
WHAT THEY DON'T TELL YOU ABOUT BEING A TEACHER (BY A FIRST-YEAR TEACHER)

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Everyone will tell you about the mediocre pay you will receive as a teacher and you will always hear people joke, “You’re definitely not in it for the money!” *Everyone* will tell you that you are “brave” because you are a teacher and say that they could never handle “those kids” or “that age” (no matter what age it is). They will suggest that you definitely go for your master’s as soon as possible (in order to climb the pay scale). Colleagues will suggest that you demand respect from your students, but find a healthy balance between *teacher* and *friend*. College professors will teach you how to involve movement in your lessons so the students do not get bored, and how to teach poetry so that it connects to students’ lives. They will *attempt* to prepare you for long days in the classroom and unpaid overtime spent grading essays and racking your brain for new and fresh ideas for lessons over the next novel.

However, they do not tell you about Gage, the boy who will come to you, on the brink of tears, asking you to help him write a note to the counselor. He’s asking for help because he’s being bullied and he’s afraid to come to school every day. He reads to escape the world and gets made fun of for it. They don’t tell you that he’ll beg you to not call his parents because he’s afraid his dad will be mad. He says he is depressed and struggling with social anxiety.

They don’t tell you about the tears that well up in your eyes as he writes his note and, at the end, is too scared to turn it in. They cannot prepare you for the pit in your stomach when someone tells you that he needs to “stop being sensitive” or “man up.” They don’t tell you about the ache in your heart when school is over, books are closed, doors are locked, and you have to send your student home to a cold, empty house.

Things will catch you off guard and shake you to your core, but I can tell you this: it is worth every second.

They don’t tell you about Riley, the girl that reveals to you that her step-father molests her and her drug-addicted mother does not believe her. They will tell you that you must report these things, but

they cannot prepare you for the feelings that come with them. They don't tell you about the tear-filled car rides home after you've held it together in front of students all day.

They do tell you that you'll enjoy your classes and your students, but you already knew that. That's why you are a teacher. What they don't tell you is that you will fall in love every day. In love with your profession and in love with your students. You'll cry streams of happy tears when John, a struggling student with poor grades, pulls through and succeeds. You'll tear up at the thought of your students and their individual quirks, talents, and personalities. You'll laugh harder than ever before. You'll find some of your very best friends in your colleagues. They can't prepare you for the profession and all that comes with it. Things will catch you off guard and shake you to your core, but I *can* tell you this: it is worth every second. Gage, Riley, and John are worth every second.

Author Biography

Savannah Snow, a recent graduate of Kansas State University's education program, currently teaches English 9 and 10 at Maize High School. As a Wichita local, Snow feels most at home in ICT at one of many cozy coffee shops. She is passionate about inclusive, engaging, and supportive classrooms. Snow enjoys YA literature and creating meaningful relationships with students, especially when the bond revolves around a good book. ELA has always been near and dear to her heart. Snow knew that she was born to be a teacher since a very young age. She appreciates reading, writing, and daydreams about writing a YA novel one day. She can be reached at ssnow@usd266.com.