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Early Career Teaching: Learning to be a teacher and staying in the job

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Abstract: This article provides insights into the ways that teacher education programs might equip early career teachers beginning their professional identity. Situated in Melbourne (Australia), it discusses tertiary music education preparation for the profession and recognises the value and importance of having critical friends and mentors as a beginner teacher. By using narrative reflection both lecturer and graduate allow their voices to be heard as they make a contribution to understand the challenges new teachers face when building their professional identity and 'staying in the job'. The discussion provided by the graduate, outlines her experience and engagement regarding the 'positives' and 'negatives' as she establishes her professional identity. Concerns and issues raised may be similar to those experienced by others. The lecturer contends that ongoing research with graduates is necessary when preparing pre-service students as they begin developing their teacher identity and remain within the profession after graduation.

Introduction

Early career teachers have a high attrition rate in Australia, according to Paris (2010). As many universities do not offer formal mentoring programs for their graduates, teachers often consider leaving the profession within the first five years of their career. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training (2007) identified both the quality of induction programs for beginner teachers and pre-service education as contributing to high attrition rates. Retention rates are a major concern, as teachers suffer from burnout and resign within their first three to five years according to Ewing & Smith (2003) writing about their research in England. In the USA, Ponick, Keating, Pontiff & Wilcox (2003) point out that approximately 500 new music teachers leave their job each year. Ballantyne (2006), in her research in Australia, also found that 'burnout and praxis shock seem to be causing teachers to leave the profession early'. Leong (1996) and Kelly (1999) in their research in Australia also found this to be the case with music teachers. The quest for survival as an early career teacher can be daunting. Krueger (2000) found working in isolation or lack of administrative support can be contributing factors that relate to teacher attrition. Fuller & Boun (1975, 37) mention early career teachers are concerned 'about class control, about being liked by pupils, about supervisors' opinions, about being observed, evaluated, praised and failed'…'about having too much work with too many students or having too many instructional duties, about time pressures'. Such factors contribute to praxis shock and can play a part in music teachers' burnout which as Stern & Cox (1993) claim as is a dull reality.

As a form of reflective practice, this article makes a contribution to understanding the challenges new teachers face when building their professional identity and 'staying in the job'. It offers a short discussion of what tertiary education provides in preparation for the

profession and recognises the value and importance of having critical friends, colleagues or the university lecturers to call upon as a beginner teacher when encountering 'real students in authentic music teaching and learning situations' (Conkling, & Henry, 2002, 3). Research indicates the significance of having such relationships as they provide partnerships and mentoring for early career teachers (Franzak, 2002; Martin, 2006; Paris, 2010).

Sarah (an early career music teacher) both questions and reflects on what theoretical knowledge she learnt during her tertiary studies has shaped her contemporary classroom reality as she puts into practice some of the ideas and finds her own professional identity. By discussing her 'highs and lows' through narrative enquiry she is able to reflect about her concerns, issues and challenges as a beginner teacher (Beattie, 2000). Dawn (a tertiary educator) reflects on what has been provided for Sarah through her music education units and her ongoing mentoring that supports Sarah as she travels the road to 'develop her professional identity' and 'become a music teacher'. By keeping in touch with recent graduates, Dawn is able to evaluate and rethink her music unit content, delivery and assessment as she prepares new teacher courses as the course coordinator of the combined Arts and Bachelor of Teaching degree. Conway (2001, 15) is of the view that such connections are a 'way of supporting new teachers' as official induction and mentoring programs for music teachers are not common unless offered through professional organisations. In her research Robbins (2000) found that forming such support networks gets teachers started and also reduces the feelings of isolation that many teachers often experience.

Setting the Scene

Sarah came to Deakin University as a post-graduate student in 2007. She had obtained her Bachelor of Arts (Popular Music Performance) qualification from John Martin Cass Academy in 2006 before commencing her two year Bachelor of Teaching (Primary and Secondary) course. Within this sixteen unit course, she undertook twelve education units and four music units (ECA431, 432, 433, & 434). Sarah undertook a total of 80 days of school placement, 45 days in each year before graduating. Her music units were undertaken in her second year of the course.

The course complies with the Victorian Institute of Teaching: Professional Standards (2010). The music units take into account the professional knowledge, professional practice, professional relationships and professional values as set out by the Australian Society for Music Educators: National Framework for Music Teaching Standards (2005). In 2008, Sarah undertook ECA433 (Arts Discipline Study 3) and ECA434 (Arts Discipline Study 4) with Dawn at Deakin University. In 2011, she was invited by Dawn to jointly write this article as an early career teacher reflecting on the positives and negatives she encounters within authentic classroom and school realities as a music teacher.

Becoming a teacher

There is no fixed recipe or set formula to prepare one to become a teacher. Pre-service courses can only guide students for entry into the field of teaching; they cannot fully prepare future teachers.

According to Wiggins (2007, 36), 'excellent teacher education programs provide students with experiences from which they can construct their own understandings of music, education, and music education'. By providing a range of teaching and learning

opportunities within the course, students have 'a clearer image of the kind of teacher they want to be' (Conkling, 2007, 44).

Most teacher education courses provide core units in the areas of education (curriculum, assessment, reporting, diversity, special needs), pedagogy units that focus on discipline subjects/specialist areas (for example, music education), compulsory school placement and elective units that comply with the preparation of teaching.

It is well known that teacher preparation courses can only begin to prepare teachers for their profession as 'learning to teach is a process that continues throughout a teacher's career and that no matter what we do in our teacher education programs and no matter how well we do it, at best we can only prepare teachers to begin teaching' (Conkling & Henry, 1999, 22).

In a recent study in Australia, Swabey, Castleton & Penney found that 'time is a perennial and internationally recognised problem for teacher education courses' (2010, 31). They further point out that teacher education courses are just an entry into the professional community and that there is not enough conclusive evidence available regarding the quality of teacher education programs, even though courses provide beginner teachers with the skills, knowledge and understandings required for teaching.

When students enrol into a teacher education program, they begin their journey into the profession and start to 'act' and 'think' like a teacher. Students have their own individual beliefs and attitudes that will impact on their identity as a teacher. The concept of identity, argues Beauchamp and Thomas (2009, 175) is a complex one: 'even a cursory examination of the literature reveals that there is much to understand if one is to appreciate the importance of identity in teacher development'.

Pre-service teachers are often influenced by their own experience of schooling as to what is good practice, coupled with what they experienced at university and on school placement (Joseph, 2010). During their teacher education course when they go out on school placement they become 'aware of a shift in their roles, from students to teachers' (Campbell & Brummett, 2007, 52). Not only do they get the opportunity to link theory to practice (Henry, 2001), they also have to think on their feet (Joseph & Heading, 2010). Pre-service teachers draw on their university courses to inform their practice as they carve out their own identities as teachers. They include personal knowledge and beliefs about themselves as future educators. It is up to the individual student to make the most of the available background and experience, and the ability to do so will vary.

Joseph & Heading (2010) argues elsewhere that the art of learning how to teach and its process shapes one's teacher identity. They further point out that one's formation of becoming a teacher impacts on one's identity as a teacher. It is not within the scope of this paper to explore the length and breadth of ideas and issues that impact on teacher identity; rather, the authors agree that over time a teacher's professional identity can shift and change due a range of factors.

Beauchamp & Thomas are among those researchers who have explored and written about identity development, formation, building and creation. Each term, they suggest, 'adds a slight nuance to questions that could be posed about the nature of progress through a teacher's career' (2009, 178). These aspects are not reported on here: instead, the initial repertoire of teaching competencies and the range of music experience are discussed as an aspect shaping identity.

Both Dawn and Sarah use reflective narrative discourse as a way to shape their identity. According to Beauchamp & Thomas, 'the narratives of teachers about themselves and their practice, as well as the discourses in which they engage, provide opportunities for exploring and revealing aspects of the self' (2009, 181). Through such storytelling they express their identity.

Methodology

By using interpretative narrative, Dawn and Sarah locate their story as 'a lived experience' (Chase, 2005, 658). It is 'through living and telling...teachers express their personal practical knowledge to themselves and to others' (Craig, 2009, 602). By having conversations with colleagues and other professionals in the field, one reflects and purposively engages in meaningful dialogue. Reflection in and on one's practice is not new to educational practice: 'it has been embraced as a common goal of teacher education programs at universities' (Greiman & Covington, 2007). 'Reflection cannot occur without conversation' asserts Buckley (2000, 143). Reflective practice in teacher education is an important 'element of professional preparation' (Russell, 2005).

According to Loughran, the notion of 'thinking aloud' provides pre-service teachers with the ability to think and talk about 'what they are doing and why, and reason through their problems so that their pedagogy is more appropriate to the given situation' (1996, 50).

Although reflective practice occurs instinctively, Henry (2001, 27) warns us that the 'distinction must be made between being reflective and being reactive; teachers must be able to justify their action'. Dinkelman (2003, 8-9) claims that 'the process of reflection reflects the process of teaching'. He further confirms that one 'cannot perform the activity without thinking about it' (2003, 9).

In this way the professional development school partnership program in Dawn's music units reinforces the link between theory and practice, as the immediate feedback provided by both the teacher and university lecturer facilitates reflective thinking. Dinkelman (2003, 11) confirms from his research that 'students learn reflection from watching their teachers reflect'. Whether on site or off site, students undertaking music units and Dawn keep a music journal to self reflect on their teaching and learning. Through journalling Atherton (2003) argues that one is able to reflect in action (while doing something) and on action (after you have done it). As such, journalling 'can be a powerful tool for reflection' (Loughran, 1996, 8).

In this paper, Dawn (music lecturer's voice) and Sarah (music teacher's voice) reflect on the university course preparation and the realities of classroom practice. It is through such processes we are to 'create meaning around practice' and the outcome from such understanding 'provides a starting point for adapting [our] practice' (Young, 2006, 1).

Music Lecturer's Voice

In order to become a specialist music teacher, students undertake four music units at Deakin University. ECA431 and ECA432 focus on the middle years of schooling and Victorian Certificate of Education music, which Dawn did not teach when Sarah was a student. ECA433 focuses on the compulsory years of schooling preparatory to Year 10. Specialising in double music education, students undertake both research and classroom application of the European teaching methodologies (Dalcroze, Orff-Schulwerk, and Kodály) and that of African music in this unit. They consider inclusive approaches that encourage cross cultural engagement.

All activities and tasks are designed with accompanying assessment strategies ready to be implemented in students' music programs. ECA434 refines and engages students in the application of a range of practical skills, such as conducting and score arranging (long and short). Through an investigation of alternative environments for teaching and learning in a range of specialised music forms, students are informed of the arguments that underpin advocacy for music education. They undertake research projects that include

independent and self-directed investigation in a school setting. The assessment task for the unit normally asks students to interview a music teacher when on placement. Within this unit they specifically focus on issues of multicultural music education and music for special needs education.

Within both ECA433 and ECA434, students are offered a range of teaching and learning experiences to enhance their teacher preparation. By providing the onsite teaching and learning in the units during semester, students work with the music lecturer and music teacher to discuss what they are doing and how their teaching can improve in order for better learning outcomes. This is an important aspect for Dawn as she does not get to see all her music specialists at schools when on placement. Academic teaching staff is given a list of schools and students to visit according to suburb location by the Professional Experience office. Dawn points out 'If music specialist students don't fall into my zone I don't see them or their supervising teacher unless they are at risk which rarely occurs'. It can be argued that 'teachers are quick to criticize university teacher education programs, based on the attitudes of "we do" and "they don't"' (Henry, 2001, 26). Dawn, having taught at schools for many years before her tertiary position continues to engage with schools, music classrooms and professional organisations to keep abreast of current practice, reforms and debates about music teaching and learning.

By engaging students with on site school-university visits, it is hoped that the theory practice nexus is seen in action and students can receive immediate feedback from the on site music teachers, fellow peers and the university lecturer. Researchers have found that it is difficult to measure what novices learn from field-based or on site experiences (Schmidt, 2010; Clift & Brady, 2005). Conkling (2007, 45) points out that, 'when the experienced music teacher presents a compelling vision of music teaching, pre-service teachers not only attend to this exemplar of teaching practice, but they also recognize the influences of teaching practices on younger students learning'.

Jones (1978) and Conway writing two decades later in 2001, support the notion of pre-service courses that focus on issues of classroom-management, field experiences and critical incidents to better prepare our graduates. Sarah has not yet been invited to share her own experience with Dawn's pre-service teachers, but Dawn has, in former years, done so with other graduates as an effective means of getting her students to listen and ask questions about the spectrum of teaching and 'thinking on your feet' with a 'new teacher'.

Each year, Dawn takes her students to visit music departments at both independent and public schools, where students observe music lessons and, where possible, participate in classes and do micro lessons. Music heads of both independent and public schools are yearly invited to address the students at Deakin on campus about music teaching and learning. This is always a useful, informative and engaging session about school and classroom realities. In her unit ECA433, the professional development school partnership programs continue to prove most worthwhile for both Dawn and her students (see Joseph and Winspear, 2008). Her students also have a cultural immersion at the Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies (CERES) in Brunswick, Melbourne. The Centre provides opportunities to interact and 'discover traditional and contemporary celebrations, customs and traditions' from a range of cultures (CERES, 2011). She also invites heads of music and music teachers to speak to her students about budgets, resources, classroom and instrumental teaching, recruiting ensemble and choir members, touring locally and internationally with school ensembles and class management. By offering a variety of experiences to students, she hopes they will have some tools to help them endure and flourish as they enter the classroom and build their professional identity.

Aside from the music teaching and learning experience offered with the course by Dawn, final year education students can attend the Annual Hawker Brownlow Teaching and Learning Conference where they attend workshops and engage with leading professionals about teaching and learning. Students are given the opportunity in their final

year to attend a variety of professional development workshops held on campus for an entire week. Hot topics for some of the sessions include classroom management, cyber safety for beginning teachers, first aid and anaphylaxis training, relief teaching, iPads in the classroom, making the most of your interactive whiteboard and circus skills for the classroom to name a few. In addition, they attend in their final year for a week at Campaspe Downs Country Resort, Kyneton the Deakin University Education student Conference. Sarah attended this conference in 2008 where many previous graduates and current teachers present and share their experiences of their first day, week and term in the profession. Such experiences and engagement in teacher education courses provide future teachers with a glimpse of what they may encounter as professionals. Sarah also at this conference had the opportunity to undertake a mock interview with a principal which assisted her in how to apply for her current position.

Teacher's Voice

Sarah has been teaching music at an eastern suburbs public primary school since 2009. There she was given the job of teaching classroom music from Preparatory to Grade 6 and was allocated a teacher mentor on the staff for her first year of teaching.

While mentoring has great advantages, and although Sarah's mentor had only some experience in teaching music, she was not a music specialist per se, but rather a visual art specialist. Nonetheless, 'I gained much understanding and support about the school ethos and the way things are done in that school from both the visual art and general classroom mentors'. Her school mentors were able to assist with general day-to-day school encounters. 'They pointed out which students in the school needed more attention for example and also alerted me to those students who excelled in music'. Sarah also was shown some music resources by the visual art teacher to use which she found helpful as a beginner teacher. Sarah found in her first two years she was overwhelmed with preparing lessons, staff meetings, parent meetings, recruiting students for the choir to name a few things that caused her to stress and overextend herself. Her school mentors reassured her and said 'that this is all normal and will get better over time'. Sarah adds' this positive feedback from them on how I am coping makes me to give off my best and stay on at the school'.

Sarah, as an early career teacher, reflects on her university coursework, looking at her journalling of her music units and school placements to reinforce the music pedagogical and content knowledge for her 'real authentic classroom teaching'. Sarah points out 'I call on Dawn to talk about what she may do in the situation or what could work for the music lessons' and 'I find talking it through with someone I know and is experienced gives me confidence and help in what to do'. As Sarah is the only music teacher on staff she has the responsibility for full control of the class music program for the school. In her first year she was mentored by the visual art teacher who was the music teacher before Sarah got the job as a specialist teacher. Sarah notes 'it is the visual art that helped into the role of taking on the choir, an end-of-year concert and the Camerata (where soloists perform for the school community)'. She further says 'having a mentor show me how to take the rehearsals helps a lot. It gave me support as she corrected me in a positive way to work with the new students. With this support I built up my rapport and confidence with the students'.

Such responsibility and leadership was demanding for Sarah in her first year and still remains a challenge for her. 'I still find it difficult and it can become stressful to choose repertoire, plan and print the program. At times it is overwhelming as I have to organise timetables for rehearsals, manage the budget as well as stage management'.

One of the highlights Sarah explored in her first and second year of teaching was the effect of holding a meeting for the choir at the start of the school year in order to 'make it work' and 'make it happen' for both herself and her students, as membership and attendance in the past had been poor. At both these meetings 'I explained what the purpose, commitment, repertoire of the choir was and the expectations I had of the choir especially for concerts'.

To her surprise, this initial 'pep talk' increased memberships and attendance. As an early career teacher, she said 'I tried to win the favour of my students by adopting a slightly less formal way of teaching and managing behaviour. I made each one feel as though they were the best singer and created a friendly, safe environment for all to work as a team'. Her choir consisted of 35 members ranging from Grade 3 to Grade 6.

This variety of ages and stages of music development in students allowed for more relaxed teaching and learning to take place. In the past a member of staff accompanied the choir; as Sarah's first instrument is voice, she now relies on a current Grade 6 student who is highly competent to accompany the choir. In her opinion 'the use of a student to play for the choir seems to have perhaps made it more user-friendly and less hierarchical'. For Sarah as a singing teaching, this was most encouraging and she continues to take the choir and is preparing them for eisteddfods, concerts and competitions.

Sarah has also faced some minor challenges in her teaching, trying to fit all her teaching content into one 45-minute lesson. 'I plan carefully and find I prepare more than is needed for one lesson'. Sarah soon realised that the same content and pedagogy might not work within two classes of the same grade level. 'I have to therefore think on my feet and change the lesson to suit the class even though I have written out a plan, the content does not always work the same with a different class in the same year level'.

As an early career teacher, another challenge is writing reports and giving feedback to students, parents and the school. 'This was and continues to be a big challenge for me as we were not required to write reports when we were at university nor during our placements'. She continues to learn how to write reports that can be understood by both parents and students. Sarah realises the difference of seeing a report as a pre-service student and actually writing a report for students. 'When you are a teacher it is different, this is now the real world'.

After some trial and error, Sarah learnt the hard way by being advised to rewrite a good many reports when she was given feedback from a peer assessor and the principal on 'how they should be done'. This continues to be excellent mentoring for Sarah as she builds her confidence in this area of assessment. Sarah uses a range of assessments in her teaching and keeps an assessment book. Sarah comments: 'I use lots of ongoing assessment; at times I have them do a written class test. When assessing their music skills or understanding I often use a rubric or checklist to mark their competency skills. She finds it difficult to assess and manage the class at the same time, which can become very stressful. 'I find as a new and inexperienced teacher, it is not always easy to do one-on-one testing when you have the rest of the class there. Students can get fidgety; I am learning how to be smart about assessing in class time. I quickly record their response on the class list without making too much fuss about it'. Sarah has also realised that she cannot assess or make a comment weekly on each child in the class. 'It is simply not possible, as they walk into the class for example they sing their name as I take the roll and this for me is already assessing their pitch and rhythm'. This idea Sarah picked up on when she went with Dawn to do onsite teaching and learning as part of her music unit.

A major low for Sarah is managing the music budget. She was not taught or mentored on how to plan, prepare, present and purchase resources for the music department. As she was thrown in at the deep end, she went with her 'gut instinct' in terms of what to buy. She adds 'I found that I sometimes overbought instruments like too many tambourines and glockenspiels'. Rather, as she went along, she journalled and reflected on what she should

budget for in future. Sarah adds 'I guess the art of knowing what resources to buy will come with time carefully looking at what I have and what I really need'.

There is no set recipe for making the 'budget work' per se: one learns through trial and error. Sarah remembers that during her music units with Dawn, three very experienced visiting directors of music (independent school, public secondary school and public primary school) shared their ideas and thoughts about what worked for them regarding the budget in their school settings. They also talked extensively about their music teaching, parent-teacher interviews, choir and instrumental recruitment, employing instrumental teachers and 'dealing with parents'. This was useful for Sarah, as it gave her something to draw from when looking through her university journal notes.

Since graduating, Sarah has realised the need for and importance of both networking and attending professional development courses. It is during these meetings that she discusses her highs and lows of teaching with both newly-appointed and experienced music teachers. Sarah recognises that being part of a community of practitioners she has learnt about planning, assessment, reporting and accountability. She adds 'I am noticing that by talking to teachers from other learning areas I find useful ideas especially about classroom management as it has influenced my music teaching'. This ongoing learning is essential as she develops into her profession.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

In this paper, Sarah has provided a succinct description of her experience and engagement in establishing her professional identity as a teacher.

Moss (2010, 50) points out that 'there are continuing questions surrounding what constitutes support in the early years of professional life'. Although Sarah has identified what Ballantyne (2006) calls 'burnout and praxis shock', she has persevered and stayed in the job unlike some teachers who have left the job after a few years (Paris, 2010; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training, 2007; Ewing & Smith, 2003; and Ballantyne, 2006).

Sarah feels strongly that sound content and pedagogical knowledge was acquired during her teacher education course, but, she agrees with Romano (2008) that more time should be spent on classroom management skills in teacher education preparation courses.

Swabey, Castleton & Penney (2010, 33) state that 'classroom management …content and pedagogy were frequently associated with successes reported by the beginner teacher'. However, Sarah finds managing student behaviour, trying to focus on music content knowledge as well as improving learning outcomes remains a challenge for her. This she self identifies as a 'low' in her teaching. Her concerns about class management are not unique as other researchers have also found this to be the case with early career music teachers (Yourn, 2000; Roulston et al.2005). She has also come to realise that teaching is far more than just doing fun, creative activities with her music students; rather, it involves her reflecting on how her instruction impacts on her students' learning. Teaching is more than telling, as Weinstein (1989) asserts. By keeping a journal and having talks with fellow colleagues and mentors, Sarah is starting to think about better ways in which to teach and improve learning outcomes.

In the main, Sarah is working in isolation as she is the only music teacher at the school and finds she is also physically exhausted from her day's teaching. These real concerns as Krueger (2000) and Roulston et al. (2005) refer to are experienced by novice teachers and they suggest ongoing mentoring and networking as they develop their identity as beginner teachers. She acknowledges that her school placements were critical and proved valuable in her teacher preparation (Schmidt, 2010; Conway, 2002; Bauer & Berg, 2001). Sarah further adds 'having the onsite teaching and learning with Dawn and

trialling some of the lessons and assessment tasks when on placement has helped me to think of my current lesson preparation'. Sarah adds, 'I still use some of those lessons from my onsite units and my placements which now adapt for my current teaching'.

Her school mentors and senior staff members want to see more 'hands-on' instrumental playing at the school. The challenge for Sarah in her teaching is to follow the Victorian Curriculum Learning Standards (VELS). The standards outline what students are able to do at the end of the levels and are organised into two dimensions namely: **Creating and Making** and **Exploring and Responding**. Sarah realises that meeting the standards of the curriculum on paper does not necessarily mean that her students are readily able to play an orchestral instrument to form the school orchestra. She believes that performance skills are attained over time and with practice.

One of the rewarding aspects, or 'highs' as she calls them, is when both parents and teachers comment about her music productions and performances in and out of school 'that was much better than the year before'. Such encouraging words have influenced her decision to continue teaching as well as it makes her feel that she has been doing a good job since she started as the specialist as the previous music teacher was not a specialist. Sarah claims her confidence, competency, skills and understanding of how schools operate have grown as she creates her own professional identity as the 'specialist music teacher' on staff as the school did not have a music specialist for a while.

Sarah is trying her best to show resilience and start off her career with the intention of staying in the job. She approached her teaching with a positive attitude and says 'Dawn's enthusiasm and passion for music is infectious, I too have such zeal in my teaching and want to make it work'. By adopting a positive attitude says Stern and Cox (1993) can reduce burnout. Sarah found that being involved in the wider school community has helped her settle in as the music teacher. She found being honest about what she can't do and talking about it to her mentors, peers, Dawn and music networks about her bad lessons has helped her improve her teaching and confidence.

She also recognises that others have similar problems and finds it most comforting to hear even Dawn talk about her lows in her teaching at tertiary level at times. Sarah states 'by having a fake sense of all is going good when it is not just to impress does not in reality help you as a beginner teacher'. She also believes that her university course has provided her as a future teacher with the relevant skills and competencies and professional development workshops to enter the profession. It is now up to Sarah to continue her involvement in professional development as she becomes part of professional organisations that will inform her practice.

Dawn, Sarah's former tertiary music educator, offers her support as a mentor out of school. As a former student, Sarah has built up a relationship of trust to share and discuss her practice with Dawn. She openly talks of concerns about classroom management, how to best approach teaching and when it comes to African songs she talks to Dawn about how best to teach it. Dawn has provided a synopsis of what her university offers in terms of music teacher units within the Bachelor of Teaching (Primary and Secondary). The provision of having onsite school teaching and learning, workshops on campus and inviting music heads greatly contributes to preparing the future music teacher. I agree with Ballantyne (2006, 3) that 'teachers should be educated in their subject matter at university, but should learn *how to* teach in the company of more experienced teachers once they get to schools. The latter is not often and always the case if you are the only music teacher at the school. However, students are encouraged to observe experienced teachers when on school placement in other teaching areas and when they graduate to observe other teachers on staff.

Dawn has also found in her own tertiary teaching by keeping in touch and having informal conversations with previous students she is able to refine her units. She has not measured whether this has produced any specific outcomes nonetheless she has allowed

her previous students, now current teachers, to have a voice about their practice by co writing with her (Joseph & Winspear 2008; Joseph & Heading, 2010). She has engaged her students in her ongoing wider research and agrees with Wiggins (2007) that good teacher education programs can assist students to develop their own music education classes. Sarah has taken on board what she has learnt during her course and is now developing her own music program at her school and exploring different ways to teach.

Dawn recognises as the music lecturer she cannot fully prepare her students for the classroom, she can 'only prepare teachers to begin teaching' (Conkling & Henry, 1999, 22). When teaching on campus she models what classroom music teaching can be like by being positive, passionate about her teaching, prepared and presenting content that is sequential and planned. Dawn finds being well organized even at tertiary level helps eliminate classroom management problems. Dawn finds that reflecting about her lessons and talking about when she was a teacher with her pre-service students makes her students realise that even experienced teachers make mistakes and learning is ongoing and lifelong.

Sarah, like many novice teachers, is willing to improve her content and pedagogical knowledge. As the only music teacher at her school she will continue to undertake professional development to improve her teaching and learning and her students' outcomes. Her identity as a teacher will continue to develop as she creates her own individual style, which will be influenced by her context and the teachers she works with. Her professional identity, as Sachs (2005, 15) notes, is 'at the core of the teaching profession. It provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of "how to be", "how to act" and 'how to understand their work and their place in society'. Sarah will continue to build her identity as she interacts with others in a professional context (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Sarah is just one case study of a recent graduate now teaching who has an interactive voice with her lecturer as a mentor. She comes into the profession with a fresh view to teach and offers her voice as an early career teacher by sharing concerns. It is obvious that there is a gap that beginner teachers experience and not all universities or professional organisations offer induction programs to bridge this space. Roulston et al. (2005, 74) recognise that 'no pre-service teacher education program can fully prepare new music teachers for all possibilities'. Rather, Dawn finds from writing this paper she can and will in future provide more context in which her students can converse of scenario's specific for music teaching that they might face in their early years. Currently the university does offer the a range of opportunities for final year education students to undertake professional development that will assist them as they enter the teaching profession.

Sarah realises there is no set recipe for classroom management. Cuddapah & Clayton (2011, 69) are of the opinion that 'classroom management typically tops the list of novice concerns'. This rings true for Sarah and many pre-service and in-service teachers. As university teaching programs have a lot to do with teacher preparation, Dawn agrees with Spalding et al. (2011) that more research is needed to understand ways in which to create and sustain an environment that will support teacher learning. If we continue to research and report on what our recent graduates are experiencing we can only be better informed as tertiary educators about how to improve teacher education courses.

Dawn also supports Rohwer and Henry's view (2004) that continued research is needed with graduates to prepare pre-service students to be effective teachers and remain in the profession. Such research might highlight why both good and poor teachers leave and 'may assist teacher educators and preservice teachers in their mutual quest for better prepared beginning teachers' (Schmidt, 2010, 143).

Dawn firmly believes that early career teachers like Sarah need to keep in touch with their mentors. Sarah is one of many of her former students that she has been mentoring over the years. The transition from university to school setting is not a smooth ride. Roulston et al. (2005, 60) believes that new teachers should be 'provided with adequate

support and mentoring so that they thrive, rather than merely survive'. The reality is that this is not always the case as time is of the essence for all concerned. Rather, Dawn agrees with Stern & Cox (1993) that by attending conferences and listening to others speak of their own trials and tribulations helps beginner teachers in their journey.

Through such networking they gain support and keep perspective of what is required of them. In this way, they will become part of the community of practitioners as they carve their professional identity and professional growth. Dawn as a teacher educator has found like Yourn (2000) that supporting Sarah has been a reciprocal learning experience for her. By listening to each other, sharing and exploring ways to teach in a meaningful way both the music lecturer and teacher have gained. Dawn would like to undertake further research with her graduates and pre-service teachers to find better ways that could prepare them for the profession.

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