#CritEdPol: Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies at Swarthmore College

Volume 3
Issue 1 *Beautiful Experiments*

Article 6

January 2021

Down the Rabbit Hole: A Fantastical First Year of Teaching

Tabitha Dell'Angelo

The College of New Jersey, dellange@tcnj.edu

Maria DeGenova

The College of New Jersey, degenom@tcnj.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://works.swarthmore.edu/critedpol>

Part of the [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#), [Interdisciplinary Arts and Media Commons](#), and the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Dell'Angelo, Tabitha and DeGenova, Maria (2021) "Down the Rabbit Hole: A Fantastical First Year of Teaching," *#CritEdPol: Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies at Swarthmore College*: Vol. 3 : Iss. 1 , Article 6: 81-119.

DOI: 10.24968/2473-912X.3.1.6

Available at: <https://works.swarthmore.edu/critedpol/vol3/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in #CritEdPol: Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies at Swarthmore College by an authorized administrator of Works. For more information, please contact emayorg1@swarthmore.edu.

Down the Rabbit Hole

Tabitha Dell'Angelo
The College of New Jersey
Maria DeGenova
The College of New Jersey

ABSTRACT

Interviews and observations of first year teachers in the northeastern United States were used to construct a comic. The comic communicates the excitement, fears, and competing demands of a beginning teacher. The dialogue and setting are presented as surrealist to help the reader gain an understanding of the affective realities that the teachers expressed when describing their early teaching experiences. This approach allows for the multiple dimensions of the teachers' lived experiences to be experienced in ways that a traditional text does not allow. The work takes a critical look at the transition of beginning teachers into their careers and is meant to trouble notions of standardization in both teacher preparation and curriculum design. This arts-based approach recognizes performance as both a method of investigation and representation (Worthen, 1998). Given that public education is often a prominent part of societal discourse, this modality allows the reader the opportunity to make meaning of the data by experiencing the words on the page (Leavy, 2009). The illustrations allow the reader to experience the words differently than traditional text. In this way, dramatizing the data is a form of critical pedagogy (Denzin, 2006).

Keywords: *arts based research, practice based research, a/r/tography, urban education, teacher preparation*

50% OF TEACHERS
LEAVE THE
PROFESSION
WITHIN 5
YEARS.

16% CHANGE
SCHOOLS.

17% NEVER
RETURN TO
TEACHING.

MANY CRY IN
THEIR CAR ON
THEIR WAY
HOME FROM WORK...

WHA-

Let's choose executors
and talk of wills?

THAT WILL DO.
MS. LAMBERT, BE SURE
THEY DO NOT FLY
THEIR COLORS.

CHECK YOUR
PAMPHLET.
I'M SURE IT'S
IN THERE
SOMEWHERE.

REFERENCES

- Denzin, N. K. (2006). *The politics and ethics of performance pedagogy: Toward a pedagogy of hope*, In Madison & Hamera (Eds). *The Sage Handbook of Performance Studies* (pgs.325-338), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Goldring, R., Taie, S., and Riddles, M. (2014). *Teacher attrition and mobility: Results from the 2012–13 teacher follow-up survey (NCES 2014-077)*. U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics
- Leavy, P. (2009). *Method Meets Art: Arts based research practice*, New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Sousanis, N. (2018). *Frames of Thought*, PMLA, 133(6), 154-159.
- Worthen, W. B. (1998). *Drama, performativity, and performance*. PMLA, 133(5), 1093-1107.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Tabitha Dell'Angelo is a professor of Urban Education at The College of New Jersey. Her work is focused on using arts-based methodologies to communicate the lived experience of teachers. She can be reached at dellange@tcnj.edu.

Maria DeGenova is a graduate of The College of New Jersey with a degree in Fine Arts. Her work utilizes narrative mediums such as animation and illustration in order to tell stories centered around mythology and spirituality. She is currently based in New Jersey and can be reached at mariadegenova.com.