



## LECTURE

# Humanistic Education for the Future ‘Crime Fighters’<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

*Aspiring to a life of crime fighting is a challenging but noble calling, and consequently, the educating of our future police, correctional, probation, parole, child protection, crime prevention, and youth justice officers, to name just a few, is an absolutely critical task if we want to live in a community that is not only safe but also one that allows for its members to flourish and grow. Given this imperative, the process of moulding our next generation of crime fighters in North Queensland must strive not only to impart knowledge and know-how – it should also endeavor to bring to the surface their nobler selves, the best of what it means to be human. It has to go beyond merely educating the mind, and must likewise invigorate their body and inspire their spirit. Employing a humanistic teaching philosophy that is primarily student-centered in nature, and premised on genuinely caring for their well-being and progress, allows for a more effective transmission of not only facts and figures, but also of values, attitudes, and an appropriate ethos necessary for their future careers in the criminal justice system.*

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### Introduction

Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Ian [Gordon], Professor Nola [Alloway], honoured guests, a very good afternoon to all of you. Thank you so much for being here today. The invitation to present this Last Lecture for 2015 has come as a complete surprise to me. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever picture myself before all of you in this context. In fact, when the Vice Chancellor’s [VC] personal assistant, Ms Debbi Taylor, contacted me early last month to ask whether I would be available to have a 30-minute

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<sup>1</sup> Revised version of the 2015 Last Lecture titled "Celebrating the end of the academic year: A humanistic approach to educating our next generation of ‘crime fighters’, Presented by Dr Mark David Chong at James Cook University, Queensland University, Australia.

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meeting with the VC in the following week to discuss, horrors upon horrors, a matter which she was unable to disclose – I immediately went to see my Head of Social Sciences, Professor Rosita Henry, and asked her in a hushed tone “Professor Rosita, do you know if I did something wrong?”. She looked at me quizzically, hesitated for a long pregnant second, and then in an equally soft whisper, said “I don’t think so?”. Holey Moley! That really did not help calm my nerves at all. So as you can imagine, it was with considerable trepidation that I walked into Professor Sandra Harding’s office the next week, fully prepared to be told of some grave felony that I had committed in the course of my time here at the university. But to my utter astonishment, what greeted me at the door was a wonderfully cheerful smile on the face of our VC, warmly inviting me into her office. “Wait”, I thought. “This can’t be so bad! Surely...surely, I’m not going to be sacked?”

I suppose that question however will remain unanswered until after I deliver THIS lecture BUT to cut a long story short, the VC then explained that the JCU [James Cook University] Student Association annually conducts a poll asking its members to nominate an academic to deliver each year’s Last Lecture, and that MY name had somehow risen to the top of that list. It is really a special moment when a teacher is publically acknowledged by his or her students in such an edifying way. Consequently, in response to this great honour bestowed upon me by my criminology students, I hope that you will not mind me departing from the usual convention of talking about a range of interesting research projects that I am conducting with wonderful academics like Dr Surin Maisrikrod, Mr Jamie Fellows and Associate Professor Hayden Lesbirel, or that hopefully brilliant book that God willing, I am just about to publish with Dr Abraham Francis. Instead, what I would like to share with you is a few thoughts of why I think I am here speaking to you in the first place – and that is, my teaching philosophy and why this resonates so well with many of our criminology students here at James Cook University.

As the title to this lecture foreshadows, I will be speaking about how a humanistic approach to educating the next generation of ‘crime fighters’ will increase the likelihood of them developing greater mental and physical fortitude, emotional resilience, a quick intellect for problem-solving, a sound grounding in criminological theories, high moral standards, and the ability to empathise with victims of crime, as well as with some offenders who may themselves be victims, in one unfortunate way or another.

In this regard, ‘crime fighters’ refer to our future police, correctional, probation, parole, child protection, crime prevention, youth justice, and research as well as public policy officers.

Now – the need to provide our criminology students with additional scaffolding at this stage of their education is not unreasonable by any measure. The justification for implementing a more supportive pedagogical framework for them is actually fairly obvious. We should never forget that our graduating criminology students will be entering into a world that many of them are going to find very challenging, to say the least. For example, in a recent 2015 ABC News interview with the Victorian Police Association, its secretary, Mr Ron Iddles, said that “220 police officers had taken sick leave for psychological problems like depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress in the last year”, and that 8 percent of a total of 3,500 members surveyed “had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder over the past three years” (Victorian police officer's suicide, 2015). Even prison officers are not exempt from this discouraging trend, and both an Australian Safety and Compensation Council Report for 2004–2005 (ASCC, 2007, p. 74), and a

2010 Commonwealth Government Productivity Commission Report (Productivity Commission, 2010, p. 407) noted that correctional officers “were amongst those male employment classifications with the highest frequency rate of workers’ compensation mental stress claims” (Inspector of Custodial Services, 2014, p. 16).

In 2008, the then Child Safety Minister, the Honourable Margaret Keech, acknowledged that the Queensland Department of Child Safety (now called the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disabilities) found it very difficult to stem high turnover rates among its child safety officers (Child Safety Department, 2009). According to the Minister, adverse or challenging work conditions were the key reasons why these officers decided to leave, including for example, heavy caseloads, relatively low pay, working in rural and remote communities, and a high cost of living (Child Safety Department, 2009). These experiences are by no means restricted to Australia. In a 2013 study in America, Lewis, Lewis and Garby discovered that probation officers “who reported violent recidivism or sexual recidivism on their caseloads, offender suicide, and threats and/or assaults in the line of duty scored significantly higher on measures of traumatic stress and burnout than officers who did not experience these caseload events” (p.67). And speaking of threats and/or physical assaults suffered in the line of duty – most, if not all, jurisdictions in Australia, have laws that specifically punish more severely assaults against police and prison officers. Even more recently in Western Australia, such laws were extended to assault and grievous bodily harm offences committed against youth custodial officers through the passing of the Criminal Code Amendment Bill (No. 2) in 2013.<sup>3</sup> These pieces of legislation are responses to the fact that our frontline criminal justice practitioners are at a higher risk of being physically assaulted in the course of their work.

Given these dismal conditions, why would anyone want to seek employment in our criminal justice system? Who would want to put themselves in such vulnerable and dangerous situations? And for what? The salary is certainly not going to compensate for the increased risk of harm to themselves.

And yet, so many do! Increasingly, more and more of our students here at James Cook University are taking that leap of faith by enrolling in the Bachelor of Arts in Criminology or alternatively, remaining in their present degree, for example, law, psychology or social work, but enrolling in as many of our criminology modules as their current programme will allow – all in the hope of better preparing themselves for a career in the criminal justice system. While there are certainly many ways for these students to make a positive difference in their communities, this however is the path that THEY want to take in order to make our society a better place to live in, and flourish. I do not want to sound giddily utopic here but as far as I can tell – many of our wonderful students actually want to lay down their lives, limbs and peace of mind for something greater than themselves – US! They know the statistics. They know how tough it can get. And yet they still want to pursue this arduous life of service.

In the face of such courage, as well as optimism that they CAN make this world a better place to be in, I find myself likewise compelled to respond to that generous spirit of

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<sup>3</sup> Royal Assent given on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 2013 as Act No. 12 of 2013: <http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/bills.nsf/BillProgressPopup?openForm&ParentUNID=A754F8BEDAD1CA7948257B9600097972>.

self-sacrifice by teaching these students in a way that will more effectively prepare them for their challenging calling. As highlighted earlier, this, I believe, can be achieved through the employment of a humanistic pedagogy or teaching philosophy.

Let me just say at this juncture that I have not received any formal training in pedagogy or education. A great deal of what I do is modelled from other teachers whom I greatly admire from my own primary, secondary and tertiary schools in Malaysia, Singapore, England and Australia, as well as through self-study. I have also been greatly blessed by the nurturing and patient guidance of our Associate Deans of Learning and Teaching, and in particular, would like to acknowledge the expertise and influence that Dr Amy Forbes, Associate Professor Cecily Knight, and Associate Professor Kay Martinez, have had in helping me to become a better teacher.

### **1. Humanism in the Context of Education**

OK – So what does humanism mean in the context of education? Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer first coined the term “humanism” to describe a new liberal educational curriculum that was designed to facilitate a FULL expression of our humanity (Fincham, 2011, pp. 95-96).<sup>4</sup> According to Niethammer, education should not simply be concerned with the transmission of facts and figures, or even of reading, writing and arithmetic. It must also strive to bring to the surface our nobler selves, the best of what it means to be human. In my teaching, I have embraced such a philosophy that has at its core, a framework that is student-centred. Humanism is thus a philosophy that is steeped in optimism. It assumes that through proper guidance, we can liberate ourselves from our baser instincts – that underneath layers calloused by suffering, disappointment and materiality, our true nature nevertheless remains pure and altruistic – a position previously argued with great eloquence by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his work, ‘Emile or On Education’ (1762). Likewise, Abraham Maslow implicitly expressed his confidence in mankind’s innate goodness when he explained that our highest existential needs are fulfilled or actualised only when “what a man [or woman] can be, must be” (Maslow, 1954, p.46). Facilitating this most valuable of outcomes is key in any humanistic pedagogical agenda.

I joined James Cook University in 2009, carrying with me a legal professional background as well as experience of teaching criminology to police and narcotics officers in Singapore, all of whom were adult learners. Teaching such a discipline to primarily post-high school students here in Australia was therefore a relatively novel experience for me. Nevertheless, I was determined to guide and educate my ‘new’ younger students with the same approach that I had taken with my adult students – a way that would bring out the best in them, not just intellectually but also in their character and temperament. My previous teaching experiences had shown me that even adult students, with years of ‘living’ behind them, still came to my classes yearning for someone to help them reach their full potential; and not just in their careers but also as human beings. Perhaps more importantly, they also wanted to be worthy of that noble cause, whatever that ideal might be. They wanted to become better human beings; to develop a greater capacity to empathetically relate to the people they were tasked to serve and protect, as well as those

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<sup>4</sup> Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer published his book entitled “The Dispute between Philanthropinism and Humanism in the Educational Theory of our Time” in 1808.



they were supposed to constrain, to reform or to rehabilitate. As one of the principal teachers in their criminal justice programme, many of them looked to me for such advice, guidance and direction – a mentoring role that I soon realised would require from me a pedagogical ethos that would go beyond merely educating the mind, but also the body and spirit. Through much study, and personal reflection, I came to the conclusion that humanism and its application in education was the most appropriate pedagogy that I could employ in order to better scaffold these students in their exciting journeys of self-discovery and actualisation.

Humanism as a teaching philosophy has very deep roots in history – all the way back to Classical Greece and Imperial Rome actually. According to Nimrod Aloni, there are five distinct forms of humanistic education: the classical-cultural framework; the romantic-naturalistic approach; the existential paradigm; the radical-critical form; and finally, the eco-centric participatory model (2014, pp. 2-5). My approach to teaching however is an amalgamation as well as an adaptation of the first two frameworks, that is, the classical-cultural and the romantic-naturalistic paradigms. While the former accentuates and celebrates the individuality of each student as a most worthy end in itself, the latter strives to harness that self-actualisation of individual goodness within each of us, for the common good (Aloni, 2014, pp. 2-3).

How is this done though? Well, Bernard and Nicholas noted that the great Hellenic philosophers Xenophon, Plato and Isocrates were of the opinion that “... education was an art whose purpose was the harmonious development of human nature; physical, moral and intellectual” (1976, p. 12). In essence, to ensure that the student will be able to live life to the fullest not only for him or herself but for others as well, their education would have to envelope not only the cultivation of their mind but also of their body and spirit. Thus, a humanistic education would be characterised by a holistic curriculum that covered not only intellectual pursuits but also moral education, and physical training. It should also be delivered in a student or learner – centred manner. As Carl Rogers (1969) made it amply clear, for a humanistic framework to work, it must begin and end with the student’s best interests at heart.

## **2. Seven Core Humanistic Principles**

In this Lecture, I will therefore try to outline the core humanistic pedagogical principles that I have distilled, reflected upon, and employed from the relevant literature. I will also endeavour to demonstrate, through the selective use of anonymous student feedback derived from institutional data sources like the Student Feedback on Teaching (or SFT), as well as student correspondence, and photographs, the positive difference that I think I have made in my students’ transition into and out of university. These efforts likewise represent my contribution to JCU’s whole-of-institution approach to student advising and support that aims to cover every facet of a student’s life: Learning, University, Career, Life and Identity. While this is a deeply personal journey, I am hopeful that perhaps the following may also serve as a guide for others wanting to adopt a humanistic pedagogy in their work.

OK – so this is by no means a comprehensive list but the following are the seven humanistic principles that I actively employ on a day-to-day basis.

- Firstly, caring for the individual student;
- Secondly; aiding the student in self-discovery;
- Thirdly, facilitating self-actualisation or the fulfilling of their potential;
- Fourthly; intensive mentoring;
- Fifthly, cultivating sound judgment and a sense of nobility or honour;
- Sixthly, empowering the student; and
- Seventhly, leading by example.

#### ***a. Caring for the Individual Student***

Let us talk about the first one – caring for the individual student. Ideally, a teacher has to go that “extra mile” for their students because that will really help to build trust and respect between them. Students need to know that you care for them – not just in abstract terms but rather in some concrete and personal way. For example, in a first year criminology module that I taught a few years ago, I had 157 students. I took the effort to learn their names within the first 5 weeks of that subject. Teaching, as well as learning, was made so much easier after that, because the students knew that they really mattered to me. They knew that in my eyes, they were not simply “bums on seats”. One student even had this to say in their SFT Comments – “I still can’t believe that he has learnt all of our names!”<sup>5</sup>

When I interact with students in the classroom, simple gestures such as inquiring after them if they looked worried or unusually tired or even just offering a student a tissue paper when they sneezed during a lecture may seem inconsequential but are actually much appreciated by them. Tangible expressions of concern, both great and small, build trust; and with trust, effective mentoring at a later stage will be facilitated. One of my students wrote in their SFT Comments that it really “... makes a significant difference to the approach to learning, results and dedication of a student at university when a lecturer and tutor cares just as much about the student as an individual as they do the subject and content. It is very much appreciated.”<sup>6</sup> Even my final year criminology students, jaded though many may be, still appreciate these heartfelt gestures. In fact, one of them in their SFT Comments recounted with some joy and perhaps amusement: “[t]he welcome greetings when you first walk in the door and he remembers your name every time.”<sup>7</sup>

#### ***b. Aiding the Student in Self-discovery***

The next principle – aiding the students in self-discovery. As many of you will know, the process of discovering who they really ‘are’ is a critical stage in any student’s journey towards self-actualisation. One of my students was particularly appreciative of the effort I had taken to get to know her because we later discovered that she had a previously

<sup>5</sup> SFT Comment S/No. 19, CY1001, SP2 of 2010.

<sup>6</sup> SFT Comment S/No. 4, CY2001/3001, SP1 of 2010.

<sup>7</sup> SFT Comment S/No. 2, CY3456, SP1 of 2013.

undiagnosed cognitive condition. She wrote in her SFT Comments that: “[h]e has helped me and taken me to [the] councillor to help and get notice for my learning disability [sic].”<sup>8</sup>

In another case, a student who was doing a first year subject with me was questioning her decision to come to university. She was seriously thinking of leaving before I intervened and helped her to discern what she was best suited for. Months later, she emailed to say: “[l]ast year you helped me switch to law from education after I was really sick at the end of semester one. I just wanted to let you know [that] it's [sic] going so well. My grades are good and starting law was the best decision I ever made.”<sup>9</sup> Funnily enough, that was the ONLY criminology subject this student ever enrolled in! So, I am not too sure what that says of our criminology programme but I am not going to dwell too much on such uncomfortable questions!

### **c. Facilitating Self Actualization or the Fulfilling of their Potential**

Anyway, let us consider the next principle – facilitating self-actualisation and the fulfilment of their potential. Once I know what the individual student wants out of life through discussions either individually or in small groups, I then personalise the criminological programme and other scaffolding structures around those hopes and aspirations – taking specific account of the student’s actual strengths and weaknesses. By way of illustration, one of my first year students was going through a particularly challenging time with her family and partner, and wanted to give up her studies. She had however previously intimated to me how much she wanted to join the Australian Federal Police, and was disappointed that she lacked the resilience to achieve this life-long dream. She had previously enrolled and withdrawn from three other degrees. So I made her a deal – stay for one more semester and allow me to mentor her before she makes up her mind as to whether she should give up her studies altogether.

I warned her though that mentoring would entail: (1) helping her select future subjects; (2) attending weekly face-to-face consultations outside of her normal university timetable; (3) getting her to go for regular counselling sessions with qualified professionals; (4) encouraging her to exercise and learn martial arts; and (5) frequently emailing her thought-provoking readings in criminology so as to generate increased interest in the discipline. She stayed on, and at the end of that period, emailed me, saying: “I will be praying in the holidays that next semester I can achieve my goals and dreams because I am sick and tired of not reaching my full potential and letting it [eat] me up inside [sic]. I also wanted to let you know that you are an inspiration to me and I suspect every other student you teach both in the knowledge you obtain and your charisma that you portray.”<sup>10</sup> I am happy to say that she has since graduated, is currently enrolled in our part-time criminology honours programme, while working fulltime in a supervisory position in the criminal justice system.

### **d. Intensive Monitoring**

Following on from the previous principle, intensive mentoring from a humanistic perspective is an ideal vehicle to facilitate the process of self-actualisation. My experience in teaching suggests that a closer or more directive form of supervision is necessary when

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<sup>8</sup> SFT Comment S/No. 9, CY1001, SP2 of 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Email from student dated 17 May 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Email from student dated 10 November 2009.

mentoring students who are: (1) burdened by challenging circumstances; (2) lack a strong basic foundation in the disciplinary content; and/or (3) require additional scaffolding for character-building. As one of my senior criminology students noted in their SFT Comments, my more directive style of mentoring went “... *above and beyond any expectation of ... [my] position in terms of encouragement (also encouraging lifelong learning skills), support and modelling of behaviour in terms of attitude to work, peers, and fulfilling your true potential.*”<sup>11</sup>

That said, getting the right balance between being a good teacher-mentor and being overly manipulative and domineering – ala-*Spengali* – is very fine indeed, particularly when such intensive mentoring may be considered by some to be overly invasive and dictatorial. I am always asking my students to tell me if I am behaving too much like a stalker when I mentor them! I was therefore greatly heartened to read this SFT Comment from a student: “*Dr Mark was a very helpful tutor, understanding of the individual [student’s] needs and helpful and friendly without being too intrusive at the same time [sic].*”<sup>12</sup> Others have also appreciated this more hands-on-approach: “*Great Mentor-Mentee relationship skills*” wrote another in their SFT Comments.<sup>13</sup>

#### ***e. Cultivating Sound Judgment and a Sense of Nobility or Honour***

Moving on to the principle of cultivating sound judgment and a sense of nobility or honour – a good education should do more than just develop academic or cognitive prowess. It should not be, as Carl Rogers once wrote, only from “the neck up” (1969, pp. 3-4). Many of my students are aware that I often try to impart some deeper lesson than that which is obvious, and one even noted in the SFT Comments how I taught “...*not only the subject material, but morals, a love of learning and is inspirational in ... [his] dedication to this job and ... [his] students.*”<sup>14</sup> Another mused in an email to me that: “*[e]veryday, [she] left ... [her] class knowing ... [she] had learned something important and exciting, whether it be an academic or a life lesson.*”<sup>15</sup>

#### ***f. Empowering the Student***

The next principle that I would like you to think about is empowering the students. There is an internal as well as an external dimension to this principle. Firstly, having confidence in your students, and showing them that despite their need to be mentored, that by itself does not take away their agency and self-worth. If your students can see that you believe in them in a tangible way through the expenditure of your time, effort and concern, you will ultimately also give them an equally persuasive reason to believe in themselves; to engender a self-belief of worthiness and capability. This is what I would describe as internal empowerment. So for example, in a SFT Comment from a student, they noted that I treated “... *students as though they are equal and more than capable of achieving what they want.*”<sup>16</sup> In a personal handwritten note from another student, they wrote that: “*[y]ou are the first person who has truly believed in me. Thank you for persevering and holding me*

<sup>11</sup> SFT Comment S/No. 1, CY3456, SP1 of 2011.

<sup>12</sup> SFT Comment S/No. 11, CY1001, SP2 of 2009

<sup>13</sup> SFT Comment S/No. 7, SY1001, SP1 of 2012.

<sup>14</sup> SFT Comment S/No. 20, CY1001, SP2 of 2009.

<sup>15</sup> Email from student dated 22 July 2009.

<sup>16</sup> SFT Comment S/No. 21, CY1001, SP2 of 2009.

*above water in a difficult part of my life.*”<sup>17</sup> The mature-aged student who wrote this has since graduated, and won not only the university’s coursework medal, but was likewise awarded a first class honours – a far cry from when they were at the brink of giving up their studies just a few years earlier.

Secondly, empowering entails ensuring that your students will be in the ‘right place’, at the ‘right time’, and with the ‘right attributes’. This would be the external empowerment component, and will require the implementation of a holistic educational programme that encompasses scaffolding across a range of dimensions: mind, body and spirit; as well as opportunities to exercise those right attributes, for example by providing: (1) work-integrated-learning internships; (2) in-house criminology conferences and workshops; (3) paid or unpaid research assistantships; (4) paid sessional tutorship; and (5) martial arts training classes, etc.

#### ***g. Leading by Example***

One of the most effective ways of mentoring is through one’s own personal conduct; both good and bad. Everything a teacher-mentor does can be a teaching moment, and I reinforce this by accentuating the fact that while “no one is perfect”, particularly me, we are all nevertheless called to do the right and noble thing. Even if we fail – and I remind my students constantly that I am just as prone to error and poor judgement as the next person – our obligation nonetheless is to keep trying; and when students see you do that, it inspires them to do the same. Sometimes though, I am not too sure whether my students fully appreciate what I am trying to impart here, so I was really encouraged when one of them actually wrote in their SFT Comments that: “*Dr Mark leads by example and expects nothing of others he wouldn’t do himself.*”<sup>18</sup>

## **2. Operationalising the Humanistic Principles**

OK – so these principles sound good in theory. Operationalising them on a day-to-day basis however requires a great deal of time and effort. So, for example, I conduct frequent meetings with students who have expressed an interest in studying criminology, both individually and in small groups, so as to get to know them better. This will then allow me to discover their strengths, deficits, and goals in life. Thereafter, I will draw up a plan in order to help them achieve those life-goals by linking them with other people who can facilitate these ambitions; personalise their criminology programme; provide career guidance, including conducting mock interviews, as well as editing their resumes and cover letters, if necessary; match their interests, passions and capacities to a range of appropriate criminal justice occupations; help them select relevant criminology or cognate subjects depending on their choice of criminal justice career; and identify and put in place whatever additional scaffolding that individual student requires.

To get them excited about their criminological studies and future careers in the criminal justice system, I also regularly organise a range of student activities the whole year round. This would include:

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<sup>17</sup> Personal handwritten note from a student, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> SFT Comment S/No. 1, CY2001/3001, SP1 of 2010.

*i. Criminology Lunches* – where I can get to know the students better in a semi-social setting, and give them a chance to speak to other like-minded students.



*ii. Criminology Workshops and Mini-conferences* – where I bring together like-minded academics, students and criminal justice agencies to network and talk about interesting criminal justice issues.







iii. *JCU Open Day Criminology Stall* – so as to allow the students the opportunity to build community ties and have fun in the process.



*iv. Provide Students with Access to my Personally Owned Police and Prison Paraphernalia and Antiques* – letting them “play” and take photographs of genuine police truncheons, handcuffs, prison ball-and-chain, Bobby helmets.



*v. Criminal Justice Movie and Lunch* – where the students can have fun, food, and watch classic crime movies like “The Outsiders”, which many of you will know is a wonderful film on juvenile delinquency.





**vi. Special Criminology Lectures** – where I organise a talk on some entertaining aspect of the criminal justice system, for example, the last one was on “The most gruesome punishments ever – Come and watch!”.

**vii. Criminological Quizzes** – with fun themes like: “How well do you know your neighbourhood serial killer?”; “Celebrity Mug Shots”; and “Giants of the Criminological World” etc.



**viii. Criminal Justice Agency Recruitment Talks** – where the students can build networks with criminal justice practitioners.

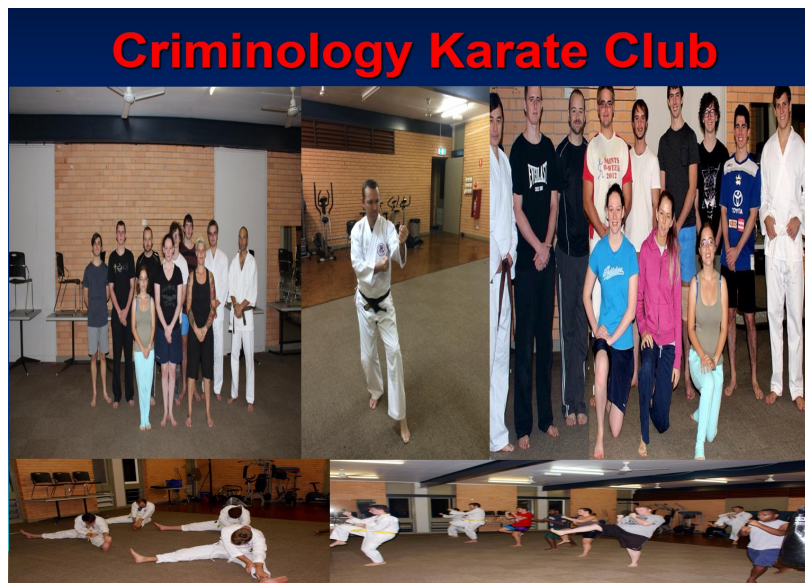
**ix. Criminal Justice Agency Internships (a Work-Integrated-Learning initiative)** – where students through competitive and non-competitive internships can get real-world experience of working in a criminal justice organisation.



*x. Facebook Criminological Network* – where current and former students are able to interact with me and one another. This forum also regularly provides them with job and internship notices, interesting articles, events, discussions etc.



*xi. Criminology Karate Club* – this is primarily for those students who want to join law enforcement and correctional services to build up their fitness and develop self-defence skills.



## Challenges and Disappointments

As wonderful as all of these initiatives may sound, I wish I could say that employing such a humanistic pedagogical framework was smooth-sailing and full of success stories. Unfortunately, I cannot. As you can imagine organising the aforementioned activities is time consuming and requires a lot of effort, although thankfully a number of my senior

criminology students often step-up and help me with them. It is also expensive because most of it is paid out of my own pocket. Given the overall climate of financial uncertainty in this country, university budgets have likewise become tighter and tighter, so I am actually quite embarrassed to ask my Department, College or Division for funding. Furthermore, investing so much of myself in these endeavours can be really emotionally draining because while these activities do inspire many of my criminology students, sadly a significant minority are quite apathetic about them, and I sometimes feel a little sad that I am not able to “reach” or engage them more. There is also an opportunity cost factor involved for me professionally because my humanistic pedagogical efforts have left me with less time to publish or seek external grants. Nor are any of these endeavours, well ... apart from this Last Lecture for which I am very grateful, directly linked to tangible academic rewards, for example, sessional support, promotions, internal grants, university teaching awards etc. And finally, fortunately or unfortunately, depending on who you talk to – I am getting older – so I am not as vigorous as I used to be when I first came to JCU in 2009 as a young spring chicken! I cannot do as much as I would like to anymore!

### **So is it all Worthwhile?**

Well, from a disciplinary point of view, it does look like the criminology programme in Townsville is flourishing, thank God! In this regard, I am indebted to Dr Nick Emtage for providing me with the relevant institutional data to support this assertion.

In collaboration with my extremely competent colleagues, Dr Garry Coventry, our former Head of Criminology who has since retired, Associate Professor Glenn Dawes, and Dr Theresa Petray from Townsville, as well as Dr Jim Coughlan, who has also retired, and Dr Roger Wilkinson from Cairns, the figures for criminology since 2011 when I became the Bachelor of Arts major coordinator has looked healthy.

Before I show you the figures, please bear in mind that while the absolute numbers are quite small, this however should be understood in the wider context of declining student enrolments in many of our majors and even degrees over the past few years. So, while actual numbers are relatively small, the growth in this discipline is actually quite encouraging particularly in the face of declining enrolments, more generally.

So, for example: Equivalent Full-Time Student Load (EFTSL)<sup>19</sup> figures for criminology on the Townsville Campus only (as there is no longer a criminology major offered in Cairns) is quite promising.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>EFTSL</b>	26.6	41.0	48.0	48.4	64.1

This is the number of enrolled students in criminology by year (internal and external).

<b>Year</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>No. of students</b>	60	76	94	87	103

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<sup>19</sup> Tertiary study in Australia employs the concept of the EFTSL as being “a measure of the standard annual study load of a student undertaking a course on a full-time basis”: <https://www.jcu.edu.au/students/enrolment/glossary-of-terms>.



This is the number of commencing students in criminology by year.

Year	No. of students
2011	28
2012	34
2013	37
2014	30
2015	40

And finally these are the retention figures of criminology students by year

Year	Retention %
2010/11	67%
2011/12	75%
2012/13	77%
2013/14	70%
2014/15	76%

As for me professionally, my SFT scores have been consistently above the university average since 2009. I received letters of commendation for ‘Perspectives on Criminology’ in 2013 and 2014, as well as for ‘Deviance, Crime and Society’ in 2013. I am especially pleased to receive a Faculty Commendation for Crime Prevention and Community Safety’ for being in the top 10% of all subjects taught at James Cook University for Semester 1 of 2013. In addition, I was a recipient of one of this year’s JCU Inclusive Practice Awards in recognition of my support for students with a disability here at the university.

For me personally though, getting a surprise birthday cake during a lecture or seeing my blackboard decorated in this way before the last tutorial class of the semester is pretty cool as well.



## North Queensland’s ‘Future Crime Fighters’

So North Queensland, these are going to be some of YOUR ‘future crime fighters’!



And this is a photograph of one of your future – FUTURE crime fighters!



### Conclusion and Acknowledgements

Given the gravity of this event, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to God for this opportunity to share with you some of my thoughts on this really important issue. I would also like to thank the JCU selection committee comprising of Professor Janet Greeley, Professor Colin Ryan, Professor Rosita Henry, and Associate Professor Glenn Dawes for taking a chance and offering me a job way back in 2007. I am likewise indebted to Professor Robbie Robertson, Professor Rosita, and Professor Nola Alloway for always giving me opportunities to serve our colleagues and students. Thank you so much, and God willing, I hope that I have not let you down in any way. I would like to thank the VC for allowing me to address you today, the Student Association for deciding to go with me instead of another much better candidate, and to all those involved in the organising of this exciting event, in particular, Ms Kiara Liessmann, for her tireless effort and support.

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Last but certainly not the least, my wonderful students for being such a blessing to me. Every morning, I wake up enthused because of you. May God always bless you, and the fruits of your labour.

As for everyone else, thank you so much for joining us today, and God bless you too.



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