

Abstract

Teaching is stressful, and for beginning teachers the complexity of keeping up with building relationships, planning, teaching, assessing, managing the behaviour of students all the while maintaining a healthy work-life balance seems at times, impossible. How can teacher education programs better prepare novice teachers for their professional careers, but also for those vital first years of teaching? This chapter uses narratives from beginning teachers and those who work with them, to identify and share experiences regarding what we labelled as *key learnings*; that is, essential components of a teachers' education that contribute to their success as a new teachers. The authors identified five key learnings: Everyone has a story; the line in the sand; communication; time management; and, I am not a rock, nor an island. However, this chapter focuses on the two key learnings the authors believed were of most value; everyone has a story, and the line in the sand. The stories in this chapter offer specific moments that exemplify the continued need for teacher education programs to offer students opportunities to develop relationships and build classroom management skills.

Keywords

Teacher Education, Beginning Teachers, Relationship Building, Classroom Management, Narrative methodology

Excerpt

It is an interesting exercise to take one's experiences and try to derive from them key learnings that we would recommend to others as formatively important in their development as teachers. Also interesting was to take these experiences, hold them up against the experiences of relative strangers who have shared similar journeys, and to seek resonance. Nonetheless, that was our goal. There was no format, or turn-taking – it was a deck conversation that saw moments of excitement, risk-taking, group consensus, polite disagreement and constant awareness that each of us was going to leave that evening with the homework of writing about our own experiences framed by the key learnings derived during that conversation. The results were five areas that we saw as distinct from one another that we could each find moments in our own experience that suggested their importance in the development of beginning teachers. They are:

- 1. Everyone has a story: Acceptance, compassion, empathy, relationship and trust**
- 2. The line in the sand: Discipline, expectations, equity, boundaries and consistency**
- 3. Communicating with students, parents, colleagues and the administration**
- 4. Time management, sustainability, self-care and adaptability**
- 5. I am not a rock, nor an island: Finding mentors and initiative while practicing self-efficacy**

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