



ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC UNIVERSITIES  
ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ATLANTIQUE

*Award for Excellence in Teaching*  
*2013*  
*Distinguished Teaching Award*

**DR. RUSSELL WYETH**

Students in Dr. Russell Wyeth's courses learn to 'think like biologists'. An Associate Professor in the Department of Biology at St. Francis Xavier University, Russell Wyeth equips his students with biological knowledge and critical thinking skills to analyse and understand the natural world around them.

Key to Russell's success, whether in large lecture classes, in laboratories, in the field, or online, is his determination to engage and support all students in the learning process. Each learning opportunity is orchestrated around a theme with observations, relevant examples, images, videos, pair-share discussions, creative assignments, and other activities to draw the students in. Students are particularly appreciative of his lecture guides which aid their note-taking and study, and of his infectious enthusiasm for the subject. A former student described Russell's teaching as something that "... begins with his love of the material. Russell plainly finds biology an endlessly exhilarating subject. Perhaps more importantly though, he understands *why* he finds Biology so interesting. This enables him to transmit this excitement to his students. Russell sees the elegance inherent in nature's products and invites his class to share this view. More than anything, this inspires the class not only to learn, but to appreciate the subject, a process that can have an indelible effect on his students."

An Outstanding Teaching Award recipient at St. Francis Xavier University in 2012, Russell is recognized for assisting his students in developing the analytical skills necessary for answering questions about the natural world. He explicitly teaches the scientific method using a process he and colleague Dr. Marjorie Wonham coined Q-H-E-D—Questions, Hypothesis, and Experimental Design. This process, based on the ideas of biological patterns and biological mechanisms, provides students with a conceptual framework for understanding and applying the scientific method to answer their questions.

Russell has critically examined how teaching and learning technologies can enhance student learning. He was a leader in the adoption of Moodle as the University's course management system and served as coordinator of campus-wide support for the system from 2010 to 2012. Focusing on increased student engagement with course material and increased instructor-student interaction, Russell quickly became an expert in Moodle's features that facilitated course planning, communication, material dissemination, feedback, and assessment. He has been very generous with his time, sharing his expertise with others to facilitate their effective use of the system.

Dr. Russell Wyeth is clearly an exceptional teacher worthy of the Association of Atlantic Universities' 2013 Distinguished Teaching Award.