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Passion for improving students' learning experiences earns WA educator national award

An early childhood specialist who applies her school's motto, 'together we grow' in her learning programs will receive a national award at the ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA) today at a ceremony in Melbourne.

Denise Ansingh from Hawker Park Primary School will join 11 other outstanding educators from across Australia in receiving the top awards. Selected from more than 1000 nominations in 2014, the 12 national award recipients will be honoured for their inspiring and innovative contribution to teaching.

Ms Ansingh has been teaching at the school for 10 years and was nominated by parents for her energy and passion. She will receive a Leadership and Development Award for achieving outstanding learning outcomes for students and showing outstanding leadership qualities as a teacher.

Ms Ansingh has been instrumental in incorporating play-based learning into the school curriculum and her Australian teaching practice and thinking is also influenced by the Reggio Emilia teaching philosophy that originated in Italy.

She says she is focused on making some identified changes to comply with the National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care.

"Two teachers and I were trained in these standards last year which provided us with a framework for discussing and building knowledge about applying early childhood principles."

ASG NEiTA Chairman, Allen Blewitt says Ms Ansingh's dedication and initiative is a true reflection of what NEiTA represents, celebrating quality educators in Australia.

"As a professional in the education sector, I understand just how committed teachers like Ms Ansingh are to their profession. There is so much emphasis on improved teacher quality and training on a national stage and Ms Ansingh has been instrumental in improving the quality of teaching through establishing a partnership with Edith Cowan University, which will include creating videos of best practice, visits by students groups and working with other researchers on their studies. This sort of approach adds to the quality of education that children can access in schools and is a credit to the value-add our ASG NEiTA teachers bring to education."

Ms Ansingh says the university partnership will create many exciting opportunities.

"Establishing my school as a Centre for Excellence is a goal which we are closer to achieving and it means we are included in their teacher education programs and have the opportunity to share our philosophy with all pre-service teachers at Edith Cowan University. I am also hoping that the programs we create can be extended to all West Australian children."

Parents, grandparents, secondary student councils, school boards, councils, parent associations, committees of management and community organisations throughout Australia nominated these inspirational recipients.

Chief Executive Officer of ASG NEiTA, John Velegrinis, says he is humbled by the teaching calibre and the depth of experience of the award recipients.

"I congratulate Ms Ansingh and the other NEiTA recipients. Their dedication, leadership and initiative are a true reflection of what NEiTA represents, celebrating quality educators in Australia. There is compelling evidence linking teacher quality to student achievement, and accomplished teachers demonstrate inspiration and enthusiasm for teaching and student learning. This is why NEiTA has thrived for the last 21 years, because the community thinks these teachers deserve recognition.

"All of our national award recipients are passionate about the need for greater quality pre-service teaching programs, and they are teachers who also continually strive to better themselves, pushing the status quo and learning and adapting with their students."

The national awards are divided into three categories: leadership and development, innovation and community engagement. For more information on the 12 national awardees, including profiles go to: <http://www.asg.com.au/neita>

Eleven national award recipients will receive \$5000 professional development grants with one teacher getting the incredible opportunity to go to Space Camp in the U.S. One teacher is also awarded a \$2000 Disability Inclusion Grant.

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