



World Teachers' Day QLD

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Teaching – where the future begins

Embracing the teaching adventure

Influenced by personal experiences, Tony Zeith found his true calling in supporting students with disabilities and literacy development at Ravenshoe State School.

Tony draws his inspiration from 20 years' experience as a teacher and a diverse background that includes working as a foster carer and a warehouse manager.

"Teaching was not my first career. I do believe in sliding doors that will lead to many opportunities and pathways," Tony said.

"I wanted to be a teacher but this did not happen straight away.

"The real turning point was working with young adults with disabilities who we employed through a work support program at the warehouse I managed.

"Taking the time and care to help these adults develop skills that would lift their self-confidence and wellbeing brought a lot of satisfaction to my job.

"Working with many children with trauma, I feel I have the ability to help any student in my classroom become a strong confident learner."

A father of an adopted child with Downs Syndrome, Tony believes the experiences are a gift he can share with his students.

"The wonderful research and understanding around literacy support is now giving students like my son, an opportunity to become stronger lifelong learners," he said.

"I explain to students that establishing strong literacy and numeracy skills in primary school will allow you to succeed at any pathway you choose to take.

"Importantly, having these skills can help you support other students and teachers while on your journey."

Throughout his career, Tony has experienced moments that define his teaching practice.

"Working as a Teaching Principal on Horn Island, a student struggled to understand why he was in a learning group not at the level he thought he should be," Tony said.

"After a very anxious and upsetting time for the student, I was able to share his data with him, but importantly, also share with him where the journey would take him.

"This student understood and believed he could do it, and then worked harder than had ever before right up until he left for high school."

Tony encourages aspiring teachers to embrace the adventure of teaching and to see it as a gateway to exploring diverse communities and cultures within their state.

"The most rewarding part of teaching is being part of a community," he said.

"It wasn't until I made the move to work in Cape York (NPA) that I discovered who I am as a teacher..

"It definitely takes a village to raise a child and as in the Torres Strait, we say the 'Yumi Way' which means you, me and all of us together."

Tony Zeith
Ravenshoe State School
Ravenshoe