

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on why prospective teachers want to teach. It argues that prospective teachers draw on their own perceptions of what teaching means to them and that these perceptions are clarified and refined during the initial stages of their university study. Firstly, it examines what attracts and holds first year student teachers to teaching and whether they really want to be teachers. Secondly, it compares students' perceptions of teaching at the start, during and at the end of their first year of their first year of university studies. Finally, it identifies the kind of early experiences at university and school sites that can either strengthen the initial commitment to become a teacher or might lessen the original desire to teach.

The context of the study is a regional university in a provincial city in Central Queensland. The selection of constructivism as a theoretical framework informed the research approach and allowed data to be gathered in a case study format using an iterative process to permit probing and identification of change, and reconstruction of relevant issues. In this research, data was collected through three individual interviews with nine first year prospective student teachers at the beginning, mid and end of that year. Constructivist analysis concepts were employed to draw from the data coded patterns, themes and issues displaying student teachers' emerging perceptions of their first year of learning how to teach.

The thesis reports that student teachers in their initial year were enabled to articulate their co-construction of what it means to be a teacher. During the year they were able to build up their construction of what it means to be a teacher which, over time, alleviated earlier uncertainties as their decision to teach

was affirmed. The process of construction of being a teacher identified qualities, knowledge and skills identified from the start to the end of the program, building from perceptions to reality, from the old to the new.

Conceptions of teaching as work, and the importance of relationships in teaching contributed to the satisfaction of student teachers and helped affirm their commitment in anticipating their future as a teacher. The findings of the study exemplify that a well-structured, collaborative teacher education program in the initial year will attract and retain many prospective teachers. This thesis gives a wider understanding of the first year of a teaching career.

The research builds a contemporary picture of what prospective teachers think about teaching in their first year of a teacher education program. The issues and problems identified in the context of a regional campus, underpin the results of this research. This research enables students' voices to be heard and will inform teacher educators and others involved in teacher education to examine specific cases in the attraction and retention of prospective teachers.



Central Queensland
U N I V E R S I T Y
Where Students Come First.

**First steps in becoming a teacher:
Initial teacher education students'
perceptions of why they want to teach**

Mary McDougall

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the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy,**

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Declaration

I declare that the main text of this thesis is entirely my own work and that such work has not been previously submitted as a requirement for the award of a degree at Central Queensland University or any other institution of higher education.

(Mary McDougall)

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Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

This thesis explores the first steps in becoming a teacher. The virtually uncharted research journey focuses on student teachers' perceptions of teaching at the beginning of their career, by telling their stories to assist people (teachers, teacher educators, guidance officers and others) to understand why prospective teachers want to teach. To investigate the phenomenon, this study transports the reader through the rites of passage of the student teacher world to the initial year of a teacher education program, and so it will be necessary to identify the early experiences that can either strengthen the initial commitment to become a teacher or might lessen the original desire to teach. The study attempts to find specific examples of what causes a person to become attracted to teaching and how the design of a teacher education program assists that person to be successful in pursuing a teaching career. This conception of how one learns to be a teacher, is set in the social and academic context of how the potential teacher reflects on that first year experience, and this research is built upon any issues arising from those perceptions.

1.2 Background to the study

Becoming a teacher calls for a decision, for a desire to teach. Teachers themselves use many words to show what they perceive and believe about teaching, what motivates, perhaps drives one to be a teacher. The word 'commitment' appears in various studies as a quality of teacher attitude, e.g. Diamond and Borthwick (1989), Stokes (1997) and Hansen (1995). Stokes focused on such beliefs about commitment, the worldview that 'called' teachers, who consist of as many as fifty per cent of incoming teachers (Yee, 1990), bring

with them into teaching. ‘Called’ in this sense is what Woolf (1974, p.110) defines as ‘a strong inner impulse towards a particular vocation’. Stokes maintains that identification of prospective teachers who may perceive they are ‘called’ or committed could be crucial to the well being of those who elect to remain in the teaching workforce. In perceiving teaching as work, participants in this study had to gain entrance to a university to learn how to teach. Primary teacher education moved to the tertiary sector within the last decade, and today teacher education programs are mostly undertaken in universities (Knight, Bartlett and McWilliam, 1993).

Entrance to universities is not uniform worldwide. Clark (1988a) proposed that in the future, the cross-national perspectives of absorbing more young people from upper secondary education could be problematic. Indicative of that problem, the New Zealand Ministry of Education has created initiatives to give extra support to students with little previous academic success at school, forming partnerships with employers, tertiary training and tertiary institutes (Boyd, McDowall & Cooper, 2002). In Australia, lower employment rates worldwide and nationally meant higher competition for fewer work positions, and hence the concern was to maximize Australia’s investment in education through the education industry (Dawkins, 1991). Therefore, in attempting to become a teacher, participants were actually competing for a work position. With the emergence of the national system in Australian higher education, participation rates have risen, and the student load rate has grown two thirds since 1983 (Mahony, 1992). There has been an increase in the number of secondary students seeking entrance into tertiary studies in regional centres (Hallein, Phillips & Pearce, 1998), and an upsurge of mature age students wishing to enter higher education (Crowley, 1998, p.173).

TER (Tertiary Entrance Rank) scores are a matter for individual institutions (Crowley, 1998), varying in each Australian state (Knight et al. 1993), called the HSC (High School Certificate) in New South Wales and ACT (Australian Commonwealth Territory), and the VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education) in Victoria with administration of these certificates ascertaining the performance of students dependent on the number of places available on campuses, number of applicants and the quality of the applicants. In Queensland, university selection is administered by the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC). Student teachers can enter teacher education programs directly through their Overall Position (OP) scores derived from their secondary school results and a general ability core skills test, or as people wishing to resume their entry via QTAC entry. In most states, alternative or special entry to universities is accepted for a wide range of qualifications for entry into their courses. Tertiary institutions recognize that the skills required for success in tertiary studies can be developed through a wide range of competencies, so that criteria and procedures to selection and for entry placement should include recognition of prior learning and credit transfer (Adey, 1998). Today primary teacher education programs are available in universities over a four-year Bachelor of Education (Primary) degree.

Preston (1997) observed that the Tertiary Entrance scores reflect demand from school leavers, but mature and other special entry students are not included in such scores, although their academic preparation and commitment to teaching are reportedly very high. As described earlier, Stokes (1997) asserted the importance of research that helped teacher educators to understand how being called to teach shapes professional growth. Hansen (1995) also researched the

meaning of a teaching vocation in his book, *The Call To Teach*, where the nature of teaching was considered, where 'to teach is to be full of hope.' (Foreword: Hansen, 1995). Other researchers use the word 'calling' as motivation for becoming teachers. As a teacher educator, Danielewicz (1998), was dismayed to find in interviews with prospective teachers that several had not chosen to be teachers, that two could not feel it to be a 'calling', and that a 'star pupil' dropped out as she 'just couldn't make it *feel right*' (p.31). Williamson (1998) in the teacher magazine, *Classroom* (p.10, June 6, 1998), quoted the study of Dinham & Scott (1998) who found that fifty percent of new teachers just fell into teaching. If a teacher does not have a 'calling' to be a teacher at enrolment, what did he/she feel called to do rather than teaching? If a student just drifted into teaching, would, could that student just drift out?

This thesis focuses on why education students want to teach, and ultimately on the problem why potential teachers are attracted to teaching, but do not complete their first year. In the light of these above perceptions of prospective teachers about self-image as teacher, what could be expected in their language, perhaps actions of the student teachers. It could be believed that some of the participants would be 'called' and others not. Since the prospective teacher made the decision to enrol in a teacher education program and was selected, it is necessary to examine the current public image of becoming a teacher. A recent study in Australia (Crowley, 1998) indicated that prospective teachers in Australia would be joining a teaching force where most teachers are likely to be in their mid forties, with almost fifty percent of secondary teachers female, increasing to around seventy-five per cent of primary teachers.

Hoyle (1995) claimed that teaching is relatively high in the range of all occupations, relatively high in the group of public and personal service professions (e.g. nursing), and higher than that of skilled manual and white-collar occupations, but lower than that of the major professions like medicine (Tremaine, 1977). Teaching is by far the largest profession, so that occupational prestige is a reflection of the well being of society, according to Hoyle (1995), though he saw the salary demands for such a large profession as being problematic. This view is echoed by Murnane (1995) who claims that in the United Kingdom, the more favourably teacher salaries compare to other occupations, the more likely graduates are to choose teaching. However, Murnane (1995) maintains that a concern by educational policy makers in many countries is whether there will be enough certified teachers to educate all children.

In Australia, Preston (1997) projects an urgent need for teachers through to 2006. This would be true internationally also, in New Zealand (Preston, 1992) and the United Kingdom especially (Preston, 1997 p.28-9; Chambers and Roper, 2000). In the Netherlands, Stokking, Leenders, De Jong & Tartwijk (2003) assert the shortage of teachers is a major challenge to teaching because of the large proportion of dropouts in initial teacher education, and to counter that dropout a nationwide intervention was contrived. Since 1995, an intensive practice period in the final year of teacher education has resulted in a reduction of the dropout rate with the relevant factors for student teachers being the provision of supervision and mentoring, acceptance in the schools, encouragement of reflection, and the gradual increase of independence.

This shortage would be true for Australia, and for national action in teacher education, where Eltis (1997) asked how do we attract entrants to teaching, yet fight the competition from the more prestigious and well-paying professions. The knowledge that a percentage of teacher entrants will not complete their teacher education programs is of great concern in educational circles (McWilliams Bogad, (1983); Diamond & Borthwick, (1989). McArthur (1981) pointed to the 'reality shock' apparent in the concerns of teacher entrants as a potential contributing factor, and McLean (2001) highlighted the necessity of countering culture shock through early strategic planning for first year university students, thus reducing any stress that could reduce the dropout rate.

Abbott-Chapman, Hull, Maclean, McCann & Wyld (1991) stated that young people from secondary schools are making choices based on career knowledge, but not always on realistic career strategies, and it was unfortunate that many will be unable to meet their occupational ideal, with the implication for the future. The dominant theme of research by (McWilliams Bogad, (1983); and Diamond and Borthwick (1989) appeared to be that some of the best potential teachers could be attracted to but not retained or held in the teacher program.

The above profile of the prospective teacher may describe the outward appearance of the profession, but it is necessary to probe in this study how the student teachers perceive their readiness to teach. Neurerer (1995) perceives that candidates for teaching:

1. are motivated by a concern for others;
2. perceive a nurturing aspects of teaching as more than academic requirements;

3. possess confidence in their teaching abilities;
4. express greater concern for mastering content than for managing interpersonal relationships, and
5. interpret the teaching act as one of dispensing information.

Neurerer's later perceptions relate more to the technical aspects of teaching. The actual motivation by concern for others and the perception of the nurturing aspects of teaching, as detailed earlier in Hansen (1995), Stokes (1997) and Danielewicz (1998), were foreshadowed by Lortie (1995)'s five attractors to teaching as contributing to the ethos of the profession. There is an interesting contrast between points one and four. While teacher entrants would appear to be motivated by a concern for others, their management of interpersonal relationships appears of lesser concern than that of mastering content. Such contradictions emerge in the current public profile of prospective teachers, indeed of the teaching profession, therefore it will be necessary to compare critically what the literature claims further about prospective teachers, and how the student teachers and teacher educators actually interact in the first year.

Teacher entrants may have a thousand reasons for their decision to teach, and many understandings about what being a teacher means. But whatever has driven their want to be a teacher is part of the wider world vision of the profession, and their understandings of entry into the teachers' world are of great importance to the numbers of teachers in the profession, to the attraction and retention of first year student teachers. The initial steps of the prospective teacher may be tentative, timid, frightened, exploratory, challenging, adventurous, but hopefully bold and daring as befits a learned profession.

In a background of a teaching industry, where the necessity to keep enough teachers out front with the children remains constant, it is imperative to identify any issues that will continue to attract and hold student teachers in a teacher education program. This thesis identifies the variation in the reasons why prospective teachers want to teach and explores the different implications these reasons for teaching have for their future teaching career.

1.3 Focus and Context of the Study

This study is focused on preservice teachers' understanding of what it means to be a teacher. Influences on the choice of a teaching career provide important knowledge of teacher socialisation, career choice, and possible reasons for choosing alternate careers. However, in Australian and overseas universities, such as in the United Kingdom (Chambers & Roper, 2000), the greatest number of dropouts occurs in the first year of teacher education programs, so that having an understanding of what these entrants think about teaching is an important step in beginning to identify issues relevant to student teachers in their first year. Such research on why student teachers want to be teachers, if they want to leave, or find they don't want to teach, provides feedback for universities and other educators to remedy such problems.

This study aims to investigate student teachers' perceptions of teaching at the beginning of their career by telling their stories to assist people (teachers, teacher educators, guidance officers and others) to understand why prospective teachers want to teach. Firstly, it explores what attracts and holds first year student teachers to teaching, whether they find out that they really want to be teachers. Secondly, it focuses on comparison between their perceptions of teaching at the start, part way through and end of the year examining implicit

connections to their career preparations. Thirdly, the study will help teacher educators understand why student teachers succeed or fail in the first year. The research aims to build a contemporary picture of what prospective teachers think about teaching in their first year of a teacher education program, and what universities do to sustain them in their developing career. The issues and problems, identified in the literature and in the context of a developing regional campus, underpin the design of this research.

The key questions and their related sub-questions directing this study are listed below and frame the thesis structure:

1. *What are the student teachers' understandings of being teachers?*
 - a) After the commencement of the teacher education program what does being a teacher mean to commencing students?
 - b) What does being a teacher mean to them at the end of the First Year?
2. *How does comparison between these views lead to a better understanding of students' expanding knowledge of the teacher's world?*
 - a) What are the implications of these understandings for the students' future career paths and their career preparations?
 - b) How can the findings for this study assist teacher educators to lessen attrition in teacher education?

This research allows the student's voice to be heard in an examination of recurrent issues in the initial year of a primary teacher education program, and allows teacher educators and others involved in teacher education to examine specific cases in the attraction and retention of prospective teachers. Most studies of prospective teachers have examined specific aspects of teacher programs, such

as policy or content only, few have explored a certain year. Focusing on the student teacher in the first year alone gives a unique snapshot of the emerging teacher.

Such an approach attempts to comprehend how student teachers construct what being a teacher means to them in their first year, not to be restrained with specifics, but to allow for any changing aspects from the start and end of the year. To permit the researcher to understand and analyse what the participant reveals, this study uses a constructivist paradigm to enable the researcher and participants to co-construct teacher entrants' understanding of the first year. Given that attrition is an emerging problem for some in the first year, it must be sensitively handled, which is often why such research on student 'dropout' occurs after the event, and why a follow-up in subsequent years can be rewarding for such issues. Exploring prospective teachers' understanding of teaching over their initial year is an innovative exploration to the problem of non-completion.

Stake (1995, p.17) states that in greater understanding of any research problem, conceptual organisation is required. He suggests that issues may be used as conceptual structure, where the complex background of human concern can help the researcher to recognise the human interaction in problems. By drawing on relevant literature, as reviewed in Chapter Two, a conceptual framework is created for the study. As cited by Cranston (2000), from Bassey (1999, p.73): "it is expected that the researcher will refer to related research as reported in the literature and show how this study fits into the general picture... the 'conceptual background' to the study".

1.4 Significance of the Research

As the study commenced in 1997, and change in teacher education was proceeding, educational communities were facing the realities of a decade of evolving teaching and learning. While earlier an emphasis was laid on finding the best prospective teachers (Diamond & Borthwick, 1989; McDougall, 2001), warnings of an emerging teacher shortage in certain global areas meant that alternatives to teaching could lessen the intakes of teacher entrants. Universities worldwide were forced to question the attraction that the teacher education program held for first year university students. With the restructuring of the higher educational system, more regional universities were created, and university students could stay in their own city, rather than leaving for study in capital cities.

Because prediction of success (Salzman, 1991) indicates that standardised tests do not appear to predict success as well as studies that explore the student perceptions of their own evaluations of their successes, this study is important to allow the prospective teachers to tell their own stories, their perception of teaching. They know that they have been accepted into the course through university selection, as do the teacher educators, but the year could be uncertain, whether in the transition of coming from school, industry or other contexts. It is not intended that this study should dwell on any issues or problems in the program, but to be significant for the rich data that may be produced for the bigger picture of those who want to be teachers. Because competencies other than academic prowess are acknowledged in selection into universities, into teacher education, the importance of why intending teachers enrol in teaching, must be addressed, leading to the commitment of what learning to teach means.

This study aims to clarify what knowledge of commitment signifies in the first year. While this research may be authoritative and meaningful to those who need to recruit prospective teachers for all or specific areas of teaching, the powerful narratives of teacher entrants themselves, their new or older biographies, convey what the essence of teaching is about.

Important too, to the reformation or change in the way teacher education has been, or is now conducted, this study will show the networking, the interplay in regional educational communities, how the university student is exposed to contemporary teaching. In a time where world employment is of concern, Australian teachers are getting older with a teacher shortage predicted, and other alternatives to teaching become more accessible, the importance of any research that examines why any student teacher does not make it through the first year cannot be underestimated.

Teacher entrants may be uncertain what is required of them in contemporary teaching, pre-empting the claims of Anderson & Burns (1989), that there is no universal definition of an excellent, good or effective teacher. Of prospective teachers, Murnane (1995) maintains that a positive relationship between a single, academic ability, and the quality of teaching has not been forthcoming, and no consensus has emerged of their vital academic, personal and professional qualifications. Research that opens up the worldview of prospective teachers will contribute meaningfully to the gap perceived by the above researchers. The study analyses critically the emerging knowledge and practices of prospective teachers in their first year, and examines how student teachers, teacher educators and the local educational community interact in the making of a teacher.

1.5 Methodology

The design of all research needs conceptual organisation, the idea of what needs to be understood, conceptual bridges from what is known, a framework for data gathering, and how results can be displayed to others (Stake, 1995). Research is designed with real individuals in mind (Janesick, 2000), and when the researcher constructs the research questions, the questions cannot be entirely separated from the method. The social setting is studied to understand the meaning of the participants' lives, with the researcher living in that setting over time. Gergen & Gergen (2000) argue that subjects are not static products, and the researcher is not a passive bystander, but actively builds communicative relationships. This thesis innovatively uses multi-voiced methods in co-constructed narratives in the participants' own terms to better understand what attracts and retains student teachers to teaching in their first year.

While the study does investigate the phenomenon of prospective teachers individually and as a group or cohort, in a context of a teacher education program as described earlier, the thesis also explores the university organisation as a whole social, political and economic system, whether situated in city, country or world. The research design must show what is going on in the participants' lives, any differences between them and if there has been any change. Yin (1994) proposes that to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, where the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident, a case study is preferred.

A case study methodology was proposed because richer and firmer data would be obtained. Stake (1995, p.100) sees the researcher in the central role of interpreter, and gatherer of interpretations, believing that knowledge is

constructed rather than discovered, that how case study researchers enlighten the reader depends on 'their notions of knowledge and reality.' He contends that human construction of knowledge appears to begin with sensory stimulation of external stimuli. But such sensations are immediately given personal meaning, one's own interpretation of it, so that in the mind, new perceptions of stimulation mix with old. This is of great importance in how the prospective teacher perceives the teaching and learning process in progression through the initial year. Understanding, according to Stake, as reached by each individual, would in some degree be unique, but much would be held in common. These interpretations of the people most knowledgeable about the case can justify substantial narrative description in the final report.

If, as Stake contends, human construction of knowledge appears to begin with sensory stimulation of external stimuli, this thesis aims to explore the changing perception of 'self as teacher' framed in the constructivist paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). To allow the researcher to build experience in the constructivist method a pilot study was conducted to trial interview procedures and devise analytical procedures. Interview questions were tested to discover prospective teachers' understanding of teaching in their first year of the teacher education program. Denzin & Lincoln (1994, p.128) refer to the inquirer's own self-reflective awareness of his or her own construction and to the 'social construction of the individual constructions.' In a constructivist approach to understanding through construction of knowledge, it is the blending, the co-construction of researcher and participants over a long-term study that allows for development of key issues (Stake, 1994).

In constructivist research, data is gathered using an iterative process to allow for probing and identification of change, and reconstruction of relevant issues. In this research, data were collected through individual interviews with nine first year prospective student teachers at the beginning, mid and end of that year. Constructivist analysis concepts were employed to draw from the data a number of issues displaying student teachers' emerging perceptions of their first year of learning how to teach. Co-construction was achieved through the three interviews by re-asking previous questions in discussion. The analysis consisted of data reduction as a form of coding, by teasing out themes and clustering, then data displays as a form of reporting the results, and by drawing and verifying conclusions about the case. The interview transcripts were read and re-read to identify sets of emerging patterns to be further refined into sets of issues, contrasting participants' perceptions of learning to teach. The constructivist nature of this research allowed the reduction and interpretation of the case to be reported in a coherent and well-refined construction of the varied perceptions of the first year prospective teacher. Further reasons for the choice of a constructivist case study as a research methodology will be discussed in Chapter Three. Previous research is often cited in support of the way the study is framed (Merriam, 1998). According to Cranston (2000) a 'previously developed theory can be used as a template to compare' the results of a study (Yin, 1989, p.38). In this research the literature review in Chapter Two does serve as a template with which findings are contrasted, to allow for the construction of a conceptual framework. In generalising the results of a case study, (Yin, 1994, p.32) the use of theory from previous studies is immensely valuable.

1.6 Outcomes of the study

The main aim of this study was to build a co-construct of what prospective teachers believe has attracted them and retained them in their first year of teaching. Such outcomes will contribute to:

1. the development of knowledge about the first year of teacher education programs from the viewpoint of the student teacher;
2. the development of knowledge about the first year of a teacher education program from the viewpoint of educational institutions;
3. the identification of the implications of this research for student teachers' future career paths and career preparations;
4. assisting teacher educators to lessen attrition from the teaching degree in the first year;
5. the application of constructivist research techniques in a new context.

1.7 Definitions of Terms

Discussion on issues arising from the attraction and retention of prospective teachers in their first year at university highlights the necessity to define some concepts. The study is set on a regional university campus in Queensland, Australia. As part of the thesis title, the word 'perceptions' needs to be defined as a major feature of the research. In this thesis the terms of 'prospective' and 'student teachers' are used many times over, as are the words, 'first year' and 'beginning teachers'. The terms, 'issues' and 'concerns' are also evident through the text.

'First year student teachers' is the chosen name in this study to describe entrants into a four-year Primary Bachelor of Education degree. The term preservice is also applied to entrants as distinguishing them from those teachers already in the teaching service. A previous term of teacher trainees was often used, but today the teacher entrant is often introduced to schoolchildren by name

as 'student teacher,' with connotations of respect. Much literature refers to teacher entrants as recruits, or being engaged in initial teacher education, enrolled in a teacher education program. As candidates for the teacher profession, the title of prospective teachers is used many times in this thesis with the position that they gain an extensive view of teaching while looking forward to graduation, an inward vision of a teaching career. However, the actual name of beginning teacher in this study is reserved for teachers engaged in their first year of employment in their own class.

People in the world use their senses to gather perceptions, that is, to make sense, to become aware of stimuli upon the body, sending impulses to the brain where sensations are interpreted. Prospective teachers have gathered their own perceptions of teaching, and in the first year of teacher education they continue that process. Much literature does report on teachers' perceptions of teaching (Abbott-Chapman, Hughes and Williamson, 2001), not only using the word 'perception' but as Clandinin & Connelly (1987) report, how teachers make explicit their frames of reference, beliefs, values and attitudes through which they perceive and process information. Student teachers as they enter teaching have their own perceptions of teachers, therefore the context of this first chapter is really about teaching and teachers, but this thesis is about the perceptions of the first year student teacher when learning how to teach. Deer, Brady, Segal and Bamford (1997) researched the perceptions of first-year student teachers by evaluating their experiences of their teacher education program, however this thesis probes further to make use of knowledge from past and present perceptions of teaching of participants. Previously, Stake's (1995) contention that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered was examined, that human

construction of knowledge does commence with sensory stimulation of external stimuli, but is personalised with new perceptions mixing with the old, with some perceptions of student voices unique, and some in common.

In making the decision to enter a teaching career, prospective teachers may commence a process of commitment to shape professional growth. In this chapter, the idea of teacher vocation as contemplated by Stokes (1997) and Hansen (1995) defines the attraction to become a teacher as being 'called to teach'. Retrieved from On-line dictionaries (<http://www.library.cqu.edu.au/vrd/dict.htm> October 22, 2003): (Oxford Dictionary) - that the word 'called' is rarely used as an adjective now. Two meanings are offered: professional calling in a certain livelihood; the strong impulse to any course of action as the right thing to do: (From Merriam-Webster Dictionary) Calling: to summon to a particular employment.

Retention of student teachers in the first year may depend upon the strength of the commitment, and therefore strategies to retain prospective teachers may be part of a teacher education process. Definitions of attrition as possible concerns in the program are presented in Chapter Two. McInnes, Hartley, Polesel, Teese (2000) suggest that terms such as attrition, dropout, discontinuance, withdrawal and non-completion caused problems in the literature, but more neutral terms are currently used, with 'non-completion' as the preferred term, and for university students, those who commence study, but do not gain a university qualification.

1.8 Delimitations and Limitations of the Thesis

A case study design for this study was selected because of the nature of the research problem and the questions being asked, as the best plan for

answering the research questions, and particularly useful for studying educational innovations (Merriam 1998). For this reason the general delimitations of this research study are displayed through the construction of the case study and the collection of data. Merriam (p.43) asserts that a case study evaluates a phenomenon through description and interpretation of the issues to be considered. In this present study the design is based on a group of first year student teachers and their perceptions of the phenomenon of why they want to teach. Although a case study research method was lengthy and time-consuming (Merriam, 1998), this paradigm allowed the student stories to be told, so that the issues could emerge from the three phases. However, the study builds upon first year teachers' construction of learning how to teach through a co-constructivist method with researcher and participants to achieve the best possible results. This is intentional to give voice to the student teachers rather than the institutional role of the university as portrayed in most of the literature, so that this research endeavours to address this discrepancy.

A further focus of the delimitations of the research is related to the co-construction of student teachers' perceptions of first year teacher education and the analysis carried out by the research on the basis of the data supplied by the student teachers. Interviewing is the principal method of data collection and after the co-construction the researcher had 'to rely on one's own instincts and abilities' to portray a 'slice of life' (Merriam, 1998).

The limitations of the study may be identified. The reasons why primary student teachers want to teach that emerge from this study are located on a regional university in Queensland among a similar group of universities in Australia or overseas. If research was conducted further in Queensland, other

Australian states or in other countries or cultures, a more comprehensive set of reasons why first year primary students want to teach may lead to a greater representation than is possible from the participants in this study. A further limitation of the research centred on the decision to confine the study to the vital first year of teacher education. Given the great importance of that initial year, further study could be extended to later years, and even to first year secondary student teachers, to find out why they want to teach.

1.9 Structure of Thesis

In Chapter One an overview for the study has provided the argument that preservice teachers' understanding of being a primary teacher may have implications on future career prospects, that contextual changes in the general field of education mean a rethink of teachers in the workplace. Having an understanding of what these entrants think about teaching is an important step in beginning to identify problems centred about recruitment, socialisation, attrition, and the first few months on a new campus. Identification of issues will lead to the enhancement of emerging professional knowledge in regional universities.

To gain that understanding of preservice teachers in their first year, data were collected over that year using a constructivist paradigm so that a co-construction (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) of the changing perception of self as teacher using a series of case studies may be achieved. My research is significant as high demand in teacher education is growing in provincial areas, prompting regional universities to increase places. This Chapter has identified the focus, purpose and research questions addressed in the study, to enable a consistent methodology to be framed through the use of a literature framework. Relevant terms and key definitions employed throughout the study are explained.

In Chapter Two, the body of literature regarding the perceptions of prospective teacher in the first year of a teacher education program is closely examined, and divided into five relevant sections to enable the construction of a conceptual framework to drive the design of the study. The chapter could be construed as like an umbrella of what it means to be a teacher, covering reference to career choice, attraction and decision to enter teaching; the qualities of teachers; outstanding teachers; teaching as work; the teacher education program. These five issues are set into the context that the preservice education program will attract and retain student teachers. Such literature builds the conceptual framework for the research to drive the data collection, analysis and the display of the findings.

The Methodology chapter presents the research design employed in the study including results of the Pilot Study trial, summarises the data obtained, the analytic procedures developed using the data, and changes to the Interview Proforma. This chapter builds from the literature and theory in the previous chapter so that relevant issues from data collection, analysis and ethical and design limitations are examined. Tables of relevant research details with sample display of findings are included, along with interview schedules.

Chapter Four uses the first two research questions as posed in this chapter to allow for emergence of issues over the year. Analyses of these interviews were framed by the focus, purpose and research questions of the study, and so each interview over the three phases was summarized, with comparison facilitated as cross cases.

Chapter Five presents the emerging issues from the study, using them in conjunction with the literature template to construct a framework of six issues identifying the similarities and differences across the case.

Chapter Six includes discussion of the conclusions drawn from the data, using the first two research question findings, to address the third research question, implications of these understandings for the student teachers' future career paths and their career preparations. A final brief section will discuss conclusions and recommendations, in considering the fourth research question, towards future research.

Chapter Two

Themes in the literature on prospective teachers' perceptions about learning to teach

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines pertinent themes in the literature, to set the scene and the conceptual framework for exemplifying the essence, purpose and research questions for the study. Prospective teachers can be very positive about the ideas that they bring with them into teaching, however in the initial year they see, hear, and interact with others in their growing understandings of teaching. Not all elements of initial teacher education in the literature are addressed, but only those relevant to this study will be reviewed in order to delimit the scope of the chapter.

According to Merriam (1998), designing a study is not merely a linear or process of reading or identifying the literature, but a highly interactive process of finding out how previous studies pursued the problem. A commanding knowledge of previous literature builds a point of reference. Merriam attests there is a need to show that the current study is urgent and important and will advance the knowledge base in this area. In reviewing the following literature the search may weave back and forth to help focus on the problem, in order to assess the strengths and weaknesses. By building on a deeper understanding of the topic, the review contributes towards a choice from various applicable methodologies.

The chapter presents five relevant issues from the literature. Firstly, student teachers' perceptions of teaching are considered, the elements of teaching which appeal to entrants and those that do not. Secondly, it is proposed that

prospective teachers bring with them their own ideas of teaching and may be considered as being enculturated into the profession as they begin their teacher education program (Nimmo & Smith, 1994; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981; McArthur, 1981). The third section describes what makes these ideas change as teacher entrants proceed into practical experiences. Loughran's 1996 constructivist views and Liston & Zeichner's (1991) inquiry-reflective practicum program are used as facilitators to change in teacher education, though with contrary views by some who may claim that teacher education makes no difference, (Kagan, 1992), and those who say it does (Nettle, 1998).

The fourth section argues the importance of what researchers say should be done to enhance change in teacher education, with the movement towards the importance of critical reflection by the practitioner (Zeichner & Gore, 1990) and the growing aspect of professional development through cognitive change (Bandura, 1997). The fifth issue reveals how those structural ideas that augment change (Tom, 1995) should be incorporated *immediately* into the first year experience. The last section of the chapter draws issues from the literature and discusses them in relation to the research design, enabling development of a conceptual framework to drive the study. Key issues arising from the literature review, and which clarify how the conceptual framework was contrived are placed at the end of each section in this chapter.

2.2 Perceptions of Teaching

Contrasting views of teaching are found in the literature on teacher and student teacher perceptions. Abbott-Chapman et al. (2001) gathered the perceptions of practising teachers over the last decade and argued that teacher work has been dramatically reconceptualised. Education has become entwined

with the needs of local and global industry, in the time of increasing workloads (Hargreaves, 1988) and increasing social change, including family breakdown and the uncertainties of the 'risk' society (Eckersley, 1988; 1995). With outcomes becoming more 'observable and measurable' (Barlow & Robertson, 1994) the teacher takes on many roles.

Despite the changing societal demands on the roles of the teacher through the years, Abbott-Chapman et al. (2001) claim practicing teachers perceive themselves as humanists in a caring profession. This commitment to teach, Hansen (1995) declares, lies in teachers' perceptions of their role and of their students, and it is those perceptions that 'reside at the heart of what a teacher is about' (p.90). Perceptions are central to teachers' work, and 'the decisive factor in their work remains their perceptions of themselves, their students, and the practice of teaching' (p.130). Not built on a single organisation or school, teacher perceptions are part of the larger vision of teaching, the 'perceptions of selves as members of a practice - with a history as old as civilisation' (p.126). Such perceptions of teaching are diverse, perhaps hinging on the sacred, and pertain to teachers' attraction to teaching, and Hansen (1995) argues teachers' perceptions of themselves, students and teaching are embedded in that commitment to teach. Diamond & Borthwick (1989) assert that perceptions or constructs enable people to make predictions and decisions about their likely future behaviour. Studies on perceptions of teachers, and of teaching, give greater understanding of what teaching is especially Lortie's (1975) five attractors to teaching, McWilliams Bogad's (1983) case study of those who did not want to be teachers, and Diamond & Borthwick's 1989 research which addressed whether teacher graduates might stay or leave teaching. What Lortie (1975) found regarding

teachers' thinking about their teaching careers, as described in his five attractors to teaching, attains great importance to this thesis about perceptions about teaching.

2.2.1 Attracting and retaining teachers

The interrelated research on the problems of attracting and retaining prospective teachers in a teacher education program has highlighted the changing patterns of motivators since Lortie (1975) researched the topic in the early 1960's through to Diamond & Borthwick's paper of 1989. The research by McWilliams Bogad (1983), Berry (1986) and Diamond & Borthwick (1989) has shown that attraction to a teaching career is dependent on many variables. These include the success of the career to attract new recruits, the appeal of other professions particularly to bright young women and the fit of the applicant to the realities of the university degree chosen.

Lortie's seminal work: *Schoolteacher: A sociological study* (1975), used the theme of a search for the nature and content of the ethos of teaching and the pattern of orientation and sentiments peculiar to teachers. Lortie perceived this ethos as distinguishing them from members of other occupations, both in the structure of the occupation and the meanings teachers attach to their work. He saw recruitment resources of teaching as consisting of attractors and facilitators, questioning whether these resources attract particular kinds of people with particular orientations towards work and schooling, and if so, how such an orientation might influence the ethos of the occupation. He described a 'tilt towards continuity in teaching,' and inquired whether that could be connected to methods of recruitment, which must be considered in this study. He believed that by using a model of career decisions in choices among competing alternatives,

an occupation could be presumed to 'win out' over competitors offering greater advantage to those making choices. By identifying which characteristics elicit commitment, Lortie questioned teachers, 'asking them to describe the attractions they saw in it, and to identify those which made it more attractive than the alternatives they seriously considered' (p.26). While Lortie (1975) conducted his research 27 years ago, much of his findings are relevant today, although sections may be contested in some sectors, and updated in other studies e.g. Tom (1995). Lortie detailed five attractors to teaching that he believed offered considerable advantages to those making career choices. These advantages were designated as themes by Lortie.

1. *The Interpersonal Theme* was related to protracted contact with young people, one of the most important characteristics of teaching. This can be interpreted as liking to work with people, which Lortie considered carries a certain aura. So defining the work of teachers added dignity, and enhanced the self-esteem of the teaching profession.
2. *The Service Theme* was the opportunity for teachers to provide societal service, to be perceived as performing a special mission in our society (p.28).
3. *The Continuation Theme* showed school as a place where aspiring teachers had enjoyed being.
4. *The Theme of Time Compatibility* meant the attraction of work schedules relating to working hours could be a 'potent' recruitment force. Lortie suggested that those who selected teaching because it may give limited claims on their time, may be less likely to identify strongly with the occupation and its interests.

5. *The Theme of Material Benefits* suggested that respondents were aware of the drawing power of material benefits as in money, prestige and employment security.

Lortie asserts that the resources of teaching do attract certain types of people, identifying attractors that he believed attracts entrants into the teaching career. Abbott-Chapman et al. (1991) claim that those who wanted high-paying jobs did not choose teaching, but those who did, saw 'helping people' as part of a 'caring' profession, wanted mental stimulation and job security. Deer et al. (1997) describe a cohort of student teachers who perceived their primary teacher education course in a positive manner, mostly becoming more committed to teaching over their first year.

A student's desire to be a teacher or not is bound up with his/her perceptions of what being a teacher is. Given this relationship, it is relevant to consider whether the work by Lortie (1975), McWilliams Bogad (1983), and Diamond & Borthwick (1989) is applicable to the current study. It is proposed that questions using Lortie's (1975) five attractors to teaching could enable student teachers to 'see' *that* career choice as offering the greatest advantage than other careers. McWilliams Bogad (1983) and Diamond & Borthwick (1989) used Lortie's 'five attractors to teaching' in their research on teacher education to investigate why some student teachers decided to remain *in* or leave teacher education. Their research focused on the aspects of attraction and retention of prospective teachers, and elucidated some different perspective of what being a teacher means. Their studies investigated the attraction and retention of completing student teachers, leading to the decision in this thesis to look at student teachers at the *beginning* of the degree, rather than at the end. Literature

on not becoming a teacher (the dropout) also became a reason for the research, by helping people (teachers, teacher educators, guidance officers and others) to understand more fully why people left teaching.

McWilliams Bogad's study took place in a North American university with prospective primary teachers, while Diamond & Borthwick (1989) looked at Australian secondary student teachers at the end of their teacher education program. Lortie included both primary and secondary elementary school teachers. In all studies, some perspectives of becoming a teacher, were exemplified, including the implication that leaving or staying in the teacher education program may be part of students' perceptions of self as part of their understanding about teaching. Limits to these future intentions are discussed in the next section.

2.2.2 Not to become a teacher

McWilliams Bogad (1983) considered the process of 'not becoming a teacher' since research had shown that after completing a teaching degree, 30 percent of prospective teachers made a decision to leave. Her case study of three student teachers in the later years of their degree described the processes involved in being a dropout, and how recruitment and socialization can fail. Various factors for not seeking a teaching position emerged. McWilliams Bogad, by using Lortie's orientation of the five attractors to the teaching profession, was then able to make categories for her study - attractive career alternatives, basic value conflicts with the orientation of the profession, and hesitancy to set up an adult life structure. Dissuaders and persuaders could then be charted to show visually points in favour of, or against seeking a teaching job.

McWilliams Bogad used the literature on professional development of teachers that suggested a model of concerns first with self, then students, in the successful socialisation of teachers. Blockage at any stage of development (e.g. presence or absence of an occupational 'fit' to be a teacher) suggested that contributing factors lay in the socialisation/training process (Fuller, 1965). Female subjects perceived that teaching was not the only career alternative. McWilliams Bogad showed her subjects as 'being turned off' teaching, as a dissuader in the process of socialisation and work identification, so that they moved in and out of teaching. While McWilliams Bogad studied students who had formed an intention to leave teaching, her main concern was to develop ways through her research to prevent dropouts. Of the three who appeared to be leaving teaching, two eventually did go back to the classroom.

Berry (1986) also considered the negative aspects of the decision not to become a teacher by identifying the career expectations of non-education students, to understand how bright young students could be attracted and retained in teaching. Those not attracted to teaching did not consider financial reward, or career ladders. They listed the perceptions of teaching as in frustrating working conditions, bureaucratic requirements, the lack of professional control, and few opportunities for intellectual growth, their intolerance for diversity in their work place and their conception of teaching as a boring job. Berry's study showed that policy moves to attract the 'right' teachers required further research in order to attract students who 'claimed to have altruistic career goals' (p.275). Career expectations of some education students did not fit the present demands and conditions of teaching, claimed Berry.

In Australia, Crowley (1998, p. 174) identified reasons for alternative careers by those choosing not to enter teaching:

- a greater range of career options, especially for women;
- expression of community attitudes such as fear of litigation, (especially for men) and in the perception of teaching as 'women's work';
- the impact of university fees and charges;
- uncertain job prospects.

Diamond and Borthwick (1989), challenging other researchers who claimed that the 'best and brightest' who entered teaching simply intended to leave, asserted that little was known about who remains in teaching and about relatively high attrition rates in the first few years of teaching. Diamond and Borthwick aimed to investigate intended persistence or withdrawal as reported by graduating students themselves. They examined critically why some prospective teachers intended staying in teaching for at least five years, why others were undecided, and why others intended withdrawing. Using combined theories of personal constructs and decision-making, Diamond and Borthwick framework modelled influences of personal, academic and social factors on intended persistence. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from 147 subjects in a secondary teacher education program at the University of Queensland. Every teacher had completed at least a three or four year bachelor's degree. The mean grade point averages were considered in the analysis. In the last week of formal classes a questionnaire was administered in which subjects explained why they and other diploma students would stay, or leave teaching in the next five years. From their descriptions a list of key words was developed.

The key words were grouped thematically, and labelled in terms of the eleven categories that emerged. These eleven categories resembled Lortie's (1975) five attractors to teaching, which were also used by McWilliams Bogad, (1983).

In the final analysis, Diamond and Borthwick (1989) showed that intending stayers were committed to teaching, confident of future promotion and satisfied with teaching as a career prospect. However intending leavers were uncommitted, not confident of future promotion, and dissatisfied with teaching. Differences in relation to initial grade point averages were much less marked. Diamond and Borthwick found that the most able were *not* necessarily intending to leave teaching at graduation, but that the further problem is to retain those capable teachers during their teaching careers. The authors concluded that further research on problems of recruitment, selection, integration and retention was necessary to provide the kinds of teachers who are required in schools. The problem remains to attract *and* hold those interested in teaching.

Therefore from the literature regarding the perceptions of prospective teachers about teaching, the problem of attracting and holding prospective teachers becomes the study focus. Diamond & Borthwick (1989) state that further research about retaining those attracted to teaching is necessary, therefore it is informative to consider studies that investigated why teaching does not attract certain students. McWilliams Bogad (1983) proposes that some prospective teachers may be uncertain regarding their occupational fit to be a teacher. Berry (1986) investigated reasons why others decided not to become teachers, concluding that some did not fit the present demands and conditions of teaching, and that research was needed to attract the right teachers to present day schools. Crowley (1998) found that the uncertainty of a teaching position, other

career alternatives, university fees, fear of litigation and the view that teaching was women's work were factors that do not attract people to teaching. Prospective teachers who have chosen to teach bring with them perceptions of why teaching is the right career choice.

2.2.3 Reasons to continue to teach

Thus far, the importance of student perceptions has been proposed, of what prospective teachers think teaching is about, whether they enjoy contact with children, like to help people, had enjoyed school, and find the working hours, financial rewards, prestige and security attractive as portrayed by Lortie (1975.) It has been earlier argued that student teachers begin teacher education programs using their own beliefs and ideas about what it takes to be a successful teacher, and that they do have their preconception of what teaching is. Entrance into teaching may be said by some to occur on the first days on the university campus, however familiarity with the world of teaching is personalised through the many years of school attendance, (Zeichner, 1986; Goodson, 1992; Lortie, 1975; Britzman, 1986).

While student teachers bring with them the influence of their previous educational experiences as derived from their own schooling, their perceptions of teaching may be extremely varied. When an applicant actually makes the career choice to become a teacher, a future teaching career appears attractive, but socialization is individually mediated (Stuart & Thurlow, 2000). Lortie's depiction of teachers back in 1975 may appeal to prospective teachers, but such rewards come at the end of perhaps a three or four year teacher education program. The general community does not fully appreciate what teaching actually involves, according to Dinham & Scott (1996), and, of the applicants to

teacher preservice courses surveyed in their study, only 54% said that they had a realistic view of teaching before entering the program. The first year of University is very important to retaining and holding students, and it is for this reason that this research focuses upon that factor.

While Dinham & Scott (2000) claim that the majority of applicants to undergraduate teacher pre-service courses are school leavers, the reality may be different. According to Deer et al. (1997), who contest Dinham & Scott's view, and add another dimension in their study of the perceptions by primary student teachers about their teacher education program in their first year at a Sydney university, student teachers have differential life perspectives. Entrants come straight from school or are classified as mature age. She further claimed that, over the first year, commitment to teaching strengthened in all but one student, and while regarding their course positively they could identify areas of concern, such as in particular subjects, lecturers. They had seen the practicum as being related to specific teaching skills, such as planning for teaching, organisation and management. They believed that their learning about teaching skills was of more value than their learning about how children learn. While Deer et al.'s research was specifically to determine students' perceptions of the effectiveness and relevance of their teacher education program, a comparative aspect of their paper is relevant to this study.

During preservice, the successful applicant needs to make sure that teaching is the right choice, to fulfill the promise shown at the time of university enrolment. It would appear that certain times in that candidature are crucial to prospective teachers. The acceptance of the place in the preservice degree for teaching does not necessarily mean that the intending student will take one's

place on campus. Financial concerns may also be a consideration at the time when the student teacher is faced with the first formal request (West, Hore, Bennie, Browne, & Kermond 1986) for choices regarding University fees (in Australia HECS: Higher Education Contribution Scheme). It is possible that such a choice is more a reason for not continuing in a university, rather than not continuing a preservice teacher course. Such times of decision for teacher entrants may be stressful.

McArthur (1981) stated that in early stages of the teacher education program the student teacher may become compliant, perhaps passive when identifying with the teacher role. He noted this 'reality shock' phase as a phenomenon of the effect of initial experience in teaching. He likens this phase as similar to patterns observed in medicine and nursing, 'a sudden, sometimes traumatic, realisation of become submissive', perhaps 'reality shock' when identifying with the teacher role. He noted this 'reality shock' phase as a phenomenon of the effect of initial experience in teaching. He likens this phase as similar to patterns observed before beginning work and the actual work situation' (p.2-3). This crisis of 'reality shock' (Veenman, 1984) may be very real to some student teachers. Not only do teacher entrants grapple with the new teaching and learning environment of the university, they perceive teaching as work, perhaps for the first time. A once familiar classroom now contains two teachers, and there are pupils with whom to build a relationship. McArthur emphasised the importance of this in a comment from the interviewed teacher, about 'being better off not teaching if one cannot relate to the kids'.

2.2.4 *Withdrawal from teacher education*

The reality of the very first months of teaching may be perceived as different from expectations, may even lead to the possibility of being at risk in surviving in the program. Earlier the importance of student perceptions has been outlined, what they think teaching is about, what attracts them to teaching. In this way further perspectives of what it means to be a teacher were exemplified. In contrast, research investigating what does not attract, or which retains student teachers is presented. It is possible that what applies to the body of teachers may not apply to all student teachers as revealed in the following literature.

Literature on retention as an alternative to withdrawal is investigated in this segment about perceptions of student teachers, and is presented in two sections, withdrawal and retention. Theories of what does not attract and retain student teachers are presented as possible strategies for prospective teacher retention, as the problem is integral through both areas in Australia and overseas. Literature that frames the subject of student retention, McInnes et al. (2000); Chambers & Roper, (2000); Tinto, (1993), and in teacher education (Chapman & Green, 1986) and others is discussed. From the little literature found on teacher education in isolated areas in Queensland, the research of Holbeck, (1990), and Boylan & McSwan, (1998) is centred on the effects of isolation in such areas. Using literature regarding withdrawal and retention from teacher education and from non-completion by university students would allow a wider field of knowledge, to gain perceptions of student teachers about attraction and retention in their first year.

In the U.K., Baumfield & Taverner (1997) discovered that student teachers withdrew partly because of financial problems and the image of the

teaching profession. It seems appropriate at this stage to examine some of the literature about retention, and why they leave. Lortie (1975) detailed the reasons why practising teachers were attracted to and remained in teaching. McWilliams Bogad (1983) and Diamond & Borthwick (1989) researched reasons why student teachers would stay or leave, so that strategies for retention could be found. However the later paper, Baumfield & Taverner, found student teachers left for professional reasons, that of the current image of teaching, and the personal reason of fiscal conditions in the actual course. It is apparent that for some participants in the first term, a teaching career may be future-oriented, and present problems may intervene. Identification of strategies to encourage retention in the first year of education, of university, may be found in the literature.

Following on from Baumfield and Taverner (1997), Chambers & Roper (2000) aimed to find reasons for withdrawal from the two year secondary teacher training in Leeds, U.K., stressing the need for the study with rising withdrawal rates up to 10.5% in 1997/98, and a decreasing number of teacher candidates. Chambers & Roper's research included all those who withdrew before completion, and of those who replied to his questionnaire, six of whom were interviewed, most had decided that teaching was not for them and were happy with the decision, though a few felt they were "pushed." The study concluded that those with financial, medical, personal or family problems were at risk from failure, but such students may have made an enormous investment of time, effort, emotion, finance and self to the process. The institution admitted that not much was learned from the majority who had withdrawn, but the minority who was not satisfied was able to provide feedback. The student response suggested these strategies:

- their motives for entering the profession should be examined in detail in interview;
- that students should have recent experiences in school to know what they expect;
- that the mentoring support in schools and universities should be taken seriously;
- that support for those making the decision to leave must be provided.

Chambers and Roper's 2000 study explored why people entered teaching, through their recent school experiences, financial and mentoring problems, the demands of the job, and was focused on withdrawal as a fait accompli. The opinion of McWilliams Bogad (1983) was described earlier, where student attrition was approximately 30 percent in the education degree program in her research area. Such studies draw attention to the problem of student retention. On the selected site for this study the greatest attrition was at the commencement of the first year, and so it was necessary to gather student perceptions of teaching and learning to construct their understandings by focusing on initiation into teacher education.

University students often enter the academic world in cohorts, a group of learners together, although in some courses progression in units may be communal or individual. Chapman (1983) used Krumboltz's 1979 theory of decision-making in a particular profession to produce a model of influences on teacher retention. He suggested that teacher retention may function through several factors: teachers' personal characteristics, educational preparation, initial commitment to teaching, quality of first teaching experience, professional and social integration into teaching. External influences, such as employment

climate, affects career satisfaction, which in turn, relates to teachers' decisions to remain or stay in teaching. Chapman has shown that while prior perceptions and recent experiences may influence prospective teachers to remain in a teacher education course, influences outside the university may inhibit that decision, as was indicated in Baumfield and Taverner (1997) above.

Research on teacher recruitment and teacher retention in rural and isolated areas by Boylan & McSwan (1998) indicates a profile of a professionally satisfied, community integrated, family oriented teacher who enjoyed the rural lifestyle and environment, carrying strong messages for teacher recruitment and teacher selection processes. As many of the graduates from the selected campus in the present study may teach in those rural schools their perceptions of the possibility of enjoying the rural lifestyle when teaching in the future could be paramount.

Baumfield & Taverner (1997), Chambers & Roper (2000) and Chapman (1983) assert that, while retention of the prospective teacher is dependent on many diverse factors, the internal issues in a teacher education program such as prior knowledge, personal characteristics and commitment to teaching may also be subject to the external influences as identified, specifically the current and prospective employment situation.

Holbeck (1990) investigated reasons why some rural students in a regional university dropped out in their first years of higher education and concluded that early withdrawal was characterised by low educational commitment because of unrealistic expectations, insufficient preparation, and negative experiences early in tertiary studies. The above factors lead to the conclusion that some university students were not able to fit into the reality of

higher education. Holbeck identified institutional distress as a concept that refers to the anxieties and alienations perceived by students in the environment of the college campus. It includes anxiety created in the tertiary atmosphere and within student peer relationships. Other factors included lecturer-student relationships and cultural adjustments of social and educational handicaps. In a semi-rural area, ecological misfits, (students who do not meet the normal culture in higher education institutions, and cannot make cultural adjustments in academic life), were identified in teacher education using the theories of Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) that social origin predetermines educational destiny.

Teacher education takes place in universities, therefore it is necessary to examine not only retention of student teachers, but studies of withdrawal in undergraduate degrees particularly in the first year. Tinto (1993) has shown that a key to effective retention in university is shown to lie in a strong commitment by the student to quality education, and in the building of a strong sense of inclusive and social community. Prospective teachers do not only start their transition from student to teacher when entering the teaching profession. Their decision to teach means they also enter into a university community. It is pertinent to consider what perceptions, expectations, aspirations and knowledge teacher entrants have of the academic higher education institution in which they have enrolled, and how the institution welcomes students.

2.2.5 Collaborative community on campus

Tinto, Goodsell-Love and Russo (1993) sought to track the academic and social behaviours, perceptions of academic experiences, and academic performance and persistence outcomes of students who were enrolled or not enrolled in a collaborative learning university program during their first year.

Comparative statistical analysis of the data yielded confirmatory evidence that collaborative programs made a difference in the importance of student involvement to student attainment, reaffirming student perceptions that involvement matters. A national survey in the United States (Cobbs, 1996) revealed that an average of nearly 27 percent of college freshman in various courses fail to return for their second year, and that was 2.5 per cent higher than the dropout rate reported over any of the thirteen years collection.

McInnes et al. (2000) suggest three categories of withdrawal are pertinent, those of systems, institutional and internal attrition (Price, Harte and Cole, 1991; Price & Harte, 1993). A student leaving an institution to go to another institution is a non-completer from the perspective of the original institution, but not from the perspective of the system. Those transferring internally between courses in the same institution are not lost to a particular institution, but do contribute to course attrition in institutional and system statistics. It was found that part-time, mature aged students were most likely to withdraw from the Northern Territory University because of the difficulty of work and study commitments. The university has a much higher proportion of part-time students than other Australian universities. The factor of study and work commitments would need to be considered and probed with the participants in this study.

McInnes et al. (2000) researched updated research on the literature on the reasons for non-completion, and the strategies designed to reduce non-completion. Their comprehensive account of the Australian experience is supported by material from the United States and the United Kingdom, from which this study uses the focus on higher education undergraduate courses. A

surprising consistency in estimates of attrition in higher education institutions from the late 1990's, and from the latest DETYA (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs) analysis of the 1992 cohort, is reported at around one-third in Australia. The move from 'elite' to 'mass' and a more diverse student population in contemporary higher education must be considered.

McInnes et al. (2000) state problems of definition about non-completion, are heightened by interchangeable terms. While the term 'student dropout' was current previously, more neutral terms are presently used, student attrition, withdrawal, discontinuance or non-completion, leading to some confusion regarding the literature. McInnes et al. (p.5) posit that attrition is often termed as withdrawal from an institution by enrolled students, which is not always the case, while DETYA (1996) uses the definition of 'non-completion' as “non-achievement of outcomes generally considered the norm for the sector concerned. At the university level, it refers to students who commence study but do not gain a university qualification”. This definition is used in this thesis.

McInnes et al. (2000) suggest that the patterns of student enrolment mean that linear patterns may no longer apply in change of pathways. Studies in Australia and overseas note that a good number of those who do withdraw are likely to return to study at some stage of their lives, perhaps as mature-age students. Some terms have negative connotations, such as attrition, dropout and withdrawal, so the use of 'non-completion' is certainly a more apt, neutral description of student movement. However, McInnes et al. consider these negative aspects of attrition on institutions and individuals as a waste of institutional resources, damaging to the reputation of that institution, and individual withdrawal lowers self-confidence and self-esteem. In this study, the

background of participants must be considered. In 1995, about 22% of commencing bachelor students in Australian universities had prior experience of a higher education course (Pargetter et al. 1998), and two thirds (14% of the total) had an incomplete higher education course, suggesting that most are 'course switchers'.

There are significant gaps in theory about non-completion, McInnes et al. (p.16) claim, and theory is generally undeveloped (Yorke, 1999). The work of Tinto establishes the role of the institution in U.S. in promoting student persistence, however assumes a school leaver norm, whereas in Australia a large proportion of undergraduates are part-time and mature age students. Yorke (1999) critiqued Tinto's theory as neglecting the impact of external factors in shaping students' perceptions, commitments and reactions. Methodological problems in research into non-completion exist, when exiting students are often surveyed by institutions, and are reluctant to criticise institutional teaching, (as shown in Chambers et al. 2000, above). Macdonald (1984) designates such research as 'ex post facto' occurring after withdrawal. Few studies have used intensive interviews.

Other issues regarding non-completion addressed by McInnes et al. include:

- further study needed for issues of readiness for specific disciplines;
- expansion of higher education and changing nature of student population;
- association between withdrawal and students' uncertainty about career choice e.g. age factors;
- contemporary technology and flexible modes of delivery.

McInnes et al. detailed six factors found by Yorke (1999, p.39) that reduce the complexity of the many and varied reasons students gave for withdrawal:

- poor quality of the student experience;
- inability to cope with the demands of the programme;
- unhappiness with the social environment;
- wrong choice of programme;
- matters relating to financial needs;
- dissatisfaction with aspects of institutional provision.

McInnes et al. (2000, p.59-60) included a summary of problems and examples of solutions as reasons and strategies to reduce non-completion, alluding to those problems prior to commencement and then in the initial adjustment problems. Strategies for appropriate recruitment and transition management were identified for first year university and learning innovations. Just as research on withdrawal from higher education could expand knowledge of why student teachers are attracted to teaching, but withdraw, the earlier studies reported on those who chose not to become teachers and did not identify with a teaching career.

This section has considered some causes of leaving a teacher education program, and identifies successful retention strategies. As these studies have revealed, retention in the first year of university program can be dependent on many variables. In teaching retention, while socialisation in the transition from student to teacher may be an issue, external personal factors may trigger withdrawal. An awareness of the wider literature on retention in the first year of a university program has been indicated, though the intent is not to follow that

channel. It would appear that a collaborative university community would be favoured, a supportive staff and student body, so that institutional distress can be identified early in the first year, and together any concerns could be addressed.

The literature highlighted the importance of the social community in a teacher education program, whether on campus or in the schools. Tinto (1993), Chapman & Green (1986), and Boylan and McSwan (1998) stress that to retain teachers, whether in the teacher education program, in the schools, or out in rural schools, teachers and prospective teachers need a collaborative social milieu to be professionally satisfied in a supportive community. If the prospective teachers perceive that they are isolated on the campus, in the lecture room, in the schoolroom, at the study desk, with some peers, some lecturers, some teachers, they could leave. Lortie (1975) states that beginning teachers spend much time physically apart from colleagues, and that teaching arrangements in schools, as in separate rooms (though this is changing in some contemporary schools) reinforces that separation. Dinham and Scott (2000) also comment on the feeling of isolation and insecurity that may be fostered by lack of time and teaching demands creating stress upon beginning teachers. It may be that what has attracted student teachers to teaching in their former perceptions of teaching, may put students at risk with failure, through social, financial, personal and family problems in the community.

The importance of student perceptions has been argued, what they think teaching is about, whether they enjoy contact with children, like to help people, had enjoyed school, and find the working hours, financial rewards, prestige and security attractive (Lortie, 1975). Such issues that pertain to reasons why people want to teach can lead to identification of any problems prospective teachers

may have so that they will be retained in the teacher program.

2.2.6 Summary of section

The literature reviewed here suggests that practising teachers today perceive the role of the teacher as part of the larger vision of teaching of helping people in a caring profession. Attractors that draw prospective teachers into a teaching career have been detailed as well as existing uncertainties that may dissuade others from teaching. At the end of a teacher education program in universities some prospective teachers were still hesitant about teaching, while others were committed and confident regarding their readiness to teach. At the start of the initial year in a primary teaching degree, teacher entrants bring with them their own perceptions of what attracted them to teaching. During the year some became more committed to becoming a teacher, while others questioned their choice and left the program.

Non-completion of a teaching degree and withdrawal from the university is seen as a waste of resources of the institution and the individual. Strategies employed for retention in the program were identified, essentially that a more collaborative community should be established in the university and schools, although external influences were seen as contributing to withdrawal. Although the commitment to teach was seen to increase in the first year, prospective teachers were more anxious to learn teaching skills than learning how children learn. When first taking the teachers' role with children in the classroom some teacher entrants were shocked to find they could not relate to children. Prospective teachers are attracted into a teaching career, and so the problem remains to hold them in the first year of the program. The literature review now turns from early attraction to teaching into transition as exploration into the teaching career.

2.3 Enculturation into the teaching profession

A further perspective of what it means to be a teacher identifies that a collaborative university community will involve student teachers socialising with all educational happenings. The following section focuses on the significance of the teacher culture evolving in a teacher-program, where the *why*, *who* and *how* combine to create the social atmosphere in both the institution and the school.

During a teacher education program, prospective teachers may be considered as being enculturated into the teaching profession (Nimmo & Smith, 1994). Nimmo & Smith (1994) suggest, that teacher enculturation may be viewed in terms of two broad perspectives - teacher socialisation and teacher development. Previously it has been considered that socialisation into the teacher education program began with prospective teachers; through the perceptions of teaching they bring with them, reasons they are attracted (Lortie, 1975), their previous many years in the classroom (Zeichner, 1986), and perhaps more recently their different life perspective (Deer et al. 1997). Another example of the social milieu outside the university context is revealed in the study input from students at risk with failure. Moreover the literature on retention has shown that while such previous perceptions may be important to retaining students in the first year, a collaborative learning university program is necessary. Building the sense of an inclusive and social community (Tinto, 1993) in the teacher education program sends the message that student involvement is related to student attainment, promoting professional satisfaction. Prospective teachers may perceive that teaching is not unknown to them.

2.3.1 Enculturation as teacher socialisation

Teacher socialisation may be said by some to occur on the first days on the university campus, however familiarity with the world of teaching is personalised through the many years of school attendance, (Zeichner, 1986; Goodson, 1992; Lortie, 1975; Britzman, 1986). Exposure to years of role models has meant that the student teacher may have identified with the inhabitants of the school, but will now have to consider a new role of socialising where teaching is work. According to Dinham & Scott (2000) the extent to which the teacher education program socialises students into the teaching profession depends on the particular direction of the course in which entrants participate in critical reflection skills about how teachers teach and children learn. In this way the preservice education course is likely to have different outcomes for different students (Martinez, 1992). Newcomers to any profession may be confused and uncertain (McInnes et al. 2000) of their role, with questions to be contemplated and explored in the new environment, with limited experience on which to reflect, (Berliner, 1988), lacking understanding of work, of self as teacher, which needs time and support.

Lortie (1975, p.10) claimed the work of a teacher is ambiguous, honoured yet disdained, with teaching usually seen as 'above the run of everyday work,' whether paid well or not. While the career is seen by some as respectable, stable and continued employment, others may label teaching as 'easy work.' Weinstein (1988) found that preservice teachers may be decidedly optimistic when entering a teaching degree, and the lack of concern when confronted with the complex world of the classroom may contribute to reality shock. Lanier & Little (1986) asserted that few individuals were denied access to the teaching career, giving

the impression to successful applicants 'that anybody can teach' (p.549). Those many years as children in school may equate to the belief by the former student that they are equipped to be teachers (Lortie, 1975). Student teachers find their personal and managerial styles and strategies (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985), with the implication that teaching is instinctive rather than learned. Weinstein (1988) recognised that, in the absence of no publicly recognised knowledge base for teaching, education students may believe that because of their successful experiences with children they may underestimate the difficulty of teaching (Book, Byers & Freeman, 1983) and preconceptions about easy success may be unchallenged (Pataniczek and Isaacson, 1981.) Teaching was always more difficult than the lay public imagined (Tuinman, 1995) and, because of tremendous social shifts, the teacher's job has become ever so much more complex in recent decades. Dinham & Scott (2000) propose that the myth of teaching being a simple '9-3 job with great vacations' is quickly dispelled by beginning teachers. It is appropriate to consider the origin of the beliefs of the student teachers as they socialise on the campus.

The prospective teacher had been a pupil in a school class, whereas the student teacher in the teacher education program is one of a cohort of aspiring teachers, and in the practicum period will be in a classroom of children with the supervising teacher as a second adult. Nimmo & Smith (1994) attests that the informal influence of colleagues is likely to be important, and so the professional isolation of teachers referred to by Denscombe (1982), Little (1990), Lortie (1975), Nias (1989), Zeichner and Tabachnick (1986) as encountered by teacher entrants must be forestalled by a collaborative program. Such professional, psychological and social isolation, Lortie (1975) suggests, lessens the extent to

which teachers are able to share professional knowledge and values in the workplace. In teacher education workplace detachment may lead to disenchantment in teaching.

2.3.1.2 *Workplace socialisation*

Teacher socialisation means being immersed in the workplace and the culture of schooling, and learning about how a teacher behaves. Nimmo and Smith (1994) noted the importance of colleagues and workplace culture to the beginning teacher during preservice education and his/her initial appointment. Zeichner (1986) and Goodson (1992) also commented on teaching as work, with the accent on the personal background and life experiences of the teacher. Lortie (1975) found that the future careers of prospective teachers are influenced by former teachers, and so the teacher entrant prefers to continue in an institutionalised atmosphere rather than leaving what is familiar to change to an unknown career. Britzman (1986) also argued that teaching is the 'most socially familiar profession' because of the potential teacher's twelve years' experience of school.

University students are first enculturated onto campus in Orientation Week, at the start of the university year. Lortie (1975) used the word *ethos* to describe that culture as the mix of patterns and sentiments found in the structure of the profession and in the meaning teachers attach to their work. It is important for student teachers to give careful thought to what teaching means to them, what the culture of teaching is, and for this reason faculties of education must become models, must be more accountable for an up to date knowledge of the profession (Tuinman, 1995). As the preservice teachers are socialised into their future career it is important to take into account how one becomes a teacher, often

mentioned in the literature as 'learning how to teach' (Widdeen, Mayer-Smith, Moon 1998).

Tom (1995) suggests that teacher educators ignore the social aspect of teaching where individuals build relationships with one another, and with the profession. It is fitting to give careful thought to the socialisation process through which student teachers develop in a teacher education program. This study presumes an awareness of a wider area of literature about socialisation, but will not focus specifically on that literature in detail, as it is necessary to define boundaries. While sociological issues are most important this is not a sociological study. It is a study on students' perceptions of becoming a teacher, and of course aspects of sociology frame that. Recognition of some important aspects here is considered about enculturation, but it is not intended to elaborate on that theme. Enculturation into a teaching program encompasses prior experience of school, perhaps some knowledge of the workplace, of life, and being immersed into the university and teaching culture. It is important to recall what the literature revealed about financial and personal problems, the image of teachers (Chambers and Roper, 2000), and also the need for a collaborative milieu (Tinto, 1993). Socialisation in the first year for student teachers should address such community issues in the learning and teaching process.

Widdeen et al. (1998), reviewing research on 'learning how to teach', also supports such a formative view suggesting that there is some evidence that closer collaboration between the players in teaching may bridge the cultures of the school and university (Bolin, 1990; Chandler, Robinson, & Noyes, 1994; Smith and Rhodes, 1992). Such communication could reduce tension existing between the expectations of teacher educators (Griffin, 1989; Pape, 1992) and the sense

among student teachers of not being prepared well in the school setting (Loflin Smith, 1993). Such collaboration is discussed in the next section.

2.3.2 Enculturation as Teacher Development

The development of teaching and learning is socially constructed. Prospective teachers bring their perceptions of prior experiences with teachers, good or bad, into teaching, and such memories of school need to be reconstructed. Those teacher entrants who have just left school the previous year have not had the opportunity to unpack those years of being in a learning capacity at school before changing roles. They remain as students, but also teachers, usually called student or preservice teachers. One could say such entrants have the most recent memories of school, however their social construction of that time was as students. Mature age students may bring their experiences of life with them. Some who perhaps have not been learners at school for some years may be frequent visitors to school, teachers and principal in their parental capacity of children, while other mature age entrants may need to acquaint themselves with the modern school. From the above perspective prospective teachers have a varied construction of the educational system.

Craig, Bright and Smith (1994) proposed that prospective teachers could be socialised into a teacher education program as a community of learners. Smith (1981) declared teachers should not merely tell students what to do, but must see the content along with the process. In such an interactive constructive approach lies the recognition that the students and instructors constitute a community of learners. Transposing this situation to a preservice teacher education program, the prospective teacher would take the initiative, with the lecturer or the supervising teacher advising when necessary, not telling but teaching. In this

way, perspectives of teaching and learning can be appreciated, and cognition develops.

One aspect of teacher development designated as stage theory is examined, followed with other considerations of teacher development that abates around practical experiences. Fuller & Bown (1975) in researching the concerns of student teachers, proposed that when entrants first come into the program they thought only of their self survival. It was later that concerns about the teaching curriculum were experienced, and much later that the prospective teacher was enabled to become concerned about the children, the relationship with them and their problems. This factor of student teachers' perceptions in their first year about the relationship of the children and the teacher was identified earlier (Deer et al. 1997). They believed that their learning about teaching skills was of more value than their learning about how children learn. Danielewicz (1998) also indicated her concern that student teachers were more concerned about learning to teach rather than thinking about the children and the subject matter. Clark (1988b) asserted that prospective teachers should be offered field observation early in the course to support or question previous preconceptions. Further literature regarding Fuller's theories, often proposed as stage theory, will be discussed later in conjunction with the relationship of the prospective teacher with children, and the timing of practical experiences.

2.3.3 Process of development

Nimmo & Smith (1994) claimed that some researchers such as Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981) were uncertain of the role of preservice education in socialising recruits. They also asserted that some authors want teachers to be change agents in a more socially critical theoretical approach and others see

education in a technist, 'what works' approach. Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) spoke of most research on teacher socialisation as being conducted with prospective teachers, but in their first novice year. The definition of 'beginning teachers' in the literature is at some times blurred, as to whether beginning teachers are those starting in their first year of appointment after graduation, or those preservice teachers commencing their teacher education program as student teachers. This distinction is important for further discussion on teacher development when examining literature on teacher development as socialisation. This study focuses on enculturation for prospective teachers occurring in the initial year of a teacher education program, in the revisiting of prior school lives, and any experiential developments in new events on or off campus.

Theoretical frameworks such as prior experience and socialisation in practical experience, formerly called the practicum, according to Nimmo & Smith (1994), tended to view student teachers as relatively passive agents in the socialisation process. While no fully developed theory of teacher development appears to exist (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986), Nimmo & Smith suggested that a contrasting theoretical framework of stage development viewed the teacher enculturation process as greater orientation toward teaching, as experience is gained. Such development depends on numerous factors with the time through each stage varying among individuals, as may be perceived by the student teachers themselves.

Earlier in this thesis, the concerns of prospective teachers (Fuller, 1969) have been discussed in relation with the timing of practical experiences and the relationship of the prospective teacher with children. Nimmo & Smith (1994) have summarised aspects of the theories of Fuller (Fuller, 1969; Fuller & Bown,

1975; Ryan, 1986), Marshall, Fittinghof and Cheney (1990); and Berliner (1988a), who suggested different stages and durations.

1. Fuller & Bown: researched the concerns of teachers, describing the stages of survival concerns, teaching situation concerns and finally pupil concerns.
2. Ryan: building on the theory of Fuller and Bown, distinguishes four stages: a fantasy stage (preceding school teaching), a survival stage, a mastery stage, and an impact stage (in which the teacher recognises and deals with the needs of individual students).
3. Berliner distinguishes five stages: Novice, advanced beginner, competent teacher, proficient teacher, and an expert teacher.

Nimmo & Smith's 1994 research centred on data from a study of enculturation about four beginning secondary school teachers in Queensland state schools, contrasting the enculturation of two of the participants, Laura and Louise, who had both wanted to be teachers from an early stage. Nimmo and Smith described the prior influences that led them both to a teaching career, their preparations to become teachers, practicum experiences through the year of the teacher education program, and finally the first year for each on appointment to a school. Both prospective teachers referred to the positive influence of their former teachers, designated by Zeichner, (1986, p.31) as anticipatory socialisation. However, Nimmo & Smith demonstrated through their account of the enculturation of Laura and Louise the limitations of both stage theory and teacher socialisation perspectives as explanatory frameworks.

Nimmo & Smith (1994) conceded that there is a 'large degree of consistency' in the way stage theorists account for the process of beginning

teacher development. They cited Kagan's (1992) claim that her review of forty professional-growth studies among preservice teachers and beginning teachers between 1987 and 1991 yielded remarkably consistent themes that partially confirmed and elaborated both Fuller's and Berliner's models (Kagan, 1992, p.120). The inferred model partially confirmed, explicated and integrated Fuller's (Fuller & Bown, 1975) developmental model of teacher concerns, and Berliner's (1988b) model of teacher development based on cognitive studies of expertise. It was her belief that preservice teachers and first year teachers appear to constitute a single developmental stage, that of the novice.

Kagan (1992) believed that her model indicated the shift from concerns from self to pupils as valuable to construct one's image of teacher, unlike Fuller's (Fuller & Bown, 1975) theory that early focus on self was a weakness, and should be discouraged. The model suggested student teacher interaction with pupils through structured activities so the student teacher could step back and reflect on what is or is not appropriate in the classroom, or on other educational experiences. Becoming familiar with classroom routines would lead to a turn from self towards the needs of the pupils. Kagan saw her model as accounting for progression through Fuller's (Fuller & Bown, 1975) stages as outlined above.

While Kagan (1992) refuted criticism that such literature did not provide generalisations about the process of teacher development, Nimmo & Smith (1994) argued that doubt must exist regarding the nature of the stages. They used the argument put by Levine (1989) that the individual's precise stage of development should not be cast in rigid categories, by Huberman (1989) that career development is a process, not a series of events, and by Bullough, (1989) that 'human development defies easy categorisation'.

Widdeen et al. (1998) mention frequently the idea of stages of becoming a teacher in the learning to teach literature, suggesting that personal biographies (Zulich, Bean and Herrick, 1992) could enhance or hinder student teachers' ability to negotiate the various stages of beginning to teach. Widdeen et al. found that the practical experiences foster much tension and conflict so that survival with minimal risk-taking and the need for a good grade occupies the neophytes. The perspective of being a teacher may mean that the student teacher finds that becoming a teacher may be difficult, and disheartening.

Nimmo & Smith stated that neither stage theory nor socialisation perspectives can, by themselves, adequately account for the complex processes involved in beginning teacher enculturation; that any description of such enculturation must recognise the "subtle interplay of biographical and contextual factors" (p.13.) These factors of the personal background and life experiences are important facets of understanding the initial year of a teacher education program. It is not proposed that such enculturation should move through a lock step situation for all teacher entrants as suggested in Kagan's (1992) new model of teacher development. This study supports the views of Nimmo & Smith (1994); Levine (1989); Huberman (1989) and Bullough (1989), that no one account of progression through the teacher education process can be the same. Therefore, this study does not take a strong stance on the theory of stage development, but must consider that argument as did Nimmo & Smith and the above theorists. While the ideas that prospective teachers bring to teaching as perceptions have been described, it must be seen that these perceptions are 'incomplete' as did Clark (1988b). Because teacher entrants enter the profession from many 'rites of passage' each passage probably does not follow a pattern that could be described

as a series of stages. Kagan claimed that preservice teachers and first year teachers appear to constitute a single developmental stage.

On the other hand, career development should be viewed as a process, something that is going on, is proceeding through a series of transitions that would happen at different times with different people. From the stages described by the above theorists, only some would apply in the first year of a preservice program, but from the research data some student perceptions of such development should be discernible. By positioning career development as a process, it may be possible to identify not necessarily events but particular foci that occur in the different phases of the process.

While these teacher entrants may have been looking to the past from their own advantage, theorists such as Kagan and Fuller look into the advantage for the pupil. This reason is an important motive in this study to gather the perceptions of the student as valid data, to ascertain whether there is some aspect of the idea of focusing on self, on survival as regression or progression, rather than centering on the needs of children (Fuller, 1969). If perceptions of the prospective teacher are focused on self as teacher, other models of teacher may surface from prior knowledge of success or failure as self as learner.

2.3.4 Success/failure to reconstruct images of self

The image of self as learner, and the exemplary models of teachers are two important elements in shaping prior beliefs, asserted Kagan (1992). By using their own experiences as learners, teacher candidates may assume that those they teach will possess learning styles similar to their own. She also found some evidence that beginning teachers may encounter frustration sufficient enough to drive them to other occupations if they fail to reconstruct their images of self as

teacher appropriately. The reader is referred again to the study of McWilliams Bogad (1983). Like Kagan above, she also showed her subjects as being 'turned off' teaching, as a dissuader in the process of socialisation. Blockage at any stage of development (e.g. presence or absence of an occupational 'fit' to be a teacher) suggested that contributing factors lay in the socialisation process. For instance, female students perceived that teaching was not the only career alternative available to them. Frustration was found by her subjects, noted Kagan, (1992), if they failed to reconstruct their images of self as teacher appropriately. Danielewicz (1998) also found that self-identity was uppermost in her student teachers' minds. She had presumed that her students had deliberately chosen to be teachers, but found in interviews that this was not so. While she originally meant to investigate the structure of her literacy course with two secondary student teachers in interviews at the mid, end and post semester, she discovered that entirely different issues emerged. She found that the question of *who* they were going to be as teachers and how they were going to make that transition, occupied their attention. Her transcripts revealed that her students were talking their way into the identity of teachers. She used the term 'identity' in the postmodern sense in which selves are always multiple and shifting, and that 'identities need to be constructed daily' (Foucault 1976; 1981). Danielewicz encouraged her student teachers when she realised that their interests lay in the problems of learning how to teach, and in the transition from student to teacher.

The 'transition from student to teacher' as inferred by Danielewicz (1998) is of importance to this study. However, the construction and reconstruction of self-identity as a teacher through cognitive socialisation could be expected to be part of the initial growth of understanding for candidates in the teacher education

program. The term "identity" in the post-modern sense is not used in this study, as viewed by Danielewicz in which identities are constructed daily. The constructivist view employed in this study follows that of Loughran (1996) who documented any shifts in student teachers' attempts to develop a reflective-self in teaching and learning as shown below, from the cognitive viewpoint of their own knowledge through personal experience.

2.3.5 From self to student

Loughran (1996, p.57) modelled his teaching and learning theories about developing reflective practice, thus providing a framework for his student teachers of his attempts to 'document the conversation of reflective practice.' By using the 'talking aloud' strategy as a tool he encouraged his student teachers to reflect on their own learning. He used his own teaching journal, student teachers' journals, transcripts from interview/video of students' teaching as tools for reflection. These teacher entrant concerns shift throughout their preservice education program. As student teachers move from concerns about themselves to concerns about their pupils' learning, they use their recognition of problem situations to become more responsive to student learning. Loughran was thus able to document any shifts in student teachers' concerns as described by Fuller, 1969).

Kagan's 1992 assertion that prior beliefs and images of teacher candidates must be modified and reconstructed for growth to occur is similar to Loughran's 1996 identification of the shifts in his student teachers' learning as they used recognition of their prior beliefs as they proceed through the first year. She asserts that preservice and first-year teaching appears to constitute a single developmental stage. In that stage novices acquire knowledge of pupils, using

that knowledge to reconstruct their personal image of self as teacher, developing procedural routines in classroom management and instruction. Kagan suggests that knowledge of such routines allows the beginning teacher to turn outwardly to the pupils. She critiques university classes for not providing such knowledge to prospective teachers. Grossman, 1992; Dunkin, (1995) did not agree with aspects of Kagan's 1992 paper. In a later review (1998) of ninety studies on learning to teach, Widdéen et al. (1998) disagreed with Kagan's (1992) findings that student teachers need procedural knowledge about classroom management. This study concurs with Widdéen et al.'s belief that in the complex teacher education program the process of 'learning how to teach' will not be improved by the knowledge of such procedural knowledge alone. Recommendations from studies reviewed by Widdéen et al. point to the need for a theory for teacher education that moves from the traditional training model towards alternatives more consistent with constructivist theory, and other than the acquisition of procedural knowledge. Such a theory should seek strategies that will cause beginning teachers to challenge their own ideas of teaching and learning as the first stage of learning how to teach.

2.3.6 Summary of section

Teacher enculturation is seen as teacher development in a social community of learners where knowledge is socially constructed and relationships develop in universities and schools. The school, while observed as a place of teaching and learning is also perceived as a workplace for the first time, where the student teacher is in company with children, the supervising teacher and other teachers. The transition from learner to teacher promotes professional growth where learning to teach leads to the construction of a teacher image,

leading to a greater self-confidence in teaching proficiency. Perceptions of the prospective teacher are seen as incomplete, emanating from years of observing the teacher in the classroom, from a performance perspective. They are optimistic that any one can teach, and underestimate the difficulty of teaching, although beginning teachers quickly disprove the idea that teaching is merely a nine to three career. The personal background and life experiences of teacher entrants may enhance or hinder the transition of learning how to teach. Some student teachers may fail to reconstruct their image of self as teacher, and can be seen as passive, possibly timid, in the socialisation process. Theorists claim that the prospective teacher considers the self first in teaching, then the teaching curriculum, and later the learning of children. Rather than acquiring procedural knowledge alone as in the traditional model, alternatives more aligned with constructivist theory will enable strategies for change so that student teachers will question their own ideas of teaching as a more inspiring introduction of learning how to teach.

2.4 The importance of professional experience: classroom perspective

Liston & Zeichner (1991) saw reflection as a critical component of the practicum, which enhances teacher development through inquiry. In the day to day activities associated with the practicum the inquiring student is guided by the institution, the university lecturers, the cooperating teacher and school staff at the time of practice teaching in the schools. Reflection should be embedded in the teacher education program so that the prospective teacher is socialised into the classroom in a more interactive way than in a lecture situation on the university campus. This reciprocal experience should bring reflection by the student teacher upon the unfolding classroom events, leading to discernment through self-inquiry.

According to Liston & Zeichner (1991, p.168-174) an inquiry-oriented teaching program is composed of five curricular components:

1. A teaching component in which the student is expected to gradually assume responsibility for all aspects of the teacher's role.
2. An inquiry component intended to help students understand the contemporary cultures of classroom and school, and the relationships between these educational contexts and the surrounding social, economic and political climate. Action research projects, limited ethnographic type studies, analysis of school curricula and the processes of curriculum development in their allotted schools are carried out by students, and so are closely linked to the next component.
3. The third component of the program is the student teaching seminar where current placements and students' ongoing teaching experiences act as vehicles in weekly seminars to explore important educational issues transcending individual settings, representing a variety of perspectives on particular issues.
4. A writing component where student teachers keep a journal about their development as teachers during the semester, guided by and shared with university supervisors. Student teacher reflections on their teaching, the social context, and their development as teachers are valuable as they meet together to share group learning in particular sessions.
5. The supervision component takes part in conferences where the specific teaching activities and student teacher perspectives can be focused on all three domains of reflection (technical, practical, and critical.)

Each of those above examples attempts to create a reflective situation

linking theory and practice, the relationship between thought and action between the school and university, so that the student teacher becomes a researcher of one's own practice, observing the practice of others and reflecting on self development. In this sense the student is not alone, not isolated, but experiences teaching as social interaction.

2.4.1 The practical experience: the supervising teacher

Nimmo and Smith (1994) viewed field experiences as problematic, as while student teachers identify such experiences as most valuable in Queensland tertiary institutions, they argued that the practicum 'can be very diverse,' and dependent on the development of the relationship between the entrant and the supervising teacher (Kagan, 1992). McArthur (1981) stated that the processes of compliance and identification may be observed in student teachers in the very early stage of teacher socialisation, as described earlier, in the way a job is envisaged before beginning work and the actual work situation. This passivity (Danziger, 1971) may develop in the individual student teacher through the shock of realisation that teaching is not all 'happy smiles and little children.'

Although the academic component of the preservice program may be the source of some tension, leaving the place of learning to take part in the practicum in the school is part of occupational socialisation. McArthur (1981) emphasised the importance of this in a comment found in his interviews with student teachers, about 'being better off not teaching if one cannot relate to kids'. It is noted that this observation has implications for the timing of student teacher contact with children in the first year.

Numerous teacher educators have called for change in the field experiences of teacher education, for instance, Goodman (1988) argued that

socialisation associated with the practicum should not focus on the mastery of specific technical skills. A new framework is needed in field experiences, according to Muldoon (1994 p.137) so that issues identified by stakeholders that cannot be accommodated within the practical experience framework may be resolved in the matters pertaining to partnerships, supervision, the length of the school-based experience, assessment and reflectivity.

Goodman (1988), like Zeichner and Liston (1987), claimed field experiences should promote student reflection, experimentation and decision-making, but believed that teachers' working conditions inhibit such development (Apple, 1987). Teachers are expected to deliver programs passively, getting children through programs in a quiet, orderly fashion (Apple, 1983). This current tension between the need for teachers *and* student teachers to make their program interesting and active, to be able to retain control and be responsive to the children and the demands of the lesson, can make Learning to Teach complex and stressful. Cole and Knowles (1993) perceived this 'impasse' on teacher education as involving a process of 'shattering the images' that were held by student teachers. Nettle (1998) found support for the conclusion that teacher education does influence student teachers' beliefs about teaching, as well as findings that there is stability in the beliefs of student teachers.

2.4.2 Teacher development: a cognitive perspective

Earlier in this literature review it is noted that the processes of compliance and identification (McArthur, 1981) are uppermost in the early stages of teacher socialisation. If, as asserted by Nettle (1997), practice teaching reinforces traditional custodial beliefs and the influence of supervising teachers can sway student teachers towards a task orientation rather than an affective

orientation, it is necessary to examine researchers' theories on what *should* be done to enhance change in teacher education. Such promotion of enhancing teacher education could counter the idea of the student teacher being a passive recipient in the classroom or on campus, so that the responsibility for growth belongs to him/her.

2.4.3 Summary of section

The professional experience component of a teacher education program enables the student teacher to create a reflective situation linking theory and practice, with a relationship between thought and action, and as a researcher of one's own practice. The existing preconceptions and beliefs of the prospective teacher form a framework where new information can be clarified and reinterpreted, in matters pertaining to supervision, partnerships, assessment and the timing of the school-based experience. Integrating existing knowledge may conflict with the new, and a more active reconstruction of belief is needed in the form of conceptual change by making connections with the student teachers' actual preconceptions about teaching. In this way the teacher entrant is socialised into the classroom as part of occupational socialisation in a more interactive way than in a lecture situation on the campus, and is guided by the institution, university lecturers, the cooperating teacher and school staff.

2.5 Enhancing change in teacher education: interrupt social practices

According to Goodman (1988) the suggestion that field experiences provide opportunities for students to engage in reflective thinking stands in contrast to current practices that emphasise mastery of technical skills. The use of strategies such as seminar meetings, supervisory conferences, interactive journal writing, action research assignments, and curriculum development

projects based on the real life field experiences of preservice teachers should act as a catalyst for reflection (Zeichner and Liston, 1987) on what it means to be a teacher. Goodman (1988) saw calls for change in teacher education as being possible through field based experiences that promote experimentation, reflection, and responsible decision-making, creative thinking and entrepreneurship in schools of education, so that innovative ideas may emerge more easily if teacher education groups or teams might cross traditional grounds. Martinez (1989) also stated that change in teacher education should actually 'interrupt social practices' so that all components in the course should allow student teachers to reflect critically on the theoretical outcomes and practices of present day schools, but not at the cost of focus on initial survival.

Renzaglia, Hutchins and Lee (1997) claim that university faculties can therefore seize the opportunity to model and demonstrate types of reflection strategies during student and faculty interactions, so that within class sessions, specific knowledge can be shared and discussed prior to actual practice in natural contexts. The traditional lecture has given way to more active learning strategies for the prospective teacher (Watson, 1995), so that positive relationships between informal faculty contact may be encouraged.

2.5.1 Recent innovations in the 2000s: Fundamental structural changes

Zeichner and Gore (1990) and Zeichner (1989) viewed fundamental change as necessary to a teacher education program. For the last thirty years the traditional placing of prospective teachers with good teachers, whether in groups or individually and often in passive imitation of a single teacher, could inhibit the capacity to learn from experience over time. Being exclusively in the one classroom over the practicum sustained the orientation of isolation, a narrowing

of the educative potential, rather than a community view of teacher socialisation. While Zeichner (1989) has indicated his sympathies lie in a reflective practice orientation towards teaching he does not dismiss the proposals or accomplishments of an applied science view. He believes that future curriculum reforms need to bridge the gaps between the various traditions of reform.

Zeichner (1989) states clearly that the more 'systematic' approach to student teacher supervision was developed so that specific feedback to students was focused on skills that research suggests are associated with desirable school outcomes. In this way faculties can develop a shared understanding of the themes of a teacher education program with planned articulation between all program courses and experiences, based on particular conceptions of the teacher's role.

It is argued that these two paradigms can and should enhance change in a teacher education program as a means for prospective teachers to gain a greater understanding of their chosen career. The reflective inquiry approach to teaching as proposed by Liston and Zeichner (1991) has been detailed earlier in this thesis. The scientific view of teaching can in turn be interpreted through the learning theories of Bandura, (1997), as developed in what follows.

2.5.2 More specific feedback to students: constructivist role

The development of the scientific view of teaching involving student teacher supervision has developed from the social learning theory through the early work of Bandura and Walters, (1963). However, with the application of cognitive elements on behavioural interpretations of learning, Bandura's learning theory (1986) differs from those traditional behaviouristic theories through the emphasis of symbolic representation and self-regularity procedures.

Previously it has been shown that two important elements in shaping prior beliefs of prospective teachers are exemplary models of teachers and the image of self as learners (Kagan, 1992). In his research identifying attractors to teaching, Lortie (1975) asked practising teachers if they could recall outstanding teachers that they knew or have known. It is intended as part of the theoretical framework of this study student teachers should be asked the same question as they proceed through the first year. In this initial year of the teacher education course, the role models encountered from the past, and the present, such as in clinical supervision, should assist in the new learning of the transition from student to teacher.

2.5.3 *Modelling: observation, efficacy and self regulation*

Bandura (1986) contends that much human learning is facilitated through observing the behaviour of others, so that we learn to imitate by receiving reinforcement for performing a certain behaviour. Effective learning occurs when model behaviour is coded symbolically in images and verbal images, so that, for instance, student teachers think and reflect about what they are doing and rehearse the behaviour mentally and with language before performing it overtly. McInerney and McInerney (1994, p.123) assert that '*at this level the theory becomes explicitly constructivist in the sense that individuals interpret the modelled behaviour in terms of their own existing mental schema*' (original emphasis.)

In the cognitive apprenticeship, the social relationships between the supervising teacher, the lecturers, other teachers and the prospective teachers assume great importance. Some potential teachers are more socially adept, and so communication becomes easier. This may apply to the model (the mentor), so

that if they seek challenges, enjoy what they are doing and do not let problems get them down, they can lead by example (Bandura, 1997), enabling the other to seek their identity and fulfillment similarly. In such social interaction the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) becomes very close.

Bandura (1997) proposes that some theories of human development rely greatly on the self-regulative function of speech as described by Luria (1961), with children's behaviour regulated by verbal instructions from others, where children guide their actions by overt self-instruction, then covert self-instruction. Bandura asserts that inner speech serves as the principal mover of thought and self-direction in Vygotsky's (1962) theory. Heightening human competence serves in promoting self-guiding speech (Meichenbaum, 1977; 1984). Walker and Lambert (1995) also comment on the social, cultural and historical nature of learning, called by some socio-cultural or cultural history, described by Vygotsky as residing in society. Considering language to be a tool for thought, while mediating mental functioning, Vygotsky believed that in the internalisation of knowledge language played a major role.

Cognitive skills, including language, are modelled by having models think the modelled plans and strategies aloud in rehearsal, facilitating learning and retention. It is necessary in this thesis to consider how student teachers perceive modelling teaching as part of learning how to teach, how data on this process can be accessed. The observation, the modelling, and the tone, audibility and projection of the speech utterance all combine to enable learning and teaching. Bandura (1986) believes that motivating by giving oneself rewards on the basis of good performance enhances future performance. In teaching experiences the supervising teacher and others model their roles, as observed and then self-modelled by the student teacher.

According to Bandura (1997) the striving for control over one's life circumstances permeates almost everything people do in life, providing countless personal and social benefits. Control is contained in effort, ability, luck and the influence of powerful others or unknown factors. Their belief in their capabilities to produce the desired effects through their actions will be embedded in the broad network of socio-structural influences so that they have a hand in selecting and shaping the environmental context of their lives. Their belief in their own capability to do so is reflected in their personal self-efficacy affecting their self-regulation of actions. Bandura (1997) asserts that social structures are devised to organise, guide and regulate human affairs in given domains by authorised rules and sanctions, and efficacious people are quick to take advantage of opportunities presented, to change institutional constraints alone or collectively, while inefficacious people do not do so, but become discouraged. In this way, people's shared belief in their capabilities is not simply the sum of the efficacy beliefs of individuals. Social cognitive theory posits that collective efficacy is a group-level attribute emerging from the product of cooperative and individual dynamics.

In the first year of a teacher education course, student teachers are mostly grouped in cohorts, often in tutorial groups, creating a situation reinforcing a sense of collective efficacy. However, according to Bandura, 1997, p. 25), people “can envisage possible selves, conjuring up specific self-images of future successes and failures, constructed from personal experiences, the many actual and symbolic models, and life-shaping socio-cultural influences” (Markus & Nurius, 1986). In social cognitive theory the mechanism for transforming thought into action operates through a conception matching process, so that self-efficacy beliefs are constructed from four main sources of information where:

- being able to master an experience serves as an indicator of capability,
- one can compete and compare with the attainments of others,
- one is persuaded of one's capability by the encouragement of others,
- one partly judges one's capabilities, strength and openness to shortcomings (Bandura, 1997).

Participation in a teacher education cohort enables comparison between many available models. Bandura asserts that, in their every day lives, people produce effects through their own actions, so that they believe that what they do will be effective in new situations. If people feel confident that, by their actions they have gained some influence, people seeking to alter their environment will adapt to situations they like, but at the same time try to change aspects they find undesirable.

To compare with the attainments of others, modelling serves as an effective tool for promoting a sense of personal efficacy. In everyday normal life, people compare themselves to particular associates in similar situations, such as classmates or work associates in similar endeavours. Modelling influences do much more than simply provide a social standard against which to appraise personal capabilities. Student teachers actively seek proficient models who possess the competencies to which they aspire. By their behaviour and expressed ways of thinking, competent models transmit knowledge and teach observers effective skills and strategies for managing environmental demands (Bandura, 1986).

Acquisition of effective skills through observation raises belief of personal efficacy. An optimistic belief in one's own efficacy is thus a necessity, not a character flaw. When visualising oneself applying the modelled strategies successfully, self-

belief is strengthened that one can actually perform well. Modelling with such cognitive rehearsal builds stronger self-efficacy than modelling alone; modelling alone, in turn surpasses verbal instruction in the same strategies (Maibach & Flora, 1993).

Modelling as described above is a means of learning from experienced others, and in comparison with peers, building self-confidence, perhaps losing faith, recovering quickly or slowly, becoming self regulating. Bandura asserts that people do not fit neatly into fixed stages, and for this reason stage theories have been going out of vogue in psychological theorising (Flavell, 1978). While views regarding any series of transitions by entrants in a teacher education program process have been described, the study further examines the benefits in cognitive self-modelling, perceived self-efficacy for the individual, indeed the whole cohort, as self-regulating capabilities are developed.

2.5.4 Self regulation, cooperative encouragement

In this particular mode of self-influence, student teachers can visualise themselves repeatedly confronting and mastering progressively more challenging or threatening situations. A strong sense of self-regulatory efficacy contributes to the ability to master academic subjects by building a cognitive efficacy towards higher aspirations (Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). It would appear that people with a low sense of self-efficacy for a particular task would probably avoid doing it, while those who feel competent should participate readily. Prospective teachers could perceive that they have models other than their past teachers. Cooperative structures, in which members encourage and teach each other, generally promote higher performance attainments than do competitive ones (Johnson, Maruyama, Johnston, Nelson & Skon, 1981).

The first year of the teacher education program should be one where efficacious self-regulators invest their graduation aims with their own short-term challenges by adopting goals of progressive improvement when they can get feedback of how they are doing (Bandura, 1991; Bandura & Cervone, 1983). Successful socialisation in the first year of a teacher education program year will give impetus to a successful completion of the process of becoming a teacher.

2.5.5 Summary of section

Enhancing change is necessary in teacher education, to interrupt the social practices of many years where the student teacher is a passive recipient of teacher management. In this passive imitation of a single teacher, isolation becomes a narrowing of the educative potential rather than a community view of teaching. Innovative ideas may emerge more easily if teacher education crosses traditional grounds and field experiences provide opportunities for students to engage in reflective thinking that stands in contrast to current practices that emphasise mastery of technical skills. The relationship between student teacher and supervisors is crucial to enable reflective and critical feedback and help student teachers alter the cognitive disposition as opposed to just behaviour that they bring into practical experiences.

Change in teacher education is also enhanced by use of the cognitive theories of Bandura (1997) where modelling, observation, a sense of collective agency, self-regulation and cooperative encouragement become part of the student teachers' tools in learning how to teach. By observing the behaviour of others in a teacher education program, the prospective teacher perceives that his/her capacity to perform similar behaviour can be developed by modelling. The transformation of thought into movement functions through a conception

matching process, where student teachers can compete and compare with the attainments of others. Being able to master an experience serves as an indicator of capability. The student teachers are persuaded by the encouragement of others to trust in their own capabilities, and are able to partly judge their own capabilities, strengths and shortcomings. Self-regulators adopt goals of progressive improvement, using feedback on practice. The combination of the theories of Bandura's (1997) regarding self-regulation and modelling, and of Tom's (1995) ideas to restructure teacher programs (see next section) lead to a rationale of commitment to teaching.

2.6 Structural change: a more exciting initiation in learning to think as teacher

Britzman, Dipbo, Searle and Pitt (1997) and Zeichner and Gore (1990) have critiqued the traditional apprenticeship form of teacher education as one of passive compliance reducing such a program to a technical problem of classroom application. They proposed that the amount of classroom-based practical experience or teaching days should vary, according to a more theoretical orientation, more clearly articulated to the practice of supervision, where students could have experience in non-formal community settings and to engage with pupils away from the classroom. In such a “cognitive apprenticeship” the student teacher could begin to think and act like a teacher, assuming teacher behaviour, but how could a faculty initiate such a program at the very beginning of the first year? What kind of structure, or subject could stimulate and introduce prospective teachers of various skills, background and ages to the first tentative steps in teaching, and away from the classroom setting?

Tom (1995) also proposed, like Zeichner and Gore (1990), that teacher education had remained virtually the same for over fifty years, (Cogan, 1958;

Conant, 1963; Counts, 1935; Monroe, 1952) and at least since his own teacher certification, 1963, basically a course and content structure. He acknowledged that while a teacher education program should represent a vision of good teaching both substantively and structurally, it is the practical and organisational arrangements of such a vision that must be thoughtfully articulated. Tom questioned four structural assumptions that are typical of conventional teacher education programs:

- a) the assumption that content and experiences must be introduced gradually;
- b) the presumption that pedagogical knowledge should come before teaching practice;
- c) the supposition that disciplinary specialists teach most of the program content;
- d) that student grouping can be continually grouped as students move through the program.

Some teacher educators believe that the content in unit courses should be introduced in small chunks, however the prospective teacher may find that such a gradual step-by-step experience is not very exciting, even boring. Tom (1995) proposes that a new career or a new romance is a powerful learning experience, a force that demands a response, but year by year in a teacher education program does not involve the newcomer completely. This would break with usual university practice of unit after unit, so that that the beginning of a teacher preparation program could be designed as a short intense prelude over several weeks, fulltime or over consecutive weeks. Such an introduction could lead to a more natural socialisation between faculty, students and in the schools so that

building a group consciousness encourages both conceptual and experiential learning.

2.6.1 Knowledge as practice

According to Tom (1995), student teaching is usually delayed until the teacher entrant masters some prerequisite professional knowledge, but Tom believes that the idea of stockpiling knowledge for later use is suspect. He suggested that the knowledge-stockpile idea could be changed structurally by utilising situational teaching to link knowledge or practice, or introducing professional study through the practicum, through a particular approach to lesson planning in each practicum set collaboratively by all subject lecturers. Tom posits that any decision to begin a teacher education program with teaching experience could be a high risk strategy when entrants are being introduced to educational ideas along with teaching demands, and could lead a novice to revert to survival skills. However, working daily with a skilled master teacher (lecturer) in cohorts as reported by Tom, (1995, p.123) would foster an analytical frame of mind 'as opposed to the imitation-of-a-model approach that frequently occurs in conventional student-teaching.'

It is contended that the work of Bandura (1997) does apply to the cognitive development of student teachers, as described in the previous section. Further it is contended that, as proposed by Tom (1995) above, socialisation daily in the teacher education program will further that cognitive development. This cognitive development corresponds to the theory of Tom (1995) that considered that when a more capable person works in close collaboration with a learner the zone of cognitive development may be created, allowing the learner to achieve success. Walker and Lambert (1995) assert that opportunities for the

social construction of knowledge are upheld in learning contexts where peer activity is facilitated through collaboration and cooperation rather than through competition, allowing a joint negotiation, a 'seeding of ideas'.

2.6.2 *Staffing/teaming*

Conventional teacher education programs, Tom (1995) asserts, appear to move slowly. Anderson (1989) p. 101, argues that 'a small number of core, organising ideas should be the basis of the teacher education curriculum'. Where Sigel (1990) states that the difficulty for novices is working out the implications from practice from those core ideas Tom (1995) believes that a case can be made for the situation that lecturers assume more responsibility from the professional program than one single course or unit. In this way a team of faculty members would be responsible for the whole program to coordinate contents of assignments, schedule of due dates for papers, and agreement of overlap on agreement of a single lesson plan format.

By observing such a team, prospective teachers could understand the mutual teaching and learning involved in the teaching profession. Lortie (1968) asserted that for student teachers the only 'shared ordeal' seemed to be that of practice teaching. Tom (1995) suggested that all teacher education institutions had differing approaches for the prospective teacher unit structure. He believes cohorts of twenty to thirty (more would be mass) students would make it possible to develop a group spirit (p.127) and a sense of mutual support. The professional semester could create a cohort where certain faculty members and students share that 'ordeal' through the interweaving of student teacher strategies through the curriculum. Such a cohort structure was the basis of the researcher's overlay of Bandura's (1997) theories, where the student observed the modelling

of the lecturers, of supervising teachers, of peers, their own self-modelling, how the pupils modelled themselves from the teacher, their peers.

Tom (1995) asserts that student cohorts have the advantages of monitoring student progress in a caring, non-bureaucratic atmosphere, socialising through a more collegial dimension. Tom envisions the cohort not only as a shared experience, but also as contributing to any feeling of shared ordeals (p.127) 'that mold the developing teacher into a professional ready to assume substantial responsibility with a sense of self-confidence.' It is Tom's (1995) belief that in the last ten years there are teacher educators who are ready to confront and change what has been done in the past so that the passivity of any student teacher in the first ongoing participation is challenged in constructing new knowledge.

2.6.3 Summary of Section

This thesis focuses on the perceptions that student teachers construct in their first year of a teacher education program. Some researchers debunk many programs as being ossified (Smith, 1999), as remnants of teacher education fifty years ago. The previous section revealed the impact that cognitive psychologists can bring to education, where prospective teachers can use cognitive tools of modelling, observation, self-regulation and cooperative encouragement to judge and improve their teaching capabilities. In this context of being immersed in learning how to teach, Tom's (1995) theories give new life to the tired condition of some teacher education programs. He proposed that while a vision of good teaching is the aim of teacher educators, practical and organisational matters must be facilitated. On a regional campus, local issues should be examined and determined. By questioning structural assumptions about the prevailing

characteristics of entry by student teachers into teacher education, Tom (1995) side-stepped from a lock-step entry to a more natural enculturation where faculty, students and schools would build a group consciousness encouraging both conceptual and experiential in an exciting start to a teaching career.

2.7 Conceptual framework for this study

When investigating teachers and how teachers learn to teach, researchers need a conceptual framework that allows an appreciation of the experiences of student teachers relating to their developing practice, and helps the identification of factors that are influential in the student teacher's professional growth. The main issues drawn from the literature are incorporated into the conceptual framework for this study. The framework optimises the theory that an effective model of the primary teacher education program, particularly in the first year of study, should change structurally. Positive messages from theorists concerning the success of initial programs in other systems where structural change has occurred indicate that an intensive, enthusiastic commencement where students will have contact with faculty, teachers, peers and children at school early in their university program, leads to prospective teachers becoming more certain in their career choice. The teacher entrants would be introduced to a more varied set of models of teaching. New knowledge and skills could be created immediately, building on prior knowledge, and utilising observation, modelling and socialising skills in both university and schools. Student teachers engage in teaching and learning together and build a group cohort perspective. Literature supporting the conceptual framework draws from the experiential practice and theorising of teacher educators, their perceptions of a sameness in teacher education, but also an awareness of a vision of good teaching that will stimulate

and introduce prospective teachers into their first tentative steps in teaching. The framework suggests that prospective teachers will need to overcome passivity, to become leaders building professional relationships, and will need to challenge many of their perceptions about teaching.

Outcomes of research concerning what student teachers perceive about learning how to teach, particularly in their first year, have been summarised through this chapter. The attitudes, changes, skills, values and knowledge obvious from a more visionary initial year in teaching will have implications for selection and recruitment of teachers, and for policy and practice for professional development for prospective teachers and teacher educators. In a demanding teacher education process where teaching becomes an exciting initiation it might be expected that teacher entrants will construct their own teaching and manage their own learning, although it may be expected that some will not.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has identified many issues concerning student teachers' initial year of teacher education, including their perceptions of why they want to teach, their enculturation into the profession and practical experiences, and how structural change can enhance teacher education. The review of the literature has examined several themes that are significant to the study. It has been argued that the first steps in becoming teachers should include discussions of why they want to teach. The first year of university is particularly important for student teachers to begin to discuss, debate and explore what teaching is and what teaching means. The initial year of study is imperative to a teaching career in the emerging perceptions of learning how to teach.

Because a commitment to teaching develops in the first year, it is most apt to investigate why prospective teachers want to teach. Accordingly, any entry to the preservice teachers world is achieved through the attraction and retention of students in their first year of study. Acceptance of a place in the teacher education program can result in a career as a teacher. The first year has implications for the way intending teachers view teaching. The want of becoming a teacher might have been longstanding, newly formed or almost non-existent, and so the prospective teacher is developing arguments in the mind whether teaching fits their wants and vice versa.

Much literature on teacher education is actually about teachers in the classroom, what teachers say teaching is about, what has held them in teaching. Student teachers view teaching in terms of what they want out of teaching, from their own memories of past teachers, and also their future life expectations. The decision to teach comes from a diversity of career goals and may even result as a reason not to continue in teaching. This attrition at any moment in the course may be attributed to many reasons, but indicates that some prospective teachers did not fit the job, but much time, effort and finance would be involved.

For this reason, the literature was funneled down from the idea of the practising teacher, to that of the student teachers' construction of why they wanted to be teachers, but the reality of what that meant in the course. In this study, it is argued that how student teachers perceive themselves at the start of their university degree has profound effect on their prospect of graduation and ultimate teaching career.

In a supportive community, student teachers as 'learners' could have a sense of belonging, sharing and supporting others in their learning. Teacher

development can be seen in terms of enculturation through socialization, extending relationships to peers, lecturers, supervising teachers, but particularly to children. Student teachers are shown in some literature as 'passive, compliant,' when moving through the course, but other accounts show that no individual is the same. Concerns of prospective teachers are portrayed as tending to favour self, rather than the curriculum and later the needs of children, as most importance with the timing of the first contact with children.

The transition from student to teacher means the construction of a teacher identity, developing the traits necessary to the role of a teacher. Being in the school grounds or classroom leads to identifying teaching as work, part of occupational socialization. Being with children can be a shocking revelation for some intending teachers, leading to a need for change in perspective. Being with a supervising teacher and children should be an uplifting force to a new career, just as interacting with many in a variety of experiences, can enhance development.

Perceiving a teaching program as a developing process means perhaps a change in belief, a reflection on what it means to be a teacher. Many strategies, such as seminar meetings, supervisory conferences, journal writing, action research assignments and curriculum projects based on the real life professional practice experiences, contribute to the learning to teach repertoire. Differences were apparent over years of teacher education. Early training models were heavily biased on procedural knowledge where student teachers were told what to do. More current models were directed towards challenging new teachers to seek strategies in their teaching and learning using their own ideas. The loud and clear message from contemporary literature, is that technical expertise is not the

cornerstone of teaching, and accordingly this thesis explores not just the techniques, but the wish, the wanting to be a teacher, the ethos surrounding those who profess to be teachers.

From that idea of making prospective teachers responsible for their own learning, further relevant literature was sought, moving away from the traditional to the contemporary. It was obvious from early literature that teacher training was just that, where the whole course was taught for the benefit of many undergraduates straight from school, just as historically in teacher educational colleges. The reality of the contemporary undergraduate means that over half are mature age entrants, who did not come straight from school. These mature age students according to the literature come from very diverse fields in their wish to become teachers. Modern entry into teaching comes not mainly now from tertiary entrance from schools but from industry, from credit transfers from other institutions, and from preparatory programs tailored to assist the mature aged to enter university.

Literature was sought therefore for this new age of university entrants, particularly those from a regional area in a new university. The conceptual framework had to fit the requirements for these new age, new century students, who do not want to be told what to do but have experienced life, often over many years since their own schooldays, and yet are prepared to be teachers and want to be teachers. Literature such as Liston & Zeichner (1991) and Widdeen et al. (1998) point to how to build a teacher education program that can develop a shared understanding of the themes of a teacher program with planned articulation between all program courses and experiences, based on particular conceptions of the teacher's role. Rather than passive imitation, underpinned by a series of traditional lectures and tutorials, some literature

speaks of the need for an injection of life into university programs. These programs focus on a more 'alive' model where students use teachers, peers and experienced teachers as in self-regulating their learning of how to teach.

It seems that when learning how to teach, the problem of attrition appears to be a mismatch of expectations and reality. The literature establishes that early contact with children is necessary, and so it would appear that must be a part of a teaching program. Some literature promoted the view that student leavers need a collaborative university program as in American universities. This could be true in Australia for the need for collaborative courses, however it must be considered that here the mature age undergraduate will have issues concerning failure through financial, personal and family problems exterior, but related to their entry to teaching. The literature review was a stimulus to thinking about student teacher perceptions, a sounding board (Burns, 1997) of other ways of looking at the problem of retaining first year students.

The main theme in this thesis is concerned with why education students want to be teachers and explores student teachers' perceptions of teaching. This is an important research issue because so many students leave the program in the first year of study. The research literature shows that some prospective teachers actively engage in teaching, learning and planning from competent and also peer models on both the university and school sites, so that observation, self experiential modelling, reflection and cognitive knowledge become the means of development. To tell their story a constructivist research methodology was chosen, to use a case study framework to uncover the students' perceptions of teaching to progressively co-construct with the researcher their own knowledge as they experience their world. The knowledge constructed will represent our best efforts to make sense of the teachers' world.

CHAPTER THREE

Design of the study: A constructivist research approach

3.1 Introduction

The research questions in this study have as their concern student teachers' understanding of teaching, as a form of knowledge, perhaps implicit, which influences their choice of career and perhaps of their later teaching actions. Peoples' behaviour is coloured by their views of the world (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992), which includes the way they view work. Therefore, peoples' interpretation of their workplace and teacher preparation experiences are constructed from their worldview (Stake, 1995). The experiences they might recount create a window, through which insights into their worldview and their perceptions about teaching can be opened (Clandinin and Connelly, 1987).

This chapter explains and justifies the student teachers' worldview through both the constructivist research paradigm and the case study research method that were selected for this study. Specific aspects of the research method that are discussed include the use of the method in the literature, data collection procedures such as semi structured interviewing, data analysis procedures to devise an analytical framework for the study, and a pilot study to refine data collection. These topics are discussed in considerable detail to be consistent with the assumptions of qualitative research. This section discusses the search for a relevant research paradigm and methodology.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), the paradigm or interpretative framework is a basic set of beliefs that guides action. Such beliefs touch our daily lives in a modern world so that all research is interpretive, guided by the set of beliefs and feelings about the world. Each interpretive paradigm makes

demands on the researcher, in the questions asked and the interpretation the researcher brings to them. The previous chapters have outlined the study focus on the perceptions of teaching that prospective teachers construct in their first year of teaching. The aims of this research are to investigate the prospective teachers' initial views of teaching and to jointly construct any changing perceptions of their chosen career. To tell the story of what is found and the details to support that view, a relevant research paradigm for defining the methods and techniques in collecting and analysing data was devised.

Merriam (1998) noted the distinction made by Carr and Kemmis (1986) among three basic forms of educational research - positivist, interpretive and critical. In the positivist form, knowledge is gained through scientific and experimental research, and "reality" is stable, observable and measurable. In critical research, education is considered to be a social institution designed for social and cultural reproduction, where the knowledge generated is an ideological critique of power, privilege, and oppression in areas of educational practice. In interpretive research, education is considered to be a process, a lived experience, where the knowledge gained becomes multiple realities constructed socially by individuals. It is not the intention in this study to gain data and knowledge through positivistic or critical forms of research. Education may be considered as a process, and to interpret that process the interpretive or qualitative perspective will be used to gather data from participants, using a chronological development of the case (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994) as they live through the experience of their first year of university. The personal meaning to participants, their own interpretation in this thesis are termed as 'perceptions.'

Qualitative research is an umbrella concept, claims Merriam (1998), which

covers several forms of inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) to help understand and explain social phenomena, so that the natural setting is not disrupted. She notes other terms that can be used for such research such as naturalistic inquiry, field study, case study and others. In this research the interest is in understanding the meaning student teachers make of their experience. With the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, fieldwork was involved. From the data was constructed an inductive research strategy in the form of themes and categories. From this process of meaning and understanding, words and pictures were built around the participants rather than numbers, and so the data is often in the form of their own words. The design of the study needed to be flexible and emergent in response to any changing conditions in the study such as lengthening the time of data collection. Therefore, the sample selection was small and purposeful.

3.2 Constructivist research paradigm

The constructivist or interpretivist believes that to understand the world of meaning one must interpret it, according to Schwandt (1994). Gergen and Gergen (1991) explain how accounts of the world usually take place in shared systems of intelligibility, in language or writing, as an expression of relationship, among people, as a social construction of meaning and knowledge. There are multiple, perhaps conflicting constructions, and all potentially meaningful, with the assumption that what is real is a construction in the minds of the individual (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The findings or outcomes of an inquiry are themselves literal creation and construction of the inquiry process. Walker and Lambert (1995) propose that learning is an active, constructive process, and through the individual's perceptions, attention and memory, knowledge is constructed

through their experience of the world. While the knowledge so constructed may be different from others in the same situation, this knowledge represents the individuals' best efforts to make sense of their experiences in the world, in this case, of initial teachers.

Stake (1995) contends that human construction of knowledge appears to begin with sensory stimulation of external stimuli. But such sensations are immediately given personal meaning, one's own interpretation of it, so that in the mind, new perceptions of stimulation mix with old. This is of great importance in how the prospective teacher perceives the teaching and learning process in progression through the initial year. Understanding, according to Stake, as reached by each individual, would in some degree be unique, but much would be held in common. These interpretations of the people most knowledgeable about the case can justify substantial narrative description in the final report. If, as Stake contends, human construction of knowledge appears to begin with sensory stimulation of external stimuli, this thesis aims to explore the changing perception of 'self as teacher' framed in the constructivist paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Denzin & Lincoln (1994 p.128) refer to the inquirer's own self-reflective awareness of his or her own construction and to the 'social construction of the individual constructions.' In a constructivist approach to understanding through construction of knowledge, it is the blending, the co-construction of researcher and participants over a long-term study that allows for development of key issues (Stake, 1994).

In constructivist research, data is gathered using an iterative process to allow for probing and identification of change, and reconstruction of relevant

issues. In this research, data was collected through individual interviews with nine first year prospective student teachers at the beginning, mid and end of that year. Constructivist analysis concepts were employed to draw from the data the co-construction of coded patterns and themes displaying student teachers' emerging perceptions of their first year of learning how to teach. Co-construction was achieved through the three interviews by re-asking previous and emerging questions in discussion. The analysis consisted of data reduction as a form of coding, by teasing out themes and clustering, then displaying data as a form of reporting the results, and by drawing and verifying conclusions about the case. The interview transcripts were read and re-read to identify sets of codes and code definitions further refined into sets of issues, contrasting participants' perceptions of learning to teach. The constructivist nature of this research allowed the reduction and interpretation of the case to be reported in a coherent and well-refined construction of the varied perceptions of the first year prospective teacher.

3.2.1 Case study from the literature

The literature describes a number of case studies that were conducted in the area or timeframe that the present research intends to pursue. A brief description of these will help inform the methodology selected for this study.

McWilliams Bogad (1989) case study relied on a series of structured interviews over two years. Data from her initial screening interviews conducted as a pilot study were interpreted so that three primary subjects were interviewed over the second year, and the interview data was incorporated into the individuals' stories. These stories were the findings, results and implications originally intended to describe recruitment that failed, and have implications

when viewed as processes in socialisation and work identification for prospective teachers. She had identified the basic conflict with the orientation towards teaching and the possibility of an alternative career being available.

Danielewicz (1998) built a case of the identification of teacher identity for three of her student teachers, and interviewed them three times in the year. As their English professor, she kept observation notes, notes from her teaching journal, using students' written work in exams, unit plans, papers and teaching philosophies. She argued the case that student teachers can indulge in dialogic discourse through which identities are constructed.

Loughran (1996) used documentation of the reflective conversations (between student teachers and their lecturer) in transcript and in tabular form, to give an idea of what issues (see earlier Concerns-Fuller 1969), problems and solutions student teachers reflect upon, whether through their journals, or in interviews with their lecturer.

From the literature, the influence of Lortie's book, *Schoolteacher* (1975), is still felt in contemporary papers (Wideen et al. 1998). The studies of both McWilliams Bogad (1983) and Diamond & Borthwick (1989) used the influence of Lortie's five attractors of teaching in interviews or questionnaires to investigate why prospective teachers would continue to have the commitment to remain in teaching. McWilliams Bogad (1983), Danielewicz (1998), Loughran (1996) and Deer et al. (1997) each interviewed student teachers over one year as longitudinal research in aspects of a teacher education program. The data-collecting phase of this study encompasses the first year of a teacher education program, because the problem studied has been identified as occurring in that time span.

3.2.2 Key researchers in the field

While Lortie (1975) wrote of the 'five attractors of teaching' vital to recruitment, McArthur (1981) pointed to the reality shock apparent in concerns of teacher entrants. Other researchers, McWilliams Bogad (1983) and Berry (1986) focused on aspects of teacher attraction and retention, and Diamond & Borthwick (1988) probed the relatively high rates of attrition in the first few years of teaching. Borthwick (1988) and Calderhead & Shorrock (1997) looked at the first years of teacher education, with the use of reiterative data analysis, but using contrasting presentation, of case studies and the repertory grid. Hansen (1995) and Stokes (1997) researched motivation of student teachers as reasons for choosing a teaching career. In the following table, similar and contrasting methodology from the literature is detailed to help in devising an original design plan. From the literature, the researchers' methodology is identified, as is the research instrument, how the data is presented, and if any participants are studied in depth.

Table 3.1: Exemplar methodology from the literature

Researcher and Focus	Method	Instrument and Timing	Presentation of Data results	Total number of participants
Lortie 1975 Schoolteacher	Analysis: themes, qualitative and quantitative	Interviews	5 attractors to teaching designated as Themes	94
McWilliams Bogad 1983 Not becoming a teacher	Case study analysis: categories	3 Interviews over last year	3 case stories Figure; Persuaders and dissuaders	3
Diamond 1989 Who remains in teaching	Qualitative and quantitative analysis	Questionnaire at last week of course	Figure: showing categories Discussion and conclusions	147

Researcher and Focus	Method	Instrument and Timing	Presentation of Data results	Total number of participants
Danielewicz 1998 Transition from self to student	Interpretive; ethnographic	3 Interviews each over year. Observation, journals, exams	Individual constructions of students, and Conclusion	3 in depth
Borthwick 1988 Process of change for intending teachers	Constructivist Personal construct method	Grids for each students showing change constructed 3 times in year and learning conversations	Construct grids Of contrasting individual patterns over year. Discussion answers to research questions	17 students 2 in depth
Calderhead 1997 Understanding Teacher Education	Case study Analysis-themes	Interviews several times over two years	Chapter for each case study and discussion from all cases	20 students in depth 4
Loughran 1996 Developing reflective practice	Case-studies Analysis Constructivist	3 Interviews, journals	Emergent issues/concerns in first year: Themes	19 students in depth 4
Deer 1997 Perceptions of first-year education students	Analysis	Interviews, questionnaire 4 times in year	Themes: discussion	27
Stokes 1997 Called to teach	Case studies	Interviews	Chapter for each student, discussion	3 students in depth

Two other longitudinal studies of the first year in that process have not been included in the literature review chapter intentionally, so that they could be presented in the methodology chapter. Calderhead & Shorrock (1997) were researching a similar theme to this thesis in 'Understanding teacher education,' while Borthwick (1989) was researching the processes of change that occurred for intending preservice teachers. Both used Miles and Huberman's (1984) conception of qualitative research as an iterative and interactive process, where ongoing analysis was used to inform data collection, data was then reduced and interpreted, and questions generated for verification for further inquiry. Both

researchers interviewed participants three times over the year at the time of practice teaching.

Table 3.2: Contrasting constructivist method

Calderhead (1997)	Borthwick (1989)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employed a case study method • Studied twenty students training to become primary teachers in an American university over a two-year period • Sought an understanding of the teacher education process • The case study documented the student teachers' difficulties, challenges and successes along with personal, organizational and curricular factors that facilitated or impeded their professional development. • To construct the case histories two factors were borne in mind, firstly existing theoretical models, such as past educational experiences or personal images of teaching, and secondly the significance students placed on events, perhaps repeated mentions of such factors. These events or processes were used to construct the case account, clustering them under general headings, such as educational background, early images of teaching, Professional relationships Understanding the core curriculum • Looking across all cases it was possible to identify a number of general themes concerning the students' learning and experiences, as aspects of student development. • In-depth case studies of four of the student teachers were provided, drawing together similarities and differences in their experiences in order to provide a detailed examination of their learning. • Final consideration was given as to how research helps in understanding the teacher education process, discussing practical questions facing teacher education, and how it might help to direct teacher education in the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used a variety of methods, mainly the personal construct method (Kelly, 1955). • Explored the experiences of seventeen intending secondary teachers over the year's course at the University of Queensland • Explored the nature of any change in the process for the individual or group of prospective teachers • Described 'the processes by which individuals progressively constructed and reconstructed their personal worlds as they moved through a period involving their transition from student to teacher'. • The personal construct method (Kelly, 1955), was used to collect and analyse the construct systems of each neophyte which portrayed the list of teaching skills, a detailed repertory grid of their learning. The individual grids were analysed, with similarities in constructing the grids identified, so a grid for each could be produced for the three occasions and presented to the respondent during the learning conversation, where individuals examined their individual grids. • Using data displays, the repertory grids of all participants were a sensitive means of capturing change in individuals construing. • To deal with the 'mass of data' Borthwick presented samples from two participants within the group, whose analysis of the grid data showed as being consistently most distant • Data from the range of sources demonstrated that change did occur for the individuals and the group of intending teachers over the period of the preservice program.

Both researchers identified a number of general themes concerning the student teachers' learning experiences, as aspects of student development, showing similarities and differences in these experiences in the changing context of the teacher education program. Comparison between these two studies enabled consideration on the best method to interpret findings through the research questions. While a case study methodology within a constructivist paradigm has been selected, using Miles and Huberman's 1994 conception of qualitative data analysis, similar problems to Calderhead & Shorrock (1997) and Borthwick (1988) were faced regarding data summary, analysis and data display. Both used the idea of themes through analysis of data in building their student teachers' construction of understanding teacher education.

The display of the changing reconstruction of the themes was a necessary component of analysis, for participants and readers, and for the reduction of data. Calderhead & Shorrock stated that the reconstruction of the previous and incoming data was time-consuming but necessary to understand the chronicle events being unfolded. His case study focused on four prospective teachers from the twenty participants, a chapter for each, but in later summary chapters data from all participants was drawn upon. Borthwick displayed the changing grid lists as constructed and reconstructed by all student teachers from analysis, but also focused on two contrasting participants, although in answering the research questions she made conclusions from both the individual and the group of intending teachers. Reference is made to the above studies when details of data analysis in this study, data reduction is achieved, and results are displayed. Research, whether case study or not, is often unique, must be original, but partial replication does occur through the ideas of others.

In the choice of an interpretive paradigm, using a naturalistic inquiry, a "*narrative inquiry model*" is proposed in which researchers and participants are each telling their stories (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). From the various methodologies mentioned in the literature as influencing the design of this study, Loughran's (1996) constructivist year-long study of prospective teachers has been critical. He was able to document 'any shifts in student teacher' concerns as described by Fuller (1969). Fuller's research dominates much research on prospective teachers. From the literature (McWilliams Bogad, 1983; Nimmo and Smith, 1994; Kagan, 1992; Widdeen et al. 1998), reference was made to the implications of Fuller's seminal papers on the development of student teachers.

Fuller (1969) considered how the concerns of teachers have a developmental conceptualisation. Undergraduates in teacher education learn what they want to learn, but have difficulty learning what does not interest. The problem is in motivation of students. Fuller stated that in a study of teacher attitudes to teaching McKeachie (1963) found that of 100 education students questioned in interviews 97 were young and without teaching experience and did not speak highly of their course. The other three who were middle aged and with considerable teaching experience were most enthusiastic about the same course, and the question was posed whether the typical, unexperienced undergraduate was not ready to benefit from a conventional teacher preparation program. McKeachie (1963) queried what the students are ready to learn, what concerned them. Any regularities in student interests, that he called "dependable motives," would guide educators in preparation programs. In this thesis such regularities would enhance perceptions gained through the data. Just as McKeachie distinguished between the younger or more experienced prospective teachers,

this study uses a similar perspective, as did Deer et al. (1997), distinguishing participants as straight from school or from mature age entry.

Fuller's 1969 study aimed to investigate the developing concerns of prospective teachers, and to use the findings of other investigators, to find out whether those concerns could be conceptualised in some useful ways. From previous findings from English and American studies she did find consistency of similar concerns, but also absence of concerns usually found in preparation programs. New teachers may be reticent to admit problems in what they should know, so that a more ongoing study was necessary. Fourteen student teachers identified their topics of concern over an eleven weeks semester, so from that data the frequency of that topic in each week was identified (Table 1, p. 212 Fuller, 1969). In her second study, 29 different student teachers were surveyed on 'what they were concerned about' from the start to the end of the semester in two week intervals.

From Fuller's 1969 research and her exploration into previous similar studies her impression was that concerns can change over preparation, however another possibility may be that those who retain early concerns may drop out of teaching, which must be considered in this study. Fuller reported no studies about concerns of student teachers before actually teaching, but an early teaching phase identified was *concern about self*, while later and more mature concerns seemed to focus on pupil gain and self-evaluation. Loughran (1996) noted Fuller's studies which explored student-teachers' concerns during pre-service education, illustrating the shift in concerns from themselves early in the course towards their pupils later. He considered how student-teacher concerns could impact on their journal writing, perhaps influencing the extent to which attitudes

may be displayed, and so decided to use their reflective writing as part of data to help them develop their teaching and learning. In studying the perceptions of prospective teachers the focus is not on concerns alone, although student comments about reflective journals may support other data to show developing attitudes.

3.2.2.1 Gathering student views

Loughran (1996) explored student teachers' development of reflective practice in learning about teaching and learning through modelling. This study has highlighted the importance of reflection and modelling occurring in a teacher education program. To gather student teachers' views Loughran used several approaches to explore that relationship through journal writing, interviews of participants over the year, and videotaping some students teaching in their final teaching experience. His aim in this exploration was so that teacher education programs and educators would help student teachers to develop in their teaching an approach in teaching, so they could gain control of their teaching, to be thoughtful about their own pedagogy. This study has sought to construct student teachers' perceptions about their learning to teach in their first year, and to find whether reflection about modelling does occur in that year. Fuller (1969) refers to concerns which could help student teachers to form concepts about learning to teach. Loughran (1996) considers conceptual issues, possibly concerns, through which he can hope to encourage the development of pedagogical habits, skills and attitudes necessary for self-directed growth. In gathering the perceptions of prospective teachers in interview at the beginning and end of their first year I do not intend to concentrate on concerns alone. Loughran uses the word 'issues', as does Stake (1995) to consider conceptual points as topics. The concept,

'concerns,' may have a negative overtone, so that analysis of my data, categories or themes may or may not have the intonation.

3.2.2.2 Number of topics discussed: issues

Loughran (1996) found that the total number of topics discussed by the students in their journals was 27, collapsed and grouped so similar groups could be listed together. He categorised the common groupings into issues initiated around the specific topics in the course, issues initiated by concerns about self, classroom teaching, and learning. Using such a structure allowed documentation of trends over the year, highlighting the shifts in the student teachers' concerns in a similar manner to Fuller, 1969; Gunstone and Mackay, 1975; Fuller and Bown, 1975. Loughran further analysed these four topics by determining whether three attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness, described by Dewey (1933) as essential to readiness to consider thoughtfully the subjects that do come within the range of experience, were present in students' reflective journals. The number of coded journal entries per student for each attitude was displayed in a table. This enabled the researcher and reader to understand what trends were apparent in those attitudes, and further tables were constructed from data analysis of the coded entries for all participants in each of the three blocks of time-frames each consisting of weeks of coursework and teaching experiences.

3.2.2.3 Student data indicates change

Finally, Loughran (1996) noted that varying issues were related to each of the three attitudes in student's journals. He stated that as students' concerns change through their pre-service training (Fuller, 1969; Gunstone and Mackay, 1975; Fuller and Bown, 1975), it is important to identify these issues and to

consider how they may relate to journal entries and interviewing. While Loughran identified the attitudes of student teachers on developing reflective practice when teaching and learning through modelling, this study has investigated the perceptions of prospective teachers over a similar time-span. Loughran had identified the shifts in those attitudes in journal entries, interviews and other data. He found that concerns shift throughout their pre-service education program, influencing their reflection over the year and the extent they used that reflection in practice, substantiating the findings of the above researchers that students' concerns change through their pre-service training.

If students' concerns (issues, perceptions) change through their teacher education program, the research questions in this thesis needed to ask what being a teacher means to student teachers at the beginning and end of the first year. The expected responses from the study data would be indicative of change as identified by the above researchers.

3.2.2.4 Perceptions encourage reflection

In the first year, the transitional understanding of what becoming a teacher means to student teachers builds career preparation towards future career paths. Deer et al. (1997) stated that their study of student perceptions of the first year at university in initial teacher education courses encouraged student reflection. They were willing to be frank about the course, so that such comments gave staff valuable information that could be used in further course improvement. It is the intent of this study that participant student teachers will be encouraged to reflect upon their understanding of what it means to be a teacher in that year.

As indicated previously, this study inclines towards an inductive research strategy through the construction of themes from the data, building words and pictures rather than numbers. It is necessary however to be aware of the use made by Loughran (1996) in the number of coded journal entries to display trends or shifts in tables, and in narrative. It is from this framework of emergent codes, conceptual issues from student perceptions of the course, that themes and issues may be constructed to allow research questions to be answered. These codes, as identified throughout the case, build on the issues or themes, supporting the case of Merriam (1998) that such categories reflect the purpose of the research, the answers to the research questions. Those examples form the framework of the case study and can be seen as both a chronological and biographical development of the case (Stake, 1995), as the researcher comes to know the case through the participants. Components of the case may be presented in briefly described episodes known as vignettes that often illustrate unique aspects of the case. It is possible that through these examples certain issues may be more or less emphasised as student perceptions vary in the first year, as shown in Loughran (1996), and it is in this context that the advantages of the case study can be demonstrated.

3.2.3 Case study defined

The richness of the studies generated in the above studies has encouraged the choice of a case study orientation for this study, so that the study can similarly probe teacher entrants' understanding of a teaching career, to allow interpretation of that understanding. Merriam (1998) devotes a chapter on the definition of the case study. In definition she states that:

Case studies can be defined in terms of the process of conducting the inquiry (as case study research) the bounded system or unit of analysis elected to study (that is the case), or the product, the end product of a case investigation (p.43).

Previously it has been noted (Stake, 1995) that it is the responsibility of the caseworker researcher to be the prime interpreter and gatherer of interpretations, and the knowledge in the case is constructed rather than discovered. Both the participants and the researcher construct this knowledge through stimuli to the senses, and in this way this thesis uses a constructivist perspective. These sensations from the senses, Stake proposes, take on personal meanings so that new perceptions mix with old. The understanding by each individual of the case, whether the participants, researcher or the audience, would then be unique to some degree, but much would be held in common, as would be true in this case study. One could call data from the participants their 'perceptions of teaching,' however one must consider the researcher's perceptions of teaching, in the co-constructed story of the case, and also those of the readers.

According to Merriam (1998) case studies take us, the readers, to places where we normally don't have the opportunity, but is seen through the researcher's eyes. In such a way this thesis needs to carry the reader to the setting and situation through written analysis. Because the aims of this research are to investigate the prospective teacher's initial views of teaching, a case study has been chosen as the specific research method. Such a method allows the researcher and participants to jointly construct the changing perceptions of teaching. The characteristics of the prospective teachers, as provided by the interviewees themselves, could be considered. In this way data from student teachers may be gathered in confidence and anonymity. The case is defined as

making a joint construction of the initial understandings of emerging issues and concerns about teaching in the first year of student teachers on the regional campus, 1999. The case study will consist of individual interviews with the same students, conducted at the beginning, middle and end of their first year.

3.2.3.1 Who, how and why of case studies

Yin (1994) relates the use of case study research to the research questions asked in the study. He suggests that some "what" questions are exploratory, but that "how" questions are more explanatory, and likely to lead to the use of case studies. The "how" question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has no control, the case in this case study. Yin states that while some researchers think that the purpose of a literature review is to determine the *answers* (original emphasis) about what is known on a topic, but others preview previous research to develop more insightful *questions* about the topic. The research questions being asked in this study are aimed to enable exploration of the student teachers' understanding of being teachers. The unit of analysis used in this research is the perceptions of prospective teachers in their first year. To gather these perceptions it was necessary to consider how data gathered through the research questions can reflect an organised method to present the findings.

3.2.3.2 Data needs of research questions: analysis of a series of interviews

Chapter One has shown the significance in this case study in having an understanding of what teacher entrants think about teaching, as an important step to identify any problems, because on the regional campus the greatest number of student teacher dropout occurred in the first term of the first year. It is proposed that the research study would follow a number of students over a series of

months. The first general research question to be addressed by the researcher was: “What are the student teachers' understandings of being a teacher?”

This led to a generalisation of any issues about recruitment and socialisation in the first year on a new campus. To gather specific information the second question made use of the time factor as a feature of case studies. Familiarity with teaching is personalised through the many years of school attendance, (Zeichner, 1986; Goodson, 1992; Lortie, 1975; Britzman, 1986) and so questions relevant to that idea were in the first interview: After the commencement of the teacher education program what does being a teacher mean to commencing students?

Emergent perceptions of what being a teacher means were gathered through the year over three Phases, as the first year students faced the reality of a demanding teacher education process (Zeichner & Gore (1990, Nimmo (1994), etc). Their responses were analysed, and participants were interviewed in the middle of their first year and again at the end of that year. Interview questions reflected the research question: What does being a teacher mean to them at the end of the first year?

Analysis from the second general question becomes the findings of the study. *How does comparison between these views lead to a better understanding of students' expanding knowledge of the teacher's world?* This leads to a comparison between these views: What it means to be a teacher.

Using the data so generated the researcher was in a position to answer the final questions: What are the implications of these understandings for the students' future career paths and their career preparations? How can the findings

from this study assist teacher educators to lessen attrition from the teaching degree in the first year?

3.3 The Organisation of the Study

This study has been structured as a case study to investigate student teachers' understanding of teaching in the first year of a teacher education course. It was intended that the perceptions of prospective teachers participating in the study should be gathered over three phases at the beginning, middle and end of that year to aid in the reconstruction of their understanding of teaching. This enabled two snapshots of those perceptions, as it were, at the start and conclusion of the year. That data allowed comparison between the views of the intending teachers during the year, leading to conclusions and implications of their perceptions in the first year for their teaching career.

3.3.1 The gathering of data

According to Stake (1995) the principal uses of case study are to obtain the descriptions and interpretations of others. Such a method is suitable to this study to gather the perceptions of the student teachers about teaching in order to gain in-depth understanding. Stake suggests that the conceptual structure for the case may be focused on the identification of issues in order to draw attention to any problems and concerns. The structure of the research questions in this study does allow for an exploration of the perceptions of prospective teachers. Stake states that case study fieldwork regularly takes the research into unexpected areas. It was necessary to begin to interpret student understandings from the first interview, so that together the researcher and participants could reconstruct that interpretation.

The most important source of case study information (Yin, 1994) is the

interview, where the case study is about human affairs. Because a series of interviews has been chosen as the substantial source of the data it was needed to trial the interview protocols, develop interview skills, and devise an analytical framework for my study. To show the trustworthiness of research, the validity of interpretation of research, Merriam (1998) suggests member checks that involves taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived. Another strategy was to gather data over a period of time to increase the validity of the findings, so that the research was conducted over long term observation over the year. Peer colleagues on campus involved with the participants in the case were also asked to comment on the findings as they emerged.

3.3.2 Interview protocol

This protocol describes the formulation of the interview, develops a rationale for the selection of the site, the criteria for the selection of participants, the time and frequency of data collection, a trial interview, and any changes to the interview protocol and conduct. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe the interview as a conversation, the art of asking questions and of listening, noting the three major forms - structured, unstructured, and open-ended, and how the tool is modified and changed during use. A highly-structured nor completely open-ended interview was not favoured by the researcher, and Merriam (1998) names the less structured alternative as the semi-structured interview. This choice allowed the researcher to be guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, to enable response to the situation at hand, the emerging worldview of the participant and to any new ideas on the topic.

To investigate what understandings of teaching student teachers have in their first year, the interview protocol was prepared to enable the researcher to compare their views at the start and end of that year. Such comparison led to a better understanding of students' construction of prior and constructed knowledge, and of the implications these understandings would have for their future career paths and their career preparations. To make this comparison a series of interviews was chosen as the major source of data, and interviews were conducted at the beginning, middle and end of that year, 1999. It was necessary to trial the interview protocols, develop interview skills, and prepare an analytical framework, and so a pilot study was conceived. This pilot study was conducted towards the end of semester two, 1998, because these first year student teachers were able to describe their understandings of becoming a teacher from the beginning to the end of that year. During that year this was the first cohort to hear officially that they were able to continue their education degree on that campus. The participants in the main study, 1999, were aware that their Teacher Education program would continue for four years.

3.4 The Pilot Study

Since the major data source in this study was a series of interviews, it was necessary to trial the interview protocols, develop interview skills, and devise an analytical framework for the study. To do this a pilot study was conducted with a small cohort of first year teacher education students at the end of their first year of study. In this section the details of the pilot study are outlined. Firstly, aspects of the interview and how the interviews were conducted are outlined. The trial led to some changes to the interview techniques aspects of which are indicated below. Some details of the analytical procedure followed are provided so an

appreciation can be gained of how data reduction of the interview data was achieved. Finally, some of the tentative insights gained from the pilot study, which contribute to the study, are provided.

3.4.1. Pilot Study Participants

With permission from the lecturer and relevant campus authorities, the researcher spoke to first year student teachers at lectures. This cohort was the first to continue their teacher education on the selected campus, and those who volunteered came from the whole commencing cohort. Of the ninety-six prospective teachers enrolled in the teacher education program, nine students volunteered to participate in the research. One male student teacher had volunteered, but subsequently decided to decline because of time commitments. Eight female student teachers from the first year Education 1998 cohort on the selected campus were interviewed individually on the last month of the second semester.

3.4.2 The Interview

The interview was prepared to answer the research questions, and was constructed using the literature base described earlier in Chapter Two. For instance, Lortie (1975) used an interview with practising teachers to capture their ethos of teaching, and described five attractors to teaching that he believed enabled that career to win out among competing alternatives. His exploratory interview was adapted by McWilliams Bogad (1983), and Diamond and Borthwick (1989) in research on retention of student teachers, who were near the end of their teacher education course. Using those researchers' ideas and those of others in the literature a semi-structured interview was constructed to seek the understanding of student teachers in the first year of their teacher education

course on the selected campus. The research questions in this study ask about the understanding of student teachers at the start and end of the first year of what it means to be a teacher, and so questions that explored the process of the student teachers' reconstruction of being a teacher were asked. Data about the student teachers' understanding of being a teacher could have been sought by direct queries addressing this question. However, richer data was obtained by asking a series of questions that encouraged the student teachers to talk about teaching and their experiences: which would indirectly reveal their views about being a teacher. The first questions of the interview were about the background of the student teachers, and why and how they were in the course. The other questions were about the students' experiences of teaching in the first year. The last few questions asked about future concerns, intention to continue teaching and future employment choice and prospects.

3.4.3 Semistructured Interview

A semistructured interview was constructed as outlined above, so that together the researcher and participants could construct a narrative. Mishler (1986) considered that an interview should be seen as a jointly constructed narrative. To enhance interpretation and co-construction of that narrative it was decided which probes would be asked and when, in which order the questions would be asked, and even the sounds of agreement that would be made, in a 'mutual reading of signals.' Interaction between the researcher and participants made the researcher aware of individual similarities and differences between the prospective teachers' understanding of teaching. In the semistructured interview in which the researcher could probe for depth, most interviews were close to forty-five minutes.

The eight female student teachers were eventually present for their interviews, despite conflict with their practicum and holiday times, and sometimes forgetting interview times. Seidman (1991) maintained that the interviewing relationship 'is fraught with power'. Merriam suggests that a skilled interviewer should adopt a respectful, nonjudgmental, and non-threatening stance towards the respondent, so participants usually enjoy offering a perspective on the topic, as an opportunity to clarify their own thoughts and experiences. The research information sheet provided to student teachers invited participation in doctoral research using their individual perspective on becoming teachers. The first year student teachers came from an extremely wide range of people, in the area of age, gender, education, confidence, experience of children, universities and schools, but their knowledge of the researcher's doctoral research and practising teacher qualifications ensured a joint construction that would be trustworthy. The interviews were conducted over a period of two weeks, despite the busy schedule of interviewees.

3.4.4 Analysis of Pilot Study data

In this section, the analytical procedures that would serve as a basis for the later analysis of data are outlined. A section from the selected interview is included and discussion of the processes and procedures used in the analysis of data are explored. The interview tapes were transcribed and reviewed several times to gain a full appreciation of perceptions of teaching pertaining to the research questions. By a reading and re-reading of the transcripts, marginal notes and underlining were employed as a means of identifying similarities and differences, thus seeking threads that may tie together bits of data. Using this analytical technique the researcher was able to "chunk" these student teachers' statements, which reflected their perceptions and beliefs about teaching, and assign descriptors to the chunks. The

research questions focused on the student teachers' understanding of being teachers, so interview transactions that related to this were identified for categorisation (Huberman and Miles, 1994).

To test the suitability of the analysis process, the decision was made to analyse the interview of a very astute mature age student, Jodie, (a pseudonym). Her fifteen years as a Social Service supervisor and her own nurturing of her children allowed her to give a mature and reflective commentary on being a teacher. It was anticipated that Jodie's interview would therefore provide a comprehensive starting point for analysis (an informant who understands the case, according to Stake, 1995, p.67). Her identification of what it means to be a teacher was well described. It was by looking for further examples of emergent descriptors in her interview, that the consistency of some descriptors were perceived, in deciding whether the descriptor was representing the same idea or whether it was a new idea warranting a separate descriptor. To obtain a possible contrasting set of descriptors that might emerge from students with different backgrounds, comparison with other participants helped to refine initial descriptors into a prototype set of descriptors which would be further refined in analysis of subsequent interviews. It was by looking at the interview to find a descriptor to link it with other interviews, which enabled the identification of an issue.

3.4.5 Identification of descriptors and procedures in the interviews

To gain appreciation of the analysis system employed, a sample section from one interview is presented to identify a descriptor, and using further examples of how different interviews mentioned the ideas represented by that descriptor. The following phrase was used as a descriptor to summarise the code: *Teacher Likes*

Children

This code was identified from an excerpt taken from an interview with Jodie, the mature age student. Researcher perception of this student enabled the identification of 'terms, concepts, and categories that reflect' what the researcher as the investigator sees in the data (Merriam, 1998, p.182). To contextualise the subsequent analysis, a brief bio-sketch is presented of Jodie.

Bio-sketch: Jodie

Jodie was working full time in a management position for fourteen years. Married with two children and expecting a third, she decided to commence a Bachelor of Arts part time as a mature age student on the selected campus. She then decided to transfer to the Bachelor of Education program, and left full-time employment.

Excerpts from Jodie's interview, representing the descriptor, Teacher Likes Children, are presented and discussed below. Key statements as chosen by the researcher and related to this idea are highlighted in bold text.

3. 4. 5.1 Interview excerpt for the descriptor: Teacher Likes Children

Jodie

*Some people who went into Prac worked out **they didn't want to do teaching. They couldn't handle kids.** They decided to change to other courses next year. **Going into the schools they've decided it's not for them, or they need to change their attitudes a bit. And having that in the first year it gives them the opportunity to work that through early in the piece rather than their second year.** Going into prac early helps you to understand the theory and get hands on work with the theory in practical circumstances. We had like an hour's prac a week, in first semester at first in Phys. Ed. It gave us hands on and made us understand what the aims were for the lesson plans, why you had to have certain steps, help us mix with kids in a very early point too which is important. The prac's essential and should be started as early as possible in first year. I'd always known I **liked** working with children. Having Min (baby) as well encouraged me in that line. I liked having a hand in her development. I'll be working with something I'm enjoying, and enjoyment of life is fairly important to me Interview 7 Pages 16-17.*

Descriptor identification: Teacher Likes Children

The research questions focused on the student teachers' understanding of becoming teachers. This coded segment was chosen because Jodie, as a mature age student teacher, indicated in her answer that both she and her peers considered the teacher's attitude to children of prime importance. She presented a comprehensive explanation of the teacher education program, concluding that early experience with children could deepen the understanding of teaching, or dispel the notion, because of the early contact with children. Jodie saw the first year as a landmark in the local university. While being out in the schools was an actual physical occurrence in the first year, and could be described as such, Jodie saw the happening as a conceptual milestone for the prospective teacher. To her the day out in the schools away the university campus was a necessity, and she gave several reasons as to why that was so. A major attraction that teaching held for Jodie included her enjoyment in working with children. Therefore the idea of 'liking children' as a descriptor was chosen showing the importance of teachers' attitudes towards children. As further interviews were analysed it was *found that all interviewees, whether straight from school or mature age, emphasised the importance of 'teacher liking children.'* In this interview excerpt, the heading 'Teacher Likes Children' is used as descriptor identification. The words, 'Liking Kids' sprang out as a similarity on all interviews, as described in later discussion in descriptor refinement.

The student, Jodie, perceived the practicum as an institutional and personal experience, one that reinforced how she 'liked working with children.' Later in the interview Jodie revealed that she had been worried about how she would relate to children in the practicum and that she may not enjoy it; but when

in the classroom, 'mixing it with the kids', she found that was not so.

Further examples of how different interviews included the idea of “liking kids”

There were eight students interviewed in the Pilot Study, and so reference is made to descriptors from all interviews because this code was definitive from all interviews.

It is notable that while Tessa and Missee were student teachers straight from school Jodie, Francie, Lauren, Margie, Jacqui, and Melanie were mature age students. It was found that student teachers, straight from school or mature age, spoke of liking children themselves. While the idea of 'Liking Children' was mentioned as one of the reasons to become teachers by most participants, a number of them reported that several of their peers later in the first year 'found they didn't like children.' The words from other interviews pertaining to liking or not liking children, are highlighted below. The participants were discussing their perceptions of the practicum at the time. Emphases are added in bold to highlight the word associated with the code.

*Francie: Worthwhile I learned a lot. I know a lot of mature age students decided that they didn't want to be teachers because they **didn't like kids**, so they learnt something which they wouldn't have known before. It's a very realistic way to look at teachers' work.*

Lauren implied that some teachers did not give the impression that they liked children:

The teacher who yells and screams everyday is the straw that broke the camel's back. They're copping a hard time at home and a hard time at school, and there's no light at the end of the tunnel; so I think if you're not keen in becoming a teacher you shouldn't be allowed to teach.

*Margie: On prac some got there and decided that they **didn't like children**, one especially who decided she didn't like children. So they obviously aren't going to continue. I've heard of some, one especially who decided they didn't like children. So they drop out.*

*Jacqui: **I love kids.** I have a child myself, so I **love kids** you know especially... I know I can make a difference to some of those kids' lives, and make them feel safe.*

*Melanie: One girl, you would feel would be a great teacher, she's very bright, relates well with kids, has great lesson plans, great ideas for teaching and has pulled out as she discovered she **doesn't like children**. At that age [late teens] unless they know what they are doing, tend to think that 'I'll go for this job', or 'there's an exciting one'. I don't think that's career choice.*

Melanie described the qualities she possessed when she decided to become a teacher:

*I **like children**. I'm interested in them. Although I said a career, which it is, it's a career in caring, not just a nine to four job. You can't just walk in, walk out. You have to be committed. I tend to think a lot of people aren't. I tend to think too you have to get down to their level and look at their needs, not just your needs to have a career and to be a teacher. You have to relate to those children. It's not easy. Even at that age it's very daunting, even having children and knowing your own discipline systems and having your own systems at home.*

Student teachers **straight from school** also spoke of attitude to children as important. Tessa gave her major attraction in the decision to teach as:

*'It was the kids. I really **liked kids**, so it's a job where I'm with them all the time'.*

*Missee: 'In the prac is fun. It's different. Getting out of someone talking to you and getting in to help the kids. I **love the kids**. It's even their attitude to having something new in the classroom.'*

Discernment of the role of the teacher's personality as part of the understanding of the teacher 'liking kids' could bring about a reciprocal approach. Most interviews did show that awareness, but Tessa described how the relationship between pupils and student teacher might depend on teacher charisma. She felt that the teacher can respond by:

'just being enthusiastic about what you're doing, and that if you're really slow, the kids won't respond'.

The underlying construct of this descriptor, the idea that the student teacher liked children, was the attitude of the prospective teacher towards

children at school. All eight students regarded this concept very highly in both their own and peers' understanding, mostly as a positive conception, but also negative for some peers.

3.4.5.2 Descriptor identification summary

Thus far in the identification of codes and procedures using a sample from interviews with student teachers, the assignment in a set of codes was explained, and how the responses of interviewees relate, either individually or collectively, to give meaning to the creation of issues. The code mentioned in the discussion on the excerpt has been extracted in a similar manner to other coding groups, including some false starts with some change in code names, so the description of the code assigned has been abbreviated. These have been refined and further reduced so that a final set of fifty-eight codes has been detailed. The set of codes from the trial were used in the data analysis, and further refined as necessary - especially in the light of the interviews being held earlier in the next year. Once the final set of codes had been extracted, the codes were grouped into sets with similar ideas embedded, to arrive at a set of Issues (See Chapter Five.)

3.4.5.3 Changes to the interview process

It should be noted that the pilot study was conducted at the end of the academic year, whereas the series of interviews for data collection were conducted on three different occasions during the next year. Consequently, variations in some questions were necessary, according to the time of the year when the interview was conducted. The trial of the pilot study questions helped to refine the interview, so that some background questions were deleted as inappropriate, placing most at the beginning of the interview to be updated over the three interviews. Some questions were grouped together, others needed to be

reworded, as according to Merriam (1998), pilot studies are crucial for trying out questions. It was found that in the first instance the researcher needed to be careful in case a question was missed, which was rare, as a check situation was employed for each. As a result of the trials it was necessary to rebuild the interview, changing the question order to accommodate the three interviews, and adding several questions over the year. The pilot study interview questions were compiled to gather data about student teachers' understanding of the first year of becoming a teacher. The research questions of this study are more explicit, asking what does being a teacher mean to commencing students at the beginning and end of the first year. For data collection in the series of three interviews, the question order was changed. The participant background questions were asked only in the first interview, and other questions were scheduled to gather data from the start, mid and end of the first year.

3.4.5.4 Pilot Study Summary

Yin (1994) defined the conduct of a pilot study as the final preparation for data collection, helping researchers in the refinement of those plans in both the contents of the data and the procedures to be followed. Eight first year student teachers volunteered to be interviewed in this 1998 pilot study concerning research about prospective teacher' understanding of learning how to teach in their first year on the relevant university campus. Similarities and contrasts were noted between student teachers' understanding of teaching through repeated reading of the interview transcripts. Using two contrasting interviews, similar situations were coded through each interview, as shown in the samples. By clustering data, themes began to emerge to be used as a frame for the dataset. Some change in the interview questions and the interview itself was

necessary for the data collection, mainly with the design and placement of some questions, elimination of some and creation of others. Some selected questions from the Pilot Study were changed according to the time of year, to reflect the students' perceptions at that first year. Data collection over the first year 1998 will use a constructivist frame in three interviews in order to construct any progressive variation in the prospective teachers' understanding of teaching. Co-construction will be achieved with the participant reading and commenting upon the interview transcripts from the first and second interviews in conjunction with the interviewer.

3.5 Changes to the interview conduct

The trial of the methodology and interview resulted in changes to the interview. The Pilot Study was conducted at the end of the academic year with the 1998 student teacher cohort. The series of interviews for Data Collection were scheduled on three different occasions with the 1999 cohort of intending teachers. Consequently variations in some questions were necessary, according to the time of the year when the interview was conducted.

As a result of the trials it was necessary to rebuild the interview, changing the question order to accommodate the three interviews. The interview proforma was refined so that some background questions were deleted as inappropriate. The research questions ask about the understanding of student teachers at the start and end of their first year. The interview questions were based on the research of Lortie (1975), McWilliams Bogad (1983) and Diamond & Borthwick (1989). Lortie had interviewed practicing teachers to identify five attractors of teaching that he believed enabled that career to win out among competing alternatives. Both McWilliams Bogad (1983) and Diamond &

Borthwick (1989) used Lortie's investigative interview in research on retention of student teachers, who were near the end of their teacher education course. It is argued that consideration of Lortie's five attractors by student teachers is more appropriate for prospective teachers at the commencement of the teacher education course and through the first year, rather than at the end of their course.

If this is so it is important for the university to structure the first year accordingly. Therefore the first research question asks what does teaching mean to prospective teachers at the commencement of the course. The literature indicates a gap in the definition of the qualities of teachers and prospective teachers (Anderson & Burns, 1989; Murnane (1995), therefore prospective teachers are forced to bring their own ideas of teaching into the course (Nimmo, 1994; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981; McArthur, 1981). Thus it was necessary to find out what those perceptions are in the first interview.

Interview One.

The first questions were background questions. In the pilot study such questions were interspersed but it was more convenient to place them at the start of the interview. At the start of the second and third interviews prospective teachers were asked about any change in that background. In the first interview they were asked why they decided to become teachers, what attracted and influenced them including past and present teachers, and about qualities, knowledge and skills they possessed (Lortie, 1975). Questions included student concerns about survival in teaching (Fuller & Bown, 1975) and opportunities for mental stimulation in teaching (Berry, 1986). Students were asked to consider future teaching options and commitment. Some specific incidents for certain participants were threaded through each interview, e.g. the role of the teacher.

Interview Two

Because longitudinal observation at the research site was indicated, the method proposed by Merriam (1998) as a member check strategy was employed, so that data is taken back to the people from whom they were derived. It was arranged that participants would be contacted by the researcher to organise the time for the midyear interview. The researcher mentioned to them that the earlier printed transcript would be available at the current interview for them to invite comments. Such a method bridged the time lapse between interviews to allow what had occurred first to flow to the present. Each question was then recalled, and participants had the opportunity to review and respond to their previous answers briefly. A set of new questions was asked to allow participants to reflect on course experiences as being better/ worse than previously, on mentoring. A question regarding participants' experience of fun in the course (Lortie (1975, McWilliams Bogad (1983), Diamond and Borthwick (1989) mirrored student teachers satisfaction with the course. Unexpected, most important, career course and academic satisfactions were reflected upon, as was the midyear intention to continue the course.

Interview Three

In this interview, questions from the first and second interviews were re-asked, perhaps in slightly different ways in each interview. The printed transcripts from those interviews were available for the student teacher to look back over the year after each question. In this way, the participants were able to construct past, present and possible future perceptions of their first year in considering the role of the teacher in emerging knowledge, skills and qualities, along with any change to indicate strengthening or weakening of the desire to teach.

3.5.1 Participants in the case study

It was necessary to gather the perceptions of the prospective teachers through a series of interviews over their first year, so that together researcher and participants could aim at understanding and reconstructing that emergent knowledge to move towards a more informed way of knowing, towards a possible consensus. Because the researcher is the principal data collection instrument, the research was publicised briefly to the whole population of the case, that is, the entire 1999 first year cohort of the selected primary teacher education program. The proposed aims, procedures and expected outcomes of this study were discussed with the senior education lecturer and relevant campus authorities, and permission to proceed was granted. According to Anderson and Arsenault (1998), building rapport with people in the research setting is extremely important. If it was necessary to understand the world through the eyes of the participants they had to feel comfortable enough to want to speak to the researcher. By arrangement with the Program Coordinator, the doctoral researcher explained to the cohort on the first day of the 1999 teacher education program the research procedure to explore what becoming a teacher means to prospective teachers over their first year, and what that knowledge means to their teaching careers. On the first day on a new campus the thought of sharing such details with a stranger could be daunting. The researcher had to be aware that the first year students came from an extremely wide range of people, in the area of age, gender, education, confidence, experience of children, universities and schools, regional living, whether metropolitan, provincial or rural. All students were asked to volunteer to take part in confidential individual interviews over the year. Information and permission sheets, along with communication details were

available to the teacher entrants, and arrangements were made for times and places for the interviews.

It was hoped to interview student teachers who would be interested in talking to a researcher, for whatever reasons, about what learning to teach meant to them over the entire first year. In the Pilot Study eight participants had been interviewed, all female, with no male representative.

From the entire 1999 cohort, nine intending teachers *volunteered* to participate in the three individual interviews over the first year. The numbers, eight females and one male, were fairly similar to the Pilot Study. Only two females came straight from school, while the others were mature age students. This was not representative of the ratio of students straight from school or from mature age entry in the course, as the ratio was close to equal, the mature age group minimally higher. A table of Cohort details, including age, birthplace, secondary schooling, marital status, number of children, and entry data, may be found in Chapter Four.

The decision to contrast the perceptions of the student teachers straight from school and those from mature age entry issued from the analysis of the pilot study, where similarities and contrasts between the student teachers' understanding of teaching were noticed. In the pilot study, the interview of a very astute mature age student who gave a mature and reflective commentary on being a teacher, was compared with the interviews of other student teacher participants.

In their research in the first or last year of the teacher education course McWilliams Bogad (1983), Diamond & Borthwick (1989), Borthwick (1988), Deer et al. (1997) and others recognised the two groups at point of entry, mature

age students or those coming straight from school. These two groups were combined with the gender of each participant as relevant to the student background. Deer et al. 's study described the prospective teachers in the first year as coming from Category One composed of those straight from school, and Category Two being all other students, that is mature age students. This study uses the terminology as indicated earlier - student teachers straight from school and from mature age entry.

3.5.2 Interviewer relationship

Merriam (1998) suggests that participants usually enjoy sharing their own expertise with an interested and sympathetic listener, often to clarify their own thoughts, that good respondents are those who express their thoughts, feelings, opinions - their perspectives, and can reflect on and articulate for the researcher what is going on. Mishler (1986) cautioned researchers not to forget why one is there, to describe and analyse a pattern of relationships. The informant and the interviewer co-construct meaning, producing a "story" around the facts, so that each person "reads" the signal. The interviewer sends out a message that the respondent receives. However the power relationship between the two can mean that a one shot interview can be like a meeting with strangers. Anderson (1998) states that effective communication needs a degree of trust between interviewer and interviewee.

According to Stake (1995) the case researcher recognises a problem, studies it and tries to connect it with known things, trying to make it understandable to others. By asking the student teachers about their emergent perceptions of what being a teacher means to them in their first year, the case researcher is a biographer, and an interpreter, and as such is a constructivist. The

prospective teachers do not discover knowledge over that year but construct their understandings from their experience in the course whether from the point of view as female, male, straight from school or mature age entry. The old perceptions, those prior experiences, mix in the mind with new perceptions of stimulation. Because the understanding of this case reached by each individual may in some way be unique much will be held in common, but it will be of our own making, a collective making.

The interviewer relationship was built over the three interviews, reviewing the first interview together, looking at new questions, ringing to arrange the next interview. We talked to one another on campus, asking how things were going, being ourselves in interviews, using the time between interviews to consider deeply what was asked and will be asked.

3.5.3 Comments on the interviews

The three interviews took place as planned, as close to the start of the program as possible, in mid-year, and at the end of the year. For the first interview it was uncertain how many student teachers would volunteer. It was three weeks after the researcher had spoken to all prospective teachers on their first day/week of the program that the numbers were finalised at nine student teachers, one male and eight female teacher entrants.

Table 3.3: Overview of data collection showing student participation

Time	Focus	Interviews	Total number of students
22 Feb-5 April	Understanding of being teachers	First	9
26 July-8 Aug	Understanding after commencement	Second	8
17 Nov- 21 Dec	Understanding at end of year	Third	7

Arrangements for each interview were made by phone, and dependent on the availability of each student on campus between being in lectures, being out in schools, working and studying. If appointments were broken, they were remade again, until the interview occurred. From the first interview it was obvious that two students intended to change course direction during the year, into a library course. One of those students was not present for the second or third interviews as she had enrolled externally. The second of those students was not present for the third interview because she said she had deferred the program because of family illness.

Over the three interviews, particularly over the first, it was found that in certain instances one or two participants hurried through their response, or some simply stated that the question was a 'hard' one, but did attempt an answer. Despite their busy interactive transition from students to student teachers, most continued to interview till the end of the year.

3.5.4 Changes to data collection in the interview

Because of changing the original interview into three interviews, reflective of students' understanding of teaching at the beginning, middle and end of the first year, a more non-hurried interview environment was evident, where the interviewer and participant could relax. At the time of the second interview, the review of first interview questions was an impetus for students to comment on their early perceptions and add to any change in perspective. The new questions mid-year were more pertinent in the course after the early teaching episodes, and after the longer practicum experience. Three interviews gave researcher and participants the opportunity to continue with the process of

constructing and reconstructing, not frozen in the original snapshot, but to consider, reconsider change. As researcher, I attempted to capture data on the perceptions of student teachers, as Stake (1995,p.20) states "from the inside," from concerned understanding, to gain a more encompassing overview of the context. I was able to flag certain incidents in particular interviews, gathering threads together, asking what happened, might happen.

3.5.5 Administration of the data gathering: procedural, ethical matters, permission, taping and transcription

In this section the data collection procedure is described: how permission was granted, the ethical matters pertaining to participants, how the data is gathered and stored, and how data will be readily accessible for analysis. Anderson and Arsenault (1998) assert that in case study research one must remain flexible and to be prepared to collect data from new sources. He insists that data collection and data analysis should be concurrent activities so that all aspects of collecting data, interpreting and analysing findings, and rethinking issues emerge as the study unfolds. Therefore, while interviewing and transcribing, analysing data was actually beginning. In this way it was possible to form a database as a foundation for a chain-of evidence and include tables, and charts in the report or in the appendices to facilitate analysis. Data management is defined by Miles and Huberman (1994) as the operations needed for the systematic, coherent process of data collection, storage and retrieval to ensure high-quality accessible data and associated analysis at the completion of the study, so that research questions as posed were answered in an ethical manner.

An application for ethical clearance for the conduct of this study was obtained from the University Human Ethics Research Review Panel, as was

permission approved by the regional campus authorities for the research to commence. When prospective teachers were approached on the first week of lectures it was explained that participation was voluntary, that interview material would be treated in confidence, with no names ascribed, and that anonymity of participants would be guaranteed. The new teachers were assured that such research would not be a threatening experience, that they would have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty, and there would be no harmful effects to them. An Information Sheet that portrayed the main features and timing of the study to interested prospective participants, was available. If interested, they were asked to sign a Consent form, with options of further contact during the outcomes of the research. The proposed outcome of the study was included in the Information sheet, as their informed approval to participate was necessary.

3.5.5.1 Permission

Nine volunteers from the entire 1999 First Year cohort of the teacher education program on the selected campus gave permission to be interviewed as participants in this study. At the appointed interview time in a room arranged by campus administration, the student teacher was reminded that the proposed outcome of the study would be identification of the multiple perspective that may be identified about the enhancement of emerging professional knowledge of the preservice teacher. It was explained that the interview was one to one with the researcher, as we sat face to face, that it was easier to use a tape recorder, rather than forgetting any details, and each participant consented. Over the year, seven participants took part in the three interviews. The other two were present for the initial interview, but one student said she was unavailable for further

interviews. The other said she was available for the second interview, but had deferred from the program.

3.5.5.2 Data Collection

Collection and production of data in construction of this study was based on the description and analysis of case study methods proposed by Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Merriam (1998), Stake (1995) and Miles and Huberman (1994). Anderson and Arsenault (1998) claim that the case study researcher, as in all research methods, must maintain meticulous field records, and record all kinds of data collected. Merriam (1998) points out that the most common way to record interview data is to tape record the interview, ensuring that everything is preserved for analysis and allowing the interviewer to improve interview techniques. This worked, and data was rarely lost in taping, employing checks to ensure no loss. She stated that verbatim transcription of recorded interviews provides the best database for analysis and needs to be in a format that allows the researcher to find information easily, time and place and participant. In the transcription observation of participants' speech (slow, loud, soft, hesitant, etc) was included to remind the researcher what was going on in the interview. Because it was planned to probe certain aspects in the interviews it was necessary to explain how such planned probes affected participants to help in my analysis of responses. Stake (1995) asserts that the function of the qualitative researcher during data gathering is to maintain strong interpretation, and on that basis of observations and other data, to draw their own conclusions, called by Erickson (1986) assertions, a form of generalisation. Stake (1995) maintains that assertions are drawn from understandings deep within, perhaps a mix of personal experience, scholarship, and the assertions of other researchers, but the

“multiple realities” (p.43) is what the case researcher tries to gather, the different, contradictory views of what is happening.

It was in transcription of these long interviews (most took forty-five minutes and the last interviews often went to an hour or more), that the researcher was aware that data would need to be reduced, while analysing, again and again, constructing and reconstructing in the mind. Miles and Huberman (1994) advise early analysis, contributing to the fieldwork process, interweaving data collection and analysis from the start. In this way the tapes are refined into words, into a text clear to the reader or analyst, but this text needs to be refined and simplified from the raw events by analysis. In the following section, the data analysis is explained, that the reason for coding is the reduction of data, that further refining of descriptors will build on newer levels, into issues to enable the organisation necessary to present the findings of this research.

3.6 Data Analysis

In the Pilot Study described earlier, some details of the analytical procedure followed were outlined so that an appreciation of how data reduction of the interview data occurred. Further explanation is provided to show how the descriptors were refined and built upon to construct the emergent issues. Because data collecting took place three times over the year it was necessary to be able to answer the research questions through the chronological order of the interviews. The first question asked what was the prospective teachers' understanding of teaching at the beginning of the year therefore analysis of the first interview answers that question. The second question asked what was their perception at the end of the year. With the constructivist nature in this research the answer was obtained through analysis of the second and third interview. These are the

findings or results of the research (See Chapter Four and Five). Implications for prospective teachers' future career paths and their career preparations (Chapter Six) are asserted (Erickson (1986) through analysis of comparison of student understanding of teaching at the beginning and end of their first year. These assertions take the form of generalisations. Analysis of the pilot study (McDougall 2000) had allowed a tentative construct of student understanding of teaching in the first year, however continual interviewing in the data collecting meant continual analysing, permitting reconstruction, gathering patterns. Merriam (1998) perceives that recording data is one aspect of analysis, but an interview gives just the participant's perceptions, perhaps distorted or exaggerated, and perhaps what the interviewee believes the researcher wants to hear. The quality of data must be assessed, by comparing participants' accounts with those given by other informants. It was then necessary to consider how verification could occur. To better understand the interview data, program documents were consulted, to verify student teachers' construction of understanding of teaching in their first year.

From analysis of interview data and the researcher's understanding of the first year in a teacher education program on a regional campus, it was found necessary to speak to Education lecturers about any changes in the program since the previous year. In this way, participants' narratives could be confirmed with other participants' accounts.

3.6.1 Summary of the Interviews

The descriptor system was devised to analyse the data from interviews, and in this way data reduction was achieved. Miles and Huberman (1994) begs the question of given a working set of descriptors that describe the phenomena in

transcribed field notes, how can a second level be reached, one more general, more explanatory. Kaplan (1964) suggests the researchers' quest for "repeatable regularities." While the first-level coding can summarise segments of data, pattern coding can group these summaries into a smaller number of sets, themes, or constructs. In the Pilot Study the researcher was able to repeatedly chunk smaller sets together to form pattern codes of student teachers' statements which reflected their perceptions and beliefs about teaching and assign codes to the chunks. Comparison between interviews helped the refinement of those initial codes into a prototype set of codes to be further refined in analysis of subsequent interviews.

Miles and Huberman (1994) assert that the reason for coding is reduction, coding is analysis, appointing tags or labels. However in data collecting the researcher cannot use all data, and will need to cope with overload, by use of the conceptual framework and the research questions. Coding in this thesis is used to retrieve and organise, when combining some codes in chunks, so that the researcher can quickly find, pull out and cluster the segments related to a particular question or theme, entailing a system for categorising the various chunks, setting the stage for drawing conclusions.

Data reduction for data-collecting (in the 1999 year) was accomplished in several ways, by further refining of codes by reading and re-reading transcripts of all interviews. The master list (Merriam 1998, p.181) of pattern codes created for the Pilot Study (1998) was used firstly to code two interviews at the commencement of data collecting. Consideration was given to creation of any new codes and to deletion of redundant codes. The remaining seven of the first interviews (nine in all) were coded, checked manually. The coding was

facilitated by the use of pattern coding, so that the researcher could code every interview over each data collecting wave, and use the codes to build up the issues so created by the end of data-collecting.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) pattern coding has important implications for qualitative research so that large amounts of data are reduced into a smaller number of analytic units, getting the researcher into analysis during data collection, so that later fieldwork can be more focused. An evolving more integrated schema for understanding interaction was elaborated in this study, laying the groundwork for the cross-study analysis by surfacing common themes and directions. Using the newer and older pattern coding, the researcher began to weave the threads together to begin to create issues, but not forcing them. In this way the pattern codes were brought together and the issues were tagged, checking to see if all pattern codes for the first data collecting could be subsumed into issues. With the next wave of data collecting (midyear) a check was made to see if the patterns and issues held, however it was necessary to be alert for any variation as the first year progressed. The issues and codes could be displayed on one sheet (Huberman and Gather-Thurler, 1991). This sheet was useful for the final (end of year) data collecting. From the first interviews, a start to understand the viewpoint of each participant was forthcoming (See Participant Background in Chapter Four), whether coming straight from school or as mature age student teachers (Deer et al. 1997). Consideration had to be made as to how to present the findings of this study through the use of the research questions, as presented earlier.

3.6.2 *Presentation of findings organisation*

The Pilot Study has shown briefly how analysis was achieved through pattern coding, and how contrast of the participants' backgrounds (whether from a mature age or those straight from school perspective) allowed individual views to be expressed in interviews and through the use of the created issues. All participants' views were expressed through those particular descriptors using a cross case comparison. This Chapter referred to the longitudinal studies of Calderhead & Shorrock (1997) and Borthwick (1988). To organise reduction of data, both had made a choice to focus on certain key participants. Calderhead & Shorrock chose four teacher entrants to convey an understanding of teacher education. A story was formed around a chapter for each student teacher using the analysis from data so that the narrative was expressed as chronicled events over the two years, but data from all participants was discussed in the conclusions. It has been described earlier how in her case study McWilliams Bogad (1983) described her research in the form of a story about each of the three participants over their teacher education year.

Borthwick (1988) reduced her research data by focusing on two participants, although displays of all students' three grid results over the year, particularly those of four students also involved in consultation about improving practice with the researcher, could be seen in chapters and in the appendix. Through computer analysis the two contrasting participants were described as being modal (most representative of the group as a whole) and isolate (shared little commonality with the group as a whole). The progress of the two in the teacher education program was mapped in detail over the year through their three discussions with the researcher, and analysis of any changes to the construct

lists. The research questions could then be answered in regard to the group and the individual. Calderhead & Shorrock (1997) and McWilliams Bogad (1988) chose to present their research findings in a narrative case study, while Borthwick used the visual construct lists as a method to display any change for participants and readers.

In this thesis, data came from nine participants in the first interview, two straight from school and seven mature age entry. In the second interview, data was collected from eight students, the two participants straight from school, and from six mature age participants. One mature age student teacher had indicated that she was still enrolled in the degree, but in a distance education mode, and would not therefore continue with the interviews. A second mature age participant took part in the second interview, but said due to family circumstances she had deferred her studies. For the third interview data was collected from the two students straight from school, and five mature age entrants. One male participant took part in the three interviews, while the other participants were females.

In Chapter Four it is intended to introduce the participants with biographical sketches. To highlight changes in perception in time across interviews, each interview was summarised. Issues of the case study are introduced in Chapter Five, and related to the research questions. Each Issue will be discussed, using examples from cases, and the use of the emergent issues were clustered from the key points to bring together similarities and differences.

Analyses were conducted both within-cases (for each participant) and across cases. Each individual case (individual student teachers) provided one level for analysis, the cross-case (9 student teachers provided another) (Mertens,

1998). Merriam (1998) suggests that cross-case analysis can lead to categories and issues to conceptualise the data across the cases, but can result in building a theory covering multiple cases.

It is timely to review the part that analysis plays in this study. Stake (1995, p.78) stresses that it is *the case* we are trying to understand which should be kept in mind. This research uses a case study to investigate the cases of nine student teachers, as they constructed their understanding of their first year of teaching. Constructivist research must provide 'description of things that readers usually pay attention to, particularly places, events and people, not only commonplace' as Stake implies. He suggests that investigators move through three stages of progressive focussing (Parlett & Hamilton, 1976) observation, renewed inquiry and explanation, and that the course of the study cannot be charted in advance. Such was the case in this study.

We are reminded again that it is the case we are trying to understand. Stake proposes that issues, possibly problems, provide a powerful conceptual structure for organising the study of the case. He cautions, though, that a quantitative inclination could look for meaning in repetition, while emergence of meaning could result from direct interpretation. On the basis of observations and other data, researchers draw their own conclusions. Taylor and Bogdan (1998, p.151) assert that developing a story line is an analytic thread uniting and integrating the major themes in a study, answering the question, "What is it a study of?"

While the case might read something like a story, case researchers represent the case fully with use of broad but non-technical description and narrative, allowing readers to make their own interpretation. Stake (1995, p.127)

insists that a case study is not simply storytelling, but can be a chronological or biographical development of the case, through the researcher's view of coming to know the case, or possibly the description of several major components of the case. Coming to know the case means that the researcher comes to know the participants well over the three phases of the study.

3.6.3 Role of the researcher

The researcher in this study is of extreme importance to the many roles assumed in the creation of a case study. Merriam (1998) calls the researcher the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, as responsive to the context, adaptable to the circumstances, in going out to the people in the case. Stake (1995) names the case researcher as the biographer, the interpreter and the constructor of the inquiry. The biographer recognises that life occurs against changing times, amid problems, patterns and phases, as in the contemporary teacher education process. As this study uses an interpretive paradigm, a narrative inquiry model, that seeks the perceptions of the prospective teacher, enables the telling of the researcher and participants stories (Clandinin, 1990).

Anderson and Arsenault, (1998) sees the researcher as needing to be a good communicator, establishing rapport, empathising with people, asking good questions and then listening intently. Yin (1994) poses the interview as being about human affairs. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) describe the interview as part of the art of conversation. Mishler (1986) reminds the researcher, that the aim in an interview is to describe and analyse a pattern of relationships. The informant and the interviewer co-construct meaning, producing a "story" around the facts, so that each person "reads" the signal. The interviewer sends out a message that the respondent receives. Most of the student teachers who participated in this study

became well known to the researcher over the time of the researcher, especially during repeated interviewing, the reminders of interview time. Stake (1995) deems the role of interpreter as crucial to a researcher.

People construct their understanding from experiences, so the perceptions of the prospective teacher draw their construction of knowledge from sensory experience from sensory stimuli. A constructivist view of the world does not avoid delivering generalisations, but encourages description of things, places, events and people, so that much narrative description is justified in the case study (Stake, 1995). In this way, the constructivist researcher uses a reiterative research paradigm, where in repeated interviewing, those descriptions of people, things, places and events may be constant or forever changing. In this aspect the researcher becomes an analyst, intuitive, sensitive, reflective, so that in chronological research, a year in this study, analysis takes on a quality including newer perceptions, and shifts in development from the data. The researcher in this study was enabled to help the participants so they could co-construct their perceptions of teaching in their first year of their course. This was particularly achieved by giving the participants the opportunity to reflect on what they had answered questions over the year. Transcripts from the first and second interviews were handed to participants at the start of the second and third interviews, where they had time to read back over what they had said. Using the transcripts helped participants to be able to reflect upon their changing perceptions.

This feedback from their responses through the repeated interviews was an acknowledgment of the effort made by the participants to their commitment to the ethos of this study. Practical acknowledgement of the team ownership was

given by the researcher in the form of thank-you notes, copies of published papers about their first year. The researcher also continued in pursuit of the participants' perceptions of teaching, to find out that mostly all had graduated successfully as teachers.

3.7 Trustworthy research results

Merriam (1998,p.198) argues that all research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge, so that professionals, such as in education, as practitioners who intervene in people's lives, want research results which are trustworthy. While Firestone(1987) maintains that both quantitative and qualitative paradigms search for validity and reliability, the quantitative study shows a world of variables and static states, and in contrast the qualitative study describes people acting in events. Merriam(1998) claims that the work of Kemmis (1983) establishes that case study work is scientific because of the observer's critical presence in aspects of the research design. Merriam states that more recent writing from postmodern, poststructural, constructivist, and critical perspectives (Alcoff, 1991; Donmyer,1996; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Lenzo, 1995; Lincoln,1995) calls for careful thinking through totally different conceptualisations of validity and reliability.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) noted that the researcher must find and defend these developing criteria that best apply to one's own work. Wolcott (1994) claims that rather than the search for validity being concerned with finding the right answer, the correct version, the Truth, (pp.366-367) he seeks something else, a quality that points more to identifying critical elements and wringing plausible interpretations from them, and the 'something else' is to him understanding. However there has been no consensus by the research

community as to the appropriate criteria for assessing validity and reliability according to Merriam (1998). Thompson (1998) asserts that the notion of a universal truth is rejected in favour of a view of knowledge as a social construction with multiple ways of knowing and multiple truths (Kvale, 1995)

What is being observed, according to Merriam, are people's constructions of reality. This reality is a 'multiple set of mental constructions... made by humans' (Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.295). In this constructivist study, these mental constructions are built on the perceptions of first year prospective teachers, on why they want to teach, and co-constructed with the researcher over that year. Schwandt (2001) maintains that no single interpretation or account can be judged superior to any other and there is only an endless interplay of different interpretations.

The question of reliability turns on the extent that research findings can be replicated, to ascertain whether the same results would be yielded if the study was repeated. Lincoln and Guba (1985) ask whether findings are transferable, and do they fit? While reliability is one criteria by which traditional research is validated (Merriam,1998) qualitative researchers try to describe and explain the world as those in the world see it, and in this study it is the world of first year prospective teachers with the researcher as prime instrument of inquiry. Stake (1995, p.135) claims that case study is highly personal research with persons studied in depth, so that the researcher includes one's own personal perspective in the interpretation, where interaction between the case and researcher 'is presumed unique, and possibly not reproducible in other cases and researchers.'

Lincoln and Guba (2003) maintains that three criteria for judging social inquiry were proposed by Schwandt (1996). First was through a form of

knowledge by which the researcher seeks to understand the aims of practice from a variety of perspectives or lenses, second was to enhance or cultivate critical intelligence in parties to the research encounter, and finally was the way in which social inquiry was judged as practical philosophy.

Cranston (2000) maintains that Lincoln and Guba (1985) presented a set of criteria against which a study's trustworthiness could be evaluated, comprising five questions as establishing the 'truth value' (p.290) of the study, its applicability, consistency and neutrality, quite similar to the positivist paradigm of internal validity, reliability, and objectivity. Lincoln and Guba's alternative constructs were comprised as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. This study, it is believed, does address each of those criteria.

Six basic strategies to enhance validity are suggested by Merriam (1998, pp.204-5) through *triangulation, member checks, long-term observation, peer examination, participatory or collaborative modes of research, and the researcher's bias.*

Validation was seen by Merriam (1998,p.204) as shifting the notion of *triangulation* away from the technological solution towards a 'holistic understanding' of the situation to construct 'plausible explanations about the phenomena being studied.' Stake (1995) observes that to describe the case a substantial body of uncontested description should be presented as targets for *triangulation*. He also states the case that it is true that when dealing with many complex phenomena and issues, for which there is no consensus, misrepresentation and misunderstandings must be minimised. The caseworker needs certain protocols or procedures, going beyond simple repetition of data

gathering, in order to find the validity of data observed. In this current study, multiple sources of data and the researcher's getting to know the case over the three phases confirmed the emergent findings of why student teachers want to teach.

Both Stake and Merriam saw value in *member checking* as a means of validation of a study. Stake (1995, pp.115-6) used member checking in the form of taking rough drafts back to the 'actor' mostly to achieve a 'mutually respected argument or suggestions for improvement. Merriam (1998, p.204) also suggested taking data and tentative interpretations back to participants, asking if the results were plausible, with the suggestion to do so continuously over the study. Certainly such suggestions influenced the planning of this study. As a constructivist study, the idea of taking the transcript back to the participant and reiterating the same questions over the year, along with relevant new questions was welded into the study. Gergen and Gergen (2003, p.603) contend that innovations such as co-constructed narratives do far more than expand the methodological area, and begin to generate a new form of consciousness, not from the private perspective but from an integral connectivity.

Long-term observation, peer examination and a collaborative mode of research over the research site and the repeated observations of the same phenomena were achieved through the co-constructed frame which made the study more interpretively rigorous. This was achieved by taking the transcript to the participant during the three phases of data collecting and promoting discussion upon those previous answers, to allow for the chronological flow of the year and the study. This was necessary to address the nature of the research questions. Gerber (1993) believes it is necessary to make sure that the overall

research question is organised to reflect the qualitative research to be employed. In this study an overall issue was to explore the attraction and retention of student teachers to teaching.

By prolonged and substantial engagement in the study, as addressed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Merriam (1998), the researcher communicated emerging findings written up for critical peer review. These comprised conference papers, leading to publication in book sections (McDougall 1998; McDougall 2000; and McDougall 2001). To continue the collaborative mode of research experienced by the researcher and participants, copies of some of these papers were distributed to the prospective teachers.

Bowden (1994) maintains the importance for the researcher to enunciate clearly the purpose of the study over all stages of the study where all other aspects hang on the original research intention, building a well-documented chain of evidence or audit trail (Burns, 1990; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the present study this was achieved through all elements of the research process - through the pilot study, creating the research questions, building the interview questions, gathering data, and in analysing the results of the research. Each aspect of the study was carefully implemented to make sure the focus was on the phenomenon being investigated. The pilot study was used to refine the actual data-gathering questions so they could draw from the participants their optimum account of their practical experiences of their first year. The questions from both the pilot study and the data gathering were derived from a selection of relevant literature and the researcher's observation.

Walker (1980) and Burns (1990) suggested that bias could impact upon validity and reliability. Graziano and Raulin (1989, p.129) also raised the issue

of 'bias' as a limitation of case studies, occurring as the researcher can be influenced by what is seen and heard. A more modern frame of research quality is termed as trustworthiness, including support from professional peers (Eisenhardt, 1989). In this present study, any likely problems in this regard were addressed by the researcher progressively analysing the data over the first year, and presenting earlier transcripts to be reviewed and discussed with the participants in the interviews.

It was this progressive focusing (Parlett & Hamilton, 1976) that allowed the researcher to observe, renewing the inquiry and explanation, where the course of the study cannot be charted in advance. This permitted the researcher's own constructions of the phenomena to develop through investigation. Stake (1995, p.78) reminds us that it is *the case* we are trying to understand which should be kept in mind. He proposes that issues, possibly problems, provide a powerful conceptual structure for organising the study of the case. He cautions, though, that a quantitative inclination could look for meaning in repetition, while emergence of meaning could result from direct interpretation. In this study where people are studied in depth, the analytic thread uniting and integrating the major issues (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998) flows from the three interviews in Chapter Four to the identification of the major issues of the case in Chapter Five.

3.8 Summary of methodology

This chapter has discussed and defended the use of a constructivist case study as the research methodology most suited to this study. The research story has been told in an interpretive naturalistic method, using a case study format as flexible and emergent, so that the case story can be told from the prospective teachers' viewpoint in the transition from students to teachers. Examples from

the literature have enhanced that choice, so that a constructivist paradigm can give focus on the interview as instrument.

In a case study, perceptions were jointly constructed and reconstructed over subsequent interviews to allow the research questions to be answered. A pilot study was conducted to allow the researcher to trial the interview questions, develop interview skills and prepare an analytical framework, which resulted in changes to the interview and in the timing of interviews. The organisation of methods to be used in the study was enabled through the production of the Pilot Study trial, so that data collection and analysis proceeded over the interviews. After interviews, the interviewer relationships were assessed, and grouping among the participants became apparent. Comparison of semi structured interviews formed the organisation of the study, so that gathering of data in the case study was ongoing through analysis.

The administration of data gathering concerning ethical matters was established, along with details of taping and transcription to produce data. Analysis from interview data using descriptors as a form of data reduction and to establish emergent issues, was detailed, so that further reduction was planned for the display of the findings of the study through answers to the research questions and the findings of the study could be displayed in Chapters Four and Five.

Finally, the trustworthiness, the soundness and consistency of the study was assessed, based on the work of Merriam (1998), Lincoln & Guba (1985) and others. It is argued that the design and methodology of the study adopted are consistent with the focus, purposes and questions of the study. Supporting datum may be found in the Appendices. An important assumption underpins the present study: In their first year of study, prospective teachers have multiple reasons for

becoming teachers: it was argued in this chapter that a constructivist case study is a suitable methodology to investigate why prospective teachers want to teach because constructivism allows issues to emerge over a chronological pattern, so that the researcher and participants together co-construct the results, actually, the issues of the research.

Chapter Four details the findings from the study through the three phases of the interviews, using discussion from the individual prospective teachers and also from cross-analyses, in order to provide identification and description of the research issues. These six issues are summarised in Chapter Five, and further considered in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings: why prospective teachers want to teach

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed account of the findings for this study. These constructions are the outcomes of the data gathering and analysis strategies reported in the previous chapter. Because the researcher's view of coming to know this case has certainly been a chronological and biographical development of the case, and also a view of coming to know the participants, this chapter is structured to take advantage of the time lapses through the research year. In this study of initial teacher education students' perceptions of why they want to teach, the time involved is the initial year of the teacher education program and the biographies involved are those of prospective teachers. Because there were three interviews over that year, it is necessary to use the first and last interviews (indicative of the first two research questions) as snapshots of the prospective teachers' perceptions.

The three interviews, at the start, middle and end of the academic year, are termed as the first, second and third phases of this chapter. The number of participants in each interview phase was nine, eight and seven respectively. Each phase contains interview summaries from the transcripts. The co-constructivist framework of this research has been stressed, and this paradigm comes to the fore in the presentation of the findings. The first interview phase contains the student voice at the start of the teacher education program. In the second and third phases, the student teacher and researcher conjointly discussed issues, using the transcripts from the previous interviews. Therefore, in the third phase, through co-construction, more interpretation from the researcher is apparent.

Emerging from the analysis of the three interviews, the key issues are identified, and will be presented and described in Chapter Five, to make possible discussion of the commonalities and differences across the cases portrayed. To enable the readers to familiarise themselves with the recording of data in the Chapter, four ways of capturing the ‘voice’ of the participants are used. With this in mind, the results of the analysis of data in this thesis are set out as follows. Extracts of interviews are used throughout the text of the following chapter to illustrate perceptions of initial student teachers. At times, both the response from the participant (P) and the questions from the interviewer (I) are included in a segment of the interview. At other times the words of the participants have been included in the text. Substantial quotations are used where possible to portray arising issues. In this thesis a substantial quote is indented and written in italics to be distinguished from the main text of the chapter. Finally, dot points are used to illustrate collective items. Quotations have been identified in individual interviews of the participants in the first, second or third phase, by name. Samples are presented below of the data records.

1. In the second and third interviews, the participant and researcher reviewed the previous transcripts as a means of revisiting the interview questions. "Is the desire to help people important in your career choice?" Answers were subsumed into the interview text, and elicited into the quote in italics below. In helping children at school, he believed that a good teacher does have an effect on children, the parents and community. He wanted to help society:

I think we all want to be Joan of Arcs or knights in shining armour, so we make – not a name for yourself but-you want to make some effect on the world we live in before you die. [Interview 3. Jack. Male. MA]

2. This quote in the first interview text resulted when Liah answered the question about what she expected in the course. She had expressed the idea that it was better for the student teacher to experience teaching early in the first year.

From this perspective she decided 'it is better to get it over when you start off, and really do what you plan to do.'

3. From this direct quote from the participant (I), the interviewer (I) probed the participant's answer.

P: Like when you've got to stand up in those oral things, because before no-one would. You get out in front of people and talk. But that's improved. I've virtually come out of my shell. I used to be, you know, a tiny sit in the corner-forget about me (acting, Loud). I'm not here. But now I set out and make an idiot of myself with the rest of them.

I: So that is really your unexpected satisfaction that you can do that?

P: I'm learning. I didn't think my brain was dead, and it's not. I've proved that. [Interview 3. Di. Female. MA]

4. This quote illustrated collective items from the data. One male Year Six teacher:

- never played favourites;
- never treated anyone like they were stupid;
- really took time for extra things.

4.2 Introduction to the participants of the case study

This section is instrumental in introducing the participants into the text, or giving them voice as earlier suggested. An injection of life into this thesis does not come from words alone, but from the interaction between the people in this study, the student teachers and the researcher. That interaction is captured in the data and analysis, in the case study, the story of initial teacher education

students' perceptions of why they want to teach.

There are nine participants in this case study, as reported in the methodology chapter. They are introduced with a short biography at the start of the next section, because to capture their voice is to interpret the case themes. This case is about people, the student teachers taking their first steps in learning to teach, about wanting to teach, perceptions of becoming teachers. Stake (1995) asserts that researchers recognise and substantiate new meanings, identifying problems, studying them, and in identifying new connections find the way to make them understandable to others. In the case, the student teachers are described in depth, building up the case through their life histories in co-construction with the researcher. As Stake insists, in looking at people the biographer sees lives over time, in problems, patterns in phases, and while unique, is much in common with other lives. The names are pseudonyms.

4.2.1 Cohort Characteristics

Cohort characteristics listed below show the age of each participant, roughly those straight from school in their teens, those in the thirties and those in the forties. Two were locally born, two others from Queensland, the others from New South Wales, and overseas. Four went to high school in Mackay, a city in regional Queensland, three also in Queensland, and some in other states. Two participants did not have children.

Figure 4.1 Student teacher personal characteristics.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Birth Place</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>High School</i>	<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Entry Age</i>
Jessica	Mackay	1960	39	Mackay	Married	2	Mature Age
Jack	Mackay	1961	38	Mackay	Married	1	Mature Age
Carissa	England	1981	18	Brisbane	Single	0	OP15

<i>Name</i>	<i>Birth Place</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>High School</i>	<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Entry Age</i>
Liah	Armidale	1981	18	Mackay	Single	1	OP4
Renaë	T'ville	1978	21	Mackay	Single	0	TAFE
Rita	Geelong	1954	45	Geelong	Married	8	TAFE
Chris	Brisbane	1953	46	Brisbane	Married	2	STEPS
Liz	Cooma	1958	41	Tenterfield	Divorced	3	STEPS
Di	Sydney	1963	36	Kingaroy	Single	2	STEPS

4.3 The Findings of the Study

The content of the interviews was constructed around key issues identified from the literature and in later instances by matters arising from the on-going analysis of data collected in earlier phases and also the types of information identified by Stake (1995) for the study of a case.

The findings are presented in a chronological pattern commencing in 1999 with the first interviews conducted during 22 February-2 April through to the final set of interviews from 17 November-21 December. As indicated in the previous chapter, interview data for each prospective teacher are considered individually in the first instance for each phase. Following this, a cross-case analysis of findings is presented. It is in this cross-case analysis of data where the more generalisable findings regarding the first two research questions are developed. The summaries of interviews and key quotes from participants (in *italics*) provide data for the compilation of the findings that follow.

PHASE ONE

4.3 Phase One

Phase one data were collected from the nine prospective teachers from 22 Feb to 2 April, 1999.

1. The key issues addressed in the interviews included:
2. Characteristics of the prospective teacher;
3. Decision to become a teacher;
4. Attraction and influences to teaching;
5. The role of the teacher.
6. Future teaching

Interview 1 - JACK

If I have a natural talent with children I may as well use it to my benefit

Jack entered the teacher education program as a mature age entrant in his late thirties. He had been made redundant from the local coal industry, but had been considering preschool teaching and tried some relieving work to see if he liked it. In his previous long-term position, he felt he needed a change from the same-thing-everyday even though he was on good money. He had a strong desire to become a teacher, spoke to teachers about what he wanted to do, and attended University open days. He was ecstatic about being accepted into the Bachelor of Education primary program. He had been uncertain because of his gradings at school, but was told that mature age entry went on life experiences.

Well when I first decided to enter teaching, the want of becoming a teacher, which is the burning desire, is more important. If you don't like what you are doing, you don't put everything into it. So I've got that want, the desire. I did think would I cope? It's been so long since I've been at school. I've been here, it's my fourth week and my writing's improved so much, surprising me. I've got that desire, the want of becoming a teacher.

Making the decision to teach last year, Jack found that only the first year was offered for the teacher education program. He built up a knowledge of what would be involved in working in preschools from a pre-school teacher friend and information offered by the university. He was influenced in his choice of

teaching by the recognition of friends and relatives regarding his relationship with children.

Everyone says how good I am with children, the way I handle them, control them, talk to them, interact with them, and that was another step that made me think about preschool to Year Three. Everywhere I go, people say, "Gee, you're good with kids," so if I have a natural talent I may as well use it to my benefit.

He spoke to teacher friends about his choice, and found that there 'were not a lot of males at preschools.' The preschool teacher gave him a book to read, because of the possibility of 'deviates', but Jack was undeterred, keeping that in the back of his mind.

He said his major attraction to teaching was working with children, the satisfaction of guiding them, comforting them. He considered money did not come into this attraction as he had been used to good money in the coal industry. He wanted to help children and would be satisfied to help just one child, as he had had problems with a teacher in primary school. Jack believed that many children needed a male role model in society.

I: You've been made redundant so you could have chosen any course here.

P: I'm interested in the medical field, I could have chosen nursing, I'm into natural therapies, but I want to do the teaching part. That's what made me choose education.

The outstanding teachers Jack remembered included an American exchange primary teacher that he did not get on with, and so missed out on subject knowledge particularly mathematics. However, he noted his school life was enriched at high school through the interest of the deputy principal, and he excelled in certain subjects, but not mathematics. From that friendship, because he had been very shy at primary school, he moved into cadets and other award schemes, bringing out other skills suppressed since primary school. He described

a female secondary teacher of whom pupils thought highly. Another teacher would go out of his way to help students because he related to them on a one-to-one basis. He thought these teachers had good rapport that they seemed to have a love of teaching and the love of students themselves. He called teaching “just not a job,” where some teachers were at school from nine to three, got their pay and went home.

Personal satisfaction would be one where if I could just help one child through. There are so many children at school who haven't got a dad at home because there are so many single mothers, single parent families who need a male role model, and the problem's left for someone to keep them on the straight and narrow, to keep them away from drugs and whatever, to keep them away from crime or whatever happens.

To prepare for the preservice program, Jack took orientation courses such as reading and essay skills, and an 'Enabling Maths' course as he had not done mathematics for so long. He found everything 'full-on' when getting to know lecturers, peers, mentor and tutorial groups. Because he did not know what to expect he decided not to worry and “to go with the flow.”

Jack rated the love of children to be the main thing that attracts and holds people to be teachers and to pass on knowledge, but he considered the problem that the child cannot take the teacher's hand in the playground as in years ago. The teacher may not pick up a fallen child, to give a cuddle to calm them.

I: You used the word “passion” as one of the words people use when they want to be teachers. What other words could be used?

P: You've got to have the burning in the belly.

I: Do you think everyone is attracted in the same way?

P: I don't think everyone is. A lot of people think teaching is easy. The mature age students have the same idea of why we're here and what we are here.

He believes that those student teachers who entered straight from high school might be searching for some time. He calls his stress levels high, and though

he enjoys the four subjects there is more work than he is used to. His wife works, and he has part time work, but suffers from stress in some assignments.

In considering the role of the teacher he asserts that he is never bored in teaching.

- Teaching, particularly in preschool, is so alive and wanting.
- They never let you sit still, either.
- Even after school hours there is still work to be done.

The knowledge, skill and qualities of the student teacher are identified by Jack as most important: basically a good working knowledge of the subjects, Mathematics, English, and the Arts, knowledge of children, life skills and relationship knowledge. He rated communication as the most important skill as in being able to teach

P: You can be a good communicator, but a lousy teacher.

I: How do you mean a lousy teacher? What are your ideas on that?

P: A person can stand up and write and talk on a whiteboard all day long. And have students behind it doodling, and not worrying about it. The teacher has to be responsible for what happens in the class. You have to be on a par with them, think like them. I think that helps.

Jack rated the want of becoming a teacher as part of the burning desire when he first entered teaching, as fairly important, but had to consider if he could cope. While it had been so long since school, he perceived that his writing was improving. Other qualities included creativity, acting and drawing as attributes to the teaching role.

He saw professional experiences and microteaching as most important to student teachers to move out to the schools.

It's like a Toastmasters[(course)]; it's like the icebreaker. It actually gets you out in front where you have to do up your lesson plans. You have to talk to the students, you have to get the point across to teach them the

task you're given, and you are given it straight off the second week. I think that's very important.

While he said people thought primary education was an easy degree, he disagreed, believing 'there is a lot of work involved, no matter what you do.' He had been uncertain what to expect in teaching, but had already gone out to a school in his first weeks, to get 'out in front,' to talk to the students, 'to use a lesson plan to get your point across.' He believed such experience should take place in the first year, as student teachers from other universities have told him that teaching was great until third year when they went out to the classroom, and it was too late to cope. They had never thought what their career would be. He found the actual 'hands on of his lesson was affirming.'

He considered he had no concerns about commencing teacher, although he would like to start teaching immediately. Overall Jack thought he was losing nothing in becoming a teacher. In fact he believed he was gaining. However he did contemplate whether he would have been better in another full time occupation...

rather than becoming a teacher, which is no money, very little money, just a part time job. Only getting so much a week. Um or going home, coming to uni, enjoy all the lectures, study assignments, and go home. It's full on again just reading and researching, and all that stuff. Am I doing the right thing or should I have got the full time job 9 to 5, come home and just put my feet up? Relax. No study whatever. I don't say it's a loss. I think it's me. Coming to be a teacher is growing - you have good days and bad days with lawns to mow and chores and that, and I feel guilty when I'm not doing study.

He decided that he was not losing anything as he hoped to gain a teaching position which would be a full-time occupation.

Jack was articulate in his choice about what his teaching future could hold. He explained that he had contemplated working in the childcare area, but after his two visits to the preschool where he found the children were taught the

basic motor skills, he preferred preschool teaching. He was not interested in secondary teaching where students can be pressured with outside influences, and preferred the lower primary school where children are more open, more absorbed in knowledge and information. He preferred preschool through to primary teaching, and would be prepared to take a Year Seven. He explained that it was a miracle that he was at university, and was not frightened to stand up in a group.

In committing himself to teach for three years, and even further to a ten-year term in the teaching career, Jack repeated that he was ready to start 'right now.' In considering the ten-year term, he confessed that he did not know what he would do, but would possibly teach overseas.

In hypothetical future job offers, which could expand knowledge of the teaching career, the prospective teacher anticipated that a geographical location would be first preference as he was married and did not want to leave the area. The year level would be important to him, and at that stage of his career he was considering teaching in a preschool. He did not mind which system in which he would teach. At that time he did not rate professional prestige highly, but declared that he would rate teachers as a profession highly.

In one way this potential teacher did rate job security highly, as he anticipated that any job is hard to obtain, and he believed that he actually had to look for a job. One area of teaching where male teachers are scarce, Jack believed, is in the primary area, and he thought there would be no problems in obtaining a place when he finished. With the intention of becoming a male primary teacher after graduating, he did not want to appear discriminatory, but discerned that 'they're screaming out for them.' However he concluded that he did not miss job security at the moment.

Summary

Becoming redundant from industrial employment, Jack was accepted into university as a mature age prospective teacher, believing he had a natural ability in relationships with children. He perceived a societal need for males in primary teaching, and actually experienced preschool teaching with an interest in that field. He was aware of the difference between potential teachers entering teaching straight from school or from a mature age entry. Being uncertain about teaching, he had good and bad days, experiencing high stress, but articulated the skills, knowledge and qualities he was developing. At first he said he was losing nothing in being a teacher, but admitted he had doubts. He wanted to be a teacher to help children, discerning from 'good and bad' teachers. He did not know what to expect in the course, but looked forward to early professional practice as most important, believing he would secure a teaching position after graduation.

Interview 1 - RENAE

I have no concerns about teaching

Renae is twenty-one years old, single, went to school locally, and worked as a childcare assistant until she entered university. She had wanted to work with children, and so completed a Childcare Diploma at TAFE over two years. She had been told if she completed the Diploma, she would gain credits towards the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) course, and decided to have a break before teaching as she entered the TAFE course straight from school. She had always wanted to make a difference to children and teaching was one of her goals. She entered the teacher education course at the local campus with her Diploma credit, and found she could go straight into the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood), which could qualify her to teach from Preschool to Year 7.

She believed that after completing her first Semester, she could transfer to external study.

She had made the definite decision to teach in Year Eleven after taking a school subject called Family Community Care, and during work experience had enjoyed working with children. She was influenced by a particular TAFE teacher, who encouraged her to work at her goals to succeed. She understood teaching was a four year course, but because of her TAFE credit she was able to go straight into the subjects for second year. Her major attraction to teaching was working with children, where already she has been able to help them develop and have positive experiences. Renae believed she had a desire to help both children and adults to make a difference so they could enjoy learning.

I think the most important thing is to gain experience, to give them [the children] the best opportunities to let them benefit from my teaching. I don't know the way to put it. The most important thing will be for them to understand what you are trying to teach them.

When recalling her former teachers, she remembered what she called “an ineffective role model” a Year 4 male teacher who had no patience, when she had problems in mathematics. In contrast she remembered a Year Seven teacher who related positively to students in a friendly atmosphere, allowing the students to make choices about their work. One secondary teacher also made a difference through encouragement and recognition of hard work. Renae had not encountered many present day teachers at TAFE, but related back to a former teacher who treated children as a friend, not just a teacher.

She believed that what attracts and holds people in teaching is the satisfaction of helping children gain knowledge, where the teacher can see that the children are benefiting from experience.

I: So that's mainly with the children and your feeling of personal

satisfaction.

P: I think that will make me keep working with children. It's really because you want to help, observing the children to make sure you're giving experiences on the right level, or giving some children activities too advanced or too simple to benefit them.

I: What do you think holds teachers?

P: I wouldn't really know apart from enjoying work.

I: You think that holds them because they're staying.

P: Not really. They might be transferred or they may stay if they have a contract or may have decided to go out of teaching.

Renae found planning, and making sure that experiences are appropriate, was mentally stimulating, so that she enjoyed doing things where she had to think about what she was doing. She explained that the teacher must be careful when planning a program to make sure children don't feel they have failed.

She believed that the teacher should have knowledge of the development of children. They have to be aware of how they are supposed to be teaching and what they are teaching, using the curriculum and the syllabus. They must have something planned when they get in front of a class.

When asked about skills she may possess, Renae was rather non-committal.

I: You've said you have been a childcare leader. What skills do you think you have?

P: Time management. Being able to plan appropriate experiences, to be able to listen to what the children are saying.

I: You may remember skills from school subjects.

P: I was good at hospitality and catering.

I: You're a welcoming kind of person, you make people feel comfortable with you, is that what you mean?

P: I don't think I should treat people, no matter who they are, as if I'm above them.

When identifying qualities she believed fitted her for teaching, Renae was quite animated, declaring she knew she would have to be very dedicated and willing to work hard to meet all the requirements, 'to stick the whole course through' to get where she wanted to go. She would have to be patient, have a love for children, willing to give them positive experiences, treating children as individuals and see them as equal, and not above them at all.

The experience that I've had over the years and with my teachers giving me their influence and encouraging me in what I wanted to do. Then that sort of led me to want to do things with the experiences I had at school.

She thought that what was considered as most important to her work as a teacher was microteaching, and because she had gone straight into second year with her credits from TAFE she had not been actually teaching. She had found the situation rather frightening as the other second year students already knew one another. She did have a mentor. What she wanted was experience in teaching so that children could benefit from her teaching, and understand what she was trying to teach them.

When considering what she expected from the actual university course, Renae believed she was prepared to work hard, and she would become familiar with what was required, with many assignments, new people to meet, and new faces around. She had expected being out with the children, a 'lot more training,' as that was one of the most valuable things to gain more experience. Actually, she had no concerns about teaching, but was excited about as she said 'getting out there and starting it.'

Any potential losses to herself in teaching she rated as a two-way thing, as the children, parents and community would give back what you teach. She was looking forward to be in front of the children.

I: Did you feel like that at childcare?

P: Not really because the only time you had contact with the children was once a week, and when you went out in field placement that was the only time. But we weren't allowed to have a lot, to be alone with children. We didn't get much chance. We were training to be group leaders, to actually have control of our own group, but that comes in the last year, in the third or fourth placement.

I: So you are looking forward to being in a room as a teacher. That's what you are looking for.

P: Yes.

When considering any future teaching Renae confided that she did not want to continue in childcare teaching. Because she had a small stature she preferred to work in lower primary, as she thought she could connect better with the younger children. While she would like to teach in a preschool, she was not interested in high school teaching. She preferred the younger children, to watch their development, she had a lot of patience and could relate to them more. She considered working in an outback place where the classes may be smaller.

Her commitment to three or ten years in teaching, she decided, depended on the job prospects, but she was prepared for that time frame.

I: So you think there are other jobs you could get rather than teaching?

P: Not really. One of the things I've been thinking about is teaching in the outback.

I: You feel there will be jobs for you?

P: I'm not sure of all the opportunities I can get. If there are no jobs in teaching I'll find something else.

I: You say you're pretty sure there will be jobs.

The most important factor in entering teaching for Renae was the experience with children over the years, and the encouragement of her teachers which led her to achieve.

Summary

Deciding to become a teacher early because she enjoyed working with children, Renae used credits from her TAFE to be accepted into the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) at university. She had been employed in childcare, but her hours were cut and she was told after her first semester at the university she was entitled to enroll in the external teaching course. She was concerned that contact with children in childcare was minimal, so she did not have classroom experience. She believed she could make a difference with children, finding observing teaching stimulating, and was dedicated, perceiving a need to be patient, to love children. She was excited about starting to teach. She thought she would be employed after graduation, hopefully in a lower primary class, possibly in a small outback situation. The encouragement of former teachers and her rewarding experiences with children led to her choice of teaching.

Interview 1 - LIAH

Always wanted to teach

Liah had always wanted to teach. She was eighteen when she was enrolled and accepted at first preference into the Bachelor of Education Primary degree with an OP of 4 (top 15% of the high school cohort in Queensland). The year before, she was at a local high school, and then a southern urban high school for the birth of her daughter. Liah is single and supports her nineteen month old child. Her working positions included some nanny and childcare experiences. She had considered becoming a pediatrician or psychologist, but was influenced by her father who had always wanted to be a teacher. She made the decision to teach a few years ago when she enjoyed ‘teaching’ some little children ‘how to read and write basic stuff.’

She considered high school teaching, but primary teaching was what she wanted to do. She had work experience in a local Year Ten class and a childcare centre, hoping she could do primary teaching possibly at a childcare centre. She supposed the main reason she enjoyed that experience was because she was around children. Her knowledge of the qualities necessary to become a teacher included:

You're there to teach them, support them, be a mentor, and meant to teach them in the right way.

She knew all teachers had to go to university to become teachers, to have professional experience, and that some teacher aides just went to TAFE.

Her major attraction to teaching was that she held the idea that she had always wanted to be a teacher, whereas she thought none of her friends wanted to be teachers. When looking after a friend's child, she wanted to help in the child's development as she had done with her own brothers and sisters, whom she didn't see much now.

I: Did anything else attract you to teaching?

P: Probably not the salary, as I didn't think that teachers got a whole lot of salary. Holidays are another thing that attracted me because I have Tina to look after, so I can have holidays the same time she has. I like the whole prestige of being a teacher. You've got a whole lot of people looking at you all the time, expecting you to do the right thing, although there's controversy over teaching. Parents are expecting you to be teaching the way they were taught, through repetition, which is not effective. In some ways that was not a good attraction, being in the public eye all the time.

I've looked up to a lot of my teachers, but there were times when the parents and teachers did not agree, and children were taken out of school. There's the whole teacher abuse thing, yelling at kids that's always in the media. So basically you're in the public eye. There's always someone looking at you to see that you do the right thing.

I: Have you experienced any of that? Has anyone yelled at you at all?

P: No, not really, Not at my school, but you hear about stories where people exaggerate about how teachers act in class.

Liah remembered two outstanding teacher role models who taught her in a composite class, male and female teachers. She called them good teachers because they were friendly, and helped her to become involved and interested, and she hoped to be like them. She contrasted those teachers with a male mathematics teacher in high school, whom she said just wrote work on the board, sat down, faced the class and did not respond to the pupils. He just basically told the students once so they would remember. She considered that most important as her marks dropped and she wasn't interested any more.

Liah believed that teachers are attracted and held to teaching because they are successful teachers, and children like them greatly. When asked whether it is the teacher who attracted people, she related to the teacher helping people. She recalled that she had taught people, so that just having the ability to teach could attract people to a teaching job.

P: Whether it be a teacher or anything elsewhere you have to teach people, and doctors even could sort of teach people, as they help people. I don't know what would attract people to a teaching job.

I: What attracted you?

P: Mainly to help people, to help children as the main attraction. You have to like the job to stay there. If they were successful teachers and they received a lot of response, you're a good teacher and that's the obvious way to stay there. Getting a response from students and parents would help teachers to feel successful. If the children were learning, saying that you are a good teacher, and that they like how you teach that's success.

In considering the role that mental stimulation will take in her teaching, Liah asserted that she meant to be a lot better than some of her teachers and model the good ones, unlike her former Grade Five male teacher:

- the teacher doesn't want to be bored with the job, but wants to keep it moving and interesting to all, so that the teacher gets involved with what the students are doing;

- by such interaction, each day could be different to make the job more fun for the teacher.

She attempted to identify the knowledge, skills and qualities that the role of the prospective teacher requires. She perceived that the knowledge related to student learning moves through different levels, necessitating progress to the next level, so that teachers need to know about individual students, catering for a range of students. In her experience she remembered teachers spending time after school with those students having problems, and with others giving extra work for those progressing too fast. The teacher would observe the class, managing to cope with different levels of learning.

Liah believed that teaching is the skill of being able to teach, but that some people could not explain things well. To improve the ability to learn, the teacher needs to learn from the student, understanding their background and circumstances.

She described the qualities she had acquired, and wants to acquire:

- I'm a happy person most of the time;
- I have a lot of patience that is important to teaching and can sort of understand little kids;
- I'd hoped I would be an approachable teacher, so children could come to me with problems, friend and mentor at the same time;
- I believe I have the ability to invent ideas in some areas of teaching like in mathematics and English;
- I'd like to teach primary mathematics, English and social studies;
- I'd like to model the two teachers who made learning really fun for me;
- I want to invent things in primary school to make it more interesting.

Liah considered that the most important role of the teacher she would undertake was probably to make learning more interesting:

There is nothing worse than trying to learn and remember something that is absolutely boring and you hate it. The teacher should make things interesting and more fun to become more involved with the students, using the teacher's own experience to enable the students to discuss together what may be right or wrong. Mainly to interact with students who are not being passive, by getting them to learn in the best way playing the helping part by making learning interesting.

She rated her expectations of the course to be the challenge of very hard work, with the difficulty of remembering everything she needed to know to build up a teacher identity, hoping to learn different models of how to be a teacher, and how one should teach children. She thought she should come up with her own ideas of how it will be really like to become a teacher.

I: You are talking about your own personal philosophy as a teacher?

P: I hope so and that's exactly what I want to find at the end of the year, because we do practicum work in this first year which is excellent. You can try different methods, and won't be on your own as you have another teacher to help, to observe how they teach.

Leah believed that having the practicum is excellent in the first year, because it was possible that the student teacher could find out the theory in the first and second years of the teacher education program, but not do any professional experience, and then decide that they did not really want to be a teacher. From this perspective she decided 'it is better to get it over when you start off, and really do what you plan to do.'

She looked forward to learning about the subject, *Development and Disability*, stating that she did not think that any of the student teachers had much idea of what would happen, particularly in the subject *Professional Practice*, as they would start on the next Thursday teaching in the schools. She saw this important step as part of her desire to help people. At one stage she had

considered becoming a doctor by helping children, but rejected the idea of children being sick. Liah saw her attraction to teaching as being able to help both the parents as well as children. Having no real concerns about her own teaching course, she turned her attention towards her peer student teachers in the cohort.

I've spoken to a lot of students who are actually worried about whether they want to be teachers. They were not quite sure whether they will be good teachers, or like working or will have the patience to deal with them [children]. I don't have concerns about that at all. Hopefully that's what I want to do, but I want to find out about when I become a teacher. Doing the course will help me get there, but I'm not worried at all.

When asked what she might lose by being a teacher, Liah laughed and said perhaps her sanity. She referred again to the teacher being always in the public eye, and so one of the worst things was not being able to do what the teacher wants:

- people are always watching you in meetings to see what you may do wrong;
- teachers have to be careful how they act out of school, especially as a young teacher at a party;
- what teachers do does reflect on the school;
- until you become a teacher and you have a position as a teacher, you have to become conservative, and do what is expected.

The student teacher pondered that she would gain rather than lose, in the background and knowledge of what teaching is really like. To become a good teacher the potential teacher would have to practice, to cope with relationships between students and other people as well.

Liah anticipated that in her future teaching she mainly wanted to teach childcare subjects. She considered an age range from newborn babies to Year Five children, but was not sure whether childcare would be more interesting than

primary schools. She thought she would like to set up her own childcare centre, but realised she could teach any primary school levels and was more interested in lower primary. Secondary school teaching was dismissed as she did not want to handle teenagers. She laughed when she said she did not know whether teachers have job security.

I: What do you mean? That sounds interesting.

P: We knew a few people who'd gone to university and couldn't get jobs anywhere.

I: Is this lately?

P: A few years ago, maybe four or five years ago. It may have changed now.

I: You say you are hoping to get a job, that there are more jobs around.

P: Hopefully I know some places are calling out for teachers. I thought there were a lot of teachers from universities who could not get jobs anywhere, but perhaps they didn't do as well as they hoped.

Liah committed herself to teach for three years and perhaps in her own childcare centre by another ten years. Her choice of future job offers would depend on the type of students, the year level, and the geographic location, while she did not think that the salary mattered. She summed up her interview points through her belief that the main factor of becoming a teacher is by helping pupils, mainly through the models of good and bad teachers, and to make study more interesting as all people need to be educated.

Summary

Overall, Liah was a highly qualified, enthusiastic and articulate prospective teacher who approached the teacher education program very positively. She considered she was well prepared to handle new experiences, and often identified how helping children was an important factor in her attraction to teaching. Her positive manner enabled her to express her position on many

aspects of teaching as new learning for her professional development. Having always wanted to teach and with adequate work experience she considered teaching from the child's point of view, commenting that teachers are 'always in the public eye. From a career perspective, she saw school holidays as attractive, as she had a small child, but wondered about prospects of employment at graduation. Liah looked forward to her coming involvement in practical experience in the schools, using the qualities, skills and knowledge she had acquired or was acquiring.

Interview 1 - JESSICA

She had always been a teacher at heart

This prospective teacher was thirty-nine years old, was born in Mackay, running a sewing machine business with her husband, and has two children. When she was younger she had always wanted to be a doctor, but due to family circumstances was not able to achieve that aim. Her work experience includes fifteen years in an office, followed by two years in a department store selling sewing machines. For the last thirteen years Jessica has been selling machines in the family business. She knew she wanted to get out of the business, findings holidays difficult with the children, and so started to think it would be good to be a teacher with time off with the children.

The principal of her son's school approached her about teaching music at the school, as she played for the church school and had music qualifications, and later he asked her to consider the teacher education course. She wasn't quite sure, as she worried that perhaps she was rushing, with just a week to get the application in, but she entered the Mackay course as a mature age entry. Teaching was her only preference as she stated that with a family she could not

go elsewhere to university if she was not accepted. She scored extremely high for her Statistics entry to university. Both her husband and the school principal were supportive.

However after being accepted into teaching she said she had no doubts about the four-year primary teacher program. She had not volunteered with other student teachers regarding the interview, but had noticed the researcher waiting for a missing participant, and offered to interview immediately. Her main attraction to teaching was being 'able to be more available out of school hours' for her little son and the fact that she had been telling people how to do things in sewing.

We have to run a lot of classes in how to use overlockers to make bags, and I guess I've been a teacher at heart. I've always enjoyed telling people. I think it's really exciting at the end of the year, to look back and see how much you've taught that child, and how you have influenced them.

When commenting on whether a desire to help was important in her career choice, Jessica believed it was very important, as she had always been a person who would help in any way she could and exclaimed what better way to help by teaching. She used examples of her own past teachers to illustrate how her teachers had helped her. One male Year Six teacher:

- never played favourites;
- never treated anyone like they were stupid;
- really took time for extra things.

She spoke of a modern day teacher of her son.

- She could 'go crook' [get angry] without raising her voice, without even changing the tone of her voice
- Those kids didn't know they were being ticked off

- She had a very charming manner
- Even with the most frustrating of kids she didn't really get upset with them.

She believed that teachers are attracted and held in teaching by the desire to teach, and help people. She thought that if people went into teaching for money they would not remain, as she thought it was not an easy job, and so it takes a special kind of person to be a good teacher. This potential teacher commented that she could not stand a job if it is boring, but was really finding this (teaching) very mentally stimulating.

Jessica identified the knowledge, skills and qualities necessary to fulfill the teacher's role. She believed that certain qualities are necessary to be a good teacher, and she described sharing and helping people as priorities.

The satisfaction of seeing the kids grow up and mature, and knowing you had a part in it. Teachers come into my shop, and I say, "You were my teacher" and they look and say, "Look where you are now. You are a business person," and they take pride in the fact that I have done well.

According to this intending teacher, the teacher needs the skill of being able to keep control of the class, to explain things in the way they can grasp the concepts, to be friendly and approachable. The teacher also needs to enjoy sharing knowledge, to put a concept in ways the children can understand, so that if someone does not understand, it needs to be explained from a different perspective. Jessica claims she enjoys that challenge, mainly from being more mature.

She declares that most important to teaching is the basic skills that children are going to need in real life.

There's always the three Rs. Teach them respect. If kids are comfortable with who they are, they are more likely to take on bigger and better challenges.

Of her expectations in the course, Jessica replied that she did not know, but was ready for university to be able 'to take what comes.' She had no concerns about teaching, none at all. She also believed that at the start of the program she could not think of anything she would lose.

When considering future teaching she found she was interested in lower to middle primary, as she thought those children were at an age of greater comprehension, where they could be shown self discovery and are becoming aware of peer pressure. She does worry about discipline when she takes older groups and she was not interested in secondary teaching. She had shown her competency when teaching adults.

She declared that she was ready to teach for three and even ten years, as she has been in the workforce for twenty-five years and was not a person to 'chop and change'. Regarding actual teaching positions on the future, she did feel that the geographic position would be important as she could not take just take her family away and disrupt them. Her choice of year levels would be lower, and as to the teaching system, she revealed that she has already been offered a future position. Because of that offer, she believed that job security was not an issue for her.

Summary

Entering teaching from a mature age perspective with long work experience selling sewing machines, Jessica was attracted by the extended holidays with her children, and the suggestion by her son's principal that she apply for teaching. She declared that it was not easy to teach and takes a special kind of kind of person to be a teacher, one who is attracted and held in teaching by having the desire to teach and help people. The student teacher needs to take control of the class, be friendly and

approachable, enjoys sharing knowledge, and help the children understand their work. She had no expectations or concerns of the course, losing nothing in teaching. She was more interested in lower classes, worried about discipline in higher grades, had been offered a teaching position after graduation, and did not want her family disrupted. She believed teachers are moved by the desire to help children and the satisfaction of seeing results in their teaching

Interview 1 - CARISSA

Eventually she wanted to teach German, and so had to leave home

Carissa was born in England in 1981, moved to Brisbane at eight years of age with her parents. She was interested in nursing until she was eight, but decided on teaching, as from Year Five she had done German LOTE (Language Other Than English) lessons, had done well and planned on becoming a teacher in that field with a OP score of 15 [Too low a score to be offered a place in a metropolitan university]. She applied for various university degrees in Brisbane, in LOTE, teaching, or Bachelor of Arts, and on a Central Queensland regional university, where she gave preferences of No 5 to Teaching, and No 6 to Nursing. She was accepted in the No 5 preference in Teaching.

Carissa made the decision to teach in Year Eight at high school, planning to become a German interpreter, and was influenced by the teachers who had taught her five years in LOTE German classes. Both parents had been to cooking colleges in England, and worked in nursing homes in Brisbane, and so Carissa had worked after school and at weekends at local homes. She claimed she liked working with older people, finding it rewarding, and had once planned to be a nurse. One of the reasons why she chose teaching was that she liked children, as she was an only child and loved being around children.

She believed she was mostly influenced by the German LOTE teachers, as her parents allowed her to do what she wanted. She was not influenced by her friends, who did not understand her career choice of teaching. In Carissa's words her friends 'saw teachers as not cool.' She realised that in a teaching career, she would need good English skills, good people skills, and that the teaching degree was a four-year program.

Her major attraction to teaching was that she had always wanted to be a teacher. While she admitted that the teacher's salary is good, she claimed children were the attraction.

P: Something that draws me to them [children] however naughty they are.

I: Have you brothers and sisters?

P: No, I don't. That's probably why.

Carissa indicated that a desire to help was important in her choice of teaching, and that desire included all people, not just children. In schools she wanted to help in the lower and middle section. She remembered how her teachers helped her at school.

I had a German teacher in Grade Seven, Herr G. He was always egging me on. "You've done very well," always giving me good marks and made me learn more. He'd organise activities so that we would want to learn our German, instead of just grammar. He'd give a sheet with games to play and cooking we'd done. He brought the culture into the actual language.

Other teachers included one who brought her bird into the class, and it was her teachers rather than her parents who encouraged her. Carissa had thought back to her teachers and how good they had been, both male and female. She said her teachers:

- had been friendly;
- always answered her;
- helped even if too busy;

- always made time if you had troubles;
- were a 'people persons'.

She thought about what attracts and holds people into teaching. She basically considered that everyone wants to learn and that teachers are the ones giving people information. Children are held at school until Year Ten, and people want a career, job security, and money to survive in the world. So their education is the starting block of life, and teachers have what they (children) want.

Carissa identified that as a teacher she did not want to be bored, and so will always be interested in what she is doing, so that teaching will keep her mentally stimulated. She thought she would always have something to do as a teacher, as teaching is not just a nine to three job.

She recounted the knowledge, skills and qualities necessary for teaching. Teachers had to:

- know the subjects they teach;
- be able to listen to the children;
- really help them.

Carissa thought about the skills she was bringing into teaching.

P: I'm not really bringing any skills.

I: what about your language skills? And did you do a bit of debating?

P: Yes, I did, I'm not very creative, but I suppose if you are bringing in what you learnt at school, then you've built on that by being in the university as a primary specialist.

She decided that her knowledge of German is her best quality, with her long years of learning the language and the culture. She had been told she had a photographic memory, and so could pick up words very well. Her other quality,

she believed, was as a good babysitter, handling children quite well. As a teacher she believed the most important activity was to:

- look after the children;
- listen to them;
- take in what they say;
- learn something everyday from them.

Carissa thought the teacher education program was going to be totally different to what actually happened.

I didn't think we'd get to be doing any micro-teaching as early as we have done. Brisbane universities do their practicum in the second year. I also didn't count on this Physical Education. I didn't really think you would be doing it, as well. It was good. It's good to be on the job, being with children really.

Carissa stated that she really has no concerns about starting teaching, but she did not think she is ready to handle a class of thirty children. In her current subject, *Development and Disability*, she explained how there may be a group of five in the class with disabilities, and perhaps five who may be extra intelligent. She thought she could not handle that as yet, but supposed as she progressed through university she would learn to cope.

Carissa considered what she might lose in becoming a teacher.

P: I don't think I will lose anything. I don't really know any other occupation.

I: It's what you always wanted to do. You said you've got your mind set on it since Year Eight. Do you think many people decide in Year Eight what they want to do, or you know that some people take a long time to choose?

P: Some people in my own uni course have done something straight away after they've graduated, and now they've come to do teaching. So really some people won't know until they're actually in the course. Or what they want to really do.

I: So you're saying they know their knowledge area, because they have

their degree in that, but then they decide they want to teach in that knowledge area. Is that what you are saying?

P: Yes.

I: What kind of knowledge are they bringing to teaching?

P: Well, some have done journalism, so they are pretty up on the English language.

She gave her opinion on her choices for future teaching in her chosen career. She did not think she could teach Year Seven at the start of the four years, particularly the Mathematics, but would be happy with the lower classes. She would prefer to stay in primary, and if she was doing the LOTE German teaching, she would be travelling around to the five or six schools, with a base school, teaching from Year Five to Year Seven. When rating what choices she could take, she decided she wanted to be in a big city, as she found the university city like a little country town. She said she preferred a lower class to start gradually. Carissa thought the salary would be pretty important when you are coming out of the education program.

Making a commitment, she stated she intended to stay in teaching for three, then ten years, being in the school and, as she said, ready for her long service. She decided that there was job security in teaching, as she knew the pay was sufficient, and there were 'more teachers wanted.' If she could not 'get into German,' she would stay with primary teaching as she would have her degree. Looking back over her interview, Carissa decided working with children and the program units were most important in her teaching, as well as to do her German.

Summary

Carissa always wanted to be a teacher to use her German proficiency in a teaching career in her home city, but left home to gain admittance to primary teaching in a regional university. She had been influenced by her helpful LOTE

German teachers, liked working with older children and children, as teaching was seen as stimulating, not a nine to five job. She recognized the importance of early contact with children as she was aware that some universities did not send student teachers out to schools until third or fourth year. She claimed she had no concerns in teaching, but was unprepared to take a large class, or many children with disabilities at this stage. She preferred to teach a lower class at the moment and for future teaching, commented on the importance of future salary for teacher graduates, the prospect of future employment. Desiring to help and work with children was the main theme of her decision to teach.

Interview 1 - RITA

Wants to teach, but is not confident

Rita is married with eight children, is forty-five years old, and her husband is ill with a stroke. Her work experience consisted of ways to support her family. She had taken on Daycare teaching, until the family moved to Central Queensland for employment opportunities. She completed a two-year course of Diploma of Childcare at TAFE, and from those credits, was accepted into the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) degree.

Her decision to teach was an early desire, but as the eldest of nine, when she missed out on Teachers College, she had to leave school to help the family.

In that position:

P: I worked at jobs to earn money.

I: Did you in any of those positions have a position over others?

P: No, nothing like that. I'm not the kind of person to be over people, I'd rather

just take directions, and continue on with my work. I'm not confident to have people under me.

She considered that she had always wanted to 'get into' teaching, and she was prepared to study after so many years. Rita had been told that her TAFE credits would enable her to enter the teaching degree at university, with two and a half years to complete. She did apply for positions at Day Care centres with her qualifications, but was disillusioned when she was not employed, wondering whether it was because of her age, so decided to apply for teaching. She was influenced by a group of her peers from TAFE who also, as she put it, 'were able to slide in straight away' into the Early Childhood Program. She explained that there were some subjects that she was given credit for, that she did not have to do. The Careers Officer told her she was there to support her.

Rita had thought previously that Year Twelve was a prerequisite for entry to university, until the year before she was informed that her qualifications would allow her to enter a teaching program. Her youngest child was six years old, she had to consider the family situation, and school holidays would be suitable in teaching. In discussion with the Guidance officer, Rita decided that she would apply for a librarian technology course, as she loved books and teaching, and would like to do library work, but part-time. In this way she would not have a full classroom, but would have the ability to teach in library lessons. She said she never intended to work full-time, until she had more confidence.

She didn't realise how easy it was to get into university. Her mother was supportive when Rita said she was doing what she was meant to do, to help children want to learn. She claimed that her major attraction to teaching was that she loved children, she wanted to learn how to make learning easy for them, and had always wanted to teach since young. Rita claimed she did have a desire to help children as a student teacher, and had always helped her own children with

their homework, specifically mathematics and tables. With her TAFE qualifications she believed she was qualified to observe what teachers do, and to consider their practice.

Rita was dismayed with all her teachers at school, and claimed none were outstanding. She admitted that she was extremely weak in mathematics, and none of them seemed to be able to help her. Her mother even 'got a teacher round to help in mathematics,' but, as Rita said, she was 'thick as a brick.' She said no one ever inspired her, or gave her confidence. Her Year Six teacher had put her down, she waffled through school and did the best she could. She contrasted today's teachers, saying that her children's teachers were outstanding:

- the children won't go home, they love her so much;
- the way she encourages them;
- just the way she talks to them;
- she could not put a finger on why, but Miss B was so good.

She believed that teachers are attracted and held, because they were trying 'to get the children through,' to help them in the first few years, the formative ones. She claimed some teachers were there for the job. They were told they were going to teach, and that was the opportunity they had, and that was why they taught because it was a job. She said others really believe they are there to help children take a good step in life. She thought some of the young student teachers had not had much to do with children, need experience with children to do a good job of teaching, and have to enjoy what they are doing, so that it is not just a job.

The teachers of today, Rita claimed, made school mentally stimulating, because teachers years ago used 'to teach by the book,' not by imagination.

Student teachers need to make school more fun for the children and themselves, to give a wider focus on the wide world, not only the school world. In defining the knowledge, skills and qualities necessary for student teachers to understand the role of the teacher, Rita took a child-centred view, where the teacher tries to understand how the child feels, and acknowledges the parent.

Without their help you're not going to get far, because if they don't like the teacher the child is going to play up. The teacher has to have knowledge of what the parents expect of them, and the parents need to know what is expected of them in the school. In this aspect the student teacher must have good communication skills, has to have an understanding of how children experience learning. Keep it simple and keep it fun, otherwise you will lose the child altogether!

In considering what qualities she was bringing to the program, Rita wondered how hard the course would be, whether she would be the oldest in the cohort, and was glad to find there were more mature age students. She did believe that her qualities included listening to children to get their point, having experience with children to help them overcome their fears and problems, and she thought she could do that very well. Rita believed that the most important role of a teacher is not to make children worry if they do not understand, not to let them think that they were 'no good at this,' but to make them confident, give them good self esteem.

Rita was lost for words when she identified what she expected in the course, but said she was aware that it would not only be fun and games, but lectures where the student teacher makes her own notes, not handouts. She explained that it was 'going to be hard,' because she would really have to think for herself as an adult. She did believe that if the student teachers need help they must ask, but she did feel the pressure of not knowing so many peers in the cohort at this stage. She did feel that she had no concerns:

I'm not going to look so far ahead yet, because I have two and a half years to go. We won't touch this one yet, let's stick to the day.

When considering what she might lose as a teacher rather than being in another occupation, Rita said she did not think she would lose anything, as she did not think there was anything to lose. She believed that if a teacher is content and enjoying the job, there is nothing to lose but everything to gain. Rita was able to comment on what the future may hold for her in teaching. She was mostly happy to teach in a childcare situation, and in a preschool. As she was accepted into the Early Childhood degree, she was ready to teach up to Year Three, however would not consider higher grades. She claimed she was frightened of losing control of the class.

P: Well you lose control with little classes. They've got all those rights, and you can't tell them off, and it's the way you have got to go about it with this psychology for kids. It is just simple, I know what I can manage.

I: Do you think the teacher education course will help you?

P: Yes. I find it boring, to be honest. We know what she [tutor] is talking about. I've already done all those observation [in the TAFE course].

In considering a time commitment for teaching over ten years, Rita spoke again of her plan to complete the teaching program, to be able to work part time perhaps in libraries, and that she would be teaching ten years until fifty-five. Looking at future work, she would be looking at the geographic position, as she would have her family to think of, the year level and the system. She believed job security was not an issue for her in teaching, as she thought that teaching has other forms, such as after-school teaching, and teachers are always needed.

Rita, in reviewing her interview, believed the most important factor was because of her love of children, just to try to help them better.

Summary

She had always wanted to teach, completed a Diploma of Childcare, and did not obtain employment. With an ailing husband and children at home, she was accepted into university. She only wanted to teach part-time, and in discussion with the Careers Officer was considering a library course. She claimed she loved children, wanting to help them, although she had been very weak in mathematics at school. She admired some of her children's teachers as outstanding and encouraging. She saw student teachers as needing good communication skills between child, parent and teacher. She has expected the course to be difficult, having no concerns at that stage, with nothing to lose as a teacher, although she admitted she was not confident. She was frightened of losing control of the class. She was content to teach until fifty-five for her family needs. Her main theme in wanting to teach was the love of children.

Interview 1 - LIZ

Teaching was her childhood dream

Liz had an early wish to be a teacher, but became a nurse. She had that natural sympathetic compassion. She cared for people, listened to them, and loved to make sure they were well. She intended to be a teacher when young, as her parents were both nurses, but the pressures of Year Twelve were too much, and her teaching dreams remained unfulfilled. She stayed in the rural community with her parents, and took up nursing there, rather than teaching in a regional university. She nursed for three years, married, later divorced, and 'just' looked after her three kids and family for a few years.

Liz's two sons left home to attend university, and she decided she wanted to further herself also, but her youngest child was only eight years old. At forty-

one, she entered the University bridging program which she considered as stepping stones, to keep many doors open, with advice and support from the University staff. At first she considered taking up nursing again. She played the violin, and the local Conservatorium was a possibility, and she could perhaps become a music teacher. Her two interests were also teaching and health, and when she found the health course would be in the capital city, she decided on a teaching course because it was offered locally.

Teaching was my childhood dream, but now I have a little girl of my own who is keeping me young and keeping me occupied in that field and I am learning and teaching, and teaching to learn what I wanted to do with children.

She was influenced in her career choice through several sources. She had respected her childhood teachers, and learnt much from them. The guidance officers in the bridging program were most helpful, explaining what was involved in a university degree on campus. Liz was aware the bachelor of Education (Primary) was a four-year program, and she considered that secondary teaching could be a possibility. Her parents were surprised when she suddenly turned from nursing to teaching, but supported her in every way.

Liz's major attraction to teaching was because as a child she was drawn to teach little children like herself. 'You become 'institutionalised', and it becomes very familiar.' She still had a visionary notion of school as being nice, a good time of life, and called her career choice 'personalised satisfaction.' She thought she always wanted to teach, that since she has been a mother and had her own children, the decision was because she had the 'little eight year old who will still need teaching after her graduation.'

She maintained that a desire to help others was important in her career choice, and compared her nursing career to her choice of teaching. In teaching,

Liz believed that 'you were doing the similar thing, caring for their mental needs a lot more than their physical, also their emotional needs of children or whoever one is teaching.'

Liz recalled outstanding teachers who had helped her in the past and the present. She could not recall her primary teachers, although she thought there were four male teachers in her rural school, but she believed she had blocked that out as she was so very shy and just did her schoolwork. In high school she had the same mathematics teacher for six years. He was straight from Teachers College, was strict, kept the class in line, and taught so well that Liz attained an advanced level. She classed the University bridging staff as outstanding and wonderful teachers. She called one local teacher a very valuable teacher as he had the stamina to 'keep up' with the class.

If discipline is needed, he makes sure they know the rules, and he does it in the fashion that brings them to see it themselves. Not just saying, "You've broken the law," but continues. "You two are fighting, causing a rumpus. Go for a run around the footie field and see if you are going to argue. After that he relates it to the circumstances, but still having an open mind, with time to understand, persuade and coach.

Liz considered what attracts and hold teachers in their career, and believed that some people had enjoyed the school as an institution, such as being in the teaching environment, the sense of discipline, the attention and ability to learn skills. While she considered teaching a stressful position, she believed the teacher was in a position of authority, of being able to persuade and encourage children. Other attractions to teaching, she stated, were the likelihood of gaining a secure teaching position in the time of unemployment, as there was a need for more teachers, when some older teachers would retire. Practising teachers are well-skilled, well-paid and have families of their own for which to provide.

Mental stimulation was important to Liz in any career choice. She used the example of one of the university tutors to illustrate that point, where student teachers are placed in a situation where they ‘become the children,’ She explained how they learn from the tutor’s lesson plan, to be able to plan for their own practical experience. In this way, Liz believes, lesson plans are in place for every class structure to improve the flow of the lesson, to help in the student teachers’ social skills, as teacher or child.

She was able to articulate the knowledge, skills and qualities necessary for the student teachers to aspire to in their role as a teacher. She stressed the need to:

- know many social skills;
- know copious lesson plans;
- uphold the structure of the class to communicate with children;
- know assessment techniques in order to know that communication is happening;
- have some public relation skills when dealing with the parent as well as the public;
- entertain the idea of bringing in ‘disabled’ children into schools;
- manage even more knowledge in areas not normally required.

Liz identified further skills that are necessary to teaching such as public speaking, tutorial skills, compassion, encouraging and persuasive skills, administrative and paperwork matters.

She stated that she possessed qualities that were required by the student teacher in the role of teacher.

I've got a good maternal instinct where I love to encourage children, and I also have great patience. I don't mind if they do something naughty because it's not going to aggravate me. I let them learn techniques and how to persuade them in the right track.

Liz believed that for the student teacher the most important focus was to have an open mind regarding the children, and to have the capacity to inspire them for the better. She would like to build the capacity to do so. An opportunity to practice that role would occur for the second time in her first two weeks of the program, she claimed, when the group of student teachers would go out to the school for ten minutes individually with a group of children. She explained that each student teacher had a small group of three children to teach in a physical education lesson. To her this was most important as this would be her first contact with children in the program, even if that would be only for ten minutes.

Regarding her further expectations of the preservice program she exclaimed:

Well if it's anything like we have already started it's going to be eye-opening and intriguing, and it's doing for me what I wanted, I want to know further ways and methods of how to inspire.

Despite expressing the satisfaction she felt when going out to the schools in the first two weeks of the program, Liz confided that it was rather daunting for her to be alone with her group in front of all the children. She called the observer an 'inspector,' however claimed she realised that learning those many skills would inspire confidence until she would achieve a certain level of competence.

She considered whether she was losing anything by becoming a teacher, rather than in any other occupation. Her astute observation was that she was stuck with the familiar environment that you have been brought up with, and so the student teacher was not really reaching out and broadening one's sphere, getting into other areas of the public domain.

Liz identified the areas of future teaching that interested her at this stage of her candidature. Childcare did not interest her, as she was aiming for experience of a range of primary year levels, but eventually she wanted to be in secondary schools. She was ready to commit for many years of teaching, and believes that by ten years she would have 'got it right.' Her choice of a teaching position would be influenced by the type of students she hoped to teach in the school, and she did not mind which year level. She thought she would be willing to move away from her home in order to be employed, but was not sure what life held for her in the future.

From her interview, Liz indicated that the most important factor in her decision to become a teacher was because as a child she had great respect for her teachers, as they had done well for her. When she was older and made the final decision to teach she still had the yearning and the desire to inspire young ones to draw on their learning capacities.

Summary

Liz enrolled in the university bridging course, and although she had been a nurse when young was accepted into the teaching program, as she had always wanted to teach, believing that a desire to help was necessary for student teachers. She described a former teacher who taught her mathematics as outstanding, and saw mental stimulation as important to teaching, enjoying the hands-on peer modelled mathematics subject. She believed that of most importance was the interaction with a small group of children within the first week for just a few minutes, although at first found being back in school rather confronting. For future teaching she was more concerned with primary, perhaps with a prelude to secondary later. She intended to teach for ten years, feeling her

own teachers had inspired his ambition to teach, leading to an adult decision to achieve that goal.

Interview 1 - DI

Wants to teach, but is very shy

At thirty-six years old, Di was single with two children, and wanted to expand herself with study. Previous earlier employment had been in management positions. She entered the University-bridging program, and after completion enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program, and was accepted.

She had seen an advertisement for the local University preparatory program, and on enrolment, the staff helped her to evaluate a career decision, advising a Law course, but with two children she could not leave her city. Her son had problems at school, and she thought a career helping even one child to get through would be fine. She found out more about teaching from the bridging program with advice in her choice by the university staff. Her decision to teach was influenced by the needs of her son who was helped by remedial teachers, and she wondered about the 'training' required to undertake such a teaching position. She said she had no knowledge of what was needed, but the university staff explained she would firstly need to have good marks in English, and that the teaching degree was a four-year Bachelor of Education (Primary). She reflected that she nearly didn't enter teaching. At the start of the bridging course she had a very emotional upset, and was ready 'to throw the lot in', but the staff urged that 'we'll do this for you, we are here to support you.' Her parents believed that she would not be able to enter university, and become a teacher, but when she was accepted into teaching she was determined to prove them wrong.

Di stated that her major attraction to teaching was definitely not salary, it was just to help kids. Each week she went to a local school with personal relationships developing there.

P: There's a lot out there having problems, and they need, and this makes me sound as if I want to be Superwoman, but they need someone there even just there to listen to them. You've got to be trained to know what to do and what to say to help them.

I: The fact that you will be here for those years, you feel you're going to get a lot of that help and in the schools too with your networks.

P: Definitely

She considered that helping people, helping children was most important to her career choice, but found that sometimes she went out of her way to help. She had friends, like her son, who were mentally and physically disabled, and she helped people, not just children, in every way she could. Di remembered her childhood teachers who helped her. She named her Year Seven Mathematics teacher as fantastic, as he took the time to explain every single detail. The University bridging staff who helped 'to make something click in her head,' she called outstanding because they:

- kept you on track;
- were there to rely on;
- were always there for the student;
- were there no matter what time of night or day;
- were there if you had a problem.

Di pondered why people were attracted and held in teaching, and recognised that teachers are aware of problems in teaching and want to fix them.

P: Teachers use their own way to solve problems.

I: Did you feel that your teacher did that?

P: They all had their own technique. Each teacher was an individual in problem solving.

I: You think that's one of the things that attract people, and your teachers had it.

P: Yes.

I: You thought some children have problems and that's attracting you because you want to help. Are there any other things that attract?

P: Definitely not the money.

I: You think that's the main reason to be a teacher?

I: They keep on teaching because they love it. The kids, the work, they just enjoy their job.

Di was quite comic in her description of the importance of mental stimulation in teaching. She found that she became overstimulated, and that the brain stops, but restarts again when she is 'teaching' in her sleep. She believes it is because she is more enthusiastic about teaching, and the rest of her life just went on and on. She described the necessity of knowledge, skills and qualities to the role of the student teacher. She did see knowledge as quite expensive because of the fees charged, as a subject, but explained that the best knowledge comes from the teacher's life experiences, as well as the information obtained at university. She believed that the student teacher will be better off incorporating the above knowledge, and also the information gained from other teachers.

At first she confined her ideas about skills to what the subject entails, such as in mathematics and physical education, before she could teach it. She confided, then, that the skill she needed most as a teacher was communication. Di said that she needed the skills of communication, because she was too shy.

Like at the moment I couldn't stand up in front of the class and say, "Listen here." That's why I'm getting red at the moment. I really should be doing Toastmasters[course], they meet today, just to get self-esteem, so I can stand up in front of everyone.

Di considered what qualities teachers should possess and confessed that she did not know, but again related the question to the life experiences of the

teacher, such as what had happened in their own classrooms. She suggested the student teacher should think about the qualities of known people, and then to think about their own personality. She said she was ready to help people, but was *waiting* to be trained in the correct way of helping. To Liz the most important task as a student teacher is to explain oneself properly. She said to do that means to get everything across to the children, but in their own level, so that the prospective teacher does not use university jargon, but puts the point across in their language. She recalled her own teachers who were:

- always your friend, your confidante;
- sort of everything you needed.

She disclosed that she had no idea what to expect in the teacher education program, but she quickly found out how much study was involved in the first week and realised it was going to increase and increase. Di found she made different failures, creating new networks, both personal and in practice. She found she would not know what to expect, particularly in a half-hour long swimming lesson, and she had her first meeting with a child who would not do what he was told.

I thought, "How am I going to handle this?" I was teaching breast stroke kick, and he was a junior lifesaver who knew it all, and I recruited him and turned him into a teacher, and said, "Well you show us how to do it. You come along and help me", because he was just jumping up and down in the water, and doing twirls because he was bored. I said, "Come and help me and tell me if the kids are doing their kicks right". I didn't know what to do, but I turned him into a teacher!

Di had no concerns at this point in the program, but was worried that in the teaching bloc next semester she might freeze or make a fool of herself, in front of the class, but said that would be a matter of getting up confidence and doing it. At the moment she could think of nothing she could lose by being a

teacher. When considering the year level she would like to teach, she said she would prefer primary teaching, but would be happy teaching at preschool as 'they are beautiful at that age.' In preschool, she believed, the children progress in little steps, but important steps at that age.

She was quite happy to consider teaching up to both three, and later ten years after graduation, as she believed she would have twenty years of working life 'left in her.' Future teaching for her, she thought, could mean going out to the country area, where few teachers would be willing to go out the bush area. Di would be prepared to go where there were 'miles and miles between things,' to have both the qualifications to teach normally, or to help children with special needs. Students were important to her in one-teacher schools with a wide variety of schools and children. Her year level choice would be Year One to Five. She was confident of securing a teaching position after graduation, as she believed there was supposed to be a shortage of teachers. In summing up the interview, Di said her decision to teach was about wanting to help kids.

Summary

At school she had been very shy, but remembered her teachers as helpful. She entered the university bridging program, considering law, but chose teaching as her son had an intellectual problem. She was about to withdraw from the program but was supported by the staff and accepted into teaching. She was still very shy, not having the confidence at the start to even stand in front of a class. She saw the qualities of student teachers as emerging from life experience, and from professional experiences in the program. She had no expectations regarding the course, but soon found out the projected study load would increase. From her own experience with children, she was able to assert herself in her first

behavioural incident, but did have concerns for the future. She preferred to teach in country schools, perhaps in a special needs area, and was confident she would find a teaching position. Her interview theme, she decided, was about 'wanting to help kids.'

Interview 1 - CHRIS

Am I creative and energetic enough?

When young, Chris had started a Bachelor of Arts degree, with plans to be a high school teacher. She then married an accountant, had two children, and now at forty-six, decided to re-enter university. Her work experience included clerical and reception work, and teaching swimming as a Level 1 swimming coach. Her mother had been a preschool teacher and kindergarten director. She had heard on the radio about the University bridging course, and enrolled to 'get back into the way of study.' She said she really wanted to work, so applied for entry into Bachelor of Mathematics, Bachelor of Arts, majoring in business and human resources, and Bachelor of Education (Primary) as first preference.

Being interested in children and their development, she made the decision to teach, as it was always something she had considered, and she believed she would obtain a position at graduation. She actually influenced herself into teaching as her husband had not talked to teachers, and believes she would be bored and not like the job. She was aware of the many combinations of university degrees, as in the four-year teaching program, and that she could major in Science and Mathematics, and obtain a Bachelor of Arts. Chris believed that she really always wanted to teach. The major attraction was personal satisfaction and child development, and she believed she had brought out the best in her son. She indicated that being good at mathematics had nothing to do with

how you teach them, and she was fascinated with it and loved the learning.

Chris said she had a desire to help people, specifically children and their families.

I: When you say help children what do you mean?

P: Motivate them. Motivate them to learn

I: Why would you want to help them?

P: Because it's important to have a good education. Motivate them for their own self- esteem, I think. The way of the workforce is that they're just keeping them in work longer. If you are not motivated to learn, I think that's the most important thing in life to motivate them to learn, to be interested, even if it's not formal learning, if it's just interest in learning.

Recalling outstanding teachers, Chris decided they were probably the strictest and most organised, claiming that at high school, some teachers did not motivate, just made children do work, said you produce this or you stay in. She said she had terrible teachers, even one who used to shake girls if they didn't give the right answers, but not the boys. In the lower grades, she recalled that the teachers liked you and you liked them. She observed that communication and rapport between teacher and children was important, so as not to damage a child's self esteem. The teachers of her children were outstanding:

- because the children liked her;
- and thought she was wonderful too;
- they aspired to be like her;
- it's a pity she retired.

When asked what attracts and holds people in teaching, she considered this point, but said she didn't know.

I: What's attracting you?

P: I have an interest in children and their development and how to motivate children. On the first day we had to introduce ourselves. The younger

ones were really there because they could not get into another university. One girl said her father didn't want her to go away, but she said she would have gone away to another university. I think it has a lot to do with age sometimes because you really wanted a career in teaching, or you really didn't know what you wanted and you just went into that.

I: Those outstanding teachers you spoke about, why do you think they would want to teach?

P: Probably the same as me, thought they would do well out of it. They thought they would be good teachers. They just like teaching, get the results, developing professionally, getting the feedback.

When Chris considered whether student teachers need mental stimulation, she indicated that she loved challenges, found learning fascinating, but worried that she may not be creative enough, not have the energy to bring her creativity into the real world in primary teaching. She enjoyed going out to the schools, calling it only Physical Education, but thought because she had taught swimming she would be better at micro-teaching than she was.

She identified some of the knowledge, skills and qualities necessary to the student teacher. In the subject, *Maths Curriculum and Pedagogy*, she expected that it would be more mathematics, but found it was really learning how to teach, using real life experiences. In the subject *Communication Culture and Difference*, she became aware of how important it is in teaching not to perpetuate stereotypes. She claimed that she found the subject fascinating, though she felt that she was not going to be a very good teacher for a long time. She identified these skills as important to student teachers:

- rapport with the children;
- organising teaching methodology;
- having to be creative;
- motivation;
- having good knowledge of psychology;

- understand and be interested in the children.

Necessary qualities for student teachers were identified as the interaction with children, the skills acquired to motivate children to do their best. Chris believed that student teachers who were parents would be better teachers, understanding that children's lives may not be working out the way they would like it. She observed that the most important thing to do as a teacher is to motivate children to apply themselves to their school-work, to try out new skills, and to attempt one to one teaching with the class.

Chris was able to articulate well what she expected of the preservice course. First she expected good lecturers, which she believed there were, and she expected to be interested, which she was. She expected a fair amount of work, which there was. She found her life to be hectic at the moment in a new situation, but was learning a lot. She was surprised in her micro-teaching swimming lesson, that she was not better than she thought she would be, but asserted she would be better with more practice. The only concerns she reported were in her creativity.

I: When you say the creative side, what do you mean?

P: In mathematics we have a lesson plan. That's our assignment, three lessons actually, and everything has to be related to real life, motivating children to learn, so they don't just turn off because it is a mathematics lesson. I have high aspirations, but I'm not creative enough, when I look at the tutor's good example.

She remembered her sons' teacher, who was highly organised with lots of things in the room, and she had the feeling that teaching is not a nine to three job. She realized she needed to motivate children, but now knew she had to motivate herself to think of novel ideas to develop skills to find her level of creativity.

Chris found she lost or missed the adult company at meals in the schools, as she believed that teachers have a way of talking they find difficult to turn off, from talking to children. She felt she might lose the ability to just interact with adults. She believed that no one should go straight to school to teach, because they lose the experience of going out to the wide world.

In considering future work she may gain after graduation, Chris thought preschool teaching would be easiest, and said she would be happy with all primary levels, and lower but not higher secondary years. She believed secondary was more specialised, and would find it a challenge to motivate them as they had 'come through the ranks.' She was ready to continue teaching until she was sixty-five if allowed, at least another fifteen years, until sixty. She did stipulate that she would not move away, and would take supply teaching if necessary. Her choices for the future included a small local school in the Queensland system, with middle school classes. As her husband was an accountant, she did not find actual job security a problem in a financial sense, but that there would be a teaching position for her.

Her most important factor in her decision to become a teacher was the theme of considering teaching as a career for her, but she had to find out what teaching was about.

Summary

Chris wanted to go to university, completed the university-bridging course, and was accepted into the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program. She had always wanted to teach and had a desire to help children, to motivate them to learn. While finding the program a stimulating challenge, Chris was concerned that she would not be creative or energetic enough for teaching. As a swimming coach

she had been surprised that initial teaching contact with children was not so rewarding, that she had more to learn. Teachers' life experiences, especially as parents, were important, enabling interaction, organisation, motivation and creativity. Strengths of the program were the encouragement of the lecturers, and early contact with children. She perceived a weakness in herself regarding her creativity, but meant to build on that. Chris hoped there would be a future teaching position perhaps in small rural schools, seeing teaching as providing a career.

4.3.1 Phase One Cross – Case Summary

In their first interview, most student teachers gave their major attraction to teaching as wanting to work with children or that they had always wanted to teach, although Jessica found being available for her son out of school hours most attractive. Some did not know what to expect in the teacher education course, others anticipated it would be hard work, while another had not contemplated first contact with children so early, and yet another believed the course would continue to be eye-opening and intriguing. At this time of their career, most thought they would lose nothing by being teachers, although Liah was aware of being 'in the public eye,' and Jessica believed teachers could lose the ability to interact with adults. While some teachers said they had no concerns in the course, others found they were not very confident as yet to teach children. Chris wondered whether she was creative enough, Rita was troubled that she did not know many peers, and Jack thought he might be 'better off' to have a full-time position because of stress in his assignments.

All the prospective teachers claimed they had a desire to help children, to help people some said, while Jack and Di called that desire the main reason to teach.

Regarding their former teachers, all participants were able to provide examples of what some called ‘good and bad’ teachers, and how the teachers had helped or influenced them in their school life. Most student teachers believed that teachers were attracted and held in teaching because of the children, although others mentioned satisfaction, a secure job and the ability to teach as attractive. Liz thought a position of authority might attract some, and Jessica said that teaching was not an easy job, that it takes a special kind of person to be a good teacher.

The intending teachers’ decision to teach embraced a wide variety of reasons. Liah and Carissa came straight from school and had always wanted to teach, Carissa specifically to teach the German language. Renae and Rita both held a Diploma of Childcare, and were eligible to enter the teaching degree. To Liz teaching was a childhood dream, Di wanted a career to help children, and Chris had always wanted to teach also. Jessica wanted a change in her family’s business, and Jack had wanted a change in his work-life after his former position concluded. All the student teachers regarded teaching as a stimulating career, some saying teaching would not be boring, loved challenges, were enthusiastic, intending to improve the flow of the lesson, to make it interesting. From her observation Rita claimed that today’s teachers make school interesting, not teaching by the book.

All student teachers were able to provide examples of the knowledge, skills and qualities necessary for the role of the developing teacher at this stage. Some ideas identified were:

curriculum knowledge, development of children, communication, the individual child, lesson plans, social and life experiences, understanding of children, and ‘learning how to teach.’

Skills needed were for assessment, class control, debating, communication, time management, student rapport and motivation. Di saw communication skills as very important to her personally, as she was extremely shy. Qualities for student teachers included being friendly, approachable, creative, dedicated, happy, patient, inventive, interactive, and experienced with children.

Each participant distinguished what was most important for the teacher, mostly in building relationships with the child. Jack saw professional experience in the schools in the first year as important, as did Renae in particular, as coming straight from the Diploma of Childcare, she had no experience of micro-teaching as yet.

In the timeframe of the first interview, most student teachers were becoming more aware of their perceptions regarding their teaching career. Looking at any future teaching after graduation, they were able to begin to articulate what teaching levels they would prefer at this stage. They mostly found from choices available that they would consider the geographic position of the employment, the year level and the student body. Some were prepared to go to country schools. Job security at this stage did not appear to be an issue, more to actually be employed.

All participants were ready to consider teaching from three, and to ten years after graduation, although Rita would consider part-time teaching. The interview summaries at this stage of the participants' first year in teaching show that most are generally positive regarding the roles and responsibilities of the prospective teacher at this particular time and in the future.

PHASE TWO

4.4. Phase Two (July-August)

Phase Two data were collected from eight student teachers from July to August 1999. The focus of this data collection is built on the literature review and the key findings to emerge from the Phase One data analysis.

The stage during which these data were collected represented a period when the prospective teachers had completed their first semester of the teacher education program. In that semester student teachers completed their individual subjects. Most started the program in the first two weeks, by going out to schools in the *Physical Education and Health* subject, taking small groups of children to teach, and observed by University lecturers. During the semester the intending teacher went out one day a week at the same school, with the same class, teacher and children. Interviews were in the first week of second semester mostly, and the eight individual days professional practice (as similar to first semester) was to start the next week. The ninth participant, Renae, when contacted, explained that she would not continue her participation with the research project as she had indicated earlier that she expected to continue her degree externally.

This set of interviews with student teachers, at the start of the second semester in the first year of their teacher education program in 1999 was a useful summary of their progress and participation in the process of becoming a teacher. The key issues addressed during these interviews included:

1. Any change in the participants' biographical or academic background.
2. The key findings from the earlier interview were conjointly examined, using the interview transcripts provided to the participants.

3. Consideration of the role of the teacher in emerging knowledge, skills and qualities.
4. Consideration of any change in the identified themes to indicate strengthening or weakening of the desire to become a teacher.

Interview 2 - JACK

Mid thirties

Redundant coal miner

That's me in four years time. Jack's continuing commitment to teaching.

Jack did not perceive any change in his personal circumstances. His perceptions of the course were not better or worse, a lot of work and a lot of fun, however he had not expected the amount of pressure. As a mature age student he had come from a nine to five job, with weekends off, whereas the student teachers out of high school environment were used to assignments and the study load. He had to consider the overall time commitment, and as he said 'the nerves set in, worrying, panicking, could he cope?' Now with the first semester completed he knew he did not have to worry about that, but that the pressure, the stress, was still there in every assignment submission, and talking to peers helped to keep focused on the end goal. One peer was considering dropping out.

Jack found the formulation of lesson plans to be influential in learning how to teach, as well micro-teaching with peers in some subjects, and assisting in whole days at preschool. The Special Needs subject in the last semester and the *Special Needs and the Supportive School Environment* subject were very helpful with strategies to assist children in gaining their confidence.

Most satisfaction came from the knowledge that as student teachers they are 'learning how to be teachers', and to find what problems are out in the schools. Unexpected satisfaction came from children in the lower grades.

They seem to listen and absorb everything you are saying. They watch you, watch your actions. If you ask them to do something they do it to the best of their ability. Where the upper primary grades seem to have a 'thinking of themselves' attitude and they try to think of what you are trying to get across to them, and try to work out an easier or lazy way of doing it, the lower grades are really switched on.

Jack found the children friendly. Mathematics had been a 'fun' subject, hands on and practical, where student teachers were taught to teach using modern day resources for learning. Group assignments and activities in Health and Physical Education he calls 'so alive,' in small cohort tutorial groups. The prospective teacher intends to complete the teacher education program, and he has motivated himself towards success by placing a print of a 'male silhouette in graduation cap and gown' on the wall. Jack says, 'that's me in four years time.' He said he was not academically brilliant, and he struggled at times. According to Jack he did quite well with his academic studies, surprising himself, as he 'never dreamt I would be at university, but I've quite excelled myself.'

Jack considered his student mentor as excellent, for at the start of the program he was one of a group of ten first year university students assigned to a second year Education student. The mentor emailed, phoned, (stuffed letters in the mail) her group, However Jack believed that other groups were not so lucky in regular contact with mentors. At this stage of his first year in the program he claimed that he was 'Extremely Satisfied' with his choice of a teaching career. He believed it is a really rewarding career, and by talking to practising teachers, he had satisfaction in helping students. He is considering an early childhood degree, to enable him to teach in preschools.

From the earlier interview, he sees himself as a role model for male children, with children trailing behind him, which encourages him in his first year to help

them in their life. Major attractions to teaching now include:

- people look up to Jack, when he says he is a university student studying a Bachelor of Education (Primary);
- encouragement to keep going when people say, "We need more males out there";
- encouragement of friends who are teachers;
- personal satisfaction.

He had not always wanted to teach, but after the first semester, he said 'that's all I want to do.'

He believed that more qualities have been drawn out in this year through his interaction with people at university in micro-teaching. His confidence and self-esteem had been built up, so that the want and desire was stronger, through enjoyment. He professed that, if the 'want' was too hard to do, you would look elsewhere. He observed that the desire to help people should be fairly high up the scale, and if not, the person should not be teaching.

Jack recalled that he had spoken about his teachers at school in the last interview, and now at the time of the practicum the student teachers had to write down some qualities of teachers they liked. Because he had problems with some of his childhood teachers, he wanted to make sure not to let that happen in his classes. He still anticipated teaching in a preschool, although he thought he was the only male in the course wanting to do so and was aware of problems forcing males out of the early childhood scene.

When considering whether the program was mentally stimulating, he felt in this semester there was a lot more work and reading, still stress and in every waking minute the university is on Jack's mind. His brain never stops, but has better ideas,

such as ‘I think I can use that idea.’ Student teachers, claimed Jack, must possess knowledge of:

- what you are talking about;
- the children and their background, the family history;
- all that's basic that goes into how a child behaves in class.

He still believed that communication is the essential skill for teaching, that without the skills he could not be able to effectively teach the class. He learns new information and new techniques by being in the practicum, and learning from peers. Jack found that he expected the size of the university to be satisfying, that it was not frightening, but ‘user friendly,’ as the student teachers get to know everyone in the tutorial groups. Jack did not identify many concerns, mainly just communication between tutorial groups, and the handing in of assignments.

Jack still did not think he was losing by being a teacher, as he was gaining so much knowledge, and a better quality of life with the reward of passing knowledge onto the children for their future. For choice of future employment he identified the geographic position as being important, that he would like to teach preschool. He intended to teach until he retired, as he admitted that ‘all the hard work must be used for something’. He believed that with so much unemployment in the world, job security was necessary and has been told that by the time he graduates that there could be a teacher shortage. He was sure that more male teachers were needed, and was glad to see there were two more male student teachers in the program.

Summing up at midyear, Jack had found the size of the university comfortable, user friendly, not frightening, as he ‘got to know all the cohort.’ He

was aware of problems he thought were forcing male teachers out of early childhood teaching, but still wanted to be a preschool teacher. He still had stress in every assignment submission, but his confidence and self-esteem had been built up, and he had an excellent student mentor. Jack's most important factor in his decision to become a teacher at this stage of his first year still remained 'the want, the passion of becoming a teacher,' to teach children.

Interview 2 - LIAH

Eighteen years old

Has small child

I'm definitely sure I want to be a teacher

Liah reported that nothing had changed in her biographical and academic circumstances. When asked at the beginning of the second semester whether teaching was better or worse than what she had expected, she replied that she was enjoying teaching a lot more than she thought she would. She had thought the subjects would be rather hard, especially subjects such as *Communication, Culture and Difference* that she knew nothing about, but learned quickly about semiotics, 'signs' and 'syntagms'. During her seven weeks holiday she took some volunteer work at a local state school with the special education unit. She enjoyed it so much that she was considering specialising in Special Education, until she decided that she would do an Early Childhood major, as she was not interested in *Visual Arts* and *Health and Physical Education*.

The experiences that were influential in helping Liah to learn how to teach included the tutorials being so small, and close to the tutors, about twenty-six or more student teachers. The lecturers were really able to help, and became close to the student teachers. She described writing lesson plans before going to schools as most helpful, and then going out in groups of two or three students.

She believed the most important satisfaction she received in the course so far had been the volunteer work she had undertaken, as she felt she had really helped someone to understand. She could really see that they understood what she said, that she had helped someone, and it was probably the greatest satisfaction she had had in her life. Liah claimed that she was 'sort of hoping' she would get satisfaction out of teaching and she had discovered that she did. She found the course 'fun', loving all subjects, even the most confusing. In mathematics she found it wasn't the content, but how to teach mathematics that she found valuable and enjoyable, finding the assignment fun. From her own research on assignments she found out much important information. She did particularly enjoy going out in the Prac to teach *Health and Physical Education* even though she was not particularly a sports' person.

At this stage of the degree she definitely intended to finish, because:

P: I love teaching and I'm definitely sure I want to be a teacher.

I: So would you say you were a called teacher before that?

P: For the last few years I've sort of always wanted to be a teacher, so will work with children or early childhood. This year I've just sort of proved I always wanted to teach. I was a bit worried about getting early teaching and figuring out I don't like this, But I do, I really love teaching.

I: So would you say you're really starting to be a called teacher?

P: I hope it's my calling.

Liah considered that she had not seen her mentor since orientation week, and was in a group of about nine, whom she named. In the first week the mentor rang all the people in the group, and after that she did not contact anyone. She said especially, when one of the group died, it would have been better if the mentor was there as the 'whole university was very upset' and it probably affected her as well.

She said she was 'extremely satisfied' in what she wanted to do, because she enjoyed teaching, that in many ways she was 'good at teaching and really wants to do it.' In her major attraction to teaching, Liah believed that she had been lucky at school and had had good teachers. She considered that salary was important, and did not know teachers received good salaries, but thought that the four-year degree was better than three years, as graduates would receive more money. The main attractions were still that she had always wanted to teach, and personal attraction.

She still believed that her desire to help people was important in her career. She had noticed that:

On my prac yesterday I noticed that the teacher I was with was 'really good friends' with every single student in her class. It just amazed me how easy it was to teach because they were all friends in there and that really helped.

What attracted and held people to teaching, according to Liah, was the ability to teach. She still believed that if the teacher liked the job they would stay.

The teacher responds, the children respond, and that's why the teacher stays.

Everyone thinks you are a good teacher, so that's why you keep going.

In the previous interview Liah had identified that she wanted to be mentally stimulated in teaching. She did not want to be bored, she wanted teaching to be interesting and involved. She did not stand back, and usually acted in that way, so that each day was different to make it more fun for all.

She was able to indicate any changes she had perceived in the role of the teacher regarding knowledge, skills and qualities. Motivation, she had been learning, was most important:

- the teacher needs to know what really motivates the children in the classroom;
- the teacher needs to know what will really get children to work when they may not want to work, perhaps in the way the teacher is teaching;
- different strategies the student teacher needs to motivate children.

Liah believed that to motivate other people, the teacher must be self-motivated. She observed that she did not think that she could get up in front of a group of children, to try to get them motivated in a lesson, if she did not want to do it herself.

She had identified the skill of being able to teach as necessary, as some people could not explain properly to others. She had also recognised the skill of understanding children through their different circumstances, and that she believed these were the skills she needed. She still believed that the teacher should possess the qualities of happiness and patience. Liah had said in the last interview that she could invent ideas, and later the mathematics tutor had taken a copy of her assignment, because she thought it was interesting. Liah had made that point earlier that student teachers should make their classes interesting for everyone.

Regarding her expectations of the course, Liah had identified that she was hoping to learn different models of how to be a teacher. She now explained that she had tried different teaching methods, such as in teaching *Health and Physical Education*, where the teacher did not order the children to 'do stuff', not just telling the children what to do and making them do it. She explained that the lesson was a lot easier if the teacher demonstrated and helped them along. She

also was able to observe so many different teachers, and having them as lecturers helped her to understand that teachers teach in a variety of ways, although she understood that she had to 'figure it out for herself and keep going until you get it right'.

Last interview, Liah had considered that she had no concerns in continuing the course, but identified others who were having concerns. At this stage of her first year she still believed that she had no concerns, and observed that those who did have concerns have 'pretty much dropped out.' They had been out to the schools to teach children, and they had decided that teaching just wasn't for them.

I don't think any of us were definitely sure that we wanted to be teachers until we had the actual practice and we all have now and those who weren't too sure have sort of dropped off, about three that I know of. The rest of us, I think, are pretty much going to go on to be teachers. I think it's better to find out early rather than later, wasting part of your life doing something like that, that you don't want to do.

The only thing Liah felt she might lose in becoming a teacher was freedom, as she had identified earlier that teachers had to work in the public's eye. In that area she observed that the teacher had to be accountable, and document incidents and happenings. She explained that student teachers had been warned about going into a teaching job 'wearing a pink mohawk and hanging earrings.' However, she still did not feel she could gain as much as she had as a teacher, in any other occupation.

In commenting on any future teaching year levels, Liah felt she was more comfortable with teaching a higher year level. Her work experience in the special unit over the holidays encompassed Grade One to Seven, and at the practicum school she has taken Year Seven, and now knew she could teach higher classes. She could still consider secondary in the future, she thought. She believed she

would be teaching in ten years, but was not quite sure at this stage that she intended setting up a Childcare Centre. While previously she was considering specialising in Japanese, she had now turned to Special Needs teaching. For any future teaching school, she changed some choices:

- she preferred to consider the students first, then the year level, then the geographical position, as her teaching experiences helped to consider a wider range of levels;
- she did not want to move far away with her young baby;
- regarding job security in teaching, Liah heard from tutors that some years after graduation, teachers could find work in education other than classroom teaching. She was reassured with that information, as she had been worried about becoming a teacher, not liking the work, and not having any other qualifications.

On reflecting on this interview, Liah stated that working with children, helping them and having the ability to 'pass on some knowledge that she may have,' was the most important factor in her decision to become a teacher. She was aware that she could have needed help from a mentor regarding a peer's death, but that she did not ask for help. In considering any future work after graduation, she did wonder about leaving the area with a young child.

Overall, Liah had no concerns about teaching, was enjoying teaching more than she expected, and had discovered that she gained satisfaction from teaching. She had found teaching Year Seven to be rewarding, and also found that learning 'how to teach' mathematics was valuable and enjoyable.

Interview 2 - JESSICA

Late thirties

Used to sell sewing machines

She still could not think of anything she would lose as a teacher

At this interview, Jessica explained some change in her academic and family circumstances. She said that at the first interview the family business was to be sold, but unfortunately it didn't and Jessica had to drop back in her degree to study part time. For the start of this second semester she had enrolled full-time, but if arrangements for the shop could not be made, she would have to drop back to part-time. She had ended up completing two subjects instead of four. Despite the change in her enrolment, or because of it, Jessica found it was better not to speculate on her decision to become a teacher. She found nothing different, not better or worse.

The experiences influential in learning how to teach for Jessica were in the practical work already undertaken. The first micro-teaching session commenced at the start of the year with half hour lessons in the *Health and Physical Education* subject every week at different schools.

The interaction with the kids, the way the children reacted to you, as we worked in groups of three, and I was often with the younger students. I felt that as a more mature student I understood the children a lot better, more of a...a suppose more motherly, not to say it was them, but it was a different attitude that they had.

She explained that this occurred at different schools, different class levels from Year One to Year Seven each week, so that she now had experience with a variety of year levels. Jessica called these visits 'cross-culture' as the student teachers went to State and Catholic schools. In helping in learning how to teach, she believed that 'the other was just theory and you couldn't test it until you actually taught.' The most important satisfaction she had received in the course

was being happy with her practicum grade, and as she had related in the first semester, being with the kids. She did not believe that there was any unexpected satisfaction in the program, but thought that, as a mature age student, she 'had things pretty well nussed out.'

The fun in the program was in the enjoyment of the *Health and Physical Education* subject, because in the tutorial, the cohort discussed going out to the schools. Jessica called the subject more like a health lesson, 'P for participating,' where student teachers 'got to experience the other side of it.'

In part of each tutorial a small group actually got together and took a part of the lesson and they would be 'teachers and kids'. I found that a lot of fun, as well as doing it with the children. So we had the two experiences.

She was emphatic that she intended to finish the course, because she said she was not the kind of person who gives up, and secondly this was what she wanted to do. When asked about her academic studies, she told me her marks for the two subjects she had taken, a High Distinction for *Health and Physical Education*, and a Distinction for *Communication, Culture & Difference* (a subject she had hated.)

Regarding the availability of a student as a peer mentor, Jessica said she had seen her mentor often in the first week of first semester, in the group of about ten students. She had seen the mentor a couple of times when passing, but she was available if a student wanted to contact her. She did email the group several times, 'to see how everything is going.' She said:

I think it is more beneficial to the younger students, especially those who are away from home. She is much younger and a second year Education student. She is there if you need it, but she's not in your face all the time if you don't need her. We don't have meetings, but probably could if the need arose.

When regarding the current perceptions of the student teacher's feeling about her career choice, Jessica reminisced that from the time she was little she had wanted to be a doctor. Now she thought she was probably getting too old 'to embark on that now.'

It would take too long, and even if I could get into medicine. By the time I graduated and finished being an intern it would be time to retire. So I think I would probably put Number Two, 'I am very satisfied with my choice of teaching.'

In the previous interview, Jessica had considered her attraction to teaching to be important to her because of the convenience of school hours in teaching, to be with her children. However, while she believed that was still important to her, she was enjoying 'working with the kids,' and that was becoming a little more important. She considered salary was important, but not the major attraction. She did feel personal attraction to teaching, but did not really feel called to teach:

Probably, it's just something that never occurred to me. Now that I'm into it, maybe I feel this is what I'm meant to do.

She reaffirmed her earlier decision in the first semester that a desire to help people in her career was important to her. In the first semester, Jessica had considered that teachers had pride and satisfaction in their career, and she now considered the importance of the desire to teach. She could not see anyone 'sticking to it long term without any other reason.' She had said earlier that teaching was not an easy job, that it took a certain type of person to be a teacher, and she considered whether she was that kind of person.

She still believed that mental stimulation was necessary to her in a teaching role. Jessica updated her ideas of the teacher's role in her identification of knowledge, skills and qualities required.

After having the opportunity to teach with children, Jessica was able to rate:

- good teaching strategies as very important;
- being able to adapt your teaching strategy to be inclusive;
- being able to reach the children across a wide spectrum, the disabled right through to the gifted to reach out.

Jessica had started the *Development & Disability* subject, but withdrew.

The subjects she took were

- Communication Culture and Difference
- Professional Practice, Teaching, Learning and Planning, Studies of Society and the Environment, Student Needs and the Importance of School Environment.

Another skill she believed was important to her teaching was curriculum, as in *Communication and Behaviour Skills*, where the teacher must be friendly and approachable. She felt that she still enjoyed sharing knowledge and helping someone to understand. While she reiterated the importance of the basic skills children need in real life, Jessica added the importance of self-esteem to the child. What she expected of the program at this stage was that the semester would probably become more difficult, and that she would 'just take it as it comes.' She had no concerns regarding the course, and still could not think of anything she would lose as teacher.

In considering year levels for future teaching, she was still interested in the lower classes. Geographic choice of school remained important to Jessica, in consideration of her family. She favoured the choice of year levels now, rather than the importance of salary in teaching. She did not see much change over her earlier hypotheticals for the future.

Even though earlier in the year Jessica had to drop back to part time study with two subjects, she was relieved later to be able to return to fulltime study, back to four subjects. Working with children was becoming more enjoyable, and she termed 'learning to teach' as fun in *Health and Physical Education*. She attained high results in her academic studies and was very satisfied in teaching.

Interview 2 - CARISSA

Eighteen years old

Wants to teach German in schools

She had been set on being a teacher since Year Eight

At this stage of her teacher education program, Carissa stated that her biographical and academic details were not changed. When commenting on whether the course was better or worse than expected, she just mentioned all the assignments, but said there has been nothing good or bad about the course so far. She explained that she was learning a little about children and their behaviour, but had thought she would be learning more about actually teaching children the content of the lesson, but was now learning more about teacher contact. She has had contact with the children, going out to the schools for the *Health and Physical Education* practical for an hour once a week. She rated that experience as enjoyable, as she believed that all universities do not have that experience as they do not have professional experience until the second and third year.

She was anticipating that in the coming practicum she would have a supervising teacher, who would work with her with the whole time she would be at that school, with lecturers also to help. Whereas the physical education lesson was only for an hour, Carissa was looking forward to a whole day in a class. Experiences that have been helpful to enable her to learn to teach have included:

actually having been with the children already. It helped me to see what it's actually like to be in the schools. I can practice what I've learnt on them.

Her most important satisfaction she had received in the preservice course had been:

I have enjoyed being with the children. That's been an experience.

So far in the course, Carissa had not found any satisfaction that she didn't expect, explaining that it was still early in the course. Of the things that were fun in the course, she included actually going out to the schools for the *Health and Physical Education*. She was enjoying other subjects, such as learning about disabilities, and in mathematics the different activities. She anticipated that she intended to finish the course, because she wants to be a teacher. Carissa rated her academic studies as having being, 'well enough,' that she had passed all subjects. She still had hopes that she might be able to transfer her teaching program back to Brisbane.

She explained the mentoring system on campus, so that if she needed help with her assignments, she could ring the mentor, but that the mentor had only kept contact for first semester. The mentor was a second year Education student and it was good to talk to someone who knew 'what it's all about', but Carissa observed that most student teachers in her group 'managed fairly well on their own.' She claimed it was excellent to have a mentor, a good idea.

Carissa indicated that she was very satisfied with her choice of teaching as a career at this stage of her first year. She reconsidered the major attraction that teaching held for her in the second semester. She restated that it was still working with children, the salary did 'nothing really big' for her, and she did not feel it was important. She felt there was prestige in being a teacher, as it was

always good to be 'in a good steady job,' and you are probably 'higher up the rank.' She had stated that none of her friends were doing teaching, that she was not following anyone. She said she liked working with children and that satisfied her, as she had said she always wanted to teach. The desire to help was important to her career choice of teaching, just as she had stated her desire of helping older people, and hopefully in the primary school she would help.

Carissa reflected again on why teachers were attracted and held in teaching, still believing that teachers are really the starting blocks, the ones who have to be there. As the student teacher was learning more about inclusion problems of the mentally handicapped or Down's syndrome and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), she or he needed help (knowledge) to handle the situation, to help the child. The teacher accesses necessary information to make the career stable. She believed some teachers had to stay in teaching because of friendships with the children that they wanted to help.

Going out to schools had reinforced Carissa's belief that mental stimulation plays a part in the teaching career, as there was always something different going on. She reconsidered the role of the teacher and the knowledge, skills and qualities necessary to fulfill that role, and the general knowledge required. She was able to participate in the physical education activities with the children, and could observe:

- how they grow and develop;
- what stage they are at in their growth rate;
- how they play their games;
- their major skills.

Carissa recalled that she had the skills of debating and knowledge of the German language, and also was learning more about computers every day, building on her skills. She believed she was building on her qualities with part-time baby-sitting of a Grade One child, and her next practicum was with a Grade One class. She would still like to further her knowledge of German in Brisbane. She still thought that, as a teacher, the most important aspect would be working with the children, and that her professional practice and experience would help in this role.

Previously the prospective teacher had stated that it was most important to listen to children, and that she had learnt:

how they react to you, how they behave, and what they do in certain situations. It's important to have the two mixing together, that it's cooperative. They take something from you and I take something from them. With Health and Physical Education we had about three children to a student teacher and we played a small game, then with three other fellow teachers we played a game with the nine of us, just a half hour.

Previously she had been happy with the microteaching, and in the second semester Carissa expected a heavier workload, and experiencing longer teaching practice. New subjects she expected to happen were:

- *Teaching, Learning and Planning*, about help and planning with student teachers' lessons.
- A follow-up from *Development and Disability* is about the behaviour of children with disabilities.
- Another subject is *Studies of Society & the Environment*, which is about geography and history, of which Carissa liked the geography, but not the history.
- One subject, *Professional Practice*, covers the practicum right through to the end.

Carissa repeated her previous concern from the first semester, in which she said she was still not ready to handle a full class, because she didn't have enough experience behind her. So far she had only taken small groups of children to start with, but perhaps later in the practicum she could be taking a class, and she felt she would be ready at that time.

She still did not think she would lose anything by being a teacher. As she had said in the first semester she did not know any other occupation, because she had not learnt anything else. She had been set on being a teacher since Year Eight, and she said it was possible that she could say she was a called teacher. She had said that some student teachers did not know, really know, until they were in the course, and some were in another course and had changed over to be a teacher. Carissa believed that a few had dropped out because they did not want to carry on, too much work-load. Some people were still deciding, and after the practicum, they would still be deciding whether teaching fits with them or not.

In considering any future year levels, Carissa preferred lower year levels, until after the practicum, but was already thinking after her graduation towards the older levels of Five and Seven for her LOTE teaching:

- she stated she would be teaching three years after graduation, and from ten years she would be there until she retired;
- in the hypothetical job offers after graduation, her first three selections changed slightly from the geographical position, the year level and professional freedom to the geographical position, the students, then year level;
- she would prefer to be back in Brisbane, as she could not handle living in the country;

- the students were one of the most important things in teaching;
- she still thought salary was important, an important consideration for student teachers at graduation.

In summary, she admitted she was still not ready 'to take a whole class,' but had enjoyed the early contact with children. She was looking forward to a whole day in school in the practicum, and at this stage thought she may be a 'called teacher.' She found she still preferred to live in a big city. Carissa admitted that the important factors of her decision to teach were still working with children and her future in German.

The units helped me to understand more, and I'm sure the next Professional Practice will help too. Nothing has really changed, perhaps after the practicum. It has been good to recap and look back.

Interview 2 - RITA

Mid forties

Not confident with children

She asked for a deferment because her husband had been so ill

When reviewing any change in her biographical and academic circumstances, Rita said there had been a big change, as she found she could not cope with her husband's illness and the teaching program. She had put her teaching 'on hold' for six months, which she did not like doing, but she could not afford to even find out her results. She explained that, as she had always loved books, she intended to enter the external Librarian Technology course from a southern university, and had to be in the local university to get into the librarian course.

At TAFE in the Diploma of Childcare she believed she could cope, but she had a bad experience in the Education degree, when she had to hand in an assignment two or three times. She felt that what she did last year showed she

needed the ability to control the class, because the children scared her, and she had no experience in planning. She asked for a deferment, because her husband had been so ill. She thought she needed support, and hopefully in the librarian course she would find help, as another student was starting the same course, and they could work together on similar subjects. She had chosen two subjects not requiring a computer.

With her husband so ill, Rita did not take any Education subjects requiring the practicum, but she had been volunteering in the schools. At the university, Rita had found the Careers Officer most helpful. In other ways, she had expected teaching would be better for her, but repeated that she could not control the children at the school where she volunteered, even in a group of four. She found that watching other teachers had been influential in helping her to teach. Because she had not taken subjects with practicum, she did not have many peers, and had chosen only one subject.

She did not feel satisfied with herself because, even in the mathematics subject, she was disappointed that she did not pass, even though she felt the tutor did help in the 'fun things' in the subject. She realised that she 'only come from one subject, [had enrolled in one subject only]' but when her husband was ill she said her study 'just fell in a heap.' Rita did not really comprehend the way that the Mathematics papers were written. She had enjoyed the practical side of the mathematics subject, and had peers to talk to. She hoped she could continue to become a teacher eventually, as she had found she had taken on too much.

She contacted her mentor to see if he could help her to understand the mathematics assignment, but he said she would have to go back to the lecturer. She believed it would be better to have a more mature age student to help. She

was satisfied with the course in her circumstances. Because she had not fully understood the nature of the mathematics assignment, she did not take the assignment for comment by the lecturer, and did not get it completely finished for assessment.

In looking at the last interview, Rita believed that, in teaching, a desire to help was important, so that the student teacher could learn to teach in a 'fun way,' so that school was 'not as tedious' as it used to be when she was at school. Most important for student teachers was to help children not to worry, and to make it easy for them while they were still learning, in order to help their self esteem. Rita reconsidered what attracts and holds teachers in teaching.

You have the genuine teachers who really love teaching and those who just did it because it was a job, and some do not appear to really worry about the children, not making it interesting for them.

Mental stimulation is necessary for the children as well as the teacher, Rita stated. She explained that she had met one great teacher, who could not communicate well enough, to be able to speak to the parents outside of school hours. She believed that some teachers had to be able to know more about the world. Rita reconsidered the knowledge, skills and qualities the role of teacher required:

- she thought the teacher should try to understand how a child feels, so that if the child has any problems the teacher should attempt to help the child;
- she rated good communication skills as most important, so that the teacher needs the love of teaching, to 'love the kids.'

If she started the library technology course externally, she believed she would know what to expect. She explained that she came to the university at the

start of the year knowing nothing, and she had to find out for herself. She had hoped to find more precise instructions. Coming back next year Rita would have to repeat the mathematics subject again. As well she would have to take the *Health and Physical Education* subject, part time she thought, as it was compulsory to the program.

Rita did have concerns about continuing now, and she had realised, that if help is needed she had to do it herself. She did not really feel she was called to teach, because she had always thought about how she could be able to teach. She had watched others teach, but she would try the librarian course because she wanted the experience. She repeated again that she did not have the confidence in herself to do it,

to really hold the kids. I'm frightened that ...I'm not going to teach them the right thing. I'm not doing good enough.

As a teacher she thought she would not lose anything. Thinking about any future teaching, Rita anticipated that she would prefer year levels no higher than middle primary, as she was aiming to try the librarian technology course, where she would have to learn computers and internet skills to pass them over to the children. She was hoping that with those subjects, she would be able to keep going and be able to continue teaching in the future. She explained that the subject was only two years fulltime, but she would try as part time until she 'found her feet.'

Looking at hypothetical future teaching, Rita repeated her concern about the geographical position of any remote school, as she could not move away because of her children and her husband, but she was hopeful of managing the library course.

Her decision to teach had been difficult, and she had had to defer at the moment, because it had been harder than what she expected, for her personally. If her husband had not been ill she may have started the library course, because it was something she wanted to do.

Addendum

November 1999

When contacted, Rita stated that she had deferred the two library subjects, and hoped to complete the mathematics and the *Health and Physical Education* subjects part time in the future, as her husband still did not have much strength.

Interview 2 - LIZ

Early forties

Teaching was her childhood dream

Liz also found being out in the schools was fun

Liz noted that her personal and academic circumstances had not changed, and was glad to move on. She considered whether teaching was any different from what she expected, stated that it was not, and that the student teachers were getting plenty of help. She had expected that and was glad of it. From listening to people from other colleges, she was also pleased that the student teachers here had teachers who were easy to get on with and willing to help you out. She did not say it was better than expected and was not saying it was worse.

The experiences that were influential in helping student teachers how to teach were various:

- learning how to teach mathematics;
- how to be among the children when going out to microteaching which was fantastic and essential;

- getting into the ‘nitty-gritty’ of how to respond to the behaviour of the children which was very good.

Liz said she needed a lot more of the same in the next semester.

She commented on the most important satisfaction she had received in the course in the way that she was able to put down on paper the learning skills she needed, and also putting them into practice in a small way. Liz explained that over the next eight weeks the student teachers would go out to the schools one day a week, rather than going out in a bloc teaching practice. Another satisfaction had been the idea of gathering resources for each unit, such as the resources for the *Studies of Society & the Environment* subject she was working on at this time. The resources were to be put together in a form that would cover many different ways of teaching, practical, musical, mathematical, all the different types of learning.

She had been hoping the issue of public speaking may have been addressed in the course, which it hadn't been, she thought, as yet. A satisfaction that Liz had not expected to find presented itself, as she had been learning to associate more with her peers, which she said she needed, learning to talk more, as her conversation techniques needed to be improved. So far in the course she had taken one small seminar assignment, but she had ‘plenty of others to do,’ which would give her practice. Getting up to present those seminars in front of her peers and lecturers, she believed would be part of her satisfaction of teaching.

The presence of ‘fun’ in teaching was evident through Liz’s account of working together with others:

- She rated participating with someone in an assignment as ‘fun,’ explaining that the prospective teachers could pool their skills together in association with people that they hardly knew, which was good fun with the other adults;
- Liz also found being out in the schools was fun, that she really liked the microteaching, and was looking forward to being in the schools, though she thought it may be nerve-wracking;
- she had certainly found the *Health and Physical Education* visits to schools fun, because it was all athletics, and theory of all sorts.

She asserted that, of course she intended to finish the course, and the main reason why was that she wanted the ‘registration card’ to be able to teach in a job, and she needed those years in order to become capable. When asked about her academic results, Liz said she did not know her marks:

because I don’t have the money to pay for my Student Association fees,[The University does not release marks if the student carries a debt] and I didn’t have Austudy. I looked into it, and I’m a ‘strange case. They just forgot me. I’ve got to work this out yet, and pay for that, then get my results and pay for my books and everything else. But the fact that I had no Austudy all this semester means I’m going to have a nice back-pay.’

Regarding the mentors each first year student has on campus, Liz thought she was the one who was a ‘bit slack ‘in that area, as she just did not go to talk to the mentor. She believed that she did need to ask her mentor about resources, as Liz did not really know where to look for them, but knew she could ring and talk to her. She explained that the Education students had an association where they held social occasions on campus, and were attentive to other Education students. In making the choice of which statement came closest to her feelings about her career choice at this stage of the first year, Liz circled the second choice, that ‘I am very satisfied with my choice of teaching.’

When reviewing the reasons for her main attraction to teaching, she declared that it was working with children, inspiring them to learn as a main objective. She thought the consideration of future salary for student teachers was important, because the bills had to be paid. Professional prestige did not matter to her at this time. Personal satisfaction was important because she wanted to grow in herself to be able to develop skills, and to become a better person in herself.

She repeated, as in the first interview, that a desire to help was important as a teacher. As a nurse she had the desire to help people because she believed she was sympathetic and passionate about that career. Now, because of the needs of her own children at school, she felt just as passionate about teaching.

Previously, Liz had considered why teachers were attracted and held in teaching. In addition to the several comments she made at that time, she reiterated that a secure job was an attraction. It was her opinion that there could be a 'huge' influx of necessary teachers, and not just because older teachers may be leaving teaching. She asserted that in any change of government there could be an expectation of what is wanted for teachers in the teaching arena:

From the political level I think there's going to be a lot more (teachers) to choose from, to decide that they can say that these ones can go. We don't want them, and from these ones we can choose them because we want them.

Mental stimulation was important to Liz, as she showed in the earlier interview, as it was in nursing for her, as a student teacher stepping into the children's shoes in the Mathematics tutorials. She believed that in teaching she was avoiding a more emotionally straining job or choice of career, such as in going into a welfare position that might have a stress 'go go go go sort of job,' actively encouraging others all the time.

In re-reading her comments about what knowledge, skills and qualities are necessary for the student teacher in assuming the role of the teacher, she considered they need even more knowledge than she had mentioned earlier. She thought it was obvious to her that student teachers need, and should access a big resource pool, whether that could be resource people, or from the library, from the Internet or from a room full of gear, so that the resource is in place waiting to be used. To add to the extensive list of skills Liz covered in the first interview, she considered the potential teacher must know several different avenues of redress, in order to cope if there is a problem in the classroom:

- what associations will help?
- what legal rights I have?
- skills to consider the options, to take the problem to the headmaster.

Further qualities for student teachers that Liz mentioned included tolerance, patience, and encouragement towards the right direction. In considering what was most important as teacher at this stage she was still in agreement with her views in the first semester. Her expectations of the first semester revealed that Liz was surprised that the intending teachers were so quickly placed into the environment of school, teacher and child, but it was a good surprise. In the second semester she recognised that she needed a variety of practical and vocal activities.

Concerns regarding teaching that were identified earlier continue to be an issue, to build up confidence in any activity. While Liz did not believe she was losing anything by becoming a teacher, she did think that student teachers coming straight from school may lose as they may have become institutionalised, with the school and environment becoming so familiar. She is not losing out:

- because it adds to whatever she is doing;

- in other schools;
- in seeing parenting.

As she said, if she was to sit around doing anything else, looking for a job, she would not be able to do much else except sell behind a counter, whereas what she is learning now is great in knowledge. In considering future employment after graduation, Liz remembered her experience of childcare as good, but draining, describing it as ‘full on and active’ caring for others’ emotional needs, and so she decided she would be happier teaching the upper grades. Regarding how long she would continue teaching, she reiterated that she intended to keep going, well after that time.

The choice of future employment was hypothetical, but Liz rated the year level as most important as she intended to teach higher primary, even secondary grades. She was still happy to teach in a more rural area, and thought administrative influence was of next importance. Job security was necessary to the teacher, and Liz remembered that her teachers of old were usually there for the whole year, with stability for teacher and child.

Liz re-evaluated what she had said about crucial factors in her decision to become a teacher. In summary she had enjoyed going out to schools in Physical education as it was athletics and theory, and was fun. She had been disappointed her Austudy grant was help up as she needed to know her subject marks. In associating with her peers she was pleased her conversation techniques were slowly improving, and had taken one ‘small seminar.’ However she was positive of one of the main reasons:

The teachers in the past have influenced me, because I had good teachers. I've only had one in my whole life who had a negative influence, and most of them were men. All my teachers were men.

Interview 2 - DI

Mid thirties

Is extremely shy

She found everything she had done in the program was fun

Di thought there were no changes in her personal and academic circumstances. In considering many ways teaching is different than expected, she asserted it was more interesting than she thought it would be.

I thought it would just sitting around, and you learn this and that, like it was at school, but all the lecturers tend to make it interesting and get your attention and keep it, even if by clapping hands.

She explained that she had been volunteer teaching at a local school, assisting the teacher, and she started the practicum the next day. She had been to meet her teacher and half the children. The subjects Di had taken were:

1. Development and Disability
2. Health and Physical Education
3. Curriculum Pedagogy Mathematics
4. Communication Culture & Difference (a total waste of time, in her opinion.)

This semester she was taking *Studies of Society & the Environment, Professional Practice*. The experiences that have been influential in teaching the student teacher how to teach, according to Di, were mainly the attitudes of the lecturers, and of other teachers:

They've been very positive, not pushing you down, you're just a beginner, go away, that kind of thing. Everyone I've talked to so far has been very helpful, having good lecturers. It's opened my eyes. There's only so much you can learn behind a desk. You've got to be out there and into it and know exactly what you're facing. Here's a naughty child. What do you do? Here's a child who won't do anything you want him to. What do you do? Those kind of situations. And I hit all three of them in the first three weeks. You had to think quick

The most important satisfactions Di had received in the program were mainly the backup from the lecturers, teachers and peers, saying ‘you can sort of bounce ideas off them’ if your lecturers and teachers are approachable. She had found some satisfaction she did not expect, because she was a bit worried, as she had two children at home. She had worried about keeping her temper, but she found changes at home, when she kept, cool calm and collected. She found everything she had done in the program was fun. She had ‘a ball’ last semester in the physical education subject, spending hours where she had to think up all the lesson plans to teach the kids. She explained that physically she was not too good at it, but she loved teaching it. She enjoyed the finding out-or-the researching to do assignments, the bigger the assignment the better. She just thought back to when she was sporty, years before, so she tried to mix it all and have fun.

Di was going to finish the program because she intended to be a teacher, and she aimed to get all the qualifications she could. She wanted to teach from kindergarten up to higher classes, but she would like to:

specialise with Special Needs kids. Their problems, their physical, mental, intellectual, it doesn't matter. As fast as I can take it. That's where I am going.

When commenting on her academic assessment, she said she had passed three subjects, but failed one. She didn't think she should have failed, and was not happy. She had passed the exam, but had failed the assignment (not negotiable), even though the paper had been checked out by three other teachers, who said it was fine. She had to take the follow-on subject in the second semester. However, she came out with mostly credits.

Di's ideas about mentoring were varied, as she had seen the mentor for ten minutes on the first day and had not seen her since. She had been given her contact details, and had tried to ring once, but she had no answer. None of the group had seen the mentor, and most had not spoken to one another. She heard some mentors were 'fantastic,' giving information to first year students without being asked, even to the extent of helping them to obtain textbooks. She said she did not know what happened to her mentor, that she had disappeared.

When she commented on which statement came closest to her feelings about her career choice, Di exclaimed that she was extremely satisfied with her career choice:

I am having a ball, having a ball learning. I'm achieving what I wanted to achieve. I'm having fun doing it.

At the start of the second semester, Di reiterated that her major attraction to teaching was to help children. She did say that she realised she had to concentrate in her work because of failing a subject. A desire to help children was important in teaching, she considered, as well as personal satisfaction. She had not felt she had always wanted to teach. While some say they are called to be teachers, she believed she might have a 'belated calling.'

Mental stimulation was necessary to teaching, and previously Di had admitted that she was so stimulated by teaching that her mind kept going at night. She was able say now that she had to 'train her mind' to turn herself off just to sleep, even in the early hours of the morning. She had to try to calm herself down, and meditate just to get to sleep some nights.

Di was able to consider further what attracts and holds teachers in their career. She thought those teachers loved teaching, loved children, and just wanted to help them. She added that she was just learning how.

In reconsidering what knowledge, skills and qualities were required for the role of the student teacher, Di said laughingly that the teacher had to have knowledge to make sure that the teacher was 'smarter than the kids.' The teacher needed that knowledge, or as she said 'they will get you every time.' She believed that:

if children ask about a subject the teacher knows nothing about, it is better to be honest, and tell them you don't know, rather than trying to bluff your way through.

In the first semester, Di had explained that she was so shy that she had no speaking skills. Now at the start of the second semester, she found she was able to stand up in front of her peers more comfortably:

- she also found she had to draw on other skills such as imagination, a vivid imagination;
- she had to be flexible, very flexible;
- the student teacher might have a lesson plan prepared, but something must happen if it was not working out and the prospective teacher would have to quickly change, to be able to be ready to shift and change at a second's notice;
- she had identified previously that the student teacher had to use qualities from life experience in teaching and at this time she was not able to identify other qualities that may be necessary.

Di had recalled earlier that she had considered her past teachers as 'confidantes,' always friendly, and what was important to her in teaching was because of the problems her sons had growing up. She had wanted to know how to help them to achieve.

In the earlier interview she spoke of the expectations of student teachers, and she explained how unexpected, in her first contact with children, was her adult way of dealing with an unruly child. Now she said she has done that a couple of times and turned them into teachers. Again Di expect the course to be:

- harder;
- a lot more detailed;
- a lot more study.

From the first semester, she found she knew a 'little bit more of what the student teacher is in for,' if they talk to their teacher before they go. She had talked for two hours, and found it was easier if on the same wave-length. The teacher told her:

- a bit about the kids;
- what their names were;
- what they were up to;
- what we'll be doing.

In reviewing any concerns she may have had, Di had been worried that she 'might freeze' in her teaching, or 'make a fool' of herself. She explained that she had been at the same school, class, teacher and children one-day a week for several weeks, however she was the only student teacher at a more distant rural area. One other concern was that of 'flunking' a subject as she had to repeat the mathematics subject next year. She did not know if anyone else had failed a subject, and she had not told anyone else she had to repeat.

Again Di believed that she would not lose any thing as a teacher. She would gain, would not lose. In retracing the year levels she would choose at this time, she chose the same levels of preschool, childcare and lower primary grades. She explained that:

- you have a ball with those kids;
- teach them what you want them to learn and in a fun manner and you will not look an idiot.

She remembered that when young all her problems were in Year Seven.

She has now found that the older children get the more they seem to rebel, and unless they are really interested in learning it is a fairly difficult task to keep their attention. Di had identified that her skills at the start of the course did not include public speaking, and that she was 'extremely shy.' Now when she had to present a forty to fifty minute assignment and had to get up in front of her peers she was shaking in her boots.

Regarding future teaching after graduation, she was quite happy to be teaching for three years, also ten years, and even after twenty years. In a hypothetical future scenario, Di kept her preferences almost entirely. She felt the first choice of a school was because of the students, she preferred from Year Five down, and would be happy

to go bush, the deeper the better, country town or country area. It's like teaching friends, small close knit. I live on the edge of S, near the cemetery, then my friends don't go visiting.

In the first semester, she was confident of finding a position after graduation, having heard of coming teacher shortages. At this time she did not feel that job security and salary was greatly important to her as a student teacher. When summarising what were the most important factors in her decision to become a teacher, Di at this stage was more comfortable to speak with peers, but had been upset in presenting a seminar. She would have to repeat one subject in the next semester. While she was confident of finding a position after graduation, she would be happy to work 'out bush.' Di repeated the two words from the earlier interview, helping children as she believed:

That is what teaching is all about. Trying to get it in their heads. If you had asked me ten years ago about having a calling for teaching I would have said, "What are you talking about?"

Interview 2 - CHRIS

Mid forties

Married to an accountant

She now believed she could manage the work, do it well, and liked children.

Chris considered in what way teaching turned out to be different from what she expected. Her first comment was that she did not have any preconceived idea of what it would be like. She thought it was really good, very effective, very relevant. Although she had thought she would have been better at teaching as she had taught swimming, she found that the course had helped everywhere, and she would build on through the relevant subjects:

- Students Needs and the School Environment
- Study of Society and the Environment
- Teaching, Learning, and Planning
- Professional Practice One

It was going to be a busy semester, she surmised, and there seemed to be a rush to have all done in twelve weeks, then to have seven weeks off. The assignments had to be in virtually at the end of the twelve-week bloc. There was no two-week bloc for the end of this year, as there would be a second eight one-day for *Professional Practice Two*. Chris found that her teaching had been no better or worse than expected, but relevant.

The most influential experiences in teaching the student teachers 'how to teach' were nearly all of the subject offerings, according to Chris, and from the last semester:

- the pedagogy subjects were actually how to teach those subjects to children, and were really relevant.
- The *Communication and Culture and Difference* subject showed how people are enculturated, and showed the student teacher how not to be subjective in the class.
- *Development and Disabilities* showed stages of development in children.

She called these subjects very relevant, including *Health and Physical Education*, which she had mentioned in the first interview as enjoyable. She rated these influences in learning how to teach as being a good combination through both the university learning and going out to the schools,

otherwise it is just all theory and if you are actually doing it, you need to combine the two.

Chris re-examined what she thought was the most important satisfaction she had personally received in the course, as she didn't know. Perhaps it was learning how children learn, or in microteaching there was so much. There was discipline, and learning how to learn, and the stages children go through. There was just so much to learn, how they learn and to keep them motivated, and give them good strategies to learn. She believed that you do not get one satisfaction, you do not get it all from one subject:

You get it across the subjects, a little bit here and there that you need to use. They are all pretty helpful. I think you need it all as a package, I must admit, to get to practice on children, though you don't need to use them as guinea pigs – it is an important part of it. You can write up a maths plan, but it will never be perfect, but to actually practice to teach that to children. I suppose it's being out in the field in the first semester to put theory to practice.

A satisfaction that Chris found that she didn't expect was that she probably enjoyed teaching even more than she thought she would, the actual

being with the children and teaching. Even though it was a small group she thought it would be harder, and as she had said earlier she thought she would have been better because she had taught swimming, and so it just fulfilled expectations. She laughed loudly when asked what was fun in the course:

- teaching the children is fun in the course;
- *Professional Practice* will be the most fun because we actually get in the classroom and not just do the theory;
- you actually go out to have hands on experience and get practice in teaching.

She was excited that she was going out to a Year Five class and had spoken by phone to her teacher. She said that seminars could not be called fun, and she had a few seminars to be presented. She did say that the actual getting together of the seminars and Social Studies units were fun, but she did not know whether she would call presenting seminars to peers as great fun, but you had to do it.

At this stage in her first year she intended to finish the course because she enjoyed it, and would keep going because it would be worthwhile. She thought she could be a fairly effective teacher, and that if she thought she was not going to be that, she supposed she would not be there. She was most happy to give her academic marks, and said that it actually worried her that she got four High Distinctions, because she could only go down. She felt it was hard to know how she would go, whether:

You are giving them what they want. I mean the further into the university you do, the more you realise what's involved in teaching, the creativity, and what they want and the different learning styles. You can cater for all that, because I do know how to write academic essays, and that probably helped.

When commenting on her impressions of her campus university mentor as a first year student, Chris was impressed as even though her mentor was having a baby and had been ill she was quite helpful. She had wanted to know whether the first year education tests were ‘gruelling,’ and another second year student was able to help also. She felt that if a student teacher needed someone to talk to, if another adult student who may be less confident, or even older, the mentor is available but she said perhaps the younger ones have each other.

In choosing which statement described her feelings about her career choice, Chris indicated that she was very satisfied. Chris believed that the major attraction teaching held for her at this time is still working with children. Salary had a certain amount of attraction, having your own money, to be independent and make your own decisions. She felt a sense of personal satisfaction in teaching, and she had always wanted to teach. It was true that she had a desire to help children in the best way she could, in all the ways of learning and thinking about teaching.

When wondering what attracts and holds people into teaching, she thought about the young teachers straight from school, how they changed and matured over the three to four years, their self growth. She considered she had some self-growth to do, but they probably have a lot more, and they are there to learn.

What holds me is the fact from all that I've said is that I want to help children to learn and to have a good self concept, and be reasonable. But for some people probably holidays and that sort of thing attract them. Even though I've said that they may not have got in another university, as they develop over the years, I'm sure they will make great teachers.

She had found that the young ones answer the questions in the lectures and tutorials, and while some were right into it, others were quieter than the others, and one of them had killed himself, and another boy had left as well.

Mental stimulation on the job, Chris believed, was fairly important in the challenge of having different abilities in the job:

- the difference is the behaviour, to keep it interesting;
- to keep it going to bring out the best in them;
- stimulating lessons enough to keep them motivated;
- doing the research and putting our resources together;
- stimulating teaching enough for different classes;
- see how well they work, and then evaluate to find how well that lesson has worked.

At mid year it was important for student teachers to consider the role of the teacher and any growth in knowledge, skills and qualities they perceived. Chris showed in her first interview that the importance of knowledge was in the way you teach, not so much what you taught. She took the case of behaviour management, where there would be different behaviour problems, as well as different learning abilities, and the prospective teacher must cater for those. She felt that knowledge is what the teacher needs, and the skills are things that a teacher can use. In grammar and mathematics, lesson plans would be necessary for good English and mathematics. The actual knowledge and developmental stages, knowing the theory, would use the skills of behaviour management, developing the skills, through strategies in how to teach and motivate.

Adding to the qualities Chris had identified earlier, she recognised that she had probably learnt some qualities from other teachers, where the teacher

must be motivated and encouraging in becoming a quality teacher. Of the various things the teacher must do, Chris noted that the teacher must foster a good self-concept as a catalyst to learning, in order for children to be constructive learners. In this way, motivation by the teacher is very important to allow children to feel good about themselves.

As she continues into the second semester, Chris presumed that each semester:

would get more difficult if you are going to progress, I imagine, to ease you into it. So I'm expecting the workload to be a bit more next year, and the year after. They'll expect more of you, the ability to organise yourself to know what they want and what you are doing.

In the first interview, she had been concerned that she was not creative enough to be a teacher, but at this stage she reported she was getting better and becoming more creative. She found that she enjoyed getting all her resources together, that creativity was not all that was needed. Whether the student teachers came up with their own ideas or used good ideas from other teachers, probably someone had done it before. Chris realised that her perceived lack of creativity, that she would never find really interesting activities for the children to do, was not as bad as she thought.

Chris had thought that teachers sometimes lose the ability to interact with adults, playing the teachers' role at home and treating others also as children, talking shop if you go anywhere, 'about this good child, this bad child, how they learn'. She believed the student teacher needed to guard against this shoptalk with others, but teaching is time-consuming, and does take up your world.

'When others know you are a teacher, it is like with a doctor you have the expertise and others want some of that to rub off.'

Regarding the choice of future year levels in teaching, she was quite certain that she would be happy in teaching most levels, but her main choice would be upper primary or secondary.

- She also thought she was ready to stay in teaching from three and more than ten years after graduation.
- Any future job offers she may receive would be limited by the bounds of geographical distance as her husband and family live locally.
- The year level she would teach and the students in the school were important, and she included the factor of job satisfaction she would hope for in a school.

In considering the importance of job security to her, she had said earlier that her husband was a public attorney, so that money was not the object, but she wanted to get a job when she finished the degree. She had chosen teaching because:

It was something I thought I could be employed at, and so I didn't want to study something and not be employed. And so it's not so much the security, but that I could actually work, that I would get a job. And in other words I think I'm good enough to teach.

- She believed a lot of women teach even if it does not pay well, and it works in well with children in holidays.
- It was easy to go back to teaching after having children, and could be a good second income if not the primary source.
- These factors, she believed, made the career very attractive to women.
- They are more nurturing in nature probably to start with, so they think they are not gifted with it, but more inclined to it anyway.

Last interview Chris stated that her main factor in choosing teaching was because it would be a career for her. She has added to that factor, by saying that she did not just want a degree, but to actually work in that degree field. Her course subjects had helped her to teach, she had very high academic results. She now believed she could manage the work, do it well, liked children and wanted to be a teacher.

4.4.1 Phase Two – Cross-Case Summary

Student teacher perceptions of their initial year of learning how to teach which emerge from the phase two data are similar to those of phase one, where the role of the student teacher becomes more emergent and defined. As well, the possibility of future employment and the commitment to a teaching career became significant for the student teachers. As previously, in consideration of the cross-cases for the eight prospective teachers in this phase, it is evident that their perceptions of the role of the student teacher continued to evolve during this phase, in consideration of the teacher education program and their future teaching.

As well as the reiterative aspect of the phase one questions, there was a generality across the participants, as noted below, and also some differences and similarities in the comments and responses of emerging issues at this time of the initial year. In considering how teaching might be different from expected, Jack believed that his stress of assignments may have lessened from previously. Jessica had ‘dropped back’ to a part time course, as her business had not sold, but with other arrangements she was back to full time. Rita found teaching worse, for she could not cope with her ill husband and the teaching program, had deferred and hoped to continue onto a library study course.

At this stage of the program, most student teachers found microteaching as being influential in learning how to teach, while some mentioned lesson plans, being with children, and positive lectures and teachers as being important. Rita explained that she had not taken a Practicum subject because of her family situation. She had taken a small group of children at the local school, but found she could not control them. The most important satisfactions to the intending teachers were learning to be teachers, being with children, going out to the schools, microteaching and the backup from peers and lecturers. Rita did not find any important satisfaction, as she had failed her only subject, mathematics, and would have to repeat the subject.

Unexpected satisfaction from teaching came from observing children's reactions in the class, helping children to understand, being happy with the Practicum class, being with children and teaching, and an improvement in a student teachers' own children's behaviour at home. Carissa and Rita had no unexpected satisfactions. Liz found that learning to associate more with her peers an unexpected satisfaction, as she had known her conversation techniques needed to be improved.

Going out to the schools for the *Health and Physical Education* subject rated highly as 'fun in the course' with most student teachers, as did 'hands on subjects and peer seminars.' Rita did not go out to the *Health and Physical Education* school sessions as she had not taken any Practicum subjects as a part time student. Most students were quite happy with their academic assessment at this time of the year. Rita and Liz were disappointed that they had not passed their mathematics subjects, and would have to repeat that assessment later. Di could not access her marks, as her Austudy income had not been delayed as yet and she could access marks when student fee payments were made.

The student teachers were varied in their perceptions of the mentoring program for first year students, the mentors being second year Education students. Jack and Chris found their mentors helpful when they contacted them. Both Liah and Liz felt they needed their mentors, but did not contact them. Carissa managed by herself, Di did not see her mentor, but had her phone number. Rita had contacted her mentor, who was a young male student, about her mathematics assignment, but he suggested she should contact her lecturer.

Most student teachers indicated that they intended to finish their teacher education program, while Rita said she would like to finish. Jack, Liah, Jessica and Di described their feelings about their career choice at this time as being 'Extremely Satisfied,' and Carissa, Liz and Chris said they were 'Very Satisfied.' Rita said she would like to be a teacher, but she would 'need help.'

These apparent variations in comments and responses across the seven student teachers show their intent to continue in the teacher education program, except Rita who had deferred

PHASE THREE

4.5 Phase Three

Phase Three data were collected from seven prospective teachers from November 17 to December 21, 1999. The focus of this data collection is summarised on the next page, built on the literature review and the key findings to emerge from the Phase Two data analysis.

The stage during which these data were collected represented a period when the intending teachers had completed their first year of the teacher education primary program. In the second semester student teachers completed

their own individual subjects. There was no bloc practicum. The student teachers went out to schools for one day a week in the same school, whereas in the first semester they had only spent short-sessions (approximately one hour) with a small group of children. Interviews were in the last weeks of the year. Rita had deferred her study, and was not interviewed in the Third phase of the study.

This set of interviews with student teachers, at the end of the second semester in the first year of their teacher education program in 1999 produced a useful summary of their progress and participation in the process of becoming a teacher. The key issues addressed during these interviews included:

1. Any change in the participants' biographical or academic program.
2. The key findings from the earlier interviews were conjointly examined, using the interview transcripts provided to the participants.
3. Consideration of the role of the teacher in emerging knowledge, skills and qualities, along with any change to indicate strengthening or weakening of the desire.

Interview 3 - JACK

Mid thirties

Redundant coal miner

Jack said he desperately wanted to be a teacher

Jack had confidently undertaken seminars and groupwork with peers as required, organised children's groups, with his coursework. A friend had dropped out of teaching, deferring to start a family life. He still felt he was drawn to teach in a preschool, finding a disability subject helped him to encourage children in that area. He felt that a good teacher could help society

I think we all want to be Joan of Arcs or knights in shining armour, so we make –not a name for yourself but-you want to make some effect on the world we live in before you die.

Progressing through the coursework, his network of friends helped him in assignments and other areas. He thought those not continuing in teaching were dropping out by the end of the first year, and he kept in mind the male teacher problem with sexual connotations where male teachers work with young children. He expected the course to continue similarly, and knew that some student teachers straight from school were finishing the course elsewhere. He had no concerns about finishing the course as he felt teaching was going to be better for him as:

It's exciting. I've enjoyed every subject, because it was new. Some students said a subject is boring. I thought it would be just sitting in a classroom, do this, do that, what I envisioned from my classroom at school. It's fun actually.

He found most subjects 'fun' using the many strategies adapted for the classroom. He also enjoyed the feeling of being a teacher, that someone valued him.

It feels good when you're walking down the street on the weekend, and some little kid that you've taught says [mimics child], "Look, Mum, that's my teacher now." That's great. You may as well put a Mickey Mouse badge on you and turn into Superman.

He had found unexpected satisfaction with the children, and called all subjects of great significance. He lost nothing in being a teacher, but explained how important the mentoring on campus was for him as:

It would be easier just hopping onto a dole queue and looking for a job than studying, with all that stress and pressure. She [the mentor] spoke at length about sticking with it helped me, and she won mentor of the year. I've put my name down for student mentor for next year.

While he still had a problem with stress in examinations, he passed his mathematics subject, and was 'working it through.' He still wanted to teach in lower primary, with students the main focus. He stressed the importance of teaching strategy knowledge, communication skills and how the teacher showed

care and concern, particularly for the disruptive child. While he found his time in the practicum meant the children were glad to see him and he had everything organized well ahead, he found some student teachers did not have very good students. His supervising teacher had explained to the children how student teachers were special.

Jack showed pages from his reflective journal, remarking again about not being able to console the child who had fallen over. He explained that his teaching mark related to his teaching competence was a 'Sound,' with the range from Good to Unsatisfactory, and said his teacher was a hard marker. A friend told him that straight after graduation that he would be offered a 'job' as a male teacher, guaranteed a job. He desperately wanted to be a teacher, intending to finish the course as his wife was working and then she would stop. Salaries were sufficient for males and females, and he thought he would 'teach until he died' after becoming a teacher.

Becoming known as a teacher, he was tutoring a Year Six child, and was asked to coordinate Australia Day activities by the local council. He was showing visually his own philosophy of teaching about how he values children and the environment. Changes he perceived in himself through the course meant he was friendlier, and looked at his life through both the child's and the teachers' viewpoint. The idea of being called to be a teacher was discussed:

I: How do you think that term may apply to you?

P: About being called a teacher?

I: Do you want to talk about it?

P: I feel comfortable with it. I'm not embarrassed about being called a teacher. I think it's a privilege, because a teacher is a mentor as well. It's a guide.

I: Do you think it's a special calling?

P: Yes. I think it's a special calling.

In summary, Jack still wished to teach in preschool, and wanted to help society by being a good teacher. While he still had a big problem with examination stress he wanted desperately to be teacher, and he would get through. Jack indicated that he was '*Extremely Satisfied*' with his choice of teaching as a career:

It's the way I feel I can help. I may only help one child to get through his schooling years and make it to the end to be someone great and famous. So I just want to help that one. It's great to look back from where you started- halfway through.

Interview 3 - LIAH

Eighteen years old

Has small child

I haven't had a bad moment through my entire year. I am loving it

In this last interview, participant and researcher were more relaxed together, and able to discuss the previous interviews using the printed transcripts, and upgrading any change in circumstances while considering the interview questions. Liah's personal background had not changed much, but she was rather concerned that a friend had been posted 'way out west.' She was nervous about that future possibility with an eighteen months old daughter, but reassured that her friend may find a 'loophole.'

She had loved teaching Year Five in the practicum, knowing that she could teach all grades in the Primary degree. Having more support now, she was able to talk to other Early childhood educators while developing her own personal philosophy, noting that her daughter's Childcare Centre had its own childcare philosophy displayed, helping her to clarify her beliefs. Her major attractions to teaching had varied benefits:

- working with and helping children of any age;
- the salary is better than previously and teachers fight for their eight percent wage increase;
- regarding professional prestige, teachers have to be careful in the public eye, how you behave;
- teachers are held in pretty high esteem.

Liah called teaching an extremely important job, and she has a desire to help and teach people. The teachers' role means making sure the children's health needs are met as part of teaching and learning. In tutorials, student teachers recalled their past teachers, grouped into 'good' or 'bad teachers, but picking out their qualities also. At this stage of her first year, she called her practicum teacher as the best she had met, 'fantastic:'

- everything that I've ever learnt has related directly to them;
- I can say, my prac teacher did that, I remember when she did this;
- so she really is an outstanding teacher, that I will probably always remember;
- it's good to have an outstanding teacher in your first prac as well. It didn't turn me off.

Understanding children and communicating with colleagues to get parents' support was most important. She believed that successful teachers who wanted to help would be attracted and held in teaching, and those who dropped out, didn't enjoy it, couldn't manage or handle stress. She believed:

that you would have to enjoy teaching to stay, or you would get sick of it and leave, which would apply to studying as well as teaching.

Liah believed the teacher is interested in a child-centred program, children learning at their own pace, with a need to make parents aware of current

pedagogy, and that student teachers do not lose in becoming teachers. Mental stimulation was necessary to her as she needed change and stimulation constantly, not sitting at a desk and writing.

I: So this job has been mentally stimulating for you?

P: Definitely, it's more exciting than what I'd ever expected it to be. I thought it would just be lectures sitting in a lecture room taking notes, going home, writing them up, completing assignments. But it's so much more than that.

All assignments had been practical, such as developing unit and lesson plans that student teachers really need for the practicum experiences right at the start, and exciting workshops so stimulating, not boring as she thought it might have been. The level of support and interaction in groupwork came through the help of lecturers in problems encountered. Fast tracking would mean a higher workload 'crammed into three years.' Experiences influential in teaching her how to teach were the practicum firstly, then the peer tutoring where peers became experts on their research in cohort workshops, supporting one another in learning 'how to teach properly.'

She had been certain that she wanted to be a teacher, apart from perhaps future posting to 'the wide blue wonder.' Liah had no concerns about continuing teaching. She focused on those who were uncertain of their wish to be good teachers, and over the year, after practice teaching, had left the course. The practicum has been most influential in shaping Liah's professional identity:

I've seen a real teacher in a real teaching situation, doing real teaching with real students. So it hasn't been bunch of theory, it has been practical, helping me unbelievably, and the activities we did in our Prac were really relevant to the professional side of things, important in turning us all into professionals.

She was surprised with the flexibility teachers have in the curriculum, with the creativity of the individual teacher. While she had at first thought of

teaching as 'great fun' Liah now realized that teachers take their position so seriously that they must help children in their background and family situations, in more like a welfare organization. She elaborated briefly on the most important satisfaction she received from teaching, as previously she had stressed her experience with the first contact with children at the start of the year, and actually teaching a child to learn something. At the end of her first year, she rated the practicum as most satisfying because she knew she could teach:

Probably, doing eight weeks of day-visits, if you didn't know how to teach. If you were hopeless at it, or you were afraid of young children, or nervous, or not able to cope with stress, you would have picked it up straight away, considering [dropping her voice] it was a difficult Prac. It was just like teaching, so we got to experience it at first hand, and getting good marks is great satisfaction. I don't think we'd all be here, unless we knew for sure that we are capable of teaching.

From the beginning going out to the schools with the *Health and Physical Education* assignments through to most assignments was fun in her first year of teaching, including her new research and the practical activities in mathematics, more exciting than the expected writing notes. However, she expressed consternation that she had not seen her mentor since the start of the year, especially as one of the mentees had died, and they needed support. From the knowledge, skills and qualities she aspired to, she recognized the importance of knowing about child development, so the student teacher finds out the background, the development, special needs, personality of each child. While curriculum knowledge is 'handy,' understanding the child is more important.

She believed the student teacher must be able to organize, plan and communicate effectively, and while she has learnt to teach from a plan:

I still think knowing children as individuals, understanding personalities, development, physical development, emotional and social, is pretty much the basis of everything you would need as a teacher, because you can expand on that.

She was prepared to teach from Childcare to Year Seven in the future, but preferred younger and smaller classes. Since she had a tiny child she had to consider being away from her own family support.

She considered a good day during the Practicum to be one with no problems, most unlikely, but with children enjoying activities, as one day children had 'played up,' but the teacher said it was a good day, where Liah had thought she had failed. She said, "I have learned to control them better." In commenting on her reflective journal, Liah claimed she liked having the opportunity to show her understanding of each day, how helpful it was to develop as teachers, and share the journals with peers. As important reflections were assessed, Liah was able to perceive teachers as being 'more busy' than she thought they were:

P: They do a lot planning and assessment. Always making sure that what they are teaching is effective. They expand constantly on what has been taught, to observe that the children are learning, always assessing things.

I: Some people have been critical of teaching, you appear to be saying.

P: Yes. Just people, especially my parents who have always thought teachers have too many holidays, and all they do is babysit children. From my Prac I've been able to show them my folder with the activities, and say, "Read this! [passionately]. This is what my teacher goes through in a day, starting at seven thirty going through to five thirty. It's not a nine to five job like everyone else have got, it's so much more than that.

I: Sounds as though you are sticking up for teachers.

P: I do it all the time [loudly].

In the previous interviews it was obvious that the student teachers were reflecting on their own ideas of teaching, and the word 'philosophy' crept into the reflection, and was incorporated into the last interview. Liah was beginning to create her own personal philosophy as required by the course with the focus of understanding the child. She found the Head of Faculty to be helpful towards her when she needed support:

He's been really understanding in things like that—I've had a really young baby to look after on my own, and they've taken all that into consideration, and I haven't needed to-like to have time off. So it hasn't been a major problem but, things like that maybe need to defer for a year he would be the first person I'd talk to.

While Liah had 'checked out' the expected salary for teachers as important to her in supporting her little daughter, having a job that one enjoyed was much more important than the money. For that reason she would not have wanted to be a doctor or lawyer just to get better money, although some peers had actually complained the salary was not enough for teaching, because it is a 'pretty involved job.'

One of my lecturers said that if it wasn't for teachers we would not have doctors and lawyers, and those high-paid roles. If we didn't educate them effectively there would be no doctors, so our job is fairly important.

Intending to teach for more than ten years, as she was young coming straight from school, Liah felt some mature age student teachers just wanted to teach for five years, then retire. However, she also felt job security and stability were important with a child. Her supervising teacher became a senior teacher after nine years of teaching experience.

After a hard first year, she was happy with her academic achievement, achieving more than expected. She had turned eighteen that year, knew a lot more about teaching than she ever thought she would know, and she knew she would learn more. She had at first thought teaching was basic, just imparting knowledge into children, but now perceived more than that, learning and changing as a person in the year. She saw herself advocating for teachers and what they do and when people say teachers had too many holidays she was ready to say that teachers plan during those holidays. She knew now that she was really valuing teaching as a career.

To her, most important was that she wanted to be a teacher, and that was one main thing she had seen in herself. Considering whether she was called to be a teacher, Liah thought she had always wanted to work with children, but she was not sure whether she had always wanted to be a teacher. She had always wanted to work in Early Childhood, after her work experience at school, but it was not until her volunteer work this year that she felt she may be called to Special Education, as she had recounted earlier. She feels a calling towards that area, and 'never thought she would.' She said, 'And I have and it's weird.' The statement that came closest to her feeling about her career choice was, "I am extremely satisfied with my career choice."

She was definite that this research and her reflective journal had helped her to reflect on the year. She did not think that any of her friends could remember how they felt at the beginning of the year, and it was important to look back and see how you have developed as a person through the year. Of that question about how she had changed through the year, she thought she had stood up for teachers and the teaching profession. From her prac, she realised how important the role is. What you are doing is excellent, because so many students go through their first year unrecognised as an "unknowledgeable" (sic) student with absolutely no idea of what teaching is.

Liah had always advocated for teachers, how great their job is, how much actually goes into their job, how multi-faceted their role is. As a teacher she hoped she could become as great a teacher, as others she had seen teach. She knew that she could teach, and would be able to teach more by the time she had finished her degree. She could see that teachers are held in high esteem, was extremely happy in teaching and in her academic results.

I'm still happy with what I'm doing. I haven't had a bad moment through my entire year. I am loving it, so hope I become a great teacher.

Interview 3 - JESSICA

Late thirties

Used to sell sewing machines

You have to fit with the job. You will feel unique in wanting to be a teacher

In this last interview we were discussing the earlier data using the transcripts, before updating Jessica's personal circumstances. It was surprising her 'who was dropping out'. She was surprised because some of the people who had pulled out were not the ones she had expected. The people she had looked around at on the first day surmising they would not survive in teaching were the ones who had 'stuck to it' in the first year. She explained that one girl who was obviously doing quite well, had 'pulled out' when a peer student teacher had taken his life.

Concerning her business arrangements, she was able to continue full time study this semester, finding it fulfilling, and being able to fast-track the course meant finishing earlier than expected. She took the Mathematics Second Year subject through fast-tracking, and her lecturer helped her to understand that in Early Childhood the teacher must have more than a fundamental understanding, so that children must have a firm foundation for mathematics.

Her main attraction to teaching she believed was working with children and personal satisfaction, and being able to make a difference to them would give her personal satisfaction, although others may think differently. A desire to help is important to her as a teacher:

I see so many teenagers that are pretty mixed up and you can make a difference in their lives. I know people who say they were very much influenced by a certain teacher, and I know myself I was influenced by teachers, and if I have a positive influence on those kids to make a difference in their lives then it's worthwhile.

As she learned more about teaching, she felt that the desire to help children or people had a 'ripple effect,' so that she could reflect on her own good teachers, her children's teachers, and at the university as being able to see the same things coming through as role models for student teachers, to emulate the recognized qualities. She reflected:

P: Most children view their teachers as a role model if they see qualities in you that they want to copy.

I: So you are saying you are a positive role model.

P: No, not every child, I guess. I mean you can't please all the people all the time. To be able to instill in the kids a sense of self worth I think that's probably more important than the knowledge you impart. When you think about how much you actually knew at school, how much you actually use in life, it's not a lot of what you actually knew at school. But if you can change their attitude so that they feel better about themselves, they can achieve anything they try to do.

To be attracted and held in teaching Jessica considered teachers had to be very special persons, that if you did not like children you could not be a teacher and if you did not like teaching you would not stay. Without the special qualities needed for communication, a teacher would not be effective, and so not everyone is called to be a teacher. It had taken a long time to work out that she was. In looking at the teaching career or profession as special, she meant special as being equipped for that job. Teaching is not a profession that most people would want to get into unless they felt they had the abilities to do it.

Jessica believed that some student teachers who had 'dropped out' had decided they were 'not cut out for it'. In Professional Practice, she thought, actually mixing with the kids, the student teachers get a taste for it before they actually have to go out and do it. She thought it would be horrible at the end of four years study to think 'I don't like this, I should never have done this, I should have done something else.' Early prac gives that taste, and she thought:

P: It's a unique person rather than special. You have to fit with the job. You will feel unique in wanting to be a teacher. Unique as in I'm not the only one. I mean the best, as there are a lot of good teachers out there.

I: You think you are going to be with a group of people who do feel unique, who value what they are doing?

P: I would hope so. If you don't value what you are doing, I'd rather go somewhere else.

I: You said people, society value teachers?

P: I think the adult population mostly value teachers. Some of the students don't at the time, perhaps when they have matured a little more down the track. It seems to be the younger kids love teachers, and the adults love certain teachers, but the in-between ones don't see why they should be at school, and why they have to do what they are told, at that rebellious age.

Regarding mental stimulation, she thought that 'if you do not use it, you lose it,' defining mental stimulation in teaching as anything where the student teacher must use the brain for any challenge. She was pleased with 'fast tracking,' and being back full time, otherwise the course would have taken her eight years, two subjects a semester, but now 'out in three.' Her only concern earlier had been until she had done Professional Practice, as she thought:

- am I really going to like this?
- I think this is what I want to do;

After Professional Practice she was sure 'that's what I want to do.'

Jessica found that she was liking teaching more than anticipated. She had wanted to be a teacher, but at the same time was frightened because she did not know enough about it. She did not know 'how you knew how to teach.' But she has been learning 'as we go along, so the fears are slipping away, and just leaving the love of it there.' She meant that everybody is frightened of the unknown, and as that fear was going the student teacher 'understands what it is all about, which means you are more free to enjoy it.' She had not found any perception that made her – 'pull back a bit,' she had not. Jessica believed that

the teacher education course helped her to work out “what she believed a teacher should be”.

My attitudes are changing as I understand more about the things that teachers need to know in the developmental areas.

The Professional Practice also gave her the most important satisfaction in her preservice, ‘actually seeing and actually having the child learn what you are trying to teach them, and seeing the result from that.’ It gave her great satisfaction. She had not really found an unexpected satisfaction in teaching, but more than she expected, she did not expect so much satisfaction, but that made a difference. She had not studied for 25 years, and enjoyed the challenge of study as enjoyable, just as finding fun in the course when being with children. She envied the Early Childhood student teachers when she noticed through their open door:

They have these things like sort of vinyl cushions on their feet and they're stacked around the room on carpet and it looks like fun. So we haven't done anything like that [enviously].

She still thought she was losing nothing by being a teacher, as all jobs have pluses and minuses, giving as an example the doctor putting up with other people’s bodily functions. The concept of mentoring first year university students had helped her introduction to the campus, but she had not felt a need to talk to anyone. She knew that the mentor had helped one student having difficulties, and she would have mentored next year, but she would have five subjects next year.

When considering any future teaching positions, Jessica was aware of the knowledge, skills and qualities necessary for student teachers to fulfill the teacher's role:

- knowledge of the developmental stages of children;
- to be familiar with the curriculum content;
- behaviour management and communication skills;
- compassion, empathy and passion.

In considering future teaching, Jessica claimed students are most important, as 'take away the students and you don't have a job.' For future year levels she now preferred from Year Two up to secondary levels, and teaching outside preferred year levels endangers job satisfaction. 'Freedom to teach to be yourself,' within limits, is necessary.

From her knowledge of a Mainstreaming subject, where Special needs students were incorporated into regular classrooms supported by Teacher Aides, Jessica found in her Practicum classroom there was a little boy in the class who had Williams syndrome, similar to Down's syndrome with the chromosome abnormality. His mental impairment was about the same as Down's syndrome child, but without the facial features. He was assisted by a Teacher's Aide for most of the day while she was there, but found that he was actually only receiving six hours a week of teacher aide time. She believed that was putting stress upon the teacher, although she said she was given the aide time as relief. Jessica was concerned in what was actually happening in practice. She thought it sounded good in theory, but was extra work for the teacher.

A good day at the Practicum for Jessica was when she actually took a whole lesson with the kids.

I had the most fantastic day. They worked their little butts off and actually the teacher even said, "Ha! They won't do anything more when they work for me." It was just that they'd do it for anyone who is different. Seeing them understand what I had tried to say to them, and learning and improving. That was about just the best feeling ever, having a day where you knew you could make a difference.

Originally Jessica had wanted employment where she would be able to be at home after school with her son, and in the second interview she enjoyed working with children, finding that more important, while this interview showed working with children and personal satisfaction was her most important factor in teaching. In developing a personal philosophy of teaching, she discussed the idea of how the teacher motivates the child, how satisfaction is gained in teaching. She quoted her father's philosophy, 'that knowledge was not a heavy thing to carry around, and the more you learn the more you earn.' She was pleased with her academic progress, further High Distinctions, but was aware that she had allowed herself to become upset in an oral presentation, admitting

I let a stupid thing upset me and I shouldn't have.

She intended to finish the course, and after graduation (she would be in her fifties then) to teach after ten years until she retired. Job security to her was not an issue, but rather to actually have a job. Having a husband and a business, she knew many young students had no one to support them, and some teachers were on contracts. Jessica had checked out even before she started the course what the salary would be, but as she would be employed by a local private school it is a little less. She thought teachers should be properly remunerated, although she thought to her personally it did not matter:

P: But you are not going to get good teachers unless you pay for them?

I: You are coming out of this course with a Bachelor of Education

P: I really don't think a piece of paper makes any difference to how effective you are.

She found the Head of Faculty was 'fabulous,' when she thought she may have 'to pull out, because the course book said it was a full-time course and she was almost in tears.' He said she could do two subjects, even one if she liked. If

she had not approached him she would not have known, she would have left. In reflecting on the changes she had perceived in herself since the start of the course, Jessica felt:

I probably think I am more contented myself in being able to get into the study and knowing now that this is really what I want to do. I think I'm a lot more self-content. That makes a change to who you are, to outside people.

The reflective journal was most helpful to the prospective teacher to put into words 'what you think,' explaining how she would stop and think, recalling how she felt. Her supervising teacher was away Jessica's first Practicum day and she 'felt like a fish out of water', however the relief teacher took over, using the supervising teacher's term planning lessons. When asked whether the term 'called to be a teacher' may apply to her, Jessica replied

I think I am called to be a teacher. I didn't know at first. I didn't know it for a long time, and I'm nearly forty. It's taken me a long time to work that out, yet in YearTen the Guidance Counsellor used tests that said you should be a teacher. I said I don't want to be a teacher, because at that stage I was sick of school, sick of teachers. I was sick of being told what to do.

Her Practicum experience had been 'fantastic,' and her academic results were very high. Although she had to catch up with some missing subjects the next semester, she had found she was a lot more content in being able to get in the study. In deciding which statement came closest to describing her feelings about her career choice Jessica chose:

I am very satisfied with my choice of teaching

Interview 3 - CARISSA

Eighteen years old

Wants to teach German in schools

The identity of being a teacher would be 'your own style of teacher.'

This last interview was conducted in the capital city at Carissa's home, as the student teachers' first year concluded early, and she went home. She spoke about her personal and academic circumstances as not really changing, however she explained that she had undertaken a voluntary week Practicum on returning home. We were able to reflect together about the year, using the previous interview transcripts. Her personal background had helped her in the course, from working in the old peoples' home taking therapy and organising games, and because she left home, moving north to gain a place with her lower OP score. She had 'been pretty dedicated' to go away, she thought, becoming more determined and flexible.

Because she had experienced the full week practicum on her own undertaking, Carissa found that the student teacher had to be 'pretty flexible,' and that she had to get to know the students to know how they learn and react. She had hoped to be able to use her German language expertise, and had found that she may be able to utilise that discipline skill after graduation. In recalling teachers who had influenced her in her decision to become a teacher, she was pleased to explain that the practicum she had attended lately took place at her old primary school.

A few of the teachers were there from when I was a student and they were shocked, surprised to see me, as they didn't think I'd become a teacher. I did not see my German teacher.

She had always wanted to be a teacher, and while she had taken Year

Ones in the Practicum, she found Year Six in her old school to be quite different helping the students with their 'email buddies.' The desire to help children or people was prominent in her life, and as she was teaching she was happy when they were learning. She wanted to help them in their learning, and to cater for the individual child, and the whole class in a group. The subjects she had taken in the course had allowed her to look at teachers and how they handled children. She said it was not just what they were teaching, but how they were teaching it, the classroom management organisation; the teacher had to cater to the children's needs over the whole year in what was important for each child. She felt job security held people in teaching as they had a job. She wanted that security, always wanting to be a teacher, and to teach the German language in schools. Other teachers, she thought, 'really go for the money' as the salary was good. To get as good a salary, other people would have to take four years of university.

Mental stimulation to teachers and students meant keeping active, being involved, good organization, working to full capacity and not 'being bored.' She did not know what to expect in her second year of the teacher education course as she hoped to be able to transfer from the provincial course to her home city, preferring the city, but presumed the next year would probably be more difficult, with a two weeks bloc teaching. Most influential in teaching Carissa how to teach were the seminars as key components of the course, as she did not feel the assignments helped her greatly, although she admitted that a Social Science unit where she had to find activities, lessons and outcomes was worthwhile. This unit was difficult, as she had to follow modern syllabuses, to set lessons, choose the year level, teach that lesson in microteaching with peers.

She had no concerns about continuing the preservice course at this time, however Carissa sensed a difficulty in her volunteer practicum when more Special Needs teachers or students were brought into the classroom. On the earlier Year One practicum, she had no apparent Special Needs children, but this time she had been told to ensure the Special Needs children were learning over the two hours she was in the room, which was not difficult. Teaching had been turning out to be what she had really expected, and even going to her old city school, she found the teaching to be 'pretty universal.' She regarded a philosophy of teaching for her as too early, as she only had ideas as yet in handling children. She did believe that she was gaining a professional identity by watching other teachers, how they disciplined, and she did not think the identity of the teacher or herself as teacher had been discussed in the course, but thought that would be 'your own style of teacher.'

She acknowledged one day 'on prac' as fairly satisfying as it had helped her to put what she had learnt in practice, as she enjoyed being with the children, observing and teaching them for a whole day. She said the lessons had gone well, as she had planned them 'pretty well.' Other perceptions of the prac were that she had seen how each day was not the same, that things are changing, how students can be behaviour-wise and there are interruptions. A good day on Prac would be where you get to do something you had planned as the student teacher never gets all you planned to do done, which is disappointing when you do not get a chance to teach it, having to leave it to the next day. A good day means if the children were in a good mood, as Carissa explained that some children can be 'feral'. The most fun in her first year actually was in the volunteer Prac taken in her old school, being with the students and putting into practice what she had learned, as it was fun to have another person in the room:

To actually help. She was a back-up, like I was a back-up for her.

Concerning the knowledge that student teachers need to do a good job of teaching, Carissa claimed they needed general knowledge of all curriculum areas, had to be able to handle their class, and be ‘ a people person,’ be personable, getting on with all sorts, parents, peers and students, able to communicate well. To be a good teacher, the student teacher must talk to the students, and be able to stand up in presenting seminars with peers, as well as in written assignments. She had noticed in her old school practicum that technology as a form of communication had advanced, with a computer laboratory installed, and teachers needed to know how to work a computer, and how to surf the Net to pass it on to students. At the end of their first year on campus, the Education students were required to complete a half-hour computer course. Carissa thought there could be a computer course for student teachers, as she had seen from the city University course that it was basically computer based.

She was quite happy to teach lower and upper primary grades in the future, but would prefer to be in a bigger city. While she had enjoyed working with Special Needs children, she was not sure if she could cope over a whole year. If she were to succeed in her LOTE German language ambitions, she explained that the teachers took from Year Five to Year Seven classes in a round of five schools teaching thirty-two hours a week. She had admired and respected her teachers, the German teachers also, and would expect the children she taught to respect the teacher, as the most important factor of her decision to teach was that she supposed some of her teachers had influenced her to become a schoolteacher.

She intended to finish her course because she enjoyed it, and was happy she had passed all her academic studies. When she was asked if she thought she would be teaching three years after graduation, and then ten years, Carissa smiled and nodded, as she thought she would still be there until she retired. She liked teaching, the job security, the money and the holidays, however she learned:

that holidays were not really holidays when you are a teacher with all the planning you have to do for the year. Weekends are not really weekends.

Job security as a way to be happy in a job was important for Carissa's future teaching and she thought that in the LOTE field in which she wanted work there would not be too many German language teachers. While she looked for a secure position, she was still not too sure what salary teachers received, supposing teachers get enough money, but she did not understand 'about the bachelor and diplomas' in universities. She called her reflective journal a resource, and while given a mark from lecturers, said it was more for herself, to be useful for other professional experiences. After discussion with her supervising teacher, her daily reflection meant going back over the day's events, to change or improve the next time, so that the teacher education course contained a reflection on 'self as teacher' a day at a time, or in the reflective journal over the whole first year.

She perceived that she had changed since the start of the year, communicating better through her learning, particularly through standing up in the first peer seminars, not even being nervous. She had said earlier in the year that she had wanted to be a teacher since Year Seven, however:

P: I don't think I was being called. I just liked the idea of being a teacher. I don't really like that term of 'being called.'

I: Some people would say a vocation- of a calling to be a teacher.

P: No.

I: You feel it is something you want to do.

P: For my own self. Self-satisfaction mainly.

Carissa considered the statement that came closest to her feelings about her career choice:

I am very satisfied with my career choice.

She was very satisfied because the year has gone past, and she was very happy with what she had done so far. She thought research in the first year on teaching 'helps the students know what they are doing.'

Interview 3 - LIZ

Early forties

Teaching was her childhood dream

Her supervising teacher had helped her to overcome her nerves

Together we reviewed the previous interview transcripts through the current and newer student issues, so that Liz could reflect back to her original decision to teach, to any changes in her personal and academic circumstances, and how her personal background helped her in her teacher education course. She believed that she was more confident now, as before she was wondering whether she would make it. After a year of coursework, and being able to keep up with the work she believed she had the capability to continue, although she was happy that the course could be reduced to three years and could get out sooner into the workforce.

Her experiences of life, including her previous nursing position 17 years ago, looking after and educating her children in correspondence lessons, probably helped her in teaching. Previously she had thought about how she had been taught as a child, but did not know how she was able to teach. Now she

found she was more aware of learning to be a teacher, of how to teach, to know how to stimulate, motivate and give children some inspiration. This was particularly so in mathematics, because she was ‘good at it’ even though some hated it. Her main aim was to ‘learn how to teach maths so students would like maths.’ She thought it ‘awful’ to go through not liking a main subject, but she had been given a firm mathematics foundation in high school 20 years ago and the university bridging course had influenced her choice of a teaching career.

Her main attraction to teaching remained as the love of children, and she was developing her learning to inspire children to love maths, to want to learn as one of the main themes through all her studies. In her mathematics subject, her lecturer facilitated her learning by basing mathematics on teaching the children to think about it themselves, so they could draw on their knowledge, their own patterns of thinking. With gaps in her own mathematics knowledge, she believed that some children had less understanding in applying mathematics, rather than ‘just doing the method’.

She called the course subjects very useful to her. She had thought learning by large screen videoconferencing (Interactive System-Wide Learning or ISL) would be terrible:

I was afraid of it, because to me you don’t have that personal contact, and if you have a question right there and then, you might miss out, or if you want to see them after class. It worked out fine, because you could talk through the mike and we got used to it.

She believed her own formation as a teacher had developed by looking back at her own teachers, and she counted herself as lucky that she had ‘had no bad teachers.’ As a student teacher she had looked back before as a child and a student, but ‘looked at them with a different eye’ now, as the role is changed, so that she could contact and access contemporary teachers such as her child’s

teachers as a career resource. Mental stimulation in teaching would be for the child and the teacher, so that she would stimulate the children by recognizing their various relationships. The challenge in socialization in the job, when relating to parents, coincides with finding interesting and creative ideas to inspire children, particularly in new technology.

Most important to her teaching was ‘not to give children information on a silver plate, but to allow them to delve into their own minds, formulating ideas, reflecting on their thinking, knowing they are learning and able to learn more.’ Being a reflective person, highly critical of herself, she believed she could help children to reflect on their own capacity to learn. Being attracted and held in teaching requires the student teacher to have a desire to help children, to have a love, a desire for children to do well, to achieve and grow in responsibility and ability:

Because once you get out there it’s actually harder than you think to associate with the children who aren’t so cooperative as well as responsible. The topics studied relate to problem areas where children misbehave or have a disability in their studies and learning. However, in prac there has been probably a better relationship, where rather than talking about it we did see it happening. When the parent comes into the room to get the children, we can speak with them about their children’s work, and if the child needs special care talk about that first.

One reason Liz considered teaching was different from expected was that most of her teachers had been male, whereas today they are mostly female teachers.

I think I didn’t know exactly what teaching was. In how to be a student and how to be a teacher, I didn’t know a lot. The main image of teaching

in the past has been, Do this or else! Kids who mucked about got sent to the headmaster to get the cane. Whereas we've been learning strategies I've been learning with my own children over the last twenty years, how to teach them by encouraging them by asking them to think about themselves, to take responsibility. I was brought up like, 'Do it or else', but I didn't bring my children up that way, and I don't expect schools to be handling children that way. That's the worst way to relate to children. They are individuals.

While teachers try to get the child to cooperate, finding it difficult because the teacher is not going to hit them, she believes that children will react under crisis, so that a different way of teaching approach is happening, different from the parent 'giving a hiding to the child who has done something amiss.'

She believed that the course would be harder, more professionally based, when her supervising teacher 'insinuated that, because they were all 'first years, they would not be expected to know much.' Liz laughed when asked how aspects of the course had helped her to gain a professional identity, and said she had not got it yet.

I know by the end of three years I will have it, by the time I know how to teach.' The most important is to relate to the children, teachers and principals around me, where I will prove I am able to do it, that I'm in the school and earn that respect. It is something you earn, not just something you have because you are a teacher.

While she had had all effective past teachers, some other student teachers did not have that pleasure, however she intended to inspire children in the same methods the lecturers used to help the student teachers learn. Her satisfaction would be able to inspire the children, as that was the main feature taught in the course, to teach the children to think for themselves and take responsibility for their actions. The only satisfaction she had not expected was perhaps a growing rapport between her teacher in the area of the university and herself. At school, she learnt 'There is the teacher, you look at him, he teaches me, and that is all.' Whereas now, being adults with adults, there is definitely a relationship between the teacher and the student.

Our lecturers are teachers, our teachers. I think that is an advantage for the whole make-up of the university. You do get good rapport with them.

Liz called the first year as most important for student teachers in deciding whether they were going to stay or not, whether they were ‘cut out for it or not,’ but she realised that she was definitely able to cope. Those who did not want to keep going had left, some to earn an income, have a break, or other personal reasons. While she knew she would always be bothered by stress, student teachers had to learn to cope with that. This was accomplished by devising their own management plan, so they knew they could do it, was achievable, would happen. ‘Ringing for peer support’ was another way of alleviating stress. Where some high achievers, seeking high distinctions, were ‘ready to drop it all’ just before handing in assignments, she knew she did not have the capacity to handle such stress, and was quite happy to obtain a pass or credit.

The most fun in the first year was the *Health and Physical Education* subject because it was a break from heavy theory, heavy work, academic study – to go out and play:

We did our micro-teaching as well as having a practice before we went. We did it with somebody in our class who would take the class, and practice what to do with the next five children. It was outside, not in the classroom, with two student teachers together mostly, as there were so many. One would take part of the class or be timing the half-hours, and you had some latitude.

The student teachers had someone to compare with, someone to practice with beforehand and reflect on afterwards to talk about it after hours. Liz asserted it was definitely good fun, a good way to start the year. However, it was quite clear that some student teachers were not ready to handle children, finding it more difficult than expected. She called learning to teach a gradual thing, as in small microteaching, not too sudden, pleasant and definitely fun.

Regarding the mentoring system, she did not speak to her mentor, but could have gained by such conversation, but a personal problem prevented this. She lost nothing in becoming a teacher, she said, as she had never had high salaries or prestige. Although she admitted that society respects teachers and esteems them, she felt that the teacher worked hard for a wage, and did have professional status. In the light of teacher's role in the teaching methods the student teachers were learning, she distinguished between knowledge to be passed on, and how knowledge may be written down and accessed through the computer or from a book. Teaching methods, Liz asserted, comprise:

- planning it, learning lesson plans, resource access;
- teaching children to use these effectively in teaching;
- think, plan and do;
- be aware and teach children awareness of planning and actions.

Skills for student teachers concern the person:

- being a happy, outgoing person amongst the children to encourage them;
- being able to organise the classroom well;
- able to handle behaviour problems in a diplomatic way;
- redirect children in their capacities in a positive way instead of in a negative one.

She identified qualities for student teachers as needing to be forward enough to get things rolling, be energetic enough to keep up with it all, to plan and resource lessons. However, the teacher would need to encourage, and be diplomatic. At the end of the year, she considered her future teaching in what were achievable levels for her, middle and lower primary, so she could relate to

the children, and still get their support and cooperation. Believing she could get a higher salary in a public system she chose salary as important. Reviewing her decision to be a teacher, Liz said she cared for children, and wanted to inspire and help them in their learning.

She loved the preparation for the practicum, with lecturers and student teachers co-ordinating well in each lecture with the topic helping to develop the lesson plan, writing it down, ready to perform it. She called it 'pleasant and challenging.' She called a prac day good when the teacher was welcoming, encouraging the children to respect them, when the work is done with lessons provided and learning from the few mistakes made. A bad day was that the pair of student teachers did not use proper techniques, not getting children to think for themselves, and were 'grilled' for their mistakes. Her various life experiences were influential in her work:

- my own motherhood, bringing up my own children, and teaching them how to use the methods I wanted them to use. At the beginning I didn't know how, it was a matter of them being guinea pigs. Some things worked, some didn't. I had to learn not to shout and to bring a crisis on, but to be patient, to walk away until I could handle the situation with patience;
- in nursing it was being there for patients, taking on a professional attitude of caring for and tending them. People respected nurses in that way, but we didn't have the pay that a profession offers, so they had to put people through university to say they've got the degree, papers and qualifications and should be paid from the beginning, as the income was so low there was nothing, no prestige;

- with teaching, you expect that you are going to be put in a professional job and you will be acting appropriately and that's what we are learning while we are doing our three years. In that way we should go into the job with an ability to create that respect.

In developing her personal philosophy of teaching she intended to teach them how to gain knowledge, so that in the future there will be different and new challenges, in developing and inspiring children who want to learn. She had found the University counselor helpful in social issues in the course, and was happy with her academic assessment. She had enjoyed working with a partner in a *Study of Society and the Environment* unit, giving a good description of the unit as lesson plans 'under scrutiny as a cooperation,' to teach student teachers that in the schools it was not a single person working by themselves, but that mostly is cooperative work. She did definitely intend to finish the course as she knew she could do it, was confident, and, because she would definitely have an income by the time she finished. Liz hoped to teach after graduation, from three years and to ten years also, laughing when she said:

I think by then I'll be getting older and I don't know if they let old people, old fogeys, in the business any more. It depends.

She needed secure employment with her children, as her single parenting income had been low, but she needed an income, not just surviving. She needed a new lounge. She felt student teachers were encouraged to think they would gain jobs, with more teachers needed, but there was an undercurrent:

Why bother having a job that's gonna be spasmodic, not something you can rely on, like artist's work, an artist's work that may be profound and not available if at all, even though you know you can do more study to get backing to do commercial art. That's more secure, too.

Her reflective journal as she showed it, was very personal. On Day One Liz was welcomed by the supervising teacher, who helped her to be secure, as Liz was nervous. She had to take on a lesson by herself, panicking at first that she had prepared too much, reflecting to limit with one activity in future. She understood the practicality of teaching mathematics by method, where she had been taught by rote. She saw one child using that method at his own initiative.

In looking at changes in herself over the first year of teacher education, Liz said:

P: Since the start of the year I've become more confident, I've got more self-esteem. I'm able to associate with my peers better.

I: Because I remember you saying about standing up in front of people.

P: That was part of it. Because, if you can do that, then the day- to- day socialising seems to be not so foreboding. If you can do that, that's already a big step. And the other socialising is a norm. Whereas for me before, when I first started uni, just ordinary socialising, standing in a crowd of my peers, talking to them, was foreboding. Because I was silent for so many years, and isolated for so long, it was near intimidating. But I've overcome a lot of that by getting out.

She did not think she was called to be a teacher. What she thought she had a calling for, was to encourage children and adults to be 'helping in our approach to life spiritually, mentally and physically.' In summary, Liz said teaching was a dream come true, and that the microteaching helped peers to practice their teaching before the Practicum. While she had had a social problem, finding it difficult to talk to others, she had overcome that, through taking part in the peer seminars. Her supervising teacher had helped her to overcome her nerves, but she would always be bothered with the stress of tests. Liz chose this statement as coming closest to her feeling about her choice of career:

I am very satisfied with my choice of teaching. I think because it's a dream come true. Something I really wanted to do a long time ago and I'm actually doing what I had given up on for about twenty years. I'm doing it now.

Interview 3 - DI

Mid thirties

Is extremely shy

She had no concerns about continuing the preservice course at this time

Her decision to become a teacher resulted because of Di's son's problems at school, and she reported that he was finally coming out of them. She believed that the experiences she had been through with her own children and friend's children, and the subjects she was doing at the moment have helped her through the course. She had not really understood the strands that teachers cover, but she understood it was a lot of work. At first she had wanted to help her son, but then she said:

Now it's for me. I want to help any kids so that they don't end up with so many problems as my son did. But now it's changed because I want to help kids because I want to be with kids. I think I can make a difference.

When Di was asked what attraction she had for teaching at the end of the year, she believed that it is all sorts of fun because 'you are with the kids'. It's a fun profession, but if you sit back on the sidelines you may as well not be there:

If you get into it up to the elbows in the sand if you're in the sandpit, you will really enjoy yourself and you'll have a fun career.

She had not always wanted to teach, and from her group of ten friends, five had left, thinking it not worth the effort, but the mature age students were 'sticking to it', and some of the younger students wanted a break. Her desire was to help children, as she remembered mostly her 'bad teachers,' although she had been impressed by her supportive lecturers in the STEPS (Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies) course. She had just presented her 'orals' on evaluation, and believed the teacher needed to evaluate both self and children, so that the lesson aim was realized. Mental stimulation in student teaching meant the brain never stopped, and she expected in the practicum that her brain would be 'in overdrive.'

She believed teachers and student teachers were attracted by 'kids.' She was attracted because:

You can see a child when they comprehend something. You can see the sort of light switching on in here and you only have to see that once. Ah. You think. I've done it once. I can do it again, and you go on and on until you see that little light switch going on. I think that once they're in there that's what's holding them. They are thinking, I can make a difference even if it's for one child.

Some were attracted by the salary, others liked 'kids,' not realizing what was involved, but when not enjoying themselves, not having fun, would not want to teach. She had gained personal satisfaction from the course, except for her mathematics subject repeat, but she had enjoyed every class so far. At first she thought she would 'not hold in there,' but was learning better than expected, having organized her life, even with her own children, having a book in one hand, stirring the tea, adapting her lifestyle with a good management plan, with the family night framed around mum's study time. She traced the fun in the course to the lecturers and tutors being able to make it fun. She gained satisfaction from the course:

Yes, I've completed this. I've got this done today. I've only got this subject to do. I've passed this and I've passed that. The more you pass the better you feel.

In relating what she expected the course to be like in the future, she used the perceptions of peers in her year or of those in the second year to inform her expectation that the course would be harder. Di really had no concerns in continuing the course, only that she just hoped she would pass everything. The most important satisfaction she had received in the course was when she received her first semester results, and she had passed, [jubilantly calling out 'Hooray.'] She termed these orals results as milestones. One satisfaction she did not expect was to be slowly, but surely, overcoming her nerves:

Like when you've got to stand up in those oral things, because before no-one would. You get out in front of people and talk. But that's improved.

I've virtually come out of my shell. I used to be - you know- a tiny sit in the corner-forget about me [acting-Loud]. I'm not here. But now I set out and make an idiot of myself with the rest of them.

She considered that her teacher education program had really helped her to gain a professional identity, even to the extent of being patronized by the local photocopier shop assistant, or when a member of the public says, "How can you stand that many children around?" Di asserted that she loses absolutely nothing by being a teacher, that she could only benefit, and she supposed some people tend to look up to their teachers. Some do and some don't, depending on their attitude. She focused on helping children in every way, even if tying their shoelaces, supposing if she helped children you helped society. She had asked for help from her university mentor, but did not catch her, although some of her peer group had been impressed by the level of support provided.

Regarding the knowledge, skills and qualities necessary to perform the role of teacher, Di believed the teacher had to listen to the child, that it is amazing what children can tell the teacher. Many qualities are needed by the student teacher, to be mother, guidance officer, friend all rolled into one, to be approachable so that you know where the child is in his or her life. She actually would be happy to teach up to a year Four level, where she found the children were interested, with anything different catching their attention, and making an effort to learn. After that year, she believed they were more interested in their 'buddies,' than in actually learning. Over the year she had considered the students she would teach, being willing to 'go bush,' to smaller country schools.

The experiences that had been influential in helping Di to teach were firstly the role models of the lecturers, especially naming two lecturers, as well as the role models on prac:

There were really some excellent teachers at the school I was at, and just to look at them, study them or even to listen to them. There were things I could pick up, different approaches and ways of doing things that you would never think of. The good role models help.

She was comfortable with the school, class and supervising teacher, enjoying the one day a week over the ten weeks block, getting to know the children over time, understanding their little quirks and 'you get to know the atmosphere.' Di depicted a comical, but typical good day on Prac.

A good day is when everything goes right, nothing goes wrong. When you haven't got any accidents or fights. Screaming kids, especially girls and every time there was a fight. [Acting]. You know, This is my friend, you're not my friend, you've got my doll. The simple solution was just moving. There was one child who seemed to be in the centre of it. So I just moved that one child lock stock, to the other side of the room. Then everything stopped. So a perfect day would be none of the above happening. Just everything clicking into joint like a nice, neat puzzle, but they're very rare. I don't think I've had one.

In the personal philosophy of teaching she was developing in written and visual form, Di had to consider what she believed was important to children and in teaching. When talking about any changes in her course or direction in her study, Di said that she had once spoken to the Education Faculty administration and Head of Faculty and others regarding an unsuitable lecturer, as she believed that the administration officer was the 'first port of call.'

Di spoke often about her first supervising teacher as fantastic, giving her feedback about her strengths and weaknesses. However, when the teacher said, "You are always watching me." Di said, "That's what I'm supposed to do." Her class was told that she was a student teacher, and she was still learning, but that she still had the right and privileges of a teacher. She explained how helpful her reflective journal had been in her teaching, showing the first pages of the forty tasks the student teachers undertook over the eight days:

The journal showed the changes over the year, because at the beginning of the year you did not know what you are doing. Reflection to me means your feelings, your ideas, what you think worked, what did not work. Different ideas you tried, like self-criticism. So the reflection page is really excellent, as you can just go crazy, write what you have done, work that you think you should have done, things that did not work, the way you changed them and what you did. That's 'the bible.'

Di said she was definitely going to finish the course, because:

I'm going out there and I'm going to teach, and be the best damn teacher I can

For the future she intended to teach after graduation, and 'go bush,' and 'dig in roots' so no one could move her. So she maintained that if she had her way, she would be there teaching in ten years time, twenty years time.

Di described the changes she could see in herself since the start of the year:

I get more involved instead of falling back. If we had group discussion I would just sit back and listen. Now I'm actually participating for a change. In every tutorial we seem to do at least one activity of some kind to focus on that subject. There's always group discussion or class discussion with everyone's opinions. I'm not as gullible. At the beginning of the year, you help each other, but you sort of wake up and you watch what you do.

Di was satisfied if the teacher's salary after graduation was enough to live on, 'not a million dollars.' She believed that many went into teaching for a steady career and pay cheque, which was not the right attitude for her. Job security after graduation was important to Di to support her children, and to get to know fellow teachers, to draw on them for information, to get to be a 'close knit group.' Some student teachers found the financial struggle difficult in the first year, Di said, particularly the single parents with children. While she was unsure what a teacher's wage would be, she said that 'vibes' from the lecturers were that after graduation there will be plenty of jobs. When asked whether she felt called to be a teacher, Di said that it would be a 'late calling,' as there were so many things, so many other professions out there that one can do, but teaching was what she wanted to do.

Di concluded that she was extremely satisfied with her career choice. She qualified that choice by calling teaching a fun profession, so that teaching was what she wanted to do. Satisfaction in overcoming her nerves helped her to enjoy every tutorial class, and her supervising teacher had helped her with feedback about her strengths and weaknesses.

Answering those questions made me look at myself, and made me more critical of what I am doing, why I am doing it, how I 'm doing it. Because I haven't had to voice why or how to anybody, it has made me think about why I am doing this, so it's been excellent.

Interview 3 - CHRIS

Mid forties

Married to an accountant

She now believed she could manage the work, do it well, and liked children

She believed that her professional identity was enhanced through the teacher education program.

In this last interview, researcher and participant knew one another fairly well, and the interview questions were able to flow onto reflective discussion. She reflected on her decision to teach, and how her personal background had helped her in the program. She had taught children to swim, had children of her own, and Chris believed that must help, along with other life experiences and her age. Knowing the expectations of the education system as a parent, she knew teaching was not going to be easy. However, one thing made her unsure, and that was the disadvantage of being older (she was the eldest of the nine student teachers, unknown to her), questioning whether she would have the energy and creativity to facilitate children's learning and to sustain her interest in their learning. 'You get a little bit more worried when you get older,' so she wondered whether she had made the right decision.

Apart from the stress, Chris pondered whether she would be better off being a part time teacher, liking the way in Special Education there was normally a small group of children with the teacher, but she did not think she would do more study. She did not think anyone had influenced her to be a teacher, as her husband, the University bridging coordinator, and other teachers had given her a negative view. Her peer student teachers though were supportive of one another, but she questioned her own ability. Her major attraction to teaching was watching children learn, motivating children to feel good about themselves, and her own personal satisfaction. She had always wanted to teach, indeed she had started a Bachelor of Arts years ago to become a secondary teacher. Other influences in her choice of teaching were being cognizant of past teachers she had experienced 'truly terrible teachers' was her description, that they were 'fairly Draconian.'

She called it 'a bit more democratic today', and her own children's teachers were, 'absolutely wonderful, exceptional and outstanding' as role models. She thought she could never be a teacher like her teachers had been, and having her own children had helped her to 'formulate her own teaching style' as espoused by the teaching program 'fitting it into your own teaching style in some way, shape or form.' She did not think she could teach very effectively at the moment as she considered how the student teacher is taking information from everywhere, with more to come, some of which is past experience with teachers, but she still 'harked back to the good teachers.' As a teacher, she did have a desire to help children, considering that, of most importance, was for the teacher to facilitate children's learning, and found the course subjects helpful in that context.

Having an effective management plan was probably the biggest thing Chris ‘got out the year,’ calling behaviour management (‘the discipline things’) most important in the practicum with so many interruptions, so that effective teaching will ensure communication with children. She calls the plan:

- it's a big package of being organized;
- having a good relationship with the children;
- taking an interest in their learning;
- knowing sure you get through the curriculum;
- making it interesting as well;
- what did I get through to the children today?

She thought teaching was attracting and holding her, as she considered it a very good ‘second job’ for her, calling it ‘family friendly’ as she could still be on holidays with her children, take them to sport, have them at home after school, and have the evenings for school preparation. When suggesting what she may lose as a teacher, Chris contrasted the career with other professions, whose members associated with their own kind. Those student teachers straight from school:

Go from school to university, then teach in a school, have never been in the real world. It becomes a very insular way of looking at the world, and you need to broaden your output.

She suggested that more teachers may be attracted if they are actively recruited from outside from industry, from graduates in the workforce, as graduates may be losing because they have not considered teaching.

While she had taught swimming previously, Chris called that automatic as she had the required skills, but she had a concern that she found teaching mentally and physically exhausting, particularly when observing a class teacher teaching

in the one day practicum. She expected the preservice course to be similar to this first year, looking forward to the university Summer Term over the holidays as a way to fast track her study, as a way to advance graduation, concentrating on one subject at a time. The teacher education program enhanced her professional identity, with participation in student teacher seminars for peers and lecturers, allowing professional people to be objective, to be consistent with positive attitudes to build better relationships among peers. Teaching was turning out to be different from what she had expected:

- she had just realised what a big job it is;
- how fast the day goes;
- the discipline is harder than she thought, being used to taking small swimming groups;
- class behaviour was worse than anticipated.

However, Chris also decided that some things were better than expected, that the three R's, (reading, writing and 'rithmetic) now include a fourth R- Reasoning, because student teachers want children to think, reflect, have critical thinking skills, have better cognitive thinking skills. She believed that basics may be neglected, which was why Net tests [year 2 level tests] happen in schools, to have a balance for the workforce, as reasoning for lifelong learning, for any change in job positions and skills.

Despite any behaviour problems, Chris asserted her most important satisfaction in teaching was the children. and the unexpected satisfaction was the 'learning,' in *Teaching, Learning and Planning*, the psychology behind learning and how people learn, *Communication Culture and Difference*, not so practical, but to relate it to the classroom, in how we are enculturated, why we think the

way we think. She certainly found the tutorials to be fun in the course, and in the unit, *Studies of Society and the Environment* the student teachers had to take lessons, as 'children and teachers,' which she called immense fun, so creative and participatory. Regarding the mentoring system for first years, she had contacted her mentor and was satisfied with the response, but was aware of more helpful mentors through her peers. When inquiring about mentoring for next year, she was told that a mentor was supposed to make contact with the student.

In talking about developing qualities, skills and knowledge, Chris saw communication skills as most important, as she cared about the children and how they learn, encouraging an environment where they felt safe so they could learn, by her kindness, showing an interest in the children and her qualities of caring and honesty to facilitate learning. She saw growth as occurring when the student teachers reflected on the day, where they needed to improve, considering the positives and negatives. Communication and organising skills must be explicit, not perhaps in big items, but simply remembering children's names, so contributing to becoming an effective teacher. In becoming a good communicator, the teacher must be organised, which could mean knowing the latest theories, not as an end to itself, but to keep up to date with the latest trends that parents expect of professionals. She saw teachers as needing to be adept at teaching, having to be flexible, adapting skills to the children in one's class, where they came from, how they learn best, motivating them, clearly building classroom management skills.

For future teaching, Chris was happy to teach in the primary area with possibly an interest in Special Needs, considered students first, the geographical position next, (saying she could not leave that out, because she could not move,

‘unless she got divorced’. She said that professional freedom was important to connect with any new ideas, to want to work with other people when looking for a lot of guidance especially when the student teachers would first come out, as they ‘have people continually at their shoulders.’

She called the time spent in the practicum as not enough, that student teachers just go back and learn more, the real life of teaching, seeing what it is really like out there:

- it was scary, feeling you were out of your depth management wise, to say something in a positive manner to keep control of the class;
- you need good behaviour strategies so you can actually teach them, in spite of interruptions;
- you need to be confident in the way you handle the class, we need more about that in the actual course.

She explained that the student teachers talk about the practicum in tutorials, but in 'little bits and pieces.' She thought that perhaps in the first year tutors ‘did not want to scare you.’

More attention was needed regarding 'how to handle behaviour,' Chris believed, as she considered continually stopping children for misbehaviour is the 'biggest time-wasting stuff of all day', stressful when seeing what works. Modern day teachers develop a personal philosophy of teaching, instead of just teaching the basics as in the past, but becoming facilitators of learning, finding the important areas to develop in the children.

In her first practicum Chris took children in small groups, observed the teacher, and took half a class at the end of the prac. She thought next prac she would have to be more prepared, taking lessons, and she heard some student

teachers were up half the night preparing the next day, rather 'gruelling.' She believed that a good day in prac was when lessons, everything she planned worked well, and she felt good. The children came to tell her things, she got across the intended learning, and they enjoyed lots of variety, with different things happening. During the practicum periods, she kept a reflective journal about what she was doing which she rated as helpful, as student teachers need to reflect on change to make it better, more effective, but from generally positive feedback, from the supervising teacher. Some students were awarded an Excellent sticker, she was given a Pass, or Fail. Regarding her supervising teacher, she said he hardly ever watched her, and when she took a Science lesson on the verandah, he 'sort of kept an eye' on the class. He was younger than she was, and while some students were 'getting a written page' on any improvement, she felt sometimes:

No-one else told me how I was going, except when looking at my folder. I liked my teacher, and it was probably good to have someone casual. It was probably not good to have negative, grumpy teachers, as she thought some had, particularly if you are seventeen.

She discerned that a career was the most important factor in her decision to teach, to get a job in something she had studied, choosing teaching because she enjoyed children learning and wanted to motivate that learning. Satisfaction with her academic results was obvious, a pass in the practicum, but she had no failures, and four high distinctions in first semester. She certainly intended to finish the course, as she had come so far, and made the comment:

Finally, Chris finishes what she starts.

Chris believed she would continue teaching through ten years, not many years to teach as she was older, but probably a while before they retire her. She anticipated that there would be a teaching position for her after graduation, but

job security for her was different from many student teachers as she did not actually have to earn an income to live, because of her husband. Job availability and survival with a job were most important, but she became a teacher because she wanted to do something, to get a job. For her personally, the material benefits were not very important, but she did not think the current salary was sufficient, compared with the young graduate accountant's future salary in her husband's business. To go further in teaching, Chris identified that ambitious teachers had to:

- move up the scale in increments;
- move house to become principal;
- go out to little schools.

After her first year, Chris perceived change, (not so much that she was more tired and catching up with sleep on holidays), but that from then to now it is as though she could look in the mirror:

- you just knew you had to be more organised, and so I am;
- you get further confident with getting up in front of people and so I think my communication skills have improved immensely;
- as a teacher I am less judgmental. The subject, *Communication, Culture and Difference*, showed me that I was fairly conventional in the way my Anglo-Saxon Protestant able-bodied capitalists were. Now I am less judgmental of parents, how they bring up their kids. The subject, *Teaching, Learning and Planning* and our peer seminars helped that discernment.

Chris said she did not know whether she had a call to teach, but that she had wanted to be a teacher, and supposed it was a call. But perhaps:

P: Some people have a better aptitude to teaching, but you can develop your weaknesses to a point where you can become a good teacher. I think lots of people if they had a go would find that they are really good at it, so I don't really think it's a calling. I suppose it's something you always thought you wanted to do. So in that way it's a hard question.

I: I'm sure it is. You will probably keep thinking about that forever.

Her only reservations were whether she had the energy, and to be creative, as she found she was mentally exhausted from thinking all day.

I: You said that at the beginning.

P: Not so much creative, but the mental energy and the physical energy. You need to really get the kids' attention to keep them learning and interested. It's tiring. Don't you think it's tiring, probably because I was thinking?

I: No, after all these years, I suppose the word is 'conditioned.' I love it.' You love it too.

P: I love it, but I was still shocked that I was mentally tired, would I have enough energy for the next day?

I: If you had your own class.

P: Yes. That's it.

She said she always wanted to teach, as she had in her swimming, but while she had found class discipline harder than expected she found the peer seminars gave a professional outlook and she was happy with her assessment and the fast tracking in the holidays. Chris described her feelings about her career choice positively:

I am very satisfied with my choice of teaching.

4.5.1 Phase Three - Cross Case Summary

The data collected in this phase were aimed at student teachers reflecting across their participation in their first year of the teacher education program. The perceptions from the phase three data are similar to those issuing from the previous phases. Change was evident from their responses, and a more relaxed and familiar interview ensued.

As previously, the role of the prospective teachers' participation in their initial year of teacher education and their perceptions of their future teaching career continued to emerge from the data. Some recurrent issues resurfaced through this phase.

The salary of the graduate teacher was important to most student teachers. Some, Jack, Jessica and Chris, had the financial support of their marriage partners, however Jack said he wanted to be the breadwinner after graduation. Jessica saw the graduate teacher as receiving good wages. Liah would need income for her small daughter, Carissa thought the salary was sufficient, and Di wanted enough to live on. Salary was very important to Liz as the income was low on a single parenting income.

All student teachers considered the idea of being called to teach, most were in harmony with the term as applying to them. The reflective journal that each student teacher was required to keep was viewed by most as an opportunity to reflect on the day's practice. Chris explained she listed positives of the day where she needed to improve.

Perceptions of the practicum rated highly with all intending teachers. Some observations were that no pracs were the same, planning was important, a lot of preparation, but that lecturers helped. The prac was about how to teach, a real teacher in a real situation, and that teachers were busier than thought. Others spoke of a good day, fantastic day, got to know children over long term, and that some children were a problem for the teacher. Another participant made the comparison that his supervising teachers told the class that student teachers were special kinds of teachers, but had heard that some student teachers had 'terrible kids.' One student teacher said of the practicum that reflection meant feelings,

ideas, what worked, did not work, like self- criticism, the way the change was made. Yet another participant spoke of the positives of the day, where improvement was needed, to change to be more effective, and to concentrated on further practice.

To be able to talk to someone about any course changes was important to several student teachers. Liah had spoken to the course coordinator because she had a very young child to look after by herself. He was very understanding, and was taken into consideration, however she did not need time off. Jessica said the course coordinator was fabulous when she thought she might have had to pull out of teaching when the sale of her shop fell through, but he explained that she could have two or even one subject as a part time student.

Each student teacher was able to describe the changes they perceived in themselves over their initial year of teaching. Jack found he was friendlier, wants to look at how children behave, and view observations from the teachers' viewpoint. Liah found she knew more about teaching than she thought she would, not just imparting knowledge, found herself changed as a person and valuing teaching as a career. Jessica was more contented being able to get into teaching, knowing it was what she wanted to do. Carissa believed she could communicate better, had learnt more, particularly in peer seminars. Chris felt she was more organised, more confident, less judgmental and critical, with an improvement in communication skills. Liz related a change in her self, as she confided that socialising for her had been very difficult and intimidating to stand up in front of people. She had been silent and isolated for so many years, but now she had more confidence, self esteem to associate with peers. Di also had a social problem, and said she was slowly overcoming nerves, as she had been 'a

tiny-sit in the corner- forget about me,' but that had improved, and she had 'virtually come out of her shell.'

Jack had commented earlier on his helpful mentor, but added at this stage of the year that the mentor had helped him at length to 'stick with it.' He thought earlier that it would have been easier for him to look for a job, rather than the stress of the teaching course. Earlier in the year Jessica had given her reason for entering teaching as the school holidays suited her family life, but now indicated that her reason to teach soon included working with children. A recurrent issue with Chris was that she pondered whether she was creative enough, and in this interview admitted that she became physically and mentally tired after teaching.

Most student teachers viewed the idea of having fun in the course from the aspect of finding what they were doing as enjoyable, exciting, not being bored, involved, achieving much, sometimes, immense satisfaction by being involved with children. Their experiences were in contrast to Rita's comments in her two interviews revealing that, although she claimed that she liked children and was satisfied with the course, her comments were superficial as she was struggling with the fact that she was frightened of taking even a small group of children, and that it was not fun to her.

At the end of the year all student teachers remained very positive about their teaching career, with most commenting that they were *Extremely Satisfied*, and a few *Very Satisfied* with their career choice.

4.6 Identification of Issues

The concept of building understanding from the case was fostered by the reiterative structure of the progressive interviews. A feature of the constructivist approach to understanding through construction of knowledge was the blending,

the co-construction of researcher and participants over a long-term study that allows for development of key issues (Stake, 1994). The identification of key issues was indicated in the Methodology chapter, and supported by the research of Loughran (1996) who stated that as students' concerns change through their pre-service training, it is important to identify these issues. These issues are identified, described and analysed in the next Chapter.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter was organised into three parts or phases corresponding to the three interviews conducted over the student teachers' initial year. To explain these phases the data was presented in summaries of each individual participant's interview. In the first phase of interviews a shortened summary concluded each interview. After interviews in each phase, any changes or non-change in participants' perception of teaching were described about how an attraction to teaching may be deepened and affirmed.

This chapter provided a detailed account of the findings for this study of initial teacher education student teachers' perceptions of why they want to teach. To construct analysis of the interviews over the first year, all student teachers' stories were framed as individual cases, then across case also. Such analysis of the interviews in conjunction with the literature allowed any case issues to emerge from the co-constructivist nature of the interviews. The interview questions in the first interview focused on the participants' decision to become teachers, their own work and academic backgrounds, how they were attracted and influenced to become teachers, how they perceived the role of the teacher, and also their consideration of plans for future teaching. The student teachers were again asked similar questions using the conjoint discussion from the earlier

transcripts in the second and third phase interviews. The final phase allowed the emerging knowledge, skills and qualities to be identified to indicate any strengthening or weakening of their decision to become teachers, and at that stage all student teachers strongly indicated their desire to become teachers.

A comprehensive account of the data collected across the three phases of the study is provided in this Chapter. That account has addressed the overall focus, purposes and two research questions identified in Chapter One. Slabs of text in which the voice of the prospective teachers was captured enabled brief comparison of those perceptions. The cross case summaries have been influential in probing the individual issues, concerns or themes of the individual student teacher over the first year. It is intended in the next Chapter to solidify that 'voice,' as Stake (1995) asserts that identification of issues draws attention to problems and concerns, building on knowledge of the case through the practical experiences of the participants.

Chapter Five will relate the findings as reported here to the conceptual framework of the study, linking them to the emergent collective key issues and to the literature as reviewed in Chapter Two. Implications for further research on the perceptions of initial student teachers and recommendations for the professional development of the prospective teacher are presented.

Chapter Five

Issues pertaining to why first year student teachers want to teach

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings of the study through the interview data from the nine individual prospective teachers over their initial year in the teacher education program. This was achieved by the co-constructivist nature of the interviews, where summaries of individual interviews were presented in three phases. At the end of each phase, short cross case analyses were prepared to identify generally any commonalities and differences across the cases. In this chapter further description of these emergent issues are strengthened, identified and described as constructed on the basis of the prospective teachers' perception of why they want to be teachers.

The cross case summaries have been influential in probing the individual issues, concerns or themes of the individual student teacher over the first year. A further section will relate the findings, as reported here, to the conceptual framework of the study, linking them to the emergent collective key issues and to the literature as reviewed in Chapter Two. Implications for further research on the perceptions of initial student teachers, and recommendations for the professional development of the prospective teacher are presented in the next chapter.

According to Stake (1995) the principal uses of case study are to obtain the descriptions and interpretations of others. Such a method is suitable to this study to gather the perceptions of the student teachers about teaching in order to gain in-depth understanding. Stake suggested that the conceptual structure for the case might be focused on the identification of issues in order to draw attention to

any problems and concerns of the participants. In a constructivist approach to understanding through construction of knowledge, it is the blending, the co-construction of researcher and participants over a long-term study that allows for development of key issues (Stake, 1994).

Direct interpretation of data was utilized, rather than devoting too much time to categorical data (Stake, 1994). Clustering the recurring regularities or patterns from the interview summaries allows the selection of names of issues by the researcher from terms, concepts or themes, perhaps coming from the participants or the literature, to assess if these patterns make sense together (Merriam, 1998). By isolating those repetitions, Stake (1994) asserts that emic issues, that are issues generated by the participants, can emerge, and etic issues brought in by the outside, as in research questions, can allow the researcher to draw one's own conclusions from the data, as in multiple realities of 'what does it mean?' Merriam (1998) advises that category or theme construction build conceptual elements that cover many individual examples of the category, emphasising that they should reflect the purpose of the research, and are the answers to the research questions. These identified issues can be restated by the researcher to give emphasis to what Stake calls the 'big ideas' or themes, in order to use issues as a conceptual structure. He suggests that the identification of issues can draw attention to the concerns and problems of participants, and that issues (p.127) 'are good windows for examining the conditions, the complexity, and the coping behaviour of the case.'

In an instrumental case study, Stake (1994) asserts that research in a case study can gain understanding of something else, as in the general or specific research questions. He states that the case study provides a story element so that

participants in a certain setting have a problem. The traditional research report of statement and problem (p.128) 'is particularly ill-fitting for a case study report', however in this study the identification of issues has been progressively focused (Parlett and Hamilton, 1976) over the three phases of data collecting. Problems are identified, may worsen or be resolved over the initial year. Through careful perusal of the three phases, six particular issues in initial teacher education students' perceptions of why they want to teach were identified. The issues focus on personal, chronological, and biographical aspects of initial teaching. The research findings over the three Phases can allow for possible changes or even no change in perceptions, as mentioned earlier. Through those issues, the commonalities and differences between the cases can be personified, and further conclusions and implications can be uncovered.

5.2 Issues of the Case Study

In this chapter, interpretation and discussion from the researcher will clarify the implications and conclusions of the case to be reported in Chapter Six. The issues were identified by the researcher through long interaction with the data and with the participants over a year-long period. The issues emerging from the case were described and discussed in the researcher's published book chapter, (McDougall, 2000), reflective of the reiterative nature of research about prospective teachers in the initial year, the ongoing interviews, and the matching of literature to the chronological movement of the teacher education process. The six issues focus on different aspects of the perceptions of initial student teachers emerging over the first year, not always focused with the same weighting. A thorough explanation of each issue is backed by evidence from the data, both from Chapter Four and from all transcripts. The six issues identified are:

- **Perceptions of being called to teach:** *Understanding teaching means making a decision to teach* (Issue one).
- **Perceptions that teachers like children:** *Understanding teaching involves contact with children* (Issue two).
- **Perceptions that teacher education is a process:** *Understanding teaching means reconstructing the process of becoming a teacher* (Issue three).
- **Perceptions of reflecting on current satisfaction:** *Understanding teaching means reflecting about whether teaching measures up to the student teachers' desires and longings* (Issue four).
- **Perceptions of worthwhile career experiences:** *Understanding teaching means growth of knowledge and qualities* (Issue five)
- **Perceptions of creating a pathway as a course of life:** *Understanding teaching means considering future career paths* (Issue six)

Each issue emanated and fluctuated through the wave of interviews, focusing on the personal, biographical or theoretical reasons of why the pre-service teachers decided to teach, and the implications of that decision.

5.3 Issue One: Called to teach

Understanding teaching means making a decision to teach. A student teacher believes that teaching is the right choice.

This perception focused on the reasons why student teachers wanted to teach, their decision to enter into teaching. Only some of the student teachers stated they always wanted to teach, those who had come straight from school, or held a dream to teach. Some chose teaching as an alternate job from the previous position held. Others saw their decision to teach as one of possible benefits, such

as job security, salary and holidays (Lortie, 1975). This issue of why student teachers want to teach points to the reason for the decision to be a teacher early in the year, and any strengthening or weakening in the commitment to continue the teacher education course. Ultimately towards the end of the year the desire to teach can be seen as more personal, more a confirmation of intention to finish the teacher education program, or as described by Hansen (1995), and Stokes (1997) as being called to teach.

The idea of becoming a teacher appeared to be a personal choice for intending teachers, sometimes formed in childhood. Some had come straight from school, entering teaching with eligible O.P. scores. However, later in the final year one student teacher was able to say that the experience in the course had enabled her to feel 'called to teach' in the Special Needs area, after her degree was completed. Prospective teachers make the decision to teach from many vantage points, however some participants coming straight from school appear to take the position that becoming a teacher has the attraction of being with children, and of the material benefits of a good salary.

Rather than using the term 'called to be teacher', one participant later in the year preferred to speak of the personal choice, the idea of being a teacher, having made the decision to become a teacher straight from school. She claimed that through graduation into the Diploma of Childcare at TAFE she could become a teacher, and in this way she was able to experience childcare work, before making the decision to teach. The three student teachers straight from school had been able to plan their lives so that they could become teachers, and so at the end of their first year in teaching were able to make a commitment to continue, whether called or not.

Other participants mentioned the alternate positions they had held over their life experiences from a mature age perspective, and how that experience impacted upon their decision to teach. One mature age participant made a hasty decision to teach based on a family situation and an offer of employment after graduation, and was uncertain at first whether she should enter teaching, however early into the first semester she was able to say that she 'had become sure.' By the end of the first year the participant believed that she did have a commitment, a calling to teach (Hansen, 1995).

Participants from mature age entry were seeking a career that would 'fit' them, so that their life experience would allow them to 'fit' into teaching. Although one participant had school-aged children she did not understand what was required from entrants to teaching, but was helped by university staff who could assist her in her desire to teach. Despite the participant's age she spoke of a late calling to teaching, and that, of all professions, teaching was the career for her. Some were uncertain in their choice, sometimes indicative of those who had influenced their choice, supported or retarded that choice. Family motives to teach could be specialized, such as relatives or siblings who were teaching, or related to material family needs or as a reason to choose teaching through a change in family relations.

One student teacher had some similar motives to enter teaching as those who had come straight from school. She had proved that she wanted to be a teacher through her earlier study, and had the knowledge about entry into teaching and a reduced time at university. However, although she did achieve her aim to enter the teaching degree, her family situation changed. Others saw teaching as a change of career, an opportunity to attend university, a way to

secure material benefits. Another participant needed a new work situation and decided on teaching by experiencing teaching work, which could be compared with those entering from both a mature age and those straight from school to see if teaching was for them. Later in the year, the prospective teacher could realize he had made the right choice, felt called to teach, actually a special calling (Stokes, 1997).

Yet another student teacher had actually commenced a degree when young intending to teach, but deferred (McInnes et al. 2000). Returning to university as a mature age student, she still chose teaching. At the end of her first year the student teacher did feel that teaching was her calling, something she had always wanted to do, which compares with the ‘always wanting to teach’ professed by those entering teaching straight from school. She did not have school teaching experience, but had coached children in swimming.

The decision to teach came early or late for some, or when the geographically-distant university came closer to ‘home.’ The university location was new, and previously a teaching degree could not be completed, which meant that for various, possibly physical reasons, teaching could not be a career choice. Some career choices were not degree courses at the university, and with teaching just available for the first time, those desirous of a teaching career could be accommodated, particularly from a mature age perspective, and in one case ‘a dream come true.’

All participants alluded to their own experience of being students over almost fifteen years of school. Recollections of previous teachers by student teachers allowed comparison between certain teachers’ ‘good and bad’ points, and to consider contemporary teachers where some participants had not updated

that knowledge, or knew the modern day school through their own children's teachers. However, some student teachers related the qualities of 'good teachers' as being exhibited in the teachers' personalities, their attitudes towards children, and their effect on children. Another summary of a modern teacher from a mother/participant captured teaching as work where the teacher 'helps the children and motivates them to learn.' Other past memories of teachers were not always of that calibre, and some saw some teachers as not good models for student teachers.

Memories of past teachers or images of teaching were recalled as participants portrayed a modern image of teaching, relating the importance of updating the current and past images of teaching as the societal view of teaching changes. One student teacher was able to link her memories of calisthenics, and her personal observations of her family to her present observations in the teacher education program. As a mature age student teacher with children, she had observed how both the teacher and children responded to classroom strategies.

5.3.1 Summary of Issue One: Called to teach

Of all issues identified in the case study, the perception of being called to teach, or the actual decision to teach was of most importance. Deciding on a teaching career was very wide-reaching for all participants, sometimes seemingly by chance. The student teachers straight from school related that they had always wanted to teach, and certainly had already overcome barriers to enter teaching, such as moving from one city to another, coping with a small child at seventeen or eighteen or moving on from Childcare employment to teaching. From the mature age perspective, some participants carried the idea of teaching for many years, truly saying they had always wanted to teach. Others over the

year before entry were presented with the opportunity to teach, had to make a choice from their current knowledge about teaching, and the reality of being accepted into the university.

After acceptance, the first phase interviews showed the participants' uncertainty regarding what they expected of the teacher education program, according with the conceptual framework as articulated in Chapter Two. Some research has suggested that student teachers use their former teachers as a guide to what is expected, distinguishing between 'good and bad' models. From these memories of former teachers, participants are reminded of the needs of children, specifically their own childhood, and how the teachers' personality and attitude towards children has the effect on others' lives, how they help or hinder, and how the child is motivated to learn.

From a notion of uncertainty at the start of their first year, the third phase of interviews revealed that during that year they were able to commit themselves to consider whether their decision to teach was vindicated in believing that they were committed to teach. While all participants were able to consider whether they were actually called to teach, some thought it was just something they wanted to do, for self and children, others a late calling, being called to the needs of children, a childhood dream, a privilege, a special calling. The decision to teach by most became a commitment to teach, often a calling.

While the participants at the start of the year were uncertain of what to expect at the start of a teaching career, their reasons to teach were interlaced with wanting to work with children.

5.4 Issue Two: Teacher likes children

Understanding children means that teaching involves contact with children. A student teacher presumes a developing relationship with children.

While uncertain at the start of their initial year in teaching of what to expect, and that they did not think they would lose anything in becoming teachers, all student teachers identified contact with children as being the primary reason to become teachers. They believed their attitude to children was in being able to help, to make a difference. The issue of 'Teacher liking children' is connected to the issue of the decision to be a teacher, about being called to teach. At the commencement of the primary education degree, the decision to teach is informed by current experience of teaching, and the knowledge of past school experience in the constant interaction of teacher with child. During that year the prospective teacher would gain opportunities to have contact with children.

At the start of the initial year, models for 'helping children' were confined to knowledge of the participants' past teachers. At the end of the year, experiencing teaching as a line of work enabled a more concise depiction of 'knowing the child.' For one participant, contact with children was the basis of a reason to teach, starting from school life, through further qualifications, working in a childcare center with limited contact, a semester at university, until the opportunity to gain the qualification to teach children.

Many said they had prior experience with children, whether as parents, work experience at school or in childcare employment. They described the effect that teachers had on children, often using role models from their own childhood experiences, or that they observed with their own children's teachers, or in the

supervising teachers they had teamed with on the school site. While having experience with children out of the school, at home, and on social occasions, may enable the student teacher to 'think I can do this very well,' experience may prove otherwise. Neither Rita nor Renae, included in the second year cohort, had experience in teaching, as they observed the actual teaching contact in a Childcare diploma with children was minimal. Rita did not take a practicum subject and therefore did not go out with the first year cohort to schools for the Physical Education subject.

Teacher personality was seen as an important facet of pupil motivation. Teaching as work was perceived as a combination of the many ways that teachers related to children so that the relationship between the class and the teacher could be built over the whole year. At first, one participant considered that the teacher needed to help others, particularly children, with an unselfish notion of the desire to teach, that a teacher needs to be a special kind of person. At the end of the year this perception is echoed again, that a teacher is a special kind of person, who likes children. Some student teachers may feel drawn to a certain area using a recognized talent to interact with children in teaching, specifically to help children, and referred later to being attracted to Special Needs children.

However, the student teachers, while expressing their 'own liking for kids' were quick to comment on reasons why some of their peers left the teacher education course in that first year. Even in the first weeks of the program the student teacher related the career to being with children. When experiencing teaching as work in the first year, student teachers may have various perspectives of what work is, and in the example of a mature age student who had had active

work experience was able to comment on recruitment of teachers. Experiencing teaching as work meant being able to stand at the front of the class with children, and using increasing public speaking techniques to be assessed by peers in seminars. Such social skills may come straight from school (as in debating) or from life experience from the mature age entrant. Socialising in teaching may be equated to the new skills required in life, in an occupation, or in relationships required in a career as in teaching that requires the development of prolonged contact with children.

The ability to socialise and develop in a career comes at a cost to achieve ambition. While some may have decided to leave, others struggle on to succeed. The actual socialisation, the building of the relationship of the student teacher with children appears to be of equal weighting where the student teacher is frightened of the child, whereas the personality of the teacher in any occasion must be taken into consideration. The behaviour of children in the classroom was rarely raised in the first interviews, but modelling to prepare for observing classroom teaching was, mainly in the idea of the mental stimulation occurring in the socialisation of teaching and learning activity in the classroom.

Later in the year the networking with peers allowed participants to be at ease with new situations, with peers, lecturers and eventually with children, to be more comfortable in small groups, to be a leader, or to understand how children will follow a leader. Midyear observation, as the student teacher had some experience of being in the classroom, meant a dilemma situation could be resolved through experiencing a teaching and learning situation.

5.4.1 Summary of Issue Two: Teacher likes children

Student teachers have been students in classrooms over ten years, watching the performance of the teacher in a position of authority, observing from the students' perspective. Distinguishing now, as an adult, or a school leaver, the participant attempts to discern from past or present models of teaching what is 'good' or 'bad' teaching. Models from lower primary school appear to be those who liked children, who wanted to help them in any problems, and with the ability to make school interesting. The prospective teacher professed to like children, to have had work experience in educational institutions. While one participant claimed to have had experience with children and could help them, and do it very well, she confided later that she found she could not, she was not confident, 'was frightened to take a small group of children.'

A teacher had to be a special kind of person, who liked children, to be a good teacher. Those who did not like children should not remain as teachers, and may not stay. Others feel drawn to teaching by their own school experience, wanting to help on that field. Those who have left teaching say they love teaching, but could not cope with children, when experiencing contact with children much later in the degree. When student teachers take their place as teacher at the front of the class, they experience teaching as work for the first time, taking responsibility for the children in the classroom. Perhaps one might leave the program, as being the only adult in the room, a sense of isolation may take place in becoming a teacher. To counter this perhaps 'frightening aloneness,' although in a group or room of children, strategies are identified at the start of the program, where student teachers 'play the part' of children or teacher in the class with peers, guided by tutors.

The isolation of 'being out front' is also experienced by student teachers when conducting peer seminars over the year, overcoming performance nerves. The distance between the teacher and children narrows when the student teacher uses the strategies experienced in microteaching and seminars with peers to build a relationship with children in the participants' workplace. Socialisation in teaching means new skills are necessary, to build relationships with peers, university staff, supervising teachers, but mostly to form substantial contact with children over long term. Personal social skills need to be developed by those lacking in interacting with adults, whether participants straight from school or mature age, so that the student teacher does not appear hesitant or anxious in front of children. The desk may be a barrier between the teacher and child, and so the student teacher needs to be both out the front and among the children. Quick observation and quick action can resolve dilemmas.

While loving, helping and working with children are motives to teach, teacher education builds on the socialization of participants from any background to take their place confidently as teacher with children. Learning to be a teacher is thus a process where the student teacher begins to understand what teaching is.

5 . 5 Issue Three: Process of reconstruction. Being a teacher

Understanding teaching means reconstruction of the process of becoming a teacher. A student teacher believes that teacher education is a process, a series of actions involved in the accomplishment of an end; a stimulus that rouses the mind or spirits towards such activities.

The student teacher makes the decision to teach, often with the motive of desiring to help children learn and to work with children. Discussion on those two issues has identified some strategies at the start of the first year that enabled the participants to learn to socialize with children, university staff, peers and

others. Memories of teaching from the past and present enabled student teachers to compare what they thought was 'good' or effective teaching as helpful to children, to what they termed as undesirable or unacceptable teacher behaviour. Interviews at the start of the initial year of teaching indicated that participants were uncertain of what to expect in that year, although identifying that they believed it would be hard, not easy.

Contact with children has been established as working with children, and the necessity of becoming confident in that work. Traditionally in the teacher education program, time has been set aside in the first or other years, for professional experience usually referred to as the practicum. Organization through planning was seen as a practical way to learn how to teach. This was accomplished through an organized way of life to prepare for teaching, through time management of university, school and home requirements, and by estimating what amount of work was needed in various programs of the teacher education course. The writing of lesson plans was an integral method of learning how to teach, to go out to the schools in the early weeks of the program in small groups.

Management strategies were perceived as important, whether behaviourally as for children or in any aspect of teaching. Role models were seen as an aid to teach, to be able to begin to judge the effectiveness of any such models from the past, present or future as a role of teaching, on any site. The role models as 'seen' in classrooms, whether the supervising teacher, the lecturer on campus, or peers in microteaching or in schools were observed by the student teachers, perhaps critically by some, in the professional practice experience.

The experience of early contact with children as an important learning situation in the first weeks of the program allowed the participants to explore teaching through lesson plans and microteaching, leaving the university to go out into schools. Modelling lessons with peers, observing lecturers and teachers modelling what was expected, in small groups of children established first teaching, first contact. This enabled the participant to move from small groups to whole day observation, so teaching over a more sustained period. This built on their understanding of today's teacher, as opposed to perhaps some of their former beliefs, and enabled the theoretical to flow to the practical, to observe their perceptions of any change in teaching.

One student teacher explained that to help students organize themselves was encouraged as a way to avoid stress, to plan for the future, for any untimely interruption to study. Management plans such as the above, and also behaviour management plans were encouraged, or mandated to allow student teachers to plan for the future, personal and classroom skills and management. It was indicated earlier that most participants did not know what to expect in the program, however another student explained that understanding the course and teaching necessitated superior communication.

Communication skills needed to be established and seen by some students as imperative, contributing to their relationship skills with children, staff, parents or significant others, building a professional identity. Other participants saw communication as a way to build relationships with children, using past role models to illustrate how certain teachers use language at the children's level of comprehension, and also to communicate children's progress to parents. Another aspect of communication was related to the teacher

education program where student teachers perceived the necessity to be out front with peers, to be assessed by lecturers in oral, not written form.

Communication was seen as a developmental skill in teaching and learning. Where the student teacher may have been seen in some models as passive, not knowing quite what to expect in their first year, the view of the participants was that communication skills necessary for teaching were introduced and developed in the program in a variety of ways. While one perception was that contact with children was desirable and attainable in a teaching career, the socialization with adults was promoted as equally as important, and skills to attain competence were modelled and developed. Communication with children had to be expressed clearly and positively, as different from communication with adults. At first, student teachers took part in microteaching with peers before going out to schools in small groups conducted in the first weeks in fun situations in Health and Physical Education. Later in the full day practicum, communication was facilitated through the supervising teacher, and other staff as well as a peer student teacher, observing at first then taking small groups of children in the classroom. On campus, development continued over the year to build social skills with adults, such as parents and teachers. To counter the isolation of being out in front leading a class, several peer seminars were created and conducted, and assessed by both peers and university staff.

At the end of the first interview, not all students had participated in the various developmental activities as described in this issue. The issue of reconstruction of being a teacher was ongoing through the year, however in the first and second interview participants were asked to commit themselves to

whether they thought they would be teaching three, and later ten years after graduation.

5.5.1 Summary of issue: Process of reconstruction. Being a teacher

This issue must be understood in the context of the previous issues. Student teachers had made a decision to teach for a variety of reasons, with the prime motive that they wanted to work with children, that they liked children and desired to help them. In the process of becoming teachers, of learning how to teach, some were frightened because they ‘didn’t know how’ they were going to learn to teach, until they could start to understand what teaching and learning is about. This has been equated as being passive, not to know what to expect in a new learning situation. At first participants recalled their own former teachers, as they considered the priorities necessary to learn how to listen and talk to children.

In their first two weeks on campus, they were introduced on campus in tutorials, to learn how children learn, and how student teachers learn. Across subjects they learnt good strategies, becoming motivated through understanding the function of lesson plans to a lesson. Before going out to schools, the student teachers prepared themselves for teaching, using microteaching with peers and staff to formulate and practice lesson plans. Going out to schools taking groups of two or three children in the playground in a fun situation in Health and Physical education allowed the prospective teachers to have first contact with the children.

Some were not quite ready to handle children, finding it more difficult than expected, however the experience was meant to be ‘gradual and pleasant,’ in leaving the university to experience the atmosphere in a school with children and staff,

observing and modelling their successive lesson plans. From small groups, the participants eventually moved to whole day observation.

Assignments to some student teachers, particularly the mature age, were more difficult than expected, causing stress and pressure, although by the end of first semester they were overcoming nerves and able to cope. The participants had to devise their own management plans for assignments to know that submission for assessment was possible and feasible within the required time. Strategies for discipline and communication in the classroom were also included in the student teachers' own behavioural management plans.

Communication was recognised by most participants as crucial to working with children, and with adults in the process of becoming a teacher, when networking and building relationships with staff and parents, forming a professional identity. However, talking to children may not be communicating if the teacher and child do not listen to one another, and the teacher does not acknowledge the difference in communicating with adults, and with children. In observation in the practicum, the student teacher develops communication skills by watching other teachers taking a class.

But socialisation, enculturation into teaching is not about children alone. To communicate with children one must become fluent and at ease in conversation or work practices with adults, particularly in relationship with parents and teachers. For some, socialisation can be painful and stressful. Participants related how assignments were not merely written forms of expression, but also took place as peer seminars, to have experience of being out the front in the classroom, and to communicate with and to be assessed by peers and lecturers. Over the year such communication slowly became less stressful, but more experiential.

The issues of Deciding to teach, of Liking children, and Learning how to teach were perceptions that emerged in the first interview. In the second interview the student teachers perceive that they gained satisfaction from teaching, and considered reasons why they would continue a teaching career, and look forward to their future teaching.

5.6 Issue Four: Reflection on current satisfaction

Understanding teaching means reflecting on current situation. A student teacher reflects or thinks about whether teaching measures up to one's own desires and longings.

This challenge to reflection could be as simple as being personally satisfied with progress in the first year, or using any concerns encountered by the student teacher as a means of overcoming any shortcomings. Satisfaction was seen by many as the reason for teaching, enjoying the growing relationship with the children in the same classroom over several weeks, as a way to see individual progress of the children or the explanation of the supervising teachers as to why 'it is so.' At the end of the initial year the participant was able to identify personal changes perceived over the year relating to the choice of teaching as a career, the place of the learning in the program, the program, the satisfaction of knowing a decision had been wise, and how that decision reflects confidence and development to others, in line with the conceptual framework of this study.

Role modelling of the supervising teacher also inspired confidence in the participant to relate for the future the qualities of the best, 'fantastic' and outstanding teachers and memories of the teacher's competence and experience. Other participants also related well to their supervising teachers, but recalling past models of teaching where as a child the teacher was a teacher, not so much seen as a person. Relating self to adult situations of teaching and learning, the

student teacher perceived that one is learning through the building of the relationship, the socialization between teacher and learner to be able to relate that situation with children in the classroom.

Participants perceived self change as being able to relate more socially to people through their teaching, and also considering teaching from the teacher's viewpoint, whereas previously a relationship was related more to the former child or student demeanour, sometimes from a passive stance. However, assessment satisfaction was achieved with academic success, although some repeated units so as to be able to continue. In the last interview, the participant who hoped to return to her home city said she 'had passed everything,' but was unable to say whether she could transfer back to the city. Assessment in the first year may tie in with both personal and career ambitions.

Satisfaction with academic assessment was linked to overall development, and while subject assessment was rated highly, the teaching or practicum pass was an indication of learning to teach. Sometimes the effort in achieving high subject ratings was a source of much stress and possible disillusionment or withdrawal. The effort of assessment was doubly stressful when two participants could not access results through financial problems. When an assignment does not pass, or fails, the participant must gather the disappointment and attempt to pass the subject successfully, which usually means an extra load in the next semester. For one participant the failed subject was the only subject and resulted in disappointment and dismay. Along with a relative's ill-health, having to repeat a subject, eventually led to the decision to defer from the program. The failure was taken personally, a reflection to a childhood weakness in mathematics, where teacher and parent had tried remedial

procedures, and now in the teaching career had experienced similar academic experiences.

In their current teaching and learning program, assessment became a concern. Previously, communication had been presented as an important learning facet of teaching, in many different forms. While many student teachers reported that they did not have concerns, assignments set from current subjects communicated the academic progress of the participants to lecturers and tutors. Just as they had to overcome fears of being out the front in oral presentations, some students found that stress and pressure did affect their progress at first. Such behaviour conforms to the conceptual framework in which passivity has been indicated. The participants learn to cope with this stress, just as they learn to become confident in public speaking. By midyear some participants had settled into a pattern of assessment, with the pressure and stress present, but with peer and family encouragement repeated subjects, or by taking a certain number of subjects whether enrolled full or part time managed their assessment load. Such flexibility enabled the participants to continue their studies, and gain satisfaction in their teaching career.

Career satisfaction was evident at the end of the year, as was the growth of professional prestige. Actually gaining the knowledge of learning how to teach enabled the student teachers to ascertain what problems they may encounter in teaching, both in the teacher education on campus and also in the schools. They were aware of the time limitations of their course and their management of their own learning. Time management was often a concern among student teachers, and they recognised the necessity to utilise strategies or methods to increase their learning of knowledge. The knowledge and learning must be presented as contemporary learning experiences in an interactive and lively manner to hold student teachers' interest. In this way they can explore contemporary problems in the schools.

The participants were aware that transmission of knowledge could be passed on through written learning, but their progressive learning about teaching develops through interaction and relationships between others, so becoming aware of the theory behind a well-structured teacher education program.

Satisfaction in the course was achieved by many activities, and particularly in the volunteer work undertaken by each participant in a field of their choice, such as helping in the Special Needs area, where an understanding of what is involved in helping children to understand. Such understanding of how children learn builds satisfaction in a teaching career. In commenting on satisfaction gained in teaching, a participant considered whether present satisfaction was present in the school or the university, and decided it came from both sources, where her teaching and learning experiences were backed up firstly by the lecturers and teachers, but also from the interaction between her own cohort and other cohorts. Collaborative support enabled interaction and cooperation between all concerned with the teacher education program.

Another source of satisfaction to participants was the realisation that as both teachers and students they observed their teachers, as role models, and used the same learning to teach children, even inspire them similarly. This observation of teachers has been termed reflection and was encouraged through the teacher education program by the compilation and creation of the reflective journal, where the participant observes constructively, mostly through the senses to perceive the ethos of the particular supervising teacher regarding teaching. This observation, and recording of personal reflections, allows the prospective teacher to reflect on the teaching style of the teacher, and also to observe how the children react with their teacher.

Interviewees were encouraged to bring their reflective journal to the final interview, as they are required to maintain them by the Faculty, assessed during practicum events. These were an obvious source of pride as they reconstructed what they had been doing over the year, and how they overcame any

expectations or beliefs they thought needed to be changed. Most presented the journal as a personal journey of the year, how they saw each day as a progression towards becoming a teacher, and their personal feelings about what they saw as helpful, and their ability to write about each day.

Others saw the reflective journal as a diary, in which they could reflect upon how the supervising teacher managed the class, and to put down on paper their reactions to what goes on in the classroom, and to be a player in the classroom also, by taking early steps in learning to teach, teaching a lesson to the same children taught by the supervising teacher. Reflection must be personal. ‘How would I do it? How did she [the supervising teacher] manage and plan the sequence of lessons?’ As a male teacher in a female dominated work situation, one student recorded an area of concern to be reflected upon, to pass sentence on ‘a society that prevents a teacher from comforting a child,’ where the teacher has chosen a career known for loving contact with children, over a long term situation.

5.6.1 Summary of Issue Four: Reflection on current satisfaction

In reflecting on the participants’ own personal assessment of their progress in the teacher education program, most expressed some form of satisfaction, some personal enjoyment or new knowledge that they had enjoyed and counted as building development in their teaching. The study’s conceptual framework was built on the knowledge that existing literature described some teacher education programs as not having the capacity to shake prospective teachers from passivity and compliance. Satisfaction with the course would include changes in personal characteristics, that indicated to participants that they were learning to teach, becoming confident that they were able to become

teachers, to show others that they really wanted to teach. Such conviction was built upon several factors, firstly from memories of past teachers, secondly from numerous role models in the program, and the role of the supervising teacher.

Childhood memories of the teacher were often childlike, remembering the teacher as an adult, but not so much as a person. The first experience for the student teacher in building a relationship with an adult teacher must of necessity be a memorable occasion. One participant described the supervising teacher 'as fantastic and outstanding in the teaching and learning role' of teaching both children and student teachers, but that student teachers 'should have the best teachers in their first practicum.'

Another participant reported a growing rapport between the supervising teacher and the student teacher, building adult relationships for teacher and student. Participants perceived personality changes in self by being able to relate with others from both the teachers' viewpoint and the child's world. The issue of academic assessment concerned many participants, from the point of aiming to achieve the highest results or to have the ability to pass a subject. Both personal and career motivation centred on the ability to succeed at the desired level, indicative of overall commitment.

Academic written assessment of subject assignments was one criterion of development, another was the pass or fail mark for teaching, and the peer or official rating of research seminars. Some were excited with their high marks, others said rather quietly they had passed everything, while others said they had passed, but had to repeat a subject in the next semester. Although most participants reported they had no concerns, stress in academic mark was apparent with some. Distress was reported from two student teachers who had no money

to access their results. Others viewed failure as an obstacle to leap over, to try again, but another was confronted with a childhood subject failure, and did eventually with family circumstances defer from the course.

Stress and pressure had an effect on progress and development in the course, and support was available in several forms. Peer support appeared most popular, and other sources of collaboration could be accessed. Halfway through the year some stress from submission of assignments appeared to ease, or perhaps stress flagged a lack of commitment and a reason to leave the course. Course flexibility was obvious where the individual prospective teachers could take a minimum of subjects, even just one studied by one student teacher, and another cut the subject intake by half through family business problems. Actually learning how to teach could be viewed from the university or the school site, where strategies such as time management were employed to make the best use of time available in students' personal, working and academic lives.

Most participants did not view their growing teacher learning as transmission of knowledge, but rather an explication of what teaching is, the methods of teaching, an awareness of how to act, what to do next in certain situations, in specific curriculum or behavioural areas. A choice to pursue various personal teaching interests lead to career satisfaction, to pleasing learning experiences in a volunteer or service capacity.

The satisfaction of teaching and learning often came from interaction with children firstly, obtaining actual pleasure from observing the results of their teaching. From the cooperative efforts of lecturers, teachers and peers in relating the transition from student teachers to teachers, was the realisation of the learning experienced by the child in the classroom. Learning was generated by

observation of the teacher and child in the classroom, reflected back by the student teacher into constructive knowledge as created by their thoughts, their recognition of teaching, into written language. Such catching of teacher wisdom, of emerging professional expertise, enabled the prospective teacher to gain a glimpse of the day-in-day-out regularity of life in the classroom.

Three very different reflections were captured in this instance. The first described reflections as a preparation for the future, something personally important to be improved. The second was seen as a method to put thoughts on paper, to construct meaning for knowledge. The third used actions as a means for reflection, on what the teacher did as a strategy when action occurred, on how the male student felt when reacting passionately to a critical incident.

Satisfaction was seen as growing rapport with the supervising teacher, realisation of self- change through teaching, reaction to assessment through success and failure or passivity, observing a teacher teach, and reflecting on ‘what does it mean?’ The decision to teach has resulted in observation of how the teacher interacts with children, how the teacher constructs the next class action, how the prospective teacher reflects on teacher satisfaction, and considers what he/she is gaining from teaching.

5.7 Issue Five: Reasons to stay through growth of knowledge and qualities

Understanding teaching means growth of knowledge and qualities. The student teacher perceives a worthwhile career.

The prospective teachers brought with them the perceptions that teachers had a desire to teach, and that contact with children would increase as that desire deepened. Uncertainty of what was involved in learning how to teach was quickly allayed in the early exciting first contact with children in the modern school, complete

with lesson plans, modelling by lecturers and peers of a brief encounter in a fun situation in the first week. Over the year in building that increasing rapport with children, awareness of what was involved with 'learning how to teach' led to the perception that teacher education is a process, learning to know what becoming a teacher involves.

In beginning to understand that process, the student teachers reflect on whether they are currently satisfied that teaching is what they expected, and whether life in the classroom will be a career for them. The issue of perceiving teaching through the worthwhile career experiences experienced during the first year involves development through growth of knowledge and qualities. Learning to teach means firstly learning 'how to teach', and as a learner the prospective teacher needs to be scaffolded in the 'first steps' of their new career.

University support was seen as crucial by student teachers including the roles of all staff on or off campus. Participants in the third interview reported four concerns, although those concerns had taken place earlier in the year and had the potential to possibly cause the participants to leave the Program. The mentoring system was in place for first year university students and the participants were introduced to their mentors at the start of their initial year. Opinions were mixed as to the function of a mentor, however participants discerned good from bad mentors just as they have discerned the qualities or lack of qualities in their former teachers. A good mentor encourages student teachers to overcome problems, to listen to the options presented and to leave the decision to the student. In one case the student was ready to leave the course. Because the mentor had been in a similar situation as a first year student regarding uncertainty at the start of the year, help for her student included prolonged interaction over time to help the participant to remain in the course.

Student teachers' concerns are often unrecognised or acknowledged by themselves as reported in the previous chapter. Previously the participant had revealed that he had a good mentor, and also that he had encountered stress in his assignments, but had not until later in the year shown that he might have left the program earlier. Overwhelming stress worried three students, Jack, Di and Liz, early in the program, to the extent that their studies were suffering. The Student Support staff counselled both Di and Liz when the participants found socialisation among their peers and university staff was extremely difficult. However, the teacher education program was structured, as reported earlier, to challenge participants to change their lifestyles in interaction with both adults and children, particularly with peer students in the cohort.

While some found a mentor or counsellor could help change to occur in prospective teachers, others took the initiative themselves to approach the Course Coordinator when needing to make changes to their course or circumstances. Two participants were extremely happy with career advice provided or suggested. If collaborative intervention had not been forthcoming, both may have left the course. One was concerned because she may have needed time off, as she had a tiny child, and she was reassured that in any event that would be taken into consideration. A second found family affairs pressing, and presuming the course was full time, thought tearfully she would have to leave, to be told that she could cut her subjects back to part-time.

The decision for establishing a mentor system was explored, as those in the pilot study did not have such support, but readily became mentors for those involved in the data collecting. Opinions regarding mentors were mixed. Previously the support, given by a second-year Education student mentor, to help

retain a student considering alternate employment, was described. One participant found the mentor quite helpful when asked to assist, although the mentor was 'having a baby'. Another had seen the mentor on campus, knew she was available, and thought the system would be good for those away from home. Another called the mentor system 'useless', and thought her lifestyle should have been matched with her mentor, as she was a very mature age student teacher, and he was a very young male. His suggestion for her was to talk to a tutor regarding her assignment.

Mentors had been given training at the start of the year on the duties and demands of a mentor. Mentors were accessible to the student teachers, but the student had to approach the mentor to explain the problem. Another participant saw the role of a mentor as a counsellor when one of the mentees had died, however the prospective teacher did not contact the mentor to speak about her concerns. Access to a mentor was a new experience for both the mentors and student teachers with various successes or disappointments from the establishment of such a program.

Knowledge of 'how to teach' and the theory outlining the 'why' were discussed in the interviews. The description of 'learning to teach' was constructed as various facets of the teachers' role. Several saw 'learning to teach' as a function of the practicum where the student teacher wanted to practice teaching. In professional practice, both the role models presented by the lecturers and the excellent teachers in the schools were singled out. From those teachers, the participants could observe and study the teaching of various models, as indicated in the previous issue of satisfaction in teaching. They described what they had learnt from observation as 'just studying and listening to teachers', but

indicated the different ideas, approaches and ways of doing things that the prospective teacher would not have thought of, unless given the opportunity to reflect.

Preparation for the practicum was also seen as a priority on campus, where before going out to the school, lesson plans were formulated for various lessons, and microteaching with peers as ‘teacher and children,’ as described in earlier issues. This was facilitated by the size of the university where tutorials were comparatively small, interaction with tutors could be more informal, and as reported by one participant, any confusion by the student teacher in certain subjects such as mathematics could be readily identified and help accessed in learning how to teach. One student teacher called the practice before going to schools as ‘fantastic but essential’ in learning to respond to the behaviour of the children, actually calling it the ‘nitty-gritty’ of teaching. Most participants viewed the practicum as an opportunity to interact with children, to be able to learn of some problems, such as in student behaviour in ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), and learning to respond to their needs, such as in ‘how to handle, put pressure on them to gain their confidence.’ Another participant called the teaching and learning in the program as ‘head knowledge,’ and until practice occurs, feedback could not be forthcoming. One participant described learning what it is like in schools as ‘using all the learning, all the course subjects in learning how to teach.’

In each interview, the participants considered the skills, knowledge and qualities necessary to fulfill the role of teacher. Participants in the first interview stressed mostly the necessity of good communication, the development of children, understanding them, creating rapport with them, keeping teaching

interesting, control of class, inspiring confidence, and others. Some qualities were listed often in one word, including the following: dedicated, patient, happy, approachable, compassion, motivation and encouragement.

In the midyear interview, the prospective teachers again listed communication and understanding as necessary to their teaching. Behaviour, motivation, teaching strategies were also seen as knowledge to be absorbed into teaching. These necessary qualities, skills and knowledge built on the role the participants perceived as necessary for the teacher, and to enable effective teaching and learning for both teacher and children. Tolerance, patience, confidence, imagination, teacher wisdom and the want to teach were indicated as anticipated qualities.

At the end of the year, participants identified previous or/and current skills, knowledge and qualities necessary to student teachers. These were seen as possibilities for the future, often to be striven for, and to eventually achieve. Communication in teaching was definitely a concern for participants, in building collaborative relationships with adults and children, a growth area on which to build. The same qualities were recognised as previously in class and behaviour management, curriculum knowledge, being a 'people' person, and concern for the child.

This aspect of quality in teacher education is of great importance to this issue currently discussed, that of the reasons why student teachers decide to stay in teaching, continuing to grow and develop their potentiality as teachers. Regarding the qualities necessary for teaching, some participants made these pertinent comments:

1. A teacher is a special kind of person. If you did not like children, you could not, should not be a teacher, would not stay.
2. A teacher is a unique person rather than special. You have to fit with the job. You will feel unique in wanting to be a teacher, with a group of people who do feel unique.
3. The teacher will listen to children, be mother, guidance officer and friend all rolled into one.

The issue of teacher quality is one of reflection, of adequate and prime role models, but for student teachers is certainly not one of passivity as shown by the participants' views regarding the 'brain power', the mental stimulation necessary for teaching. Mental stimulation was shown as necessary for maintaining commitment to teaching, and also for the ongoing reflection the teacher 'carries at all times in the mind'. Awareness of mental stimulation and motivation for children was declared as part of the teacher's role. Mental stimulation was seen in several forms in teaching, to keep both the teacher and children interested, to be not boring. The prospective teacher finds the program more interesting, more exciting than expected, viewing the unexpected in teaching as a challenge, as in participating in peer workshops, not just in a lecture situation, but believing that the teachers must keep up to date with the latest trends. Finding teaching was fun was surprisingly stimulating.

Fun in the course was equated with many participants as going out to the schools to be with children in the first *Health and Physical Education* group lessons in the early weeks of the program. This accorded with the structural framework for this study where some saw teaching as boring, and, as a career, needed an exciting entry where the student teachers went out to the schools to

have first contact with children. Some saw all subjects as fun, learning to research specific areas, while others enjoyed the opportunity to participate in 'joint' assignments where skills and resources could be pooled. While others earlier had found their first experiences of presentation of seminars 'rather frightening,' one participant called the experience as 'good fun, but not great fun, but something that had to be done.' Of all indications of fun in the program, the initial lessons of going out to schools to be with the children for the first time was considered as 'the most fun,' leading to much satisfaction in teaching. While the course started on campus, the participants quickly socialised with many staff and peers, to catch their first glimpse of university life, to understand the concept of a lesson plan for the first time, to 'pretend' to be teachers and children in a 'fun way,' and to translate that experience into the schools in a sports situation.

Another learning experience in teaching was the learning and teaching that occurs in peer seminars where peers taught each other in small groups, instead of the lecturer, and communicated at their own level of understanding. The participant called such peer learning as 'beneficial, where the peer becomes the expert.'

The emergence of a philosophy of teaching was portrayed as part of the professional identity of student teachers. Participants explained that they were only beginning to understand their ideas of teaching philosophy. These ideas were quite various according to their own life styles, experiences and stage of life. Most were concerned with a focus on children and their learning, with a main focus by one participant on understanding the child. A second philosophy was that the teacher is there to facilitate learning, 'to help the child to become receptive to knowledge and learning.' One participant prepared a visual

representation on valuing children and the learning environment, while another was considering 'how to handle students.' Another student teacher was pursuing the idea that 'anybody can do anything if they want to badly enough, and that perhaps in the educational structure children are not given enough time to achieve that.' A final philosophy concerned the view that 'previously teaching was often basic facts, whereas today the reasoning behind these basics are considered.' Such ideas build up the repertoire of student teachers about 'learning how to teach.'

Commitment as part of the Issue concerning the reasons to stay in teaching, was part of developmental growth. This commitment is further explored in the last issue concerning future teaching. During the year the idea of intending to finish the course coincided with the reason of intending to be a teacher, and the practicality in 'having to pay for tuition in the university course to become a teacher.' Later in the year having achieved the confidence to know that the participant can finish the course, was celebrated, as was the family position where one person was 'bringing in the salary and that position could be reversed,' also anticipation of earning a teachers' salary, and the enjoyment and eager expectation of teaching was obvious. The majority of participants, through the year, did not perceive that they were losing by becoming or being teachers. When the idea of losing as teachers was connected with professional prestige it was considered that 'some people may look up to teachers depending on their attitude.' Commitment was also engendered by the encouragement over the year to consider what year levels, and job offers would be considered after graduation, as reported in the last issue of '*Future teaching*.' The intending teachers rated how satisfied they were about their career choice. The majority

said they were extremely satisfied or very satisfied as part of the commitment to teach. Some considered midyear whether they may be called to teach, and at end of year as reported in the first issue, '*Called to teach*,' the contemplation of whether one was called to teach allowed some to decided that teaching as work could be a vocation, a mission, a passion, a profession of a calling by both male and female prospective teachers.

5.7.1 Summary of Issue five: Reasons to stay through growth of knowledge and qualities

The recognition that teaching is a worthwhile career has been the cornerstone of this issue. Through the year the student teachers' never ending experiences on or off campus have led to their perception that their learning to teach develops through reflection and understanding of the professional identity of the teacher. Exploring the role of the teacher in a dual learning situation, as student and teacher, calls for careful negotiation of relationships where passivity is not uppermost, but where independence and authority can be observed by others as the student teacher grows in stature of teacher wisdom. The fledgling teacher discerned support by others in learning how to teach. This is provided by others in a collaborative community, on and off the university site.

Student teacher concerns that may have caused cessation of their course, became an obstacle to be overcome as they grew in knowledge and quality, but most perceived that they were not alone. Appointed counsellors and mentors were able to help them as they built their self-esteem and teaching capabilities. The actual socialisation was not in the education cohort alone, but in all facets of the university degree. While mentors were available to all students in the first year, the concept of asking for help, understanding what a mentor could achieve was new learning to some.

Mentors were one avenue where student concerns could be arbitrated and disarmed, but other prospective teachers used their own commonsense by discussing problems with their lecturers and Faculty Coordinator. Being with children was enhanced in the practicum, as was their knowledge of 'how to teach' by observing the many role models available on or off campus, often in a 'hands-on' situation in the classroom or out. They found that they did fit into teaching, that teaching did fit into their plans for the future. The size of the university helped them to become comfortable and at ease with staff, and particularly with peers in workshop circumstances, where the actual standing 'out in front' caused problems at first with some. This was in the form of stress, in the assessment of oral delivery of seminars, similar to stress apparent in written examinations, however most participants reported that they were overcoming such stress.

Learning how to teach was not seen merely as being out in the schools with children, supervising teachers, and being in the university, but over the entire course experience. From the first week, participants learnt from the first lesson plan and tutorials in a peer cohort situation taking the role as firstly observers of models, as 'children' then as 'teacher.' This was a challenge in the first weeks to actually 'teach' a few children for a few minutes in a fun way, using their own lesson plan and resources. The prospective teachers perceived that socialisation into teaching could be achieved in a collaborative, flexible manner between lecturers, student teachers, school staff and children on both the university and school site.

Preparation in professional experience was achieved in the same manner of cooperation where the teachers' role and the student teachers' roles were

intertwined, and problems could be ‘seen, reflected and acted upon’ as they occurred. Interaction with all players, all models in the course, allowed the learning in the chosen or core subjects to filter through to the teaching situation, in school or university. Student teachers believed that most subjects, particularly the pedagogy communication elements were most relevant. Developing communication with children was seen as essential early in the year, and participants were able to list skills, qualities and knowledge necessary for the teacher’s role. It was perceived that teachers are special or unique persons who fit the job of wanting to be a teacher.

The course was perceived as mentally stimulating, much more exciting than as expected, not just lectures and assignments, but being involved right from the start in practicum experiences, being challenged to improve, look for change, being involved with others, not isolated. The element of fun was present, the prospective teachers perceived, in most subjects, most assignments even with peers, microteaching, peer seminars. During the year, participants developed their own emerging ideas, their growing philosophy of teaching, their professional identity, which allowed them the ability to express the belief that they would finish their teaching course. Definitely, certainly, desperately they intended to finish the course and become teachers, for many various reasons.

Most did not feel they were losing anything in becoming teachers, rather they believed they were gaining. The issue ‘*Called to teach*’ was presented as of most importance in the initial decision to become a teacher. The element of uncertainty at the start of the year had meant that those who had come straight from school were more certain of a teaching career than mature aged entrants, proclaiming that they did not know any other job. At the end of the first year, the

decision to teach enabled all participants to consider whether they felt they may have been called to teach, would finish that year, intending to become teachers, making a commitment. Part of the early uncertainty appeared to be that prospective teachers did not know how they were going to learn to teach, wondering whether they would fit.

Halfway through the year, there were changing ideas. Perceptions during that time included surprise that they had already been out in the schools, building their own knowledge base, had been exposed to lectures, and so developing strategies and cognitive skills. The desire to teach was growing as the prospective teachers perceived that they were actually building up a teaching competence, and felt, even though the course was quite demanding, that they were able to consider whether they were called to teach. This was particularly so with the one male participant, who had found aspects of the course to be extremely stressful. His awareness of the dearth of male primary teachers both in the course, and in the teaching profession, caused him to question the regard of society for such teachers, however he was determined to become a pre school teacher.

During the first year of the teacher education program, the student teachers perceived that they had developed some strategies, some cognitive skills, and found out that they really wanted to be teachers through their reflections and their attitude. At the end of that year, they found that many anxieties were not necessary, and they could look forward hopefully to a future in teaching. Over the year, the intending teachers constructed their own hopes for that future, as detailed in the next issue.

5.8 Issue Six: Future teaching

Understanding teaching means considering future career paths. A student teacher creates a pathway as a course of life.

While this Issue is presented as the final issue, and is interconnected with all issues as constructed by the student teachers, the future career paths were present in all facets of the interviews over the entire year. Despite what question may have been asked, the actual ability to teach, the hope that the student teachers would become teachers after graduation, was inherent in most aspects of learning to teach. For that reason most questions had been asked over the entire year.

Lortie (1975) saw recruitment as consisting of attractors and facilitators attracting different types of people. The five attractors were long contact with children, providing societal service, enjoyment of former school life, hours, holidays etc, and opportunities for material benefits and economic security. This teaching career would depend on the perception of the intending teachers about conditions in schools, those who people schools, the type of schools. Over the year their constructions of which classes to teach, where the best schools would be located, how long they intended to teach, was developed.

During the year, the idea of intending to finish the course coincided with the reason of intending to be a teacher, and the practicality in having to pay for tuition in the university course to become a teacher. Later in the year having achieved the confidence to know that the participant can finish the course was celebrated. The actual decision to teach which led to their presence in the course was verified by the participants in their indication of how many years that they would expect to teach after graduation.

The initial decision to teach was reviewed over the year in the light of any change in commitment through the positive indication later in the year where the intention to finish the course was mostly passionately declared. This intention to finish the course came from several perspectives-practical, personal and professional, however the financial aspect was predominant. Where the mature age male student teacher was not the breadwinner and was supported by his wife, who did not want to continue to work, he wished to become a teacher as quickly as possible. A participant coming straight from school supporting her daughter also viewed the completion of the course as a cessation of feepaying for the course. The income to be derived from completing the course was welcomed by a mature age student who was also supporting a family.

Another aspect of the relief in looking forward to the end of the course, was that at the end of the first year the prospective mature age teacher was confident enough to know that she believed she could continue and complete through her own understanding of what was involved. Enjoyment of the course also led a student teacher straight from school to believe she would finish the course. Personal concerns such as finance were inbuilt into the decision to finish the teacher education course, as were the development in confidence in becoming a teacher, and enjoyment in teaching. This decision to teach, preferences for future teaching, job security, whether called to teach, commitment to the number of years that student teachers intended to stay after graduation were ascertained.

Any commitment to a certain number of years in the teaching force appears to be contingent with the age of the participant. The question of the security in a teaching position seems to hinge on the family situation. A third aspect is seen as a professional

issue where teaching competence is enhanced with the seniority of years in teaching. Most participants spoke of teaching until they retired, whether mature age or straight from school. One nominated teaching until sixty-five, another that the 'hard work has to be used for something.' From the student teacher straight from school was the belief that coming straight from high school was an advantage in seniority, and her role model, her supervising teacher had become a senior teacher after nine years in the career.

While commenting on the number of years the prospective teachers would like to teach after graduation, one concern was whether there would be a teaching position for them, and whether that position would be secure. While one mature age participant believed that she did not need her husband's wages as security, she did say she did not want to move from her family, but would 'take any teaching position, supply or any teaching employment.' The mature age male student teacher saw any employment as of importance in the current job climate, but believed that as a male teacher he 'would not have a problem, as male primary teachers were in short supply.'

During the year, students were asked what employment did they expect, perhaps hypothetically after graduation, ranging from 'geographic areas through to expected salaries and conditions.' The areas of teaching they would choose whether from High school to preschool may have changed, and were noted as evidence of such change. Over the three interviews choices for a hypothetical career choice were combined with several choices. Choices such as salary, professional freedom or prestige ranked much lower than the most popular aspects of a new position in a first school, which were year level, students, the geographical position and then the system (Government or Independent).

While at first one student teacher straight from school had considered that teaching very young children might be appealing, she became aware later that she 'could teach any levels in primary schools.' Although she had later experience with upper levels such as year seven, her preferred level was the early years, but did state that she would teach upper levels if required in any future employment. The male mature age student teacher was unshaken through the year that his decision to become a teacher had commenced with his belief he could become a preschool teacher. He believed there was a 'calling for such teachers' and that was his choice.

Another mature age participant chose the Year Two/Three level as appropriate for her teaching competence and confidence. Early in the year she had expressed a concern that she did not have confidence to take upper classes mainly because 'they scared' her and she had not much to do with that level. When she did professional practice with a higher level she confided that she 'found it difficult to keep their attention mainly through disciplinary problems.' For that reason she believed that the lower years were her preference 'where the children have their basis for learning and the teacher could focus upon their development.'

The year level was, as shown above, considered first mostly, and of interest was that they chose lower levels. Earlier management and behavioral plans have been shown as important considerations by student teachers in other issues, however the issue of discipline has not been prominent in interviews. The choice of class levels belongs surely then in the issue of future employment, also in the question of experience over all class levels over the entire teacher education program, and belongs to commitment towards teaching where most

prospective teachers in their first year prefer lower classes, not any higher. Towards the end of the year, the question of geographical position of future employment was shown as an issue, where reasons why participants should not remain in a local area ranged from 'needed to remain with husband and family,' or family, were expressed. However, some did state they would be ready in future positions 'to consider more remote rural communities.'

Participants did perceive changes in their attraction to teaching, commenting why they believed their ideas, and those of others, had changed. As perceived in the issue of Teacher likes Children, one mature age participant found that she had 'become more confident, had more self-esteem, in being able to associate with people more.' Other aspects of change in perception of self in the course meant that all participants were able to articulate many changes resulting from their first year in the teacher education course. Some of these concerned teaching qualities, and personality and knowledge development. Communication as a socialization skill was widely reported as part of student teachers' growth patterns. The actual performance aspect of standing out in front of others whether children, adults, peers or supervising teachers was seen as the most important change of most participants, inspired by developing confidence.

Other aspects of change were the personal knowledge that teaching was their career, leading to contentment in that choice and the ability to show confidence in that choice. Another change reported was that presence in the course had led to an awareness of the benefits gained from the teaching and learning of looking at the 'teacher's viewpoint' of teaching. Student teacher satisfaction in their chosen career ranged from 'I am very satisfied' to 'I am extremely satisfied' and various comments. Together they show the spectrum of

satisfaction in their choice of a teaching career at the end of their first year in the teacher education program. One mature age student was very definite in her comment of being extremely satisfied in her career choice because she perceived she 'was having a ball.'

5. 8. 1 Summary of Issue six: Future teaching

The issue of future teaching was strongly influenced by the prospective teachers' perception of satisfaction of teaching as their career choice. Each description of why they felt they were happy in teaching had links with all other issues. Firstly, was the personal satisfaction experienced in teaching, secondly was the recognition that an inclination, or calling to teach through a personal dream was experienced. A third perception was the societal or community hope that teachers help children in their personal, academic and personal lives. Lastly, was the belief that the professional life of the emerging teacher was enriched by the recognition of the 'multi-faceted role of the teacher' drawn from the many role models observed and recognized in the first year of becoming a teacher.

5.9 Chapter Summary

In the first section of this chapter it was argued that Chapter Four allowed summaries of individual interviews over three phases to probe emergent problems and concerns of the individual. The six issues evolved from the collected data, and the summaries of the three Phases of interviews in Chapter Four. According to Stake (1995), the case study may be analysed through the concerns and problems of the participants' stories. The narrative in the stories told in Chapter Four came from the student voices intermingled in the co-construction with the researcher. However, the creation of the six issues emerged from the researcher's analysis from both the interview data and the student

teachers' stories. It is important to the case to appraise how the prospective teachers constructed their understanding of learning to teach through such issues. This chapter brings together the commonalities and differences of the cases, presenting and identifying them as issues of the case study collectively. The names of the issues certainly came from the 'mystorys.' Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.1054-55) aptly name these life histories as 'mystories.' in which the writer's texts function to pinpoint local conditions that require change, providing grounds from moving from the particular to the universal.

The six issues identified in this study should not be called problems alone, but results of the case, and actually the answers to the questions asked in Chapter One. The decision to teach was of most consequence for the first issue, that of the consideration of being Called to Teach. There is no doubt that in a time of national unemployment any means to obtain a fulltime position would be canvassed. In actual fact only two participants were working full-time when enrolling for the teaching degree. One was working in retail and a second was teaching sewing as the owner of the business. The only male participant had become redundant, and other mature age entrants had been employed in various capacities. Three participants entered the degree through the University preparatory course, while the opportunity to enter the course with transfer credits from the TAFE Diploma of childcare allowed two entrants to commence the degree. Only two student teachers, coming straight from school, had stated that they had always wanted to teach, although others said they had thought about a teaching career for many years.

Some saw teaching as an alternative to other degrees (Lortie, 1975; Eltis, 1997; Crowley, 1998), which could not be accessed at the regional university,

particularly since the full teaching degree would be available for the first time. They were influenced in their decision by many factors, such as change of career, family motives, and the wish to obtain tertiary qualifications. Each participant explained in detail how they were enrolled and accepted into the course, with only the two entrants straight from school who possessed O.P. (Overall Position) tertiary scores, and the mature aged student teachers enrolled through alternative entry. The influence from former teachers was obvious in distinguishing from the 'good and bad' role models, and several specifically sought to update themselves (Chambers and Roper 2000) with the contemporary school.

Most were uncertain with what to expect in teaching at the start of the year, but through contact with children were convinced and committed by the end of the year that they did have the ability to teach and that helping children was a reason to teach, seen as a calling by some. Prospective teachers believe they are attracted to teaching. This attraction occurred through contact with children, resulting from enjoyment of their own school life, from finding school holidays and timetables attractive, from commitment of teaching as a special mission, from the material benefits of money and prestige, thus making teaching preferable to alternate careers. That is why they are in teaching, because teaching fits them. They perceive it is necessary to consider whether they will *fit* into teaching (McWilliams Bogad, 1983; Diamond and Borthwick, 1989; Kagan (1992); Danielewicz, 1998). Therefore, student teachers perceive that they need to find out whether they really want to be teachers.

Wanting to be a teacher often begins in childhood, where the prospective teacher play-teaches with other children, and fantasizes about the future (Lasley,

1980). From the familiar classroom situation, the student teacher remembers the teachers who helped or hindered children (Renzaglia et al. 1997), their attitude, the way they motivated learning, and the effect they could achieve on the wayward child. They may remember the teacher as a 'happy person.' Some entrants had work experience before becoming teachers, had their own children at school, or in other ways familiarized themselves with the world of children. All the prospective teachers claimed they 'wanted to help children' (Dinham and Scott, 2000), and had remembered particularly their lower school teachers helping them and others, although memories of some high school teachers were not so flattering (Groundwater-Smith, Ewing & Le Cornu, 2001).

Confidence with children was a necessity, as one participant found taking just a small group by herself was frightening. Although she was experienced with children out of school, she had not taken any positions of responsibility in former employment. This was a factor when the student teachers went out to the schools for the first time to see their proposed teaching career on the school site, the workplace. Being out the front for the first time could result in a feeling of isolation, and so in the first week, the prospective teachers were introduced to the idea of the teaching plan, the lesson, as a strategy towards first contact with the children. This took place on campus, with groups of cohort peers playing as teacher or child as a rehearsal (Bandura, 1986) for teaching a small group of children ball skills in a fun situation, overseen by tutors and school staff. However, some students had no conception of going out into schools in the first month, and were not comfortable in that situation (McArthur, 1981).

Participants experienced being out front in peer seminars (Walker & Lambert, 1995), so that public speaking was a way to calm the fears of those not

experienced in seminar production and dissemination. This socialization with adults in the course (Nettle, 1998) was a bridge to build relationships with children where social skills may be lacking, so that the student teacher can build relationships in confidence. Becoming a teacher means helping, liking and working with children, building an atmosphere of trust and motivation in understanding the teaching process. According to Dinham and Scott (2000), primary teachers enter teaching because of deep concern, a commitment to love and nurture children.

The issues of Deciding to teach, and of Liking children were the prime deciders at the beginning of the year in wanting to teach. At the start of the year, student teachers were uncertain with teaching because they did not know what to expect, as they did not know (Danielewicz, 1998) how they were going to teach. They decided that they had nothing to lose as teachers, particularly those entrants straight from school as they said they knew no other work. Using the patterns of observation from their own schooldays, they considered how to understand what learning is about. Not knowing what to expect in a new learning situation has been described as passive, perhaps compliant (Danziger, 1971; McArthur, 1981). However, as described in the conceptual framework, an exciting introduction to the world of teaching (Tom, 1995) has meant that the current program did not mean sitting at lectures (Watson, 1995) for a year, nor passively sitting (Martinez, 1989) at a desk at a local school watching a teacher.

Perceptions at that time included surprise that they had already been out in the schools, building their own knowledge base, had been exposed to lectures, were building some strategies and cognitive skills. While some were not quite ready to handle children, they were able to experience modeling their lesson

plans, observing peers for a short time in a school atmosphere, and later in the year to be part of whole day observation in various schools.

Enculturation in teaching was not confined to socializing with children alone out in the schools. Communication to all educational players (Nettle, 1998) was of concern to all prospective teachers, forming relationships with staff, parents as well as with children. Learning to communicate with children was often a learned skill for many. For two participants, even learning to communicate with other adults in peer seminars was very painful, but built on teacher expertise. Personal management and behavioural plans contributed to the student teachers' own development invoking a sense of responsibility towards assessment and professional identity.

While this study has recognized that the issues of being Called to teach, of Liking children and of Learning how to teach were of prime importance to the student teachers at the beginning of the year, and continued to dominate their perceptions of why they wanted to teach, the issue of their Reflection on how they were currently satisfied in the teaching career increased strongly during the year, as was recognized by Deer et al. (1997) in their study on perceptions on first year student teachers. As described in the conceptual framework in Chapter Two, the ideal structure for a teacher education program should rouse intending teachers to become confident that they were able to become teachers. The ability to cope with the demands of the course may have been through former models of teaching at first, but the growing rapport with lecturing staff, fellow peers, and later with their own supervising teacher in the classroom, meant that any hint of passivity gave way to deep satisfaction with career development.

Part of that overall course commitment was the ability to satisfy academic assessment in three fields, in written assignments, rating for peer seminars, and the pass or fail mark for teaching. Stress in assessment was obvious but resulted in success in overcoming disappointments and achieving the required pass mark, even in waiting for financial funds to find out results. Failure for one student teacher, along with family illness, did force deferment from the course. Other methods to relieve anxiety were peer support, and course flexibility to be able to drop or add subjects when necessary. An awareness of how to act in current situations contributed to satisfaction, often in interaction with children and the cooperative efforts in a collaborative atmosphere, and in the ability to reflect on what being a teacher involves.

This reflection was in constructing meaning for knowledge, using strategies to improve, and in reaction to current observations. Satisfaction was gained from developing relationships with teachers, children and peers (Tuinman, 1995), and from overcoming any blocks to the fit of becoming a teacher by persistence and endeavour. While early in the year most prospective teachers revealed they had no current concerns, reporting they were satisfied with teaching, it was apparent to the researcher that underlying causes could have precipitated a decision to leave the course. The importance of that occurrence was inherent in the issue of why the prospective teacher chose to remain in teaching, and the growing knowledge and qualities they perceived as strengths of their chosen career.

This fifth issue concerns the resilience shown by prospective teachers in the face of threats to their continuance of the course. Such persistence is in accord with the personal determination shown by participants to be accepted in

the program. Reasons to stay include the recognition that support for others was provided by a collaborative university community (Tinto et. al., 1993) where relationships were in a dual relationship in teaching and learning. This was achieved in the university mentor program, where the transition from student to teacher was consolidated (Renzaglia et al. 1997), and where students themselves were able to effect change in their program by communication with administrators and lecturers.

Other aspects of this issue included the recognition that learning how to teach encompassed all aspects of the entire course experience. It was shown that, over the year, a developing communication with children (Gore, 2001) was deemed as essential, as was the perception that teachers are special or unique persons who fit the job of wanting to be a teacher. The course was seen as mentally stimulating, where student teachers felt they lost nothing in becoming teachers, enjoying fun over time, making the commitment with the intention to finish the first year. Building up a teaching competence, the intending teachers were able to consider whether they were called to teach.

In the issue of the prospective teachers' future teaching career was the personal satisfaction evinced in teaching, that teachers help children (Nias 1989) in their personal and academic lives. It would appear that the six issues emerging in the stories of each student teacher in the ongoing interview presentation in Chapter Four enabled the construction of the interaction in the first steps in becoming a teacher in the cases of the initial teacher education students' perception of why they wanted to teach.

In the first section of this chapter it was argued that Chapter Four allowed summaries of individual interviews over three phases, to probe emergent

problems and concerns of the individual. This chapter brings together the commonalities and differences of the cases, presenting and identifying them as issues of the case study collectively. The chapter described six issues recognized by the participants and researcher conjointly. The student teachers were able to articulate in that co-construction of what it means to be a teacher. In that construction the prospective teachers revealed that they were able to build up their conceptions of the role of the teacher from their ongoing perception of becoming a teacher in the Teacher Education Program. Their perception of that role of a teacher enabled the candidates to look towards a future in teaching.

In the final section of the chapter, a sixth issue gave a brief description of the student teachers' perceptions of their future teaching actually based on the interconnection of the first five issues. The actual perception of why they wanted to teach became the emerging perception of the necessity of learning how to teach. Student teachers were able to construct how by the end of the first year they had become competent and confident enough to recognize that their future in teaching issued from their desire to teach. In summary, the chapter identified the pathway towards becoming a teacher, and the means to attain that goal. The conclusions and implications of that choice are outlined in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a final comment on the four major research questions devised in Chapter One. The first section deals with the substantive research findings in the thesis. In the second part, implications for future research on the perceptions of why initial student teachers want to teach and recommendations for the professional development of student teachers in teacher education programs are offered.

6.2 Substantive research findings of the study

The results of this study have presented the varied reasons of why prospective teachers want to teach and how the first year of a teacher education program is perceived by student teachers. In this thesis, the focus of the research on the phenomenon of student teachers' desire to teach was viewed from a certain theoretical stance. A constructivist research approach was used in a case study framework to build co-constructed narratives in the participants' own terms to better understand as clearly as possible, their perceptions of why they want to teach. A constructivist view was employed so that the previous chapter, Chapter Five, provided the description of approaches that emerged from the interview data in Chapter Four. These approaches were constructed to form a framework of the six issues that were identified as building on the student teachers' conceptions of teaching in their first year.

Much of the previous research on teacher perceptions, reviewed in Chapter Two, applied to constructions of teachers' work, but must be viewed from the stance of the prospective teacher. Research on such a stance is often

linked to a reformist view of teacher education, with an emphasis on the technical aspects of the transition from student to teacher. The theories of Britzman et al. (1997) and Zeichner & Gore (1990) critiqued the traditional apprenticeship form of teacher education as one of passive compliance in a technical classroom situation and proposed that students could experience teaching in non-formal community settings engaging with children out of the classroom lending credence to the conceptual framework for this study guided by the theories of Tom (1995). He refuted theories that the pedagogical knowledge of teaching should come before teaching practice, or that the content and experience of teaching must be introduced gradually. He called for a restructure of teacher education, for an exciting start to the program. To build on that exciting start he proposed a more natural socialization between faculty, students and in the schools in a cohort situation encouraging conceptual and experiential learning, leading from theory to practice. Bandura's (1997) theories of self-regulation allow the prospective teacher to adopt goals of progressive improvement, using feedback on practice.

It is from such literature, describing how researchers envisaged student teachers should learn how to teach, that this study was conceived. Such knowledge must come from the insider, the prospective teachers' perceptions of why they wanted to teach. Often, the results of research on initial student teachers take the form of an evaluation of the teacher education program, called by Deer et al. (1997, p.2) as essential to monitoring their effectiveness and to effect necessary change. However, this study was aimed not at describing the actual course, but as a means of evincing the reasons why the prospective teachers wanted to teach, at the start of the first year, and subsequently at the end

of the year to ascertain their level of satisfaction in their chosen career of teaching. Such reasons to teach were so multi-faceted that their construction of their initial year needed to be progressively focused (Parlett and Hamilton, 1976), and the knowledge so constructed represents the best efforts (Walker and Lambert, 1995) to make sense of their experiences in the student teachers' world.

In this respect, researchers of prospective teachers build specific knowledge about 'learning to teach'. This study is unique in attempting to describe an almost intangible quality, that of why student teachers want to teach. Our co-constructed answers may be hard to pin down, may appear elusive, ethereal, perhaps blurred, and almost indefinable, but are of great importance to the future of teaching. It is for this reason that a constructivist research approach was employed, as Stake (1995, p.100) states that understanding the case is linked to any emergent issues, and these issues spring from sensory experiences.

The nine participants were all part of the same first year cohort, but they were all different. While a distinction had been made between the mature-aged entrants and those straight from school, it has been shown even in this study that the mature aged are not a homogeneous group. Their life experiences were extremely diverse. The data showed that those straight from school had always wanted to be teachers, had suitable tertiary scores to enable entry to university, and that the mature age prospective teachers had been admitted through alternative entry arrangements.

Although being attracted to teaching, participants were uncertain of their fit into teaching (Kagan, 1992), not sure of their future in teaching, and might be at risk. The issues identified in Chapter Five show that a collaborative (Tinto, 1993) teacher education program in a contemporary university will provide

strategies to 'get' with those who are passive, compliant and frightened in the socialization that occurs in the transition from student to teacher.

From what the nine people said over three phases, it was possible to compare the similarities and differences in the six issues. Such comparison allowed the creation of new knowledge showing the need for refining some intervention to support student teachers in their first year of a teacher education program.

In this study, the data clearly and strongly showed that prospective teachers in their first weeks of their initial year at university constructed an understanding of the necessity of structure and collaboration in the teacher education process through socialising, modelling from lecturers and peers on campus, creating their own lesson plans, having first contact with children in a fun sports situation in a short time span.

From this novel form of contact, perceptions of why they wanted to teach emerged as issues. Because they made a decision to teach, they were accepted into the teaching course in their local university, and were at first uncertain of how they were going to teach, but in the first week they had their first teaching experience. McArthur (1981) stated that some student teachers suffered reality shock when identifying with the teaching role, by not being able to relate with children. In this way, the original decision to teach can be re-defined as needing to be able to relate to children. Already in the first contact with children, the prospective teacher has had to create a lesson plan, and model from experts or peers, to start to understand that teacher education is a process. Further in the year those perceptions would continue to be ongoing issues to the intending teacher, as would the perceptions of reflecting on how they are currently

satisfied, that teaching is a worthwhile experience and that there is a future in teaching for them.

Of interest was the fact that all participants appeared to be frightened of being with older classes in their choice of future teaching levels, with the premise that upper classes were more difficult to handle. The data showed that most prospective teachers were excited with the fact that they were out teaching in their first two weeks of teaching, although two participants who were technically second years, did not have that experience. One of those participants was frightened of taking a small group of children, finding herself lacking in confidence, and because she only took one subject (that she had found difficult as a child), she failed that subject, and eventually deferred through family circumstances.

Family circumstances also had been issues with some students. One prospective teacher had a very young baby, and was afraid that there might be circumstances why she would need time off. However, she spoke to the course administrator, and was told there could be allowances made. In another family situation, a participant believed that she may have had to leave the course because of a failed business transaction and she could not continue, but she was assured by the course administrator that she could continue with less subjects due to course flexibility.

Two participants had the problem of extreme shyness. Both had entered the program through a preparatory course, not quite sure of which program to take. One was persuaded by counsellors to continue with the STEPS course, after an emotional upset. In the first year both found contact with other student teachers very difficult, but were helped by university counsellors, and also the

up-front peer seminars that did much to socialise participants into the reality of public speaking required in teaching. One other participant worried that she would not survive the course as she did not believe that she possessed the required creativity. Stress was identified as a particular issue for participants in the form of assessment. Two prospective teachers could not access results because of lack of finance. While one eventually repeated the subject later, the other deferred from the course. The latter had contacted a mentor, but found him unhelpful. One student encountered stress in written assessment, to the extent that he considered leaving to find a fulltime position. However, his mentor spent time with him and he continued in his teaching degree.

From orientation week all students on campus shared a mentor with several others, and could contact the mentor at any time. Second year education students mentored the first year education students. The university students and staff saw the mentor system as supportive and necessary for first year students. With attrition reported by McWilliams Bogad (1983) as thirty percent in teacher education, and becoming worrying nationwide in Australia, particularly with a reported shortage (Preston, 1997), any measure that will retain prospective teachers in a teacher education program and in their chosen career of teaching must be considered of value.

While reference has been made to the formal university mentoring program, *mentoring* is a feature of the teaching profession that exists in various facets, not always under that name. The supervising teacher mentors the neophyte during the practicum (Nettle, 1998), an experienced teacher mentors the new graduate. This study argued that the prospective teacher who wanted to teach found many mentors in their introduction into teaching. Mentoring in the

teaching profession has become more common, as reported by Dever, Johnson and Hobbs (2000) in medicine, social and public services, and business (Fagan & Walter, 1982; Gray & Gray, 1985) particularly for the purpose of retaining beginning teachers (Feiman-Nemser 1996). Such collegiality was shown in this study to counter the professional isolation, (Lortie, 1975), perhaps passivity and compliance, which lessened to a great extent the way in which student teachers were able to share professional knowledge and values in the workplace.

It is clear that student teachers built their conceptions of why they wanted to teach through the issues confronting them over the year. The data from this study shows their capability in building up a personal construct of the six issues over a sustained time frame. While the participants were able to describe quite graphically how they were attracted to teaching by their desire to help children and society, and expressive reasons of how teaching was the career that fit their lives, they were uncertain how they could teach. The conceptual framework clearly shows that those who were attracted to teaching for any reason should be retained. Tom (1995) posited an exciting start to the year, which in this study meant participants took part in a ‘shared ordeal’ which in teacher education equates with student teaching. Going out ‘to teach’ in the first week with staff and peers in a less formal, but fun, learning meant prospective teachers were not just becoming teachers but were actually teachers teaching. Data from the study showed that participants were worried about ‘how they were going to learn to teach,’ however building relationships in a challenging format straight away in the program undid much uncertainty, preventing a passive culture from forming.

The developing issues over the year did show evidence of the ‘shared ordeal’ experienced by participants. In some respects, that ordeal showed a

mismatch of expectations over reality (McInnes et al. 2000, p.1), such as in confronting any frightening aspects of the ongoing program. It was in the perceptions of what was required to overcome such aspects that the issues took life, and the support mechanisms of the program became apparent to most, or were indeed utilized. Enculturation was thus a combination of all partners (Muldoon, 1994) in the making of a teacher, from the university to the educational worldview. Such a collaborative rite of passage enabled most participants to confront and overcome the issues that threatened their choice of a teaching career in its initial year.

The relational model of interconnecting issues on which this thesis has been built is an attempt to capture the dynamic interplay as prospective teachers construct why they want to teach. From their first tentative assertions of their decision to teach, wanting to learn how to teach, choosing a workplace where helping children is a norm, facing the reality of continuing challenge through assessment, the participants confided their growing commitment to a shared vision of teaching (Hansen, 1995) along with many others, satisfied that their future lives, and that of others, would be enriched by their chosen career.

The strength of the model lies in the idea that perceptions of prospective teachers are constructed through the interweaving issues confronted and overcome through their first year. The use of a constructivist framework allowed student teachers' perceptions to be identified and described. This was important because, in that first year, concurrent snapshots of why participants wanted to teach were exposed rather than what had currently existed. What really happens in that first year is often written from the institutional concept of social and financial needs, certainly not often issuing from the satisfaction, determination

and commitment, but sometimes from bitter disappointment, of the intending teacher.

Therefore, the identified issues are intended to act as a framework to allow those concerned with teacher education, including the prospective teacher, to be mindful of how attraction to teaching may be foiled sometimes. If issues are not acted on, by the student teacher as a first port of call, and by a collaborative educational spirit, that attraction becomes rejection of the call to teach. It is recommended therefore that both teacher educators and prospective teachers should possess perceptions of issues relating to why initial teachers do or do not want to teach. It is suggested, therefore, that both prospective teachers and teacher educators need such awareness to provide opportunities for them:

- to seek more understanding of the issues confronting prospective teachers in their initial year of the degree; and
- to discuss, communicate, seek further views from peers, staff, family and those interested in perceptions of why prospective teachers want to teach.

In summary, the six issues of perceptions of why prospective teachers want to teach which emanated from the research results of this thesis, enabled the construction of a conceptual framework that built upon the knowledge of first year student teachers' perceptions of their teaching career. It offers teacher educators and all interested in teacher education new ways for understanding the issues confronting prospective teachers who want to teach. These issues represent a case study of many faceted first year experiences, which could be expected to contain similar or different snapshots of the prospective teachers' perceptions of their desire to teach. Identification of these issues will be of great

use to teacher educators and others as a framework to understanding why intending teachers want to teach, through the varied experiences portrayed throughout the case study. This will add to a more contemporary, student-centred knowledge of perceptions than currently exists.

The issues as raised by the nine prospective teachers in their first year in their chosen career were considerable and formidable. Just as they had had to surmount many barriers to enter the teaching profession, most were able to say with commitment, pride and satisfaction at the end of the year that they intended to graduate as teachers, and looked forward to their teaching career in the future. Certainly, further research is necessary to enhance the present set of issues and this will be discussed in the final part of the chapter.

6.3 Building on the current study

It has been argued previously that a constructivist stance was appropriate to the requirements of this study, as it empowers the collection, portrayal and interpretation of data reflecting various constructions of the phenomenon of first year student teachers' perceptions of why they want to teach. The research presented here and in the pilot study, noted the variations of co-constructed perceptions of initial student teachers' reasons to teach. In many constructivist studies, it is the description of relationship between the emergent issues in the ensuing case study that provide the answers for the research questions. It is the construction between the commonalities and differences that contribute to the final outcome of the research, 'a collective making' (Stake, 1995, p. 102.)

Some studies, in particular, looked at the broader picture of the perceptions of first year student teachers (Deer et al. 1997; Stokes, 1997; Abbot-Chapman et al. 2001). The latter found student teachers saw teaching as a caring

profession, as did participants in this study, who were also concerned for themselves and family as well as for any job security they may possess. Stokes also investigated his participants' feelings as student teachers, their ideas of being called to teach. Of interest in the research of Deer et al. was the contrasting perception of the student teachers where in their first practicum, which occurred after nine weeks of the course, one student was 'not prepared,' while another was not able to use all that was learned. Because the intending teachers in this study went straight into teaching in the first weeks their preparation for their first contact was very different, using a lesson plan, modeling and going out to schools as preparation.

The present study, too, attempts to describe perceptions, those ideas coming from within the participants, that understanding of becoming and being teachers, developing a language to discuss teaching (Calderhead and Shorrock 1997). Nevertheless, even though the outcomes of this research offer a much more comprehensive picture of prospective teachers' perceptions of why they want to teach, the outcomes also disclose a lacking in this construction, indicating the urgency for further research. The study, then, provides a platform from which construction of the perceptions of why student teachers want to teach can continue to be investigated. The following explicit recommendations originated from the present study:

Recommendation 1: *The present study should be replicated in other systems or cultures.*

The present study was conducted within the Bachelor of Education degree in the tertiary section of a regional university in Northern Queensland. Replicating the study in other universities, in other regions, other countries and other cultures would help determine whether the constructions of the issues

emanating from perceptions of initial teachers of why they want to teach are present in other sections of educational systems and other cultural contexts.

Recommendation 2: *The present research should be replicated to further enhance knowledge about the reasons why first year prospective teachers want to teach.*

Within the tertiary system, there is as yet no portrayal of the perceptions of why prospective teachers want to teach. This is a significant gap in the snapshot of reasons why student teachers want to teach. Any development of knowledge about the first year of the teacher education program from the viewpoint of the student teacher will fill that gap. A series of research projects replicating the present study could be aimed at prospective teachers in the first year of teacher education, either in small or large groups, or even lone participants in regional universities, to add more significantly to a more comprehensive knowledge of the phenomenon of how student teachers construct their understanding of why they want to teach. By finding out what student issues mean to the development of learning how to teach, and how they construct such issues over the first year, a comparison of regional needs as indicated through the eyes of the prospective teacher could be taking a further step into the process of teacher education.

Such studies would be of interest to all those concerned in the teacher education process. Research could be extended to client work experience programs, as well as education school experience programs where school-based and tertiary-based supervisors work with assisting prospective teachers in exploring what issues are involved in why they want to teach. Both sectors are lacking in research on the area of attraction and retention of such teachers.

Recommendation 3: *The present research should be replicated so that issues identified as successfully implemented by the North Queensland university, and issues indicating at risk students, could be further explored and developed.*

In this way, development of knowledge about the first year of a teacher education program from the viewpoint of educational institutions can be disseminated, discussed and recommendations for future teacher education made.

Recommendation 4: *This research could be replicated to assist teacher educators to lessen non-completion of the teaching degree in the first year, and into the following years in the teacher education program.*

Research should be undertaken to identify further the implications of this research for student teachers' future career paths and career preparations. Research for a longer period of exploration than the prospective teachers' first year is needed to explore future commitment to a teaching career throughout the degree and into the first year of actual teaching. Rather than in-depth research containing a deficit view of attrition, such as reported in literature such as Chambers and Roper (2000), where those who have left the education degree were interviewed, this study treated the subject of attrition from an affirmative viewpoint. Such a stance views attraction to teaching in a positive light where retention is the opposite from attrition.

Literature on retaining prospective teachers in the teacher education program was more positive, basically the concerns of the student teachers. Fuller's (1975) seminal paper on such concerns revealed that participants were concerned for themselves first, then the curriculum, and then the children. The study was built on the problem where more student teachers than usual had left the course at the beginning of their first year in a new regional university. The study found that by reversing the student teachers' concerns for themselves at the

start of a program, they were able to focus on the children as the outcome of their first contact with children. Using Tom's idea of a 'big bang' at the start of the teacher education program, the three concerns as investigated by Fuller - self, children and teaching/learning were instigated together, allowing the prospective teachers to construct their up-to-date knowledge of the teaching career.

In this manner, the self-identified issues involved in a would-be attrition case could become a challenge to be overcome, as indicated in this study, to be self-evaluated, strengthened by resilience, determination and confidence, built up and scaffolded by peers, lecturers, counsellors, mentors, supervisors, school staff and the children in a collaborative and supportive community of learners. The first year of teacher education can be one where the prospective teacher is attracted to a job of helping children, resulting in a growth of knowledge and qualities about how to teach, building satisfaction and willpower towards graduation and future teaching.

Further elaboration of the identified issues over the remainder of the teacher education program could lead to further research on how entry to teaching builds the professional teacher.

Recommendation 5: *Further research in the area of the benefits of a smaller regional university, and in the establishment of using a formalized mentoring system should be conducted.*

One outcome of this study which needs to be pursued in greater depth is the impact of smaller cohort size in regional universities, where a more collaborative faculty and participants are able to present a more modeled approach to peers and lecturers, and transpose those models quickly to partner schools. A second outcome was the identification of successes and failures in an implemented mentor system where all first year university students could access

wisdom from a second year undergraduate. This system is particularly suited to education students, as within the educational system many mentor models are presented. Calderhead & Shorrock (1997, p.201) viewed a mentor's possession of the ability to talk about teacher practice as valuable in helping the student teacher 'to interpret their observations and reason about teaching and learning.' However, as this study shows there was an unwillingness with some to access the benefits of such a scheme, and further exploration of mentoring in aspects of teacher education, beginning teacher induction, and professional development of teachers is merited.

Recommendation 6: *The results of this research should be further explored so that more prospective teachers enjoy the prospect of going out with the children in the first week of the program, so that they are 'getting out' to do 'what teachers do.'*

It was in that first contact with children that the issues sprang to life. At first, participants were quite uncertain about their choice of a teaching career, about what to expect. Tom (1995) found that some student teachers called their participation in the program 'boring.' Past memories of some teachers could have reinforced that view, where teaching was not seen as child-centred, as might ideas of sitting in front of lecturers in universities, just like school. Other perceptions of teachers, who helped the participants, led to the idea of a teacher being committed to the job of teaching children. As attested by Tom (1995, p.119), 'breaking abruptly with the standard university practice,' meant immediate contact with children was initiated to give a taste and see aspect of the profession. The study reported views by participants regarding other universities' placement of professional practice where some of their student teachers found into their second or third year they did not like their original choice, and lost time and energy in pursuit of another career.

Getting out with the children enabled participants to ascertain quickly whether teaching was for them, challenging them to go out to the schools, armed with their lesson-plan, and peer and lecturer models. Self-regulation over the year allowed the necessary competences and confidence to be built upon, supported and socialized collaboratively by many mentors, so the prospective teacher was out the front immediately to experience what teachers do.

Recommendation 7: *The results and format of this research could be further explored so that prospective lawyers or other professionals enjoy the prospect of going out into the workplace in the first week of their degree, so that they are getting out to do 'what professionals do.'*

Professional practice in certain professions “preserve the best creations of their practitioners for posterity” (Shulman, 1987, p. 11-12). While lawyers build up past case histories to inform the present, architects use plans and buildings, and doctors compile records and case studies, teaching is conducted without an audience of peers. This thesis contends that in the teacher education process, teaching can be conducted with an audience of peers, (Zeichner, 199?); Bandura, 1997). Thompson (1998) asserts that in educational research, participants, such as principals, can display their professional knowledge through their ability to articulate conceptual meaning. He senses a parallel between the constructive nature of describing conceptions and the construction of a case study. Such a parallel is further discussed in the next recommendation

Recommendation: 8 *Results of the present research should be developed further for the purposes of assisting prospective teachers to seek out their perceptions of a teaching career, even before enrolling into a primary or secondary teaching degree.*

Constructivism attempts to identify the issues confronting prospective teachers in their first year in teaching. The application of constructivist research techniques in a new context enabled the researcher and participants to co-

construct issues arising from the perceptions about why prospective teachers want to teach. Stake (1995) showed that a case study method in a constructivist framework allows the researcher to build the best interpretation of the case, so that the researcher is the agent of the new interpretation in 'the belief that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered' (p.10).

Stake shows that complex events occur all the time, with few opportunities to tease out the cause. In this study, student perceptions of why they wanted to teach were identified through issues confronting participants over their first year of teacher education. This unique co-constructed case can be extended into a collective case study where prospective teachers in several universities are studied, with important co-ordination between the individual studies.

What this research study brings to light is that prospective teachers build up a great deal of information about their chosen profession; knowledge that they had not previously contemplated and that has not been brought to the light of interested educationists. The case study approach over the first year allowed rich description of why the participants wanted to teach, allowing their early views to build a base for their more experiential knowledge of their chosen career and for their future teaching. Merriam (1998) suggests that participants usually enjoy sharing their expertise with an interested listener, and use the opportunity to clarify their own thoughts and experiences.

In Australia, a series of case studies were developed by the NPQTL (National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning) in 1996 in establishing national competency standards for teaching. A series of case studies could be conducted over the years of a teacher education program, and compiled

in a similar format, so that the researcher would work closely with cohorts of prospective teachers in an attempt to focus on the issues confronting them in the transition from student to teacher. The construction of these cases would build up a wealth of knowledge about the prospective teacher.

6.4 Epilogue

This thesis has added to the knowledge of why prospective teachers want to teach. Substantially, using a constructivist research approach, the study described as precisely as possible the similar and different issues that exist in the perceptions of why prospective teachers want to teach. An exploration of the relationships between the issues was central to the study. One major outcome was in the form of the identification of issues regarding choice of a teaching career, and how the case study revealed that such issues were stepping stones to retention in a teaching career, towards future commitment, or to stumbling stones where feet of clay led away from the desire to teach. A second major outcome of this research, that gave a wide-ranging contemporary view of prospective teachers' perceptions of wanting to teach, was the results for the participants in the case study. All nine student teachers in the pilot study graduated. At least six participants in the major study graduated, with Chris, Jack and Jessica known to be teaching in the local area, and Liah teaching in a capital city. Liz persisted and was completing her last professional practice at a chance meeting with the researcher. Rita had deferred from the course with an ill husband. Carissa's whereabouts are unknown. Fifteen new known teachers, those who were extremely satisfied with their choice of a teaching career, were added to the list of those who teach.

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APPENDIX 1

Semi-structured interviews: Prompts and questions

Purpose of the interviews

The purpose of the three interviews reported in this thesis was to explore the following five areas:

- Characteristics of prospective teachers
- Decisions to become a teacher
- Attractions and influences of teaching as a career
- Role of a teacher
- Future teaching

Interview One

The first interview questions focused on the background of student teachers (age, birthplace, gender, marital status, number of children, secondary schooling, work experience, entry data), and student entry and admission into the teacher education program. Additional questions probed the five areas identified above.

- Why did you decide to be a teacher?
- What attracted you to teaching?
- Who, if anyone, influenced you in your decision to become a teacher?
- What do you remember about your former teachers?
- Have you had any teaching experience prior to this course?
- What knowledge and skills do teachers need to be effective?
- What qualities do you have which will be helpful in becoming a teacher?
- Do you think you will enjoy being a teacher?
- Do you think teaching will be a rewarding career?

- Do you think you will lose anything by becoming a teacher?
- Do you think you will be a teacher in 3 years and 10 years time?
- What kind of job offers do you think you will get?

Interview Two

Each question was recalled from the previous interview and participants given the opportunity to review and respond to, and elaborate on their previous answers.

- Have your personal circumstances changed since our last meeting?
- Was the teacher education course better or worse than you expected?
- Have you found anything that you have enjoyed in the course?
- Having completed part of the course has your desire to become a teacher altered?
- Do you still think you have made the right career choice?
- What university experiences have been influential in helping you learn to teach?
- Are you satisfied with the academic component of the course?
- Are you satisfied with the practicum component of the course?
- Tell me about your first practicum experience in a school.
- Have you found the student mentoring program useful?
- Will you continue in the course?
- Do you think you will be a teacher in 3 years and 10 years time?
- Are there any changes in your perceptions of your future employment as a teacher?

Interview Three

Questions and prompts used in the first and second interviews were reviewed and interviewees asked if they wanted to change or add to any of their previous responses. Printed transcripts were available for the participants to peruse.

Additional questions were:

- Has your desire to teach strengthened or diminished during the first year of university?
- Do you view the role of a teacher differently now you are in a teacher education program?
- Is your level of commitment to becoming a teacher still the same?