

Teaching Philosophy: J. Charles Schencking The University of Melbourne

"Best lectures I have ever been to in my entire 5 years at university. I even feel like I've developed as a person. I've learnt beyond the academic objectives of this subject"
Anonymous student. 2005 Quality of Teaching Survey

Overview:

The best educational environment is one in which impassioned teachers and engaged students view learning as an active and holistic process of discovery; a process in which critical, creative, and analytical skills are developed and ideas formed, tested, and articulated with confidence. With this philosophy in mind, as a teacher, supervisor, and mentor I have made significant contributions to numerous key areas of teaching and learning both within the University of Melbourne and beyond the boundaries of this institution since I began teaching in July 2000.

First, as an inspirational and dynamic teacher, I have infected students with my passion for learning and teaching and my love of Japanese, Asian, and Pacific history. I have created exciting learning pathways for students to pursue research higher degrees and in doing so have established a focused research and learning community. I have also developed Japanese and Asian history subjects that attract some of the highest enrolments in Australian higher education in this area. Second, I developed a innovative subject, *A History of Asia, Pacific, and the West*, devised in the first instance for history teachers in Australia but which is now taught online within the larger Universitas 21 global education community. Third, through targeted and integrated assessment that fosters the development of core skills of inquiry, research, and persuasive expression I have provided my students with the skills and knowledge to enable them to excel both at university and in everyday life. Fourth, I have worked extensively with the Arts Faculty, Arts International, and various university services to increase multi-cultural and international awareness and sensitivity in the delivery of education, teaching and tutoring practices thereby enriching the quality of the Melbourne University experience for both international and domestic students. In all of my teaching endeavours, I give my students the confidence to think critically and creatively about the past in the hope that this will challenge the way they see the present and, as global citizens, perhaps even shape the future.

In each undertaking, I have become, and been recognised by students, colleagues, and superiors as one of the University's most dedicated and effective teachers and one who has increased multicultural awareness and enriched the international experience at the University of Melbourne. Evidence to support these claims follows:

- **Teaching Excellence Awards.** In 2005 I was awarded the Arts Faculty Dean's Teaching Excellence Award. In 2006 I was awarded the Barbara Falk University Teaching Excellence Award.
- **Tutor training Programs.** Each year since 2002, I have lead numerous training workshops for new tutors in the Arts Faculty geared towards increasing multi-cultural awareness and effective teaching strategies in an international educational environment.
- **International Teaching and Learning Programs.** Since 2002, I have worked in numerous programmes geared to help international students and students from equity groups achieve success in tertiary education. Most recently, since 2004 I have worked closely with Arts International in establishing the Hwa Chong Junior College (Singapore) and University of Melbourne Humanities and Social Sciences Research Project that brings Singaporean high school students to study at the University and to work one-on-one with academic mentors.

- **The Creation and Maintenance of an Active Teaching and Learning Community in Japanese and Asian History and Disaster Studies.** Through my research-led teaching, I have encouraged nine of my best undergraduate students to commence research higher degrees at the University of Melbourne (and attracted two students from overseas) thus creating an active and focused research community. Eight of these students are now researching topics intimately related to my current research interests in Japanese, Asian, and military history.
- **My Quality of Teaching Scores.** My Quality of Teaching (QOT) scores have exceeded the averages achieved by the History Department, the Asia Institute, and the Faculty of Arts in *every* result in *every* subject I have taught. The results listed in the table below for the subjects I have developed and taught as the sole coordinator show unambiguous evidence of effective, excellent, and dedicated teaching. My results are listed with History Department averages in (parentheses) and Arts Faculty averages in [brackets]. Scores listed are out of a possible 5.0

Quality of Teaching Results, 2000-2005

Subject Taught	2000	2001	2002	2004	2005
The Rise of Modern Japan, 131-039	N/A	72 enrolled	70 enrolled	105 enrolled	85 enrolled
Had clear idea of what was expected of me in this subject]	4.5 (4.1)[3.9]	4.4 (4.1) [3.9]	4.4 (4.1) [4.0]	4.6 (4.2) [4.0]
Was well taught		4.5 (4.3)[4.2]	4.8 (4.3) [4.1]	4.8 (4.3) [4.2]	4.8 (4.4) [4.2]
Was intellectually stimulating		4.5 (4.4)[4.2]	4.7 (4.4) [4.0]	4.7 (4.4) [4.2]	4.8 (4.5) [4.2]
Received helpful feedback		4.0 (3.9)[3.5]	4.2 (3.8) [3.8]	4.3 (3.8) [3.7]	4.3 (4.0) [3.7]
Staff showed interest in the academic needs of the students		4.6 (4.3)[4.0]	4.7 (4.2) [4.1]	4.6 (4.3) [4.1]	4.7 (4.3) [4.1]
Overall satisfaction with Subject		Not part of QOT survey until 04	Not part of QOT survey until 04	4.7 (4.3) [4.1]	4.7 (4.4) [4.1]
World War Two in Asia and Pacific, 131-463. Formally 131131 (2000) 131112 (2001).	4 enrolled	15 enrolled	18 enrolled	19 enrolled	9 enrolled
Had clear idea of what was expected of me in this subject	4.8 (4.1)[4.0]	4.8 (4.3)[4.0]	4.5 (4.2) [4.0]	4.8 (4.2) [4.0]	4.9
Was well taught	4.8 (4.4)[4.2]	4.9 (4.5)[4.2]	4.9 (4.4) [3.9]	4.9 (4.3) [4.2]	5.0
Was intellectually stimulating	4.8 (4.4)[4.2]	5.0 (4.5)[4.2]	4.7 (4.4) [3.9]	4.8 (4.4) [4.2]	4.9
Received helpful feedback	4.3 (3.8)[3.6]	4.5 (4.0)[3.6]	4.1 (3.8) [3.7]	4.6 (3.9) [3.7]	4.8
Staff showed interest in the academic needs of the students	4.8 (4.3)[4.1]	4.9 (4.4)[4.1]	4.7 (4.2) [4.0]	4.8 (4.5) [4.2]	4.9
Overall satisfaction with subject	Not part of QOT survey until 04	Not part of QOT survey until 04	Not part of QOT survey until 04	4.8 (4.3) [4.1]	5.0
Total War in Asia and the Pacific, 1931-45, 131-210.	N/A	N/A	124 enrolled	105 enrolled	77 enrolled
Had clear idea of what was expected of me in this subject			4.5 (4.2) [4.0]	4.6 (4.2) [4.0]	4.6
Was well taught			4.9 (4.4) [3.9]	4.9 (4.3) [4.2]	4.9
Was intellectually stimulating			4.8 (4.4) [3.9]	4.9 (4.4) [4.2]	4.9
Received helpful feedback			4.0 (3.8) [3.7]	4.3 (3.9) [3.7]	4.4
Staff showed interest in the academic needs of the students			4.5 (4.2) [4.0]	4.7 (4.5) [4.2]	4.8
Overall satisfaction with subject	Not part of QOT survey until 04	Not part of QOT survey until 04	Not part of QOT survey until 04	4.8 (4.3) [4.1]	4.8

1. Approaches to teaching that influence, motivate, and inspire students to learn: *"Keeping history alive."*

A fundamental way in which my teaching influences, inspires, and motivates students to learn is by actively engaging them in all aspects of the learning process and creating a learning

environment that encourages students to take important degrees of responsibility for their own learning experiences. Learning in my subjects is never a 'passive exercise.' One important way I achieve this is by making my lectures interactive; I ask students questions. I find that this method of instruction keeps students actively engaged in the lectures and the subject material like no other pedagogical technique. I begin each lecture by asking questions about a relevant contemporary event of familiarity in order to engage and stimulate students in hopes that knowledge of the present will result in greater curiosity, engagement, and interest in the past. For example, I begin my lecture on the Great Tokyo Earthquake and 1920s Japanese society by asking: What can we learn about a society by studying disasters and responses to these events? What makes a natural phenomenon a disaster? What caused the Indian Ocean Tsunami and why did it kill so many people? As a result of employing this technique, few if any of my students ever come to lecture expecting to engage in 'passive' learning but rather come prepared to answer questions, ask questions, and to be active, engaged learners.

To further facilitate student involvement I utilize primary documents and materials in my subject reader so that students can engage more fully with historical materials rather than merely reading and reiterating what established scholars have already written. Most importantly, I include numbers of translated Japanese primary materials in my reading pack that I or my postgraduates have translated so that my students receive the opportunity to develop informed opinions from Japanese language sources otherwise unavailable to them. Students feel greater ownership over, and enthusiasm towards the subject material because my teaching empowers them to get involved, form opinions, and articulate their ideas with confidence and authority.

These techniques foster an atmosphere of inquisitiveness and student-teacher interaction in subject material that greatly enhances student learning. As one student wrote in a QOT evaluation in 2002, "I cannot say enough good things about this subject. The subject matter is always interesting and [the] lecturer and tutor don't just stand up in front of class and read facts – they involve everyone and get them interested." "Charles Schencking, the lecturer," wrote another in 2004, "was absolutely excellent; vibrant, interesting, enthusiastic, funny, intelligent. He lectured well, involved the students, and engaged with them both during and after the lecture . . . Please get more lecturers like Charles – keeping history alive!"

"The best I have heard in my 4 years at Melbourne"

Apart from content, I also assist active learning by employing novel, interactive, and fun educational delivery techniques in my tutorials. These include role-plays, team debates, and mock trials; techniques not only make the past come alive but also emphasize the development of skills critical for future success in the workforce including teamwork, analysis, and the persuasive articulation of ideas and opinions. The 'mock trial' of Japanese Foreign Minister Hirota Koki for his 'crime of omission' in relation to the Nanjing Massacre of 1937 not only provides one of the most heated debates and discussions per semester, but also better allows students to make informed conclusions concerning the issues surrounding genocide and war crimes trials today. As one student wrote in a 2005 QOT survey: "Charles, apart from your passionate lectures – the best I have heard in my 4 years at Melbourne – what stood out to me were the tutes. They were so energetic and fun. The role-plays and the trial were fantastic! It was clear that everyone looked forward and came prepared for each tute. Everyone knew that you really wanted us to think and to express our own ideas. How inspirational is that! Thank you." That I have maintained an average score of 4.8 (out of a possible 5) over the past six years in relation to question 2 of the QOT survey (This subject was well taught) is, I believe, clear testament to my effectiveness as a teacher.

2. Development of curricula and resources that reflect a command of the field.

Revitalising student interest in the discipline

Research-active educators who tie together their research and teaching interests and who are energetic and enthusiastic about delivering their material make the most effective teachers.

Since my appointment in July 2000, I have developed each of the core subjects I now currently teach as sole coordinator believing that it is critically important to be responsive to changing student interests and those of the international marketplace. I first directed my energies toward creating an adaptive curriculum and revitalising Japanese history by devising a new subject 'The Rise of Modern Japan' and eliminating the subject '*Japan and the World* which between 1995 and 1999 had never obtained an enrolment figure above 43. My enrolment numbers have never dropped below 70 in this subject, averaging as one of the top 5 largest 2/3 level subjects in the History Department. I then sensed a specific need for greater coverage of Asian history within the History Department and devised two new subjects on the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific at both the 2nd/3rd year and 4th year level, which I believed would attract students. They have. Enrolments for my 2/3 subject, *Total War in Asia and the Pacific*, have never dropped below 77 and this subject had the largest enrolment of any non-language studies subject in the Asia Institute in 2002, 2004, and 2005 and was in the top 5 in the History Department (out of an average of 24 subjects taught per semester). The enrolments for my 4th year subject have been in the top 3 in the History Department (out of an average of 20 subjects taught per semester) between 2001-2004.

In 2001 I also transformed the generic subject *Comparative Asian History* into *Asia, Pacific, and the West* which is now centred on a cross-cultural, thematic exploration of how Asian societies, people, and governments have responded to Western imperialism and now globalisation over the past 150 years. Importantly, this subject is now also being taught on-line to secondary-level history teachers in Australia and within the larger Universitas 21 global education community. The enthusiasm and interest I have demonstrated in revitalising Japanese and Asian history at Melbourne has paid off and national statistics clearly reflect this. An Australia-wide survey of Japanese studies in Australia conducted by Professor Peter Drysdale at the Australia-Japan Research Centre, ANU, documents that my Japanese studies subjects (131-039, and 131-210) had the highest enrolment rate of any Japanese studies subject (outside of language) in all of Australian and New Zealand higher education in 2001, 2002, and 2004 (my subjects were not offered in 2003).¹

Research-led teaching

Providing new and exciting opportunities for student learning, however, is not enough to retain student interest or instructor enthusiasm in a particular subject over an extended period of time. I believe that teachers must regularly revise the themes of their core subjects so as to not only make their content better reflect current trends in scholarship but also to correspond with the teacher's own evolving research interests. For example, I uncovered the core themes of democracy, liberalism and communication in pre-occupation Japan in a 2004 research project (subsequently published as a book by Stanford University Press) and immediately incorporated these into 'The Rise of Modern Japan' and 'Second World War' subjects. Apart from revamping both the subject and my enthusiasm and giving me a far greater command of the subject matter, a major benefit of this research-teaching nexus was that it made my students feel that they were part of a much larger, internationally significant research project, giving them a valuable taste of how exciting research can be. "This lecturer is always fantastic and I always enjoy coming to his classes," wrote a student in a 2004 QOT. "He has such a passion for the subject matter and a great teaching ability."

Influencing research culture

Most importantly, my development of exciting, cutting edge curricula and my dynamic teaching and mentoring has encouraged a number of my students to undertake further research thus creating a research and learning cluster. Of the 12 students I now work with as primary supervisor (9 postgraduates and 3 honours-level students) 9 were previously undergraduates of

¹ Peter Drysdale ed., *Directory of Japanese Studies in Australia and New Zealand*. (Canberra: The Japan Foundation, 2004). Statistics are tabled between pages 118 and 284.

mine of whom 8 are now researching topics intimately related to my current research in Japanese history or disaster studies. The creation of this exciting research, teaching, and learning network has also encouraged one interstate and two international students to initiate postgraduate work with me at Melbourne.

Making history relevant to the world students live in today

In 2005, reflecting the initiation of a new monograph length project on the culture of catastrophe in Japan following the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake I have changed many of the major themes of my core Japanese history subjects to reflect my evolving research interests. The major theme of *The Rise of Modern Japan* in 2005 and 2006 surrounded how the Japanese state attempted to manage, shape, and mould its subjects in times of national, international, and natural crises but also how citizens and subjects responded to the state in these “perceived states of emergency.” Most dramatically, I have been able to tie in current events related to the Indian Ocean Tsunami and America’s post September 11 war on terrorism into my subject to provide direct contemporary contextualisation of many of the historical themes explored in my subject. “How and why,” I ask my students, “have states used natural and manmade catastrophes in the past and where have we seen / do we see this today?” This has proved to be wildly successful. Not only has it repeatedly facilitated student discussion in lectures and tutorials, but it has also given students direct evidence of how studying the past can give us a strong foundation with which to make informed judgements about the world today.

As a result of my evolving research interests and interaction with international and national scholars interested in disasters, I have devised a new subject to be offered in 2008: *Disasters in the History, Memory, and Culture of Asia and the Pacific: From Krakatoa to the Indian Ocean Tsunami*. This will be the first subject of its kind in Australia, Asia, Europe or America and will give Melbourne students an unparalleled opportunity to undertake and engage with a cutting edge field of study with immense contemporary significance for our nation and region.

3. Approaches to assessment and feedback that foster independent learning.

Modelling the importance of process in critical thinking

A critically important core component of my teaching is the emphasis I continuously place on developing the skills of critical thinking, creative thinking, independent research, and persuasive expression in my students. These are the skills that I want all of my students to possess and use both now, and after they leave the university. So, how do I foster these skills in my students?

First, I lead by example in my lectures. I develop and deliver each lecture as if it were a six to seven thousand word article in which I set out my research questions, explain why they are significant in the larger field of scholarship, introduce the source material that I consulted in researching my questions, and develop and articulate a clear set of arguments and opinions backed by material evidence. Not only do my lectures thus introduce content in a clear, concise, and logical way, they also highlight the processes by which, and the skills I used, to reach my conclusions. In essence, I present model research essays to the students each week. At the end of each lecture or tutorial I take 5 to 10 minutes to recapitulate the main themes/opinions/ideas posited during the lecture/tutorial. This is not, however, just content focussed. Rather, I want to make my students conscious of the critical, creative, and analytical processes that were used in reaching these conclusions. My pedagogical aim here is to demonstrate that learning is a holistic process from the inquiry stage to the persuasive articulation of informed ideas. Indeed, a core tenet of my tertiary education philosophy is that learning should not be focused solely on outcomes, but processes as well. I want students to be aware of how and why I (and other students) reach an opinion. This I believe ensures that students will leave the university with the skills and abilities to continuously make decisions, reach conclusions, form opinions based on evidence, think critically, and evaluate numerous forms of material evidence related to all aspects of daily life. Succeeding in this pedagogical undertaking demonstrates to students that history is not just the study of the past, but a discipline that can teach them the skills to interpret

the world we live in today and to do so with authority. This clearly resonates with the students. "Of all the 32 subjects I have completed over the last four years," or so one student wrote in a 2004 QOT survey, "I felt each week that the content of this subject was delivered better than any other." In every subject I have taught since 2002, 100% of students who submitted anonymous Quality of Teaching Surveys replied either "strongly agree" or "agree" with the following statement: This subject was well taught. (Please see optional supporting materials)

Giving students responsibility for learning

Apart from the organization and delivery of dynamic lectures with clear pedagogical aims and objectives, the assessment I set in every one of my subjects is geared towards students acquiring critical and creative skills as well as content mastery. In each of my subjects, I require every student to devise his or her own research topic, rather than make them pursue 'set' research questions determined by me. This compels students to think critically and creatively about the subject material covered and to formulate a question that they will research in primary source materials. Moreover, I believe this gives students greater ownership over their essay topic and encourages and inspires them to excel. It also helps students to see that learning is a process from the inquiry stage to the persuasive expressive stage. After selecting a topic, I have each student go through a 'source-storming' exercise in tutorials where each student introduces their research question in front of their peers. A large part of this active learning exercise revolves around students asking other students key questions about their topic, sources, and hypotheses. This exercise, I believe, helps students engage with and learn from their peers in a constructive and friendly environment.

Through the next piece of assessment, I encourage students to develop a clear argument based on their research and to persuasively articulate their own findings. To help facilitate this type of learning, early in each semester I require students to fill in a research essay proposal template. In 2002 I specifically developed a research essay proposal template that requires students to provide:

- the core research question they will pursue;
- the sources they have consulted;
- the hypothesis that they believe they will argue/prove in their essay;
- an explanation of how their findings fit within the existing historical literature;
- a bibliography of primary and secondary materials;
- an explanation as to why they selected this topic/question.

In doing so, I present a clear and concise statement of assessment requirements and expectations. Requiring students to submit a clearly defined research essay proposal and returning marked proposals within one week of submission allows me the opportunity to give feedback early in the semester and, when needed, the opportunity to assist students who are having difficulties. As one student wrote in a 2004 QOT survey, "It was excellent to have a small assessment early in the semester to get some sort of feedback before handing in a huge essay."

After they have received feedback on their first essay students submit a final research essay which requires them to repeat the processes involved in the first essay. This allows the students and myself the opportunity to gauge how well they have engaged with not only the content of the subject but also with the processes of learning. Since introducing this assessment pattern in 2002 I have found that students have learned a considerable amount from this process; final essay scores have averaged between 5 and 7% points higher in each subject I have taught. "As an exchange student from America," one student wrote in a 2005 QOT survey, "I took this class to learn about WW2 in Asia and the Pacific and it exceeded my expectations in every way! But what I really gained from the lectures, seminars, and the assessment exercises was how to research and write a first rate research essay. I learned so much from the lectures and assessment exercises and will use these techniques in all future classes I take. I wish I could

stay another semester and take Dr. Schencking's Japan class. This has been the most rewarding subject I have ever taken at [the] university level."

Above all else, my teaching is geared towards creating opportunities for students to develop and articulate their own views and opinions and to provide them with the richly rewarding and confidence-building opportunity to make discoveries for themselves. This to me is the essence of critical inquiry, creative thinking, independent learning, and is the cornerstone of history as an academic discipline. I believe the emphasis I place on fostering student learning through targeted assessment is the most important reason why I have continuously scored above all university and departmental averages in my QOT surveys on questions four (I received helpful feedback) and five (Staff showed interest in the academic needs of the student).

4. Respect and support for the development of students as individuals

Assisting international students develop the skills that will be fundamental for succeeding at the tertiary level, has been a priority for me since my appointment. In 2002 I worked as a university shepherd and mentor for the Trinity College Foundation Studies Program, a program geared towards helping international students improve their critical thinking, research, persuasive writing and communications skills prior to (and after) acceptance and enrolment at the university. As a shepherd, I shaped and oversaw the implementation of assessment focussed on helping students comprehend what would be expected of them in a university setting; the first exercise revolved around having groups of students dissect model research essays into constituent parts thus providing examples of excellent, good, and poor research essays. Moreover, I contributed to the development of in-class exercises geared toward making overseas students from non-English speaking backgrounds more comfortable voicing their own opinions on both historical as well as contemporary issues.

In addition, I have worked actively with two other programs that help international students succeed at our university. First, since 2002, I have worked with Arts International to assist international exchange students with the transition from their home universities (and countries) to the University of Melbourne. Each semester since, I have helped organise and participated in workshops geared towards helping international students better understand academic and assessment expectations at the University of Melbourne. As an individual who has studied and gained degrees in four countries that use vastly different undergraduate assessment techniques, I can empathize with students who face difficulties because assessment expectations remain unclear to non 'native' students. At these seminars I emphasize the importance our university places on critical thinking, analysis, independent research, and persuasive writing and use the model essay dissection technique that I employed as a Trinity College Shepherd. Finally, as a former exchange student who is aware of the difficulties one can face living in a foreign country, I have volunteered as departmental International Representative, thus serving as a contact for international students if they are having difficulties with any aspect of their program.

Second, since January 2005 I have worked with Arts International, to establish the Hwa Chong Junior College (Singapore) and Faculty of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences Research Project. Under this program, I have supervised five Hwa Chong students on site in Singapore and Melbourne, as well as through fortnightly internet-facilitated supervisions. In 2006, this program expanded to include a 30-student humanities contingent that visited Melbourne for a week of intensive supervision, teaching, and mentoring. The aim of this program is to introduce high achieving international high school students to university life at Melbourne. Moreover, through working with a university mentor one to one in completing a 4000-word research essay, the project allows students the opportunity to develop the critical and creative thinking skills that will enable them to more fully succeed upon entry into university. Each of these programs has assisted overseas students and enriched the international experience of teaching and learning at Melbourne University.

5. Scholarly activities that have influenced and enhanced learning at teaching Melbourne.

Though I am still an early-career teacher, since 2002, I have played an active role in developing professional development activities in teaching, tutoring, and learning at the University of Melbourne. Most importantly, at the request of Associate Professor Steve James (Associate Dean, APC) I have trained new university tutors in teaching in a multi-cultural classroom environment. Drawing on my background of learning and now teaching in numerous multi-cultural settings (including universities in Japan, Hawaii, the mainland US, UK, and Australia) I have conveyed my experiences and techniques on how to effectively facilitate multi-cultural awareness, discussion, and to encourage learning within a comfortable multi-cultural environment.

This takes many forms. First, I teach new tutors innovative and engaging ways in which to help students become aware that they are indeed in the midst of a multi-cultural, multi-national, multi-ethnic learning environment. For instance, I introduce all new tutors to an ice-breaking stereotype-illuminating exercise that I have used at the beginning of each tutorial led since 2001. Next, I convey my experiences of how to foster critical thinking and expression skills among students who, often from Confucian-oriented educational backgrounds, are trained in their home universities not to express their own opinions in writing or tutorials, particularly if they challenge or contradict the opinions and conclusions reached by lecturers or tutors. I follow this session up with what turns out to be an eye-opening interactive discussion on constructive ways to combat racial, national, religious, or ethnic stereotypes and discrimination. I emphasize that inflammatory language or behaviour directed at an individual or a group because of national background is just as offensive and discriminatory as racial, religious, or gender badgering or bullying. In short, my participation in this program since February 2002 has allowed me to enhance teaching practices for all tutors employed by our university. Finally, since 2004 I have helped organise teaching symposiums in the Department of History that highlight good teaching practices in all aspects of education delivery. I have been asked to expand this program across the Arts Faculty in 2006 by the Learning and Teaching Taskforce created by our new Dean, Professor Belinda Probert.

As a dynamic lecturer and engaged researcher I have transformed the content and delivery of Japanese and Asian history at the University of Melbourne and beyond. My enthusiasm and focus on active learning techniques have inspired and enabled a vibrant, postgraduate research and learning cluster to develop since my appointment. More broadly, my teaching has influenced the lives of students here and abroad. My focus on skill acquisition and the 'active learning process' allows students to develop the skills of critical enquiry, creative thinking, analysis, and persuasive articulation of opinions. Coupled with my focus on active learning, the assessment techniques I employ compel students to get involved and take greater ownership over their learning. The emphasis on these skills and the use of confidence-building educational techniques, I believe, best enable students to succeed in all future pursuits, educational or vocational. Finally, though an early career teacher, the training programs I have developed help train a large cohort of tutors and teachers on how best to deliver education in a multi-cultural, international classroom setting.

"I have studied in Melbourne, Oslo, China, Canada, Norway, and Spain (at university level), and his was one of the best subjects I have ever done. Charles is an entirely engaging academic. The university would do well to get more academics of his ability as a teacher."

Anonymous student, 2004 QOT.