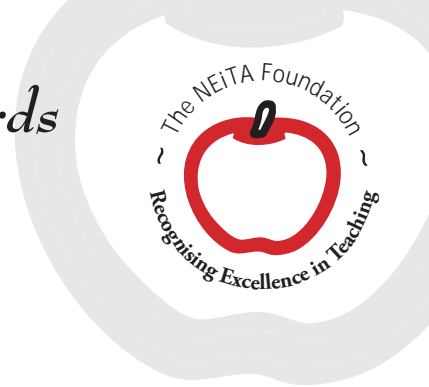


2007 National Excellence In Teaching Awards

State and Territory Teaching Excellence Award Recipient



Liz Rayner

Diploma of Teaching
Keithcot Farm Primary, Wynn Vale, South Australia
Nominated By: Governing Council

Position: Primary Teacher • Level taught: General Primary • School type: Government • Town: Wynn Vale • Category: Primary • State: SA

Exploring multicultural similarities

Liz Rayner has spent a lifetime caring for, and encouraging her students. Liz is a great supporter of Keithcot Farm Primary School's *International Program*, which enables her to invite pupils from Japan and Korea into her classroom and practically share and explore her passion for Asian Studies with her students. Liz believes this helps inform students of the differences between cultures, but more importantly, understand the similarities seemingly diverse cultures share.

Liz treats all her students as individuals, showing that she understands, respects and cares for them. She promotes an interactive and collaborative classroom environment and recently introduced the use of interactive whiteboards that have become a valuable tool. Liz strongly advocates extracurricular activities and promotes music lessons, academic competitions, and student involvement in the Premier's Reading Challenge.

Insight

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

A: A good teacher is someone who builds strong relationships with their students and parents. They promote a culture in their classes where all students feel valued and able to achieve.

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

A: By trying to be adaptable, using various approaches and attempting new things. Involving my students in my planning and showing them that learning is an on-going process for us all.

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

A: I wish we had been given more specific direction in some specialist areas such as science and physical education.

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

A: With the expanding curriculum, and extra responsibilities we have, it is a challenge to cover everything required of us along with meeting individual students' needs.

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

A: Making sure all students progress to the best of their ability, and trying to make school enjoyable for them. Connecting with negative students can be a real challenge.

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

A: Far more is expected of teachers nowadays. On a positive note, relationships between teachers and students are less formal and children are more willing to approach their teachers with concerns.

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

A: I work hard to develop a class environment where all students feel safe, valued and respected. I make myself available when they need to see me.

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

A: Raise the profile of science and physical education in all schools by ensuring they were adequately resourced. I would also make sure all students had access to a counsellor.

Q: *What keeps you awake at night?*

A: Worrying about how I am going to get everything done that I need to. Individual students concern me if I feel I am not meeting their needs or connecting with them.

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

A: Fun, fair, and organised.

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