During the academic year of 2012 DATTA Vic received a number of high quality nominations for the Teacher of the Year Awards for Secondary Educator of the Year and for Leadership in Product Design and Technology and Systems Engineering Education. These Awards celebrate excellence in the teaching and leadership in Product Design and Technology and System Engineering Education in Victoria.

**Secondary Educator of the Year Award**

This year DATTA Vic was proud to present this Award to two very deserving teachers, Tina Fitzgerald and Adrian Konieczny. Both Tina and Adrian are joint winners of the Secondary Educator of the Year Award for excellence and innovation in the teaching of Product Design and Technology and/or Systems Engineering Education.

**Tina Fitzgerald**

Tina Fitzgerald currently works at Horsham College and has been a valued member of staff for the past ten years. Tina has demonstrated her ability to drive excellence within her teaching of Product Design and Technology, specialising in Textiles. She continually strives to enhance the learning environment and promote innovation within her teaching of Design and Technology Education and across the curriculum. Tina works above and beyond expectations, including working with students during holiday periods as well as being a part of the College’s School Improvement Group. She has delivered projects which not only enhance the learning experiences of her students, but also the local community, such as, organising fashion parades for the International Women’s Day Gala Dinner. Tina is a committed and dedicated educator who actively seeks to share her passion of Product Design and Technology Education with students, colleagues and the wider community.

**Adrian Konieczny**

Adrian Konieczny has worked at Orbost Secondary College for 8 years and is much respected by peers, parents, students and members of the wider community. Adrian is a passionate educator who specialises in Wood Technology and has demonstrated his enthusiasm for the subject through re-designing the whole Wood Curriculum at the College. He delivers engaging and meaningful units of work which inspire his students to strive for excellence. Adrian is constantly integrating technology into other aspects of school life, such as managing the construction of a vegetable garden area and has been the driving force for the building of the chook shed. As a leading teacher, Adrian models expert teaching. He is a positive influence on all teaching staff at Orbost Secondary College and was a positive driving force with the design and implementation of the year 8 sustainability unit, which was recognised as a finalist in the 2011 Regional Community Awards.

Nominations for the DATTA Vic TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2013 will be accepted from March 2013 until November 2013. Please refer to our website for further information [www.datta.vic.edu.au](http://www.datta.vic.edu.au).
Leadership in Product Design & Technology Education Award

This Award is for excellence in the person’s contribution to Product Design and Technology and/or Systems Engineering Education, either for ongoing work or for a special contribution during the past year. DATTA Vic are proud to present this Award to Craig Watson from Kardinia International College.

Craig Watson

Craig Watson has provided excellence in the teaching and promotion of Technology Education not only at Kardinia International School, but within the wider Secondary setting in the Geelong area. Craig has actively delivered workshops to support colleagues at Kardinia International School and at several DATTA Vic Conferences. Craig has undertaken an advertising campaign within the school to promote the benefits of Technology subjects and educating students and parents about tertiary pathways and career paths that are available to students who select Technology within their curriculum choices. As well as the promotion of Product Design and Technology Education, Craig has worked collaboratively with other subject areas across the curriculum. Craig has clearly demonstrated his passion and leadership skills in the field of technology education and is a truly deserving candidate for this Award.

Lets get to know our Award Winners.........

Q What made you decide to become a teacher?

Tina - I enjoyed my schooling and loved learning and decided to continue that in my career. Hands on subjects such as art and needlework were a lot of fun and I enjoyed creating things.

Adrian - The main reason in changing careers paths for me was the challenge to educate and inspire students into furniture making and design. To teach them the skills to produce quality furniture is very rewarding.

Craig - Being a cabinet maker by trade and having a wife who was a teacher it was too difficult to get up and go to work at 6am when I knew she would be sleeping in during her holidays I wanted to be the one sleeping in!! I also enjoyed the work that I did but realised there was no future in it for longevity for having a healthy body (have you ever met an old tradie with a good back?) by the age of 40. It seemed like a logical choice to move into education when there was a subject that wasn’t too different from what I was already doing and I possessed the necessary skills to pass on to students.

Q Who or what inspires you?

Tina - Innovation in design; people who try new things and think creatively to keep life interesting whilst considering sustainability – I think “cleverness” is inspiring.

Adrian - Working with local or recycled hardwoods are certainly areas which inspire me. Peter Rock, my Principal at Cobden Technical School was one person who invested a lot of time in me to become the teacher I am today. From dealing with classroom management issues to thinking outside the square and backing my judgement when designing curriculum has had a lasting effect on the way I deliver curriculum today. He modelled everything he asked of his staff, especially positive relationships with students.

Craig - I get inspired by my family and my work colleagues.
Q What do you believe to be your greatest teaching achievement and why?

Tina - I had 2 year 12 students last year achieve a study score of 50 in textiles – a fantastic result. I am happy with the amount of community engagement fostered through the fashion parades I have run at the Wimmera Machinery Field Days, our Centenary Celebrations and International Women’s day events. My involvement in the planning and creation of two murals that have beautified the school grounds, this will be followed up by a BBQ area with a flowing, creative seating area incorporating mosaic and metal sculpture. This project is currently underway and will combine a range of students – year 9 challenge program, VCAL, the SRC, metalwork classes and a family working bee. One of my goals is for the students to develop pride in their work and in our school and I feel these projects foster this.

Adrian - Certainly working with a team of teachers and developing a 10 week integrated Sustainability unit has been rewarding. Educating and making students aware of the issues faced are important in all aspects of life.

Craig - In a previous job I was involved with the set up and implementation of a trade related secondary school program. The Australian Technical Colleges (ATC) were an initiative under the Howard government and it was the best technology based program I have ever been involved with. Unfortunately through changes in governments and policies these are no longer functioning under the same model. It was great to see students who were interested in technology education being taught in a manner that revolved around their skill set and producing quality outcomes through all areas of their school, work and social lives.

Q Why are you passionate about Product Design and Technology Education?

Tina - I think you need to have passion in the area you teach in, to inspire and motivate your students. I think textiles is a dying art and I do all I can to promote this valuable life skill with all my students.

Adrian - I enjoyed cabinet making as a trade and it was a natural ‘next step’ to teach, inspire and motivate students to become interested in the area. It is also rewarding when students visually see their achievements and can display their progress.

Craig - Because it is the BEST form of education that is being taught in schools today, it makes students have to think for themselves as there is no one correct answer to a problem that is being solved. It applies all other curriculum areas and gives them a practical application where students see relevance to what they have been taught in maths, science, English etc. It makes students critical thinkers being able to think about why they do things in a particular way and why their way is the best way in producing the best outcomes to their models.

Q What do you want to achieve in your teaching career in the next 5 years?

Tina - I am currently doing a leadership program and as part of that I am in a group planning a “Wimmera Top Designs and Top Arts” events to be held at the Wimmera Trade Training Centre. Our goal is to get all 12 partnership schools involved and promote the work of our talented students. I would like to see this exhibition become an annual event and have junior classes visiting to become inspired to do PD&T and Art to VCE level.

Adrian - Continue learning from others through observation and feedback, from peers and students.

Craig - I would like to see the technology stream of education be taken more seriously in schools and it being appreciated by policy makers to see that it gives skills far greater than the practical ones being taught. If I could have some sort of influence in that occurring I would feel like I have achieved something for the better of our subject.

Q Why is it important to teach Product Design and Technology?

Tina - Students need more practical skills! Life isn’t all about a computer screen. Make, create and produce – we need to encourage the “hands on” stuff.

Adrian - Product and Design caters for all learning styles and domains. It is important for us as educators to demonstrate and teach the possibilities in this area.

Craig - It prepares students to participate in tomorrow’s rapidly changing technologies, by learning to think creatively. The subject calls for students to become problem solvers, both as individuals and in groups looking for needs, wants...
and opportunities and responding to them by developing a range of ideas, making products and systems. Practical skills are combined with an understanding of aesthetics, social and environmental issues, function and industrial practices. In the learning process pupils can reflect on and evaluate present and past D&T, its uses and effects. Through D&T, all pupils can become discriminating and informed users of products, and become innovators.

Q What would be your advice to new teachers of Product Design and Technology and Systems Engineering when starting their first year of teaching?

Tina - Remember – it’s fun! Have some “no fail” projects to guarantee success and instil the enthusiasm required for more advanced work.

Adrian - Relationships are so crucial in teaching. Obviously content is important, however if you don’t invest your time developing positive relationships and catering for individual learning styles, I believe most would find it hard to achieve success consistently. Be flexible and know your students. Not only educationally but any factors socially which could be holding students back..

Craig - Remember why you became a teacher, what you wanted to do with the students, things, projects you wanted to teach and go for it, if someone says no that can’t be done find a way to make it happen. All too often in schools we are restricted in what we can do through time, resources, support, the fact that it hasn’t been done that way before. If you have an idea and are passionate about it teach it and the students will learn and enjoy it. Also ask as many questions as you can, visit other schools don’t feel like there isn’t any support for you, I have never met a Tech teacher who won’t help or will keep their ideas to themself.

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