

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE4344

Brewer, Ilma Mary

(1915 - 2006)

Born	19150101, North Sydney New South Wales Australia
Died	20061231
Occupation	Academic, Botanist, Educator

Summary

Ilma Mary Brewer studied and later taught botany at the University of Sydney. She developed new methods of teaching based on the principle that a student learnt more by working at their own pace and through self-instruction. She outlined her methods in *Learning more and teaching less: a decade of innovation in self-instruction and small group learning*, published in 1985.

As well as working in academia, Brewer also spent time working for the Australian military and in private industry in the United States.

She attended North Sydney Girls' High School before enrolling at the University of Sydney in the 1930s.

Events

1974 - 1974

Appointed a staff associate in the Regional Teacher Training Centre for Health Personnel at the University of New South Wales

1942 - 1943

Assistant Lecturer in Biology, University of Sydney

1936 - 1936

Bachelor of Science, University of Sydney

1946 - 1947

Director of research in a chemical factory in New Jersey, the United States

1942 - 1942

Doctorate of Science, University of Sydney

1937 - 1941

Holder of a Linnean Macleay fellowship in Ecology in the Botany Department at the University of Sydney.

1979 - 1984

Honorary research affiliate in the Department of Anatomy, University of Sydney

1963 - 1970

Lecturer in Botany/Biology, University of Sydney

1937 - 1937

Master of Science, University of Sydney

1970 - 1978

Promoted to Senior Lecturer in Biological Sciences, University of Sydney

1969 - 1969

Received a special grant from the Vice-Chancellor to establish an audio-visual centre for self-paced, independent study in Plant Anatomy

1978 - 1978

Retired

1957 - 1958

Returned to the staff at University of Sydney as a part-time Demonstrator

1982 - 1982

The Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia granted Brewer honorary life membership in recognition of her contribution to research and development in tertiary education

1939 - 1945

Worked with Army Intelligence to map the vegetation in the coastal regions of New South Wales.

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Resource Section

Brewer, Ilma Mary (1915 - 2006), McCarthy, G. J.,
<http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/bsparcs/biogs/P000256b.htm>

Book

Learning more and teaching less: a decade of innovation in self-instruction and small group learning, Brewer, Ilma Mary, 1985

Archival resources

University of Sydney, Archives

Personal archives of BREWER Ilma Mary [1915-2006]

Author Details

Isobelle Barrett Meyering

Created 27 January 2026

Last modified 27 January 2026