

Poolville Elementary School *The Monarch Metropolitan*

August 24, 2020: Edition XXII - **Who Needs A Time Machine When You Have Amazing Coworkers!!!!**

A Letter From the Editor: All Aboard For A Little Time Travel



Today's edition of *The Monarch Metropolitan* has me reflecting on a question my 14-year-old son asked me this weekend.

"Dad, if you could go back in time, what would you tell your prior self?"

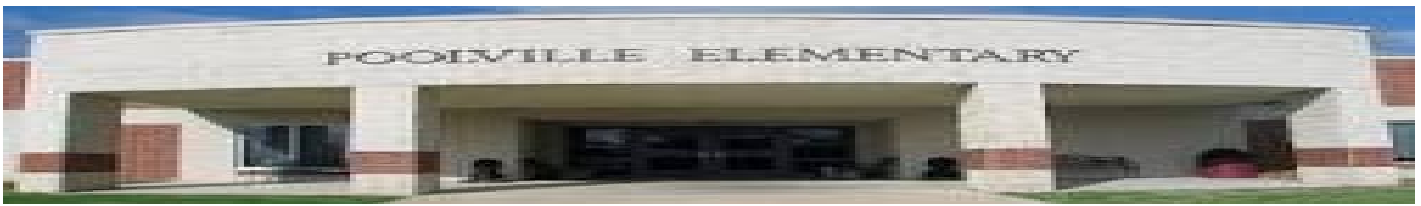


My mind immediately began wondering about work. Specifically, do you remember the enthusiasm (or apprehension) you had on that first day when you stepped into your very own classroom? What would you say to yourself now....years on from that first day? Would you warn yourself off becoming a teacher or encourage you to do it again?

If you've been a teacher for a while, you might be interested to know what other teachers think. Or, if you're thinking about becoming a teacher, then these responses may provide you with some much needed information to help your decision.

Here is what I came up with. Perhaps it can help you and our amazing students.

If I Only Knew Then What I Know Now:



What I didn't anticipate when I entered the teaching profession was the plethora of unexpected experiences and challenges that come with being a teacher. Looking back, I was grossly naive about what makes being a teacher so much more than just teaching. Here are just a few things I wish I had known about before the start of my teaching journey. I hope they help you...whether you're in your first or 48th year, because to be truly successful, it is going to take all of us working together!

1. You'll never have enough time for planning.

As much as you know your subject matter, it's unadvised (and likely frowned upon) to "wing it" in the classroom. Teaching requires a massive amount of planning. Many teachers are required to submit their lesson plans in advance for approval, and must continually adapt and update regularly.

In today's world of active learning, teachers also need to get creative. Let's face it, students—whether they're 8 or 18—only have a limited attention span, which continually challenges teachers to find new ways to keep the classroom engaging. Whether that means developing interactive lessons and activities or creating PowerPoint presentations for lectures, the time you'll need for planning adds up.

2. Your work extends (far) outside of the classroom.

In addition to course prep, there's a great deal of administrative work that goes into teaching. Think about it: for every fantastic assignment you create, hours of grading come along with it. Similarly, teachers often are required to attend in-service training, meetings, field trips, conferences, and professional development seminars. Much of my daily routine involves answering emails, analyzing data, and meeting with students one-on-one. The notion of teaching being all about the classroom is a farce—teachers do so much more.

3. You'll have countless opportunities to make a difference.

You probably remember a teacher who made an impact on your schooling experience. Why was that? Did they go out of their way to help you? Did they genuinely care about your success? Teaching allows you the opportunity to shape an individual for the better. Students young and old have lives outside the classroom—hardships, traumas, emotional needs, and other unique circumstances—which affect not only their learning but their self-image and approach to the world.

I was surprised by how much I would have to navigate and consider students' personal lives as a teacher. If you can handle the challenge, you're more likely to have a lengthy and successful career.

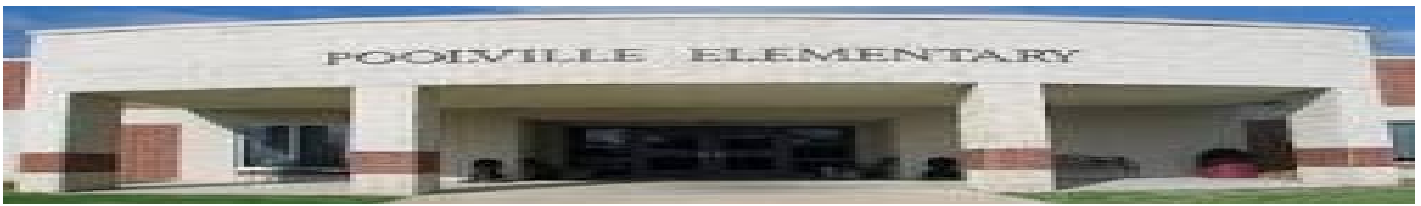
4. You'll form deep and lasting connections.

Speaking of that impact, it will last longer than you think. I never expected to form lasting connections with students that would continue after they graduated. To this day, many of my former students keep in touch through email or social media and continually check in with me about their lives.

Just recently, one emailed to say they'd received a promotion! They're also quick to get in touch when they have plans to be near campus and would like to say hello. It's not uncommon to receive thank you notes at the end of the year filled with words of gratitude—something that only reinforces my choice of profession.

5. Your students will teach you, too.

Many teachers feel drawn to this career due to their love of learning. I am always surprised by how often our amazing students teach me about things I wouldn't otherwise know about, whether it's culturally, demographically, or even within my field of study. The world is continuously changing and evolving, and the classroom is a continual opportunity for me to learn from those who may have a different perspective on it.



One of the most unanticipated aspects of being a teacher is really how little teaching is actually about teaching. Sounds contradictory, right? But that's proof that the education profession is widely encompassing. Future teachers should prepare for unexpected challenges—many of which they can only encounter in the classroom. By having a good idea of what teaching is like, we can all be ahead of the curve.

Conclusion:

Ultimately, the main thing I would tell my prior self is that teaching is not a job. It is not a career. It is your life. You are a teacher 24/7. You are a teacher on Saturday morning when you dash to the drug store in your slippers and run into a parent. You are a teacher when you are dining out and see unruly children. You dream about your students, you write thank you notes on vacations, you go into any store with an eye out for something you can buy for your classroom. You save everything - just in case you need it someday.

Would I change my profession had I known this? Absolutely not!

After watching each of you this first week, I know you wouldn't either!

Thank you for making Teaching and Poolville the greatest things on the planet!

Let's go TEACH!



Let's change our practices. Out with the old, in with the NEW!

Let's use RESEARCH to fuel Monarch LEARNING!

Good luck!