**World Teachers Day podcast series – Dionne Juillard**

**Dionne Juillard**

*Dionne Juillard is head of curriculum (teaching and learning) and a teacher at Queensland independent school, Brisbane Christian College. She is the school’s first accredited Lead Teacher. She has more than 10 years teaching experience. Her previous roles include art teacher, literacy support teacher, year level coordinator and head of lower primary. Dionne believes it is important for a teacher to remember the Zulu saying 'Ubuntu', I am because we are. Dionne is passionate about giving back to the profession, and coaching and mentoring other teachers to reach their full potential as an educator.*

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

**Virginia Bowdidge**:
World Teacher's Day is a special day on the school calendar. And we would like to take this opportunity to thank all Queensland teachers. 2020 has been an extraordinary year during these unprecedented times, our Queensland teachers, school leaders and wider school support staff have all continued to show their professionalism and resilience, striving every day to do their best for Queensland students.

Commemorating World Teacher's Day gives us the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate 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 what drives them and what they value most about their role as a Queensland teacher.

**Virginia Bowdidge**:
Today, Dionne Juillard, Year Four teacher and Head of Curriculum Teaching and Learning at Brisbane Christian College, chats with me about her love of teaching. Hi Dion. Thanks for joining me today.

**Dionne Juillard**:
Hi Virginia. Thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity.

**Virginia Bowdidge**:
Dion, what inspired you to choose teaching as a profession and what is it that first attracted you to the profession?

**Dionne Juillard**:
Well, I've grown up in Zimbabwe. And I remember being in primary school and looking around me and really reflecting on what I assumed was normal for a school setting. And I recall being just overwhelmed by the sense of that just didn't feel right. And I remember making the promise when I was in Grade Three, that I would become a teacher and that I would be different. And that my goal would be to bring smiles and a genuine joy to the kids that I teach.

**Virginia Bowdidge**:
So what was it that didn't feel right for you?

**Dionne Juillard**:
Back then, corporal punishment was still part of the education. Growing up in Zimbabwe, where there was a lot of racial tension that was felt and was part of the everyday classroom environment. And I remember sitting in my chair and thinking that this is just not right. That kids should come to school, being happy, being loved and being supported to pursue their goal.

**Virginia Bowdidge**:
So how long have you been teaching?

**Dionne Juillard**:
I've been teaching for over 10 years.

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

**Dionne Juillard**:
Well, I've had a full gamut of different roles. So I've started in the classroom. I've been an art teacher. I've been a literacy support teacher. I've been a coordinator, a year level coordinator. I have managed to be a head of a lower primary. And now I find myself in a curriculum role where I'm ahead of curriculum. And on the side, I'm also lecturing at a university in a Bachelor of Education degree.

**Virginia Bowdidge**:
What do you love about your job?

**Dionne Juillard**:
I guess for me, what I love the most is that I've been blessed with an opportunity to instil characteristics, qualities, values, morals, and ethics in a generation when the world needs us more than ever. I love that through all of my struggles and prejudice of worth from society that I can still walk in victory. And share that victory with the minds that are open to see the beauty and the creation this world has to offer.

Virginia, I love that I can encourage dreams, aspirations. I love that I can help break down walls and show possibilities. I love that I can raise up future leaders, future inventors, future parents, that are going to impact our Australia.

**Virginia Bowdidge**:
Yes, teaching certainly is a very special job, isn't it?

**Dionne Juillard**:
It sure is.

**Virginia Bowdidge**:
2020 has been an extraordinary year. How have the events of this year impacted on you as a teacher and your teaching practice?

**Dionne Juillard**:
I guess for me, the biggest thing that I've learned is that we can't be complacent. We live in a world where tomorrow is not guaranteed to be the same as today. Our profession must evolve to sustain change.

**Dionne Juillard**:
I've learned that we can't sit back and be the victims in any circumstance because our students depend on us. We have to be active. We have to be present. We have to be ready and flexible as teachers. We have to actively learn. We've got to adapt and we've got to change. After all, we expect our students to do that.

Traditional teaching and the same way I've always done things, is not going to sustain my students in the years ahead. I've learned that through a pandemic, I have to roll my sleeves up and be ready for what comes my way. I have to learn as a teacher. I have to grow. I have to ask questions. And I have to seek professional development. I have to be active and present and not expect others to provide answers. I need to share my ideas, my thoughts, and I need to play my part in education.

**Virginia Bowdidge**:
Do you have any memorable moments in your career that you'd like to share with us?

**Dionne Juillard**:
I sure do. I will never forget the day, Virginia, I truly learned what it means to provide a voice for all of your learners in your classroom. So I was engaged in a reading lesson and I was having in depth discussions around the book Boy Overboard. This rich resource provided an opportunity for my refugee students to share their heartache, to share their brave journeys and experiences living in Australia.

And for the first time, an opportunity to truly see my students excel in an activity that allowed them to authentically display their skills, that removed a foundation of middle class assumptions. I will never forget moderating the task with my teaching team and seeing the overwhelming evidence of success for a student who normally ranged below the benchmark.

**Dionne Juillard**:
Through tapping in to their life experience, I was able to allow them to display success. And from that day, I learnt that I have to engage my students in a context that's authentic to them.

**Virginia Bowdidge**:
How do you want to inspire your students in your role as a teacher?

**Dionne Juillard**:
Great question, Virginia. For me, I see we live in a world that is full of brokenness. I want to be able to use my role as a teacher to show my students that we get to choose the lens we look through. I'm a Christian educator, and I know that I have hope in something else. And I want to bring that hope and sense of peace to my students. I want to be able to show them that in life, we always walk through seasons, and all seasons have a beginning and they have an end. And that a new season brings a new hope.

I want to inspire my students to see that the change we all seek and the desire that we have to make this all better, begins with us, with me. Choosing to set aside a self-inspired walk, but rather a heart to look out for my neighbour, a heart to grow and learn so I can share my knowledge and skills, my talents, with others.

**Virginia Bowdidge**:
What do you think are some of the most valuable qualities of a teacher?

**Dionne Juillard**:
I think when teachers can genuinely look at the faces in front of them and see the families behind those eyes, see the hands of the future and see the hearts of children who deserve the best because they want to have options and possibilities. Then we teach with a purpose, not just a legalistic obligation. So what are the most valuable qualities of a teacher? Well, they are the ones you don't learn at uni. They are the qualities that stem from the core of who we are as a people.

**Virginia Bowdidge**:
And what are your aspirations for your career?

**Dionne Juillard**:
I've been so blessed to walk through many opportunities in my 10 years. My greatest aspiration in my career is to be able to share my hope with others. And share the importance of today matters because we will never get it back. To share the creativity, the discovery and joy of a strong educational system. To challenge teachers to turn up because students deserve our best. Whatever that role might be, I'm free for that door to open.

**Virginia Bowdidge**:
And how will you be celebrating World Teacher's Day this year?

**Dionne Juillard**:
Well, Virginia, I am so blessed to have a wonderful husband and four kids. They are my biggest champions. I plan on sharing this significant day with my loved ones, over a nice meal. And of course, my 28 students who remind me each day why this day really matters and why great teachers matter.

**Virginia Bowdidge**:
Thanks so much for your time, Dion.

**Dionne Juillard**:
Thank you so much for having me, Virginia.

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