Celebrating Teaching

FBE Learning & Teaching Newsletter

Melanie Beresford, Economics
Postgraduate supervision (research completions and submissions)

Many of my students are from a non-English speaking background so they can start with ambitions but not a lot of confidence. What I try to do is let students follow their own nose and take ownership of their research, while giving them a lot of my time and being supportive. I’ve been teaching for very long time but you’re learning all the time; students are always challenging you to keep up with them. It always ends up that they know a lot more about the topic than you do. It’s not like undergraduate teaching; you just have to adapt yourself to the individual student. In some ways it’s a collegial relationship. What both of you are engaging in is an initiation into the academic system. They will become a specialist, they’ll have a real passion for it and they’ll develop that over the rest of their career, and that way the frontiers of knowledge will get pushed out a little bit.

Bill Blair, Accounting & Finance
Sustained contribution to student support

As undergraduate program coordinator for four years, I put a face to our degrees and built up the profile of the Department. I also developed a program for students at risk of not being able to complete their degree. The program grew from 14 students and an 80% success rate, and is now being rolled out across the Faculty. We have so many students so it’s easy for them to fall through the cracks. Raising awareness about this has been important; I think that’s part of my legacy. I think the students that I’ve dealt with really appreciate the fact we’ve got them through their degree. My philosophy with students is that I’m here to service their needs: I see supporting the students as a priority; always have and always will.

Jana Bowden, Business
For excellent results in Marketing 101

Teaching is part acting, part customer service; ultimately they are all about connecting with your customers. Educators should give students an engaging performance when they are on ‘stage’ teaching, the students should feel good about that performance and the knowledge imparted and they should like what they see. Teaching is similar to customer service, in that I am giving customer service when I teach and I want to ensure that my customers, my students, get an engaging experience. I want to leave them feeling like they should come back for more.

June Buchanan, Business
For excellent results in Marketing 101

I love to try and challenge students to set high standards for themselves and to be the best they possibly can be. I also love to try and stimulate their love of knowledge (particularly in third year), so they can ‘think outside the box’ and realise that marketing can be so much more than developing marketing mix strategies for target markets. Having taught third year undergraduate students for a number of years, I was very concerned about the consistent lack of scholarly standards exhibited by far the majority of students in their assignments. This motivated me to introduce assessment tasks into tutorials, designed to engender scholarly standards within students in their first year of university study. Anecdotal feedback from two of my colleagues over the following 6-12 months indicated that the scholarly standards of students had markedly improved in their respective 200 and 300 level marketing units.
Maria Dyball, Accounting & Finance
Sustained contribution to Learning & Teaching policy

As Chair of the Learning & Teaching Committee from 2006 to 2009, I made a sustained contribution to the discussion of the benefits of having policy surrounding Learning & Teaching. I initially identified a crucial aspect of learning and teaching in the Department of Accounting & Finance, and the Faculty, was a reliance on sessional staff. I have focused on developing policy and procedures for recruitment and local and discipline-specific training for sessional staff; which is necessary in the example of teaching large classes, which is not covered in central professional development programmes. This operated initially at the departmental level, which is now being mirrored across the Faculty in the form of the Teacher Induction Program. So that systems and training schemes are in place to establish what quality teaching means and implement it.

Michael Quilter, Business Law
Contribution to Learning & Teaching over 17 years

I try to empathise with students and try to get them to understand that I understand them. If you are able to tell students “I understand” and “this will help”, they see you trying your best to help them, and they respond – it’s about recognising the importance of making them feel comfortable and confident. You have to offer them tactics and techniques to turn out a successful product, rather than just collecting information. They have to know in the real world, it’s the old adage that holds: ‘it’s not what you know but how you use it’.

Max Tani, Economics
Enhancing Economics 110

As lecturer for Introduction to Macroeconomics, which was the largest class on campus with 1600 students, the key point for students to realise is that macroeconomics is all around us. It must be an accessible entry into economics to students so it captures them, and so they realise they can organise the complexity around us and use economics to explain what is going on around them. There are certain economic decisions that seem very abstract, but sometimes they have a lifelong consequence. We may as well accept that and make sense of it, as opposed to saying it’s a textbook that lasts between February and May. It is learning that you apply to decisions which change your life. Education is a life-long exercise in teaching generalist skills to explain what is going on around us.

Tony Shum, Business Law
Introducing Blackboard student feedback

I introduced Blackboard for use in Business Law 320, which is currently the only subject in the Department to do so. We improved student learning outcomes include online submission of assignments, online chatroom for tutor consultations and peer discussions, discussion board, online results and feedback, iLecture. We also contributed to sustainability by shifting away from a focus on paper. The students really seem to like it.

The Teaching Index fund

The Teaching Index (TI) was established to reward Faculties for staff activity in the area of scholarship of teaching. It provides extra money for teaching and learning to the Faculty. The TI is calculated on the basis of qualifications, awards, grants, publications and presentations undertaken by staff in the field of teaching and learning.

The TI Department Coordinators are: Laura Billington (Economics); Emily Cotton (Business Law); Claire Wang (Accounting & Finance); Alison Petto-Hamilton (Actuarial Studies); Darren Aitken (Business).

Vice- Chancellor’s Awards for Learning and Teaching

The four Vice-Chancellor’s Awards provide incentives and rewards for excellence in learning and teaching including:

1. Programs that Enhance Learning
2. Teaching Excellence
3. Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning
4. Excellence in Higher Degree Research Supervision

The closing date is 20 August. For assistance in writing your application contact paul.taylor@mq.edu.au. More information: www.mq.edu.au/provost/activities/awards/vc_awards.html