



World Teachers' Day QLD

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Teaching – where the future begins

Teaching for art's sake

After choosing to study education at university, Leanne Shead has gone on to teach Visual Art for more than 29 years.

“While my father wanted me to be a lawyer, I wanted to be an Art teacher,” Leanne said.

“After he accepted my decision, he told me ‘Well if you’re going to be a teacher be a good one’.

“This phrase has followed me through my entire career and I now confidently say, I am.”

After finishing her degree and starting a career in New South Wales, Leanne made the move to Queensland and now teaches at St Monica’s College in Cairns.

“A teacher is all I have ever wanted to be,” she said.

“I am passionate about entering student artwork into competitions and exhibitions, so they can share the feeling of accomplishment and enjoyment from being a practicing artist.”

Leanne enjoys watching students take risks, make choices, problem-solve ideas and overcome adversity through art.

“These are skills they develop subconsciously, which prepares them for the world beyond school,” she said.

“The mindfulness that Visual Art offers is often quietly understated.

“In a world where anxiety and depression in our youth is escalating, the arts offer a diverse set of skills such as perseverance, curiosity, mindfulness, autonomy, self-expression, and belief.

“Teaching Visual Art is rewarding because it offers a platform for young creatives to blossom.”

Professional highlights for Leanne include being selected by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority to help redevelop the Visual Art senior syllabus and co-authoring the school textbook *Creative Inquiry*.

She was also last year’s recipient of the Dr Alan Druery OAM Memorial Award for Excellence in Teaching at the TEACHX Awards.

“Teachers often go above and beyond without seeking recognition, but I believe recognition and peer support is important,” she said.

Leanne is a sessional tutor at James Cook University, teaching an undergraduate degree in Primary Education.

“This opportunity excites me, as I see these young people embracing the opportunity to be part of a changing world through education,” she said.

“Teaching is a career that is never static and offers intrinsic enjoyment and a chance to connect and teach young people new things.

“I would not have chosen a different profession even if I had my time over again.”

Leanne Shead
St Monica’s College
Cairns