

NEiTA 2009 ASG Inspirational Teaching Awards

State and Territory Award Recipient



Rita Mechielsen

Diploma of Teaching (Primary and Early Childhood Education), Graduate Diploma in Music Education (Primary)

Runcorn State School, Sunnybank South, Queensland

Nominated by: Parents and Citizens' Association

Position: Music Coordinator • Category: Primary • Level taught: P - 7 • Years teaching: 18 years • Years at this school: 12 years • School type: Government • Town/Suburb: Sunnybank South • State: Queensland • Postcode: 4061

Why teaching?

Ever since I was eight years old, I aspired to be a teacher. I had very positive educational experiences as a young person and was always drawn to dynamic and vibrant teachers.

I love teaching and wish to remain highly effective and inspire students in their 'life-long' love for music.

Sharing an infectious enthusiasm for music and performance

Rita Mechielsen aims to have all children in all year levels, from prep to Year 7, enjoy and positively participate in music classes. She empowers children to understand music and encourages full participation while always keeping an emphasis on having fun. She uses techniques such as the Kodaly method and the Orff Schulwerk approach, which emphasise the importance of musical education in younger children. These techniques combine music, movement, drama and speech into lessons that are similar to a child's world of play.

Rita's lessons encompass a variety of musical experiences including voice, contemporary and traditional instruments along with music technology and computer practices. Students read, sing, play, write, compose or improvise - whatever it takes to connect to their own musicality. This emphasis on participation and inclusion has had tremendous results. In the 12 years that Rita has been at Runcorn State School, the number and variety of choirs has increased. Positive involvement was evident this year when 60 per cent of the year 7 students chose to participate in a presentation of *High School Musical*, and an incredible 85 per cent of the entire school community participates in the end-of-year concert. In this year's Choral and Instrumental Evening, 208 students will showcase their musical abilities. Rita also organises visits to the school by professional musicians to further inspire her students.

Her emphasis on inclusion has led Rita to tailor individual music lessons for students' special needs, as well as supporting intern music teachers and networks with fellow music educators.

Rita's enthusiasm has changed the way music is perceived at Runcorn State School.

Contact details:

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