**World Teachers’ Day Podcast**

**Katrina Peall**

Announcer: This is a Queensland Department of Education podcast.

Virginia Bowdidge: Every day, Queensland teachers make a difference in the lives of students in diverse communities across the state. There are more than 50,000 teachers in more than 1,200 state schools teaching more than 543,000 students a day. Teachers make a difference, and teaching can make a difference in your life. Teaching is a profession with incredible opportunities to take you to amazing places.

Education Careers Ambassador Katrina joins me to discuss where teaching has taken her.

Katrina Peall: Hi, I'm Katrina Peall, and I'm one of the 2019 Teach Queensland Career Ambassadors.

Virginia Bowdidge: Thanks for joining me today, Katrina. Could you tell me a little bit about why you chose teaching as a career?

Katrina Peall: I sure can. I'm one of those people that always wanted to be a teacher. Right from a very early age, it's all I ever wanted to do. I think I chose to be a teacher because I wanted to make a difference or an impact on a person's life.

Virginia Bowdidge: Is that what first attracted you to the profession?

Katrina Peall: I think what attracted me was that I had many positive influences from the teachers that taught me. I really cherished those interactions with them, and those connections and relationships with them. I wanted to have that with other students and make the same difference with them.

Virginia Bowdidge: Yeah, it's very special when you get that connection with the teacher, isn't it?

Katrina Peall: It is, very much so.

Virginia Bowdidge: How long have you been teaching?

Katrina Peall: I've been teaching almost 23 years now.

Yes, and varied locations across the state, I haven't just been in the one place. I've taught in the Fraser Coast, I've taught out in Emerald, in the UK as well, in Bundaberg, and in Brisbane as well.

Virginia Bowdidge: Can you tell me a little bit about the various roles you've had over those years?

Katrina Peall: One of my favourite questions, actually, that one. My career has been incredibly diverse in that I've had the opportunity to take up many different roles. They weren't just what you would expect of being a teacher or being a principal or anything like that, so there wasn't just a linear career path. My career has taken very sideways steps, as well. I first started as a teacher, then I did take up the opportunity of being a small-school principal, and then I took a sideways step and went into a curriculum advisory role for science. As you can tell, now I'm an ambassador, so that's another sideways step. Each time, sort of in between those roles, I've stepped back into that teacher role, so it's been quite a diverse career.

Virginia Bowdidge: Well, that's a wonderful thing about teaching, isn't it? You can get all those different aspects to your career.

Katrina Peall: Absolutely.

Announcer: Got a question? Email podcast@qed.qld.gov.au.

Virginia Bowdidge: Were there any particular roles that you felt were more challenging than others, or did they each offer their own challenges?

Katrina Peall: Most definitely, all different sorts of challenges and stretched you in different ways. The thing I like about doing different roles is that then you can take those experiences and skills and bring them back to the classroom and share them with your students. It makes your teaching so much more enriched and more engaging for the students, as well. Better learning opportunities for them.

Virginia Bowdidge: What was it like being a principal of a small school?

Katrina Peall: It was quite interesting, and had its own diversity within that career, as well. But the reason I liked doing it was because I could build a deeper connection with the community.

For example, in one particular school that I was a principal at, I developed a connection with the local rescue helicopter, and I was able to organize the helicopter to come and land on the oval of the school. The kids were there and they're all sitting down in front of the helicopter once it had landed and turned off its blades. They got to talk to the crewmen and the paramedics about what they do, and they even got to climb all through it and be strapped into the big stretcher. Parents came along as well, they were standing sort of behind the children, and they got to participate in all of this as well. It meant that that service could develop a deeper connection, or a better connection, with that community.

It actually became quite fortuitous in the end because then, in the school holidays that followed, the family that lived across the road next to the school oval, the father actually broke his leg and had to be airlifted to Brisbane. It just meant that the chopper crew knew where to land and where to go, first of all, but it also meant for that family that they knew what was going to happen. So the kids weren't stressed, worried, anxious or anything like that, and it just made it a smoother transition for that family.

Virginia Bowdidge: Oh, that's lovely. Are there any one of the roles that you've done that you like more than the others?

Katrina Peall: Oh, no.

Virginia Bowdidge: You don't want to say, or no?

Katrina Peall: No, I don't have a favourite, I don't think. I like them all for different reasons. They all pose different challenges, therefore you like them in different ways, and different situations and things like that, too.

Virginia Bowdidge: What do you love about teaching?

Katrina Peall: I think I like the impact that you make. I like the last day of school, actually, and it's not because of the school holidays are about to start and summer’s here and things like that. Sometimes you can't see the change or the impact that you've made through the year because it can be such a little move. But when you get to those last sort of two weeks of the year or the last day of school, you can see the impact over the year and you go, "That kid got it then, that kid got it then, and that kid got it then." So you can see it a lot more.

Announcer: For more information, visit qed.qld.gov.au.

Virginia Bowdidge: Do you think the reality of teaching has lived up to your expectations?

Katrina Peall: Oh, I think it's exceeded it.

Virginia Bowdidge: Wow!

Katrina Peall: More so for the diversity. I didn't expect the diversity in the career, like I said, with the different types of career roles that I've had. I also didn't expect the lifestyle that it afforded me as well. When you teach in rural and remote, the types of connections you make and the sense of belonging that you have with your colleagues. That's really important to people, and I didn't expect that.

Virginia Bowdidge: I was going to ask you to describe a typical school day, but you've done so many different things, I'm not sure that you're going to be able to do that.

Katrina Peall: I'll describe a typical teaching school day.

Virginia Bowdidge: Okay, excellent.

Katrina Peall: How does that sound?

Virginia Bowdidge: Excellent.

Katrina Peall: It's very different for different teachers because we all work so uniquely. But for me, I use my mornings before school as sort of my admin time. That's when I do my emails, I read my morning messages, I might make sure I've got everything ready to go for the day. Not the prep work, just having it all there ready to go. That's the time I like to connect with fellow teachers, connect with the people in my school, and build relationships with them. Once the day gets going, you're just so busy, you can get caught up with the events of the day that you don't always get that opportunity, so I like to do that in the morning.

Obviously, then, through the day, it's hands on with the kids. It's very full, and you need to maximize your time with the students because you've only got them for that window or that snapshot of time. You can't sort of then go, "Oh well, I'll do that at 3:30" because they’ve already gone home. So, that's that face to face time. Then, after work, I find that that's the time I use for my prep work, like preparing and planning the next lessons for the next day or the longer-term planning. I'm one of those teachers that I like to then walk out of school, go home and switch off if I can possibly do that.

Virginia Bowdidge: Would you recommend teaching as a profession?

Katrina Peall: Absolutely. If you're someone who wants to make that impact on a young person's life, or if you have that nurturing, caring role or instinct about you, then yes, teaching is most definitely the career for you.

Virginia Bowdidge: Wonderful. How do you think we can inspire other young people to value and pursue a career in education?

Katrina Peall: I think that we can, firstly, as teachers ourselves, definitely inspire them and tell them the good things about the profession. I think sometimes the negative stories can sometimes override the positive stories, and there is more positive than there is negative, it's just sometimes it has a louder voice. So I think we need to be making sure we're putting out positive stories all the time and giving students the opportunity to take up teaching-style activities in the classroom, whether that's peer mentoring or something like that, or going and doing something with a younger grade so that they get that taste of teaching. Parents can give their children opportunities to explore teaching if that's what they've voiced to them as a possible career. So there's lots of different little things like that that we can do.

Virginia Bowdidge: Where to now for you?

Katrina Peall: For me?

Speaker 2: Yes, what's your next step?

Katrina Peall: I'm going back to my school next year, back to my Grade 3 classroom. I'm really looking forward to going back and, like I said, applying all those things that I've learnt this year in my ambassador role back in the classroom. Even showing other teachers things that I've learnt that could possibly extend their experiences and opportunities for the children in their classroom.

Speaker 2: Okay. Excellent. Thanks very much for your time, Katrina.

Katrina Peall: Thank you.

Announcer: You have been listening to a Queensland Department of Education podcast.