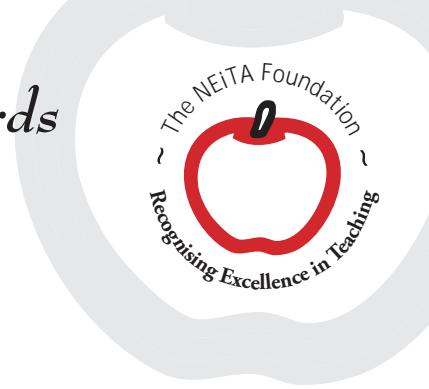


2007 National Excellence In Teaching Awards

State and Territory Teaching Excellence Award Recipient



Michael Staples

Diploma of Primary Teaching, Bachelor of Education
Halls Head Primary School, Halls Head, Western Australia
Nominated by: School parent

Position: Physical Education Teacher • Level taught: Specialist Primary • School type: Government • Town: Halls Head • Category: Primary • State: WA

Getting physical to advance student education

As a physical education teacher at Halls Head Primary, Michael Staples sees his role as an opportunity to energise and encourage young students, and help them achieve their maximum potential during their school years. He creates new and exciting ways to stimulate and promote growth in his students.

Michael devotes many extra hours both before and after school to promote the healthy interests of his pupils and the wider community. As well as being a specialist physical education teacher, Michael started a *Runners Club* in 1995 (which is still running!), *Healthy Breakfast* program days, whole school *Fruit 'n' Veg Week* activities, the *Active After School Communities* programme (AASC), a *Dance Sport* program, and *Beach Fun Days* as part of the In-term swimming lessons programme. He accompanies, and encourages, his students to participate in many local sporting events and organises district professional development programs, sports star visits, workshops, and guest nutritional lectures. He has coached the Rugby League Tag school team which has been successful at the State Championships in 2003, 2004 and 2006.

Since 1998, he has filled the role of Chairperson of the Peel School Sports Association, and since 2001 has been the District Facilitator of the Fundamental Movement Skills programme.

Insight

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

A: Enthusiasm and passion for the job, and making learning experiences enjoyable.

Q: How do you maintain your enthusiasm for teaching?

A: By using variety in student learning experiences, maintaining a high level of interaction with the students, and by seeking new challenges for students and myself professionally.

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

A: A greater understanding of the physical, mental and social development phases of children.

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

A: In my area of teaching, it is difficult to establish and maintain in students the practice of a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age.

Q: What is your greatest challenge as a teacher?

A: To raise physical activity levels in students and to equip them with the fundamental movement skills to participate with confidence in community sport and recreation.

Q: How has teaching changed over the years?

A: Catering for individual student needs has become a bigger focus. Attention to changing family values has also required more emphasis.

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

A: Show them that you are interested in their learning. One way to do this is to find out about their interests and to have regular conversations with them.

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

A: I would try to raise the standing of physical education in schools. The benefits of fitness and physical activity skills are life-long.

Q: What keeps you awake at night?

A: Not much, I sleep really well. I do use it occasionally as a checklist time to prepare for courses and sports carnivals.

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

A: Friendly, enthusiastic and fun.

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