template when someone new comes through my office door and it is important to listen, learn and be supportive of a whole range of personalities, circumstances and abilities.

As part of the learning process, I want students to recognise quality of thought and experience, and to be constructively critical when it is absent.

"In order to be a great writer a person must have a built-in, shockproof crap detector"
 Ernest Hemingway, Nobel Prize in Literature, 1954.

Hemingway's famous quote encapsulates a key dimension of what I believe an education should provide. I have learned, however, that helping students obtain such a detector requires careful teaching. I want my students to be able to recognise quality and I want them to be good at this by the time they graduate. Such an aim requires that they not only develop critical thinking in ecology but also the capacity to use this in all aspects of their lives. Importantly, this includes self-reflection and a keen understanding of their own values and judgments.

'Learning by doing' and inquiry-based teaching

I have continued to develop and refine my approaches and challenge myself to try fresh ways of teaching to engage and motivate students. An important dimension is centred on inducting students into ecology. I want them to share my enthusiasm for the subject, to understand what it means to think and construct knowledge like an ecologist, and more broadly as a scientist and as a member of society. A key element in my teaching practice is learning through active inquiry, whereby I support and guide students in a range of teaching

situations where they learn for themselves by actually doing their own research. Repeatedly, I have found that these learning environments are amongst the most engaging and productive.

I want students to expand their learning by examining their thinking about ecology and botany and its application in a broad context, and I want them to learn about and appreciate wider perspectives. In my teaching therefore, I aim to link theory with practice, and in doing so I incorporate considerable professional and community experience from New Zealand and other countries where people experience very different social, cultural and economic circumstances. I especially like to help students from developing nations who are, without fail, enormously appreciative. I consider this 'outreach' activity to be of enormous benefit, not just to the students involved but also to myself. Seeing for oneself the hardships that these students work under and their enthusiasm and thirst for knowledge is a very grounding experience.

Students as individuals and as individual learners

The teaching environment can take many forms. I have had numerous conversations in my office, and on field courses, along with a wide range of classroom teaching. I aim to be approachable and someone who students feel comfortable with. It



is important to me to get to know students as individuals as soon as I can during their tertiary studies. In large classes this can be difficult, especially when the teaching format is primarily lecturing. I therefore endeavour to find ways and means in my teaching practices to individualise student learning at the earliest stage possible. It is also one aspect of my commitment to field-based student learning and the development of new ways of teaching on campus that allow and encourage the individual to emerge and develop in a supportive atmosphere. I believe it is important that students are allowed to make mistakes and learn from them, as I consider this process to be a key element in development. Creating a learning environment where making mistakes is seen as a natural part of the learning process does, however, require careful teaching so that students feel able to follow their own ideas, accept constructive criticism and feel comfortable with risk.

My role as a supervisor

Supervision of research students is one of the most challenging, as well as one of the most rewarding, of my teaching practices. When a student first approaches me to be their supervisor, I explore their interests with them. Sometimes the student is clear about the topic they would like to study, sometimes not. I work with them to explore their interests, formulating research questions and suggesting literature that is relevant for them to read. I want the student to be enthusiastic about their topic right from the start. I want them to feel that they 'own' their research, and that it has not been prescribed for them. I want to see them fired up about their research because they want to be. If they do not feel ownership then I say to them that it will be so much harder when they are further into their studies.

I have rarely had fewer than eight research students since 1990. I respect them all, and I do my utmost to help them to develop their potential, including assisting them in finding employment. I have gone on many journeys with these students where we have explored quite different aspects of ecology. Over the years, I have approached and involved many colleagues as co-supervisors or advisors of students. This has been a very enriching experience of great benefit to myself and to the students involved, and I have always been really thankful of the willingness and support my colleagues have shown. What better way to learn



about another person's field, be it entomology, geographic information systems, mathematical modelling or social entrepreneurship, than working collectively to supervise a student

Last word

I take my teaching very seriously and I endeavour to incorporate the experience gained from my research and community involvement into my practices, so that students learn about authentic situations. Some students become professional ecologists but others follow different walks in life. It is my aim that students are given the best education I can provide for whatever they choose to do. All this does not take place in a vacuum and I am privileged to have worked and collaborated with some very talented colleagues and students, for which I am very grateful. This teaching award has served to further energise my teaching. I aim to use the funds to meet and train with other practitioners who are utilising inquiry-based and research-informed teaching practices, both in the developed and developing world. I hope to act as a conduit and therefore provide benefit to as many people as possible, not just myself.



PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

"...Kath's goal is not to infuse students with ecological knowledge, but to make ecologists out of them. She therefore treats them as scientists rather than mere students of science. Many former students, who went on to postgraduate studies in ecology or careers in the field, say that they owed their start to Kath's dedication and encouragement. I can think of no better evidence of the impact that this outstanding teacher has had on her students..."

Professor Robert Poulin FRSNZ, Chair Ecology Board of Studies, Department of Zoology, University of Otago

"...When I see Kath with students or hear students talking about her, I realise that she is exceptional. I do not use that word lightly. She is the teacher that students will go to for help because they know that she will give her time and that they will receive support of the highest quality..."

Associate Professor Tony Harland, Higher Education Development Centre, University of Otago

"...Kath has always followed through from her teaching to helping me out with the obvious next step after studies i.e. getting a real job! On top of making sure that I was academically well prepared for the 'real world', on several occasions I have been lucky enough to have Kath's help in gaining employment..."

Richard Clayton, former postgraduate student

"...Most of all, Kath has shown great pedagogic skills and a very human attitude. Her involvement with her students goes far beyond their courses of study. She was as much concerned about my well-being during

my studies at the University of Otago, as with my professional success beyond my studies..."

Dr Pascale Michel, former postgraduate student

"...I would like to characterise Kath's teaching as enthusiastic, innovative, interactive and extremely student centred..."

Dr Robert Hofstede, Regional Director, IUCN - The World Conservation Union, Regional Office for South America, Quito, Ecuador

"...I'd like to acknowledge Kath's approach to teaching as a collaborative and evolving effort. Kath is always willing to discuss her teaching techniques, adjust her plans to accommodate changing situations, and debate pedagogical issues with anyone from post-grad demonstrators to award-winning full Professors. Kath's intellectual generosity with her junior colleagues is obviously inspiring, and I believe that, in addition to training excellent future scientists in her formal teaching assignments, she is also training a large number of excellent future teachers with her assistants, colleagues, and demonstrators..."

Associate Professor Dana Dudle, DePaux University, Indiana, USA

"...Kath is perhaps the most enthusiastic and committed teacher I have met in 20 years of university teaching...Kath has greatly enriched the learning experience for staff and students at the University of Otago, and I count myself fortunate indeed to have been able to work with her."

Dr Gerry Closs, Director Ecology Degree Programme & Senior Lecturer, Department of Zoology, University of Otago



SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

Dr Diane Johnson

SENIOR LECTURER, DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL
AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS ■ UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

Diane has been involved in tertiary teaching since 1993 when she moved from a Dean/Head of Department in a secondary school to become a teacher at the University of Waikato's Language Institute. Most of the courses she teaches are in the area of applied linguistics. Diane was involved in initiating the Whakapiki I Te Reo programme which has evolved and become the basis for programmes now offered by a number of institutions throughout New Zealand. She believes that teaching should be dynamic, interactive, creative, flexible, enjoyable collaborative and relevant. Her focus is to provide an example of lifelong learning, encouraging learners to see the completion of each course not as an end, but as the beginning of a journey that can lead to a variety of interesting and exciting discoveries and experiences.

Overview

In 1993, I moved from a position as Dean / Head of Department in a New Zealand secondary school to become a teacher at the University of Waikato's Language Institute. In 1996, I was appointed to the Department of General and Applied Linguistics where I am now a senior lecturer.

Most of the courses I teach at the University of Waikato are in the area of applied linguistics. Central to this is the theory and practice of language teaching, including teaching practicum courses in which students have an opportunity to put theory into practice and to reflect on, and evaluate, their own practice as well as that of their peers and tutors. My students come from many different cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds and have diverse needs, interests and expectations. They include experienced teachers and students who have never taught before (often in the same group). Many of them teach, or plan to teach, different languages to language learners of different

ages in different countries and in different learning contexts. Many of them are already working in positions as educational managers.

I believe that effective teaching is part of a cycle of learning, consultation, preparation and reflection that begins long before a class meets for the first time, continues throughout the duration of that class and feeds into the next cycle. The intersection of teaching and learning should be dynamic, interactive, creative, flexible, enjoyable, collaborative and relevant, and should include detailed mutual feedback that focuses on what has been achieved, what is still to be achieved, and how it can be achieved. Within the context of teaching-learning interaction, it is important to build on strengths, taking account of, and drawing upon, the different backgrounds and existing knowledge and understanding of learners, and of their different learning styles and learning preferences, whilst challenging them to try out new approaches and supporting them as they

gain confidence and move towards independence. I try to model life-long learning, encouraging learners to see the completion of each course not as an end, but as the beginning of a journey that can lead to all sorts of interesting and exciting discoveries and experiences.

Maintaining currency in teaching practice

My courses are taught in different modes (face-to-face; distance; combined on-line and face-to-face) and in different locations (in New Zealand and overseas) to different groups of learners from different linguistic, cultural and professional backgrounds. In order to maintain my currency as a teaching practitioner, I engage in reflective practice, which involves actively and consistently reviewing my own teaching practices, seeking feedback from students and colleagues and welcoming new approaches to pedagogy and involvement in further training.

Much of my teaching is in the area of teacher education so maintaining regular contact with schools and with the views of teachers is important in evaluating the ongoing relevance and effectiveness of my courses. Although I work in a tertiary context, I have retained my teacher registration and I maintain contact with New Zealand schools through involvement in school-based research and through my work as Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of a local

secondary school. In addition, I try to keep up to date with sources of information on international trends in language teaching, such as the current focus in Asia on introducing learners to additional languages at a much younger age, and in a more structured way, than was traditionally the case. Since any emerging trends in language teaching and learning inevitably impact on teachers and, therefore, on teacher education, an important part of my approach to course design and preparation is to ensure that emerging trends are addressed using a range of practical and sustainable classroom strategies. Course appraisals therefore include evaluation of the extent to which these strategies are appropriate in the wide variety of teaching and learning situations in which my students are engaged.

Facilitating learning

Since 1993, I have developed a wide range of courses included in the University of Waikato's Calendar offerings (from first year university level to Master's degree level) and I also supervise research at MA and PhD level. In addition, I design, deliver and/or contribute to courses and programmes locally, nationally and internationally as part of the University of Waikato's commitment to outreach activities. These courses and programmes all have learning outcomes which are determined in relation to the needs of specific groups of stakeholders from differing cultural,





linguistic and educational backgrounds. In each case, there is a direct and demonstrable link between course/programme objectives, materials/resources and assessment strategies. Courses/programmes incorporate specific strategies for encouraging student autonomy and for ensuring that there is sufficient flexibility to allow for adaptation in line with student responses.

Because I have a strong belief that learning is not always dependent on input from a teacher, I rarely give lectures in the traditional sense. My classes normally involve a significant amount of interaction between students in pairs and groups, modelling the kinds of approaches that might be expected in their own classroom practice to stimulate a higher level of engagement in the learning process. The fact that PhD students and university staff colleagues often attend my classes as part of their professional development also contributes towards a learning community approach.

As a language teacher educator in New Zealand, I believe I have a responsibility to support the efforts of Māori colleagues to revitalise their language. There is a good deal of potential crossover from one language teaching context to another and, approached with due sensitivity, there are ways in which those of us who are working in more resource-rich teaching and research domains can contribute to the professional lives of our colleagues. One example of this kind of crossover is the Whakapiki i Te Reo programme (providing support and professional learning for teachers in Kura Kaupapa Māori and Rūmaki classes). I was involved in the design and development of the early stages of this programme, assisting with the creation of guidelines for course design, supporting staff as they gained confidence

to follow and implement these guidelines and, along with other colleagues, providing training sessions for Māori staff that were to deliver the programme. Originally introduced as a one-off programme in 1994, it is now run in a variety of different forms and locations. I continue to be invited to contribute to Te Whakapiki i te Reo programmes (particularly in Hamilton and Christchurch) and am often invited to provide in-service development for resource teachers of Māori including the Te Rito programme in Northland.

Assessing Student Learning

I use a wide range of approaches to the assessment of student learning, including a type of portfolio assessment in which students are encouraged to submit final versions of some coursework assignments after they have received criterion-referenced feedback on initial drafts. Along with course outlines, course participants are provided with specific grade-related assessment criteria for each assignment. Assignments are returned with feedback forms (designed in relation to the criteria for each assignment) which clearly indicate what steps need to be taken in order to improve grades in the future; these form the basis of group and individual assignment tutorials. Formative assessment includes assessment of students' capacity to apply specific criteria to individual and group in-class task performance and to comment constructively on their own performance and that of their peers.

Evaluating teaching

Because much of my teaching involves pre-service and in-service language teacher education, course evaluation (in these courses and in all others) is treated as a regular and on-going part of the teaching and learning cycle. Students are invited to discuss issues relating to teaching and learning throughout each session and to attend regular individual and/or group tutorials in which they are encouraged to provide feedback about teaching and learning. Feedback is also sought from former students on areas in which they now perceive the need for development and/or improvement of the courses they attended. Course evaluation forms



are provided for all teaching programmes offered, including those taught overseas. I regularly invite students in my practical courses to observe or experience lessons taught by me and to apply to these lessons the same criteria that they apply to all other observed lessons, providing feedback and comment and making suggestions for improvement.

Final comments

I feel very fortunate indeed to have won one of these awards. I would like to offer my thanks to all the people who contributed to the production of my portfolio, and to the Qualifications Authority and Ako Aotearoa for having made this possible.

PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

Diane Johnson's teaching is awesome. For me, it was life-changing. She makes even the most complicated things seem simple.After the first discourse analysis session with Di, I felt I had been given the missing pieces of the jigsaw. From that point on, I knew what I wanted to do with my life.

*James [Hēmi] Whaanga PhD
Post-doctoral Fellow, School of Māori
and Pacific Development, University of
Waikato*

As a student in Diane's teaching practice class I found:

- *the classes always motivating, challenging and captivating;*
- *the content informative and appropriate to language teaching;*
- *tutors well prepared and organised;*
- *provision of models of teaching of an extremely high quality;*
- *an empathy towards cultural differences;*
- *a willingness to go out of her way to assist students;*
- *the assessment and feedback sessions we participated in were very beneficial with Diane always giving much-needed advice and comments;*
- *an extremely gifted and passionate teacher.*

*Rauhina Cooper, Senior Tutor, Te
Whakapiki i Te Reo Programme,
University of Waikato*

Dr Johnson was able to draw on her profound knowledge in practical linguistics and teaching strategies to make creative, thought-provoking materials supported strongly by sound research sources. The thoroughness of her preparation never left anything to chance no matter the subject area; she spared neither

time nor effort to give to teachers, trainees and other students skillfully designed materials to stimulate their imagination and enhance their own professional possibilities.

She says a thing 'as it is' but with kindness and with a strong dose of her characteristic humour. The breadth of her experience has made her aware of each students' needs and how best to address them for the benefit of the person.

*Dr Bosco Wen Ruey Lee, President,
Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages,
Kaohsiung, Taiwan ROC*

From the first session of the first of Diane's courses that I attended, I realised that this was an exceptional person with very special talent and ability as a teacher. Later, I realised that Diane's exceptional contribution to the life of the university extended far beyond the classroom. Diane became for me, as she has been for so many others, a mentor, someone who has encouraged, supported and advised me, someone who has created opportunities for me and has done everything in her power to help me to achieve my goals.

Diane has mentored many others in the University and beyond in similar ways, providing them with opportunities to contribute to seminars and workshops and helping them to prepare conference papers and write articles. Her generosity and her professionalism are critical aspects of her academic leadership role. Diane listens, helps, supports and guides, but she also challenges. She challenges others to do better in the same way as she constantly challenges herself to do better.

*Anthea Fester, Senior Tutor, Department
of General and Applied Linguistics,
University of Waikato*



Dr Angus McIntosh

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES ■ UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Angus is a highly effective leader in his field of freshwater ecology. He is fully committed to lifelong learning and advanced thinking in ecology, and conveys this commitment through his teaching and interactions with peers and professionals. His teaching style is engaging, he always strives to include everyone at their own level and encourages them to achieve to the best of their abilities. Angus has played an important leadership role in the amalgamation of the Zoology Department with the Plant and Microbial Sciences in to a single School of Biological Sciences.

Teaching driven by a passion for the environment

I'm an ecologist. Teaching freshwater ecology is a natural extension of a youth spent exploring the wilds of Stewart Island. I was captivated by an amazing natural world, but appalled at how it was being destroyed by pests and other impacts. I'm not an angler, and streams were not a childhood passion. Instead I was convinced to work on freshwaters by some inspirational teachers. The benefit of not only expanding knowledge, but encouraging others to use the knowledge was obvious even as a laboratory teaching assistant. Moreover, I experienced the pleasure gained from seeing others better understand the natural world.

Professionalism - A responsibility to the students and society

My commitment to teaching was driven by a personal vision to change the way humans treat the world, enhanced by the rewards of helping students learn, but taking on a University faculty position carries a higher-level responsibility. Education and society are always linked and although university teachers have a responsibility to their individual students, the contract is ultimately with society.

First, teachers must decide what to teach. They need to focus on the needs of the individual students and their eventual role in society. For me this value judgement is closely linked to research. Carrying out research ensures my teaching is state of the art because I'm actively involved in the generation of knowledge. There is a reciprocal relationship between teaching and research, and separating the two in universities is bound to reduce the quality of tertiary education (and research).

Teachers must also be exemplary practitioners. Students are astute judges of integrity. Gaining respect does not mean students shouldn't question a teacher. Tertiary teachers need to create an atmosphere where the pursuit of understanding is the ultimate goal, and questioning and investigation are integral parts of the process. Moreover, everybody learns by watching and following to a certain extent, so demonstrating the role that science should play in society is critical. I present details of how knowledge was generated, how reliable it is, and encourage well argued student views. As a teacher, I don't just want 'students', I want 'learners'. Like most relationships, the best ways to develop positive learning relationships are through effective communication, mutual respect and hard work.

Learning Tools

If there is one absolute certainty in teaching, it is that every student is different. I use a number of techniques to try and ensure every student participates:

1. Generate enthusiasm and interest

Grab student attention. It can be asking questions or having a class discussion. The most important thing I do is set the tone. Student reaction to the teacher determines the level of participation.

Students also learn effectively if they enjoy the experience. They can derive enjoyment from hard work, participation, achievement and discovery. I build enjoyment into courses to encourage successful learning.

2. Get students out of the lecture theatre

Taking students out of their normal environment

is a great way to engage a class. The University of Canterbury has four field stations. Here students get engrossed in the natural environment, and learn effectively and independently if they are pointed in the right direction. At first year they work through exercises where the methods and questions are prescribed. By the end of a third year field trip enquiry-based learning is being used where the students are challenged to formulate the questions and methods.

3. Offer a range of learning options and get feedback

I mix delivery methods to ensure students are thinking, are challenged and avoid passive note writing. Different approaches often throw new light on an issue or allow them to fully understand a concept. Some students learn from asking questions and some learn from listening to answers. Asking them to fill in feedback cards is an effective tool because it means their knowledge is tested and they are forming the concepts in their own minds. I use images to promote discussion, illustrate points, and give students a deeper insight. I intend to purchase underwater camera equipment with the award to extend the types of images I am able to present.

I always have an outline which details the main points and have places to go for additional information (textbooks, literature and websites). I give them important detailed figures and tables in full, but remove some key points. Thus, I'm encouraging them to come to the lecture and actively participate in their note taking. Moreover, by leaving out key points I'm encouraging them to think about what the crux of a question is before we get there. I keep my eyes, ears, door and 'approach' open to facilitate communication. If a class has switched off, it will be obvious from the sound and their faces. The most important part of obtaining feedback is being approachable. I chat to students informally and actively engage in conversations wherever possible.

4. Focusing on concepts and skills, not facts

Many students are obsessed with the information they think it will be necessary to regurgitate. It's essential that they know what they must do to be



successful in a course, but they should focus on gaining understanding and learning skills and concepts. Thus, setting the learning outcomes for a course and getting student buy in for them is paramount. To be useful in society I want graduates who can solve problems, apply knowledge and create new knowledge. Once I realised it was impossible to cover everything, students appreciated my lectures more because they were able to concentrate on the key concepts and ideas.

5. Match assessment to the learning outcomes and make formative assessment useful

Assessment tasks play a key role in the education process because they are hurdles that require learning to pass. I make sure formative assessments are well matched to the learning outcomes, and that they really do encourage and guide student learning. For example, in the first year exercises we are looking for an association between a practical situation and a concept indicating they understand the concept. In third year the goal is to be able to apply an appropriate theory or concept for a particular practical situation.

6. Risk management in setting teaching goals

The best way to ensure the majority of students are capable of dealing with the level you are teaching is to be certain about their background and preparation. Here developing careful and considered views that are student-centred and earning the respect of colleagues enables a coherent and organised pathway through the curriculum to be negotiated. Making sure struggling students keep up with the class and the high calibre students don't lose interest involves some special strategies. Giving special invitations for students who are having difficulties and tutorial groups are useful. I label some reading as extra for experts, but they are often looking for more challenge, not more work. Here spending a few minutes in a lecture discussing the new cutting edge developments in a topic can keep them on board. For postgraduate students I offer advice to help them manage the trade-off between feasibility and outcome, and assist students secure funds for their own work. This has led to a group

of postgraduates working on highly diverse projects in freshwater systems where their original input is maximised.

Teaching Development and Improvement - Reflecting on practice (and practise)

In the beginning I spent a large amount of time researching and preparing the most comprehensive lectures possible. Students liked my communication style, but weren't learning as I expected and many indicated they were being swamped. Since then I have shrunk the content of my courses, and moved more towards concepts. The students find learning easier because I avoid 'overcomplicating' the material. With a young family I also found it wasn't possible to keep up the intensity of preparation and revision. The process of improving teaching should be continuous, but it's not possible to revise everything each year. This is a major part of dealing with life as a university academic. Passing through this stage involved encouraging independent learning, focusing on students who most need attention, blocking out time for teaching development, prioritising and anticipating course revision, and training postgraduates to use my time effectively.

Other significant steps have involved taking advantage of the opportunities for peer review. All the courses I teach are team-taught so there are many opportunities for discussion and evaluation of delivery, content, assessment and student achievements. Visiting the ecosystems and field sites I'm teaching about has also been essential in developing my ability to convey the essentials to students. I intend to extend my breadth of experience by visiting some tropical locations using the award funds.

The student-focused approach adopted for both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching has been enormously rewarding. Without doubt the biggest thrills from my career have come from student achievements. The management of freshwater ecosystems in New Zealand is and will continue to be a critical issue. I'm excited about helping them learn effectively to ensure they are up to the challenge of managing our freshwater resources effectively.



PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

"In my opinion, Angus is a highly effective leader in his field of freshwater ecology. He is fully committed to life long learning and advanced thinking in ecology, and conveys this commitment through his teaching and interactions with peers and professionals such as myself."

Rachel Barker, Waterways planner, City Environment Group, Christchurch City Council

"Angus is an inspirational teacher; his teaching style is engaging as he always strives to include everyone at their own level and encourages them to achieve to the best of their abilities. Furthermore, through interaction, discussion and questioning, Angus encourages us to extend our boundaries, leading us to our own discoveries and realisation."

Helen Warburton, Rebecca Neumegen, and Nicola White, Undergraduate Students, 2004-6

"The confidence and passion for science that Angus helped to engender during my MSc degree played an integral part in my decision to continue to work in the freshwater science arena, and to build EOS Ecology; an aquatic science research and consultancy business. His conviction of the role quality science and research must play in achieving sustainable management of our freshwater resource has reinforced my own beliefs, and has become central to our company's work ethos."

*Shelley McMurtrie
Former student, now director of EOS Ecology*

"Angus' undergraduate teaching leaves lasting impressions on his students. His infectious enthusiasm, attention-grabbing energetic lecturing style, and the occasional gimmick, like whistling to demonstrate kokako mimicking other birds, leads to entertaining and memorable lectures. He places much emphasis on undergraduate fieldwork, which is invaluable in stimulating interest, reinforcing lectures, learning skills to conduct independent research and also provides an avenue for informal discussions. Angus has a reputation for asking difficult undergraduate exam questions, as they integrate material from several lectures. This forced us to understand the material and led to assessments that were a learning tool, rather than a hoop to jump through."

*Hamish Greig and Michelle Greenwood
Ph.D. candidates University of Canterbury*

"I was [also] struck with the respect that the students in the class expressed for Professor McIntosh and their appreciation for his commitment to facilitating their learning and growth. He is a highly approachable and fair individual, and it was clear that the students took advantage of their opportunity to interact closely with him."

*Barbara L. Peckarsky
Honorary Fellow & Emeritus Professor
Department of Zoology University of Wisconsin Madison*



SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

Peter Mellow

SENIOR LECTURER, FLEXIBLE LEARNING ADVISOR ■ AUT UNIVERSITY

Peter has taught over a wide range of levels for twenty years in the tertiary sector. He is widely recognised as a leader in the fields of Flexible Learning, eLearning and the rapidly expanding mLearning. Peter is continually looking at new initiatives to help the students with their learning, e.g. on-line course information and tests, creating interactive CD-ROMs for the students' use. These and other examples add depth to the students' learning. He is dedicated and committed to his work, provides inspirational assistance to his peers and is ever striving for excellence.

Over the last few years, I have been fortunate to have had my teaching recognised via a number of awards and accolades. While awards are nice to receive, they are not why we teach. I teach because I love the journey.

What is that journey like typically for me and my students? And, why are our journeys together like this? What new journeys lie ahead?

I often start the first class of a semester by inviting students to "Come for a walk with me, hand in hand through anatomy land". This underlines that we are on a learning journey together, and that I won't always be leading from the front. Sometimes I walk beside the students like a colleague, pointing out interesting concepts. I often get students to lead the way, so they can share their expertise and enjoy the feeling of sharing knowledge with others.

I encourage the students to make their environment their classroom. One example I use is the radio masts in Henderson, Waitakere City, with their supporting guywires, being mirrored in the human body with the muscle group quadratus lumborum. This diagonal support structure is one of many examples I use to get the students to think 'outside the classroom'.

I want them to share with me the wonder of the subject I am teaching, and do this with passion and unbridled enthusiasm. I believe that by nurturing *their* passion for the subject it will sustain them on their lifelong journey of learning.

There has been much talk in flexible learning of the move from the 'sage on the stage' to the 'guide on the side' and this approach is similar to what I have always practised. However I don't believe they are mutually exclusive. As a teacher, I move between the two roles as I sense what is needed for today's topic or how the class are reacting to it.

I try to apply social constructivism learning theory in all of my teaching activities. I recognise that my students have a variety of learning styles and I attempt to appeal to as many of these as possible to allow students to create meaning for themselves, including developing tactile models to suit kinaesthetic learners particularly. I use blended learning and try to foster autonomy in study for all my students.

One approach I use is providing a wide range of course resources allowing students some control over what they wish to learn. Some may follow the textbook well; others explore fringe resources

like links to interactive web sites to see animations of key concepts, which they find makes grasping complex concepts easier. As Shaw (2001) stated “students must be able to exert significant control over the sequencing of activities”.

I am conscious of the need for constructive alignment and link my learning outcomes with my learning activities and then through to my assessments. Flexibility is needed here as some groups need a different approach, so being ‘fleet of foot’ is a valuable skill. Being adaptable rather than rigid is important.

The only constant in education is change. This oxymoron has guided a lot of my development. The students are changing, especially the school leavers. The technology is changing, bringing both benefits and risks. Also the content is often changing - keeping up to date with recent research shows a commitment to ensuring that my classes are always current.

I am a keen follower of the emergence of connectivism as proposed by George Siemens. It recognises the impact that technology is having on our students and the ways they wish to learn. Students are very social and have always wanted to learn and work in smaller groups and teams. Making these connections is important.

Classes need to be entertaining. We are teaching to a generation of students who have spent twice as long playing video games as they

have reading, and four times more time watching television than reading (Prensky 2001). However, while classes need to be entertaining, we must remember that they are not entertainment, they are education. Making classes entertaining promotes engagement with the students and it is easier to teach engaged students than daydreamers.

I embrace the Internet and the flexibility that it offers both staff and students. Before AUT had its own Learning Management System (LMS) I put up large quantities of course material in the form of static web pages, starting in 1998. However, I attempted to use it not just as a noticeboard for content: I used the Coursebuilder application to create formative quizzes for students to do. Students were given Internet ‘Easter egg’ hunts to find resources and solve problems. Student interactivity with material is important.

Once AUT’s LMS became available, discussion forums allowed students to have a communal space where they could discuss questions, concepts and share ideas. This format allows flexibility to students through its asynchronous nature. Students can log in at their convenience, take time to weigh their responses and then compose their own comment without the pressure of feeling that they have to answer immediately.

The students spend more time out of the classroom than in it. My influence is relatively minimal, time-wise, to their learning. So I am a great believer in providing lots of formative assessment opportunities where students can gauge their own progress and see how well they have cemented their understanding. These come in the form of short answer quizzes on-line, with every answer being given personal feedback, so even





if they get a question wrong, they get direction on where to go to review the learning around that subject to ensure they pick it up.

I start almost every lecture with a short quiz. This gives the students time to settle into class, but also to review what we covered last time so their mind is in the right space to engage with the new topic of this day's lecture. I also finish with a short quiz as a brief review of the key learning points.

Assessments (both formative and summative) are not just there to 'assess' students and their knowledge. I encourage students to look upon assessment as another part of the learning process; to learn where they went wrong in an assessment and to ensure that they learn that so that next time they will do better, that is real learning!

I have developed a number of electronic resources over the last ten years to add another dimension to my students' learning. As well as the face-to-face classes and tutorials, I have produced over 50 interactive CD-ROMs for student use at AUT.

Most of my students represent Prensky's 'digital natives' and Oblinger's 'net generation'. Cellphone penetration is at or above 100% for all of the papers I lead. I created the StudyTXT cell phone study system to tap into this phenomenon and allow students to 'snack on study' as a start to using the emerging mLearning that is beginning to impact on education. As well as the cellphone,

the portable MP3 player has added another layer of learning options with the growth of podcasting.

Because I use a range of technologies people often think that I believe that technology is *THE* answer to learning in the 21st century! While I embrace technology, I view it as just another tool in my educational toolbox. It is not the tool you use; it is how you use it. I believe that technology is ONE of the tools we should use.

I have been successful in creating a number of innovative learning pathways, which are not designed to replace traditional learning methods, but recognise the diversity of learning styles our students possess. These have been attempts to be more inclusive for marginal students who may not have blossomed a few years ago, when their learning options were more limited.

Is teaching a science or an art? We have research-based learning theories that we follow as they are an acknowledged means of providing quality to our teaching and the students' learning. However, there is the 'X' factor, which is the educator's experience in front of a class and those soft skills like charisma, energy and passion.

These are hard to quantify, yet contribute greatly to making the difference between a good and a great teacher; the 'art' of teaching. I believe that all lecturers have something that is unique to them that they could use and promote in their classes to enrich the learning experience for the students. Recognising what you have and using it, that is the real skill.

Energy and empathy, patience and passion are some of the keywords that come to mind when I am asked to describe my own teaching. I hope I live up to these words (they are echoed in student feedback), as they are important ingredients to being a successful educator. Being in a position where you are guiding, supporting and assisting students along their journey towards tomorrow is a big responsibility. However, the reward is feeling that you have made a contribution, even in a small way.

I intend using the award money to fund part of my own never-ending journey, and to use the resulting learning to assist my peers on theirs.



PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

Peter's ability to engage audiences with varied academic achievements and experiences, while maximising learning experiences is absolutely outstanding. Peter's charisma, enthusiasm, innovation and passion for education were definitely catalysts that promoted my desire to pursue a career in tertiary education.

He is dedicated and committed to his work and to assisting others. He continually strives for excellence. I see Peter as a grounded, charismatic role model, who possesses honesty and integrity, and commits himself to extraordinary work with enthusiasm and passion, for the improvement of those he comes in contact with.

Robert Hogg, former student and colleague, now lecturer, AUT University

Peter was exceptional in his efforts to help his students with their understanding and was always using new approaches to help us learn, recall, understand and apply important sport science knowledge. Peter's door was always open, whether it was for further assistance on the sliding filament theory, additional study notes or just a general student chat session.

Be lucky Pete Mellow – know that you have touched many lives and created many dreams.

Melanie Longdill, former student

Student appraisal highlighted Peter's exceptional enthusiasm and energy for teaching, his helpfulness to students and colleagues, and his ability to meet learners' needs using "an impressive repertoire of strategies." Two students' comments sum up Peter: "This lecturer is passionate about what he teaches" ... and "Pete is the most impressive lecturer I have come across ... he has helped me to decide to continue on to do my masters and become a lecturer myself".

Lorraine K. Parker, Director, Centre for Educational & Professional Development, AUT University

I have been privileged to observe Pete teaching on many occasions. His true passion is teaching and empowering students. He is continually looking at new initiatives to help the students with their learning, e.g. on-line course information and tests, creating interactive CD-ROMs for the students' use, which has added depth to the student learning. He sets the standards for other lecturers to follow.

He constantly delivers excellence in education to our students. The energy he gives our courses, his fulltime job and family commitments show that Pete is truly a remarkable person. He is a consummate professional teacher.

Carol Sommerville, Short Course Manager, Division of Sport and Recreation, AUT University



SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

Dr Tracy Riley

SENIOR LECTURER, SCHOOL OF CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY ■ MASSEY UNIVERSITY

Tracy has demonstrated a commitment to excellence during her eleven years as a teacher educator at Massey University. Her teaching philosophy and practice are driven by the belief that a teacher scholar engages in research-informed teaching and teaching-informed research. She is one of the leaders in Massey University in the use of eLearning strategies, and has employed contemporary electronic teaching techniques in a way that ensures the primacy of pedagogy over technology. She is continuously engaged in the development of her subject specialty through her teaching research and her contributions to the educational community. Tracy is actively involved in the supervision of postgraduate research at all levels, between four and eight research projects and theses a year.

I began my teaching career in 1988 as an elementary school teacher in the United States, and it was during my first year of teaching that I discovered my passion. One student in my classroom, a bright girl who glided through activities and assignments with ease and flair, emptied my “bag of teaching tricks” quickly! Since asking my initial questions about her and how to best meet her needs, I have pursued a career as a teacher, researcher, and advocate in gifted and talented education.

Being a Scholar Teacher

I teach undergraduate and postgraduate papers, designed mainly for pre- and in-service early childhood through secondary school teachers. These papers have been taught extramurally (distance), internally, and as block courses. Since 1999, I have used WebCT for on-line resources and discussion, gradually moving to fully web-based papers. For all the papers I teach, I also develop written study guide materials. I am actively involved in the supervision of postgraduate research at all levels.

Teaching a diverse range of students at different levels and programmes of study – and in a number of ways – is a real challenge! It requires me to carefully consider my students’ individual needs, so that I can best meet those through appropriate teaching. Over my University teaching career, I have had to develop a wide range of effective strategies, all underpinned by my teaching philosophy.

My philosophy of teaching stems from the fact: *I teach people how to educate gifted and talented children.*

The characteristics of gifted children push their teachers to find ways of providing them with learning that goes outside the square of everyday practice. Strong implications arise for my teaching from what my students need to know about educating these children. I ground my teaching in research and reflective examples of how teaching must be tailored to the individual needs of my students, along with making them aware of how they should reflect on the needs of the children for whom they have responsibility.

I strive as a teacher educator to encourage my students to be reflective practitioners, through differentiated learning that bridges the gap between theory and practice. I believe that teaching and research are inextricably linked: we need to develop a research-led teaching force, and a teaching-led research community.

I am actively engaged in research, and my teaching is underpinned by research. Being a scholar teacher means having the ability to ‘step back’ from my own research and theoretical knowledge, making connections to practice, and effectively communicating with students in an engaging, student-friendly manner. I strive to make sense of theory and research for my students, as it relates to the art of teaching.

I strongly believe part of my role as a scholar teacher is to *enact* the theory and research in my field of study – to “practise what I preach.” This requires not only extensive knowledge of my subject area, but also a solid understanding of effective teaching. I have made a commitment to enhancing the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of my teaching through ongoing professional development, evaluation of teaching, and my professional contributions.

I am committed to facilitating differentiated learning experiences for my students by infusing these seven elements of **PASSION** in teaching and learning:

- Personalised
- Authentic
- Specialised
- Student-centred
- Individualised
- Optimal
- Negotiable

I seek to empower my students to effectively address the unique needs of gifted and talented children in their own teaching by giving them the *experience* of differentiated content, processes, and products in their learning.

Personalised and Specialised

Gifted and talented education is a specialised field of study, filled with a range of potential topics and ideas for exploration. I consider myself a ‘generalist’ in a ‘specialist’ area, with my role being to facilitate my students’ learning by encouraging them to

“follow *their* passions”. I provide many choices in pursuing topics, allowing them to study issues through different lenses.

Personalising learning through specialisation is just one avenue I pursue in my teaching – I turn the kaleidoscope, encouraging students to view many perspectives. I challenge them to consolidate theories and research by exploring their own beliefs, attitudes, and experiences. The views of parents, gifted students, and other educators are contributed by real and virtual guests, and through films and biographical data. I also bring *myself* into my many ‘classrooms’ in very personal ways by sharing my own teaching, research, learning, and parenting experiences.

To accommodate students’ specialised learning, a wide range of resources is required. Each WebCT site is continually updated to exploit the potential of the Internet. I have also developed the Mass-E-Gifted Education Resource (web page). This requires me to ‘stay on top of my game’ and I believe is enhanced by my ongoing commitment to the field.

Finally, I aim to provide my students with the tools they need to be successful learners, by using strategies such as ‘feed-forward and feed-back’; teaching them ‘how-to skills’; utilising a variety of media and presentation styles; and weaving their own experiences and perspectives into my teaching, by challenging or reinforcing their responses.

Authentic and Negotiable

I base the design of the papers I teach on theory and research, and this can sometimes create tension. Teachers want to know ‘what to do’ in their classrooms – they want authentic learning! Feedback from my students shows that I clearly and logically translate research into relevant practice. I believe my active and ongoing involvement as a researcher and in policy development have enhanced my ability to do this.

Authenticity is also achieved through assessment that requires students to address ‘real world’ problems through the application of their knowledge in a personally meaningful context. My students are given choice in a range of ‘products’ for assessment. Students may submit journal articles, web pages, professional development



plans, pamphlets, teaching resources, or a negotiated product. I encourage students to complete their products in their area of professional and personal interest. This flexibility and negotiation is a hallmark of my teaching and demonstrates, in practice, the theoretical and research-based principles of my field. I want my students to be *producers* of knowledge, rather than consumers.

Student-Centred and Individualised

Many students enrol in the papers for personal reasons – someone they know intimately is gifted and talented. Most exciting are those students who come to understand themselves as exceptional learners, sometimes for the first time. A few years ago, a postgraduate student ‘confessed’ to me that she had just married a gifted man! I encouraged her to focus her studies on adults and creativity, and at the end of the course, she emailed:

I am happy to say, all your teaching and encouragement to reach out to the gifted as they are, has paid off! (email, 2004)

This example shows me how teaching impacts individual student development – and this can be both personal and professional. I work hard to support students in their academic and professional careers, and the most rewarding element of my teaching is what happens next! When I open a journal or attend a conference, I am always equally delighted and humbled to discover contributions from my students.

Optimal

To optimise my students’ strengths and abilities, I must first determine what these are. I seek to know and understand where they are ‘coming from’ through a variety of strategies. For example, I have students complete a KWN chart – what I Know, what I Want to know, and what I Need to

know – and I use this information in my planning.

I continually gauge knowledge and understanding through brainstorming, pair and share activities, small group discussions, simulations, and role play; providing opportunities to apply and analyse key content. In on-line teaching, my students are set individual tasks, including sharing their plans for upcoming assignments. These activities provide them with teacher and peer feedback, and opportunities for ‘thinking out loud’.

Teaching is also about optimising learning. I believe students learn through assessment, so I prepare mine by giving guidelines, criteria (e.g., rubrics), links to University support services/resources, and examples of previous assessment. I write constructive comments and questions on a summary feedback sheet and assignments – I do not use meaningless ticks! Using WebCT and PowerPoint presentations, I summarise overall feedback to prepare students for their next assignment.

My Passion: Making a Difference for Gifted and Talented Children!

During my eleven years in this country, I have been in the fortunate position to make a difference to education. In addition to my teaching and research contributions, I am a leader in the field. Being a leader demands continued growth in my knowledge and understandings, as well as critical thinking and seeing issues from different perspectives. My passion for teaching and learning is sustained and developed through my influence on national policy initiatives.

I am empowered by the nexus of teaching, research, and advocacy, and since I began my career I have been committed to excellence in all these areas. My aim is to spark the flames of passionate teaching for my students, helping them



reflect upon their own learning and teaching as it relates to children with exceptional abilities and qualities. I want my students to make a difference for our gifted and talented children – and they do!

Future Plans

As I look to the next few years I foresee a major shift in my teaching, with gifted and talented education becoming integrated across the teacher education curriculum. This will require greater collaboration with my teaching colleagues and will force me to consider how the needs of gifted and talented learners fit into the bigger picture of education. Technology is also rapidly changing and will no doubt alter the face of tertiary teaching. I plan to use the award money to take part in teacher

education conferences and to enhance my use of technology in teaching.



PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

Dr Riley is the epitome of the scholar teacher: one who informs her teaching with contemporary research. Dr Riley has both a thorough understanding of her subject and a comprehensive understanding of pedagogies for working with adult learners; she is extraordinarily capable in linking the two.

Some can be effective teachers without knowing why – personality is a factor. But Dr Riley is an effective teacher who knows why, because she has an impressive understanding of the links between subject knowledge, pedagogy and personality. She exploits these links perfectly for the advantage of her students.

Dr Riley could well write the “textbook” on excellent teaching, and in so doing set the benchmark for lecturers in this and other universities.

*Professor James Chapman,
Pro Vice-Chancellor,
College of Education, Massey University*

For me, the most empowering learning that I have been involved with has been with Massey University under the nurture, mentorship and guidance of Dr Tracy Riley.

There is a saying that it only takes one significant other to make a difference in someone’s life. I believe Tracy is my ‘significant

other’, for she recognised potential in me and drew this out through her expertise. I now strive to do the same for staff, colleagues, and students while I continue my learning journey.

*Shelley Wells (Postgraduate Student)
Deputy Principal, Whangarei Intermediate School*

Dr Riley exhibits an enthusiasm for her teaching that is clearly contagious, and many individuals have had their interest in gifted education sparked by taking one of her courses. However, Dr Riley is much more than an entertainer and an inspirer; she is an excellent academic whose teaching is always informed by research. The ability to bring together theory and practice is a hallmark of her teaching and this is a key reason why she is highly esteemed within the education profession. She has occupied many leadership roles within this profession and been very involved in the development of policy and practice in New Zealand. This level of acceptance and recognition as a teacher, researcher and policy developer is even more impressive when one considers that Dr Riley has lived in this country for just over a decade.

*Associate Professor Roger Moltzen
University of Waikato*



SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

Dr Christine Rubie-Davies

SENIOR LECTURER, FACULTY OF EDUCATION ■ UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

Christine has sustained excellence in teaching over the nine years of her university career. One of Christine's most notable philosophies is the importance and value of feedback. She strongly believes that feedback and self-reflection on teaching practice enables students to improve their teaching effectiveness. She has a focus on deep rather than surface learning and delivers her lectures in a way that carefully integrates theory and research about teaching practice. Christine has always been particular to ensure that Pasifika and Maori students are well supported and encouraged while also being appropriately challenged in their learning. Student ratings are consistently high across the wide range of courses she teaches. Another major quality is her willingness to fully participate in various teaching committees, putting in extraordinary background study and follow-up work.

Background

Teaching is an opportunity to inspire and empower. As I look back on my teaching life I realise that I have always understood teaching is my passion; it was always my destiny. The privilege of teaching young people is the most wonderful opportunity that life has afforded me. I loved teaching when I lined my dolls up at three and taught them to read; I loved it when my younger brother and sister (twins) sat 'enraptured' as I taught them their basic facts; I loved it when all the neighbours' children were ordered to line up in straight lines outside my bedroom and to sit quietly on my mat in front of my blackboard. I loved every day I spent in a primary classroom; it was never a job, it was something I had always wanted; and now I have the honour and pleasure of being able to endow other young people with my passion, enthusiasm, delight in making a difference in children's and young people's lives. Even more special at this point in my teaching career is that in educating

the next generation of teachers I have the opportunity to influence the quality of education and learning for future generations; indeed a privilege.

Faltering steps

However, moving from primary teaching to tertiary in 1998 was not an easy emotional transition. My initial euphoria at being able to exponentially influence multitudes of children, making classrooms safe, happy learning environments for all was soon overshadowed by the realities of the position I had so eagerly entered. Moving into the university meant teaching very big people! Very big people might not overlook my weaknesses as children do and might think I was awful at lecturing. I related well to children but older beings might not be so accepting. Besides, lecturing wasn't teaching, or certainly not as I knew it. I began my first lectures with extreme trepidation. I wrote out almost every word I would say and every question I would ask.

I timed myself giving a lecture because I had no idea how much talk filled up two hours. I practised my new craft in front of the mirror and hoped that my face would not give away my nervousness. I hid behind my notes as I took my first faltering steps at lecturing.

As I relaxed, I realised that I could enjoy teaching just as much as I had in my schools. The students were responsive; many told me they enjoyed my lectures; some came to me with significant personal problems, showing they trusted me. My confidence grew and my teaching improved. I could present 'Christine', be honest with them and enjoy being myself with these delightful student teachers. I re-discovered the caring, respectful, supportive teacher that I thought so important in the primary classroom.

Pedagogical beliefs and practices

I consider that teaching at the tertiary level can be divided into two broad areas: teaching the student and teaching the subject. Teachers must be passionate about their students as well as their subject if they are to be successful. So what does this mean?

Teaching the student

Caring for students

I believe that successful teachers establish a caring

relationship with their students. Creating a supportive classroom environment generates a climate in which students are motivated to learn. Caring is also about sharing students' successes and their failures, being there when they need support and showing excitement at their successes. Students respond genuinely to genuine responses. To be successful, teachers should be honest with their students and share a little of themselves. A classroom needs to be a place where students are respected and encouraged to take risks but it should also be a place where there is laughter and fun. Laughter goes a long way in fostering positive relationships with students.

Student self-esteem

The significance of success in enhancing students' self-esteem cannot be underestimated. Success is a great motivator and all students should be succeeding in their courses. Ideally all students would show personal growth from participating in one of my courses, and leave more confident and self-assured than when they arrived. Where students are less successful, a good teacher will look to their own practice and reflect on ways to alter their teaching practices so that students have every opportunity to learn. Hence it is important to listen closely to students and respond to their feedback.



Accounting for individual needs

Our society has become increasingly diverse. Therefore teacher education students should come from an increasing range of social and cultural backgrounds in order to cater for a varied student population. To teach effectively in a changing university environment, teaching style must change from the traditional transmission approach. Students need a wider range of opportunities to learn. Cooperative approaches in lectures, tutorials and assignments can sit alongside the more conventional individualised approaches. Some students may need additional assistance to be successful and so it is important for the teacher to provide encouragement and to create a classroom environment where peer support and friendships are fostered and promoted.

Making learning exciting and enjoyable

Being a motivator is another important teaching role. I believe effective teachers are inspirational. Showing enthusiasm for teaching is infectious. I let students know that I am excited about teaching them and passionate about my subject. I want to promote curiosity, enhance excitement for teaching and inspire them to expand their intellectual horizons. I want them to love teaching as much as I do. Often I share amusing anecdotes from my primary teaching years to show students how much fun teaching can be.

Teaching the subject

Understanding of content

The pastoral care of students contributes enormously to their academic success but achievement also requires content. The central goal of any teacher is to enhance student learning, to increase their knowledge. This may sound simplistic but content is my core business. There is a body of information that student teachers need in order to become successful. It is my job to ensure that all student teachers leave my courses understanding the content they require.

Linking theory and practice

Much of the content that students should understand comprises knowledge of theory and of practice. Teacher educators have struggled to

make the links clear and comprehensible to students. I believe the best way to enhance student understanding of these links is to have a core evidence-based educational theory that underpins the course. In this way, theory facilitates student reflection on teaching practice as students have data to analyse and reflect upon their practice. Practical application of theory can provide students with means to access and interpret beliefs about teaching, critique the practice of others and analyse their own practice.

Being well-organised and well-prepared

Careful planning of lectures is the first step towards a successful learning experience for students. Planning learning intentions and key questions for students provides a necessary framework for a successful lecture. It is important to consider how the lecture will be presented. How much will be my talk? I include a range of activities within each lecture to keep the lecture moving and because variety keeps students interested and offers them a range of learning opportunities. I run the lecture through my head several times before giving it, searching for ways to improve and then I feel positive about giving it. Many people think I am confident and self-assured. The opposite is actually the case but I'm a good actor! Rehearsal puts me at ease and ensures that the students are stress-free and ready to learn. I believe students learn best in a relaxed, comfortable environment.

Encouraging independence and curiosity

While it is central to present students with core knowledge and concepts, arguably a more significant role is continually to challenge student beliefs, perceptions and understandings. I believe that all students should be able to think critically and analyse their implicit beliefs. By challenging their understandings I encourage them to formulate questions, to think differently about issues and to critically analyse new concepts. My students become active learners engaging in lively debate and feeling confident in expressing their ideas.

Summary comments

While it can be said that teachers at tertiary level know their subject, what appears to set apart the



excellent teachers is the care they show for their students. What is my concept of an excellent teacher?

Excellent teachers listen to students, take heed of what they are saying and make changes, because they seek to grow their pedagogy.

Excellent teachers pour energy into preparation, organisation and clarity of presentation because they want every student to learn and be successful.

Excellent teachers provide students with clear guidelines and feedback on assignments because

they want them to understand and grow academically.

Excellent teachers show enthusiasm and humour because they want students to enjoy learning.

Excellent teachers are creative and inspiring because they love learning too.

What are the qualities of a caring teacher? Enjoy your students; be honest with them; don't be afraid to show them that you care; show them respect; listen to them; and laugh with them!

PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

I have been involved in teaching at University level for 30+ years and it is rare to have the pleasure to support an academic of such high qualities in her teaching... The student ratings typically exceed 9 (out of 10), and this is powerful, given the number and range of courses Christine teaches. The qualitative comments are also very positive...What a powerful message – so many, so high, so consistent.

John Hattie, Professor of Education, The University of Auckland

Christine has always been particular in ensuring that Pasifika and Māori students are supported and that her practice is consistent with ensuring a good level of understanding and is contextually relevant for these groups of students. She is supportive and encouraging but also challenging...She has a focus on deep rather than surface learning and delivers her lectures in a way that carefully integrates theory and research for student learning about teaching practice.

Nane Rio, Lecturer, Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland

One of Christine's most notable philosophies is the importance and value of feedback. She strongly believes that feedback and self-

reflection on teaching practice enable trainees to improve their teaching effectiveness.

Jenny White, Senior Mentor, Mangere Bridge School

Christine is an excellent teacher and mentor. She took a great interest in all her students and I am proud to say I can call her a friend now also. She is never too busy to offer advice and help and is very approachable. Even whilst Christine was overseas she provided me with her email address and I was able to contact her for any help I needed. This just served to highlight how passionate and serious she is about her students and career. This I feel marks the spirit of a true professional and loyal mentor.

Melanie Paterson, former student and then senior mentor

Throughout my three years at The University of Auckland I always knew that if I had a problem I could approach Christine. She was an excellent mentor and took an active part in the pastoral care of students. Her compassion and understanding were instrumental in many students staying and completing their degree rather than quitting when things got tough.

Deborah Howell, former student



SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

Dr Bryan Walpert

LECTURER, SCHOOL OF ENGLISH AND MEDIA STUDIES ■ MASSEY UNIVERSITY

Bryan has been at Massey for four years teaching creative writing and specialising in poetry. The structure of his courses and the exceptionally high quality of his feedback to students about their writing are a feature of student course appraisals. He has revised his course and developed others with equal success. He has contributed significantly to his colleagues at Massey and to a broader level of teaching within the literary community. He has served on the organising committee for the Tertiary Writing Network Conference and in October 2005 was nominated to be a Vice-Chancellors' Committee representative on the Accreditation Panel for the Whitireia Polytechnic Bachelor of Fine Arts application.

The truth is that for a long time, as I pursued a career in professional journalism, I resisted the pull I felt to teach. But when I finally stood before a classroom more than a decade ago – once I had committed to my own creative work – it truly felt like coming home. I felt I belonged in the classroom from the first day (though my hands were shaking behind the lectern), and it's continued to feel less like what I do than who I am. To be able to combine that with my other passion – creative writing – is a remarkable opportunity.

Massey University's creative writing courses, or papers as Massey refers to them, are open-entry rather than entry-by-portfolio. We have students of all educational backgrounds, abilities, and ages (one student requested a prerequisite exemption because she was 70 years old – "I'm running out of time!" she told me). I design my papers with that diversity in mind and with the understanding that creative writing sits within a context of English literature courses. Though not

all of my students plan to make writing their lives, I hope they all leave with at least some of the enthusiasm I have for reading and writing.

To share that enthusiasm means helping student to see writing as I have come to see it, as a process of discovery. I have always thought the hardest part about learning is unlearning, and writing is a subject everyone seems to hold assumptions about, no doubt because we all do it in one form or another. It is exciting and rewarding to see students gradually let go of their assumptions. In particular, it is a pleasure to help students come to see writing as more than mere "expression," as something more exciting than the transcription of a worked-out idea. If I'm successful, they begin to see writing as a way of thinking; they write to discover what a piece is about rather than stick with their plans and intentions. And they recognise that the result—a poem, a short story—is a work of art with an existence independent from whatever experience might have prompted

them to pick up a pen.

To get there, over time I've developed (and continue to develop) a teaching philosophy and a set of practices that stem naturally from it. My teaching philosophy is probably best framed as a learning philosophy: Student learning, to my mind, should be experiential, recursive and student-centred. It should also be a delight.

Experiential Learning

I was inspired once by a river guide, who said, "Out here, the only knowledge is experience. Everything else is just information." Writing is something you can only learn by doing. We do look at published poems and stories; we do discuss theories and craft. But most importantly, students write and talk about what they and their peers write. It is best to start writing immediately, with whatever it is students believe a poem or story to be – even if they have never written one and have read only a few – and work from there to dislodge assumptions. Writing and critiquing one another's work allows students to engage with the material, not just observe it. But it also allows students to discover information for themselves, to own their knowledge.

Small group workshops are central to the teaching of creative writing and this works well with my teaching style, which tends toward

interacting—questioning, guiding, and prompting—rather than expounding. Though my courses have a lecture component (I do expound a bit), the most important teaching occurs when we sit around a table and simply pay attention to the poems students write. All students bring in their work, which we read at home over the course of a week and return to discuss. Workshop can be intimidating at first, as it was for me when I was a student. So it is important that students feel safe both in presenting their work and in giving their opinions. None of the material before workshop receives a grade; this keeps the focus on the work, rather than on the assessment. The workshop format ensures students receive a variety of viewpoints; allows students to hear the poem as the writer intended it to be heard; ensures active participation by all students; and gives urgency to our discussions not available when we read poems that already have been published.

Recursive Learning

I believe students should get a chance to do something once, revise it, and then try it again—while receiving extensive feedback. They should also reflect, in writing, on their work and receive feedback on those reflections; and they should receive my comments on their written feedback to other students. So by recursive, I mean that



students learn by receiving feedback on what they write, feedback on revisions, feedback on their reflections on what they've written and revised, and feedback on their feedback to other students. They are constantly, then, shaping and reshaping their work and their ideas about their work – and about the work of others – in light of my responses and the responses of other readers.

My comments – up to a page or more, typed – are the centrepiece of my assessment strategy. I've calculated that I type several hundred pages of comments each semester in response to student work. I try to point out not only avenues for revision suggested by the piece itself but also some broader issues of craft each piece raises. Students, as a result, see how much goes into the writing of a poem or story; they come to see that the first draft has potential where we might least expect it; and they learn that writing is a process, often – even in the case of poems and stories – a collaborative one.



Student-centred Learning

I provide lectures and an anthology of excellent – and diverse – published poems to serve as points of discussion. But learning, to my mind, is most effective when students' questions and concerns, rather than my timetable, drive the class. What a student is currently struggling with in his or her own writing gives urgency to issues that do not seem as urgent if I bring them up in a lecture.

So student writing becomes the primary text in the class. Student drafts also often suggest additional poems I might bring to class as models for discussion. Students, in turn, bring in poems they admire. Together these become a kind of secondary class anthology that grows organically from student concerns. Some of these poems become a part of the official course anthology the following year.

Learning as delight

I'm not saying the course should be easy. In fact, just the opposite. There is a certain pleasure students can only get when they've discovered they are more capable than they expected. The delight I aim for in my classes is the kind that comes when you've discovered something for yourself – and about yourself.

My goal is to treat each student opinion with respect, to consider each comment thoughtfully. I'm an experienced reader but not a perfect one. When a student comment changes the way I read a poem, I make a point of acknowledging it. I believe this gives students the confidence to voice their opinions and gives them some faith in my integrity as a teacher. But treating students with respect also means challenging them to justify their opinions at all times. It's true that students occasionally grow weary of hearing me ask, "Why do you say that?" But I believe students will have greater faith in their opinions if they know they've been asked to think things through rigorously – and they will have learned, I hope, the pleasure of difficult thinking, even if one's head hurts a bit at the end of it.



This returns me to learning by doing and that wonderful comment by the river guide. My lectures on how poems and stories work offer a coherent context, information we return to often in our workshop discussions. But it is the student work that raises the issues in a way that makes them matter. You can talk all you want about the physics of the rapids, the difficulties of terrain and weather, the angle of the raft. It is only when you're in the water, the wind in your hair and the rocks before you that you suddenly, really want to know how to paddle.



PEER AND STUDENT COMMENTS

"What particularly impresses me about Bryan as a teacher is his relentless capacity for seeking out and addressing opportunities for improvement. Bryan is always on the lookout for new ideas, new approaches, and new texts. Anyone who knows Bryan knows he is a teacher committed to the idea that no matter how well a class has been taught, it can always be taught better the next time."

Dr Thom Conroy, Lecturer, School of English & Media Studies

"Bryan brings buckets of enthusiasm to class with him that invariably rubs off on the students... Our classes often result in a lively debate about various pieces of writing. Bryan is never defensive and is always receptive to our questions. If a student still doesn't understand, Bryan will ponder this until the next class and deliver an alternative explanation. In this way he is continually seeking to improve his papers. He is a thoughtful marker who challenges you to be all you can be! On a personal note, I am

thankful to Bryan for having opened my eyes to the beauty inherent in everyday things around me. I see ordinary things with new eyes, which is a precious thing for a student of creative writing."

Tracey Hepi-Eparaima, Former student, 2nd year poetry writing paper

"In three years he has already raised the profile of the writing courses, bringing an outstanding professionalism and infectious enthusiasm to his teaching and service... Altogether, Dr Walpert has made an excellent contribution to Massey that takes his teaching to a broad arena. Outstanding in the classroom, he has consistently contributed to a broader level of teaching outside the classroom; in both community and University contexts... He is a brilliant teacher and an excellent colleague."

*Professor Warwick Slinn
Head of School, School of English & Media Studies, Massey University*



