

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/hyper-performativity-and-early-career-teachers/>

This video discusses a research study examining how early career performing arts teachers in Western Australia construct their professional identities amidst pressures of “hyper-performativity” within education. Conducted with 27 teachers in their first two years of teaching, the study utilized semi-structured interviews to explore their experiences, identity development, and the reality versus their expectations upon entering the profession.

Key findings reveal that 35% of the teachers left the profession following the study, reflecting a broader crisis of teacher attrition in Australia linked to job insecurity, lack of support, high workloads, and dissatisfaction. The study identifies significant challenges for performing arts teachers, including:

1. **Insecure Employment**: Many teachers were on temporary contracts and often unsure of their future employment, leading them to overwork and perform to secure their positions.
2. **School Culture**: A competitive culture valuing extensive obligations and data-driven outcomes was normalized, leading teachers to feel compelled to work excessive hours and engage in unpaid extracurricular activities, often at the expense of their mental and physical health.
3. **Mental Health Issues**: The overwhelming workload and the pressure to uphold idealized notions of a "good teacher" resulted in deteriorating mental health among many participants, who reported neglecting their personal well-being and social relationships.

The paper emphasizes that the teaching environment, particularly for performing arts educators, needs to be made sustainable to retain passionate teachers. While attracting new educators is important, the focus should equally be on creating supportive working conditions that prioritize teachers' well-being. The study ultimately argues for systemic changes in educational institutions to alleviate the burdens placed on those entering the teaching profession, especially in the arts.