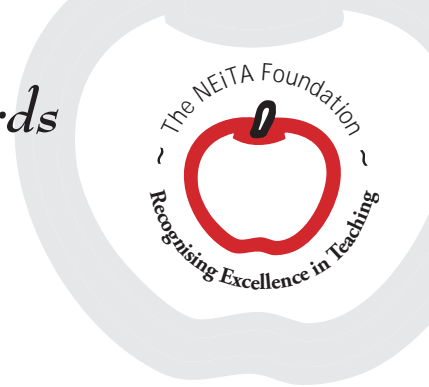


2007 National Excellence In Teaching Awards

State and Territory Teaching Excellence Award Recipient



Debra Dellar

Diploma of Education (Early Childhood)
North Tom Price Primary School, Tom Price, Western Australia
Nominated by: School parent

Position: Early Childhood Teacher • Level taught: Early Childhood • School type: Government • Town: Tom Price • Category: Early Childhood • State: WA

Overcoming the challenge of a remote location for special needs students

North Tom Price Primary is a remote school in the Pilbara with limited resource support. Debra Dellar has worked for more than 12 years at the school to create an atmosphere of excitement and enthusiasm in her classrooms, and overcome feelings of isolation. She provides her pupils with a structured yet flexible program that caters for both gifted and special needs students.

Debra incorporates many aspects of the local community and environment into her classes. Topics, such as snake and spider awareness and an Aboriginal language program, help to engender a heightened awareness of the Pilbara region.

As well as being a classroom teacher, Debra takes on major leadership roles within the school. She is a mentor to other colleagues and a school leader in Aboriginal education. She organises the school's major fundraising events that greatly benefit her school resources.

Debra has developed an Early Literacy program that aids comprehensive awareness and early reading. She has not only made a huge contribution to the education of children in the Pilbara region, she has also assisted many parents to develop parenting skills and is considered a vital link between the school and its wider community.

Insight

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

A: A good teacher cares about his or her students and can relate to, and develop each child on an individual basis. They have to have a heart for education.

Q: How do you maintain your enthusiasm for teaching?

A: My enthusiasm comes from the children themselves. I feed from their willingness to learn, and turn this eagerness around and channel it into achieving learning outcomes and aims.

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

A: More 'parent managing' skills and a ready-reckoner of where to get the million and one things a junior primary teacher likes to use to make learning meaningful to students.

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

A: The lack of time. Children need the time to stop, observe and try before they commit – an opportunity not often given to them in today's busy world.

Q: What is your greatest challenge as a teacher?

A: To open the reluctant learners' mind to the amazing things that surround us on a daily basis.

Q: How has teaching changed over the years?

A: We now have to take on a more general 'whole of child' education responsibility...teaching manners, society protocols and such, along with the ever-changing issues that stem from technology.

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

A: My aim is for each child to feel safe and secure with me. If I can accomplish this, I feel they can commence their learning journey with me.

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

A: Coordinate an Australia-wide campaign to enlighten the general public about the benefits of retaining quality teachers, and to change their outlook on teachers and the profession as a fulfilling and rewarding career.

Q: What keeps you awake at night?

A: What many of my current 'me generation' children will be doing in the future and how some of them will cope in the wide world of competition.

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

A: Kind, fair-minded and happy.

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