

Dayna, the teacher in an unusual classroom

Dayna has been a teacher for 17 years. He has been teaching at Balga Senior High School. He was teaching year 12 last year. However this year he was sent to the WADJAK Northside Aboriginal Resource Centre near the school to be stationed there instead. Every morning Dave the Aboriginal Indigenous Education Officer would bring him students there. He never knows how many students would turn up. It can vary from only one to ten or more. The program started this school year to help students who would otherwise stay away from school because they could not cope in a normal classroom setting. For Dayna this is also a welcome change. He has the freedom to devise his own teaching methods to suit the needs of those who come. It is also his biggest challenge to be prepared for whoever turns up. He still works within the boundaries set by the Education department but he says with a wide smile, “Now the boundary has changed from a square to a circle!”

Dayna rates his current job 10/10! I followed him around for a day and saw how he taught like a mentor, in a way knowledge is transmitted from father to son, in a family setting which the centre, together with the other staff and visitors, provided. That morning there was an elders meeting, and the kids joined them for lunch. His students were especially enthusiastic about the old scooter Dayna used as a teaching aid to take apart and put together again.