

Teacher Spotlight: Georgia Davies



At the core of our mission to provide a quality education in Agricultural and Horticultural Science, are dedicated educators. One of whom has taken a massive leap from a well-paying and comfortable job to being tasked with the hefty yet rewarding responsibility of raising the next generation of industry leaders.

Georgia Davies recently started her journey as an Agricultural Science teacher at Christchurch Boys High School. Despite the challenges that come with teaching, Georgia does her utmost to create a strong sense of enthusiasm for Agri-education among her students. The stigma surrounding the subject as a 'last resort' or 'afterthought' class often makes this tricky, yet her students continue to amaze with their increasing interest in agriculture and newfound knack for it that they never knew they had.

Some of these boys have been put into ag because they couldn't go anywhere else and yet seeing the improvement, seeing them start to learn and ask questions is brilliant!

The emphasis on a good teacher comes into play in the context of students reaching their academic potential. So, what makes for a good teacher?

For Georgia, it's about the

passion an educator has for their respective subject.

When you've got someone who, as a teacher, shows a real passion for the subject, doesn't matter what subject it is, that's how you keep students engaged and involved.

Secondary school students are at a crucial time in their lives where they are weighing up their options not only for what they are going to study at tertiary level, but for their future career pathways.

Georgia stresses the pivotal role that she as an agriculture teacher plays not in promoting further study in ag/hort but by helping her students pinpoint their existing skills that are advantageous for the primary industries.

If I can get one or two students a year, convinced that maybe agriculture is a viable pathway for them, then I'm doing my job properly in terms of what I wanted to achieve which is to get young people into ag...that might not necessarily be the farming pathway, it might be catching a kid that's a really strong biologist and getting him into genetics.

Persuading school leavers that the primary industries provides worthwhile careers is somewhat of a challenge, and an ongoing collective effort from agriculture and horticulture teachers nationwide. The reason for this lies in the stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding Agricultural and Horticultural Science as subjects. They are deemed easy, non-academic and by extension not worth the credits.

Georgia reflects on how despite her students being doubtful of the value in studying Agriculture, under her guidance, they have flourished, seeing significant growth in their learning and interest of the primary sector. She commends agriculture as a subject that requires strategic thinking and of tremendous importance in the long run for New Zealand.

I don't think a lot of people realise quite just how academic agriculture is, and you know, it's a science for a reason...I think they also don't realise the breadth of how far the topic covers and how much of an impact it has on the country as well.

Having been through multiple pathways in the primary industries prior to her teaching career, Georgia is equipped not only with the skills to pass

on crucial sector knowledge, but also the industry experience to back it up. With expert knowledge from her time working as a Territory Manager at Gallagher and a Nutrient Specialist at Ballance Agri-Nutrients, Georgia has worked with a variety of clientele and knows that these essential people skills are key to a successful lesson in her current role.

From my life experience, you've got to work out who your customer set is, what they do and how they want to do it. So for our boys, every single day someone will ask me, 'can we go outside?'. At the moment I can't so I'm really focussed on bringing the outside in.

Teachers are the backbone of the education system and often perceived as the 'make or break' for the next generation as they navigate the trials and tribulations of their future. Georgia acknowledges her students and their individual journeys, but strongly advocates for the ever-ongoing necessity that is, the primary industries. She encourages young learners to be present and open-minded in their studies and moreover to not shy away from making mistakes. These mistakes are what will allow us to grow.

You can't do anything wrong in terms of your career, if it feels right at the time, jump for it.