

GOOD TEACHING

A guide for staff discussion



From the Secretary

“Investing in Our Teachers, Investing in Our Economy” (2010 Grattan Institute Report) reports that teacher effectiveness has a greater impact on student performance than any other government school reform, and that an increase in teacher effectiveness of 10 per cent would lift Australia’s education systems into the highest performing countries in the world.

If this is true, how can we assist in the ongoing development of all teachers to raise their effectiveness?

The Department of Education’s Learners First Strategy strengthens the quality of teaching and learning opportunities for all students in our system. In order to work effectively, well-developed teaching and learning programs need to be implemented in every school, along with strong leadership.

Staff in Tasmanian Government schools are working hard to educate their students to the highest standard. They are offering quality educational programs delivered by competent and committed teachers.

The purpose of this paper is to raise the debate across schools to gain a common understanding of what makes a good teacher. It is designed to generate discussion on what good teaching practices look like, and how to continue to improve each teacher’s pedagogy. Supporting all learners is the most fundamental action for teachers in Tasmania.

Central to every decision that effective school leaders and good teachers make is meeting all students’ learning needs. In promoting and implementing school improvement, they also challenge solutions of how to improve learning opportunities and outcomes for all students.

The primary task of a school leader is to ensure that high quality teaching occurs in every classroom at the school.

By creating and sustaining the conditions in which high expectations and high quality teaching thrive, school leaders are able to have a significant impact on the learning outcomes of students.

Research shows that of the school factors influencing student learning combined with the quality of classroom teaching, school leadership accounts for most of the variation in achievement levels of students. The AITSL standards frame a skills development progression towards being an increasingly good teacher, however it is equally important for practitioners to pause and reflect on what it takes for them to be a good teacher.

Leading for high quality teaching creates a culture where:

- **Good teachers** put the Learner First in their decision-making;
- **Good teachers** have high and realistic expectations for all students;
- **Good teachers** personalise their teaching to meet the learning needs of students; and
- **Good teachers** continually expand their knowledge and skills to develop their capacity.

At the classroom level, teacher and student relationships are critical to strong student outcomes. At the school level, professional collegial relationships are vital to a healthy and vibrant organisation.

Colin Pettit
Secretary



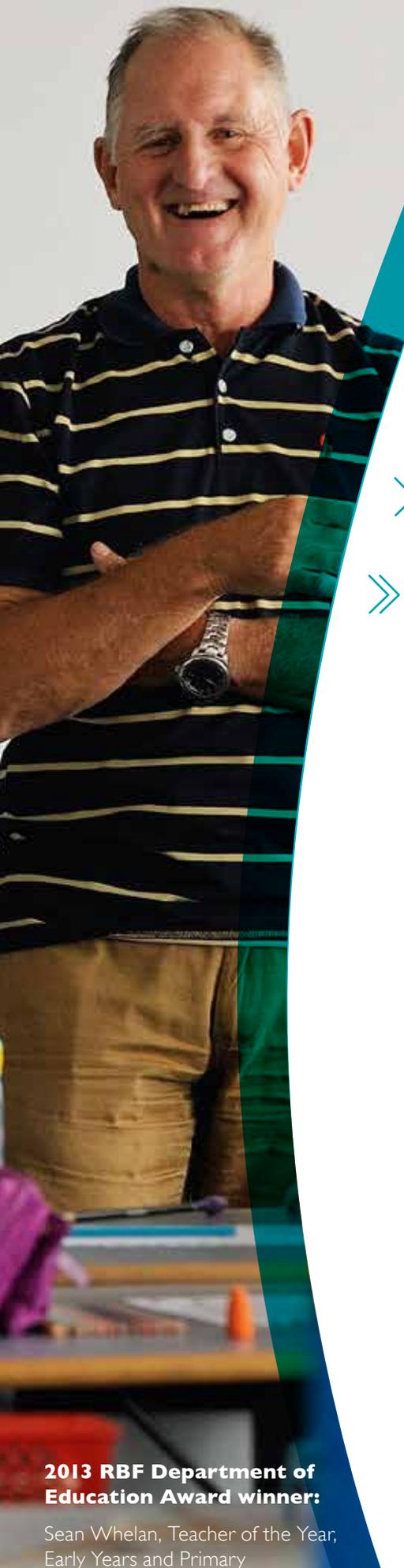
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2013 RBF Department of Education Award winner:

Dr Deborah Beswick,
Teacher of the Year, Secondary

Good Teachers – Professional Practice

- » Good teachers develop productive relationships with their students – they get to know them and take a particular interest in their overall development and progress. They treat their students with respect and expect the same in return.
- » Good teachers have high expectations of their students. They help their students meet these expectations both in terms of their standard of learning and their behaviour. They motivate and engage their students, believing that every student is capable of achieving success at school.
- » Good teachers have high expectations of themselves and their own learning. They actively work with their colleagues in order to improve one another’s personal capabilities for the benefit of all learners in the school.
- » Good teachers understand that students develop at different rates. They acknowledge that in every classroom there will be a range of student abilities by differentiating the learning needs of students, rather than teaching to the middle. Learning is personalised to meet each student’s needs.
- » Good teachers ensure that they use techniques that have each student working on tasks that engage and challenge them to achieve their personal best. They understand that students learn best if their culture, background and abilities are acknowledged by the teacher in the way they teach the student.
- » Good teachers understand that there are many things that students can learn themselves through inquiry, with the teacher structuring appropriate learning tasks. However, there also are many aspects that require the teacher to teach in a more direct way.
- » Good teachers understand that students learn in a number of ways. It is important students are exposed to learning opportunities, but they also need to be explicitly taught things that are important for all students to know. Maximising explicit teaching techniques, where appropriate, is an important skill of a good teacher.
- » Good teachers know that students learn best if they are provided with opportunities to learn from their teacher, other students and from resources outside the school. There are a number of resources that are now more readily accessible through both the broader community and existing technology.
- » Good teachers encourage students to take greater responsibility for their own learning.
They make sure their students:
 - know what is required of the learning program;
 - understand what and how the program will be assessed;
 - are provided with constant and timely feedback to encourage success; and
 - are actively involved in evaluating their own learning.
- » Good teachers have a thorough knowledge of their subject content, scope and the sequence of learning required skills and expected learning outcomes. Through this, they inspire students to enjoy learning, and understand how students can best learn and apply concepts, content and skills. Working collaboratively, good teachers map the curriculum across year levels to meet student needs within their school’s context.



» Good teachers understand the standard their students are expected to achieve and use a range of assessment methods to determine the extent to which those standards are being met and to plan the next steps.

» Good teachers provide a safe, stimulating and orderly learning environment that assists every student to reach their full potential. They understand how students learn in a classroom environment where they feel safe and confident to attempt new tasks.

» Good teachers closely monitor each student's achievements. They know where their students are in their learning and what the next steps are to move the learning forward. This enables them to provide each student with regular feedback on their performance.

» Good teachers regularly reflect on how well they are engaging their students and investigate better ways of teaching to support students who may require further assistance or extension.

» Good teachers tailor their own learning and development, and create opportunities to trial, implement and assess contemporary strategies to ensure they continue to grow their own capacity.

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