

AAUT VIDEO SERIES:

2021 AWARDS FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE OF THE YEAR (EARLY CAREER):

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BACKGROUND

I came from a secondary school teaching background. Before I came into academia. For me, I was always passionate about teaching and learning. I studied actually originally a master and then that led me to do my PhD in learning and pedagogy because I'm fascinated in understanding what learning is, what it means, but also how we can then improve people to be better learners. That background tied really nicely then into my role now as an early career researcher. I love looking at how we can help sport coaches, sport officials as well as people such as health and physical education teachers be better practitioners in the areas that they want to learn in.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ASPECTS OF YOUR TEACHING BEING RECOGNISED FOR THIS AWARD?

The key aspect of my teaching is really incorporating innovative technology into online learning. I was wondering when I first came into academia, how we could better educate people to learn online because it's so difficult. COVID pandemic coming on board that really brought that to the forefront even more. And then the area that I work in is related to practical skills, learning practical hands on skill acquisition, as well as how to coach them different skills that gave me a thought of starting to work with 360 Camera Technology, started playing around with that when I first came to QUT and then that's really progressed in the last couple of years to becoming a really important part of my online learning presentations.

People through 360 feel like they're actually there. They're part of the whole learning process and being able as a learner to adjust the camera to what you would like to look at as part of that learning journey is really important. It was about introducing innovative technology to help people learn more effectively in a practical hands on subject, such as health and physical education.

HOW DID YOU APPROACH TEACHING AWARDS APPLICATIONS?

In 2020, I was awarded a QUT Vice Chancellor's Award. I actually won the top award, the David Gardner QUT teacher of the year, and that was for introducing innovative strategies to help our students learn effectively online that was probably the starting point for me.

I was actually approached by my institution to apply for the award as an ECR. I really wasn't completely aware. I really had no idea of the prestige and the importance of an AAUT award. It was really my institution that strongly encouraged me. But I'll also say then strongly supported me in order to prepare and write for my award application.

That's really then the support that I got in doing that and led to me applying. The award itself provides people with a much bigger picture than that. It provides you with not just an award, but it provides you with really incredibly deep reflections on your own practice. As an educator as Early Career Researchers, the importance of applying for that award is really important when you're applying for award. It's also about looking at yourself, looking at what you're doing as an educator and really thinking about what are the processes [that] I'm doing, what other processes are out there? How can I help my students learn better? If you've got that passion, if you've got that internal drive, that's what ends up making an authentic deeper award application.

WHAT WERE CHALLENGES IN WRITING THE APPLICATION AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?

The challenges definitely would be a time factor because you have to write so deeply about what you're doing and reflect on that deeply. It's time to write it. But it's also time to think about what is it that makes your teaching what is it that makes your processes as an educator so important and so valuable and how they could be even made even more valuable. It's also though about gathering evidence. It's fine for me to talk about what my strengths are and the way in which I've used

technology to help online learners, but you've got to gather the evidence. So then you're continually filtering a whole range of different evidential sources that you could be using. You might be collecting video. And for me, that was really important because I wanted to capture what the 360 immersion was really like, having to capture student responses. You're capturing responses from fellow academics that you might be working with or might be working within your team. So like I was a Learning and Teaching Committee, I am providing ideas and different approaches to learning for them gathering evidence writing the application then itself getting the language right, hitting the mark. So I'd say too, in terms of the objectives of the AAUT are looking for. Your writing has to hit those objectives benchmark and then it has to be concise, a limitation on that it through that drafting process of putting that together, talking to the mentor, redoing it. That takes a long, long time. You must be committed to genuinely wanting to showcase your work by going through that process.

HOW HAS THIS AWARD IMPACTED YOUR CAREER?

It's had quite a big impact on my career. I become more well known not just nationally, but internationally. Social media obviously drives that sort of platform as well. Having that technology aspect has been a really big factor. I've been asked to speak now at a "Women in Research" Showcase event. Now on my institutions, a AAUT selection committee. I've been asked to speak at an international conference about technology in terms of online learning platform. I've been asked to join of course the International Federation of teaching fellows that's connected me now with an even bigger audience. I'm mentoring now some other ECRs in my own institution.

You can use the aspects of the award to help apply for so many other exciting things, research grant applications, professional courses that your institution or other institutions might offer. The way in which you think about the processes that you're using as an educator can help you then in these much wider aspects of your own learning. ECR like we're early career researchers, we've got years ahead of us in terms of what we're doing in our research journey. To me, applying for that [AAUT award] is a really wonderful baseline to start with your journey and your growth as an educator overall.

ADVICE FOR FUTURE APPLICATIONS?

I definitely encourage Early Career Researchers to apply for this award. First of all, what is it that is your spark? What is it that really drives you in terms of how you like to educate people, what are the processes and then what special to about you and your processes? Secondly, find a like-minded person, find someone that also inspires you that you can chat to about your work. Sometimes all we need is someone else just to say to us "I'm here" and if you can email that person, zoom that person, teams that person, if you just know in the back of your mind, "Someone got you", You can do it. We all go through ups and downs. We all go through cycles in our work when we're just swamped. If you really want to do it. You find the time to do it, and you surround yourself with the right people that make it happen as well. They just encourage you to do that.

AAUT CONTACT DETAILS

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For any further questions, please contact the Awards Team aaut@rmit.edu.au