

On Becoming a Teacher Educator__ Some Reflections

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This is a narrative of my life as a teacher developing into a teacher educator. I hope to reflect on my past experiences in order to understand how they have shaped my present.

Today I am standing on the beach of my present life and gazing intently at the sea of past experiences. I am reflecting on my life as wave after wave of past incidents comes rolling back and the surf stings my eyes. Tears roll down my cheeks remembering past unhappy events and at times the sparkle of the waves leaves me smiling fondly at past happy events. Who am I? What do I believe in? Where do I fit in this vast expanse of the universe? What is my mission in life? How far have I achieved it? Why? Or why not? Have the waves of my life made any difference to the beach around me? The continuous rolling of the waves demand an answer and I hope by giving these answers, by reflecting on my life I can further improve my practice.

If I trace the critical incidents that stand out in my life I would like to share an incident from when I was in class seven. My classmate Nabiha got typhoid and was absent for nearly a month. We were preparing for our half yearly exams, which would begin in a fortnight. Nabiha got better and rejoined school. Crying, she told me that if no one helped her to catch up in her studies she would surely fail specially in history and geography which coincidentally were my favorite subjects. So I offered to help.

I remember explaining the lesson, "The Indus Valley Civilization". I vividly recall taking her through the lesson as if I was there, appreciating their excellent brick constructions, the public baths and the well laid out roads and drainages. Within a fortnight I coached her, half an hour in the morning

and the same time in the afternoon until my bus arrived. When the results were announced she had passed and also secured the 'Best Effort' award. Her next statement changed my life. She said, 'Thanks Qamar .I could not have done it without you, you are a great teacher.'

I had not only helped a friend but also myself for I had found my vocation. It was then that I decided to become a teacher.

The next wave took me to my University where I had just completed my Masters in English Literature. I joined the college to teach English. The college was notorious for driving out lecturers especially lady lecturers. I faced the teasing of my life but I continued teaching in that College for a year. I resigned only when I was getting married and was shifting. I learnt to not only survive but managed to win my students' respect by reaching out to them and understanding their world. I did not realize then that these incidents were further chiseling me into a relational teacher .At the end of the year I had their respect and regard which improved their grades for they now wanted to study.

I asked the waves where do I stand today. Today I am an Assistant Professor teaching Educational Leadership and Management to adults not only in Sindh , Balochistan and the Northern Areas in Pakistan but also in East Africa, and Bangladesh. Experience has taught me that the best way to teach is relationally. From my friend in class seventh to M.Ed students, I have always cared. I am of the opinion that by studying ourselves, our stories and our relationships, we can develop purposeful curriculum and relationships to empower new teachers to tap into their tacit knowledge and use it to design effective curriculum for their students. This kind of relationship is the cornerstone of relational teacher education.

My purpose in telling and retelling narratives of my experience in the context of teaching will help me to better understand myself as a teacher .and as a learner.

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