

JUGGLING CRADLES AND CHALK: THE PATH OF TEACHING AND MOTHERHOOD

by:

Zernie D. Gutierrez, MAEd

SHS Teacher III, E.C. Bernabe National High School

The dual role of motherhood and teaching carries both profound fulfillment and demanding responsibility. Whether it is the mental development of students or the emotional and physical health of one's children, each role requires tolerance, empathy, and a steadfast dedication to fostering progress. These responsibilities overlap on a daily basis for many women in education, with the home and the classroom evolving into two intertwined areas of learning, care, and discipline.

Adaptability is one of the most striking similarities between teaching and motherhood. While mothers must adapt to their children's constantly shifting developmental stages, teachers must modify their lessons to meet the demands of varied learners. According to research, the ability to adapt is crucial for preserving work-life balance because it enables people to successfully handle conflicting demands without sacrificing quality in either job (Bataineh, 2020). Resilience is cultivated by this ongoing adaptation, which is advantageous to kids and students alike.

Maintaining this balance also requires effective time management. Teachers frequently bring work home with them, which interferes with family time. This work may include grading papers, planning lessons, or participating in online meetings. In contrast, mothers have a excess duties, ranging from dinner preparation to nighttime rituals. Research indicates that having clear limits and efficient time management reduces the risk of burnout and guarantees that parental and professional responsibilities are given enough attention (AlAzzam et al., 2021).

Emotional labor lies at the heart of both education and motherhood. In the classroom, teachers offer support, resolve disputes, and set an example of empathy; in the home, mothers do the same. Although beneficial, this emotional investment can be exhausting. According to experts, maintaining high levels of emotional engagement without developing compassion fatigue requires self-care and emotional management (Rodriguez et al., 2022).

The overlap between the two jobs may also be advantageous. Mothering skills like active listening, patience, and conflict resolution are immediately applicable in the classroom. Parenting techniques can also be improved by the educational knowledge, organizational abilities, and communication techniques acquired through teaching. In this sense, having a dual function as a mother and a teacher develops a skill set that enhances both.

But having two roles also means having periods of self-doubt and remorse. Many teacher-mothers express feeling conflicted about whether they are providing "enough" attention to their families or their careers. According to research, social support—whether from family, friends, or community networks—is essential for lowering negative emotions and encouraging a more positive work-life balance (Chen et al., 2020).

For teacher-mothers, technology has become both a boon and a burden. Digital tools make it possible for educators to work remotely and maintain relationships with their students, but they also make it more difficult to distinguish between work and personal life. It is essential for family connections and mental health to figure out how to "switch off" and be really present with one's children. To make sure that work obligations don't take precedence over interpersonal relationships, this calls for deliberate preparation and attentiveness.

Ultimately, balancing the demands of parenthood with teaching calls for poise, vigor, and creativity. It's about realizing that success is based on being able to be really

present in whatever role one is now playing, and that perfection is neither required nor feasible. Women in these dual positions inspire others – students and children alike – by embracing the messiness, unpredictable nature, and beauty of both teaching and parenthood. They are resilient, caring, and dedicated.

References:

AlAzzam, M., Abuhammad, S., & Khraisat, O. M. (2021). Work-life balance among female teachers during COVID-19. *Journal of Occupational Health*, 63(1), e12234. <https://doi.org/10.1002/1348-9585.12234>

Bataineh, K. (2020). The impact of work-life balance on teachers' job satisfaction and quality of life. *International Journal of Educational Research Review*, 5(1), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.24331/ijere.628294>

Chen, M., Li, Q., & Liu, Y. (2020). Social support and work-life balance for female teachers: Evidence from China. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 1510. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01510>

Rodriguez, S., Smith, C., & Sellers, L. (2022). Emotional labor and burnout among educators: The moderating role of self-care. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 115, 103702. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103702>