

The Snowball

Building and Sustaining Success in the First Years

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Rayne Ellison



Rayne Ellison



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Years of Experience

A. Pre-Service

B. First Year

C. Second through
Fifth Year

D. Experienced, but
feel like a "Newbie"!



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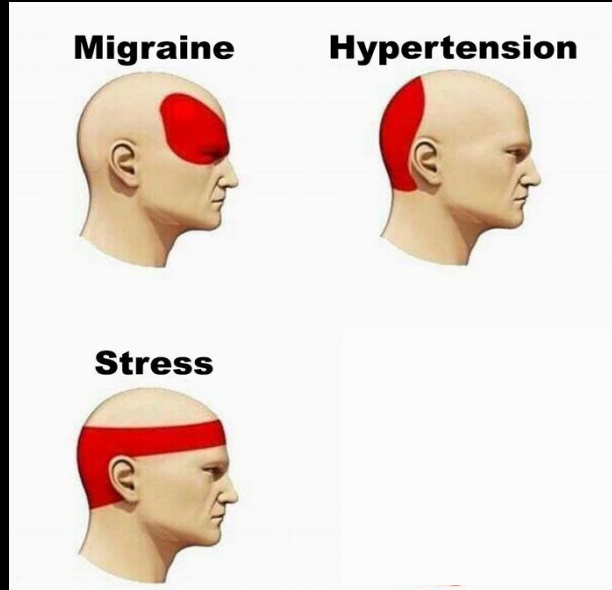
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What is it about the first years?

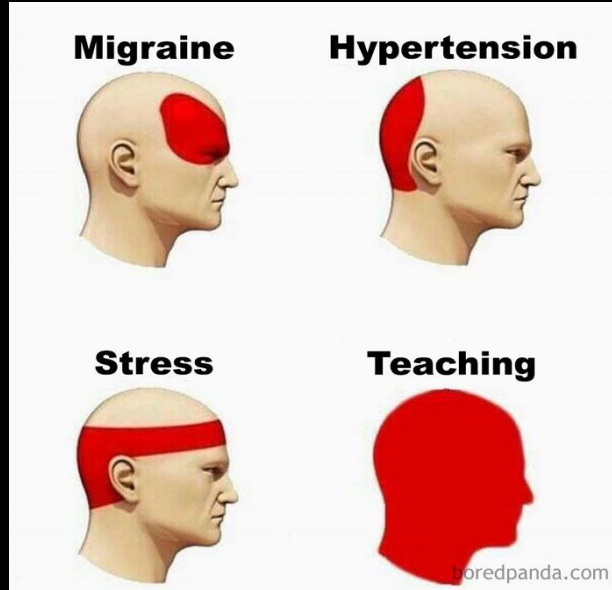
- More than 44% of teachers leave the profession within 5 years (Brown, 2020).
- The percentage of teachers who say they are very or fairly likely to leave the profession has increased by 12 points since 2009, from 17% to 29% (Department of Education, 2013).
- Teacher job satisfaction at a 25 year low. (Richmond, 2013).
- Fueled by the pandemic, the teacher shortage is accelerating (Bryner, 2021).



What is it about the first years?



What is it about the first years?



Challenges

- Not what I expected
- Utopia is a MYTH!
- Lions and tigers and giant classes, oh my!
- We can't learn it all in school.
- Strong music programs are built not found.



The Dream



The Reality



Challenges

The job is open for a reason.



Teaching Situation

- A. As expected/Well-prepared.
- B. Somewhat different.
- C. Profoundly different.
- D. "Toto, I don't think we're in Kansas anymore."



Success is possible!

Despite challenges, many new teachers thrive during the first years.

HOW?



Building Your Snowball



Building your Snowball

Mountains of Resources

- Rules.
- Procedures.
- “Stand your ground.”
- Programming.
- ...Endless recipes for success.



Building your Snowball

Blizzard of ideas

- What's most important?
- What can I use in my situation?



Building your Snowball

Four Pillars of Success

- Vision.
- Support.
- Relationships.
- Determination fused with patience.



1

2

3

4

1 Plan and Work Towards a Vision

- Start with a learning mindset.
- School and community expectations.
- What does success look like for your students?
- REASONABLE goals.
- What can I change?



Get out of your igloo!

- Colleagues/mentors.
- Make the phone calls/emails.
- Don't reinvent the wheel.
- Teaching ideas and strategies.
- Programming.



Get out of your igloo!

- Community, personal, and professional support.
- Choose the right support system.
- Venting.



What is your comfort level with mentoring?

A. I'll take all I can get!

B. Generally comfortable.

C. Nervous/anxiety.

D. Door locked. Shade down.



2 Get out of your igloo!

Listen.

Let go of ego.



2 Get out of your igloo!

Listen.

Let go of fear.



Build Relationships

Students

- Resistance is expected.
- Set expectations.
- Focus on trust.
- Why are they here?
- Learn from—but lead—students.
- POSITIVE Energy.

One word: Relationship with your students.



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3 Build Relationships

Families and Community

- Introduction.
- Honor traditions and culture.
- Communication.
- Join the family.
- POSITIVE Energy.



One word: Relationship with families.



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3 Build Relationships

School Colleagues and Administration

- Dirty snow.
- Invitations.
- Guest artist/conductor.
- Learn and apply school policies.
- Documentation.
- Communicate.
- POSITIVE Energy.



One word: Relationship with administration.



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Build Relationships

3

POSITIVE Energy



Patient Determination



- Balance.
- Self-care.
- Sometimes the snow is yellow.
- Every day is a Monday.



Patient Determination



- Manage expectations.
- Student feedback: Group/Individual.
- Small victories.
- Persistence is omnipotent.



Avalanche!

Forks in the Road

- Administration changes.
- Funding challenges.
- Master calendar changes.
- Schools undergoing change.
- Rezoning.
- Colleague friction.



It won't be easy,

but it will be worth it.

