

2010 SESSIONAL AWARD RECIPIENT, JCU FSE

JCU Sessional Teachers participate in a range of teaching roles and thus are oftentimes at the very forefront of student engagement, hence their ability to influence student learning in powerful ways. Sessionals contribute meaningfully to the learning and teaching community and their genuine interest in facilitating student learning promotes high quality student learning experiences as is evident in SFS.

The casual teaching experience encompasses but is not limited to preparing for and presenting tutorials and/or workshops; lectures; mentoring and group facilitation; designing teaching materials; external/online teaching and marking. In 2010, JCU peers and colleagues nominated Mr John Daicopoulos for the JCU FSE Sessional Award that recognizes outstanding contributions to Student Learning.

TLD's Best Practice Project brings you:

AWARD WINNING ATTRIBUTES OF SESSIONAL **JOHN DAICOPOULOS**

IN THIS ACCOUNT, THE FIRST TIME SESSIONAL AWARD RECIPIENT REFLECTS ON THE CASUAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGED FOR HIS POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TO STUDENT LEARNING.



Everybody wants to be recognized by their peers, but those who nominated me teach subjects that follow on from the subjects I teach, and their nomination speaks volumes. Knowing my peers are prepared to accept the skill level of my students is a great confidence boost, especially in a subject like PH1005 when it is the main and largest physics and engineering subject available at JCU.

In a small way this award has made me even more cognizant of the comments on my teaching evaluations. My teaching style of today is built up from every previous year in this great profession. At the end of each semester and after every lab, I check my notes for what worked and what did not work then I re-write lesson plans, lab guides and tutorial questions as necessary. Getting this award is yet another standard upon which to evaluate my teaching techniques.

'Passionate, patient and structured are words I would use to describe my teaching style'.

John Daicopoulos, Discipline of Physics

I have been a sessional teacher with JCU since 2008. My career in teaching Physics began in 1990. Fourteen years later my family and I moved to Australia where I continued teaching Physics in Victoria. After a short writing stint, as the Editor for the Australian Physics Journal, I moved to Townsville and ultimately joined the Physics team at JCU.

There is a perception that Physics is a content driven subject. My passion is to show that Physics is a far more skills-based discipline, and with skill it can be learned best through exercise and application. In my lectures and tutorials I emphasize how particular problem-solving techniques demonstrate that seemingly different problems are inherently similar. In my labs it's all about the many ways to analyze data for the purpose of making a claim that needs to stand up to scrutiny. Content is crucial, but stressing skills at every level of the process makes teaching physics a value-added undertaking.

Since you ask in what way can I be supported more to sustain or improve my teaching: I believe that one of the strengths of teachers like me is our long-term outlook on student progress. This level of obligation implies that the planning of teaching strategies, subject content and lab skills also parallels that long-term view; it would be great if JCU could support my success by matching that commitment.

[RESEARCH INTERESTS](#)