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"An imperilled profession?" : teachers' perceptions of the significance of remuneration in entering and remaining in the teaching profession.

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2009-03-03T10:05:53Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/6602

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Rationale

At present there seems to be a perception that teaching is what Duke (1984) referred to as an "imperilled" profession. Although teaching is considered to be a vocation for people who gain a great deal of satisfaction through working with children, the rates at which teachers in South Africa are leaving the profession indicates the existence of alarming levels of dissatisfaction with the profession (Bot, 2005; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park 2006; Robinson, 1999). The perceived dissatisfaction is not only evident in terms of data gathered on the increasing attrition rates in the profession. A number of researchers have also indicated that there has been a serious decrease in the number of students entering teacher training institutions, resulting in a cause for concern in South Africa due to the imminent shortage of trained professionals entering and remaining in the teaching profession (Bot, 2005; Hayward, 2002; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park 2006).

There are a number of factors indicating that the "overall emotional health of the teaching corps is at a dangerously low ebb,…" (Venter, 2005). At the heart of the discontent amongst teachers are the poor levels of remuneration. Most commonly, remuneration is an indication of value for a given profession, yet education is a vital function of a successful and developed country and still it is widely recognised that teachers in South Africa are poorly paid (Bot, 2005; Emory Report, 1997; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park 2006; Robinson, 1999).

Given the immense responsibility for their pupils' academic futures, and society as a whole; there would be an assumption that teachers would be treated with esteem, as are many other vocational workers, such as doctors and members of the clergy (MacKenzie, 2005). In truth, teaching is often perceived by many to be a job for people with limited expertise, whose commitment is part-time and whose low levels of remuneration are balanced by 'perks' in the form of long holidays (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Johnston, McKeown & Mcewen, 1999; Leibowitz, 2003). Yet, teachers are under extreme pressure to meet the increasing demands placed on them. In South Africa, amongst the

responsibilities undertaken by teachers includes the challenge of maintaining a learning, and co-operative atmosphere in large classes of children for whom the majority suffer varying levels of financial, emotional, educational, physical and social deprivation as a result of the legacy of Apartheid. In addition, since the transition to democracy in 1994, teachers have had to adjust to the numerous policy changes within the education system. Amid these changing demands and expectations, teachers still need to tend to their responsibilities of book-marking, lesson planning and taking part in extra-curricular activities in return for a meagre wage.

It is within this context that in June 2007, during the writing up of this research, South African teachers along with other public service workers made the decision to strike for a 12% increase in wage ("Union's 'Can't," 2007; Ngqiyaza, Seale, Stephen, & Mkhwanazi, 2007). While under labour law the right to strike is afforded teachers (and other public service workers, such as nurses), this was indeed a conflicted decision made by a profession sanctioned with the responsibility for upholding the child's rights to education. Regardless, this was recorded as one of South Africa's longest and largest strikes since the change of government and abolishment of Apartheid ("Strike Exposes," 2007). Teachers, along with other public servants had decided that they had reached a point beyond which a one-day downing of 'chalk' in order to raise awareness would be adequate. A strong message was sent to government and society that it is no longer acceptable for teachers and public servants in general to be expected to work selflessly in the service of others for wages that are unable to keep up with ever increasing rates of inflation. The 28 day long strike was ended following negotiations between unions and government for a 7.5% increase in wage.

It is clear from statistical analyses of the trends in the teaching profession, in addition to the public servant's strike of June 2007 and further threats of strike to follow in 2008 that South African teacher's are unhappy (Bertram, Appleton, Muthukrishna and Wedekind, 2006; Bot, 2005; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park, 2006; Steyn, 2005). This finding should be of particular concern not only to those in the education sector but society as a whole - as a society without teachers (or nurses) is unimaginable.

As described, much of South African research indicating the probable dissatisfaction in teaching is quantitative in nature (Bertram et al., 2006; Bot, 2005; Hayward, 2002, 2003b; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park, 2006; Steyn, 2005). This is helpful in that it produces statistical data that attempt to explain the trends in teacher attitudes and the possible factors influencing such trends. However, they do not often provide an in-depth understanding of the factors that teachers may perceive as influencing their attitudes towards their profession and remuneration.

Consequently quantitative research indicates that remuneration is a significant factor influencing teacher's perceptions of the profession, while there is a comparative lack of qualitative research exploring this claim. Qualitative research was thus seen as helpfully complementary to the research conducted to date, as it may provide a greater understanding of the realities that teachers are facing in South Africa at present. The current research is an in-depth look into how teachers perceive the role of remuneration in the teaching profession. Through this research, the researcher hopes to contextualise the challenges female teachers face in South Africa at present, particularly in relation to the 'balancing act' between remuneration and their passion for teaching.

This study however, also aims to identify why female teachers remain in the profession. It is hoped that it may shed some light on why it is that teaching may not be considered a viable profession within South African society (Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park, 2006), and importantly, what could be done to influence these perceptions more positively. Furthermore, the research undertaken here may also challenge future researchers to build on these findings and produce recommendations that are useful and realistic, which may even effect policy and entice those with the vocation to teach, regardless of gender, to do so. In this way, this study hopes to contribute to the broader body of research concerned with the state of the education system in South Africa.

1.2 Research Aims

This research undertakes to investigate the 'justice' of five claims impacting on the decision of a sample of South African teachers to enter and remain in the teaching profession and the ways in which these impact on teachers' perceptions of remuneration.

The first of these is that teaching is considered to be one of the vocations, which suggests that teachers' (as do other vocational workers') have an unusual relationship with remuneration. Thus it is believed that those who choose to enter the teaching profession are more concerned with the intrinsic rewards, otherwise known as 'psychic income' (Furnham & Argyle, 1998) related to teaching as a result of the lack of extrinsic rewards related to teaching.

As teaching is typically considered 'female work', the research aims to investigate the relationship between women teachers and their perceptions of remuneration. It is possible that as women are not, typically at least, recognised to be the main breadwinners in their homes, they can rely on a better salary to support the bulk of their financial needs. The effects of this on the teaching profession need to be considered as it may suggest that only married, or wealthy women can 'afford' to teach and that men may be excluded from the profession as a result of the poor levels of remuneration in the profession.

The third factor to be investigated for its impact on teachers', possibly changing, perceptions of remuneration, are the familial and social contexts of teachers. It is widely accepted that the familial and social contexts would have changed from the time teachers would have made their decision to teach. Such changes may have altered teachers' original perceptions of remuneration when they first considered entering the profession.

The final claim is that in order for teachers to remain in the teaching profession they need to continue to perceive the intrinsic rewards and psychic income in order to continue to tolerate low pay. However teaching, especially in South Africa, is fraught with difficulties and challenges which are often overwhelming to teachers. Such difficulties (as alluded to above) often contribute to high levels of dissatisfaction amongst teachers. It goes to say that if these difficulties are perceived by teachers to overshadow the intrinsic rewards gained teachers will begin to focus on issues of remuneration.

1.3 Research Questions

Five research questions have been formulated on the basis of the research aims.

1. To what extent does remuneration appear to impact on the participants in relation to their choice of taking up and remaining in teaching as a profession? Does the role of remuneration appear to relate to the perception that teaching is a vocation?

2. In what way does gender appear to impact on perceptions of remuneration and teaching?

3. Does familial and social situation effect or alter the perceptions that the participants have of remuneration and teaching?

4. Are there other factors impacting on teaching in South Africa and if so how do these factors impact on those of remuneration?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature relating to questions raised by this research. It will consider the three main bodies of research related to this study. Briefly, these include investigations into the factors that attract young people to the profession and the role that remuneration plays in this; issues around teaching, remuneration and gender are considered; and the extent to which contextual factors in the personal and professional lives of teachers affect perceptions of remuneration are discussed.

Much of the literature relating to issues of entering and leaving the teaching profession surveyed, refers to statistical data indicating the numbers of people entering and leaving the profession. This information is referred to as it contextualises this study in relation to the trends found in teaching in South Africa. Furthermore, this data indicates that the high attrition rates in South Africa and abroad are a cause for concern and are directly linked with issues of remuneration.

Linked to the reasons that people enter the teaching profession, another body of literature referred to explores the notions of the vocations, under which teaching falls. This important body of literature was consulted because of its relevance to historically examining the unusual relationship that the vocations have with remuneration. This anomalous relationship needs to be explained in order to understand the role of remuneration in the teaching profession. The material surveyed highlights and further explores the central notion of ‘psychic income’ in the vocations.

A further body of literature which is important highlights the significance of teaching as a gendered profession. The fact that the teaching profession is predominantly female requires an investigation into the extent to which levels of remuneration could be understood to be related to this factor. Linked to this significant body of literature concerning the feminisation of the profession and issues of remuneration, the impact of society’s perceptions of the profession are considered.

It was necessary to consult research which draws attention to the context of the teaching profession in South Africa. Once South Africa was recognised as a democracy in 1994 many of the public and social structures were changed in order to 'more equitably' meet the needs of the 'whole' society. Thus the teaching profession experienced changes on a number of levels. Reviewing and understanding these changes and the resultant challenges they present is necessary as this may significantly shape the work experiences of teachers. In turn, this is likely to have an impact on their perceptions of remuneration.

In connection with the professional context of teachers, the personal context of teachers was reviewed. The limited information found on this topic is discussed as it is typically understood that personal needs and circumstances significantly impact on issues of remuneration.

2.2 A Crisis: Teacher Shortages

The teaching profession across time and place has developed and evolved as have the countries in which teachers' have taught. The education of children is understood to be one of the building blocks of society and thus in South Africa, the classroom has played a pivotal role in both the subjugation of people and is a place where the struggle for freedom has been fought. It is for this reason that Robinson (1999:195) points out that in the case of South Africa, "Teaching is more than a job; it is a political commitment to the future of this country". This commitment is made by men and predominantly women, to serve the needs of children and society as a whole. Yet it seems clear that in South Africa as elsewhere, the teaching profession is struggling to attract and maintain people in this "noble" (Duke, 1984, p.159) profession.

Statistical analyses provide evidence for the proposition that there may be dissatisfaction around the state of the teaching profession in many countries. Information indicating the number of people entering the profession (student teachers) and the number of people leaving the profession (attrition rates) at a particular point in time is important when coupled with possible reasons for this. With such input, one can begin to explain these phenomena and locate areas of discontent. In this way one can start to gain an understanding of how the profession is viewed in society.

Research indicates that attrition rates are increasing, while the number of students entering teacher training colleges have dropped quite significantly both in South Africa (Bertram, Appleton, Muthukrishna and Wedekind, 2006; Bot, 2005; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005) and abroad, such as in the United States and Britain (Corcoran, Evans & Schwab, 2004; Murnane Singer, Willet, Kemple, & Olsen, 1991, as cited in Editor's Review, 2005).

Such data focusing on the teaching profession is useful in beginning to grasp the state of education in South Africa. Research conducted in 2004 by Bertram, Appleton, Muthukrishna and Wedekind, indicated that 350 000 teachers are employed by the state in South African public schools, this figure does not include teachers employed by school governing bodies (Crouch & Perry, 2003, as cited in Bertram et al., 2006). This implies that between 19 250 and 24 750 newly qualified teachers should be produced through tertiary education programmes per annum (Bertram et al. 2006; Bot, 2005; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005). Crouch (2001, as cited in Park, 2006) posits that around 30 000 newly qualified teachers will have to be trained per year, a figure that does not take into account the loss in number of teachers due to HIV and Aids on the schooling system. If HIV/Aids were to be accounted for, this number would have to rise dramatically as Aids-related deaths amongst educators are estimated to be around 50 000 between 2001 and 2010 (Hall, 2002, as cited in Hayward, 2002).

In their review of "post-provisioning models", Motimele and Dieltiens (2005, p.16) cited research by Bot, Beard and Schindler (2003) that indicates that there has been a considerable decrease in those entering teacher training at the tertiary education level from 200 000 students in 1994 to a reported 20 000 students in 2003. This data is in accord with studies conducted by South African researchers Bot (2005), and Park (2005).

The projected graduation rate for qualified teachers in 2004 was about 9 000, however it is believed that many more than half of these were part-time students who were more than likely already employed as teachers (Wedekind, 2004, as cited in Bertram et al., 2006; Park, 2006). According to this research, it appears that the system is not producing

nearly enough new teachers (Bertram et al., 2006; Park, 2006), a situation which is of serious concern to the profession and the country.

2.3 Issues of Remuneration in the Teaching Profession

The perceived dissatisfaction with the profession is not only evident in terms of data gathered on the numbers of students entering teacher training. A number of researchers have indicated that attrition rates are occurring beyond what is typically forecast (Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Hayward, 2002). A study conducted by the HSRC (Health Sciences Research Council) (2005, as cited in Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005) reported that 45% of teachers admitted that they had considered pursuing careers outside of public schools. The reason provided for this was firstly dissatisfaction with remuneration packages, as well as other factors such as workload stress, lack of career advancement and undisciplined learners.

Amongst the considerable amount of research documenting the different factors that add to the difficulties teachers experience in their profession most cite dissatisfaction with salaries. This is understood to be one of the major causes that contribute to low teacher morale, attrition rates, or is listed as a deterrent to those considering entering teacher-training colleges (Balt, 2005; Belfield, 2005; Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Bertram et al., 2006; Bot, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Davies & Ferguson, 1997; Duke, 1984; Griffin, 1997; Hayward, 2002, 2003a; Heafford & Jennison, 1998; Johnston et al., 1999; Leibowitz, 2003; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park, 2006; Robinson, 1999; Smit, 2005; Steyn, 2005; Thomas, 2005; Thornton, 1999; Williams, Moorse & Yates, 2005; Young, 2005). There seems to be a fair amount of recent academic literature that addresses and affirms the claim that teachers in public schools receive a salary package that is not indicative of their responsibilities and the important role they play in society. Conversely, teachers in private schools seem to receive many other types of extrinsic rewards and are slightly better paid (Hayward, 2002).

Research indicates that the link between issues of poor remuneration and teacher shortages in South Africa is clear (Bertram et al., 2006). A study conducted in 2004, sampling a number of 776 final-year student teachers from eleven of the tertiary

education institutions in South Africa identified the number of students who planned to teach abroad in 2005. Just over a quarter (27.4%) of the respondents indicated that they would be teaching abroad, more than half (63.3%) would be teaching in South Africa, and less than ten percent (7.2%) planned not to teach at all (Bertram et al., 2006). Perhaps unsurprisingly, when the respondents who were planning to teach abroad were asked to list the top three factors guiding their decision, just over two thirds of this group (69.1%) identified a higher salary as the foremost motivating reason to work abroad. In research conducted by Thomas Park (2006), the negative view of South African teachers' remuneration levels was echoed by Grade 11 learners who also perceived teacher salaries to be low, and therefore listed this as one of the deterrents to choosing teaching as a possible career path.

This dissatisfaction with salary is also reflected by people who are already in the teaching profession. In research conducted in 2002 investigating the morale of teachers in South Africa by Hayward, respondents were requested to rate the impact of 36 different factors on their levels of morale. Their ratings ranged from options of very high to very low. Respondents who took part in Hayward's (2002) research were all teachers and members who fell under the auspices of NAPTOSA, the National Professional Teacher's Organisation of South Africa, which is an umbrella body representing nine teacher unions. It is reported that in 2002, NAPTOSA had a membership of 100 000 teachers. Hayward (2002) reports that 757 questionnaires were distributed of which 270 resubmitted for analysis constituting a viable 35.7% response rate.

The factor scoring the highest in terms of negative morale was that of remuneration, which represented 58.1% of the respondents. This attitude is in line with the findings of a number of other studies which go further to say that concern over remuneration not only leads to low teacher morale, but is linked with the decision to leave teaching to find better paying jobs (Balt, 2005; Belfield, 2005; Bertram et al., 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Heafford & Jennison, 1998; Johnston et al., 1999; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park, 2006; Thomas, 2005).

It is important to note that Bertram et al. (2006, p.7) identified that for those teachers who would be working abroad, the positive or 'pull' aspects associated with teaching abroad significantly outweighed the negative, or 'push' factors; such as perceived unemployment in South Africa, the crime rate and bad working conditions. It seems that based on the results of this study, the driving force of earning a higher salary overseas decidedly outweighed any other reason listed to teach abroad. It can be argued that a valid conclusion to be drawn from this research is that remuneration in the teaching profession is a concern for newly qualifying South African teachers and a factor that influences the morale of teachers who are already teaching within the system.

The finding that seven percent of respondents indicated that they would not enter the teaching profession after graduation in 2005 due to the low salaries (Bertram et al., 2006) might be further understood in conjunction with Park' (2006) research. Park (2006) investigated the attractors and deterrents for considering teaching as a career option by Grade 11 learners. He found that when learners responded to a question asking their opinions of teachers' remuneration, a third of the respondents marked the option, "I have no idea what teachers earn" (Park, 2006, p.151). This might indicate that some people undertake to study teaching without knowing just how low the salaries of teachers' are, and therefore do not factor this into their career choice.

2.3.1 Remuneration and the Vocation to Teach

The above research clearly identifies remuneration to be a key factor in the decision to enter and leave the profession (Bertram et al., 2006; Hayward, 2002; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park, 2006). However, it provides very little information about those who choose to remain in the profession.

The research undertaken by Hayward (2002) also noted that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of private schools in South Africa – an increase from 200 in 1990, to a figure of more than 1 600 in 2002. Of the respondents who were staying to teach in South Africa, Bertram et al. (2006) found that 35% of that group had already secured a post in a private school. This might indicate that many newly qualified or well-experienced teachers may be teaching in private schools where the salaries are

considerably better and other comforts greater. Teaching in a private school would therefore be one way to combat the financial discomfort experienced by teachers teaching in government schools.

Although Hayward (2002) found that salary negatively affected respondents' morale towards the profession; over half indicated that they did have positive experiences improving their levels of morale in other areas. Their morale improved when commenting on such emotions as loyalty and enthusiasm towards the profession (Hayward, 2002). Loyalty and enthusiasm towards the profession has been found to be a motivating factor for teachers around the world (Ben-Peretz, 2001; Johnston et al., 1999). Even more interestingly, when rating the factor, "Knowing that I render an essential service towards improving the quality of life in the country", 75.7% of Hayward's (2002) respondents realised that this had a very positive effect on morale. These internally motivating factors are coherent with those categorising the teaching profession as a vocation.

This seems to indicate that teaching may offer something that money cannot provide – it is 'intrinsically rewarding' and offers a 'psychic income', while factors such as remuneration and salaries provide a source of what is often called extrinsic reward (Furnham & Argyle, 1998). Intrinsic motivation is specifically described as "the desire to engage in behaviours for no reason other than sheer enjoyment, challenge, pleasure, or interest." (Lepper, Iyengar & Henderlong Corpus, 2005, p. 184). This elusive sense of satisfaction is recognised to be the primary reason that people enter and remain in the teaching profession (Booth, n.d.; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Hayes, 2005; Heafford & Jennison, 1998; Inchausti, 1993; Johnston et al., 1999; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park, 2006).

Yet traditionally, it is widely recognised that money is a motivating factor for work and is desired to some or other extent by all people within society. Thus, it may come as a surprise that for most people money is not considered, or recognised to be the foremost factor in choosing a career (Kerr, 1997a). There is concurrence amongst the psychologically focused studies concerned with identifying the factors that make a career

attractive or not, in finding that remuneration is commonly ranked sixth or seventh in importance from a list of top ten factors (Furnham & Argyle, 1998; Kerr, 1997). It seems almost counter-intuitive that remuneration is not found closer to the top of the list. However, this low ranking of remuneration seems to be a typical finding of professions where pay is seen to be fair; equally weighted against working conditions and demands. In such instances, pay is reported to rank after such factors as security, co-workers, interesting work and welfare arrangements (Furnham & Argyle, 1998).

At the same time it would be inadequate to determine that these findings reduce the need to consider remuneration when considering which career path to follow. To say that money is not important would be a misconception as it would not make sense of requests for pay increases, or of instances where workers band together in solidarity and strike for better pay. While the private sector may reduce the significance of remuneration when compared with other factors, it is equally true that "the less people are paid, the more concerned they are likely to be about financial matters." (Kerr, 1997b, p.19). These findings indicate that considering both intrinsic factors (such as interest in work) and extrinsic factors (such as monetary gain) are necessary when analysing the dynamics of work motivation (Lindgren, 1980).

Furnham and Argyle (1998) have introduced the term 'psychic income', which is comparable to the concept of intrinsic reward. Work which is high in psychic income is seen to yield a high 'internal' or 'intrinsic reward', which is thought to compensate for low remuneration while retaining a relatively high social status (Furnham & Argyle, 1998; MacKenzie, 2004). This argument may lead one to conclude that there are two routes to social status: high financial reward, or high psychic income (MacKenzie, 2004). As there has been relatively little written about 'psychic income', perhaps because it is a term almost exclusively used by Furnham and Argyle (1998), references will be made to literature that speaks of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. The terms psychic income and intrinsic rewards will be used interchangeably for the purposes of this research. Although psychic income and intrinsic rewards are synonymous, it should be noted that while extrinsic rewards are often thought of in terms of financial gain they include other factors, such as length of working hours or longer holidays.

It is then necessary to focus on the intrinsic rewards offered by teaching in more detail. In the research conducted by Park (2006) discussed above (where Grade 11 learners were asked whether they intended to follow teaching as a career path, and if so for what reasons), there were some interesting results. The greatest 'attractor', most commonly listed by respondents interested in pursuing a career in teaching, was that they would like to work with children and following this, that teaching would allow them to work with people. This is in accord with similar research of male and female students of teaching conducted by Johnston et al., (1999) and Thornton (1999). Another factor found in other research and listed by the Grade 11's was that "they were enthusiastic about knowledge and they wanted to share it with others" (Park, 2006, p.153; Booth, n.d.; Inchausti, 1993; Johnston et al., 1999; Thornton, 1999). The last two factors listed by the learners as attractors were that there was an important role to be played in society by teachers in general, and that teachers are considered as important contributors to community development (Park, 2006, p.153). This again has been found to be a motivating factor for teaching in other studies (Booth, n.d.; Inchausti, 1993; Johnston et al., 1999; Steyn, 2004; Thornton, 1999). This list of top-five attractors identified by the learners are considered to be intrinsically rewarding factors associated with teaching. The next five listed, interestingly enough, were more likely to be extrinsically rewarding, such as "teachers get a lot of holidays" and "it is easy for a teacher to get work abroad" (Park, 2006, pp.153/154).

2.3.2 Status, Remuneration and the Value of Teaching

If it is understood as a given that remuneration in teaching is poor, this then shifts the focus onto the status and recognition that teacher's get for their direct contribution to what has been called, "the maintenance of social democracy through building communities of literate and informed citizens" (Codd, 2005, p.193). Ten predetermined factors were given to Grade 11 English, Afrikaans and Xhosa learners who were asked to rate the extent to which these factors may influence their perceptions of teaching as a career option (Park, 2006). Deterrents listed by the learners indicated that just under 10% noted that "the status of teachers in the community is too low" (Park, 2006, p.153). This echoes research concluding that teaching may be perceived as a profession that is

undervalued in society and is disparaged by the public and the media (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Ben-Peretz, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Griffin, 1997; Hayward, 2003a; Jauhiainen et al., 1998; Johnston et al., 1999; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park, 2006; Rees-Gardener, 2004; Thomas, 2005; Venter, 2005).

It is interesting to note that from Park's (2006) research, the majority (54%) of students who considered teachers to hold high status and are considered to be very important people within their communities were Xhosa students. This seems to be in line with a finding in South African research, which is currently being written up, that indicates that Black African teachers are regarded with respect and accorded high status within their communities (S. van Zyl, personal communication, April 20, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park, 2006).

However, it appears that for the most part, teaching is an undervalued profession in Western society. (Ben-Peretz, 2001; Bot, 2005; Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, Michelli & Wyckoff, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Jauhiainen, Kivirauma & Rinne, 1998; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005). This lack of value accorded the teaching profession is partly related to the perception that entrance requirements for training are low. In addition it seems that the negative perceptions of teachers are closely related to their poor levels of remuneration. It is generally recognised that within Western society high pay is closely related to level of qualification. Thus, this provides the impression that teachers are not highly educated and receive little pay accordingly. This is surprising as teachers are required to complete a four year university degree.

Technically speaking, the most basic qualification teachers are required to earn is a minimum of four years of tertiary education. When comparing the salaries of recently qualified teachers with other equally qualified graduates in different fields of study, it is recognised that teachers earn considerably less (Belfield, 2005). Added to the poor starting salaries of teachers is the lack of monetary recognition for any further qualifications that they may achieve, such as a Masters or Doctorate degree. Lastly, over time teachers have fewer opportunities to improve their salary packages to the extent that other graduates in their respective fields of work do (Belfield, 2005). This lack of room

for growth is exacerbated by the restrictions placed on teachers in terms of improving remuneration as further study is not rewarded (Hayward, 2002; Robinson, 1999).

To continue with this argument, it would appear that teaching is negatively perceived as a result of the interaction between poor pay and the perceptions of the profession. That is to say that there is a murkiness regarding the perception of teachers as professionals and as workers. Nazir Carrim, (Senior Lecturer at the School of Education, Wits University), tried to consolidate the divide between the question of teachers as professionals or teachers as workers in his speech at the 2004 National Union of Educators (NUE) Conference (Venter, 2005; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005). He argued that this debate is no longer ubiquitous, as teachers are quite simply "both" (Venter, 2005:10). Thus, Carrim elaborated that teachers are professionals, but not like most due to their lack of status and pay, and they are workers, but not like most as they have formal training (university degrees), unlike most workers (Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Venter, 2005).

The question of the nature and extent of the professionalism of teaching has been raging for a number of years and can be traced back to the times preceding the formalisation of the profession itself (Jauhiainen et al., 1998). For this reason the question of the identity of teachers as professionals or workers may not be as easily resolved as Carrim suggests. Jauhiainen et al. (1998) provide an historical account of the "lowly" (Thomas, 2005, p.46) status of the profession by tracing back the negative perceptions attached to the teaching profession. In their study revisiting the process through which Finnish teachers' secured status and prestige through the certification of their degree, Jauhianen et al. (1998) locate the negative status of teaching back to the 17th and 18th centuries. At this time the church stipulated that the common people learn to read, and so village and home schools were established in the countryside, where

> 'free teachers', [such as] village elders, cripples, former soldiers, and those who had left their academic studies unfinished, or adults who were otherwise 'experienced in the school of life', gathered children around them in order to teach in order to earn a living. (Rinne & Jauhiainen, 1988, as cited in Jauhiainen et al., 1998, p.262).

As there were no real criteria by which the qualifications of teachers were measured at the time, a low status of primary teachers developed (Jauhianen et al., 1998), and seems to have prevailed over time. In order for Finnish teachers to have their expertise

recognised amongst the members of the public, they rallied together to have their qualifications accredited through university programmes.

2.3.3 Gender, Teaching and Remuneration

While the aspect of gender in relation to the teaching profession, does not receive much attention within the literature, Griffin (1997) and Benton DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) attribute the negative perceptions and low pay related to teaching "to its reputation as women's work" (Griffin, 1997, p.12). This links to the fact that there is a world-wide under-representation of men within the profession, with only 25% to 30% of teachers documented to be male (Belfield, 2005; Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Bertram et al., 2006; Griffin, 1997; Johnston et al., 1999; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Thornton, 1999).

However, teaching has not always been a predominantly female career (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Griffin, 1997). The dramatic *"feminization of primary teaching"* (Johnston et al., 1999, p.55; original italics), is understood to be a result of a number of social, political and economic factors (for an in-depth discussion of the history of teaching as a gendered profession see: Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997 and Griffin, 1997). Generally it would seem, that as the pay to both male and female teachers began to equalise, the profession became less appealing to men. It would seem too that a combination of an increase in the proportion of female educators and poor remuneration levels resulted in decreased levels of respect for the profession (Griffin, 1997). Men began leaving the classroom and found other employment, while those who remained in the profession sought promotion into the administrative levels of education where they are better remunerated (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Griffin 1997).

While the above explanation provides a general overview of the feminisation of the teaching profession, it is interesting to look more closely at research that has focused on a small number of male students of teaching (Johnston et al., 1999; Thornton, 1999). These authors have concentrated on the experiences of men in coming to the decision to choose teaching as a career. In his research tracking the successful completion of a small group of male student teachers in England, Thornton (1999:45) quoted a male respondent who expressed his difficulty in making the decision to teach:

> I should have done this [teaching] when I was 18…I knew teaching was right for me, the fact that it took me 15 years to get back to it is another issue… But it is a definite decision. It wasn't a whim…It has been a hard emotional and financial slog for us.

This quote highlights not only the process through which some men go in order to make the decision to teach, even when they have the vocation to do so, but hints at the financial implications of such a decision. It is important to note that teaching is not perceived as a career that is able to meet the expectations of men to be the breadwinners for their families. Griffin (1997) has argued that the salaries of teachers have been constructed in such a way as to be considered reasonable as an additional income for a married woman. This ties in well with the perception that teaching is an extension of mothering (Johnston et al., 1999), and therefore is not well paid. This point is equally true for nursing, and thus also poorly remunerated.

2.4 Other Challenges Facing Teachers

Since the 1960s teaching has been documented to be in a state of flux around the world (Duke, 1984). Teachers face difficulties in and outside the classroom: undisciplined and disrespectful learners; a lack of parental involvement and interest; teaching in environments which are experienced as unsafe; meeting the demands of increasingly complex policies and mandates; and a lack of communication and support from staff members. Factors such as these all add to the challenges met by teachers around the world daily (Belfield, 2005; Duke, 1984; Hayward, 2002; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park, 2006; Potterton, 1999; Robinson, 1999; Steyn, 2004). To contribute to this, teachers are experiencing greater and greater criticism in the media, greater demands on their time, and increasing workloads with relatively unmet remuneration needs (Belfield, 2005; Griffin, 1997; Hayward, 2003a).

While it is true that poor remuneration has been strongly linked to adding to the increasing attrition rates amongst teachers, it is not the only explanatory factor. None of the articles reviewed for this survey have considered the issue of poor remuneration to be the sole factor contributing to dissatisfaction amongst teachers. It is understood that teacher attrition rates and dissatisfaction with remuneration levels occur within a context of difficulties and challenges experienced on a daily basis by teachers.

While the dissatisfaction experienced by teachers has received emphasis in Britain and the United States for some time now (Editor's review, 2005; Duke, 1984); only recently, since the mid-1990s, has it been noted as a cause for concern in South Africa (Bertram et al., 2006; Bot, 2005; Hayward, 2002; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Leibowitz, 2003; Park, 2006; Potterton, 1999; Robinson, 1999; Smit, 2005; Steyn, 2004; Venter, 2005).

In South Africa specifically, it appears that the challenges facing the teaching profession are further complicated by the need to address complexities and disadvantages that have resulted from the legacy of the Apartheid years (Garson, 2006; Robinson, 1999; Young, 2005). Teachers in South Africa have to face overcrowded classrooms, many of them in schools with a shortage of space, books, desks and chairs (Robinson, 1999; Young, 2005). As South Africa has eleven official languages, teachers are placed under a great deal of stress and struggle to communicate adequately with their pupils. While trying to meet only the handful of challenges mentioned, teachers are faced with the challenge of surviving on what most would call a 'meagre' salary. John Lewis of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) commented that it is widely accepted that "African teachers are poorly paid and sometimes don't even get paid for months." (cited in Govender & Farlam, 2004, par.44).

Furthermore, as a result of the political changes within South Africa, the educational system has been subjected to dramatic quantities of policy change. Within this context of transition, Brigitte Smit (2005) has focused her paper on the process of policy formulation in South Africa. She investigated the relationship between policy development, teacher satisfaction and the difficulties teachers seem to have in implementing such policies effectively. Smit (2005) attributes the lack of willingness of teachers to buy into new policies to be a result of the lack of input and voice that teachers are given in developing them. She highlights the often negative emotional reactions of teachers to policies imposed on them, which are often resisted because they are perceived to be "illogical, irrational, and improperly conceived…." (Smit, 2005, p. 301). Changes at the policy level have been described as causing great levels of stress and frustration amongst teachers, specially those who have already been teaching for between five and ten years (Smit, 2005).

In relation to the issue of policy development and implementation, Potterton (1999) describes the low levels of trust that teachers' have of District Officials from the Department of Education. Furthermore, Hayward (2002), reporting on low levels of morale within the teaching profession, suggests that negative feelings are influenced by the Provincial Educational Department's often "poor, slow or non-existent service delivery" (Hayward, 2003b, p. 9). From Hayward's (2002; 2003b) report it would seem that teachers' experience great levels of frustration with the Department in terms of queries regarding salaries, applications for leave and the late delivery of learning support materials. Such unreliable 'support systems' to teachers are known to add to their frustrations and cast a negative light onto the teaching profession.

In a piece entitled "Exit the educators…", written by Dave Balt (2005) and published in the NUE (National Union for Educators) Journal, he describes research conducted by the HSRC (Health Sciences Research Council). The HSRC did a survey of 1 714 randomly selected schools and 21 358 teachers in order to review the factors determining 'Educator supply and demand in South African Public Schools'. This research was undertaken after concern was raised that teachers were leaving the profession in large numbers. The survey found the following factors to be amongst the main causes of teacher dissatisfaction: poor levels of remuneration; challenging work conditions including a heavy workload, very limited opportunities for career advancement and recognition; poor relationships with the Education Department; lack of respect for the profession within society; and stress due to the changes in education such as the system of Outcomes Based Education (OBE), and the implementation of new curricula (as cited in Balt, 2005). This piece of research correlates closely with the report on educator morale written by Hayward (2002) as well as a report discussing dissatisfaction amongst South African teachers by Motimele and Dieltiens (2005).

More specifically, a number of studies have identified that the lack of respect teachers are accorded from pupils is a serious problem experienced by teachers (Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park, 2006; Steyn, 2004). This lack of respect has severe implications on the levels of discipline teachers are able to maintain in the classroom. Research suggests that the struggle with discipline is a common complaint from educators (Davies &

Ferguson, 1997; Griffin, 1997; Park, 2006; Robinson, 1999; Steyn, 2004). While this same challenge of learner discipline is a concern in England, the United States and Israel (Belfield, 2005; Ben-Peretz, 2001; Davies & Ferguson, 1997; Duke, 1984), it is experienced as an exceptional difficulty by South African teachers as, out of these countries, South Africa is the only country with a pupil to teacher ratio of 40:1 (Robinson, 1999).

Many of the authors who highlight and make attempts to address the challenges listed here aim to focus on and bring about change at the level of training for teachers, as it is well-documented that many "educator preparation programmes seldom fully prepare educators for the profession (Halford, 1998, p.33 as cited in Steyn, 2004, p.82). Teachers thus enter the classroom feeling unprepared and unsupported in dealing with aspects such as discipline, teacher-parent consult, and the heavy administrative requirements of teachers (Johnston, 1999; Thornton, 1999).

Statistical evidence from the United States suggests that as many as 50% of teachers in urban schools drop out within three years of teaching due to the lack of adequate support within schools (Black, 2001 & Whitaker, 2001 as cited in Steyn, 2005), and the inadequate training of teacher preparation programmes (Halford, 1998 as cited in Steyn, 2005; Williams et al., 2005). This also seems to be a factor that South African schools and training colleges have to contend with, as a study by Bertram et al., (2006) indicated that of a group of 776 final year teachers, just under ten percent (7.2%) were planning not to teach at all and a further 27.4% planned to teach abroad.

Thus, the trend is that newly qualified teachers arrive in schools armed with their training knowledge, and are often faced with the very different practical reality of classroom teaching (Robinson, 1999). The result is that newly qualified teachers are then overloaded with unwanted and disliked tasks that seasoned teachers refuse to take on (Steyn, 2005; Williams, Moorse & Yates, 2005). These difficulties, coupled with poor remuneration significantly increase the attrition rates.

The challenges, as a result of the gaps between teacher-training and teaching receive special focus in research conducted by Davies and Ferguson (1997) in England. The

results of the Davies and Ferguson (1997) study are interesting in their reported differences to those challenges receiving attention in the South African literature (Bertram et al., 2006; Bot, 2005; Hayward, 2002; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Leibowitz, 2003; Park, 2006; Potterton, 1999; Robinson, 1999; Smit, 2005; Steyn, 2004; Venter, 2005). Such challenges listed by the Davies and Ferguson (1997) teachers were identified as difficulty experienced and gaps in how to teach children to read; too little contact with, and observation of 'good teaching'; little guidance in the practical side of classroom management; and a lack of training in assessing children's progress. Such difficulties and gaps were not mentioned in the South African literature dealing with such challenges. Davies and Ferguson (1997) report however, that like South African teachers of the two most frequently mentioned gaps experienced by their participants was their lack of training in dealing with class behavioural problems or discipline, in addition to a lack of guidance in areas of administrative duties. It is possible that South African teachers struggle to some or other extent with the same difficulties encountered by the Davies and Ferguson (1997) participants. However, such difficulties may receive little attention in the South African literature as a result of the complexities of the transitions that have occurred in education in line with the political changes in the country and thus other factors are focused upon.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

A Qualitative Approach to Research

Qualitative research is suited to investigations that have an interest in the subjective experiences of groups of people. The current research employed a qualitative approach as this best complements the gathering of descriptive, exploratory data of the subjective experiences and perceptions of participants (Flick, 1999; Guba & Lincoln, 2004; Krippendorff, 1980; Neuman, 2003; Zhang, 2006).

The overview of the literature undertaken in Chapter 2 above, indicates that a deeper understanding of the perceptions of teachers' around remuneration and their profession is called for. Qualitative research methods allow for "thick descriptions" of social life (Geertz, 1973, cited in Guba & Lincoln, 2004: 5), provide detailed explanations of social processes, and theoretical generation on both macro and micro levels of analysis.

3.1 Data Collection

3.1.1 *Sample*

It is recognized that for qualitative content analyses, purposively selected samples reflecting the research questions are chosen (Zhang, 2006). The importance of sample selection is highlighted by the following simple, yet pertinent quote: "For most psychological phenomena, *who* you study does matter." (Fife-Schaw, 1997, p.104; original italics). This research employed non-probability convenience sampling measures and was chosen as the participants had to meet the selection criteria (outlined below) as well as represent a group of people easily accessible to the researcher (Anastas, 1999).

In qualitative research the selection of the sample is crucial because the appropriate selection of participants plays a large part in how the research question is answered. The following selection criteria were established in order to make the convenience sampling techniques more robust (Anastas, 1999). The need to compare the different perceptions of remuneration and teaching, across the interviews, in qualitative research requires some

level of commonality of experience amongst the participants. In this case the selection criteria required that:

1. All the participants had to teach at government primary schools and be fully qualified teachers.

This meant that this group of people would receive standard salaries paid by the Gauteng Department of Education. Also of importance, the participants would be exposed to similar teaching conditions in terms of school resources, structures.

2. Only women teachers were included.

Research indicates that the profession is predominantly female and so women teachers' perceptions were chosen. More importantly, it is reasonable to assume that there may be significant differences between men and women teachers' perceptions of remuneration and that should men have been included, it may have been difficult to draw appropriate comparisons.

3. Teachers with at least two years, and as much as ten years teaching experience were included.

The significance of the number of years of experience is important as this study requires the participants to discuss their experiences of teaching in an informed way. The presence of the question of possibly leaving the profession however, should still be active for the group and thus it is reasonable to assume that this may not be the case of people who have been teaching for over a decade.

4. Participants were to be between 25 and 35 years of age.

Related to criterion 3 above, it is practical to assume that younger teachers would not be as experienced and may not have the same financial responsibilities as those expected of the older participants of this research, reducing comparability of circumstances. On the other hand, the older participants should not be so old as to make it less feasible for them to consider leaving the teaching profession.

5. Teachers teaching at similar schools in similar areas of Johannesburg were chosen.

For comparative purposes, it seemed important that the participants who shared similar urban communities would be likely to share similar living standards and living costs. Thus, this selection excludes people from rural communities where the environments are significantly different, and the cost of living may vary. Also, rural teachers were excluded on the grounds that teaching in rural areas might present different challenges and rewards.

6. Participants are all to come from a middle income group (household income of between R6 000 and R15 000).

Crucial to this study, the issue of remuneration had to be modulated for comparative purposes. This means that when thinking about money, similar issues should come into play and would be of similar relative meaning and importance for the participants. The decision not to include teachers from significantly lower income groups in South Africa means that in practice Black teachers were excluded from this study. Similarly, very wealthy teachers, either independently wealthy or married to particularly wealthy men were excluded from the study as remuneration would not be a significant factor for them.

While teachers were not selected or excluded on the basis of race, in practice the sample consisted of 4 Indian, and 5 White women.

3.1.2 *Data Collection Measures*

Unlike the questionnaire-based information that has been gathered to support the findings of quantitative data previously mentioned, this research is based on data gathered from a number of semi-structured interviews, which includes capturing pertinent biographical data. The interview “is a research-gathering approach that seeks to create a listening space where meaning is constructed through an interexchange / cocreation of verbal viewpoints…” (Miller & Crabtree, 2004, p.185). Semi-structured interviews are particularly suited to qualitative research methods as they are able to capture the phenomena of interest by making use of the words or actions of those who embody them (Anastas, 1999; Boyatzis, 1998; Flick, 1999; Neuman, 2003; Zhang, 2006).

It is necessary to point out that a nuanced conceptualisation of the role of remuneration in context could not have been captured without the opportunity of gaining the insights into the thoughts and feelings of individual teachers without the sensitive tool of the semi-structured interview technique. It would seem that Neuman's (2003:440) conceptualisation of qualitative research as being able to "stimulate understanding", is indicative of the processes of this research method. Understanding is emphasised because in qualitative research, "explanations tend to be rich in detail, sensitive to context, and capable of showing the complex processes or sequences of social life." (Neuman, 2003, p.440).

To complement the semi-structured interviews conducted with participants, an accompanying short biographical questionnaire was filled out by participants. Krippendorff (1980) explains that short questionnaires of this kind are complementary to more detailed semi-structured interviews

A copy of the semi-structured interview and biographical data obtained are attached to this report under Appendix A.

3.1.3 *Thematic Content Analysis*

The data, that is the information gathered from the semi-structured interviews, was analysed through a technique of language sensitive thematic content analysis. Thematic content analysis is defined by Krippendorff (1980, p. 21) as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their contexts". Thematic content analysis according to Babbie (2005, p.328), is "the study of recorded human communications.", and it is suited to a variety of data sources, such as books, speeches, letters, e-mail and so forth, as well as any selections or parts thereof. Thus the analysis of the data collected via interviews is suited to a thematic content analysis technique. In addition, thematic content analysis takes into account that data can be analysed from a number of perspectives (Krippendorff, 1980). The technique is language sensitive as it is this that is the focus of the gathering and analysis process.

Mayring (1983, as cited in Flick, 1998), outlined six steps to completing a thematic content analysis. The following is a description of Mayring's (1983, as cited in Flick, 1998) steps to conducting thematic content analysis. Firstly, the key material is to be defined, that is to say that interviews, or those parts relevant for answering the research question should be identified. Secondly, the context of data collection should be analysed, taking into account who was involved in the interview process, and where it was done. Thirdly, the material should be formally categorised with consideration of the recording protocol; such as the verbatim transcription of interviews. In the fourth step the direction of the analysis for the selected text should be defined, this is determining what one wants to learn from the analysis. According to Mayring (1983, as cited in Flick, 1998), in the next step the research question is clearly defined on the basis of theories. This process stipulates that the research question of the analysis must in advance be clearly defined and should have a theoretical link to earlier research. The research question is usually differentiated in the form of sub-questions. Next, Mayring (1983, as cited in Flick, 1998) suggests that the analytical technique (in this case thematic content analysis) be applied. At this stage the material is paraphrased (see Appendix G for the paraphrased interviews). In the last stage the analytic units are applied, ranging from the smallest possible unit (the coding unit) to the largest units of analysis (the contextual unit). Mayring (1983, as cited by Flick, 1998) defines the coding unit as the smallest portion of text which may be analysed and fall under a category. He goes on to state that the largest unit which may fall under a category is the contextual unit while the analytic unit defines which passages are to be analysed one after the other. These steps were used as a guide for the research process.

It is noted that inflexibility when defining the research questions and codes in relation to theory only, can be a limiting factor to one's analysis (Flick, 1998). This is recognised by others who have formulated frameworks for thematic content analysis which allow for greater flexibility and amalgamation of information. Neuman (2003) describes a process by which a hybrid approach to his framework for developing codes applies. Neuman (2003, p.29), explains that a continuum exists "from theory-driven to data-driven approaches" when developing themes and codes.

He explains that data-driven codes are inductively constructed from the raw data, while a theory-driven approach uses prior research in order to develop a code and then apply it to the raw data (Neuman, 2003). It should be noted that "All of these approaches to developing themes and a code move the researcher towards theory development" (Neuman, 2003, p. 29).

Neuman (2003) describes four steps in developing themes and codes using a hybrid of the two approaches (data-driven and theory-driven).

1. Reduce the raw information
2. Identify themes within samples
3. Use theories or prior research to develop themes
4. Create a code

In his first step, Neuman (2003) suggests that once the raw data, in this case interviews have been carefully listened to, transcribed and read, each piece of data should be paraphrased or summarised. Each sub-sample should then be analysed for similarities and patterns. The third step allows for prior research as well as one's own conceptions to develop themes. A code is then developed in relation to similarities and differences with relation to the raw data and prior research. This formulation of code development (described by Neuman, 2003) was used as a guide for code development here.

While thematic content analysis has "evolved into a scientific method that promises to yield inferences from essentially verbal, symbolic, or communicative data" (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 20), it does have weaknesses. One of the major weaknesses relate to external validity and reliability in terms of analysing the data (Neuman, 2003). As it was not feasible for another researcher to analyse the data, the nature and scope of this research does not allow for these issues to be addressed. In addition, qualitative research is recognised to be limited in the extent to which the findings are generalisable. Both these areas are recognised as limiting features of this research. However, due to the

exploratory nature of this research it is suggested that further research be conducted in order to substantiate and advance the current findings.

3.1.4 *Data collection procedure and analysis*

By way of amalgamating the processes described by Mayring, (1983, as cited by Flick, 1998) and Neuman (2003), the following steps outline the procedures undertaken in this study:

1. Written data of the necessary biographical information was gathered from participants via a short biographical questionnaire (please refer to Appendix A for the biographical questionnaire; for the results in table form please refer to Appendix H), and verbal data were gathered from nine individual interviews using a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix A for the schedule). The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Please refer to Appendix G for the interview transcripts.

2. The transcripts were reviewed several times in order to gain an overall sense of their content. Following this, the data were summarised and paraphrased into the researcher's words. This was done using two approaches: an analysis reviewing each interview in its entirety (See Appendix G for a complete summary of the data), and secondly, the analysis beginning to develop themes across the interviews (Appendix F).

3. The themes were developed from existing theory (theory-driven approach), coupled with common and differing notions expressed by the participants (data-driven approach), with the research questions in mind.

3.2 Ethical Considerations

A letter of permission allowing access to teachers and to conduct interviews on the school property was gained from each school before undertaking the interviews. (See Appendix E for Letter of Permission from research sites). Participation in this study was voluntary. The participant information letter advised participants of the estimated duration of the

interview and provided a brief indication of the area of research. (Please refer to Appendix B for the Participant Information Sheet). Permission to conduct the interview as well as to audio-record the interview was requested using two separate informed consent forms. The first form required that both the interviewee and the researcher acknowledge the exchange of information with regard to the nature of the study and confidentiality. The interviewee signed the second form in order to give their permission to audio-record the interview and to allow the researcher to use direct quotes. (Please see Appendix C and D for Informed Consent forms).

Ethical clearance was granted internally by the Ethics Committee of the University of the Witwatersrand (Ethics Clearance Number: MED/06/003 IH).

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF KEY FINDINGS

This chapter presents the main themes using the description of the interview material across the interviewees (please refer to Appendix F for the thematic summary) in relation to the literature discussed above (Chapter 2: Literature Review). In addition, this chapter is organised into themes in order to provide a comparative analysis. The themes are organised in relation to the questions outlined in the Introduction section above. The participants' comments in the form of direct quotes are italicised and thus distinctly identifiable as their own.

The comparison of the different responses elicited by the interviews intends to determine the extent to which remuneration is a factor in teachers' decision to enter and leave the profession. In addition the factors underlying the focus, or lack of focus, on remuneration are considered in light of the extent to which the profession is considered to be a vocation as well as the context in which teachers are working. After the analysis of each theme, a summary of the findings is provided.

4.1 Remuneration and teaching. Entering and exiting the profession: the "moral imperative" rivalling financial necessity. (Hayes, 2005:32)

It is necessary to acknowledge that teacher trainees have chosen the teaching career from a wide range of career alternatives through a process of reflection involving many factors. Considering the role that teachers play in society, the importance of gaining an understanding of what draws people to the profession and keeps them in it cannot be underemphasised.

The teaching profession is one that is essential to the advancement and preservation of society. For hundreds of years it has been the means through which formal knowledge has been passed on through the generations. In addition, it has been accepted that those who choose to be teachers and work in building the future generations of learners are "'called' to work in service of others…" (MacKenzie, 2004, p. 105). The desire to do such work is characterised by intrinsically motivating factors (Furnham & Argyle, 1998;

Lindgren 1980; Kerr, 1997a). This would suggest that there is a special relationship between the teacher and her life's work and a great reward for being a part of the process of imparting knowledge and guiding children intellectually, emotionally and morally.

The participants eluded to the intrinsic call to teach when they made such comments as, *"I love kids, and they're my passion and that's why…I decided to teach"*, (Participant 2); the work is *"challeng*[ing] *primarily, and also… reward*[ing]*"*, (Participant 9); and they described the pleasure gained from *"being able to expand them* [the pupils] *as people… and to…guide them through life"* (Participant 6). Such examples of reasons for entering the profession echo research indicating that the factors related to becoming a teacher are generally "rooted in caring, fulfilment and impact upon society" (Hayes, 2005, p.32).

The majority of participants (8/9; Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9), listed as one of the reasons they were drawn to the profession that teaching would enable them to fulfil their desire to *"work with small children"* (Participant 9). These participants made it clear that working with children was a *"love"*, *"enjoyment"* and a *"passion"* and something that *"I always knew that I, I wanted to* [do]*"* (Participants 2 & 9). This aspect has been found to be a significant factor in choosing teaching in other studies and indicates that there is something about working with children that is fulfilling in itself (Hayes, 2005; Heafford & Jennison, 1998; Johnston et al., 1999; Park, 2006).

However, participants did not only see their desire to teach as enabling them to work with children, as teaching primary school is not the only way to fulfil this need. In addition to working with children, participants emphasised the importance of three other factors that provided them with a *"personal reward"* (Participant 5). These factors all hinge on the need to play an important role in the world of the child for the sole benefit of the child. It is for this reason that the vocations are classified as partly altruistic endeavours (Booth, n.d.; Inchausti, 1993; Furnham & Argyle, 1998; Hayes, 2005; Johnston et al., 1999; MacKenzie, 2004; Park, 2006).

Specifically, one of these factors emphasised the importance that participants placed on developing the intellectual capacity of children; a second and related factor was the reward from, and challenge of, imparting information and knowledge through teaching

the syllabus; and a third factor was the fulfilment that comes from contributing to the emotional development of the child. The factors identified by the participants are recognised and supported by other studies both locally (Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005 and Park, 2006), as well as internationally (Hayes, 2005; Heafford & Jennison, 1998; Johnston et al., 1999). What is clearly expressed as appealing to a person in choosing to teach is the need to share knowledge, the desire to answer a vocational calling by dealing with what are often called pastoral matters, in addition to making an important contribution in developing their communities (Hayes, 2005). Participant 3 expressed something representative of all the participants when she said:

> *…when I teach them…I'm teaching them content…but I spend a lot of time talking to the kids inside and out of school. I know a lot about their homes, their families, their backgrounds, even the little things that are going on in the classroom, or in the school, I generally tend to know.*

While these rewards are not quantifiable, they are meaningful to those who turn to the vocations to satisfy them. Thus it is something of this intrinsic reward that Booth (n.d., p.255), an American teacher described when he said that one of the privileges of teaching is that, "you get to witness moments of initiation in the lives of your young students…".

In line with this, participants often used terms such as *"personal reward"*, *"love"* and *"challenge"* when describing the reasons they entered the profession. They emphasised their internal motivation for entering the profession and stressed that *"it definitely wasn't for the money"* (Participant 9). This feeling was common amongst the participants, as they overlooked remuneration in favour of "the special rewards gained from serving the needs of others" (MacKenzie, 2004, p. 106). This attitude: that *"the love of the job being far more important than your big bank balance"* (Participant 7), resonates with literature focussing on the vocations, such as that written up by Lindgren (1980) and Furnham & Argyle (1998). Furnham and Argyle (1998) conclude that one of the perceptions associated with the vocations is that remuneration is of lesser importance than the satisfaction and intrinsic rewards associated with these professions (Johnston et al., 1999; MacKenzie, 2004; Thornton,1999).

With this in mind, it was clear that the majority of the participants (6/9; Participants 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9) were well aware from the outset that teaching was not a career choice that

would be well-paid. This knowledge, along with the strong emphasis on answering one's call to work in the interests of society would suggest that monetary reward is of lesser importance than the intrinsic rewards gained from teaching. In line with this understanding, Participant 6 emphasised a point typical of the majority of the participants (6/9; Participants 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9) when she said that,

> *It wasn't a matter of the money…I was doing it because I was loving the training and really enjoying the whole idea of you know, passing on knowledge."*

It was unexpected that a participant would suggest that remuneration was a motivating factor for entering the profession, especially as it is well-documented that teaching is renowned to be "characterised by low salaries…" (Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005, p.19; Benton DeCorse & Vogtle 1997; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Griffin, 1997; Heafford & Jennison, 1998; Johnston et al., 1999; Park, 2006; Thomas, 2005). However, Participant 1 felt that at the time that she was preparing to enter the profession, *"The salary was good, the hours were good,"* but she adds *"not anymore."* It is interesting and important to look at the biographical information compared to the other participants in order to make sense of this surprising remark. Participant 1 is just two years younger than the oldest participant in this study, who is 34. Race is also an important factor as in South Africa as it can never be excluded as a result of the country's inequitable past (Bertram et al., 2006; Robinson, 1999; Young, 2005). Participant 1 is one of four Indian participants in the study, the remaining 5 being White. It is therefore reasonable to extrapolate that during the time at which Participant 1 began her studies, teaching may have been a secure option for a young Indian woman. This is in line with research that finds that especially in the Black community, remuneration in the teaching profession is perceived as good (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park, 2006). In addition, Participant 1 emphasised that she comes from a family of teachers, and therefore teaching may have been more positively viewed and highly regarded than in other families from different backgrounds.

The remaining two participants who did not affirm that they were aware that teaching was poorly remunerated were Participants 4 and 5. Both Participants 4 and 5 explained that they had received scholarships for teaching and therefore were unable to study anything else as they did not have the funding for tertiary education. Griffin (1997)

explains that such situations are not unusual and that at times, some women have no other option but to study teaching as this might be the only career for which they receive a bursary. Again it is important to note that these participants were not from privileged backgrounds and, it would seem that race and its relationship to socioeconomic standing in South Africa may play a role in that both these participants are Indian.

Thus while it seems that there are few extrinsic rewards in teaching, especially with regards to remuneration, it is the case that the participants reported that there were other less intrinsically rewarding reasons for entering the profession. For almost all of the married participants (5/6; Participants 1, 3, 7, 8, 9), it was important that teaching allowed them the *"flexibility"* (Participant 9) and time to commit to their children and families (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Griffin, 1997). Participant 3 emphasised the importance of this for herself when she recounted that, *"every single afternoon you get solid time to spend with your children and you don't neglect your home."* It would seem that the married participants anticipated this advantage as they mentioned that they recognised that teaching was a good fit with motherhood and home-making. Due to space constraints, this issue will be discussed in depth below in the section entitled: Teaching, Remuneration and Gender.

In addition to the flexibility in time that teaching allows, participants mentioned that they appreciated the longer holidays, (5/9; Participants 1, 3, 7, 8, 9). This was not only valuable time to be spent with family, but it also allows teachers a *"break"* from the stresses and strains endured from having *"just spent three months preparing children constantly for the work."* (Participant 7). One of the participants (Participant 8) however, focused on the holidays as being more than a perk, but rather a primary motivating factor for teaching. It would appear that her initial reason for entering the profession was different to the other participants in that she was teaching in order to attain her dream of working with severely handicapped children. This requires her to qualify as a teacher and then to specialise in special education at a Post Graduate level. She is studying part-time and teaching full-time in order to reach her goal. It is likely that she appreciates the holidays as they provide time to focus on her studies.

A further benefit that three of the nine participants (Participants 3, 7, 8) pointed out was that through being attentive teachers, they felt better prepared to raise their own children in line with the experiences and lessons they learned at school. This was an unexpected finding and there was no mention in the literature reviewed that this may be a motivating factor for entering the profession.

Overall, teachers primarily answer the call to teach as they "feel that it is a useful and worthwhile way to spend their time, through making a positive contribution to the wellbeing of society" (Hayes, 2005, p.32). Although the participants were able to find some externally rewarding reasons to enter the profession, it is certain that they did not enter the profession in the hopes of being financially well-off. Thus all of the participants agreed that remuneration was an unimportant reason to enter the profession. However, a very different picture emerged when discussing remuneration and the role it plays in relation to remaining in the profession. The participants expressed that the interplay between intrinsic rewards and the serious lack of extrinsic rewards coupled with the number of challenges they face (discussed in detail in the section below entitled: An imperilled profession: Challenges exacerbating the problem of poor remuneration) highlight the lack of remuneration for their efforts.

The participants unanimously emphasised how poorly they were remunerated and just how *"pathetic"* (Participant 2) they perceived their remuneration to be. There was a focus on how inadequate a teacher's salary is in order to function in the world. The participants all recognised that they are unable to survive independently on a teacher's salary, especially not if one has children. Both the married (6/9; Participants 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9) and unmarried participants (3/9; Participants 3, 4, 5) stressed the fact that without the financial support of some significant other *"You can't actually survive"* (Participant 5). For the married participants, this would be their husbands' (Participants 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, and 9), for the remaining participants (4, 5, and 6) this would be their partners' or families'.

It would seem that the participants all agreed that once they were in the profession, in terms of financial viability, *"teaching on its own…It's not enough."* (Participant 4). The participants' outright repetition of the following caution from Participant 9 to prospective

teachers indicates just how seriously they are affected by the poor remuneration: *"Don't ever think you can live comfortably on a teacher's salary because you can't"*. This comment was repeated throughout the different interviews as the participants expressed their concerns regarding remuneration.

It is of great concern that the overwhelming majority of participants (7/9; Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9) explained that they were making plans to leave the profession as a result of the "*(in)adequate"* (Participant 5) remuneration.

The unmarried participants' (Participants 4 and 5) urgency to leave the teaching profession was far more overtly expressed than the married participants'. It is clear that both Participants 4 and 5 emphasised that a teacher's salary is only adequate if there are *"two incomes in the household"*, otherwise *"You can't actually survive"* (Participant 5). Griffin (1997) and Benton DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) have made similar observations in their research by pointing out that a teacher's salary is traditionally thought of as a secondary salary and that many single and divorced women are often forced to leave the profession "even though they *loved working with children* because they wanted a career with higher pay" (Biklen, 1983 as cited in Griffin, 1997, p.12; original italics). Participant 5 described how stifled she felt because her salary does not cover all of her basic expenses after she has paid her rent. For this reason Participant 5 lives with her brother and his family and shares household expenses and rent with him in order to ease her financial load. Participant 5 described the dilemma as a 'catch-22' situation when she said:

> *Then you think: now I am in this job because I love it, but at the same time, what if I can't make my car payments this month?*

Participant 5 wishes for financial and personal independence and thus she feels that there is no choice but to leave teaching in order to earn more money. This situation is similar for Participant 4.

In their attempts to retain the intrinsic rewards related to teaching, Participants 4 and 5 explained that they were looking for jobs that were *"**still** linked to teaching in terms of training or something like that"* (Participant 5). They both agreed that they wanted to

retain the internal satisfaction gained from the *"imparting of knowledge"* and *"the same relationship that you build with the student"* (Participant 5) so that *"you know that you're doing something constructive…for somebody."* (Participant 4). Participant 4 is left with the consolation that she can still make an impact and help *"at the higher levels"* with the necessary benefit of earning far more money.

Of the married participants (Participants 2, 3, 7, 8, 9) who were making plans to leave the profession, the only reason that they remained in teaching was as a result of their children still being small. The consensus amongst these mothers was that *"As the kids get bigger…their expenses become more and then a teacher's salary's just not gonna be enough."* (Participant 3). While they considered their salaries essential in contributing to meeting their family's financial needs, there was unanimity in recognising their husbands' as the *"main breadwinner(s)"* (Participant 9). This is in line with the discussion around the way that a teacher's salary has been constructed in both Benton DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) and Griffin's (1997) papers. These participants explained that they were waiting for their children to grow a little older before leaving the profession, so that, in the words of Participant 9, *"…they don't need me…as much as they do now, to be flexible"*. Again many of these married participants' explained that if it wasn't for the poor remuneration, they would not look to leave the profession, however financial necessity will come to take prominence as their families grow.

The two participants (1 and 6) that felt that they would remain in the teaching profession until they retired were certainly in the minority. It may be significant that what Participants 1 and 6 seem to have in common is that they both come from teaching families, where they join other family members who are teachers. Research indicates that the families in which teaching is a common career choice are more supportive towards other family members who make the decision to teach (Thornton, 1999). Participant 1 and 6's commitment to teaching is undeniable and evident in comments such as, *"If you're not gonna get the personal rewards you're not gonna* [be] *the best for the children either"* (Participant 6), and,

> *You don't choose this career because you like the hours, you don't choose it because you think you gonna be a good teacher. I believe that teachers are born.* (Participant 2).

Perhaps that seven of the nine participants (Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9) have plans to leave the teaching profession as a result of the poor remuneration should not come as a surprise, as research indicates that one of the greatest motivating factors for teachers to leave the profession is poor remuneration. This is found to be equally true in South Africa (Bot, 2005; Balt, 2005; Leibowitz, 2003; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park, 2006) as well as internationally (Balt, 2005; Belfield, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Heafford & Jennison, 1998; Johnston et al., 1999; Thomas, 2005). In addition, the plans of participants to leave the profession seem to be in line with South African research presented by Bot in 2005. Her report indicated that between 1994 and 2002, there has been a drop from 53% to 30% in the proportion of teachers aged below 35 (Bot, 2005). This means that younger teachers seem to be leaving the profession in large numbers so that while the highest proportion of teachers before 2002 fell into the 22-34 year age group, in 2002 this average increased to the 35-44 year age group. It is interesting to note that the participants of this research are aged between 25 and 35 years of age and are making plans to leave the profession.

Furthermore, the plight of teachers and other vocational workers in South Africa, such as nurses was highlighted during the public servant's sector salary strike in June 2007. This strike brought these essential services to a halt for a month and clearly indicates the levels of dissatisfaction around remuneration amongst teachers (and nurses).

Further research clearly indicates that while intrinsic factors play a large role in work motivation, it is undeniable that "the less people are paid, the more concerned they are likely to be about financial matters." (Kerr, 1997b, p.19). This observation makes sense of the 'change in heart' that the participants seem to be displaying – from entering the profession and working with children being described as a reward in itself and expressing almost no concern for financial reward at first, to predicting that they will leave the profession as a result of the poor remuneration levels. This is certainly a loss for the profession and the country as a whole.

The dissatisfaction and concern surrounding remuneration compelled participants (7/9; Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9) to send a resounding warning to prospective teachers.

When asked what advice they would provide to an acquaintance or family member who was considering teaching as a career option, the participants hypothetically urged these people to reconsider their thoughts. Participants explained that the decision to enter the profession could only be made after two necessary conditions were filled. Firstly, they said that if someone is considering entering the profession, it is necessary for them to be financially secure by being able to rely on someone with a steady and good income. This concern led Participant 2 to explicitly state that if the person considering teaching as a career is *"the sole breadwinner…in the family then I would say… definitely no"* to being a teacher.

The second common stipulation put forward by the participants was that this prospective student of teaching, in the words of Participant 1, *"must really love the career…, if they don't have a love for children they in the wrong field"*.

Warnings and concerns of this kind about the profession indicate two necessary considerations. Firstly, in order to teach successfully, one needs to be 'called' to teaching, to work selflessly in the service of others. At the same time, this is almost impossible to achieve, without some financial resources or financial security. This might suggest that in order to reap the intrinsic rewards of teaching, one has to be without financial difficulties, even though one may not necessarily be seriously interested in making money. That is to say that it seems that one has to be able to 'afford' to teach. This double bind, may in part explain why it is that of the nine participants interviewed, only Participants 1 and 6 felt that teaching is a life-long career, while the remainder admitted that they were making plans to leave the profession in the short to mid-term.

This seemingly contradictory change in the participant's feelings for teaching seems to have occurred after teaching for some time and is directly related to the poor levels of remuneration. Over time, the participants described changes in their lives that included greater financial responsibilities. Participant 2 realised that while remuneration was not a concern when entering the profession, she remembers that at that stage she thought:

> *oh it's fine because I'm doing it for the love but then you have…responsibilities like you have a house to run and you have kids and then you think like Oi! You know?*

Overall, it would seem that teachers are compelled to choose this line of work as they believe in what they are doing; and in entering the teaching profession outweigh the challenges (financial and emotional) with the intrinsic rewards of teaching. However, it would seem that there are a growing number of difficulties facing South African teachers (Bot, 2005; Hayward 2002, 2003b; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Ngqiyaza, Seale, Stephen, & Mkhwanazi, 2007) and so, "the profession has lost some of its appeal" (Bot, 2005, p.8). This last quote may to some extent reveal a contributory factor to the attrition rates of young teachers, and may speak of what the majority of participants are experiencing.

It is of great concern that it seems that even learners are aware of the way that *"teachers do not look very happy in their jobs"* (Park, 2006, p.153; original italics). Park's (2006) research indicates that the unhappiness of teachers is easily recognised by learners themselves, and in turn deters them from considering teaching as a career in the future. Fundamentally, it must be noted that poor remuneration is one of the greatest contributing factors to teachers' leaving, or making plans to leave the profession (Belfield, 2005; Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Bot, 2005; Booth, n.d; Griffin, 1997; Hayward 2002; Heafford & Jennison, 1998; Johnston et al., 1999; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park 2006; Robinson, 1999; Venter, 2004).

4.2 Teaching, Remuneration and Gender

An area of focus of this research is on the participant's understanding of gender issues related to teaching and the way that this relates to perceptions of remuneration in the profession. It is clear from the literature and the experiences of the participants that class teachers are predominantly female (Belfield, 2005; Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Bertram et al., 2006; Johnston et al., 1999; Thornton, 1999). Interestingly, the participants' understanding closely reflects the findings in the literature, which primarily links the feminisation of teaching to perceptions of remuneration and teaching. Essentially, this involves a 'traditional' understanding of the relationship between a man's status and the way he earns his money in society.

In accord with the literature, all the participants agreed that teaching has become a predominantly female profession (Belfield, 2005; Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Bertram et al., 2006; Johnston et al., 1999; Thornton, 1999). Most participants (5/9; Participants 1, 2, 5, 7 and 9) highlighted, as does the literature, that this was most evident within primary schools, as *"more females gear towards, especially teaching the younger children."* (Participant 5; Johnston et al., 1999; Thornton, 1999).

It is interesting to note that there is support in the literature for the common-place perception held by the participants that women are perceived as 'better suited' to primary teaching than are men (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Johnston et al., 1999; Thornton, 1999). The perspectives of men and women in choosing primary teaching as a career in England seem to be aligned with the participants of this study as they too felt that primary teaching especially, is an extension of mothering (Johnston et al., 1999). This view was generally expressed by the participants as they felt that women had the qualities necessary to teach young children, such as patience and nurturance. In line with this, just over half of the participants (5/9; Participants 1, 2, 5, 7 and 9) felt that their decision to choose teaching as a career was influenced by their gender.

It was Griffin's (1997) argument however that the extent to which teaching is perceived to be an extension of mothering is directly linked to the undermining of the profession in terms of remuneration. She proposes that it does not seem 'necessary' to pay well for a quality which is constructed to be inherent. She further highlighted the historical progression of the teaching profession from being male dominated to female dominated, so as to maintain the lower levels of remuneration (Griffin, 1997).

Accordingly, the married participants (6/9: Participants 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9) felt that teaching was a career that was well-suited to being a woman as it allowed greater flexibility and time to be with one's family (Spencer, 1986, as cited in Griffin, 1997). Although the participants emphasised that they work very hard, they do see teaching as a career which is flexible enough to find time to raise and care for young children.

In view of the apparent link between primary teaching and mothering, it is interesting to note a rather unexpected feeling shared by some of the participants who have their own

children (3/9; Participants 3, 7 and 8). This group of participants shared that they take lessons in rearing their children from their positive and negative experiences of teaching and thus determine what *"schools do right and wrong.* [This] *let*[s] *you know, you learn from* [schools]*."* (Participant 8).

It is interesting to note however, that while both Participants 7 and 8 did not feel that their gender influenced their decision to become teachers, they did feel that teaching is a career well-suited to raising a family. Furthermore Participant 8 feels that teaching is a valuable learning experience in raising one's own children. Participants 4 and 6 who did not have children of their own similarly expressed that being a woman did not consciously influence their decision to become teachers.

Alternately, on reflection as to why the participants felt that men tend not enter the teaching profession, several of the participants (3/9; Participants 3, 5 and 7) pointed out that many men do not enjoy primary school teaching. On the occasion that a man does teach, it is acknowledged that he may be inclined to teach high school (Participants 3, 5 and 7; Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Johnston et al., 1999; Thornton, 1999).

While the research conducted by Johnston et al. (1999) and Thornton (1999) both support the findings that very few males apply to and enter teacher training colleges, both these authors focus on a small number of men who make the choice to undertake primary teaching. This literature seems to support the unanticipated recollections of Participants 6 and 8 who, in contrast to the majority of participants, felt that they could easily imagine men entering the profession. From their experiences coming across men interested in primary school teaching was not uncommon as both had studied to become teachers along with their male counterparts. It is important to note however, that Participants 6 and 8 acknowledged that the men with whom they studied did not pursue teaching as a career as they were unable to earn enough money to support themselves and their families (Johnston et al., 1999; Thornton, 1999).

The participants of this research did not agree on whether it is difficult for a man to make the decision to choose a teaching career. The uncertainty that the participants were experiencing seems to capture some of the ambivalence that men themselves have

expressed in research in this area when making this life-changing decision (Johnston et al., 1999; Thornton, 1999). From the research undertaken by Johnston et al., (1999) and Thornton (1999), it would seem that men go through a difficult and conflicted decision-making process in following their passion to teach. This process requires them manage the issue of poor remuneration in addition to the discouragement, criticism and ridicule they receive from others (Johnston et al., 1999; Thornton, 1999).

Participants 6 and 8 both described how after they had attained their teaching qualifications, their male peers had gone off and pursued other careers. It was reported by these two participants that in earning substantially more money than they could as teachers, they had the opportunity, and were inclined to return to teaching. This trend was noted by Benton DeCorse and Vogtle (1999:40) when they observed that for men, "Deferring teaching as a career was due, in most cases, to both social and economic reasons." It would seem that the reasons that men do not make the decision to become teachers as often as women, was as apparent to the participants as it was within the literature: men do not teach as a result of the poor remuneration and negative status within society (Johnston et al., 1999).

All of the married participants (6/9; Participants 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9) emphasised that one of the reasons men did not often enter the teaching profession is as a result of the perceived relationship between successful masculinity and good remuneration. They explained that on a teacher's salary, a man cannot attain primary breadwinner status within the family. It would seem that the single participants (3/9; Participants 4, 5, and 6) did not consider the financial role of a man being that of primary breadwinner as it would seem that they were entirely responsible for their own financial well-being. However, they agreed with the rest of the participants that it *"would be impossible"* (Participant 9) to survive without the ability to rely on another salary supporting the household.

It is clear from this that remuneration is a major factor influencing the predominance of women in teaching, as it is seen as acceptable for women to be relying on their husbands' salaries in order to survive. The low salaries of teachers' provides a serious concern for men who wish to teach and retain their sense of masculinity, which is closely affected by

perceptions of society, friends and family (Griffin, 1997; Thornton, 1999). There was a clear sense amongst the participants, as Participant 9 explained, that *"society views them* [male teachers] *as not like real men"*. This statement is exemplary of the findings within the limited literature investigating the experiences of male teachers (Johnston et al., 1999; Thornton, 1999). A quote by a male respondent taken from the research completed by Johnston et al. (1999:60) clearly identifies the societal denigration that male teachers are prone to:

> There are always disparaging comments that you are doing a Mickey Mouse woman's course…your friends at Christmas will make jokes and ask you how you are getting on with the wee kiddies. To an extent it is only joking, but they do look down.

It is evident that men "have to confront societal negativity about males working closely with young children" (Johnston et al., 1999, p.62). This is viewed negatively within society for several reasons; firstly, the importance of their contribution to the lives of young children is undermined, and secondly for more sinister reasons. The idea of men working closely with young children seems 'odd' especially as it is common knowledge that teaching is so poorly remunerated that one is often left questioning the motives of male teachers. It seems unlikely to assume that a man would be willing to earn so little and to work in such an unglamorous environment for purely intrinsically motivating reasons (MacKenzie, 2004). Alternately the message here is that it is entirely acceptable for women to work with children for very little financial gain and highlights the inequalities between men and women.

While working with young children for some may be filled with intrinsic rewards, it would seem that in Western society as a whole, there is little value in such a career as it is recognised that "the further one gets from the children, *the more one gains in money and prestige*" (Walsh, 1996, p.165 as cited in Griffin, 1997, p.14, original italics). Thus, the trend for the few men who enter the teaching profession is to seek promotion. Male teachers tend to get promoted into administrative positions more often than do women (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Griffin, 1997; Thornton, 1999). This then takes them out of the classroom and puts distance between themselves and working closely with children, but results in increasing their income dramatically. Women are less inclined to

seek promotion as they often feel that their place is in the classroom with the children (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Griffin, 1997; MacKenzie, 2004).

Other researchers made sense of this trend by suggesting that men and women place different stress on the extrinsic and intrinsic aspects of a career (Johnston et al., 1999). Unsurprisingly, it was apparent from the Johnston et al. (1999:57) research that women place greater emphasis on intrinsic factors, such as satisfaction; as opposed to men who are "more influenced by extrinsic aspects of teaching as a career", such as remuneration, or its lack.

It seems apparent from the above discussion that level of remuneration has a great impact on the feminisation of teaching (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Griffin, 1997; Johnston et al., 1999; Thornton, 1999). Men expect to earn more money in order to support their families, and it would seem that their wives share similar expectations of them, perhaps especially when their wives have chosen to become teachers. Corresponding to the trends and understanding of gender, remuneration and teaching in the literature discussed above, Participant 9 admitted that she *"would never have married a teacher…..…that would have been* [because of] *the remuneration…"*

4.3 Teaching: A de-valued vocation

The discussion above evaluating the intersecting points between gender, remuneration and the perceptions of society provides a glimpse of society's views of the teaching profession. In line with the above discussion, the majority of participants (8/9; Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) described their general impression of the low status of the teaching profession within Western society. This was such a prominent theme throughout the interviews that the topic was pre-empted by a third of the participants before the question tapping into their understanding of the general public's image of teaching was asked. In accord with the participants' views, there is a range of evidence that teaching is negatively viewed within society (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Ben-Peretz, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Griffin, 1997; Hayward, 2003a, 2003b; Jauhiainen et al., 1998; Johnston et al., 1999; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park, 2006; Rees-Gardener, 2004; Thomas, 2005; Venter, 2005).

It is interesting to note that when participants were speaking of their low status within society, they often referred to their levels of remuneration as juxtaposed to the nature of their work. There is no doubt that teaching is *"one of the most important professions, us and nurses, we get paid nothing for it."* (Participant 2). This is an exemplary quote as similar sentiments were expressed by many of the participants (7/9; Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9). There was a clear sense from these participants that their work is *"devalued"* (Participant 6) as a result of the lack of extrinsic reward attached to such an essential position. Evidence exists relating the disparagement of teaching to the remuneration levels of teachers (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Griffin, 1997; Johnston et al., 1999). There was a conspiratorial feeling amongst participants that society denied to acknowledge that teaching is *"a primary service just like a doctor…"* and yet the decision was made *"at the beginning of time…that they needed to pay teachers so little"* (Participant 9). It is interesting that research which corresponds with Participant 9's observations has pointed out that "although teachers aspire to professional status, the pay, power and prestige usually accorded those with professional status is lacking in the teaching profession." (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986, as cited in Griffin, 1997, p.12; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005).

Furthermore, the participants often noted that they are underpaid and in the same sense undervalued in comparison to other professionals who have attained the same qualification levels (Participant 2, 7, 8 and 9; Codd, 2005). This has also led one of the participants to analyse the financial disparity between teachers and other professionals who have studied for the same period of time. Participant 8's frustration was evident in pointing out that: *"the worst thing for me is that we have to work seven hours a day"* and,

> *The corporate world* [is required to work] *eight hours a day, so we are only one hour a day short…But the money is not one hour a day short.*.

The participants (8/9; Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) felt that the poor remuneration that teachers receive is partly linked to the misconceptions that society holds of teachers. Participants described occasions where acquaintances felt that teaching is *"a half-day job"* and that *"you people (teachers) aren't working that hard,"* (Participant 7), thus they describe a sense on the part of society that teachers are paid accordingly. These

misconceptions are exasperating to the participants as they are misguided and then used to justify poor pay. In addition, South African research reported by Hayward (2003b) indicates that the false impressions held by society at large undermined the work of teachers and was a key factor influencing the low levels of teacher morale within the country.

In her paper discussing the future of teacher training in America, Linda Darling-Hammond (2006), also points out that lay people have a lack of knowledge of what the teaching profession entails. She explains that:

> *Much of what teachers need to know to be successful is invisible to lay observers, leading to the view that teaching requires little formal study and to frequent disdain for teacher education programs.*(Darling-Hammond, 2006, p.300; original italics).

The participants point out that this disdain is not held only of teacher education programmes, but is passed on to teachers too. A typical point made by Participant 7 was that,

> *people…don't realise that they're* [teachers are] *educated and* [people] *think they're* [teachers are] *there just because they can't do anything else with their life*

The misconceptions and disparagement of teaching seems to be made sense of by some, in terms of the unclear distinction between the professional versus the worker identity of teachers. As teachers can be classified as both, this creates confusion (Griffin, 1997; Venter, 2005). Other authors provide historical and socio-political causes for these misconceptions (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Jauhiainen et al., 1998).

Benton DeCorse and Vogtle (1997) make sense of this disparagement by analysing the ways in which primary teaching has been constructed in a negative light. They explain that teaching is seen as "as part-time or minor", which "may reflect and promote the social perception that it is a part-time profession for women who are secondary wage earners." (Colardaci, 1992, as cited in Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997, p.44). These observations held in the literature echo the experiences of the participants who described others' perceiving teaching as a *"half-day"* (Participant 7) job.

Participant 5 described the change in perceptions of those who were once acquaintances but then got to know her better. She explained that they held similar beliefs about teaching being an undemanding job for comparative pay, but once they began to understand her responsibilities better, they began to ask, *"'why did you work so hard for such little pay?'"* This was echoed by the experiences of Participant 6. Participant 5 went on to explain that those friends grew to *"love that I teach and that I actually enjoy it…."* She expressed that the intrinsic rewards are things that she can *"brag"* (Participant 5) about and share with her friends and that they come to admire her vocation too. However, she was the only participant to share such an experience and highlights that 'in practice' those outside the profession have little acknowledgement and recognition for value and role of teachers in society.

To add to this positive experience, Participant 1 was the only participant to say that she felt that teachers have *"status"* (Participant 1) in society. This different opinion might be the result of a number of interlinking factors, such as race, age and family background, as she shared that she comes from a long line of teachers.

It is believed that the vocations (for example, doctors) are associated with relatively high social status within society while their remuneration levels are not on the same 'high' levels (Furnham & Argyle, 1998; Lindgren, 1980). However, it would seem that within the different vocations, the status is relative to the profession. Thus doctors are accorded the highest levels of status, whereas priests have lower levels of status than doctors. Again this is true to some or other extent in different communities, as it is possible that amongst some groups, doctors and priests may be equally important people. Research indicates that in Western society teachers and nurses, are vocational workers who do not receive much status in society.

This might to some extent speak to the more positive experiences described above by Participants 1 and 5. While all the participants strongly agreed that they were underpaid; with the exception of Participants 1 and 5, they did not feel that they were accorded any high status within society.

An exceptional finding was that two of the nine participants (Participants 3, 9) expressed that from their experiences of teaching in certain communities, teaching is not always viewed disparagingly (Darling-Hammond, 2005). This is supported by the literature suggesting that in certain communities and contexts, the vocations are accorded higher esteem and value than in other contexts and communities. In some non-Western communities, such as the Muslim and Black communities, as indicated by Participants 3 and 9 and supported by the literature (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005), teaching is a highly respected profession where teachers are recognised and admired. This may also to some extent make sense of Participant 1's claims that she feels teaching is positively viewed within the community that she works.

However, from the experiences of the majority of participants, they are not accorded high social status despite their altruistic concern for the development of society. It would seem that the lack of esteem for the teaching profession is so severe that Participant 9 exclaimed, *"…there's no status! I mean I think if you're a teacher you're pretty much viewed the same way…*[as] *a fireman or a policeman…"*. It would seem impossible to remove this largely negative view of teaching as a result of the low levels of remuneration that teachers are rewarded. The disparagement of the teaching profession seems to be directly linked to the observation that "money has the capacity to play a huge role in meeting most people's needs for recognition, status, and self-esteem." (Kerr, 1997, p.xi). Similarly, Balt (2005:10) points out that it is indisputable that "salary increases…are the most direct and powerful way to demonstrate the value accorded to the education profession." It would seem that with these two notions in mind the civil servant's salary strike took place in June 2007.

It is interesting to investigate why it is that teachers have been remunerated so poorly over time. For Furnham and Argyle (1998) the disparity between the importance of the work that teachers do and their extrinsic rewards is managed by the level of intrinsic rewards they receive from the very nature of their work.

A different perspective was noted by Biklen (1983, as cited in Griffin, 1997, p. 12), as many respondents in his study "attributed the low pay to the widely held belief that teaching is women's work." This links to the notion that teaching is thought to be a good

secondary income and 'suitable' work for married women (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 2005). However, in the instances of the unmarried or divorced participants (2/9; Participants 4 and 5) they strongly felt that their needs are overlooked as they struggle to survive on a teacher's salary. Furthermore, the married participants (6/9; Participants 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9) support their unmarried counterparts concerns, saying that *"It would not be possible"* to survive on a teacher's salary. Participant 9 empathised with her unmarried counterparts and wondered if she weren't married, *"how would I ever afford a car payment, as well as a bond, as well as groceries?"*.

Griffin (1997) again cites the work of Biklen (1983), who explained that some parents, mothers in particular tended to question the professionalism of teachers. It was indicated that, "These well-educated mothers with advanced degrees seemed to feel intellectually superior to teachers." (Griffin, 1997, p.10). Participant 9 expressed the same sense of devaluation when she expressed the feeling she gets that *"…these parent's think that* [teachers] *don't have to be particularly ambitious number one, or intelligent…"* to do the work of a teacher. Participant 9 pointed out that parent's perceptions of teachers are passed onto their children, which she feels results in a *"lack of respect"* towards teachers by children. This same acknowledgement of the negative perceptions of children towards teachers and the profession is described in South African (Park, 2006), as well as international research (Ben-Peretz, 2001).

Again, this would indicate that teachers are undervalued for their service to society and supports the claim that while teaching is one of the *"most important professions…"* (Participant 2), there is very little acknowledgement, financial or otherwise.

Furthermore, participants pointed out that there are groups and organisations that maintain and purport negative views of teachers. A third of participants (3/9; Participants 2, 4 and 8) identified the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) as *"lacking respect for teachers"* (Participant 4; Balt, 2005; Griffin, 1997; Rees-Gardener, 2004). This is unexpected in that administrators within the profession are assumed to be supportive and responsible for promoting a positive view of the profession, however it appears that in some instances, this is not the case.

In addition, there is evidence to support the concern of Participant 2 that the media plays a role in *"undermin(ing)"* (Participant 2) the work of teachers within society (Gardener, 2004; Griffin, 1997; Hayward, 2003b; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005). Griffin (1997:12) makes a strong statement when she comments on the role of the media in perpetuating "the demeaning image of teachers, which leads administrators, parents and children to devalue their work."

The participant's own perceptions of teaching appeared to be negative in that an alarming number of participants (7/9; Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9) expressed that they were planning to leave the teaching profession within the short or mid-term. They made such plans despite the fact that they all expressed the common view encapsulated by Participant 7 when she said that *"I love my job"*. Furthermore, the majority of participants, as their first response, did not hesitate to advise those who were hypothetically contemplating teaching as a career not to become teachers (7/9; Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8).

It would seem however, that for the most part, teaching is negatively viewed within the urban communities in which these participant work. It is evident that the literature as well as the participants confirm that the denigration of the profession is closely related to the poor levels of remuneration that teachers receive. It would seem unlikely to lay people that a person would opt to work selflessly, in the service of society for little pay at a job which is both intellectually, physically and emotionally demanding.

4.4 The changing role of remuneration throughout teaching as a career

While it is clear that participants experienced significant changes in their lives from the time they embarked in their first year of study to the point of entering the teaching profession and then completing the interview, it would make sense that their perceptions of remuneration may have changed too. It was clear from the interviews that changes such as getting married and having children, or remaining single have impacted on the participants' perceptions of money, remuneration levels and their financial needs. Generally, there is a lacunae in the literature exploring this relationship. Griffin (1997:12), however is one of the few authors to briefly comment on the way in which

"low teaching salaries constantly influence their [teacher's] daily lives and career decisions." This was an experience clearly shared by the participants as a cause for concern, and was most prominent amongst unmarried participants (3/9; Participants 4, 5 & 6).

There was serious concern amongst unmarried participants that remuneration is *"adequate if you are part of a married couple.…But on its own I don't think it's adequate at all."* (Participant 5). Money was such a concern for two of these participants (4 and 5) that they were actively trying to improve their financial situation by getting out of the teaching profession as there is very little room for promotion and financial growth within the profession (Balt, 2005). This will be a huge loss as both these teachers echoed each other when Participant 5 admitted that *"I am in this job because I love it, but at the same time, what if I can't make my car payments this month?"*

These participants were convinced that it is almost *"impossible"* (Participant 5) to survive on a teacher's salary without some kind of *"fallback"* (Participant 6). For Participant 6 (the third unmarried participant), this fallback is being fortunate enough to have parents who have bought and are paying off the bond on her house, as well as having a live-in boyfriend with whom she shares expenses. She says without these opportunities for financial support, *"I probably wouldn't make it through."* (Participant 6).

In order for participants 4 (previously divorced) and 5 (unmarried) to survive, they are also sharing expenses with fiancé, and extended family respectively. The understanding that a teacher is reliant on others in order to survive financially was also identified by the married participants as they recognised how desperately they relied on their husband's incomes.

There was a sense from the married participants (6/9; Participants 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9) that their remuneration for teaching was a "secondary" income for the family (Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997, p.44; Participant 3). While all but one participant who seemed ambivalent (please refer to Appendix H for the summary table of biographical information) disagreed with the statement that they could 'afford' not to teach, it was clear that their salaries are viewed as supplementary to their husband's earnings

(Participant 1, 2, 7 & 9). Not only did these participants rely on their husbands' as primary earners there was an understanding that in order for their families to have their basic financial needs met, their husbands have *"to earn more"* (Participant 2; Benton DeCorse, 1997). It was clear that these participants felt that they would not be able to continue with teaching if their husbands were unable to provide the kind of financial support that they were providing currently, as Participant 2 points out that,

> *my husband…knows that my salary can never change more than one percent in a year whereas his…can go up like every month so that he knows the pressure would be more on him than on me.*

It is interesting to note that as the married participants all had families and children with the exception of Participant 1(5/6; Participants 2, 3, 7, 8 & 9) they explained that they were waiting for their children to grow a little older before leaving the profession for better paying jobs. While it was clear that as the children *"grow…, the family will need more (money)"* (Participant 3), the participants struggled with weighing financial independence with the added time teaching allows them to spend with their children. Participant 3 summed this conflict up succinctly when she said that the decision to enter the teaching profession was largely *"a choice between salary and a family, and I chose the family."*

In addition to their jobs as teachers, the majority of participants (5/9; Participants, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) took on extra duties in order to earn an *"extra few hundred rand a month…"* (Participant 3). Research conducted in the U.S. of the teacher labour market indicates that at least 13% of their educators have "outside employment" (Belfield, 2005, p.178) and indicates the extent to which teachers have to go in order to supplement their income to *"make ends meet"* (Participant 4).

In summary, the changes in a person's life, such as getting married (or not) and having children, or getting divorced impact on the way in which money is viewed. However, in this case, the greatest adjustments needed to be made in order to earn more money lay heavily on the husbands of the married participants; or resulted in the unmarried participants desperately searching for higher paying jobs.

4.5 An imperilled profession: Challenges exacerbating the problem of poor remuneration

It was clear that the participants felt that they had not been adequately prepared to cope with a number of different aspects of teaching. In addition to the poor remuneration levels this was found to add undue stress on participants and significantly impacted on their feelings towards teaching as a life-long career. It would seem that the inadequate remuneration, coupled with the challenges teachers face daily impacts negatively on the participants as these stresses take away from, or devalue the intrinsic rewards. This sense of despondency and hopelessness was clearly expressed by Participant 2 at the end of the interview as she was struck by the way that *"everything sounds so negative."* This pessimism should be a concern to the public as such stresses are impacting on teacher's willingness to remain in the profession and contribute to growing the future generations of society.

While these difficulties experienced by teachers are removed from the direct focus of remuneration and its relationship to teaching, they are however critical to the future of education in South Africa. Furthermore, it is clear that if it were not for these difficulties, participants would not be as concerned about the inadequate remuneration levels. It would seem as though these challenges and frustrations emphasise the extent to which teachers are underpaid and counter the intrinsic rewards the participants wish to experience; as a result increasing the likelihood of teachers looking for other employment. Thus, these factors are important for consideration in that they impact on the perceptions the participants have of remuneration.

A key point which occurred throughout the different interviews was that the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) played a pivotal role in the participants' negative experiences of the profession (5/9 Participants 1, 2, 4, 6, 8). When reflecting on their experiences as teachers, many participants agreed with Participant 2, and felt *"(un)supported"* and *"demotivated"*. This largely pessimistic view of the GDE and the experiences of teachers' in relation to the bodies which govern them did not feature distinctly in the South African, or international research surveyed. The complaints and

criticisms were usually aimed towards the policies which such bodies implement, for example the scrutiny of the implementation and success of the Outcomes Based Education frameworks both in South Africa and abroad (see Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001), as well as other policies implemented by such bodies (Heafford & Jennison, 1998; Steyn, 2004). Throughout the interviews, there was a general undertone that the Department of Education was not providing the type of support and understanding that the participants needed, especially through the different policies they maintain.

Furthermore, it would seem that the department is unsympathetic to teacher's concerns with remuneration. This was highlighted during the month-long stale mate reached when public servants, such as teachers and nurses went on strike in order to bargain for a salary increase. This strike was a difficult decision taken by Unions choosing the need to highlight the poor levels of remuneration of teachers (and other public servants) over and above their commitment to the well-being of society.

Thus most of the participants (5/9; Participants 1, 2, 4, 5 and 8) were particularly dissatisfied with the changes to an Outcomes Based Education (OBE) system. The OBE system in South Africa required a change in policies, teaching techniques, further teacher training in the form of additional courses for qualified teachers and a number of added administrative tasks. This is the framework in which teachers are currently required to teach and is a major cause for discontent amongst the participants.

In particular, the majority of the participants (6/9; Participants 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8) were concerned by the amount of paperwork that was required by the GDE. Their loudest protest was against the *"repetition"* of information throughout the different, and *"always changing"* administrative forms. This uncertainty and inconsistency by the Department described by the participants provides the impression that it is a highly *"incompetent"* organisation that does not *"know what they want from us (teachers)…"* (Participant 2). This increased workload makes sense of participants' comments when they stressed the amount of hours they spend working. Participant 5 made a comment representative of other participants when she explained that while officially they are required to work a seven hour day, *"I work later, 'til about four or so and uh, I take work home often,*

almost everyday." To add to this, Participant 1's frustration was emphasised when she commented on *"how much work there is in* [teaching] *and how absolutely little the salary is."*

Participant 5 described her frustration in that *"…our curriculum, our policies keep changing …. So there's tons of paperwork and it's always changing."* This results in the participants feeling so overloaded and overwhelmed that both Participants 2 and 4 admitted that the time-consuming task of completing forms results in them *"actually… spending less time teaching"* (Participant 2; Balt, 2005). Similar findings have been recorded in international arenas and a call by Balt (2005, p.11) has been made for "educators [to] be released from administrative tasks…" as a result of the drain this has on teaching time. In addition, there is evidence that both international and local research support the finding that teachers receive "little guidance in the administrative side of teaching…" (Davies & Ferguson, 1997, p.42), which causes great "frustration and stress" amongst educators (Steyn, 2004, p.83; Belfield, 2005; Hayward, 2003a).

It was clear that all the participants had difficulty with the amount of paperwork they are required to complete. This resulted in a 'negative transference' towards the Department of Education due to the Department's apparent indecisiveness and inconsistency. The GDE was viewed as incompetent and unprofessional. However, an alternative and more sympathetic feeling was expressed by Participant 7 towards the GDE and the paperwork required of teachers. While she strongly agreed with her peers that the administrative load on teachers was very demanding and there was a lot of repetition, she felt hopeful that the Department of Education are *"trying to aim to get it (paperwork) cut down a bit."*

To add to the disillusionment that the participants experience in relation to the GDE and the extent to which they are underpaid for the number of responsibilities they undertake, is the policy on class size. Three participants (Participants 1, 4, and 7) felt that class size was a serious challenge to effective teaching. They felt that it is unreasonable for them to be expected to have a class of 40 learners and teach constructively for the duration of the school day. Participants were especially frustrated by their inadequate training for managing such big classes, thus they complained that they have not been provided with

any effective tools on how to maintain discipline by Department officials under such unique circumstances.

While these feelings of inadequacy and concern about teacher to student ratio are further highlighted within the South African literature (Bot, 2005; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Steyn, 2004), there is a void in the experiences of teachers abroad (such as in the United Kingdom and America). However, challenges of discipline and working with children's behavioural problems are not isolated to only the participants in this study, but were also found to be a difficulty for British teachers in a broad-scale study by Davies and Ferguson (1997). Behaviour problems were one of the most frequently mentioned gaps in the training that British teachers identified in this study. Davies and Ferguson's (1997) findings are supported by international research, including that done in the United States (Belfield, 2005) and South Africa (Park, 2006; Steyn, 2004).

The list of difficulties that teacher's experience according to the participants would indicate that teaching is a very demanding and challenging job with many factors, other than the children, competing for attention. From this general discussion, it would seem that there are many expectations placed on teachers from both society and the Department of Education. Just under half of the participants (4/9; Participants 2, 5, 7 and 8) reflected that the expectations of society, especially those of parents are unrealistic.

According to the participants, they are expected to be *"responsible for everything"*, to be the *"nurse, and the mother figure, and the counsellor, and the therapist and whatever the child needs."* (Participants 1 and 5 respectively). Glenda Griffin (1997:7) in her paper on the plight of female teachers comments that, "Society expected them [teachers] to work without complaint for little pay while teaching, disciplining, supervising lunches, bandaging cuts, and being constantly on duty." Thus it would seem that these high demands on teachers are experienced not only in South Africa, but of teachers abroad too. The participants' experiences seem to echo the experiences of South African teachers across the country, further highlighting the way in which these challenges intersect with concerns about remuneration. This extract from a letter written by a teacher and

published in the *NUE Comment* expresses just the sort of frustration and overwhelming sense of responsibility that the participants are feeling:

> We (teachers) don't count…So we have, on top of academic and sports programs, become 'experts' in psychology, marriage, family and moral issues, discipline, puberty and sex education, smoking, alcohol and moral issues and rehabilitation, first aid, Aftercare and Aids. And all of this for half of what other graduates earn! (Hill, 2004, p.28).

There provides a clear sense of how this "role overload" is experienced as overwhelming for teachers (Leibowitz, 2003, p.13; Darling-Hammond, 2006). It would seem that teachers, especially these participants are beleaguered by the demands and expectations placed on them. To make things worse, their hard work seems to be unappreciated with respect to remuneration. They are required under great pressure, with few resources and support systems, to continue to provide education of a high standard.

In addition to the struggle of participants to meet the demands of society and the parents of the children they teach, two participants (Participants 6 and 9 respectively) identified gaps in their training in terms of, *"parent consult"* and *"how to deal with a parent that's angry"*. While this was not expressed as a common difficulty amongst the rest of the participants, there is evidence that other teachers experience similar difficulties. Research conducted in the U.K. by Davies and Ferguson (1997:42) investigating the gaps in training of newly qualified teachers found that they had struggled with "little or no help in how to work with parents, either face to face or in writing".

Participants pointed out that while there were so many demands placed on them, there was a lack of acknowledgement for what they do provide. Frustration and disappointment were experienced by participants who felt that there is a lack of *"incentive for us as teachers"*, (Participant 2) and limited scope for promotion. This frustration resounds in other studies investigating the contributing factors toward teacher (dis)satisfaction and the profession's appeal to future graduates (Balt, 2005; Benton DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Griffin, 1997; Heafford & Jennison, 1998; Venter, 2004).

Interestingly, Participant 7 was the only participant to mention that she felt that she was unaware of how to identify children's difficulties. Furthermore, she was concerned about

identifying causes for these difficulties, which seems to be 'on par' with international research indicating that teacher's identified a "lack of training in how to assess children's ability and progress" (Davies & Ferguson, 1997, p.42). Participant 2, on the other hand felt that the entire teaching experience was a little overwhelming.

Overall, the participants felt despondent and depressed about the challenges that they faced daily and felt that these detracted from the enjoyment that they gain from teaching. Participant 1 had observed that the number of challenges together with the poor remuneration is seriously impacting on the ability of the profession to retain teachers. She says that

> *there's a lot of teachers who are leaving the profession purely because of the OBE* [Outcomes Based Education]*, the large numbers in the classroom, and the salary. And the pressure is great.…*

This comment leads one to recognise that it is not only beginner teachers who are vulnerable to facing difficulties and thus leaving the profession, but also those with years of experience (Balt, 2005; Smit, 2005). This is of particular importance as all of the participants interviewed have been teaching for a minimum of 5 years. Their experience is essential to the profession and to the children they teach, yet only two (Participants 1 and 6) felt a strong and life-long commitment to the teaching profession, whereas the others all had plans to leave. Further research conducted in South Africa supports this loss to schools as a study conducted by the HSRC in 2005 indicates that up to 54% of teachers considered leaving the profession for alternative jobs outside of the classroom (Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005). Their findings echo the experiences of the participants; that the dissatisfaction stemmed from factors such as remuneration packages, workload stress, lack of career advancement and poor learner discipline.

It would seem that overall, teachers would not be opting to leave the profession as often as the statistical evidence is indicating if there were fewer challenges and more reasonable demands made on teachers, or at least if they were accordingly remunerated. From the outset the participants admitted that earning a great deal of money was not their foremost concern when entering the profession, however poor remuneration coupled with

the challenges discussed above seems to have led to a change in heart amongst participants about their career choice.

4.6. Summary Discussion of Key Findings in Relation to the Research Questions

This section summarises and discusses the key research findings paying particular attention to those findings that make it possible to answer the research questions. It focuses on each of the key questions in turn, in an attempt to concentrate the sometimes dispersed and rich body of information that emerged from the interviews.

Question 1: To what extent does remuneration appear to impact on the participants in relation to their choice of taking up and remaining in teaching as a profession? Does the role of remuneration appear to relate to the perception that teaching is a vocation?

In order for clarity to be gained in answering the extent to which remuneration impacts on the decision of people to enter and remain in the teaching profession, it is necessary, as Question 1 indicates to consider the extent to which teaching is a vocation. The question of teaching being perceived as a vocation is important as the vocations share an anomalous relationship with money. That is to say (as was indicated in Chapter 2, the Literature Review section in detail), that while it is generally understood that vocational work is immeasurably important to the functioning of society, vocational workers are not paid accordingly.

The question of psychic income seems to be inextricably linked to the reasons that people enter the teaching profession. Thus a key finding that was expressed by all of the participants (9/9) was that their decision to enter the teaching profession was guided by predominantly altruistic or vocational reasons. The participants shared a strong need to work with children in a meaningful way (8/9), and hoped to have a positive impact on society, leaving the participants with a sense of satisfaction or intrinsic reward. This satisfaction was deepened by the pleasure that the majority of the participants (8/9) gained from sharing knowledge with children as well as guiding and shaping the emotional experiences of children. In line with the findings of this research, the focus on

the vocational appeal of the teaching profession has also been documented in research conducted in South Africa (Bertram et al., 2006; Motimele & Dieltiens, 2005; Park, 2006), as well as abroad (Johnston et al., 1999; Thomas, 2005). Thus an important issue is that the participants' search for internal satisfaction, otherwise known as the intrinsic rewards or by Furnham and Argyle's (1998) term, 'psychic income' appears to be the predominant factor underlying the reasons the participants entered the profession.

An important qualification expressed by Johnston et al. (1999:61) reminds readers that: "decision-making in choosing teaching as an occupation is likely to involve an interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic considerations." Aligned with this idea, the teacher's interviewed often went on to describe the more material rewards offered by teaching, such as its flexibility as well as the benefits of school holidays. An unexpected benefit described by a third of the participants (3/9) was the way in which working in schools allowed participants an opportunity to learn from practices which could be used to advantage with their own children.

The seeming emphasis that the participants placed on extrinsic rewards in choosing teaching seems reasonable in a profession where there is little financial reward. An important issue for the participants seems to hinge on the extent to which other extrinsic factors can improve their quality of life. For example, it was very common amongst the married participants (6/9) to emphasise the time and flexibility that teaching allows them to spend with their young children and families as of greater importance than remuneration. However, an important issue to note is that while it is true that intrinsic as well as extrinsic rewards are taken into account when deciding on a career such as teaching; it is important to add that such considerations do not only influence the decision to enter the profession, but equally important, to remain in it.

A key finding was related to the issue of the factors involved in the participants' choosing to remain in the profession. Surprisingly, seven of the nine participants felt that they would not teach until the age of retirement. In fact, the two unmarried participants of this group had plans to leave the profession imminently, as their financial concerns were greater than the five married participants who were planning to leave when their children

were a little older. An interesting seeming discrepancy described by the seven participants was that while they still loved their work, they were planning to leave due to the lack of adequate remuneration. This finding however, requires further consideration in the form of questions three and four below as it would seem that other contextual factors impacted on the participants' decisions to leave the profession. An analysis of the impact of other contextual factors, on remuneration is necessary as it would seem that the decision to leave teaching is more complex than being solely influenced by dissatisfaction with remuneration. It goes to say that if the majority of participants (6/9) were aware of the poor levels of remuneration when entering the profession, remuneration cannot be the only factor related to their decision to abandon their vocation to teach.

It is noticeable only Participants 1 and 6 felt that there is no other work for them than teaching. What is interesting is that these two participants have many different characteristics. In terms of marital status, Participant 1 is married with a child while Participant 6 is unmarried and living with her boyfriend; there is a six year age gap between the participants; and one participant is White and the other Indian (please refer to Appendix I: Summary of biographical information of the participants). However, what they do have in common is that both mentioned that they have family members who are also teachers, which may provide a greater positive impact on their feelings towards teaching.

Question 2: In what way does gender appear to impact on perceptions of remuneration and teaching?

Across the interviews it was apparent that the participants had different feelings about the extent to which their decision to enter the teaching profession was influenced consciously, or unconsciously by their being women. Just over half of the participants (5/9) felt that their being a woman influenced their decision about their suitability to teaching to some or other extent while the remaining four did not feel it had any influence. Three related issues around gender emerged as significant. Firstly, it was clear that all of the participants felt that the issue of remuneration greatly impacted on the

gender ratios of the teaching profession (70-85% female (Bertram et al., 2006)). Next, the participants often raised issues of the concept of the primary breadwinner in relation to the salary of teachers. Thirdly, some of the participants explained that the qualities expected of teachers were better suited to women than men. This was often related to the status of men in society, especially at the point where status and work intersect.

All of the married participants (6/6) pointed out that teaching primary school is a career which is well-suited to being a woman and raising a family. This was important to them as they rationalised that while their skills were not widely recognised in terms of good pay, they were able to use the flexibility that teaching allows to focus on family matters. An important issue with regard to remuneration was that all of the married participants pointed out that while their salaries were necessary as part of a combined income, their husband's were responsible for the bulk of the family's monetary needs. In addition to this, on some occasions the participant's spouses were required to find other ways to earn more money as their wives' teaching salaries were inadequate. An unanticipated area of congruence amongst the married participants planning to leave teaching (5/6, Participants 2, 3, 7, 8, 9), was the point at which they were planning on leaving the profession. They explained that this move would be necessary when their children grew older as their family's financial needs would increase, and they would therefore have to seek out positions that were pay better.

This discussion often led participants to point out that there are very few male teachers, especially within the primary school system where the salaries are far too low to meet their needs. They felt that this was especially true if the men were expected to be the main breadwinners of their families – an unlikely scenario on a teacher's salary. This claim was further supported by two of the participants' recollections that while they studied teaching with men, none of their male peers taught. The reason for this was solely a result of the poor levels of remuneration.

In addition, some of the participants (4/9) believed that teaching, especially primary school was not well-suited to men because of the personal and psychological expectations of teachers. For instance, these participants pointed out that women are believed to be

more nurturing, caring and patient than men. An interesting discrepancy was that three of the participants believed that men would not be able to fulfil all of the functions required of teachers as teachers are expected to complete a number of practical and administrative tasks daily. It would seem that these participants feel that men are not accustomed to doing the large quantities of administrative work required of teachers and prefer the comforts of a corporate environment.

Question 3: Does familial and social situation effect or alter the perceptions that the participants have of remuneration and teaching?

From the above discussion it would seem that the participant's perceptions of remuneration are significantly affected by familial and social structures, and as these structures change, so do the perceptions of remuneration. Nevertheless, these observations receive very little attention in the literature. From the interviews, it was clear that as participant's life circumstances change; when for example their first child was born, or the birth of more children; or in the event of a divorce, so did their perceptions of remuneration. The majority of participants placed greater importance on good remuneration at certain stages in their lives as this clearly affected the quality of life of the participants and their families. This seems almost entirely contradictory to the participants' initial description of remuneration and its lack of significance in deciding to choose teaching as a profession.

For the single participants, the changes in perceptions regarding remuneration were directly linked to the difficulties they faced in fulfilling their financial responsibilities from day to day. They unhappily described how difficult it was to feel any sense of financial security for one's basic needs and the extent to which they still relied on others to survive. It was particularly difficult for Participant 5 who, unlike Participant 4 was not engaged or dating and had no other option but to live with her brother and his family in order for her to afford a place to live.

It would seem that only for Participants 1 and 6, regardless of their circumstances at the point of the interviews, felt that while they were underpaid they would not be leaving the

teaching profession. That is to say that they both felt strongly that they were 'born' to be teachers.

Question 4: Are there other factors impacting on teaching in South Africa and if so how do these factors impact on those of remuneration?

A key finding is that in conjunction with question three, there are a number of contextual factors that influence the working life of teachers and in turn, this impacts on the participants' perceptions of remuneration. A host of factors were listed by participants in which they experience serious challenges in South African schools. It is essential to point out that as the participants described these difficulties and the lack of understanding and recognition for what it is that teachers confront daily, they reverted back to pointing out how little they earn. A substantial body of South African (Bot, 2005; Hayward, 2003a; Robinson, 1999; Steyn, 2004), and international literature (Davies & Ferguson, 1997; Heafford & Jennison, 1998), has focused on similar challenges experienced by teachers. These authors often link the high attrition rates experienced in teaching to these types of difficulties and the poor remuneration levels of teachers.

Amongst the challenges listed by the participants was the idea that newly qualified teachers are often confronted with challenges for which they feel unprepared by their training. It would seem that even as time lapses, they do not receive additional support from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) either. Overall, the GDE was at the centre of most of the complaints made by the participants. It would seem that the policies and mandates of the GDE are viewed as unclear to the participants. The participants complain of often-changing documentation, rules and requirements for teachers implying that the department officials are themselves unsure and unclear of what is required of teachers. In addition to this, the GDE can only afford to place one teacher for every 40 learners in state schools, resulting in large, unmanageable classrooms for which the participants complained that they receive no guidelines in terms of discipline practices. To add to their frustrations and stresses, the participants felt overwhelmed by the perceived expectations from society to fulfil a number of roles in the lives of the children, for which they do not feel properly qualified. That is to say that teachers are expected to

do more than teach; they are required to attend to serious emotional problems; deal with physical ailments and are often one of the closest caregivers to children who live in a country which is still afflicted by the legacies of apartheid. Furthermore, the experiences of the participants indicate that in addition to there being very little financial reward for the incredible responsibility they undertake; there is very little recognition from society, the GDE, and the media of teachers' qualification levels and hard work. Factors such as these seriously affect the morale of the participants and bring to the fore the discrepancy in the expectations of teachers and their remuneration.

In sum, it would seem that in the same way that both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards play a role in the decision of the participants to enter the profession, so too do they play a part in the decision to leave the profession. From the abbreviated list of challenges above that South African teachers face daily, it would seem that these reduce the positive experiences of the intrinsic rewards that can be gained from teaching. Ultimately, this emphasises the financial concerns of the participants and seems to contribute to the decision to leave the profession.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Concluding the Study

This chapter comprises four sections. Firstly, the key findings are discussed and reflections on the study are presented. Secondly, the scope and limitations of the study reflecting critically on the qualitative research technique employed are discussed. In light of these insights recommendations for further research are made. Lastly, important issues related to the implications of the research and the broader context in which this study is situated are taken into consideration when looking at a possible way forward.

The aim of this study was to explore teacher's perceptions of remuneration especially as this relates to entering and remaining in the teaching profession. This qualitative study investigated these perceptions through the experiences of a group of urban, qualified women teachers. This group's selection was based on the presupposition of some commonality in the participant's experiences in terms of their teaching context and importantly, in terms of their relationship to money. Therefore, the participants all came from similar economic backgrounds and were not historically underprivileged or affluent. While there are an increasing number of quantitative studies investigating the relationship between teaching and remuneration both in South Africa and abroad, it is understood that particularly in South Africa very little research has focused on the meaning of money to teachers. Much of the research investigating issues of teaching and money draws attention to the fact that teaching is usually regarded as a vocation and that the questions of the remuneration in the vocations are somewhat different from those in other occupations.

5.1 Reflections on the study

One of the key findings of this study is that all of the participants (9/9) reinforced their own sense that teaching is a vocation. The participants appeared to have chosen the profession with its vocational nature, such as the opportunity "to perform a moral service to society" (Johnston et al., 1999), foremost in their minds. Important too, the participants emphasised that these "personal rewards" (Participant 2) associated with teaching were

their primary reason for entering the profession. For the participants, in entering the profession, there was very little emphasis placed on the importance of money.

With time however, all of the participants began to refer to the increasing significance of questions of money and emphasised the impact that it had on "quality of life" (Participant 6) for themselves and their families. It was true too, that all of the participants were clearly dissatisfied with their "pathetic" (a word most commonly used by the participants) levels of remuneration. Yet, what is interesting is that the majority of the participants (7/9) were well aware of their expected remuneration levels on qualifying and emphasised that this was not a concern at the time as they 'weren't in it for the money.' Perhaps this is why, for the majority of the married participants (4/6) there was an explicit understanding that their husband's were responsible for earning substantially more in order to sufficiently provide for their families.

The participants recounted however, that they perceived a greater emphasis on remuneration at a time in their lives identified with personal and familial changes. These changes include for example, the birth of one or more children, divorce or added family responsibilities. For Participant 5, this concern came at a time when as a single woman, she wished for greater financial independence and a reduction in the sacrifices associated with relying on her family. This is not unusual in any way as it is commonly understood that money is an important indicator of quality of life especially in terms of improving access to resources.

This lack of ability to earn enough to support a family on a teacher's salary, or oneself, as all of the participants pointed out was closely related to the gendered experience of the profession. The participants' (9/9), supported by the literature, expressed that teaching was so poorly remunerated that it was almost "impossible" (Participant 9) for men to enter the profession, even though they might have the desire to do so. Furthermore, two of the nine participants, brought to attention that in their experience teaching was not considered a 'real' man's work. This observation clearly implies the extent to which teaching is devalued, even as 'women's work'.

As suggested above, a striking aspect of this study was the degree of disappointment verging on bitterness, expressed by the participants at the lack of value that the community at large seemed to place on their profession. Eight of the nine participants expressed the view that they seriously struggled with the extent to which their work went unrecognised by society. The participants were upset by the lack of acknowledgement that they received from the communities in which they worked, of the importance of their profession.

The lack of respect experienced by the participants seems to be associated with other socio-political and historical factors impacting on teaching. The participants expressed that there is a perception in the communities in which they work that teaching is what is often described as a "half-day" job, while this is by no means the case. Furthermore, the credentials of teachers seem to be undermined, especially as Participant 8 pointed out that at the primary education level, people "don't realise that they're [teacher's are] educated and they think they're there just because they can't do anything else with their life."

The participants were puzzled by the lack of appreciation and recognition for their role in society, especially when education is of such importance on a macro scale. This lack of appreciation seemed to dampen the spirits of the participants and diminished their quality of experience of the intrinsic rewards often related to teaching. This lack of psychic income experienced seemed to shift the participants focus onto the extrinsic rewards they could expect from teaching. However, this only highlighted how limited the extrinsic rewards are and emphasised how inadequate their levels of remuneration are in relation to the role they play in society.

Closely associated with the lack of intrinsic rewards experienced by the participants was the important aspect of the context of the profession in South Africa at present. The education system, over the last decade has been an arena for dramatic policy change and on some level, high levels of instability (Robinson, 1999). Teachers have had to manage large classes; undisciplined learners; children who suffer emotional, academic and physical deprivation, largely as a result of the legacy of Apartheid; and the difficulties of teaching in a culturally diverse context. This list of challenges is only a handful of the

difficulties that are facing teachers and learners. For the participants, these challenges coupled with the diminished levels of respect and intrinsic rewards have a profoundly negative impact on their levels of satisfaction and again highlight the lack of monetary gains.

It is necessary to emphasise that while the commitment to teaching as a vocation was displayed by all of the participants, it is also clear that having entered the profession the role of remuneration came to the fore as their personal and professional circumstances changed. This seemed to have such a significant impact, that of the nine participants interviewed in this study, seven had plans to leave the profession.

Participants 1 and 6 differed from the majority when they expressed a commitment to teaching regardless of the poor levels of remuneration and the professional and personal challenges they were facing. There is one characteristic connecting these two participants, which may indicate the extent to which the intrinsically motivating factor of respect for the profession impacts on teacher's experiences. Participants 1 and 6 are characteristically different from each other in terms of age, years of experience, and race (please refer to Appendix I for a summary of the biographical information of the participants); yet unexpectedly both these participants explained that they came from 'teaching families', each with at least one teacher related to them. It is possible to suggest that coming from such an environment, where teaching is viewed positively by close friends and family may improve the extent to which the intrinsic rewards are experienced by these participants, and maintain their sense of vocation.

5.2 Scope and Limitations of the Study

It is well established that qualitative research is a way to understand information rich in meaning and embedded in context. Neuman (2003:440) explains that qualitative research provides "Explanations [which] tend to be rich in detail, sensitive to context, and capable of showing the complex processes or sequences of social life." The study described here, is an example of such a research process in which the perceptions of the teaching profession and remuneration of a specific group of teachers are given careful consideration. Inherent in qualitative research is the focus on a specific context and thus

deeper explanations and understandings are provided at the expense of a ‘one-fits-all’ approach. For this reason a widely acknowledged limitation to qualitative research is that the findings cannot be generalised to a larger group or population.

It is often recommended that researchers employing thematic content analysis have their data analysed by a group of experts in order to reduce the extent to which the themes are subjectively identified (Neuman, 1997). However, an unavoidable limitation of this study was that it was impractical to make use of such a procedure.

Where the research is based on the interview process it is important to reflect on the interviews (Miller & Crabtree, 2004); their nature, and their timing. In the case of face-to-face interviews dealing with a potentially sensitive topic as money, it is important to consider whether the topic was discussed openly. In this case, the nature and the atmosphere of the interviews did not indicate constraints of this kind. The participants seemed to welcome the opportunity to talk about the general challenges they were experiencing as teachers, as well as being free to highlight problems arising from lack of adequate remuneration.

As the timing and context of the interviews could have an impact on responses it is important to point out that the interviews were conducted at the end of the school year, just after the exams. It is possible to imagine that had the participants been interviewed at the beginning of a new school year, after the holidays, their responses may have been different, perhaps not quite as negative.

Thematic content analysis can “be characterized as a method of inquiry into *symbolic meaning* of messages.” (Kripendorff, 1980, p.22; original italics). Implicit in this notion is that when data is symbolic in nature, it can be looked at from numerous perspectives. Analyst’s undertaking thematic content analysis must acknowledge that their inferences are determined in part by their knowledge and interests. Thus the researcher does not in any way claim to have uncovered ‘the’ only possible understanding of the data and recognises her subjectivity. Despite this, this method of research provides a detailed and more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of remuneration in the teaching profession, however it is limited to the particular group of people under study.

In addition, ‘dependability’ is often used to evaluate the quality of thematic content analysis procedures (Zhang, 2006). This would involve the data analysis to be conducted by a team of researchers who could meet to “discuss the results among the members and to mutually check them.” (Flick, 1999, p.187). However an unavoidable limitation of a master’s study is that the data is analysed by one person and then subjected to scrutiny and discussion by a supervisor. This means that consistency in the method is attained, while the consensus of multiple expert perspectives is lost.

5.3 Further Research

In the case of qualitative interview based research new avenues for investigating a similar topic often relate to addressing the issues under investigation with different groups of people. A clear direction to further research would relate to exploring these issues with people from different economic backgrounds and different levels of wealth.

With regard to a ‘poorer’ sample, it would be important to identify how more severe levels of economic deprivation would impact on perceptions of the profession as well as perceptions of remuneration. It is possible that teachers from such backgrounds may have different experiences and formulations of remuneration and teaching. It is likely that a sample of this nature would be predominantly drawn from the Black population of South African teachers. Yet, such a sample raises a number of different questions and distinctions which have to be drawn for their impact on the possible findings (discussed below in terms of the contexts of rural and urban teaching environments).

On the other end of the ‘economic background’ continuum, it would be interesting to conduct similar research with teachers from more affluent backgrounds. This would pose an interesting question in that the dynamic of remuneration should be largely removed in terms of its impact on perceptions of teaching. However, what would be of significance is the way in which this group would manage the interplay of intrinsic rewards in relation to the challenges facing teachers.

Along with economic background, a distinction between urban and rural underprivileged teachers would have to be made. It is possible that urban teachers from equally deprived

economic backgrounds, possibly in the townships may have similar or even more severe experiences in terms of the contextual challenges experienced here, but money may be conceptualised differently.

It might be useful to look at teachers in rural areas, who are themselves Black and working in Black communities. There is a possibility that they would be well received in such contexts as research in the process of being written up by another researcher, preliminarily indicates that teachers in rural areas are considered with great respect in their communities. It is possible that the extent to which the more extreme challenges faced by rural teachers, in terms of lack of resources and overcrowded classrooms, may be mitigated by the better discipline of the learners as they have been brought up to respect these figures in the community.

A very different teaching context would present itself in the form of the 'elite' private schools in South Africa. Further research focusing on similar issues may yield interesting results in terms of the management of remuneration and intrinsic rewards for such a group of teachers.

Similarly it would be interesting to look at the relatively small group of male teachers. Their experiences of working in a predominantly female environment may cast an interesting light on the conceptions of remuneration and the teaching profession.

Lastly, it would be especially interesting to someone training in the area of special education to research a group of people who would be considered to be driven by a greater sense of vocation. This is not only because they are working with children, but with children who have special needs. The management of the interplay between remuneration and the notion of intrinsic rewards associated with work of this nature would be of significant interest.

5.4 A Way Forward?

The context in which the final stages of this research were written up could not but bring to light the status of teaching as imperilled in South Africa. Threats of further pay strikes of the nature that severely impacted on the country's functioning in June 2007 were

repeated at the beginning of 2008 by public service workers. In addition, a survey was published indicating that South African high school beginners have the lowest maths and literacy rates amongst a comprehensive group of same-aged children from developing countries (Education in Crisis, 2008). Very recently, a short interview on the radio highlighted the extent to which the teaching profession was experienced as not only problematic by teachers, but by learners too.

On Radio 702 (http://www.702.co.za/onair/heardonair.asp), in the week of the 21st of January 2008 three of South Africa's top Matriculants were being interviewed on the basis of their outstanding results. When one of the top-achievers positively acknowledged the role of her teachers' in her journey to such great success, the presenter thought to ask whether any of the three top students were considering the teaching profession as a career. The responses were disappointing, not only in that none of these learners indicated that they were considering teaching as a profession, but they could not recall a single one of their peers planning to follow such a career path. This raised questions, for which they did not have time to discuss on air, as to why it seemed that not one of their classmates was considering teaching.

One of the more dispiriting aspects of doing this kind of research relates to the fact that it is difficult to think of how the findings may be used to help or promote the teaching profession. The issues involved in South Africa as elsewhere, seem enormous. The simplest solution would be to say that teachers should be paid significantly more. However, this is not a reasonable or realistic solution as the socio-historical and economic climate of South Africa makes this impossible as there are severe economic penalties related to such a decision. Furthermore, it is unlikely that paying teachers more would be significant enough to improve the status of the teaching profession as this study highlighted the complex dynamic of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Thus it may seem that reducing some of the challenges that South African teachers face might offer some improvement to the experiences of teachers. However, reducing class size or providing all schools with better resources and facilities is equally impractical and as unlikely as paying teachers more. These challenges are largely the result of the past

socio-political and historical context of racial segregation and a disproportionate spread of resources in the country. Addressing issues such as these is exceedingly complicated and would take a considerable amount of time to work towards.

However, what the radio interview unexpectedly brought to the fore was the extent to which this study indicated that teachers themselves felt the profession was not valued. An unassuming option, with very little relative cost involved would be to suggest that teachers and the media work together to promote teaching more actively. The special values and contributions of teachers should be emphasised and brought to the fore in a more personal and direct way. This could take shape in the form of a campaign where the narratives of people whose lives have been positively influenced and possibly shaped by one or more teachers, could be encouraged. This type of 'acknowledge your teacher campaign' should allow for the voices of teachers, parents, and learners to be heard. Some of South Africa's role models and leaders could symbolise a greater degree of public acknowledgement in sharing how important one of their teachers may have been in influencing or shaping their lives.

The aim of such an undertaking would be to acknowledge the positive impact that many teachers are known to have on the lives of people. Furthermore, this might encourage teachers to better experience the intrinsic rewards that originally drew them to the profession. Importantly this might promote a level of sensitivity in the public arena for the role of teachers in society, which in turn might be passed down to children entering the education system and may promote a little more respect for teachers. Thus while this approach may not provide any financial relief for teachers, it may rekindle the vocation to teach. And rather than just paying 'lip-service' to the role of teachers in society this public acknowledgement may re-introduce the experience of the all important intrinsic rewards rightfully associated with the profession.

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