

At medical school, I remember struggling to memorise lists of facts to regurgitate for exams. I struggled because of the didactic and unengaging way these facts were often taught, and I am not alone. Many medical students become frustrated trying to memorise facts, especially when they cannot see their direct clinical relevance (Biggs, 1999). The human brain is wired to remember things through association (Brown, 2014), which is why storytelling is a key memory tool for transferring knowledge in many indigenous cultures (Lawrence, 2016). Indeed, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) culture uses songlines, stories, and physical landscapes as visual aids to convey vast amounts of knowledge to future generations (Kelly, 2016). I have Samoan ethnicity and was brought up in Papua New Guinea, with close connections to rural and indigenous communities. My connection to indigenous cultures and my appreciation of the 'power of narrative' influences my teaching philosophy and approach. The James Cook University (JCU) Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) program is a six-year course comprising three years of largely classroom-based subjects, followed by three years of mostly clinical, workplace-based learning within the health care system. The program specialises in training doctors with a passion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health as well as vulnerable populations in remote and rural settings. In fact,

In Emergency Medicine, if someone is very sick, we use an approach called the ABCDE approach (Thim, 2010). This structure prioritises treatment of the airway first, then breathing, then circulation (heart) and continues with more treatments in order of urgency. In keeping with the ABCDE approach, my new curriculum was written with airway diagnoses being studied first, followed by shortness of breath diagnoses, and chest pain diagnoses. Students have appreciated my changes to the curriculum: "*I definitely approve of the arrangement of the subject into symptoms rather than systems. I feel like this worked very well*" (Formal Student Feedback, 2018). Within one year of my new curriculum being introduced, student satisfaction scores regarding the organisation of the subject more than doubled from 2.4 to 4.9 out of 5 and have consistently stayed above 4.8 in the four years since.

Many medical students use study aids such as flashcards and mind maps to help in their study (Sleight 2006), and once the curriculum was changed in 2017 to focus on symptoms, I created a new resource in 2018 that converted each symptom into a selection of memorable case stories: the EPIC cards.



the broader community and public media. In 2021, I was named the overall winner of the [award] across JCU's Australian and Singaporean campuses. I was subsequently invited to present to teaching staff in Singapore about my curriculum and delivery methods for the Emergency Medicine subject. The Dean of the JCU College of Medicine and Dentistry, Prof. Richard Murray, commented on my teaching style during a personalised training course stating, *"as educators, you've left us in no doubt as to your natural talent as a teacher. It's a great example"* (2019). In addition, the Head of the Townsville Clinical School, Prof. Tarun Sen Gupta, emphasised that *"he [Zaf] doesn't just teach the material—it is learned, and retained, and applied where relevant"* (2019). Most significantly at the National level, in 2018, after my very first year of lecturing, I was awarded the national [award]. The AMSA Awards are *"the highest honour bestowed on a teacher by medical students across Australia"* (AMSA President Alex Farrell). AMSA represents 17,000 medical students across Australia and the Award was selected from over 90 nominations of academics across the country and *"represents students' appreciation and recognition of teachers who have made an especially positive impact on their studies"* (AMSA). This prompted former JCU Vice Chancellor, Prof. Sandra Harding, to write to me personally, stating, *"I am always pleased to see our staff recognised for their professional achievements. This [AMSA] award is a great testament to your work in teaching, engaging and inspiring our medical students"* (2018). In 2018, The Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM) described my new Emergency Medicine module as *"completely revolutionising ED teaching"* through the creation of *"additional learning aids like flash-*