**TRISH TAYLOR - WORLD TEACHERS’ DAY**

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

**Virginia Bowdidge:** World Teachers’ Day is a day to celebrate and acknowledge the wonderful work of all teachers across our state.

I’m Virginia Bowdidge from the Department of Education and I’ll be talking to some of Queensland’s extraordinary teachers, about the teaching moments that have inspired them.

Today, Trish Taylor, teacher of the deaf and advisory teacher for metropolitan region, Queensland Department of Education, joins me to talk about her teaching moments.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Hi Trish thanks for talking to me as part of our World Teachers’ Day series.

**Trish Taylor:** Thanks, it’s good to be here.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** How long have you been a teacher and what inspired you to choose teaching as a career?

**Trish Taylor:** Well, as of this year, I’ve now been teaching for 34 years . I think my inspiration comes from my love of learning. I absolutely loved school, I was just fascinated by what my teachers did so, I think it was a combination of just school life, love of learning and the teachers themselves.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Was your initial training in secondary or primary teaching?

**Trish Taylor:** My initial training was in secondary. I initially did a degree and did a double major in music, double major in ancient history and modern history and then I went in did my Diploma in Education and my first school was Caboolture High School as a secondary music and history teacher and I absolutely loved it. My fondest memories are from that time.

After I’d been teaching for a while, I found out my hearing was deteriorating and I had to think and do something about that. I didn’t want to leave this career, so I went back to Uni and I did a Graduate Diploma in Special Education and majored in hearing impairment. So, I came out of that as a teacher of the deaf and luckily enough was sent back to Caboolture High School, back in the secondary setting that I loved, where they had deaf children for the first time and worked there as a teacher of the deaf for quite a number of years after that. And now I work with children from Prep to Year 12.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** How has your hearing loss impacted your career?

**Trish Taylor:** It really made my career change tack. I’d always wanted to be a teacher since I was at that early age of eight and really had thought of nothing else, that I wanted to do, so when I did find out that my hearing was deteriorating and they couldn’t give me a timeline, at all … I was devastated...because what I always wanted to do with my life was now thrown up in the air. I did not want to leave teaching, at all. That’s when I went and changed tack and I went and spoke to a teacher of the deaf who supported me in high school. The lovely Mr Stapleton. He was an inspiration in himself for me and I had a really good chat with him. I also chattered with quite a few other people as well, trying to find out how I could stay in the profession. My worry was not about whether I could hear music or not, it was about whether I could hear and understand the students that were in my classroom, the trouble with hearing the student, the speech, things like that.

I’m not sure, that I would be a teacher of the deaf, if my hearing hadn’t deteriorated. It certainly changed the career path for me but enabled me, I was able to stay within education and stay as a teacher.

I had actually found out, when I was graduating high school, that not long before-hand, if you did have a hearing loss, you could not even become a teacher. It was not allowed. And even when I finished doing my Diploma in Education, I had to have a hearing test and that was considered into my employment opportunity, about whether I could be given a teaching job. That could have been a barrier to make me go seek something else.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Oh, that’s good, that education has moved on from where it was, thirty plus years ago.

**Trish Taylor:** Very luckily so, and it’s so lovely to see so many teachers and teacher aides, who are deaf themselves or have whatever level of hearing loss, employed by the department and being an inspiration themselves to the students that we teach.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** And so, what does your work now involve?

**Trish Taylor:** I’m now an advisory teacher for students with hearing loss. I support various schools in Metro Region. Those schools have students with hearing loss of all sorts of various degrees and they can be from Prep to Year 12.

I still get to work with the classroom teachers and with the curriculum. We need to make sure that they can access the curriculum and what reasonable adjustment needs to happen and I’m part of a team of advisory teachers that do service to regions. So even working within that team is great itself. I get to work with other teachers of the deaf, I get to see what teachers are doing in their classrooms. That is one of the best things about the job, because I learn so much from what other teachers and from seeing what other teachers do pick up some of their strategies and pedagogical practices and I’m able to share that with the school that might be ten kilometres away with another teacher there and so, a bit of a link in between spreading the word of good pedagogical practices. It’s one of the things I really love about the job. And I also love to see the teachers where they have a, “a-ha” moment, about the perspective of having a hearing loss and having to operate in a classroom environment and deal with a challenging listening environment. Because when they have that, “a-ha” moment, they understand their student better. And it’s so good when you come across the student that says this is working for me, I’m experiencing less difficulties and less barriers. If they are experiencing less barriers, that means we’re doing things right. That makes me feel so good at the end of a day, when there’s things like that to celebrate. And the work is so varied, that it’s just so exciting, you just don’t know what’s coming around the corner sometimes.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Teaching can offer enormous variety. Have you found that in your career?

**Trish Taylor:** Oh, definitely. There’s a number of different paths that one can take in their teaching career. Mine certainly took a complete side turn in what I taught but there are other teachers that happens for as well and they follow their interest and they might go into special education or they become a guidance officer or for whatever thing they might choose to do to follow their passion and I guess mine was, in some ways, nature imposed on me but it was so good that I was able to change tact within the particular career.

Sometimes, I’ve actually thought, oh do I go and try something different now? And a few years ago, I did go and try back into, more on the ground work, and I worked as a support teacher when I was up in Cairns. So, not much of a desk teacher anymore. I wanted to see if my hearing impairment was still a problem with hearing kids in the classroom, in that kind of teaching role.

Unfortunately, it was for me but I was able to have that experience and that opportunity to see if that was a path for me. Because there’s lots and lots of different paths that we can follow.

I’ve been able to do a number of various, different roles in the department, it hasn’t been restrictive, at all. Going deaf wasn’t traumatic for me, but leaving main stream teaching was, but then, I’ve been able to find so many other different things in teaching not just in the main stream. I’ve been head of special education. I’ve been a project officer, I’ve been a state-wide advisory teacher, I’ve been a regional AUSLAN support teacher and now I’m an advisory teacher, which I’ve done in three different regions, so I got a different experience even doing the same role. But I’m on constantly, on the lookout for the next challenge and what kind of position could feed my soul. All within my education career.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** What is it, that you love about your job?

**Trish Taylor:** The best part of my job at the moment, is really going into the classroom of other teachers, across a range of subjects, across a range of grades and I get to see so many different teaching strategies and how they manage their classroom. It’s just so vast, so effective, I’m on a constant, massive learning curve, from seeing what other teachers do and being able to share that with other teachers, as well. But what really motivates me in my career at the moment, seeing the confidence of both the students and the teachers grow.

When I see teachers that better idea, of the unique things that works for their student and what is best for the student. I see those teachers more confident and successful with their professional judgement and I see happier students, who are achieving their potential. And that is the kind of thing, that I love celebrating.

I think students with disability have an amazing resilience and when they feel understood and there’s the barriers have been broken down, a lot like Mr Stapleton did for me, I find the student’s actually open up to their learning environment more. It becomes fun, it becomes something that they enjoy and not something that’s too hard. And then when I can give the teacher a better profile of that uniqueness of the student and how they best learn and how they can best engage in schooling, then that enables those teachers to make so much better professional judgements and do it with confidence. And then that benefits the student and brings out success. Happy successful teachers, makes for happy successful students and vice versa.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** What is it about teaching that makes it so rewarding?

**Trish Taylor:** Seeing others be successful, that’s what it is about, for me. When I was a mainstream teacher I loved seeing students go along the learning journey. When I was teaching history, I used to love students coming up with unique, independent thoughts about what they were learning. And if I can contribute to both teachers and students being successful, then I feel like I have actually made a difference. I think teaching is very much a calling and a service. Most of the teachers out there, you can see, they also have that feeling. You have to fulfill the rewards, far outweigh any stress or challenges to keep going and the end result is just amazing.

**Virginia Bowdidge:** Thank you very much for your time today Trish.

**Trish Taylor:** Thank you, you’re welcome.

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

**Virginia Bowdidge:** 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.