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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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VOLUME II

"An imperilled profession?"

Teachers' perceptions of the significance of remuneration in entering and remaining in the teaching profession.

Nefeli Sfetsios

APPENDIX A

Biographical Information Questionnaire and Semi-Structured Interview

Biographical Information

Please fill in the following questions, where options are offered, please circle the answer that applies most fittingly to yourself.

1. Age: _____ How many years have you been teaching?

   _____

2. Marital status: single married divorced

3. I am employed by: the GDE the school governing body

4. Please describe your household situation. (For example, do you live with your husband, and children? Your parents? Share a house with roommates? And so on.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Who would you identify as the primary breadwinner in your household?

   _____

   _____

6. Does the following statement apply to you? 'If I didn't teach or have any other source of income, my family and I would still remain financially secure.' _____

7. Monthly household income (please circle): between R4 000 & R6 000

between R6 000 & R10 000 between R11 000 & R15 000

between R16 000 & R20 000

8. Who does the income support? (For instance, yourself only, 2 people, 5 people, 7 people?)

   _____

   _____

   _____

9. To what expenses do you generally allocate your salary? (For example, are you responsible for all the household expenses or only a few, i.e. clothing, entertainment, groceries, rent, insurance and so forth?)_____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

(Preliminary) ***Semi-structured interview schedule***

1. Could we start by talking a bit about how you decided to choose teaching as a career, what factors played a part? (Probe: When you were thinking about becoming a teacher what were some of the things you thought you would enjoy about it?)
2. Could you reflect on whether you think that being a woman had any role to play in you choosing to go into teaching?
3. Could you imagine your brother, husband or any of your male friends entering the teaching profession? In your opinion why do you think this may be? (Probe: Do you think that teaching as a career choice is easier to make for a man or a woman? Why?)

4. How would you describe a teacher's salary? I wonder if we could explore your reasoning a little further. (Probe: When you were training to teach, were you aware that teaching wasn't a particularly well-paid profession?)
5. Have there been any significant changes in your personal circumstances that have influenced your financial needs or security? (Probe: Has that in any way changed your perception regarding money and its role in your life?)
6. Once you began teaching, were there any aspects of teaching you were not prepared for, or felt let down by?
7. Do you view teaching as a life-long career? Could we talk about your feelings about this a little? (Probe: For what reasons do you remain in the teaching profession?)
8. Have you ever considered leaving the teaching profession or contemplated teaching at a different school, or in another country? If so, for what reasons? (Probe: Has your family or social context influenced your perceptions in any way?)
9. Do you supplement your salary in any way? For instance, do you undertake any extra duties or work that results in an added monthly income? (Probe: Could we discuss why it may be that you do this?)
10. I wonder if we could discuss what your understanding of the way that other people (friends, family, society at large) view teaching as a profession? (Probe: What do you think their reasons for perceiving teaching in this way may be?)
11. If you could start all over again, would you choose teaching as a profession? What are your reasons for your answer? (Probe: Would you encourage family or friends who were considering teaching as a profession to enter the profession? Why?)

APPENDIX B

Participant Information Sheet

UNIVERSITY
OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559
Email: 018lucy@muse.wits.ac.za

Dear Educator

My name is Nefeli Sfetsios and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. My area of focus is that of the perceptions of teachers' of remuneration. Our society can in no way underestimate the importance of the teaching profession; however it is true that teachers face an incredible number of challenges, both inside and outside the classroom. Since the demise of apartheid, teaching in South Africa has undergone a number of dramatic changes. Teachers have been required to participate in an increasing number of courses and training initiatives in which new polices are to be grappled with and instated, this has largely led to an increase in administrative work for teachers, seemingly without any other aspects of the workload being adjusted for. Teachers are required to take on an ever-growing number of roles: educator, counsellor, advisor, administrator, mother, nurse and disciplinarian to name a few, however the salary-packages have not appeared to be keeping up. One of the research aims' is to explore how the perceptions of teachers' about their profession relate to and interact with their perceptions of remuneration. In addition to this, I am exploring the ways in which the experience of being a woman (in a female dominated profession) and how familial and social contexts influence her perceptions of teaching and remuneration. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Participation in this research will entail being interviewed by myself, at a time and a place that is convenient for you. The interview will last for approximately one hour. With your permission this interview will be audio-recorded in order to ensure accuracy and to allow me to use direct quotes in the final research report. You may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point without consequence. All of your responses will be kept confidential, and no information that could identify you would be included in the research report. The interview material (audio-tapes and transcripts) will only be processed by myself, and will not be seen or heard by any other person in this school at any time. Data sets (audio-tapes) will be submitted to the course co-ordinator who will have the information (which

has no information identifying participants on it) stored in a secure place at the University. Once the research report has been marked the audio-tapes will be destroyed in order to safeguard your confidentiality. Participation is voluntary, and no educator will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. There will be no direct risks or benefits to anyone who takes part in this research. Once the research has been completed, a summary of the results will be delivered to you. If you are interested in the full report, one will be made available to the school and accessible to yourself.

If you choose to participate in the study please fill in your details on the form below and place it in the sealed box provided in the school's office. I will empty the box once weekly, and will contact you within two weeks in order to discuss your participation. Alternatively I can be contacted telephonically at 082 4577692 / (011) 646 2632 (h) or via e-mail at nefelis@excite.com.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. This research will contribute both to a larger body of knowledge on teacher's perceptions of remuneration, as well as to the understanding of possible factors influencing decisions on entering, and or remaining in the teaching profession. This may help to inform the development of policies and procedures aimed at the advancement of educators in the future.

Kind Regards

Nefeli Sfetsios

Please fill this in if you are interested in taking part in the study

Are you interested in taking part in this study? _____

Name: _____

Contact number: _____

APPENDIX C

Interview Consent Form

I, _____ consent to being interviewed by

Nefeli Sfetsios for her study on teacher's perceptions of teaching and remuneration.

I understand that:

- Participation in this interview is voluntary.
- That I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.

Signed: _____

Date:_____

APPENDIX D

Recording Consent Form

I _____, consent to the audio-recording of my interview with Nefeli Sfetsios for her study on study on teacher's perceptions of teaching and remuneration.

I give the researcher permission to use direct quotes in her research report YES / NO

I understand that:

- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person in this organisation at any time, and will only be processed by the researcher.
- All tape recordings will be destroyed once the interviews have been transcribed.
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E

Letter of Permission from Research Sites

To Whom It May Concern:

Ms .Sfetsios, a Masters of Education student at the University of the Witwatersrand has requested that we grant her permission to access a group of teachers at our school in order for her to conduct research that is in partial fulfilment of her degree. She has explained her research aims and we are happy to grant her access to the educators at our school for research purposes if they are willing to take part in her research.

Ms. Sfetsios has explained that participation is voluntary, and those who wish to participate will be able to do so. She has made it clear that any information to be gathered from the research materials is to be kept under the strictest confidentiality and we trust that she will do so.

Ms. Sfetsios has explained that willing participants take part in one interview, approximately one-hour long. We have agreed that in order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of our teachers, a room which is considered to allow for this privacy will be made available for after-hour use at the school.

We would like to make it clear that any teachers who wish to participate, or may choose not to participate in the research being conducted by Ms Sfetsios will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way.

Yours Sincerely

The Principal

APPENDIX F

Preliminary Analysis of Findings

Below is a description of the analysis of the responses to the interviews conducted and printed in this volume. The responses of the interviewees are commented upon, especially with regard to their perceptions of remuneration and the teaching profession. The data have been organised into themes which enabled a comparative analysis across the participants' responses to take place. Direct quotes from the participants have been italicised.

Remuneration and teaching. Entering and exiting the profession: the 'moral imperative' v financial necessity. (Hayes, 2005:32)

The participants listed a range of reasons for deciding to study teaching and become teachers, however the common thread running through the different interviews was that these women all enjoy working with children. Eight of the nine participants (Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9) expressly mentioned their love of working with children and made comments such as, *"I love kids, and they're my passion and that's why…I decided to teach"*; *"I wanted to work with the younger children, sharing knowledge, and also developing a holistic child."*; *"I always wanted to work with kids"* and *"I always knew that I, I wanted to work with small children in some way"*, (Participants 2, 5, 6, and 9 respectively).

Many of the participants went on to describe the ways in which working with children is satisfying, as it is *"challeng(ing) primarily, and also… reward(ing)"*, (Participant 9) leaving participants with a sense of purpose and fulfilment. It was clear that the participants agreed that they did not gain many material or quantifiable benefits from teaching. Being unified in their understanding of the gains and benefits of teaching, the participants agreed with Participant 5 when she described her sense of *"personal reward. The only thing I get is personal reward"* from doing this kind of work. This last quote provides the impression that for the most part, the "personal reward" is one of the only

motivating factors when considering entering and remaining in the teaching profession, a sense congruent with all of the participants and in line with the above discussion (9/9).

However, the sense of personal reward is drawn from different aspects of teaching. For example, Participant 2 stated that her personal reward is achieved *"at the end of the year"*, when reflecting on

> *how they've (the children have) grown and…developed….For example I'm teaching grade one now so they come…knowing absolutely nothing and then you like see them at the end of the year and you can't believe it was the same child that you had, or…you got a child with a problem and they like come to you and…you are their support and I think that's you know, just seeing how they developed is like the biggest… enjoyment.*

This quote encapsulates three themes that emerged when participants described the nature and quality of the rewards that most participants gained from teaching. Firstly, the participants noted the essential role that the teacher plays in the intellectual development of children; secondly, the internal pleasure that participants gained from the imparting of information, knowledge and teaching the syllabus; and thirdly, the satisfaction that comes from being a part of a child's emotional development and life. The following comments are only a few quotes that signify the prevalence of these three factors throughout the interviews: *"imparting information…Sharing knowledge with younger children…. That's important to me"* (Participant 5); *"being able to expand them as people…And to inform them about things and to…guide them through life"* (Participant 6); *"I love…giving them (the pupils) knowledge and education, getting them to the next level and just their, their self personalities…"* (Participant 7); and lastly Participant 3 who stated that,

> *…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 the majority of participants listed these personal rewards as the primary reason for entering the teaching profession, a few mentioned other external factors in addition to these. Nearly all of the married participants with families (5/6; Participants 1, 3, 7, 8, 9) emphasised the way in which teaching allows the participants time to spend with their children and families as opposed to having *"a nine to five job where you drop them (your children) at a crèche and you pick them up at a crèche…"* (Participant 7). Participant 3

points out that teaching is a very suitable profession when one has small children as, *"every single afternoon you get solid time to spend with your children and you don't neglect your home."*

Related to the time and flexibility teaching allows, some of the teachers mentioned that they enjoyed the longer holidays (5/9; Participants 1, 3, 7, 8, 9). Participants 1 and 3 both explained that they appreciated the holidays because this is time *"you get to spend with your family."* (Participant 3). Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that that the participants who described the holidays as a motivating factor for entering the profession are all married and have families, whereas none of the single teachers (3/9) mentioned the holidays as a perk (3/3; Participants 4, 5, 6). A thought-out explanation of why the holidays are so important was provided by Participant 7, who explained just how important and necessary she feels the breaks are in relation to the demanding nature of teaching:

> *you **need** your holidays because you just spent three months preparing children constantly for the work, and you're constantly drilling them because children don't learn immediately, believe me you have to constantly drill them and you **need** a holiday just to have a break from all of this.*

While most of the teachers did at some point of their interviews say that they enjoy and appreciate the holidays, only one of the participants (Participant 8) emphasised the importance of the longer holidays. Furthermore, she provided a very different primary reason for entering the profession when she explained that her specific field of interest was to teach children with special needs. However, in order for her to qualify to work with these children, she was required to complete a degree in remedial education, thus teaching was both necessary, as part of the direct route to gaining her qualification, and a paying job while completing her part-time studies.

An unexpected finding was that a third of the participants (3/9; Participants 3, 7, 8) expressed one of the primary motivating factors to becoming a teacher was that teaching *"helps you with your own kids. Because everything that schools do right and wrong let you know, you learn from them."* (Participant 8). Surprisingly, this view was supported

by two other participants who have children and who emphasised the confidence and lessons that teaching provides in dealing with one's own children (Participants 3 and 7).

While seven of the participants (7/9; Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9) clearly described their sense of internal reward that they gained from teaching, as discussed above, of all the reasons listed for entering the profession, it was quite clear throughout the interviews (9/9) that none of the participants felt that remuneration is a factor that encourages them to remain in the teaching profession. Participant 2 spoke for seven participants when she reflected on how it was that she decided to enter the profession, *"well it definitely wasn't for the money… Because it's the love of the job more than anything."*

When making their decisions to enter the teaching career, the majority of participants were well aware that it was not a particularly well-paid profession (6/9; Participants 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9). However, at the time of entering the profession, Participant 1 who came from a line of teachers, felt that it was a well-paid profession. She explained that this has changed, as *"The salary was good, the hours were good, but not anymore."* The two participants who were not aware of the remuneration levels of teachers, were Participants 4 and 5, both of whom received scholarships for teaching and therefore were unable to study anything else as they did not have the funding for tertiary education.

Of concern, is that despite the personal and intrinsic rewards that the participants described as well as the acknowledgement that *"the love of the job (is) far more important than your big bank balance"* (Participant 7); for the majority of participants (7/9; Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9), poor remuneration became the outstanding factor that resulted in the participants stating that they have decided to leave the profession either in the short, or mid-term. Participant 8 expressed this clearly when she said,

> *If the money was better, I would consider it. But because of the money I don't consider it because you don't, you can't grow. I can't see myself getting my son to a very good school, or to university because the finances aren't there.*

Furthermore, and somewhat alarming, is that all of the above mentioned participants (7/9; Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9) admitted that they felt that teaching is not a life-long

career. The foremost reason that these participants provided was quite simply the poor remuneration.

The married participants from this group (Participants 2, 3, 7, 8, 9) explained that while they are poorly remunerated and that even as a supplementary or secondary income, they were unable to sustain themselves, or their growing families. Participant 3 made the following comment; which both supports this claim and is representative of this group of married participants' views; *"As the kids get bigger then there's a need for them to go to…school, and then the expenses, their expenses become more and then a teacher's salary's just not gonna be enough."* As a result, these participants (2, 3, 7, 8, 9) agree that while their children are still young they will continue teaching as they weigh up the flexible hours and more time spent with their families as of greater importance under the circumstances. Participant 9 states that in terms of her family and her career, while she doesn't *"consider myself to have a part-time or half-day job or anything like that…"*, she does *"recognise that there is a degree of flexibility (in teaching) and that really suits me at the moment."* These participants (Participants 2, 3, 7, 8, 9) all agree that they worry that in the future the remuneration they receive for teaching is not going to cater for their family's financial needs and they predict that they will need to find higher paying jobs as their children's financial needs increase.

Compared to the married participants who have growing families and plan to leave the teaching profession when their children are older, there seems to be a greater urgency amongst the single participants (Participants 4 and 5), with the exception of Participant 6. Participant 6 feels unequivocally that teaching is a life-long career. Participants 4 and 5 strongly convey that they feel that they have no option other than to *"get out of teaching… as I said because of the financial thing"*, (Participant 5). It is worth noting that although Participant 6 is also single, she is living with her partner and appears to have the financial support of her parents, something that both participants 4 and 5 can not rely on. Participant 6 admits that *"my parents have paid for my house …if I were paying everything I probably wouldn't make it through."* It is interesting to note that similarly to Participant 2, Participant 6 comes from a family of teachers, as she explains that her *"sister's actually a teacher…"*.

Both Participants 4 and 5 give the distinct impression that *"You can't actually survive"* (Participant 5) on a teacher's salary without the support of another income. Furthermore, it was evident that the question of money is a huge stress for both these participants as *"you're always looking ahead because you earn so little you feel like you need to think about the future all the time…"* (Participant 4). Participant 5 echoed this constant financial worry when she said, *"it (money) affects your lifestyle…Because you have a budget to follow all the time, you have to bear that at the back of your mind."* Participant 5 feels that she needs to leave teaching as she is not surviving financially, however she would like to do something *"linked to teaching"* as this will still fulfil her *"need to educate…"*. In a similar vein, Participant 4 made it clear that she would prefer to find a job in which she is still contributing to society, *"You're going home knowing that you're doing something for somebody"* and *"you are **paid** for doing it."*

It is clear from these comments that unmarried participants cannot survive financially on a teacher's salary. However it is interesting and important to note that they both feel very strongly that in their new jobs they would still like to achieve the same degree of personal reward that they achieve from teaching. For instance, Participant 5 said that she would consider training as it is *"The same imparting of knowledge, the same relationship that you build with the student…, but with a higher salary."*

Teaching, Remuneration and Gender

From the interviews, it emerged that three aspects of the relationship between teaching and gender were apparent: the question of remuneration; concepts of the primary breadwinner; and lastly, the participants formulisation of the qualities that teachers have.

Overall, all of the participants agreed that, *"if you look at the (teaching) profession now, it's predominantly women,"* (Participant 1), however Participants 4, 6, 7 and 8 (4/9) strongly felt that their gender had nothing to do with them deciding to become teachers. Alternately, just over half of the participants (5/9; Participants 1, 2, 5, 7 and 9) felt that being female influenced their decision to become teachers either consciously, or unconsciously.

Participants 1, 2, 5, 7 and 9 agreed that being a teacher is an ideal profession for a woman as teaching fits well with *"The idea of being a wife period. Taking care of the house, cooking, whatever comes with it, suited the profession"*, as stated by Participant 3. These participants all agreed that teaching suits family life as the hours are more flexible than many other professions and that even while these women *"know the remuneration is pathetic,…from the point of view of having small children…there are (pause) definite benefits."* (Participant 1).

As suggested by the above quote, a common theme was that these participants often made comments which suggested that they often weighed up earning a better salary with some of the benefits of teaching (such as the flexible hours and more time spent with their families). This resulted in the participants (5/9; Participants 1, 2, 5, 7 and 9) often choosing the benefits of spending time with their younger children over and above being well remunerated. Most of the participants (7/9; Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9) expressly agreed with Participant 2 who said that *"it's the love of the job more than anything"*, that calls women to choose this profession.

When discussing why it is that men do not often choose teaching as a career, there was an overwhelming sense of agreement amongst participants (9/9), all confirming the statement that *"the salary doesn't suit the men."* (Participant 1). Many of the participants (7/9, Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9) felt that it is common for *"men (to) want…a job that pays…brilliantly… I don't think women feel like that as much as men."* (Participant 2).

Similar comments to the one above were directly linked to the notion that men do not enter the teaching profession because *"they actually can't see themselves being a breadwinner, supporting a wife…It's not do-able, it's not viable"* on a teacher's salary. This viewpoint was supported by the majority of participants (6/9; Participants 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9), for example Participant 7 felt that *"everybody knows that (teaching is) not a highly paid job and (that) men are seen as…the breadwinners within the household and with a teacher's salary, with our salary you can't."*

Interestingly, while the single participants strongly agreed that men do not teach because of *"The (low) salary"* (Participant 5); none of them (3/3; Participants 4, 5 and 6) linked the concept of a primary breadwinner to a man's remuneration or his role in the family.

The discussion further interrogating why it is that men do not often enter the teaching profession yielded some unexpected results. There seemed to be some consensus amongst Participants 1, 2, 5, 7 and 9 (5/9) who felt *"that women are more nurturing and caring"* (Participant 2) than men and therefore less suited to teaching especially *"the younger children."* (Participant 5). Participant 4 went on to provide some anecdotal evidence to support this claim.

> *I think that men are highly stressed when it comes to teaching and stuff like that, they have very low patience levels... ., I've worked with male teachers before and from my experience it seems that women are much better (equipped) to handle these sort of situations than men are.*

To elaborate on the notion that men are less suited to teaching, some participants felt that men were not well-suited to the administrative and secretarial aspects of teaching, feeling that teachers are required to *"do paperwork every single day and sometimes they (men) aren't too good with paperwork. It's like being a secretary on your own…. For them it won't be good enough."* (Participant 1).

This last comment, *"For them it won't be good enough"*, is pivotal as it highlighted a discussion with Participant 9, who strongly argued that one of the reasons that teaching is not considered to be a good profession for men (other than the poor salary) is that in the case of men who teach, *"society views them as not like real men. …I just think they, they're looked down upon."* She further elaborated on this point when she said that, *"maybe there (are) no male (teachers) because the public, I believe sees teaching not as a male profession…teachers are not seen as professional uh posts."* This raises an important notion about the perception of teaching in society which will be further elaborated on in the discussion below (*Teaching: A de-valued vocation*).

In contrast to the views expressed above by some of the participants: that men are not suited to teaching because they are not seen as *"caring, nurturing"* (Participant 7); and that men do not enjoy the largely administrative aspects of teaching, Participants 6 and 8

felt differently. Both these participants felt that they could easily imagine men entering teaching as this was true to their experience. They both told similar stories where they recalled men who with them, *"studied teaching and went into teaching…"*, however they both admitted that these men *"actually all decided to leave"* the profession (Participant 8). Participant 6 explained that *"They didn't actually work, but they have studied"*, and the underlying reason for this decision was *"salary based"*. These participants both acknowledged that while some men may wish to enter the profession, many of them do not as a result of the poor levels of remuneration. They explained that these men *"can't see themselves being a breadwinner…"*, (Participant 8).

Thus it would seem that the experiences and seemingly different viewpoints of Participants 6 and 8 confirmed the perceptions of the other seven participants, as they admitted that the men they knew who wanted to teach made the decision to leave the profession as they needed to earn more money.

Teaching: A de-valued vocation

The perception's held by society of the teaching profession was described by the majority of participants (8/9; Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) as denigrated. These negative views were largely the result of misconceptions that society has of what teachers undertake to do when they enter their careers. Furthermore, it was apparent that other social and professional bodies were identified in their role of perpetuating negative perceptions of teachers within society. These negative perceptions were identified specifically in relation to Western culture and society and it was interesting to note that certain cultures and contexts often expressed more positive and appreciative perceptions held by society of teachers.

While the question, "I wonder if we could discuss what your understanding of the way that other people (friends, family, society at large) view teaching as a profession?" was planned as the penultimate question, its importance and relevance to the interview was recognised by the participants and so pre-empted by a third of the participants (3/9; Participants 7, 8 and 9).

Interestingly, while still at the beginning of the interview Participant 9 described teaching as, *"the most rewarding and…also the most unrewarding job on earth …"*, she went on to elaborate that *"from the point of remuneration, it's extremely unrewarding and also from the point of view from society's perceptions of teachers,…I think that really makes one feel very…uh, demoralised."* She recognised so strongly the negative perceptions of society that she felt that it had almost equal status to the central issue of poor remuneration for teachers. Furthermore, she highlighted the importance of this question when she expressed her concern, saying that,

> *…it would be interesting to find out how these perceptions have come about. And to go back and get some sort of grasp that made people think at the beginning of time…that they needed to pay teachers so little, and pay nurses so little and social workers so little and chartered accountants so much? And doct…I mean it's a primary service just like a doctor…* (Participant 9).

An overwhelming number of the participants (8/9; Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) echoed the view that society perceives teachers in a negative and disparaging light. Comments such as *"People think that you leave at half past one but you don't"*, and *"people…don't realise that they're (teachers are) educated and (people) think they're (teacher's are) there just because they can't do anything else with their life"* (Participants 7 and 8 respectively), are typical examples of the participants' experiences of the disparaging ways in which society views teachers.

There was a distinct impression from the overwhelming majority of participants that society has misconceptions of teaching. There was a sense that society and those people who do not fully understand the work and responsibilities of teachers often look down on teachers for a number of reasons.

Consensus amongst the majority of participants (7/9; Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9) indicated that they experience a confusing disparity between the *"function that we (teachers) play in society"* (Participant 5) and their level of remuneration. Participant 2 put this in her own words when she said, *"I mean (teaching is) like one of the most important professions, us and nurses, we get paid nothing for it."* A sense of confusion, disappointment and disillusion was highlighted amongst participants (7/9; Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9) when they reflected on the role that teachers play within society and how

they are paid for it. It was understood that if children were considered to be the 'future' of a country, it is quite appalling that teachers who are their intellectual and emotional nurturers outside of the home, are not acknowledged for their pivotal role in society and remunerated accordingly. Participant 6 captured this confusing relationship for all seven participants when she said:

> *…this (school) is where it starts, if you're getting a bad education you're not going to get a good job because you haven't had a good education. The teacher's are undervalued in that sense, that it is the foundation for life…*

Participant 6 further expressed her confusion and frustration on this topic when she pointed out that, *"it's terrible because everyone is gonna have to send their children to teachers at one point in their life and they should be praising the job and praising the idea of teachers…".*

It would seem that almost all of the participants (Participants 8/9; Participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9) have experienced that society (acquaintances and some friends) manages this unfair relationship by believing that teaching is *"a half-day job, and then they think oh well they (teachers) get paid to do it - you people aren't working that hard."* (Participant 7). These participants explained that the public has a misconception of teaching as an undemanding, half-day job with many perks and therefore deserving of the poor remuneration, their acquaintances making comments like *"what are you moaning about?"* (Participant 6). These participants explained that people outside of the profession do not realise the amount of work teachers do, for example Participant 5's comment captures the responses to the misconceptions of society when she said:

> *…we never ever really finish early.…We work at school 'til about half past two, three, I work later, 'til about four or so and uh, I take work home often, almost everyday. …it's not like a job, a clock-work job where you can…go there at half past seven in the morning and leave at four with no papers in your hand, with no work to do at home, with like a project here and there or whatever.*

Participant 8 explained her understanding of the misconception when she said, *"yes we do get home earlier, but we start earlier and also on holiday we do courses, after school and, after hours."*

Interestingly, two participants (2/9; Participants 5 and 6) related that people who know teachers well (family and close friends), who were once ignorant of the exact demands on teachers, often change their perceptions from feeling that teaching is an easier job, to feeling that teachers do too much work to be so poorly remunerated. Participant 5 agreed with Participant 6 when she described how she found her friends beginning to say, *"'why did you work so hard for such little pay?'"*.

The fact that the entire group of participants feel that teachers are *"underpaid"* (Participant 5), led the participants to infer that having less money to spend on material things (such as cars, holidays and houses) equates teaching with lower *"status"* (Participant 6) in Western society. The equation between *"Status and money and cars, and fancy things"* was described by Participant 6 and was further highlighted by a third of participants (3/9; Participants 5, 7 and 9). It was clear from their comments that these participants feel that teachers are limited in their capacity to obtain *"money and cars, and fancy things"* (Participant 6) and often struggle to meet their basic needs. Participant 9 has observed that she has

> *seen teachers throughout the schools that I've worked at who've remained…single, still living in rented…flats, driving cars that are really past their best, not safe anymore…breaking down every second, because you actually, I mean how could you possibly afford a car payment on the cheapest car but a new car?*

Participant 5 added to this when she said of the status that teachers are afforded within society:

> *I think they (society) look at you in terms of …the cars that you drive and whatever, but it's fairly obvious, if you look at teachers, none of us like drive fancy cars and we always like sort of uh, we never go away on expensive holidays or do outrageous things, so they, I think they can see that we watch how we spend our money.*

Only one of the participants expressed a view contrary to the ones discussed above. She felt that teaching has *"status."*

> *People think that teachers are the most glamorous people…they all have degrees and they are absolutely bright. But at the end of the day they don't know how much work there is in it and how absolutely little the salary is.* (Participant 1).

It is possible that her experience of teaching and the ways in which society views teaching are more positive than the majority of participants as she explains that *"on my*

mother's side the entire family are teachers. My cousins and my uncles and my aunts are principals…". It would seem that the long line of teachers from which she heralds may have shaped her experience of society's views of teachers more positively. However, she does admit that the way in which teaching is viewed has *"changed"* over time, and is not quite as positive as it used to be. It did seem that some participants (3/9; Participants 2, 4 and 8) similarly felt that in the past, teaching was viewed as a good and *"noble"* profession and *"had status"*, however they agreed that, *"things have changed. …teaching is not what it used to be before"* (Participant 4); *"I think teachers had a lot of respect in the years gone by, but now they don't."* (Participant 2).

The above discussion ties in interestingly with a point that was raised by other participants. While for the most part they agreed that teaching is *"undervalued"* (Participant 9) in society, in certain contexts and in certain cultures teaching is still viewed as a noble profession with high status. Participant 3 shared a personal experience with the interviewer when she explained that,

> *…in the Muslim community teaching is a…profession held in high esteem because uh, you're doing an honourable thing. …apart from your own personal situation you're going out there and helping other children and so it actually forms a part of the fundamentals in the faith.*

In addition, Participant 9 commented on a similar experience when she shared that,

> *respect for teachers…also does depend on where you are, because like I said I… taught at a very underprivileged school,* ***there*** *the respect was enormous from the parent body…*

From these examples it would seem that while for the most part, *"teaching has a reputation - overworked, underpaid"* (Participant 5); in certain communities and contexts, teachers are valued for their role in society.

An interesting and unexpected finding was that a third of the participants (3/9; Participants 2, 4, and 8) connected the role of the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) to the negative perceptions of teaching within society. These participants were angry when they linked the role of the GDE to creating and perpetuating negative perceptions of teachers within society. While many of the participants felt unsupported by the GDE (5/9; Participants 2, 4, 5, 8, and 9 as discussed above), Participants 2 and 8

deduced along with Participant 4 that, *"if the Department lacks respect for teachers then I don't think anyone else is going to respect the profession either."*

Interestingly, Participant 2 was the only participant to mention the role of the media in generating and spreading negative perceptions around teaching. She says that,

> *…the newspaper completely undermines the profession. I mean with all the stuff that's going on in the schools. Like all the violence in the schools…it's completely undermined and it's the way it's perceived in the media…. You often see articles written in the newspaper about…teachers not doing their job,…that aren't coming to school, aren't working…*

Her experience is that the plight of teachers as well as the good work that teachers do is largely unrecognised by the media or within society at large, while these more negative aspects receive focus.

An unexpected comment was made by Participant 9 when she expressed that some teachers and administrators perpetuate and undermine their profession and each other by their *"small mindedness"*. She explained that *"it's just like you're treated continuously like a child…"*, however this view was not expressed by any other participants. In addition, she felt that children whose parents undermine the profession have little respect for teachers especially *"in the intermediate phase and the senior phase there's that sort of lack of respect…"*.

It is necessary to note a common feeling amongst the participants in response to the question, "if you had family or friends that came to you and said that they were considering teaching as a profession what would you tell them?" Most of the participants' (7/9; Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8) initial responses were that they would not encourage anyone they knew to enter the profession. However, this often impulsive answer was always contextualised by one of two views. These participants would explain that the individual *"must really love the career…, if they don't have a love for children they in the wrong field"*, (Participant 1), however if the individual is *"the sole breadwinner…in the family then I would say… definitely no (to teaching)"* (Participant 2). These two viewpoints were repeatedly mentioned by Participants 3, 4, 7 and 8.

Although Participants 5, 6 and 9 did not immediately state that they would not encourage others to enter the teaching profession they echoed the sentiments of the above mentioned participants (3, 4, 7 and 8). A typical example of the type of advice they would provide follows:

> *I think that if they (the person) came from a secure financial background then I would say go for it, if they showed a general love for it, then go for it, but if they didn't and they were looking to improve their financial status, or, you know their lives, then I would say no.* (Participant 5)

From the responses in relation to the question of whether teachers would encourage others to teach, it seems that the participants felt that their advice rested on one of two notions; that the person would gain a sense of benefit and intrinsic reward from the work and importantly, that the person should ensure that they are financially secure before embarking on such a career path.

The changing role of remuneration throughout teaching as a career

Many of the participants expressed that changes in their families and lives had indeed affected the way that they thought about money and the way in which they earn money as teachers. The personal circumstances of each participant had an important role to play in the ways in which their perceptions of remuneration and money changed over time (especially from the time that the participants had decided to study teaching to the time of the interview).

Six of the participants (1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9) were married, five of these participants had children and one was pregnant at the time of the interview. The remaining three participants were unmarried at the time of the interview; Participant 4, a divorcee was living with her fiancé, Participant 6 was living with her boyfriend and Participant 5 was single and was living with her brother and his family.

It was clear from the participants' stories that changes in their families, such as having children, or having a disabled family member, or getting divorced or being single, often required adjustments to be made by the participants, particularly in terms of money. Often these adjustments resulted in restrictions on participants in terms of decisions

regarding money. The married participants with children all agreed that *"as the family extends…financially, you need more money."* (Participant 1). Participant 1 went on to say that,

> *When you have a child, you need the extra money. … once you have a child you know you have to do something extra to cover that.*

It was interesting to note that all of the married participants (6/6) mentioned that they relied on their husband's salaries to meet the demands of their growing families and saw their salaries as a *"secondary salary"*. (Participant 3). Comments made by married participants with families were very similar when they spoke about meeting the family's needs financially as they spontaneously stated that their husbands were required to find ways to make more money if they were to remain in the profession. For example, Participant 1 said that after the birth of their child, *"my husband had to open his own business so that we could get that extra money. Just so that we could accommodate for our child"*, and similarly Participant 2 stated that, *"my husband…has to earn more to pay for all those extra things because…my salary can never change more than one percent in a year…so that he knows the pressure would be more on him than on me"*, and Participant 7 said that her husband *"works over-time"* in order to meet the family's growing financial needs.

While the married participants relied heavily on their husbands' salaries in order to survive, many of them admitted to undertaking extra activities themselves in order to bring in a little extra money. Participants 1, 4, and 5 explained that they do aftercare in order to earn extra money while Participants 2 and 3 both give extra lessons. Participant 3 feels she needs to further supplement her income by selling Tupperware, and says that an *"extra few hundred rand a month, it covers like petrol…but it makes a difference."* Participants 6, 7, 8 and 9 do not take on any extra duties to improve their remuneration, but Participant 8 explained that,

> *previously I have given extra maths lessons and stuff like that, but we've been told that if they catch you doing those things, then you will not get your salary or you will be fired because you're not allowed to do anything else unless you apply for it.*

Participants 4 and 5 confirmed the above statement when Participant 4 explained that,

> *we would probably do something other than teaching during the weekends but…that is not allowed as part of the teaching profession. If you are teaching you're not allowed to indulge in any other work-related affair.*

While all of the married participants felt that financial survival *"would be impossible… if I wasn't married and I was single"* (Participant 9), the single participants described how difficult it was not to have another person to rely on. Participant 5 who is single echoed the feelings of the married participants' when she said that a teacher's remuneration *"is adequate if you are part of a married couple"*. Unmarried Participants (4, 5 and 6) all described how it was impossible to survive on their remuneration without relying on the support of others. Participant 4 is living with her fiancé and feels that she is far better able to manage now as they share their expenses. Participant 5 made it clear that as a single person, *"You can't actually survive (on a teacher's salary) because look at me, car payments, rent…"*, and so she has no option but to share expenses and a house with her brother and his family, *"Or else I'd live alone! Definitely. I'd live alone."* Participant 6 explained that she shares expenses with her live-in boyfriend and is very fortunate that her *"parents have paid for my house, so…I'm not paying a bond"*, furthermore she recognises that, *"on my salary if I were paying everything I probably wouldn't make it through"*. Participants 4 and 5 both described the stress that comes from being unable to *"provide for each day without worrying about what you're doing tomorrow"* (Participant 4). Participant 5 went on to describe the way in which remuneration

> *affects your lifestyle in terms of what car you decide to buy… um what car you decide to drive, the sort of activities you do on the weekend, things like that. Because you have a budget to follow all the time, you have to bear that at the back of your mind.*

It seems that from the different experiences of the participants, married and unmarried, it is clear that their careers and their remuneration closely affect their quality of life, their ability to provide for themselves and their children.

An imperilled profession: Challenges exacerbating poor remuneration

All of the participants listed a number of gaps in which they felt that their training at university was inadequate and felt that this led to challenges and difficulties in their jobs. They listed a range of challenges from struggling with discipline, to feeling unsupported

and let down by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), to the difficulties that they have experienced with Outcomes Based Education (OBE).

It was surprising to discover the amount of consensus there was amongst participants (5/9 Participants 1, 2, 4, 6, 8) who felt that one of their greatest challenges is meeting up to the demands of the Gauteng Department of Education. Many participants expressed their frustration with the GDE, saying that they felt that they were not *"supported"* (Participant 2) in many ways by them. Some participants felt unsupported as a result of the lack of guidance that the Department provides, for example *"you're never given any guidelines …and often they (the GDE) never tell you very much about discipline"*, (Participant 6). With a great sense of frustration, Participant 2 stated that, *"if they (the GDE) would give you…ways you could punish children instead of saying ok, there's nothing I can do as a teacher,…cos we have no rights, absolutely no rights, the kids have all the rights…if they could…give us that, or support us with that…"* it would be more bearable.

Other participants described their frustration in terms of the amount of paperwork and forms that they are required to fill in, in order to comply with the Department's requirements. Participant 2 had strong feelings about this when she said, *"the Department of Education…don't know what they want from us, cos every month they come up with something more, paperwork, more paperwork…"*. She raised a crucial concern that had been raised by other participants (3/9 Participants 4, 5 and 6), when she said *"So we actually are spending less time teaching and more time doing stuff for them…"*.

Not only did the majority of participants (6/9; Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7) feel that there was unnecessary paperwork required by the GDE, but some participants (4/9; Participants 2, 4, 5 and 6) felt that the Department is unclear and inconsistent about their requirements of teachers, particularly when completing paperwork: *"so then they come back and say they want this now in a different way. There's tons of paperwork and it's always changing"* (Participant 2). This was a common complaint of the majority of participants (5/8; Participants 1, 4, 6, 7 and 8 concurred). Participant 5 also expressed with frustration that, *"…our curriculum, our policies keep changing and that's a bit*

difficult to…work around. So there's tons of paperwork and it's always changing. So it's not something you can stick to…". Participant 7 added to this saying, *"there are huge amounts of forms and paperwork and its repetition… Everything's repetition and then you have to write it here then you write it there, then you write it there."*

Participant 2 expressed the most extreme feelings of dissatisfaction towards the GDE out of all of the participants when she said:

> *I'm so demotivated…by all the stuff I have to do for the Department. Like…there's no…appreciation to work for an organisation such as the Department of Education that's so incompetent and can't deal with simple little things, like they don't know what they want from us…*

In contrast to the above statement, Participant 7 was the only participant to express more forgiving feelings when she recognised that, *"(the paperwork) is being minimised more and more I think, they're (the GDE are) trying to aim to get it cut down a bit. So let's hope."*

The largely negative feelings amongst participants towards the GDE seemed to be further complicated by the introduction and role of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) in teaching. A prime example of this dissatisfaction was expressed by Participant 1, who felt that, *"…we studied four years…. And when I got into the teaching profession it was nothing compared to what we had done in university. They did not prepare us for OBE."* A third of the participants (3/9; Participants 1, 5 and 8) felt that, *"Our training definitely didn't match (the reality), therefore, we had to go for extra training and we had to go for courses just so that we could be prepared to teach our children OBE."* (Participant 5).

There was consensus amongst three participants (1, 4, and 7) who felt that class size was a distinct challenge to teaching effectively and a factor that they were not adequately trained to deal with. Participant 4 makes a valid point when she recounts that,

> *…you can give of much more when you have a smaller class than when you have a bigger class. Because obviously there's going to be disturbances…. When they (the children) start to sit too close to one another they're going to get at each other and it does affect your teaching cos you gotta constantly stop in between to solve another problem instead of focusing mostly into what you supposed to do.*

Just under half of the participants' (4/9; Participants 2, 5, 7 and 8) experiences of the teaching profession have led them to believe that the expectations of society, particularly of parents' exceed the job requirements of a teacher. Participant 2 describes the attitude of parents towards teachers in the following way, *"the parents of… think that you not just the teacher but you…are responsible for…everything. …you have to deal with everything."* Participants 5, 6, 7, and 8 expressed similar feelings when Participant 2 said,

> *And I think that they expect too much from us also. You know, cos at the end of the day we really are just the teacher, we're you not like the social worker and the doctor and the nurse and the counsellor.*

Participant 5 echoed the same experience when she said,

> *Because now, it's not simply a matter of teaching but it's also being the nurse, and the mother figure, and the counsellor, and the therapist and whatever the child needs.*

From these comments, it would seem that there are great expectations of society and parents on teachers to resolve all of their pupil's needs and requirements while placing very little emphasis on remuneration.

An unexpected finding was when two of the participants (2/9; Participants 6 and 8) mentioned that they did not feel adequately trained to deal with their pupils' parents. Participant 2 expressed her anxiety in this regard when she said that, *"varsity doesn't prepare you enough…. …you're never given any guidelines (on) how to deal with a parent that's angry…".*

Participant 1 summed up the difficulties and challenges that teacher's face well when she shared her impression saying,

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

APPENDIX G

Interview Transcripts and Interview Summaries

The following chapter presents the interview transcripts in verbatim. The participant's words are italicised for ease of reference and for emphasis. After each interview transcript is the accompanying summary of the interview. The interviews have been paraphrased by the researcher. Portions of the text are direct quotations from the participants and have been italicised for emphasis and consistency. These quotations have been preserved as they capture the essence of what the participants expressed in relation to the issue of remuneration in the teaching profession.

Transcription of Interview 1

Could we start by talking a bit about how you decided to choose teaching as a career, what factors played a part?

At first, it used to be the salary…and it was a lot of chalk and talk method of teaching. The old-fashioned way of teaching, but now things have changed, you think twice. But that's why I chose it. The salary was good, the times were short, the day was short and if you think long-term if you've got a family it works out perfectly.

Mhm. Um were there any other things that you were thinking about when becoming a teacher, when making that decision?

Uh, if I say that it's hereditary?

Hereditary…

Well…that on my mother's side the entire family are teachers. My cousins and my uncles and my aunts are principals and I just think that when you qualify from university you have a vision and this was my vision.

Um, so it was in the family?

It was in the family.

OK. Um, could you reflect on whether you think that being a woman had any role to play in you choosing teaching as a career?

Mh. It has a lot to do with a woman because…as a mother now I see how good it is when you finish school at an earlier time even though you got a lot to take home, but you still know that leaving early and you still got a lot of time for your child. Holidays are perfect because if your child's on holiday you on holiday as well.

Mhm.

And it just works out perfectly.

Could you imagine…could you imagine your brother or husband or any of your other male friends entering the teaching profession?

At this stage?

Mm.

No. I don't think so because if you look at the profession now it's predominantly women. I think that the salary doesn't suit the men. Working times might be shorter…

Mhm.

but the salary doesn't go with it and if he's the breadwinner the salary doesn't suffice.

Mhm. So, so your understanding of it is that the salary is not enough?

Definitely.

And do you think that teaching, making the choice to teach as a career is easier to make as a man or as a woman?

I think it is easier as a woman.

So you think it's difficult for a man…

I think it's difficult for men to choose…reason being for the salary and it's also with the times because right now teaching is very demanding. And you almost doing paperwork every single day and sometimes they aren't too good with paperwork. It's like being a secretary on your own, I don't think for them it won't be good enough. They like something more practical.

Ok.

Hands on.

How would you describe a teacher's salary?

Pathetic…because of the work that you put in. What you put in is what you get out with the children, but the salary doesn't match that at all. Not at all.

Um, and when you were… when you were training to teach, tell me, were you aware that teaching wasn't a particularly well-paid profession?

When I first went into university getting a degree was very important. And getting a teachers degree it used to be in those days uh…excellent job to do.

Mhm.

The salary was good, the hours were good, but not anymore.

Would you explain a bit about what you mean by 'not anymore'?

Um…now the teaching profession is very demanding. When I went into university I knew that was what I wanted to do for many reasons. Now the salary doesn't match and the hours are longer because we gotta take a lot of work home and because it's OBE based. You have to be ready every single day for everything that you do. You cannot walk into the class and just think off the cap that this is what you wanna do. You have to be well prepared.

Um, ok. Have there been any significant changes in your personal circumstances that have influenced your financial needs or security?

I think as the family extends…financially, you need more money.

Mhm.

When you have a child, you need the extra money. And especially when you have, when you know that your teaching salary is going to cover that but once you have a child you know you have to do something extra to cover that.

Ok. So you feel you have to support your child?

*You **have to!** We have to because we wouldn't be able to give our child everything we want to.*

And what type of extra…extra areas of money have you found to support your income?

Um…I do aftercare.

Mhm.

So that I can get that extra money…And uh…my husband had to open his own business so that we could get that extra money. Just so that we could accommodate for our child.

So does that affect your life in the decisions you make?

It does definitely. And the more children you have the more its gonna affect you.

And you're planning to have more children…

I am. And the economy rate, it's rediculous.

Once you began teaching, were there any aspects of teaching you were not prepared for, or felt let down by?

I think the OBE-based education. When we were in university I mean we studied four years…I studied five years of my life, five years of my life I spent studying because eventually I wanted to do deaf and verbally impaired children. Teaching of that. And

when I got into the teaching profession it was nothing compared to what we had done in university. They did not prepare us for OBE.

So your training didn't match…

Our training definitely didn't match, therefore, we had to go for extra training and we had to go for courses just so that we could be prepared to teach our children OBE.

Were there any other factors that w…were different to what you imagined…before you came in?

No, just the OBE teaching and…uh… the class sizes. The number in your class. When we were in school, when I first took up teaching we were sitting with 24/25. Now we sitting with 30 in a class…and the ratio is 40 to, p…per teacher. 40…uh…for every ch…40 children we have the school only allows one teacher.

Hm. Which means that um… your GDE salary might affect your uh…, well I mean if you were a…school governing body employed teacher, that might affect your decisions in teaching at the moment.

It would. I mean there's a lot of teachers who are leaving the profession purely because of the OBE, the large numbers in the classroom, and the salary. And the pressure is great.

Hm. But still do you view teaching as a life-long career?

Well eventually someday I want to be a principal of some school. So I would, that's my vision. So uh…I have to follow protocol and go through procedures and yes, I see myself teaching for the rest of my life.

So you would stay in the teaching profession but you wouldn't necessarily do mainstream teaching?

No, not necessarily. I'll do it until my children are big enough because I'd like to spend those extra holidays with them.

But, um…um…and what else is influencing your decision other than maybe um, a need to become a principal…um, what else is influencing your decision?

I think that uh, as a person I want to develop and I want to progress and if we all stay in the classroom for the rest of our lives we never gonna make any progress. And if I do progress, my salary improves as well. Ultimately, the children are important but with the children goes the work and with the work goes the salary. So uh…that would be my aim.

And would you be…would you be, would you feel adequate with remaining as a teacher and keeping your salary the same?

No, if I have to go for promotion, I want to be, go from H.O.D to Deputy Principal to Principal to increase my salary uh…thereafter if I want to leave the teaching profession, if I want to go out to be a trainer…I'll stand a better chance.

Ok. So, so basically what is driving your, your ideas about changing is the salary, plus the fact that you enjoy teaching.

I do enjoy teaching, but the salary is big. It makes a big difference.

Hm. So I think you have kinda answered this question:

Have you ever considered leaving the teaching profession or contemplated teaching at a different school, or in another country?

Um, I'm quite happy with where I am. I left a school where uh, the class, the class, the number in the classrooms were huge and I come here and I'm very, I've developed as a person here and uh, I'm very content. And I'm ***happy****, and I just want to progress now from here.*

So you want to move from one level…

I want to move from level to the next.

And your family has some sort of influence on that? On your perception, on your need to move…

My family would support me in anything that I do and uh, I think that because it's hereditary, all our cousins and family started as teachers and eventually ended up as Principals, that's uh, something we can all work to. Like a goal.

Hm. Um…Could we discuss your understanding of the way that other people, um, perhaps your friends, family, or society at large view teaching as a profession? I know you already said that in your family it has been encouraged quite, quite strongly. But are there any other experiences other than that?

If it's another teacher that you speaking to, and…if someone wanted to go into the teaching profession, any teacher there will, uh discourage that person.

Advise them not to…

*Advise them **not** to become a teacher. Whereas if you talking to a parent, and they know that you have made a change in their child's life, they'd love it. They'd want you to remain as a teacher. They'd want you to influence other people to be teachers. Uh…it's status. People think that teachers are the most glamorous people, they all ha…they all have degrees and they are absolutely bright. But at the end of the day they don't know how much work there is in it and how absolutely little the salary is.*

Ok. So your understanding is that people, especially parents really like the fact that you are a good teacher…and do you think that th, that, they would like you to encourage their children to become teachers?

They would because if you tell a parent that your child has decided in L.O. (life orientation) that he or she wants to be a teacher, they are…absolutely ecstatic. Uh…they just look at it as a status thing, oh he's a teacher or he's a doctor, but they don't look at it long-term, financially.

Ok. So you think the, the greatest drawback is financially.

That's the greatest drawback.

Um, and if you had a friend though that was considering going into teaching, so that you wouldn't necessarily encourage them to do so.

They must really love the career that they choosing. If they don't, if they don't have a love for children they in the wrong field. Because you gotta have a lot of patience, a lot of tolerance. You are working with uh, different people who are of uh, uh who are from different backgrounds and people that you working with alone may have different morals.

So you think that there's something specific, something special about teaching that should, that should encourage the reason that people teach.

Definitely. 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. You are born to be a teacher. You can't just overnight think that yes I'm gonna be a teacher. That doesn't just happen.

Thank you very much.

You're welcome.

Summary of Interview 1

The interview opened with a discussion of the different factors that underpinned the reasons the participant decided to choose teaching as a profession. The participant explained that when she entered the profession she considered it to be well-paid and felt that in the 'long-run', it fitted with the demands of having a family at a later stage. She explained that the hours were flexible and that the working day was short. When asked to expand a little, she explained that she felt teaching was "*hereditary*" in her family and that many of her close and extended family members had taught.

The interview went on to explore whether the participant felt that being a woman played any role in choosing teaching as a career. She felt that teaching was a particularly well-suited profession to women, especially after having a child. She explained that although there is a lot of work to do and that she often has to take work home, she is still able to leave a little earlier and spend more time with her child. One of the greatest benefits of

teaching were the holidays, as they "*are perfect because if your child's on holiday you on holiday as well.*"

The participant felt that currently, it was difficult to imagine any male friends or family entering the teaching profession. She feels that "*if you look at the profession now it's predominantly women. I think that the salary doesn't suit the men.*" She explained that even though the hours spent at work are shorter, the salary did not match the amount of work done and so does not meet a man's needs. This she felt was especially true as men are expected to be the primary breadwinners and cannot achieve such status on a teacher's salary. The decision to choose teaching as a career she felt, was much easier for a woman to make than for a man. This, she explained was so as a result of the low salary paid to teachers. In addition, the participant felt that men are not well-suited to the large amounts of administrative and secretarial work required by teachers.

When asked to describe how she would describe a teacher's salary the participant's response was direct. She said,

> *Pathetic…because of the work that you put in. What you put in is what you get out with the children, but the salary doesn't match that at all. Not at all.*

The participant felt that over time the expectations of young teachers entering the teaching profession have changed. She described that when she first began studying, teaching was considered to be a good prospective career with good working hours and a good salary for a young Indian woman such as herself. She felt that teaching "*used to be in those days (an) …excellent job to do.*" She explained that things have however changed. Teaching has become a very demanding job as the hours have become longer due to an increased work-load demanded by Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and a salary that has not kept up with the times. The participant expressed that teacher's need to be more prepared,

> *You have to be ready every single day for everything that you do. You cannot walk into the class and just think off the cap that this is what you wanna do.*

The participant explained that as her career has progressed, her financial needs have changed along with changes in her personal life. She explained that after she had her first

child, the family's financial needs have increased. She simply stated that, "*When you have a child, you need the extra money."* She went on to explain that teaching was not enough to support a growing family, and that one needs to do something "*extra*" in order to earn more money. The participant explained that she undertakes to do aftercare on a weekly basis in order to earn extra money. She shared that this however, was not enough, and so "*…my husband had to open his own business so that we could get that extra money. Just so that we could accommodate for our child."*

The participant then described the ways in which she felt that she had not been well-prepared for the practical work of teaching after completing her training. She felt that she had been let down by her university training in that it had not prepared her for OBE, even though she has completed a five year specialised teacher training degree. She said that,

> *Our training definitely didn't match,* (the demands of OBE) *therefore, we had to go for extra training and we had to go for courses just so that we could be prepared to teach our children OBE.*

The participant went on to explain that the class sizes were not what she initially had expected. She explained how shocking it was that for every 40 children there are in a class, the government only subsidises one teacher. She felt that the situation is so severe that,

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

Given the difficulties that the participant had described, she reported that she viewed teaching as a life-long career and saw herself in the position of Principal in the future. The participant expressed that she wished to do class teaching until her own children were older so that they could spend holidays together, however she was then interested in moving up the ranks within the profession. This would earn her greater recognition through *"(self)-develop(ment)"* and that if she does move up the ranks her, "*salary improves as well. Ultimately, the children (learners) are important but with the children goes the work and with the work goes the salary."* The participant explained that if she were not to move up the ranks successfully, or wished to change her career path, she would hope to become a trainer as "*…the salary is big. It makes a big difference."*

The participant went on to explain that she felt happy with the place she was working and did not wish to change schools. She just hoped to continue to progress in terms of promotion from that point. The participant recounted that promotion was important to her as a large portion of her family are teachers and that they all became Principals.

The discussion proceeded to explore the participant's understanding of the perceptions that society has of the teaching profession. The participant immediately explained that if a teacher was talking to someone who was considering entering the profession, that teacher would immediately discourage the interested person from entering the profession. Conversely, she felt that if a teacher were talking to a parent who is satisfied with her work, the parent would encourage the teacher to stay on. She went on to explain that parent's such as these feel that teaching has status and is seen to be glamorous. She explained that as teacher's, "*all have degrees,…they are absolutely bright.*" However she felt that it is problematic that *"at the end of the day, they (parents) don't know how much work there is in it and how absolutely little the salary is."* In her experience, she feels that parent's are pleased to hear that their children may have decided to teach as it has equal status to being a doctor, while they may overlook the negative financial implications. The participant explained that she would not encourage other to become teachers unless that person was certain that he/she:

> *must really love the career that they choosing. If they don't, if they don't have a love for children they in the wrong field. Because you gotta have a lot of patience, a lot of tolerance (to teach).*

The participant ended her interview by explaining why it is that people choose teaching as a career.

> *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. You are born to be a teacher. You can't just overnight think that yes I'm gonna be a teacher. That doesn't just happen.*

Transcription of Interview 2

Could we start by talking a bit about how you decided to choose teaching as a career?

Ok, well it definitely wasn't for the money, no. Um, cos I love kids, and they're my passion and that's why…I decided to teach.

Uhm. Just for the enjoyment that you get out of working with the children.

Ja, like you see it at the end of the year like how they've grown and how they've developed at the end of the year, so…that's why I enjoy it.

And I mean excluding money obviously like you said, are there any other benefits that you've found or that you really enjoy?

Well they so like, I mean like for example I'm teaching grade one now so they come like knowing absolutely nothing and then you like see them at the end of the year and you can't believe it was the same child that you had or like you got a child with a problem and they like come to you and like you are their support and I think that's you know just seeing how they developed is like the biggest…

Uhm.

enjoyment.

Uhm. So it's got something like quite internal for you…

Ja, it's more than, ja, that's it.

Ja, um, could you reflect on whether you think that being a woman had any role to play in choosing career, the teaching career?

Well probably. I mean I can't, um I'm not sure exactly why…but I think that women are more nurturing and caring, like you don't see many men teachers. There's a few…

Ja

Most of them are gay anyway, but anyway. I think it's just a womanly instinct.

Ja, ok. Um, uh, could you imagine your brother, or your husband or any of your male friends entering the teaching profession?

No, no. No, I think that would be because they know it doesn't pay much.

Uh huh.

And I think that they also don't have the patience that we need to have…

Is required…

Ja. I think, I think it is, because men want like a job that pays like brilliantly, like you know?

UmUhm. So they feel like they need the financial support and the status of the money that is tied to their jobs.

Woman don't, I don't think woman feel like that as much as men.

Ok.

Because it's the love of the job more than anything.

Ja, Uhm. Definitely. So then I'm assuming if you had to think about whether teaching is easier to make as a decision for a career choice for men or women, you think it would be easier for…?

Because also you think that your husband will be the breadwinner of the family then yours will just be like an extra, basically…

Uhm, ja. Ja I see what you're saying.

And then how would you describe a teacher's salary?

Pathetic, like peanuts.

Ja. Ja, that's come up already.

Ok.

No um, it's definitely not…

For what we do,

Yes…?

We get paid nothing. I mean it's like one of the most important professions, us and nurses, we get paid nothing for it.

UmUhm.

I mean like actuaries get paid like what we earn in about five years, I mean in about one month.

Ja exactly.

So, so.

So it's really not rewarding in terms of financial gain?

No.

Um, and do you have any sense, um when you were training to become a teacher, did you have any sense of what the salary would be?

Look, I knew it wasn't brilliant.

Uhm.

Like I did know that going into it. At the time like I thought, oh it's fine because I'm doing it for the love but then you have like responsibilities like you have a house to run and you have kids and then you think like oi. You know?

Uhm.

But I mean it's still like I don't think I would change it anyway because I still love what I do more than what I get at the end of the month.

Ok. Um, we we said that, um in terms of any changes in your life, um your house, getting a new house and children that all adds to the financial stress. How would, um, how has, has that changed your perception regarding money in any way?

Um, not, like not for my salary myself, but like for my husband. Because I mean he has to earn more to pay for all those extra things because like he knows that my salary can never change more than one percent in a year whereas his, his is in computers, his can go up like every month so that he knows the pressure would be more on him than on me.

So um, do you think that if there was um maybe a limited amount he could go would you have to make any changes?

Ok yes then we would have to downsize with like certain things, like not spend like R2000 on the shopping, or like not go out so much, so ja…you always like…

Cos then you would have to change your ways…

Like your priorities…

Like using money…

Ja, basically like spend it in a different way.

Ja. And then once you began teaching, were there any aspects of teaching you were not prepared for?

Well basically everything. Standing in the classroom, the discipline, the different kids, the paper work, managing like the time in the classroom. Um, getting to know the kids names for me was always the worst. Um, just learning how to manage the emotional problems, the discipline, ja…

Uhm. So just kinda the general running around about being a teacher, the demands of being a teacher…

That's right.

You can't practice or learn that before you actually get into the situation.

That's right.

And um, you mentioned that you love teaching um, but would you consider it a, a life-long career?

Huh (sigh). If the kids keep going the way they are at the moment, then no, then I would be out of here in the next few years.

Uhm.

Um, also there's like besides the money there's like no incentive for us as teachers. I mean there's not like, ok, so like there's an incentive of one percent. It's like R200 for the year. That's like ***nothing!***

Yes.

Um, we don't get like service bonuses, we don't get like bonuses at the end of the year. We get for our birthday, which is like once a year, which is fine…but there's not really any real thing that we can say oh like wow, like you know?

That it's worth staying there for…

Ja.

And um, I mean what would you then consider as another option?

I have absolutely no idea.

So you just think that maybe within the next ten years if you feel that things are getting worse in terms of classroom management…

Then I would leave. But the thing is I've only studied teaching so I don't really have anything else. So…it might just be something I have to stick with.

Uhm. And then how do you feel about sort of possibly leaving teaching?

I don't know. I mean I don't know if I'd be devastated, because, not be…just because I find that I have been having the worst bunch of children this year. And I'm so demotivated by them and by all the stuff I have to do for the department. Like, uh like, there's no like appreciation, there's no like oh wow…

Like you did a good job…

Ja, you know? I mean street sweepers probably earn more than we do.

Uhm. So you're saying that it's your experience mainly in the classroom that would be the most significant factor.

Like also to work for an organisation such as the Department of Education that's so incompetent and can't deal with simple little things like they don't know what they want from us, cos every month they come up with something, more paperwork, more paperwork…

Uhm…

So we actually are spending less time teaching and more time doing stuff for them and then we send it to them and ***no,*** *it's not what they want and here's the criteria of what we actually wanted you to do…*

Uhm…

When they could've said, here's what we want, do it, or like for example now I moved schools, so uh they cancelled my medical aid…

Uhm…

So for the last six months I haven't been on medical aid like five people are working on the problem, and they're still working on the problem…

Uhm.

You know like that for me…

Is incompent.

Ja.

So then the reason that you, would, that you remain in the profession are what?

(sigh) At the end of the day, it's still the kids. I mean I still do, like I'm feeling like that now maybe cos it's the end of the year…

Uhm

But I think I still enjoy it. I mean maybe if I went to a private school I wouldn't have all these, issues.

So you think that might help you a bit?

Maybe. I haven't really considered it.

Ok. So then um, this, this might actually answer that question, would, do you, do you supplement your salary in any way? Um, would you consider leaving and going to another school, or…going overseas or anything like that.

Well, I don't know about overseas, but maybe to move to a private school where there won't be all these issues and maybe there'd be better discipline with, amongst the kids.

Uhm.

Um, yes, we have to supplement income. I have to do extra lessons like once or twice a week…ja.

So you do feel that the teacher's salary isn't quite exactly enough and you have to support it with extra.

A bit extra, ja.

Uhm.

I think that's what most people…unless there husband's are earning absolutely brilliantly.

Ja, ja. Um, and I wonder if we could discuss what your understanding of the way that other people view the profession um, such as maybe your family, your friends or extended society at large, um…what are your feelings about that?

Well, I still think that the newspaper completely undermines the profession. I mean with all the stuff that's going on in the schools. Like all the violence in the schools it's always like the teachers.

Uhm.

I mean, uh, teachers are dying from Aids and teachers are… So it's completely undermined and it's the way it's perceived in the media. Like you often see articles written in the newspaper about like teachers not doing their job, but it's not us teachers it's like teachers that are like out there, that aren't coming to school, aren't working… So I think it's completely like …I mean it never used to be like, I think teachers had a lot of respect in the years gone by, but now they don't.

Uhm. So you saying that there's been a change in perception and people see teachers as less…

Definitely.

And people see teachers as less, kinda like esteemed.

I think so, well, I know, I don't know about in private schools but I know in government schools that's what's happening. And they also, like the parents of like the kids think that you not just the teacher but you like are responsible for like everything. You know they literally give you the child in the day and then you have to deal with everything.

Uhm.

And I think that they expect too much from us also. You know cos at the end of the day we really are just the teacher, we're you not like the social worker and the doctor and the nurse and the counsellor.

Uhm, ja.

And secretary.…

Uhm. Um, I know lastly, if you could start all over again, would you choose teaching as a profession?

Huh…(sigh). Probably, If I didn't have to work for the Department of Education.

So if you could kinda change it a little.

Ja. I mean if I, firstly if they appreciated us more. If we got like a thank you, or if we got some motivation.

Uhm.

*I mean **yes**, like they give us a housing subsidy but it's like R300. They pay 2/3s of your medical aid, which does really help because a lot of company's don't do that. You get your 4 um months maternity, so these are all benefits that really do make a difference…*

Uhm

But it's just all the added pressure that they put on us that we…I mean I know that I can't cope with what they giving us.

Uhm. It's sort of too much to handle.

*Like if I was just teaching and I didn't have **all** this other like paperwork on my table it would be fine. Then I could say fine no problem. But it's just everything else that we have to do. And I mean if there was like for example, like punishing children. If they say like corporal punishment is ok, or if they would give you like ways you could punish children instead of saying ok, there's nothing I can do as a teacher, then…cos we have no rights,*

absolutely no rights, the kids have all the rights. So if they could like give us that, or support us with that then…um

That would be more useful.

Ja.

Um, and if you had maybe family or friends that came to you and said that they were considering teaching as a profession what would you tell them?

I don't know if I'd be too positive. I don't know. Not because, just because I can see what's happening. That it's like getting worse. All the time that the kids are getting weaker, they don't wanna be there. They're getting more undisciplined, more difficult to handle…

Therefore, for those reasons then they shouldn't possibly consider it.

And I mean if they, if they, ja. If they the sole breadwinner or something in the family then I would say like definitely no.…

Ok. So if they didn't have someone to rely on…

Then I would say no.

Because it's just, you don't make enough?

No. It's just feels like it's unappreciated. Completely unappreciated.

So you feel undervalued.

I think so. It's my personal opinion.

Ja. Is there anything you feel that maybe I left out, or anything you want to add?

No, it's just that everything sounds so negative.

Yes, I think it can seem that way. Thanks so much for your time.

Summary of Interview 2

The interview began with a discussion of the different factors that were involved in influencing the participant's decision to enter the teaching profession. She expressly stated that her reasons were not guided by monetary gain. She explained that she loves working with children and that children are her *"passion"*. She went on to explain that her love for teaching comes from seeing how children grow and develop throughout the year. She described her job and its rewards in the following way:

> *…for example I'm teaching grade one now, so they (the children) come…knowing absolutely nothing and then you like see them at the end of the year and you can't believe it was the same child that you had, or like you got a child with a problem and they come to you and like you are their support. And I think that you know, just seeing how they developed is like the biggest* (pause) *enjoyment.*

The participant reflected that the joy she gets out of teaching is something that is quite unique to the profession and internally satisfying.

The discussion then focused on whether the participant felt that being a woman had any role to play in choosing teaching as a career. She felt that she had a sense that being a woman did have some role to play in entering the profession, as she feels that women are somehow more nurturing and caring than men are.

When asked whether she could imagine any men that she knows entering the profession, she quite strongly felt that this was totally unlikely. She felt that teaching is not a profession for a man, as men know that teaching *"doesn't pay much"*, and that men do not have the necessary patience required in order to teach. The participant considers men as wanting high-paying jobs, while it would seem that the money is less important to women. She feels that women teach because of *"the love of the job more than anything."* The participant went on to say that she imagines that the decision to become a teacher is more difficult for men to make than women, *"Because also you think that your husband will be the breadwinner of the family"*. Thus she suggested that the wife's salary will be an extra income.

When the participant was asked how she would describe a teacher's salary she very quickly described it as, *"Pathetic, like peanuts."* She felt strongly that the salary is not at

all a reflection of the type and amount of work required of teachers. She believes that *"…it's like one of the most important professions, us and nurses; we get paid nothing for it."* She explained that what other graduates of equal training in other professions get paid in a month, a teacher may earn in five months. She made it clear that there is no financial reward in teaching. The participant felt so disillusioned when considering the value of teaching in society at the moment, that she feels as though *"…street sweepers probably earn more than we do."*

The participant explained that while she was studying to become a teacher, she knew that the salary *"wasn't brilliant"*. She considered that she may not have thought of the financial implications thoroughly as, *"At the time…I thought, oh it's fine because I'm doing it for the love but then you have like responsibilities…"*, such as taking care of children and the upkeep of the household. However on reflection she feels that *"…I don't think I would change it anyway because I still love what I do more than what I get at the end of the month."*

The discussion then focused on the ways in which the participant's life circumstances and the ways these change, such as buying a house, and having children have impacted on her perceptions about money. She felt that these extra financial pressures do not affect her so much, however they have added greater pressure to what her husband is expected to earn. She said that her husband has *"to earn more to pay for all those extra things"*, as *"…he knows that my salary can never change more than one percent in a year…"*. She added that as a result of this lack of opportunity for progression in the teaching profession, *"he knows the pressure would be more on him than on me."* The participant mentioned that if her husband was not in a position where he could continually earn more money, the family would have to make alterations to their life style by limiting their expenditure.

The participant then described her expectations of teaching while in university and how little she felt that her studies had prepared her for this profession. She explained that she didn't feel very prepared for most of the aspects of practical teaching, such as standing in the classroom; disciplining the children; the administrative demands placed on teachers; dealing with an array of different personalities in the classroom; time management

(getting through the syllabus in one year) and learning how to manage the emotional problems of the learners. The participant also expressed that far too much is expected of teachers from parents. She feels that teachers are expected to fill a number of roles and functions, and that parents forget that,

> *at the end of the day we really are just the teacher, we're you not like the social worker and the doctor and the nurse and the counsellor... and secretary.*

When the participant considered whether she felt that teaching is a life-long career, she sadly explained that, if *"the kids keep going the way they are at the moment, then no, then I would be out of here in the next few years"*. She did however admit that she has no other skills or qualifications and is not sure what she would do. The participant shared that teaching is a very challenging job and that if support of teachers from the Department of Education and from parents does not improve she can no longer continue, despite the fact that she *"loves"* the work. She also protested that while there really is no monetary gain in teaching, she feels that there are no incentives for teachers. A teacher can expect to earn very little more than her salary regardless of how much work and effort she puts into her job. *"…we don't get like service bonuses, we don't get like bonuses at the end of the year."* However, when considering why she stays in the profession if she's not satisfied, she explained that the reason she stays is because, *"At the end of the day, it's still the (commitment to the) kids."*

The participant explained that she had felt particularly demotivated this year (2006) and that it was her experience that teaching was a very unappreciated job for very little pay. In addition she expressed that the Department of Education places a lot of pressure on teachers and that there is a lot of work to do in order to satisfy the educational system. The participant's feelings about working for the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) were strongly worded. She said that it is a very difficult situation

> *…to work for an organisation such as the Department of Education that's so incompetent and can't deal with simple little things like they don't know what they want from us, cos every month they come up with something, more paperwork, more paperwork...*

It made her angry that there appears to be a great deal of confusion with what it is that the Department expects of teachers and feels that,

> *we (teachers are) actually are spending less time teaching and more time doing stuff for them and then we send it to them and* ***no,*** *it's not what they want and here's the criteria of what we actually wanted you to do. When they could've said, here's what we want, do it…*

The participant continued to heatedly explain that she feels very let down and unsupported by the GDE. In her opinion, teachers are facing a number of problems and their professional board (GDE) are unable to provide any useful support. She explained that discipline and punishment are overlooked:

> *or if they (GDE) would give you like ways you could punish children instead of saying ok, there's nothing I can do as a teacher…cos we have no rights, absolutely no rights, the kids have all the rights. So if they could like give us that, or support us with that…*

The participant thought that if she were teaching at a private school she may not be facing the same problems to the extent that she is in a government school. Thus the participant considered that teaching at a private school may help with the difficulties she is experiencing with classroom management and discipline.

The participant described how she needs to supplement her salary by undertaking extra lessons twice a week and believes that most teachers have to do extra work in order to improve their income. She feels that this may not be true in cases where teachers are married to men who earn exceptionally well.

The discussion proceeded to explore the participant's understandings of the perceptions that society has of the teaching profession. The participant felt that the media has a big role to play in the negative perceptions that people have of the profession. *"I…think that the newspaper completely undermines the profession."* The participant felt strongly that the media portrays teachers in a negative light, reporting about teachers who don't go to school, or who do their jobs poorly. She feels that this is an unfair representation of many of the teachers she knows. It is her opinion that while *"…teachers had a lot of respect in the years gone by…now they don't."*

She went on to describe the unreasonable demands placed on teachers by parents who seem to relinquish their responsibilities and are largely uninvolved in their children's lives. She said that,

> *You're not just the teacher but you like are responsible for like everything. You know they literally give you the child in the day and then you have to deal with everything.*

The participant shared that if she were able to start again and decide whether she wanted to become a teacher, she feels that she *"probably (would). If I didn't have to work for the Department of Education."* She feels that if teachers were better appreciated, received some thanks and motivation, that it would be worth entering the profession again. She admits that

> *…they give us a housing subsidy but it's like R300. They pay two thirds of your medical aid, which does really help because a lot of company's don't do that. You get your four…months maternity, so these are all benefits that really do make a difference…but it's just all the added pressure that they put on us that we… can't cope with what they giving us.*

The discussion then turned to what the participant would say to someone who was considering entering the teaching profession. She explained that she would be unable to speak positively of the profession. She feels that the challenges teachers are facing are too overwhelming and that it is unlikely to get any better. She also made it very clear that if the person interested in teaching is, *"the sole breadwinner or something in the family then I would say like definitely no. Then I would say no."* When asked whether this was because one does not earn enough money, the participant said that teaching is not worth it. *"It just feels like it's unappreciated. Completely unappreciated."*

Transcription of Interview 3

Could we start by talking a little bit about how you decided to choose teaching as a career, what factors played a part?

Ok, I finished university with a bachelor of arts degree, wasn't sure what to do, so I did a PGCE while I was deciding and I went for a teaching job interview and I liked it, so I carried on, and I'm still teaching.

So you hadn't decided that you want to teach before you started?

No

That came after you had a degree.

After I had a degree and I, I had been teaching part-time, filling in for a local school. That's why I did a PGCE.

Ok. What, what, what were some of the things you liked about teaching when you started?

Working with the children and the content.

The content of the work?

The content of the work, it keeps you busy and it keeps you thinking.

Ok, you enjoyed that a lot?

Yes.

Ok, could you reflect on whether being a woman had anything to do, or a role to play in you choosing teaching as a career?

Yes it did because I was married already and children were an option and then the teaching obviously you finish up a little bit earlier in the afternoon and you get the afternoon at home.

So you're saying that the idea of having children fits well…

The idea of being a wife period. Taking care of the house, cooking, whatever comes with it, suited the profession.

Ok, so you had enough time, or flexibility to do all those things.

Yes

Ok. Um, could you imagine your brother, husband or any of your male friends entering the teaching profession?

No

And why do you say that?

Because they won't be able to be the bread, the breadwinner and they will ***not*** *be able to support a family on a teacher's salary. A single salary.*

So the salary just doesn't cut it.

Doesn't!

Definitely not.

Not for a man.

Um, and do you think that if a man wanted to teach would the option be easy or difficult to make?

Difficult.

Difficult decision…

Very difficult decision, because he's gotta think about responsibilities. And he's always ever going to be the breadwinner, irrespective of who he marries he still has to be the man in the house.

So it, it just doesn't support you enough financially.

No, no (starts laughing).

It's just not financially viable.

No, no, not for a man.

Um, how would you describe a teacher's salary?

A teacher's salary is enough as a secondary salary and if it is in conjunction with someone else's salary.

So someone else's salary. And, and if, if you had two teachers salaries do you think that would be…

You'd be cutting it very close.

Ok...

If the husband and the wife were teachers, they'd be cutting it very close. They would, but there'd be no savings, no holidays, no…

So it would be the bare essentials.

Bare essentials. Yes, that's right.

Ok, um, when you were training to teach, were you aware that teaching wasn't a particularly well-pay, paid profession?

Yes.

You were. And how did you feel about that?

At the time it was a choice between salary and a family, and I chose the family.

Have there been any significant changes in your personal circumstances that have influenced your financial needs or security lately?

No.

There's nothing that may…that made you reconsider teaching as a viable option?

Like to leave it?

If you were to leave it, or…

For the salary, yes, yes I am definitely going to study further.

You're going to study further.

Some way or the other, either to do honours, to branch out, maybe to lecture. Try something different because it is, the salary, doesn't, doesn't…it's not wonderful.

So you're saying that as your family grows…

Yes. As the kids get bigger then there's a need for them to go to, to school, and then the expenses, their expenses become more and then a teacher's salary's just not gonna be enough. It's enough for now, but because they still babies.

So, so in other words as your personal circumstances in terms of family, and growing family…

Yes, as your family grows there's going to be a need for a secondary.

Ok, and that has changed your perception about money-earning in some way.

Yes, definitely, definitely. It's um, how'd you say? Yes, um, it's not even the biggest amount of people. It's just growth, I mean in the family will need more.

Uhm. Ja, the costs of living.

And you, you don't want to deprive your, your children of anything.

Ja, ok. And once you began teaching, were there any aspects of teaching you were not prepared for, or felt let down by?

Yes, the discipline…

The discipline…

The discipline. You don't realise that you don't come from the same background as a lot of the children that you teach to, so you come in with certain expectations and when you step into the classroom you see it's quite different to the reality. And it's not exactly, you can't say it's the children's fault because they come from a certain place and I suppose if they come from…if their values at home allow them to do this, then you can't, you can avoid it in your classroom, but you can't stop it.

Uhm.

But it's just small, basic, basic home discipline.

So cultural differences and, and the way that children are brought up…

Yes it is, it's a cultural difference.

Their respect and your expectations to teach them and that's something you weren't really prepared for.

Definitely no.

Um, do you view teaching as a life-long career?

No.

You don't. Could you talk a little bit about that.

There's very, very little room for promotion. From a teacher you go to and HOD and from an HOD you go to a principal. But the salary increase is not even significant. It's the smallest of increase and a lot more work. And, um, there's very little incentive. There's no, there's no real incentive in the profession so you as a person could be satisfied being a level one teacher for five or ten or even 15 years it would make no difference.

Uhm. In terms of financial reward there's no, there's no…

Yes. Like a teacher working for five years gets paid the same as a teacher working for one year gets paid on level one.

Yes, so in other words…

And even if you keep on studying further, it's not gonna affect your level, so it's not gonna help, no matter how much you study. So if you change, if you carry study further you need to change your profession in order to benefit from that.

Ja, from the extra effort you're putting into studying and….

Yes, yes, you have to change your profession.

Your knowledge…

But people like, to get that knowledge it's gonna take you two or three university courses a year. It's gonna make no difference to your salary or to your ability here at school.

Uhm.

But if you change your field, then it might just make a difference.

So you're not recognised for what you bring, um, outside of your basic teaching.

Yes.

Ok, and do you think that you're considering leaving the teaching profession um, could you just elaborate a little bit about the reasons for that.

Yes. Um…it's only financial and if you gonna study further and do honours and maybe masters, it's not gonna suit the profession as well and so you should find a route where your skills will be applied better.

So, so even if you have to further your education it doesn't really impact teaching very significantly, besides like the financial recognition.

Yes, it's the basic skills also don't suit the profession.

So, that's why you would change your profession, and obviously the financial gain that you'll get anyway…

Would be a plus.

Uhm, ok. Do you supplement your salary in any way? For example, extra lessons or anything that adds to your monthly income?

Yes, yes. Extra lessons, and I sell Tupperware now.

And that's how you supplement your income.

Yes, extra few hundred rand a month, it covers like petrol or something insignificant a month, but it makes a difference.

Definitely. Ok, um…could we discuss a little bit about what your understanding of the way that other people, um, such as friends and family and society at large, view the teaching profession?

Ok. My entire family think that it's the best profession in the world because it suits a woman, and because the flexible hours and school holidays you get to spend with your family. And every single afternoon you get solid time to spend with your children and you don't neglect your home. It's not a nine to five job and you're not taking a lot of things home. So, my mother, my father, all of them think for the kids now it's the best option because they smaller and they need a lot of attention and you can't in this day and age stay at home. It would be lovely to be a stay-at-home mum, and then the thing is with the teaching you have extra knowledge to use with your kids,…

Uhm.

to help them to learn to read and write before it's actually time for them to be doing it.

Uhm

So, and generally in the Muslim community teaching is a very, very, it's a profession held in high esteem because uh, you're doing an honourable thing, like apart from your own personal situation you're going out there and helping other children. And so it actually forms a part of the fundamentals in the faith.

Ok. From a cultural and religious background or understanding teaching as a profession is held in high regard, but um, if you had to consider just one further, maybe society at large, some other cultural, uh cultures, do you, how do you perceive their understanding to be?

I don't think they consider it to be a wonderful profession and you can see that from the respect you get from the parents of the children that you teach. It's uh, you come to school, you do your job and get paid for it, so do you job and go home.

Uhm.

That's where it ends. Other people would look at it and say oh wow, you're doing such a good thing and would back you up and when you don't get that kind of support then that let's you know what people think about your profession because they don't really consider it so important.

Uhm. Ok, so there seems to be a bit of a split there because there are some people who seem to hold teaching in high regard…

Yes.

Because they view it as an honourable profession and that you are helping others and not just considering yourself as important, but then there are others who kinda just see you doing your job and nothing really particularly important about teaching.

Yes.

Ok, um and if you could start all over again, would you choose teaching as a profession? What are your reasons for that answer once you've thought about it?

Yes, I would, I would still teach like now for at least the five years and sort my whole family life out first and then from there there's always time to move on and once the kids go to school then you have a lot more time and then it becomes a bit easier to study and then it would be easier to change profession also because then they'd be settled and it would make the transition a little bit easier but I would I do enjoy, I thoroughly enjoy teaching, I couldn't say that I don't.

Ok. So then you say that you enjoy teaching because partly it gives you flexibility in your home life, with your family, um but are there any other reasons that you enjoy teaching.

No, yes, I uh, I enjoy, I enjoy working with the kids, I do. From the first day I ever walked into a classroom I loved it. And when I teach them I mean I'm teaching them content or whatever 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.

Uhm. So there's actually more than just…

Yes, yes, no it's much more than just the job it is the kids, a big part of it is the children.

Ok, and I'm assuming it's hard to say exactly what is so good other than working with children…

It's connecting with them. It's, children find it so difficult to just open up to somebody. And so once you make that connection and then they willing to share important things in their life with you, then it gives you a feeling of satisfaction, great satisfaction.

The genuine concern…

If they coming to school with a sulky face and if you take the time to ask them and if you genuinely find out why they sulking, it matters, it matters. Not just coming to school doing the work you give them and then going home.

Ja. So there's like more an interconnection…

Yes, it's a personal a very personal relationship like with your children, the children that you teach.

Uhm. Ok. So there's more to it than just what might meet the eye.

Exactly.

Ok great. Thank you very much for your time.

Summary of Interview 3

The interview began with a discussion of the different factors that were involved in helping the participant decide on entering the teaching profession. The participant explained that while completing her Bachelors degree she had been filling in at a school and enjoyed it. She therefore decided to complete her PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) and thereafter found a teaching post. She described some of the influencing factors that further contributed to her decision to study teaching, such as her enjoyment in working with children and the satisfaction of teaching the content of the syllabus. She put it in the following way:

> *…I enjoy working with the kids, I do. From the first day I ever walked into a classroom I loved it. And when I teach them I mean I'm teaching them content or whatever 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….(teaching) is much more than just the job; it is the kids… It's connecting with them…..…children find it so difficult to just open up to somebody. And so once you make that connection and then they willing to share important things in their life with you, then it gives you a feeling of satisfaction, great satisfaction.*

The participant went on to stress that her connection to and concern for the children is incredibly important and that that this is what makes teaching worthwhile. It is expressed in the following quote, *"If they coming to school with a sulky face and if you take the time to ask them and if you genuinely find out why they sulking, it matters, it matters. Not just coming to school doing the work you give them and then going home."*

The participant felt that being a woman had a big role to play in choosing teaching as a career as she was already married and was considering having children. She felt that being a teacher, she could get home a little earlier in the afternoons and spend that time with her children. As the participant comes from a cultural background where women are expected to play an extensive role in the running of the home and family, she feels that teaching suits, *"The idea of being a wife period. Taking care of the house, cooking, whatever comes with it, suited the profession."* She felt that teaching allowed her the flexibility and time to fulfil all these roles as a wife, mother and woman.

The participant felt strongly that teaching was not a profession as well-suited to men as teaching does not provide enough financial security. She said that a man *"won't be able to be the… breadwinner and they will* ***not*** *be able to support a family on a teacher's salary."* Furthermore, the participant felt that if a man wanted to teach the decision for him would be a very difficult one to make, *"because he's gotta think about responsibilities. And he's always ever going to be the breadwinner, irrespective of who he marries he still has to be the man in the house."*

When describing how she felt about a teacher's salary, the participant stated that the salary is enough as a secondary salary and only *"if it is in conjunction with someone else's salary."* However, she later explained that as families and children grow, a teacher's salary even as a secondary salary is not enough to survive. She also felt that it was very difficult to survive on two teacher's salaries and that there would be great financial constraints placed on a family if both parents were teachers. She stated that they would have the bare essentials, *"there'd be no savings, no holidays…"*.

She explained that in terms of her current needs and personal circumstances, she is planning to further her studies in order to earn more money. She feels that *"Some way or the other, either to do honours, to branch out, maybe to lecture…because…the salary…it's not wonderful."* She realises that as her family grows and develops *"their expenses become more and then a teacher's salary's just not gonna be enough",* even as a secondary salary.

The participant stated that when she was training to become a teacher she was well aware that teachers were not well-paid professionals. However, she felt that her decision to continue with teaching was one made as she weighed a new and young family as more important than a high earning salary.

The participant shared that one of the aspects she felt unprepared for when she started teaching was disciplining the children. She felt that dealing with children from diverse backgrounds who had different value systems in their homes was difficult to manage in terms of discipline.

When the participant considered whether she felt that teaching is a life-long career, she stated that for her, it was not. She was very specific in the reasons that she gave for this and expressed discontent at the lack of room for growth and development within the profession. She said that,

> *There's very, very little room for promotion. From a teacher you go to and HOD and from an HOD you go to a principal. But the salary increase is not even significant. It's the smallest of increase, and a lot more work. And, um, there's very little incentive. There's no, there's no real incentive in the profession so you as a person could be satisfied being a level one teacher for five or ten or even 15 years it would make no difference.*

She feels unhappy with the salary and feels that there is very little acknowledgement by the Department for teachers who have been teaching for many years compared to newly qualified teachers. *"…a teacher working for five years gets paid the same as a teacher working for one year gets paid on level one."* She explained that

> *even if you keep studying further, it's not gonna affect your level, so it's not gonna help, no matter how much you study. So if you change, if you carry on to study further you need to change your profession in order to benefit from that.*

She feels very sad that in order for a teacher to be recognised and appropriately financially compensated for their qualifications, they have to change their job which is not 'in line' with the scope for promotion expected in nearly all other professions.

The participant went on to say that the only reason she would leave teaching is in order to make more money and so better support her family as, *"you don't want to deprive your, your children of anything."* However, until she is able to continue her studies and find a new job, she feels that it is necessary for her to supplement her income by giving extra lessons and selling Tupperware. Keeping the current circumstances in mind, as well as the poor salary, the participant feels that she does wish to leave the profession however, she wishes to leave after about five years so that she can

> *sort my whole family life out first, and then from there there's always time to move on and once the kids go to school then you have a lot more time and then it becomes a bit easier to study and then it would be easier to change profession also because then they'd be settled and it would make the transition a little bit easier but …I thoroughly enjoy teaching, I couldn't say that I don't.*

The participant explained that her family views the teaching profession as the perfect option for a woman, especially as it suits her role as a mother and homemaker. She explained that, *"my mother, my father, all of them think for the kids now it's the best option"*, because she described, she is able to give them attention while also being able to supplement the family's income a little.

Her family believe that teaching is *"the best profession in the world because it suits a woman"*, they very much valued the *"flexible hours and school holidays you get to spend with your family"*. She explained that she does not have to take work home, which she really appreciates. Furthermore, teachers are equipped with a whole lot of extra knowledge they can put to use with their children, *"to help them to learn to read and write before it's actually time for them to be doing it."*

The participant went on to say that,

> *…generally in the Muslim community teaching is a very, very, it's a profession held in high esteem because uh, you're doing an honourable thing, like apart from your own personal situation you're going out there and helping other children. And so it actually forms a part of the fundamentals in the faith.*

She has not experienced however, that outside of this community teaching is not regarded with equivalent high esteem and is actually looked down upon, *"you can see that from the respect you get from the parents of the children that you teach."*

Transcription of Interview 4

Could we start by talking a bit about how you decided to choose teaching as a career, what factors played a part?

Hm…

You can take your time.

Thank you. Um, I initially wanted to go into Commerce, but at that stage in time they weren't offering loans or bursaries for any other profession other than teaching. Initially that is why, that is why I studied teaching.

Ok, so um, for a bursary you needed to go into teaching.

Uhm.

And uh, when you were thinking, or when you started your teaching degree, uh, what were some of the things you thought you would enjoy about it?

Firstly, I love kids. So that was obviously a positive sign towards teaching, I didn't think I'd have a problem teaching because I get along with kids and they feel quite comfortable, and uh…speaking to me or whatever.

Ok, so, so you, so you thought that you'd enjoy the interacting with the children and uh, um, what not.

Yes.

Um. Could you reflect on whether you think that being a woman had any role to play in you choosing to go into teaching?

Um, not exactly as I said earlier I have a passion for kids and if anyone can get through to them regarding teaching or, um, making an impact, a positive impact on their lives I think I'd be a good person.

Uhm, and in terms of your feelings about originally wanting to go into Commerce, why did you think that you would prefer that as a career?

Uh, I always preferred things that regarded figures and numbers or the same thing rather, but anything that regarded using a computer, uh, I was uh…always that way inclined.

Uhm.

So technically and mathematically…

Ja. But uh, in the teaching profession it also offers you those areas to work yourself on.

Ok, so you get those areas and subjects and you can use those.

Ja.

Ok. Um, could you imagine your brother, or a husband or even any of your male friends entering the teaching profession?

Now, no!

You say now no, what do you mean by that?

Uh, things have changed. The salary doesn't foot the bill, firstly, that's a major thing.

Uhm.

Uh, secondly, teaching is not what it used to be before. I, I believe that when I first started teaching the main focus used to be on the children. Now it seems the main focus is on, uh, completing forms and filling in forms.

So it…

Ja, it seems that they more focused on that area than actually the kids.

Uhm.

So it gives you very little time, or much less time than we used to focus on the kids before.

Ok. And your feeling is that um, women are maybe better at that than men are? Or…

I think that men are highly stressed when it comes to teaching and stuff like that, they have very low patience levels but that may be just me generalising.

Ok.

But uh, I've worked with male teachers before and from my experience it seems that women are much better to handle these sort of situations than men are.

Oh, ok. Um, how would you describe a teacher's salary?

Am I allowed to say something mean?

Yes, you are.

Pathetic, I think it's really pathetic. For what we do for kids and I believe we make a difference. Everything stems from the classroom. What a child becomes, future, any future, stems from the classroom…

Uhm.

Um, cannot be where he is if there's no positive uh, reinforcement right from down. It doesn't matter whether it's academic or emotional…

Uhm hm

But I think we play a major role on the kids.

Uhm

But it's, there's nothing for it. We don't get anything for it.

Uhm. And uh, when you were training to teach, were you aware that teaching wasn't a particularly well-paid profession?

Not at the time, we were never made aware of those sorts of things. Uh, I only first became aware of it when I first started teaching. Uh, and at that time it was still ok cos I still lived with my mom and well obviously I paid my earnings, supporting the household or whatever but it wasn't a responsibility of mine. Now it's more of a priority of mine. Now it has to be done, then it didn't have to be done.

You mean making money?

No, I'm talking about paying bills and stuff like that.

Uhm, ok.

Uh, there wasn't so much of responsibility of footing bills, but now there's much more of a responsibility as time goes on because you have more priorities that you have to take care of.

Uhm.

Uh, like insurances and stuff like that.

Uhm, so…

You want, you want to, you're always looking ahead because you earn so little you feel like you need to think about the future all the time…

Uhm

You not living in the now.

Uhm. And how did you feel when you found out that uh, the profession wasn't very well-paid?

Uh, I was very despondent. It doesn't change my passion about kids and teaching, but it does change the whole idea that I need to do something else as well in order to foot the bill. Because teaching on its own is not going to foot everything.

Uhm. So it's not enough.

It's not enough.

And you would say especially for a single person who has to support themselves entirely…

It's very difficult

Uhm

*Especially when you have to foot a bill, the main one being rent and up here in he Johannesburg it's **very** difficult to have to foot the bill on your own.*

So in other words…

It takes…

So you might maybe be able to pay rent but you can't pay everything else yourself.

Exactly, it takes, if you're living on your own as a single person it takes up half your salary.

Uhm.

So that's, that's a bit unfair and the subsidy that they give you these days is not a lot.

Ja, and it's obviously not enough to buy a house.

Not a chance. On that note, I applied for a loan, uh, a home loan.

Uhm.

And, uh, teachers a, as a whole at the level that I am at at the moment, we get, we get ,a a loan of two forty, most, two fifty and in Johannesburg you can get ***nothing*** *for that.*

Uh huh. Ja, that's actually impossible.

Exactly.

Um, and have there been any significant changes in your personal circumstances that have influenced your financial needs or security? Or you feelings about money?

Um, you mean like, what aspect are you…

For example maybe, your household and home living circumstances, perhaps if you had had children recently, or anything like that?

Ok, nothing of that sort, but uh, it does make it a bit difficult because my mom is disabled and I used to be the breadwinner at home, uh, with my mom.

Uhm

Now it's a bit difficult for me to contribute as much as I used to contribute before and I don't feel very nice about that because as I said she's disabled and it's very difficult for her to support herself.

Ja

And the grant that they are getting these days is nothing as well. So, um I have become a bit despondent regarding teaching because of that aspect.

Uhm. So financially you're finding it difficult?

Ja.

Um, once you began teaching, were there any aspects of teaching you were not prepared for, or you felt let down by?

Uh, initially when I first started teaching we had very small classes uh, of kids. Now obviously it's growing and that impacts on your teaching…

Uhm.

Um, you can give of much more when you have a smaller class than when you have a bigger class. Because obviously there's going to be disturbances, uh, regarding the kids themselves. When they start to sit too close to one another they're going to get at each other and it does affect your teaching cos you gotta constantly stop in between to solve another problem instead of focusing mostly into what you supposed to do.

So in that way the demands on teachers are growing…

Yes, but the salaries stay stagnant.

Uhm, ok. Do you view teaching as a life-long career?

Not a chance, not at all. I plan on getting into something else other than teaching. As I said it's not because of the kids, that's the only rewarding part of the profession. There's nothing else in the profession that's rewarding. I need to get out of it as I said financially

and it's becoming very stressful regarding admin, it's not that I cannot cope, but there are other professions that I can do the same amount of work for and earn way more than I am right now.

Ok,

And if I don't become realistic about the whole situation then, uh, I don't think survival in the future is not gonna be very easy.

So it's going to be very difficult for you.

Ja.

And, um, you were saying that uh, the work is… you said you could be doing the same amount and…

And it seems as though the administration part is taking over the actual teaching. You know there was a point in time where…now they brought in the OBE and the RNCS and all of that, but I believe that we used to do all of this before, it just wasn't called by a fancy name. Now they calling it all these fancy names and they um, and they putting it into the classrooms where before it used to be so much easier to do it on your own, you know? you would sit with your class and know what you were doing…

Uhm

Obviously we were hands-on before.

Uhm.

Um, the way it is situated now that it never used to be hands-on before and now it has become hands-on. If you understand?

Ja, that was the previous perception.

And I believe that teaching…what we used to get through with them was much more constructive, than now.

Uhm.

We did lots more then, in that amount of time.

Ok. So it's just because the changes that have come about in terms of admin and uh, expectations of teachers have changed quite considerably and you don't feel they're necessarily for the better.

I don't think they necessarily focusing on the kids.

Ok…

And they supposed to be focusing on the kids more than, as I said that paperwork. It feels like they want to keep track of everything that's being done at all times, it's like they being watchdogs on the teachers rather than actually focusing on the kids themselves.

Ok…

They feel they are, but they not.

Ja.

Because they're putting more pressure on us and it's making it difficult to actually keep track of what we should be doing.

Ok, so you say, it's actually distracting from your teaching?

Exactly

And so it wouldn't make much sense except for part of the teaching is with the children…

Exactly, there should be enough trust between the department and the teachers to know that they're there to perform a duty and they're going to do it to the best of their ability if they're just left alone to do it.

Uhm.

It goes like any other profession. If you go into any corporate company you're given a job description, you're told once, you sign a contract you're told once that you need to do it…

Uhm.

It is your job description, then you're left alone to do it, until the times that obviously, something pops up where you are not doing it exactly as it should be done…

Uhm

But it's not like that in teaching…

They're always monitoring you…

Exactly.

Ok. Um, and you said you're definitely considering leaving teaching um, what are you your reasons for this and what are your plans?

I plan on doing something close to teaching, but um, obviously not with kids. It's more in the training aspect to work with corporate companies and train people in those companies. Uh, wher …you know I'm not afraid of hard work, I'm never afraid of that, it's just that I'm not finding it constructive. If you cannot help at the lower levels then start helping at the higher levels.

Ok

*And so you are **paid** for doing it. You're paid well for doing it and then you can provide for each day without worrying about what you're doing tomorrow. And uh, you know that you're doing something constructive. You're going home knowing that you're doing something for somebody.*

So you feel that you, you'll still be helping, you'll still be in a helping profession by training um, that would be your focus if you would leave, is that because you'll still be

contributing which is in line with why you would want to teach but also that you'll still be better paid?

Exactly.

Ok. And, um do you supplement your salary in any way? For instance, do you take on extra duties or work that results in an added monthly income?

Um, at the moment we are doing the aftercare programme…

Umhm.

So that helps with the extra income at the end of the month.

Uhm.

And if we had the choice I presume we would probably do something other than teaching during the weekends but I presume that that is not allowed to…

Oh, ok.

As part of the teaching profession. If you are teaching you're not allowed to indulge in any other work related affair.

Oh, ok.

To get an extra income. That's the way I understood it, maybe I'm wrong.

Um, ok. I'm not too sure about that, so. Ok.

Could discuss a little bit about what your understanding of the way that other people for example, friends, or family, or even society at large view teaching as a profession?

Um…I don't think anyone I know views the teaching profession as something positive. Um, it's become such a demeaning profession to other people that when, when you tell them that you are teaching they go, oh why are you teaching for?

Uhm

Because firstly, uh, it seems like, the way the department treats the teachers, it sort of, uh, it sort of puts a negative aspect on teaching itself, regarding other people. So, they don't have as much respect for teachers as they used to before.

Ok, and what do you think the reasons behind that are?

Uh! I mean if the Department lacks respect for teachers then I don't think anyone else is going to respect the profession either. If you're paid so little for something that you supposed to be doing, uh, I mean we're supposed to be contributing so much to society with kids and all of that and if you're paid so little already they, that's a lack of respect.

Ok, so you think that the department, how they determine what you should be paid indicates what kind of, level the profession should have in regard to society.

Exactly, because if you go, if you look at overseas. The way they are paid there. The teachers are respected much more than they are here, and everybody's leaving South Africa to go over there, because that's the same, the same issue. It's the lack of respect and it's the salary obviously.

So you say that teachers actually are not respected in society.

Not any more, they used to be before.

Ok. Um if you could start all over again, would you choose teaching as a profession? What are your reasons for your answer?

No.

You wouldn't…

I'd uh, as I said I have a passion for kids so I probably would have decided whatever that I would probably have opened up a crèche or something. But I wouldn't choose teaching all over again.

And your reasons behind that are…?

As I said, I don't think it's a very constructive profession anymore, as it used to be before. Besides the salary, it's just uh, the pressure that is being put on teachers now, is horrible. Um, I mean that they expect you to have forty kids in a class before they give you another teacher at a school!

Uhm.

So they expect you to sit with a class and have constructive learning taking place with forty children in a class in a small space. It's impossible.

So the expectations are unrealistic.

Exactly, obviously you're going to try your best to get as much as possible done in that space of time, but it's not gonna be as much as you can, as you were. You, you are capable of giving out much more to those kids than you, you can at that point in time. It's very difficult.

So, you, you with like the children are also loosing out with the changes.

Definitely! The government is spending money on all unnecessary things when they can go to school and provide extra classrooms, smaller classes, more teachers. But they're spending money in the wrong direction.

Uhm. And uh, would you encourage friends or family who were considering to come into the profession to enter the profession?

No.

No. For the same reasons?

For the same reasons I've just said.

Ok. Well thank you very much for your time.

Pleasure.

Summary of Interview 4

The interview began with a discussion of the different factors that played a part in the participant choosing teaching as a career. She explained that she thought that she would like Commerce as she is largely technically and mathematically inclined, but also feels that teaching offered the opportunity to develop your skills in those fields as well. She explained that when she started studying, they were only offering bursaries and loans for teacher training and while she would have preferred to do Commerce she had to follow teaching due to financial constraints. She went on to say though, that she has always loved children and thus working with children was still something she was sure she could do and enjoy, *"I didn't think I'd have a problem teaching because I get along with kids."*

The participant did not think that being a woman had influenced her decision to teach as she feels that she has *"a passion for kids"*. The participant strongly expressed that currently, she could not imagine any of her male friends and family entering the teaching profession, even though she realises that gender is not an indication of a good teacher. She feels that things have changed from the time she studied and that a major drawback for men is that *"The salary doesn't foot the bill…that's a major thing."* Her second reason for thinking that men would not choose to become teachers currently, is due to the focus of teaching having changed dramatically. As she says,

> *when I first started teaching the main focus used to be on the children. Now it seems the main focus is on, uh, completing… and filling in forms.*

She feels that males do not enjoy such work and would feel overly stressed by the ways that teaching has changed.

When discussing the participant's opinion of a teacher's salary, she checked first whether she could be honest about her response. After receiving affirmation that she could, she then exclaimed that she thinks the salary is,

> *Pathetic, I think it's really pathetic. For what we do for kids and I believe we make a difference. Everything stems from the classroom. What a child becomes, future, any future, stems from the classroom…*

She mentioned that the support that teachers provide to their pupils can be *"academic or emotional"* and that teachers play a fundamentally important role in children's futures, but is angered that teachers don't *"get anything for it; it's not enough."*

The participant recalled that while studying, she was not aware that teaching was not a well-paid job, and explained that *"we were never made aware of those sorts of things…I only first became aware of it when I first started teaching."* She also explains when she first started teaching, the salary was not a major problem as she was still staying at home, and while contributing towards the household she did not have the same type of pressure that she has now.

She explains that as her personal circumstances have changed, so have her financial needs and responsibilities. She said that in the past,

> *there wasn't so much of responsibility of footing bills, but now there's much more of a responsibility as time goes on because you have more priorities that you have to take care of.*

For instance, the participant explained that her mother is disabled, and when she lived at home the participant was the main bread winner, however now that she has moved away from home,

> *it's a bit difficult for me to contribute as much as I used to contribute before and I don't feel very nice about that because as I said she's disabled and it's very difficult for her to support herself.*

The participant described the tremendous pressure of *"earn(ing) so little"* that *"you're always looking ahead because you…you feel like you need to think about the future all the time."*

She proceeded to describe her feelings and disappointment that resulted from the reality of earning a teacher's salary,

> *I was very despondent. It doesn't change my passion about kids and teaching, but it does change the whole idea that I need to do something else as wel,l in order to foot the bill. Because teaching on its own is not going to foot everything.*

The participant elaborated when she discussed how difficult it is to be a single person, living in Johannesburg on a teacher's salary. Rent alone *"takes up half your salary… So that's, that's a bit unfair and the subsidy that they give you these days is not a lot."* She explains that applying for a home loan on a teacher's salary is rather futile as, *"we get… a loan of two forty, most, two fifty (thousand rand) and in Johannesburg you can get nothing for that."*

The participant felt that she was most unprepared for some of the changes that have occurred within teaching recently, especially class size. She says that it is *"impossible"* to *"have constructive learning taking place with forty children in a class"*. Bigger classes are more difficult to control and discipline. In addition problem solving due to learner conflict takes time away from teaching time and is very challenging. Nevertheless, she said that while the demands on teachers' are growing, *"the salaries stay stagnant."* The participant stresses that the children are the greatest losers as a result of all these changes and difficulties.

The participant went on to discuss her dissatisfaction with the newly instated OBE (Outcome Based Education) and RNCS (Revised National Curriculum Statement) policies. She feels that in the past she could describe teaching as *"hands-on"*, however now they've implemented *"fancy names"* and have also increased the paper and administration load of teachers, which results in added stress and less time for quality teaching. She says that, *"what we used to get through with (the children) was much more constructive, than now."* She feels that this system does not actually do what it is intended to, *"they supposed to be focusing on the kids more than, as I said that paperwork."* She feels that all the paperwork is a distraction from teaching and caring properly for the children.

When discussing whether the participant views teaching to be a life-long career, she very clearly stated,

> *Not a chance…. I plan on getting into something else other than teaching. As I said it's not because of the kids, that's the only rewarding part of the profession. There's nothing else in the profession that's rewarding. I need to get out of it as I said financially and it's becoming very stressful regarding admin, it's not that I cannot cope, but there are other*

professions that I can do the same amount of work for and earn way more than I am right now.

The participant very openly feels that she has to be realistic about the situation, as if she is not, *"survival in the future is not gonna be very easy."*

The participant feels that she would like to move out of teaching but possibly into something that is aligned with teaching, for instance, training for corporate companies. She says, *"I'm not finding it (teaching) constructive. If you cannot help at the lower levels then start helping at the higher levels."* And her motive is that she would be *"paid well"* for doing it and will still have a meaningful impact on the lives of others.

In order to earn a little extra money, over and above her salary, the participant said that she's doing after care once a week which, *"helps with the extra income at the end of the month."* She explained that if she were allowed to provide extra lessons for money, she would most certainly do so, however as she understands it *"If you are teaching you're not allowed to indulge in any other work related affair."*

The discussion then turned to the ways in which the participant feels that there isn't anyone she knows who views teaching positively. People are always asking why a person would ever be a teacher. She feels that teaching has become *"such a demeaning profession"*. This she feels, is largely as a result of *"the way the Department treats the teachers."* She felt that the Gauteng Department of Education *"lacks respect for teachers…"* and that this results in a lack of respect for the profession by society at large. This lack of respect, she feels is emphasised by the poor remuneration that teachers' receive for something that is *"supposed to be contributing so much to society… and if you're paid so little already…, that's a lack of respect."* She felt that this problem is experienced by many teachers and explains why it is that so many teachers are leaving South Africa to go and teach abroad.

The participant felt that if she had the opportunity to start all over again, she would most certainly not choose teaching, however she would like to choose a profession as rewarding as teaching can be. For example, she would consider opening up a crèche. She

is very specific in her reasons underlying this hypothetical decision, firstly *"I don't think it's a very constructive profession anymore,"* Secondly, regardless of the poor salary,

> *the pressure that is being put on teachers now, is horrible. Um, I mean that they expect you to have forty kids in a class before they give you another teacher at a school!*

She said it is for the above reasons that she would not encourage any friends or family to enter the teaching profession.

Transcription of Interview 5

Could we start by talking a bit about how you decided to choose teaching as a career, what factors played a part?

In choosing to be a teacher?

Uhm.

Well basically I was offered a bursary and I had no choice because it was a teaching institution.

Ok.

So I couldn't study anything else.

Ok, so there weren't other bursaries available to you at the time.

I applied but I didn't get them.

Ok. So you were limited…

This was one that I felt was ja…financially…

Ok, so you were limited by financial resources. Um, and then when you were, when you started studying teaching what were some of the things that, what were some of the things you thought you would enjoy about teaching?

Um…what did I enjoy about teaching? Um, I think imparting information.

Uh huh

Sharing knowledge with younger children, I wanted to work with the younger children, sharing knowledge, and also developing a holistic child. That's important to me.

Ok, your role that you play…

In society, yes.

The role that you play in creating a society that's actually viable.

Ja. Holistic children, very important to me.

Uhm.

Especially uh, considering I had to do teaching and I think I'm good at it because I can explain properly, I have an interest in it. It's not like I was forced to do it. I do have an interest in it.

Uhm. Ok, there are things that you enjoy.

It was on my list, ja, it was on my list of things to study for.

Um, ok. Could you reflect on whether you think that being a woman had any role to play in you choosing to go into teaching?

Um, in other words do more women become teachers?

Possibly, or also something to think about is could you imagine, maybe you could answer this question, could you imagine your brother, husband or any of your male friends entering the teaching profession?

No, I don't think so.

And why do you say that?

Well, salary is one definitely.

Uhm

And uh, I think that uh it is a profession that more females gear towards, especially teaching the younger children. Males don't seem to enjoy teaching the younger ones. They'd rather go into a high school, there's the other subjects.

Ok, so there's a bond between the younger children and…

Yes, a motherly figure.

Ok, and then also obviously the salary.

The salary, definitely.

Ok. And that's just not enough for a man to earn. So then in that way do you think that teaching has a rol…has some sort of a role to play in you being a woman and choosing that as a profession?

Ja.

I mean if you were a man…

I might have, but then I don't think I would've decided to teach in the foundation phase, I don't think. I would've taught at a high school, and I think that at high school you get paid for the extra murals and things like that.

Uh huh

So I would've taught a sport or something like that…

Supplemented…

Yes, supplemented with a sport, or coaching or whatever.

Ok. How would you describe a teacher's salary?

I think that it is adequate if you are part of a married couple.

Ok…

And there are two incomes in the household, or like me, you know, sharing with other people?

Uhm.

But on its own I don't think it's adequate at all.

You can't actually survive…

You can't actually survive because look at me, car payments, rent, you know, stuff like that…

So you've been forced to actually live with other people…

With someone else, yes. Or else I'd live alone! Definitely. I'd live alone.

So you mean if teaching was a career that paid enough I mean you wouldn't, you wouldn't opt to live with other people?

No, I wouldn't. I'd rather live alone.

Ok. And so you're limited in that way because of your career.

Yes, and also it, uh, it affects your lifestyle in terms of what car you decide to buy… um what car you decide to drive, the sort of activities you do on the weekend, things like that. Because you have a budget to follow all the time, you have to bear that at the back of your mind.

Ok, so there's never like a kind of free moment where…

Yes, where you can't go on a shopping spree as such, unless it's your birthday and you get your 13th cheque or whatever, but then you've got major expenses throughout the year.

Uhm

Like for me I had to uh, get new tyres for my car, I had to send my car in for a service, whatever, whatever, so all that extra money goes there.

Uhm.

So, it's not actually luxury money, you know what I mean?

Yes, ja. Uhm, so that means you always have to be accommodating for these things.

Ja.

Um, have there been any significant changes in your personal circumstances that have influenced your financial needs or security? Um I think we were just discussing the fact that because you're single and you don't have another person's salary to sup…to supplement yours, you **have** to live with your brother and his family so basically that's um, I think we've covered that question.

Ja, ja.

Um, once you began teaching, were there any aspects of teaching you were not prepared for, you felt let down by?

Any aspects of teaching?

Uhm

Um…I think our curriculum, our policies keep changing and that's a bit difficult to, you know, to work around. So there's tons of paperwork and it's always changing. So it's not something you can stick to…

Uhm hm. So you don't feel confident, and um, containing or holding in that way…

Yes, yes.

It's always changing so you kind of get a sense of insecurity or unease?

Yes, yes. And also when the department, when they pay visits to us, they want to see these things in a particular format. And different schools interpret it differently. So they say things like at other schools they do it this way and we recommend that you do it that way. But that, that won't work for all schools, you know what I mean?

Uhm. And so instead of stipulating what they want they don't but then they say they don't like what you do anyway.

Yes, it doesn't uh,...it's inadequate. It doesn't fulfil the proper requirements.

Yes…

And they keep changing it. And even with that and you work on that, you spend hours doing that at school and they go and change it, so then they come back and say they want this now in a different way.

Ja, ja. So there's a lot of work extra that you are reporting to do, besides for the work you do with the children and teaching.

Yes, and courses to go on to understand the new terminology, or the new 450 form or whatever.

So it detracts from your actual, um…

Teaching in the classroom. Ja.

Ok. Um, do you view teaching as a life-long career?

Um, I think that for a lot of people yes it is, yes, because like a colleague says a teacher is born, a teacher is not made. But uh, personally I was also looking to get out of teaching earlier as I said because of the financial thing.

Uhm. Ok.

I want to study and get to another field.

Uhm, so you considering studying?

*Yes, but **still** linked to teaching in terms of training or something like that.*

Ok, and you feel that training will be useful, or similar to teaching because it has what kinds of characteristics?

The same imparting of knowledge, the same relationship that you build with the student. And uh, I think that it would be nicer to work with adults.

Ok, so it fulfils the same functions…

Yes, but with a higher salary.

Yes, with a higher salary.

In terms of the need to educate…

Yes, the reward of sharing knowledge and working with people and improving people's situations.

Yes.

Um, but it also comes with a higher salary.

Yes.

Ok. And you were saying that someone said that a teacher a teacher is not made, a teacher is born. I mean how do you feel about that?

I think that's true to a large extent because, um, if you look at the kind of teachers there are in the classroom, some people go into it because they think that it's an easy job because you get lots of holidays, and uh, it's a copable salary, if I can use that word? And uh, I don't think their financial circumstances are not the same in terms of they have parents who are able to help them out or whatever the case may be.

So they have more financial support than others.

Yes, yes. So,I think ja…

So people like that may go into it for slightly different reasons that, but that most people…

Most of them persevere, most people persevere even with the bad salary and the stress and the many hours of work, even weekends we take work home, we work 'til ten at night, some of us. Um, ja, a teacher is born. You've gotta have a passion for it.

Oh ok. Ja, ja, so there's something about it you, you just have to enjoy. Ok. Um, you said that you've obviously considered leaving the teaching profession and you said it's because of the fact that you're not earning enough money to live the life, I mean not even that you'd **love** to lead, it's just something that's standard and average.

*Ja, cos it, it's, besides the work stress it's also stressful being broke, at the end, **before** the end of each month. You know what I mean?*

Yes

Like stressful. And 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? Or what if I can't, if I don't have enough petrol money to last me 'til the end of the month and then it's borrowing from your sister, and whatever, whatever.

So you feel inadequate in those ways?

Yes. You can't…

Support yourself.

Ja, support myself basically. Ja, it's not even the luxuries, I mean the clothes we can do without, the cell phones it's not that high, it's the petrol and the…you know the...

So your basic necessities, it's a bit too costly

Ja, it's a bit shaky.

Ja, you always looking out…

To make ends meet it's a bit shaky. It depends on the month, like the car, or whatever.

Uhm. Ja. Ok, do you supplement your salary in any way? Like, for instance, do you undertake any extra duties or work that results in an added monthly income?

Aftercare.

Aftercare?

Ja

And you do that because you feel that…?

Well I need the money first of all. Secondly, um I teach the children so it's a familiar environment, it's at school.

Uhm

So it's not like it's an outside place or anything, and it's interesting.

Ok. But your main reason is…

It supplements…

It supplements. Um, I wonder if we could discuss what your understanding of the way that your friends and family or even society at large, um, view teaching as a profession?

In two words overworked, underpaid.

Ja, ok. That's how they view…?

Uhm, that's how they view. But they also tend to think that it's a leisurely job in terms of you get time off holidays and you don't work public holidays, and you finish early. But we never ever really finish early. You know? We work at school 'til about half past two, three, I work later, 'til about four or so and uh, I take work home often, almost everyday.

Uhm. So there are some misconceptions about what it actually requires of teachers?

Ja, it's not like a job, a clock-work job where you can like go there at half past seven in the morning and leave at four with no papers in your hand, with no work to do at home, with like a project here and there or whatever?

Uhm

But we take work home almost everyday. There's books to mark constantly, files to update, the paperwork is shocking.

So the admin comes in as well…

Yes, I think the paperwork has increased like ten-fold over the last few years.

And what do you think, I mean that other than, than them thinking that maybe teachers get an easy time because they get lots of holidays, do you think there are any other reasons that they perceive teaching in this way, like overworked, underpaid?

Um…

Is there anything else contributing to that?

I think they look at you in terms of um, you know they say you shouldn't judge people by looking at them and the cars that they drive and whatever, but it's fairly obvious, if you look at teachers, none of us like drive fancy cars and we always like sort of uh, we never go away on expensive holidays or do outrageous things, so they, I think they can see that we watch how we spend our money.

Uhm, ok. So it's not really esteemed? I mean, it's not really something that people possibly can think that oh, um, I'd like to be a teacher.

I think there are some aspects in terms of our relationship with children, um, a lot of my friends love that I teach and that I actually enjoy it because I'm always bragging about our school and um, this child is this and that child is…and always sharing experiences of the classroom…

Uhm

I think some of my friends actually show some sort of admiration in terms of like, it's a ***noble*** *profession, with the discipline problems and with the class numbers, at this school we don't really have such a problem with that, not as such in terms of class numbers, but with the discipline definitely and with the stress. It's definitely higher. Because now it's not simply a matter of teaching but it's also being the nurse, and the mother figure, and the counsellor, and the therapist and whatever the child needs.*

So there's a lot of roles…

A lot of roles. More so now I think. More so now.

And people can appreciate that when they think about it and also maybe because they know you.

Yes, and you know with the function that we play in society now, if the child can't turn to the teacher, you know the teacher should be a constant in the life-experience of the child.

Uhm

The teacher should be a constant, I think. So some of my friends like you know when I talk about school and the children and the problems we experience and how sometimes it is, and how ***bad*** *sometimes it is, in terms of if you look at families and dysfunctional families, and the financial situation of the, like our black parents, you know? The domestic parents…*

Yes…

Then I think they uh, they see how important it is. The value of teaching.

But then and then if you have people you have just met, or they don't know you, their perceptions I'm assuming are slightly different until they've heard you speaking about it.

Yes, yes. So I do get the question sometimes, you're a teacher? ***Why*** *are you in that profession still? Why haven't you moved? Especially in Johannesburg, especially since I moved here, people want to know why you haven't moved into something else, because*

they know teaching has a reputation I think. It's sad to say, overworked, underpaid, but it is.

Uhm.

That's the reputation. Almost a stigma. Hm?

Yes. That applies to teaching.

Yes. Overworked underpaid, um, they think that the classrooms are chaotic…

Uhm.

Ja.

And it takes a lot of effort to make sure that they're not chaotic.

Ja.

Ok, and um, if, if you could start all over again, would you choose teaching as a profession?

No I wouldn't.

And what are your reasons for saying that?

Um, I think that in order to build a secure future for your, for yourself, in terms of personal growth I've learnt a lot yes, but the reality of it is that you still have to pay your bills and you still have to look after yourself.

Uhm

And um, I'm lucky that I'm single but had I been married with children I think that it would've been difficult. Yes, a supplementary income would've been ok, but um, what if something were to happen to my husband and I had to look after the children myself? There is no way I would be able to support the household. There is ***no ways.*** *So, I think I*

would, as much as I love it, I think I would've chosen something else that is equally enjoyable, but that paid more.

You need to get something viable. You need to get something out of it, you need passion but…

No, the reality of it, yes everything I get is personal reward. The only thing I get is personal reward, I love my job, but in terms of finance, the financial situation. And let's be honest ***that's*** *a motivating factor in how you live…in how happy you are, in how secure you are, in the activities that you do, you know?*

Yes, it defines your life, your quality of life.

Yes, quality of life, that's it, ja. I mean money's not everything, I'm no saying I want to get a high-paying job um, that I can enjoy, just…more, a little more.

Ja, it's not enough.

Ja, it's too stressful.

Yes, um and if you had maybe, any family or friends who were considering teaching as a profession what would your advice to them be?

I think that if they came from a secure financial background then I would say go for it, if they showed a general love for it, then go for it, but if they didn't and they were looking to improve their financial status, or, you know their lives, then I would say no.

Ok

Rather try something else. Maybe linked like training.

Uhm.

If you enjoy teaching try and get a job where it pays more, or, uh, work at a private school, and get paid more. Actually that's what I would do also. Maybe in a few more years if I will try at a private school.

So if you, if you don't actually decide to, to…

To go into the training. Then that's, that's what I would do.

Ok. So that's actually a more viable option because you still get the reward, that you do, the personal reward that you get from teaching.

Yes, and being with the children, and being part of the school environment.

Ja

I think I like it. It's a, it's a cooperative job. It's like you pass the child on from one grade into another, into the hands of other people. It's a special relationship.

Uhm, ok. Thank you very much for your time.

You're welcome.

Summary of Interview 5

The interview began with a discussion of the different factors that played a part in the participant choosing teaching as a career. The participant explained that there was not much option available to her as she had been offered a bursary at a teaching institution. This seemed to be the only financially viable option for the participant, nevertheless she did explain that she had *"an interest in it. It's not like I was forced to do it."* She feels that she has a *"role"* to play *"in society"*, and participant went on to say that she really enjoys *"imparting information"* to children. She feels passionate about

> *Sharing knowledge with younger children, I wanted to work with the younger children, sharing knowledge, and also developing a holistic child. That's important to me.*

The participant believes that it is more likely for women to choose teaching as a career as the salary is a hugely negatively influencing factor for men. She also explained that she feels women are far more drawn to teaching younger children than are men. She believes that in the case where men choose teaching, they are more inclined to teach high school where there is a greater variety of subjects to teach. She also said that *"…at high school you get paid for the extra murals and things like that"*, which would make teaching there

more lucrative for male teachers. She feels that for men to teach, they have to find something more to supplement their salary.

The participant felt that a teacher's salary *"is adequate if you are part of a married couple."* She felt that it is necessary to have *"two incomes in the household"*, otherwise it is necessary to *"shar(e expenses) with other people."* She was quite sure that *"on its own, I don't think it's adequate at all."* The participant's experience has been that *"You can't actually survive (on a teacher's salary), because look at me, car payments, rent..."* without another's financial support it becomes impossible to be financially stable. In order to survive on a teacher's salary without having the financial support of a partner, it has been the participant's experience, and many others she knows, to have to share a home and find many other ways to share and reduce the costs of living. She says convincingly, *"Or else I'd live alone! Definitely. I'd live alone."*

She explained that for a single person to survive on a teacher's salary requires a lot of restraint, and limits one's options. *"Because you have a budget to follow all the time, you have to bear that at the back of your mind"*, and she added that *"it affects your lifestyle."* The participant explained that even when one gets a little bit of extra money, such as a thirteenth cheque, one is not able to spend it as he or she may wish. She explained that, *"Like for me, I had to uh, get new tyres for my car, I had to send my car in for a service,"* and so has very little expendable income.

The participant felt that she was most unprepared for some of the changes that have occurred within teaching over the last few years.

> *I think our curriculum, our policies keep changing and that's a bit difficult to, you know, to work around. So there's tons of paperwork and it's always changing. So it's not something you can stick to.*

She feels that these changes can be very disconcerting and frustrating. This is further made exasperating by the Department of Education's seeming lack of consensus as to what exactly is required of the schools in terms of documentation as well as the confusion around the format that these documents are expected to take. She elaborated by saying,

> *…when the Department…pay visits to us, they want to see these things in a particular format. And different schools interpret it differently. So they say things like at other schools they do it this way and we recommend that you do it that way. But that, that won't work for all schools… And they keep changing it. …you spend hours doing that at school and they go and change it, so then they come back and say they want this now in a different way.*

The participant explained that many hours are taken up by the confusing administration that needs to be done for the Department, this all being outside of teaching time, and there are *"courses to go on to understand the new terminology, or the new 450 form or whatever."* This detracts from *"Teaching in the classroom."*

The participant emphasised that teaching should be considered to be a life-long career, however she feels that this is not possible for her, primarily as a result of the poor remuneration levels. She said that,

> *I think that for a lot of people, yes, it is (a lifelong career), …because like a colleague says a teacher is born, a teacher is not made. But uh, personally I was also looking to get out of teaching earlier as I said because of the financial thing.*

The participant hopes to study and move into a field related to teaching, such as training, as she feels that she will still retain the satisfaction that comes from *"the need to educate…the imparting of knowledge, the same relationship that you build with the student."* This option provides the same level of satisfaction that teaching provides the participant, *"…but with a higher salary."* The participant explains that while teaching comes with its own stresses,

> *besides the work stress it's also stressful being broke, at the end, **before** the end of each month... Like stressful!. And 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? Or what if I can't, if I don't have enough petrol money to last me 'til the end of the month and then it's borrowing from your sister, and whatever, whatever.*

The participant explains that although she does without the luxuries, there are basic necessities that she worries about in case she is unable to afford them, *"To make ends meet it's a bit shaky. It depends on the month, like the car, or whatever."* The participant explained that she does extra work as an aftercare teacher in order to further supplement her salary.

The participant explained that she feels different people go into teaching for different reasons. Some people are driven to teach, however others

> *go into it because they think that it's an easy job because you get lots of holidays, and uh, it's a cope-able salary, if I can use that word? And uh, I don't think their financial circumstances are (not) the same in terms of they have parents who are able to help them out or whatever the case may be.*

From this statement, it would appear that the participant feels that some people can 'afford' to teach, however others eventually may have to weigh up financial gain, from the drive and passion to teach.

> *Most of them (teachers) persevere, most people persevere even with the bad salary and the stress and the many hours of work, even weekends we take work home, we work 'til ten at night, some of us. Um, ja, a teacher is born. You've gotta have a passion for it.*

The participant's understanding of the perceptions that society holds of teachers could be summarised *"In two words (as) overworked, underpaid."* She elaborated that this leads many people to ask why one may remain in the profession and describes this as the *"stigma"* of teaching.

She feels that there is a large portion of society who have misconceptions about the profession. These people

> *also tend to think that it's a leisurely job in terms of... you get time off, holidays and you don't work public holidays, and you finish early. But we never ever really finish early. You know? We work at school 'til about half past two, three, I work later, 'til about four or so and uh, I take work home often, almost everyday.*

The participant described the nature of teaching in the following way,

> *it's not like… a clock-work job where you…leave at four with no papers in your hand, with no work to do at home…. We take work home almost everyday. There's books to mark constantly, files to update, the paperwork is shocking.*

She feels that there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes and beyond the 'public eye' that if one is not a teacher, or closely involved with a teacher, one is unaware of the amount of work teachers actually do.

The participant felt that one of the factors that leads to these negative perceptions of teachers within society is that teachers have very little financial status in society and are therefore are not esteemed by others. She says that even though

> *they say you shouldn't judge people by looking at them and the cars that they drive and whatever, (but) it's fairly obvious, if you look at teachers, none of us like drive fancy cars and we always like sort of uh, we never go away on expensive holidays or do outrageous things. So they, I think they can see that we watch how we spend our money."*

The participant however notices that her group of friends, and the people that know her seem to have been influenced by her positive attitude as, *"I'm always bragging about our school and um, this child is this, and that child is…and always sharing experiences of the classroom…"*. She feels that some of these people think that teaching is *"a noble profession…"* especially *"with the discipline problems and with the class numbers…and with the stress."* The challenges facing teachers have grown *"Because now it's not simply a matter of teaching but it's also being the nurse, and the mother figure, and the counsellor, and the therapist and whatever the child needs."*

The participant feels that some people acknowledge, while others overlook the role that teachers play. She thinks that the way society is currently structured, with the problems and challenges that face children and their families, it is necessary for *"the teacher (to) be a constant in the life-experience of the child."* It is often the case that the teacher is the last person a child has left to reach out to. The participant feels that if people are able to acknowledge this, then they are able to *"see how important it is. The value of teaching."*

If given the opportunity to start again, the participant was sure to say that she would not choose teaching as a career. She says,

> *…I think that in order to build a secure future for your, for yourself, in terms of personal growth I've learnt a lot yes, but the reality of it is that you still have to pay your bills and you still have to look after yourself.*

The participant considers herself fortunate to be single and not have the financial responsibility and obligation to others as she feels that even with a supplementary salary of a partner,

> *There is no way I would be able to support the household. There is no ways**.** So, I think I would, as much as I love it, I think I would've chosen something else that is equally enjoyable, but that paid more.*

The participant very succinctly summarised the benefits and disadvantages of teaching in the following way:

> *…the reality of it, yes everything I get is personal reward. The only thing I get is personal reward, I love my job, but in terms of finance, the financial situation. And let's be honest* ***that's*** *a motivating factor in how you live…in how happy you are, in how secure you are, in the activities that you do, you know?*

The participant wished to stress that she was not after fortunes, *"just…, a little more."*

The participant felt that if she were to advise someone who came to her saying that they were interested in becoming a teacher, she would have to honestly say that,

> *if they came from a secure, financial background then I would say go for it, if they showed a general love for it, then go for it, but if they didn't and they were looking to improve their financial status, or, you know their lives, then I would say no.*

The participant feels that if the person needed to earn an average living, she would suggest a profession that remunerates better, but might still have some of the joys of teaching; such as adult training. She feels that the other option is to teach at a private school, something that she would consider pursuing in a few years time.

Transcription of Interview 6

Could we start by talking a bit about how you decided to choose teaching as a career, what factors played a part?

Um, I always wanted to work with kids, and that was when I was just a little girl when I was really young…

Uhm

And I wanted to do social work, to start out, but I just felt that it could be a bit hard for me, cos I'm a bit of a softy…

Ja

So I'm teaching and then from here I'd like to do remedial.

Oh, ok. So, um you said you like working with kids, what is it about that that you…

Uh, just being able to expand them as people…

Uhm

And to inform them about things and to…guide them through life.

Uhm, ok, ja. When you were thinking about becoming a teacher, I think that we've discussed some of the things that you thought you would enjoy about it?

Well I enjoy all facets of working with kids…

Yes

I enjoy the marking and preparing lessons and looking and constantly learning to teach the kids…

Uhm. So the curriculum?

Ja. To get ideas, ja…

To get ideas across and everything…

Ja.

Um. Ok, could you reflect on whether you think that being a woman had any role to play in you choosing to go into teaching?

Nothing, no I wouldn't say it played a major role.

Ok, but at the same time could you imagine your brother, husband or any of your male friends entering the teaching profession? In your opinion why do you think this may be?

Yes. They already are.

Really? Ja. Ok, and um, how do you think they manage the idea of becoming a teacher because most people have said um, no and largely for…

Salary

Yes.

Ok. Well for them it was also…that they didn't actually become teachers, but they had actually done teaching in the past.

Ok…

They didn't actually work, but they have studied.

Oh, ok.

And it was also salary based reason.

So your feeling is if they had been paid properly…

Uh…ja I could say that. I know a lot that have gone overseas and taught overseas and have come back and have studied maybe.

Oh….ok

For the salary mainly and then decided to do the real thing…

Oh, so some people have made money before that…

Ja, and then they've taught and really, really loved it.

Oh, ok. That's very interesting. Um, um, do you think, um…so you don't think that um teaching as a career choice is easier or more difficult to make for a man than it is for a woman?

No, I don't think so because I think it's something that you decide that you want to achieve, or work with children and help them. I really think it's definitely a personal thing as well…

Ja

I don't think it's for everyone..

Ja. Um, and how would you describe a teacher's salary?

Oooh, tough one. Well, I would say it's a little bit too low, ok because we are building the future. I know it's a cliché and everything like that…

No…

*We **are** with the kids most of the day and we are building them up…*

Ja

To go to varsity and stuff eventually…

Yes

So they really should put more money into not necessarily only the teachers but also the schooling.

Yes

I mean…

So the standard of education…

The whole…a little bit more, ja.

No that's fine. Um, um…when you were training to teach were you aware that teaching wasn't a particularly well-paid profession?

Yes I was, ja, ja.

And how did you manage that?

Well for me, it wasn't a matter of the money…

Uhm

I was doing it because I was loving the training and really enjoying the whole idea of you know passing on knowledge…

Ja…

So the money didn't affect me at all.

Ok. Have there been any significant changes in your personal circumstances that have influenced your financial needs or security? Um, for example a lot of people when they've had children their needs have changed or just just the kind of lives they lead…

Well I don't have children or anything but my parents have paid for my house, so that's available for me…

Oh…

You know I'm not paying a bond. So maybe that's, maybe that's why I also could, because I knew I was gonna have that…fallback, ja.

Ok. So I mean do you think you could've done it without the help of…?

Uh, over a much longer period and maybe a much smaller house. Ja.

Ja. So with less um…like flexibility…

Yes, I would have to sacrifice a lot more.

Yes ok. Um would you agree that most people who are living on a teachers salary would need an extra salary to supplement…?

Most definitely, oh ja. Ja. Um, with me on my salary if I were paying everything I probably wouldn't make it through. And that's with that's now paying a car and a medical aid or anything…

Uhm, ja once you began teaching, were there any aspects of teaching you were not prepared for, or felt let down by?

Well for me, because did four years at varsity…

Uhm

And I felt that the varsity doesn't prepare you enough for cons…parent consult. You know you always get told ooh, you know, you're never given any guidelines how to deal with a parent that's angry and often they never tell you very much about discipline…

Uhm, yes.

And those are the…

Key things…

Key things and I feel that was a little bit of a problem for me.

I think its come up so far.... Um and is there anything else or was that mostly it?

Mostly, that's it, but like now you've got to do all these duties and when you do them the first time it's quite daunting because you don't have a clue what's going on.

Uhm, ja

You know if the varsity should've decided by our fourth year shown us how to fill out a support form you know and then we won't be sitting with the problem of half the teachers in school not knowing how to do it because they've never done it as well.

Ja. And they haven't had um, a proper explanation in what goes into filling it out properly…

Exactly, because you send in these forms and then they send it back and then it goes back and forth. If they just trained us from the beginning it would solve the problem.

Ja. Ok. Um, do you view teaching as a life-long career?

Yes

Um could we talk about your feelings about that a little bit?

Well I see myself being in a school for sixty years. You know one school that I really enjoy, I could do anything I wanted to, wherever…

Ja. Ok. Um, so then what are the reasons that you remain, and you can remain?

Just that I'm enjoying it, I'm getting the quality of life, you know I'm happy.

You say quality of life, what exactly do you mean?

Like quality of life, I'm getting performance from the kids, I'm getting performance from my job, I'm getting enriched. Constantly learning new things, constantly met with children with different children being… and for me that just makes me wanna stay and do more, and like conquer those challenges.

Uhm. So personally rewarding…

Ja

As opposed to necessarily financially…

Ja. I think it's more personal, for me.

Ok. Um, so you, you haven't really considered leaving the teaching profession or contemplated teaching at a different school, or teaching in another country?

Um, I have contemplated teaching at another school, because it's closer to my house.

Oh, ok. So it would be reasons of travelling.

Ja

But not necessarily a private school.

Well it was a private school.

Would that influence your decision at all?

Um, depending on the salary…

Yes…

Like if it was major more, maybe…

Yes

But if it's not and I don't think it was much more then I wouldn't.

Oh, ok. And do you think that if you need a change, maybe if you decide to have children…?

No, definitely. Then I'd move closer to home because then it would be easier.

Ok. And do you supplement your salary in any way? For instance, do you undertake any extra duties or work that results in an added monthly income?

No. Nothing at all.

Um, and I wonder if we could discuss wonder if we could discuss what your understanding of the way that other people, like your family and friends or even society at large view the teaching profession?

Well that's actually interesting. Considering it's a disappointing topic, because as soon as you say to someone 'oh I'm teaching' then they go, 'oh man, what the hell made you do that?' kind of thing…

Uhm, yes…

I think that the overview of teaching has a very negative…outlook…

Perception…

Ja perception. I think it's terrible because everyone is gonna have to send their children to teachers at one point in their life and they should be praising the job and praising the idea of teachers…

Ja… And admiring what you do.

Ja, and not looking down at the job.

And what do you think might be the reasons that they do look down on it?

I think, especially in this country, I don't know in other countries, it's a salary thing and you don't have all that…, you can't show yourself on…

Like status…?

Status and money and cars, and fancy this, because I think in this country is a very prominent thing…

Yes, in society…

Ja, and your classes, or whatever you call that. And I think that's maybe why, and also people feel that it's a half day job, and then they think oh well they get paid to do it - you people aren't working that hard.

Uhm, yes. And being a teacher what are your experiences really?

Well I've heard people say exactly that. Like, 'well it's only a half day job what are you moaning about? Dah dah dah dah'. And after they like 'why did you work?' some people realise that it's not a half day job and they like 'why did you work so hard for such little pay?' you know?

Ja, so there's a kind of perception in society that either teaching is not a big deal because you're not really working very hard, it's really flexible or you don't really work…

Ja, that's my experience…

Which isn't necessarily true…

Not at all, no, no.

And then um, or else they recognise that it's actually a difficult job, but they can't understand why anyone would…

Go into it, ja.

So there seems to be quite a negative view.

*Very, **very,** negative view.*

Ja.

I mean my father is adamant that I must get out of teaching.

And why is he so…?

I just think he just feels that, he knows that if I teach for the rest of my life I'm not going to be getting a much bigger salary than what I am now…

Ja

And he just wants to know that if I don't get married or whatever, that I can support myself…

Uhm, yes, yes.

And he also just feels that it's quite stressful…

Ja

You know, you've got stress from every angle, maybe he just thinks I can't handle it as well as he thinks I can…

Ok, so quite negative…

Very negative about it.

And I mean um, it's largely, I'm assuming that he's quite worried about your financial…security, and providing for the future…

Yeah, yeah, definitely that is what it is. That is what it is.

And if you…well I think I know what your answer will be, but um, if you could start all over again, would you choose teaching again?

Yes, definitely

Right. And um, I think we've discussed the reasons for that?

Yes

But um, if you had friends or family who were interested in the profession, what would your advice be?

Well, my sister's actually a teacher, and she said, her advice to me was don't get into it unless you are absolutely sure, because else you're going to be disappointed. And that would be my advice to anyone who's considering it.…

Uhm

If you're in first year and you don't like the pracs, don't carry on.

So you would say don't do it unless you're absolutely sure that…

That you like working with children, and working you know, working in close relation with different people, you're gonna have to get along with different people, and parents and if you can't do that, then don't go into it because you won't enjoy it.…

Ja, ja. Ok. Um, that sounds like fair advice. So your concern is that they have to go into it for the children and for themselves…

Definitely

Because there's nothing else much for them…

Ja. If you're not gonna get the personal rewards you're not gonna get the best for the children either.

Ja

It will probably be a disadvantage for them

Yes. Ok, well that's it. Thanks for your time.

Summary of Interview 6

The interview began with a discussion of the different factors that played a part in the participant choosing teaching as a career. The participant explained that ever since she was young she *"always wanted to work with kids."* Although she was interested in Social Work, she felt that this may be too trying for her and so she decided to teach. She said that she would like to specialise in remedial teaching in some day. The participant enjoys teaching as she is *"able to expand them (pupils) as people"* and also enjoys informing them in different areas as well as *"guid(ing) them through life."* The participant reported that she enjoys all facets of teaching, from preparing lesson plans to teaching the curriculum and finding interesting media through which to teach.

When considering whether she felt that being a woman played any role in her deciding to teach as a career, the participant was quick to explain that she felt that her gender made no difference. She qualified her statement by saying that she knows a number of men, friends and family, who have decided to enter the teaching profession. Interestingly, she explained that she knows a number of men *"that…didn't actually become teachers, but they had actually (studied) teaching in the past."* She explained that although they had trained as teachers, they did not enter the teaching profession due to the poor *"Salary."* It is the participant's opinion that if the salary had been higher, these men would have taught if they were better remunerated. She says that she knows *"a lot (of male teachers) that have gone overseas and taught overseas and have come back and have studied…"*.

She explained that others of them worked in different careers, made money and *"then they've taught and really, really loved it."* The participant explained that she feels that making the decision to become a teacher is no more difficult for a man to make than a woman. She put this in the following way:

> *I think it's something that you decide that you want to achieve, or work with children and help them. I really think it's definitely a personal thing as well… I don't think it's for everyone.*

When discussing the ways in which the participant would describe a teacher's salary, she said that she feels it poor, *"because we are building the future. We **are** with the kids most of the day and we are building them up… to go to varsity…eventually."* She feels that for this reason, *"they really should put more money into not necessarily only the teachers but also the schooling."*

Even though the participant was aware that teaching wasn't a well-paid profession, she decided to teach as she felt strongly 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. So the money didn't affect me at all.*

The discussion then began to explore whether the participant felt that her personal circumstances had changed in any significant way that may have changed her feelings about money and remuneration. She explained that she was fortunate enough to have parents who were able to buy and pay for her house. This allows her some financial freedom as she is not required to pay a bond, *"So maybe that's…why I also could (choose teaching), because I knew I was gonna have that…fallback."* She recognises that if this help was not available to her it would be much more difficult and that she *"would have to sacrifice a lot more"*, such as having to buy a much smaller house and realising that it would take a lot longer to pay off. This led the participant to acknowledge that it is not really possible for a single teacher to survive on her salary alone and that she needs a supplementary income from a partner to make ends meet. She feels that, *"if I were paying everything I probably wouldn't make it through."*

The participant felt that she was ill-prepared by her training to cope with some of the experiences while teaching. For example, the participant explained that her experience of the shift from studying teaching to teaching in the classroom was disappointing because

> *the varsity doesn't prepare you enough for…parent consult…you're never given any guidelines on how to deal with a parent that's angry and often they (the university) never tell you very much about discipline.*

She said that these are *"Key things and I feel that was a little bit of a problem for me."* She continued to explain that the new administrative forms that the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) have implemented were not properly explained at university and that it was an omission by the university that they,

> *by our fourth year, shown us how to fill out a support form…and then we won't be sitting with the problem of half the teachers in school not knowing how to do it because they've never done it as well. … you send in these forms and then they send it back and then it goes back and forth. If they just trained us from the beginning it would solve the problem.*

The participant sees teaching as a life-long career and can see herself "*being in a school for sixty years."* She feels this way as she is experiencing a lot of positive feedback,

> *Like quality of life, I'm getting performance from the kids, I'm getting performance from my job, I'm getting enriched. Constantly learning new things, constantly met with children with different children being… and for me that just makes me wanna stay and do more, and like conquer those challenges.*

She says that the rewards of teaching for her are *"more personal"* and less about remuneration.

The participant mentioned that she had been considering teaching at a school closer to her house, and although it was a private school, she wouldn't move for the salary unless it was significantly better. The participant said that she does not undertake any other activities or duties in order to supplement her income.

The participant felt that it was very interesting that we should be discussing her understanding of the ways in which the teaching profession is perceived in broader South African society. She said that,

> *it's a disappointing topic, because as soon as you say to someone 'oh I'm teaching' then they go, 'oh man, what the hell made you do that?' kind of thing… I think that the overview of teaching has a very negative…outlook.*

The participant expressed sadness by this and felt that it is ironic that people in society are going to have to send their children to teachers at some or other time in their lives, and that *"they should be praising the job and praising the idea of teachers… and not looking down at the job."* The participant understands society's negative perception of the profession as partly being a result of the poor remuneration. Thus, teachers are unable to gain any status in their communities. This is largely because she feels that in South Africa, financial wealth equates to high social status. She feels that teacher's are unable to *"show off"* their *"status and money and cars, and fancy"* things. A second reason that the participant feels that society *"looks down"* on the teaching profession is because

> *people feel that it's a half-day job, and then they think oh well they get paid to do it - you people aren't working that hard. …I've heard people say exactly that.*

The participant explained that those who understand the profession better, realise that teachers work very hard, but then they ask *"why did you work so hard for such little pay?"* In all, she feels that people have a *"Very, very negative view"* of the teaching profession as well as of teachers.

The participant revealed that her father is dissatisfied with her decision to become a teacher because

> *he just feels that, he knows that if I teach for the rest of my life I'm not going to be getting a much bigger salary than what I am now… and he just wants to know that if I don't get married or whatever, that I can support myself.*

Her father also seems to understand that teaching is *"quite stressful"* and does not wish his daughter to have to work so hard and to be paid so little to cope with life's everyday expenses.

The participant shared that if she were to give advice to a family member or a friend who was considering entering the teaching profession, she would tell them the same thing that her sister, who is also a teacher told her: *"don't get into it unless you are absolutely sure, because else you're going to be disappointed."* She feels that she would explain to them

that if they did not enjoy the practical training during the first year, or enjoy working closely with children and parents from different backgrounds, then they would not enjoy teaching. She expressed this in the following way, *"If you're not gonna get the personal rewards you're not gonna get the best for the children either."*

Transcription of Interview 7

Could we start by talking a bit about how you decided to choose teaching as a career, what factors played a part?

Um, I, I love dealing with children and just sort of giving them knowledge and education, getting them to the next level and just their, their self personalities and their whole life, their lives are so sort of small and just to give them a bigger, broader sort of knowledge range of things. Um…

Uhm

But it wasn't my initial choice actually it was, I didn't know where to go, I didn't know what to do, I went career sort of psychologist to sort it all out…

Oh, ok.

And he suggested either OT or teaching, but I decided teaching.

Ok, so you decided teaching um because you thought that you enjoyed imparting knowledge and working with children closely…

Yes, yes…

In a different way to an OT would work…

In a different way to an OT.

Ok, so um, I'm just assuming that some of the things that you, that you said you would enjoy when becoming, when you were thinking about becoming a teacher was that whole idea of sharing knowledge with children, helping them develop…

Yes.

In terms of the emotional and um…

Yes, cognitively and socially, yes, yes.

Could you reflect on whether you think that being a woman had any role to play in you choosing to go into teaching?

Um, to a certain degree had I been a man I don't think I would've done it, I think I would've gone elsewhere but um, I don't think it played a huge part you know?

Uhm

But it is more of female sort of job. But ja, I don't know…

Yes

But I think there is an element to it…

Yes, um and what is your understanding of why it's seen as a female job?

Because it needs to uh be caring, nurturing, it's seen as that sort of motherly, especially with the little one's. Perhaps with the high school ones there's more male overtones but the juniors definitely are needing a motherly, than a man possibly could give.

Uhm

*Um, not that **all** men couldn't but then certainly I think that women do that better.*

Ja. Um, it's more natural

More naturally.

And um you said that if you were a man you would not have chosen this field or even if you could you imagine your brother, husband or any of your male friends entering the teaching profession, what's your thinking about that?

Well I mean it's perfectly fine if they want to teach, I would see no problem with it at all, but it would be seen as a more senior primary high school post rather than a junior or pre-primary post.

And that's because of the bond that you have with the children and the maturity of the children?

Children, yes.

And do you think that any other ideas govern a man entering the profession.

Um no, not really I think its, its they, they also want, it's personal opinion as to how, what they want with their lives…

Uhm

Like also with the teaching profession you don't get money everybody knows that it's not a highly paid job and men are seen as sort of the breadwinners within the household and with a teacher's salary, with our salary you can't. I think, I think that is also a consideration for some people.

Ok. The fact that they won't be earning enough to support a family, and that would make it very difficult for a man to choose teaching.

Uhm

Ok. Um, how would you describe a teacher's salary?

(Laughs). Poor, um, for, as a salary it is not a bad salary but if you compare it to other professionals who study for four years it is shocking, I mean it's probably half, if not even a quarter of what other professionals are getting.

Uhm

The salary is not, it is not one of the perks of the job at all, like for a four year qualification and it's a lot of hard work. People think that you leave at half past one but you don't.

Uhm

You're constantly at school, you constantly doing extra murals you're taking work home. ***I always*** *am personally worrying about what this child has done, have I done the best for this child, have I supplied the right information to the parents? There's all of those elements for me that sort of go into it. So it's not when I leave here at four o'clock that it's finished and over with, I take work home…*

Yes

Um, whether it's actually physical work or its emotional work I'm still working constantly.

Ja, so there's a lot more that goes into teaching than what people perceive, from the short hours…

And the holidays…

Ja, ja

Or the, most definitely yes. And you ***need*** *your holidays because you just spent three months preparing children constantly for the work, and you're constantly drilling them because children don't learn immediately, believe me you have to constantly drill them and you* ***need*** *a holiday just to have a break from all of this.*

So it's demanding work…

Yes

And the holidays match the…

Match sort of they demand of it…

Yes, so that there's no burnout.

Yes

Um, and, um you were saying…um let me just get my mind, um… that your teaching its really about caring and thinking about, um but oh yes, and that in terms of teachers are undervalued in terms of the fact that um other people have studied the same amount or number of years but other people are earning a lot more like than you're earning for a salary or working for the same number of years and that kind of undervalues…?

A lot, definitely, definitely undervalues teachers for the amount of work that they, they do um, compared to, I mean obviously I, I don't know how much work a doctor does and stuff but certainly there are professions they can't possibly do as much as we do.

Ja

Nurturing children. I mean this is where it starts, if you're getting a bad education you're not going to get a good job because you haven't had a good education. The teacher's are undervalued in that sense, that it is the foundation for life…

Yes

Um, discipline, responsibility, reliability, things like that where you learn it at school, with the assistance of the parents hopefully…

Yes

But uh, that's not always the case…

Yes. So I mean you also believe that uh, um you teaching is playing a fundamental role in society…

Yes

In the growth of…

Society, most definitely

Ja, ja. Um have there been any significant changes in your personal circumstances that have influenced your financial needs or security? In terms of, um I mean for example some people have children and then they have to re-evaluate their work, or how they're earning money.

*Well I am pregnant at the moment and **yes** it has become a huge issue as to whether there's enough money for this and enough money for that and, um we work on a strict budget my husband and I…*

Uhm

We do… I make sure there is gonna be enough money for this and that and the next thing but at the moment my job is threatened due to circumstances…

Uhm

*Which is a huge worry for me, um but I wouldn't leave teaching **now** because I'd like **my** chil…, I'd like to be able to have them at the school with me, or I'd like to be able to get home a bit earlier in the afternoon and spend a bit more time with them…*

Ja

Um, things like that rather than have a nine to five job where you drop them at a crèche and you pick them up at a crèche, that, to me I would stay in teaching for that, um but financially at the moment we haven't outgrown our salary, we've budgeted within our salary, but if I were to leave my job or my husband were to, everything would go completely pear-shaped and that would be a huge serious problem and um, anything that I could do to avoid that.

Ja, and it's also your understanding that um teachers, or teaching is a good career for a woman because if you're thinking of um having children or having a family in terms of the flexibility it allows…

Having a family…

Whereas other jobs may not allow that same flexibility…

Most definitely. You've definitely, definitely got a more flexible time scale because one day you can stay at school until very late and the next you can leave quite early.

Uhm, uhm

And the weekends you don't work unless there's something happening at school, and normally you can bring family with to it. Um, so flexibility with mothers with children or even fathers with children. Ja.

Uhm…uhm…uhm…

So I mean you get um, the work still gets done but it doesn't **have** to done in the hours that are stipulated (outside of teaching time).

Ja

Um, and when you were training to teach were you aware that teaching wasn't a particularly well paid profession?

Yes, I was completely, it was… my father was actually quite cross that I was going to because it was, it wasn't his first choice for me, he wanted me to do a B.Com or something…

Yes

Um, because the salary is dreadful and we all knew it, but I still went to do it.

So that was the concern of your family and…

Ja, definitely.

Ok. How did you feel about that or were you driven by something else?

*Um, it, it didn't really concern me because money's not **everything** in life. I think the love of the job was far more important than your big bank balance…*

Ja

To get up and go to work just to earn ten grand a month just because you can, but you hate the job everyday, I couldn't, I couldn't do that…

Uhm

But coming in here some days I think 'what on earth am I doing here?' But most days I do enjoy it and there's so many little things that come from the children, just like 'oh but you look ***beautiful*** *today'…*

Uhm

Or…wow I understand that! Or something like that. And it just makes your day, not only, it makes your year, your life!

Uhm….uhm

Just things like that that you work, that you've changed something in a child's life, so the money wasn't a huge issue but it is…a part of an issue...

Ja

If we had more money obviously we would enjoy it more.

Yes.

I mean you expect it.

Um, and once you began teaching, were there any aspects of teaching you were not prepared for, or you felt let down by?

Um, assessment. Uh when I first started teaching I thought huh where do I start, where do I finish, how do I do this? And I actually was getting myself more frustrated and the educational psychologist actually said to me that I was referring children to because I would keep saying what do I, how do I actually tell the parents what's wrong with the child?

Ja

I, I can tell them that they can't write or that they can't do this but how can I specify it and how can I help with this. And that's when she said to me it's not your job. So I had to take a step back and just needed to realise that I could identify…

Uhm

That there could be a problem involved here and then refer it to an educational psychologist to then pinpoint an exact problem and decide whether they needed OT or speech therapy or whatever from there.

Ja

So I felt that in terms of that oh my goodness what do I do? And then also the admin part of it…

Uhm

Filling out form after form you can, you can be a wonderful teacher but if you don't know how to fill out forms then there's no hope for you because there are huge amounts of forms and paperwork and its repetition…

Uhm, ja…

Everything's repetition and then you have to write it here then you write it there, then you write it there, it's like constant repetition…

Uhm…uhm…ja

I hate that. Um…

Uhm, and how does that make you feel about teaching?

Um, if we could scrap half of it that would be wonderful but its part of the job and we have to do it and there's always going to be something that you dislike…

Ja

But there, I think it could be minimised I really do.

So you think it's a bit uh, well a bit redundant…

Definitely…

Because you're repeating yourself quite often…

*Because if you've written it **once,** I honestly don't understand why you have to write it three different times in three different things.*

Yes

Why have three different files on assessment just to say the same thing, that this child cannot read or…

Uhm

This child's doing wonderful, why must we write it four times?

Yes

That to me I think is ridiculous, I mean what's the point?

Ja, ja

Um, but I think it is being minimised more and more I think, they're trying to aim to get it cut down a bit. So let's hope.

Ja, ok. Um, do you view teaching as a life-long career?

Um, no. I, I, obviously it depends on how, what my situation is and my circumstances but I don't see myself doing this forever. I, I do see myself sort of changing, getting a bit bored of this, moving on, trying something else, doing another course, just becoming a different person in a sense…

Uhm

But I do see it for the next 15 or 20 years.

Oh, ok

But not completely lifelong, I think I'd like to get out and try something different after that.

And when you think about trying something different I mean what comes to mind?

Bookkeeping, funny enough. I don't know I just wanna work with figures and organise people's financials and just organise things like that. But there's no definite and that's also another thing that would prevent me leaving teaching is that also I wouldn't know what to try.

Uhm, yes.

Um, also going educational psychologist, or OT, branching out in that sense

Ok, something extending your work in teaching…

Something different ja. Not just being a teacher in a classroom for the rest of my life.

Ja, but still that…

Within children and working with children, even adult education I might consider, um, but basically I'm not sure…

Yes, but still something that promotes lives of other people…

Yes.

Ok, we've discussed why you remain in the teaching profession at the moment, I think that we've discussed. Um, have you at the moment ever considered leaving the teaching, I know that you just said you consider leaving the teaching profession in some ways or contemplated teaching at another school, or in another country or anything like that?

Um, I have, I've left, I have just come back from two years living in Scotland. Um, I've taught in Scotland for two years, a completely different setup, it's unbelievable how um and it does work…

Uhm

It does work. With everything there are flaws and there are pros and I can see there's a balance between the two and um, what else?

So then, so the why, why ha, why did you go overseas?

Um, we went to travel more than to work, but being a qualified teacher you get a very, very nice salary there, which…Um, I tried a few other things while I was there, I tried a filing job which just drove me mad, I was just stuck in an office all day long...

Ja

So in that sense I don't think bookkeeping would be great for me.

Ja, um

But, um, I tried an au pair job as well where it was cleaning and looking after someone's baby and I thought I can do this in my ***own*** *house in South Africa, what am I in Scotland for then? Um, so I gave that up.*

Ja

A lot of jumping around. And then I got into a nursery school and that was where I stayed…

Oh, ok.

Then we had to move because my husband's job moved. He got a much better job actually. So then I got a job as a pre-primary teaching. So it was mostly in teaching…

Oh. So it wasn't just for the money?

No, it was to travel.

But I'm sure you earned a lot more?

Most definitely. It fits within the travelling because the more we could earn the more we could travel.

Uh, yes, well that makes sense. And you haven't considered teaching in any other schools in the country.

Well yes I have. I think you need a wide range of experience and I taught here, I was here on my teaching prac as well, so this really the only school I've known but before I left I went to Orange Grove and it was a completely different set-up...

Uhm

There were 44 in my class, it was a complete change of scenery and I think that you need to get out and see what's out there, but obviously within a… I'm not going to give up a perfectly good job to go and see if I might get one there. I'm more logical than that.

Uhm, yes

If it happens if I don't have a job here.

Ja, but not necessarily for money.

No, no not really. Um, also considering a private school compared to government school, um I think you get paid more but I do think you work more. I think there's more of a demand from the parents and there's other challenges I've just remembered a, a someone who taught at a private school and they have a swimming coach and the children come back and say but my swimming coach says that you must do it like this. And as a teacher you're thinking I'm not a trained swimming coach and how do I deal with this situation that they're going and saying…

Yes.

So I think there are other challenges at a private school most definitely.

Ja, ok. Um, do you supplement your salary in any way?

No. My husband works over time. But we both say if he gets overtime then it's a bonus and we can pay the house off quicker or the car, but if he doesn't then we can still manage on his normal salary and my salary put together.

A theme that does seem to be coming up is um, you, you need someone else's salary to supplement yours as a teacher.

Yes, most definitely. I couldn't survive on my own as a teacher. There's just no way.

Uhm

I mean we managed to get a house quite cheaply, and uh which you don't get anymore, it would be the case of renting a small little flat which would drive me insane as well.

Uhm

Yes, um I couldn't survive on my own, living off a teacher's salary.

Uhm, ja. You really need someone else.

Most definitely. It should not, it shouldn't, that's the way it shouldn't be because teaching you studied for four years…

Yes

It's a profession you should be able to survive without…but there is a mom here who, um, well she teaches here, she's a single mom, but she lives in a garden cottage at her parents' place. I don't know if she pays rent, but the impression I get from her is that she could, there's no way on this earth, she could ever move into her own place. But she says she's got an older car, don't tell her I said that…

Ja

She's got an older car and um, I don't think, I think it's fully paid off and so it's not even the case that she's got a bond and a car payment, you couldn't even, and money's tight…

Ja, ja

You couldn't, ja there's no way you could survive on one teacher's salary.

Ja, um… I wonder if we could discuss what your understanding of the way that other people like um friends, family, or society at large view the teaching profession?

It's highly respected, the minute you say you're a teacher it's like 'Ooh! Wow, you sort of clever and stuff', they don't… they realise that the money's not there but they, there's a definite respect for teachers. The minute you say you're a teacher, immediately they go 'Ooh', there's a respect out there for it. But on the other end they go 'but your salary's rubbish'.

Yes

So…it's just, but I feel there's definite respect for it.

So you think people recognise that teachers work very hard and there's a role for them…

*Well, yes, because there's a sense of, there's a sense, people often say 'Oh, I could never do that' meaning that you're dealing with all those children 'forget it no way', but you get the other end as well that say 'but you get all those holidays' and I've got a friend that says 'Are you on holiday **again**?'*

Ja

There is this, there is a respect, in a sense that you must be clever, to be a teacher

And patient…

And patient and kind and tolerant and all those other things as well…and then there's all those on the other hand that think well you get all those holidays and the salary's rubbish as well.

So there's a thinking that maybe the holiday supplements for the salaries…

For the salary. Yes, um but most people that I meet there's a definite sort of 'Oh, ok!', but those people that know me are like all those holidays and things like that.

Um, and we're near the end um, what do you think are there any reasons, I mean other than maybe the holidays that people view the profession…maybe it's also quite different, like on one side it's um, a bit extreme and on the other side it's a bit extreme…

Yes

Do you think there's any reason for this?

Well there must be a reason that…I don't know. Most definitely there's an element of ooh you have to be clever to be a teacher, you have to be well trained, well…you must be, I'm not saying you mustn't. But there's definitely people think that then there's this 'ah but you're always on holiday and you're always getting this and you're getting doing that' so…

Ja.

And I think in some ways it could be easy but in another way then they couldn't do it. They come across, yes that they think it's very easy to be um, because you've got all the holidays but it's not something that they would consider in the slightest.

Ja, ja. Ok, um why do you think they wouldn't consider it other than, you get, I don't know what I was going to say…

I think that the salary is maybe one of the reasons they wouldn't do it, but I think the patience in dealing with all those children

Ja, yes

Dealing with all those children. Comments like 'ah I've got one at home and that drives me mad I couldn't have a whole class of 19 or 40 or whatever it is. That comes through.

Uhm. So the salary and the actual work. So, lastly if you could start all over again, would you choose teaching as a profession?

Yes. I think so. I complain about it, I think I would. I can't see myself doing anything else, um I said bookkeeping but I don't see myself in an office. I'd like to try something different, that's more, but I think definitely I'd go back to teaching.

Ja, uhm

It's just made me aware of different factors that concern children and having my own child now I'd like to be knowledgeable, I'd like to know things and I think four years of knowing about children has been of great benefit for me.

Uhm

Um, I might be a bit opinionated, but I'd prefer to know how to do it right than to stumble along and hope for the best. But that's my opinion…

And if your family or friends came to you and said they were considering teaching as a profession, what would your advice be?

It would probably be WHY? I'd probably tell them not to. Well, that's how I would start it but I would say it's very rewarding, um it's a satisfying job in the sense that you come to school and when you see a child's face light up from ***seeing*** *you in the morning, that's why I don't think I could do high school…*

Uhm

I think I'd have to, it would have to be the little ones or the youngish ones…

Who still appreciate you?

Yes. Cos, because you don't even have to say anything you can just smile at them and their faces light up. Parent's tell me that I'm discussed at dining room tables and its 'my Mrs. Nell said ***this*** *and that is what's gonna happen…'*

Ja.

*And it's constantly been 'this is what my teachers said and this is what I'm going to stick to, overriding the **parents** opinion'.*

Uhm

*No really, most definitely. So in that sense I'd say by all means do it, but if you **don't** have a passion for the work, for the children, then don't do it. But you can see people who would be, in terms of a family or a friend, in personality wise I could see whether they would be good with the, like nurturing, or caring for children or whether they wouldn't. I would take it on that…*

So your knowledge of them.

To let them know that it's a lot of work for very little pay and…

Uhm

But if you, if that's what your heart is set on then go for it because you won't find anything more rewarding. Um, just seeing their little faces everyday…

Yes

*It's lovely, it's a lovely feeling. Even if you **cross** with them and they look at you, you just your heart just comes off…*

Ok, thanks so much for your time that was lovely…

Great!

Summary of Interview 7

The interview began with a discussion of the different factors that played a part in the participant choosing teaching as a career. The participant was very sure about what it was that she enjoyed about and gained from teaching. She said,

> *I love dealing with children and just sort of giving them knowledge and education, getting them to the next level and just their, their self, personalities and their whole life, their lives are so sort of small and just to give them a bigger, broader sort of knowledge range of things.*

Having expressed this, she then explained that she was not sure what she wanted to do originally and after receiving career counselling it was suggested that she may enjoy Occupational Therapy or teaching, *"but I decided teaching."*

When considering whether she felt that being a woman had played any role in her choosing to teach, she explained that, *"had I been a man I don't think I would've done it, I think I would've gone elsewhere"*. She is not however aware that being a woman significantly affected her decision. She then said that she thinks that teaching is a profession that is geared towards women more so than men because teachers are typically *"caring, nurturing, it's seen as that sort of motherly (role), especially with the little one's."* The participant elaborated by saying that she feels that for the junior years, there is a greater likelihood of finding female teachers, however in the higher grades, perhaps in high school, one may find more male teachers.

The participant explained that while she could imagine her male family or friends entering the teaching profession, a serious disadvantage for men is that,

> *with the teaching profession you don't get money everybody knows that it's not a highly paid job and men are seen as sort of the breadwinners within the household and with a teacher's salary, with our salary you can't.*

When asked to describe a teacher's salary, the participant first laughed and then said the following,

> *Poor, um, …as a salary it is not a bad salary but if you compare it to other professionals who study for four years it is shocking, I mean it's probably half, if not even a quarter of what other professionals are getting.*

She explained that the salary is a disappointment and that this seems to contribute to the negative perception that society has of teachers. She says that *"The salary is not, it is not one of the perks of the job at all, like for a four year qualification and it's a lot of hard work."* Some people out there respect teachers and think that teachers are quite intelligent and have many good qualities, but at the same time they feel that the salary is *"rubbish"*.

The participant feels that although teaching is a full-time job and requires a lot of time and commitment, there are many misconceptions about the profession which lead to it

being undervalued within society. She says that *"People think that you leave at half past one but you don't."* Teachers are required to do extra murals and often take work home. She further described her commitment to the work in that,

> *I always am personally worrying about what this child has done, have I done the best for this child, have I supplied the right information to the parents? There's all of those elements for me that sort of go into it. So it's not when I leave here at four o'clock that it's finished and over with, I take work home….*

The participant feels that it is a misnomer that teachers do not work hard due to their short hours and 'many' holidays. She very expressly feels that the holidays are necessary for teachers to cope. She described this in the following way:

> *you **need** your holidays because you just spent three months preparing children constantly for the work, and you're constantly drilling them because children don't learn immediately, believe me you have to constantly drill them and you need a holiday just to have a break from all of this.*

Furthermore, the participant feels that teachers are not acknowledged for the important role they play in society:

> *Nurturing children. I mean this is where it starts, if you're getting a bad education you're not going to get a good job because you haven't had a good education. The teacher's are undervalued in that sense, that it is the foundation for life…*

The participant explained that her life circumstances are busy changing, that she is pregnant and that this is changing her view towards her financial needs and responsibilities. She says that in preparation for their child, *"we work on a strict budget my husband and I."* She adds that this is an extra stress in her life, but that she would not like to leave teaching now, as she would prefer to get home a bit earlier in the afternoons and spend time with her children and later have them begin schooling at the same school she teaches at. She feels that although there is a lot of work to do when one teaches, while she emphasised how much work is required of teachers, teachers have *"a more flexible time scale because one day you can stay at school until very late and the next you can leave quite early."*

When the participant shared that she knew that teaching was not a particularly well-paid profession while she was studying, and that her

> *father was actually quite cross that I was going to because it was, it wasn't his first choice for me, he wanted me to do a B.Com or something because the salary is dreadful and we all knew it, but I still went to do it.*

Although her family was concerned, the participant felt that *"the love of the job was far more important than your big bank balance."* The participant emphasised some of the benefits to teaching even though the work was not always easy by noting that,

> *there's so many little things that come from the children, just like 'oh, but you look beautiful today'… Or…wow I understand that! Or something like that. And it just makes your day, not only, it makes your year, your life!*

The participant explained that the thing she felt most unprepared for when she began teaching was the assessment of children. She was very worried that while she was able to identify children's difficulties, she was unable to offer any detailed understanding to parents. An educational psychologist explained to her that this shouldn't trouble her too much as she, as a teacher is not expected to know the details of these difficulties, only that she should identify them.

She added that the administrative part of teaching was another area that she was ill-prepared for. She says,

> *Filling out form after form you can, you can be a wonderful teacher but if you don't know how to fill out forms then there's no hope for you because there are huge amounts of forms and paperwork and its repetition.*

She feels that the forms that teachers are required to fill out could be minimised and the information that is asked for could be refined, *"I honestly don't understand why you have to write it (again) three different times in three different things."* She said that although this is very frustrating for her, she recognises that an attempt is being made by the GDE to minimise the repetitious nature of the forms that need to be filled out.

The participant went on to say that she does not feel that teaching is a life-long career. She imagines that she envisions herself *"changing, getting a bit bored of this, moving on, trying something else, doing another course, just becoming a different person in a sense…"* This change however, she stressed would come in some time, after about 15 to 20 years. The participant explained that she hadn't given it much thought and is not exactly sure what her alternative preferences would be. She has considered options such as bookkeeping, educational psychology or occupational therapy.

The participant explained that she feels that being a teacher is also very useful in terms of having one's own children. She said that teaching has given her knowledge about the

pros and cons of certain methods of child rearing and has prepared her for the child she is about to have.

When discussing what other options the participant may try, such as working overseas or teaching at a private school, the participant explained that she had just returned from working in the UK for 2 years. She mentioned that this move was mostly an opportunity to work and travel, although being a qualified teacher, she managed to earn well overseas. She says that she has considered teaching at a private school as she believes the salary is better, but she has also heard that it is a lot more work because the children's parent's are more demanding of the teachers.

> When asked if the participant supplements her salary in any way, she explained that she does not, but to compensate, *"My husband works over-time."* The participant elaborated by explaining that it is necessary for a teacher to have an extra income in the household in order to survive. She says that *"I couldn't survive on my own as a teacher. There's just no way."* She feels that this is unfair as after studying for four years, *"you should be able to survive without"* having to rely on another person's income. To illustrate how limiting this is on teachers, she described a case of a teacher whom she knows, who is a single mother. She described this woman as.

She also explained that this woman is unable to get a new, more reliable car and drives one that is old. Even though the woman is not paying rent, a bond or making car payments, money is very tight. This story just proves to the participant that *"there's no way you could survive on one teacher's salary"* alone.

The participant explained that if she were to give advice to someone who was considering entering the teaching profession, she would probably ask them why they would want to do that to themselves, *"I'd probably tell them not to."* She then said that on a more serious note, she would explain that it is a *"very rewarding"*, *"satisfying job"* as a result of being such an important figure in the life of young children. However, she explained that this is largely true of primary school teaching and not so much older children in high school. She says that she would have to advise the person that if they *"don't have a passion for the work, for the children. Then don't do it."* She would make is clear that

it's a lot of work for very little pay…But if you, if that's what your heart is set on then go for it because you won't find anything more rewarding.

Transcription of Interview 8

Could we start by talking a bit about how you decided to choose teaching as a career, what factors played a part?

Well actually I wasn't gonna go into teaching…

Uhm

I went overseas for a year and worked with disabled kids. And the only way I could get into working with them…

Was teaching them…

Doing remedial teaching. And then teach normal kids and then specialise in special ed…

Uhm

And I'm currently doing my last year of special ed through Asutralia

Oh, ok.

And that's why I'm teaching now, at the moment.

Oh ok, so…and this, uh do you want to work overseas?

No, I only went for the year. My family, cos my family said I must go see if I can work with disabled kids before I go into a career.

Oh, ok right.

Now I've just done 4 years of teaching, with remedial as my last, well my main subject…

Uhm.

And now I'm going on with my studies.

Oh, ok. That's very interesting. Um, and what were some of the things that well now I know you are interested in working with disabled children, but um, what are the sort of things you enjoy about teaching and working with children generally?

Well basically it helps you with your own kids. Because everything that schools do right and wrong let you know, you learn from them.…

Uhm, ja

That they, then you see what works on their kids.

Ja

That's the main thing.

Uhm

Also the holidays and those things.…

Ja, so you appreciate the holidays and that kind of thing.

Ja.

Ok, could you reflect on whether you think that being a woman had any role to play in you deciding to teach?

No.

Ok, um and could you imagine your brother, husband or any of your male friends entering the teaching profession?

No.

And why do you say that?

For income. For a male, they don't have that financial stability.…

Uhm

And maybe there is no males because the public, I believe sees teaching not as a male profession…

Ja. Do you think there might be a reason for that?

I don't know. Uh, teachers are not seen as professional uh posts. They're not seen as professionals so they're just seen as someone that's good and caring you know?

Ja.

I believe that um, people think that they don't realise that they're educated and they think they're there just because they can't do anything else with their life.

Uhm, ja. Do you think that has anything to do with um…the requirements to get into teaching?

No, I think it has to do with the fact that the profession… the people that are teaching, from years ago to now, I know that years ago the idea was the same, but teachers were seen as a good profession and all those things…

Ja

But people's perceptions is not that…

So over time it's changed as to what people actually think of teachers…

Ja, ja.

Do you have a sense as to what else might be, what else has contributed to that change in perception?

I think that the department has a lot to do with that…the they don't give people credit.

Uhm

There's not a lot of promotion space. Also the governing bodies are all the same, they are controlling the teachers. They don't need facts or professionalism they have more say now than they had years ago.

So I mean you just said that you're not treated as professionals to start off with by the governing bodies and the department itself, so then why would other people respect…

And there's something, a PA, I was offered a job a couple of months ago to be a PA, ***not*** *the job but the salary of a PA that doesn't do much…*

Ja

Is much more than a teaching salary and you just do a one year diploma through Damelin or whoever and you get more money than you get as a teacher.

Ja. And you study for four years…

Yes

Exactly. Um, and so obviously it's harder for a man to make the decision to choose teaching as a career or a viable option?

Ja. I started with males, who studied teaching and went into teaching…

Uhm

And they actually all decided to leave…

Ja

So they, they actually can't see themselves being a breadwinner, supporting a wife…

Uhm, ja.

Its not doable, its not viable

Ja. It's just not possible. And to have a teacher's salary needs to be supplemented by some bigger salary…

Yes

And for a man that's harder to do, to have to rely on a woman to do that.

Yes.

Um, and how would you describe a teacher's salary?

Pathetic!

Uhm.

I mean you know the worst thing for me is that we have to work seven hours a day.

Ja

The corporate world is eight hours a day, so we are only one hour a day short.

Uhm

But the money is not one hour a day short.

Ja

And its not that, we don't only do school work, we've got evening things on, I mean this year alone I went on two tours where you're away from home for a couple of days, you leave the husband and child home.

Uhm

And all those, yes we do get home earlier, but we start earlier and also on holiday we do courses after school and after hours.

Uhm. So there's a perception in the public that you do less work and it's not necessarily so and it's possibly more flexible work but not necessarily less.

Yes.

Ok. Um, and when you were training to teach, now I know you trained for slightly different reasons. Um, were you aware that teaching wasn't a particularly well-paid profession?

Actually when I was studying some lecturers and departmental people came and they actually explained to us how they were going to adjust teacher's salaries and what a good salary that there will be. But everything we were told about how great it was, was never the case…

Uhm

So we were actually put under a false impression.

Ok, so they told you you would be earning more?

Yes.

And, what did they say? I'm just interested…

Well they said that if you are a breadwinner for, cos we had quite a lot of gentlemen studying with me cos I studied in Potch…

Uhm

And they were under the impression that their salaries could be uh for the breadwinner.

To be able to support not just themselves, but for a family or a little bit more than just themselves. Whereas teachers are struggling to support…

Yes!

Just themselves at the moment.

Ok, um…um have there been any significant changes in your personal circumstances that have influenced your financial needs or security? For example a lot of people meet,

change when they have children or when their families grow. Um, it sounds like you're planning to branch out of the teaching profession and um, maybe is there another reason for that?

You see, the thing is I have a little boy, which is obviously very expensive…

Ja

So I have to get a maid to look after him, or alternatively a little crèche or get a day mother, so it's extra money as well. So at this moment, I don't know whether I'll stay or go over, because the thing is when I started…

Uhm

With remedial teaching there was still the big possibility of remedial schools and special schools and hospitals all those in government posts, but since I've been getting my salary and since I've been teaching I can see that that might be the case. They are closing down remedial schools, the government is withdrawing funding…

Uhm ja

All special eds are being withdrawn, all the inclusive talk…

Uhm

So it feels to me that I've been doing all this studying now extra for no reason…

Uhm

Because the government is not recognising those people. Where those kids will never fit into a mainstream school.

Uhm

It's just not possible for school structures and per…people relationships…

Uhm, ja. So you see difficulties with inclusive education.

Very very much

And uh, they are considering, they will be keeping some schools open, but my understanding is that your very disabled children who cannot fit into an inclusive school…

Yes. The thing is while I was still studying I worked for Peet Legraanse which is for severe, very badly severe mentally and physically disabled kids. But even the funding for those schools were not as good as it should be because those teachers were not, I mean those kids, if you have a cerebral palsy child.…

Uhm

One palsy child is seen as three kids.…

Ja

When it comes to the care. So the numbers are too big for the teachers, they can't really help them to really reach their potential because of the numbers.

Ja

The money is just not there.…

Ja, ja.

At the end of the day, once I've done my masters maybe go and do my doctors decide to start my own school.…

Uhm

Because otherwise these kids actually won't get what they need.

Uhm, ja. Um and once you began teaching, were there any aspects of teaching you were not prepared for, or felt let down by?

They don't prepare you for the nonsense the parents give you.

Uhm

I mean I know that when I was at school parents never complained, they were just happy with what was going on, discipline was never a problem. And quite in particularly here discipline is a problem.

Yes, I know discipline has come up quite often. Is there anything else?

Do you view teaching as a life-long career?

No

No

If the money was better, I would consider it. But because of the money I don't consider it because you don't, you can't grow. I can't see myself getting my son to a very good school, or to university because the finances aren't there.

Ja, so financially it doesn't support you enough to actually have quality of life…

Ja. I mean with a teacher's salary you can't even apply for a house loan.…

Ja

I think you get R100 000 and you can't even buy anything with that.…

Ja, no, it's true. I think someone said it was two hundred and thirty or something.

Oh, ok.

Have you ever considered, you're obviously considering leaving the profession. What is this based on? What is your reasoning other than you saying if the money was better.

You know when I started teaching there was joy in your work, but these days because of the parental aspect, the joy is not there anymore.…

Uhm, uhm

On the most part they always happy, and they'll come to work happy as well, but I don't know if that's always the case, and the more financial problems there are the more stress at home as well…

Ja

So most of the reason is financial…

Ja.

Do you supplement your salary in any way? For instance, do you undertake any extra duties or work that results in an added monthly income?

Well according to the department we're not allowed to.

Uhm

Uh, previously I have given extra maths lessons and stuff like that, but we've been told that if they catch you doing those things, then you will not get your salary or you will be fired because you're not allowed to do anything else unless you apply for it.

Ok

And a long process that isn't worth it anyway.

Ja

Because friends of mine who have applied and they've just said 'well sorry'. They don't agree.

So then other people can provide extra lessons, but teachers can't?

Full time teachers of the GDE

Uhm. Ok, I understand. Um…could we discuss a little bit, we did discuss a little bit of that…ja, um we went actually into that. Your understanding of the way that other people

view the teaching profession and it being undervalued in society. Is there anything you would like to add to that or have we covered most of it?

No

If you could start all over again, would you choose teaching as a profession?

No. Um, when I went to varsity there were a couple of routes I could take…

Uhm

You know either OT o speech, or even clinical psychology, or educational psychology…

Uhm

And although I've done those, I still chose the teaching route because I thought that was the ideal way to go. But if I did it all over I wouldn't go there.

Ok. So why was it the ideal way?

Because the perception you were given…

Oh

The perception that we had was we could in fact have all these things and work for your job…

So there was the perception that you would be earning a good salary

Yes.

Uhm, but what um what are the some of the reasons that…

Well at the moment I haven't got another route, but that might all change…

Uhm

Some of them are still the same as when I first started, like the kids and some of them have changed, but the majority of them, was the perception I was given…

Ja.

All that isn't there, you know the financial stability, some of the perks, all that isn't there anymore.

Ok.

If you take a normal teaching salary after medical aid and pension you get less than five grand a month…

Uhm

I mean who can live on that?

Ja, exactly. Especially if you don't have someone to support you, a husband or another breadwinner in the house it's actually impossible…

Yes

And if you had family or friends who were considering teaching profession what would you tell them?

I'd tell them to rethink it.

Uhm

First if they have a husband who earns a good salary but otherwise, or and a mother, or a mother to be, it's a great post…

Uhm

Because you've got your some afternoons off, you get home before four, well not four, but I get only home half past four fiveish.

Ja

So it's great for that, you've got the whole day to spend with your kids…

Ja

But if you've not got that background, or backup…

Ja

You would do better in the corporate world.

Ja, so if you have to rely on yourself teaching's not the way to go. So thanks, that's it.

Ok

Summary of Interview 8

The interview began with a discussion of the different factors that played a part in the participant choosing teaching as a career. The participant explained that her interest was working with disabled children and that she hadn't planned on teaching. While working overseas with children with special needs, she learned that the only way for her to continue working with these children was to complete a remedial teaching degree and then specialise in Special Education. In order to attain her goal, she has been working as a teacher and studying part-time. She is completing her Special Education degree through an Australian University but hopes to work with disabled children in this country. The participant explained that one of the things she enjoys about working with children currently is that she is able to learn how best to manage her own children. She said that she is able to learn from the good and bad things that schools do and what techniques may work well with her own children. She said that she also enjoys the holidays.

Although the participant explained that being a woman played no role in her deciding to choose to teach, she said that she could never imagine any male friends or family entering the teaching profession. The participant explained that she felt that men would not choose to teach as in their case, *"they don't have that financial stability…"*, which a teacher's

salary does not allow for. She also felt that *"maybe there (are) no males because the public, I believe sees teaching not as a male profession…"*. When the participant reflected on the possible reasons that the public may view teaching as a woman's job she said that, *"They're not seen as professionals, so they're just seen as someone that's good and caring you know?"* The participant shared that although she had studied with men who then began teaching, she explained that *"they actually all decided to leave…"* as *"they actually can't see themselves being a breadwinner, supporting a wife…"* as a teacher. She feels that for men, teaching is *"not doable, its not viable."*

The participant spoke about other ways in which teaching is negatively viewed by society and largely undervalued. She said that she believes that there is a perception in the public sphere that teacher's are not *"educated and they think they're there just (that) because they can't do anything else with their life."* The participant explained that over time, *"people's perceptions"* have changed about teaching. She said that in the past teaching was a respected profession, but this is certainly not the case anymore.

The participant listed another contributing factor to the negative perception that society has about teachers. She explained that *"the department has a lot to do with that"*, as she feels that *"they don't give people credit."* She described that there's a problem in that *"There's not a lot of promotion space."* She added that *"the governing bodies are all the same, they are controlling the teachers."* She feels that neither the Department of Education nor governing bodies treat teachers professionally, which relays a negative message about teachers to broader society.

The participant experienced it is as confusing and unfair that teachers spend four years obtaining a teaching degree, but get paid very little. She used the example of being a Personal Assistant (PA) to 'drive her point home', as she had been offered such a post prior to this interview and she said that while teachers work much harder than a PA may be required to work, and all they require is *"a one year diploma through Damelin or whoever and you get more money than you get as a teacher."*

The participant had one word to describe a teachers' salary. She said that it is *"Pathetic!"* The participant explained that what she found most irritating is that teachers *"have to*

work seven hours a day" and this is not too different from those in the corporate world who work eight-hour days. She deduced that this meant that teachers are therefore *"only one hour a day short"*, but she adds matter-of-factly that *"the money is not one hour a day short."* She explained that it does not end there, but that teachers are also required to work evenings, she expressed that just this year she had to leave her husband and children to go away on *"two tours where you're away from home for a couple of days…"*. She said that although people are correct in thinking that teachers do end work earlier in the day, *"we start earlier and also on holiday we do courses after school and after hours."*

When asked to reflect on whether she was aware that teaching was a poorly paid job during her studies, she explained that remuneration had been addressed by some people from the Department of Education as well as some lecturers at university. It was

> *actually explained to us (teacher trainees) how they were going to adjust teacher's salaries and what a good salary that there will be. But everything we were told about how great it was, was never the case…*

The participant felt that they were given *"a false impression."* She said that the information given to them gave the distinct impression that if you were the breadwinner of a family, as there were many men in her class, *"they were under the impression that their salaries could be uh for the breadwinner."*

The participant explained that her personal circumstances have changed somewhat over the past few years as she has *"a little boy, which is obviously very expensive… so I have to get a maid to look after him, or alternatively a little crèche or get a day mother"*, which she says does not come cheaply. She explained that having a family is expensive and therefore requires more money to be generated in order to meet the family's needs.

The participant simply explained that she does not view teaching as a life-long career, however, *"If the money was better, I would consider it."* She says that

> *because of the money I don't consider it because you don't, you can't grow. I can't see myself getting my son to a very good school, or to university because the finances aren't there.*

She feels that being so poorly remunerated restricts teachers financial independence and autonomy. She says that *"with a teacher's salary you can't even apply for a house loan…".*

The participant felt that one of the aspects that teachers who are training are not well prepared for when they start teaching is dealing with parents as well as disciplining children. She remembers that, *"when I was at school parents never complained, they were just happy with what was going on, discipline was never a problem."* She explained that these difficulties, along with the poor remuneration are contributing factors to her feeling that she wants to leave the teaching profession. *"You know when I started teaching there was joy in your work, but these days…the joy is not there anymore…"* She believes that this is the case for most teachers and feels that she and her colleagues have lost their love for teaching for a number of reasons with a contributing stress of poor pay. She said that for

> *the most part they (she and her colleagues are) always happy, and they'll come to work happy as well, but I don't know if that's always the case, and the more financial problems there are the more stress at home as well…*

When discussing whether the participant supplements her salary in any way, she explained that according to the Department of Education:

> *we're not allowed to. Previously I have given extra maths lessons and stuff like that, but we've been told that if they catch you doing those things, then you will not get your salary or you will be fired because you're not allowed to do anything else unless you apply for it.*

She explained that the application process is long and *"isn't worth it anyway"*, as friends of hers have applied and their requests have been denied regardless.

The discussion then focused on whether the participant would, if given the opportunity to start again, still choose teaching as a profession. The participant explained that teaching was not her only option, she could have done Occupational or Speech Therapy, or even Clinical or Educational Psychology however she *"still chose the teaching route because I thought that was the ideal way to go."* Given the opportunity again, she said that she would not choose teaching. She chose it because they were given the perception that they

could teach because they loved it, but still be fairly remunerated for the work. She makes it clear that the perception they were given was that they *"could in fact have all these things and work for your job…"*. She expressed that she felt let down by the job, the perks were not what she thought them to be and she was very dissatisfied with the salary. She explained that *"If you take a normal teaching salary after medical aid and pension you get less than five grand a month… I mean who can live on that?"* She felt that this is especially a problem for teachers who cannot rely on a better combined salary being generated by their partner every month.

When discussing what type of advice she would give to friends or family who were considering the teaching profession as a career path, she said that she would *"tell them to rethink it."* She said that she would stress that if they have a spouse, who earns a good salary and they are a mother or an expecting mother, then teaching is a great post *"Because you've got your some afternoons off, you get home before four, …well I get only home half past four fiveish."* However, she stated that if one does not have the financial backup or support from someone else then, *"You would do better in the corporate world."*

The participant explained that she is feeling very disheartened and confused at the moment as the education system in South Africa is in the process of change. She is worried that with inclusive education, remedial schools are being closed down or that *"the government is withdrawing funding."* It may be that the participant has *"been doing all this studying now extra for no reason…"*. The participant felt concerned that children who are severely mentally and physically disabled will not, and do not, receive the care they need in order to reach their potential. It was apparent when working at a school for severely disabled and cerebral palsied children in the past, that:

> *the funding for those schools were not as good as it should be because… the numbers (of children) are too big for the teachers, (and so) they can't really help them to really reach their potential.*

Transcription of Interview 9

Could we start by talking a bit about how you decided to choose teaching as a career, what factors played a part?

Let's just see, I don't know if I can remember that far back…I think it was something that I'd, that I'd always considered, it was something that I, I always wanted to do.

And why did you think that you'd always considered teaching? That you'd wanted to do it?

It looked like something I would enjoy.

In terms of…?

Well small children, I always knew that I, I wanted to work with small children in some way.

Ok.

And, I would never have wanted to work in an office.

Ok, so it suited your needs in quite a few ways.

Ja.

Ok. When you were thinking about, about becoming a teacher, or as you became a teacher what were some of the things you thought you would enjoy about it?

I think the challenge, primarily, and also the reward…, I mean I always say it's the most rewarding and it's also the most unrewarding job on earth so it's a two edged sword. But definitely in those early days I taught in a very underprivileged school and getting that sense of being able to contribute, which is nice. Um, what the question the challenges and the…?

So, yes, um, just when you were thinking about it, um what were some of the things you think that you would enjoy?

Ya, the challenge and the feeling of being able to contribute, to make a di difference.

Ok, so when you say reward, you're talking about making a difference in children's lives…

Ja, ja…

Um, is there anything else that, that's part of that part?

Well at that stage it was also the day-to-day. It wasn't a feeling of oh my word I've gotta get up, you know the enjoyment…

Uhm.

The day flew by and it was enjoyable, you know?

Ja, and then you said it's uh, um, a two edged sword and it's also unrewarding, what do you mean by that?

Well I think that from the point of remuneration, it's extremely unrewarding and also from the point of view from society's perceptions of teachers, it's a very…um, it's seen as a, like a half-day job, you don't have to be particularly intelligent or particularly really anything in order to do it and I think that's, that's very un, I think that really makes one feel very…uh, demoralised.

Demoralised? And um um, I'm assuming that you're saying it's undervalued by society…

Definitely. Way undervalued.

And people have incorrect perceptions of…

And people have very little respect for teachers as well and I think that that also does depend on where you are because like I said I also taught at a very underprivileged school, ***there*** *the respect was enormous from the parent body and from everything. But here the respect for teachers is virtually nothing.*

So you say from a parent…?

Ja parents, parents and also sort of then obviously parents and then obviously a parent's perception is also obviously carried onto their child…

Right.

Which in the foundation phase we don't have that much of a problem with, but certainly in the intermediate phase and the senior phase there's that sort of lack of respect, and you just hear it, and you get a general lack of respect.

Ja.

Ja, you just get the feeling that these parent's think that you don't have to be particularly ambitious number one, or intelligent, or um, trying to have a…

And so it's passed down to their children?

I think so, ja.

And do you think that this is, uh, something that um, is a belief held by not just parents but society at large, and maybe some of your friends?

Um, ja I think that if you hear that someone's a doctor or chartered accountant or whatever and the, the prestige and you immediately think that Sjoe! they must be intelligent and they must…, whereas if you hear that someone has got sort of a B.Ed then, I just don't think there's the same…

Ok.

And I think that you know, just purely isn't…

They don't actually recognise that you actually have to be bright and…

No, not at all. No…Um, no there's no status, I mean I think if you're a teacher you're pretty much viewed the same way, ok maybe one step above someone like a fireman or a policeman.

Ja. So, it's just the services and hu…human resources…

Ja, and I think nurses are viewed pretty much the same way.

Ja. So completely undervalued.

Could you reflect on whether you think that being a woman had any role to play in you choosing to go into teaching?

I don't think at that time that actually it was a conscious thought, but looking back. I mean I say that, you know the remuneration is pathetic and all of that and it is, but from the point of view of having small children and all of that, there are…

Benefits

Definite benefits.

Uhm.

But I don't think I thought of that when I entered the profession, but certainly I, I see it now.

Ok.

You know?

Yes. So um, could you imagine your brother, or husband or any of your male friends entering the teaching profession?

I can, I can. But then I think that society views them as not like real men. Kind of like oh, can you only cope with a school environment, you know? I, I do, I just think they, they're looked down upon.

Ok. So I mean it wouldn't be…

Well I would never have married a teacher let's put it that way because you, not from the, well I suppose that would be, that would have been the remuneration I suppose.

Ok, so, I mean because men are expected to be the main breadwinners I suppose?

The main breadwinners, ja.

Teaching is not a viable option for them because it's just, not enough. So in other words a teacher's salary needs to be supported by someone else's salary?

Absolutely, one hundred percent! I don't know how any, I, I often picture myself you know, if I wasn't married and I was single, how would I ever afford a car payment, as well as a bond, as well as groceries? I, I just think it would be…and I mean I've seen it, I've seen teachers throughout the schools that I've worked at who've remained you know single still living in rented apa, you know flats…
Uhm…

Driving cars that are really past their best, not safe anymore not… breaking down every second, because you actually, I mean how could you possibly afford a car payment on the cheapest car but a new car?

Ja…

A car payment, insurance, as well as a bond, as well as insurance on your household contents and what have you, as well as groceries, clothing? You could ***not****. It would not be possible. Medical aid?*

Ja.

I think it would be impossible.

No, you can't do it without someone else's um, income whether, its parents or living with other people…

Sharing…ja. Or supported by your parents or…ja. And that's sad, I mean that's, tha, tha that's…you know?

Ja. Um, how, how would you describe a teacher's salary, if you look at it?

Look, look its not the worst salary on the face of the earth. But in terms of the qualifica…you know in terms of the qualification that you may have, and in terms of the year's experience, I think it's pretty dismal.

Uhm

I mean, like I've got an honours degree, I've been teaching for 11 years and my gross salary is very little over R8000 a month, and I think that from that perspective it, it's very disheartening.

Uhm

And it's not going anywhere, you know? And that's probably the most, just um you know, just the most distressing of it all.

Uhm. So it's not like you can look forward to improving your salary…

Very slightly.

Uhm, ja.

I mean, ja. And whenever the department brings in plans to do that, they are just, I mean for instance, now they've introduced a whole heap of salary scales. Basically according to your years of experience and your qualification and they only recognise like up to a four year qualification, you should fall within a particular band. Now my salary, to the cent is for a teacher of five years of teaching experience and I've been teaching for eleven. And the reason for that is there was apparently, while I was in the system there were six years where teachers were given no increase whatsoever…

Uhm.

So basically…

You were behind…

Ja. And I mean those kind of things there's just stuff that's unethical about that.

Ja, ja. Um… and when you were training to teach, were you aware that teaching wasn't a really well-paid profession?

Well definitely, but I think I always, well it might be very sort of unliberated but I always just thought well I'll get married and I'll have a husband who'll supp…I mean, it's probably a ridiculous viewpoint but it is always just what I thought, but I always understood that if I didn't that I would have problems…

Yes…

I would need to…But I just always assumed that I would, I would get married, I would have children…

And you were fortunate enough…

Ja. And you know, perhaps it's also just like, perhaps if I'd like been brought up by my mom, in that kind of environment I would've thought again. But the home I came from, my father was the breadwinner, my mother was…and perhaps that's just what I…

Ja…

Perhaps if I had, if I'd seen a different picture growing up I would never have chosen it because I would've realised…

Ja, in terms of what you needed that wouldn't have been enough.

Ja, ja.

So that makes sense. Um, and have there been any significant changes in your personal circumstances that have influenced your financial needs or security? In terms of maybe family's that expand, and or um changes in your life that affect your financial needs?

Um, um…

Not really…?

Not really. I mean I think it's for instance the birth of my youngest, that's my third child and that did make me stop and think you know there are gonna be school fees to pay and there gonna be…perhaps I need to go to a private school, sell houses. Something! Just to generate more of an income which would certainly make things easier and give you more choices…

Uhm, uhm

But at the end of the day I realised no, this suited me right now…

Ok, ok

But I mean definitely earning more money would provide you with more choices. I mean we would have more of an option as to where the children would go to school, more of an option as to…ah lots of things.

Well yes, money gives you access to resources. Um, and once you began teaching, were there any aspects of teaching you were not prepared for, or you felt let down by?

I think definitely, I think definitely it was the element of the small-mindedness in a school. I was not prepared for that. I thought, I thought that it would be different, I thought that as a teacher you wouldn't be just like you were going back to school…

Oh, ok.

The the small, ja, the the the small mindedness of a school-type environment I wasn't prepared for that.

Could you give me an example of what you mean?

Um, I, I don't know it's just like you're treated continuously like a child in a way, especially young teachers until you get old enough to just give, well the sort of take it or leave it attitude which you do eventually get.

Ja…

Or it's water off a duck's back and you don't actually care…

Uhm

But certainly when I entered, when I entered the teaching profession I felt like I had never left school.

Uhm, ja.

It felt like it was just a transfer to being treated like a bigger child and uh, and that was like a shock for me.

Ja, it's like all the similar rules and expectations…

Ja, exactly…And the same, the same sort of like…right to sort of victimise, to, to, ja. And I think that comes with experience and growing a sort of skin and you end up sort of saying well, tough luck, kind of thing.

Ok. And then…do you view teaching as a life-long career?

For myself personally?

Uhm.

Um, no. I think that once my children are bigger and they don't need me to be as much as they do now, to be flexible. You see with teaching the nice thing about it, but it also comes with the attitude that I'll do what suits ***me****, because then you're not really supposed to leave at two o'clock but my attitude is now, if I want to work at half past seven when my children have gone to bed, then that's what I'll do, because that suits me right now because my afternoons are basically freed up for my children.*

Uhm

But once my children are older and don't need me as much, I think I would definitely consider something else…selling houses! I think that I, I feel, I feel that I would be

interested in, which would generate more income and possibly not be one hundred percent full-time either.

Ok. So you'd be looking for something between the two, um, in terms of money, and something that's also…

Not in an office. Ja…

Ja, ja, I definitely would. But it would be definitely, oh a good few years. Possibly when my children are in high school…

Uhm

Because then they don't need all the things that they need now.

Uh, ja. Ok. Have you ever considered leaving the teaching profession, I know you spoke a little about thinking about maybe selling houses…or contemplated, and you also mentioned teaching at a private school, or changing schools or working in another country?

Personally I haven't really considered working in another country, definitely my circumstances haven't led to that, but having said that say, my husband got retrenched or my family was in crisis, or whatever I would definitely consider. I mean I wouldn't want to ever, but if my, if my income and my skills had to generate a whole lot more money I would go to Saudi, or to…and send money back because that's where I could earn considerably more.

Uhm.

But no, in my set of circumstances I haven't had to. Ja, I, I think all through my career I have to come back to the small-mindedness of the school-type environment, I think apart from remuneration that's pushed me to think I wanna leave this, I would rather work independently…or…ja.

Ok, um do you supplement your salary in any way?

No. But having said that if I were single, and I had to pay all these bills I would have to, I wouldn't have any choice whatsoever. I would ***have to****, find something else****.***

Ja, so recognising that if you couldn't rely on your husband, um you still at the same time recognise if you couldn't you'd have to supplement…

Oh, I would have to.

Ja.

I would have to….And I know many teachers do.

Ja

Extra lessons, that kind of thing, you know?

Ja. Um, and we've discussed your understanding of the way that other people view the teaching career and you said that it was very undervalued.

Very, very, very!

Very badly recognised. And then, lastly, if you could start all over again, would you choose teaching as a profession?

Um, it's an interesting question, um for myself personally with my specific set of circumstances, I recognise that right now, teaching is the best place for me.

So in terms of your family context and your needs…

Ja, I think of it as the best of both worlds. And I don't consider myself to have a part-time or half-day job or anything like that, but I do recognise that there is a degree of flexibility and that really suits me at the moment. I mean I'm still able to go and watch my child at swimming lessons and if I wanna work all of Saturday and Sunday when their father is around then I can…

Yes

If I wanna work after they've gone to bed then I can.

Ja.

You know and that really suits me right now.

Ok. And if you had any um, family or friends who were considering teaching as a profession would you um, encourage them to?

I would be honest, and say that I was lucky the way it turned out for me, and say that I've never had to rely on my salary and I have been lucky…And I think that if I had had to rely on my salary then I would've been out of here a long time ago and that's what I would say. Don't ever think you can live comfortably on a teacher's salary because you can't. But having said that it's an interesting job, its different everyday, it's not the confines of an office situation. It's working with a whole heap of different personalities which is very, which is stimulating, so ja, it is rewarding. And from those perspectives I mean, I would, I would, I would die if I had to go into an office everyday.

Uhm…

Also the holidays, let's be honest. Do I really want fifteen days a year?

Ja, ja…

Um, you know so from those perspectives it really is nice.

So there are quite a few incentives.

But at the end of the day, you mean either survive or you can't, you actually wouldn't be able to.

Um, is there anything you would like to add or feel that there's anything we haven't covered?

Um, I just think it would be interesting to find out how these perceptions have come about.

Uhm

And to go back and get some sort of grasp that made people think at the beginning of time think that they needed to pay teachers so little, and pay nurses so little and social workers so little and chartered accountants so much? And doct…I mean it's a primary service just like a doctor or uh you know?

Uhm

And I think that would be kind of interesting because it didn't just happen.

Ja, you're right.

I mean you know.

Ja, I mean you're looking at people who are responsible for constructing society…

Ja, ja, ja.

Ok, thank's for that.

It's a pleasure.

Summary of Interview 9

The interview began with a discussion of the different factors that played a part in the participant choosing teaching as a career. The participant explained that teaching was something that she had always considered and thought of it as *"something I would enjoy."* She expanded by saying that she *"always knew that (she) wanted to work with small children in some way."* There are two factors that the participant chiefly identified when explaining what it was that she enjoys about teaching. She explained that the work is very challenging, yet at the same time very rewarding. She experienced the rewards in *"the challenge and the feeling of being able to contribute, to make a difference."* The participant described her job as something very enjoyable as she could not remember that dreaded feeling at the thought of waking up and having to go to work that so many

people refer to. When thinking back on her feelings when she started teaching she said that *"The day flew by and it was enjoyable, you know?"*

The participant expressed a dislike for having to work in an office and that this is one of the reasons she enjoyed teaching so much. Later in the interview, she went on to state that she also really enjoys the long holidays, and couldn't imagine only getting fifteen days leave.

The participant explained however, that teaching is not all wonderful:

> *it's the most rewarding and it's also the most unrewarding job on earth so it's a two edged sword….from the point of remuneration, it's extremely unrewarding.*

She elaborated that another area in which she experienced high levels of dissatisfaction and lack of reward was in the realm of society's perceptions of teachers. She described teaching as being viewed by society as *"a half-day job - you don't have to be particularly intelligent or particularly really anything in order to do it"*. This she expressed makes one feel *"very…uh, demoralised."* The participant felt strongly about teaching being *"Way undervalued"* in society. She went on to say that she feels that *"people have very little respect for teachers as well."*

She did express however that respect for teachers is different in different communities as when she taught at a very underprivileged school, there was great respect for the teachers. However, typically suburban government schools she feels that *"the respect for teachers is virtually nothing."* She feels that this is especially a problem with parents, who then pass their negative views of teachers onto their children. She says that:

> *in the foundation phase we don't have that much of a problem with (this lack of respect), but certainly in the intermediate phase and the senior phase there's that sort of lack of respect, and you just hear it, and you get a general lack of respect.*

She expressed that it seems as though *"parent's think that you (teachers) don't have to be particularly ambitious number one, or intelligent"* to be a teacher. The participant explained that she felt that these undervalued perceptions of teachers are not just held by parents, but by society at large. In her experience teaching is not afforded the same respect as other professions such as doctors or chartered accountants. She described

accountants and doctors as viewed with *"prestige and you immediately think that 'shoe!' they must be intelligent."* She feels that teaching is viewed as maybe *"maybe one step above someone like a fireman or a policeman…and I think nurses are viewed pretty much the same way."*

The participant shared that she has often wondered how these perceptions have developed. She often wonders and wants to,

> *and get some sort of grasp that made people think at the beginning of time that they needed to pay teachers so little, and pay nurses so little and social workers so little and chartered accountants so much?…I mean it's a primary service just like a doctor!*

When reflecting on whether the participant felt that being a woman influenced her decision to teach, she admitted that while this may not have been conscious, *"from the point of view of having small children and all of that, there are definite benefits",* even though *"you know the remuneration is pathetic"*.

Although the participant said that she could imagine her brother or other males entering the teaching profession, she felt that *"society (then) views them as not like real men."* There is a negative assumption that men who enter the profession are thought of as *"only (being able to) cope with a school environment"* and that *"they're looked down upon"* by broader society. She went on to say that she *"would never have married a teacher"* because she realises that a he would not be able to earn enough to support her on a teacher's salary.

When considering whether she agreed with the statement that 'a teacher's salary needs to be supported by someone else's salary', her response was a convincing *"Absolutely, one hundred percent!"* She cannot imagine how teachers who are single survive. She considered what it is like for women teachers who are single and explained that she has seen how many sacrifices they have to make. She their circumstances and poor quality of life: still live in rented flats,

> *Driving cars that are really past their best, not safe anymore not… breaking down every second, because you actually, I mean how could you possibly afford a car payment on the cheapest car but a new car?*

After listing the expenses, such as *"A car payment, insurance, as well as a bond, as well as insurance on your household contents and what have you, as well as groceries, clothing…medical aid?"*, she says that she thinks *"it would be impossible"* to survive on only a teacher's salary without the significant financial support of somebody else.

When the participant described a teacher's salary, she simply stated that, *"in terms of the qualification that you may have, and in terms of the year's experience, I think it's pretty dismal."* She explained that the salary of a teacher who has studied for four years and taught for ten years as *"very disheartening."* To make matters worse, there is no hope of the remuneration improving, *"it's not going anywhere… and that's probably the most, just um you know, just the most distressing of it all."*

The participant explained that although the Department of Education has made some efforts to remunerate teachers better, there has been a miscalculation because

> *my salary, to the cent is for a teacher of five years of teaching experience and I've been teaching for eleven. And the reason for that is there was apparently, while I was in the system there were six years where teachers were given no increase whatsoever.*

This, she said affects all teachers who have been teaching for more than five years and she feels that *"there's just stuff that's unethical about that."*

The participant explained that while she was studying, she was aware that teachers were poorly remunerated, but she always idealistically comforted herself in the idea that she would get married and have a husband who would support her. She said that she *"always understood that if I didn't (marry someone who could financially support me) that I would have problems."* She shared that she came from a very stable home with two parents and felt that *"Perhaps if…I'd seen a different picture growing up, I would never have chosen it because I would've realised"* how difficult it could be to be independent on a teacher's salary.

The participant explained that her personal circumstances have not changed drastically, but that she did stop and think twice when she had her third child and thought about the financial demands of schooling and rearing this child. She felt that she may need to find a way to earn more money as she considered going to teach at *"a private school, sell*

houses. Something! Just to generate more of an income…". This *"would certainly make things easier and give you more choices."*

The participant explained that once she started teaching, she felt let down by the *"small-mindedness in a school."* She explained that she felt disappointed by the way *"you're treated continuously like a child in a way."* She believes that this was *"especially (true for) young teachers."* She felt as though she had never left school, that as a teacher, she experienced a similar *"right to sort of victimise"* as she had experienced while being a school pupil.

The discussion then focused on whether the participant views teaching as a life-long career. She explained that she did not. She felt that teaching suited her now due to its flexibility especially with her young children, but *"once my children are bigger and they don't need me to be as …flexible as they do now,"* then she will get another job that *"would generate more income."* She described teaching as flexible in that if she wished she could *"work at half past seven when my children have gone to bed…because my afternoons are basically freed up for my children."*

The participant explained that she does not supplement her income in any other way, however she did explain that she is very fortunate to have a husband who does earn well and whose salary she completely relies on.

If participant had the opportunity to start all over again, she said that given her set of circumstances, she would not change anything. She described teaching as:

> *the best of both worlds. And I don't consider myself to have a part-time or half-day job or anything like that, but I do recognise that there is a degree of flexibility and that really suits me at the moment. I mean I'm still able to go and watch my child at swimming lessons and if I wanna work all of Saturday and Sunday when their father is around then I can…if I wanna work after they've gone to bed then I can.*

The participant explained that if she were to advise someone who was interested in the teaching profession, she would say that in her circumstances she has been very fortunate to marry a man who earns well. She has *"never had to rely on my salary and … if I had had to rely on my salary then I would've been out of here a long time ago."* She would warn the person not to *"ever think you can live comfortably on a teacher's salary*

because you can't." Nevertheless, she still felt that teaching is still *"stimulating, so ja, it is rewarding."*