**World Teachers’ Day**

**Melita Dellit**

**Our Lady of the Southern Cross College, Dalby**

**Announcer:** This is a Queensland Department of Education podcast.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** World Teachers’ Day is a special day on the Education calendar. It’s a day we celebrate and acknowledge the hard work of our teachers. As part of our World Teachers’ Day celebrations this year, we ask teachers throughout the state to share some memorable moments. Moments that made them think, ‘I made a difference.’

My name is Virginia Bowdidge, and joining me today is Melita Dellit, Year 1 teacher at Our Lady of the Southern Cross College in Dalby.

Thanks for talking to me Melita.

**Melita Dellit**: Thanks Virginia.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Now, you’ve been a teacher for a while, haven’t you?

**Melita Dellit**: Yes, I have. I’ve been teaching for about 22 years.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Why did you decide to become a teacher?

**Melita Dellit**: I loved school as a student myself, so it was quite early on as a student that I set my heart on being a teacher. I particularly wanted to be an Early Years teacher and so I’ve always taught Year 1 or Year 2.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** What is it about teaching that age group that really interests you?

**Melita Dellit**: I enjoy the fact that every day is different. I love working with the children and watching them to reach their potential and I don’t feel like my job is work.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Have you been at a variety of schools in that time?

**Melita Dellit**: No, I haven’t. I’m fortunate that this is the school that I went to as a child. I also completed my last university placement here and I’ve always taught at this school.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Oh, that’s fantastic to hear. What is it about your job that inspires you? What makes it so rewarding?

**Melita Dellit**: The learners in my classroom have such a diverse range of needs. I see it as my responsibility to adopt my pedagogy to suit all students so that every child has a chance to succeed.

We actually have a phrase at our school, which is, *‘Every child, every chance’*. And I enjoy the challenge of modifying the classroom, whether it’s resources or the physical environment, to cater for the students in my class. Things like: flexible furniture, recommendations from the occupational therapist, or adjustments that are suggested to me by education officers that meet the requirements of sensory impairedstudents in my class.

I was actually nominated, and one of three finalists too, in the Toowoomba Catholic School’s Excellence in Leadership Awards this year, from my work in teaching two visually impaired students in our school.

These students transition to learning Braille, to read, write and learn Braille. Prior to the first student entering into my classroom last year, I had no first-hand experience with Braille. I had to quickly upskill myself, and I actually chose to approach the introduction of Braille with inclusivity by normalising Braille in the classroom. And, as a class we sing Braille letter songs every morning to help us all learn the Braille Alphabet Dots. The students’ desk name tags have a Braille sticky label with their name in Braille dots. My staff name badge does as well, as do lots of other staff members at our school.

I actually went to our local K-Hub (dedicated Kmart focus store) store this week and was served by a hearing-impaired staff member, who commented on how she liked my badge and how, it was for everyone. It was really cool to see someone who was not associated with our school to recognise this.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** So, was that challenging for you to make those adjustments?

**Melita Dellit**: It was challenging but I actually found it quite rewarding.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** And how was it embraced by the other students?

**Melita Dellit**: They love it. The kids in my class are so adopting and accepting of the student in my class that’s visually impaired. They’re very acceptable to learning Braille and they’re quite excited to share this with our college community.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** What do you think shaped you into the teacher you are today?

**Melita Dellit**: I believe that I am the teacher that I am today because I had great role models, in both my personal and professional lives; who believed in me and encouraged me to be the best version of myself. I am determined to better myself and constantly strive to improve my teaching practice for better outcomes for my students.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** You’re obviously a very dedicated teacher. What advice would you give students thinking of studying teaching?

**Melita Dellit**: I think I would strongly encourage anyone that’s thinking of studying teaching to pursue this career. It can be very hard work at times but it’s also very rewarding. It’s definitely not a 9 to 3 job, as sometimes perceived in the outside world. I do usually arrive at school at around 7:30am or a quarter to 8. I don’t leave until about 5. I’m not saying that you have to be at school to meet your requirements, but I do value working as a team member, which does include regular meetings with new staff in our mentoring program. Planning lessons, I guess. Organising resources, marking, moderating assessments. Managing communications, such as class Dojo (online classroom management platform and app) and emails but, I guess my advice, to anyone working in this field is to concentrate on building respectful relationships, whether it be students, families or colleagues.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** What does the future in teaching hold for you?

**Melita Dellit**: Well, I’m definitely motivated to learn new skills, to assist the students that are in front of me. I actually thrive on watching the students grow academically and socially. I love seeing them succeed. So, I do like to take the time to set up routines and procedures in my class. This reduces the cognitive load for students, so that they can concentrate on their learning.

I’ve actually commenced a journey with the Queensland College of Teachers to become a Highly Accomplished Teacher. I’m still awaiting for certification of that.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Well that sounds interesting.

**Melita Dellit**: Yes, that’s exciting.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Thanks for your time Melita. It was great talking to you.

**Melita Dellit**: Thanks Virginia. Thanks for allowing me to share my story.

**Announcer:** You have been listening to a Queensland Department of Education podcast.The Department of Education acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands from across Queensland. We pay our respects to the Elders, past and present, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture, and hopes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.