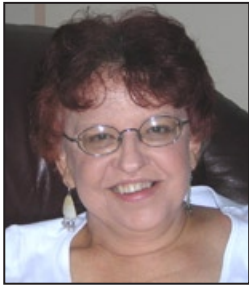


2007 National Excellence In Teaching Awards

State and Territory Teaching Excellence Award Recipient



Inta Gertners

Diploma of Teaching, Graduate Diploma of Teacher - Librarianship, Certificate of Gifted Education

Good News Lutheran School, Middle Park, Queensland

Nominated by: School parent

Position: Gifted Education / Librarian • Level taught: Specialist Primary • School type: Independent • Town: Middle Park, Brisbane • Category: Primary • State: QLD

A gift for the gifted

After many years of classroom teaching, Inta Gertners was appointed school librarian at the Good News Lutheran School. However, Inta soon realised that she missed the daily teaching role she had just relinquished. She proposed that she create a mixed Year 6 and 7 Advanced Maths class for the school's most gifted children. Inta and her students negotiated the class curriculum together incorporating advanced content set to challenge students' abilities. Although initially designed for Years 6 and 7 Maths students, the program has proven so popular that it has spread through the school. Inta now teaches extension Maths classes for Year 6 and 7, and Years 4 and 5, and an extension English class for students in Years 5 to 7.

Inta encourages students to take risks and helps to create a social and emotional safe place for her students. Her work has resulted in the Good News Lutheran School winning both the Year 6 and 7 divisions of the most recent *Let's Solve It Maths Science Challenge*, along with the best team entry. In the latest *University of New South Wales Maths Competition*, almost half of Inta's students were awarded High Distinctions or Distinctions, and one pupil won the State Medal for the highest test score in Queensland.

Insight

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

A: Someone who values children; integrity, imagination and a sense of humour; intellectual curiosity and knowledge; a risk-taker; and someone who is confident to try new ideas.

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

A: Feedback from children leads to rethinking of content and pedagogy. Conferences, research and further study offer new ideas.

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

A: A variety of behaviour management strategies – teachers can take years to develop a management style that works for them and their students (and parents).

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

A: Remaining positive and enthusiastic in the face of regular attacks by uninformed politicians, members of the media, and sometimes parents can be difficult.

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

A: Balancing support for the intellectual and emotional needs of students, while dealing with regular additions to the curriculum without losing valuable aspects of old programs.

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

A: A move to a child-centred, broader curriculum; unimaginably improved resources; more preparation time needed; greater accountability demanded, but less respect given by the community.

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

A: Take time to sit down with no agenda and talk and listen to them. The resulting improvement in productivity compensates for any teaching time lost.

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

A: Support rather than attack education and educators; swap budgets for Defence and Education (an educated society is a powerful society); and ban pejorative terms like 'elitist' and 'ivory tower' for academic achievement.

Q: *What keeps you awake at night?*

A: The fear 'that I may cease to be before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain'. There is so much to do in one lifetime.

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

A: Funny, different and demanding.

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