Becoming the teacher: Graduate pre-service teachers’ experiences of reading and understanding the text of teaching

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Author’s Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work that has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Christine Glass
Abstract

This thesis focuses on how Graduate Diploma Primary pre-service teachers experience the process of becoming the teacher. It argues that this graduate cohort of teachers come to teacher education with previous experiences of teachers and teaching, life histories, dispositions and a complex personal life that inform the process of becoming. Understanding the teacher self, leading to the development of an identity as the teacher and the dispositions that enable the individual to cope with the difficulties and complexities that becoming the teacher entails are a focus of the research.

The context of the study is a school of education within a mid sized Australian University. The study is informed by a social constructivist theoretical approach coupled with a literacy model borrowed from the work of two literacy theorists. A framework for reading and comprehending the text of teaching is developed to enable an understanding of the process of becoming the teacher. Four case studies are developed to explicate the story of each individual utilizing three interviews throughout the two semesters of their program. Drawings of themselves as the teacher they envisioned themselves to be and a graph of their year provided rich data enabling a telling of each story.

The research builds a picture of the experiences of four graduate diploma pre-service teachers as they negotiate the development of an identity as the teacher. The findings indicate that becoming the teacher is a deeply personal process undertaken in the contexts of others. It is complex and difficult work particularly for mature aged pre-service teachers who have much in their lives other than their teacher education program. It is about reading the text of teaching and not only developing understandings about the text but also being able to transform that understanding into new ways of working within a school and classroom.

A teacher education program that emphasizes the personal and that has a collaborative and collegiate connection with schools is proposed in order to enhance the possibilities for successful outcomes for pre-service teachers.
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Preface

The preface contains a list of the three research publications presented as Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Publications

Chapter 4 (Article 1)

Chapter 5 (Article 2)

Chapter 6 (Article 3)
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