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The Process of Becoming: Novice Teacher Narratives on Coursework and Pedagogical Confidence in The First Year

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Abstract

Research shows that novice teachers feel underprepared for the realities of the classroom after completing their teacher preparation or training. They often face wavering confidence, also known as "wobble," when confronted with pedagogical uncertainty. This phenomenon can cause teachers to question their practice or consider leaving the profession altogether. Thus, this inquiry investigates the phenomenon of wavering confidence, specifically among novice middle school English teachers. In conversation with teacher education research around secondary English teachers and the growing interest in the relationship between teacher preparation programs and teacher effectiveness, this study aims to better understand novice teachers' pedagogical confidence and how their preparation may have impacted it. It explores how the experiences during the first year affect pedagogical confidence and identifies ways teacher educators can best support novice teachers. The study uses a narrative method and a critical event approach to conduct qualitative semi-structured phenomenological interviews with three novice middle school English teachers in New York City. It both explores theoretical concepts of building or strengthening teacher identities and discusses the findings and implications of participants' stories as a way of reflecting on the impact of pre-service teaching experience and coursework.

Keywords: wobble, teacher educators, novice, narrative, middle school

