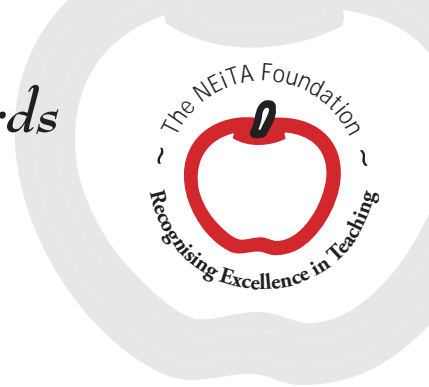


2007 National Excellence In Teaching Awards

State and Territory Teaching Excellence Award Recipient



Anna DiNuzzo

Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Education Primary (Post Graduate)

South Street (Moe) Primary School, Moe, Victoria

Nominated by: School parent

Position: Primary Teacher • Level taught: General Primary • School type: Government • Town: Moe • Category: Primary • State: VIC

Providing the personal touch for each and every student

The secret to Anna's success and popularity at South Street Primary School lies in her thorough preparation and attention to each student's needs. At the beginning of each year she devotes a great deal of time to assessing each student's knowledge and skills. She then plans her curriculum incorporating how she can build on the strengths of each student, and work on his or her weaknesses. She values student input in this process and runs what she terms a "democratic classroom".

Anna also coordinates the *Bridges Program* – a very successful literacy recovery program. She also develops tailored *Individual Learning Improvement Plans* for any students who need extra help.

Insight

Q: In your opinion, what makes a good teacher?

A: Passion, dedication, flexibility, and the desire to make a difference through the relationships you form with the children and the curriculum you implement. Being 'young at heart' and having a good sense of humor always helps too.

Q: How do you maintain your enthusiasm for teaching?

A: That's easy – the kids! They give me a sense of purpose, provide meaningful work and constant challenges while allowing me to be creative and have lots of fun.

Q: In hindsight, what do you wish your training provided you with more of?

A: University training is inadequate for preparing today's teachers. It should be more of an apprenticeship style system where you spend most of your time in classrooms learning from real teachers.

Q: What is the most difficult aspect of teaching today?

A: I entered teaching believing it was as simple as following the curriculum but it isn't. There is a complex range of social, emotional and physical issues that impact on effectively educating children.

Q: What is your greatest challenge as a teacher?

A: Within each class there is a great range of abilities and I find it a constant challenge to cater for all students' needs.

Q: How has teaching changed over the years?

A: I have noticed a growing trend for large amounts of paperwork for accountability and assessment and also a move towards working collaboratively in teams and sharing ideas to improve practices.

Q: What is the single most important thing you, as a teacher, can do to connect with individual students?

A: Listen to them, share with them, care about them, and show them this in everything you plan and do.

Q: If you were the Minister for Education, Science and Training for a week, what would you try to change?

A: Ensure a maximum of 20 students per class, provide funding for a Physical Education teacher in all schools and take teachers' wages from the school global budget so principals can hire based upon their school's needs, rather than affordability.

Q: What keeps you awake at night?

A: Reflecting on how to improve my practice, and make learning fun and engaging while catering to a range of abilities. The day I stop worrying is the day I should stop teaching.

Q: If your students could describe you in three words, what would they say?

A: Fun, active, and that I have high expectations.

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