

2007 National Excellence In Teaching Awards

State and Territory Teaching Excellence Award Recipient



Kirralee Baldock

Bachelor of Communication Studies, Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Education
Glossop High School, Glossop, South Australia
Nominated By: School Council

Position: Music Teacher, Coordinator of The Arts, Health and Physical Education Teacher • Level taught: Secondary School • School type: Government • Town: Glossop • Category: Secondary • State: SA

Music to the ears of her students

Kirralee Baldock is an exceptional music teacher at Glossop High School, but it is her use of music to encourage and assist students in other areas of life education that really sets her apart. Kirralee has implemented a *Boys' Business* music program to help students who had become disengaged from the learning process. Its widespread success led to Kirralee being asked to present her approach at the 2006 International Middle Years Conference.

Kirralee nurtured the school's band, the *Glossop Groovers*, which have enjoyed great success. The *Groovers* have toured interstate, played for the State Government's Education Minister, and performed at the Riverland Reception for the Commonwealth Games Queen's Baton Relay. Kirralee also works at a district level, combining students from 22 Riverland and Murray schools into a dynamic festival choir. Recently the first of Kirralee's students graduated to study music at the Conservatorium and many more plan to follow a similar path in the next few years.

Kirralee is currently on maternity leave.

Insight

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

A: One who builds positive relationships with students and helps them discover and nurture their talents. Every child needs and deserves at least one adult to believe in and mentor them.

Q: How do you maintain your enthusiasm for teaching?

A: I'm always on the lookout for opportunities to enhance learning for my students and myself. I try to seize every moment of every day.

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

A: Mentoring during my first year out. Moving to a country school was tough as everything was new and I lost immediate contact with my support network of family and friends.

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

A: With large class sizes comprising students of varying abilities, preferred learning styles, and special needs, it's very difficult to give each student the time they deserve.

Q: What is your greatest challenge as a teacher?

A: Engaging students from a generation accustomed to high tech entertainment and fast gratification. I need to grab their attention at the start of each lesson so that 'mundane curriculum' becomes exciting.

Q: How has teaching changed over the years?

A: An increase in our region's multiculturalism has provided a wonderful opportunity to teach students respect and tolerance and to celebrate the similarities and differences of humanity.

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

A: Listen. By listening to my students, I learn what makes them unique and what their passions are. This helps me communicate with them positively, motivate them, and make their learning relevant.

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

A: Share and celebrate student, parent and teacher successes with the community. It is so important to educate society about the vital and positive roles teachers play in their schools and community.

Q: What keeps you awake at night?

A: Reflecting on moments of the day. What did or didn't work? How could I have handled that incident differently? Did I choose the right words for that student at that time?

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

A: Creative, enthusiastic, and fair.

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