



AUSTRALIAN AWARDS
FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHING

2021 AAUT Briefing Session: Writing A Successful Application

Presented by: Professor Shelley Kinash – 10 June 2021

The key message from news about cancelled AAUT funding post-2021, is that it is not okay for applicants to delay their award submissions. If you are making outstanding contributions to student learning, through your teaching approaches and/or support projects, it is time to apply now. This interactive presentation has been designed for university teachers and for the support teams who build their capacity.



The topic is how to create compelling, evidence-informed application statements, based on your (or your colleagues') innovative approaches to supporting student success. The playful metaphor setting the backdrop for this presentation is Lego Masters 2021. Spoiler Alert for those of you who missed the finale on the 17th May 2021, the deer and the wolves in the forest won.

Why? Because:

1. The story was clear and conveyed emotion.
2. The builders had a creative idea to address challenges.
3. The creators were skilled, carefully applying their technique for placing solid layers of bricks.
4. The build met the remit, in a clear and cohesive way.

The hosts, Brickman and Hamish Blake, created the conditions which fostered this success. There were 16 builds before the final-winning, creation. Specific feedback was candidly delivered along the way. These approaches will be spelled-out for in-institution AAUT support teams.

You do not have to have watched Lego Masters to understand the practical tips and suggestions for creating winning AAUT applications. Key takeaways are checklists for applicants and for support teams.



AUSTRALIAN AWARDS
FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHING

Writing A
Successful
Application



Professor Shelley Kinash



Your presenter is Professor Shelley Kinash. Besides being a mother (of a daughter and a son who are now both studying university degrees), and therefore an experienced Lego expert, Shelley brings rich expertise in the context of learning and teaching awards.

Shelley has been an AAUT assessor numerous years, for citations, program awards and teaching excellence awards. She was the MC of the Queensland AAUT award ceremonies. She created tiered systems of recognition, at both Bond University and the University of Southern Queensland, leading to notable success in ladder School, Faculty, University and National awards. She has personally coached many individuals and teams to achieve success.

She was the lead author and co/leader of three national research/practice grants awarded through the Australian Office for Learning and Teaching, on: graduate employability, postgraduate student experience and closing-the-loop on student evaluation of courses and teaching. She was awarded an international mobile learning platinum catalyst award and Queensland State awards for teaching and learning.

Shelley looks forward to practically sharing tips for success, in the context of play.

Professor Shelley Kinash

Director (Advancement of Learning and Teaching)

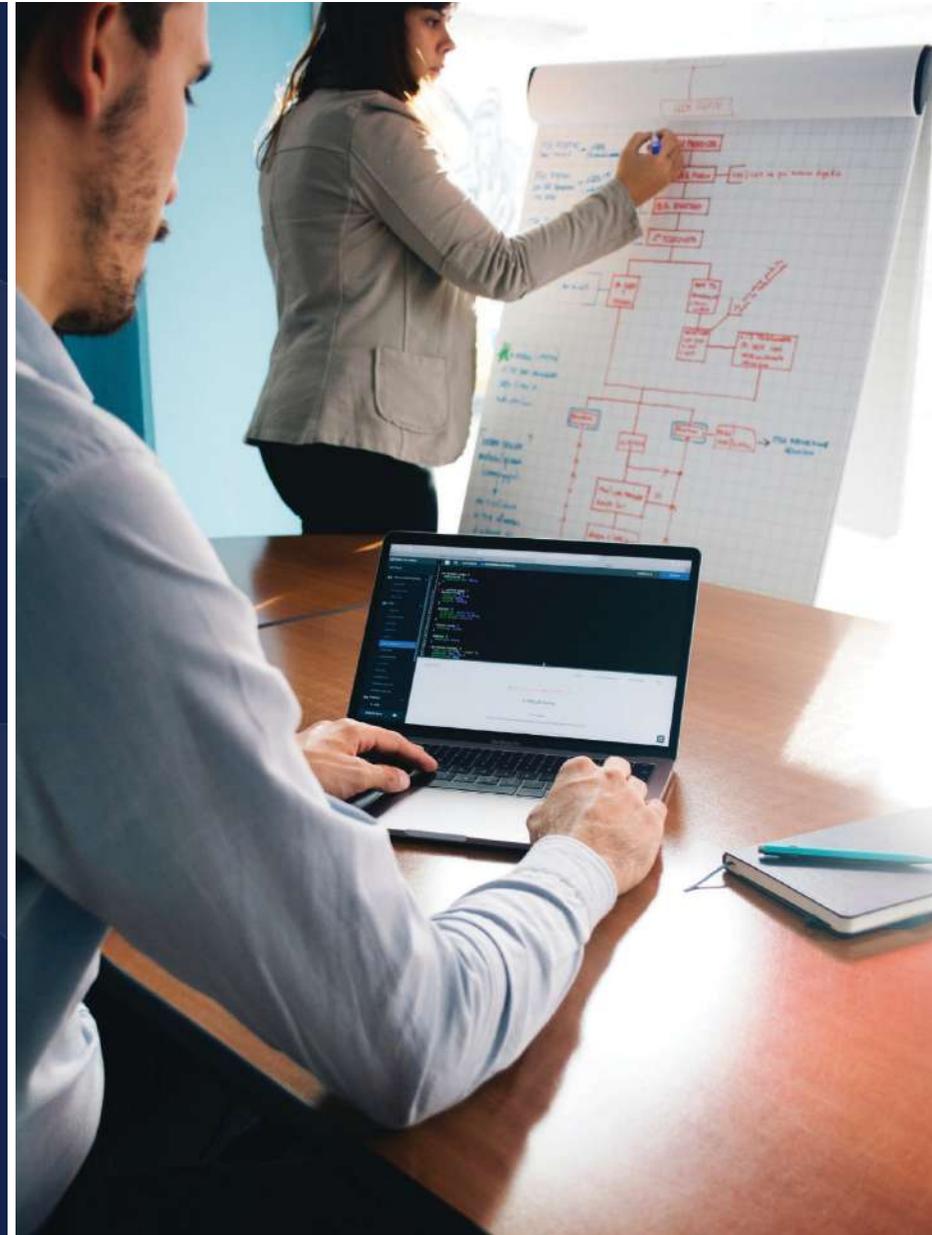
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Why Australian Awards for University Teaching Matter – Now More Than Ever





- Because Australia does not have a peak body learning and teaching organisation, we need to join together to create and celebrate, to keep the education sector strong, cohesive and caring.
- Learning and teaching awards send a clear message that our university students, their experiences and their successes matter.
- Australian education is distinctive and high-quality, and aggregated teaching awardees convey that message (including to future students).
- University educators matter, and acknowledgement and awards keep our identities strong and our actions inspired.
- Award winners form communities of practice, supporting one another and inspiring early career colleagues to excellence.

**The Playful Presentation
Context:
The Lego Masters Metaphor**



The finale of the third Australian season of Lego Masters was on 17th May 2021. In pairs, people create Lego-build challenges. There are 16 builds across the season, with pairs facing elimination along the way. Three pairs compete in the finale.

This year, they had 28 hours to complete their final build. The winner is selected through the votes of 250 visiting community-members and a golden brick (worth 100 votes) chosen by the Brickman host. The Brickman is joined by comedian, Hamish Blake, throughout the season, which makes the show fun and lively.

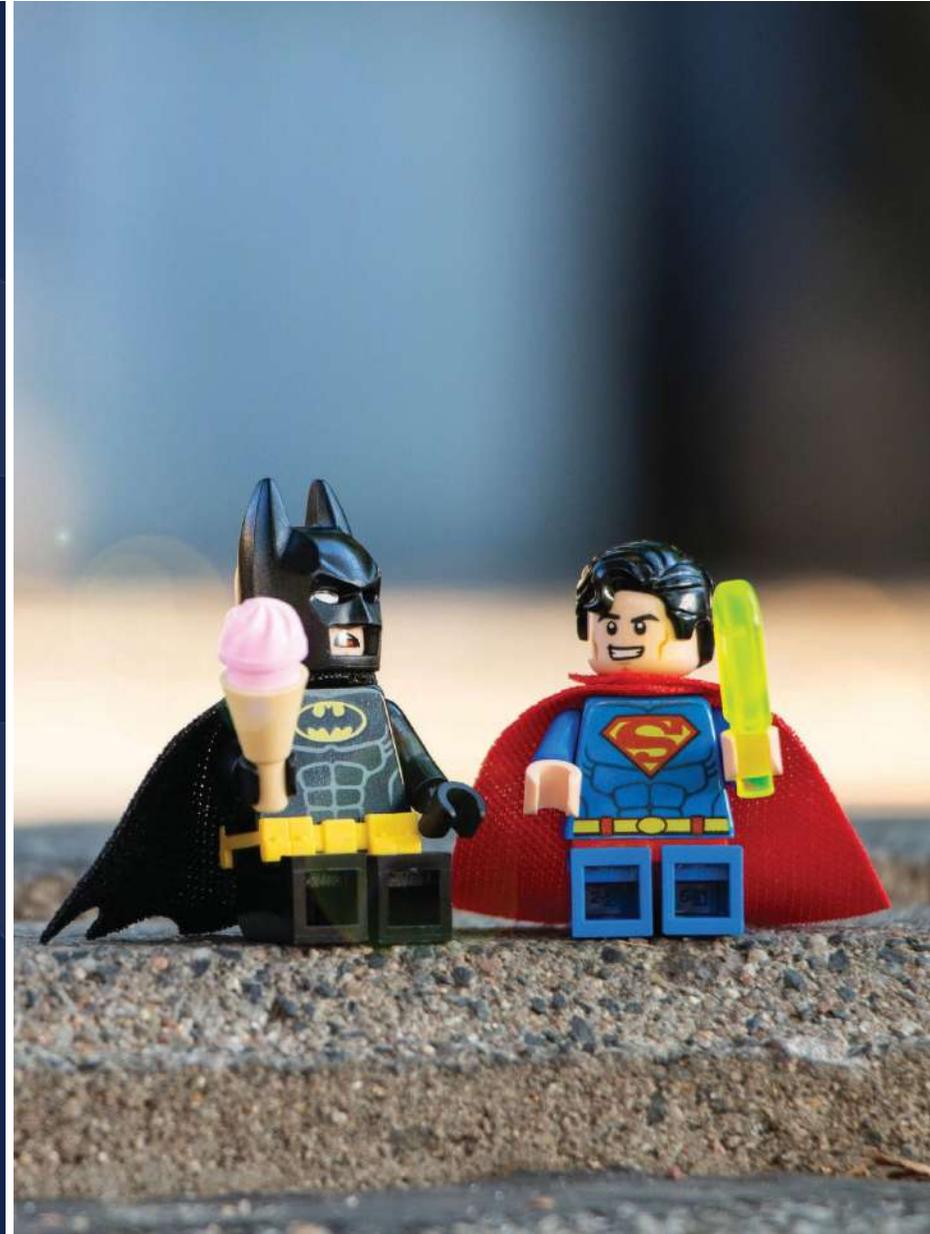
The 2021 three finalist pairs were: Ryan and Gabby who built a circus, with a mechanism slowly spinning a disc inside the circus tent, revealing four scenes; Owen and Scott who built a mini-figure world called, Engineers versus Hippies (with moving parts); and David and Gus whose winning build was of deer who were alert to a wolf in the forest, missing two more lurking nearby.

**The Lego Masters Metaphor
Aligned with AAUT:
What this Metaphor Means**



1. The builds stand-for both the submitted award statement and the teaching approaches (and other contributions to student learning) which form the substance of those applications.
2. Many people audition to be contestants on Lego Masters; the eight pairs taken forward are the best of the best (i.e. Not Good Teaching, but Outstanding contributions).
3. There are 16 builds prior to the finale, and the contestants learn along the way, with robust, honest and specific feedback from the Brickman and Hamish (i.e. Formative Institution Ladders of Recognition and Awards).
4. Lego Bricks are an apt metaphor for teaching approaches and learning contributions (layer by layer on a solid foundation).
5. Building Lego is Doing-Something – creating, making, contributing.

**For Institution Support
Teams:
How to be Like the Brickman
and Hamish**



1. The Brickman Cries

- *He really truly cares about Lego (substitute teaching) and he shows it.*

2. Personalise

- *The Brickman and Hamish know contestants' strengths and they help build the contestants' capacities and identities. 'Stick to your strengths.'*

3. Sixteen Builds Before the Finals

- *An institution formative ladder of awards – School, Faculty, Institution, National (Also provides evidence).*

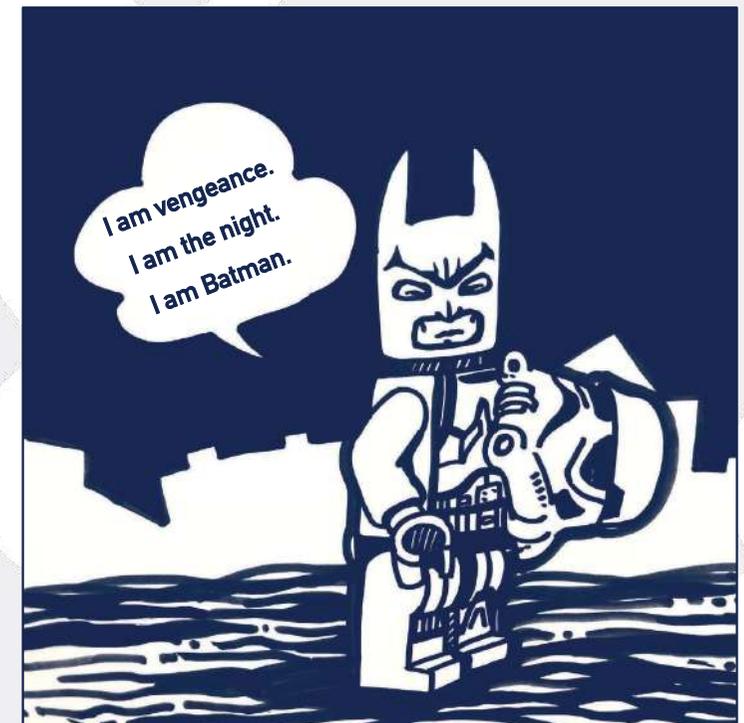
4. Feedback

- *The Brickman does not hold-back. He visits the tables many times during the builds, sometimes provoking teams to start over.*

**Four defining rules of
Lego Masters:
Why Gus and David's
final build won**



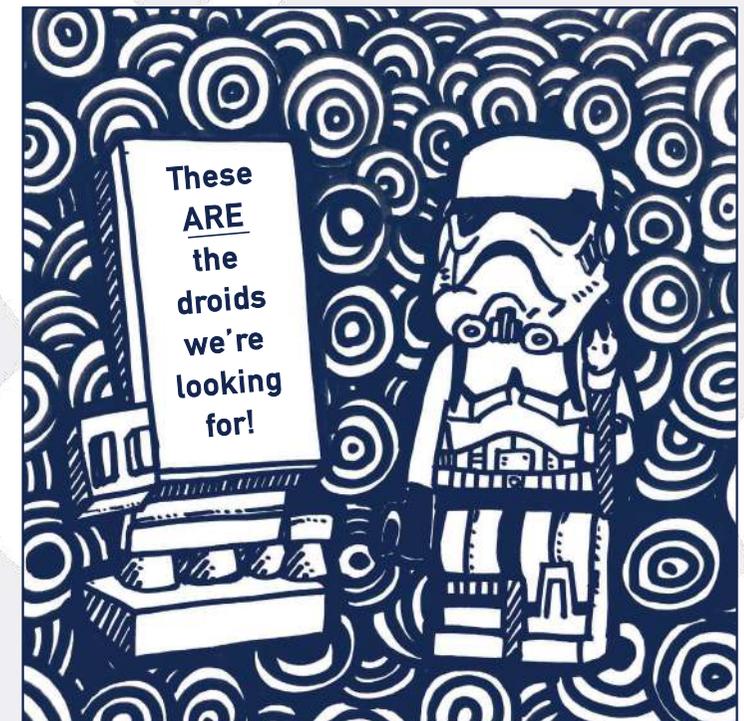
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Four assessment criteria (for AAUT Citations)



1. Positively impacted on student learning, student engagement or the overall student experience for a period of no less than three years.
2. Gained recognition from colleagues, the institution, and/or the broader community.
3. Shown creativity, imagination or innovation.
4. Drawn on the scholarly literature on teaching and learning.



For Applicants



Brickman: *“Scotty and Owen - stand-back here with me. Your Engineers versus Hippies story is not clear.”*

Tell a story that matters. What is your plot? Where is the intrigue? Is it too complex? Is it compelling? What was the challenge or problem? For which students? What did you change? How do you know the change worked?

For Applicants



Brickman crying: *“David and Gus – your story is beautiful. The emotion in your deer is so real. The action is clear without motors and mechanisms.”*

Bring your SELF into the experience. Why does what you did matter? How did your approaches and contributions foster student success? It does not need to be high-tech and it can be ‘ordinary’ innovation.

For Applicants



Brickman early in the build: *“Ryan and Gabby – why are you having a spinning disc beneath the four scenes, if the viewers can see them all from above. You need to add a circus tent.”*

The statement must be cohesive and hang-together. Each brick must be laid with purpose and precision. Published literature (including philosophy of teaching and learning) form structural, foundation-bricks. Bricks of evidence must be laid, for the problem or challenge, and to evidence that you solved the problem (outcomes and impact).

The Tricky Bits: Technic Lego



“Why is that piece spinning? What does it have to do with the story?”

What evidence are AAUT assessors looking-for?

One of the main reasons AAUT applications are turned-back is that SECT survey scores are the only evidence provided, and the evidence often does not align with the approach.

Determine the evidence, based on what you are trying to prove (the change you led/enacted).

Was the problem (for your students) ...

- **Fail rates** – Use improved grade distributions over time as evidence.
- **Attrition** – Show improved retention rates over time as evidence.
- **Industry Alignment** – Use student Professional Association memberships and Employer Satisfaction Survey results as evidence.

“Take out your sketchbooks and draw your full build.”

How do you choose a Category?

1. **Approaches to teaching** and/or the support of learning that influence, motivate and **inspire students to learn.**
2. **Development of curricula, resources** or services that reflect a command of the field.
3. Effective **assessment practices** that bring about improvements in **student learning**, focus on **academic integrity.**
4. Innovation or **leadership** that has influenced and enhanced learning and teaching and/or student experience.

Do you have evidence of finding creative, efficacious ways of supporting students to overcoming learning challenges in your discipline? *(Cat.1)*

Did you write a textbook and case studies and then use these to support your students' learning? *(Cat.2)*

Are the assessment activities you created, and provide formative feedback to students about, not only designed to evaluate students, but for them to learn through doing? *(Cat.3)*

Have you provided sector-level learning and teaching leadership, which has built the capacity of others to teach, and had measurable impact on student learning? *(Cat.4)*

**What Makes Gus and David's
Lego Masters creations /
winning AAUT Submissions
so great:**



- ***Focus***
- ***Emotion***
- ***Skill***
- ***Care***
- ***Identity***
- ***Teamwork***







THANK YOU

Click **AAUT Awards** for more information.

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