

WHAT HAVE I SIGNED UP FOR?

By: Michael Victory & Kate Chinner

Welcome to the teaching profession.

Like all teachers, graduate teachers are learners. Your own approach to learning, how you create the conditions for optimum learning and, and how you enable your students to take responsibility for their own learning will all have a big impact on how your students learn and how you yourself grow and thrive professionally.

Your degree is the beginning

Congratulations on having completed your teaching qualification. It is a great achievement and significant milestone for you as an educator. Your degree is the beginning of your career and we want to support you to make your teaching life a rich and valuable experience for you and the students you teach. You have joined a professional community and we want to help you become a great teacher.

The Graduate Teacher Learning Series will connect you with the right people and the right resources at the right time.

Designed as 12 editions spanning the teaching year, everything in the Graduate Teacher Learning Series is written for you, a graduate teacher starting out in the teaching profession.

It focuses on the issues that are most challenging to new teachers and offers you practical strategies, research and evidence. The Graduate Teacher Learning Series is a conversation between expert teachers and graduates like you. You'll hear how experienced teachers manage their classrooms to get the best out of their students and you'll find conversation starters to enrich professional conversations with your mentor teacher. You'll also be hearing stories from graduate teachers from 2018 about the challenges and excitement of being a teacher.

Three big challenges of teaching

When I'm feeling happy in my teaching practice, I am positive and collaborative.

I'm open to new learning and ideas. I am inspired. (Graduate teacher 2018)

In the Learning Series we will:

Focus on you and how to look after yourself

We'll feature articles on teacher wellbeing, coping strategies, managing complex relationships, time management, challenging conversations, mindsets and boundary-setting. You'll hear from experienced teachers, find out what works for other graduate teachers, and be provided with practical 'next steps'.

Help you manage complex students and classrooms

We know that one of the best ways to manage challenging behaviours is by setting up great classrooms. You'll find articles on establishing classroom routines and rituals, empowering student voice and building strong relationships. There will be practical strategies on how to maximise student engagement and manage challenging behaviours.

Help you to ensure all students make optimal learning progress

In the Graduate Teacher Learning Series we recognise the critical role of assessment practices. We show you how to use assessment for learning, establish learning intentions, analyse evidence, and gather feedback. We show you how to celebrate your students learning and use it as feedback on your own teaching.

Connecting you with the right people and the right resources at the right time

*My advice for new graduates is: use your mentor, listen to your mentor
(Graduate teacher 2018)*

In the Learning Series we will:

Help you plan your first year

The Graduate Teacher Learning Series articles are designed to wrap around your teaching year and will be delivered to you at the time you need them most. Take a look at The Teaching Year to see how your year could pan out.

Later in the year we will introduce a section on Securing your future to help you with the development of your VIT portfolio and job application.

Introduce you to other graduates

In our Meet the graduate series we will bring you stories from graduate teachers across Victoria. You'll find out how graduate teachers like you managed and grew in their first year of teaching. You will meet Noah, a graduate teacher from 2018, who is writing a section titled What worked for me. We will also provide information about the graduate conferences that commence in term three.

Introduce you to your education community

Every month, the Learning Series will make connections with the wider education landscape. We'll map out 'who is who' in the community to enhance your career confidence as you set about securing your future as an educator. See the section on The Education Landscape.

We will provide stories for you about how other schools build relationships between graduates and mentors with a series of Podcasts. We will provide starters and reflective activities to get the most out of your mentor teacher, see the section on Mentor Conversations.

To get you started

Kate Chinner is a teacher with wide experience who remembers what it is like to stand in your shoes. Enjoy her narrative.

I loved my teaching rounds in the fourth year of my teaching degree. It was my favourite time at university. In that year I was working with Year 5/6 students and had an amazing mentor teacher who was very supportive and gave me as many opportunities as I wanted. I pushed myself because I knew the more that I could learn and practice my teaching the better I would be. The teachers in the team were supportive and helpful with all of the questions that I had.

I was lucky enough to get my first teaching job at the same place I completed my final practicum placement. I had spent 10 weeks at the school during the year, so I was familiar with the school layout, many of the school processes and knew some of the staff. However, I was allocated to the Year 5/6 area of the school, which was new to me. My mentor teacher was also brand new to the school - so even though some parts were familiar, there were some very new things too.

I remember my very first day as a graduate teacher. I was so excited to finally be starting my career. I had loved everything about teaching rounds and I had waited 4 years for this moment to be a teacher with my own class.

I remember waking up and feeling the nerves in my stomach. As I drove to school there were so many things that played in my mind: What would the day be like? What would my class be like?

I had spent the week prior to school commencing, setting up my room. I put up posters to refer to and I added colour to the dull pinboards. I called on my mum who was very creative to come and help me and my partner who was also a teacher. I was quite lucky to have these support systems. I had prepared all the name tags ready for the students to come in. My physical space was as ready as it was going to be. Now to prepare myself mentally for what was about to come.

I entered that classroom on my very first morning as ready as I was ever going to be. When I look back now and I think about that moment I realise two things; I never really knew what was coming and what would happen over the days, weeks, months and years. Secondly in that moment I felt lonely, really lonely. Not only was I a teacher, but I was THE teacher.

Ten years later and with diverse experiences, including teaching overseas and working in teacher professional development, I still love what I do. That moment of loneliness was just one more step in understanding myself as a teacher, accepting the responsibility of my role and being trusted to teach other people's children. I had learned from my teaching rounds that I was part of a very big group, the teaching profession, who were there to support me and each other.

Enjoy your teaching, it is demanding, but it is also a joy and a privilege.

Top takeaways for graduate teachers

Keep learning

Like all teachers, graduate teachers are learners. Your own approach to learning, how you create the conditions for optimum learning and, and how you enable your students to take responsibility for their own learning will all have a big impact on how your students learn and how you yourself grow and thrive professionally. You, the teacher, have the biggest in-school influence on student achievement. The Learning Series aims to help you make the best of this privileged position. You'll get one edition each month delivered via email. Use it, revisit it, improve it and make it your own.

Communicate with us

The Graduate Teacher Learning Series is designed for you and to succeed we need to hear from you. What would you like to see featured? What is your own experience? You can comment on articles, participate in our ongoing evaluation and tell us your professional interests.

In the Graduate Teacher Learning Series we are committed to learning from graduate teacher experiences and reflecting graduate teacher voice. Have your say and comment on the articles you're reading.

Evaluate the Learning Series

The Graduate Teacher Learning Series is produced by the Department of Education and Training as one of a series of supporting resources for graduate teachers.