

Teaching – why it's more than just a job



2014 Future Teacher Scholarship winners' essays

About us

Teachers Mutual Bank is a purpose-driven bank; we believe profits should do good in the world.

That's why we invest our profits back in to our members and the education sector.

We are committed to creating a better world for our members, the teaching community, the planet and the people on it. We believe profits should help create a brighter future.

We lead by example and are committed to being a responsible business, as we believe it's the way business should be run, and that it should be driven by ethics. Sustainability is not part of our business, it's why we do business. Sustainability is integral and integrated into what we do every day.

We want the next generation to live in a better world so we invest in putting teachers at the heart of everything we do. We create opportunities for teachers and the community to flourish.

We provide scholarships for young teachers, support teacher development and provide grants to schools to help teachers educate students about the environment.

After all it's why we exist, to support teachers who do one of the most important jobs in the world.

About the Future Teacher Scholarship

Our Future Teacher Scholarships provide financial assistance to university students studying to become teachers, so they can focus on their future and not worry about their finances.

Teachers Mutual Bank believes teachers do one of the most important jobs in the world and understands the need to support and nurture our future teachers. Since its launch in 2009 the Future Teacher Scholarship program has provided a total of \$175,000 to 35 deserving students.

"We want to help ease the load and allow aspiring teachers to focus on their university studies" says Steve James, CEO of Teachers Mutual Bank.



In 2014 we asked applicants to submit an essay on the subject 'Teaching – why it's more than just a job'

We were overwhelmed by their passion.
We found 7 winners.

These are their stories...

Ann-Maree Maunder

Bachelor of Primary Education (Religious Education),
University of Notre Dame Sydney, NSW



About Ann-Maree

Studying in Sydney to follow her dream of becoming a teacher has been a challenge for Ann-Maree. The University of Notre Dame student must carefully balance her strong desire to perform well in her course with her need to work for financial stability. Although finding the practical experience in her degree the most rewarding element, Ann-Maree admits that it can be difficult to juggle her tutoring work around school placements.

"This scholarship removes a big financial burden. I can now focus more on my studies and becoming the best teacher I can be" said Ann-Maree.

Ann-Maree was inspired to become a teacher after seeing first-hand the struggles of children growing up with learning difficulties such as dyslexia. She would like to inspire her future students, whether they are traditional or non-traditional learners, to believe in themselves and their ability to pursue any avenue for their future.

Ann-Maree believes "a teacher is the key to opening and fostering the wonderful minds of students and enabling them to identify their strengths and reach their full potential".



Ann-Maree's essay

The modern classroom still explores our key curriculum areas of literacy, numeracy, science, health and creative arts. However, there are new qualities and beliefs that are also being incorporated including, creativity, wonderment, belief, self-esteem, belonging, global citizenship and social activism. The continual evolution of education not only explores the cognitive development of each child but now includes the development of well-rounded students equipped with knowledge and skills to lead an able life both academically and socially. To create a classroom culture that welcomes these beliefs and a desire for change, we look to the teachers. The teacher is key to opening and fostering the wonderful minds of students and enabling them to identify their strengths and reach their potential.

This is why teaching is more than just a job, it is a vocation that requires unique philosophies and approaches to life. **To be a great teacher one must have faith and an uncanny belief in the future,** of their own and most importantly of their students. As a student teacher you can see how your own thoughts and attitudes evolve as you progress through your degree as you become aware of something greater than yourself. Each situation becomes a learning experience, initially for oneself and then it expands and translates into classroom learning experiences. You find yourself noting picture books, exhibitions, films, games, news articles, websites and animal facts as your own personal repertoire for lesson content and activities.

It is amusing how the majority of people associate teaching with amazing hours, ample holidays, finger painting and tracing. It would be interesting for them to spend a day in the mind of a teacher and see how each detail is linked to the next, each experience both personal and professional are deconstructed into learning content, and then analysed as to its success. This critique of life is to better ourselves and our student's experiences to ensure our classrooms are the best they can be.

Teaching is more than a job, it is believing in potential, having faith in change and enabling ourselves to continually improve and assist our students in their achievements.

Teaching becomes a way of life, one of challenge, betterment and belief. **Teachers help sculpt children for careers and ways of life that may not even exist yet, so we must believe we can help them come to know and understand the ever changing world around them.** It is our responsibility to maintain an understanding and faith in what the world can become and that our students are the ones to facilitate this change and evolution.

Teaching is more than a job, it is believing in potential, having faith in change and enabling ourselves to continually improve and assist our students in their achievements.

This may not be achieved in one day, or in our first year, but the goal is that throughout our career we will inspire a student or two to facilitate change and give each one the gift of self-belief. Teaching truly is believing in one another.

Catherine Francis

Masters in Education,
Charles Darwin University, NT



About Catherine Francis

Catherine is juggling a lot at the moment. Not only is she teaching full time but also studying to complete her Masters in Education at Charles Darwin University. Distance education is Catherine's true passion and she is currently teaching students in remote areas around the state via correspondence. Catherine is pursuing her Masters, also by distance, in the hope to one day influence the way this type of schooling is taught.

"This scholarship will allow me to stay on track with my studies and help cover the long trips, 380km, to meet with my peers and lecturers" said Catherine.

Catherine admits that distance education has its challenges and in her current position she deals with a lot of students who are disengaged and struggle with access to resources.

"I want to help create policy and programs within the Northern Territory that allow teachers to better connect with and engage students in remote and rural areas" said Catherine.



Catherine's essay

The first time I knew teaching was more than a job was sitting with my two year old sister after a day at Kindy and making her sit on my lap, while I taught her to write – I was four years old. **I had always wanted to be a teacher**, I loved classrooms when I was younger a lot but since getting my own classroom, I realised there is so much more about it I love. **I wake up every day and walk into my school like it's the first day, full of wonder and energy about what the day will bring**, about what impact I will have on my students today and how I can help my colleagues.

Learning is the one thing my family could give me. Growing up in a poor family and always going without, as one of five children, made me realise as I got older that education is the biggest commodity in life. Not money or new brand name clothes, which I had wanted so much when I was younger, but being a lifelong learner and having an education made me a valued person and in turn made me appreciative of the gift my parents had been able to give me – Education.

Growing up with disabled brothers who found learning hard I found success in teaching them to read and write and find wonder in books. Every day in my job now as a teacher I work with students who are disengaged in learning, struggle to find wonder in a world that disconnects them from it because of difference, and are confused about choices they seem unable to make. I teach **that learning is a pathway and a tool or possession that no one can take away from them, it is theirs and only theirs to keep** and the power that education and being a life learner gives to a student or a teacher can change the world – your world.

To me teaching is more than a job, it's a lifestyle. I still feel like a student on the first day, I still label my books and items with my name, I still get anxious when the principal calls me into her office and most of all I still learn something new every day.

As a teacher I realise I make a choice every day to be a learner and a teacher. I instill in my students that with education you can do anything and go anywhere no matter what your colour, size, background, or past; you do have choices over your future with education. As a passionate teacher who values and adores learning, to me teaching is more than a job, it's a lifestyle. I still feel like a student on the first day, I still label my books and items with my name, I still get anxious when the principal calls me into her office and most of all I still learn something new every day. I value the right I have to an education and the journey that has taken me to completing a Master's in Education, that I hope will make me the best teacher I can be and reinforce to my students learning is important no matter who you are or where you are on your journey.

Gabrielle Wallace

Master of Special Education (Hearing Impairment)



About Gabrielle Wallace

Gabrielle is an established teacher who is going back to university to follow her dream of becoming a full-time teacher for children who are deaf or hearing impaired. A mother of two hearing-impaired sons; Gabrielle has an abundance of experience that she hopes to build upon. Going back to university will be quite challenging, with Gabrielle having to continue to work to support both herself and her family.

“I have put off my studies in the past and this scholarship will give me the extra boost to allow me to finish my Masters” said Gabrielle.

The mother of 3 has always had a love for teaching but working with children with hearing impairments is where Gabrielle’s true passion lies. The 52 year old must go back to university to obtain her Masters of Special Education to enable her to work on a permanent basis with deaf and hearing impaired students across South Western Sydney.

“Children with special needs are faced with learning challenges, knowing where and how to give my students the help and support they need is very rewarding” said Gabrielle.



Gabrielle's essay

Teaching has a job description, yes, with specifics about curriculum, assessments and reporting. Inspirational teachers have vision to bring the role alive, infusing in students a love of learning for their lifetime. Teachers love their jobs and this is often handed down through the generations. I hang with pride my Grandmother's Master of Arts from 1904! She herself won a scholarship, taught English and French and eventually became a Head Mistress. Long after her death people spoke highly of her integrity, her love of teaching and how she had positively affected their lives.

My mother also with a Masters would sit in the evenings and sometimes think aloud about how she was going to help a certain student, running through a verbal list of what she had already tried. After those ponderings my mother would say, "I've got it." Another strategy was born, also modelling resilience. I remember the telephone ringing. It was an ex-student thanking my mother for never giving up on her and this was not a single occurrence.

It is those times of beaming faces in the supermarket, "Miss, Miss, remember me, remember you read me that story!" It's that priceless connection as you beam back with, "Yes of course I remember you!" How could we forget; even if it was only one day in the classroom as a casual teacher?

Children are our most precious resource. In a globally agile and technically savvy world a teacher is a vital resource to negotiate inter-cultural connections and to facilitate the continual processing of information in an educationally advantageous way.

Teachers are 'systems analysts,' continually appraising their own effectiveness, the efficacy of their programmes and assessing their student's learning. Teachers use peer support to enhance learning, in an atmosphere of an inspired community

This is more than a job; it is a responsibility and one that has long-lasting effects. Some of the world's greatest leaders have cited their teachers as a source of success and inspiration.

in the classroom. When things don't quite go to plan you are a navigator. If you hit some turbulence you turn back and start again **Your sense of humour sees you through.**

An effective teacher requires an enormous amount of dedication and stamina. She spreads her abundance of knowledge and enthusiasm across her pupils, whilst recognising the uniqueness in each one. She can re-direct the children who want all her attention and the 'livewires' are kept stimulated. She taps into their intrinsic motivation, ignites curiosity and allows creativity to flourish. This is the engaging passion for teaching and learning.

A teacher is a guardian of values in a culturally respectful way; a mentor, a mediator, and someone to be absolutely trusted in all situations. This is more than a job; it is a responsibility and one that has long-lasting effects. Some of the world's greatest leaders have cited their teachers as a source of success and inspiration. Young lives are touched in such a profound way by how teachers role-model exceptional qualities.

Teachers leave a legacy. The vulnerability of your charges is something to never take lightly. Teaching is certainly more than an extraordinary job!

Kate Archibald

Bachelor of Education (Kindergarten to year 7),
Edith Cowan University, WA



About Kate Archibald

This aspiring teacher puts 100% into everything that she does and somehow, between studying full time and working, Kate still manages to find time to volunteer with a number of charitable organisations. The student at Edith Cowan University has a true love of literacy and language and is excited to pass this on to her future students.

“With a 14 week unpaid work placement coming up I was quite stressed about money and being able to work enough to support myself, so a huge worry has been lifted” said Kate. Kate’s passion for teaching came at an early age. She was inspired by an amazing teacher of her own and his ability to engage with and build a relationship with every one of his students. Kate, who is particularly interested in working with disadvantaged children, hopes to achieve this with her students in the future.

“I did a prac in a low socio-economic area and just seeing what the children could achieve with encouragement and a positive attitude was amazing” said Kate.

“I am passionate about literacy and believe books are a way for kids to use their imagination and escape, I want to foster a love of language and literacy in all of my students” said Kate.



Kate's essay

As Gini Cunningham so aptly wrote in 2009, "teaching is more than a job – it's magic!", and it definitely takes a special type of person! Teaching isn't a job, it's a profession.

As a teacher, the classroom is your oyster. As soon as a student enters, you have the opportunity to allow your personality, humour and creativity to shine through; something that most jobs won't allow. **Being a teacher, money isn't the primary objective, you do it to change lives and inspire young minds.** No day is the same and each new dawn brings something different and offers a chance to influence a student to a level as deep as changing their life. Children are the future and ultimately teachers and parents are responsible for raising the next generation of citizens for this world so full of constant change. Educators empower students and equip them with the skills and motivation needed to fulfil their hopes and dreams.

Being a teacher brings so many things that you can't get from just sitting behind a desk. Teachers are life-long educators, and we never stop learning ourselves. The more teachers can learn, the more they can impact others. It is a fun and energising profession; you are constantly inspired and uplifted and get to share this joy with students by emphasising the fun in education and fostering a love of learning. **Even the intangible rewards that may seem small to some – seeing success, the smiles, the laughter, the memories, and the drawings and notes are guaranteed to fill a teacher with the utmost joy.** Recently at the before and after school care centre where I work, we had a "super hero" themed day during vacation care. **The children were asked to draw a picture of their heroes, one young girl drew me; captioned "Kate the teacher".** How many 'jobs' can claim to be a child's hero?

Teaching requires 100% heart and soul, you have a whole class eagerly waiting at your fingertips, that's a whole class of brains to mould and children that will one day be responsible for leading our country.

In conclusion, every individual's home life is different, some are great and some are terrible but being a teacher allows you to open your class and provide a student with a constant place they feel valued, happy and supported. Every student deserves the right to a quality and equitable education to enable them to succeed and reach their full potential. Being a teacher provides an outlet to implement the skills and enormous passion to make a difference in the world. If someone were to just see teaching as a job, they may just do the bare minimum, teaching requires 100% heart and soul, you have a whole class eagerly waiting at your fingertips, that's a whole class of brains to mould and children that will one day be responsible for leading our country.

"I'd like to give every young teacher some good news. Teaching is a very easy job"... "However, if you care about what you're doing, it's one of the toughest jobs around". – Rafe Esquith

Rhea O'Donnell

Bachelor of Education (Primary),
University of Sydney, NSW



About Rhea O'Donnell

Rhea O'Donnell was drawn to study education because of her natural urge to help others. The 27-year-old, Sydney University student believes she was always meant to be a teacher, referring to teaching as the 'family business'. Although wanting to focus wholly on her degree, Rhea also works to cover her living and educational expenses. Rhea admits she has to be extremely creative to survive on her tight budget in Sydney.

"This scholarship will reduce a lot of financial stress, enabling me to focus on my studies and becoming a better teacher" said Rhea.

Upon completing her degree Rhea would like to pursue teaching opportunities in Australia's rural communities.

"If I am able to make a difference in the life of even one child I will be happy and all of the late nights, essay deadlines and exams will have been worth it" said Rhea.



Rhea's essay

Teaching to me is far more than just a job. It's a natural fit and very much the 'family business'.

In total, nine members of my family have been called to the teaching profession and these people were a significant inspiration to me when deciding to pursue my qualification.

Our family teaching tradition began in 1892 when my great grandfather William Landrey became a pupil teacher at Cleveland Street Boys High School. In 1905 William married my great grandmother Frances Hanbidge – who was also a teacher. William was initially posted to the country town of Berrigan, and many different locations throughout rural and urban NSW; William finished his career as a principal.

My great uncle Jack Hanbidge, along with his two sons Alan and Robert, continued the teaching tradition. As did my uncle Geoff Landrey, who was a specialist Language teacher. One of my cousins has recently qualified as a primary teacher, another is due to complete his secondary education studies in 2014 and my brother spent 5 years teaching English in Japan. I am proud to think that I will add yet another layer to the historical narrative of my family and particularly, to our tradition of teaching.

My passion for teaching doesn't just stem from my family history. **I also have a burning personal desire to serve the community in an important and profound way.** I am totally committed to Public School Education and equitable outcomes for all students. I am particularly interested in indigenous Education and hope to teach in a remote or rural community – just like my great grandfather – not only when I graduate but also through the program 'Beyond the Line'.

Having already completed two practicums, I firmly believe teaching is the life for me! I thrived on the cultural diversity displayed in both Bourke Street and

I want to be able to be able to say: I made a difference in someone's life. I helped to cultivate a thirst for knowledge. I helped students to achieve their goals and reach their potential.

Crown Street Public Schools, which fundamentally provided inspiration for developing engaging learning experiences. As a result of my professional placements I have begun to understand the individual teaching needs of students from diverse backgrounds. I feel so content every time I experience teaching – I feel like I'm coming home.

In addition to my family history, I have been thoroughly inspired by many quality educators who have (throughout my schooling) instilled conviction, character and courage. One particular example of this was a wonderful woman who connected with my younger brother when he was struggling to learn to read. I am happy to report that as a result of this teacher's fierce dedication, my brother is a skilled and enthusiastic reader. If I can achieve this at least once in my career – all the late nights, essay deadlines and exams will be worth it!

I want to be able to be able to say: I made a difference in someone's life. I helped to cultivate a thirst for knowledge. I helped students to achieve their goals and reach their potential. **Teaching is more than just a job. It's what I'm going to do – to make the world a better place.**

Robert Low

Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Teaching (Primary),
University of Newcastle, NSW



About Robert Low

Robert, a father of two, gave up a full time job in civil construction to pursue his teaching aspirations. The Newcastle University student must carefully balance his desire to perform well in his course with his need to support his young family. Robert admitted that this can be a challenge with the costs of day-care, textbooks other expenses adding up. "This scholarship will significantly ease the financial burden that my university studies place on my family" said Robert.

Robert was inspired to pursue his dream of becoming a teacher after seeing the positive impact his father-in-law, a teacher and school principal of 40 years, was able to achieve with his students. Having children of his own also changed Robert's perspective on life and motivated him into the teaching professional.

"I hope teaching will enable me to help my future students realise their full potential" said Robert.



Robert's essay

(I wrote this essay in the third person from my father-in-law's perspective after discussing my application with him)

It was a windy and bitterly cold Friday night in July 2010 and I was watching Friday night football with our soon to be son in law Rob. After his beloved Bulldogs won Rob was off to bed as he had to begin work early on the Saturday morning. This day changed Rob's life forever. When he returned home in the afternoon after working in civil construction, Rob enthusiastically told me about his dream. He had dreamt that he had quit his civil construction employment and had followed his childhood desire of being a primary school teacher. And so his change of career and lifestyle began.

A few obstacles and events confronted Rob as he began his journey to become a teacher. Firstly, he had a wedding to help organise in December 2010. Secondly, his civil construction company were bitterly disappointed at losing such a hardworking and dedicated employee and thirdly, he had to complete an application and receive admission into Open Foundation at university. Rob did not have the opportunity to complete his High School Certificate so he would have to do this externally and succeed before applying and being accepted to complete his degree at the University of Newcastle.

Rob worked extremely hard during 2011, successfully finishing his High School Certificate whilst working full time and becoming a father for the first time. This allowed Rob to gain entry into a Bachelor of Teaching/Bachelor of Arts (Primary) beginning at the University of Newcastle in 2012.

Rob has now recently completed the second year of his degree obtaining excellent results in subjects ranging for Educational Sociology to Physical Education and Dance. As a mature age student, now with two little children, Rob has displayed all

Life is not a dress rehearsal and you make the decision to follow your dream.

the attributes required to be an excellent teacher such as: organisation, inter and intrapersonal skills, leadership qualities, enthusiasm and passion to make a difference with students.

He has demonstrated throughout practicum and volunteer work that he has a wonderful rapport with students, staff and parents. He has an explicit and systematic approach to his teaching and learning programs. He embeds all elements of the Quality Teaching Framework in every aspect of the teaching and learning cycle. Rob's passion is working with students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, students experiencing learning difficulties and Aboriginal students to actively assist and promote the closing of "the gap."

Now, back to the dream... Rob had mentioned to me that he has learning difficulties when he attended Primary School and that he did not learn to read effectively until later primary school. This has made Rob determined to assist other students that find learning challenging and have behavioural issues.

Rob is now well down the track of fulfilling his dream of being a teacher. The dream will end or maybe it will begin at the end of 2015 with Rob in front of his class, **successfully making a difference in the lives of children and being an excellent role model to the younger generation.**

Life is not a dress rehearsal and you make the decision to follow your dream. Teaching is so much more than just a job!

Scott Tapper

Bachelor of Education (Primary),
Edith Cowan University, WA



About Scott Tapper

Scott has always wanted to be a teacher and after completing a law degree he has now gone back to university to follow his true dream. The Edith Cowan University student manages to keep himself very busy, devoting a large proportion of his time to the non-profit student group Network Teach, which Scott founded. The network helps equip students studying teaching with the skills and experience that will help them gain employment at end of their degree.

“My opportunities to work this year are considerably reduced by not only my university course work, but my commitment to Network Teach and a 10 week unpaid practicum. This scholarship will remove a financial burden and enable me to pay my university fees” said Scott.

Scott is passionate about the importance of education and is excited to be a teacher and an advocate for learning. Scott’s goal is to one day become a principal so that he is able to make a bigger difference in the lives of more children.

“I was inspired to be a teacher by the positive male role models that taught me as a child” said Scott.



Scott's essay

Teaching could never be defined simply as an occupation, it is an opportunity to truly define and grow the future leaders of tomorrow in an ever changing world. A passionate teacher is one who takes personal pride in building the aspirations and successes of generations of students. It is a person who doesn't live by the conventions of a traditional working week and a person who always strives to guide and help those in need. A true teacher will make it their lifelong goal to captivate the minds of students in an endeavour to promote the importance of learning and its place in our daily lives. We have a far greater role than simply educating students. **We are mentors, we are councillors, we are parents, we are doctors, and we are present during every step of a child's journey throughout the toughest and most exciting portion of their life.** It is with this great responsibility that we represent the gatekeepers of the future, working to make this world a better place through the process of imparting knowledge and developing students to think beyond the confines of the classroom. It is what we do that makes us more than just teachers, and highlights our growing role in reinforcing the values and beliefs of our students to make their own choices that will define their future.

As the founder of Network Teach Inc, I am no stranger to the importance of teaching being more than just a job. I have worked tirelessly throughout my degree to support my colleagues and thousands of strangers, transforming a small mentoring program into Australia's largest and leading organisation to support aspiring teachers. This organisation now operates at 3 campuses and supports approximately 80% of all aspiring teachers in Western Australia. I have spent thousands of hours over the course of my studies and in my own time, building the support structures and opportunities of aspiring teachers

We have an opportunity to really make a positive difference to generations of students and it's this time which we can really instil and define a child to become the person they want to be, guiding them along the way to truly reach their potential.

in an effort to instil the importance of professional learning, engagement with communities and the quintessential role teacher's play in the social and emotional development of children in our care. It has not been an easy task, managing a growing organisation as an unpaid member of staff whilst also completing my studies and working in a special needs school to make ends meet, I have been fortunate that despite my dedication to Network Teach, my grades have been consistently high and my attention to my work has always been completed to the highest standards.

I am proud of my attention to my work has always been completed to the highest standards. I am proud of my achievements and hold this is evidence that I believe teaching is more than just a job.

As teachers, we have an opportunity to really make a positive difference to generations of students and it's this time which we can really instil and define a child to become the person they want to be, guiding them along the way to truly reach their potential.



Need more information?
Call **13 12 21** or visit csr@tmbank.com.au

