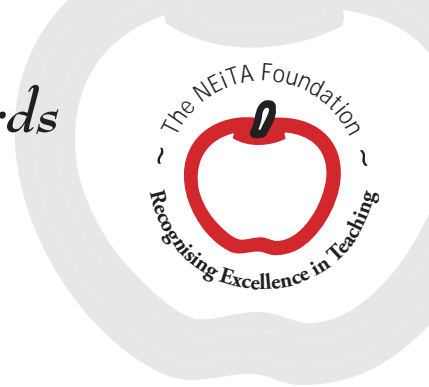


# 2007 National Excellence In Teaching Awards

## State and Territory Teaching Excellence Award Recipient



## Jason Wegener

Bachelor of Education (Primary)

Charles Conder Primary School, Conder, Australian Capital Territory

Nominated by: School Board

Position: Special Education Teacher • Level taught: Special Education • School type: Government • Town: Conder • Category: Primary • State: ACT

### Helping under-achieving and 'at risk' boys

Jason Wegener is a positive role model for his young male students. His special attention to creating opportunities for marginalised and disenfranchised boys has seen increased levels of student self-esteem and confidence, accompanied by a drop in truancy and disruptive behaviour. Jason instigated and runs the FARM Program, which uses the school's agricultural centre as a hub to encourage students to take ownership and pride in an area they have created. He helps students to direct their activities towards outcomes that benefit the whole school community. Many of his students have transferred their skills, based around communication and resilience, into their mainstream classroom attitude and behaviour.

Jason creates many meaningful and effective learning opportunities beyond the classroom. He has initiated students working with the local RSPCA shelter in a program called TLC (Tender, Love and Care). The boys learn how to care for animals and assist in training and comforting them before they go to their new homes. Through this and similar programs, many of the most 'at risk' boys have experienced caring and supportive relationship roles, and gained confidence in their abilities to become valued contributors to the wider community.

## Insight

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

A: I have worked with many fantastic teachers in my short career and the skill they all share is an ability to build strong and meaningful relationships with their students and peers.

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

A: Seeing students use the skills we have developed together allows me to truly believe I am making a difference to them. This keeps me going through the tough times.

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

A: I would have liked more hands-on time in the classroom putting theory into practice.

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

A: Teachers have become facilitators of learning and we must encourage students to become independent learners while supporting them to understand and value learning, tolerance, teamwork and problem solving.

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

A: Meeting the individual needs of all students, all of the time in meaningful and engaging ways.

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

A: I believe teachers are now required to facilitate learning rather than the traditional role of learning as listening and teaching as telling.

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

A: Apologise when I make a mistake and learn from the incident. Never pretend to know it all, I must demonstrate learning.

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

A: Teacher conditions including salaries and the value of teachers in the community

Q: *What keeps you awake at night?*

A: Thinking about the opportunities that I have had in life and wonder whether my students will have these same opportunities to find a life path that is meaningful to them.

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

A: Understanding, helpful and fun.

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