



EDITION 11: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LEAD?

Transcript

Ben Pisani & Emily Kidd

Ben:	00:02	Hi, welcome to the graduate teacher learning series podcast channel. I'm Ben and I will be hosting this session. In this podcast series, we will be talking to graduate teachers, mentors and experts about a variety of different topics that relate to each editions framing question. We will also get the graduates and mentors to share some reflections on their practices that may assist you in yours. In each podcast, the graduates and mentors will be asked the same questions so you can hear the different perspectives on each topic. Okay, so sit back and relax and let's get into this edition of the graduate teacher learning series podcast, talking to a graduate teacher
Ben:	01:00	Who are you and where do you work?
Emily:	01:02	I'm Emily Kidd. I'm a second-year graduate teacher at Flemington Primary School and I'm a foundation team leader, so I teach the foundation kids, but I also lead the team of teachers
Ben:	01:22	In this first section of the podcast, our discussion will focus on the framing questions for this edition. What do you think makes a great teacher?
Emily:	01:31	I think a great teacher is someone who cares for the students, no matter how little time you spend with them. For example, we had a child enrolled for all of five days this term and we cared for them despite the fact that she was there only for a little time. And that's out on yard duty as well. You care for all the kids, even if you only ever see them on yard duty. I think a

great teacher is someone who's approachable, from parents should be able to approach you. Kids should be able to approach you; colleagues should be able to approach you at any point in time for various different reasons. And I think you can show that you're approachable in many different ways by being out and social with your colleagues, by being social with the parents before and after school, keeping communication open, things like that. I also think a great teacher is someone who seeks out and takes on feedback as a lifelong learner, always and forever. Feedback is going to be helpful no matter how long you've been teaching for. I think a great teacher is someone who isn't afraid to have fun and be a little bit silly for the sake of the students, for costume days and schoolhouse sports and even just overacting in a classroom to engage the kids in what they're learning. I was dressed as Ursula today for a book week costume and it was fantastic. The kids were just so enthused by it. I also think a great teacher is someone who has a very strong work ethic because it's a very difficult job at times and I think that needs to be linked to a passion for the job and everything that we do.

Ben:

[03:16](#)

What do you think an effective leader is and how has it impacted on your development throughout the year?

Emily:

[03:20](#)

I think an effective leader is someone who understands and empathizes with how all humans are affected by change. I think leaders are often the instigators of change and whether they're meant to be positive and improve elements of our job or our environments, not all change is easy for everybody. I think leaders really need to be able to empathize with that. I think effective leaders also need to be really great communicators as we all do in this profession. But leaders especially so and just like great teachers, leaders need to be approachable from parents, students, colleagues, graduates especially and the reality of leadership is that just like all humans they have good days and they have difficult days. So, we've all experienced that with leadership from both ends as leaders, as people who are trying to approach leaders, but it's helped me develop empathy for them. I think we all work hard. We all have our own workloads that can seem really overwhelming. So, I think it's important for leadership and those not in leadership to understand that and empathize with that.

<p>Ben: 04:32</p>	<p>What opportunities have you had to explore leadership? Is this an area you can see yourself developing in, in the long-term future?</p>
<p>Emily: 04:40</p>	<p>I was given the opportunity this year to be the foundation team leader at my school. So, we're a team of three teachers. My role involves meetings with other school leadership, advocating for my team, supporting my team when communicating with parents and their professional learning as well. And so many extra little behind the scene type things that we all forget about every, every now and then. Part of my leadership skill building this year I attended a professional development called Mackrel, and it was so helpful and eye opening for me being a new leader to see what leaders who've been leaders forever go through every day, what they need to consider every day and I would always recommend even if you're just thinking about becoming a leader in future and with the support of your workplace, obviously, if you're given an opportunity to do a leadership course, take it, do it because it's so interesting to be a part of, even if you're not going to be a leader in that moment, I would love to continue for a while being a middle leader type role but I'd also be open to stepping back and taking on simply a classroom teacher role again, especially if I'm going to teach a new year level for the first time. Cause I've only been a foundation teacher at this point in my career though as long as I'm in the classroom, I'm going to take on whatever challenges, leadership opportunities throw at me.</p>
<p>Ben: 06:11</p>	<p>Inclusive classrooms are an important element of today's teaching practice. How do you embrace the concept of an inclusive classroom in your teaching practice?</p>
<p>Speaker 3: 06:20</p>	<p>Every child is so different and every child has a right to a safe and supportive education and school experience. Whether their difference is being English as an additional language background, disability, trauma or simply that they didn't have breakfast that morning. In my classroom I have equitable expectations of all students, their behaviors, both learning and other. But those things need to be taught with patients, to the children. If a child doesn't know how to add numbers, we teach them. And if a child doesn't know how to sit on the floor and listen, we need to teach them. It seems straightforward saying it like that, but it's not always in the moment. And when we're actually trying to teach them. It's also understanding that</p>

students have their good and their difficult days as well as well as teachers do, we're all human.

Ben: [07:16](#) What advice do you have for graduates out there?

Emily: [07:19](#) One of the biggest adjustments for me into full time teaching was the parents, how to support them, how to communicate with them. And from my perspective I went straight into teaching foundation prep students. So often times I'm told these parents can be a little more anxious and it's something definitely to consider in full-time teaching. Being approachable to the parents and carers. Building your relationships with them, is so important because when you have that with them in the good moments, it's so much smoother if you need to approach them about concerns or something that's happened throughout the day with their child. It makes that extra element of your role so much easier when you've got a relationship with the parents. But also, don't be afraid to be firm but fair with them. Sometimes requests from parents are difficult, for example, a request I had from a parent was that the students do yoga at school every single day and we just had to be really honest with them and say it doesn't work with the curriculum, with our daily schedule. It's a fantastic idea, but unfortunately, no. That's honest to goodness, a request that I've had from a parent and it was very difficult, but we had that relationship, so that was the biggest adjustment for me.

Ben: [08:36](#) What are your time management tips?

Emily: [08:46](#) I cannot stress enough, make lists. Lists are so important, whether you're the kind of person that does it on a computer, a sticky note on pen and paper with a voice memo, lists are so important to get to make sure you don't forget anything. I forget things all the time and I tell myself that's because you didn't put it on the list. Also using a daily or weekly organizer setting out what you'll need to do throughout the week to get it all done and get it all done when it needs to be done because there are so many things to do in our job and there are so many things every day and there are so many things that just come up quite suddenly that if you weren't to have your week organized and that suddenly takes priority, you're going to miss things. There needs to be some kind of organization. That would be my biggest tip, but also take time off when you need it. Your work cannot be every waking moment because it will wear you out.

		You can be more effective with your time when you give yourself time to work and time to have a break.
Ben:	09:54	What department resources have you found to be particularly useful in your classroom practice as a teacher?
Emily:	10:00	At our school, we use the high impact teaching strategies, the hits to structure what we call instructional rounds, um, and peer observations and some mentoring and coaching as well is based around the hits. So, we get an opportunity to read through the hits and be open and honest about, you know, I'm not really strong in this area, but I'm really strong in this area. And one of the areas me, I in particular I'm not strong in is metacognitive strategies. So, it's one that I put down I'd like to go and observe someone else doing. So I got the opportunity then with a group of my colleagues to go into another classroom, observe how they use metacognitive strategies in their classroom and come back and reflect in a really positive light about here's what they did, here's what I'd like to take to my classroom. Another great department resource that I found really helpful and I'm sure there are many others, like it is the literacy learning toolkit. It's so much information and so much structure that I've implemented in my classroom to help my children with their literacy. In reading, there are so many different strategies that you can use, and I barely knew the names of these things, let alone how to do them. And so, I found the online literacy toolkit very helpful when I was developing my skills in teaching literacy, especially to foundation students
Ben:	11:32	A new career, it can sometimes be difficult to ask for help. Who should graduates turn to?
Emily:	11:38	My biggest tip would be don't be afraid to ask for help at every turn, at every interval. Ideally, we want our students to be competent enough to ask for help whenever they need it. So why shouldn't we? It might seem like a really stupid question and honestly, sometimes it does. Sometimes I have a really great question, but it still feels stupid to me but it's better to ask them than be left with the uncertainty because the uncertainty becomes stress and the stress becomes unbearable. Ask Your colleagues, they're the closest people to you and they're experiencing exactly the same things that you're experiencing. Sometimes it's just little everyday things that come along with learning to be a teacher and colleagues can be so helpful. Use

their experience to your advantage, especially past teachers, of your current students where appropriate with advice for supporting that student that they had or the parents that they have communicated with before and built relationships with before. One on one and in an appropriately confidential environment, it's totally appropriate to ask your colleagues questions about the children in your classroom if they've had them before. Sometimes I'll ask face to face in the moment that the question pops into my head, sometimes it's more appropriate to send an email and book a time. And that could be with a mentor, with a coach, with a colleague, with leadership. They're all there to help. They're all there to answer the questions because chances are, they've had the questions before when they were in the same position that you were in.

Ben: [13:19](#) And finally give us you words of wisdom.

Emily: [13:22](#) This job involves many challenges, big and small every day and sometimes every hour. And it is so important to look after yourself with as much energy as you put into caring for and teaching the students in your class and around you in the school environment. Because it's so hard to teach when you're drained in every single way. Get sleep and make a conscious effort to care for yourself.

Ben: [13:54](#) And that's it for the graduate teacher learning series podcast. Thank you to our guests for sharing their experiences and thank you for listening. We'll see you next time. Bye for now.