

Retiring Principal's Interview Questions

Can you tell us a little bit about what led you to choose a teaching career?

There is only one vocation I ever thought about from a very young age and that was to be a teacher. That was my goal all through High School. In Year 12, I applied to the Catholic College of Education (now ACU) to study a Diploma of Teaching. In those days, the Principal of the College interviewed all applicants. I believe the interview was my golden ticket. My love for the vocation shone through in all my responses. I loved Teachers College and loved learning about child development, child psychology, the primary curriculum and classroom management.

I remember the feeling of teaching out the front of the classroom on my practicums and realised even in those early days the importance of the job and my impact on young minds. I was tasked with a very important role and I accepted it reverently with pride. Consequently, I remember not feeling nervous in front of my supervisor, all I cared about were the students in front of me. I excelled at College with many High Distinctions and Distinctions because I was doing what I love and this is still the case today. I am honoured and humbled to be a part of a student's education.

What does school leadership mean to you?

I like the metaphor of school leadership being the captain of a ship steering the school through all kinds of conditions. The captain relies on and works with his crew to safely transport passengers to their destination. So too does school leadership, providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of the community as they work towards their destination of human flourishing. School leadership is much bigger than the one person, the principal. It involves many people working towards the same goal in a culture of respect and collaboration to "inspire hearts and minds to know Christ, to love learning and to use their talents to be the very best they can be." (CSBB Towards 2025)

What does student success mean to you?

I like to think about student success in the broadest sense. There are many indicators of student success. It's about the student achievement and growth in all Key Learning Areas and ensuring you are providing the best teachers who are constantly developed professionally to meet the needs of the students in their class. Student success is also about students developing their social and emotional skills so they can learn to get along with others and interact successfully in their school environment and in society. Student success is about touching their hearts with the love of God and providing experiences of Jesus Christ.

Who inspired your path in education and leadership?

When I was teaching at Prouille in 1999, I led literacy learning and teaching throughout the school. Trish Wilson was the School's Consultant at the time, she approached me to apply for the Assistant Principal position at OLPS. I had never considered "formal" leadership but decided to apply out of respect to Trish. I never considered for one moment that I would be successful.

The most influential person on my leadership is Val Delany who was the Principal of OLPS when I was AP. I shared the principalship with Val in 2005. I learnt so much from Val, but I think the most valuable lesson was her sheer determination to improve student learning with a hands-on approach. You can do that in a small school. She used her gifts and expertise as a Reading Recovery Tutor to lift reading levels throughout the school.

What is a favourite memory of your career?

The day \$2,000,000 was promised to OLPS by the Federal Government in response to the Global Financial Crisis. My P&F president at the time greeted me on road duty in the afternoon and told me that OLPS would be gifted with 2,000,000! I didn't believe him. This was the most amazing gift that really transformed the facilities at OLPS and brought us into 21st century with contemporary and innovative learning spaces.

Br Tony Wheelan loved our new hall so much that he invited all the principals to OLPS for a Director/Principals meeting in the Father Jones Hall. Imagine every principal in the Diocese at little OLPS!

What is something that you learnt in your teaching journey?

Get to know your students, listen to them and know how they learn. Then as a leadership team get to know your staff, listen to them and know how they learn. Interacting and engaging with parents is an honour and privilege as I have also got to know the parents and built their trust.

How does it feel to have embedded so many years into education?

I have loved every day and every year of my work in education. I love being in a community where Christ is central to all we do. There are few workplaces where this can be the case.

I was made for this vocation!

I feel passionate about education as it is the gateway to a happy and fulfilling life. Our young people are the future of our planet. They are creative, collaborative problem solvers who can make a real difference in our world.

What is a moment that still makes you feel proud?

There are many, many moments that make me feel proud. When a child can suddenly read and write, when the school is shiny and looks its best, when we celebrate on special occasions as a community. I will miss those everyday moments and pray that I have made a small difference to the lives of the people I have come into contact for over 41 years!

God Bless.

Principal, *Sue Host*
(2005-2022)