



# EDITION 8: PODCAST WITH A MENTOR

## HOW CAN MY STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES HELP ME BE A GREAT TEACHER?

### *Transcript*

Ben Pisani & Aisha Shorrock

Ben:	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, relax, and let's get into this edition of the graduate teacher learning series podcast, talking to a mentor.
Ben:	Hi, thanks for being part of this podcast. Can you please introduce yourself and tell us a little about where you were working in some of your experiences?
Aisha:	My name is Aisha Shorrock, I'm currently a Grade 2 classroom teacher and year level coordinator at Berwick Fields Primary School. I am also mentoring Nicole Williams.
Ben:	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?
Aisha:	I believe there are some key qualities that make a great teacher. Above all I think that a great teacher values relationships and connections with their students. I think that great teachers take a genuine interest in their students life, their interests and abilities. I also think they promote positive behaviours within their classroom. Great teachers I think are reflective, they can identify their strengths, what is working well in their practice

and what their opportunities for improvement are as well. Great teachers are open to receiving feedback and they seek this out. They don't see feedback as criticism or don't feel like their being judged, rather they see it as being crucial to improving their own practice. I also think teachers are collaborative and they recognise the value and the importance of working collaboratively in a team and they can see the impact this has on their students and their own teaching practice. I also believe teachers are committed to continuing their own learning and live by the motto 'learn for life'

Ben: How do students inspire you to improve your teaching practice?

Aisha: So, my student's feedback inspires me to improve my teaching practice. The feedback could be in the form of reflecting on their own learning and recognising their own strengths and opportunities for improvement, or it could be in the form of them reflecting on my practice and providing information to me about what worked and wasn't helpful, or what was helpful and what didn't work.

Their achievements and attitudes also inspire me to improve my practice. Regardless of their ability or level, when I see any level of growth or that they are achieving their personal best it inspires me to continue those high expectations that I have of them and myself.

Ben: How do your colleagues inspire you to improve your teaching practice?

Aisha: So, my colleagues inspire me to improve my teaching practice in a few ways. One of those ways is by being willing and open to work collaboratively. We work in a way where we analyse student data together and discuss teaching strategies and best practice for our students. Hearing them share and undertake their own reflection as well as having us engage in professional discussions about our teaching is what inspires me to grow as a teacher and improve my own practice.

Another way my colleagues inspire me to improve is by observing them in action. When I observe another teachers lesson and their own teaching practice, I am given the opportunity to see another way of doing something, perhaps something that I hadn't previously considered. This inspires me

	to investigate teaching strategies and best practice more. It also encourages me to reflect on my own practice, which I believe is a sign of growth and improvement.
Ben:	What difference does a great teacher make?
Aisha:	<p>A great teacher who shows they really care and want to celebrate their students' successes can make all the difference to empowering their students in believing in themselves and pushing them to achieve their personal best.</p> <p>For me, a lasting memory I have is of my prep, grade 1 &amp; 2 and my grade 6 teacher (two different teachers) but the reasons I considered them great teachers were the same – they really took the time to really get to know me and made every effort to support me more, give me opportunities to shine and celebrate my successes. They are actually both the reason that I choose to be a teacher and I am a teacher today so that shows the impact they have had on me.</p>
Ben:	What advice do you have?
Aisha:	<p>I think the biggest piece of advice I have is don't be afraid to ask for help, you're not expected to know everything and I think when you are confident to ask for help it shows you are showing a commitment to learning for life, which is something I think we all try to foster in our students. Another piece of advice I have is don't try to take everything on or too much on, I think you will burn out quickly if you try to do that. And where possible I really encourage observing other teachers to see other practices. I think it's really powerful to observe another teacher in action and have that professional discussion with them afterwards about their practice</p>
Ben:	What are your time management tips?
Aisha:	<p>Something I have learnt is that the amount of time we have doesn't change. At the end of the day there's only 24 hours. All we can do is manage ourselves and what we do with the time we have available. So, I try to remember to work effectively and efficiently, I really like the saying work smarter not harder. Another tip would be to try and organise your day by priorities, there will always be things on your to do list and the list will</p>

never be empty. I think it's important to prioritize what's really important and truly matters and accept that sometimes not everything will get done. If you have too much on your plate, just say no, that's way easier said than done I know but I think as teachers we are people pleasers and want to say yes to everything. If you say yes to everything, I think you run the risk of not being able to complete tasks to your own standards or worse being burnt out. And lastly I really do believe in looking after yourself is very important to help time management, scheduling in time for you whether it be exercise or hobbies will help ensure you are able to effectively manage your time for school and teaching.

Ben: What resources have you found to be particularly useful in your classroom practice as a teacher?

Aisha: So, some of the resources that I have found useful to my teaching are the High Impact Teaching Strategies, documents, and all the information surrounding that. The FISO improvement cycle has been really useful. The Practice principles for excellence in teaching and learning as well as the PLC Initiative documents that are circulating as well, they have been really handy for me. For example the HITS has been really useful to my planning and also in peer observations that I've been doing. Using the HITS I've been able to really look at my lessons and see which of those ones I'm hitting, which ones I'm missing, what HITS I might need to work on.

Ben: In a new career. It can sometimes be tricky asking for help. Who should graduates turn to?

Aisha: In my experiences, I've been lucky enough to feel like I can ask anyone at my school for help. There are so many people at schools with varying experiences and knowledge. Sometimes it can be hard to know who to go to for what, especially in a large school like mine. I would always find my mentor would be the first point of call for me in the beginning of my teaching career when I needed help, followed by a team leader. I think it also depends on what help you need. I think it's important to get to know your colleagues and the staff that you work with and what their experiences, roles or knowledge is, can help you work out who to go to. I've just shared my own experiences in my graduate year of who

	I would go to. I really hope that helps other graduates out there and gives them some idea of places they can go to for help.
Ben:	And finally, give us your words of wisdom.
Aisha:	I would definitely be open to asking for help and being honest when you are struggling. There will be so many resources in the form of people at your school. You don't know what you don't know, this has always stuck with me along my teaching journey. It's definitely ok to not know, but I think it is important that you ask for help. I also think definitely say no when you have too much on your plate. You can't be the best teacher to your students when you are feeling burnt out yourself. And as I mentioned previously, I really, really strongly believe in taking the time for you and to remember you are more than just a teacher and to give your best to your students and to improve your practice you really need to be thinking about yourself. So, trying to set aside even 20 minutes a day to do something you love that is non-school related I think is really important. Whether it's exercise, reading, cooking or another hobby. I really think that if you invest back in yourself you are going to be the best you can be for your students.
Ben:	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.