

2007 National Excellence In Teaching Awards

State and Territory Teaching Excellence Award Recipient



Tracey Quadroy

Bachelor of Education, Masters of Education in Special Education and Learning Support.

Bowen State School Special Education Unit, Bowen, Queensland

Nominated by: School parent

Position: Special Education Teacher • Level taught: Special Education • School type: Government • Town: Bowen • Category: Primary • State: QLD

Helping those with special needs

Through her work at Bowen State School Special Education Unit, Tracey Quadroy helps to encourage self-esteem and enthusiasm for learning among her special needs students. Many of Tracey's students have very challenging disabilities, including hearing, intellectual, vision and physical impairment, and Autistic Spectrum Disorder, but Tracey helps each child to feel confident and proud of their achievements. She employs tools, such as personal student digital portfolios to record and highlight each student's progress, as well as designing programs using Information and Communication Technologies to help children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and other disabilities.

Tracey undertook her own fundraising program to enable Indigenous students with special needs from Palm Island to attend and compete at their first *North Queensland Disability Games*, a personal highlight for many of the children. Her work has been recognised by James Cook University, which asked her to contribute articles to its journals about the special techniques of teaching students with autism through the use of Information and Communication Technologies.

Insight

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

A: Someone who is caring, patient and willing to listen to the children, staff, parents and members of the community, and treat them with respect.

Q: How do you maintain your enthusiasm for teaching?

A: By giving students with disabilities a supportive learning environment where they are encouraged to achieve their independence and learning outcomes, along with witnessing my students succeeding and celebrating their achievements within the local community.

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

A: I wish my training had provided me with behaviour management strategies, knowledge of teaching Indigenous students in rural communities, cultural differences and teaching students with varying disabilities.

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

A: Catering for social and emotional needs of children in today's society. Stresses on families through sexual abuse, neglect, housing shortages, substance abuse and family break-ups are increasing stressors on children and schools.

Q: What is your greatest challenge as a teacher?

A: Being 'all things to all children' - being a music, sports and arts teacher, carer, First Aid assistant, substitute parent, counsellor, computer technician, life-skills teacher, fundraiser and audio visual technician.

Q: How has teaching changed over the years?

A: An increase in research to identify and accommodate children of varying abilities, a higher expectation of teachers by the community and a corresponding decrease in respect for teachers from children.

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

A: Show children that you care for them - I see them as individuals and treat them with respect. I tell my children to treat a person how you would like to be treated.

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

A: I would increase the number of teachers and teacher aides and increase funding to schools to improve facilities and appearances.

Q: What keeps you awake at night?

A: Being limited in what you can do to help children who are experiencing difficult situations through learning difficulties, behaviour difficulties and emotional difficulties.

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

A: Not all of my students can communicate verbally, but I think they would say I was happy, fun and supportive.

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