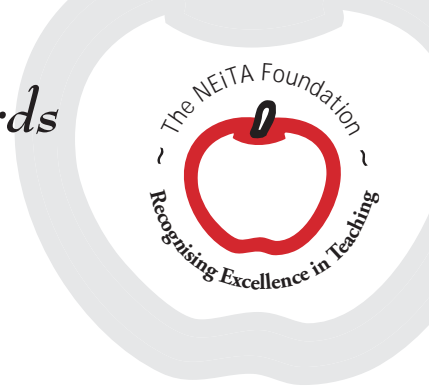


2007 National Excellence In Teaching Awards

State and Territory Teaching Excellence Award Recipient



Patrick Mallett

Bachelor of Laws, Diploma of Education
Toolooa State High School, Gladstone, Queensland
Nominated By: School Student Council

Position: Legal Studies, SOSE and English Teacher • Level taught: Secondary School • School type: Government • Town: Gladstone • Category: Secondary • State: QLD

Prevention is better than cure for troubled youths

Through years of working with troubled youth in Juvenile Justice, Patrick Mallett realised he could better help young people by becoming a teacher and reaching them before they became ensnared in the juvenile justice system.

Before Patrick began teaching civic studies at Toolooa State High School, many students considered the subject mundane, but through his *Youth Parliament* program, students now travel to Canberra where government is brought to life for them. The culmination of last year's program saw one of the students, who had never been on a plane before, travelling to Canberra and meeting Prime Minister John Howard at Parliament House.

Patrick has become director of the school-based radio station and negotiated an agreement with a local FM radio station for work experience and training for Toolooa students. He is also the chairman of *Indigenous Partners for Success*, as well as the founder of a vibrant Amnesty International Group among the student population.

Insight

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

A: The ability to engage students across the spectrum of learning abilities. Also, enthusiasm, a sense of fun and unpredictability.

Q: How do you maintain your enthusiasm for teaching?

A: By observing unexpected progress in students who previously had been written off as 'lost causes'.

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

A: More practical based support from senior teachers and those involved at the coalface of education, namely the classroom.

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

A: Bureaucracy and catering to the ever-changing whim of our political masters.

Q: What is the greatest challenge as a teacher?

A: To maintain my enthusiasm, spontaneity, and engagement with students.

Q: How has teaching changed over the years?

A: The students have remained the same but bureaucratic instructions have encroached on the creativity of teachers.

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

A: Respect the student and earn their respect.

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

A: The black hole that boys between the ages of 14 and 16 fall into, and the absence of a specific tailored program to increase learning outcomes for that group.

Q: What keeps you awake at night?

A: Nothing. Pondering over the slings and arrows of the classroom at 11.00pm is a useless and self-indulgent exercise.

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

A: Unpredictable, fun and dedicated.

Contact Details:

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