

They Didn't Tell Me

*When I arrived at my first school
full of missionary zeal, enthusiasm and
lots of facts and theories about education
I felt I was ready.*

*Ready to start teaching
to touch the lives of my students
to fill those little sponges with knowledge
to help begin to make a positive
difference in this world.*

*I was ready to work with my peers
To share ideas, lessons and laughter
Plan the curriculum and help where I could.*

*But they didn't tell me
I would have students who couldn't read or write
In all my classes,
Students who wouldn't listen or care
who would swear, spit and be ugly.*

*They didn't tell me
That parents would confront me,
Questions my training and my skills,
And tell me how I should teach.*

*They didn't tell
Xerox machines could break down
Before they became outdated,
That fax machines and computers would be sent
Just to try me and give me stress.*

*They didn't tell me
That administration tasks would
Confuse and frustrate me
That paper work would swamp me,
That deadlines would overwhelm me.*

*They didn't tell me
That most of what I had learned at Uni
Would be outdated, irrelevant and useless in 10 years
And that I would need to study more to get back
to where I thought I had already been.*

*They didn't tell me
That 50% of my students would experience divorce,
40% would drink alcohol daily,
25% would be sexually assaulted and
over 40% would consider suicide as a way to solve problems.*

*They didn't tell me
About P.D. days that would bore me to bits,
Meetings that achieved nothing could takes hours,
And that meetings at night could happen as often as they did.*

*They didn't tell me
that outcomes based education would come in-
Doubling my assessment and marking time,
Bringing me hours of boring PD's and
Taking much of my enthusiasm and passion for my job.*

*They didn't tell me
That there would be long hours of marking
That would keep me from my family
And even longer hours report writing
at the end of long tiring terms.*

*They didn't tell me
That there would be times
I would hate feeling stressed and tired
And not sure that teaching was what I needed
To be doing anymore.*

*But I guess it's a good thing they didn't tell me
Because maybe I would not have followed my heart,
Maybe I would have walked away from the most
Challenging, rewarding, and wonderful careers
That exists in the world today.*

Maggie Dent 1999