Profi ling the 2017 recipients of the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards
Award Recipients

Dr Te Taka Keegan
Professor Ursula Cheer
Dr Liz Ditzel
Associate Professor Ruth Fitzgerald
Gail Harrison
Dr Brad Hurren
Associate Professor Ben Kennedy
Dr James McKinnon
Associate Professor Jay Marlowe
Mereana Rapata-Hanning
Amy Raymond
Haruko Stuart
This publication is a celebration of teaching excellence. It encapsulates excellence in teaching practice that is demonstrated by a superb group of twelve tertiary teachers. This group of 2017 recipients have been recognised for their sustained and excellent contribution to learners in diverse parts of New Zealand’s tertiary sector. Learner benefit is a fundamental gauge by which all nominees are measured, and the learner voice rings loud and clear in each of the awardee portfolios.

The purpose of this publication is to capture the essence of what excellent teaching means for this year’s awardees and share it with others. Each awardee is given the opportunity to reflect on the values that are important to them in their teaching. They detail aspects of their practice, how they inspire students, how they cope with the considerable demands of the job, and what use they make of rapidly changing educational technology.

Two of this year’s recipients are teaching in a kaupapa Māori context.

Ako Aotearoa is very fortunate to have high calibre panellists representing a range of stakeholders in New Zealand’s tertiary education sector. We take this opportunity to thank them for the very hard decisions required in processing this year’s 29 nominations. The panel for 2017, again chaired by Phil Ker, comprised:

Rikke Betts • Tertiary Education Union
Greg Durkin • Industry Training Federation
Edwige Fava • New Zealand Association of Private Education Providers
Dr Stanley Frielick • Ako Aotearoa
Linsey Higgins • New Zealand Union of Students’ Associations
Dr Te Kani Kingi • Te Tauih O Ngā Wānanga
Dr Mary Simpson • Teacher Education Forum of Aotearoa New Zealand
Dr Joe Te Rito • Ako Aotearoa Māori Caucus
Dr Amanda Torr • Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics of New Zealand
Alieta Uelese • Association of Māori Providers of Training, Education and Employment
Sam Utaí • Ako Aotearoa Pacific Caucus
Dr Rachel Zajac • Ako Aotearoa Academy of Tertiary Teaching Excellence

The Honourable Paul Goldsmith, Minister for Tertiary Education, and Dr Jian Yang, Member of Parliament and Chairperson of the Education and Science Committee, hosted the 2017 awards ceremony in the Banquet Hall of Parliament Buildings on the evening of 8 August.

Any organisation teaching tertiary students is eligible to nominate teachers for these awards. A nomination form and full details of the criteria and process for applying for the 2018 awards are available on the awards section of the Ako Aotearoa website at: www.akoaotearoa.ac.nz/awards
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Minister’s Foreword

Hon Paul Goldsmith
Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment

High quality teaching has the power to transform lives. These awards showcase the exceptional individuals who know and understand what it means to inspire the next generation of learners.

There are four main elements to New Zealand’s tertiary education system: strong foundational learning, effective skills and knowledge development, world-class education and research, and a strong and sustainable international education sector. Teaching excellence underpins each of these elements through the hard work, commitment and achievements of our tertiary teachers.

Participating in tertiary education ensures that young people gain the skills required to move into sustainable work and further study. An important part of the work lies at the foundation level – where tertiary providers are working with at-risk young people who have struggled during their schooling. They are looking to find that spark of inspiration that each young person needs to get back into education and into a job.

New Zealand’s outstanding tertiary teachers respond to the challenges of an increasingly complex global environment, contribute to our world-class research output, and are responsible for fostering and nurturing the innovators, entrepreneurs and leaders of tomorrow. Passionate and innovative teachers are the key to keeping learners engaged with the education system and helping them reach their full potential.

Our graduates are highly competent and able to participate in a global market-place, and our tertiary institutions are destinations of choice for international students seeking to reap the same benefits. All of this contributes to a thriving international education sector that delivers $4.5 billion to the New Zealand economy each year.

The annual Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards are the responsibility of Ako Aotearoa, which recognises and encourages excellence in tertiary teaching. The awards provide an opportunity for tertiary teachers to further their careers through identifying, sharing and celebrating excellent teaching practices. This is the sixteenth year of the awards and to date more than 200 outstanding tertiary teachers have received awards.

I am pleased to congratulate the recipients of the Ako Aotearoa Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards for 2017.
Chair’s Comment

Phil Ker

Chair ■ Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards Committee

Congratulations to the 2017 award winners who once again exemplify excellent teaching across the tertiary sector. It is particularly pleasing to include in our awards excellence teachers from the adult and community education sector as well as universities and polytechnics. Special congratulations to Dr Te Taka Keegan who is the 2017 winner of the Prime Minister’s Supreme Award.

Choosing New Zealand’s top tertiary teachers is never an easy task but it is certainly a privilege to do so. I have no doubt that the excellence bar continues to be raised year on year as education providers attach more and more importance to improving teaching quality.

The selection panel is always faced with the difficult decision to differentiate outstanding teachers from a field comprising excellent teachers. So what is it that caused the 2017 winners to stand out?

As has been the case for many years, our winners are very much learner-centred, which means that they appreciate that it is how and what their students learn that is important, rather than what they know and can do as specialists in their field. Increasingly, our excellent teachers appreciate that it is the learning experiences that they design for their students that really count. Our excellent teachers are passionate and caring and constantly thinking about how they can improve the learning environment so that their students can realise their potential. Their improvements are evidence-based – excellent teachers are proactive in listening to their students and taking action on the feedback they are given.

Our excellent teachers are all proactive in their own professional development and contribute to the development of others, not only in their immediate teaching teams but also in their wider community of practice. Their teaching is informed not only by the literature on effective teaching but also increasingly by their own research into their own practice. Our excellent teachers are making an impact on both their learners and their profession, and of course will have the opportunity to make an even bigger impact through their participation in Ako Aotearoa’s academy of excellent teachers.

As has always been the case, the 2017 award winners, including the Supreme Award Winner, result from a full consensus of the selection panel. I would like to thank the members of the panel for their thoroughness in analysing the portfolios and their willingness to listen and debate with an open mind. The strength of the panel comes from its diversity of teaching experience and contexts, and when we reach agreement we can be confident that we are indeed confirming excellence.
It is indeed an honour for me, in my first year as director, to introduce another group of national Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards winners. As in previous years, the 2017 awardees are inspirational teachers who are the exemplars of excellence for the sector.

The New Zealand tertiary sector is characterised by diversity across a range of different contexts and conceptions of good teaching. This year's group is diverse both in their subject areas and their approaches to teaching. Despite differences in discipline, experience and approach, they share several things in common. They provide compelling evidence for outstanding teaching. Above all, they are committed to creating engaging learning environments and ensuring their students have the best possible chance of success.

Recipients must display sustained excellence in teaching, with a track record of consistently going the extra mile. When appraising the portfolios, the selection panel pays particular attention to whether the student voice affirms and complements the case for excellence.

Tertiary education plays a formative role in the trajectory of a life – both in providing the necessary base for a successful career and in creating the social experiences and networks that sustain personal capability and lifelong learning. Learning the discipline is necessary for competence, but capability also requires learning how to learn, how to creatively solve new problems, and developing a sense of belonging and identity. Our award winners all demonstrate the ‘X-factor’ that helps create those kinds of learning experiences.

But the concept of ‘excellence’ is difficult to define in education; truly excellent teaching cannot be quantifiably measured. So, selecting the top twelve tertiary teachers from 29 worthy nominations is a demanding task. For each portfolio it entails hours of reading, careful consideration, and a rigorous discussion, evaluation and long deliberation by the panel. I’d like to thank this year’s panel for their efforts, and especially acknowledge the leadership of Phil Ker, the panel chair, and the hard work of Ian Rowe (Ako Aotearoa Central Hub manager) who coordinates and arranges the selection process.

I also need to acknowledge the New Zealand Government and the Tertiary Education Commission for funding these awards, and their ongoing investment in educational excellence and capability through supporting Ako Aotearoa. The tangible difference that our awardees make to the lives of many students is testimony to the value of this kind of investment in our country’s future.

Awardees become part of the Ako Aotearoa Academy of Tertiary Teaching Excellence, the body of national awardees. Members of this group collaborate and share approaches, and contribute further to the development of excellent tertiary teaching.

Ako Aotearoa is privileged to celebrate the work of these twelve wonderful teachers and the families and colleagues who support them. These teachers exemplify the aspirational goals of the whole sector. We congratulate all the awardees and wish them continuing success in their future careers.
The 2017 Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards Parliamentary Ceremony in August. Standing from left: Associate Professor Ben Kennedy, University of Canterbury; Professor Ursula Cheer, University of Canterbury; Associate Professor Ruth Fitzgerald, University of Otago; Dr James McKinnon, Victoria University of Wellington; Associate Professor Jay Marlowe, The University of Auckland; Mereana Rapata-Hanning, Otago Polytechnic; Gail Harrison, Whanganui Learning Centre; Dr Brad Hurren, University of Otago. Seated from left: Amy Raymond, Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology; Hon Paul Goldsmith; Dr Te Taka Keegan, The University of Waikato; Rt. Hon. Bill English; Louise Upston, MP; Dr Liz Ditzel, Otago Polytechnic; Haruko Stuart, University of Otago.
Dr Te Taka Keegan

Pūkenga Matua, Tari Rorohiko ■ Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Ka hiki atu taku wae i tēnei whenua ka moanatia i muri i a au Pūrekireki Wīwī māna tātou hei huti ake ka puta ka ora.


Ko Te Taka Keegan tōku ingoa, he pūkenga ahau i te Tari Rorohiko o Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato. Kei roto i ēnei whārangi noa nei ētehi o ōku whakapono, ētehi o āku whanonga mō tēnei mea te whakaako ki te whare wānanga, me ki ki te whare wānanga Pākehā. Ko tāku, e toru ngā whakaaro nui hei ārahi i te kaiako; kia hiki te wairua, kia hihiko te kaupapa, kia hora te aroha. Taro ake ka whakamārama atu i ēnei āhuatanga.

Whakataki
Timata ai taku mahi whakaako ki te Tari Māori. Tōku waimārie i reira ētehi tino toki o te ao Māori
Kia hiki te wairua

Tuatahi, kia tau ai te wairua o te ākonga ki te ako me mauri tau ia. Tau a hinengaro, tau a wairua. Ka uaua te mahi whakaako inā e pōrararuaru ana te ākonga, ēngari kē te ākonga e noho hankoa ana. Nō reira ka rapu huarahi au ka hiki ai i te wairua o te ākonga kia ngākau nui ai ia ki tōna nohoanga, ki tōna kaikaio, ki tōna kaupapa ako hoki.

Ko tētehi o aua huarahi ko te waiata. Ka raru au i konei i te mea ka kino taku reo waiata. Ka tīmata au ki te waiata ka tangi ngā pēpi ka whakarere atu ngā tāngata. Nā, ka kore au e waiata i mua i ākou ākonga ēngari kē ka riro mā ngā kaiwaiata rongoūi whērā i a Six60, i a Kings of Leon, i a Rihanna mā. Kei ngā rūma whakaako katoa o te whare wānanga nei he mihinī paoho whakatangitangi waiata hoki. Ka whakamahia aua mihinī ki ngā waiata pai, i mua i te akoranga. Ka tae atu au ki te akoranga 10 meneti i mua i te timatatanga kia whakarite ai ngā taputapu mō te mahi whakaako. He wā pāi tēnei he whakatangiti waiata. Ko tā ngā waiata rā he hiki i te wairua o te ākonga i mua i te timatanga o te mahi ako. Ka pau te 10 meneti, ka wetonīa ngā waiata, ka nohopuku te akomanga, ka reri ngā ākonga ki te ako.

Ko tētehi atu huarahi hei hiki i te wairua o ngā ākonga, ko te mahi tīnhihangahanga. Ko tāku he rapu huarahi hei mahi tīnhihangahanga i rito i ākou ākoraonga. Ko tētehi o ākou māhine tīnhihangahanga ko te whiu yoyo. I ākou tamariki i te kura tutahi, i mua i te whai kaupapa o te beyblades me te spinners, i whai kaupapa kē te yoyo. I kaha mātou te whānau ki te whiu yoyo kia wero atu ai kia mātou anō ko wai te toa hei māhine tīnhihangahanga yoyo. E 2 tau, e 3 tau pea mātou e mahi whērā ana, ā, nā wai rā ka mehehangā haere. Ka whai kaupapa kē atu ākou tamariki ēngari ka aroha tonu atu ki taku yoyo. Kātahi ka kite atu i tētehi ēhuatanga rorohiko e taea ai te whakamārama atu mā te māhine tīnhihangahanga o te yoyo. Anā, ka ū te whiu yoyo ki ētehi o ākou akoranga rorohiko. Pōkana mai anā ngā karu i a au e tuku ana i taku yoyo i rito i te akomanga, he akoranga ka mau piri pono ki te hinengaro o te ākonga!

Whai muri i te māhine tīnhihangahanga i te akoranga, ko te māhine whakakata. Mehema e taea ana e au te whakakata i ākou ākonga, e taea ana hoki e au te tūhono atu a wairua ki a rātou. Mā te katakata e hiki ai te wairua. Mā te whakataoi hoki e hiki ai te wairua mehema e whakatiao i runga i te pai, mehema e whakatai hiki tonu i te mana o te tangata. He tōpatorangahau kei te mahi whakakata, me manaaki i te tangata i ngā wā katoa. Me te whakaaro he wā anō tōna kia noho tauranga ngā kōrero he wā anō tōna kia
rere te katakata. Heoi anō e harikoa ana ahau i te rongo atu i ngā katakata i te kte atu i ngā kanohi menemene i te mea he tohu tērā ki a au kua tau te mauri o ngā ākonga, kua rite mai te akomanga katao ki te ako.

Kia hihiko te kaupapa
Me pēwhea e ū ai te ihi me te wehi ki ngā kaupapa o ngā ākoringa? Ko te hihiko o te kaupapa tēnā, he mea whakarika kia noho ngākauunui nei ki ngā ākonga. Heotei me pēwhea te whērā? Kaua mā te tohutouhoo noa, kaua hoki mā te whakaatu i ngā āhuatanga e ngākauunui noa ana ki a au? Ėngari kē ia mā te wero ki ngā ākonga kia rapu i ō rātou ake whakapono, i ō rātou ake pūmanawa kia pūawai ai ngā kaupapa e ngākauunuitia e rātou.

Ko tētehi o āku nei wero ko te whai tiakareti arā te peanut slab. Ka timata tētehi ākoranga ka mea atu au, he tiakareti ka whoatu i te mutunga o te ākoranga nei ki te ākonga tuatahi ka whakautu i tētehi pātai. Ėngari tiahoa ake mō te pātai, he i te mutunga rā anō ka whakautu i te pātai. Hei taua wā tonu ka uiui haere hei whakatau ai mā wai te tiakareti. Ėtēhi wā ka oati te tiakareti ki tētehi o ngā tuhinga. Ėtēhi atu wā ka oati te tiakareti ki tētehi o ngā whakamātatau.

Ko tērā tētehi whakamātatau i te tū i te tau 2015. Ka mea atu au ki ngā ākonga, ki te eke koe ki tua atu i te 100% ka whoatu peanut slab. I taea ai e rātou te piki atu i te 100% i te mea i taua whakamātatau ētēhi pātai i tua (bonus questions). 106 ākonga i taua akomanga, 41 i hipa i te 100%! He mea whakakata i a rātou, he
mea whakatangi i a au, i te mea nāku anō aua tia kareti i hoko!

I te tau 2003 ka 30 tau te Tari Rorohiko. Hei whakanui i tēnei āhuatanga ka hokona mai ētehi taonga whakairo Māori. Ko tētēhi he kōwhaiwhai kua hāngaia e Reen Katipa. Kei roto tonu i tērā kōwhaiwhai he whakamunatanga o tētēhi piko. Ka noho whakakatau te piko he tohu 0, ka noho whakakatau te piko he tohu 1. Nō reira ka noho ngā 0 me ngā 1 ki te kōwhaiwhai, ā, ko te wero ki ngā ākonga he aha te kōrero muna e noho atu rā. Mā ēnei tūmomo wero e hihiko ai te kaupapa rorohiko nei.

**Kia hora te aroha**

Ahakoa pēwhea ko te mea nui o te mahi ako ko te aroha ki te ākonga. Ko tērā te kōrero ‘Aroha Mai, Aroha Atu’. Ki te tuku atu tō aroha ki ngā ākonga ka whakahokia mai tērā aroha ki a koe. He ngāwari noa iho mā te ākonga e kīte ko wai ngā kaiako e aroha atu ana ki a rātou, ko wai hoki ngā kaiako kāore i te aroha atu ki a rātou.

Me mārama te kaiako ko ngā nawe o ngā ākonga

Mehemē e aroha atu ana koe ki āu nā ākonga ka whai wā koe ki a rātou. Ka whai wā koe ki te rongo me the whai atu i ō rātou nawe, ka aroha atu koe ki ō rātou pōrararu, ka whai wā koe ki te whakanui i ā rātou whakatutukitanga, ka tangi koe inā ka tangi rātou, ka harikoa koe inā ka harikoa rātou. Arā te hora o te aroha. Ki te eke ki tēnei o ngā whanonga ka nui ngā hua ka riro mai.

**He tirohanga whakamua**

E ai ki ngā kōrero ‘kāore he mutunga o te ako’. Ko aua whanonga ako e toru, kia hiki te wairua, kia hihiko te kaupapa, kia hora te aroha, ka whai take mōkū i āku nei mahi whakaaiko i tēnei wā. I tēnei te ao hou nei, ka pēwhea āpōpō, ko wai ka mōhio, ko wai ka hua?

Ki te hoki mahara atu ki ngā akoranga o mua, ki ngā kaiako, ki ngā ākonga katoa ka noho whakaiti tuku ngākau. Me pēwhea au e whakanui tika i ā rātou katoa? Heoi tāku, he māringiringi noa a roimata, he wai tohu nō āku kamo, he pūāwai nō te aroha...

At the foothills of Pirongia maunga, on the shores of Waipā awa, lies our marae of Pūrekiwēki, home to Ngāti Apakura of Waikato-Maniapoto. My name is Te Taka Keegan. I am a senior lecturer in the Computer Science Department at the University of Waikato.

Background

I did not set out to be a teacher. I have no formal training as a teacher. But after teaching for over 20 years it has become an important part of my life. There is a joy in helping others, and there is a joy in helping others to learn. When I do not teach for a while I miss it immensely.

I was privileged that my early years of teaching at Waikato University began in the Māori Department. It gave me opportunities to be guided by some of Māori’s most respected authorities on language and culture. I was then fortunate to be able to combine two of my passions, te reo Māori and computer science, as I moved to the Computer Science Department and began research and teaching in these two areas. Over 25+ years I have formed a teaching philosophy that seems to work for me.

My experiences in teaching have shown me that students learn best when their spirits are lifted, kia hiki te wairua, when they are inspired by the subject, kia hihiko te kaupapa, and when they are shown genuine empathy, kia hora te aroha. I use a number of methods to implement these philosophies, including music, yoyo tricks, humour and peanut slabs.

Lifting the spirits

Students who enjoy the class and who are relaxed and comfortable tend to engage more with the lesson and usually engage longer-term with the subject.

As a computer science lecturer, the 10-minute preparation time before a lecture starts is important. It is needed to connect to remote servers, preload web pages, set up the lecture recording software and load lecture notes. However, I find that even more important than preparing the software for the lesson is preparing the student. The first thing I do when I arrive into a lecture room is to turn on
some music reasonably loud so that it engages the students – I don’t want this to be merely background music. Over the last 20 years I have noticed this has a calming effect on the students and tends to lift them into a good frame of mind for the lesson that is about to follow. I time the songs to finish exactly at 10 minutes, which causes the background talking to also cease. The class goes silent and the lesson begins.

In 2003/04 a yoyo craze swept through my children’s school. Not wanting to be left out, I bought my family some yoyos and we played regularly for a year or two to see who could do the best tricks. The novelty faded for my children but I still kept up with it and managed to work yoyo tricks into some of my lectures. For example, an algorithm is a series of small steps to achieve a task; this can be likened to a series of movements that you perform with your hand to have a yoyo complete a trick. I would then perform either the ‘sleeper’, the ‘round the corner’ or the ‘rock the cradle’ algorithm. To be fair a yoyo has little to do with the subject of computer science; it is more about lifting the spirits but the students really enjoy it and regularly ask for more tricks. I have had some students come up to me over 10 years later and say they still remember the lecture with the yoyo trick in it!

To be effective teachers we need to have an ongoing connection with our audience. Humour gives you immediate feedback on whether you are connected or not. If I can hear my students laughing or see them smiling then I know I am connected to them and I have them in a good head space for learning. I search out avenues to incorporate humour into my teaching, though I take a lot of care to ensure this is done in an appropriate manner.

In 2016 in one of the programming lectures, the machine we were using was taking an unusually long time to compile a demonstration programme. In the pause I asked the class if anyone knew any jokes. None of the students could offer any on the spot. I remembered one my daughter had told me. I asked the class, “What did the fish say when it swam into the wall?” No one could think of a suitable reply. So I said, “The fish said ‘Dam!’” Most of the class laughed, I could see we were connected, the programme finished compiling and we carried on.

Inspiring the subject

Students, and people in general, are curious by nature. If you can spark that curiosity, they will want to find the answers and they will be more motivated to self-learn, which removes the importance away from the lecturer. We shouldn’t teach students the truths – we should teach them how to find their own truths. We shouldn’t teach them about our own passions – we should teach them how to find their own.

Peanut slabs are given away in my classes. I do this at random lectures throughout the semester. I announce at the beginning of the class that I will be giving away a peanut slab. I give the lesson, then save five minutes at the end of the class to question the students on one particular concept. The student with the first or best answer receives the peanut slab.

As an extension on this, in 2015, for the second-year databases paper I mentioned that for the second test I would give a peanut slab to every student who scored above 100 per cent – bonus questions allowed them to do this. This ended up costing me a lot; 41 students out of 106 students got better than 100 per cent!

In storytelling I try to find real life examples and analogies that allow for the simple transformation of concepts. The cleverest people I have met have always been able to
take the most complex of concepts, break them down into discrete and simple parts, and then explain those parts in a way that anyone could understand and be interested in. This is my objective in planning and designing my lesson plans and lectures. How can I take a complex computer science topic, break it down so that its main theme is revealed, and then describe it in a simple but challenging manner? This is something I try to carefully plan out before each opportunity I have in front of eager minds.

For example, in a first year lecture on number systems I explain how characters can be encoded into sequences of binary numbers. I then explain how a secret message has been encrypted, in binary, into the kōwhaiwhai panel above the Computer Science Department’s office. The students’ mission, for a prize, is to unravel what the message in the kōwhaiwhai panel says.

Empathy
Students can easily tell when you care about them. In a learning environment, having empathy for students is, I believe, essential. Being genuinely interested in students’ lives, being concerned when they are concerned, organising time to celebrate their successes, and making yourself available when students reach out to you, are behaviours that are seen in all good teachers. The rewards for doing this can be significant.

An opportunity to show empathy is with exams and assignments. These can create stress and take the fun out of learning. Exams and tests are a difficult time for students. Even students who perform well still dislike them. I am acutely aware of this and work hard to make this time easier for them. I specifically reserve time to clearly explain to students when their tests are, what format they will be in and what topics will be discussed. I give high priority to answering student concerns and queries pre- and post-test.

Once a test has been sat, I place high priority on having it marked immediately. My personal goal is to have every piece of assessment marked within 24 hours of being submitted. The students clearly appreciate this, it gets them out of a sense of limbo and gives them direction early on as to where they may need to focus their learning.

Looking ahead
Reflecting on 25 years of teaching has been difficult but gratifying. Passionate teachers and students, really, really great people, from both the Department of Māori Studies and the Department of Computer Science have, and continue to, inspire and shape my philosophies as a teacher.

These practices I use appear to work well for me right now. But with newer generations of learners, a living, adapting Māori language, and an exponentially updating field of computer science, refinements and continued improvements in my teaching philosophies will always be necessary.
Te Taka has been one of my favourite lecturers. I found his lectures to be engaging, with playing music at the beginning of each lecture, his comedy, creating activities that make you participate and always being willing to help. In my second year of study I wasn’t sure what area of computer science I was interested in, but after taking COMP258 with Te Taka I realised that I really enjoyed Human Computer Interaction and it has been the focus of my studies going forward.

Ashleigh Dale, student, 2013-current

Another enjoyable teaching method Te Taka used, which I found was different, was that he made us find a poor usability concept or item and made this into a competition, and the winner was awarded some chocolate. Unfortunately, I never won the competition but it made the class interact and be excited, but learn at the same time, which was a win-win situation.

Peke-Tupaea Manawaiti, student, 2013-2016

I have had the pleasure of knowing Te Taka as my lecturer over the duration of my university years whilst taking his computer science papers. His guidance and support had an immense effect on me even to this day. I have fallen in love with the world of computing and have since partaken in ICT throughout the past fifteen years.

Jojo Rangihaeata, student, 1997-2001

Te Taka is one of the most influential lecturers of my time at the University of Waikato. During his enthusiastic and informative teachings, he enabled me to find a passion for the usability aspects of computer science by showing that not only was the subject interesting, but that its real-world applications can make a huge difference to our lives. His ability to engage and motivate students, and present information in a relevant manner made it easy to not only pass the papers he taught but to enjoy doing so.

Rebekah Wilkins, student, 2014-current

In my second year of university studying towards a degree in computer science, I had Te Taka as a lecturer. I found Te Taka’s lectures to be well organised and engaging. He would often ask for class input when completing examples on the whiteboard and computer. Participating in these exercises kept me engaged and helped me to identify the different ways a problem could be solved. I was also appreciative of the pace at which Te Taka ran his lectures. New material was introduced gradually, enabling main concepts to be grasped easily. Prior to sitting a test, Te Taka would provide example questions and practice tests, giving an idea of the upcoming test’s layout and the types of questions that are likely to be asked. I found this to be an extremely helpful tool when studying.

Mariah Atutahi, student, 2013-current

Te Taka is the most engaging and effective lecturer I have encountered during my studies at the University of Waikato. His combination of theory learning coupled with a practical component ensures that different student learning types are catered for. Te Taka’s use of incentivised student participation in lectures increases the student participation in lectures, which can be a challenging task. Throughout the duration of the courses I have had with Te Taka, he uses his unique teaching ability, humour, compassion and passion to open people’s curiosities as he guides people to want to learn more and further themselves in the pursuance of their own passions.

Cameron Adam, student, 2015-current
By 2010 I realised I had been a somnambulist teacher and my students had been learning in the same way. I resolved to poke and prod myself awake and harry and hassle them to do the same. Now I am on a journey in which I intend to unlock the full value of my teaching for my students, my colleagues and myself. I read and write about teaching both on my own and as part of a law school teaching research group. I drive my students to become involved with the sorts of activities and conditions likely to generate high-quality and deeper learning. Whereas before I sought merely a good relationship and some enjoyment with my students while delivering the information they needed to obtain a law degree, now I want so much more.

Now I seek, apply and model active, reciprocal and deep learning in law. This is my teaching philosophy and these are the goals that make up that philosophy:

- To share all I know about the law with my students, to unlock its mysteries as a living thing with real impact on human life;
- To encourage my students to be curious
about the law and its place in society;

- To teach my students to enjoy learning and to learn actively rather than passively;
- To develop as an educator and learn together with my students;
- To give my students confidence in the learning process and in their own potential and progress;
- To care about and be accessible to my students;
- To facilitate an environment where my students can teach and learn for themselves and take responsibility for their own learning;
- To relate to my students in a way that makes them feel comfortable and respected, especially in ways that recognise diversity in the student group;
- To lead, motivate and collaborate with my colleagues and other law teachers in learning about teaching, sharing strategies and developing a successful teaching methodology.

The innovations I use, and my students have embraced, are these:

- **Facilitating student self-regulation:** I actively engage the students in running some of the exercises in their classes. For example, randomly chosen students research and present biographical introductions for guest speakers, and others thank the speakers and present them with supplied gifts. Other randomly chosen students run a grand debate, while others run case study discussion sessions where they facilitate the sharing of views on what they think cases are about.

- **Haiku competition and wiki:** I run a haiku competition online on a voluntary basis. Haiku poems require lyrical skills, editing and accuracy within 17 syllables. They are very suited to law, where those skills are valued too. Many legal documents and communications have to take specialised and restricted forms. In this exercise, students can contribute a haiku on any of the topics covered. The purpose is to develop the skills of distilling a legal idea or principle into a clear and simple form, to build confidence and to have fun. Haiku are entered in a wiki for all the students to see. I also contribute to the wiki, often responding to student haiku with haiku of my own. At the end I give a prize to the best haiku.

- **Pub quiz:** I use a pub quiz as a form of revision and motivation exercise. This rowdy knock-about session is like a real pub quiz (without alcohol) with randomly chosen teams and small prizes of chocolate fish. The response is lively and the whole class is involved. The team with the lowest marks is asked to contribute to the haiku wiki and does so with good humour, sometimes submitting more than one entry! Reflecting on this exercise, I believe it meets my goals of making revision more enjoyable, engaging the students, and demonstrating to them, in a safe group setting, how much or how little they know and inspiring them to do more.

- **Filmed newsdesk oral presentation:** I designed and developed learning outcomes for an oral presentation exercise that allows students to experience speaking to an (imaginary) audience of future work colleagues on a media law topic while being filmed. Development and assessment of oral skills is very rare in University of Canterbury law courses, and although students can take part in mooting and other competitions that test oral skills, these are not compulsory. Yet the practice of law, and use of legal skills in other work contexts, invariably demand good oral and presentational skills. In my exercise a handout with detailed instructions and information is made available at the outset and one class is devoted to the handout and to any questions students might have beforehand. Students are assessed on both verbal and non-verbal skills: posture, stance and grooming; eye contact and engagement; clarity and strength of voice; confidence; and content and structure.

- **Media madness simulation exercise:** This is a real-time, breaking news simulation exercise I have developed that is unique in New Zealand law schools. It stimulates engagement and learning beyond my wildest dreams! Students are assigned randomly to become members of two- or three-person law firms and are required over a two-hour period to advise a journalist client on a breaking story in which the facts are based
on a real news event. The clients are senior journalism students close to graduation and already writing stories for publication in the media – as close to the real thing as they could be! Both lawyers and journalists receive minimal initial information, after which, every 20 minutes, the journalists receive new information. Periodically, journalists contact their law firm (by phone or by arranging to meet on campus) to seek legal advice on the new information. The law students identify specific issues that arise and give advice under pressures of time and journalists who want to publish as much information as possible. I am blown away to see my students laugh, shout, and share cell phones, laptops and textbooks, while sitting cross-legged on the ground outside, inside or wherever suits them during the exercise, while I literally become invisible to them. Afterwards they present me with serious and carefully drafted group opinions and then let rip with mighty praise and suggestions for improvement in individual reflections that, in turn, engage and challenge me.

Talk show host: In large classes, I make use of a teaching style I call the ‘talk show host’ gig. This involves roaming the entire lecture space amongst the students during introductory lectures, deliberately breaking and re-breaking the imaginary wall that exists between the teaching lectern and the first row in large lecture theatres. In the sessions that introduce new topics, I use simple images to illustrate current news stories that are relevant to trigger discussion and excitement about the topic to come. I offer challenging and exciting fact scenarios to the class and seek their engagement by getting physically in among them in a high energy fashion. This involves either taking a seat next to individual students and engaging them in a talk-show host manner to introduce themselves and then make comment, or sitting on the stairs while I make comment. The level of engagement in these lectures is extremely high for both teacher and students.

Future plans
My future plans include continuing to co-lead the longitudinal research project, which is changing the teaching of law in New Zealand. The Law School obtained funding from Ako Aotearoa for this project entitled ‘Establishing and exploiting a contemporary student profile for use in curriculum design and teaching methodology to achieve effective teaching in a law degree’. This project is a study of student aspirations, expectations, well-being and satisfaction in their law degree. It is exceptional in New Zealand because it has taken a 2014 cohort of students from Canterbury, Auckland and Waikato law schools (and Victoria Law School in 2017), and is following them from entry into law school and out into the workforce for up to 10 years. This study will continue to inform me as I innovate and further develop my teaching methodology, as well as informing my colleagues at the Law School and other law schools.

My current thoughts about what to do with my teaching award favour an international tour of other law schools to search out, observe, inform and perhaps take part in the best law teaching available world-wide.
Peer & Student Comments

Ursula treated the group as adults and allowed people the opportunity to be active participants in the class rather than just empty vessels absorbing information lectured at them, thus making the lectures a better experience.

Media Law student, 2012

Again by the charisma with which the course was taught it was quite easy to see Ursula’s passion for the topic and, in that way, get excited for it myself. The heavy class involvement in the course through the weekly case studies, grand debate, and haiku also helped promote a different atmosphere than other courses, which further stimulated interest in the course.

Law student, 2015

My son is one of your students this year and he thinks you are absolutely the best teacher in the place – inspiring, interesting and fun.

Mother of a student, 2015

I believe this was the best, most enjoyable and most relatable to the real world exercise I have ever participated in at university. The two hours flew by and I was left feeling exhilarated and with a great sense of achievement! The exercise was able to test our adaptability, quick thinking and teamwork skills in a way no assessment I have ever done has been able to do.

Law student, 2016

...Overall, this seemed to me the very model of a successful, interesting law lecture – and its success was attributable to Ursula’s enormous teaching skills, commitment and enthusiasm. I was very impressed.

Associate Professor John Caldwell, Law colleague, 2013
As a nurse educator, my goal is to enable students to ‘think like nurses’ and become independent life-long learners capable of caring for themselves and others in today’s challenging healthcare environment. An adult learner myself, I have a variety of learner-centred methods I find helpful, including small group work, games, drawing, role-plays, presentations, reflective discussion, and resources such as written narratives, film and stories to promote curiosity and make learning relevant and fun.

My teaching career began as a tutor at the Dunedin School of Nursing (1981-84). I progressed to university lecturer (1989-2009) and returned to nursing education as a principal lecturer in the School of Nursing at Otago Polytechnic in 2010. Over these years I raised four children, worked as a practising registered nurse, managed a 16-bed intensive care unit, lectured and developed courses at university. I also studied part-time, completing three degrees in economics and management and a doctoral thesis on nurses’ stress and burnout.

These responsibilities and my venture into new academic disciplines have equipped me to fully understand the complexities, challenges and rewards associated with being an adult learner.
Highlights from university teaching

I began teaching *Introduction to Management* in 1990 at short notice following the sudden death of a staff member. Literally thrown in the deep end, I 'lectured' to 500 students using his previously prepared handwritten overheads. Traumatised by this one-way information-giving experience, I volunteered to develop a tutorial programme (the first of its kind at the time). I recruited and trained 15 tutors (honours and postgraduate students) to deliver 38 small group tutorials a week. Using my formal training as a nursing tutor, I wrote lesson plans, developed case studies sourced from local businesses and adopted a problem-based learning method involving analytical frameworks (e.g. SWOT) to analyse these real-world examples. I also harnessed student enthusiasm for experiential learning and active participation by developing a *Business Case Competition* (with prizes from sponsors) as part of their formative assessment. I value case study resources since they present realistic, complex and contextually rich situations that help learners to identify the parameters of a problem, recognise and articulate positions, evaluate courses of action, and argue different points of view – all essential attributes of effective business managers and reflective practitioners.

Teaching a smaller *Human Resource Management* second-year course allowed me to experiment with flexible assessment strategies that were inspired by a seminar affirming that we all learn differently (visual, kinaesthetic, aural and multimodal). To provide students with the opportunity to analyse employment issues, I designed and developed a 'media watch' component to my course using sources from the media (newspaper or TV). This gave students the freedom to choose how to share their understanding of the issues with peers, producing an array of artwork: posters, skits, a 20-minute radio talkback show, and a short play depicting the experiences of employees with disabilities. To the surprise of my colleagues who wondered what was going on, students greatly appreciated the opportunity to present their work using different formats.

Polytechnic teaching

Currently, my teaching practice is guided by Patricia Benner’s theory that nurses develop knowledge in stages, i.e. progressing from novice to expert over time. She observed that novices (first-year students) depend on principles, frameworks and abstract materials in order to learn and develop theoretical knowledge. However, the practical knowledge required to become a competent registered nurse depends on concrete experiences (clinical nursing) and reflective practice.

First-year students require clinical reasoning skills to foster reflective thinking and to build empathy. For this I use experiential and constructive approaches including simple games such as *Rory’s Story Cubes* in the introductory week of the Bachelor of Nursing programme. Cubes resemble large dice; each has six facets with an image on it. Working in pairs, students roll the dice and tell a short
story, either about him or herself, or about the picture shown on the cube. I play the game, role modelling active learning.

In addition, I use diagrams, mind-maps and drawings to structure my teaching and visual aids to help students learn. When introducing them to the ethical principle of beneficence, the practice of ‘doing good’, I invite students to discuss and draw a picture showing what it means to them. Drawing appeals to visual learners and helps others to conceptualise abstract concepts making beneficence easier to understand and applicable to future nursing practice.

To learn the steps of clinical reasoning, i.e. looking, collecting and processing information, I use a set of small, sealed wooden boxes containing a movable object (that makes a ‘klinky’ noise) and a picture storybook called The Box. Students are asked to observe, but not touch, the box positioned on the table in front of them (each looks the same but is internally different), then to brainstorm the box’s possible contents, writing their ideas on yellow Post-it notes. Group leaders then collect and sort notes into categories, displaying them on the whiteboard.

Following this, I read the story aloud to the class, show the book’s illustrations before prompting students to reconsider the contents of the box and write any new ideas on blue Post-it notes. Listening to a children’s story surprises and encourages students to use their imagination. Prior to my reading the book, ideas are limited to items such as small toys or lollies that fit inside the box. Having listened to the story, suggestions broaden and include the improbable – an elephant, ghost, mouse or tree. To encourage critical thinking, I say, ‘Let’s explore this idea,’ or “How could we assess the likelihood of there being a mouse in the box?”

Finally, students decide upon and draw a picture on the whiteboard of what they think is in their box. They love this part because they finally get to ‘shake, rattle and roll’ their box! I highlight how using their senses helped them to assess the box’s movement and sound, and introduce the medical terms for listening (auscultation) and feeling (palpation). I caution about judging a situation from first impressions since these boxes look the same but each makes a different sound. We finish by exploring reasons why it is not possible to open the box, relating this to human conditions that cannot be diagnosed. To debrief I ask students to reflect upon their own reactions to not knowing (huge frustration, sometimes anger) and discuss ways in which they may learn to cope with similar situations and disappointment in nursing practice.

For second- and third-year students, my colleagues and I have developed an Immersive Learning approach to help students link their human science knowledge (taught in bioscience) with clinical assessment (taught in theory courses) and clinical practice skills developed in a simulation suite. The learning design combines lectures and tutorials with LabTutor (an online learning platform) and simulated nursing scenarios using a high-fidelity manikin that has a pulse, can blink and speaks through an intercom system.

Each module is based on online case studies; one introducing ‘Mrs M’, admitted to hospital with extreme difficulty in breathing as a result of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Students first meet Mrs M in a video vignette, complete online learning activities to enhance their understanding of her medical
condition before caring for her in a simulated nursing scenario. They also perform diagnostic experiments in the LabTutor classroom (e.g., measuring their own breathing rates and lung capacity). Comments such as, “I’d read it in the textbooks maybe 15 times but when you try to breathe like someone with COPD you go ‘oh yeah’,” show us that these ‘hands-on’ learning activities help students to better understand the reality of Mrs M’s daily life. The enhanced realism embedded in the immersive approach also enables students to use their senses (sight, touch and hearing), assisting them to develop reflective thinking skills.

What of the future?
It is hard to imagine a life without teaching or not being involved in education and research. I thought completing the PhD was the end of my student days but then I completed professional nursing competency and teaching qualifications, and a certificate in Te Mata a Ao Māori, the most interesting and enriching learning journey of them all! My goal now is altruistic: to ‘give back’ to nursing education, to willingly share my knowledge with others, and tell stories of my triumphs and mistakes so that others may learn.

Peer & Student Comments

This is the first time I have had anything to do with a management paper. I was concerned I would get lost with concepts and ideas within the first week…but found that this course has been structured with the real world examples and a fantastic lecturer has held my interest and helped me understand how businesses work.
Letter of appreciation, 1999

This teacher helps me learn by using lots of interaction – makes you feel really involved in the class and interested in learning, i.e., the tutorial in which we used a box to think critically.
Student, Psychological Concepts, 2014

Liz encouraged my teaching practice by giving the opportunity to work in a paper with her. She was aware that I had a strong interest in this particular theoretical area and supported my knowledge and development as a teacher. It was an incredibly valuable experience for me.
Colleague, School of Nursing, 2016

Liz’s passion for nursing, with her knowledge and vast experience make her a great teacher. I enjoy her anecdotes and personal stories that aid my learning.
Student, Psychological Concepts, 2015

Liz always has interesting stories, which relate to the topic and help us apply current knowledge. She uses a range of teaching resources to get the point across.
Student, Psychological Concepts, 2016

Liz is a highly effective lecturer who has the students’ learning needs foremost in her approach to teaching. She is capable, efficient and current with literature, which pertains to her particular courses and is adept at technology. She is more than willing to share her expertise with staff and has developed networks across the polytechnic.
Colleague, School of Nursing, 2016
My approach to teaching reflects my belief that as teachers of the Humanities in today’s complicated world, our focus must be broader than merely facilitating good grades for our students. We have additional responsibilities. We need to show our pupils how academic knowledge prepares us for far more than simply our next ‘job’, and we must also continue to explain to the wider public the value of the Humanities as a discipline.

For example, I use my subject, Social Anthropology, to enable students to appreciate and celebrate human diversity without being fearful of it. I strive to show them that the future really is in their hands and they can shape it towards a variety of kindlier, freer and authentically human ways to be. My passion is for my graduates to become antidotes to populism by making meaningful and well considered contributions to public life. At the same time, I firmly believe in the salience of a liberal arts education to prepare students for future employment in jobs that ‘matter’, in both a cultural and an economic sense, to the well-being of our nation. The critical thinking skills, the cross-cultural sensitivities, heightened ethical awareness and expertise in qualitative research methods that my students emerge with as graduates, provide them with the skill base to go on to become diplomats, caring mental health workers, aid workers, politicians, entrepreneurs, policy analysts, cultural commentators, teachers, doctors and even budding anthropologists. To frame all of this succinctly, my overarching philosophy of teaching is to encourage both my students and
myself to go beyond a mastery of the intricacies of our shared academic discipline in order to translate our university knowledge into practical tools, ideas and competencies that can change people’s lives for the better – both individually and collectively.

As I reflect on my life’s journey, it seems to me that I have been learning to teach for all of my adult life – 16 years teaching Social Anthropology at the University of Otago, and previous to that, 15 years in Clinical Oncology as a tutor radiation therapist and another 10 years as a freelance radio journalist working at a community radio station and teaching journalism within a feminist radio collective. I now coordinate and teach two 300-level papers (the Anthropology of Health and Conceiving Reproduction), two second-year papers on how to conduct research and its ethics and politics, and an advanced 400-level paper in Medical Anthropology. I also supervise postgraduate thesis students. All of these various instances of teaching and learning have offered me opportunities to enhance the conceptual toolkit that I now work with in my classes every day to help me to achieve my learning goals. My toolkit is informed by students’ feedback, my own reflections, many years of bricolage as I continually tinkered with the design and content of my courses, a Certificate in Tertiary Teaching where I finally discovered theoretical reasons for success in teaching and learning, and my own life experiences of training and retraining for new jobs and different opportunities. Its principles are very simple – become a translator of your university knowledge into life skills, keep your feet in the real world, practise research-informed teaching, be an encourager of your students and strive for excellence in yourself and others.

It was one of my students who first described me as teaching ‘with my feet in the real world’ and I was struck to see in her insight something that I had previously failed to recognise as an important aspect of my practice. Having worked in several professions, I appreciated the value of being flexible and of having the capacity to transport and reorient skills from one profession into another. While many of my contemporaries were the last of their generation to ‘have a job for life’, my own itinerant lifestyle left me well prepared to teach students about resilience and the need to reinvent oneself according to changing labour markets and global economies. I think these experiences have helped to keep my teaching relevant.

This interest in relevance translates across into my everyday teaching practice through the leavening grains of pragmatism that I include in all of my assessments and course designs. I like to teach through real world examples and applications. Some of the most satisfying student assessments I have conducted occur outside of my formal courses, when keen students apply successfully to work on my research grants. Nothing beats watching an undergraduate student synthesise their learning and apply it to a genuine research project. The impact of these final year research team placements can
be profound. For example, one of my summer students interviewed two families living with heritable deafness and subsequently trained to teach New Zealand Sign language as a career. Another worked on a project investigating oral health self-care and was so concerned by the lack of funding for preventative oral health care for beneficiaries that the student sought out a position within the appropriate ministry in order to promote change from within.

Another example of my use of real life learning situations occurs in my second-year classes, where I teach about methods of research in order to instruct students in ways of conducting anthropological research ethically, efficiently and richly. Once again, we learn by doing. In one class, for example, the students film real people, preferably strangers, in order to create a 5-minute video log (vlog) of some aspect of Dunedin society or its cultural scenes and identities. The final research product available on our ANTHOTAGO YouTube Channel is a long running, ethically-approved research project with >65,000 views. The learning experience is authentic; students are not learning about research or pretending to be a researcher – they are researchers – albeit junior and heavily supervised ones. The safe learning space that I construct allows them opportunities for self-reflection and peer support as they consider the responsibilities that come with interacting with research participants in real life. The most positive learning outcomes of all occur when students take these skills outwards into their own personal YouTube research projects.

The same pragmatism informs my planning of assessments throughout all of my courses in an order that proceeds from tasks with lower stakes to tasks with higher stakes. This is so that students can incorporate feedback and polish their work before attempting the more complex assignments where a poor result could mean failing the entire course. The vlog project that I described above is broken up into several smaller graded assessments (a research question, a photo and a soundscape) each of which prepares students for an element of the final larger assessment. In addition, I use a number of formative assessment exercises in all of my courses. For this particular course it is a non-graded activity in which the entire class engages in a formal viewing of every student’s photographs and soundscapes to provide each other with peer feedback about their strengths and weaknesses. The students gain in confidence through this process of public discussion of their work and I rarely see the same photos incorporated into the final vlog that were displayed in the public viewing formative assessment task. Students instead go back to create more ‘relevant’ and ‘cleaner’ images based on the peer to peer feedback. This formative assessment models good study habits, fosters collegiality and enhances confidence. It also helps students to learn, for as any A+ student would know, it is easy to maintain high grades by simply keeping on doing whatever it is that you are doing already. It is the C+ and B+ students who struggle to find out what it is that they must do to enhance their grades and the peer to peer feedback provides this.

To conclude this teaching and learning statement, in looking to the future I imagine myself continuing to develop both my research and my teaching, as these have become so entwined over the years that they resist being prised apart. A particular interest for me will be to continue working with my Otago colleagues to design a postgraduate studies programme in Medical Anthropology. Our wish is to develop a programme that will be interdisciplinary in its nature, incorporating shared teaching contributions from the Humanities, the Health Sciences and Sciences.

In relation to the specific plans that I have to utilise this very generous award, I hope to use it to further a research project I am currently leading that explores the value of friendship to student success in tertiary education. This research project arises directly out of research conducted by several cohorts of my own second-year anthropology students. These students developed a research question about the significance of friendship to undergraduate students and then went on to use it as the framework for their practical lessons in conducting ethnographic interviews with other students. As we worked together as a class in order to learn how to analyse the interview findings, the results of the students’ work turned out to be fascinating to all of us. Since obtaining
Individuals such as Dr Ruth Fitzgerald continue to influence my life; their personal standards of excellence in teaching and research were very obvious and deeply inspiring.

Graduate, 2010 graduate survey

Your course Conceiving Reproduction has profoundly influenced my path over the last 7 years; I’m currently a student midwife at Ryerson University, Canada, and think back often to the critical and curious lens that your teaching afforded me... In my work, political life, and student life, I work to ground myself in the engaged critical practices I was lucky enough to learn from professors like yourself... I really credit your course as an important part of why I do the work that I do!

Unsolicited email, 2009

The course is wonderful and I was [stunned] by the emotional impact of this material for me in this class compared to when I study [human reproduction] in science.

Undergraduate student, 2015

I have never left a meeting with Ruth and not felt encouraged and enthused about my field, my capabilities, and my work. If I walk in confused and stressed, I walk out clarified and refreshed. Ruth is not only an interesting, intelligent, experienced academic mind with a wealth of knowledge, but she understands the practical workings of academia and is skilled at laying them out clearly for students to navigate. She is kind... encouraging and optimistic without being fluffly or false. She is a calm, strategic problem solver; giving wise advice without being small-minded or constraining creativity. She makes time for us, unendingly patient with our errors and insecurities...

Unsolicited testimonial, 2015

She provided me with the scaffolding to become successful. Above all else, she believed in me, and that is why she will always be my pivotal mentor.

Name withheld by request, 2017

Another quality of Dr Fitzgerald’s teaching that I admired and is certainly worth noting is her willingness to talk about the process of being imperfect as a scholar and teacher. She discussed her own imperfections and slips and the lessons from them in a way that normalised the challenges of real education. In rare instances when a lesson presented concepts that I or other students struggled to understand, she adjusted, reoriented, and reworded her communication that day or maybe the next, to bring into focus an answer or solution or even just highlight a problem. In doing so I think she taught boldly – demonstrating that being a good educator includes being imperfect and means being a lifelong learner and always challenging oneself to think differently, communicate differently and adapt when needed. That is a lesson not just for the classroom and professional training but for everyday life in areas of family, friends, politics, and beyond – and it is not one that many teachers have the confidence to share.

Nathaniel S Baer MD MA, 2017

She goes above and beyond to ensure her students learn to be good academics and not just memorisers.

Undergraduate student, 2015

those initial insights, I have had students first volunteering and now working as paid research assistants to make a wider and more systematic study of the phenomenon that we hope to expand outwards to a variety of tertiary learning institutions.
My teaching philosophy

I have spent a significant proportion of my life facilitating learning in formal and non-formal contexts in indigenous communities in South East Asia, Melanesia and New Zealand. Grounding my work in participatory models of community development, my role as an educator has always been to enable others to extend their knowledge and skills and become learning facilitators and community leaders in their own right. Much of this work has been directed towards helping women become more independent and self-sufficient; improving health, well-being and economic outcomes across a variety of multi-cultural and multi-religious communities.

I learned the art of facilitating learning and teaching from superb role models who encouraged me to utilise skills that were different from the dominant teaching and learning paradigm. At the heart of this lies a strength-based approach where, irrespective of the backgrounds and abilities of learners, the focus is on what they can do rather than a deficit model that focusses on what they can’t. Along these same lines, I view ‘literacy’ in its broadest sense as a ‘life-wide’ as well as ‘life-long’ concept.
This outlook has driven my role as educational leader at the Whanganui Learning Centre Trust (WLCT). After joining the organisation in 2006 and being engaged in a number of significant projects including the Foundation Research Science and Technology funded Whanganui Literacy and Employment Research Project, I went on to lead WLCT to embed a strength-based approach throughout the six key areas of operation, returning it to Category One status with NZQA on two consecutive occasions – 2011 and 2015. It was my aim to focus on the quality of teaching and learning across the organisation and to develop a shared philosophy for holistic education and excellence in teaching and learning at all levels of operation.

School was not a happy place for me, as it has not been for a significant number of those who come to the Centre. Seldom did educators play on my natural strengths and abilities. For this reason I knew that there had to be a better way. Meeting the demands of foundational learners who are reluctant to engage has undoubtedly been the most demanding aspect of my career. I have had to apply all my skills to get them to take ownership of their own learning and futures. I do this by challenging their mind-sets and their assumptions, just as I challenge my own on a daily basis.

Focussing on our strengths is a shared philosophy throughout our organisation. I use an array of mapping and assessment tools to develop individual strategies and plans for students to achieve short-term and long-term aspirations. Such techniques are integrated into individual and whānau learning programmes with reflection and self-evaluation becoming core components. By getting learners to understand their own gaps in learning, they can improve their skills and be encouraged by the successes they begin to achieve. In 2015, NZQA evaluators noted that by applying this ‘strength-based’ approach and a culture of organisation-wide, continuous improvement and self-evaluation, our learners achieved outstanding results, with ‘transformational’ and life-changing examples being recorded as a result of stakeholder feedback and student outcomes.

This whole reflective and self-evaluative process has led the organisation to make significant changes, one of the most important
being the adoption of a ‘whānau-ora’ approach resulting in a solid increase of Māori participation from a meagre 26 per cent per annum in 2006 to over 65 per cent during the last few years.

Just as satisfying has been that Māori achievement has equalled and at times surpassed that of non-Māori, with the same trend being evidenced for Pasifika and others for whom English is a second language. By challenging the monocultural nature of the organisation and ordering an evaluation of the whole learning culture, WLCT’s commitment to the principles of partnership and social justice has resulted in culturally diverse groups now taking the lead independently in whānau and community learning programmes.

In this respect, I am an advocate for community-led and intergenerational learning. I do nothing alone. Just as I am always part of a community-wide collaborative, I am supported in my work by a very skilful team of educators, administrators, board members, community advisors and mentors. Although I lead the planning and design of the learning process from a ‘flax-roots’ basis – where the recipients and stakeholders in the process are engaged in co-design programming – my objective is always to pass over the control. Within this context, there have been opportunities to assist groups to address not only their own learning difficulties but those of their extended whānau and children.

It is no secret that I set high expectations for my learners, leading them to acquire useful and meaningful skills and knowledge and facilitating a process whereby individuals gain insight into their own lives to take control of their own learning journey – sometimes for the first time in their lives. Strive to ‘be more’ – for ourselves as well as our whānau – is a good adage to follow.
Where to from here?
I will always work against injustice and for equity of opportunity throughout our social structures. Forever curious and looking for the ‘spaces-in-between’ and ‘outside’ systems, my future focus is on examining other communities world-wide; to bring creativity to the process because this is what drives innovation. In this respect, research, evaluation and critical reflection have been and remain central to my approach to planning and design for learning. To this end, I intend to utilise the grant from AKO to conduct shared research to investigate different ways of being and doing for this changing landscape that is ‘education’. As we say at WLCT, “The future is already here. It’s just not evenly distributed” (William Gibson, 1993).

**Peer & Student Comments**

Learners achieve well beyond their expectations at WLCT because the organisation has created a genuine learning environment where learners feel safe and are treated with dignity, and where staff are discreet, passionate and committed to ‘making a positive difference’ for their learners. Self-assessment processes, such as student satisfaction ratings of the programmes and electronic records of progress, are used to review the quality of the student experience at WLCT. These are used alongside qualitative data sources such as student reflections on their own progress, case studies, and journals to gauge how well learners have improved their well-being and enhanced their abilities and skills.

NZQA report on the Whanganui Learning Centre, 2011, p. 9

Gail’s reputation as an educator vehemently committed to social justice is legendary. Her greatest asset is her vibrant and dynamic personality that inspires all those who teach with her and acts as a magnet to those who have not been served well in the formal education system. Her skill is in working with second-chance learners; inspiring them to see learning in the context of their everyday lives and building on this recognition to motivate and inspire them to ‘be more’ – for themselves as well as their whānau.

Members of the Board of the Whanganui Learning Centre, March 2017

Every now and then, if you are lucky, you meet people who inspire, who take time to teach you what they know, who nurture and guide you, who see potential that no one else sees – except of course our mums. People who give of themselves unconditionally, who take pleasure and delight in seeing you learn, achieve and excel. I am Māori and in our language we have a word for this. That word is Aroha.

Anonymous, Student reflection, 2016

Before I went to the Learning Centre, I was living a boring, monotonous life. I had raised my children and life was empty and I felt undervalued in my work. Gail helped me to discover my worth and gave me the confidence to believe I was deserving of a decent job.

Leah McIvor, Student reflection, 2015

Without you we wouldn’t be where we are today. Your drive, commitment and enthusiasm for your students is infectious. You have an ability to consider your students’ individual needs and strengths and help individuals realise their potential.

Vicki Campbell, Graphic artist, 2016
I am an anatomist; I study and teach the structure and function of the human body. My role is to assist in training future doctors, physiotherapists, dentists, scientists, educators and communicators who will enter the workforce and leave their mark on the world. I consider myself very fortunate to teach this subject because anatomy is inherently relatable. We all have a body and have had experiences with normal and dysfunctional aspects of how our bodies work – in my opinion this is what makes the human body so fascinating and interesting to teach.

Using my own learning experiences to assist my students
As soon as I began to teach anatomy, I knew that I had found a career that I loved. I came to the University of Otago in 2001 where I completed a BSc in anatomy, then undertook postgraduate study and worked as a laboratory demonstrator. This meant that I was teaching...
the same papers that I had recently completed whilst carrying out scientific research focussing on how the nervous and muscular systems develop. I gained my PgDipSci, MSc and eventually my PhD whilst actively teaching. Even though I enjoyed being in the laboratory carrying out experiments, I realised that I loved being in the anatomy classroom so much more, mostly because I was helping to pass on what I had learned to students who were beginning their journey of studying anatomy.

I believe my key strengths in teaching are empathy and an ability to relate to students because I know exactly what it is like to be an undergraduate student and how daunting the language of science can be. When I started my own university journey in science I was constantly tripping over jargon, terminology and the complicated details that were presented in lectures and laboratories. Needless to say, I found this challenging and stressful. As a teacher, my aim is to help my undergraduate students to overcome these same challenges I had faced. Firstly, I try to emulate the passion, engagement, empathy and involvement I saw from teachers who had helped me deal with the challenges of learning. So, following their examples, I make sure I have time to speak with my students about their struggles – I am always ready to help them find solutions to manage and get through stressful times. Secondly, I avoid recreating the negative experiences of my undergraduate studies. My worst experiences at university were from teachers who seemed as if they did not want to be in the classroom, offered ambiguous explanations, and looked disgruntled if approached for clarification. To avoid this, I strive to communicate clearly and concisely, not overload students with irrelevant detail, and most of all, make learning about the human body interesting and engaging.

I want my students to ask questions and be curious while they have fun learning about the human body

For many students, learning a subject like anatomy can be confronting. It requires looking at visually and emotionally challenging material (such as human body parts) and the scientific language is difficult to master. To combat this, I try to create a safe learning environment where students can be inquisitive without being self-conscious. I tell all my students in their first class with me that they should not be afraid to ask questions. I encourage them to ask what is on their mind, to seek out answers, and show
them that they can count on my support. I also use humour to defuse student stress, often using a silly anatomy anecdote or cracking a ‘dad joke’ to lighten the atmosphere. With these strategies, students leave my classroom feeling empowered. They have those ‘light-bulb’ moments where I can tangibly see understanding of a difficult concept sink in. For me, this is one of the most rewarding parts of my job.

**Supporting and empowering students**

I teach papers that can have anywhere between 40 and 2000 students, so there will be, for various reasons, students who will struggle with content, managing their workloads or perhaps even with understanding how material is presented or examined. To ensure all students are able to achieve their full potential I have a strong relationship with the Disability Information and Support office – they contact me if a student in my class has a disability or impairment that affects their ability to learn. Once I have met the student, I can offer solutions and strategies to empower them to reach their full potential.

In 2016 I was appointed as Kaiāwhina Māori, a leadership role within the University of Otago where I support Māori students while they are studying anatomy. I run weekly tutorials across all of our 200-level anatomy courses for both Māori and Pasifika students, as well as facilitate meet and greet sessions for these students with other staff and their older student peers. I find this role incredibly rewarding because I get to meet these students at the start of their tertiary education, and many are the first of their families to attend university. It is an incredibly special feeling witnessing these students unlock their potential – from their first weeks at Otago; mentoring them across the ascending years of their study; and culminating in their donning graduation regalia and walking across the stage at the Dunedin Town Hall. They introduce me to their families at their graduation ceremonies and I too feel immensely proud of their achievements.

**Leadership, mentoring and getting everyone excited about science**

My teaching philosophy is to nurture my students so they grow into great scientists and clinicians, and while I am always seeking ways to pass on knowledge and skills to my students, I also aim to help my colleagues grow as educators. I openly share what I have learnt from my own teaching experiences and transfer my skills and knowledge to help my colleagues wherever possible. I use the skills I have learned in teaching and scientific communication to speak about anatomy at annual events such as at the Brain Health Research Day, International Science Festival and Brain Bee. Each year these events see thousands of people talking with me about anatomy – and through this, hopefully, they will have learned something new about how their own bodies work.

Outreach to the wider public also allows people to speak about their personal experiences with health, disease, human anatomy and our body donor programme. It is important to me to offer people this opportunity to talk about the human body. I am always surprised and humbled by the number of people who open up and say things like, “Oh, I had a head injury and often struggle with remembering names or where I left my wallet”. I can use a preserved human brain to show them where they were likely to have been injured so they better understand their own condition. I relish opportunities to speak about the human body with primary and secondary school students. I love to see that spark of excitement as I hold up a preserved heart or get a pair of students to hear their own heart with a stethoscope for the first time, all the while thinking to myself that one day I could be teaching them at university and maybe I helped in some small way to unlock that curiosity.

**Conclusion and going forward**

When I first came to the University of Otago as an 18-year old ‘fresher’ from Whakatane, I never imagined that I would one day stand in front of a lecture theatre with over 500 students listening to me speak about the intricacies of the human body. It is an immense privilege to be able to influence the education of my students; to help them succeed in their goals of becoming the next leaders in the fields of science and medicine. They will be people who will change the world.

Going forward, I am hopeful that I will be able to use some of the award to travel to medical and anatomical education conferences
Brad works incredibly hard to bring out the best in the people he teaches with. He shares his ideas generously, and has shown leadership in teaching through organising workshops aimed at upskilling teaching staff in inclusivity and new technologies. When I work with Brad, my own abilities as a teacher are elevated; and together our efforts synergise to maximise the quality of the students’ learning experience.

Associate Professor Christine Jasoni, Department of Anatomy, University of Otago

Brad’s warm, friendly and approachable nature make him a huge asset to the students he works with. Brad works tirelessly to ensure that all students have the best opportunity to succeed.

Jenny Weeks, Disability Information and Support, University of Otago

A great teacher is someone who can captivate and enthuse their students and has the ability to adapt their teaching style to help their students better understand the subject. That’s exactly what our students tell us about Brad. We are very fortunate to have someone as talented, dedicated and passionate about teaching involved in our programme.

Arihia Joseph, Academic coordinator of Te Huka Matauraka (Maori Centre), University of Otago

In my six years of study I have never witnessed a teacher so keen for our feedback, which to me sums up his attitude toward teaching and improving the learning experiences of his students.

Kenny Hau, BSc Anatomy (now studying medicine), University of Otago

Brad’s deep care and consideration for the quality of teaching practice is apparent in every teaching environment he is part of and he ensures that the teaching experiences are as positive for those who are demonstrating as they are for the students in the classes.

Papillon Gustafson, PhD student and postgraduate demonstrator, University of Otago

Learning anatomy would not be the same without Brad. We walk out of his labs and lectures engaged, inspired and itching to learn more. Dedicated, down-to-earth and regularly cracking a joke, Brad is quietly brilliant, having an incredible knack for explaining concepts in a clear and concise way. We feel lucky to have shared his passion for how the body works and benefitted from his talent for teaching.

Immanuel Hay and Emily Markman, BSc Anatomy students, University of Otago

and perhaps visit other anatomy departments abroad, in order to see how the subject is taught in other parts of the world. I will continue to strive to pass on my passion and excitement for understanding the human body. There is still so much that is not understood about the machinery of the body – every year I am challenged by my students who ask questions that I do not know the answer to. To me, that’s what makes this subject so fascinating, and why I enjoy teaching it so much – I am still learning as well. I consider myself very lucky to have a job that allows me to remain as curious and excited about the human body as I did when I walked into the dissection room for the very first time over 15 years ago.
I love teaching and volcanoes, and I am convinced that learning about rocks is fun! As a student I had an insatiable enthusiasm for volcanoes and my scruffy, happy-go-lucky persona naturally led me into geology teaching and academia. My teaching evolved rapidly, as I developed a philosophy rooted in educational research. This originated from a year-long role in teaching and learning development working directly with Dr Carl Wieman (Nobel laureate and world leading science education researcher) at the University of British Columbia. Now, after eight years teaching at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, I continue to work really hard developing, reflecting on and sharing my teaching and learning pedagogy. Hidden beneath a veil of crazy experiments and field classes in breath-taking volcanic landscapes, I developed a methodology that is student-centred, experiential, highly structured, informed and constantly updated with my own geoscience education research group.

Bringing world leading educational research to New Zealand
At University of Canterbury (UC), I was determined to bring what I had learnt from Wieman to tertiary institutes in New Zealand and to continue learning more and researching methods to aid learning. I worked with colleagues and students to develop our own geoscience education research group. This research group ensures that I am up to date with current research and that our educational research is targeted and then applied to geoscience teaching in the
New Zealand context. The research team is unique in New Zealand, producing evidence of learner benefit and targeted towards promoting best practice in geoscience education. My leadership has forged new national and international linkages, and students and staff all research and learn together with the same mutual goal to improve science education. I use my geoscience education research team to test new techniques and skills that align with work readiness and the desired graduate attributes of employers. I then publish and disseminate this work in the international literature.

Learning as a teacher
Teaching and students are priorities for me and part of my philosophy is to constantly solicit formative feedback about my teaching from: (1) educational researchers (e.g. Dr Brogt and Dr O’Steen); (2) students (UC teaching and course evaluations and additional Ako Aotearoa run focus groups); (3) formative learning data (in class exercises, ‘clicker’ questions and online-assessed student forums); and (4) graduate student-led research projects (supervising PhDs and undergraduate projects in geoscience education). This feedback is a crucial component of my evolving teaching style, allowing continual reflection and revision whilst maintaining a structured yet informal atmosphere.

Spreading the science teaching revolution
I am confident that the undergraduate and graduate students that I have helped educate are becoming ambassadors for New Zealand and Earth Science, and will promote New Zealand's reputation for science education. My two geoscience education PhD students, Drs Jacqueline Dohaney and Alison Jolley, have both become leaders in the field. I know science education is undergoing a global revolution and I want to help New Zealand and its students to be leading this revolution.

Innovating interactive lectures, labs, fieldwork and computer game techniques
I update my lectures, lab and fieldtrips by integrating recent volcanological and educational research into the learning design. I have transformed traditional labs to encompass a plethora of new techniques and novel experiments all designed to foster critical thinking skills around specific concepts, whilst simultaneously developing work-ready skills such as communication and team work. The labs involve a range of methods from outdoor experiments, hands-on work with rocks and microscope, to an award-winning custom-designed educational computer game to suit a range of learner needs and strengths. The geothermal world computer game allows students to take the role of a geothermal geologist and was designed by my graduate student Dr Jackie Dohaney and computer scientist Dr Hazel Bradshaw to teach note-taking skills. The effectiveness of the game was tested and compared to a field exercise teaching the same skills. Remarkably, players showed similar learning gains. Both the game and the study won awards. Some aspects of geology teaching occurs in challenging conditions outside the classroom, which often exaggerates differences in student motivation and necessitates instilling
a sense of adventure in students and prioritising their well-being.

**Room to improve**
My teaching planning remains proactive and responsive to new information and there is always room to improve my teaching. For example, after receiving lower field-teaching reviews (between 4.2 and 4.7) in a roadside-based fieldtrip that coincided with a general dissatisfaction with some of the traditional field pedagogies, my geo-education research team developed research questions to explore and improve this. In collaboration with my current geo-education PhD student Alison Jolley, we investigated the way students, peers, instructors, assessment and the field area interact. Analysis of in-depth surveys and interviews revealed statistically significant differences in the ways students interact with different field-teaching pedagogies. Dissatisfaction of trips was significantly increased where students were doing roadside geology. These trips tended to have a less encompassing role of the landscape and assessment that comprised of many small assessments. Satisfaction significantly improved where students stayed in an area, explored on foot and completed one major assessment. These data are already informing my future teaching and feeding back to the Department Teaching and Learning Committee to better design future fieldtrips.

**Motivation through enjoyment**
I genuinely love what I teach and really enjoy teaching. I appreciate that while enthusiasm helps with motivating students, it does not always translate to improved learning. This is why my teaching is grounded in rigorous educational science. My learning facilitation focusses on using peer to peer teaching and learning for engagement, achievement and retention. In my larger classrooms, I combine formative assessment with mechanisms to foster peer interaction and I use interactive student response systems ‘clickers’ to pose questions and receive answers, which students really appreciate. As part of our Transforming Tertiary Education project, we measured engagement, student attitudes and learning in my classes. We can confirm that these techniques indeed show measured improvements in student engagement, knowledge retention and conceptual understanding.

**Developing assessments that support student learning**
I have worked hard to provide scaffolding for students to successfully cope with the workload during laboratory sessions. Additionally, I have successfully implemented an innovative, collaborative, two-stage exam that allows students to first take the exam individually then retake the exam as a group and use the exam as a learning experience. The first year I implemented this, the total mean lab test scores increased by nearly 10 per cent on the previous year’s results despite the fact that exam questions and student cohort remained largely the same.

**The tricky task of evaluating learning and teaching**
Absolute measures of learning and teaching effectiveness are notoriously difficult to assess. During our educational research we conducted several cutting edge methodologies to measure engagement, attitudes and concept learning in my classes. For example, we developed concept tests to measure learning that were given at the beginning of the semester and again at the end of the semester. These tests were to assess my teaching in the lectures through what students learnt and to inform future classes as to what students already knew. The tests also give a true measure of learning during the lectures without the effect of cramming; perhaps providing a better reflection of long-term learning. We identified high levels of learning in my classes and areas for improvement. This assessment of learning project provided professional development opportunities for myself and several other science instructors in New Zealand. I undertook reflection and data analysis with educational researchers. This information was used to identify teaching practices and materials that promoted or discouraged student engagement.

**Taking my teaching to new audiences**
I have drawn on my reputation as a volcano educator and communicator to help stimulate
Peer & Student Comments

I have interacted with many of his students and colleagues and been privy to numerous commendations supporting his teaching excellence from both. In short, his teaching record and reputation are exceptional. He is amongst the most energetic, creative, passionate and inventive tertiary teachers I know. His evidence-based approach to teaching has positively influenced me, and I continue to share Ben’s approach and perspectives to teaching amongst teachers and students at the University of Melbourne.

Associate Professor Mark Quigley, University of Melbourne, recipient of the 2011 New Zealand Prime Minister’s Science Communication Prize

This has helped me develop a great network of professionals in New Zealand, which I work with to promote research-informed teaching and learning… Ben is a great mentor, engaging and impassioned teacher, and advocate for geoscience and science education in New Zealand.

Dr Jaqueline Dohaney, former graduate student now research fellow at Swinburne University, Melbourne

He showed me and my cohort how accessible and rewarding scientific inquiry can be at the highest level. More than the science, his enthusiasm for his subject palpably excited all of his students into engaging with his methods. He is, without a doubt, the best university lecturer I have encountered… He constantly evaluates, develops and updates his teaching methods through feedback between his duties as lecturer and his research agenda into the pedagogy of Earth Science. This example is one that would enrich and enliven the teaching of any university-level educator and one which I aspire to follow.

Fabian Wordsworth

Ben is a motivator and enabler who practises what he preaches. Through his series of hands-on sessions I learnt to manage and implement a range of teaching reforms… Ben is supportive and encouraging as a mentor, and a leader in this field.

Zoe Jordens, Massey University, Ako Aotearoa Tertiary Teaching Excellence award winner 2012

It is not only his students that reap the results; Ben’s approach is helping to bring about a culture change in how teaching is viewed at the university, with benefits to students far beyond the Department of Geological Sciences.

Dr Erik Brogt, Academic developer
My experiences as a social worker are what drew me to tertiary teaching. I saw the potential of education to connect people to new ways of knowing, as a pathway to relate to others and importantly as a tool to inspire change.

Social workers are privileged to work alongside some of society’s most marginalised and disadvantaged groups. I have worked with resettled refugees, homeless children in Guatemala, indigenous communities in the Amazon River basin of Ecuador, people bereaved through suicide in Australia and youth from gang-related backgrounds in the United
States. It was in these contexts that I realised how people’s histories and narratives can be so starkly different from my own, and yet, it was still possible to develop amazing relationships provided that safe and respectful environments were negotiated.

The importance of story
I recognise the power of people’s stories as a pedagogical entry point to meaningful ways of knowing. My teaching is informed by narrative approaches that assume a person’s life is multi-storied. Most simply stated, this means that there are many stories a person can tell about their life. I find that the stories of the students I teach are critical resources that support new ways of understanding social work practice and policy. They are the main mechanism whereby students question their own assumptions and shed their own discriminatory vestiges in order to understand people’s lives in their own terms – something that lies at the heart of what social workers do. My teaching is informed by three key social work approaches that relate to my commitments to social justice: it must be anti-discriminatory, culturally competent and self-reflective.

As teachers, simply accepting the status quo is not a sustainable or ethical position. For me, teaching is about asking questions, thinking about what might be possible and then working towards achieving those objectives. Collaborative and imaginative building processes are central to tertiary teaching that inspires students. A quote by Thoreau captures this process:

I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours... If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.

– Henry James Thoreau

A castle that I have worked towards realising is a commitment to assisting students with refugee backgrounds to access and succeed in tertiary study. My teaching embraces this possibility focus and extends to all of my students where greater educational outcomes and anti-discriminatory and empowering social work practice can be imagined and realised.

Students bring rich and varied lived experiences that shape who they are and how they see the world. For some, it may be adversity that brings them to social work and a desire to enact change. For others, it may be a spiritual calling, an influential person in their lives or some other formative experience that draws them to work with others. These powerful experiences shape professional practice and need a conscious examination and open reflexivity. Empathy is crucial in such exercises. Whilst this is a skill that is difficult to instil, it is possible to create class environments where students are more open to different perspectives and ways of knowing.

I achieve this by role-modelling safe discussion spaces throughout my courses, starting with the recognition that good people may have oppressive beliefs. I work with my students to help them understand that attacking another’s views, beliefs or values will only encourage more walls to be built, resulting in fewer opportunities for engagement. Through my teaching in the classroom, I aspire to create the context where often untested, unexamined and uncritical assumptions about difference can be voiced, but also scaffolded to new ways of understanding. This is achieved through
a process of mutual respect and the power of story that connects the human dimension and associated outcomes of such beliefs. When students present contested ideas, and sometimes perspectives I personally do not agree with, I open the conversation again noting the spirit of constructive contestation and multiple ways of knowing.

Teaching Culture and Diversity
The centrality of story and scaffolding to my teaching is perhaps best exemplified by SOCWORK 113 – Culture and Diversity, a first-year Bachelor of Social Work course. For their first assignment, students deliver a 10-minute presentation to six to eight classmates entitled No hea koe (Where I am from and who am I). This is an opportunity for each student to reflect upon and articulate where their values come from. It is also an opportunity for them to hear from their peers and appreciate the multiple ways of knowing and creating meaning in the world.

Before presenting this assignment, my first lectures encourage students to consider their own backgrounds and histories and how these might inform ‘common sense’ or particular value bases. I employ the metaphor of suitcases to ask students to consider what they carry with them, what aspects might be useful for social work practice, and what aspects might need to be repacked or reconsidered all together. I emphasise that as social workers they are their own most important resource – this requires an honest engagement of self and often untested assumptions. These reflexive exercises can be very confronting as it may be the first time that students have had to critically consider their views on sexuality, gender diversity, disability, religion, race and many others. But in another sense, this can be very affirming of the important histories and values that they carry with them. An openness and understanding of self-awareness is a crucial step in working with difference and sustaining oneself as a practitioner.

Having to think who I am and using my own experiences was really helpful to my learning because it allowed me to have ground knowledge in a tangible and personal way.
Student, SOCWORK 113, 2015

Building castles and identifying possibility
I aim to inspire students to reach their fullest potential and consider what castles they might build in the sky. A teacher is not the sole repository of information and I believe that all students have valuable knowledge to contribute. I strive to create experiential and critically reflective classroom environments where students contribute their own knowledge, experiences and perspectives alongside those of others.

Of critical importance is the recognition that tertiary students are embarking on a journey that does not end with study. They will go on to become New Zealand’s future social work practitioners and educators, as well as the voice that responds to concerns relating to social justice and human rights.

A possibility focus in tertiary education requires open dialogue with students, families and communities. It necessitates the recognition that learning occurs well beyond the classroom and that education can take us to places and understandings not previously imagined. One such example is a former student whose 300-page life story of forced migration and resettlement I helped to structure and edit. Once the story was finalised, he unexpectedly discovered that his sister and mother were still alive in Uganda after being separated from them 26 years ago. With the university press, I organised for two copies of the book to be bound so that he could take them to his family and show them his story. Other graduates from refugee backgrounds that I have worked alongside note how their tertiary education has opened new pathways of hope and a means to transcend past traumas associated with forced migration as individuals, families and communities.

This award will support me to maintain a possibility focus as I continue to develop and learn as a teacher. I must recognise the many people who have walked alongside me in what has been both a professional and personal journey. Tertiary education connects people. It promotes understanding, tolerance and a capacity to critique assumptions about our society. Inculcating a possibility focus within tertiary education feels more pressing than ever with the challenges facing the world today.
Jay Marlowe is an engaging and creative teacher whose commitment to social justice is not only evident in the content of his teaching but in his very being. It is a commitment that is carried with a quiet persistence and an unwavering humility, and it is a commitment that garners deep respect among his students and colleagues.

Graeme Aitken, Dean of Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland

As a South Sudanese scholar from a refugee background who speaks English as a second language, I honestly believe that his innovative teaching style, constructive feedback and supervisory support have not only lead to the successful completion of my Master’s dissertation but to my doctoral study, which I completed in October 2016. Associate Professor Marlowe was, and continues to be, a constant advisor and motivator for me since pursuing doctoral studies and has assisted me in publishing peer reviewed papers and obtaining employment. I am not alone in receiving this support. I often hear from other students, particularly from refugee backgrounds, about the support that they are also receiving from him. He recognises that for many refugee background scholars, university life intersects with family, community and transnational commitments.

Santino Atem Deng, PhD

Over the last seven years, I have seen Jay’s commitment to refugee background students through his teaching, supervision and advocacy to make tertiary institutions more welcoming places. We have a saying, “Nothing about us without us”. Jay’s commitments exemplify this – his teaching and research are consultative, collaborative and open to new perspectives. I have seen him active in encouraging and supporting families to send their children to tertiary study. Jay’s commitments to tertiary teaching are exemplary and make a real difference to us as New Zealanders. Yes, we came to this country as refugees but we are so much more than that. Jay recognises this potential and works hard to ensure that we have a meaningful place at the table to make real and lasting contributions to society.

Abann Yor, Manager, Auckland Resettled Community Coalition

Jay was the most encouraging, positive, considerate lecturer that I have ever had. Along with everything he taught us from the course, he was also an incredible role model and showed us what it means to always be considerate towards others. He always listened to students’ questions and very helpfully acknowledged and engaged with them. He also truly made an effort to get to know all students, which was hugely appreciated by us all.

Student, 2014

Jay works hard to establish a good relationship with his students based on mutual respect. He is serious about the feedback he receives and always incorporates it into the next round of teaching. He is devoted to putting together creative assessments that engage the students in their learning. Jay is also encouraging of students and their research interests, often mentoring them into research and writing for publications. He is an enthusiastic learner and teacher and demonstrates the process of ako in all he does.

Dr Barbara Staniforth, Social Work programme leader, 2011-2016

Jay strongly encouraged class participation which greatly helped in regards to my learning, as well as creating stronger relationships with my peers. Jay was an amazing lecturer! I can honestly say I looked forward to each lecture each week and I am sad to see this course ending.

Student, 2015
When Victoria University offered me my first permanent academic position, I could have taken it as a sign that my teaching was ‘good enough’. Instead, I decided to view it as an opportunity to start over. Taking advantage of the resources Victoria offered me – particularly the amazing, patient staff at its Centre for Academic Development who became my teachers while I pursued a Diploma in Higher Education Learning and Teaching – I started to reinvent myself as the kind of teacher who focusses on helping people learn, as opposed to the kind who focusses on getting good teaching evaluations.

The Higher Education Learning and Teaching (HELT) programme was also my introduction to the cultures of Aotearoa New Zealand. One of the first things I learned as a HELT student was the concept of ako, which envisions learning as a reciprocal exchange, not a one-way transfer. Ako acknowledges what all parties bring to learning interactions and implies that educators learn from the students as well as teaching them. Learning about ako helped me realise that my identity as an educator should not be based on transmitting knowledge about my discipline, but building relationships with people.
Trying new things was hard – and still is. But I realised that the aversion I was feeling was the same fear of failure that paralyses many of my students. If I wanted them to take risks – particularly the very public risks that are inevitable in learning and practising creative expression – I needed to earn their trust. As I focussed more on learning about them and what they knew, I began to understand how perilous and precarious their lives are. I learned that what many students need, much more than my disciplinary expertise, is confidence that teachers understand and care about them as people. To earn this trust, and demonstrate this understanding, I’ve had to think less about what I teach and more about how; that is, I’ve had to position myself as someone who is there to listen to them, not to tell them what to do and how good they are at it.

Design for learning
The most important factor in learning is what the learner does with their time. One thing I found odd when I first arrived in New Zealand is that people here refer to university teachers as ‘lecturers’ and courses as ‘papers’, which gave a pretty good indication of how people imagine time is spent in university: listening to lectures and writing papers. I’m quite comfortable in those modes but they don’t work for all students, and success in my discipline – and in professional and personal life in general – demands much more of people than sitting, listening and writing. People need to be able to speak up, to create and express ideas in many modalities and media, and to collaborate. So I’ve changed the way I use class time so that the students, increasingly, are performing for and with each other, not watching me.

Our class time provides opportunities for students to produce, create, debate, discuss and contribute in a variety of activities including discussion, role-play, skills workshops, performance, group projects and peer reviewing. These activities engage multiple learning including the affective (what we care about), psychomotor (physical and bodily skills), and conative (willpower and our capacity to act). Working in and through all these learning domains, students develop confidence in their abilities, values and agency by doing, making and acting. Students need to develop the capacity to act, and the belief that they can act effectively, on their own initiative. My discipline, too, exemplifies how ‘knowing’ is necessary, but not sufficient; using knowledge requires performance – that is, taking action. Effective action requires collaboration and empathy.

Facilitating learning
My priority as a ‘lecturer’ is to do less lecturing and ensure that the students spend as much time as possible learning actively. The more time learners spend doing, making and creating, the more their confidence and resilience grows. Risks that seem huge and terrifying soon become manageable – such as performing their own work for a public audience.

So what do I do? Increasingly, I spend in-class time observing and offering feedback. Feedback is something a lot of people dread, and even avoid. But when learners shift from passively absorbing information to practising new skills, taking creative risks, and putting their work in front of a public audience, what they need most is constructive, timely feedback on their progress.
The feedback from James in this course is extremely helpful – I cannot imagine the amount of time he puts into individually responding to each student, but it is incredibly worthwhile and I hope that he knows this.
Anonymous, THEA 206/306 2016

Students in my courses get feedback early and often. They also get opportunities to use it to close the gap between current and desired performance. My objective is not to tell them if their work is good – it’s to help them make it better. Offering frequent, high-quality feedback also helps me show that I care about them as people. I use feedback and support to show learners that I care more about helping them learn – and learning about them – than determining their place on a curve.

Assessing learning
Assessment is best used to provoke new learning, not to measure what students already know. I design assessment that allows students to learn actively through a cycle of hypothesis, action, feedback and reflection. I usually begin by giving students an opportunity to identify and pursue learning goals that matter to them – a skill they will need to take charge of when they no longer have teachers to tell them what’s important. Setting personal goals allows them to reflect on what they already know how to do and validates the knowledge they bring with them to the course. It also involves thinking about what is important to them, which many university students have little practice doing.

To demonstrate respect and earn trust, I make the assessment process and its rationale open and transparent. I never ask students to do something unless I can explain why I think it’s a good use of their time. I cultivate academic integrity by spending my time, and asking students to spend theirs, engaged with authentic learning activities, like composing and performing original creative work, practising skills used in the creative industry or mentoring junior peers. Authentic assessment leads to more than just a grade, and the response of a public audience produces more meaningful evidence of how they are doing.

Evaluating learning
I invite student feedback early and often – evaluations at the end of the course come too late to address problems. Inviting student feedback and showing how I use it helps me improve, and it also demonstrates my interest in students’ success and reinforces the message that I value and respect their knowledge. I think much of my success can be attributed to my students’ perceptive and thoughtful feedback on what is working and what needs improvement. In addition, inviting student feedback on specific issues leads to better solutions instead of information about their general satisfaction. Back in 2012, one class of students told us through a targeted survey that they were not keeping up with their readings even though they wished they were. This information was far more valuable than a general opinion about the quality of the course and allowed us to come up with a solution: short weekly reading responses that rewarded keeping up with readings. The survey also let us know that our solution worked, as the percentage of students who acknowledged they were doing the assigned reading went up dramatically.

The weekly critical reflective journals were GREAT. It meant there was healthy pressure put on to read the plays and readings, which made the lectures far more rewarding.
Anonymous student, THEA 201, 2014
Peer & Student Comments

James is a dynamic and entertaining teacher. His delivery of the curriculum is always done with skill and humour and he regularly stops to answer questions and to give pertinent examples to back up his content. He will willingly follow the students’ areas of interest and his flexibility and creative ways of teaching make him a favourite with our students. He is also not afraid to take risks and make bold choices in the way he teaches in the constant effort to engage and keep students engaged with the material and course subject. I have learnt a lot myself from team-teaching with James and I am constantly impressed with the way he is constantly evaluating his own methods of teaching and refining them in the attempt to improve the learning experience for students.

Kerryn Palmer, Teacher, director, Victoria University of Wellington teaching fellow and PhD student

James was marvellous! He would always make his teachings somehow relevant or important to us. …He was very very easy to approach, even though I thought he was scary for the first few weeks. He’s a very good listener and celebrates when students find solutions to their own problems, rather than focus on the problems they had in the first place. This is a very good aspect of him as a lecturer – many lecturers I’ve had won’t even let the students find their own solutions if they have a problem. One moment that made me feel like he was more human than lecturer was when he admitted to us that he was feeling rather nervous/insecure in front of the lecture class. This relatable aspect was so reassuring to us as students and it made me appreciate him and not want to let him down.

Anonymous student, THEA 204, 2017

James both encourages and challenges students to consistently improve their learning matched to their own goals. He values where each student is coming from rather than adopting the one-size-fits-all approach. I must comment on his outstanding ability to facilitate peer mentoring between students at different levels of the programme. This has enormous learning benefits for the students at the same time as it has enhanced the feeling of community amongst them.

Associate Professor David O’Donnell, Head of the School of English, Film, Theatre, and Media Studies, Theatre director

Professional development

My journey to ‘sustained excellence’ began with the acknowledgement that ‘good enough’ was not good enough for me and the decision to seek out opportunities to get better. When my new job required me to teach creative courses, rather than the scholarly modes of learning I was trained for, I sought out workshops from master artists to improve my discipline skills. To improve my teaching, I pursued my first formal training in teaching through the Higher Education Learning and Teaching programme at Victoria’s Centre for Academic Development.

After many years of teaching, it was not easy to confront the suspicion that I might have been doing it all wrong and needed to try new things. But I tell my students to confront their fear of failure all the time so I had to lead by example. Stepping outside my comfort zone and feeling the strong impulse to retreat to safety, reminded me of what it’s like for students when I ask the same of them.

My teaching has changed a great deal over the years but some things have stayed the same: I still love being in the classroom, connecting with students and helping them connect with the material. I still make a lot of mistakes, although now I see them – and encourage my students to see them – as vital steps to learning, not the stigmata of failure. Learning to teach and sharing what I’ve learned with others, has consistently been the most satisfying and rewarding part of my professional life. But – like everything – it is still a work in progress. As I often reassure my students who are terrified of not being perfect, I am less interested in seeing perfection than supporting improvement. As Samuel Beckett put it, “Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better” (Worstward Ho, 1983).
My aim is to fully engage all students with learning opportunities that increase not only their understanding of complexities of contemporary Māori health context, but enable them to formulate and implement strategies in their nursing practice that will improve Māori health outcomes.

My journey to become a nurse academic, educator and facilitator of learning commenced in 1996 during a significant period of change within nursing education. My role was to facilitate the integration of knowledge relating to kawa whakaruruhau/cultural safety, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori health into the Bachelor of Nursing programme at Otago Polytechnic. The introduction of these topics into nursing curricula had become headline news across New Zealand and a Select Committee Enquiry was about to commence. What was I thinking, you may ask? I couldn’t wait to get started. I was convinced that with accurate and relevant
knowledge of these topics nurses could and would make differences to Māori lives.

The foundations of my learning and teaching practice, however, began well before 1996.

My parents Karaka and Marie inspired us to explore and problem solve. As children, we moved easily between the marae, church, schoolyard and our home in a working-class suburb. The marae valued collective learning and individual voices were always heard. Learning in this context taught me respectful tolerance and to appreciate different perspectives. My formal education modelled structure, organisation and academic pursuit. It was in these settings that I became aware how fortunate I was to be able to walk in two worlds: Te Ao Māori and Te Ao Pākehā. It was these formative learning experiences that would provide me with my foundation for becoming a tertiary educator.

Whakaakoranga – Teaching excellence, design for learning, facilitating learning

Giving voice to the learner

The concept of Ako Aotearoa as a collaboration model has been fundamental to my teaching practice. The aim is that all learners can benefit from combined group effort and gain an appreciation of a Māori world view. Giving voice to individual learners in small groups and then gathering an overview of the collective voices reinforces Māori social structure: family/whānau/small group; sub-tribe/hāpu/combined group; and tribe/iwi/course group. The Ako Māori approach also requires each individual to take responsibility for contributing to the wider group knowledge base. I want all students to leave their learning experiences with more extended knowledge than would have been possible if they had worked in isolation.

Creating a culturally safe learning environment

To this day my passion remains the same – to share knowledge in a culturally safe way with all learners. The course content that I facilitate challenges many learners at a very personal level. The majority of learners are non-Māori, with little or no knowledge of the Te Ao Māori or the health inequities that exist within contemporary Māori society.


My teaching is underpinned by Lynda Jeffs’ Emancipatory Teaching Framework, which identifies strategies that transition learners safely to and from their ‘comfort zone’ and ‘challenge zone’.

These strategies enable me to keep students in a safe space while I challenge them with innovative ideas and ultimately reposition their thinking in relation to Māori and matters pertaining to Māori. In keeping with Jeffs’ recommendations, I never keep students hanging but bring them to new and non-judgemental ways of thinking, which are intended to inform and enhance their nursing practice.

Transforming learning

The use of transformative learning scenarios challenges learners who remain resistant to knowledge acquisition regarding Māori society and their health status. Sadly, it is not uncommon to hear comments such as:

Why are we focussing on these people?
… they are only 7 per cent of the population … the treaty was signed 170 years ago … it’s history … we are a multicultural society, we should just get on with it.

Sample of student comments, 2005-2015

Using Jeffs’ framework, I begin the lesson by writing ‘4x youth suicide rates than general population, 5x diabetes rates, 4x sudden unexpected death in infancy rates’ on the whiteboard. While I use these statistics as a visual reference point, I do not identify them as
pertaining to Māori. In small groups, the learners discuss the priority of health care they consider appropriate for the identified populations and offer a rationale to support their response. Small group feedback is then shared with the large group, where we explore more fully the existing knowledge or attitudes within the group. At the end of our discussion, I reveal the statistics are those of contemporary Māori.

The learning that occurs is palpable in many instances and learners reveal a transformation in their thinking. One student who had exhibited closed body language and passive aggressive communication patterns commented at the completion of the activity:

*I’m embarrassed that it took this to open my eyes to what’s been around me all this time…I need to get my act together if I am going to be a registered nurse.*

Student, Māori Health, 2009

Mataki – Assessing student learning, evaluation of learning and teaching

**Empowering the learner**

Developing assessment tools that empower the learner has been a key focus of my developing teaching practice throughout my career. The emancipatory learning philosophy informed my decision to permit learners to locate their own learning focus within a broad framework, e.g. identify one contemporary Māori health priority and discuss the interventions or strategies that are currently being used to address the need. This assessment empowers the learner to 1) identify a health priority that interests them, 2) requires them to research the contemporary health and disability service provision, and 3) creates a sense of unique ownership of their learning. Student feedback is overwhelmingly positive regarding this approach to assessment.

**Learner self-assessment**

The introduction of self-assessment in course assignments is relatively recent and has provided me with some unexpected bonuses. Learners are required to self-assess using the marking rubric and submit this assessment with their final script. The reversal of roles provides the learner with the opportunity to grade their own submission and potentially make improvements prior to submission if they wish. My experience is that around 90 per cent of learners are accurate with their assessment grading. The bonus is that if the grade concurs with mine then commenting is relatively simple. If not, then more detailed comments are required to enlighten the student.

**Finding my own voice**

Active reflection and on-going evaluation are inherent in nursing and therefore it was a natural progression for me to extend these actions when I transitioned to a tertiary setting. Maintaining a professional journal and participating in professional and cultural supervision ensure that I can make connections and explore emotions. This assists me to find ways of improving learner experiences. My past provides me with the tools to shape my future teaching practice.

**Valuing the voice of other teachers and nurses**

Collaboration is another skill I can transfer from my clinical practice to tertiary education. Collaborative teaching sessions provide students with a range of complementary learning experiences and also enable me to listen to the voice of other teachers, both in the classroom and afterwards when we debrief.
Supporting other Māori registered nurses in their professional pathways as novice educators has also been a feature of my journey in education. Peer evaluation ensures that my facilitation of knowledge transfer is effective. I undertake formal annual peer feedback and conduct peer teaching evaluations, a role I reciprocate, especially for kaiako Māori (Māori teachers) seeking a culturally safe peer evaluator.

**Mana – Leadership and professional development/future focus**

The opportunity to contribute to the development of nursing education and professional bodies at a local, regional and national level has been ongoing throughout my teaching career. Such roles have provided me with the opportunity to extend and continue to collaborate on matters relating to all matters Māori, e.g. Māori advisor, Nursing Council of New Zealand; Board member, College of Nurses Aotearoa, and National chairperson, Māori Nurse Educators Tertiary Sector and National Council of Māori Nurses. Such contributions are critical to ensuring that my teaching practice is current and relevant. My current professional development is focussed on exploring future PhD study on the topic of Māori registered nurse experiences of the transition from clinical practice to academic/educator. I have a strong sense of purpose in continuing to ensure that the nursing workforce of the future has the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to contribute positively to the health and well-being of all New Zealanders. Enabling nurses to work in a culturally safe way with the diverse cultural realities and think critically about the wider socio-political context of health in Aotearoa is as appealing to me in 2017 as it was in 1996.

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**Peer & Student Comments**

Mereana’s passion, enthusiasm and knowledge make learning interesting. I enjoyed learning about the history of Māori and their philosophies of health. This course has given me the tools to be a culturally safe nurse.

**Student feedback, Maori Health, 2015**

Mereana consistently placed students at the centre of course design and she incorporates learning and teaching strategies that provide students with multiple opportunities to expand their views on the health needs of Māori consumers.

**Maxine Alterio, Staff developer, Otago Polytechnic, 2005**

Experienced, realistic, humorous and intelligent teaching of topic. Challenging us to look at our own beliefs and assumptions and be willing to learn and change and have an open mind. Dignified in the face of expressed disinterest from some. Her commitment to nursing and improving Māori health is outstanding. One of the best teachers I have ever met.

**Student, Treaty of Waitangi Workshop, 2015**

Her leadership in our school has ensured the integration and ‘normalisation’ of tikanga for staff and students – she is inspirational as a colleague and teacher.

**Colleague feedback, 2017**

She is a kind and caring person who thinks outside the box and is open to diverse ways of thinking. She always goes the extra mile to assist students no matter what the question.

**Student feedback, Maori Health, 2015**

The best aspect of the course was to have class input and discussions and reflect back together as a group. This is a very rare skill and something which she excels in, always ensuring that we all feel safe to express our thoughts.

**Student feedback, Maori Health, 2010**
Amy Raymond
School of Business Studies ■ Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology

My adult learning journey began in 1992 when I took a night class in accounting. Little did I know at the time that one class would be the catalyst that would change my future.

Four years later, I enrolled in a Bachelor of Commerce and began an accounting major at the University of Otago. Eight years after that first semester I became a chartered accountant (CA) but soon discovered that working as a CA wasn’t to be my final destination.

After qualifying, I registered as a mentor with the Institute of Chartered Accountants New Zealand and volunteered as a business mentor for the National Young Enterprise Scheme. I also ran an accounting workshop for disadvantaged Māori youth. These opportunities gave me heart-warming moments and showed me what I enjoyed most – helping others discover the ‘art and science of accounting’.

I approached the Head of the Business School at Bay of Plenty Polytechnic (BoPP) and was hired to teach an evening class. My teaching journey had begun. That was in 2004.

I am now in the privileged position of teaching that first accounting course to as many as 200 students each year.
Let’s face it – accounting has a reputation for being boring, conservative and dull, loaded with jargon, rules and maths. For adult learners, second chance learners and those with mathematics barriers it can be a daunting subject to embark upon in their first semester of study.

My teaching philosophy is about breaking down those barriers and having fun. My goal is to impart knowledge about the ‘language of business’ and increase my students’ financial literacy levels while they learn about the principles of accounting.

As a student-centred teacher, the learning environment I create is flexible, communicative and supportive. This encourages students to take responsibility for their own studies, but also enables students to participate and learn how they learn best, working at their own pace and in their own environment if that is what they choose. I offer support whatever, whenever, wherever – and it is this flexibility that is mana-enhancing and enables students to take control of their own learning.

I also put into practice some helpful tips learnt after attending an Ako Aotearoa course on Success for Maori in Tertiary Education, by focussing on forming relationships, acknowledging different cultures and engaging with each and every student when the course begins. I have learnt to help everyone feel at ease, make friends and find their way in the tertiary environment – setting the scene for learning to take place.

One of the ways I break down barriers is by using ‘pop culture’ – which can be unexpected in an accounting course – but it generates interest and student engagement. For example, I have used Kim Dotcom’s mansion raid and the subsequent liquidation of his company as a case study when considering a company business structure. Despite being protected by limited liability, Dotcom pledged to repay the $1.3 million he owed to creditors. Another example used is that of Chris Daughtry of American Idol fame. Prior to being part of American Idol, Chris was in a band called Absent Element and he has been accused by his ex-band members of using four of their songs on his new solo album and reaping the royalties. He is being sued for breaching a partnership agreement.

I also like to use an article about Duff McKagan of Guns ‘n’ Roses fame, who didn’t understand the business side of his royalties and earnings, so he studied accounting while recovering from a burst pancreas (as a result of alcohol abuse). He has now become an advisor to other rockers – educating them about their business affairs.

Searching the Companies Office website for Richie McCaw as a shareholder is always a student favourite, and reveals what companies he owns and business sectors he is investing in. It also uncovers other All Blacks investing in the same entities (retirement villages) such as Dan Carter and Kieran Read.

From an entrepreneurial perspective, I like to use New Zealand success stories such as
TradeMe, 42 Below and the up-and-coming My Food Bag (to name a few) as examples of New Zealand companies earning their creators millions of tax-free wealth.

When it comes to the more practical accounting learning outcomes, I have created a series of integrated practical exercises using a scaffold approach. The scaffold allows students to ‘look through’ the complexity, visualising the end results – instead of trying to construct solutions to problems on blank pages. I also overcome barriers to learning accounting by breaking the process down into a series of steps.

To support independent and diverse student learning, I have learnt to create MP4 videos – short summary lectures (10-12 minutes) that students can download from our online platform and view on their phones. The video content shows me working through an exercise or giving an overview of a topic (using internet resources) with voice-over explaining the task. They have been so popular I have students asking for more videos on every topic.

Through the use of constructive alignment and formative assessment, my students are able to gain confidence as we move through the course, self-regulate their own learning process and achieve desired results. I provide model answers and marking schedules giving valuable feedback for students to self-assess their progress. This level of transparency with first-semester students also provides a calming influence, as I have recognised that many of our students are learning how to learn.

Prompt feedback to students (following summative assessment) is essential and it is my personal policy to give results within one to two days of an assessment – this keeps students excited, motivated and encourages some healthy competition.

As I progress on my teaching journey I have learnt that teaching is so much more than just standing in front of a class and knowing the subject. With a sound course framework and best practice in mind, respecting the differences of students, delivering in an engaging and fun way, and assessing appropriately, my teaching methodology encourages and enables student success.

Students who once feared accounting or thought it was boring become transformed and inspired! Many even plan on taking accountancy study further.

As I reflect and learn more about my teaching philosophy and pedagogy, as I further my academic career with study in both my subject area and the area of teaching, and as I reflect on student behaviour and outcomes, my teaching style becomes more effective. I seek verbal feedback from students over and above the formal course evaluations – asking what resources could be added to improve their experience, or if alternative exercises might add more value. I am always trying to improve and discover more modern and innovative ways to deliver the content.

I value my professional qualifications, having worked extremely hard to achieve them. Maintaining an on-going commitment to learning, both within the accounting and teaching disciplines, has enriched and strengthened my subject and teaching knowledge. Since my teaching journey began, I have become a life-long learner and, for me, teaching is articulating my knowledge to aid others.

It is also through the professional development process that I have met and been supported by some wonderful colleagues who share the common goal of improving teaching practice.

My journey has taken me from unskilled school leaver to accountant to tertiary teacher, and my journey as a teacher has developed from being a nervous accountant to a confident teacher.

Receiving this award enables me to continue on this path and move forward in my teaching career with confidence. I look forward to the next stage of integrating research into my career. Firstly though, I will be updating my equipment suite, ready to take on the challenges ahead.
Excellent teacher. Very evident that Amy loves her job. Always interacts with students in discussion/debate about current issues related to the paper. Fantastic effort – ensures all are included.

**Student evaluation, 601 Financial Accounting, 2007**

Her way with using resources helped me learn. Relates principles to reality. Breaks down the skills into core parts. Makes subject matter clear and breaks content down making it much easier to learn.

**Student evaluations, 500 Accounting Principles, 2013-2016**

Didn’t think I would enjoy this subject but it has become one of my favourite classes. Love the way you teach, Amy, hope to be in more of your classes. You are amazing. Love your teaching, interesting classes.

**500 Accounting Principles, End of semester, Post-it note, student evaluations, 2016**

Amy is a great teacher. She is passionate about accounting and the success of her students. She creates innovative learning activities, continuously adjusts and improves her teaching resources and cares passionately for her students’ well-being and success. Her teaching evaluations state how “approachable,” “caring” and “focused” she is for accounting and teaching and how “interesting and inspiring” her classes are. The ratings from her teaching evaluations are extremely high and I once commented in a year-end performance review that she sets the standard for teaching quality in the School of Business. Amy genuinely cares for her students’ success and well-being. This practice speaks volumes about her dedication to her students and her drive to ensure every student knows that they are important to her.

A student’s comment on Amy’s most recent teaching evaluation perfectly captures her teaching quality. The student wrote, “She is so helpful” and “Everything is explained very clearly”.

**Peter Richardson, Group leader, School of Business Studies, Toi Ohomai, 2016**

Clearly a standout feature of Amy’s teaching approach is the quantity and quality of pastoral care she offers her learners. Earlier this year I was at work one Saturday morning and Amy arrived. It was the start of a long weekend. She was meeting a struggling student. She patiently helped the student for over an hour and when I later discussed this with Amy, I discovered the student wasn’t actually in her class. Instead the student was in a colleague’s night class.

**James Paterson, NZ DipBus colleague, Toi Ohomai, 2016**

As a student-centred teacher, Amy wants the best for her learners, she sets high expectations and believes all have the potential to succeed and share her passion for accounting. She operates an open-door policy and openly assists her learners with scholarship testimonials and financial hardship endorsements. Amy enlist[s support from many areas, including Ako Awhina study sessions and industry guest speakers. She has reduced barriers and as a result students are empowered and motivated to do well.

**Melanie Katu, Learner facilitator, Toi Ohomai, 2015**
For almost three decades, I have devoted myself to spreading my love and passion for language learning and teaching, especially teaching Japanese language and culture at the University of Otago for 14 years. As a former English teacher in Japanese universities and a learner of English myself, I can easily relate to my students and understand their perspectives, challenges and interests. Language learning is challenging for anyone, but it can also be extremely enjoyable if teachers share their joy of it with genuine passion, love, patience and empathy. I am fully committed to helping all my students to learn how to learn and to encourage them to keep believing in their talent and potential.

Design for learning and facilitating learning
My core papers are JAPA131 and JAPA132 (Introductory Japanese), but I have coordinated all the language courses available in the Japanese programme including postgraduate courses and summer school. I teach a broad range of students from diverse international backgrounds and groups. JAPA131 is designed for absolute beginners, but many (one third) already have some former knowledge while about two thirds of them are ‘true beginners’. It is a course of 60 students with a wide range of linguistic abilities and career objectives, requiring lots of innovative planning and different pedagogical approaches to make
it work for everyone. As every single student matters equally to me, I put great emphasis on meeting individual needs by making sure that my curriculum is thoroughly prepared and at the same time flexible enough to accommodate unexpected classroom situations.

In addition to our textbooks used in class, I create a variety of original materials such as interactive games and audio visual activities. Every year I spend a decent amount of time redesigning my curriculum, keeping materials up-to-date and doing research on contemporary teaching methodologies. I also collect extra materials in the form of informative props such as genuine Japanese restaurant menus from Japan or photos of interesting signs and vending machines from Japan, and posters about the appropriate manners to use in Japanese subways, which are highly appreciated additions to my courses. Having a little ‘culture course’ combined interestingly with a language course also seems to be a pleasant surprise for many students. I am truly grateful for my students’ appreciation of my commitment to sustained innovation and it is rewarding to hear that the culture videos I show in class have been stimulating their interest in the subject and helping them to understand what it is like to live in Japan.

Making mistakes is an essential part of language learning, so I create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere where everyone can express themselves freely and nobody is afraid of making mistakes. If students are not confident in their pronunciation, I share some ‘funny’ pronunciation mistakes when Japanese speakers learn English and make students burst into laughter. For example, Japanese doesn’t have ‘L’ and ‘V’ sounds, so ‘I love you’ can sound like ‘I rub you’. I introduce these mistakes to show my students that it is okay not to be perfect and that people can understand what we really mean within the context. I share with them that I also had to overcome these challenges by practising speaking English continuously. I attempt to relax my students and allow them to feel comfortable with making mistakes by demonstrating that I made the same errors in the process of learning and progressing in languages. As the semester advances, they are increasingly persuaded how important it is to learn from both their own and other people’s mistakes.

When I explain the key concepts in class, I always make sure to share interesting personal anecdotes with them to illustrate examples. I try my best to provide them with lots of extra information to give a deeper understanding of what is going on and to make everything (including so called ‘boring bits’!) fun to learn, especially while explaining grammar points in my lectures.

**Assessing student learning, evaluating learning and teaching**

I make my assessments an enjoyable and creative process that involves student choice, for example oral presentations in Japanese about a topic of choice such as ‘A robot I want to invent’ or ‘My university’. One student told me that the JAPA233 (Intermediate) presentation task was exciting and gave them a sense of achievement. Another student said that the assessment was helpful and inspiring because in other courses they would normally just read articles about the topic and work on their presentations individually, but they had to work with their partners and produce something original with their imagination and creativity in this course. They were all impressed by each other’s remarkable ideas and appreciated an opportunity to express themselves in another language as well as exploring different ways of learning and improving Japanese.

At the beginning of each semester I gather students’ requests and before the mid-semester
break begins I take an informal survey and ask them to write down what has been useful and what needs to be worked on. This enables me to identify and make adjustments at an early stage. During the semester break, I analyse all the feedback given and go through a process of self-observation and evaluation. Also, I take notes about anything I noticed in class and if someone has been absent several times or someone has not been doing as well as before, I communicate with them personally and remind them that they can ask for help any time. I believe that communication and collaboration among teachers and students are vital to creating effective courses together.

Although I continually try my best to increase my knowledge about Japanese language and culture, I do not claim to know everything in front of my students. If my students ask me questions I do not know the answers to, I tell them frankly that I do not know but I will thoroughly do research on it and explain it properly in the next class. I also ask them to investigate the matter so that we can have a discussion to find the solution together. This reminds them that they are equally part of the course and teaching and learning is a reciprocal activity – we learn together and we learn from each other.

**Leadership and professional development**

My long-term leadership in teaching was being recognised and appreciated by the wider community from 2010 when I started being awarded Otago University Student Association Teaching Awards. In many situations friends or parents of my students or lecturers talk to me and tell me how much I have influenced students and how they benefited from my teaching.

As much as I enjoy interacting with my students in class, I also cherish time with them outside the classroom. Almost fortnightly since 2009 I have been actively involved in cultural events such as calligraphy, tea ceremonies and ‘chat time’ conversation classes with my students.

Many students join these events where they meet Japanese exchange students and practise speaking Japanese. I am determined to continue to give my students as many opportunities to speak Japanese as possible, both inside and outside the classroom, to have them experience a feeling of them being in Japan while in Dunedin.

I take great pleasure in organising our Hanami Cherry Blossom Viewing Party in front of the Registry Building. Seven years ago it started off as a casual get together with my students after class to simply appreciate the beauty of the magnificent cherry blossom trees, then by word-of-mouth among my students and their Japanese friends more and more people were encouraged to join the party. Since I started receiving inquiries about the event from the wider community, I decided to include additional cultural themes such as taiko drummers, karate masters and koto harp players, and now the party resembles a small version of Japan Culture Day in which around 200 students and staff participate annually.

**Future plans**

Language learning opened up a whole new world for me and now I feel it is my turn to share this experience with others. I want my students to be not only fluent in Japanese but also to be open-minded, free-spirited and compassionate. Their ‘formal’ study might have ended when they left Otago but I sincerely hope what we learned and shared together will continue to play a part in our lives long into the future. I will continue my journey in teaching and seek to share the joy of language learning with all my students for another three decades!

It is a tremendous honour to be a recipient of this award and I plan to use the grant for professional development and further learning opportunities. I wish to thank Ako Aotearoa for this award and my students, colleagues and family for their love and support.
I honestly cannot think of anything I could suggest to improve her already outstanding performance! As a language teacher myself, I felt I learnt a lot from her!

HOD, Associate Professor Paola Voci, Peer review report, 2011

Words cannot describe how much I have loved being in your class! In all my five years of university I have never enjoyed coming to a class as much as I have with JAPA131. You have sparked a real interest in the Japanese language for me and because of you I have managed to find a degree that suits me and my interests and I cannot wait to embark on international business with the Japanese language.

Student feedback, Summer school JAPA131, 2017

As university chaplain, I was privileged to assist Haruko with some charity and moment of silence events for the Tohoku earthquake. I discovered that she has a deep compassion for others who are suffering. I have known her, and valued her many contributions to our community for more than 10 years. Her ongoing leadership of community events is admirable and she is highly respected by staff and students in our university and wider Dunedin communities. Also, my own daughter was blessed through being taught by Haruko many years ago. She still values highly the experience of having Haruko as her Japanese teacher.

Chaplain Greg, Otago University 2017

The amount of praise I have for Haruko as a teacher is far greater than what I can effectively put into words here. In all of my time studying at three different universities throughout the world, Haruko is without question the best teacher I have ever had the pleasure of learning from. Her passion and enthusiasm for teaching is unprecedented, and her ability to communicate concepts and ideas in an easy to understand manner exemplary.

Haruko explains the Japanese language clearly and will not move on until each and every student has developed a solid understanding. She teaches in such a way that students do not realise they are learning; removing the focus from tests and placing it on personal gain and development as individuals acquiring a second language. She is thoughtful of students' individual needs as learners, and works towards achieving their personal goals as well as the outlined goals of the course.

Haruko is a passionate, dedicated and inspiring teacher who strives to make her classes an enjoyable, stress-free and interactive place in which students can not only learn, but also meet new people and make new life-long friends. I personally owe a lot of my close friendships to her classes and Japanese events outside of class time, and will forever be grateful to Haruko for that.

Blake, Ex-student/PhD student in Kyoto University, 2016

Haruko had a huge impact on my time in Otago both as a teacher and as a friend. Haruko motivated and encouraged me to try working in Japan after university... and I have lived in Tokyo since 2003. I have a Japanese wife and a beautiful boy, not to mention having used my language skills to carve out a career in the local IT sector. I might never have done this if I hadn't completed the Japanese programme at Otago, so thank you, sensei, for encouraging and challenging me!

Nick, Ex-student/working in Japan, 2017

I have incorporated several of her outstanding teaching methodologies into my own teachings. Haruko is an international expert of Japanese language pedagogy.

Megan, Colleague between 2009 and 2012
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The recipients of this year’s awards outline aspects of their teaching practice and describe what is important to them when working with their learners.