Belinda Fabian

Belinda Fabian advocates for the integration of non-traditional forms of learning to teach her students the skills they need to be successful scientists. To demonstrate the importance of building a digital presence and presenting a professional industry profile, she also curates the Biology Capstone Twitter account and believes that even though many of our future scientists are now social media savvy, students would benefit from learning more about how to professionally engage with and use these platforms.

“I’m passionate about preparing students for the workforce. Carrying out team-based research projects is vital for scientists, so I have co-developed a mini research project for second-year undergraduates to conduct their own research and also further develop their teamwork skills.”

Dr Bruno Alves Buzatto

Winner
Vice-Chancellor’s Learning and Teaching Student Nominated Award

Dr Bruno Alves Buzatto is passionate about biology and evolution, and believes that his passion, together with his enthusiasm and love of teaching, makes a real difference to students’ learning. He encourages critical thinking in his students, for example, by exploring their misconceptions about evolution and challenging their ideas, which often leaves them cognitively uncomfortable but equally curious and engaged.

“Nature is fascinating, and being continuously in awe of biology helps me inspire students to learn it because enthusiasm is contagious. I also stimulate my students’ critical thinking by treating them as equals in discussions – I challenge them to question what they think they know about evolution.”

“Bruno’s enthusiasm for teaching is extraordinary. His courses engage all styles of learning – this layered way of teaching made every lecture brilliant and personally gave me more of a reason to study.”

– 2019 Macquarie Student
Dr Christopher Lustri

Highly commended
Vice-Chancellor’s Learning and Teaching Early Career Award

Dr Christopher Lustri demonstrates a wider context of mathematics by bringing examples of real research and industry trends into the classroom. This provides students with practical tools and experiences that will set them up for career success. He inspires his students to see maths as more than just numbers, but rather as a way to understand more about the world we live in.

“The idea is that students can start to see maths not just as equations that have to be solved for marks, but instead as a language they can use to understand the parts of the world that they’re passionate about – biology, sociology, physics, engineering or any other topic that captures their interest.”

Charanya Ramakrishnan

Highly commended
Vice-Chancellor’s Learning and Teaching Sessional Staff Award

Charanya Ramakrishnan creates an immersive learning environment using a ‘chalk and talk’ approach, where students are not distracted by technology and are empowered to learn through writing. She also uses the ‘PIP’ technique in providing feedback: praising students for their efforts, providing feedback on areas of improvement and praising them again for positive reinforcement.

“My passion for teaching replicates itself as enthusiasm. The lectures are fun with witty references to trending topics, which I relate to the concept that I teach. This helps students to make logical connections and understand complex concepts easily.”

“She is a very dedicated and gifted lecturer whose approach to lecturing is like no other lecturing skill/style I have ever experienced. Her synthesised lecturing material and answering each question thoroughly while providing handouts to follow along and engage is something I am so grateful to her for. As a result I have been able to excel in my learning, which has been translated into my outcomes and self-knowledge. She is a true asset to the uni and students!”

– 2019 Macquarie Student
Educators of Impact

FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

Edward Moore

Edward Moore sees the potential in all of his students and empowers them to harness it. He motivates his students by setting high, yet realistic expectations and believes that as students strive to meet these expectations they will often surprise themselves by what they can achieve. He also believes that providing context for students as they learn will help them to connect the taught content to their prior knowledge, enabling them to better comprehend the connections between different concepts.

“I often facilitate peer learning and have done this largely through participatory activities with students. I have seen a large uptake in engagement which encourages other students to join in on class activities and also support each other throughout the courses.”

“Ed has always gone out of his way to help his students excel with their studies. He has proven to be an enthusiastic and encouraging mentor. I have always enjoyed his units and quite often hear of students switching to his classes (as I always have). Ed Moore has always been there when I have struggled with my studies, computing can often be overwhelming for students struggling with programming; however, Ed has always taken the time to help me overcome these adversities.”

– 2019 Macquarie Student

Dr Gaurav Gupta

Dr Gaurav Gupta believes that every student learns at their own pace and in their own way, so his teaching style underlines the value of persistence over natural capability. He’s seen how easy it is for students to get discouraged because some subjects are easier for others, so he actively helps his students build the valuable skills of persistence, patience and resilience.

“My advice for students is to run their own race. To this end, my assessments are designed in an incremental manner, where solving one stage gives you clues about the next one. This means students who do it diligently have a higher chance of success than the ones who jump straight to the end game.”

“Gaurav puts in more work than any other lecturer I’ve had. He provides a lot of really good resources that make the course material much easier to grasp. He also runs optional workshops multiple times a week where students can ask questions. He’s humorous and relatable, which makes it easy for students to connect and engage with him.”

– 2019 Macquarie Student
Joyce El-Haddad

Joyce El-Haddad strives to personalise every class by getting to know who her learners are and how they learn best as individuals, nurturing in them an innate love for learning and discovery. She achieves this by integrating different modes of technology, drawings, analogies and discussion, and connecting her unit content to real-world scenarios.

“I have observed that students pave the way for themselves to become lifelong learners when they feel encouraged and see me connecting the content in the classroom to real-life contexts. I feel that this approach encourages an atmosphere where the quintessential values of passion and compassion are conveyed within the classroom, but also echo into environments beyond the classroom.”

“...She puts in a lot of effort to make sure that you have understood the content. Her method of teaching is very effective. She has an engaging personality and teaching style. The pure excitement and joy she brings to everyone in the class. Her teaching style makes the class so enjoyable whilst learning a lot of clear information. You can tell the level of expertise she has but can also simplify it to first-year students like me.”

– 2019 Macquarie Student

Dr Katherine McClellan

Dr Katherine McClellan cultivates a sense of belonging for her students by using icebreakers to foster openness, learning and cohort cohesion. She embeds quizzes, reflection points and discussions into the learning environment to help students check their own understanding of material along the way and build their confidence as active learners.

“I design interesting assignments that draw on creativity and a range of skills, which gives students a choice in how they tackle the topic and the freedom to produce something unique. For example, I ask students to investigate a topic of interest, develop and use their networking skills to interview an expert in the topic, and then present their research as a popular science podcast.”
Educators of Impact
FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

Associate Professor Kira Westaway, Michael Rampe and Matthew Cabanag

Team winners
Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Learning Innovation
(Team nomination)

Associate Professor Kira Westaway, a lecturer with a passion for caves, sediments, fossils and discovery; Michael Rampe, a senior designer, a technologist and founder of the Pedestal 3D platform; and Matthew Cabanag, a VR guru and portable VR rig builder, have worked together to create REIM – Reality Embedded in Motion – a discipline-connecting, imagination-capturing tool that’s taking the Macquarie campus by storm.

“REIM was born out of a desire to provide students with an authentic learning environment that would take them to places we could never normally go and to push the virtual reality revolution into education. Together, we’re shaping the future of immersive technologies at Macquarie.”

– Associate Professor Kira Westaway

Dr Matthew Bulbert
Highly commended
Vice-Chancellor’s Educational Leader Award

Dr Matthew Bulbert is driven to empower his students with the skills and desire to become lifelong learners, capable of making meaningful and self-fulfilling contributions to society. In his quest, he’s applied a sustained, strategic and integrated approach to delivering on employability goals, and has initiated and designed pre-university programs; discipline-focused postgraduate PD opportunities; and award-winning undergraduate curricula, including the widely impactful and novel biology capstone.

“I focus on three key elements: the delivery of embedded skills streams applied within immersive workplace-relevant scenarios, mobilising and facilitating interdisciplinary university and industry teams to tackle employability challenges, and engaging students in transformative practice through the use of a broad breadth of creative and entrepreneurial elements.”
Dr Matthew Kosnik
For Dr Matthew Kosnik, motivation begins with respect and clarity. He treats students as colleagues in the learning process, giving them as much control over their own learning journey as possible.

“I try to get them to make the unit activities as applicable to where they see themselves in the future as they can, so that they can use the activities to discover what they like and what they are good at.”

Dr Matthew Bulbert, Associate Professor Martin Whiting, Fiona Jones and Serene Lin-Stephens

🌟 Highly commended
Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Teaching Excellence (Team nomination)

Within the biology capstone, the team created a think tank scenario in which students are professional consultants of BioCap Corporation working on ‘commissioned’ projects and self-initiated discovery projects based on their interests. Students learn in a dynamic, problem-based way. They attend professional development workshops to gain the skills required to complete work, including science communication to generate public support and research and development funding. The students also advocate for the STEM profession in the STEM Careers Forum through networking with other professionals and peers.

“The capstone unit motivates students by creating an industry-immersed learning environment inspired by skills for the future, and informed by career research and industry inputs.”

– Dr Matthew Bulbert
Matthew Mansour gets to know each student by name and makes sure they feel included in lectures, so they feel comfortable to participate in class. He also believes all students respond positively to real-life examples in lectures that explain how things really work and makes sure he regularly uses his own experiences to bring alive concepts and ideas for his students.

“Students are considerably more engaged when they aren’t anonymous – getting to know the student’s name in a large cohort helps break barriers of not feeling included in the lecture. I also embed my personal experiences and war stories into all lectures, so students can better relate the content to their end-goal.”

“Matt’s teaching style and engagement is amazing. His way of making us understand some complicated situations and connection to make it relevant to us it so great. Matt always keeps us engaged in lectures and finds interesting ways to teach us the concepts of our unit. He also tells us fascinating stories and anecdotes which engage us and keep us interested in his lectures.”

– 2019 Macquarie Student

Dr Maurizio Manuguerra takes the time to recognise the uniqueness that exists in each of his students. He adapts his teaching and learning style to better meet students' specific needs – their academic goals, interests, study preferences and knowledge gaps. This approach has inspired a positive attitude in his students towards statistics. He believes that students are motivated to succeed by different things, so he works hard to create the right atmosphere for each student to engage effectively with the unit content.

“For many students, going through real problems and seeing the relevance of statistics in their studies and in their lives is enough to get interested. Others become intrigued, and we show them the beauty of the discipline. In my experience this is enough, and most get interested and succeed.”
Distinguished Professor Michael Gillings

Distinguished Professor Michael Gillings uses examples drawn from art, music, literature or popular culture to spark a sense of familiarity and ownership with his students. To expand on concepts, he also uses current events and scientific papers that also help to illustrate specific topics. He believes that reminding students how much they have learned throughout their studies builds confidence and instils a sense of competence and achievement.

“My aim is to pique the curiosity of students, to generate an optimism and passion for learning. To make content directly relevant, I use familiar examples from real life. This shows how the knowledge students have acquired helps in making informed decisions.”

“Most hilarious and intellectual lecturer I have ever had in my university life. Is clearly passionate about investing in the next generation. Models strong, rational lines of thought during lectures to support his own views, but encourages development of student’s own critical thought patterns. Gives students great insight into complex topics such as climate change and the impact of human behaviour on ecosystems.”

– 2019 Macquarie Student

Dr Phani Rekha Potluri

By incorporating a variety of current research interests and topical stories occurring in the world today within her learning environment, Dr Phani Rekha Potluri hopes to inspire students to become excited about science and the impact science can have in today’s world. She hopes her teaching inspires students to continue a strong self-interest in their taught course.

“I feel that this research-focused component has really raised the bar of our students’ curiosity with research-driven knowledge.”

“She takes her time explaining and making sure we are really understanding the topic. She’s considerate and open to suggestions and improvements on the unit. She is very popular among the fellow students and is a very intelligent, hardworking, humble and with excellent leadership qualities. Phani has been administering a new curriculum in CBMS732/832 and has gone above and beyond to help students navigate the new course, including providing significantly more consultation time and individualised feedback for each student after assessments.”

– 2019 Macquarie Student