

2007 National Excellence In Teaching Awards

State and Territory Teaching Excellence Award Recipient



Anne-Marie Reeks

Diploma of Teaching

Monash Kindergarten, Monash, South Australia

Nominated By: Monash Kindergarten Governing Council

Position: Early Childhood Teacher • Level taught: Early Childhood • School type: Government • Town: Monash • Category: Early Childhood • State: SA

Preschoolers benefit from technology-based innovation

Anne-Marie Reeks from the Monash Kindergarten provides a play-based, constructivist learning environment. She ensures that the children attending this small rural-based community kindergarten, experience the newest learning-based technologies.

Anne-Marie has integrated the innovative KidiPad interactive technology into her curriculum. Through this new technology children engage in enjoyable, stimulating and multi-sensory learning activities. KidiPads utilised in a play-based learning environment increase and stimulate language, literacy and numeracy skills among children. KidiPads help increase student participation, enhance collaborative play and explore multicultural diversity through music and language.

Anne-Marie has been recognised as a *Leading Light* by the South Australian Computers in Education Group. She has received a *Children's Week Play Award* for her significant contribution to the development of children's play-based learning, and in 2006, she was appointed an *eTeacher* by the Technology School of the Future, and now aids in the preparation of online learning events for teachers and children in South Australian preschools.

Insight

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

A: Actively engaging in the new directions and adventures that children create each day while helping them build confidence, positive attitudes, and enjoy each learning experience.

Q: *How do you maintain your enthusiasm for teaching?*

A: My enthusiasm is built on the excitement, humour and spontaneity the children bring to kindergarten each day. Sharing this joy and energy is inspiring and motivating.

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

A: My most valuable lessons are learnt through trial and error. More practical experiences with children and mentoring from experienced teachers would be extremely worthwhile.

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

A: Collecting and analysing data to monitor the progress of each individual child is important and essential. Finding time to effectively manage this requires a lot of creative planning.

Q: *What is your greatest challenge as a teacher?*

A: Balancing work commitments, quality family time and personal recreation time are always a juggle. Sometimes the work just takes over.

Q: *How has teaching changed over the years?*

A: Society, family structures, technology and curriculum are always moving and changing. Responding to the effects this has on children impacts on the role of teachers.

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

A: Talking to children and their families builds a strong and positive connection with each individual. This knowledge supports learning plans and increases trusting relationships.

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

A: Funding for the early years sector, financial equity for country university students, reduction of HECS fees and reopen Technology Schools of the Future at Hindmarsh.

Q: *What keeps you awake at night?*

A: The next learning adventure for the children, the next improvement project at kindergarten, the next song to sing and making the perfect play dough.

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

A: Happy, funny, and kind.

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