

# 2007 National Excellence In Teaching Awards

## State and Territory Teaching Excellence Award Recipient



## Stuart Rhine-Davis

Diploma of Teaching, Bachelor of Education  
Ballajura Community College, Ballajura, Western Australia  
Nominated by: School parent

Position: Music Coordinator and Head of Department • Level taught: Secondary School • School type: Government • Town: Ballajura • Category: Secondary • State: WA

### Musical honours

Stuart Rhine-Davis aims to develop a life-long passion for music in his students at Ballajura Community College. He provides real-life opportunities that allow pupils to develop their musical skills and abilities to become autonomous learners. Students are spoilt for choice with the chance to participate in numerous performing groups, such as the school's Junior and Senior concert bands, jazz band, guitar ensemble, chorale or barbershop groups, or its rock band. Stuart has also created and successfully staged the school's first ever musical.

Through Stuart's efforts, students have performed at iconic Australian venues, such as Parliament House, the National War Memorial, and Darling Harbour, as part of a Cultural Heritage Tour that travelled to Canberra, Sydney, and Brisbane. Students have also participated in a range of other successful performance tours, including trips to Bali and New Zealand, both of which received rave reviews. The Ballajura Community College Senior Concert Band and Barbershop vocal group, under Stuart's direction, received a Premier's Australia Day Honour for Active Citizenship in recognition of Stuart's work closer to home in staging student performances at Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) events for both the school and wider community. Stuart has also coordinated and staged performances for both the state and national RSL Conferences, the Governor of Western Australia, the Governor-General of Australia, and other official functions.

Stuart is now teaching at Ellenbrook Secondary College.

### Insight

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

A: A good teacher is someone who loves what they do and can pass that passion and enthusiasm for learning onto their students.

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

A: Knowing that I make a difference when I see the smiles on my students' faces, and creating the performance opportunities that inspires their passion for music.

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

A: Our teaching practicums were invaluable. However, I would like to have had relevant curriculum and system information supported by more time in schools, through shadowing teachers and internships.

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

A: Time – having the time to put into action all the ideas, initiatives and possibilities of the job as well as all the other demands placed on teachers.

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

A: To motivate and build confidence, by connecting with all of my students and battling preconceived ideas about their own limitations and expectations about the subject.

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

A: The role of teacher has changed to that of facilitator and mentor rather than expert and lecturer. You need to connect, and then success will follow.

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

A: Create and develop relationships, treat students fairly and lead by example. That way you will earn their respect and commitment in all that you do.

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 teachers and teaching to attract quality personnel into the profession through promoting achievement, acknowledgement of excellence, and increasing the level of promotional remuneration.

Q: *What keeps you awake at night?*

A: The flashes of creativity that pop into my head. I also visualise every performance that I conduct, several times over. This is how I convert my dreams into reality.

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

A: Passionate, inspirational and caring.

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