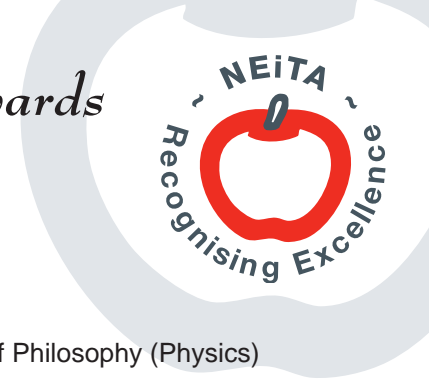


NEiTA 2009 ASG Inspirational Teaching Awards

State and Territory Award Recipient



Dr Mark Butler

Bachelor of Science (Honours), Diploma of Education, Doctor of Philosophy (Physics)
Gosford High School, Gosford, New South Wales
Nominated by: Parents and Citizens' Association

Position: Head of Department (Science) • Category: Secondary • Level taught: Year 10-12 • Years teaching: 27 years • Years at this school: 12 years • School type: Government • Town/Suburb: Gosford • State: New South Wales • Postcode: 2250

Why teaching?

I was fascinated by science in primary school but, like so many students, I was 'switched off' science by the time I left school in year 10. I later returned to study, reignited my passion for science, and completed a PhD in Physics. I had always wondered if it would be possible to make secondary science more engaging and, in 1986, I moved from tertiary teaching to high school teaching to try to do so.

It has been very rewarding over the past twenty years to see so many of my students pursue careers in science and to have been able to work with the professional community to help make high school science more relevant, exciting and engaging.

Sharing a love of all things scientific

With 27 years of teaching experience, Dr Mark Butler knows how to make science education come alive in the classroom. As Head of the Science faculty at Gosford High School, he makes his classes stimulating and inclusive. Mark challenges students to seek a deeper understanding of all topics through inquiry-based learning.

For more than ten years, Mark has run the school Science Club during lunchtimes, prepared students for the Physics Olympiad after school and run special science classes for HSC students during the holidays.

Strategies that Mark has implemented within the Science faculty have led to increased enrolments in senior Physics and Chemistry classes. In the past 10 years, four of Mark's students have finished in the top ten of the New South Wales HSC Physics exam. His pupils perform consistently well in competitions, such as the Eureka Science Prizes, the Physics Olympiad and the Newcastle University Science and Engineering Challenge, which his students have won six times at the regional level.

Mark has produced a wealth of books, videos and articles on a wide range of scientific topics. He has met with the Federal Education Minister and Shadow Minister to discuss Science Education policy and has been a plenary speaker at many educational and scientific conferences. He is the National Education Convenor of the Australian Institute of Physics, and in 2004, Mark won the prestigious Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Secondary Science Teaching and Educational Leadership.

Mark engenders a love of all things scientific in his students. More than 70 per cent of his senior students go on to pursue a science or science-related career. Many of these ex-students return to the school on a regular basis to help mentor Mark's current pupils. These former pupils share Mark's love of science and wish to help pass it on to his next generation of students.

Contact details:

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