

Mr. Alexander Ian Mitchell

Communications and New Media Programme



Mr. Alexander Mitchell firmly believes that the theories that his students learn must be firmly connected with real world skills and understanding. Thus, a key component of his teaching philosophy is that students should learn through doing. His modules are thus designed so that students learn to apply the theories he teaches in hands-on projects. For example, in NM3216 (Game Design I), students are required to embark on group projects wherein they design their own game and play-test it. This enables the students to see more clearly *how* games work, and also *why* a game works or fails to. This process enables them to connect theories about game design with their own hands-on work. In his emphasis on learning through doing, Mr Mitchell epitomizes the

teacher who does not give his students fish, but teaches them how to fish. He thus provides them with the tools necessary for life-long learning.

Mr. Mitchell is also a dedicated teacher who gives close attention to his students' work. In a context where learning takes place through doing, effective learning can only be achieved if the instructor provides careful feedback on what the students have done. Students regularly comment that he is very effective in providing constructive and helpful comments on their work. For example, a student from NM3216 notes that he 'is very insightful and gives very very [*sic*] good comments to each group regarding their game design'.

Apart from his detailed feedback on their projects, students also point out that he is a very effective lecturer who is clear in his explanation of concepts, and makes effective use of examples to bring his points across. He encourages critical thinking and active student participation. Students regularly note that he is friendly and approachable and 'is more like a mentor and friend'.

He has also introduced innovative assessment methods to encourage student learning and exchange. To foster continuous enquiry and reflection, he provides a set of questions on their weekly readings and requires students to earn a portion of their grade by posting their answers on their blogs. Students are then encouraged to read each others' blogs and post comments. This provides a forum for student interchange.

He has taught a spectrum of modules involving both small and large classes. In 2007/08, he taught classes ranging in size from 21 – 139 students. His teaching scores are generally above both department and faculty averages – often by a considerable margin. He has also been actively involved in module development. Modules he has developed for the Communications and New Media Programme include NM2217 Creating Interactive Media and NM3216 Game Design I (both proposed with Irina Aristarkova), NM3321 Interactivity and Everyday Life, NM3222 Interactive Storytelling and NM 4209 Game Design II. His profile, all in all, is that of an innovative, passionate and committed teacher who aims to bring out the best in his students.