

*For the right prescription
blending high fidelity
simulation into a
curriculum
for counter prescribing and
communication curriculum
to improve the industry
readiness of pharmacy
graduates*

ALTC CITATION

**AWARD
WINNER**

MR JOHN SMITHSON, LECTURER
FACULTY OF MEDICINE, HEALTH AND MOLECULAR SCIENCE

What does being acknowledged by JCU and your peers for influencing students' learning through your teaching practice mean to you on a professional level, and on a personal level?

Teaching and research is our core business at university and at a global level I think the university prospers through good quality teaching and world standard research, and when the university prospers, I think as a collective, we all do. It's pleasing to know my efforts and ideas are recognised beyond my immediate field. I have been lucky to have the support of my colleagues but it is even more affirming to see that recognition spread beyond the borders of our faculty and even the University. I think this level of recognition is not only good for my own personal profile within the University but also the profile of teaching and learning generally, and I think that's really significant given the important place teaching and learning has in this institution.

In what way has student feedback regarding the way in which students experience your teaching style, informed your teaching practice?

To be honest I have mixed feelings about the quality and usefulness of SFS and SFT. I have found focus groups and the unsolicited feedback from students vitally important. This type of feedback has given me some very high quality data on what students are experiencing, what works, what they would like to see changed, and my strengths and weaknesses. And I think if you have a solid relationship

with students based on professionalism, trust and mutual respect, one does not need anonymous surveys to get honest and impartial feedback from them.

You have a rich teaching career and valuable experiences that have shaped your teaching style, but what drives you to teach well?

It's fairly simple, I learn a lot when I teach and I have a lot of fun, and I think teaching well is a lot easier than teaching badly. Get it wrong, and students lose interest, they lose focus and never gain the skill that you have set out to teach them. Like most, I've had my failures, but those failures have highlighted to me the cost of poor teaching in terms of student outcomes and personal satisfaction. I think sometimes teaching badly has a greater negative impact than doing nothing at all.

What are some of your current research interests?

Simulation is clearly here to stay with us, at least in the health education field and for the next 5 to 7 years. Training students to work in a professional health environment is expensive in both time and resources and is not without risk. I see simulation as a natural bridge between theory and competent practice, and it can easily be constructed in a way to support students' personal growth and ultimately improve the quality and safety of the services ultimately provided to patients.



Mr John Smithson - 2011 ALTC Citation Award Winner