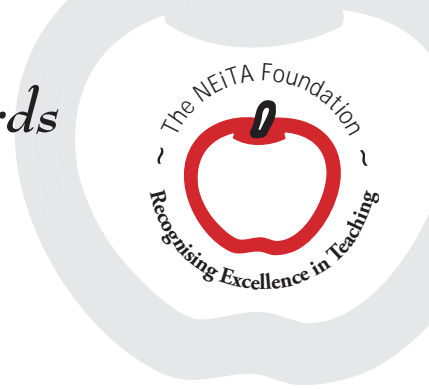


2007 National Excellence In Teaching Awards

State and Territory Teaching Excellence Award Recipient



Mark Phillips

Bachelor of Physical Education, Diploma of Education
Perth Waldorf School, Bibra Lake, Western Australia
Nominated by: School parents

Position: Primary teacher • Level taught: General Primary • School type: Independent • Town: Bibra Lake • Category: Primary • State: WA

Outstanding student achievements

Mark Phillips's classes at Perth Waldorf School are inspiring and inclusive. Students are encouraged to participate in open discussions which enable them to discuss their feelings honestly and develop mutual respect for each other. Mark is a particularly focused and enthusiastic teacher who has modelled consistently outstanding behaviour for his students.

Through the Steiner education system, Mark has taught the same class of students for all of their primary school years to date. He has risen to the challenge of making each new school year exciting with unflagging enthusiasm introducing new curricula for his students. Additionally, each year Mark takes the children out of their comfort zones on unique class camping trips where they gain the opportunity of integrating their classroom learning experiences into the natural environment.

The harmonious nature Mark has created within his classroom has resulted in outstandingly high outcomes for his students, including 73 per cent of his students being ranked in the top 25 per cent of the state for numeracy, and 77 per cent of his students in the top 25 per cent of the state for reading. He has also achieved an exceptional retention rate among his students who are keen to learn more each year from this caring and inspiring teacher.

Mark is on long service leave during 2007 and will be spending some time teaching and researching Steiner education in Europe and India.

Insight

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

A: A good teacher is someone who likes children, is playful, enjoys learning about the world, is creative and has high ideals.

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

A: By learning with the children, having fun with them, and seeing them grow in confidence and ability. Always doing something new also keeps me interested and stimulated.

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

A: Visits to other teachers' classes where innovative, creative and successful lessons were being taught. There are many wonderful teachers working out there who have great ideas and methods, but are rarely seen.

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

A: Dealing with all the influences that serve to speed up childhood and put undue pressure on children.

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

A: To be creative enough to be able to continually provide the right learning environment that allows each child to reach his or her full potential.

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

A: Due to the speed of modern life, teachers have to work harder to engage the children, awaken their imaginations and focus their attention.

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

A: To show them with a smile and a laugh how much I enjoy their presence.

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

A: I'd double the pay of all teachers to encourage more people to become teachers, to raise the status of teaching and to raise the quality of education nationwide.

Q: *What keeps you awake at night?*

A: My head spinning with thoughts if I haven't unwound after a late night meeting.

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

A: He's firm, fun, and knowledgeable.

Contact Details:

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