

## ALTC Citation Winners

Summary of ALTC citation winners from the Philosophy discipline.  
ALTC Citation Winners for Outstanding Contribution to student learning

- [Jennifer Duke-Yonge](#)
- [Graham McLean](#)
- [Jane Mummery](#)
- [Rick Benitez](#)
- [Mitch Parsell](#)
- [Catriona McKenzie, Cynthia Townley and Mianna Lotz](#)

### **Jennifer Duke-Yonge, Macquarie University (2009)**

**Citation:** For a commitment to fostering Communities of Enquiry across diverse learning contexts, through the development, implementation and promotion of reflective, research-based student engagement strategies.

#### Summary

Dr Duke-Yonge focusses on providing all students, irrespective of their learning environment, with a sense of community, and a sense of their own individual role in their learning and the learning of their peers. Her teaching philosophy is guided by the belief that learning is best facilitated through students' engagement in a Community of Enquiry, in which they are able to work together as active members of a community with a common focus and goal.

The Community of Enquiry (CoE) model of learning and teaching, originally developed by Matthew Lipman, promotes the development of a learning environment in which the students are encouraged to control the direction of their learning, by engaging in a self-correcting, dialogue-based process of enquiry. By empowering students to be active learners, the CoE model allows students to develop both a deep commitment to the subject matter of their discipline and a commitment to learning itself.

### **Dr Graeme McLean, Charles Sturt University (2009)**

**Citation:** For sustained excellence in teaching of philosophy to a variety of students in a variety of modes.

#### Summary

Dr McLean provided mainstream philosophy courses and service courses for students pursuing professional degrees at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, from 1990 to 2004, and since then at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga. At CSU he has developed methods to enable distance students to engage in the interaction essential to good philosophy teaching. His teaching has consistently been rated as outstanding for the ways in which it influences, motivates and inspires students to learn.

### **Dr Jane Mummery, University of Ballarat (2009)**

**Citation:** For the development and delivery of a vibrant philosophy program which engages students, facilitates their development as critical thinkers and inspires further study in philosophy.

### Summary

Dr Mummery recognises the importance of the inclusion of philosophy offerings within a general Humanities and Social Sciences Bachelor of Arts. Her contribution has been to develop a vibrant undergraduate philosophy program which attracts and engages students (180 students were enrolled in philosophy units in 2008, in 2003 the number was 70), and is recognised by students and other staff both within and outside the School of Behavioural, Social Sciences & Humanities as facilitating students' development as critical thinkers. She has also been successful in inspiring students to further study in philosophy, overseeing the development of a small but thriving cohort of students completing Honours and Doctoral degrees in philosophy. To further support and maintain this program – in particular, to promote students' perception of themselves as philosophy students and to further engage them in the practices of being a philosophy student – she has facilitated the development of a philosophical community through the introduction of a range of extra-curricular activities including skills development workshops with High School and undergraduate students in reading and writing philosophy, an online philosophy forum, lunchtime film and/or documentary screenings and facilitated discussion, annual socials for philosophy students, and an annual Philosophy Symposium. These measures have all been highly successful and have led to a dramatic change in student and staff perceptions of philosophy.

### **Associate Professor Rick Benitez, The University of Sydney (2008)**

Citation: For modelling philosophical processes and teaching practices in and beyond the classroom, leading to positive transformations in learners' experience of their subject and themselves.

### Summary

Associate Professor Benitez believes active participation in dialogue—*thinking the questions and thinking the answers*—is the best way for learners to make lasting intellectual progress. For this reason he devises creative ways for them to be active and engaged participants, whether in lectures, tutorials, web-based learning or assessment activities. Teaching through dialogue also helps him to be more effective, because it allows him to see what learners need to know, what they easily grasp, what they are having difficulties with, and what inspires them. Remaining sensitive and listening actively explains why he has been so effective and so much in demand as a teacher. Associate Professor Benitez provides students with the resources necessary to develop proficiency at *independent thinking*. They should learn to consider what answers they would give to philosophical questions rather than just what answers have been given in the literature, or what the current line of a particular group of philosophers is. If the class concerns the history of philosophy, he expects students to approach matters without prejudice in favour of our own place in history and without presupposing that an adequate scholarship already exists. This expectation develops an attitude to discovery that goes beyond professional training, and respects the fact that teachers and learners are also philosophers.

### **Dr Mitch Parsell, Macquarie University (2008)**

Citation: For outstanding promotion of student engagement by engendering a commitment to community and ownership of assessment tasks and associated epistemic artefacts.

### Summary

Dr Parsell strives to demonstrate that philosophy is not what is written in books, but a dynamic living tradition that depends on community. He empowers his students to develop communities to drive their own enquiry and knowledge construction. By spreading responsibility for learning among the community the knowledge gained is *owned* by the students. This ownership not only engenders fuller engagement with unit content, but also fosters a commitment to the process of inquiry by which knowledge is generated. This in turn promotes a self-conscious expansion of the range of thinking strategies employed within the community resulting in a concern for meta-cognition that dramatically improves generic skills.

### **A/PROF CATRIONA MACKENZIE, DR. MIANNA LOTZ, DR. CYNTHIA TOWNLEY, MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY (2008)**

Citation: For excellence in the development of a cross-disciplinary, research-based ethics program and for inspiring student interest in ethics throughout all levels of the curriculum.

### Summary

The ethics program in the Philosophy Department at Macquarie is delivered by a team comprising A/Prof Catriona Mackenzie, Dr. Mianna Lotz and Dr. Cynthia Townley. The program provides a coherent, sequenced grounding in philosophical ethics consisting of 9 undergraduate units spanning all levels and a wide range of ethics sub-fields, both theoretical and practical/applied. 4 units are also delivered through Open Universities Australia (OUA). The program includes research-based honours seminars, honours supervision (20+ theses supervised) and higher degree research supervision (7 completed PhDs/MPhils, 6 current PhDs, including 2 cross-disciplinary PhDs). The current program is the result of initiatives and curriculum developments extending over 15 years, beginning with the sequenced introduction of 4 upper level ethics units during the 1990's and expanding since 2003 into cross-disciplinary ethics initiatives.

Both the program and unit curricula are designed to engage student interest in ethics, to familiarise students with the rich conceptual resources within the history of ethics as well as the latest developments in the field, and to combine theoretical rigour with a practical focus. The team ensures that each unit is structured to enable students to make conceptual connections between topics, to gradually build mastery of relevant concepts and arguments, and to develop conceptual maps of debates within the literature.

The team work as a collegial unit, both when a course is delivered collaboratively and in sole-instructor units. This team-based approach readily facilitates and enhances ongoing reflection about teaching practice. The team undertake extensive discussions about the program and about content and approach in individual units, collaboratively reviewing syllabus development and assessment design, and continually sharing ideas about responses to student feedback and classroom techniques. All aspects of the ethics program and student experience of it are enhanced by this team-based approach.