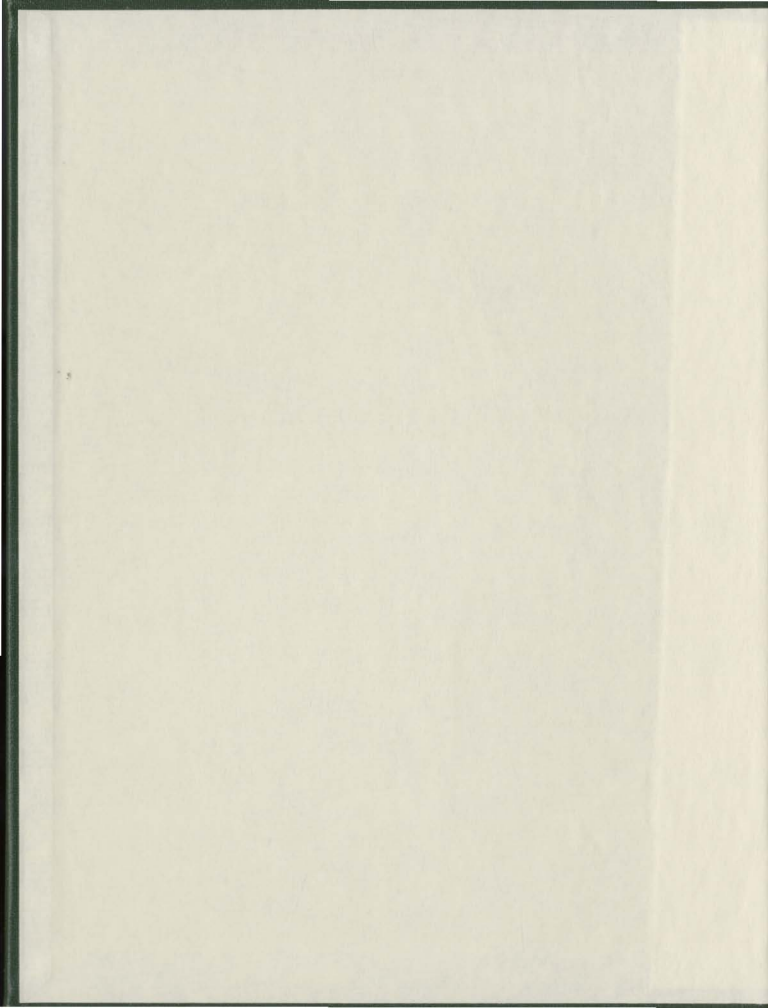


EXPLORING SOCIETY'S PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS  
THE CULTURE OF TEACHING IN EASTERN NEWFOUNDLAND

KARA ANN BOURGEOIS









*Exploring Society's Perceptions of Teachers*

*The Culture of Teaching in Eastern Newfoundland*

by

Kara Ann Bourgeois

A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Education

Memorial University of Newfoundland

August 2008

St. John's

Newfoundland and Labrador

## ABSTRACT

This critical study uses qualitative methods to study the phenomenon of whether or not the teachers in Eastern Newfoundland society are positively perceived and valued for their work. Fifteen participants were selected from a cross section of society to provide their perceptions. This research indicates teachers are not considered to be respected professionals by many members of Eastern Newfoundland society.

The participants in this study believe that many members of society do not truly understand the complex nature of teaching and learning. The de-valuing of educators appears evident in the many challenges placed upon teachers such as the continuous downloading of work, inadequate funding, large class sizes, and increased abuse of teachers. It is believed these perceptions of teachers and the neglect of their challenging circumstances have led to negative implications for teacher well-being and the successful delivery of education.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the participants of this study who enthusiastically agreed to become involved and very willingly gave of their time. They trusted in the value of this research and were eager to provide a voice for these issues.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Clar Doyle, for his guidance throughout the number of years it has taken to finish this thesis. He has been greatly supportive of the value of this research and has motivated me to continue beyond this thesis and to bring these issues to the public domain.

I would also like to thank Rosanne Tee, a fellow teacher, for the hours that she spent editing my work. Thank you to Kathy Hickman and Lillian Bussey who also took many hours to review my thesis and offer valuable feedback. They all gave generously of their time and provided me with sound advice.

My father has always been a great support throughout my life. He shares in my beliefs regarding the value of education and has supported me in this journey.

My fellow teachers and my students are my true motivation for completing this thesis. It is my hope that this work can generate greater understanding and support for the work of teachers. My students inspire me because they are our future. It is my hope they will recognize they are deserving of the best teachers and the best education possible.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix

### **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM**

1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of Problem.....	1
1.3 Research Problem.....	10
1.4 Research Questions.....	13
1.5 Limitations and Benefits of the Study.....	13
1.6 Significance of Study.....	14

### **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1 Introduction.....	15
2.2 The Work of Teachers.....	15
2.3 Society and Education.....	19
2.4 Teacher Evaluation and Accountability.....	24
2.5 Teacher Workload and Teacher Responsibilities.....	27
2.6 Inadequate Resources.....	30
2.7 Teacher Personality.....	33
2.8 Teacher Stress.....	34
2.9 Teacher Abuse.....	35

2.10 Importance of Valuing Teachers.....	36
2.11 Societal Attitudes.....	38
2.12 Summary.....	39

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

3.1 Introduction.....	41
3.2 Theoretical and Philosophical Framework.....	42
3.3 Research Design.....	48
3.3.1 Theoretical Framework for Data Collection and Data Sources.....	48
3.3.2 Data Collection and Data Sources.....	51
3.3.3 Participant Selection and Ethical Considerations.....	52
3.3.4 Data Analysis.....	57
3.3.5 Verification and Trustworthiness of Data.....	60

### **CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF DATA**

4.1 Introduction.....	62
4.2. Societal Attitudes Towards the Education System and the Teaching Profession.....	64
4.2.1 Societal Perceptions of Education and Teachers.....	64
4.2.1.1 From the Perspective of the Teacher Participants.....	64
4.2.1.2 From the Perspective of the Student Participants.....	67
4.2.1.3 From the Perspective of the Parent Participants.....	69
4.2.1.4 From the Perspective of the Administrative Participants.....	71
4.2.1.5 From the Perspective of the Political Participant.....	74

4.2.1.6 From the Perspective of the Business Participants.....	75
4.2.1.7 From the Perspective of the NLTA Participant.....	77
4.2.1.8 From the Perspective of the Faculty of Education Participant.....	79
4.2.2 Importance of Education and Teachers in Society .....	80
4.2.3 Value of Education and Teachers in Society .....	84
4.2.4 Good Teacher... Bad Teacher.....	88
4.2.5 The Role of Teachers and Schools in Contributing to Society's Perceptions of Teachers.....	96
4.2.6 Summary.....	102
4.3 Societal Understanding of the Nature of Teaching and Education.....	103
4.3.1 Changes in Education and the Teaching Profession.....	104
4.3.2 Teacher Responsibilities.....	109
4.3.3 Teacher Workload.....	118
4.3.4 Teacher Personality.....	122
4.3.5 Educational and Teacher Challenges.....	126
4.3.5.1 Lack of Funding for Education: Resources, Large Class Size, Teacher Allocation Cutbacks and Workload.....	126
4.3.5.2 Lack of Respect: Parental Pressures.....	128
4.3.5.3 Lack of Respect: Student Behaviour.....	130
4.3.5.4 Daily Teacher Challenges: Motivation of Students.....	132
4.3.6 Teacher Qualifications and Teacher Training.....	133
4.3.6.1 Entrance Requirements to the Faculty of Education.....	133
4.3.6.2 Recommendations to the Education Program.....	135
4.3.6.3 The Hiring of New Teachers.....	138

4.3.6.4 Subject Area Expertise.....	139
4.3.6.5 Professional Development for Teachers.....	140
4.3.7 Teacher Accountability.....	142
4.3.8 Decision Making in Education.....	144
4.3.8.1 Decisions Guided by Efficiency and Money.....	145
4.3.8.2 Decisions that Negatively Impact Teachers and Students Due to Lack of Knowledge of Education by Decision Makers.....	146
4.3.8.3 Parental Involvement in Decision Making.....	147
4.3.8.4 Politics and Education.....	149
4.3.8.5 Teacher and Student Involvement in Decision Making...	150
4.3.8.6 Who should make Decisions?.....	152
4.3.9 Summary.....	155
4.4 The Effect of Societal Attitudes and Societal Understanding of the Education System and the Teaching Profession.....	157
4.4.1 Teacher Morale.....	157
4.4.2 Teacher Wellness.....	158
4.4.3 Teacher Effectiveness.....	160
4.4.4 Teacher Withdrawal from Extracurricular Activities.....	161
4.4.5 The Loss of Teachers.....	163
4.4.6 New Teachers.....	164
4.4.7 Effect on the Education System.....	166
4.4.7.1 Valuing Teachers and Education.....	166
4.4.7.2 Educational and Teacher Challenges.....	168

4.4.7.3 Workload.....	169
4.4.7.4 Accountability and Decision Making.....	170
4.4.7.5 Implications of Poor Quality Education.....	171
4.4.8 Summary.....	172

**CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 Introduction .....	174
5.2 Societal Attitudes Towards the Education System and the Teaching Profession.....	174
5.2.1 Societal Perceptions of Teachers and Education.....	174
5.2.2 Importance of Education and Teachers in Society .....	181
5.2.3 Valuing Education and Valuing Teachers.....	183
5.2.4 Societal Respect for Students.....	186
5.2.5 Gender.....	187
5.2.6 The “Good” Teacher.....	188
5.2.7 The “Bad” Teacher.....	190
5.2.8 Teacher Communication.....	192
5.2.9 Communication.....	195
5.2.10 Labour Disputes.....	196
5.2.11 Media.....	197
5.3 Societal Understanding of the Nature of Teaching Education.....	198
5.3.1 Changes in Education.....	198



5.3.2 The Work of Teachers.....	202
5.3.3 Teacher Personality.....	207
5.3.4 Educational and Teacher Challenges.....	209
5.3.5 Teacher Qualifications and Teacher Education.....	214
5.3.6 Accountability.....	220
5.3.7 Decision Making.....	223
5.4 Effect of Societal Attitudes and Societal Understanding of the Education System and the Teaching Profession.....	228
5.4.1 Teacher Morale.....	228
5.4.2 Teacher Wellness.....	230
5.4.3 Teacher Effectiveness.....	231
5.4.4 Teacher Withdrawal from Extracurricular Activities.....	232
5.4.5 The Loss of Teachers.....	233
5.4.6 New Teachers.....	235
5.4.7 Effect of Society's Perceptions on Education.....	236
5.5 Recent Developments in Education.....	237
5.6 Summary of Implications and Recommendations.....	239
5.7 My Final Thoughts.....	241
5.8 Conclusions.....	243
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>246</b>
 <b>APPENDICES</b>	
Appendix A: Letter and Consent Forms.....	253
Appendix B: Questions for Journal and Interview.....	257

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1	Attributes of a Good Teacher .....	91
Table 4.2	Attributes of a Bad Teacher.....	93
Table 4.3	Teacher Responsibilities.....	117

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This thesis will explore the perceptions of society in Eastern Newfoundland in relation to the teaching profession and examine the value society places on the profession of teaching. This research intends to establish the important role that teachers play in society and juxtapose this role with society's attitudes towards the teaching profession. It will consider whether placing value on the professional expertise of teachers has wide reaching implications for the education system.

#### **1.2 Background of Problem**

This research idea arose from my own personal experiences that have led me to question the value Eastern Newfoundland society places on the profession of teaching. The following journal is a personal reflection of my journey of becoming a teacher and continues to describe my growth as professional for over a decade of teaching. It is intended to convey how I feel the attitudes of others in regard to teachers have impacted my experience as a professional.

#### *My Journal*

I did not always know I wanted to be a teacher. I was once told in Grade 9 by a friend, who I believe later, became a neurosurgeon, that I should become a teacher. I suppose this is because I often helped her and others in the class with their work. I did not give it much thought at the time. I certainly liked helping others and I liked all of my teachers, especially my Grade 7 teacher who seemed to take a special interest in me. I

did not know if it was the thought of spending the rest of my life in school or if I somehow thought that I was worthy of "better". By my Grade 12 year, I decided that I would become a doctor. I enrolled in university for that fall and I began a degree in biology.

I enjoyed my biology degree but I also found that I liked math, psychology, sociology and I surprised myself when I discovered I even liked english. I soon lost my focus for a career in medicine. I was not impressed with many of my cohorts in the biology department who were not exactly social and were fixated on being one of the *chosen few* accepted into the Faculty of Medicine. In fact, no one really helped each other and most worked in isolation. Competition was also fierce.

I considered, at one point, becoming a psychologist or a social worker. I considered pursuing ecology related work in biology and, later, after completing a course in molecular biology, I considered a career in cancer research. With still no true direction in my career goals, I thought I would do a course in the Faculty of Education. I began to picture my life as a teacher and in a career of "helping others". I knew there were no great financial rewards in education but I believed the reward of teaching others would be more than enough. I knew I enjoyed learning, considering my vast array of courses completed outside of my primary subject area of biology. I also felt my previous interest in psychology and sociology could be integrated into my new career.

Towards the end of my degree, I began working with Parks and Recreation for summer employment. My first job was Residence Camp Counselor in which I stayed overnights with a group of children four days a week. We were paid about \$5.00 an hour for 40 hours a week but actually worked 24 hours a day for four days straight. I do not

understand entirely why I accepted the job or why I stayed in this position for two consecutive summers. Week after week, many of the same children returned. Some were foster children. Many were from single parent families. Some were from wealthy homes and some were distinctly poor. Residence Camp seemed like a cheap form of baby-sitting and a vacation for parents from the “stresses” of child rearing for at least one week, or the entire summer so it became my “stresses”. Despite the difficulty of managing a large group of children, I grew attached to them and I stayed. I remember one child, Maria<sup>1</sup> who loved to sing. In fact, we often sat around the campfire in awe of her talent and encouraging her to sing one more song. She came out of her shell and kept us entertained for the rest of the summer. I remember teaching David<sup>2</sup> to tie his shoelaces. David was about seven years old and a foster child. I do not believe anyone had tried to teach him before. My most difficult child was James<sup>3</sup>. He was a child who came from a “well to do” family. His parents were separated and his father remarried. He never missed a week for those two years and never failed to create a problem, or two, every trip. I did not truly realize until years later that he did not care what kind of attention he received as long as he got it.

In later years, I worked at a different program with Parks and Recreation in which I was a coordinator in charge of a day camp – no overnights. Mark<sup>4</sup> was about five years old and a foster child who often threw tantrums. Quite often the counselors could not deal with him so they would ask me for help. I did not always feel that I knew exactly what to do with Mark, but I tried. I would take him into my office, sit him down, wait

---

<sup>1</sup> Actual names are not used.

<sup>2</sup> See Footnote 1.

<sup>3</sup> See Footnote 1.

<sup>4</sup> See Footnote 1.

out his tantrum with him, and then we would talk. I later tried rewarding him with stickers for good behaviour but I really did not feel this was working. I understood that there was no easy solution. During the last week of camp, we were returning by bus from a day trip to Salmonier Nature Park. The seats in the front of the bus, which happened to be next to me, were taken by other children. Mark threw another tantrum because he wanted to sit in front. He eventually exhausted himself and one of the children gave up their seat next to me. Mark put his head on my lap and before falling asleep looked up at me and said, "I wish you were my Mommy". My heart almost broke. This was my defining moment. I had no idea that I had such an impact on this child. In an instant, I knew why he behaved so badly. My Grade 7 teacher got it and now I got it. Every child needs to feel special and loved. Since I had somehow magically reached this child, I felt I had finally found my place in the world. I would work with young people and I would become a teacher. I wondered if I could consider myself worthy of such a profession. Young peoples' lives would be in my care and under my influence. The task seemed enormous and the responsibility immense.

Inspired, I completed my degree in Education and began substituting in the fall of 1994. I remember being told I would not likely get substituting work since I was new but, in the event I did, to be certain to tell everyone at the school that I had a great day no matter what problems I experienced. I was told administrators did not want to deal with any problems with substitutes. If so, you would not be called back to the school. I was also told because I was female and somewhat petite, I would have additional problems. To boost my self-confidence, I enrolled in a karate class.

Certainly there were problems during my days substituting. My second day substituting, I was in a junior high school. I spent my day trying to make sense of a poorly written lesson plan and an uncontrollable Grade 7 class. I finally asked for help from the Vice-Principal when a student hit another over the head with a book and when another student jumped out of the window onto the roof. I was never called to return to that school. Perhaps, I should have pretended I had a great day. No problems.

My classroom management skills did improve and I worked hard to impress at the schools I was called for substitute work. I was taken notice of at one school and was finally offered a position as tutor in a government-funded program in a large inner city school. This program involved removing struggling students from the regular classroom setting and placing them in a smaller group setting. Students were specially selected for the program based on their needs. Some of these students were at risk of dropping out. Some were learning disabled and not coping in the classroom. One was a severe anorexic, wanting to withdraw from the world. We would not let her. Another was dealing with a recent diagnosis of manic depression. We seemed to have made a measure of success with all of the students. Students enjoyed coming to our group for help and attended school regularly. I watched my students achieve higher grades and I saw their confidence in learning grow. Teaching was becoming the career of which I had dreamed. Six months later the government stopped funding the program and the students returned to the regular classroom. We were all devastated.

During my first full-year replacement contract, I was determined to impress. I worked incredibly hard and immersed myself in school life. One day, I was taken aside by a well-respected senior teacher. He asked me what I was doing. He said to me,

“When you are dead and buried, do you think that anyone will thank you for what you have done? Do you think that anyone will remember?” Those words remain embedded in my memory. Is the teaching profession such a thankless job? Why is my work not valued? Then I remembered my Grade 7 teacher. I never forgot that he was interested in my artwork or asked how I fell down and cut my hand that first day of school. I still wondered about the truth. Are teachers valued?

I was surprised in my first years of teaching by peoples’ response when I told them that I was a teacher. For many, it seemed like they quickly erased a look of disdain and would search for some polite comment. Often people would try to appear to have the inside scoop and say “I would hate to have your job.” Some would joke about a teacher’s vacation time. “It must be great to have your summers off, not to mention Christmas and Easter”. Were they really joking? I would try to tell them about how hard I worked. I would say that most days I did not stop from the minute I got up the morning to the minute I went to bed at night. I hoped this would gain some empathy. I believe it did not. I would wish that if only they would follow me around for a week, just a week, then they would understand what it means to be a teacher and gain a new respect for the profession. I was curious about this apparent dislike for teachers. Why? I could not understand why teachers were not respected. After all, are they not responsible for guiding today’s youth, the future generation?

Early in my career, I experienced a situation when a father insisted that he would speak to my administrator because he felt his daughter should be performing better in my course and I was not treating her fairly. At this point I had already tried tutoring her after school and had recommended that she see the guidance counselor for help in learning



strategies. The father argued that 68% did not fairly represent his daughter's ability and that they had received an "A" in science the previous year. After he took his problem to the "next level", my principal suggested I check her mark from Grade 9 Science. I discovered a mark of 70%. This was a two-mark discrepancy from my mark of 68%. I was amazed. It seemed that this parent had lied to try to bully me into giving his child a better mark. I also discovered that most teachers often feared parent-teacher interviews. They had learned to expect there would be at least one parent, if their child was performing poorly in their course, who would insinuate they were not doing their job in the classroom. There would be the parent who would say their child was doing better in every other course and ask why are they having difficulty in only your course? Or they would say their child did better with their other teacher last year. There would be the parent who would insist that their child was being mistreated and if they do not find satisfaction, then they would take it to the next level. Some teachers say that they do not experience these problems since they cleverly print out report cards for every student from previous years to point out any discrepancies from what parents claim about their child's academic ability. I observed other teachers who simply gave out high marks to avoid being harassed by parents.

In my first few years of teaching, I was also surprised to learn it was not uncommon for students to miss tests. In fact, class attendance was sometimes lower the day of a test. It was also common for the vast majority of students to not pass in assignments the day they were due or to not pass them in at all. This was an unknown phenomenon to me since when I was in school I would always submit my assignments on time and I would never miss a test, even if I was ill. I had difficulty understanding the

apparent lack of regard for education. I also would always be shocked when parents would forcefully expect their children to be given higher marks despite poor attendance, missed tests and incomplete assignments.

I was still amazed by the number of teachers who would always suggest it was a good idea to let administrators believe that everything within the walls of your classroom was perfect. This way you would be certain to be hired back the next year. Knowing my own experience was not perfect and that the experience of my fellow teachers was also not perfect, I questioned how any administrator could possibly believe that everything within the walls of every classroom was perfect. I resolved to make my classroom as close to perfection as possible. I realized the key to reducing classroom management problems was to build rapport with my students and develop an atmosphere of mutual respect. Then the unbelievable happened. I was finishing teaching a class, when I realized there were three boys in front who were laughing and not paying attention to my lesson. I looked and saw one boy with his hand down the front of his pants, masturbating, and gesturing towards me. The other boys were amused. Among many things, "I thought where was the respect?" I reported the incident to my administration but was surprised when a close friend who was also teacher told me that I never should have involved the administration. After all, they may think I caused the problem and I would certainly not be hired back again for having caused so much trouble. I should not have been surprised when the child's mother could not accept that her son was capable of such an indecent act and that I must have been mistaken. The student was suspended for five days and moved to another class. The mother argued against the suspension but believed he should be removed from my class. The matter was brought to the school

district. I was never informed of the final result and the matter was never spoken of again. Amazingly, my spirit was not broken. There was a show of support from fellow teachers and I recall a student, who I never knew, approached me to say she was sorry for what had happened to me. I was not hired back the following year due to the loss of teaching units.

Year after year, I have watched my workload increase. In addition to trying to create interesting lessons, I have spent hours and hours correcting student work. I try not to become disheartened when parents or students complain that I do not have work corrected in a time frame that suits them. The introduction of the new Pathways Program<sup>5</sup> also introduced many meetings after school and new teaching expectations in which I strive to meet the individual needs of these students. Greater demands for accountability through professional growth plans and school development have also placed greater demands on my time. With all of this, I still try to juggle extracurricular activities to benefit my students. All are valuable initiatives so I work hard to fulfill my responsibility.

Recently, I was asked this by my students during class, "Why are you a teacher?" I asked them what they meant. One student replied, "Well, miss, you are so smart and you know everything. How come you are a teacher?" To which I replied, "Do you think that you are not worthy? I love what I do. Why would I want to do anything else?" Unfortunately, they did not understand. They seemed to think I should have done something better with my life. Several months later, the same students asked the same

---

<sup>5</sup> Pathways Program is a plan designed to meet the individual needs of students with exceptionalities. It is often intended to provide support for students with learning difficulties. It requires an ISSP (Individual Support Services Plan) team to implement accommodations and supports for the student.

question. They must have pondered this for months and still could not understand why I wanted to teach. I repeated my same message from before, "I love what I do. Why would I want to do anything else?" Perhaps, this time they got it.

Despite some of these negative anecdotes about my teaching experience, I still enjoy what I have chosen to do with my life. I can also recall countless experiences in which I feel I have made a difference. I keep a scrapbook full of pictures, mementos and thank you cards. I follow my Grade 7 teacher's philosophy and make every student who walks into my classroom feel special. I have come to realize I do not need to be thanked to know that what I do is valuable. I am now in my fourteenth year of teaching and when I am asked what I do, I proudly say "I am a teacher". My expression shows that I am proud to be a member of one of the noblest professions on earth.

### **1.3 Research Problem**

Does society in Eastern Newfoundland positively perceive the teaching profession? To what extent is the work of teachers valued and the importance of teacher's work to society understood? How do these attitudes affect the work of teachers and the delivery of education?

Is society truly aware of the present challenges of teachers and the present challenges that face the education system? Does society recognize the importance of addressing the concerns of the education system and the challenges that impede teachers from performing their work? I believe the answers to these questions have important implications for determining the success of education and that the success of education has wide reaching implications for society.

Every member of society seems to believe they possess an awareness of the inner workings of the teaching profession. However, does society truly understand what it means to be a teacher? Does society truly understand the practices of good teaching? So many people believe they understand the work of teachers because they have attended school and therefore are familiar with the school setting and thus the role of the teacher. Does it logically follow that many people should feel capable of appropriately judging the work of teachers and advising upon the management of schools? Does the general public fail to truly understand the nature of what teachers do and the expertise they bring to the job. Who really understands the professional knowledge and expertise teachers require and truthfully possess?

Many individuals outside the classroom walls influence what actually occurs in schools. Politicians, the Department of Education personnel, school district officials, administrators and parents all partake in this influence. Are the realities, ideologies, attitudes, goals, and experiences of all of these people the same? Perhaps, each of these groups possesses their own agendas. Do these agendas have the best interests of the student at heart? Who really knows what represents the best interests of the students?

Perhaps, teachers may be closer to knowing what lies in the best interests of their students. Is it not teachers who are most aware of the needs and interests of their students? Is it not teachers who are closest to recognizing and understanding the problems that exist in the education system? Yet, are teachers really asked? Are parents and other stakeholders forcing their own agendas without respecting the professional expertise of teachers? Furthermore, are teachers really encouraged to participate in educational change? Does anyone really listen to teachers?

One of the reasons I choose this topic was because of my own personal experiences in which I felt that the knowledge and expertise that I brought to the profession was not respected and valued. I found many decisions that influenced my teaching and my students were made without true consultation around the issues I experienced firsthand. I experienced pressure to not question the decisions of those in power for fear of professional repercussions. I became aware I was not isolated in my concerns, as colleagues would relate similar experiences. Many conversations with colleagues revealed that they had similar experiences in which they did not feel that their professional expertise was valued.

I also choose this topic because I began to find the profession more challenging in terms of increasing responsibility and greater workload. I began to question whether or not other stakeholders really understood the nature of the teaching profession. I have experienced numerous situations in which I felt devalued and was shown a great lack of respect for my profession. I found fellow teachers would encourage me to leave the profession because they perceived that the profession of teaching would become more undesirable over time. I watched teachers become discontented with their jobs and leave the profession. I have watched young, promising teachers decide to pursue other careers rather than deal with the issues that surround being a teacher.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

For the above stated reasons, I decided to critically examine the perceptions of Eastern Newfoundland society regarding teachers and the cultural attitudes that influence these perceptions. I have explored how these perceptions may influence how teachers may or may not be considered valued and respected professionals. Furthermore, I have examined the implications these attitudes have for the teaching profession and the effective delivery of education.

#### **1.5 Limitations and Benefits of the Study**

The limitations of this study are recognized in that the number of individuals participating in this study is limited and therefore the results of this study are not intended to be generalizable. The study was limited to 15 participants who represented a stratified sample of society in Eastern Newfoundland. Participants were selected to represent a cross-section of society. Participants included three teachers, two students, two parents, one administrator each the school, district, and government level, a politician, a member from the Teachers' Association, a Faculty of Education participant and two business people. Male and female participation in the stratified sample were balanced. There were also several participants who offered a rural perspective.

The benefits of this study are that cultural attitudes and perceptions of teachers and education can be brought to the forefront for examination so that teachers and other stakeholders are provided a voice to express their views regarding the virtue of the teaching profession. It is the aim of this study to encourage society to reconsider its perceptions of teachers and education and how these perceptions may positively or negatively impact upon the education system and the realities of teachers working within

the system. It is the hope that this study can generate the necessary changes for the betterment of society.

### **1.5 Significance of Study**

If teachers are not valued for their professional expertise in Eastern Newfoundland society, what implications might this have for the teaching profession? How do these attitudes affect the promotion of professional development of teachers and the desire of teachers to improve their teaching practices? Does the esteem awarded the teaching profession attract and retain good teachers? Furthermore, what implications may these perceptions have for education? If teachers are not valued and respected for their expertise in society, does this influence the quality of education awarded those in the school system?



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Society's perceptions of teachers in Eastern Newfoundland is a phenomenon that has not been previously studied in this province. The Workload Study completed by Dibbon (2004) and the study by Younghusband (2005) on teacher stress are both discussed in this chapter. They both support aspects of this research and are specific to this province. Likewise, the work of Nash (2001) exposes the effects negative societal perceptions towards lower socioeconomic status in this province. Literature from the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA) provides valuable information on how teachers feel they are devalued such as the effects of the Pathways program, teacher allocations, and the increase of abuse experienced by teachers. The remaining literature used in this review reflects international views and presents international research.

#### **2.2 The Work of Teachers**

A review of the literature demonstrates that the professionalism of teachers is not respected in a Western society. Teachers are highly criticized by many sectors in society and their work targeted when the 'products' of education do not seem to meet the demands of society. Greater demands of accountability are made of teachers without equal consideration given to all aspects of the institution responsible for education. The words of Smyth (1999) exemplify how the expertise of teachers is not valued and respected by society:

Teachers worldwide are currently experiencing 'difficult times' as their work is assailed, prevailed upon, reformed and restructured almost beyond recognition by forces bent upon devolution, marketization, de-professionalization, and intensification. Increasingly impoverished enclosures are being constructed around teachers and their work in the form of measure designed to calibrate teaching more, thus supposedly leading to improved productivity and accountability. The effects of these new technologies of power, will take the form of competencies, appraisal and effectiveness, is to subjugate teacher's indigenous forms of knowledge through a constant process of the politics of derision. (p.67)

Similarly, Apple (1993) describes how the work of teachers is continuously being attacked and becoming more controlled by those outside the educational institution.

They are witnessed in the increasingly effective attacks on teaching and the curriculum, on the needs of business and industry being seen as more and more primary, if not the only, goals of schooling, the tighter control of teaching in many states, and in the increasing integration of education into the conservative project. (p.10)

He also describes how the teaching profession has become de-skilled as curriculum has become more prescribed. He describes how this treatment of teachers, as well as their loss of control in their teaching, has lead to feelings of alienation and burnout.

Teachers lack control in how the curriculum is developed and the methodologies used to deliver the curriculum. Doyle and Singh (2006) describe how the work of teachers is not allowed a creative license and how those outside of the educational setting of the classroom guide the focus of education. Doyle and Singh state that teaching is thought of in technical terms and educational reform is based upon improved teacher education and improved methodologies. However, they recognize teaching is a process that demands the integration of thinking and practice integral to being a reflective practitioner. According to these researchers, the content given teachers to teach is often pre-packaged so it separates curriculum development from its implementation. They believe teachers are treated as if their sole purpose is to deliver the curriculum created

and designed by some central agency. This approach to education denies the important role of teacher and the professional expertise they possess that would well inform educational change. It does not recognize the art of teaching but rather views teaching as a technical or scientific skill. It does not recognize the unique interactions that teachers have with students that determine the relative success of the curriculum and the ability of teacher's expertise to transform student experiences to an effectual level.

The literature shows that the lack of value placed upon the professional expertise of teachers has lead to the failure of reform efforts in education and has had implications for the retention of teachers in the profession. Schoonmaker (2002) supports this view:

Much of the school and curriculum reform efforts of past decades failed because policy makers and reformers neglected to take into account the teacher's vital intellectual role. And teaching has not had a strong holding power for academically able, well-educated, and highly articulate individuals because it has not offered them work that demands the use of these gifts. (p. 129)

Likewise, Duncan-Owens (2008) describes how the implementations of new programs are not as successful because they do not avail of the expertise of teachers.

Program developers, who insist on strict implementation of fidelity and fail to engage in discussions with teachers about how they alter their use of programs, miss opportunities to make their programs better.... The high stakes of silencing teachers extend beyond threats to the internal validity of program evaluations, they represent a wealth of wisdom and practice lost in an environment that is only focused on pre- and post-test results and producing evaluations useful for promotional materials. (p.16)

Since the work of teachers is not valued, it has lead to difficulties in attracting and retaining teachers as already suggested by Schoonmaker (2002). Many countries are working towards developing policies that increase the desirability of the profession and address numerous concerns surrounding teachers' work. *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* is a report that draws on the results of a

major study commissioned by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) of teacher policy. It was conducted over the 2002 to 2004 period in collaboration with 25 countries around the world. The OECD (2005) makes a number of recommendations to recruit and retain high quality teachers, including improving the status of the profession:

Policies aimed at attracting and retaining effective teachers need both to recruit competent people into the profession, and also to provide support and incentives for professional development and on-going performance at high levels.... The first concerns the teaching profession as a whole and seeks to improve its status and labour market competitiveness, and to improve teacher development, and school work environments. The second set of strategies is more targeted, and focuses on attracting and retaining particular types of teachers, and attracting teachers to work in particular schools. (p.7)

Younghusband (2005) reports that teachers in this province do not feel adequately involved in the decision making process or in the development of policies. She recommends greater communication between teachers and administrators. Participants in this study report they feel devalued by their administrators when they approach them to express their opinions. Participants feel they have little control over their workplace and their expertise and experience is not valued. Younghusband reports this leads to feelings of resentment, negativity and isolation in these teachers.

Younghusband (2005) also describes how teachers in this province feel isolated in the profession and feel they lack supportive work environments. These teachers call for greater emphasis on developing cooperative and collegial relationships with administrators and other teachers. They also call for administrators to recognize the importance of professional development of teachers when implementing new curriculum and new policies.

Dibbon (2004) explains the complexity of teaching and the specialized expertise required of teachers. He describes teacher preparation as an art and a skill in which teachers must combine curriculum outcomes, learning resources, and their subject area knowledge to engage learners. He explains how teachers must be able to address the diverse learning styles of their students who may be either visual, auditory or constructivist learners. Teachers must also find ways to accommodate for a variety of academic abilities. He explains how teachers are unable to find the time to adequately prepare their lessons due to workplace demands and therefore the quality of the students' experience is hindered. The OECD (2005) further supports how the responsibilities of teachers have exploded as society has advanced.

### **2.3 Society and Education**

Despite the important role teachers play in shaping a student's life, they are hindered in their capacity to provide what they may deem valuable to the student by others in who make decisions in education. Apple (1997) recognizes that teachers have lost power in curriculum decisions:

Power has seemed to have shifted from those people who were closely attached to a long tradition of curriculum debate to those...whose primary affiliations were to their academic disciplines, not to teachers and schools...Powerful groups and alliances in the larger society, in government, and in the academy had more to do with determining curricular debate than those individuals whose special purchase on educational reality was supposed to be expertise in curriculum. (p.344)

Apple (1997) recognizes power is not shared equally in educational decision making and unless a "collective voice" is found "the knowledge taught our children will reflect the fact that power is not shared equally" (p.348). This implies that if the expertise teachers bring to the field is not recognized then the realities of those in power such as

government and business will be taught and these realities may not suit the needs of students.

According to Harland (1996), there are several factors that drive society's need to control the operation of the educational institution. There is a concern about controlling public expenditures and reducing spending or at least increasing the financial efficiency of the educational institution. At the same time, there is increasing pressure that our society remains competitive on a global level and creates a workforce that can compete in the global market.

...there has been a move to reduce public expenditure or, at the very least, to secure more 'bang for the buck'... a chronic sense of resource limitations across the whole public sector... the globalisation of the economy, and the increasing pressures of international competition, have created concern in every nation about the quality of their workforce... Taken together these two factors go a long way towards government attempts to steer educational policy, and to see that public expenditure on education is geared to what are judged to be national priorities. (p.96)

Some of the recent movements in education suggest education is becoming less student-centered but more adapted to the expectations of society in order to produce individuals who meet certain criteria to exist in and best contribute to present-day society and its cultural demands. This movement has contributed to the de-valuing of teacher expertise to meet the agendas of groups that presently influence the nature of education. This view is expressed by van Manen (1999):

... the influences of increasingly rationalistic, technocratic, and corporatist movements in education we see a renewed interest in the question of the ethos of pedagogical practices... others have begun to argue that the most unfortunate fact about contemporary discourses and practices of education that is they have tended to become overly rationalistic, behavioristic, scientific, and managerial... We see this in the development of charter schools set up on the market place model, outcomes-based evaluation of teachers, privatization of government responsibilities (such as monitoring and testing of achievement levels by for profit companies), corporate funding of educational institutions in exchange for

advertising visibility. What we are witnessing is a new form of entrepreneurship in education – based on the thought that teaching is simply a skill with commodity value in the market place...The hiring policies and practices of school systems are driven by the corporatist values of business models; teachers are simply treated as replaceable workers... Educators who worry about this trend argue that we need to ask the question of what it would mean if teachers were treated as moral agents with a practical professional language. (p. 17-18)

Similarly, the work of Giroux (1981) examines the political nature of schooling and the importance of recognizing that “schools function as agents of social and cultural reproduction” (p.28). Giroux describes how the present form of education “undermines reflective thinking” and is a “form of legitimation that obscures the relationship between valued knowledge and the constellation of economic, political, and social interests that such knowledge supports” (p.53).

Doyle and Singh (2006) describe the connectedness of schools and society. They explain: “The reality of schooling and society are such that the complexities must be acknowledged” (p.6) and “connections among culture, pedagogy, politics, and power” must also be recognized (p.2). These researchers define pedagogy as “the production of attitudes, values, knowledge, and identities, which takes place in a variety of cultural and social sites” (p.8). They stress educators need to be aware of “moral implications of our pedagogy” (p.3). According to these researchers, educators need to be aware of the influence they possess in guiding their students and how their pedagogy is “crucial in forming identity” (p.3). Their work is based upon Giroux’s concept that “the notion of teacher as transformative intellectual is important because he sees teaching as an emancipatory practice” (p.7).

The work of Doyle and Singh (2006) is also based upon Giroux’s notion that students should be encouraged to be engaged in citizenry. They describe how Giroux “is

concerned with the empowerment of students and the transforming of the larger social order that will allow a faithful democracy” (p.6). The authors explain how Giroux “has an aversion to legitimating an authoritarian knowledge that simply delivers prepackaged content, instructional methodologies, and assessment mechanisms.... part of the pedagogical struggle is to demystify the hidden forms of domination” (p.7). Giroux (Doyle and Singh, 2006) expresses concern that “teachers are becoming deskilled...because of the way teaching is prescribed and curriculum is prepackaged” (p.8).

Doyle and Singh (2006) describe the focus of the writings of Henry Giroux. They feel the ideology of Giroux should be incorporated into teacher education programs so prospective teachers can give fair consideration to their role in transforming intellectuals. They are concerned the purpose of education has now become focused on economic efficiency and education is beginning to follow a business-like model.

In fact much of Giroux’s writings center on the links of history, power, knowledge, culture, and power. For Giroux, the struggle does not stop there, but it has to be extended to rejecting the notion that the primary purpose of education is economic efficiency. Universities and schools have to be more than company stores. In fact, the very term educational reform has been denuded to mean prioritizing of curricula, lengthening of school year, teacher accountability, standardized outcomes and testing. The intrusion of the business mind-set is alarming to the point where the very foundational logic of schooling is blatantly expressed in business terms. There seems to be no attempt to question the social, cultural, or historical place of such planned reforms. Teacher education is often part of this reform muddle. (p.11)

Segall (2002) supports the view of critical pedagogy and recommends teacher education programs provide opportunities for prospective teachers to critically analyze their own teacher programs, as well as to develop these skills so they are critical of



curriculum design. He suggests the development of critical thinking skills in teachers can be useful in translating these skills to their students.

Nenty (1997) describes the importance of education to the quality of life of a society. He feels educational research is essential to generate knowledge regarding the problems facing the current education system and that this research should engage a variety of stakeholders in education, including teachers. He lists numerous problems in education such as ineffectiveness of teaching and assessment methods, lack of teachers and lack of well trained teachers, high rate of teachers' turn-over, and lack of adequate resources and facilities. He describes the effects of these problems on society:

These result in wastage of a high proportion of rich human resources which if developed would have been available for development, and hence the enhancement of quality of life. They also lead to the development of skills that are not suited for the developmental demands of the society; and finally to poor and deteriorating performance by the learners. The cumulative effect of all these shortcomings in the process of human development is the continuous deterioration of our quality of life. (Discussions and Conclusions, para. 4)

Similarly, Hanushek, and Woessmann (2007) discuss how education and economic success are linked. They describe how educational quality has an impact on not only individual success but on the economic growth of a society. Desjardins and Schuller (2006) also believe "education at all ages plays an equally important role in sustaining economic, social and personal well-being" (p.11).

Field, Kuczera, and Pont (n.d.) further discuss the impact of education on society. They indicate that the costs of a weak education system are high in both social and financial levels. A poor quality education is described to lead to high costs of health care and social assistance:

Education is associated with better health, a longer life, successful parenting and civic participation. Fair and inclusive education is one of the most powerful

levers available to make society more equitable.... The long-term social and financial costs of educational failure are high. Those without the skills to participate socially and economically generate higher costs for health, income support, child welfare and security. (p.2)

This is further supported by Feinstein, Sabates, Anderson, Sorhaindo, and Hammond (2006) who relate quality education to enhanced health and, therefore requiring less dependence on health care. They also find it “helps promote and sustain healthy lifestyles and positive choices, supporting and nurturing human development, human relationships and personal, family and community well-being” (p. 173).

#### **2. 4 Teacher Evaluation and Accountability**

Many organizations have adopted methods of evaluating employees as a means to improve the organization. The education system is no exception. Evaluation practices have become a valued component of all workplaces and when used correctly can serve to empower individuals in the organization to become more effective and contributing members. Harland (1996) describes this trend:

It would seem that evaluation geared to enhancing understanding can contribute to the tasks of supporting, developing and empowering organisational members to be more creative and effective. Such good models of management seem to have persisted into the mid-1990's and many of the evaluation practices which sustain them have been assimilated into the working practices of all manner of organisations: public and private, profit-seeking and service-oriented, commercial and educational. (p.96)

Harland continues to describe how evaluation can also serve in a negative capacity and can be viewed as a form of control in organizations. She states, “Evaluation not only serves a purpose in achieving efficiency, effectiveness and economy but also functions in that of control” (p.96).

Younghusband (2005) reveals in her study that teachers in this province are struggling with increased demands for accountability. Teachers are concerned about how demands such as increasingly large amount of paperwork and the number of meetings to ensure the needs of particular students are being met are expected of them without increased support for this increased workload for teachers. Teachers express concerns about being held accountable for the success of students when teaching new curriculum in which they are not adequately prepared through teacher in-service.

The Canadian Teachers Federation (n.d.) expresses concern about the present form of accountability in the country. They describe teachers as demoralized as a result of the present demands of accountability. They stress that accountability in its present form has negative implication for students, as well. The following concern is taken from a position paper on accountability:

The system currently operating in some parts of Canada and the United States is not truly a system of accountability. It is, rather, an outcomes-driven high-stakes system of assessment. The effect of this approach is a narrowing of curriculum, an abandonment of many of the purposes of public education, the demotivation of students, the demoralization of teachers and an erosion in the trust and confidence of the public. (Introduction, para. 2)

Froese-Germain (2004) expresses similar concerns below about standardized testing as a form of accountability and calls for support for both teachers and students. He feels standardized testing is a narrow measurement of learning and does not address the diversity of learning.

The primary purpose of accountability should be to support teaching and student learning in ways that address the diverse and changing needs of all learners.

Students are not standardized. As they come to school with diverse abilities, experiences, interests and prior knowledge, it follows that narrow standardized measures cannot assess their learning or progress. (Focus on student learning, para. 1 and 2)

Similarly, Apple (1993) describes how the present forms of accountability and evaluation requiring a much prescribed curriculum are resulting in “deskilling” students and disenabling them to develop “critical literacy”.

Froese-Germain (2004) also cautions that the present form of accountability can prevent teachers from making decisions in terms of evaluation that are in the best interests of their students. In the following statement, he indicates present forms of accountability do not consider the diverse forms of learning that require “multiple forms of assessment”.

Another important aspect of professional accountability is teacher autonomy, at the heart of which is a teacher's right to make decisions that enable her/him to meet diverse and changing student needs. This includes allowing teachers to use their professional judgement to assess and evaluate student learning using multiple forms of assessment (Professional Accountability, para. 3).

A number of authors caution about the effects of high-stakes testing and the excessive demands of accountability. McNeil, Coppola, Radigan, and Heilig (2008) refer to high dropout rates of students in high-poverty high schools and how this form of testing contributes to greater inequities in education. Schmidt (2008) discusses the effects of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) policy on public education in the United States. He describes some of the negative policies to be, “unrealistic proficiency expectations, withholding of federal funds, and increasingly severe sanctions are just a few of the federal ‘carrot-sticks’ that continue to threaten and punish the schools that enroll significant proportions of disadvantaged students” (p. 36).

## **2.5 Teacher Workload and Teacher Responsibilities**

In a study completed by Nash in 2001, she reports how teachers of inner city schools of Newfoundland are feeling overwhelmed with their workload. Teachers describe being overburdened with additional responsibilities yet continue to accept these responsibilities to benefit their students. Younghusband (2005) reveals high workload demands are a major factor contributing to teacher stress in this province. Participants in this study report spending many hours outside of the school day meeting the demands of their job and how this time commitment prevented them from having a normal personal life. Younghusband reports that teachers in this province are struggling with multiple demands in the workplace. Supervision, extracurricular demands, Pathways and inclusive classrooms, increasing documentation are a number of concerns discussed in this study.

The Pathways program is described by both Younghusband (2005) and Dibbon (2004) as one of many factors contributing to the excessive workload of teachers in this province. The NLTA (2006) identifies four difficulties associated with the implementation of the Pathways Program in this province that contribute to increased teacher workload:

- I. Implementation of Pathways with minimal inservicing for teachers at the classroom level
- II. Documentation procedures which are time-consuming, place unmanageable burdens upon guidance personnel and are particularly difficult for teachers who do not have the expertise or training
- III. Frequent denial of services to students who are identified, documented and assessed at the school and district level
- IV. Major concern over students who require remedial help. There will be little available assistance from special education teachers and classroom teachers find it impossible to meet the needs of remedial students, given the wide range of other responsibilities and the lack of expertise among many regular teachers. (p.3)

In a workload study completed by Dibbon (2004), it was found that teachers worked an average of 52.35 hours a week for school related activities. He compares this to other public sector employees. Teachers work 39.5 hours a week for 52 weeks whereas the public sector works 32 hours per week for 52 weeks. He describes the work of teachers done outside of the school day as invisible work. He describes tasks such as copying curriculum materials, tests and handouts, filling out forms, doing attendance checks, speaking with guidance counselors regarding students, parent phone-calls, organizing field trips, and filling in for other teachers on staff. He calls for public recognition that teachers are overworked and sacrifice much of their personal life to their professional life.

Dibbon (2004) describes many other issues leading to increased workload for teachers. Increased demands for accountability to parents and administrators have resulted in more time spent documenting and reporting to parents. With the addition of extra demands placed upon teachers relating to the implementation of new curriculum and attending to numerous social issues affecting students, Dibbon recommends that supervision duties no longer be mandatory for teachers. The study explains that workload issues are compounded with increased class sizes, multi-grade teaching and the existence of large numbers of students on Individual Student Services Plans (ISSP) within these classes. New programs which are poorly implemented and the inadequate provision of associated resources for these programs are reported to contribute to increased teacher workload. Teachers who are teaching outside of their subject area are another contributing factor that increased teacher workload also negatively impacted

student learning. In this study, Dibbon (2004) also describes how job satisfaction for teachers increased when teachers felt they had adequate preparation time.

For example, when teachers feel they have adequate planning time they tend to be more satisfied with their job, teaching assignment, teaching load and workload, as they are generally more satisfied with the quality of their worklife. They are more likely to be satisfied with the amount of time they have to spend marking student work, meeting with parents and developing mid-year and final exams. They are also more satisfied with their ability to maintain a balance between their work and personal life and are much more likely to recommend teaching as a career for young people. (p.16)

In 2005, the Canadian Teachers' Federation also reports that teacher workload across the country has increased tremendously. Problems of increased class size and attending to the needs of a large number of students with special needs are highlighted in the report.

Compared to 4 years ago, teachers indicated they're working longer hours and their workload is significantly greater. They report growing class sizes and at the same time larger numbers of special needs students are being integrated into their classrooms. (Workload, para. 2)

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (2007) provides further information on the present working conditions of teachers in Canada. Similar to Dibbon (2004), they describe some of the invisible work required of teachers.

In actual fact, however, teachers work much longer hours than those officially outlined in legislation or collective agreements. Preparation of lessons, marking of tests, supervision, individual interviews, extracurricular activities, and in-service work and professional meetings take up considerable extra time. Studies have shown that during the school year the teacher works approximately fifty hours per week. In addition many teachers attend summer school during the vacation period in order to improve their qualifications. (Working Conditions, para. 2)

Likewise, Loeb, Knapp, and Elfers (2008) express concern regarding the downloading of work on teachers in the United States without providing appropriate support. They relate these workload concerns to the expectations of teachers in regard to standardized testing.

The underlying theme that teachers sense that too much is being asked of them (and of students), with too little support, is hard to avoid, coupled with concerns about excessive testing, inflexible accountability requirements, and what they see as a narrowing of the curriculum. (p.23)

Apple (1993) describes some of the negative effects of “intensification” of teachers’ work through increased accountability and increased workload.

Intensification is one of the most tangible ways in which the working conditions of teachers have eroded. It has many symptoms... ranging from having no time at all to go to the bathroom, have a cup of coffee, or relax, to having total absence of time to keep up with one’s field. We can see it most visibly in the chronic sense of work overload that has escalated over time. More and more has to be done; less and less time is available to do it. (p. 124)

His description demonstrates a lack of understanding by society of the increased workload of teachers due to the increased demands of accountability with fewer resources for education.

## **2.6 Inadequate Resources**

In a study by Nash (2001) on the relationship of socioeconomic status and schooling experience in Newfoundland, teachers discuss how lack of resources (eight computers for over five hundred students) impeded their ability to provide for their students. They also discuss how there was a lack of support personnel to provide training for teachers to better enable them to deal with students with issues of poverty. It is recommended by Nash that financial change was needed, as well as, a change in public perceptions of schools with a lower socioeconomic status. It is acknowledged by Nash that a lack of resources or adequate teacher training to address the needs of their students is not unique to schools with students of lower socioeconomic status but were challenges faced by all schools.



Younghusband (2005) also reports a lack of adequate resources for education as a major factor contributing to teacher stress. In this study, teachers feel they are expected to continue to meet the increasing demands of their workload with fewer resources provided to support the education system. Teachers are not provided with adequate personal resources for professional development upon the introduction of new courses and new policies. In addition, they are expected to cope without adequate resources such as manuals and textbooks during the introduction of a new course. Teachers express concern regarding poor physical working conditions. The following quote from the study completed by Younghusband illustrates additional concerns regarding a lack of resources and calls for change:

The implications for inadequate resources affect both teachers and students. This issue must be addressed at all levels of education, and teachers' concerns should be taken seriously to ensure that adequate resources are available. It is unfair to expect a teacher to teach technology courses with only half of the computers in working condition and little technical assistance to repair broken equipment. It is not acceptable to expect teachers to purchase their own supplies or expect students or teachers to study in classrooms designed for half the number of students. How inadequate resources can be justified by the Department of Education was difficult for teachers to understand and caused considerable frustration and anger. Failure to recognize the need for resources was perceived as a lack of respect for both teachers and students. So too were the overcrowded conditions in which several participants had to work. The outcome is an education system which is stressful for teachers, leaving them feeling ineffective in the classroom. (pp.199-200)

The lack of adequate resources for education is viewed by teachers in the study by Younghusband as a lack of respect for both teachers and students. They also discuss the implications of inadequate resources for the effective delivery of education.

In 2006, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA), through a submission to the Ministerial Commission established by the Department of Education to review ISSP/Pathways, calls for government to recognize the lack of resources

teachers attempt to cope with and describes how this lack of support has resulted in a struggle to provide quality education:

The teachers of this province have chosen this profession because of their commitment to the children placed in their care. They are committed to providing quality learning environments and experiences to children of varying abilities. However, to achieve this, there must be a recognition of the significant resources needed to provide this level of service. There must be a recognition that teachers have been trying for a decade to implement a delivery model that is under-resourced and overtaxed. From a professional perspective, teachers cannot continue to implement this model without major changes. (p.13)

In another submission to the Teacher Allocation Review Commission for the Department of Education, the NLTA (2006) encourages government to reconsider teacher allocations in this province. They argue the lack of resources in personnel does not allow for the needs of every student to be met by educators.

The NLTA strongly believes that there is a need to change the way teachers are allocated in our province. In over 600 submissions and in focus groups and consultations, individuals and groups have repeatedly expressed the concern that the current model, based on enrolment, is not meeting the needs of students, of the school, or of the education system in general. We have reached a point which necessitates a new, responsive and responsible approach if indeed we are committed to improving teaching and learning – the essence of education. This new approach should begin with an assessment of the needs of each student and each school and result in the appropriate allocation of resources to ensure that these needs can and will be met. (p. 22)

The NLTA recommends teacher allocation formulas consider the unique needs of individual schools and also consider the needs of the community served by the school.

The OECD (2005) reports that the provision of inadequate resources is a concern that must be addressed internationally in order to attract and retain quality teachers, as well as provide quality education. Nenty (1997) argues the lack of adequate resources and facilities in education as leading to the deterioration of the quality of life of society.

## 2.7 Teacher Personality

In the study completed by Nash (2001), she describes the caring nature of teachers and their tendency to sacrifice themselves on behalf of their students. She explains how teachers in inner city schools are likely to spend their own money buying supplies for their students. She discusses how they will spend time worrying about the welfare of their students. She also describes how teachers will find ways to cope with high workload demands so that their students do not suffer.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (2005) reports how much money teachers across the country personally spend on supplies for their students and for their classrooms:

In addition, teachers personally spend over \$90 million, collectively, on classroom materials and class-related activities, a sum that is also not reimbursed and, in most cases, for which no tax credit is provided.

Younghusband (2005) describes the desire of teachers to make a difference in the lives of their students but that workplace demands were making it difficult for them to be effective and provide for their students in the manner in which they would like. She describes teachers as "dedicated professionals who felt the environment in which they worked seriously impacted their ability to be as effective in the classroom as they had hoped to be" (p. 190). The OECD (2005) concludes "that teachers are highly motivated by the intrinsic benefits of teaching – working with children and young people, helping them to develop, and making a contribution to society" (p.9). They recommend "that system structures and school workplaces need to ensure that teachers are able to focus on these tasks" (p.9).

## **2.8 Teacher Stress**

Several researchers in this province have discussed teacher stress. The inability to effectively care for students in an impoverished inner city school led to teacher stress and feelings of inadequacy (Nash, 2001). Nash recommends there should be in-service programs to assist teachers in coping with stress. Dibbon (2004) reports teachers in this province experience high levels of stress due to the lack of preparation time they have in their profession. Teachers feel their lessons are not as successful as they would like and, as a result, it negatively impacts their students.

Younghusband (2005) completed a study, which specifically examines teacher stress. Stress is reported as a primary health problem for teachers. It is reported teacher stress resulted from school reorganization and consolidation, as well as, the continuous downloading of work on teachers. Teachers in this study express concern about meeting the demands of inclusive classrooms and Pathways without adequate support. Teachers are also concerned about coping with growing student behaviour issues that can be coupled with a lack of support from administrators in addressing these issues. Workplace stress has resulted in reducing teacher enthusiasm and causing teachers to distance themselves emotionally from their students. Stress due to workload demands is revealed to prevent teacher effectiveness. The study recommends increased and sustained collegial and administrative support, effective communication, the provision of adequate resources and professional development, and the need to recognize the issue of high workload demands.

Taylor, Zimmer, and Womack (2005) investigated factors contributing to teacher burnout and stress in a rural school district in the United States. It was reported that

stressors included relationships with administration, relationships with students, job satisfaction and professional self-esteem. Teachers were anxious about student violence. Teachers were also concerned that teaching is not respected by those outside the profession. Recommendations provided by the researchers included (1) that the administration ask teachers what works with students instead of asking textbook companies and administration (2) encouraging teaching input into curricular decisions (3) holding students and parents accountable for student achievement and (4) making professional development opportunities more relevant. Chen and Miller (1997) reviewed international literature regarding teacher stress and determined that major contributors towards teacher stress include time constraints, workload, job demands, role conflict, role ambiguity, income, resources, class size, administrative bureaucracy, autonomy/participation in decision making, collegiality, student discipline and interaction, reward and recognition, and career advancement.

## **2.9 Teacher Abuse**

Younghusband (2005) reports that disruptive behaviour from students is contributing to the inability of teachers to be effective in the classroom and that this is a contributing factor towards teacher stress. Teachers feel they had little control over discipline issues. Teachers in this study express concern regarding verbal abuse from both parents and students. Violent behaviour in schools is considered to be a growing concern in the education system of this province. Teachers in this study feel they did not have the support of administrators and this has led to feelings of isolation for them. According to the NLTA, teachers are increasingly reporting incidents of harassment from students, parents and other adults and they have been addressing ways for teacher to cope with this

increase in abuse (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association and Public Legal Information Association of NL, n.d.). The NLTA reports the kinds of incidents that teachers are concerned about in this province:

- Parents coming into schools/classrooms and yelling at teachers
- Teachers receiving angry or inappropriate comments in public
- Inappropriate comments or behaviour in the classroom
- Threats received at home or at school
- False and/or malicious accusations and allegations
- Damage to property at home or at school
- Pushing or other unwelcome physical contact
- Repeated phone calls. (p.1)

The Canadian Teachers' Association (2005) reports similar concerns across the country regarding school safety. They reported "1/3 of educators surveyed reported an increase in the number of incidents with angry or abusive parents compared to four years ago".

Further statistics from the survey are provided below:

The percentage of Canadian educators surveyed in 2005 who reported witnessing at least one incident of various forms of assault or abuse over the past year was as follows:

- A student physically assaulting or intimidating a teacher (35%)
- A student verbally abusing a teacher, more than just an angry exchange (60%)
- A parent physically assaulting or intimidating a teacher (23%)
- A parent verbally abusing a teacher, more than just an angry exchange (46%).  
School Safety, para. 2)

## **2.10 Importance of Valuing Teachers**

The literature shows that is important to recognize the professional needs and expertise of teachers so their professional power can be used to influence the success of the next generation. Doyle and Singh (2006) recognize the significance and power of teachers in society realizing the power teachers have to construct and manipulate ways of knowing, forms of knowledge, values, social practices, and belief systems. They feel the

power possessed by teachers can not be compared to any other professional. They also recognize the role teachers play in how society is shaped through the methods, content, and resources they use to teach. It is still ultimately the teacher who delivers education. Care must be given in recognizing and supporting the influence of teachers in education as opposed to permitting other stakeholders to neglect the important role of teachers in the classroom such as by not including these teachers in important decisions pertaining to education.

Negative attitudes towards teachers and lack of respect for the professionalism of teachers undermine the important role only teachers can play in a student's life and future. Connell (1985) stresses the importance of teachers in society:

...role in reshaping the hearts and minds of the next generation, casts them basically as social agents ... What teachers can do, with their students, is create new possibilities, build paths into regions that have never been explored before. And that is very close to the heart of teaching. It happens on a small scale every time a teacher teaches well. We need to translate it to the large scale. (p.206)

Younghusband (2005) supports the value of teachers in society and cautions how a lack of support for teachers can result in negative impacts on both teacher and student.

Effective teachers constitute a valuable human resource, one that needs to be supported and treasured. Indeed, these teacher participants felt undervalued, and they worried about their effectiveness in the face of all of the obstacles they perceived. The needs of students with academic deficits, social and/or behavioural disabilities, often accompanied by previous failures and frustrations, caused great concern for teachers. Such students, functioning at a slower and lower academic level will forever be behind and outside the group, yet the teacher is expected to teach this class of 25 to 40 students as a group. Such a task is extremely difficult at best but impossible without adequate supports. (p.204)

Schoonmaker (2002) feels that it is important prospective teachers be adequately prepared for the "emotional life of teaching". She explains that many teacher education programs focus on the development of "technical knowledge and skills that will be required of them to be successful" and "lose sight of the fact that who a teacher is *as a*

person and chooses to become will influence what happens in the classroom” (p.44). She feels the understanding of the self is essential to the important role of guiding students. She strongly suggests schools should also be required to focus on the development of essential capacities such as wonder, reflection, merriment, friendship and compassion.

### **2.11 Societal Attitudes**

Societal attitudes on aspects of the education system have a tremendous impact upon students and education. Nash (2001) argues negative societal perceptions of schools with students of lower socioeconomic status need to change and that the commitment of society to the success of these students is the key to progress. She points to society as failing to address the issues of poverty in schools as opposed to the schools themselves and calls for society to place a greater value in these issues.

If the inner city school, in their view, speaks to the character of society, it would stand to reason that as a *society*, not as schools, we are largely failing to address the issues of poverty. If these schools reveal unacceptable levels of abuse, and hunger and neglect then surely as a society these problems are not the priority they ought to be. (p. 144)

As a result, Nash (2001) calls for society to evaluate their perceptions:

Of critical importance is that teachers, schools, and members of the larger community take an honest appraisal of their perceptions of their students and assess for themselves whether or not they feel there is room for growth and knowledge. (p.158)

Younghusband (2005) argues that “failure to recognize the need for resources was perceived as a lack of respect for both teachers and students” (p.199).

Younghusband and Nash both suggest society re-evaluate their perceptions of education since society plays a major role in influencing the progress of the educational institution. They feel it is critical for society to place great value on education that is



inclusive for all students and that society encourages the necessary support for education. The OECD (2005) caution that negative perceptions of teachers is contributing to difficulty in attracting and retaining quality teachers and therefore impacting the quality of education. Taylor, Zimmer, and Womack (2005) report that a lack of respect for teachers is contributing to teacher stress and burnout.

### **2.12 Summary**

A review of the literature demonstrates the work of teachers is not valued or respected on a global level. Their work is subjected to greater criticism and demands for accountability. There appears to be a loss of creative license in the teaching profession as curriculum is pre-packaged. The expertise of teachers seems to be less recognized in the educational decision making process. Decisions in education are becoming more driven by the demands of local and global societies, as well as financial efficiency.

The important role of teachers in influencing students and transforming society is recognized in the literature. Teachers should not be hindered in their ability to educate students but be supported and valued. Instead, teachers are subjected to negative forms of accountability that support efficiency and standardized testing and, ultimately, lead to the demoralization of teachers. The literature has shown that increased demands for accountability have lead to increased workload for teachers in this province. The quality of education is related to economic and social success with fewer individuals dependent on the health care system and social programs.

The literature shows that teacher workload and responsibilities have intensified in recent years. Greater accountability is compounded with numerous responsibilities such as large class sizes, an increased number of students with special needs, demands of

extracurricular activities, and the need for supervision. This is further complicated by inadequate resources, insufficient teacher allocations to meet the needs of schools, lack of sufficient support staff and poor physical working conditions.

Unrealistic work expectations and inadequate resources are shown to lead to teacher stress. Stress results because teachers are unable to effectively meet the needs of their students. It is also the personality of the teacher to self-sacrifice to meet the needs of their student while jeopardizing their own well-being. High workload and lack of adequate resources are translated by teachers into a lack of respect for both teachers and students. Teachers are also experiencing greater behavioural issues in the classroom and increased forms of harassment. These contribute increased stress and a sense of being de-valuing as teachers. Likewise, the challenges facing teachers today have been demonstrated in the literature to negatively impact the quality of education.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**METHODOLOGY**

**3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this research is to examine the perceptions of Eastern Newfoundland society towards the teaching profession. This research is also intended to explore why these perceptions exist and what implications these attitudes have for the delivery of education in the school system in Eastern Newfoundland. Critical analysis of these perceptions will facilitate the identification of recommendations for change.

This phenomenological qualitative study (Ehrich, 2003; Creswell, 1998) is informed by critical theory. Data for this study has been generated by the journals of participants, my own journal, interviews with participants, and my own field notes. Participants were selected through the method of stratified purposeful sampling (Creswell, 1998; Evans, 2002) in which attitudes are compared from a particular cross section of society.

This chapter is comprised of two main sections. First, theoretical and philosophical frameworks are discussed to provide an overview of the features of qualitative research and phenomenological study, as well as, why these methods were chosen for this research. This section also outlines the nature of critical theory and how it plays a role in this research.

The second section of this chapter discusses research design. It begins by describing the conceptual underpinnings of the different forms of data collection and data sources that are used. It is followed by a step-by-step description of the actual data collection procedure and data sources used. The research design also provides an account of how and why participants were selected along with a description of the relevant ethical

considerations. The research design continues with a review of how data from phenomenological studies has been analysed in previous research, as well as, an outline of my own methodology for data analysis. Verification and trustworthiness of data are the final component of research design.

### **3.2 Theoretical and Philosophical Framework**

This critical study uses qualitative methods to examine the phenomenon pertaining to the perceptions of society towards the teaching profession. This study examines the question of how teachers are perceived and valued in society. Through a detailed review of journals, interviews, personal reflections, and field notes, a “holistic picture” is presented since participants are selected from varying levels of involvement educational field. Following Creswell’s (1998) framework, this study is comprised of qualitative aspects since “qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p.15).

“Qualitative research investigates the poorly understood territories of human interaction. Like scientists who seek to identify and understand the biological and geological processes that create the patterns of a physical landscape, qualitative researchers seek to describe and understand the processes that create the patterns of the human terrain.” (Glesne, 1998, p. 193) This research seeks to understand the interactions of stakeholders in the education system and how this influences the range of perceptions regarding teachers in society. As Merriam (1998) indicates qualitative research is based

on “the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds” (p.6).

Qualitative research requires the examination of the realities of many individuals in society and delves into understanding how these realities are constructed (Merriam 1998; Glesne 1998). It consequently requires long term interaction with participants. Qualitative research is not objective as it requires the subjectivity of the researcher. Additionally, this type of research is interpretive and phenomena are interpreted in a naturalistic way so people bring them meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Glesne (1998) supports this view of qualitative research:

...qualitative methods are generally supported by the *interpretivist* (also referred to as constructivists) paradigm, which portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing. The ontological belief for interpretivists, therefore, is that social realities are constructed by the participants in those social settings...they regard their research task as coming to understand and interpret how the various participants in a social setting construct the world around them. To make their interpretations, the researcher must gain access to the multiple perspectives of the participant. Their qualitative study designs, therefore, generally focus on in-depth, long-term interaction with relevant people in one or several sites. The researcher becomes the main research instrument as he or she observes, asks questions, and interacts with research participants. The concern with the researcher objectivity is replaced by a focus on the role of subjectivity in the research process. (p. 5)

There are five assumptions discussed by Creswell (1998) that guide qualitative research. They include “the multiple nature of reality, the close relationship of the researcher to that being researched, the value-laden aspect of inquiry, the personal approach to writing the narrative, and the emerging inductive methodology of the process of research” (p.73). In this study the multiple nature of reality is examined by looking at the perceptions of teachers from a cross section in society. Extensive time spent with interviewees greatly enhanced my understanding of their reality, as did the examination of their journals. As the researcher, I needed to understand that the realities of the

participants will be determined by their own values and that they must be interpreted to shape the narrative of the research. Finally, inductive logic is used by examining emerging themes and then working towards generalizations.

Society's perception of teachers in Eastern Newfoundland is the phenomenon studied in this research. Accordingly, this study is a type of qualitative research known as a phenomenological study since it "describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or a phenomenon" (Creswell, 1998, P.51) and "priority is given to actors' accounts of social reality" (Scott, 1996, p.64). In this research, participants from a cross section of society use their experiences to portray their reality and their attitudes towards teaching. "A phenomenological study focuses on descriptions of how people experience and on how they perceive their experience of the phenomena under study". (Glesne, 1998, p. 7) or "describing things as one experiences them" (Ehrich, 2003, p.45). According to Creswell (1998) a phenomenology is "an approach to studying the problem that includes entering the field of perception of participants; seeing how they experience, live, and display the phenomenon; and looking for the meaning of the participant's experiences" (p.31). The understanding of this phenomenon is accomplished through interviewing and analysing journals of participants to determine their perceptions, as well as, my personal reflections on the meaning of the participant's experiences.

The nature of phenomenological study is interpretative for the researcher, as well as subjective. As described by Holstein and Gubrium (1998), "subjectivity is paramount as the scientific observer deals with how social objects are made meaningful" (p.138). At the same time, it is important to recognize that my own preconceptions must be set aside

to best understand the phenomenon as experienced by the participants (Creswell, 1998; Holstein & Gubrium, 1998). Schultz (as cited in Holstein and Gubrium, 1998), states that social action must be studied “within the natural attitude by *bracketing* the life world, that is, setting aside one’s taken-for-granted orientation to it” (p.139). Bracketing was utilized by the researcher throughout data collection and data analysis.

There are four qualities, according to Merleau-Ponty, that can be used to describe the phenomenological method: description, reduction, essences and intentionality (Ehrich, 2003; Creswell, 1998). *Description* is a quality of the phenomenological method in which the phenomenon is described as opposed to explained and the descriptions come from the participants since it is their experiences that are sought (Ehrich, 2003). The phenomenological method requires the use of *reduction* which is known as “... a process where phenomenology also requires that the taken-for-granted assumptions and presuppositions about phenomena be temporarily suspended or bracketed” (Ehrich, 2003, p.46). The phenomenological method involves looking for the essential, invariant structure or *essence* of the experience. Ehrich (2003) describes essences as “...simply the core meaning of an individual’s experience of any given phenomenon that make it what it is” (p.46). It also involves the *intentionality* of consciousness “where experiences contain both the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on memory, image, and meaning” (Creswell, 1998, p.52). Chamberlain also describes intentionality as “...the total meaning of the object (for example, idea, process, a person), which is always more than what is given in the perception of a single perspective” (as cited in Ehrich, 2003, p.47).

This study consists of elements of critical theory since it involves school as a social institution, as well as, the analysis of society's perceptions of teachers and the implications of these attitudes towards the education system (Merriam, 1998). It is aimed at encouraging members of society involved in the education system to critically evaluate their perceptions and values regarding teachers and to involve themselves in the transformation of the social institution of education (Merriam, 1998). According to Fay, as well as Morrow and Brown, "variants of critical theory abound in all of the social sciences, but central themes that a critical researcher might explore include the scientific study of social institutions and their transformations through interpreting the meanings of social life: the historical problems of domination, alienation, and social struggles; and a critique of society and the envisioning of new possibilities" (as cited in Creswell, 1998, p.80). Participants are asked why they feel they possess certain perceptions of the teaching profession, the implications of these attitudes, and how they may call for a necessary change. Participants perform critical reflection so it liberates or emancipates them from "false beliefs and subsequently leads to concrete proposals for overcoming oppression" (Lakowski, 1999, p. 175). My analysis of the data also includes the critical reflection of these perceptions of teachers in society and proposes mechanisms for change.

Critical research stresses the importance of understanding that it involves the values and beliefs of those engaging in the research. It is the responsibility of the researcher to understand that these values and beliefs need to be interpreted according to their context for the participants (Doyle, 1994; McLaren & Giarelli, 1995). Throughout the research, the participants were greatly encouraged to express their own views and



strongly supported to do so. It was explained that it is their perceptions that are critical to the research and that their own perceptions were of greatest value.

Likewise, the researcher must also recognize that they have their own values and beliefs that contribute to how they conduct their research and how they interpret the data. This is why many researchers support the notion of reflexivity in critical research in which they recognize they are not objective but subjective in how they analyse and critique data (Tripp, 1998; Smyth & Shacklock, 1998). In conducting this research, my own subjectivity was considered before the interview, during the interview, and throughout the analysis of the data.

In addition, critical research must go beyond understanding a problem to offering solutions that can lead to change or transformation (Doyle, 1994). "In Critical Theory there is a rejection of the assumption that there can be 'objective' knowledge. There is no neutral or disinterested perspective because everyone is socially located and thus the knowledge that is produced will be influenced by a social interest... research is not confined to unmasking or consciousness-raising but is also about taking action to change situations" (Usher, 1996a, p.23). Critical education research also involves going beneath the surface of a problem and allowing knowledge to be deconstructed and reconstructed (Doyle, 1994; McLaren and Giarelli, 1995).

Critical research is also "human, social and political" (Doyle, 1994). According to Giroux, part of the agenda of critical education research is to explore the relationships among knowledge, power and domination and realize schools are cultural and historical sites for critical research (as cited in Doyle, 1994). According to Merriam (1998), "knowledge generated through this mode of research is an ideological critique of power,

privilege, and oppression in areas of educational practice (p.4). Our understanding of knowledge is based upon multiple realities but what is accepted as truth is determined by power. "Like objectivity; truth, logic, and reason can no longer be construed as givens with no independently innocent existence. Rather, they owe their being to their connection-or lack of it-to power and positionality, which weigh very heavily in the determination of what counts as legitimate knowledge" (LeCompte, 1995, p. 99). "We have to remind ourselves that knowledge is never the product of a mind that is detached from the realities of daily concerns. Knowledge is produced out of a human activity that is motivated by natural needs and interests" (Doyle, 1994, p. 35). The purpose of this research is to provide a voice to the participants and to "generate new ways of knowing, capable of interrupting (existing) power imbalances" (LeCompte, 1995, p. 99).

### **3.3 Research Design**

#### **3.3.1 Theoretical Framework for Data Collection and Data Sources**

"To understand the nature of constructed realities, qualitative researchers interact and talk with participants about their perceptions. The researcher seeks out a variety of perspectives; they do not try to reduce the multiple interpretations to a norm" (Glesne, 1998, p.5). Interviewing is used as one means of data collection since it allows the researcher access to past events (Burgess, 1984). Interviewing will permit a more detailed pursuit of content information (Berg, 1995). Researchers ask questions in the context of purposes generally known fully only to themselves. "Respondents, the possessors of information, answer questions in the context of dispositions (motives, values, concerns, needs) that researchers need to unravel in order to make sense out of the

words that their questions generate” (Glesne, 1998, p. 68). Interviewing provides a means of pursuing in-depth knowledge about this phenomenon.

The type of interview used is the semistandardized interview described by Berg (1995): “This type of interview involves the implementation of a number of predetermined questions and/or special topics... but the interviewers are allowed the freedom to digress...to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and standardized questions” (p.33). Participants were provided with a list of questions prior to the interview that were used as themes to guide the interview. Since these questions were intended to guide participants, they may or may not have been specifically used during the interview. Further questions were used during the interview to probe deeper into an idea and the interviewee was permitted to add to themes other than those already presented to them on society’s perception of teachers. Field notes were used to supplement the interview when the participant used a facial expression or physical movement to convey an idea that would not be apparent from the audiotape.

Journals provided another means of data collection since they added to the thickness and consistency of the research. Journals are a form of document produced by the research participant (Glesne, 1998, p.59). Journals are valuable as documentation of a phenomenon in that they provide, “contextual dimensions to your observations and interviews. They enrich what you see and hear by supporting, expanding, and challenging your portrayals and perceptions” (Glesne, 1998, p.59).

The use of my personal reflections is another type of data used in this research known as reflexivity (Smyth and Shacklock, 1998; Bryant, 1996; Glesne, 1998; Usher 1996b). “Reflexivity in research is built on an acknowledgment of the ideological and

historical power dominant forms of inquiry exert over the researcher and the researched” (Smyth and Shacklock, 1998). “Reflection is an aspect of the inherent reflexivity of all practices insofar as they are routinely concerned with the negotiation of meaning and the interpretation of knowledge claims” (Bryant, 1996). “ Researchers can not separate themselves from the objects of their research, indeed they can no longer define themselves negatively as ‘objects’, lacking the qualities which they as subjects possess” (Usher, 1996b, p. 41). These reflections included field notes and my personal journal found in the introduction of this thesis.

Field notes were used in reflexivity as a means of recording my own ideas, opinions and feelings after the interview process or after reading a journal. It was also a means of recording patterns I saw emerging as I was collecting data or reflecting on the patterns I observed (Glesne, 1998, p.49). According to Berg (1995) “opinions, preconceived notions, and general feelings about certain observed situations are also legitimate entries in field notes” (p.108).

My personal journal illustrates reflexivity in that it portrays my reality and experience pertaining to attitudes towards teaching. This journal is not only my personal reflection on my own attitudes towards teaching, but the attitudes I perceive to be those of others towards teachers. “As a researcher, you are inseparable from your findings” (Glesne, 1998, p.177). As a teacher, my own personal experiences have led me to pursue this phenomenon. It is a phenomenon that I, too, have experienced. “From this perspective, what you know about your research — reflected in your interpretations — is intertwined with what you know about yourself” (Glesne, 1998, p.176). My own

interpretations of the information generated by participants also represent my reality as I delved into understanding the reality of others in society.

### **3.3.2 Data Collection and Data Sources**

Fifteen participants from a particular cross section of society in Eastern Newfoundland were selected for this study. Selection included three teachers, two students, two parents, three administrators, a NLTA representative, Faculty of Education representative, a politician, and two members of society associated with the business community. The selection of teachers considered whether they teach in an inner city school or a rural school. It also considered if they are relatively new to the profession or late in their career. The three levels of administration included an administrator at the school level, the school district level and at the provincial level. Close to equal numbers of male and female participants were also maintained.

Participants were provided with a letter describing the research, the participant's role in the research and the rights of the participants in the research. Participants were expected to sign a consent form outlining they understand their right to decline the use of any or all information and their right to privacy and confidentiality. The letter and consent form can be found in Appendix A.

The main sources of data collection were the journals generated by the participants and interviews of the participants. The participants were advised that the time duration for the journal was expected to be one hour and that the time duration for the interview was also to be one hour. Participants were provided with the questions in advance of the interview so they could complete their journal beforehand and understand the expectations of the interview. Interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed.

Field notes were taken during the interview to document facial expressions or physical movements that conveyed an idea that would not be apparent from the audiotape. Member checking (Creswell, 1998; Glesne, 1998) was used to give participants the opportunity to review their contributions to the thesis and advise me as to whether their ideas were accurately recorded.

The questions for the journal and interview are found in Appendix B. These questions were intended to be guidelines to assist participants in the journal and to provide participants with an idea of what to expect in the interview experience. Participants were not expected to answer individual questions but they could use individual questions if they wished. They were also advised that they were free to add other ideas not included in the questions. The questions were organized into seven major themes: (i) attitudes towards teachers, (ii) value of teachers, (iii) importance of teachers, (iv) teacher responsibilities, (v) teacher training, (vi) decision making in education and (vii) implications for the future.

Field notes were used to record my own ideas, opinions and feelings after the interview process or after reading a journal. They were a means of recording emerging patterns or to reflect on the observed patterns (Glesne, 1998, p.49). My personal journal was also generated to provide data about my teaching experiences and my perceptions of how teachers are perceived in society.

### **3.3.3 Participant Selection and Ethical Considerations**

Selection of these participants was purposeful so that the participants selected would provide data that is information-rich and provides the most insight (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). "The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting

*information-rich* cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (Patton, 1990, p.169). The data is also stratified in that the perceptions of a number of individuals from several areas of society were examined. In total, there were 8 male participants and 7 female participants. Stratified purposeful sampling is described by Creswell (1998) as using subgroups and facilitating comparisons. It can also be compared to maximum variety sampling described by Merriam (1998) in which a heterogeneous sample is taken and commonalities are observed in their experiences.

The three teachers were chosen to examine how they believe they are perceived and valued by society. The first teacher had finished almost thirty years of teaching in inner city schools and was selected because he could provide the perspective of a teacher who may have observed changes in how teachers are perceived throughout a time span. The second teacher was mid-career and had all of his teaching experience in rural Newfoundland. The third teacher had been teaching for only several years and she was expected to provide the views of those just entering the profession.

Three individuals closely related to the teaching profession were selected because they are in key decision making roles regarding education. These included a female administrator at the school level, a male senior administrator at the district level and a female official from the Department of Education.

Two parents and two students were chosen for an outside perspective of the education field that is closely connected to the work of teachers. One parent was male and the other parent was female, as were the students selected as one male and one female. They were all from different families of traditional middle-class status.

One staff member of the NLTA was used to provide insight into her perceptions of society regarding the work of teachers. A politician was selected to provide his perspective of government. A professor from the Faculty of Education was selected to provide his perceptions.

Two members of the community outside of the education field were also selected. The first individual was female and worked with business and liaised with schools to promote the interests of the business. The second individual was male and the CEO of a major business in the community.

This research involved the use of human subjects using aspects of qualitative research that included both the journal and the interview process. This research complies with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Research* (TCPS). This research is limited to fifteen participants and data collection only involves the two forms of journals and interviews with the participants.

Participation in this research was entirely voluntary and participants were provided with full information about what the research involved. As stated previously, participants were provided with a letter and consent form describing the research, the role of the participant, and the methodology used to collect data. The letter and the consent form are enclosed in Appendix A. The participants were advised that if they required further information they may be referred to a third party which would be my faculty supervisor. They were also informed, if they had any ethical concerns, they might contact the Chairperson of the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR).



Participants were advised that the expected time duration for the journal would be 1 hour and the expected time duration for the interview would be 1 hour. Participants were advised they might decline to answer any individual questions during the interview or to stop the interview. Questions provided to participants for the journal experience were simply guidelines and they were not obligated to provide information they were not comfortable providing. They were informed that they have the right to revoke their permission to use any or all information gathered at any time prior to the submission of the thesis. They were also informed that they have the right to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were given the opportunity to review their contribution to the thesis prior to the submission of the thesis.

This research involved little or no risk to the participant. If I were to recognize that harm may occur or if there is the potential for harm, then it would be my responsibility to avoid, prevent or minimize the harm. Participants were provided with their fundamental right to privacy and provided with the freedom to make informed choices about their participation.

If a participant made comments that could be viewed as slanderous to an individual or institution, then I would advise the participant of the possible risk to them if anonymity is not maintained. If comments were made that could invite bias or prejudice towards the participant if anonymity is not maintained, the participant would also be advised of the possible risk. Participants were reassured throughout the process that their identity would be protected to the full extent possible. If I perceived there could be possible harm to the participant, then they would have been reminded that they have the right to revoke their permission to use any or all information gathered at any time prior to

the submission of the thesis. They were also reminded they had the right to voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time.

Participants were also advised of the benefits of participating in this research. Since this research is about society's perceptions of teachers and the implications of these perceptions for education, then the results of this research are beneficial to society as a whole. Gaining an understanding of these issues can help elicit necessary change. Participants will not only benefit society but can also benefit themselves by exploring their own reality in regard to these perceptions and how this may impact education in society. It also provided participants with a forum in which they could express their views and an opportunity to promote change in society by revealing their attitudes.

Consent should be considered voluntary since I am not in a position of authority over potential participants that would include teachers, administrators, parents and community participants. To insure that I may not be considered in a position of authority over student participants, I did not approach any student that I presently teach or could teach in the future. I also requested parental or guardian consent in the case of student participation. Student participation was limited to high school students.

Confidentiality and anonymity was provided to the full extent possible. Participants are only identified in the research either as student, parent, teacher, administrator and community participant such as business person or politician. There are further qualifiers such as "rural", "inner city", "junior" or "senior". The only individuals with access to the personal information of the participants are my faculty supervisor and myself. A transcriber did have access to the audio recordings. Every effort was made to keep the identity of the interviewees secret from the transcriber and the transcriber was

advised of confidentiality and privacy issues for the participants. Individuals involved in peer review and external auditing were also advised of confidentiality and privacy issues; however, the identity of participants was kept secret from them also. Journal entries, audio recordings, and transcripts of audio recordings made during the interview were held in a secure location during the research period and will be destroyed after a five year time period upon completion of the study. This location is in a locked filing cabinet in the university office of my faculty supervisor. If the data is used for future research, participants will expect to be consulted and asked for written consent.

### **3.3.4 Data Analysis**

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) identified phenomenology as a philosophical methodology (Small, 1999; Ehrich 2003; Creswell, 1998). Husserl "used the term phenomenology for a science of ideal meanings, based on a direct intuition achieved through successive 'reductions' of given experience. By setting aside (or 'bracketing') the reality of the objects of experience, the investigator could isolate mental phenomena in their purity. A further 'transcendental reduction', bracketing the reality of mental acts themselves, revealed that the world and its meanings are constituted in transcendental subjectivity" (Small, 1999, p.256).

Husserl describes a procedure for data analysis. "Phenomenological data analysis proceeds through the methodology of reduction, the analysis of specific statement and themes, and a search for all possible meanings" (Creswell, 1998, p.52). Moustakas and Polkinghorne employ similar steps:

The original protocols are divided into statements or horizontalization. Then, the units are transformed into clusters of meanings expressed in psychological and phenomenological concepts. Finally, these transformations are tied together to

make a general description of the experience, the textural description of what was experienced and the structural description of how it was experienced. (Creswell, 1998, p.55)

Giorgi (as cited in Ehrich, 2003) has four key steps for data analysis:

1. Reading of the entire description to get a sense of the whole statement.
2. Discrimination of meaning units within a psychological perspective and focussed on the phenomenon being researched.
3. Transformation of the participants' everyday expressions into psychological language with emphasis on the phenomenon being investigated.
4. Synthesis of transformed meaning units into a consistent statement of the structure of learning. (p.63)

A procedure for the analysis of phenomenological research similar to that described by Husserl, as well as, Moustakas and Polkinghorne (as cited in Creswell, 1998) and Giorgi (as cited in Ehrich, 2003) is employed in this study. It is outlined below:

1. *Horizontalization*. I found statements in the interviews, journals, field notes, personal reflections and other documents about how individuals, including myself, experienced the phenomena and listed out these significant statements. Each statement was treated as having equal value. I produced a list of nonrepetitive and nonoverlapping statements (Moustakas as cited in Creswell, 1998).
2. *Clusters of Meanings*. The statements produced in horizontalization were grouped into themes (meaning units) and these units were listed.
3. *Textural Description*. I wrote about *what* was experienced, in other words provided descriptions of the meaning individuals have experienced.
4. *Imaginative Variation or Structural Description*. I then addressed *how* the phenomenon was experienced. This involved "seeking all possible meanings, seeking divergent perspectives, and varying frames of reference about the phenomenon, and constructing a description of how the phenomenon was experienced" (Moustakas as cited in Creswell, 1998, p.150).
5. *Epoche or Bracketing*. The concept of epoche was employed throughout data analysis. According to Field and Morse, "...the concept of epoche is central, where the researcher brackets his or her own preconceived ideas about the phenomenon to understand it through the voice of informants" (as cited in Creswell, 1998, p.54). Epoche is the "suspension of beliefs so that the phenomenon can be fully focussed

upon and understood" (Ehrich, 2003, p.49). It requires that the natural attitude must be bracketed or suspended (Ehrich, 2003).

6. *Essential, invariant structure (Essence)*. "It is the goal of the phenomenologist, to reduce the textural (what) and structural (how) meanings of an experience to a brief description that typifies the experiences of all participants in a study. All individuals experience it; hence, it is invariant, and is a reduction to the "essentials" of the experiences" (Moustakas as cited in Creswell, 1998, p.235). This means "the researcher then constructs an overall description of the meaning and the essence of the experience" (Moustakas as cited in Creswell, 1998, p.150).
7. This process was followed first for my account of the experience and then for that of each participant. The outward experience of the participants established intersubjective validity by comparing their reality to that of my own. Afterwards, a "composite" narrative description was written (Moustakas as cited in Creswell, 1998).

The journals, interview transcripts, field notes, and personal reflections were read in their entirety. Significant statements were extracted and analysed. These statements were formulated into meanings, and these meanings were clustered into themes. These themes were integrated into narrative descriptions of the experience (Creswell, 1998). Textural and structural descriptions were used to formulate the essence of the phenomena.

The method of data analysis includes a balance between description and interpretation. According to Janesick (1998), "analysis and interpretation effectively balance description" (p.49). Denzin also supports this form of analysis "by suggesting that thick description makes thick interpretation possible" (as cited in Janesick, 1998, p. 49). Aspects of the interpretation include critical analysis of emerging themes and of the 'essence' of the experience. Implications for education are considered and suggestions for change are provided.

### 3.3.5 Verification and Trustworthiness of Data

“The credibility of your findings and interpretations depends upon your careful attention to establishing trustworthiness” (Glesne, 1998, p.151). Triangulation, member checking, thick description, peer review, and clarification of researcher bias are used to achieve verification and trustworthiness in this research (Glesne, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Merriam 1998; Berg, 1995).

The combination of interviews from a wide range of individuals directly or indirectly involved in education, the use of journals by participants, the use of field notes, and my reflections meet the needs of triangulation. Triangulation is the use of multiple data-collection methods and it contributes to the trustworthiness of the data (Glesne, 1998). Triangulation is valuable in that “by combining several lines of sight, researchers obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality; a richer, more complete array of symbols and theoretical concepts; and a means of verifying many of these elements” (Berg, 1995, p.5).

Thick description is “directed towards drawing out a complete picture of the observed events, the actors involved, the rules associated with certain activities, and the social contexts in which these elements arise” (Berg, 1995, p. 114). Thick description is also described by Denzin as “description that goes beyond the mere or bare reporting of an act (thin description), but describes and probes the intentions, motives, meanings, contexts, situations and circumstances of action” (as cited in Glesne, 1998). The data analysis used in this study is discussed previously and makes use of unifying themes from the experiences of a stratified sample in society to arrive at understanding the ‘essence’ of

society's perceptions of teachers using textural (what) and structural (how) components of their descriptions of the phenomenon.

In addition, validity is enhanced by reflecting on my own subjectivity and ensuring that my own bias does not undermine the contributions of the participants. In clarification, I comment on "past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study" (Creswell, 1998, p.202). "Continual alertness to your our biases, your own subjectivity also assists in producing more trustworthy interpretations" (Glesne, 1998, p.151).

Member checking also works to ensure validity. The participants were given the opportunity to review their contributions to the thesis and advise me whether their ideas were recorded accurately. Member checking is also valuable as it can prevent the publishing of ideas that could be problematic for the participants and valuable in assisting me in my interpretations (Glesne, 1998, Creswell 1998; Janesick, 1998).

External audits and peer review further enhanced the trustworthiness of my interpretations (Glesne, 1998; Creswell 1998; Berg, 1995). Colleagues and peers were asked to examine transcripts, field notes and data analysis to determine if my interpretations were supported by the data. Likewise, an external auditor in the education faculty was asked to review the data and its analysis to ensure that my interpretations represented the data.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION OF DATA

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The data of the fifteen participants will be presented in this chapter. It is necessary to identify them according to their relationship to the teaching profession or place in society relative to the teaching profession. The teachers participating in this study will be identified as senior teacher, mid-career teacher, and junior teacher. These identifiers are intended to convey the length of time they have been members of the teaching profession. The two student participants will be identified as student A and student B. The two parent participants will be identified as parent A and parent B. The three levels of administrators will be identified as school administrator, school district administrator and Department of Education administrator. The two members of the business community will be identified as business person A and business person B. The remaining participants will be identified as follows: NLTA participant, Faculty of Education participant, and politician.

It is important to recognize that the perception of a number of participants may be developed from several perspectives. The politician offers his perception not only from the perspective of a politician but also as a parent, former teacher and former administrator. Both participants from the business community and the NLTA participant offer an additional perspective as parents. A rural perspective is offered from the mid-career teacher, business person B and the politician.

Chapter four is clustered into themes. Some of these themes were determined by the researcher prior to the journal and interview process for the participants. They



include attitudes towards teachers, value of teachers, importance of teachers, teacher responsibilities, teacher training, decision making in education, and implications for the future. Other themes emerged through the analysis of the data. They include good teachers versus bad teachers, the role of teachers in contributing to the perceptions of society, changes in education and the teaching profession, teacher workload, teacher personality, educational and teacher challenges, and teacher accountability. Participants further elaborated on implications for the future by delineating themes that include teacher morale, teacher wellness, teacher effectiveness, teacher withdrawal from extracurricular activities, loss of teachers, effect on new teachers, and effect on the education system including the quality of education. All themes presented here reflect the realities focused on by the participants in this study.

This chapter is divided into three major sections. They include (i) societal attitudes towards the education system and the teaching profession (ii) societal understanding of the nature of teaching and education and the (iii) effect of societal attitudes and societal understanding of the education system and the teaching profession.

Although the study began by asking about society's perception of teachers in Eastern Newfoundland and its understanding of the teaching profession, participants linked teaching with education and also maintained a focus on the experience of the student. Therefore, the analysis and discussion of the culture of the teaching profession in Eastern Newfoundland will also be linked to the understanding and perceptions of education and how this is reflected in the educational experience of the student.

## **4.2 Societal Attitudes Towards the Education System and the Teaching Profession**

The data presented in this section explores the perceptions of the participants toward education and the teaching profession and what they believe to be the perceptions of Eastern Newfoundland society. It examines the importance and the value of teachers and education in society. Participants offer their views on the attributes that characterize both good and bad teachers. Finally, participants offer their views on how teachers contribute to society's perceptions of them.

### **4.2.1 Societal Perceptions of Education and Teachers**

This section examines the perceptions of participants relative to their position in society. It is subdivided into the perceptions of teachers, students, parents, administrators, business people, NLTA, politician, and Faculty of Education.

#### **4.2.1.1 From the Perspective of the Teacher Participants**

The teachers who participated in this study did not feel positively perceived or valued as professionals. The mid-career, rural teacher expresses concern regarding the current conditions of teachers: "I don't think it's possible for someone to last in the profession unless they actually love it." Despite his love for the profession, he indicates there are challenges associated with it. The junior teacher is frustrated with the level of respect she feels teachers are attributed in society. She speculates on why the profession is not respected entirely.

Well there's such a backlash against teachers in society and I don't know why. I think it's easy to say it's because they get their summers off but it can't be that easy, that everybody's jealous because teachers get their summers off?... you're off at 3:00 everyday.

The teacher participants believe that society's perceptions of teachers vary greatly and are both positive and negative. The mid-career teacher feels teachers have not been perceived fairly and states: "I think that teachers have been given an undue negative reputation in this province." This participant offers a perspective as a rural teacher and feels the negative perception is due to "out migration" of educated individuals. He suggests that those remaining struggled in the education system and would therefore have a negative perception.

As people continue to migrate out, the people that are left behind tend to have a different view because typically the better educated people are the ones that are leaving. The people that are staying behind are the ones that did not have a positive experience with education.

He also feels teachers in rural Newfoundland are positively perceived because they tend to be greatly involved in the community: "The teachers in the community are the ones that are looked upon to look after the Lion's club, to look after the town council, to look after the ladies church."

The senior teacher discusses contradictory opinions of teachers, as well. He discusses how parents may have a positive view of their children's teachers but a negative view of the profession on the whole. He explains how this is a contradiction since logically parents more accurately know the work of teachers through their own personal interactions with them. He discusses the results of a CTF national survey in which he states: "the general feeling of education across the country and teaching across the country was terrible but the teachers my kids have are really good."

The teachers in this study feel the professional expertise of teachers is not understood in society and that society views teaching as a job that is easy and does not require specialized training. Participating teachers depict society as not understanding

the workload issues of teachers and feel there is resentment from society for a “9-3 workday” with summers off, Easter and Christmas. The senior teacher explains these sentiments and how the number of hours that teachers actually work throughout the year is similar to other professions.

Many feel it to be a profession that anyone can do . . . it certainly isn't. Many feel that those who aren't qualified enough to do a real job can always teach...They have little appreciation of the magic a talented teacher does day after day. Teaching is a complicated art.... if you start putting in the hours that teachers actually do work, they end up getting basically a couple weeks off a year just like everyone else.

Similarly, the mid-career teacher explains he believes many do not understand there is a higher level of expertise in the teaching profession than existed in the past. He suggests that: “This may be a long holdover from the days when a 6 week summer school qualified people to go out and teach. This has long disappeared but the feelings still remain.”

The senior teacher perceives society to view the work of teachers as that of a servant as opposed to a professional. He is clearly frustrated with the lack of respect given to the teaching profession and the specialized expertise required of teachers. The senior teacher expresses this sentiment in his journal.

Many feel teachers are civil SERVANTS . . . with the emphasis on SERVANT. They view us as a servant instead of professionals, they treat them differently than they would treat their pharmacist or their local engineer or their physician or their medical professional or anything of that nature . . .the expectation that I'm paying my tax dollar and you owe me a service and I feel that I know what educations all about and it's easy to teach, anyone can teach. Have you tried it?

The senior teacher believes members of society feel they can comment upon and assess the work of teachers. He explains in his journal how society's attitudes are

malformed because you can not claim to know the art of teaching if you have not practiced it.

As everyone is familiar with teaching since they all attended schools, they feel that they are as much experts in the field as those whose life is teaching. I feel that this is akin to those who listen to a fine musician feeling that they know as much about music as those who are playing the tune. "Oh, playing the violin is easy . . . you just bow with one hand and move your fingers up and down the strings with the other and beautiful music come out . . ." ( Try it yourself . . . then LISTEN.)

He also infers that those who are closer to the profession of teaching have a different awareness. The senior teacher believes these individuals tend to have a greater appreciation for the work of teachers and have a greater understanding of the specialized work expected of the teaching profession: "It tends to be the more that a person gets involved and actually seeing what goes on the better the impression they have of the profession because they're amazed at what you do sometimes."

#### **4.2.1.2 From the Perspective of the Student Participants**

The student participants discuss their perceptions of teachers and explore the lack of respect offered by Eastern Newfoundland society. Student A states: "I hold many of my teachers as not only mentors, but as friends who are more than willing to listen." Student B feels that teachers "really reach out to you" and as a result he received a "friendship that . . . helps you learn." Student A believes: "Teachers should be viewed not only with respect, but with gratitude for they mold our children – our future. They teach us the basics as well as the details, and give us the first lessons in discovering who we are." Student A credits her positive experience with teachers to both her classroom experience and her involvement in extracurricular activities. She explains how, "you

really see a different kind of a teacher more of a role model or a mentor than an instructor so to speak” when teachers participate in extracurricular activities.

The students believe that parents and students who are not involved in the school community have inaccurate perception because they are unaware of the dedication of teachers. Student B feels many in society perceive teaching as a 9:00 to 3:00 job and do not recognize the amount of work teachers will do after the school day is finished.

I think unless the student or the parent or whatever becomes involved, they don't realize what goes on behind the scene.... The work that teachers are doing after hours that the rest of the student body doesn't see, it's unbelievable. And I think a lot of time they take that for granted.... But I see them there after school and they're correcting, they're teaching extra or else they're in the gym coaching, they're in the clothing room making costumes, they're cooking food because they're having a fiesta.

They credit negative perceptions of teachers to the negative publicity of abuse scandals, the occasional bad teacher, and the lack of respect for students in society. Student B feels teaching has a negative perception in society because it had become a profession in which people in university would do “if you didn't know what you wanted to do.” Student A believes some members of society may view teachers in a negative light because of the occasional “bad teacher” who will reflect negatively upon the profession. She also explains in her journal that negative perceptions may be a “carry over” from physical and sexual abuse scandals experienced in Newfoundland in the past.

There is a scattered teacher who will be unorganized, unfocused, and yet will abuse their “power” over their students. These teachers can cause a negative view which can sometimes creep into society.... When teachers are caught in physical or sexual abuse scandals (Mt. Cashel, etc.), it gives society the wrong idea in regards to teachers. Teachers are not all like this.

Student B also did not feel students were respected by society. Similar to the teachers, he feels that students are unfairly given bad publicity and the many successes of students

will go uncelebrated and unnoticed. He feels if students are not valued and respected then why would those who teach them be valued and respected.

When was the last time you saw something about a student doing well on the front page of a paper? You see... this student had a party, this student had an accident because they were drunk, this student broke into a house. Once a year they put in three students from every school that achieved the highest academics in that school and why just once a year three students are acknowledged, what about the rest of the year.... I think that that ties in with society's views on students because then... why would you ever do that, why would you go in with those students? People are kind of shocked that you would choose to do that if you can do something else? Why would you willingly go in a room with 30 of these... little delinquents.... They don't know that maybe one out of these 30 cause you trouble.

Student A expresses concern about the negative perceptions of teachers and calls for society to reconsider their attitudes: "I believe society needs to really evaluate how we view teachers for they deserve the utmost respect and appreciation." Student A casts a different perspective on an old saying: "Those who can't do teach but I think those who are the best at what they do should teach."

#### **4.2.1.3 From the Perspective of the Parent Participants**

Both parents have very positive attitudes towards teachers. Parent A recalls the positive experiences her two daughters had with their teachers. She states: "I have been very impressed with almost every teacher they have had the good fortune to have had as teachers." She describes their elementary teachers in a positive light and states: "They love children, they love teaching children." Similarly, Parent B has a very high respect for teachers and states: "Teaching is a very honorable profession."

They feel parents who are not actively involved in education have inaccurate perceptions and are unaware of the long hours teachers contribute to their work. Parent B believes society does not understand the work of teachers and that they have the incorrect

perception that teachers only work for 6 hours a day. He feels many parents are not involved enough in their child's education to be aware of the responsibilities of teachers and the extent of extracurricular involvement by teachers.

I know some people feel that a teacher is only in school 6 hours a day and therefore it is expected of them to participate in after school activities. I guess for the most part parents and outsiders really don't understand the role teachers play in the system. I have to confess it wasn't until I became more involved in my children's education and the school council that I realized how much effort was being put in by the teachers in extracurricular activities and how much time it actually consumed. The perception of society concerning teachers, I feel, is based on society's participation or lack of participation in their children's education.

This parent also feels some members of society viewed teachers as "glorified babysitters" in particular those teachers who taught in the younger grades.

Parent A explains how she feels society has varying perceptions of teachers. She gives an example of a close family friend with a child who has a learning disability and the frustrations the family experienced in finding teachers to help. Parent A did not personally feel the difficulties encountered in this family were the fault of teachers but attributed them to a lack of resources and large class sizes that prevented teachers from giving these students the needed support.

I remember a friend of my younger child. She has dyslexia and she was having a lot of problems in school.... There's not enough of resources or anything for children with learning disabilities.... She couldn't get anyone to talk to her. She couldn't get anyone to explain it. And probably not through any fault of the teachers themselves but because it was a school where there was a high number of students per class the teacher had a lot to deal with.... I think there were 35 children or more in the class.

Parent A also describes the perception of teachers for this learning disabled child as negative as a result of her experiences: "She doesn't like them, she hates them, she says she hates them all. Well because a lot of teachers have been very unkind to her and they've ignored her."



The media is also blamed for creating negative perceptions. Parent A offers the following perspective: "You've got to remember the media are media and the media seems to stir up trouble a lot. You don't always get the positive from the media.... I think media by its nature gravitate towards negative things."

#### **4.2.1.4 From the Perspective of the Administrative Participants**

The administrators demonstrate positive attitudes towards teachers. The school administrator states: "By far the majority of teachers are compassionate, dedicated professionals who really care about the well-being and learning of our students and who give generously of their time." Similarly, the school district administrator explains that his choice of a teaching career was a very deliberate choice due to the reward of making a difference in society: "A profession that I am pleased to be associated with.... I had other options like most of us but it's one that can really make a difference."

The administrators suggest society also has largely positive perceptions. The school administrator explains: "In general, society has a positive view of the teaching profession and most people are supportive of our work as teachers. Likewise, the Department of Education administrator feels that, "In society, many people, especially students and parents, do value the teaching profession."

The administrators feel that agencies such as the NLTA should work to promote positive perceptions of teachers. The school administrator criticizes the work of the teacher's association, the school district, and Department of Education in promoting a positive image of teachers. She explains:

The NLTA, department and district do a poor job of promoting the professionalism and dedication of teachers, and only have a loud voice during labour discussions. Rarely, will we hear any of these groups actively using the

media to promote a professional image of teachers and our good work... I heard Douglas (President of NLTA) on this morning. What's he talking about? We're talking about staffing again, the average public doesn't care if a teacher is losing their job... what they should be hearing is how come there's 38 kids in my Science 1206 class... Why aren't the NLTA talking about that? Why isn't our director talking about that?

The administrators believe the media promotes a negative perception of teachers. The Department of Education administrator describes, "media reports and anecdotal reports" that "bring into question the salaries teachers receive and the amount of holiday time for teachers." The administrators believe the media has a tendency to focus on the negative and individuals who are not knowledgeable about the profession. The school administrator explains that there are individuals in society who "loudly express" negative views and that these individuals tend to be listened to by the media. She explains some of these individuals may suffer from emotional disorders. She feels others do not have an adequate knowledge of the education system and therefore have "unrealistic expectations." The administrators feel it is human nature to focus on the negative and ignore the positive. The school district administrator expresses how society will tend to dwell on the negative aspects of any profession despite the fact these negative experiences would be largely outweighed by a great number of positive experiences.

The anomalies get held out so we don't get the stories about the teachers that have the major positive impact on an individual child. What we get is the horror stories of the teachers that simply taught a group of 30 kids and ignored the individual and just dealt with the group.

The administrators feel it is difficult for teachers to find public support during strikes because parents must find alternate arrangements for their children. The Department of Education administrator also explains there are incidents such as "whenever there has been a teacher labour dispute, public sympathy for teachers is low."

She explains that at the time of labour disputes although teachers have a right to strike, society does not respect this right in the same manner as it would the right of other professions in society to strike.

Whenever there has been a labor dispute with our teachers, there's been very little public support. Public are generally upset that teachers would not be in the classroom with their children and would be out on strike, even though they recognize that that's an entitlement as part of collective bargaining. But they see it differently... they have to make arrangements that impact some people's personal lives. So you can understand there will be a certain amount of disgruntled populous out there.

The administrators feel there are those in society who resent teachers for their salaries, secure employment and holidays. For example, the school administrator states: "Some people view us as having the summers off and doing nothing when by far a lot of us do something to better ourselves or to learn. And further, we need the summer to recharge and refresh because of the heavy emotional demands of teaching." The school administrator also feels the high unemployment in Newfoundland contributes to the resentment of teachers who have "secure jobs." She believes these individuals, "overinflate teachers' salaries and significantly underestimate a teachers' education and the amount of work provided by effective teachers." Similarly, the school district administrator feels people in rural Newfoundland resent teachers because they have secure employment in a community where many are unemployed due to the failure of the fishery. He feels these people are further resentful of teachers when teachers are negotiating with government to increase salaries or other benefits.

Teachers received a very generous raise back in the mid 1970's, coming from being impoverished really to becoming middle income. And the fishery was not in really good shape at that point, so in many rural communities you had teachers who were probably the best off but yet teachers are agitating through NLTA and so on so people were saying, well what do they want? They got the biggest houses

here and ... the power of being able to borrow money is through having a permanent job.

Like other participants, the administrators express concern that society does not understand the specialized expertise required by teachers. The school district administrator also feels many in society view teaching as a job that "anyone can do." He feels this is because everyone in society has attended school so that they also feel that they could therefore do the work of the teacher. Like student A, he refers to a familiar saying, "Those that can, do, and those that can't, teach" to illustrate how society does not value teaching as a profession requiring any specialized expertise. He states:

It's been looked on as... a non-profession... without really a body of knowledge or an area of expertise...so why would you then hold it high... So people say what kind of expertise do you need to be a teacher? I could be a teacher tomorrow if I wanted to be.

The school district administrator also attributes some of the lack of respect for teachers to a gender issue. He explains teaching was traditionally considered to be a "woman's job and a woman's job was seen to be less than a man's job" and he feels this view still exists in society today.

#### **4.2.1.5 From the Perspective of the Political Participant**

The politician not only offers a political perspective but also offers the perspective of a parent, former teacher and former administrator. He also speaks about his experiences from a rural perspective. He expresses a very positive attitude towards the teaching profession and states: "My opinion is one of respect and admiration for teachers and the dedication to those they serve." The politician, a former teacher, feels the public has a positive perception of teachers and holds teachers in "high regard." He feels

teachers may feel undervalued due to specific instances but these do not represent society's overall value.

I think sometimes we're probably even a little hard on ourselves as teachers. I think, generally I think the public perceives teachers well and holds them in pretty high esteem and high regard. I think sometimes we probably give too much credence to an individual who takes one instance.

The politician explains how some people may make judgements on teachers based upon negative experiences with one or two individuals. Overall, he stresses teachers are positively perceived.

#### **4.2.1.6 From the Perspective of the Business Participants**

The business people show contrasting views. Business person B expresses a high opinion of teachers. He states: "Teachers, I hold in very high regard, I always have and I will." Like other participants, he feels, as a society, we often celebrate the negative and do not focus on celebrating the positive enough. He states: "You hear about the 10%. You don't hear about the 90%. Come back to celebrating. Why aren't they celebrating?" He recommends finding ways to celebrate the positive happening of schools. Business person A expresses a more negative perception of teachers and feels there are many teachers who are unwilling to help children.

The teaching profession is made up of some truly dedicated hard working people, but they seem to be in the minority. As a parent, I have witnessed situations where every effort is made to help a child and in other cases the problem seems to be passed off as not significantly important.

Business person A has worked very closely with schools through her job related responsibilities. Through her work with schools, she believes some teachers can be very dedicated and interested in involving students in new initiatives but a great number of others are not interested in becoming involved.

I know full well that there are teachers that are so dedicated to their job that you couldn't ask for anybody any better, but on the other hand.... With some teachers, the distinct impression I get is that it would be just way too much work and they're not interested in doing it.... I think there's a serious lack of interest, I really do.

Business person A has questioned why teachers appear to be apathetic and reluctant to become involved in the initiatives she has brought to schools through the business community. She questions whether or not some teachers are "burnt out."

Business person A describes several experiences from a parental perspective that contribute to her negative perception of schools. In the first situation, business person A explains how her daughter was afraid to go on the school bus because of the behaviour of other students. She was amazed by a nonchalant reaction of the school administrator. In the second situation, her other daughter had missed an extended period of time from school due to a problem with the physical plant of the school. She was shocked by a lack of concern from the school administrator regarding the time missed by students. In addition, business person A describes another negative experience with a teacher who did not seem to be aware of how her daughter was performing in his class and did not seem to be concerned with her progress.

He didn't seem to have any comprehension of how she was doing in the classroom like: What's going on? Is she paying attention? Did she ask for help? Did she need help? ... He shouldn't be a teacher as far as I'm concerned, because he doesn't care and I don't see how you can be a teacher without caring.

Both suggest that negative perceptions of teachers arise because teachers are viewed as having a great deal of vacation and a short work day. For example, business person A feels teachers are not valued in society because they "are seen as only working 10 months of the year and not working a full day as well as having a great number of holidays during the school year."

The business people describe how it was believed that those who entered the education program at the university did so because they were not accepted into other programs. Business person A explains the “perception always was at the university that if you couldn’t do anything else you went into education.” Business person B states, “Education was the place you went when you couldn’t get anywhere else.”

The business people feel a negative perception of teachers is created when they negotiate with government in the public forum. Business person B feels that negative perceptions of teachers may develop when teachers threaten to withhold extracurricular activities or when they threaten to “walk out.”

#### **4.2.1.7 From the Perspective of the NLTA Participant**

The NLTA participant expresses a very positive perception of teachers and places value on the dedicated and caring nature of teachers. The NLTA participant also feels the public is supportive of teachers and this is indicated by numerous surveys taken of the public. In particular, she makes reference to various surveys administered by the Canadian Teachers Federation, the Atlantic region, and the province. She reports: “Teachers are very highly respected and... held in high regard.”

The NLTA participant believes that society views teachers more positively than teachers believe they are perceived. She relates this difference for teachers due to the challenges teachers are facing in the classroom. She states: “teachers have seen some changes in the way they are treated over the years by society and by parents and certainly with what they are dealing with in the classroom.” The NLTA participant further explains why she believes teachers do not feel that they are valued by society. When she began working with the NLTA, the morale of teachers was low. Teachers had undergone

a strike in which there was no public support. She believes the negativity has continued until the present day.

The NLTA participant explains how the public was not in support of teachers during their last strike but clarifies the public is typically in support of teachers. She feels more research should have been done to determine if there was public support at the time of the strike. She also feels the lack of support was due to the efforts of government in discrediting the teacher's cause so government would succeed in negotiations.

The NLTA participant describes a situation in which she encountered an individual who was criticizing teachers. This individual could speak well of their personal experiences with teachers but did not speak well of the profession.

I remember when I started with NLTA I was talking with one of my neighbors ... and the first response... "You got it made. Bloody teachers, summer off, Christmas off, Easter off, they collect unemployment during the summer"... and I'm looking at them saying first of all... "Some of those are myths. They don't collect unemployment in the summer. Most of them do PD during the summer, they're on personal time"... And they say, "well my teachers were different. My teachers were wonderful"... everybody... has a good positive things about teachers but for some reason they feel they need to knock the profession.

Like other participants, the NLTA participant feels some of the challenges faced by teachers today can be a result of increased public attention arising out of the abuse scandals in the Catholic church in the 1980's and 1990's. She feels teachers are under increased pressure because the public has become more watchful and more critical of the work of teachers and other individuals with children under their care. She feels the public should be watchful of any caregiver but, at the same time, feels society has not found a "balance" in regard to their willingness to question teachers. She believes this has resulted in a lack of control in the classroom and schools because the authority of teachers is not respected to the same degree as it has been in the past.



The NLTA participant describes why she feels the public may not have concern for issues surrounding teachers. She refers to the lack of public outcry when the government took money from the teacher's pension plan.

The public does not give a damn whether or not you have a pension. The public does not give a damn whether or not the pension plan is going to go bankrupt. You have people without jobs. You have people who are making minimum wage.

Similar to other participants in this study, she relates this to how there are a large number of individuals in this province struggling financially.

#### **4.2.1.8 From the Perspective of the Faculty of Education Participant**

The Faculty of Education participant feels society has a positive perception of teachers, in particular when they talk about their own personal experiences. However, he feels society's perception of teachers becomes negative when teachers are considered collectively.

I think most students think highly of the teachers to be honest with you. I think that most parents think fairly highly of their children's teachers... I think many teachers, many parents or many members of society, when they talk collectively about teachers and the teaching profession, I don't think they have as high regard or opinion.

Like many participants in this study, the Faculty of Education participant feels the public does not have an accurate view of the teaching profession. He feels they base their knowledge on their own personal experiences without understanding they have a limited perspective. He feels society does not understand the complexities of teaching and the level of expertise required by teachers.

I think that the general public's perspective of teachers is one that is a very distorted view and many people remember their own days in school and they don't realize the complexity that goes with actually having to teach and have somebody learn. I've said before that it's not rocket science, but it's more important than rocket science and it's more difficult than rocket science, in that

you're dealing with human learning and human learning is probably the single most complex thing that a human has to deal with... It's very, very complex work. I just don't think that the general public sees that, they see teaching as it was at one time very transmission oriented, the teacher stands at the front of the class and speaks to the class and people should learn.

In addition, the Faculty of Education participant feels society does not understand the nature of the teaching profession in that they view the teaching profession as an easy job and he believes they are resentful of teachers as a result of this misconception. Like other participants, he describes the public's perception of teachers as "they are slack-jawed" and "you work 5 hours a day, you get your summers off, what more could you want."

#### **4.2.2 Importance of Education and Teachers in Society**

Participants agree teachers greatly influence the future success of their students. When asked about the importance of the teaching profession to society, the senior teacher simply replies in his journal with a familiar quote often used by his co-workers, as well as, himself: "We teach . . . we touch the future." The NLTA participant states, "Teachers and education are the basis for what people become" and that "Society would be hard pressed without them." She continues to explain the importance of the work teachers do for the betterment of society.

It's interesting when you hear all the money going into health care. That's great we need health care but without teachers we wouldn't have those doctors and the nurses, without teachers you wouldn't have any politicians who, most of them are teachers anyway because you're the ones, you lay the ground work. Teachers are laying the ground work. You're educating these kids to go on and do something else.

The students feel teachers are influential in guiding the future of the children they teach. They influence their career choice and personal development. They teach children

how to cope and deal with life's obstacles. Student A describes the impact teachers had on her life and why she believes teachers should be valued:

My teachers have really guided me in that way in helping me to live doing the things I love to do.... Teachers are more than just instructors. They're, mentors, they're role models, they're friends.... They can really show you when you're wrong and congratulate you when you're right. They can make a big difference.

The school administrator explains in her journal the teaching profession should be considered of importance in society because "Our work as a group (and more than other professions) influencing the world in which we live" and "if you don't have great teachers you have nothing because the teachers are the leaders day to day of the children." Likewise, the school district administrator expresses the importance and value of the work of teachers in society. He describes the tremendous influence teachers may have on the life of a student.

Our society is very much shaped by what teachers do. Individual lives are shaped by what teachers do. A teacher's word, a word of encouragement can make an entire difference to a life; a teacher's scorn can destroy a life.

Parent A states how she feels teachers should be valued for their work in addition to the educational aspect of teaching such as assistance in school lunch programs, spending their own money for students in need, and working to help prevent school closures. She states: "I think teachers are owed a great deal of gratitude for what they have done and continue to do on a daily basis, not only academically but also for their humanity."

Participants feel teachers are also valuable for the role that they play in communities in terms of leadership and volunteer work. The politician stresses the value of teachers in their commitment to extracurricular activities in schools.

In rural parts of our province teachers often take on leadership roles that are vital to community survival and success. While many teachers take on extra-curricular activities related to school, they also take on many extra activities related to things such as organized sports, political leadership roles, charity groups, and again, the list goes on. They are an invaluable source within a community.

He feels it is important for teachers to build a "positive rapport" with their students through extracurricular activities and thus "would get the best out of... children academically." He feels that "learning evolves from a positive relationship." He feels teachers can often serve as role models and they can also provide support to students who experience difficult home environments. He describes a personal story of how a young girl was positively impacted by a teacher in her life.

It's a good story... her mother died at 47 ... in grade 6 came around Christmas time... and they drew names and the rule was that if you didn't bring in your gift then the person you were supposed to bring it for, then that gift would go to the other person so they wouldn't be left out. She knew she wasn't going to give the gift.... But, when she went, there was a gift under the tree for her. The vice principal put it there.... So this was before her mother died and the father drank and the mother couldn't do much of anything. Lots of days they didn't make it to school. They were the ones who were looked at as dirty and all this kind of stuff... she had her two front teeth broke off.... She's a social worker now and look at what she remembers on certain things in her school life. I can guarantee she don't remember anything about math or science... but what she remembers most are those teachers who showed her that little bit of kindness.

Human interaction between teacher and student is deemed valuable by participants in that a positive relationship can encourage learning. The NLTA participant feels there should be a strong value placed upon the presence of teachers in the classroom. She expresses a personal concern that the nurturing aspect of teaching may be lost through distance education programs. She stresses that the personal aspect of teaching is very important.

Teachers need to be there in the classroom not only to provide the guidance but to be able to nurture... what the kids know and to be able to pull out from... the children what is the absolute best that they can be.

The politician stresses the importance of “human interaction” to the success of education and the success of society. He describes the importance of all levels of education in valuing the education of students for the betterment of society.

Whatever the teaching tool, and whether or not a school is large or small, the basic fact remains, human interaction determines the success of the learning experience. If ...we lose sight of caring and respect for the dignity of all who come under our care as teachers then we stand to lose as a society.

Participants rank education of high value in society due the importance of education to an individual’s success in society and the implications of not having a well educated society. Parent A explains:

Unless children are motivated to be learners and doers then they’re not going to succeed and find a profession or an occupation to make a living at and if you don’t have a profession or an occupation to make a living well they’re going to be on social assistance... so that only taps our resources even more.

The politician also discusses the success of Iceland’s economy as a result of investing in education and feels a similar investment should be made in education in our province. He feels a highly educated society has implications for benefiting the economy.

This province of ours can be compared to Iceland. Iceland has the highest literacy rate probably in the world. A 100% literacy is what they espouse to. There’s no doubt about it. Their economy is such that they are probably one of the higher in this continent and education has been the key to getting to where they are.

Participants believe an educated society will benefit the economy and create less dependence on social programs.

#### 4.2.3 Value of Education and Teachers in Society

Participants do not feel that teachers and education are valued in society in the manner they should be. The junior teacher explains how she feels teachers are “the subject for scorn and ridicule” despite the importance of the work teachers do. The mid-career teacher explains how government and society consider education a priority but despite the value on education do not value the teachers: “Education is often ranked at the top of the list by the general public in terms of where spending should be. Yet there remains a negative perception of our value.” Student B feels the work of teachers contributes to enabling their students to be successful in the future. However, he feels many students take the work of teachers for granted and do not realize the commitment of teachers.

To me there should be a huge value put on the teachers in the education system because they're preparing everybody for tomorrow. I know sometimes students really take it for granted. They don't realize how much the teachers are doing not only in the classroom but outside the classroom to try to benefit the students themselves.

The school district administrator does not feel society values the work of teachers: “Teachers are a highly undervalued group of people and an undervalued profession.” Business person A explains that she feels teachers should be valued in society because “they hold the education of children in their hands and a solid education should be one of the most important things in a child's formative years.” Furthermore, business person A believes there can be serious implications on education in society if teachers are not valued and respected. She also feels education is not respected as much as it was in the past. Parent B feels even more value should be placed on teachers in that they are playing a greater role in “parenting” children in today's society.

I guess we become reliant more on the education facilities and the teachers to do a lot of the work that we cannot do ourselves with the children.... A major responsibility.... We maybe only are parenting 5 hours a day. A teacher is probably parenting to a whole class or numerous classes for 8 hours a day.

Similarly, the mid-career teacher explains how it is the hard work of teachers that contributes to positive results in education in society but society does not seem to value and understand the role teachers play in helping students achieve these goals: "It may not be recognized in the public as much as it... should be or could be: but the blood, sweat and tears of the teachers of the province is what's driving those positive learning achievements." The junior teacher also feels society has now taken education for granted and the work of teachers for granted.

It's taken for granted that the teacher will look after my kid for 5 hours a day, the teacher will give him the tools that he needs to get into university or get into whatever any kind of trade school program or will be able to read and write sufficiently so that he can get a job at Wal-Mart... but there's a lot less prestige put on having an education these days because it's become the norm. There's nothing special.

Participants cite numerous reasons as to why they feel teachers and education are not valued. The senior teacher explains how he feels many individuals in society have a distant relationship with the education system because "it's a small group that actually have children of school age because most of the population are either beyond school age or there's a lot of people that don't have children." Therefore, there would be a large portion of society disinterested in educational issues because they feel they do not impact them directly. This sector of society would be less likely to understand the nature of the teaching profession and place less value upon education.

The senior teacher expresses why he believes society does not value the work of teachers, asserting that the work of teachers is considered missionary work. He explains:

I think that it is a carry over from the days when religious groups doing missionary work were the teachers. They did it without reward and it is expected that it should continue to be done this way... basically you're doing it out of the goodness of your heart because no one in a real job would do that... that sort of idea, that "teacher calling."

There is a social expectation for teachers to become involved in extracurricular activities with no understanding that their participation is voluntary. The senior teacher describes how a different value is placed upon volunteer work done by those outside of the teaching profession compared with the value placed upon extracurricular work by teachers. He feels the volunteer efforts of others in the community are more highly valued than the volunteer efforts of teachers in schools: "Parents and outside adults were much more highly valued and appreciated when they coached than those who taught and coached "other peoples" children.... Seems odd, doesn't it."

Participants believe the value of education is not recognized because the effects of a good education in society are not immediate. The mid-career teacher explains why he believes education is not valued as much as other professions such as the nursing profession.

Education is not necessarily a daily condition. It's a life long one so because in the education system we have to ask our students to do certain things that aren't going to pay off immediately. In fact it's going to mean asking them to do homework, to do required readings, to do work to finally mold them to be the adults you want to be. It's going to require that they spend the time working at things that they may not necessarily like.

Participants believe that since the majority of teachers were once women, teaching is undervalued in society. The senior teacher believes it is "a carry over from the historic lack of value of women and women's work in society, with the majority of teachers being women." The school district administrator previously suggests that



teachers are negatively perceived in society because a traditional lack of respect for women in the workforce.

Participants believe many in society are unaware of the nature of teacher's work and the challenges experienced by teachers. Parent B feels the average individual in society is not close to the daily occurrences in school to be knowledgeable about the challenges and demands placed upon teachers. He explains:

Joe Public does not know what goes on in the school. Joe Public doesn't see the kids coming in hungry and Joe Public doesn't see the personal problems that the teachers are dealing with the kids. Joe Public doesn't see the counseling that the kid is getting because it doesn't affect him.

Inadequate financial support is also translated by participants into a lack of value for teachers and education. The senior teacher expresses the view that government, through the representation of society, does not value education because it is not funded to a greater extent. He explains that he feels society does not understand that education needs financial support to be successful.

If pressure is put on the government about something very important to society... they start to fund it and they start to do something about it. That's the game of politics. ...They think education is important but they think that we don't have to fund for it for some reason.

He is clearly frustrated with how society is reluctant to fund and support teachers.

If you want people to touch the future and make this a better place, you better put damn fine teachers in there but they don't want to. They don't want to pay for them, they want the silk purse yet they want to fund for the sow's ear and they do it forever and it's a false economy. It's not a wise thing to do but I'm just a mere teacher. What do I do?

The politician describes the political value placed on teachers and education.

Despite times of contract negotiations, he explains teachers are valued in all levels of government and the government has an understanding of the challenges that face teachers

in the education system: "I think the bottom line is, and if you speak to anybody from the top down, I think they hold teachers in the highest regard, recognizing the challenges that these people have to face day in and day out." The politician also predicted that "investments will be made in education" to reflect the high level of importance attributed to education by government.

#### **4.2.4 Good Teacher... Bad Teacher**

Participants contrast a great number of positive attributes of good teachers with negative attributes of bad teachers. They cite good teachers as caring individuals, first and foremost. Good teachers have a passion for teaching and learning. They build positive relationships with their students and are approachable, accessible and open to differing viewpoints from their students. They consider the total development of the child in their practices and work to accommodate a diversity of learners in their classrooms. They serve as mentors and counselors. They are adaptive and creative. They have found the proper balance of authority and compassion.

When asked about the attributes of a good teacher, the senior teacher stresses the importance of having a passion for what one teaches, a "curiosity for knowledge" and a "love of learning." The mid-career teacher views good teachers as caring about student learning and "being honest, being forthright, being principled, consistent in all things... Education is the total development the total child." The junior teacher explains that teachers must be accessible to students on many levels. They must be good communicators, have a good personality and not be afraid to "have egg on your face."

Student A explains that good teachers are prepared and consider the diversity of learners in the classroom and ensure they all understand. She feels a good teacher is a

“guide and a mentor” and “teaches lessons of knowledge and life.” She values balance between “someone who is strict but is still helping” but “who isn’t a complete pushover.” She values the volunteer efforts of teachers that build relationships with students and “it builds that level of trust and respect.”

Parent B highlights how his children feel it is important the teacher makes the subject interesting. He values patience in teachers. He also stresses adaptability and creativity. He explains how teachers must be able to adapt to serving many roles such as counselor, parent and friend while finding the proper balance of authority.

Patience is obviously a major one.... Adaptivity and ingenuity into the classroom so that they can teach and keep the child interested.... They have to be understanding to obviously to children with problems, either learning problems or personal problems and everything else, not only do you have to be counselors, you’ve got to be parents, you have to be teachers you have to be a friend and you’ve also got to be authoritative person when there is need to be. So it’s a big undertaking. Why you would want to do it, I don’t know. It’s a hard job.

The school administrator emphasizes good teachers as being knowledgeable, adaptable, dedicated, passionate and compassionate: “Good teachers are experts in their curriculum area, dedicated to all students’ learning, compassionate of heart and flexible people with a true passion for learning, usually combined with a good sense of humour.” The school district administrator stresses the importance of caring for the individual student and highlights the personal nature of teaching.

The first thing a teacher has to do is care for people That’s key. You’re a caring individual that cares and values individuals... you believe that it’s important that each child is given maximum opportunity and you see yourself fitting in that equation.... Teachers in K-12 in particular should not teach subjects. They should teach children. They should teach each child, that’s key.

Business person B describes good teachers as “superior performers” that possess “energy, preparedness, devotion, dedication... care... are empathetic.” In addition, he states: “They have to be passionate about what they do... to honestly believe they make

a difference and ... to be able to make a topic area come to life... be approachable before and after hours.”

The NLTA participant feels good teachers are educating children from the “heart” and addressing their individual needs. The good teacher goes above and beyond their responsibilities for the benefit of their students. She emphasizes the dedication of a good teacher: “They’re energetic. They’re going above and beyond.... They’re willing to spend the 20 hours a day to do their work. Which isn’t fair, but by teachers’ nature, that’s what they do.”

The Faculty of Education participant describes the characteristics of a good teacher but at the same time describes the complexities of the teaching process that is required of good teachers. He feels good teachers are familiar with their student’s prior knowledge and understand that all students learn differently. He feels good teachers work to build atmospheres of mutual respect.

A good teacher begins with the whole planning process by looking at the students, assessing where students are, knows quite a bit about their prior knowledge, doesn’t make assumptions that everybody is at the same point and the same place at the same time.... Good teachers, they do by virtue of their personalities, subject knowledge, the way they relate to students, they do generate orderly classroom or an effective classroom, don’t necessarily mean a quiet classroom but I mean one where there is mutual respect.

The Faculty of Education participant feels a good teacher will find the most effective means of reaching the learner and will employ a diversity of methods.

The attributes used by the participants to describe the qualities of a good teacher are compiled in Table 4.1. The table illustrates there a multitude of traits that can be used to describe a good teacher and that many of these traits fall under personal characteristics as opposed to techniques that may be learned through a teacher education program.

**Table 4.1 ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD TEACHER**

<b>Teaching</b>	<b>Personal</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledgeable about the subject matter</li><li>• Well prepared</li><li>• Effective communicators</li><li>• Good at explaining concepts</li><li>• Know how to effectively challenge and motivate students.</li><li>• Considers how to accommodate diverse learners in the classroom</li><li>• Able to find an appropriate balance for classroom management.</li><li>• Considers the individual needs of their students and professional responsibility for the learning of each individual</li><li>• Assesses a student's prior knowledge and plans their lessons accordingly</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Caring about students</li><li>• Caring about student learning</li><li>• Nurturing</li><li>• Has the welfare of every child as the utmost priority</li><li>• Passion for one's subject area</li><li>• A love of learning</li><li>• Creative</li><li>• Ability to communicate concepts in a creative manner</li><li>• Involved in the total development of the child</li><li>• Approachable</li><li>• Willing to take risks that may make them look foolish in front of students in order to reach them</li><li>• Guide and a mentor</li><li>• Teaches lessons of knowledge and life</li><li>• Offer advice to their students to help them deal with life experiences</li><li>• A positive attitude</li><li>• Builds a positive relationship with students</li><li>• Develop mutual respect between them and their students</li><li>• Builds positive relationships with students through extracurricular activities</li><li>• Welcome new ideas and are willing to allow students to challenge them</li><li>• Patient</li><li>• Insightful</li><li>• Understanding</li><li>• Interesting</li><li>• Adaptable</li><li>• Dedicated</li><li>• Passionate and compassionate</li><li>• Persistent</li><li>• A good listener</li><li>• Fair and consistent</li><li>• Energetic</li><li>• Able to balance a multitude of roles for their students such as that of a counselor, parent and friend while maintaining the proper balance of authority.</li><li>• Going above and beyond</li></ul>

Participants cite bad teachers as simply collecting a paycheck. They force their personal opinions on students. They are poor communicators and lack knowledge in their subject area. They are impatient, unprepared, and uncaring. They can be verbally abusive and degrading to students. The mid-career teacher describes a bad teacher as follows:

Someone who is just pushing students through for the sake of pushing them through, in essence collecting a cheque... Teaching and educating are two different things. If you look at teaching simply saying read pages 40- 48 and answer those questions, yeah maybe you are teaching something, but I don't think you're educating.

Parent A describes a bad teachers as, "impatient, a poor communicator, negative, lackadaisical, and uncaring." The school administrator describes a bad teacher as "emotionally immature (short fuse), lacking introspection and poor communication."

Student A feels bad teachers do not encourage students to form their own opinions but they force their ideas on students. She further explains:

Somebody who expects everybody to get it the first time...They're unprepared for the classes. They don't go that extra mile for their students... if you don't understand something or they don't have time for it or... they just write notes on the board, they don't explain anything.... That's what a bad teacher is.

Business person A feels a bad teacher is "marking time" until the end of the school year. The NLTA participant feels a bad teacher does not care about students and are simply in the classroom for a paycheck. The Faculty of Education participant believes a bad teacher is "ill informed" in their subject area and lacking understanding in child development.

Somebody who stands in front of the class and lectures all the time.... Poor teachers, they're probably not very well informed, they probably don't understand about children and their physical and their intellectual, cognitive development. They might not understand a lot about their own subject matter.

The attributes listed by the participants that represent a “bad” teacher are given in Table 4.2. These attributes include qualities that relate to a low professional standard but are also largely connected to personality issues.

<b>Teaching</b>	<b>Personal</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inflate marks so students would pass</li> <li>• no real learning accomplished</li> <li>• unprepared</li> <li>• a poor communicator</li> <li>• lack knowledge in their subject matter</li> <li>• do not vary their teaching strategies to account for the diverse learner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uninvolved in student learning</li> <li>• uncaring</li> <li>• only interested in a “paycheck”</li> <li>• only concerned with job security or financial considerations</li> <li>• unwilling to help students when they are having difficulty</li> <li>• do not respect the importance of allowing students to formulate their own opinions</li> <li>• force their own beliefs on their students</li> <li>• close-minded to their student’s opinions</li> <li>• ignorant to their students</li> <li>• impatient</li> <li>• negative</li> <li>• lackadaisical</li> <li>• not dedicated to the success of their students</li> <li>• verbally abusive</li> </ul>

All participants view the existence of a bad teacher as rare but see it as very detrimental to the development of the child. Student B also describes his experience with a “bad teacher” and the negative impact it had on him and other students.

Close-minded...She was a bad teacher. She was rude and really ignorant to the whole class... It was bad.... I was only young. I was in primary school but the fact that I would have to come home everyday and cry because of the abuse that we were all taking, like verbal abuse. She worked the full year... I know that one of my friends was sitting next to me and we were only little and it got to the point where he had been yelled at so much and was crying so hard that he threw up all over the desk. And she didn't even care She said clean it up. Definitely, that was the only bad experience that I've ever had.

Parent A was very positive towards teachers and education throughout her interview. However, she did feel it was important to describe the effect of a bad teacher on her daughter.

My daughter...had a bad teacher, one bad teacher...I think it was grade 9 and he, in his opinion, thought it was unfortunate that he was saddled with the class of "dummies."... the very first day of school he said to them, you are a bunch of losers and you're not going to amount to anything. That was the first words that that teacher said to those students.

The Department of Education administrator explains there is rarely a betrayal of trust between parents and teachers and explains how this is detrimental to children: "Sometimes you know a betrayal exists which is why there is such a public outcry.... but it is an anomaly. And thank God it is an anomaly. But if it's once, it's once too often." Business person B feels that there are strong negative effects on a student when they encounter a teacher who is not a good teacher.

If that teacher is not a true leader, it will impact the direction that child will take.... It will influence where they go in their learning. What they learn. Their habits, everything right through that school system and then into... postgraduate studies.

The politician feels teachers who are not dedicated to the success of their students should have considered other career options: "At the same time, there are those teachers who struggle and probably should have sought a different vocation. For a variety of reasons, they just do not seem to cut it and survive a career built on regrets, struggle and turmoil." The politician discusses the importance of careful hiring practices in the teaching profession. He expresses concern about the negative impact of "bad" teachers on the lives of children.

Once you get in the system, I'll tell you one thing, it's damn hard to get you out, it's bloody near impossible. It really is. If I were a business person and I had somebody hired who wasn't performing, what would happen to them? The other



side is, we're not dealing with a piece of business material when we're talking about the education system, we're talking about the lives of children.

Participants suggest workload issues may be contributing to the inability of teachers to be effective and create the perception that these teachers are simply "bad teachers." The mid-career teacher gives reason to consider how the workload of teachers may contribute to the perception of a "bad teacher."

It's been documented that teachers, on average, are spending well in excess of 50 hours per week... There are a lot of things that magically get done beyond simple classroom interaction with students.... Those things are complicating the ability for teachers to be as effective as they would like to be.

Participants also stress the importance of individuals choosing the teaching profession for the right reasons. The school district administrator feels those considering a teaching career should recognize that it is more than a "secure job." He explains it is "not an easy job" and it does not pay "financially." He does explain that "it pays major dividends when it comes to seeing what difference you can make as an individual."

Participants express concerns regarding the difficulty in removing bad teachers from the profession. Business person B questions how parents and students can come forward when they feel the teacher is doing an inadequate job without fear of retribution. He feels some parents and students are afraid to come forward.

What are the rights or the avenues for the students and the parents to address the issue when it comes to the teacher without retribution on the students? .... You explain to me what the parent or students rights are with respect to challenge of authority. It's pretty sparse when you think of it.

Business person B did not feel "the mechanisms are in place to weed out the not good teachers."

When I think about schools, how are certain teachers raised on a pedestal? Because they need to be up there, I don't care whether it's compensation, I don't

care whether it's a plaque on the wall, I don't care if it's a special letter from the premier.

He also feels strongly the good teachers need to be appropriately rewarded beyond a personal reward for the teacher or thanks from students.

#### **4.2.5 The Role of Teachers and Schools in Contributing to Society's Perceptions of Teachers**

Participants explain how teachers sometimes contribute to a negative perception of teachers in society. Participants believe teachers need to learn to value themselves and celebrate the good in the teaching profession in order to convey a positive perception to society. The mid career teacher explains, "If we want to be perceived as being valued we have to value our own selves." He feels teachers need to value themselves and, despite the challenges, value their profession. He feels teachers need to learn to celebrate the "good" in their profession. Similarly, the school district administrator feels it is important for teachers to stop criticizing their profession publicly.

Sometimes we're our own worst enemy as well. I think if we talk about how bad the profession is, people begin to believe how bad it is so then why would you get paid for it? So we've got to be really careful how we present our profession in society.

Participants emphasize it is vital that teachers demonstrate professionalism at all times. The Department of Education administrator also places the power of changing societal perceptions of teachers in the control of teachers: "It is teachers who have the ability to influence attitudes towards teachers." She also feels the professionalism of teachers can influence a positive perception of themselves.

If you're talking to the parents, if you're doing a good job, if you're being professional and making good judgments, if you're meeting the needs of the children, why would anyone think that this is a bad thing? It's you that influence. Your participation in school and your participation in the child's life all have a

positive influence on how others perceive teachers more so than anyone else. Because the other things, you know, the media events, they come, they go, but you're there with that child day in day out.

The school administrator addresses the importance of teachers properly communicating with the public about the nature of their work. She states: "Determined and focused professional communications from teachers is needed." The school administrator also recommends that teachers need to learn to properly and professionally represent themselves and their concerns to the public.

Teachers can accomplish these changes by always presenting themselves in a professional manner in dress, language and action. As well teachers must learn to calmly and confidently assert themselves and address criticisms/questions about our profession (when needed) in an informed, direct fashion without getting defensive and emotional.

The politician and business person A discuss the importance of maintaining a professional standard during school events or when the public visits the school. The politician describes circumstances that may contribute to negative perceptions such as poorly organized parent-teacher interviews.

I remember going to one situation in one school where they were having parent-teacher interviews and I just stood in the corridor and listened. You have about 20 parents lined up, waiting to get in and they're all behind schedule and they were frustrated with having to wait. So if you're going to start something to talk about what do you think they're going to start talking about? They'll start talking about teachers.

Business person A expresses concern over the lack of control in schools and a need to teach appropriate social skills to students. She describes an experience while waiting in the general office of a school to give a presentation.

...this kid... started pounding on the glass outside the office, trying to communicate with the guy who was inside... I mean as far as I'm concerned somebody should jump on that kid right away and tell him this is not an appropriate way to behave... screaming back and forth with each other from the office.

Participants express concern about teachers portraying the appropriate perception regarding the teacher's time off in the summer. The school administrator explains: "I think there's also an element of teachers who pride themselves a little too loudly publicly about having the summers off and not spending their time honing their craft through learning." Business person A supports the concern of the school administrator and the importance of a positive communication role. She explains how she feels: "What does torment me though is when I hear teachers talk about their summers off. That's the wrong reason for going into teaching."

Participants suggest it is important that teachers not simply complain about educational challenges but find more effective means to communicate these issues to the public. The mid-career teacher explains how teachers create a problem by simply complaining about issues and not actively working towards solutions. The mid-career teacher feels teachers need to find appropriate mechanisms to deal with the challenges facing them and facing the education system. He explains it is important to find an effective response to educational issues so that government will be motivated to act. He states:

If our only response to problems is to simply hold up our hands in rebellion and say that everything is wrong with the world and not do something about it I think that's counter productive, as well. If our only response as teachers is to speak to those around us and say change your mind and get out. That's certainly not going to raise the profile of education among the public and it certainly wouldn't be very willing to cause government to change their perception or their attitudes towards dealing with education.

The NLTA participant feels there is a need for teachers to play a role in properly communicating the issues of workload with the public and to be specific about what is

meant by a lack of resources. Teachers need to be clear about the issues in the classroom so that the public will understand and support them.

Everybody has workload. The public needs to know what are you talking about with workload? What are you talking about with lack of resources? Give us examples you can go talk to individual parents about and they'll be concerned that there's no chalk in the classroom, there's no paper, there's nothing in there, the teachers have no books.

Participants describe some positive ways in which teachers can educate the public on the teaching profession. The school administrator recommends teachers learn to not become emotional when an individual makes an unfair or unkind comment, but to educate the individual on the reality of teaching. She describes her reaction to comments about how teachers have the "summers off."

I think our own behaviours, our own responses when somebody makes a caustic remark.... So there's a way to responding to that without getting angry about it. You just have an answer... to help the other person have a little insight. "Can you imagine what it's like to be with these children all day... with 35 kids in front of them? So just imagine what that does to your health, your physical, your mental, and your emotional health. You need to get away from it sometime to just regroup and get it all figured out in your head and begin again fresh and revived."

The school administrator also suggests that teachers can be "more open to media coverage" and "use media power more successfully...work to improve the public perception of teachers."

The NLTA participant felt one of the problems regarding the public's perception of teachers was that they are not continuously communicating about their work to the public. She explains how the media assumed teachers must be in negotiations with government when the NLTA approached them about putting some commercials in the media. She feels it is an important role for the NLTA to continuously show teachers they are valued and convey this message to the public, as well.

The only time the media and the public had ever heard from teachers was when teachers were looking for money or when there was a fight with government and that was a very valid point and a very big message there that how can you get public support if the only time you hear about us is if there's something wrong... we've now made a concerted effort to let teachers know how valued they are both internally and externally.

Participants feel teachers need to recognize that they comprise the NLTA and that they need to utilize their association more effectively. The NLTA participant feels that it was teachers who contributed to the decision to go on strike in 1994 and this decision had a negative result for teachers. She feels teachers need to understand that they comprise the association and ultimately can not blame their own association without accepting some responsibility themselves.

NLTA is teachers. We are directed by teachers. So when I say the association did it, it's teachers. I think teachers let themselves down. They weren't prepared, they got angry, they were led into something that they weren't ready to do whether it was the leadership of the teachers at the time. So it wasn't the union... it was teachers.

The senior teacher and the mid-career teacher also feel that teachers are not recognizing that they should be involved to a greater extent in their association. They also feel teachers need to recognize they are the association and that the NLTA reacts in response to the wishes of teachers. The senior teacher states:

It's so funny. Teachers are not union people. They really are not. It's ok, you guys deal with it. You guys come up with it. Give us a new contract and make it good. If it's not it's your union's fault or your associations fault. They don't realize that a union is a united group of people and so the union is only as strong as the people.

Participants explain that there is difficulty in teachers discussing publicly educational challenges since teachers are viewed as a special interest group and could also be viewed as speaking negatively about their employer. They encourage the use of the NLTA, school councils, and the Federation of School Councils to communicate to the

public about educational issues. They recommend the Canadian Education Association and the Faculties of Education begin to engage in public discourse regarding educational challenges.

The NLTA participant feels there is a need to make the public understand the challenges in education. The NLTA participant explains how it is very difficult for teachers to discuss how the work they do is important to society because it will appear as "self serving." She feels an agency such as the Federation of Schools Council would be more appropriate to make society aware of the importance of education and educator. She also expressed the value in parental involvement to bring forward educational concerns to the public.

We need somebody else to talk about that and we have the Federation of Schools Councils and the parents are coming onside. We did some commercials a couple of years ago where parents were saying we need to help teachers to keep education great. Those things go a long way.

We have to find a means to get the public so angry about the conditions and so concerned about the conditions that changes will be made. And we know this government. This administration is not going to deal with or even address any of the demands coming from teachers because we are a special interest group. It has to be somebody else.

The school district administrator feels there needs to be greater public debate about education; in particular, he feels this can be accomplished through the work of academics being brought into the public forum for debate. Likewise, he expressed concern that the Canadian Education Association "is still communicating primarily with the educational community."

There has to be a social responsibility that the faculties of education have to exercise. So they've got to start publishing and the public venue has to become valued at the university level as well so that they can increase the debate and discussion around teachers and teachers work.

The school district administrator feels that the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) would be a good agency to represent to the public the concerns of teachers and the education system since they do not negotiate with governments. In this way, the raising of these educational challenges can not be viewed as "self-serving" as stated by the NLTA participant. He feels the CTF should play a greater role in communicating the "new reality" of teachers in the "public venue."

#### **4.2.6 Summary**

The majority of participants positively perceive teachers and education themselves. A number of participants also believe teachers are positively perceived in society. All participants provide examples why teachers are perceived negatively or undervalued. They suggest some negative perceptions are caused by the abuse scandals in the past, the occasional bad teacher, the media, and a lack of respect for students by society. They feel teachers are resented by society for their salaries, vacation time, perceived short workday, and secure employment. They suggest negative perceptions are caused when teachers are unable to effectively provide for their students due to inadequate support for teachers caused by factors such as large class sizes. Participants suggest that those in society who have a close relationship with schools have a more accurate perception of the work of teachers. The teachers in this study expressed strongly that they did not feel positively perceived or valued. They emphasized that there was a lack of understanding for their specialized expertise and the workload issues they are experiencing.

Participants establish teachers as playing a major role in influencing the success of today's youth and therefore influencing the direction of society. They emphasize that



teachers are assuming a greater role in society in that they are “parenting” the youth of today as more parents are in the workforce. Despite the greater role of teachers, they believe education is not valued because the effects are not immediate and education is taken for granted because it is provided for all children. Participants believe that inadequate financial support for education also translates into a negative value.

All participants value good teachers and believe that good teachers are largely a result of a great variety of personal attributes. They are concerned about the detrimental effects of bad teachers but suggest that some bad teachers may be a result of inadequate support and high workload.

Participants recommend that teachers learn to value themselves and celebrate the positive in their work. They recommend that teachers learn to find effective mechanisms to communicate to the public the challenges faced by educators. They call for a variety of agencies to support teachers in conveying these difficulties to the public.

#### **4.3 Societal Understanding of the Nature of Teaching and Education**

This section examines to what extent society understands the work of teachers and the education system. It begins by exploring, from the participants' perspective, how education has change over the last fifty years. It considers present responsibilities and workload of teachers and examines teacher personality as a contributing factor to society's perceptions. Educational and teacher challenges are presented by participants. Teacher qualifications and education, accountability and decision making in education are examined in relation to society's perceptions and value of teachers.

### 4.3.1 Changes in Education and the Teaching Profession

Participants provide varying responses in terms of how the teaching profession and education have been valued over the last 50 years. While some feel education and teachers were more valued in the past, others believe it is more valued in the present, and yet others believe that it has never been valued.

When the senior teacher responded to the journal question pertaining to changes in attitudes towards the teaching profession over the last fifty years, he responded with: "I feel that teachers have been undervalued throughout all of the last fifty years." In contrast, student A explains how she has learned from her grandmother that society's attitudes have changed over time and that teachers have become more respected: "The way teachers are perceived has changed a lot over the years as well. My grandmother was a teacher for 30 years and says that teachers of today have more respect than she and her colleagues did." However, parent B feels teachers had greater respect from society in the past: "I guess back in my high school days there seemed to be greater respect for the teachers and teaching profession." Parent B feels teachers no longer have respect from students.

Several participants offer reasons why teachers are less respected today. The Faculty of Education participant feels there is less respect today for teachers than in the past because there is a more educated society. He explains that people were less likely to challenge teachers than they are today.

There was much more respect for teachers 20, 30, 40 years ago than there is today I think. Then I think a lot of it was based upon fear, a lot of it was based upon ignorance. The teacher was the educated person in the community and how dare you challenge or suggest that what they were doing was wrong. Today I think we have a much more open society where people are much more educated. They have higher expectations and they're not afraid to communicate their demands.

Participants believe that the value of an education is changing and that society is more concerned about the end result of having a high school certificate or post secondary education as opposed to the learning that should be required to obtain these goals. As a result, they feel teachers are pressured to lower standards. This phenomenon is described by business person B below:

I think that it's perceived differently as opposed to being respected and it's almost like something that's required of you to do as a stepping stone... it's just one more thing you've got to do...it doesn't really matter whether you know the teacher is good bad or indifferent as long as the kid passes.

The reasons given to explain why teachers are less respected today are linked to the child abuse scandals in the past and the former use of corporal punishment that instilled fear in students. They believe the removal of fear in the classroom is important but that this has led to teachers having less control in the classroom and an inability to deal with discipline problems in the school today. For example, Business person A describes how teachers in the past were feared to some extent but had greater control. However, she did describe some teachers who used corporal punishment as "psychotic." She feels teachers today no longer have the same control and are at a loss to deal with behaviour problems in schools.

When I went to school of course everybody was terrified of their... if you didn't behave... you could get yourself a smack up the side of the head. They had the ruler. I think that some of the teachers were psychotic.... But some of the people there, was almost like there was no other way to get through to them.... I think there's a lot of that in schools these days, there's nothing that can be done about the obnoxious behavior that goes on.

The school district administrator explains how some members of society have a favourable impression of education in the past in which teacher had more control in the classroom. He believes they forget about other problems with the education system such

as how it failed the students who had academic difficulties: "People talk about going back to the good old times... where the people had standards and the teachers were stricter and you couldn't misbehave in classroom and so on." The school district administrator explains how the education system in the past failed a great deal of people. At that time, there was little understanding about students with learning difficulties and how to help these students.

In those good old times, what you had was over 50% of the students drop out... So we weren't at all serving individual kids and many of the kids that we now see as having special needs were seen to be, quote "stunned"...people used to say, "Well he's no good at book learning", so he couldn't go to school but he is probably one of the brightest people in the community. So we failed with a lot of people relative to educational opportunity.

Participants feel that parents today are more likely to question the work of teachers. They feel that this tendency is both beneficial and detrimental. Participants value greater openness and communication with parents but also feel some parents and other members of society will unfairly question the work of teachers, as well as, not respect their professional expertise. The junior teacher explains in her journal how the teaching profession has become devalued as a result of parents "over" questioning their work and not respecting the professional expertise of teachers.

Society's perceptions of teachers have changed as society has changed from a somewhat autocratic system (whereby local leaders, clergy, teachers, etc. had more authority) to a more individualistic one. Today's parent – and by extension student – is more inclined to question authority and focus on more individual goals with the child as focus. While this is not a bad thing, it lends itself to conflict between parents (or students) and teachers as to who knows best. The overall impact is the devaluing of teachers work.

The school administrator also describes the changes in the attitudes towards teaching over the past 50 years that have lead to better relationships between teachers and parent and students.

Yes, teachers are not viewed with the same unquestioning respect, and often fear, that existed over 50 years; this is a good thing. Today we have moved towards a more healthy understanding of the school and homes being partners in the child's education.

She continues to state that she feels the relationships between schools and the community have changed. "We have a much more openness, natural healthy relationship with our families."

All participants agree that the role of the teachers is becoming more of a parenting role as more parents are in the workforce. Participants express concern that this is unrealistic expectation of teachers. The school administrator describes the teacher's role as changing due to a changing family structure and increased divorce rate in society. She feels students are turning to their teachers for support: "There is so little permanency or consistency in many children's homes that they turn to their teacher for nurture and love and compassion." This is supported by student A who describes how her teachers served as a "second set" of parents and how, in particular, her music teacher played an instrumental role in shaping who she has now become in life.

Parent B explains how parental involvement in their children's education has changed. He describes how both parents are working as opposed to one parent staying at home with the children. He believes it has now become the expectation that teachers will play a greater role than in the past in raising the child. He also explains that parents are now beginning to view school as a place where they are able to leave their child while they go to work.

You drop your kid off at 8:00 in the morning and you get home at 5:00 and you go pick them up from the sitter... you rely more on the teacher to be a parent and to invoke study habits and everything else because the parents just don't have the time anymore.... Teaching/schools have changed their roles to some degree from strictly teaching institutions to daycare or a place parents know their children are

looked after for 6 hours a day. That is a sad commentary on our society but that is reality. How many times have I heard parents complain that they are late for work because the school didn't open early enough or there was no one at the school yet to look after their children?

He further states that "teaching and teachers have had to adjust their roles over the years to accommodate this change." In his interview, he expresses that he feels strongly that parents need to play a greater role in their children's life and the expectations of parents that teachers "raise" their children is an unrealistic one.

In contrast, business person A feels the school day should be altered to reflect the work day of others in society. She considers the extra time required of teachers should somehow be worked into their school day so they would have extra time for preparation. She feels strongly this kind of program should be in place to "benefit parents." The Faculty of Education participant responds to the parent who feels the education system should alter the teacher's workday to reflect the typical workday in society.

I think good teaching goes well beyond the babysitting function and maybe there should be some provision for students to stay at school for a full school day but I think teachers are paid and trained to teach and to assess work and to design learning plans. There's an awful lot of that work that gets done outside the classroom and I think it's a real error for anyone to equate a teacher's work day, work week and work year to the amount of time spent in the classroom.

The nature of the teaching profession has also changed in that teacher responsibilities have greatly increased due to inadequate resources and increased class sizes. Teachers have also had to adjust to changing technologies and learn to utilize a variety of new teaching methodologies. The school administrator describes the complexity of the role of teachers today such as dealing with students on the Pathways Program and striving to meet the individual needs of their students. She emphatically

states that the role of teachers today has changed “hugely.” She explains that some of the challenges that face teachers are due to increased technology and media in society.

Hugely. You’ve got to be like a spy, you’ve got to be able to investigate every possible resource you can get free, that’s one thing. You’ve got to wrap your head around 35 kids, treat them as individuals, interact with them individually, remember what Pathway they’re on. You have to have a very good memory... You have to make sure you vary your instruction because we are living in an age of students whose attention span is about that of a gnat because of technology and T.V. So you’ve got to change up every 15 or 20 minutes at least or the kids are gone... I think teachers are being stretched in a thousand ways to get the right resources, to remember each academic outcome for each child and their learning and their emotional difficulties. They are being called upon to teach larger class sizes, they’re being called upon to constantly update to new curriculum coming without the necessary resources, which is absolutely unfair to them at times, I really see that. So yes, the role of teacher has hugely changed.

Similarly, participants feel knowledge about education has greatly changed. The Faculty of Education participant states: “It’s a much more sophisticated system now than what it was 20, 30 40 years ago. I think we know much more about education.” He explains teaching was once considered to be very “transmission” and “lecture” oriented but teaching strategies have now evolved as educators have learned more about how we learn such as through the development of the Multiple Intelligence Theory<sup>6</sup> and the Constructivist Theory of Learning<sup>7</sup>.

#### **4.3.2 Teacher Responsibilities**

Participants stress that teachers are not only responsible for academic education but for social education and helping students make important choices for later in life. The mid-career teacher feels teaching responsibilities go well beyond simply teaching

---

<sup>6</sup> Developed by Howard Gardner who identified eight intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalistic intelligence. Research recommends that teachers tailor their curriculum and teaching styles to meet the individual needs of their students.

<sup>7</sup> The theory in which students should actively construct new concepts based on their pre-existing knowledge. The student is facilitated by the teacher to discover new principles.

subject matter to include the care and guardianship of children: "The responsibilities are first and foremost teaching the curriculum, that's our legislative responsibility... I think beyond that you're also responsible for every single child underneath our charge."

Likewise, student A emphasizes teacher responsibilities go much beyond that of simply teaching a subject area or a grade. She feels it is the responsibility of the teacher to serve as a parent, role model and mentor. When asked what she would write as a job description for a teacher she offers the following.

To teach by definition is to aid in the acquiring of knowledge and obviously that's first and foremost...you're going to give the students... things that are expected for them to go out and get lives for themselves and get jobs for themselves. But I think that also part of the job description is second to a parent. You're a role model; you're a mentor, you share your experiences. That's expected of you. You're guiding these kids as well.... They see you every day, every single day and who else do they see every single day, their friends and their parents and so you kind of have these three influential groups around you. For the teachers I think it's a big responsibility to see that they're having such an impact on their lives and take advantage of that and guide them in the right direction.

Student B explains the responsibilities of teachers should be teaching but teachers will do more than simply teach. He describes how teachers are responsible for dealing with students who misbehave in class. As well, he describes how teachers will go beyond their responsibilities if it will benefit their students.

Teachers end up taking on so much more than simply teaching, they become a psychiatrist, coach, seamstress, chauffer, bank, and most importantly a friend.... I think their responsibility is really just to teach the students and ensure that they receive the best education they can get but a lot of times they have to go beyond that and from my experience they end up babysitting kids. Like in a class of 30 there's always like two, three, four who just don't want to be there and it's like they come to school to sit there and be babysat by the teacher and that's not the teacher's responsibility... and you'll find them any given day after school... doing whatever they could to benefit the student academics or music, theatre art.



A number of participants describe exhaustive lists of teacher responsibilities. The school administrator provides a well thought out list in her journal which she feels are the responsibilities of teachers.

1. possessing expert knowledge in their subject area and in the curriculum documents.
2. continuing to develop a repertoire of teaching strategies and organizing learning to reflect the variety of learning styles and emotional intelligences present in their classes.
3. ensuring students are physically and emotionally safe and welcome in their class.
4. remaining current and up-to-date on educational pedagogy and technology.
5. regularly assessing students in a variety of ways and communicating this information to students and parents in a clear, concise fashion.
6. serving as positive adult role models and integrating healthy living discussions into their learning.
7. getting to know and value 'each and every child' and finding ways to make the learning relevant and meaningful for students as much as possible.
8. providing feedback/input on school operations/directions and working with school committees to move the school forward.

The Department of Education administrator feels, "the main focus of teaching is to ensure that students learn, everything else is secondary to that" but, at the same time, explains "it's much more than delivering the curriculum in fact, some could argue that that's just a little piece of it." The Department of Education administrator provides an extensive outline of responsibilities required of teachers.

Teachers must ensure that students learn. Their responsibilities include teaching children, delivering authorized curriculum, assessing children, identifying learning needs, addressing learning needs of students, providing a safe and caring environment for students, managing the classroom, providing adequate supervision, modeling positive behaviours, preparing report cards, communicating with parents, identifying their own learning needs, engaging in professional growth plans to address their needs, collaborating and working with other staff members within a school, a school district or province, participating in school development plans, contributing to a positive learning community.

Further, business person B describes what he views are the responsibilities of dedicated teachers.

Be at work at 9:00 and do the role attendance and have your lesson plan ready for the morning and deliver that. Discipline and control, firm/ fair because a teacher is a police officer as well... I would expect you, the evening before, preparing the next day's lesson plans and in there that's not something that's done in 5 minutes or ten minutes, that's something that takes a lot of thought and research.... and I'll go into the classroom, cafeteria duty, I would see school bus monitoring, ... the kids are getting in on time. I would see some security around the school issues being part of a teacher's day to day thing... I would see things being up to date from your own protection from areas such as harassment.... I would see leading into the class for the homeroom session. I would see then attendance... and I would see potentially moving into the classroom session.... I would see the evening drawn on and the end of day I would see marking, grading. I would see some extracurricular activity and I don't know if there are other things... committee work.... I would see a very full day for a dedicated teacher.

Business person B also describes how he feels society does not understand that the teacher's work day is much more than "9:00 to 3:00." He explains:

It's an unfair premise that a lot of people look at teachers that go to work 9, come home at 2. A lot of teachers go to work at 8:30 you know they get home at 5 or 6 and then they're out again at night doing something, ball games or plays or music.

Every participant stresses the value of extracurricular activities. Most emphasize the importance of these activities remaining as strictly volunteer work and should not be at the expense of the teacher's personal life. The politician discusses the value of extracurricular activities for students and the relationship between teacher and student. He explains how he realizes that this is outside of the "realm" of the teacher's contract. He uses his son as an example of how extracurricular activities can have a major impact upon a student's life.

One of my sons struggled in school and when he was in senior high he was head of the student council, he was the student rep on the school council, he took part in the drama festival and basketball.... The teachers who took him to those experiences are the ones that he worked hardest for. They built up his self-esteem where he could get up on a stage in front of 500 people and perform and speak off the top of his head without notes or anything and he struggled with reading and things like spelling.

Despite the obvious value attributed to extracurricular activities, the politician did not feel that extracurricular activities should be made mandatory for teacher participation. Like other participants, he did suggest the possibility of providing incentives for teachers to engage in extracurricular activities at schools.

Parent B discusses how engaging in extracurricular activities has become an expectation of teachers and how many teachers devote a great deal of their time to these activities: "Besides teaching all day, many teachers devote many hours after school working outside with students, be it sports or academic or other functions. I am not sure if it is self-imposed by the teacher or society." Parent B did not think teacher participation in extracurricular activities should be made mandatory but, at the same time, like many participants, feels it is an important aspect of the teaching profession.

Some participants feel that engaging in extracurricular activities should be mandatory. The school administrator feels these activities should be mandated and continues to say that all teachers should be obligated to participate in at least one activity. Business person B feels there is a positive correlation between teacher involvement in extracurricular activities and student success. He feels learning can also take place outside of the classroom especially when teachers are serving as a role model. In addition, business person B feels teacher participation in extracurricular activities should be mandatory. Similarly, he feels his employees in business should also be expected to be involved in their community.

The Faculty of Education participant describes the value of teacher involvement in extracurricular activities not only for the teachers but also for the student. He feels

teachers gain personal satisfaction from participating in extracurricular activities and students have the opportunity to develop a better relationship with their teacher.

Despite the high value the Faculty of Education participant places on extracurricular activities, he did not feel they should be mandated. He feels it may be difficult to match teacher expertise to the activity. He also feels since these activities are intended also for enjoyment you can not mandate teachers and students to enjoy these activities: "How do you mandate that students must come and they must be happy doing this after school hour, it's a difficult thing to mandate, so I'm not convinced that you can mandate." The Faculty of Education participant questioned whether or not teachers should be compensated for extracurricular activities: "I don't know: the jury's out on it. There are places in the states where people get compensated."

Participants stress the value of communication between the parent and the teacher.

Parent A feels it is important that teachers notify parents when they discover a problem. She stresses the importance of teachers and parents working together especially at the junior high level. This was not from an academic standpoint but from the view of assisting parents in the child's social development.

I think if children get involved with a bad peer group and that means easily led, led into trying things they shouldn't be trying like drugs.... So I think at that age the junior high age both teachers and parents have to very vigilant.

Participants place emphasis on the role that teachers must play in "parenting" children. Parent B feels teachers should primarily teach but in today's society "parenting" is inevitably becoming a part of the teacher's responsibility. At the same time, he feels it is impossible for the teacher to not become involved with the child as they must interact with them. Parent B explains how teachers are becoming more

responsible for raising children in today's society. He explains this is because both parents today are in the workforce. He feels in today's society teachers are spending more time with children than many parents. He believes parents should not be relying on teachers to "parent" their children. Parent B discusses this issue at great length and considers the expectation of teachers to "parent" their students as a major issue in the present education system.

So how much are we relying on the teachers just to bring our kids up for us?... The teacher... is in more contact with the student from 7 maybe 8 hours a day and if there are any extracurricular activities, 5 days a week. Like most parents now you get up at 7:00 or 6:30 in the morning, you get your kids ready and you get ready, you're gone till you drop your kids off so you don't see them till 5 or 6:00 that afternoon. You're home, you're making your supper, ...especially single parents, besides doing all the house work and trying to get the kids studying and everything else you might be able to spend 2 or 3 hours with them.

In addition, the school administrator describes the changing role of teachers from the past to the present. She describes numerous roles teachers must play in the lives of their students. Similar to other participants, she feels teachers are responsible for doing the work of others in society, in particular parents. She also expresses concern about the effect of the media and sexuality on child development and how teachers must intervene and help their student grow and develop in this society.

It's just exploded, it's beyond being an expert in your area is one first and foremost, expert knowledge, then going into social worker, nurse, parent, counselor, resource procurer, fundraiser, mental health specialist, special services, coach.

Somebody got to do the work that a lot of people aren't doing anymore. Families aren't doing the work of the families... there's no sense of permanency or balance or predictable home life in so many kids families, they don't eat together, even have Sunday dinner anymore, they don't have church together anymore, they don't have the grandparents living next-door and coming over and having regular visits. Mom and dad aren't together anymore; mom works, dad works, nobody's home with the kids after school.

What our culture is saying about sexuality in the media and the quick paced, fast paced, fast food life that we live, it's hugely injurious to the development of a child's emotional well being and it's then being brought to teachers, who are caring beautiful people. They see these children, they feel their pain, they want to help them and that's taking them away from their curriculum work.

The teachers are frustrated with the continuous downloading of work and believe it is impacting their ability to be effective teachers. The senior teacher explains how although teaching is his primary responsibility, his day becomes filled with other responsibilities some of which are influenced by accountability and interferes with his ability to effectively teach. He becomes frustrated during the interview as he discusses how many responsibilities are simply downloaded onto teachers and how this contributes to teacher stress.

Teachers are security in buildings, they've got to worry about people that are on the parking lot that are not even from the school, they've got to check washrooms for damage and do all this besides everything else that they do... How could your employer possibly have a teaching professional, an education specialist working security? It just doesn't make sense but it makes sense for some reason in society because of their perception of what teachers are. Anything need to be done? Give it to the teacher. Teachers should be doing this, teachers should be doing that. It's a death of a thousand cuts more and more and more of those little things get added and you put good creative wonderful people in these positions and it's a shame... They're carrying such a heavy load that at the end of the day they're tired and it happens to us all... You worry about your health... the job can run you down.

Similar to the senior teacher, Parent A explains teacher responsibilities have increased due to government cutbacks and increased class sizes. She discusses how teachers are expected to do more administrative work because secretarial staffing has been cutback.

Not only do they have their assigned jobs which is to teach the students and look after the classroom and do their grades and so on like that is all the extra stuff that they put in and I think the teachers are having to do a lot more administrative work then they used to have to do years ago because of all the cut backs. I think that's unfair. I think they're doing a lot more secretarial stuff, they're copying and they're sending out letters maybe to parents or they're doing a lot of calling and they're doing a lot of other stuff that perhaps they shouldn't be doing.

Table 4.3 provides a list of teacher responsibilities that have been described by the participants. A comparison is made between academic/professional and non-academic teaching responsibilities. This is not an exhaustive list of teacher responsibility generated by the participants. In fact, the senior teacher states there is no real job description for teachers.

<b>Table 4.3 TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	
<b>Academic/Professional</b>	<b>Non-Academic</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teach subject area</li> <li>• real life application for the subject matter</li> <li>• lesson preparation</li> <li>• accommodating diverse learners</li> <li>• continuous professional development</li> <li>• evaluation of student performance</li> <li>• identifying learning needs</li> <li>• addressing learning needs of students</li> <li>• participation in school improvement initiatives.</li> <li>• resource procurer</li> <li>• preparing report cards</li> <li>• engaging in professional growth plans to address their needs</li> <li>• collaborating and working with other staff members within a school, a school district or province</li> <li>• participating in school development plans</li> <li>• contributing to a positive learning community.</li> <li>• motivating students to learn</li> <li>• maintaining a respectful classroom environment</li> <li>• communication with parents</li> <li>• recording attendance</li> <li>• keeping informed on school policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extracurricular activities</li> <li>• citizenship</li> <li>• inspire a love for learning</li> <li>• building security</li> <li>• providing adequate supervision</li> <li>• building maintenance</li> <li>• clerical tasks</li> <li>• enhancing the development of the child</li> <li>• preparing students for life in general.</li> <li>• development of social skills</li> <li>• personal development</li> <li>• provide students with the tools they need to become successful and contributing members of society</li> <li>• parenting</li> <li>• role models</li> <li>• mentors</li> <li>• counselors</li> <li>• psychiatrist</li> <li>• coach</li> <li>• seamstress</li> <li>• chauffeur</li> <li>• bank</li> <li>• friend</li> <li>• a caring attitude</li> <li>• social worker</li> <li>• nurse</li> <li>• fundraiser</li> <li>• nutritional advisor</li> <li>• providing a safe and caring environment for students</li> </ul>

### 4.3.3 Teacher Workload

There are conflicting views from participants in terms of workload. Some participants feel that teachers are greatly overworked, others are uncertain, and others feel that the workload is reasonable.

Those participants who believe the workload is very demanding provided reasons such as inadequate support with the introduction of new curriculum, the Pathways Program, clerical duties, administrative duties, building security, and class sizes. The senior teacher describes additional tasks he must do throughout the day, as well as, work he must do in the evenings.

On the other hand . . . it is a lot of work. When I go home I am tired. It's difficult to do all of the night work (prep, marking labs, tests and assignments, making up tests and assignments etc). On top of this, I have to be a building security officer, social worker, and a clerical worker.

The school administrator feels the workload for many teachers is "unreasonable." She describes not only the responsibilities preparing lessons, paperwork, Individual Support Services Plan (ISSP) meetings, parental contact and evaluation. She discusses the difficulty of providing adequate attention to a high number of students.

For the teacher who is devoted to each student's learning, and who is teaching in the core areas- the workload is unreasonable. The paperwork, the fundraising, endless formative evaluations on course like Writing 2203, ISSP meetings, and parent communications require teachers to devote an inordinate amount of their time outside the teaching day (keep in mind that preparation time is almost non-existent). Just consider that the average high school teacher has ~200 students. Just think that if the teacher gave 5 minutes outside of the classroom to each of these students or families each week, that teachers would give 1000 minutes or 16 hours which equals two full days of work. Isn't this crazy?

The NLTA participant discusses some of the workload issues teachers are experiencing at great length. She refers to increased class sizes, multi-grading, the Pathways Program, lack of resources for new initiatives, lack of teacher assistants, lack of resources and in-



servicing for new curriculum, supervision, lack of secretarial support for schools, and the great number of roles that teachers must play such as police officer, babysitter, nurse and social worker. She explains how these expectations of teachers have increased over recent years. In the following quote she discusses the impact of the Pathways Program on teacher workload and how there is a need for assistance for teachers.

In the workload study of teachers, a couple of teachers made the analogy that somebody on Pathway one it's like having one other student. Someone on Pathway two is like two other students, Pathway three is like three and pathway 5 is like having 5 additional students in the classroom because of the level of workload, the meetings with social workers or nurses or psychologists that type of thing so that was not there before with the kids... Teachers need assistance and that kind of thing we know that student assistant numbers are cut back in the classroom.

The NLTA participant discusses how supervision duty has a negative impact on the teacher's workday. She explains how supervision duties can deprive teachers of the time to attend to basic needs such as eating lunch or the opportunity to use the bathroom throughout the day. Further, a very hectic day that includes supervision can affect the delivery of their teaching in the classroom. She refers to comments made by teachers in the Workload study completed by Dibbon (2004).

On the days that I have supervision I teach differently because all I think about is I have to be here and... I'm not going to have time to eat lunch, I'm not going to have time to get to the washroom... they're rushing.

The NLTA participant explains how teacher workload has increased due to inadequate provision of support staff such as secretaries. She also discusses all the other roles teachers are expected to serve in the classroom besides educating children. This workload not only increases teacher stress but also affects the education of children.

We ask our teachers to be babysitters, psychologists, social workers, police, we ask our teachers to do all these things in the classroom then we expect them to

educate our children... because of all the other workload that is now put upon the teacher, you're feeling it more and more.

Participant stress that the high demands of workload will affect the ability of teachers to contribute their time to extracurricular activities and is also impeding the ability of teachers to be effective in the classroom. The mid-career teacher explains how teachers are not only responsible for ensuring students learn the prescribed curriculum but they are also responsible for all levels of development such as social and emotional. Like other participants, he feels new initiatives are also increasing teacher's workload. As a result, he explains, teachers are finding it more difficult to contribute to extracurricular activities.

Academic, social, and emotional development all fall into the lap of the teacher in the classroom. As a result of this there is an increase and demand in the workload that is attached to the profession. New initiatives that in theory will benefit our children mean that the workload of the teacher has increased... But the limitations of the day make it more and more difficult to give time for extracurricular activities.

The mid-career teacher explains his multi-dimensional role in the rural setting. He describes numerous responsibilities that not only include teaching but his responsibility as principal and for the school computer network. He explains how this high workload contributes to his inability to be effective in the classroom.

I'm a rural school principal but still I'm responsible for a lot of the same forms, a lot of the same plans, a lot of the same paperwork. A lot of people think is trivial but coupled with that I've got to teach 14 courses, I've got to look after the computer network, all deal with a total of 27 hours of open time in my schedule. So with that 27 hours I've got to try and prepare for work, I've got to deal with administrative issues, I've got to deal with parents, teachers and students etc. plus maintain a computer network. Now that honestly is going to limit my ability to being as effective in the classroom as I want to be.

He is concerned that multi-grade classrooms are becoming a reality in more and more rural schools and this will become another contributor to high teacher workload in rural

Newfoundland. The NLTA participant expresses great concern over the workload issue for teachers and the implications this may have for education. She states: "Teachers feel overworked and concerned for the students and the future of education in the province."

The junior teacher did not have issue with the workload and viewed all professionals as having the expectation they would be required to work hours outside of the regular workday. She did have concern with supervision as a teacher responsibility.

I believe the workload is heavy but reasonable – after all we are being paid. Few professionals can function without bringing home work and teacher salaries are consistent with others in this situation. However finding other means of supervision would permit teachers to focus on their jobs, rather than babysitting.

Similarly, student A did not feel teacher workload was high and she states: "A teacher's workload has never appeared to me as too much." The understanding of teacher workload from Student B was that it would be comparable to other professions. He commented that the responsibility of teacher's work was likely greater than other professions because of the interaction with students.

I think it's about average for the most part with other professions as with anything... I certainly don't think it's any less. It's a lot more responsibility than the average desk job, having classes of 30 students staring back at you.

The Department of Education administrator did not feel there were concerns regarding workload for teachers compared to other professions. She feels the workload is "reasonable." She stressed that the teacher's workday would also include preparation and marking after school or in the evening.

I think for most teachers the workload is a reasonable one. I think that all of us work harder now than we did perhaps 20 years ago but that's not unique to teaching... Some of the work is done in the evening. Because a 9-3, 8:30-2:30, whatever kind of schedule, that isn't the teachers work day. That's the instructional part of the teachers work day. That's when you have contact with the kids. The rest of your work day is doing your marking, doing your preparation, doing your planning so that is built into a teachers work day.

Business person A feels workload varies between individual teachers and the amount of work that a teacher does is dependent upon their desire to work hard and do a good job.

I think you get people who are constantly upgrading what they're doing in the classroom and who are involved constantly in extracurricular activities and are helping students after class.... I know that there's teachers who have been working for a couple of years. They got the program down pat, do as little marking as they possibly can.

There seems to a consensus by participants that society is working harder today than in the past. The junior teacher feels society is reluctant to acknowledge that teachers work hard because they also work hard. She also suggests members of society resent the time off teachers have over summers and Christmas and fail to recognize teachers work during these times. Additionally, she suggests society needs to listen to teachers about workload issues so educational issues affecting society can be confronted. However, she also feels teachers need to be sensitive to workload issues of others in society: "A "truce" needs to be reached so that teachers can articulate the frustrations to elicit positive change and society can work with them. Otherwise it will always be a question/debate about who works more – pointless!"

#### **4.3.4 Teacher Personality**

Many participants perceive teachers as individuals who have a desire to positively impact society and who are caring individuals. For example, parent A describes the teaching profession as a calling in which teachers must have an "inner desire to do it." She feels teachers recognize the value of education in society. The school administrator believes people choose to become and remain teachers because "they want to make a difference" and "to make a better world." She states, "They're passionate about learning and their

subject, they really find it interesting and they get ignited by learning and seeing kids learn and flourish.” She describes teachers as “loving, good hearted people who care for children.”

Participants describe the dedication of teachers and how they will often go beyond their teaching obligations to ensure a student is given every opportunity to succeed. Student B views most teachers as those “who each day go above and beyond for their students” and as “spending time after class to give those that did not want to learn, extra help.” He further describes the dedication of teachers as “the teacher could always be found after school volunteering with any given sport, music, art, theatre, or academic program.” Parent A describes the caring nature of teachers and how teachers will spend their own money so that their students are not hungry.

In one particular school there were many poor and hungry children. Teachers on many occasions used their own money to buy food to have on hand for the children who came to school each day without any lunch. In the winter, many teachers used their own money to buy snowsuits and boots for these children. Teachers worked tirelessly along side school council members to prevent school closures. Many principals were instrumental in getting breakfast and lunch programs started in their schools. I think teachers are owed a great deal of gratitude for what they have done and continue to do on a daily basis, not only academically but also for their humanity.

Participants describe the self-sacrificing nature of teacher personality. The NLTA participant explains how it is the nature of teachers to make every effort, even at personal expense, to make sure that their students receive the best that they can give them, despite the excessive workload they are faced with and the lack of resources they have in the classroom. She explains how teachers will become stressed when workload issues prevent them from properly caring for their students. This participant describes how

teachers will strive to make things work in the education system despite a lack of resources and cutbacks.

But you know even with all the things that I could say, all the negative feelings that teachers have, all the concerns that they have with the workload issues, they're still there doing their job every single day and loving it and doing the best they can under the circumstances and it's unfortunate sometimes that teachers adapt and teachers just deal with it and sometimes we need to tell them, stop dealing with it, if you can't do it, don't do it.

Participants are concerned about the self-sacrificing nature of teachers in that they believe it is affecting the health and well-being of teachers. The senior teacher explains how teachers are "real accommodating, we'll make it work." The mid-career teacher explains how teachers tend to sacrifice themselves to the betterment of education. He uses himself as an example.

I was in the building most mornings at 6:30, quarter to 7; I was leaving 5:30, 6:00, trying to make sure everything was done up to snuff.... My only goal was to make our school better. I was there regardless of what cost it meant and I found that over time that creates a problem.

The tendency of teachers to self sacrifice is also believed by participants to prevent educational challenges from being brought to the forefront. The senior explains teachers will still do the work so that their students will not suffer. He feels teachers are not respecting themselves enough when they take on the workload they have. He is frustrated with the lack of support for teachers from the public and the expectation of the public that teachers take on extra demands: "There's the knowledge too that if you give a teacher a task they will do it... maybe it's a disrespect... so what you're overworked, deal with it, you've got a job, you should be happy." This teacher adds how teachers are willing to tolerate unsafe working conditions or a poor physical plant for the sake of ensuring they provide academic opportunities for students.

I've run some classes this year with 37 kids in rooms that the fire code says no more than 30 should be in that room.... So we've got to sort of say no, this can't continue. Your boiler makers and your pipe fitters say no, sorry unsafe job, job stops until you fix it then we go and we work because you have disrespect for us as workers. Do teachers do that? They don't. We'll make it do. It's all for the kids and it is all for the kids. Teachers don't want to obviously hurt a student's ability.

Participants explain how many teachers have accepted the lack of resources and government funding for education and how many teachers will spend their own money on supplies for the classroom and their students. The senior teacher feels teacher personality could be contributing to the problem because teachers will spend their own money so the student can benefit.

So we're very accountable even if there's no funding for it, there's no equipment for it. Well I'll have to bring it in or I'll have to buy it or I'll have to bring in the posters for it or I'll have to make it and the teachers do it, we do it. I'm guilty, I bring in be it tape decks, power cords, connecting wires, anything I got I bring in and use it.

Participants suggest that the conservative nature of teachers interferes with voicing their concerns through their union. The senior teacher feels teachers need to become actively involved in the NLTA as opposed to simply complaining amongst themselves. The mid-career teacher also finds teachers as a group are not supportive of the NLTA. He feels that there is a "general lack of respect towards the teachers association and a lack of desire to remain informed of what's going on with the NLTA for a lot of the teachers in the province." Both of these teachers feel this is contributing to some of the issues teachers face in the workplace.

#### **4.3.5 Educational and Teacher Challenges**

In this section, participants discuss how a lack of funding for education has resulted in a number of challenges such as inadequate resources, large class sizes, reduced teacher allocations and high workload. They also discuss how a lack of respect for teachers from parents and students makes the work of teachers more challenging. Finally, the difficulty in motivating students to learn and value education is presented as a difficulty.

##### **4.3.5.1 Lack of Funding for Education: Resources, Large Class Size, Teacher Allocation Cutbacks and Workload**

For the participants, the lack of funding for education reflected how education is valued in society. This lack of funding translated into teaching challenges such as increased class size and increased workload that ultimately affect the delivery of education. The NLTA participant describes a situation in which a teacher was dealing with a lack of resources for her students. She discusses a commercial produced by the NLTA in which a teacher was apologizing and explaining why all of her students did not have a book while the commercial was filming. The NLTA participant feels the public should be informed of these issues so they would have a “better understanding” of the reality of the classroom.

... a very vibrant energetic teacher, very colorful classroom and we were filming and the teacher took me aside and said I have to apologize all the kids don't have the book... I had to photocopy some of them have black and white, some of them have a color book. This was a grade two classroom, they were trying to read... I think if the public knew that the public would have a better understanding.

The school administrator explains how challenges such as loss of teaching units, increased class size, and lessening administrative, guidance and secretarial support are



impacting the ability of teachers to properly perform their jobs. She also comments on the frustration and stress experienced by teachers due to their inability to cope with these demands. She uses her school as an example.

For example, at my school even though our student enrolment has remained constant for the past five years, we have experienced over 6 teaching units being withdrawn from our staff and at the same time we are expected to offer a wide curriculum without increasing class size.... I am seeing even more of our best teachers becoming frustrated as they feel they can never adequately meet all the demands put on them. It is not a function of better time management or more efficient planning on their part and it is compounded by absolutely insufficient administrative, guidance and clerical allocations.

Participants explain the difficulty the education system faces with large class sizes. For example, Student B focuses on how teachers are unable to interact with students individually and how teachers are unable to assess the needs of their students because of large class sizes.

Due to the fact of large class size, so often there is no actual student-teacher interaction, so in many cases if a student is shy or quiet they get overlooked... they don't really get to know how that student perceives certain things or certain ideas that's presented in class.

The school district administrator is equally concerned society does not understand the impact of issues such as class size on the classroom, but are more likely to blame the teacher when an individual child does not succeed.

Whether there's 30 children in a classroom or not, they're not blaming that on the teacher but what they would blame on the teacher is if that child doesn't succeed in that class of 30. And they rarely look and say well that's because government didn't provide the teacher allocations.

Participants discuss the impact of teacher cutbacks on the delivery of education in the classroom. Parent B feels students are not provided the support that they need in the classroom because teacher workload has increased to the extent that they are unable to

provide students with the necessary assistance. He feels the public is unaware of these issues in the classroom.

...the parent comes back and says, little Johnny didn't pass, why didn't little Johnny pass? Well you know, little Johnny didn't pass because the teacher's tied up doing this and that and the other thing and there's only one teacher where there used to be three last year.... What goes on in the general, average school day....Until it actually affects somebody, they don't care; it's just out of sight out of mind. If you're teaching 45 students in your class how effective are you going to be? You can't devote your time to 45... A teacher will burn them self out if they try to deal with 45.

The Faculty of Education participant feels the education system is not succeeding in helping students with marginal and average academic abilities. He attributes this to the challenges that teachers are facing in the classroom. This statement addresses some of the contributing factors he believes affects the delivery of education for average and marginal students: "Class size is one thing, work load is another thing, there are so many factors, a changing curriculum right now which is very demanding on teachers... poor implementation plans by the Department of Education."

#### **4.3.5.2 Lack of Respect: Parental Pressures**

Many participants of this study discussed the issue of parents placing blame on teachers when their child does not achieve in school. For example, the mid-career teacher explains how teachers can be blamed by parents for their child not achieving in school as opposed to the child accepting responsibility.

When the parents question why their child isn't achieving to the level they want, they may question what is the teacher themselves doing without really valuing that contribution... external excuses are always easier to find. If the child is not achieving well maybe the reason is because the teacher wasn't doing enough.

The junior teacher also explains blaming the teacher is sometimes a way for the student and/or parent to avoid responsibility for their academic performance. She expresses her

frustration as some parents are more interested in the mark the child receives as opposed to the level of understanding and knowledge attained by the student.

It's a bit of the blame game; they need to look for some kind of source outside. If ultimately it's a number well fine let's sort out that number right in September and then sit back and watch movies the rest of the year... Teaching doesn't work without somebody learning.

Student B explains the importance of partnerships between parents, students and teachers. He discusses the same issue as the mid-career and junior teacher asserting that teachers must sometimes deal with parents and students who are not willing to accept their responsibility in the educational process.

I think parents of kids who aren't doing as well in school push the blame onto the teachers so they don't really get the credit they deserve... it's a partnership between the teachers, the students and the parents so it's not just one person.

Situations are described by participants in which teachers are "bullied" by parents. Business person A explains how some parents expect or demand certain marks for their child from teachers: "It's not an educational experience anymore. It's like a means to an end... she's getting B's but she needs an A. You know, you can give her an A?." The junior teacher explains how sometimes she feels pressure to accept late assignments or to give make-up assignments to students who do not pass in work. She also explains how she has encountered other teachers who will also accept late assignments rather than deal with a potential confrontation with parents. She states "they just found it easier to accept things like late assignments, 6 months late." She believes it is "extremely unfair because there was another kid in that class who stayed up all night to make sure they got it in."

The junior teacher is frustrated with parents who are not motivating their children to learn and who minimize behavioural issues with their children.

Yes, you motivate but only so much as you can. I'll motivate through my English classroom techniques, my teaching strategies, that's all I can do... and if the parent is at home saying, "Ah, you know, she's only pipping off...sure they've only smoked a bit of weed."

Business person A feels some parents react differently to teachers contacting them about issues with their child. She discusses how a teacher who called home about her daughter kept apologizing for the phone call and sensed other parents would not appreciate a similar phone call.

For instance ... (daughter) hadn't handed in some math work... so her teacher called me and the first thing he did was apologize profusely for calling me at home.... I'm thinking why is he apologizing to me because this is something that I obviously need to know and very important. But the impression I got was that this was not the reception he often got from parents... So that tells me that parents obviously don't care how the education is obtained just as long as it's obtained and don't bug me with it.

She feels that some parents are not as concerned about how their children progress in school.

#### **4.3.5.3 Lack of Respect: Student Behaviour**

Participants describe how teachers are mistreated regularly by students. For example, student B illustrates some of the challenges that teachers face in dealing with difficult students in the classroom. He does not feel teachers should have to tolerate "verbal abuse" in the classroom. He is of the opinion that this behaviour interferes with the teacher's ability to educate.

Teachers first of all should not have to take verbal abuse of any kind. As far as I know, nowhere in the job description does it indicate taking lip from a snotty little brat, yet day after day so many do. When a teacher enters the classroom it is their job to educate, not baby sit, and still that ends up being the daily routine for so many.

Participants discuss instances in which teachers are not supported by the administration in their school and teachers fear that they may be viewed as incompetent if they ask for help. The junior teacher explains the difficulty in dealing with administrators who are concerned about the child being unsupervised if they are asked to leave the classroom. However, there is also the difficulty of letting the child remain in the classroom and disrupt the education of the other students in the class. Further difficulties arise when the parents of the disruptive child are not supportive of the teacher.

You send a kid outside a classroom, the administration is coming along sending them back in because that's an unsupervised child out in the hall. And you are doing two things. One, you're not protecting them, they could come to some harm, physical harm and you're liable or the other side of it is that you are infringing on his right to an education by having him stand outside. Never mind the fact that he's in here yelling and screaming, infringing on everybody else's right to an education... His parents will come in and say you made my child stand out in the hall, he has a right to be in there just like everybody else... you've got no authority, what can you do?

This teacher further emphasizes the importance of having a good administration that will support teachers in discipline issues and parents who are supportive of teachers. She also explains how the problem of student behaviour is exasperated when the teacher is afraid to inform administration or parents because they do not want to appear incompetent: "We all have to look out for ourselves too. You don't want to be seen as someone who can't handle them."

According to the participants, teachers do not appear to have the same control in the classroom as in the past. The NLTA participant points to the sexual abuse scandals in the Catholic Church and the resulting negative impact on the ability of teachers to do their job properly. One result was for teacher accountability to increase to an unhealthy level. Another result was less respect from students which led to less autonomy of the

teacher in the classroom. She feels this has also resulted in teachers being under greater examination by the public to the extent that it has interfered with the level of control teachers have in the classroom.

Teachers at one point way back had a great deal of autonomy in the classroom. They don't have that anymore because they are under scrutiny and there are some parents and some of the public who have, I think, taken that to the very extreme so that the teacher is so far under a microscope that they are not even able to do their job sometimes... I think the children in the classroom are getting away with more then they did many, many years ago.

The NLTA participant feels that some parents and students are aware of their rights and will take this to an extreme that makes it difficult for the teacher to effectively manage their classroom.

#### **4.3.5.4 Daily Teacher Challenges: Motivation of Students**

One of the challenges faced by the teacher participants is that of intrinsically motivating students. The junior teacher has found many students operate under the constraints of extrinsic rewards and require immediate marks for validation. Further, she has experienced students who have become satisfied with the minimum grade and are not motivated to perform at their best. She is concerned about the development of the kind of culture in which students do not strive for their best.

It's not so much a focus on doing your best as it is doing what's good enough and the common cry that I hear, I only need a 70 to get into university. But if you are capable of a 90 why are you satisfied with a 70? I don't need this course to graduate, so why would I?

Parent B suggested parents should involve themselves more in the educational process. He feels the school could help parents to better motivate their child and interest them in learning.

...not only do you have to get the student interested in learning but you also have to get the parents interested in the education field because I think the more interested the more they'll make their son or they'll enforce the different study habits or whatever else upon their child.

The junior teacher calls for parents and students to share the responsibility with teachers when it comes to motivation to learn and it is not entirely the role of the teacher:

"In reality teachers must spend a lot of time finding new ways to motivate students. I believe the balance is inappropriately weighing on teachers when students should be motivated themselves (through parents etc.)."

#### **4.3.6 Teacher Qualifications and Teacher Training**

In this section, participants present reasons why teacher qualifications and teacher training may contribute to society's perceptions of teachers. They consider the entrance requirements into the Faculty of Education and make recommendations for change in the education program provided at the university. They emphasize the value of continuous professional development and the importance of subject area expertise. They recommend careful hiring practices for new teachers.

##### **4.3.6.1 Entrance Requirements to the Faculty of Education**

All participants emphasize that both high academic standing and strong interpersonal skills should be considered for acceptance into the Faculty of Education. They caution about the reliance of strictly academic measures for entrance into the faculty and encourage the examination of personality traits to determine suitability for the teaching profession. They also recommend that an interview process be required. For example, the school administrator feels entrance into the Faculty of Education should not only require a strong academic standing but experience in the field, interpersonal skills,

communication skills and a personality suited to teaching. She feels an interview process would be useful in assessing these traits and in examining how prospective teachers react when presented with difficult scenarios.

A wide variety of experiences (even some work experience) would be a good thing along with minimum of 70% average in undergraduate work... Communication skills should be evaluated through an interview process. Hopefully, during this interview the aspiring teacher's passion for learning and concern for students would come out. You've got to have interpersonal skills, you could have scenarios by which there are interviews whereby you're given an issue and see how you respond to it.

Like other participants, he also stresses that it is important to ensure that the right kind of individual is entering the teaching profession. She describes her experience with an intern who learned she was not suited to the teaching profession.

This year too we had an intern. Regrettably, this person didn't learn early enough in their education that teaching is probably not what they should be doing with their life. It would have been a lot better for that individual, for all the people that interacted with that individual and the children if that person had never been accepted to the faculty.

Participants are pleased that there is a greater commitment required by teachers studying education in that they are now required to complete a full year program in high school. For example, business person B feels people will be more likely to choose education because they are truly interested in teaching.

I think you actually have to enroll for a full year program. To me, that's great. You actually have to decide that I want to do education and do it as opposed to, well if I don't get into that, then I'll do education..... You can't do an education course once every ten years and end up with an education degree and finally call yourself a teacher. Thank God you can't do that anymore.

This is reinforced by Student A who states, "I believe the majority of new teachers are adequately trained, more so than the "older teachers."



The Faculty of Education participant emphasizes entrance into the Faculty of Education has become very competitive and the program is now accepting individuals with higher academic standing. The acceptance standard is now high leading to a higher caliber of student in the Faculty. He is pleased the faculty is moving in the direction of considering "qualitative" measures for entrance into the Faculty of Education besides academic standing such as the personal statement, letters of reference and community work.

#### **4.3.6.2 Recommendations to the Education Program**

Participants emphasize the importance of highly trained teachers. The Faculty of Education participant explains: "The better qualified and the better executor that the teacher is the more advantage that leaves the students." Student B also states what he believes to be the implications of under trained teachers: "I think the quality of education is depleted. If a teacher isn't educated correctly how can they in turn correctly educate another student?"

Participants make a number of recommendations to the education program such as a component for rural teaching and multi-grade teaching. The mid-career teacher explains why he feels this is valuable:

In also believe that given that many of the "new" teachers will be receiving their first positions in rural settings there should be more incentives to do the internship in a rural one. I would not be opposed to making the internship have to be done in a rural setting. Mandatory courses on multi-age instruction would also help.

Participants feel the internship experience should be of greater length and that interns should be provided with realistic experiences during their internship in terms of classroom management. The school district administrator feels the internship experience

needs to be expanded to "consolidate practice with theory." The senior teacher feels a more practical approach may be useful as opposed to more coursework. Like other participants, he also has concerns about the value of some of the coursework expected in the Faculty of Education.

Some are thrust into situations for which they are not trained. I feel that an apprentice-journeyman model may be more appropriate for the training of teachers than some of the education courses and papers written. Some courses seem more like "hoops to be jumped through" than useful training for potential educators.

Student B suggests the internship program needs to be expanded. He did not feel that their experience was realistic in regard to the true teaching experience: "That isn't a realistic challenge for the student teacher to have.... not this sit back and relax." He feels that interns spent too much time observing as opposed to teaching.

Participants recommend the development of coursework in communication skills, counseling, conflict resolution, and other interpersonal skills. Student A feels teachers need training in how to counsel students in dealing with difficult aspects of their lives.

I think that all teachers should be kind of prepared for sometime a student is going to need your help more than just with understanding, maybe with something going on at home or something going on with their friends. Just stuff that they need to talk about and with bullying too.

The school administrator recommends the development of other skills such as how to resolve conflict, conduct meetings and undergo regular evaluation of their work through videotaping and through feedback from students and parents.

Courses that involve role playing in dealing with conflict, chairing meetings and developing interpersonal skills. The video taping of teachers is of extreme value for reflection on teaching practice. If interns see their teaching, they can pull it apart in an effort to improve in a safe, productive environment. Completely lost from teacher preparation is the involvement of students and maybe parents in the learning process. Students should be giving regular feedback with ideas for improvement as they are the focus of our work.

Participants also believe that there are personal traits required of teachers that can not be easily taught. Student B interprets teaching responsibilities as more than simply teaching and suggests university education should involve other aspects encountered in the teaching profession rather than just the teaching component.

Teachers end up taking on so much more than simply teaching. They become a psychiatrist, coach, seamstress, chauffeur, bank and most importantly a friend. They don't teach all of that to you in university.

Participants recommend more course work in child psychology and learning disabilities. For example the Department of Education administrator would like to see academic training include increased understanding in areas of child development, "understanding of curriculum and assessment, and knowledge of exceptionalities that children may have."

The students feel volunteer work should be an aspect of teaching training. Student B states: "Each education student should definitely have to volunteer a certain number of hours each term."

Participants emphasize that teaching methodologies involve interactive, meaningful learning as opposed to transmission oriented. The politician stressed teacher education should encourage teachers to move away from traditional methods of teaching and to incorporate the new knowledge base of how students learn into practical approaches to teaching.

Moving away from the traditional style of educating by a pure textbook approach, more teacher inservices and hopefully teacher training centres are moving towards a more interactive, meaningful, learning experience. They are connecting the practical with the philosophical.

Participants also feel the present education for teachers is inadequate due to the specialized expertise now required of teachers. The Faculty of Education participant points out the faculty is re-evaluating the Secondary Education Program. Like others, he does not feel the program is of sufficient length:

Honestly, from what I know now about the complexities of teaching and learning I think it's impossible to teach anybody everything they need to know in a year to be a good teacher. ... If we had a situation like they have in law school where you get three years post degree, I think we'd be producing a much better qualified teacher. However, we would also have to pay them about three times as much.

Participants feel the program should not only be longer but of a graduate level to properly educate prospective teachers. They believe this based on the body of knowledge in education that presently exists. However, they feel the difficulty with this kind of program lies in compensating teachers accordingly.

#### **4.3.6.3 The Hiring of New Teachers**

Participants stress personal characteristics that should be considered when hiring teachers. They believe skills in creativity, listening, counseling, mediation, communication, and organization should be examined in the hiring process. The politician describes some of the important skills beyond academics required of teachers:

For starters, you've got to be able to communicate.... I think you've got to be organized, you've always got to be prepared and you've got to be willing I think to forgive a little because you're going to be faced with challenges.... You come across students that are difficult and you've got to be willing to accept that... you stick with them.

Parent B feels teachers need to be especially creative but did not think creativity is a skill that can be taught. He feels "ingenuity" is a characteristic necessary for successful teachers: "I mean in this day and age I mean you have to come up with unique ways of

trying to get through to these kids.” Parent B comments on other qualities of a teacher that can not be taught in education programs:

Let’s face it, all teachers they have to be parents, they’ve got to be counselors, they’ve got to be mediators and that’s not something that’s definitely going to be taught because not everybody is going to be a good listener and not everyone is going to be a disciplinarian when they have to be either.

Participants feel the willingness to volunteer, as well as, a great degree of dedication and patience is required when dealing with children. Student B believes extracurricular involvement in that it helps teachers in making connections with students: “Definitely for me a qualification, they would have to have volunteer experience, a lot of volunteer experience.”

#### **4.3.6.4 Subject Area Expertise**

Many participants express concern regarding teachers teaching outside their subject area of expertise. This is compounded by the difficulty faced by rural teachers who may have to teach a variety of subject areas out of necessity. The Faculty of Education participant refers to the Workload Study completed by Dibbon (2004).

One of their biggest frustrations was having to teach subjects for which they had no academic training and they felt that they spent an inordinate amount of time trying to get themselves up to speed in those subject areas and some of them said you never do.

The Department of Education administrator feels secondary school teachers require a strong knowledge base in a subject area but questioned whether or not a major should be required.

While secondary teachers need a strong content base in their subject teaching, one has to question whether or not a major is required. A teacher in a small rural community in this province may have to teach several courses in one subject area or many subject areas.

She places this in the context of the rural teacher who will be required to teach a variety of subject areas out of necessity.

#### **4.3.6.5 Professional Development for Teachers**

Participants value professional development and life long learning for teachers. The Department of Education administrator feels “teachers are adequately qualified” but that, “learning is life-long and therefore teachers should be continuously upgrading and learning.”

There are contradictory attitudes on whether or not teachers should be rewarded for upgrading. Some participants believe financial incentives will encourage teachers to upgrade and therefore improve the quality of their teaching. Others feel incentives should consider the quality of education experienced by the student. For example, the politician discusses the importance of continuous professional development for teachers. He feels incentives that provide financial rewards will inevitably result in a better teacher.

People who go to a two or three week institute, come September they're eager to go back and try certain things so you have to stay current... Maybe you've got to look at incentives. There were talks the other year you know that some of these courses may be tied to your salary.

In contrast, business person B believes: “The compensation systems are wrong because first of all you're paying for a piece of paper and not for a product that the grade 7 permits you to give.” He is of the opinion teachers should be compensated for the “end product” of their work: “It's about learning... you should only be compensated for what you turn out, it's not what you know, it's your product...The teachers' product is the student.” The senior teacher expresses concern that the Master's program is not necessarily producing better teachers because teachers are simply completing a Master's

to increase their salaries. He would like to see teachers rewarded for their innovation and creativity.

I don't like this jumping through the hoops to get a master's degree to say that suddenly you're a master. I think there are a lot of master teachers that should be compensated for their abilities.... If a teacher is an innovative and creative teacher and they're working and they're doing things that are amazing, they should be paid for it and I don't see that happening.

The quality of professional development was emphasized as important. The senior teacher expresses his displeasure with the choice of presenters at professional development in-services. He does not feel the expertise of teachers is being recognized.

I've seen people who have presented and in-serviced and have taught teachers with masters degrees and in-serviced them in subject areas that they know absolutely nothing about and you are paying them a hell of a lot less then these people that are sitting in front of them.

Participants believe that since teachers upgrade at their own expense this should also be given consideration by society. The Faculty of Education participant feels teachers are not valued by society and society does not appreciate how important it is for teachers to remain current in their field.

They are victims of a system that doesn't reinvest back in them.... To be kept current on educational theory on best practices in other jurisdictions and things of that nature... the teachers who do that generally do it on their own time and on their own nickel. So I think that there's not a real appreciation in the profession for ongoing education for teachers.

He explains there is no formalized method provided within the education system that enables every single teacher to maintain professional development on an ongoing basis.

#### 4.3.7 Teacher Accountability

Participants value greater accountability to parents and feels communication between parents and the school has greatly improved. The mid-career teacher describes how he feels education has improved since his high school experience.

Going back to my own high school days, I had one teacher myself that I would consider to be a bad teacher. His idea of teaching us was on numerous occasions asking us if we wanted a study period so he could leave and go on and do whatever it was.

The Faculty of Education views accountability as an opportunity for professional growth and shows educators their work is valuable: "I use the analogy that if you're working in a job and nobody is evaluating what you're doing than that makes you think that it's really not important if nobody cares what you're doing."

Business person B feels employees should not have permanency in their positions if they do not continue to perform and they should be replaced if they do not perform. He also suggests teachers should be compensated based upon their performance similar to the model used in his business. Business person B describes the possibility of likening schools to business.

The principal of a school is like what you would call a departmental manager, the head of the school district is the CEO right and it goes from there and then you can call your students as cold as it may sound your products.... Let's say every student had \$10,000 assigned to them... schools had to market and sell you on their wares and their ability to train your child and you got to select where you put your \$10,000 or \$20,000... You would soon find your teachers making \$150,000 and \$200,000 and the product would go up. Now that's radical, extremely radical but you know it's not that far fetched.

Participants value accountability but believe that some forms of accountability can be detrimental to education. The mid-career teacher points out, "Every school has their own unique set of circumstances and environment." He explains how certain



strategies or measures to test student achievement are not valid. He points out how if schools are aware that one subject area will be measured then they will focus on one area and will emphasize other areas less.

We should never be at the point, never, where the purpose of our education system is on scoring well on specific subtests. As an example, in the U.S...with the "No Child Left Behind Act" their funding levels are determined solely and specifically based on achievement on math in these subtests. If you see a school who is all of a sudden doing exceptionally well in mathematic progress the question may be you should be asking is not what are they doing right but the real question that should be asked is what are they leaving out to get there.

Participants suggest these strategies are not focusing on the real issues of schools because teachers and administrators are working towards achievement on the test instead of simply educating. They feel the focus becomes on marks rather than student learning.

The Faculty of Education participant suggests present day students have become good at taking tests but this may not measure the extent of learning.

The stats will indicate that student learning is increasing they would also indicate that it's increased phenomenally ever since we're implemented testing. So has the testing really increased knowledge that much, I'm doubtful. I think we've become better at writing tests and teaching the tests.

Participants explain how teachers are experiencing a lack of control in evaluating students and suggest that evaluation has become impersonal and potentially detrimental to the student. The senior teacher expresses concern that the mathematical calculation of marks may not fully express the level of learning the student has accomplished. He feels "exposed" due to the accountability expected of teachers in their evaluation of students. He also feels "exposed" because the public has access to how students are evaluated but no true understanding of the "art" of evaluation beyond the mathematical calculations.

Everything is in the public domain and the art of evaluating is no longer in the realm of a teacher's prerogative. It's suddenly become out there in a world of

spreadsheets and dots and press that button and the spreadsheet will generate a mark.

Teachers feel they are targeted when education is not fulfilling the prescribed standard. The senior teacher illustrates that teachers feel pressured to make new programs work because they will be blamed for their failure as opposed to those who ultimately made the decision to implement them.

The academics recommend their programs, the politicians put it in and some poor sucker of a teacher got to deal with it, sing and dance with it and make it work and if the system fails, guess what, it's not the academic's fault, it's certainly not going to be a politician's fault, guess whose fault it is. The teacher screwed up again. It's funny, isn't it?

Participants express concern that teachers are the only members of the education system who are evaluated for their performance. The senior teacher states he values accountability but feels it is only teachers who are being evaluated in the education system as opposed to administrators, school district personnel, and department of education personnel: "Difficult, it's so difficult. Everyone should be accountable but who's judging the administrators, who's judging the people at my school board and who's judging the minister. Poop falls down hill and I guess we're the bottom of the trench." Similarly, the Faculty of Education participant feels: "Accountability, I think it hasn't fully matured."

#### **4.3.8 Decision Making in Education**

Participants examine a variety of factors that contribute to how decisions are made such as efficiency and availability of money. They consider whether or not those in decision making roles are sufficiently knowledgeable regarding education and closely

connected to the present circumstances experienced by teachers and students. They present who they believe should be involved in the decision making process.

#### **4.3.8.1 Decisions Guided by Efficiency and Money**

Participants are concerned that many decisions in education are made to save money without considering the effect on the delivery of education. The mid career teacher expresses the concern that decisions are made based on efficiency instead of the best interest of the child.

I don't think we should put any public service under a business model. It's not an issue of, if things are done more efficiently, but efficient in terms of dollars and cents. It doesn't mean necessarily efficient in terms of long term benefit to children, it doesn't.

Similarly, the school administrator expressed concern about decisions made regarding education only relating to infrastructure and ignoring the issues of properly educating our youth. He feels it is important to recognize that society should not consider improving the physical environment in isolation to other challenges in education such as class size.

The big issue in this urban area is class size, big issue particularly in primary school. Now I'm not saying make a choice between infrastructure and that, you can't have a leaky roof. You can't learn if the environment is not safe and is uncomfortable. But it can't be either or, that's like saying again the medical saying well I'm going to choose whether I'll put money into the roof so you don't have leaks on the operating table but we won't pay for a surgeon. You can see how nonsensical it is.

Participants express the importance of government being willing to fund changes in education and are frustrated that education is not better funded. Parent A believes change will only occur in education if government is prepared to fund the changes.

Any change in education in Newfoundland is tied to money, which is controlled by the Government... Principals, teachers and parent representatives on School Councils can try as they may to make changes but unless government has the money to implement these changes, change will not happen.

Participants are concerned that there is a loss of focus on the needs of the students opposed to the needs of society. Student B further explains “You can not put a price on education.”

I can understand that there are budgets, and funding issues, but how can you put a price on education? The children who are in the school today are the future, they are tomorrow’s leaders and we do not want to interfere with their education because of funding issues.

Participants believe that properly funding education is critical for the success of students and future benefit of society.

#### **4.3.8.2 Decisions that Negatively Impact Teachers and Students Due to Lack of Knowledge of Education by Decision Makers**

Participants believe that those in decision making positions do not have accurate knowledge of the education system, as well as, the complexities of teaching and learning.

The senior teacher asserts how society and, in particular, those in decision making positions do not have accurate knowledge of the teaching profession.

Do you remember several years ago the Minister of Education came out and said... “We’re going to make kindergarten full time”.... Teachers said, “Gee that’s wonderful so now you’re going to have to hire all kinds of more kindergarten teachers”.... “Oh no, isn’t kindergarten only half time? We’ll just get the teacher to work longer and that’ll be a full day”.... At that time the minister who was serving had no background in education, wasn’t an ex-teacher or administrator.

The school district administrator expresses concern about those in decision making position not having an accurate perception of the true nature of teaching. She feels society views teaching as simply transmission-oriented and does not possess knowledge regarding the complexities of teaching and learning.

People that are engaged in policy have images of education where a teacher was in front of the class with a textbook and taught a group of kids in a classroom setting and then the kids did some seat work... so they don’t have the images of

what a good classroom looks like and how a good teacher impacts learning for each individual child.

The senior teacher expresses frustration as he explains how the work has been downloaded on teachers and that those who are making the changes in education are not considering the implications of these changes for teachers in regard to increased workload. He also explains how these changes are expected to be implemented by teachers without proper training and without appropriate funding.

It's the soldier in the trench that has to do anything that they think about and design. And there's never, never, there's always funding for the planning of the course but the implementation of the course, there's no money for it.

Student B expresses the concern that those making the decisions are not close to the experience of students in the classroom. He feels these individuals do not really understand how their decisions will impact students.

Each time you increase the class size, that student loses that little bit of extra time, they lose that little bit of individuality... That means, people in the school board sitting in their offices don't realize that, they don't see first hand, I mean, in all of the years I've been in school, I have never ever seen anybody from a school board come in and sit in the classroom.

Like other participants, student B is greatly concerned about the impact of class size on a student's education.

#### **4.3.8.3 Parental Involvement in Decision Making**

Participants feel that it is valuable to involve parents in the decision making process for educational change. The mid-career teacher feels parents can provide support when educational change is necessary: "If we want parents to get on board and support the change and the decisions that are being made in education we have to involve them more than we have in the past." The junior teacher stresses the influence of parents in

decision making at the government level since their votes can influence financial input into the education system. She states: "Financially, the public especially parents... affect change through their votes."

However, there is concern that very vocal parents may be able to influence change for the betterment of their children but this may result in neglecting the needs of the majority of other students. The junior teacher is concerned that decisions are made in favour of these parents only because they are vocal and speak out publicly.

What is listened to in this province are people who go on open line and stuff like that. The loud ones, the vocal ones, the ones who are standing up and saying my child needs special treatment, my child has a learning disability... an auditory problem... self esteem problems whatever my child has in order to get my child a label. So that way they get all these special supports but they're still only what 10% of the population.

Participants express concerns regarding parents who attempt to "bully" teachers into giving their child a higher grade while not respecting the professional expertise of the teacher. The junior teacher feels there are instances when parents attempt to inappropriately influence decisions made by teachers. She stresses the importance of "strong school support" for the teacher.

Ulterior motives such as scholarship requirements, athletic requirements or even social pressures may cause a parent to attempt to influence a teacher, sometimes aggressively, into changing a grade or admitting a student into a course for which he is not prepared.

Participants express concern that parental power influences decisions that may result in a poor academic choice for the student. The school administrator emphatically states: "It's just tragic that parental power ultimately allows parents to choose the course for students when teachers have a fuller knowledge of the students' cognitive/learning ability."

Participants explain how some parents may feel they can control a teacher's decision because, indirectly, they pay the teacher's salary. The junior teacher feels that some parents believe: "I'm paying you to get them what they need in order to get into university or get their scholarships or get into the program of choice as opposed to my child needs to do more work."

#### **4.3.8.4 Politics and Education**

Participants feel politics greatly influence the decision making process in education. They believe that society has the capacity to influence the decisions made by politicians. The school district administrator explains how politicians make the major decisions in education based upon demands of the public: "Education is funded entirely by the public purse... In our political system, in a democratic system, those that are in power at any given time take their cues from what society wants."

Participants also express concern that decisions made from a political perspective may not be in the best interest of education. The mid-career teacher states: "When governments make decisions on political will, political will is not always the source for the best possible decision." Parent B also describes a situation in which a decision was made to keep a school open that would help a politician in winning a by-election: "It was totally political that the decision was made not to close the school when the school was destined to be closed... and it was totally because there was a by-election happening."

#### 4.3.8.5 Teacher and Student Involvement in Decision Making

Participants recommend both teachers and students should be involved in the decision making process along with other stakeholders in education. There is concern that teachers are not adequately involved in this process or properly informed on why changes are taking place in education. The NLTA participant states: "Teachers should have more input into the learning environment as well as parents and other educational stakeholders." The senior teacher feels decisions in education are being influenced by politicians and academics but teachers are merely implementing the changes as opposed to influencing them: "So academics and politicians make the decisions and the paths of actually physically doing the change comes down to the soldier in the trench teacher."

In regards to the classroom, participants feel the teacher should play a primary role in decision making. The school administrator states one should "seek their counsel before dealing in any way with a student's program or behaviour. The teacher is the 'expert' in the classroom." The junior teacher suggests guidelines would be more beneficial to schools as opposed to strict policy and argues schools and teachers should have a greater degree of autonomy. She explains, "Boards are too diverse to set one uniform policy – an inner city high school will face different challenges than a rural K-12."

The school administrator describes how teachers are not adequately informed about changes in the education system and teachers need to be given an opportunity to meet and be informed of the reasons why changes have been implemented. Likewise, she also feels teachers need to be given time to plan and properly implement these changes.

Teachers... need to be told... why the new graduation requirements are coming, as an example. Where is this drawing out of the sky? When the Pathways new



curriculum came in, where was this coming from and why is it happening? It makes sense but where did it come from? What is the research? I don't think it's explained often enough why we're going down this road.

Participants believe it would be "fundamentally wrong" to not consult with teachers since they must "deliver" the curriculum. They did not feel teachers are effectively involved in curriculum development. The Faculty of Education participant suggests teachers on these committees were not permitted the time or the resources to consult properly with other teachers in the province.

There's always a token teacher who is invited to the department of education to participate in curriculum development.... how can you consult with the people in your district about what it is they're doing? There needs to be some mechanism to let that happen.

The school administrator questions whether or not the input provided by teachers involved in committee work is fully considered: "Now whether or not that's listened to I don't know but I hope it is."

Participants believe that changes should arise due to feedback from teachers since they have a close relationship with the students and must deliver the curriculum. Student A makes a distinction between financial decision making in education and pedagogical decision making:

Teachers should not be forgotten during this process for they are not only responsible for the actual instruction, but they also know what their students are capable of academically.... I know the Department of Education makes a lot of decisions and school boards and that kind of thing but how many of those people have recently been in the classroom.

Participants believe it is vital to listen to students when making decisions that will affect them. Student B feels that the student's voice should be heard since these decisions will impact their future: "I think that decisions should be brought before a panel

of not only adults but students as well, I wonder how often a youth's voice is heard when decisions are being made about their future."

#### **4.3.8.6 Who should make Decisions?**

Participants recommend that a wide variety of stakeholders should be involved in the decision making process. For example, the mid-career teacher feels decisions should not be limited to the involvement of one particular group.

I don't think it would be fair to say that any one of them is knowledgeable but I think it's a dangerous thing to single out any one particular group, be it parents, be it students, be it teachers, be it business interest, be it healthcare workers, I think the most knowledgeable is a combination of all, it's like the entire school community and all the different facets within it need to be a part of that decision making process.

The politician also stresses it is important to involve a variety of stakeholders in the decision making process if any changes are to be successful. He feels, "...the more role players who have input into the process, the more likely the positive result."

Participants express concern that teachers are not adequately involved in the process and that their expertise is not valued. The politician stresses the importance of making decisions pertaining to the classroom based upon sound evidence and "sound planning." He feels teacher input is crucial. The school administrator recommends all stakeholders in education should be involved in broad level changes such as the reconfiguration of schools but "most importantly, teachers, administrators and social demographers/economists should always be consulted." Business person A feels that decision making should involve a variety of people but that the input and knowledge of teachers would be essential: "There's no question that teachers know what works and what doesn't work in the classroom."

Participants recommend that other stakeholders such as administrators and parents should not be involved in decision making in the classroom “on a day-to-day basis.” However, as explained by the school administrator, she did feel there are other issues such as “dealing with problematic children” in which it is critical to involve “parental and other expert” help.

Teachers are the ‘experts’ in the classroom ...At the same time. I do recognize there are times when parents and other professionals must be consulted to help a child, but it is counterproductive, time consuming and professionally demoralizing when the voices of non-teaching persons are regularly contributing to classroom decision making.

In addition, the school administrator did feel there are other circumstances in which others in society may be more knowledgeable in decision making, such as graduation requirements: “There are probably demographers or social scientists who can see where the needs are in our economy in the future and why we need to retwig our graduation requirements.” The Faculty of Education participant feels the stakeholders most directly involved in educating students should be involved in curriculum decision making as opposed to parents and other members of the community such as business leaders. He did feel the broader community should be involved but that “professionals” in the education field should play the greatest role in guiding change.

Participants believe education should not be treated like a business. For example, the mid-career teacher would like to see a focus on the “needs of the child” as opposed to the “needs” of business, universities and government: “I believe that many groups should be heard and involved but we need to look at the needs of the child as opposed to the needs of corporations or political good will among localized constituents.”

Participants believe education specialists should be involved in making decisions about education. The school district administrator recommends it is important to choose individuals for leadership in education who are teachers.

I suggest to you ...directors of education, their backgrounds are of having being teachers, currently that is a requirement. There are some governments in other jurisdictions that have experimented with directors of education that are non-educators and anything that I've read; it has not been a successful experiment. The directors, having been teachers, I'm sure would highly value teachers.

Participants feel it is important to involve the entire community in broader educational decisions but they stress those in society involved in the decision making process need to be properly informed about the nature of education. The school district administrator explains: "If you sit a group of community leaders together who really haven't thought about what it is that education is, you probably won't get very far."

It is suggested that many of the changes in education are driven by changes in society. The Department of Education administrator explains it is not individuals who make major decisions in education but these decisions are guided by societal changes or the need to address societal issues.

Who do you think influences? I don't think it's a who. I think it's a what.... Things like declining enrolment, technology, low achievement, societal expectations, more kids are working part-time, more kids are on the internet, fewer kids are outdoors, nursery rhymes are not being read to the children. ... the collapse of the fishery, low birth rate... an aging population. So these are demographics that have contributed to this. So there's no who there. Unfortunately we're left to adjust to the change and make good decisions on how these changes can be implemented.

She provides numerous examples of changes in society that in turn influence changes in education.

#### 4.3.9 Summary

Participants believe education has changed in that teachers are experiencing less control in the classroom and are more questioned by society. They believe that there is greater openness between teachers and parents and they value this change. However, there is concern teachers are experiencing “bullying” by parents to lower their standards so that students will attain higher grades. Teaching has changed in that teachers are playing a greater role in “parenting” today’s youth. Participants also believe teachers have greater responsibilities with fewer resources for support. Education has changed in that technology has improved and teaching methodologies have advanced.

There is an extensive list of responsibilities provided by participants that include professional responsibilities both inside and outside the classroom. There are also nonacademic expectations such as serving in a “parenting” role and providing extracurricular activities. Participants express concerns regarding the continuous downloading of new responsibilities for teachers. They describe how workload has increased through the introduction of new curriculum and new programs that have not been adequately in-serviced. Workload has also increased through increased clerical and administrative duties and increased class sizes. Concerns are expressed about the ability of teachers to remain effective due to the constraints of increased workload.

Teachers are described as caring individuals who are passionate about their work and who will ensure their students do not suffer due to inadequate resources and other challenges in education. This self-sacrificing nature of teachers is believed to be negatively impacting the health and well being of teachers. Teachers are also described

as a conservative group who will not take advantage of their teachers' association to bring educational challenges to the forefront.

Participants bring forward a number of challenges faced by teachers and education. They include inadequate resources, large class sizes, and reduced teacher allocations. They express concern about parents blaming teachers when their children do not perform academically as opposed to understanding the constraints that are affecting the ability of the teacher to be effective in the classroom. They also cite instances in which teachers are being mistreated by parents and students when the latter are unwilling to accept their role in the learning process and expect teachers to lower standards.

Participants recommend that entrance in to the Faculty of Education and the hiring of teachers should require not only a high academic standing but strong interpersonal skills. They stress the importance of teachers who are highly trained and recommend a longer internship, as well as the addition of courses that stress counseling skills, learning disabilities, conflict resolution and other interpersonal skills. Participants value subject area expertise and continuous life long learning for teachers. They believe in the value of teacher accountability but express concerns that some forms of standardized testing may not achieve the desired result and negatively impact education. They stress the importance of not only teacher accountability but accountability at all levels of the education system.

Participants express concern that decisions in education are made based on efficiency and cost cutting as opposed to improving education. They believe that many decision makers do not have accurate knowledge of the education system and are too far removed from the classroom setting. They stress the importance of having educational

specialists in decision making roles. They do not believe that teachers and students are properly consulted when decisions are made. They recommend that all stakeholders be involved in educational change but, in particular, teachers and students who will be directly impacted by these changes.

#### **4.4 The Effect of Societal Attitudes and Societal Understanding of the Education System and the Teaching Profession**

This section refers to the effects or possible effects that the participants feel are a result of or may be a result of society's negative attitudes towards the education system and teachers. It also refers to the effects of issues pertaining to an inadequate understanding about the nature of teacher's work and the realities that exist within the school system today. The participants not only note some negative implications of these attitudes but also make recommendations for change.

##### **4.4.1 Teacher Morale**

Teachers in this study have expressed their frustration over many issues that affect them such as workload, teacher cutbacks, class size, and lack of resources. Other participants in this study have supported these concerns. In addition, teachers feel society is reluctant to hear their concerns about the education system because they feel society does not understand the specialized expertise required by teachers and is resentful of the vacation time associated with the teaching profession. The mid-career teacher feels that "over time the demoralization of the teacher work force will have an effect."

The senior teacher discusses the benefit of ensuring that teaching is not an isolating profession. He expresses concern that teachers will spend almost all of their time in the classroom with students and virtually no time with their colleagues. He

recommends that teachers be provided an opportunity to network and support each other. He feels a strong positive relationship between teachers on a staff will also have positive benefits for the students at the school. In addition, he feels praising and rewarding teachers will lead to a more successful school.

The most important thing that I find for a school to be very successful, for a school to touch kids, and do wonderful things is the relationship between the teachers that work there. It's true, it's so important that you feel that you're valued by your own teachers...that you reward teachers, you praise teachers for doing innovative things... and things start happening there when you start networking in your staff and you get that feeling that we're all pulling together... It's a positive thing, the relationship between the people who work in the schools, the staff that works in the school will make magic in a school. And, guess what? The opposite is true too.

According to the NLTA participant, the association has recognized that teachers feel demoralized. The NLTA participant discusses how the NLTA is working to ensure society recognizes the value of teachers by working with the media.

We work on behalf of teachers and our job is, to me, ... is to boost teacher morale and make sure teachers are valued... When we run ads for the public they're also for teachers. We do some other things internally as well. We get out and talk to the school reps. We have meetings with them and branch presidents and many other things but that was to let teachers know, you are valued and to deal with the internal feelings that teachers have based on years and years of history.

She also explains above how the NLTA is working to boost teacher morale and make certain teachers know they are valued by society.

#### **4.4.2 Teacher Wellness**

Participants believe high demands of workload and the self-sacrificing nature of teachers is negatively affecting their health. The senior teacher reveals his frustration with the workload expected of teachers and the constant downloading of work despite a reduction of teaching units. He states: "Maybe they'll go bloody well staff for it, instead



of overworking people to the point of exhaustion and poor health, just the same as people were treated in the coal mines, they're not treated that way anymore." He further discusses the implications of the continuous downloading of work on teachers.

Give it to the teacher. Teachers should be doing this, teachers should be doing that. It's a death of a thousand cuts. More and more and more of those little things get added and you put good creative wonderful people in these positions and it's a shame. They could be blooming, they could be doing wonderful things but guess what, they're carrying such a heavy load that at the end of the day they're tired and it happens to us all.... You worry about your health and all that kind of stuff because if you don't, the job can run you down and you can see it with people.

The mid-career teacher offers a cautionary message that teachers need to take care of themselves first and foremost. Otherwise, he feels teachers will no longer be able to contribute to their students.

I think as teachers we should ensure that we're being true to ourselves. I think we should make sure that we are being good to ourselves along the way as well because we are not to be able to be good to our students unless we're good to ourselves first.

The junior teacher feels teachers need to be cautious in their desire to help all students succeed because they tend to take on too much responsibility. She feels there are situations in which parents can be more supportive in motivating their children: "I think that's a big part of where teacher burn out happens... because they take on this responsibility for all of the kids and making sure that all the kids do well." Similarly, the school administrator describes the impact of the workload demands on the health of teachers.

I feel that all of us are bringing extra demands on teachers. It is an absolutely unreasonable thing and I feel that really passionately. I really feel at times that we are asking too much, particularly those people who are so diligent and professional and take all of their responsibilities as seriously as we want them to.... For some people the load is just getting unyielding beyond belief and it is hurting the health of our teachers

Participants also describe the frustration of teachers when they are unable to provide the necessary help to their students due to workload issues. The NLTA participant refers to teachers who participated in the workload study completed by David Dibbon in 2004: "The teachers, when they were interviewed for that study, were in tears saying I can't do what I want to do. I'm stressed out. I want to help these kids."

#### **4.4.3 Teacher Effectiveness**

The teacher participants explain how workload issues are contributing to teacher effectiveness in the classroom. The mid-career teacher refers to the Workload Study (Dibbon, 2004) in which teachers are working in excess of 50 hour per week. He explains how there are many responsibilities beyond the "simple classroom interaction with students" that "are complicating the ability for teachers to be as effective as they would like to be." He describes how his numerous responsibilities are impacting upon his ability to be effective in the classroom to the degree he would like to be effective.

I'm a rural school principal but still I'm responsible for a lot of the same forms, a lot of the same plans, a lot of the same paperwork. A lot of people think it is trivial but coupled with that I've got to teach 14 courses, I've got to look after the computer network, and deal with a total of 27 hours of open time in my schedule. So with that 27 hours I've got to try and prepare for work, I've got to deal with administrative issues, I've got to deal with parents, teachers and students etc. plus maintain a computer network. Now that honestly is going to limit my ability to be as effective in the classroom as I want to be.

In addition to referring to Dibbon's study, the mid-career teacher describes similar concerns about the workload issue and its effect on education from the Federation of School Councils. He states: "We've been fortunate enough that the Federation of School Councils has certainly recognized that workload issues are first and foremost and if this system is going to function ... desired things have to change." The mid-career teacher

also stresses the importance of teachers placing limitations on the amount of work they do since this has implications for their own well being.

We're got to be realistic on what we can accomplish, we can't develop the character of education, we can't develop all these things and we're trying to do everything for everyone, it just can't work that way for too long.

The NLTA Representative also refers to the study completed by Dibbon (2004). She discusses how workload issues are interfering with the ability of teachers to be effective in the classroom.

Teachers say I want to teach, I am trained to teach, I love teaching... but what's been happening, I have 35 children in the classroom, 6 of them are on Pathways, I have all this paperwork, I have to do all these things... things are being downloaded, the curriculum, I now have to go search for the curriculum on the internet or whatever.... I am not able to spend time with the children.... Teachers have very publicly said I am not able to give the children the attention that they deserve because of the amount of workload.

Participants are frustrated with high workload complicating teacher effectiveness, in particular, their ability to provide for their students.

#### **4.4.4 Teacher Withdrawal from Extracurricular Activities**

According to the teacher participants, one of the implications of the high workload demands placed upon teachers is that teachers, in particular new teachers, will simply not participate in extracurricular activities. In this case, many extracurricular programs will cease to exist if other willing individuals in society do not come forward to volunteer their time. The senior teacher suggests teacher withdrawal from extracurricular activities may be a mechanism by which teachers may elicit change.

In order to bring a change in the way that your employer and the way that society treats people who are teachers or the teaching profession, may be some things have to fail. Maybe we won't have the choirs. We won't have the bands. Maybe we won't have different things and if society wants them maybe they'll bloody well fund it.... Perhaps it may be a good thing that people are saying my job is to

be an educator and I will do education and if you ask me to do something else, sorry I don't volunteer for that.... It's got to fall on its face first.

Similarly, the mid-career teacher also explains how the heavy workload of teachers impairs their ability to participate in extracurricular activities.

As a result of this there is a limit on what teachers can provide outside of the curriculum. The desire of the teacher to be involved is there. But the limitations of the day make it more and more difficult to give time for extracurricular activities.

The mid-career teacher explains that teachers will eventually be forced to do less because of other initiatives teachers must take on as part of their job responsibility. He feels the education system will eventually reach a point at which teachers simply can not contribute to extracurricular activities because of initiatives such as school development and Pathways that place larger demands upon their time. He explains these new initiatives have been introduced without giving consideration to the required amount of time needed to introduce and maintain them.

I don't know if it has hit rock bottom but I think there's certainly going to be a flash point. I think that flash point could come by way of teachers simply not or just quitting doing these extra things but they'll be forced to do that.... The time simply isn't there and there's new initiatives coming on the scene, good initiatives albeit, school development... the Pathways intervention for students.... The key then with a lot of these things is that there has to be time to do things properly and a lot of these initiatives haven't been given proper time. You cannot continue to pile extra things onto the plate that's already full and for more things to go on the plate certain other things have to come off and to date that is not the case.

As a result, participants suggest that teachers will no longer volunteer for extracurricular activities. They cite reasons such as demanding workload and the lack of value placed upon the volunteer efforts of teachers in schools.

#### 4.4.5 The Loss of Teachers

Participants explain how the high demands of workload are forcing teachers to leave the profession. The heavy workload expected of the teaching profession has forced the mid-career teacher to consider the possibility of leaving the profession. This is in spite of his love for the profession but he explains how the workload does not leave him with his own personal time.

I enjoy teaching in a rural setting but I don't enjoy the workload. I have pursued other career options based on the workload issue. I enjoy the teachers, I enjoy the parents, I enjoy the students but I do not enjoy the workload and I do not enjoy the lack of personal time it gives.

The mid-career teacher describes how teachers are leaving the profession because they could not cope with the numerous demands. He feels the demands of the profession were negatively impacting their personal lives. The demands were also beyond their ability to cope.

The teacher was a reasonably good teacher but left after 3 years. Just couldn't cope with it, too much work, too high cost of self so he just got out. There are numerous cases I know about that people just have to get out, they can't handle the pressures. People that invest five, six years of their lives and copious amounts of money trying to get their education degree to start teaching and then realize I can't handle this, too many demands.

The NLTA Representative also describes how teachers are choosing not to remain in the teaching profession because of the high demands of the work expected of teachers.

Certainly there is a level of dedication that teachers have that makes them want to be teachers but there reaches a point when that is not enough. We see early career teachers leaving the profession for just those reasons and others teachers do not stay in the profession as long as they can. The workload issues can hopefully be addressed through negotiations with government. Teachers have been crying out for help in this area for a long time.

She describes the workload issue for teachers as an ongoing concern for a long period of time.

#### 4.4.6 New Teachers

Participants believe the negative perceptions of teachers will influence whether or not potentially good teachers will be attracted to the profession. The mid-career teacher states: "There is a need for this perception to change if education is to attract the very best teachers that it can get." The senior teacher also believes the present attitudes of the teaching profession are not attracting people to the profession. He feels many, who would be an asset to the profession, are choosing other professions due to the working conditions of teachers. According to this anecdote, teachers are reluctant to recommend teaching as a profession to others.

I think a lot of people who would be very good teachers are saying I don't want to go there.... My own son... he's creative... he did an amazing honors program and he really wanted to be an English teacher. I never said don't be an English teacher but I just asked him to go talk to some of your mentors.... He came back afterwards and he said I guess I better not. The system is at a loss for having not attracted people like him. I don't blame people like him for staying away from the teaching profession because you're put in an untenable situation.

The senior teacher further explains how potentially good teachers are not being attracted to the teaching profession because of how they view teachers as not being valued and respected by society.

I look at a person graduating, let's say a person graduating with a physics/math degree. They could be anything. They could go into a technological area, they could go into any engineering aspect, they could get jobs and do anything they want, how are you going to make teaching an attractive profession to them? Treat them the way that they treat teachers now?

The mid-career teacher describes the effect of undervaluing teachers on the attraction of good people to the teaching profession. He also feels these individuals will pursue other career options. However, he makes a direct link with this phenomenon on

the negative impact of this on education. He feels less qualified individuals will be hired in the profession and that this will reduce the quality of education provided.

What you will see is that the more qualified, the more competent people who would make excellent teachers are going to explore other career paths.... I think over time you will see a down scaling in the quality of education... if you can't fill the positions with qualified people the easiest thing to do is lower your qualifications and I fear that would be the case... the entire system gets watered down and the children in the immediate sense and the entire province in long term sense are the ones that will bare the brunt of that.

The school administrator expresses concerns about teacher shortages. She states there are already teacher shortages predicted in certain subject areas. She also states that 30% of new teachers are leaving the profession in the first 5 years and that this "is a scary situation." In addition, she explains there is a lack of interest by teachers in entering administration. She questions "Who will lead us?"

The senior teacher feels that there is a different attitude towards the teaching profession from new teachers who are entering the profession. He feels many of these new teachers are not viewing the teaching profession as a 'way of life' in which they are mentoring youth but that they are simply perceiving it as employment. The school administrator also expresses concern over attracting the right kind of individuals to the teaching profession: "The day of fully committed, compassionate hearted teachers may be gone... at a time when youth are most in need of them."

The NLTA participant discusses the implications of workload issues on the lack of desire for individuals entering and remaining in the teaching profession. She feels that there may be teacher shortages due to the working conditions of teachers. She also feels the "best and the brightest" will choose not to enter the profession and this would be a loss for the education system.

Participants suggest that teachers do not portray a favourable impression of the teaching profession to potential new teachers. The Faculty of Education participant describes research in which 50% of teachers would not recommend the teaching profession to others. The Faculty of Education participant feels that the negative attitude that teachers now have towards their own profession will have serious negative implications for those who may consider teaching as a career option: "If you don't think very highly of your own profession, it's unlikely that others are going to as well."

#### **4.4.7 Effect on the Education System**

In this section, participants discuss the impact of not valuing teachers and education on the education system. They discuss how other factors are believed to negatively impact education such as teacher and educational challenges, workload, accountability and decision making. Finally, they discuss the implications of poor quality education on society.

##### **4.4.7.1 Valuing Teachers and Education**

Participants believe the value of teachers is linked to the value of education. They feel if teachers and education are not valued, then the delivery of education will not be successful. The mid-career teacher states: "The importance of the profession to society as a whole should be recognized. The success of the education system will determine the success of every other facet of our province in the future." The mid-career teacher expresses concern about the effects of the negative perceptions of teachers on education and is hopeful the pattern will reverse itself. He feels "it is in the best interest of the



whole province for things to turn.” He credits the Federation of Schools Council in working to “stress the importance of education to our society.”

The junior teacher feels if parents and the media are not valuing the work of teachers then these attitudes are passed on to students. She feels if teachers are not valued and respected by students, then the task of motivating them becomes more difficult. Business person A also feels it is important that teachers are valued so that education will be valued in society. She states: “If schools and teachers are not respected, education will not be respected.”

The school district administrator suggests national attention needs to be drawn towards the value of education. The school district administrator stresses several times throughout his interview that the undervaluing of education is a national problem and we should work towards solutions on a national level: “It’s not just a Newfoundland issue and if we simply isolate it to Newfoundland we won’t succeed.” He feels that this initiative should be large scale. He also suggests that Canada should be a leader in its own educational initiatives as opposed to taking its “cues” from others such as the U.S.

Participants recommend that a number of agencies play a role in promoting the value of educators and education. The school district administrator hopes the Educational Foundation for the Eastern School District could be used to raise the profile of education and involve business and “put public education on the radar screen.” He also feels “Directors of Education need to take more opportunity to get out and talk...about public education and what it is we need and why do we need public support for public education.” He suggests a number of other groups could contribute to raising public awareness regarding educational issues such as the academic communities in

universities across the country, the Canadian Teachers Federation, the Canadian Education Association. He states: "These kinds of groups have to be in the fore in the general public, they've got to get things in the general media if you will so that it's in peoples' face."

#### **4.4.7.2 Educational and Teacher Challenges**

Participants explain the implications of placing teachers in difficult situations and how this affects the delivery of education. The senior teacher discusses some of the implications of unrealistic expectations of teachers such as placing them into positions for which they are not qualified and not offered appropriate resources or in-servicing to cope with the situation. Ultimately, he feels if teachers are not qualified and if teachers are stressed, it will impact upon the student. He also feels teachers are not treated as people but are simply expected to get the job done. He feels the education system is following a business model in which the teacher is not treated as a person.

Sorry you've got to teach math, but I never took math before in my life or you've got to teach this and they never had any experience at it. And they don't in-service them. They don't prepare them. They don't give them ways of dealing with it or this or that and as a result they're afraid of teaching math. You know what they teach? They teach a fear.... That's one of the things that has to be looked at in hiring teachers and things of that nature and putting people in untenable situations. The business model of education treats teachers that they are interchangeable cogs in the wheel.

Like other participants, student B expresses concern about the effect of large class sizes and other decisions made due to financial reasons.

I can understand that there are budgets, and funding issues, but how can you put a price on education? The children who are in the school today are the future, they are tomorrow's leaders and we do not want to interfere with their education because of funding issues.

The junior teacher explains how loss of control and lack of proper supports in the classroom is affecting education. She explains: "I don't think its teachers' fault that the kids aren't getting the same education. I don't think we've been given the same authority and the same tools."

#### **4.4.7.3 Workload**

Participants believe that workload issues are hampering the success of education. The mid career teacher feels the education system will eventually begin to fail as a result of workload pressures teachers are experiencing. The NLTA participant explains how the workload issues teachers are experiencing are impacting education.

The bottom line as I said it affects the children. We've had children whose teachers say they're dealing with the special needs kids or the exceptional kids. It's the middle kids who slip through the cracks. The ones who probably with a little bit of extra attention would excel and they just don't have the time.

Student B describes how he places a great deal of value on the teacher's role in the personal development of students.

I don't think the education system allows it because of time restraints and everything. But a teacher, these days is more then a teacher, they're a psychiatrist and a coach and a chauffeur and they would do anything they possibly could do to make it better for the students.

He feels some of the restraints on the teaching profession and other responsibilities outside the realm of teaching were preventing teachers from helping students to the extent they would like.

#### 4.4.7.4 Accountability and Decision Making

Participants feel that teachers who are not performing should be held accountable because it negatively impacts students. Business person A feels, like any profession, work ethic varies from individual to individual. She did feel teachers without a strong work ethic should be viewed differently by society because this jeopardizes the education of students.

I think it's just a defensive parent thing. There's no question that that kicks in when you have children. Children should be treated fairly and not put in jeopardy and as far as I'm concerned if you get a teacher who does nothing then their education is being put in jeopardy.

Participants suggest forms of accountability such as achievement testing can negatively impact education because their narrow focus ignores important aspects of child development. The mid-career teacher feels teachers and administrators tend to focus on teaching to that specific measure and lose sight of other important aspects of child development. He feels that this has arisen from the need of those in decision making positions to place a greater emphasis on measurement. He also feels that this narrow focus comes from the fear of accountability held by teachers and administrators.

The junior teacher responds to issues of poor decision making. She feels decision making does not adequately involve teachers, gives way to pressures of parents, and creates a system devoted to students with special needs while ignoring the remaining, graduating students who are illiterate. She feels all of this influences the real meaning of attaining a high school certificate.

We give them the certificate because they can't do anything without it, so what happens is the poor young fellow goes up to Fort McMurray or something and he gets laughed out of the place. We set them to a life of mediocrity... but we're not getting any support from society or from the parents to do anything else. Wouldn't it be nice if teachers stood up and came out and said ok forget the

politicking, forget that we work hard, forget the summers off, forget everything  
We're responsible for educating your kids and you know what, they're not getting  
the education they need.

Participants perceive that the lack of support for teachers in society is resulting in a poor quality education.

#### **4.4.7.5 Implications of Poor Quality Education**

Participants believe the education system is failing many students because of issues such as overcrowding in classrooms and lack of adequate resources. The school administrator feels the problems in public schools will lead to increases in private schools and home schooling. She explains: "Home schooling and private (and Catholic) schools will continue to grow as dissatisfaction increases with overcrowded, decaying, problem wrought public schools in some areas."

The school district administrator explains how an ineffective school system negatively impacts upon society and how society ultimately ends up supporting those in society for whom the education system failed. He feels the issues in education need to be brought "to the forefront" for the betterment of society. He feels students have been failed by the education system because of lack of resources and a lack of expertise. Like the junior teacher, he expresses concern about illiteracy. He describes the link between education and health and between education and poverty. He feels that, as society we should "get at the root" of the problem instead of trying to fix the result of a poor quality education after the fact.

The cost of supporting those who are poorly educated... those that the school system failed... because of lack of resources and a lack of expertise. And therefore our taxes are being paid to that social safety net... These people that we've failed because of the perpetuation of illiteracy... very dramatic impact of

low socioeconomic environment and the impact that has on a child's life and learning and then the school system failing to respond to it.

We'll spend the money on the other end because we'll support it through the healthcare because we know the connection between education and general health levels and we know the connection between poverty levels and education. So we're spending a fortune as a society to try and fix problems that we've created because we haven't been willing to put the money into the education system.

As a result, participants emphasize that society must deal with supporting individuals who lack adequate education and are, as a result, in poor health or require financial assistance.

#### **4.4.8 Summary**

Participants acknowledge teacher morale is low due to a variety of factors related to workload issues such as teacher cutbacks, large class sizes, and inadequate resources. Morale is further impacted by the reluctance of society to accept the workload issues of teachers as valid. It is further exacerbated by the lack of understanding by society of the specialized expertise required of teachers, and the resentment of teachers for their perceived "time off" throughout the year. Participants believe teachers need to be appropriately praised and rewarded for their work and volunteerism. The workload issues contributing to low teacher morale are also considered to be impacting the health and well-being of teachers. The health and well-being of teachers is also affected when teachers become frustrated with not being able to provide for their students effectively due to workload constraints. This is further impacted by the tendency of teachers to self-sacrifice to meet the needs of their students.

It is suggested that teachers will no longer continue to volunteer for extracurricular activities because they do not feel their volunteer efforts are valued by

society. It is expected that teachers will also find it difficult to participate in these activities due to the high demands of workload. It is believed workload will lead to more teachers leaving the profession. Participants predict less qualified individuals will choose to enter the teaching profession because teachers are not positively perceived or valued by society.

Participants stress that teachers and education both need to be valued in order for education to be successful. They call for a number of agencies to promote the value of education in society. The challenges that exist for teachers and in the education system are believed to be a result of a lack of value for teachers and education in society. Participants emphasize that high workload and other issues are negatively impacting the delivery of education. They also believe bad teachers should be held accountable because they jeopardize the success of education. Likewise, they caution against narrow measures of accountability such as standardized tests since many do not consider the total development of the child. Participants stress that poor quality education ultimately affects society since there are more individuals dependent upon financial assistance and health care.

## CHAPTER 5

### **DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter is an analysis of the results provided in the preceding chapter. This analysis leads into implications of this research and makes recommendations for change. This chapter also examines recent developments in education since the data had been collected. A post reflective journal is included that offers my personal reflections on the results of this research. It is intended to parallel my journal in Chapter 1 and is keeping with phenomenological research.

#### **5.2 Societal Attitudes Towards the Education System and the Teaching Profession**

This section brings together the attitudes of society towards teachers and education based on the perceptions of the participants. It also discusses the factors suggested by participants that may contribute to society's perceptions of teachers and education. Recommendations on how attitudes may be changed are made by both the participants and the researcher.

##### **5.2.1 Societal Perceptions of Teachers and Education**

The majority of participants in this study display largely positive perceptions of teachers. However, their beliefs about society's perceptions of teachers in Eastern Newfoundland were mixed. Despite many feelings that society has a positive perception of teachers, all participants were able to provide reasons why they believe society possesses negative perceptions of teachers. The ability of all participants to cite examples or give reasons why teachers are perceived negatively does not support the



viewpoint maintained by some of the participants that teachers are positively perceived in society. In the analysis of the results, the belief in positive perceptions is contradicted by negative examples.

It is clear the teachers in this study do not feel valued and respected by society. This perception of teachers supports a study completed by Younghusband (2005) in which teachers felt a lack of support for them translated into a lack of respect for both teachers and students.

The teachers who participated in this study express a great love for the profession but are clearly frustrated with “a lack of respect” from others in society. They did not feel society understood the specialized expertise and training required of teachers today. They feel this may be a “carry over” from the past in which teachers were required to have very little training to teach. They perceived that society views teaching as an “easy job” in which teachers work from 9:00 to 3:00 with Christmas, Easter and summers off. For this, they feel society greatly resents teachers. Dibbon (2004) concluded teachers are overworked and calls for a change in societal perceptions of teacher’s work.

There needs to be some public recognition that teachers work well beyond the mythical five-hour day and contribute much of their personal time to their professional life (p.33).

The teachers in this study feel that individuals who work more closely with teachers have a clearer understanding of the level of expertise required of teachers. However, they feel many in society are likely to judge the work of teachers based upon their own experience as a student and therefore create inaccurate perceptions about the profession. The rural teacher also attributed some of the negative perceptions of teachers to a concentration of individuals who have not had a positive experience with the

education system, who have not “outmigrated” like others who were successful in attaining their education.

The students who participated in this study display a very positive attitude toward teachers. They credit this attitude to their positive relationship with teachers both inside and outside of the classroom. They feel teachers have played an influential role in both their academic and personal development and this role should be reflected in the value of teachers in society. They feel students, parents, and other members of society who have negative perceptions of teachers have a distant relationship with education and are unaware of the work in which teachers are involved “beyond 3:00”. They feel negative perceptions may develop from the minority of teachers who would be considered “bad teachers”. They also feel this perception may be due to a connection that still exists between teachers and the physical and sexual abuse scandals in the past with the religious community. Furthermore, they feel society does not have a positive perception of students and this attitude reflects upon those who teach students. Both students feel society should place a greater value upon the teaching profession and it should be a profession to which the “very best” in society aspire.

The parents also reveal a very positive perception of teaching and credit this attitude to their close involvement with schools. They feel others in society do not share their positive attitude because they are less connected to schools and unaware of the long hours teachers commit to their profession. One parent suggests that negative perceptions of teachers are created when teachers are not provided with adequate support to meet the needs of all their students such as those with learning difficulties.

The administrators who participated in this study conveyed a strong positive perception and respect for the profession. They feel society's perceptions of the teaching profession are generally positive but cited examples in which teachers have not been valued by society and they offered examples of such incidences. They discuss how the public is not supportive of teacher strikes because they must make alternate arrangements for their children. They find the media dwells on negative incidences that create an overall negative impression of teachers. They feel negative perceptions arise from members of society in Newfoundland who resent teachers for secure employment, and perceived high salaries and vacation time. They believe many have inaccurate perceptions of the specialized expertise of teachers and the difficult nature of teacher's work. They also feel teachers are not viewed as positively by society as they were in the past.

The politician who contributed to this study has a very positive perception of teachers and strongly feels that society also has a strong positive opinion of teachers. He provided examples in which teachers have had a positive influence on the lives of students through acts of kindness and support in extracurricular activities. He feels teachers should not place too much value on specific negative experiences.

Representatives from the business community expressed mixed views on teachers. Business person A is the only participant to express a largely negative view about teachers. She feels very strongly about her beliefs and during the interview it was very important for her to express her views. She explains that her perspective has developed through a number of experiences through both her professional involvement with schools and her involvement with schools as a parent. She describes a sense of apathy from

teachers when she invites them to become involved in the educational initiative that she presents to them from the business community. She is uncertain of any reason why teachers do not participate but suggests it may be teacher "burn out". She describes other situations, as a parent, in which she expressed concern about bullying and harassment affecting her child in which administrators appeared to be unconcerned and likewise apathetic. She discusses a situation in which a teacher did not appear to be knowledgeable or concerned about her daughter's performance in the course he was teaching. In contrast, business person B has a very high opinion of teachers and feels society also has a very high opinion of teachers. He feels society has a tendency to focus on the relatively few negative experiences and not dwell upon the largely positive experiences. They both believe negative perceptions of teachers are a result of low standards for entrance into the Faculty of Education in the past.

The NLTA participant demonstrates a very positive attitude towards teachers and strongly portrays the public as supportive of teachers by making references to public surveys that illustrate this strong support. She explains how there is a perceived discrepancy between how society views teachers and how teachers feel they are viewed by society. She feels others in society are not sympathetic to concerns of teachers because they are faced with financial difficulties such as unemployment and low wages. She also believes teachers are suffering from a lack of control in their classrooms because parents are more critical and questioning of the work of teachers since the physical and sexual abuse scandals in the Catholic Church. She suggests that teachers are still demoralized after there was no public support for teachers in their last strike.

The Faculty of Education participant has a positive perception of teachers and feels individuals in society will speak positively about their personal experiences with teachers. He believes that when society speaks about teachers collectively their attitudes become negative. He strongly believes that society does not understand the specialized expertise required of teachers but views teaching as an easy job with short working days and long holidays.

There are suggestions made by participants regarding education that illustrate society does not have an accurate perception of the realities of the education system. For example, there is the idea the school day should be increased without consideration given to the impact of an already increasingly high workload for teachers. Also, the suggestion made by a former Minister of Education that Kindergarten should be increased to a full day without considering the demands on children or that more teachers would also have to be hired.

Analysis of the results suggests that the belief teachers are largely positively perceived by society is contradicted by numerous examples and reasons that indicate teachers are viewed negatively. It also suggests that society is not knowledgeable regarding the work of teachers and the challenges in education. This can have negative implications for teacher morale. The teachers in this study were frustrated with a lack of respect from society. They were frustrated with society's lack of knowledge regarding the specialized expertise and the challenges facing teachers. Negative perceptions may also have implications for gaining support from society in terms of finding solutions to issues facing teachers and the education system. Youngusband (2005) and Nash (2001) stress the importance of the need for society to re-evaluate their perceptions of teachers.

They indicate that negative perceptions influence the level of support provided to the education system.

Taylor, Zimmer, and Womack (2005) reported that teachers in a rural school district in the United States did not feel they were respected by those outside the profession and that this perception contributed to teacher stress. The OECD (2005) recognizes that teachers are not attributed a high status in society on a global scale and that this negativity has contributed to difficulty in attracting and retaining high quality teachers. They have collected research that has linked educational quality with economic success. The major determinants of educational quality include teacher effectiveness and teacher quality. As a result, they recommend the development of policies that address the educational challenges facing teachers.

#### Recommendation 1

It is recommended that mechanisms be put in place so society can become better educated on the realities experienced by teachers and the true nature of teacher's work. It is important the negative perceptions of teachers be changed so that the success of the education system can be improved. Likewise, this can lead to improved teacher morale. This can be accomplished through agencies such as the NLTA and the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) to further educate the public on the specialized expertise and training required of teachers, as well as the rigor of the professional work of teachers.

### **5.2.2 Importance of Education and Teachers in Society**

It is stressed by participants that the teaching profession should be recognized as of greater importance in society. Participants in this study discussed how they believe teachers play a role in influencing the future lives of their students. These views range from believing that teachers “touch the future” because of their influence on the lives of their students and that teaching is a “noble profession”. It was also felt that teachers influence the career paths of their students and help to shape their personal development. Teachers are viewed as role models and mentors. It is believed by participants that next to parents, teachers have the largest influence on the lives of young people.

The participants felt that a positive educational experience for students will positively impact society and therefore society is shaped by the work of teachers. A more educated society would mean less dependence on social assistance. It is discussed that a highly educated society has implications for benefiting the economy and it is recommended by participants that we should consider a stronger investment in education. This is supported by Feinstein, Sabates, Anderson, Sorhaindo, and Hammond (2006) who link the high quality of education to better health and less dependence on the health care system. In addition, they connect high quality education to improved social well being.

Those with more years of schooling tend to have better health and well-being and healthier behaviours. Education is an important mechanism for enhancing the health and well-being of individuals because it reduces the need for health care, the associated costs of dependence, lost earnings and human suffering. It also helps promote and sustain healthy lifestyles and positive choices, supporting and nurturing human development, human relationships and personal, family and community well-being. (p. 173)

The link between quality education and economic development is supported in the literature by Hanushek and Woessmann (2007). Desjardins and Schuller, (2006) make

connections between education and economic, social and personal well-being. Field, Kuczera, and Pont (n.d.) describe how poor quality education leads to high financial and social costs for society. Nenty (1997) connects education to the quality of society.

The important role of teachers in society is recognized by Doyle and Singh (2006) and they suggest care must be given to recognizing and supporting the influence of teachers. Connell (1985) also stresses the importance of teachers in “reshaping the hearts and minds of the next generation” (p.206). Schoonmaker (2002) suggests prospective teachers be adequately prepared for the “emotional life of teaching” (p.44).

#### Recommendation 2

The influential role of teachers in society should be provided greater recognition. This can be accomplished by communicating with the public regarding the nature of the teaching profession through agencies such as the NLTA and the CTF.

#### Recommendation 3

It is recommended that teachers be provided with greater support to ensure the result of a well educated society. This would require recognizing the challenges facing teachers and education and working towards solutions. This could be accomplished by certain agencies working with the government to address these concerns such as the NLTA, parent groups such as the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils (NLFSC) and focus groups that comprise various stakeholders in education. Teachers should play a major role in this process and can work towards enabling other stakeholders in understanding the realities that exist in the education system.



### 5.2.3 Valuing Education and Valuing Teachers

It is clear all participants in this study place great value on education and on the work of teachers. However, they show mixed beliefs as to whether or not they believe society values education and values teachers. The analysis of results in this section parallels the analysis in the previous section on societal perceptions of teachers and education.

The teachers who participated in this study do not feel they are valued or positively perceived by society. They feel society values education but does not value teachers and they express concern over this contradiction in attitude. The remaining participants in this study have strongly stated they highly value education and that they highly value teachers and perceive them positively. A great number of these participants also feel society respects and values the work of teachers. Other participants feel many in society do not value teachers or perceive them positively and, therefore, by extension do not value education. Some of the participants feel society, for the most part, respects and positively perceives teachers, but feel teachers do not feel they are valued and respected by society. Interestingly, every participant in this study has been able to provide examples in which teachers have been devalued by society and can offer reasons as to why teachers are negatively perceived. It appears society consciously recognizes the value of teacher's work and the important role that they play in educating the youth in society. Unconsciously, it appears society does not recognize the value of teachers and the teaching profession and that education is repeatedly devalued in society.

There are numerous reasons given by participants in this study describing the value placed upon teachers in society. Teachers are role models and mentors to students.

They have great influence upon a child's academic and social development. They can lead to the betterment of society by providing students with necessary skills to succeed in life both personally and academically. They play a greater "parenting role" in a society in which both parents in the home often work or in which there are many single parent homes. Teachers volunteer their personal time for extracurricular activities for the betterment of their students. Teachers are active in school lunch programs so children in their schools are not hungry. Teachers often find themselves counseling children in their care. However, many participants feel this dedication from teachers is taken for granted by society. Some participants did not feel teacher salaries reflect the value of the work of teachers and the expertise required of them.

There are also numerous reasons given by participants in this study that explain why teachers do not feel valued and supporting examples in which teachers are not treated as valuable, respected professionals. The lack of understanding for the specialized expertise of teachers, the existence of a high workload, the expectation of extracurricular involvement without valuing the volunteer efforts of teachers, large class sizes, the lack of inclusion in decisions that contribute to major changes in their work, limited resources, continuous downloading of work on teachers, and inadequate time and resources provided to teachers to prepare to teach new courses all contribute to the perception by teachers that they are undervalued. In addition, the frequent negative portrayal of teachers in the media, the lack of support for teachers during labour disputes, the lack of government funding for education, and the constant berating of teachers for a 9:00 to 3:00 workday and excessive holiday time without the true knowledge of teacher work hours, further contribute to the sense of demoralization by teachers.

It is important for teachers to feel that both their work and education is valued by society. It is important to understand why teachers and other participants in this study feel teachers are undervalued and negatively perceived by society. It is also important society recognizes how it contributes to the devaluing of teachers in society and how this impacts the classroom experience. For example, if teachers are not perceived to be valued and respected by society, then the students they teach will not treat teachers with value and respect. It also stands to reason that others in society who interact with teachers such as parents may not treat them with respect. This will negatively impact upon the ability of teachers to effectively educate and thus negatively impacts upon society.

Research supports the value of teachers in society. Youngusband (2005) states: "Effective teachers constitute a valuable human resource, one that needs to be supported and treasured" (p.204). The literature also discusses the negative implications of devaluing teachers. Taylor, Zimmer, and Womack (2005) reported that teachers experience stress because they do not feel they are respected by those outside the profession. Chen and Miller (1997) reported that the lack of reward and recognition contributed to negative feelings experienced by teachers.

#### Recommendation 4

It is recommended a determined effort be made to ensure that education and teachers are valued in society. Society needs to be made aware of the numerous ways, described previously, in which teachers are devalued in society. A number of agencies would be useful in attaining this result through communication with the public. They include the NLTA, school districts, school councils, NLFSC, the CTF, the Canadian

Education Association (CEA), the academic community in universities, and government agencies such as the Department of Education.

#### **5.2.4 Societal Respect for Students**

It is interesting to find that students also feel they are not respected by society. It can be implied that if society does not respect and value youth, then it would likely not value and respect those in society who choose to work with them. It is logical to reason that if society does not respect and value both students and teachers, then does it really value the system in which they coexist. It is important to recognize that if perceptions towards teachers and education need to be changed, then perceptions towards the most important member of the education system, the student, must also be changed. There is no doubt that it is the student who should be the focus of any educational change so that any educational initiative relating to improving society's perceptions of teachers should be directly linked to the benefit of the student.

#### Recommendation 5

It is recommended teachers, students, schools, school districts, and government work towards finding mechanisms to improve the public perception of youth. A focused effort should be made to promote positive events in schools and to promote the accomplishments of students. In this way, a more accurate perception of students and schools can be portrayed in society.

### **5.2.5 Gender**

Several participants suggested that the teaching profession is devalued in society because a high percentage of educators in the past were female and are presently today. There was no significant research found in the literature review to support the claim that educators are perceived negatively due to the high percentage of female teachers. Research in this area would be required to fully substantiate this claim. Research literature primarily focused upon the need for gender equity among male and female students in the classroom experience (Funk, 2002; Fennema, 2000; Edge, Fisher, Martin, & Morris, 1997). Other research focused on how females do not experience equity on the workforce (Umbach, 2006; Goho, 2004; Bartholomew & Schnorr, 1991).

It is unfortunate gender issues still exist in society and that this is believed to contribute to a negative perception and the devaluing of teachers. It is important society recognizes how gender affects how one is perceived, respected and valued in the professional realm. It is also important society continues to strive towards equal respect and equal value of both genders in the professional world.

#### Recommendation 6

Educating the public that gender equality issues still plague our society is essential. It is important that schools, school districts, and government address gender-related issues. This may also be accomplished through agencies such as the NLTA and the CTF while working with women's groups such as the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women Newfoundland & Labrador. It is recommended that further research be done by the academic community to determine the extent of the link between negative perceptions of teachers and their gender.

### 5.2.6 The “Good” Teacher

Participants describe a wide range of attributes that comprise good teachers.

Their responses emphasize the complexity of the teaching profession and a broad range of characteristics that determine the ability of teachers to be good at their profession.

These attributes include skills that may be accomplished at the post-secondary level and in teacher education programs such as knowledge of their subject matter, classroom management skills, and addressing the needs of diverse learners. However, the majority of these attributes are personal traits such as being caring, behaving as a guide and mentor, showing creativity, being passionate about teaching and student learning, having patience, being adaptable, and able to balance a multitude of roles. This is supported by Connell (1985) who describes teachers as “social agents” who play a “role in reshaping the hearts and minds of the next generation” (p.206). The findings of the OECD (2005) demonstrate that the characteristics of good teachers are difficult to measure and extend beyond simply academic knowledge but into highly developed personal skills.

A point of agreement among the various studies is that there are many important aspects of teacher quality that are not captured by the commonly used indicators such as qualifications, experience and tests of academic ability. The teacher characteristics that are harder to measure, but which can be vital to student learning include the ability to convey ideas in clear and convincing ways; to create effective learning environments for different types of students; to foster productive teacher-student relationships; to be enthusiastic and creative; and to work effectively with colleagues and parents. (p.2)

The diversity and depth of the attributes convey the complexity of good teaching and, likewise, the demands of meeting society’s expectations of a good teacher. The personal characteristics imply that a teacher requires a unique set of personal skills to be successful when interacting with students. This suggests successful teachers require personal traits that can not be simply taught in teacher education programs or through

ongoing professional development. In addition, the OECD (2005) reveals that teacher quality “is the single most important school variable influencing student achievement” (p.2). Similarly, Hanushek and Woessmann (2007) found “there is mounting evidence that the quality of teachers is the key ingredient to student performance. Unfortunately, the characteristics of good teachers are not described well, making it impossible to legislate or regulate good teachers” (p.78).

#### Recommendation 7

It is recommended that the selection process in teacher education programs consider the personal attributes of good teachers as described in this study in Table 4.1. It is also recommended these attributes be considered when prospective teachers are to be hired for teaching positions. In addition, these findings suggest that methods be found to foster the development of these personal traits in teachers. This could be accomplished in teacher preparation programs and through the mentorship programs that presently exist for the beginning teacher.

#### Recommendation 8

Likewise, it is suggested that mechanisms be provided that support both the professional and personal attributes of good teachers throughout their careers. This may be accomplished by removing barriers that prevent teachers from achieving their potential such as the teacher challenges discussed throughout this study. Further research may be needed to determine how positive workplace environments can foster the attributes of good teachers. This may be accomplished by academic communities and focus groups that comprise all stakeholders in education.

### 5.2.7 The “Bad” Teacher

The participants describe a range of attributes that comprise a “bad teacher”. Interestingly, these attributes imply that the qualities that comprise a “bad” teacher are not only related to a low professional standard but are also largely to personality issues. Some of the negative traits described by participants include unprepared for class, poor knowledge of subject matter, uncaring, lackadaisical, impatient, and verbally abusive.

A number of participants discussed some of their negative experiences with teachers. Most participants did not feel that this reflects the characteristics of most teachers and that most teachers are “dedicated professionals”. However, they did express great concern regarding the negative impacts of a “bad” teacher on students. They felt that these teachers were detrimental to students on an emotional and an academic level. Schoonmaker (2002) explains “some of our most powerful and haunting memories are of an aversive or negative experience” (p.31). Many participants did not feel there were effective mechanisms in place to protect students from teachers who are not performing in the classroom.

Some participants suggest workload issues may prevent teachers from being effective in the classroom and contribute to poor performance and stress-related behaviours. The study completed by Younghusband (2005) also conveyed how stress-related behaviours were a result of the high demands of teacher workload. Many participants describe a “bad” teacher as one who is not knowledgeable in their subject area. At times, throughout this study, participants expressed concern that teachers are teaching outside their subject areas.



#### Recommendation 9

It is recommended every effort be made to ensure that marginal teachers are held accountable when their performance negatively impacts students. This could be accomplished by re-examining the present system through focus groups and the success of the policies that presently exist within the employer and the NLTA.

#### Recommendation 10

It is recommended that those entering the teaching profession are carefully screened prior to acceptance into the Faculty of Education and carefully screened in the hiring process. This may be partly accomplished through the use of an interview for entrance to the Faculty of Education. The interview process and selection process should utilize the attributes of good teachers as described in Table 4.1 and those of bad teachers as described in Table 4.2. The view that the “very best” aspire to become teachers should be cultivated as recommended by the students of this study.

#### Recommendation 11

Further research should consider whether or not teachers who are deemed “bad” teachers may also be placed in situations in which they are teaching outside their subject area or whether or not ineffective teaching is the result of high workload demands. This may be accomplished by the academic community working with the NLTA, school districts, and government.

### **5.2.8 Teacher Communication**

The majority of participants suggested ways in which teachers could better represent themselves to the public and prevent some of the negative perceptions held by society. It was suggested teachers need to “celebrate” the aspects of the teaching profession that are positive and learn to value themselves as professionals and that it is important for teachers to stop “openly criticizing” the teaching profession in public.

Participants believe effective communication skills are essential for teachers so they can contribute to accurately representing themselves in public. They feel teachers need to learn how to effectively represent educational challenges so they are clearly understood by society. As suggested by participants in this study, teachers can not simply complain about educational challenges without accurately explaining the issues and finding appropriate venues with which to deal with them. It is suggested teachers also be sensitive to the workload issue of others in society but at the same time teachers need to “articulate their frustrations to elicit positive change so that society can work with them”.

Participants discuss the need for teachers to continuously display a high level of professionalism so their concerns can be heard effectively. They feel teachers also need to effectively learn to deal with criticism by reacting “calmly” and professionally while educating the public on the issues that face them. They believe this will involve always demonstrating a high degree of professionalism both inside and outside of the classroom. Teachers, despite often not being treated as professionals, need to clearly demonstrate they are professionals. Participants suggest teachers ensure they develop the necessary

skills for successfully engaging in conflict resolution. These skills can be utilized in interactions with students, parents, and the public.

The NLTA participant and the teachers in this study feel teachers need to recognize that they comprise the association and that they should be actively engaged in NLTA issues. The NLTA participant feels that teachers should realize that the association is following the direction of teachers.

Despite the important role teachers may play in working to change society's perceptions of education and the teaching profession, participants recommend that teachers need to be cautious. In any communication with the public, teachers need to be careful to not be viewed as speaking against their employer. Teachers are also considered to be a special interest group and should be cautious their communications with the public do not appear to be self-serving. When teachers discuss educational challenges it is important they focus upon the negative impact on the education system and on students, as well as, the accompanying negative impacts on society if the needs of education are not addressed.

#### Recommendation 12

It is recommended that teachers "celebrate" the aspects of the teaching profession that are positive and learn to value themselves as professionals. This may be accomplished through the NLTA, government, school districts, as well as at the school level. Specific strategies may be accomplished through the use of focus groups.

### Recommendation 13

Teachers need to learn how to effectively communicate educational challenges so they are clearly understood by society. It is suggested teachers ensure they are sensitive to the workload issue of others in society while articulating the challenges facing them. At the same time, teachers need to be cautious that they are not viewed as speaking against their employer. The NLTA and the CTF could be useful in educating teachers on the best manner to represent themselves to the public

### Recommendation 14

Teachers should ensure they are actively involved in understanding NLTA issues and understand that they direct the actions of the NLTA. It is recommended teachers ensure that they recognize the value of their association and become more active in their membership. This may be accomplished by formally educating teachers about the value of their association and their active participation. Further research may be done by the NLTA and the academic community to determine the level of participation of teachers in their association and the factors that influence their level of participation.

### Recommendation 15

Teachers should ensure they develop the necessary skills for successfully engaging in conflict resolution such as with interactions with students, parents, and the public. These could be developed through teacher education programs and the professional development training of teachers. The NLTA and the CTF may be useful in attaining this goal.

### **5.2.9 Communication**

The participants of this study recommend that all stakeholders in education be involved in the communication process. They believe those directly involved in the education system should be involved in communicating to the public the realities that exist in our classrooms. The public should be educated about educational challenges facing teachers such as lack of funding and resources, large class sizes and teacher workload. Society also should be educated about the reality of the work of teachers and must be willing to recognize and correct misconceptions that have arisen about the teaching profession and the education system.

A number of agencies are recommended by participants that can be utilized to increase public debate and public knowledge of issues related to education. These include parent groups, academic communities, the NLTA, the media, the CTF, the CEA, and business groups.

#### Recommendation 16

It is recommended that all stakeholders in education be involved in communicating to the public the realities that exist in classrooms. A number of agencies such as school councils, the NLFSC, the academic community, the NLTA, the media, the CTF, the CEA and business groups can be utilized to increase public debate and public knowledge of issues related to education.

### **5.2.10 Labour Disputes**

Participants explain that during contract negotiations, the public perception of teachers has been a very difficult issue. In the past, the public has not been supportive of job action such as strike or withdrawal from extracurricular activities. It is suggested this comes from the lack of knowledge the public possesses about teacher workload and the specialized expertise required of teachers to perform their duties effectively. It is also suggested that this arises from a changing society in which teachers are greatly relied upon by parents to be with their children during the day while they at work. When teachers strike or withdraw their participation from extracurricular activities, parents are forced to make alternate arrangements for their children. This arises from society's attitude that teachers are expected to perform a greater "parenting role".

#### Recommendation 17

It is recommended that communication be more effectively utilized by teachers through their association so that the public begins to understand the challenges facing teachers today and respect that they are entitled to job action such as to strike when other appropriate actions are not successful in negotiations. It is recommended that this communication be maintained as a continuous process by teachers through the NLTA and evident to the public on a regular basis as opposed to only evident at times of contract negotiations.

### **5.2.11 Media**

A number of participants believe the media plays a key role in contributing to the negative perceptions of teachers and that the media does not accurately represent the teaching profession or the education system. For example, participants believe the media plays a role in unfairly representing teachers by questioning teacher's salaries and holiday time. They also feel the media tends to sometimes focus on mentally unstable individuals or individuals who possess "unrealistic expectations" of the profession due to an inadequate understanding of the work of teachers. Participants feel that the media tends to listen to the "loudest" voice but not necessarily the most accurate. They explain that the media will focus on a minority who had had negative experience leaving the public with the inaccurate perception that this represents the reality in schools. They feel there is a tendency for the media, as well as society to dwell upon the negative. The OECD (2005) reported that the negative portrayal of teachers by the media has affected attracting and retaining quality teachers on a global scale.

#### Recommendation 18

Teachers, through their association and other appropriate venues, should ensure they effectively counteract negative publicity at the time it occurs. It is also important that teachers and their association use the media to inform and to educate the public on realities of schools and the challenges faced by the education system. This should include bringing to the forefront positive events and initiatives that pertain to students, teachers and schools.

### **5.3 Societal Understanding of the Nature of Teaching and Education**

This section examines societal understanding of the present teaching conditions and the culture of the education system. This understanding is related to changes that have occurred in education in the last 50 years. It addresses some of the concerns of participants such as workload, accountability, teacher qualifications, the process of decision making, and other teacher and educational challenges. It examines teacher personality and how it may contribute to some of the challenges faced by teachers. Recommendations for change are made by both the participants and the researcher.

#### **5.3.1 Changes in Education**

All participants discuss how the teaching profession and education has changed over approximately the last 50 years. Most participants tend to agree teachers are less respected today. However, some participants express contradictory views regarding whether or not teachers are more valued by today's society. Participants show a tendency to agree that changes in the teaching profession and education are for the betterment of society but also discuss issues in which teachers are subjected to unfair criticism and pressure from society today.

One interesting observation by participants was that society tends to have a more favourable impression of the education system in the past but forget how the education system failed students. There was discussion about the high drop-out rate of students in the past and how these students likely had learning difficulties that were not understood.

Participants agree that teachers are no longer feared by students and are considered to be more approachable. Relationships between teachers, parents and students have improved in this regard.



Participants stress the importance that Eastern Newfoundland society understands that knowledge in the field of education has greatly improved. There is a better understanding of learning disabilities and how to assist students in coping with them. Teachers are more knowledgeable about how students learn, such as multiple intelligences theory, child development, assessment strategies, and the constructivist theory of learning. Teachers are now equipped with more diverse teaching strategies that enable student learning and teaching is no longer primarily or solely transmission-oriented.

Participants feel it is important society recognizes that teaching responsibilities have also greatly increased. Teachers must deal with creating and implementing individualized programs for students with learning difficulties, they must cope with large class sizes, spend time searching for new resources, find ways to vary their instructional strategies to maintain student attention and enhance the learning experience, and learn how to utilize new technology. The OECD (2005) describes how teacher responsibilities and expectations have increased dramatically worldwide:

The demands on schools and teachers are becoming more complex. Society now expects schools to deal effectively with different languages and student backgrounds, to be sensitive to culture and gender issues, to promote tolerance and social cohesion, to respond effectively to disadvantaged students and students with learning or behavioural problems, to use new technologies, and to keep pace with rapidly developing fields of knowledge and approaches to student assessment. Teachers need to be capable of preparing students for a society and an economy in which they will be expected to be self-directed learners, able and motivated to keep learning over a lifetime. (p.2)

According to the results, teachers are also expected to address new social problems. For example, they are expected to compensate for the breakdown in communication between divorced parents regarding their child. They are expected to compensate for the hours that working parents are away from their children. Thus, they

play a greater role in "parenting" children than they have in the past. They are becoming more and more responsible for the social and emotional development of children in addition to meeting their academic needs. This responsibility comes along with other educational challenges such as high teacher workload, insufficient resources for curriculum, addressing the needs of students with learning difficulties, teacher cutbacks, and large class sizes. All of this contributes to unrealistic expectations of teachers leaving them with the impossible task of attending to the needs of today's youth.

It is important to recognize these additional expectations of teachers have left teachers in an "untenable" situation. As stated by participants, responsibilities are continuously added to teacher workload and teachers are not provided with adequate support. The question should also be asked, "How much of a role should teachers play in 'parenting' today's youth?" or "how much of a role should teachers play in fixing the problems of society?" Despite the expectation that teachers play a role in raising children, according to this study it appears some parents do not always support teachers when the teacher experiences difficulty with their child. There also appears to be the tendency of society to inappropriately advise teachers regarding their work without recognizing the specialized expertise of teachers today.

Teachers appear to be less respected over time, despite the addition of greater responsibility in the teaching profession. Participants suggest society is more likely to question the integrity of teachers. This is possibly due to child abuse scandals that have been associated with education. It is certainly important that all professionals who have been entrusted with the care of children never go unquestioned and are held to high standards. However, it appears the pendulum regarding the questioning of teachers work

has swung to the other extreme. Teachers appear to have less control of students in the classroom and less support of parents when dealing with classroom discipline. It is important that society recognizes that these new challenges face teachers.

#### Recommendation 19

It is recommended that society is educated on how the teaching expertise and the knowledge of how students learn have greatly increased. It is also recommended that society is educated on how the responsibilities and workload in the teaching profession has increased. This may be accomplished through the NLTA, the CTF, the NLFSC and the CEA.

#### Recommendation 20

It is recommended that a realization is created in society through agencies such as the NLTA, the CTF, the CEA and the NLFSC about how teachers are expected to have an increased parenting role due to a changing family dynamic. This is a phenomenon that could be researched further. Public debate could be utilized to determine the extent teachers should fulfill a parenting role.

#### Recommendation 21

It is recommended that mechanisms be put in place to support teachers when they are unfairly questioned by parents. A variety of agencies may accomplish this goal such as the NLTA, school districts, school administrators, and the Department of Education. These mechanisms should be implemented in such a manner that teachers feel confident that they will be effectively supported.

### 5.3.2 The Work of Teachers

The teachers in this study feel society has an inaccurate perception of their work. They believe society does not recognize the specialized expertise required of them. In fact, most of the participants also did not sense that the public understands the hard work and long hours teachers commit after school hours. Their experience was that society views teachers as simply working from 9:00 to 3:00 in the day with a great deal of holiday time. For this, they believe society greatly resents teachers. They feel society does not understand the long hours teachers commit to the profession during the school day and during other times of the year. They believe society does not understand that teachers may work during holidays or be involved in professional development during scheduled time off, and society does not understand the importance of this time for teachers to rejuvenate. They feel the fact that the teaching profession can be emotionally draining goes unnoticed. This is supported by Dibbon (2004) and the CTF (2007) who describe how teachers work well beyond the public perception including during their perceived "holiday time". Dibbon explains how his research demonstrates that teachers work 39.5 hours a week for 52 weeks whereas the public sector works 32 hours per week for 52 weeks.

According to many of the participants in this study, society does not understand the numerous responsibilities of teachers. These responsibilities are described to include the academic outcomes for students and other responsibilities outside the academic realm of teaching. Academic responsibilities of teachers include (but are not limited to): teaching their subject area and lesson preparation, identifying learning needs, accommodating diverse learners, engaging in continuous professional development,

evaluating of student performance, participating in school improvement initiatives, finding teaching resources, developing professional growth plans, collaborating with other staff members, participating in school development plans, and communicating with parents. Other responsibilities that are considered non-academic include: development of social skills in students, preparing students for life in general, extracurricular activities, inspiring citizenship, inspiring a love for learning, building security, providing adequate supervision of students, building maintenance, clerical tasks, parenting, mentoring, counseling, social worker, nurse, fundraising, and nutritional advisor. These responsibilities are further outlined in Table 4.3 in Chapter 4. Participants also express great value in teacher involvement in extracurricular activities and how this promotes positive relationships with students.

Many responsibilities described by participants should undoubtedly be the responsibility of teachers such as teaching the prescribed curriculum, preparing lessons and evaluating students. Other responsibilities are inevitable such as assisting in social development and mentoring since they are a result of the close interaction between teacher and student on a daily basis in which teacher and student must form a relationship. However, consideration should be given to whether or not these expectations of teachers are realistic. For example, it should be questioned whether or not teachers should be expected to provide building security, supervision, or perform clerical tasks. The extent to which a teacher should serve certain roles such as counselor, social worker and psychiatrist should be questioned. It should also be questioned to what extent teachers are qualified or trained to act as counselors. Should teachers be fundraising to support the school? Consideration should also be given to whether or not

these numerous responsibilities are impacting the ability of teachers to effectively deliver the prescribed curriculum, as well as, complete other tasks more directly related to the education of their students. The OECD (2005) suggests the possibility of teacher responsibilities focusing on those that require the professional expertise of teachers and other responsibilities reassigned to non-teaching personnel.

In its most radical form, a greater emphasis on teacher quality could see teachers' work being redesigned to focus more on its professional and knowledge-based components, with perhaps fewer teachers being employed, but with more other people being employed to do those parts of teachers' current work that do not require teachers' professional skills, and teachers being paid substantially more to attract and retain the best possible candidates. (p.9)

This approach could enhance teacher quality, teacher effectiveness, attract high quality teachers and retain more teachers.

The participants discuss several factors that have led to increased workload. As indicated previously, teachers discuss numerous responsibilities that sometimes should not be considered the work of teachers such as clerical duties, building security and fundraising. Participants discuss the high expectations of teachers in rural Newfoundland in which one teacher may be expected to teach up to 14 courses, be responsible for the computer network in the school and serve as an administrator of the school. The teachers in this study discuss the issue of how new curriculum can be introduced without the proper teacher training and without providing teachers with adequate resources to teach the new curriculum. This is supported by the research of Dibbon (2005) in which new programs were poorly implemented without the inadequate provision of associated resources. A number of participants raised the issue of the Pathways Program and how this has contributed towards increased teacher workload since teachers must engage in the development and delivery of individualized programs for students with learning

difficulties and that this is compounded by large class sizes. They agree that the program is beneficial but it increases an already demanding workload. Dibbon (2004), Younghusband (2005) and the NLTA (2006) describe how the implementation of the Pathways Program has contributes to some of the excessive workload experienced by teachers. Other factors that contribute to high teacher workload, provided by the participants include: large class sizes, teacher cutbacks, fundraising, parental contacts, greater demands for student evaluation, multi-grading, inadequate supply of teacher assistants, and inadequate secretarial support.

The high workload conditions described by participants in this study are supported nationally by the CTF (2007) and provincially by Dibbon (2004), Younghusband (2005) and the NLTA (2006) as indicated above. These authors describe some of the invisible work required of teachers and the excessive demands presently placed upon teachers similar to the participants in this study. Likewise, Loeb, Knapp, and Elfers (2008) describe comparable concerns regarding the level of workload for teachers in the United States. Apple (1993) describes how the workload conditions for teachers have intensified to the point that teachers have no opportunity to go to the bathroom during their regular work day.

Participants feel that unreasonable teacher workload affects the ability of teachers to educate their students in an effective manner and to meet other developmental needs of their students. They also feel that an unrealistic workload interferes with the ability of the teacher to participate in extracurricular activities with their students. They discuss the nature of teachers to self-sacrifice to provide for their students despite a higher workload for themselves. Participants feel the present workload is contributing to teacher stress

and therefore affecting the health and well being of teachers. Participant expresses concern that teachers are overworked and are concerned for the students and the state of education in the province.

It is logical that high workload for teachers has implications for the effective delivery of education, as well as the health and well-being of teachers. A study completed by Youngusband (2005) also supports how the demands of teacher workload are contributing to the inability of teachers to be effective in caring for the needs of their students and adding greatly to their stress levels.

#### Recommendation 22

It is recommended that teacher responsibilities be more clearly defined according to the appropriateness of the role and the degree to which workload remains reasonable. This can be accomplished through the use of focus groups comprised of teachers and other stakeholders in education. School districts, government and the NLTA can be instrumental in attaining this goal.

#### Recommendation 23

Communication with the public about the level of expertise and training required of teachers would be beneficial so that the public could be educated about the true nature of the teaching profession. This communication should also involve educating the public about the time dedicated by teachers to their work beyond the regular school day and the regular school year. The public should also be made aware of the numerous responsibilities of teachers and their increasing workload, as well as how these may be negatively impacting their ability to be effective in the classroom. It is strongly



recommended that the workload issues of teachers be addressed by government, school districts and other decision makers. It is important that teachers with the support of the NLTA, government, school districts, CTF, CEA, NLFSC and other agencies that support education bring these issues to the forefront.

### **5.3.3 Teacher Personality**

There are many positive qualities used to describe teacher personality by the participants. One participant expresses the sentiment of many when she describes teachers as “loving, good hearted people who care for children”. Participants describe teacher as caring, passionate about learning and having a desire to “make a difference”. Many participants also praise the dedication of teachers and their generosity towards their students. Similar descriptions of teacher personality are made by Nash (2001) and Younghusband (2005). The OECD (2005) supports these findings and recommends policy development to sustain these traits:

A strong conclusion from the work is that teachers are highly motivated by the intrinsic benefits of teaching – working with children and young people, helping them to develop, and making a contribution to society – and that system structures and school workplaces need to ensure that teachers are able to focus on these tasks. (p.9)

Participants also feel there are personality traits of teachers that contribute to some of the problems affecting teachers and the education system. Teachers are described as dedicated to their students to the extent that they are self-sacrificing. This dedication is evident when teachers purchase supplies for their students using their own money or when teachers accept an excessive amount of workload so their students will not suffer. The CTF (2005) reported that teachers spend over \$90 million a year on supplies for which they are not reimbursed or given tax credit. If teachers continue to

find ways to adapt to inadequate resources, accept high workload and accept large class sizes, then these issues will never be addressed by government. Likewise, if teachers continue to accept and adapt to these issues, then they will never be brought to the forefront for examination by society. This tendency to self-sacrifice also has negative implications for teacher health because teachers are devoting their time to addressing the needs of their students and neglecting themselves.

Several participants express concern about the lack of teacher involvement in the NLTA. They feel teachers are a conservative group and will not unite and act collectively to address issues. They believe teachers need to recognize that they are the association and must provide their leaders with support and direction. It has been previously recommended that teachers learn to become more involved with the NLTA to address concerns.

#### Recommendation 24

It is important that teachers no longer continue to find ways to adapt to inadequate resources, accept high workload, and agree to large class sizes since these issues will not be effectively brought to the forefront for examination by society. Teachers need to recognize that the tendency to self-sacrifice also has negative implications for their health because they are devoting their time to addressing the needs of their students while neglecting themselves. The proper utilization of their association may enable teachers to accomplish this goal. This may also be accomplished by professional development supported by the NLTA and the employer.

### **5.3.4 Educational and Teacher Challenges**

The participants in this study discuss the implications of educational and teacher challenges on the delivery of education. Participants feel inadequate government funding contributes to insufficient resources provided to the teacher and increasing class size due to teacher cutbacks. In addition, they feel that the lack of resources and the presence of large classes can impede the ability of teachers to successfully help all of their students, in particular those with learning difficulties. Other cutbacks in the area of administration, secretarial support and guidance are also increasing workload and impacting the ability of teachers to perform and provide for their students as effectively as they would like. These all contribute to teacher stress. The increasing work demands of teachers need to be addressed since it not only has negative implications for teachers but also upon the delivery of education and ultimately the success of the student. The lack of financial support for education calls into question the value that is placed upon education by society. The studies of Nash (2001) and Younghusband (2005) support the concern of inadequate funding for education in this province. They make reference to the difficulty of providing quality education for students but also for the negative implications of teacher stress in the attempt to provide for students. The NLTA (2006) also expresses concern about the quality of education due to inadequate resources, as well as the detrimental effects on both students and teachers.

In addition, the participants feel the use of teachers who are inadequately qualified to teach a particular subject negatively impacts the students. This is further compounded by inadequate in-servicing and inadequate provision of resources for those teaching these courses. Likewise, they feel these issues are a result of inadequate funding

for education and teacher cutbacks. Similar concerns are expressed in the study completed by Dibbon (2004) regarding teachers who are expected to teach outside of their subject area.

Participants feel there is a tendency to blame teachers when students do not succeed. Because the teacher is “on the front line” in regard to the delivery of education, they can be perceived as “at fault”. It is important society becomes educated on the challenges that prevent teachers from being effective in the classroom and how this may negatively impact student education. It is important that consideration be given to other factors that may hinder the success of students such as large class size, inadequate educational resources and unreasonable teacher workload. It is also important that parents and students share the responsibility for education with teachers and recognize the role they play in motivation and hard work. Parents should welcome communication from teachers and the professional concerns expressed by teachers regarding their child.

Participants discuss how teachers are experiencing a lack of control and authority in their classrooms because teachers are subjected to greater criticism and questioning from society. Participants feel this will ultimately impede the teacher’s ability to effectively teach their students. In particular, several participants feel the sexual abuse scandals in the Catholic Church have contributed to the level of respect accorded teachers today. As a result, they feel that this has impaired the ability of teachers to do their job properly and has also resulted in less autonomy of the teacher in the classroom. They feel this has resulted in teachers being under greater examination by the public to the extent that it has interfered with the level of control teachers have in the classroom.

The importance of having a good administration who will support teachers in discipline issues, as well as, parents who are supportive of teachers is discussed. Participants demonstrate that it is frustrating when the issue of student behaviour is not addressed and the teacher is not supported in the classroom. They feel this not only negatively impacts the teachers but also distracts from the education of other students. In addition, teachers are sometimes unwilling to come forward because they fear they may be viewed as incompetent in regard to classroom management. It is important that administrators and parents be supportive of teachers when addressing behavioural issues with students. Otherwise, this could have negative implications for the well-being of the teacher and the learning success of all students in the classroom.

Parental pressures are contributing to greater challenges for teachers. There are instances described by participants in which parents forcefully question teachers about how they have evaluated their child and pressure teachers to give a higher mark to their child. Participants feel society is becoming less interested in the process of learning and more interested in the end result such as a mark as opposed to whether or not learning has occurred. A number of participants indicate that teachers are sometimes "bullied" by parents.

While parents should ensure they understand how their child is evaluated, it is unfair that they pressure teachers to alter their grades when the student has not attained the necessary learning. Teachers should not fear confrontations with parents when they refuse to accept late assignments from students or when the student has not succeeded in a particular area. Parents should be willing to accept the professional judgment and decision making of the teacher. It is also important that teachers maintain their standards

in regard to evaluation and are provided with the appropriate support from all levels of administration.

Many participants also discuss how teachers are frequently shown a lack of respect by their students. These participants are frustrated with the lack of respect given to teachers in the classroom by students. One participant feels that due to a lack of societal respect for teachers many students feel that it is acceptable to take out their frustrations on teachers. Concern is expressed about the “abuse” teachers experience from students. The NLTA has reported increasing levels of abuse experienced by teachers in this province (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers’ Association and Public Legal Information Association of NL). Participants in a study completed by Younghusband (2005) in this province expressed similar concerns as participants in this study regarding verbal abuse from students and parents. They also reported a growing threat of physical violence in schools. The CTF (2005) supports these concerns nationwide and reports that teachers are experiencing increased forms of abuse from parents and students

The overwhelming demands of the teaching profession are believed to be leading teachers to leave the profession and preventing highly qualified individuals from entering the profession. The teaching profession needs to be respected in society and the workload issues need to be addressed to retain teachers in the profession and attract new, qualified, and enthusiastic teachers. If society expects teachers to volunteer for extracurricular activities, then the commitment of teachers needs to be valued. Likewise, if teachers continue to be overburdened with an increasingly demanding workload, then

society can not expect teachers to participate in extracurricular activities at the expense of their personal life, health and well being.

Recommendation 25

It is recommended that that every effort be made to hire the most qualified individuals. Policies pertaining to hiring practices should be reconsidered at the level of the employer and the NLTA.

Recommendation 26

It is recommended that mechanisms be put in place to ensure that teachers are effectively supported in dealing with behavioural issues with students by both parents and administrators. This is may require further research or the use of focus groups to understand the issues of all stakeholders involved. Effective policies should be developed to ensure that teachers are adequately supported. Avenues for teachers to pursue should be clarified and measures should be put in place so that teachers are confident that they are fully supported.

Recommendation 27

It is recommended that mechanisms be found to ensure that teachers are not unfairly pressured to alter their evaluation of a student by parents or administrators. This can be accomplished through the development of policies by the Department of Education and school districts that are clearly communicated to parents and students.

#### Recommendation 28

It is recommended that mechanisms be clearly established to assist teachers in dealing with issues of harassment by students and parents. This may be accomplished through the NLTA and the employer. Avenues for teachers experiencing harassment to pursue should be clearly established and measures should be put in place to ensure teachers are confident they are fully supported when they come forward.

#### Recommendation 29

Issues that pertain to inadequate government funding must be addressed for the obvious benefit of the student and eventual benefit of society. It is critical the public be educated on the effect of inadequate resources and large class sizes on the delivery of education in the classroom. Agencies need to step forward to make the public aware of these issues. It is difficult for teachers alone to come forward because it may be viewed as speaking against their employer or as "self-serving". Groups such as parents, school councils, the NLFSC, the CTF, CEA and the academic community could prove to be invaluable in educating the public about these issues and encouraging government to provide greater funding and resources for education.

#### **5.3.5 Teacher Qualifications and Teacher Training**

Participants stress that it is important the education profession no longer be viewed as a profession in which those who are deemed not acceptable for other professions follow. It is clear the admittance into the education program at Memorial University has now become more competitive. However, many feel that qualities other than academic standing should be taken into greater account. Aspects such as experience



working with children, volunteer work and a personality suited to the teaching profession should be considered to a greater extent. Participants feel there are certain skills and personal attributes that teacher education programs may not be able to effectively teach. Participants consider these traits to be creativity, ingenuity, patience and understanding. Many participants recommend that the Faculty of Education consider an interview process to determine suitability. It is important that society ensures that individuals entering the teacher profession are likely to make good teachers for the benefit of the education of children. The Faculty of Education is well positioned to play a crucial role in ensuring that the right individual enters the teaching profession.

Similarly, participants believe employers should consider volunteer work, communication skills, counseling skills and mediation skills in determining suitability for the teaching profession. It is recommended by participants that school districts and other employers hiring teachers consider not only academic qualifications in their hiring practices, but also personal traits and experience that would determine the suitability of a candidate for the teaching profession.

The OECD (2005) provides support that teacher quality can be attained through careful selection processes into teacher education programs as well as in hiring practices. In addition, they specify teachers need to be supported through their careers to ensure they maintain a high level of proficiency.

Key ingredients in a teacher quality agenda include more attention to the criteria for selection both into initial teacher education and teaching employment, on-going evaluation throughout the teaching career to identify areas for improvement, recognising and rewarding effective teaching, and ensuring that teachers have the resources and support they need to meet high expectations. (p.9)

The OECD also emphasizes that selecting quality personnel is one of the most important determinants for success in educational quality. They recommend that schools be provided more autonomy in making personnel decisions in the best interest of their school culture.

Successful enterprises often say that personnel selection is the most important set of decisions that they make. In the case of teaching, the evidence suggests that all too often the selection process follows rules about qualifications and seniority that bear little relationship to the qualities needed to be an effective teacher. The sheer size of school systems in many countries means that the process of teacher selection is often highly impersonal and it is hard for teachers to build a sense of commitment to the schools where they are appointed – or for the schools to build a sense of commitment to them.... The school is emerging as the key agency within the educational system for improving student learning, which implies that schools need to have more responsibility – and accountability – for teacher selection, working conditions, and development. (p11)

The participants in this study provided a number of suggestions regarding how the education program could be improved. Some of these suggestions included enhancing the internship program, integrating a volunteer component, improving classroom management skills, conflict resolution, more education in child development, more training in the area of learning disabilities, training in teaching in a multi-grade setting, and the development of counseling skills.

The participant from the Faculty of Education explains how the university is considering changes that will improve the education program for new teachers. Several participants explain how the Faculty of Education is faced with the difficulty of enhancing the program without substantially increasing the length. It was evident from participant discussions that there are “large pieces of professional information that teachers never get an opportunity to explore” in the current programs for teacher education. Participants feel that teaching education is of insufficient length to teach the “complexities of teaching and learning”. However, a substantial increase in the length of

teacher education would also mean graduates would have to be compensated accordingly.

Participants did not sense that society is prepared to invest in education to that extent.

The OECD (2005) recommends that education programs not be enhanced but rather that professional development be provided greater focus:

A lifelong learning perspective for teachers implies that in most countries much more attention will need to be focused on supporting teachers in the early stage of their career, and in providing the incentives and resources for on-going professional development. In general, there would be better value from improving induction and teacher development throughout their career rather than increasing the length of pre-service education. (p.10)

Participants also expressed concern regarding teachers teaching outside their area of expertise and the negative impact this may have on education. The workload study completed by Dibbon (2004) reveals how teachers must spend an extraordinary amount of time preparing to teach a subject that is outside of the area for which they have been trained. This study also refers to the negative implication for student learning when a teacher is not trained in the subject area. It exposes how students can not benefit from the specialized knowledge of a teacher if they are not trained in the area. In addition, the teacher is suffering from the workload demands of teaching outside of his/her area of expertise and is less effective on many levels in the classroom as a result.

Participants feel it is important that teachers continuously engage in professional development. Froese-Germain (2004) stresses the value of teacher education and professional development for teachers and links the quality of the teacher to the success of student learning.

Hence, there is a need to provide teachers with ongoing access to the knowledge and support necessary to make sound educational decisions in their classrooms every day in order to improve student learning. A recent CTF opinion poll on accountability found that, more than any other factor, the Canadian public

believes that teacher quality has the greatest influence on a child's success in school (Professional Accountability, para. 2).

Participants feel that since society is continuously changing, then teachers also need to continuously evolve to meet the needs of their students. Likewise, as the knowledge base increases about how students learn, teachers need to ensure that they remain informed.

Some participants express concern regarding the effectiveness of professional development and Master's programs for improving the quality of teaching. There is disagreement among the participants about whether or not teachers should be compensated for completing Master's programs or if the focus for compensation should be based upon the end product or the innovation and creativity of the teacher's work. Segall (2002) brings to the forefront a concern that critical examination of teacher education programs is considerably lacking. He feels that it is important to gain more knowledge "about what actually occurs in teacher education programs and how these occurrences influence prospective teachers' practice (as students and teacher) in particular ways" (p.6). The OECD (2005) recommends that it is critical for teachers to be actively involved in their own professional development to ensure its success.

Research on the characteristics of effective professional development indicates that teachers need to be very active agents in analysing their own practice in the light of professional standards, and their own students' progress in the light of standards for student learning. Policy has a key role to play in helping teachers to develop professional learning communities within and beyond schools. (p.11)

Further research should be considered regarding the effectiveness of programs that involve the professional development of teachers, as well as graduate programs.

### Recommendation 30

It is recommended that the Faculty of Education consider a number of factors for admittance into the program. These may include work experience with children, volunteer experience, personal attributes suitable to teaching, and performance in an interview, as well as academic standing.

### Recommendation 31

It should be recognized that better trained teachers will improve the quality of education for students and will contribute to the benefit of society. It is recommended teacher education programs continue to be expanded to produce as highly qualified professionals as possible. This may include a longer internship, volunteer component, and more coursework in such as in counseling, conflict resolution, and learning disabilities.

### Recommendation 32

It is recommended every effort be made to ensure that teachers do not teach outside their area of expertise since it not only contributes to teacher stress but will have negative implications for students. Mechanisms to prevent this situation should be explored by parent groups, the NLTA, the Department of Education and school districts.

### Recommendation 33

It is important that professional development programs and graduate program are successful in producing more qualified teachers and mechanisms should be put in place to determine their effectiveness. Further research by the academic community, school

districts and government may be used to determine how these programs may be made most effective.

### **5.3.6 Accountability**

Participants in this study recognize the value of accountability in education but express concerns regarding negative effects of certain forms of accountability such as standardized testing. In a submission paper on accountability, accountability is defined below by the Canadian Teachers' Federation (n.d.) as:

Accountability is the process through which individuals or organizations take responsibility for their actions and report on these actions to those who are entitled to the information. In addition to providing information, accountability implies an obligation to find ways to improve performance, not just measure it. Safeguards should be put in place to encourage good practices, prevent abuses, ensure some course of redress for problems that arise and provide some assurance of equitable and fair treatment (Defining Accountability, para.1).

Accountability is crucial to the success of any institution. This is certainly true of public education. Therefore, it is important that the work of schools be regularly assessed. At the same time, teachers should not feel as though they are being targeted as suggested by a number of participants in this study. It should be obvious that all aspects of education and all those who work in the education system are engaged in the accountability process. Harland (1996) supports the value of accountability but at the same time expresses concern regarding the danger that accountability can be used as a measure of control. Participants believe the accountability process in schools has not fully matured. They recommended that not only teachers be regularly evaluated but administrators in schools, school districts, and the Department of Education.

Participant believe teachers and administrators fear measurements such as public exams and Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT's) because they perceive that negative test

results will adversely effect the public perception of the school and the work teachers do. It is believed this fear tends to lead teachers to “teaching to the test” as opposed to working towards the overall development of the child. As a result, this negatively impacts the education of the students. The CTF (n.d.) supports that forms of standardized testing can create negative implications for the relationship between educators and the public.

Several participants do not feel standardized tests are necessarily good indicators of student growth. They feel present day students have become good at taking tests but that this may not measure the extent of learning. They feel accountability has resulted in a high dependence on mathematical calculations in determining marks while the teacher is denied flexibility in the evaluation process. Froese-Germain (2004) supports the need for teachers to have more control in the evaluation process so that various forms of assessment are considered. The CTF (n.d.) and Froese-Germain also express concern that the present systems of standardized and high-stakes testing in Canada and the United States have a narrow focus and have worked to de-motivate students and demoralized teachers.

Some participants express concern that teachers fear they may be held accountable when new programs fail. They describe how teachers will work tirelessly to make them work even without the proper supports in place for their implementation. Schmidt (2008) describes similar concerns of teachers in the United States with reference to the NCLB policy in which schools are sanctioned or rewarded based upon the academic progress of their students.

One participant expressed strong views about how to address poor performance. This participant suggests there should be no permanency in jobs when employees continue to not perform. They also suggest employees should be compensated based upon their performance. He suggests the possibility of likening schools to business and that schools could market for students as customers who would compensate them for their teaching. Froese-Germain (2004) expresses concern regarding market-based approaches to accountability: "When schools and districts are forced to compete for students and their families as consumers, the result is increased inequities" (Linking accountability with the vision and goals of public education, para. 2).

#### Recommendation 34

It is recommended that present forms of testing such as CRT's and public exams are re-examined to ensure they are true measures of student achievement. It should also be evaluated whether or not these forms of measurement remove focus on the total development of the student and the overall learning process. This may be accomplished through the use of focus groups and may require the use of other forms of research by the Department of Education and the academic community. The results should be clearly communicated to all stakeholders.

#### Recommendation 35

It is recommended that the proper supports be put in place when new programs are introduced such as adequate resources for the program and in-service training for teachers. Continuous monitoring of the success of the new programs by the Department



of Education and school districts is recommended so that teachers do not feel isolated or targeted in working towards the effective implementation of the new program.

#### Recommendation 36

It is recommended that any changes to education be considered from an educational perspective as opposed to a business perspective. They should consider the complexities of learning and the individuality of the learning process.

#### Recommendation 37

The accountability process, as it applies to all involved in education, should be clearly communicated. It is recommended that accountability is evident in all aspects of the education system so teachers do not feel they are targeted.

### **5.3.7 Decision Making**

Participants recommend that the decision making process should involve all stakeholders who are related to the change. Likewise, changes in the education system should be clearly communicated to all who will be affected by them and in a timely fashion. They stress that changes should be properly implemented by providing the appropriate resources related to the change and any necessary training for teachers.

It has been the perspective of many of the participants that those in decision making roles have a distant relationship with the present day classroom and an inaccurate perception of the reality of schools. They also express concern that these decisions are not always made by educational specialists but rather by financial specialists. They believe decisions should not be made with the sole intent to reduce the cost of education since this will likely reduce the quality of education nor should they be made to satisfy

the needs of special interest groups. They stress that changes in education should be made for the benefit of the students.

Some participants discuss the need to improve the physical plant of schools and how poor physical conditions affect learning. Schneider (2002) describes how the physical learning environment affects academic learning in schools. Adequate funding is required for construction, design and regular maintenance. The value for good quality school buildings for academic achievement and teacher retention is further supported by Woolley and Winkler (2007).

Participants believe teachers should be involved in the decision making process because they are responsible for the delivery of education and because of their close relationship to the student. Participants feel it is fundamentally wrong not to consult teachers regarding decisions that affect the classroom since they must deliver the curriculum and address issues in the classroom firsthand. Apple (1997) describes how the expertise of teachers is not effectively involved in decisions regarding curriculum. Schmidt (2008), Duncan-Owens (2008) and Schoonmaker (2002) describe how the inadequate involvement of teachers in policy making has contributed to the difficulties in educational reform. Youngusband (2005) describes how teachers in this province do not feel adequately involved in the decision making process or in the development of policies. The OECD (2005) provides further support on how teacher involvement is critical to the success of reform:

The issues raised in the report go to the heart of teachers' work and careers, and the success of any reform requires that teachers themselves are actively involved in policy development and implementation. Unless teachers are actively involved in policy formulation, and feel a sense of "ownership" of reform, it is unlikely that substantial changes will be successfully implemented. (p.11)

Many participants feel teachers are involved in the decision making process regarding curriculum but question whether or not the concerns of teachers are truly considered. Other participants believe politicians and academics are influencing decisions in education but that teachers are merely implementing the changes as opposed to influencing them. Some participants expressed the opinion that teachers should have greater control regarding decisions that affect their day to day classrooms. They suggest policies should be considered guidelines and teachers should be permitted to make decisions in the best interests of their students instead of following strict policy guidelines.

Participants in this study have expressed great concern about decisions that are made in education that are guided primarily by financial constraints and efficiency. They feel these types of decisions ignore improving the education system or even maintaining the quality of education in this province. They feel that effective change in education will only occur if government is willing to adequately fund these changes. It was effectively expressed in this study that one can not put a "price" on education and that "children are our future".

Participants believe that parents can have a tremendous impact on the decision making process in education. They caution against listening to the views of a select group of vocal parents. They are also concerned about parents who do not respect the professional expertise of teachers and attempt to unfairly influence the decisions of teachers when making decisions about their child. Parents should also respect the professional expertise of teachers and not attempt to unfairly pressure teachers to alter their evaluation. This is not to say parents should not question the decisions of teachers

and seek appropriate explanations. Parents and teachers should work together to ensure that students attain the best possible education. However, teachers should be recognized as the educational experts.

#### Recommendation 38

This study recommends that changes in education be made when all stakeholders have been properly involved in the decision making process. Decision makers should ensure they consider the views of other stakeholders who have concerns regarding the change. It recommends that changes be properly communicated to all those who will be affected by the change. It is crucial that decision makers maintain strong communication with teachers and other stakeholders about educational changes and why these changes are beneficial for education. Any changes should be provided adequate financial support and training for those effecting the change. Changes should not simply be downloaded on teachers.

#### Recommendation 39

It is recommended that individuals involved in educational decision making should have strong experience in the educational field. It is necessary that decision makers understand the complex nature of teaching and learning. It is important that those who are ultimately responsible for making the decisions such as school district personnel and Department of Education personnel thoroughly consult with teachers, parents, and students because they are closest to how such changes will impact education.

#### Recommendation 40

It is recommended that teachers should be adequately involved in the decision making process since they have firsthand knowledge of how changes will affect their students. This study suggests that teacher involvement in decision making needs to be further examined to determine if teachers are effectively involved. It should also be examined if teachers require greater autonomy in decisions that affect their individual classrooms.

#### Recommendation 41

It is recommended that changes in education be made considering the best interest of the students as opposed to limited by financial constraints.

#### Recommendation 42

It is recommended that parents recognize the role they can play in influencing the decision making process in education and ensuring the needs of their children are amply met by the education system. However, it is important that the efforts to influence educational decision making work to the advantage of the education system and not simply to satisfy select groups of students with the most vocal parents. This can be accomplished through parent groups such as school councils and the NLFSC.

#### **5.4 Effect of Societal Attitudes and Societal Understanding of the Education System and the Teaching Profession**

This section examines the effects of societal perceptions of teachers and education, as well as the impact of the degree of knowledge possessed by society regarding the work of teachers and the operation of the education system. Teacher morale, wellness, and ability to perform effectively in the classroom due to workplaces challenges are discussed. Other concerns discussed are teacher withdrawal from extracurricular activities, loss of teachers, and the impact on hiring new teachers. Finally, the impact of society's perceptions of teachers and the education system are evaluated in relation to the effective delivery of education. Recommendations for change are made by both the participants and the researcher.

##### **5.4.1 Teacher Morale**

The teachers who participated in this study are clearly demoralized by not feeling respected or viewed in a positive light by society. They are frustrated with the lack of understanding by society of the specialized expertise required by teachers and society's lack of understanding of the long hours that teachers work throughout the year. Many issues are affecting their work and thus the education of children such as large class sizes, teacher cutbacks, inadequate funding, lack of resources, and the demands of a high workload. Teachers feel isolated in their profession and feel they lack opportunities for collegiality. This all leads to the demoralization of teachers. The demoralization of teachers is an issue that should not be ignored and can have serious implications for the education system (Younghusband, 2005, Nash, 2001).

It is important teachers find ways to celebrate the work they do and focus upon the positive they experience in their careers. Teachers need to be praised and rewarded for their work on an ongoing basis. Teachers should also to be given opportunities to build healthy workplace relationships. They need to no longer feel isolated and measures need to be made to ensure teachers build environments in which they are able to support each other.

#### Recommendation 43

It is recommended that teachers effectively learn to deal with negative experiences and not allow them to overpower their successes. It is also important teachers learn to deal with challenges that face them and initiate change when necessary. They should not be afraid to ask for help or allow themselves to become overburdened. It is recommended that teachers be provided with and made aware of avenues they should follow when they need help in dealing with negative experiences. This may be accomplished through the NLTA and the employer. In addition, teachers need to feel they are supported in their workplace as opposed to being viewed as weak when they look for support. A climate needs to be created to support teachers. This may be accomplished through those in leadership positions in the school and school district while working with the NLTA.

#### Recommendation 44

It is recommended that the NLTA work with school districts and the Department of Education to ensure the morale of teachers is raised and to communicate to teachers that they are valued. The morale of teachers can also be raised by addressing the issues

that have lead to the demoralization of teachers such as how teachers feel they are not respected or valued by society, as well as the challenges teachers face in the workplace such as high workload and large class sizes. It is recommended agencies such as the NLTA, the CTF, the CEA and the NLFSC work to raise the public profile of teachers and educate the public on the nature of the teachers work and the specialized expertise required of them.

#### **5.4.2 Teacher Wellness**

This study strongly suggests that teacher stress is resulting from a lack of value and lack of respect for their work in society. Likewise, the excessive work demands placed upon teachers can also affect their health and well-being. Participants repeatedly express concern over the health and well-being of teachers because of the excessive work demands placed upon them and the desire of teachers to provide for their students.

Younghusband (2005) completed a study that focused on teacher stress in this province. This study revealed multiple demands on teachers, inadequate resources, lack of support from administration, lack of collegiality from other teachers, and inadequate training for the introduction of new curriculum and new policies. Similar results have been found in the literature (Taylor, Zimmer, & Womack, 2005; Chen & Miller, 1997) in which lack of respect for teachers, high workload, inadequate inclusion in decision making, class size, inadequate resources, and abuse are some of the factors believed to contribute to teacher stress.

This study demonstrates how teachers often make personal sacrifices for the benefit of their students. It has been previously recommended that teachers should recognize that continuous personal sacrifice will eventually negatively impact their own



well-being. They need to explore other avenues to help their students instead of continuously making self-sacrifices that will affect their health over time. It has also been recommended that teachers also should recognize that their tendency to continuously accommodate so students will not suffer not only affects their health but ultimately prevents major educational issues from being brought to the forefront and therefore properly addressed.

#### Recommendation 45

It is important that these stresses be removed from the profession for the well being of teachers and the success of education. All of these issues need to be effectively addressed by those in decision making roles such as in government and school districts. As discussed previously, these issues need to be continuously brought to the forefront by other groups such the NLTA, school councils, the NLFSC, the CEA and the CTF.

#### **5.4.3 Teacher Effectiveness**

Participants describe how teacher workload issues are impacting upon the ability of teachers to be effective in the classroom to the extent they would like to be for their students. Several participants make reference to the workload study completed by Dibbon (2004). They describe how teachers are unable to give their student the “attention they need” because of issues that lead to increased workload such as large class size, dealing with children on the Pathways Program, paperwork, and having to search for curriculum resources because they have not been adequately provided. The inability of teachers in this province to effectively provide for their students due to the demands of the teaching profession is also supported by the study completed by Younghusband in

2005. The OECD (2005) provides global recognition that teacher effectiveness is affected by the quality of their environment and the adequacy of support provided:

The quality of teaching is determined not just by the “quality” of the teachers – although that is clearly critical – but also by the environment in which they work. Able teachers are not necessarily going to reach their potential in settings that do not provide appropriate support or sufficient challenge and reward. (p.7)

Teachers need to be realistic in regard to their ability to accomplish the unreasonable workload expected of them and be aware of the negative effects of trying to maintain a high workload on their health and well being as previously discussed. It is important that Eastern Newfoundland society recognizes the negative impacts of these demands on the quality of education of students.

#### **5.4.4 Teacher Withdrawal from Extracurricular Activities**

Several teachers discussed how they feel the high workload of teachers will result in teachers withdrawing their participation in extracurricular activities. They feel teachers will have no choice as they are given additional responsibilities such as with the introduction of new school initiatives such as School Development<sup>8</sup> and the Pathways program that do not consider the time that teachers must commit to them. Teachers in this study also suggest that withdrawal from extracurricular activities may be one mechanism by which they may be able to elicit change. They suggest that society should properly fund and support these activities.

All participants in this study strongly supported the value of extracurricular activities but most did not believe that participation should be made mandatory.

---

<sup>8</sup> A School Development Plan is a relatively new expectation of every school in the province and is supported by the Department of Education. It is based upon school effectiveness and school development literature. It must be developed, employed, and reviewed by a team of teachers and administrators at the school level.

#### Recommendation 46

It is recommended that society needs to value the volunteer efforts of teachers and recognize that teachers may not volunteer due to the high demands of their workload. It is important that the workload issue be addressed if society hopes that teachers will continue to volunteer in extracurricular activities. Consideration should be given to an over reliance on teachers to support these activities. Likewise, a mechanism may need to be put in place to ensure extracurricular activities are properly supported and funded. These may be accomplished through the NLTA, government, school districts, school councils, the NLFSC, the CTF and the CEA.

#### **5.4.5 The Loss of Teachers**

The teacher participants feel excessive workload is impacting their personal lives. One teacher discusses how he is considering leaving the profession because of the high work demands placed upon him and the consequences for his personal life. The teacher participants describe others who choose not to remain in the profession because of the workload issues and how they are unable to cope with these expectations. The NLTA participant explains the loss of teachers due to high workload is an issue that the association is presently addressing and has been a concern for a long period of time. Younghusband (2005) asserts that many teachers reported considering leaving the profession due to the demands of high workload and the stress that they experience as a result. The OECD (2005) provides evidence that difficulty in attracting and retaining quality teachers has become a global concern that must be addressed for economic and social benefit:

The findings and policy concerns could be taken as evidence that teaching is a profession in long-term decline. As societies have become wealthier and educational qualifications have increased and employment opportunities have expanded, teaching's appeal as a path to upward social mobility and job security does seem to have diminished. Widespread concerns about the difficulties faced by many schools, fuelled by often very negative media reporting, have damaged teaching's appeal. Expectations and demands on schools have been increasing, while in many countries resources have not kept pace. (p.5)

Dibbon (2004) recommends that an increase in teacher preparation time in the work day would reduce the loss of teachers and increase interest for those considering entering the teaching profession.

Teachers in this study have discussed their concerns over a lack of support from administrators when dealing with academic and behavioural concerns. Younghusband (2005) also describes how a lack of supportive work environments in regard to addressing student behaviour, as well as academic concerns is leading to the loss of teachers.

Feelings of isolation were felt strongly when teachers in the current study felt that they had to deal with behavioural concerns and discipline without the support of administrators. The perceived lack of control over academics and student issues, coupled with the lack of authority to act on their knowledge and experience, was cause for some of the participants to consider changing careers (p.181).

The results of this study further support the fear that teacher shortages will become a real phenomenon. If society hopes to retain teachers, mechanisms need to be put in place to address the challenges facing teachers today.

#### Recommendation 47

To prevent the loss of teachers, the challenges facing teachers such as inadequate support from administrators when dealing with behavioural difficulties with students or academics concerns must be addressed. It is important that those in leadership roles be educated on the value of effectively supporting teachers in these circumstances. Other

challenges previously discussed facing teachers such as high workload, inadequate resources, negative perceptions of teachers, and large class size must also be addressed to retain teachers.

#### **5.4.6 New Teachers**

Several participants discussed how the present attitudes towards the teaching profession and the present working conditions are not attracting 'good teachers' to the field. In fact, they explain teachers themselves are not recommending teaching as a career choice. Potential new teachers are recognizing that teachers are not being treated with respect and therefore do not choose the profession. They also feel that, due to workload issues, individuals are choosing not to enter the teaching profession or are also choosing to leave the profession. Several participants feel if the "best and brightest" are not attracted to or retained in the teaching profession then the education system stands to lose. As a result, participants feel this will lead to hiring individuals who are not as highly qualified and consequently the quality of education will suffer.

#### Recommendation 48

It is important that negative attitudes towards teachers and the difficult working conditions change so that highly qualified individuals are attracted and retained in the teaching profession. Numerous recommendations have previously been made to address the negative perceptions of teachers and educate society on the realities of the teaching profession.

#### **5.4.7 Effect of Society's Perceptions on Education**

Negative societal attitudes towards teachers and lack of understanding of the work of teachers are believed to be negatively impacting education. These attitudes have led to the demoralization of teachers. A lack of respect for teachers by parents and the media is believed to be translating into a lack of respect for teachers by their students and is effecting the classroom interactions between teacher and student. The lack of respect for teachers is believed by participants to contribute to less qualified and motivated individuals entering the profession and is also contributing to teachers leaving the profession.

It has also been suggested that there are individuals who resent teachers because these individuals are poorly educated and unemployed or underemployed. This is more than unfortunate because it is perceived they are likely a product of an education system and social structure that has failed them.

Society's lack of understanding of the work of teachers may have led to the devaluing of the education system. A greater understanding of the specialized expertise required of teachers and the complexity of the learning experience is necessary to obtain greater support for education. It is important society understands how educational issues such as high workload demands, large class sizes, teacher cutbacks, lack of classroom resources, and lack of appropriate in-servicing are impacting upon the ability of the teacher to be effective in the classroom. These issues are also considered to prevent teachers from paying attention to the other needs of their students outside the academic realm such as assisting them in personal development and providing other measures of guidance. It is believed these issues are ultimately impacting the education of children

and leading to a decreased quality of education. It is important that members of Eastern Newfoundland society recognize that a poor quality education has great implications for our society.

Ideally, the education system should strive towards the success of all students so they can ultimately become productive members of society with the necessary skills and confidence to enable them to succeed. It is important for society to recognize there is a correlation between a lack of education and poverty, as well as, poor health (Field, Kuczera, & Pont, n.d.; Feinstein, Sabates, Anderson, Sorhaindo, & Hammond, 2006). Economic and social well-being are also supported by quality education (Nenty, 1997; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007; Desjardins & Schuller, 2006). Valuing the education system and investing more resources and funding in it could eliminate the dependence of poorly educated individuals on social programs. Likewise, there would be less of a burden on the healthcare system.

### **5.5 Recent Developments in Education**

It should be noted that there have been recent developments on behalf of the provincial government in education since the data in this study has been collected. These developments may be viewed as recognition on behalf of the government regarding some of the issues addressed in this study. A news release in from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (2007) highlights some recent investments in education:

The minister noted that significant investments have also been made to ensure a positive work environment for teachers... Approximately \$12.4 million kept 226 teaching positions in the system over the past two years. The average K-9 class now has less than 20 students. There was \$3.7 million for professional development and an annual allocation of \$4 million for new textbooks and resources. (Minister Highlights Investments in Education, para. 3)

The government has implemented the ISSP/Pathways Commission to examine the workload implications of the program while still addressing the needs of students. The Teacher Allocation Commission has also been implemented to review the present formula for determining teacher allocations. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (2007) describes its mandate for the Teacher Allocation Commission:

The primary focus of the Commission to Review Teacher Allocation must be centred on the two most central facets of public education: teaching and learning. It will be necessary to view the considerations of the commission with these in mind, as well as understanding that the fiscal realities of our Newfoundland and Labrador economy must be weighed as well. (Teacher Allocation Commission, Introduction, para. 3)

From this quote, it appears financial constraints may continue to play a major role in the decision making process in education and will, perhaps, continue to influence the quality of education in this province.

The results of the Teacher Allocation Commission were released from government in a news release on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and it was stated: "The new method is based on the premise that regardless of where a student lives or how many students attend a particular school, all are entitled to equal access, and to a quality education and opportunities to learn" (Allocating Teaching Resources Goes Back to Basics, para. 4). The NLTA (2008) reported to be pleased with the changes to the teacher allocation model in a news release.

Similarly, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador describes the results of the ISSP/Pathways Commission in a News Release dated December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

*Focusing on Students – The ISSP and Pathways Commission Report* considers the challenges of special education programming using the current model, and looks at workload, the volume of paperwork and the roles of parents, teachers and administrators. It provides a wide range of recommendations to streamline the administrative requirements and improve the delivery of special education



programming. (Changes Announced to ISSP and Pathways Models for Special Education Programming, para. 3)

Likewise, the NLTA (2007) reported that it is pleased with the ISSP/Pathways Commission Report and believes that the changes will have positive implications for teachers and their workload.

Overall, it appears government has made recent strides to improve the conditions of the education system. It is the hope of this research that government, which reflects the values of society, continues to recognize the educational needs of this province and provide continued support to both teachers and students.

#### **5.6 Summary of Implications and Recommendations**

There are numerous recommendations made throughout this chapter. Many of these recommendations can not be considered in isolation. In this study, they have arisen from the belief teachers and education are negatively perceived in Eastern Newfoundland society. This research implies these perceptions have arisen from an inadequate understanding of the important role of teachers in society, as well as the true nature of teacher's work. Many indications have been provided in which the work of teachers has been devalued and education has also been devalued.

It can be implied that an inadequate understanding of factors such as teacher workload, teacher responsibilities and the specialized expertise of teachers have lead to the devaluing of teachers and their work, as well as the challenges that presently face teachers and students in the education system. This study suggests that challenges such as large class sizes, inadequate resources, numerous teacher responsibilities, increased forms of harassment of teachers, and high workload are a result of an inadequate

understanding of teacher's work, as well as a lack of respect. The negative perceptions of teachers and the challenges facing teachers are believed to have negative implications for teacher morale, teacher stress, teacher wellness, the attraction and retention of the most qualified teachers, the ability of teachers to effectively teach, and the production of a well educated society.

It is essential that the true nature of teacher's work and the challenges facing teachers and education be effectively communicated so that society can gain an accurate understanding of the issues. Numerous agencies can unite to accomplish this goal such as the NLTA, government agencies such as the Department of Education, school districts, Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), school councils, the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils (NLFSC) and the Canadian Education Association (CEA).

It is believed that in order to accomplish true educational change attitudes towards teachers and education must be critically examined by society. Hanushek and Woessmann (2007) warn that "simple resource policies – reducing class sizes, increasing teacher salaries, spending more on schools, and so forth – have little consistent impact on student performance when the overall institutional structure is not changed" (p.77). It is believed that teacher quality is critical to educational success (OECD, 2005; Hanushek and Woessmann, 2007). Numerous recommendations have been made in this study that support quality teachers, as well as attract and retain highly competent teachers. Teacher quality can be supported by careful selection into teacher education programs, careful hiring practices, effective ongoing professional development, addressing the concerns of ineffective teachers, removal of teacher challenges, carefully outlining teacher responsibilities, maintaining reasonable workload levels, developing supportive

workplace environments, and appropriately rewarding teachers. It is critical that teachers are positively perceived, valued by society and strongly supported since they directly influence student achievement. Furthermore, educational success has strong implications for economic and social well-being.

### **5.7 My Final Thoughts**

It took many years to complete this work. This is largely because I am so invested in bringing the issues that affect teachers and education to the forefront since I am affected every day by these challenges. This is also because of the workload issues that also affect me in the teaching profession. I rarely had time during the school year to work on this thesis because I either needed to attend after-school meetings, prepare my classes for the next day, make phone calls, correct, and fulfill numerous other responsibilities from morning to night. I used most of my "vacation time" to complete the large volume of this work. I continued to extend deadlines to complete this work because I did not want to compromise the quality of my professional work nor did I want to compromise the quality of this thesis.

In completing this work, I should not have been surprised to discover that I fit the teacher personality described by participants that emerged as a theme in this study. I have recognized that I am self-sacrificing to the point that it affects my health and well-being. I often put my students first and not myself. I remember buying my own digital projector for classroom use because I felt it would enhance my teaching and benefit my students.

I am still amazed to find that decisions are made regarding my students without my consent and sometimes without consultation with me. I find these decisions most

often to the detriment of my students and that my professional expertise is not valued. I should not have been shocked when I was told that I was expected to utilize student note-taking as my only method of delivering the curriculum. I was further amazed when arguments pertaining to the value of differentiated instruction and addressing the needs of students with learning difficulties were not understood. Nor should have I been surprised when I had to fight for permission to develop my own website to enhance my teaching. Sadly, these occurrences never cease to amaze me.

This research has enabled me to believe that society does not truly understand the value of education and specialized expertise required of teachers today. In addition, it has become a recent realization to me that students do not value their education. It has become commonplace for students to not complete homework, to not study on regular basis, to not submit assignments, and to not write tests. There seems to be little concern for the consequences. Like many teachers, I feel helpless in trying to address the problem. I question if this is a reflection of society. I fear that this apathy towards schooling will have serious ramifications for my students into the future. I also fear for our society because it seems that the benefits of a good education, that are obvious to me, are not recognized or valued.

My students still ask why I choose to teach. Clearly, they continue to view teaching an undesirable profession. I explain that I love teaching and that they are the reason I enjoy my profession. I continue to remind them of their own value and that they are worthy of the very best teachers. Hopefully, they will develop their own critical consciousness of the world in which they exist.

## 5.8 Conclusions

The results of this study suggest a transformation in societal attitudes is required in which education and teachers are both positively perceived and highly valued by society. It is important society is properly educated regarding the need to adequately fund and effectively support education so a proper investment can be made in today's youth for the future of our society. These results advocate that it is critical society recognizes that teachers have been placed in difficult situations for too long and that this is negatively impacting students and ultimately society.

This study implies that many members of society do not truly understand the nature of the teaching profession or the problems that exist within it. Members of society believe they understand the nature of teaching but are, in fact, truly unaware of the degree of expertise required of teachers or of the daily and ongoing challenges that face teachers. More importantly, it appears society does not truly understand the negative impact of all of these issues on the education of students and how this adversely impacts the child later in life, as well as society.

This study indicates that teachers are contributing to this lack of understanding in society by ineffectively communicating these issues to the public. It is important to ask why teachers are not representing themselves properly to the public. Is this because teachers have quietly resigned themselves to the public being unwilling to listen? Is it because teachers are so overwhelmed they do not know how to begin to solve the problem? Certainly, in part, this research has shown that teachers, by the nature of their personalities, are complying with the extra demands placed upon them because they do not want to see their students negatively impacted. As a result, teachers are overburdening themselves by accepting an even greater workload that compounds the

great level of stress they are already experiencing. Likewise, society may be reluctant to hear the problems of teachers for a variety of reasons. Is this because so many in society are also overworked? Is it resentment for the perceived “time off” teachers have throughout the year? It is important that educators build with society a stronger relationship that enables a greater understanding of the realities of the education system.

This study has examined a cross section of Eastern Newfoundland society and how its perceptions of the work of teachers and the valuing of education relate to each other. The participants suggest the understanding of the nature of the teaching profession is reflected in the extent of their relationship with schools. The stronger the relationship they have with schools, the greater understanding they possess for the nature of the work of teachers. It is a recommendation of this study that relationships in education be strengthened. It is important that teachers, students and parents further build their relationship and communication with each other, as well as foster mutual respect. Relationships need to be improved between teachers, administrators, school districts, and government so the needs of the education system are properly communicated. Teachers and other stakeholders in education should foster better relationships with the public and educate the public on the true nature of teaching and the challenges that face education today. This development of a stronger relationship between students, teachers, parents, administrators and other stakeholders in education is essential so that society can achieve a common goal of providing the best education possible for our youth.

In conclusion, it is essential society becomes become critically aware of the value of the work of teachers and how the lack of knowledge about the expertise and work required of teachers is contributing to devaluing the teaching profession. It stands to

reason that this is leading to the devaluing education. If a greater critical consciousness is created about the challenges facing teachers, it can lead to greater improvements in education which will ultimately lead to the overall benefit of society.

## REFERENCES

- Apple, Michael W. (1997). Is there a curriculum voice to reclaim. In D. Flinders and S. Thorton (Eds.), *The curriculum studies reader* (pp.342-349). New York: Routledge.
- Apple, Michael W. (1993). *Official knowledge: Democratic education in a conservative age*. New York: Routledge.
- Bartholomew, Cheryl G. & Schnorr, Donna L. (1991). *Gender equity: Educational problems and possibilities for female students*. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED356305). Retrieved July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from ERIC Database.
- Berg, Bruce L. (1995). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bryant, Ian.(1996). Action research and reflective practice. In David Scott and Robin Usher (Eds.), *Understanding Educational Research*. London: Routledge.
- Burgess, R. G. (1984). *In the field*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Canadian Teachers' Federation (2005). *Canadian Teachers' Workplace Survey*. Retrieved February 22, 2007 from <http://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/default.htm?main.htm>
- Canadian Teachers' Federation (n.d.). *Teaching in Canada: Working Conditions*. Retrieved February 24, 2007 from <http://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/default.htm?main.htm>
- Canadian Teachers' Federation (n.d.). *Moving from the cult of testing to a culture of professional accountability*. Retrieved February 24, 2007 from <http://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/default.htm?main.htm>
- Chen, M. and Miller, G. (1997). *Teacher stress: A review of the international literature*. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED410187). Retrieved July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from ERIC Database.
- Connell, R.W. (1985). *Teachers' work*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Creswell, John. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Denzin, Norman K. & Lincoln Yvonna S. (1998). Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research. In Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. London: SAGE Publications.



- Desjardins, R., & Schuller, T. (2006). Understanding the social outcomes of learning. In Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), *Proceedings of the Copenhagen Symposium: Measuring the effects of education on health and civic engagement* (pp. 11-18). Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Retrieved July 28<sup>th</sup> from [http://www.oecd.org/document/61/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_35845581\\_37425853\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/61/0,3343,en_2649_35845581_37425853_1_1_1_1,00.html)
- Dibbon, David (2004). *It's about time: A report on the impact of workload on teachers and students*. Commissioned by Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. St. John's, NL, Canada.
- Doyle, Clar & Singh, Amarjit (2006). *Reading and Teaching Henry Giroux*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Doyle, Clar (1994). Dancing with paradigms. *The morning watch: Educational and social analysis*, 22(1-2), 33-41.
- Duncan-Owens Deborah, (2008, June 4). *Evidentiary Sleight of Hand: The High Stakes of Silencing Teachers*. Online Submission, Paper presented at the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (4th, Urbana-Champaign, IL, May 14-17, 2008). (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED501572). Retrieved July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from ERIC Database.
- Edge, Joy, Fisher, Meg, Martin, Cindy, & Morris, Marcia (1997). *Promoting gender equity within the classroom*. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED421393). Retrieved July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from ERIC Database.
- Ehrich, Lisa Catherine (2003). Phenomenology: The quest for meaning. In Tom O'Donoghue and Keith Punch (Eds.), *Qualitative educational research in action: doing and reflecting* (pp. 42-69). London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Evans, Linda (2002). *Reflective practice in educational research*. New York: Continuum.
- Feinstein, L., Sabates, R., Anderson, T. M., Sorhaindo, A. & Hammond, C. (2006). What are the effects of education on health? In Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), *Proceedings of the Copenhagen Symposium: Measuring the effects of education on health and civic engagement* (pp. 171-354). Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Retrieved July 28<sup>th</sup> from [http://www.oecd.org/document/61/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_35845581\\_37425853\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/61/0,3343,en_2649_35845581_37425853_1_1_1_1,00.html)
- Fennema, Elizabeth (2000). *Gender Equity for Mathematics and Science*. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED446968). Retrieved July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from ERIC Database.

- Field, S., Kuczera M., & Pont, B. (n.d.). *No More Failures: Ten steps to equity in education. Summary and Policy Recommendations*. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Retrieved July 28<sup>th</sup> from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/50/18/38692453.pdf>
- Froese-Germain, Bernie (2004). *Rethinking Educational Accountability*. Retrieved February 24, 2007 from <http://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/default.htm?main.htm>
- Funk, Carole (2002). *Gender equity in educational institutions: Problems, practices, and strategies for change*. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED476601). Retrieved July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from ERIC Database.
- Giroux, Henry A. (1981). *Ideology, culture & the process of schooling*. Philadelphia U.S.A.: Temple University Press.
- Glesne, Corrine (1998). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. New York: Longman.
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador-Canada (2008). *Allocating Teaching Resources Goes Back to Basics*. Retrieved July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 from <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2008/edu/0312n06.htm>
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador-Canada (2007). *Changes Announced to ISSP and Pathways Models for Special Education Programming*. Retrieved July 23, 2008 from <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2007/edu/1218n04.htm>
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador-Canada (2007). *Minister Highlights Investments in Education*. Retrieved March 19, 2007 from <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2007/edu/0305n02.htm>
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador-Canada(2007). *Teacher Allocation Commission*. Retrieved March 19, 2007 from <http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/tac/default.htm>
- Goho, James (2004, May-June). *Employment and earning differences for community college Graduates: intersection of gender and equity*. Online Submission, Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Boston, MA. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED491004). Retrieved July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from ERIC Database.
- Hanushek, Eric A., & Woessmann, Ludger (2007). *The role of school improvement in economic development*. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED498042). Retrieved July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from ERIC Database.
- Harland, Janet (1996). Evaluation as realpolitik. In David Scott and Robin Usher (Eds.), *Understanding educational research*. London: Routledge.

- Holstein, James A. & Gubrium, Jaber F. (1998). Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology, and interpretive practice. In Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. London: SAGE Publications
- Janesick, Valerie J. (1998). The dance of qualitative research design: Metaphor, methodolatry and meaning. In Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Lakomski, Gabriele (1999). Critical theory and education. In John P. Keeves and Gabriele Lakomski (Eds.), *Issues in Educational Research*. New York: Pergamon.
- LeCompte, Margaret D. (1995). Some notes on power, agenda, and voice: A researcher's personal evolution toward critical collaborative research. In Peter L. McLaren and James M. Giarelli (Eds.), *Critical theory and educational research*. State University of New York Press.
- Loeb, H., Knapp, M. & Elfers, A. (2008). Teachers' response to standards-based reform: Probing reform assumptions in Washington State. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 16(8), 1-28. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. EJ800882). Retrieved July 24, 2008 from ERIC Database.
- Manen, Max van (1999). The language of pedagogy and the primacy of student experience. In J. Loughran (Ed.), *Researching teaching: Methodologies and practices for understanding pedagogy*. London: Falmer Press.
- McLaren, Peter L. & Giarelli, James M. (1995). Introduction: Critical theory and educational research. In Peter L. McLaren and James M. Giarelli (eds.), *Critical theory and educational research*. State University of New York Press.
- McNeil, L. M., Coppola, E., Radigan, J., & Vasquez Heilig, J. (2008). Avoidable losses: High-stakes accountability and the dropout crisis. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 16(3). (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. EJ800872). Retrieved July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 from ERIC Database.
- Medical Research Council of Canada, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (2003). *Tri-council policy statement: Ethical conduct for research involving humans* (Catalogue No: MR21-18/2003E). Public Works and Government Services Canada. Available from MRC Website, <http://www.mrc.gc.ca>, NSERC Website, <http://www.nserc.ca>, and SSHRC Website, <http://www.sshrc.ca>
- Merriam, Sharan B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

- Nash, Mabel Mary (2001). *The crime of silence: The relationship between socioeconomic status and schooling experiences*. Unpublished master's thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, NL, Canada.
- Nenty, H. Johnson (1997). Link among education, research, educational research and quality of life. *Proceedings of the Seventh BOLESWA Symposium: Educational research for quality of life*. Hosted by Swaziland Educational Research Association at the University of Swaziland, Kwaluseni, Swaziland. Retrieved July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from [http://boleswa97.tripod.com/nenty\\_link.htm](http://boleswa97.tripod.com/nenty_link.htm)
- Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association and Public Legal Information Association of NL (n.d.). *Teacher's Rights in Newfoundland and Labrador: dealing with harassment by student, teachers and other adults* [Brochure]. St. John's, NL, Canada: Public Legal Information Association of NL.
- Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (2008). *NLTA pleased with Allocation Model*. Retrieved July 23, 2008 from [http://www.nlta.nl.ca/HTML\\_Files/html\\_pages/news/mar08re1.pdf](http://www.nlta.nl.ca/HTML_Files/html_pages/news/mar08re1.pdf)
- Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (2007). *NLTA pleased with ISSP/Pathways Commission Report*. Retrieved July 23, 2008 from [http://www.nlta.nl.ca/html\\_files/html\\_pages/news/dec07re1.pdf](http://www.nlta.nl.ca/html_files/html_pages/news/dec07re1.pdf)
- Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (2006). *Supporting Services Supporting Learning: A submission to the ministerial commission to review ISSP/Pathways by the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association*. St. John's, NL, Canada: Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association.
- Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (2006). *Teaching and Learning: The essence of education: A submission to the teacher allocation review commission by the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association*. St. John's, NL, Canada: Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Publishing (2005). *Teachers matter: attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. Extended Overview*. Retrieved July 28<sup>th</sup> from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/39/47/34990905.pdf>
- Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Schneider, Mark (2002). *Do school facilities affect academic outcomes?* (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED470979). Retrieved July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from ERIC Database.

- Schoonmaker, Frances (2002). *Growing up teaching: From personal knowledge to professional practice*. New York: Teachers College Press
- Schmidt, Tom (2008). Scratching the surface of *No Child Left Behind*: How *No Child Left Behind* unfairly affects schools with significant proportions of disadvantaged students. (Undergraduate thesis, University of California, 2008). (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED501254). Retrieved July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from ERIC Database.
- Scott, David. (1996). Methods and data in educational research. In D. Scott and R. Usher (Eds.), *Understanding educational research*. London: Routledge.
- Segall, Avner (2002). *Disturbing Practice: Reading teacher education as text*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Small R. (1999). Phenomenology and existentialism. In John P. Keeves and Gabriele Lakomski (Eds.), *Issues in Educational Research*. New York: Pergamon.
- Smyth, John (1999). Researching the cultural politics of teachers' learning. In J. Loughran (Ed.), *Researching teaching: Methodologies and practices for understanding pedagogy*. London: Falmer Press.
- Smyth, John & Shacklock, Geoffery (1998). Behind the cleansing of socially critical research accounts. In John Smyth and Geoffery Shacklock (Eds.), *Being reflexive in critical educational and social research*. London: Falmer Press
- Taylor, B., Zimmer, C., and Womack, S. T. (2005). *Strategies to prevent teacher stress and burnout*. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED490663). Retrieved July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from ERIC Database.
- Tripp, David (1998). Critical incidents in action inquiry. In John Smyth and Geoffery Shacklock (Eds.), *Being reflexive in critical educational and social research*. London: Falmer Press
- Umbach, Paul D. (2006, May). *Gender equity in the academic labor market: An analysis of academic disciplines*. Paper presented at the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Association for Institutional Research Forum, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED493514). Retrieved July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from ERIC Database.
- Usher, Robin (1996a). A critique of the neglected epistemological assumptions of educational research. In David Scott and Robin Usher (Eds.), *Understanding educational research*. London: Routledge.
- Usher, Robin (1996b). Textuality and reflexivity in educational research. In David Scott and Robin Usher (Eds.), *Understanding educational research*. London: Routledge.

- Woolley, Mark & Winkler, Mary K. (2007). *School facilities investments in the Washington metropolitan areas*. The Urban Institute, Washington DC. (ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service No. ED500830). Retrieved July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from ERIC Database.
- Younghusband, Lynda J. (2005). *High school teachers' perceptions of their working environment in Newfoundland: A grounded theory study*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Memorial University of Newfoundland, NL, Canada.

***APPENDIX A***

*Letter and Consent Form*

To Whom it May Concern:

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University. I am completing thesis work on society's perception of teachers, the teaching profession, and the implications of these attitudes for education. I believe that you can make a significant contribution to this work. I would like to request that you become involved with a journal experience in which you consider your own perceptions pertaining to teachers and the teaching profession, as well as, the attitudes of those around you. I would then also like to request your permission to interview you on your perceptions and what you view to be the perceptions of others regarding the teaching profession. I have attached a list of questions that I would like you to consider for both the journal and interview experience. The expected time duration for the journal would be 1 hour and the expected time duration for the interview would be 1 hour.

In my research, I will examine the perceptions of a number of individuals from many areas of society. I will interview teachers to examine how they feel they are perceived and valued by society. I will choose from teachers who have many years of teaching experience as well those teachers who are new to the profession. I will interview individuals who are closely related to the teaching profession in that they are in key decision making roles regarding education. These will include administrators, school board personnel and officials from the department of education. I will interview parents and students for a perspective of those outside of the education field but who are closely connected to the work of teachers. Interviews from staff members of the NLTA will be used to provide insight into the perceptions of society regarding the work of teachers. Members outside of the education community will also be interviewed such as business people, politicians and clergy.

Since this research is about society's perceptions of teachers and the implications of these perceptions for education, then the results of this research will be beneficial to society as a whole. Gaining an understanding into these issues can help elicit necessary change. Participants in this study will not only benefit society but can also benefit themselves by exploring their own reality in regard to these perceptions and how this may impact on education in society. It will also provide participants a forum in which they can express their views and an opportunity to promote change in society by revealing their attitudes.



Every effort will be made to keep all information gathered in this study confidential and at no time will individuals be identified. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. You have the right to revoke your permission to use any or all information gathered at any time prior to the submission of the thesis. You may decline to answer any individual questions during the interview or stop the interview at any time. Questions provided to you for the journal experience are simply guidelines and you are not obligated to provide information that you are not comfortable providing. Journal entries, audio recordings, and transcripts of audio recordings made during the interview will be held in a secure location during the research period and will be destroyed after a five year time period upon completion of the study unless you give written consent to do otherwise. You will be given the opportunity to review your contribution to the thesis before submission of the thesis.

The proposal for this research has been approved by the Interdisciplinary Committee for Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR). If you have any ethical concerns about the research that are not dealt with by the researchers, you may contact the Chairperson of ICEHR through the Committee's secretary, Ms. Eleanor Butler, at the Office of Research, Memorial University. The phone number available is 737-8368 or you may use [icehr@mun.ca](mailto:icehr@mun.ca) for e-mail.

If you are in agreement with participating in this study, please sign both consent forms and return one copy to myself. The other is for you. If you are under the legal age of majority of nineteen, the consent of a parent or guardian will be necessary. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 576-2957 or [karabourgeois@esdnl.ca](mailto:karabourgeois@esdnl.ca). If at any time you wish to speak with an individual other than myself regarding particular aspects of this study other than ethical issues, you may contact my faculty supervisor, Dr. Clar Doyle, at 737-7556 or [cdoyle@mun.ca](mailto:cdoyle@mun.ca).

I would appreciate it if you would complete both attached consent forms and return one copy to me by \_\_\_\_\_. The other copy is for your records.

Sincerely yours,

Kara Bourgeois

*Consent Form*

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby give my consent to provide a journal and to participate in an interview for this study. I understand that:

- a. any information gathered (as noted above) will be used only for educational purposes and that this information may be shared with the researchers' supervisor and with other legitimate professional and consultants.
- b. Every effort will be made to keep all information gathered confidential and to be used only for purposes stated.
- c. audio recordings, transcripts of audio recordings, and journals will be held in a secure location during the research and will be destroyed after a five year time period after the completion of the thesis, unless my written consent has been given to do otherwise.
- d. I have the right to revoke my permission to use any or all information gathered at any time prior to the submission of the thesis.
- e. I have the right to voluntarily withdraw from this study at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Consenting Individual

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness-Optional

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Consenting Party

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Witness

**To be completed only if participant is under the legal age of majority of nineteen.**

I have read the enclosed letter and the statements above on this consent form and I understand the nature of the research. I understand that I may withdraw my child from this study at any time or revoke permission to use any or all information gathered any time prior to the submission of the thesis. I understand that I may contact the researcher or the faculty supervisor for the research at any time if I have any questions concerning the nature of the research. I also understand that I may contact the Chairperson for ICEHR if I have any concerns or questions pertaining to ethical issues of this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

***APPENDIX B***

*Questions for Journal and Interview*

## Questions for Journal and Interview

**Note:** These questions are simply guidelines intended to assist you in the journal and to provide you with an idea of what to expect in the interview experience. You are not expected to answer individual questions, they are only intended to guide you. The seven major headings are the aspects of this study that the researcher intends to examine. You may use individual questions only if you wish. You should also feel free to add other ideas not included in the questions under the seven major headings.

### *1. Attitudes towards Teachers*

- What are your attitudes towards the teaching profession? Why do you feel this way? Are there any personal experiences you would like to relate that make you feel this way?
- How do you think the teaching profession is viewed by society? Explain why. Can you provide examples?
- Why do you think that this perception exists? Explain.
- How do you feel that the teaching profession should be viewed by society? Why?
- Do you think that attitudes towards teachers have changed over the last fifty years or so? Of so, explain how you feel they have changed and why.
- What do you believe are the attributes of a good teacher? Explain.
- What do you believe are the attributes of a bad teacher? Explain.

### *2. Value of Teachers*

- To what degree do you think that teachers **are** valued and respected by society? Why do you think this? Are there any personal experiences you would like to relate that make you feel this way?
- To what degree do you think that teachers **should** be valued and respected by society? Why do you think this?

### *3. Importance of Teachers*

- How much importance do you think the teaching profession **is** accredited by society? Why? Are there any personal experiences you would like to relate that make you feel this way?
- How much importance do you think the teaching profession **should be** accredited? Why?

### *4. Teacher Responsibilities*

- What do you believe **are** the responsibilities of teachers?
- What responsibilities do you believe that teachers **should** carry out?
- What role do you think teachers play in volunteer or extra-curricular activities?
- What role do you think teacher should play in volunteer or extra-curricular activities?
- What is your perception of teacher workload? Are teachers underworked, overworked or is their workload reasonable? Explain why you feel this way?
- Do you believe that teacher salaries reflect teacher responsibilities? Why or why not?

### *5. Teacher Training*

- a. What kind of academic requirements should be expected of students applying to the Faculty of Education? Explain why you believe this.
- b. Do you feel that there should be any requirements other than academic for admittance to the Faculty of Education? Why or why not?
- c. What particular expertise or training do you believe teachers should have besides what is obtained from academic institutions?
- d. Do you believe that teachers are adequately qualified? Explain.
- e. Do you believe that teacher salaries reflect teacher training? Why or why not?

### *6. Decision Making in Education*

- a. Who do you think influences the decisions that are made surrounding educational change? Why?
- b. Who do you think should be involved in the decision making process surrounding educational change? Why?
- c. Who do you think is most knowledgeable in making decisions that affect educational change? Why?
- d. Do you feel that teachers are adequately involved in the decision making process involving educational change? Why or why not? How or how not?
- e. How much control do you feel a teacher should have when making decisions pertaining to their students? (These decisions could be related to student behaviour, evaluation and instruction.) Explain.
- f. Do you believe that teacher have adequate control in decisions pertaining to their own students? Explain. Are there any personal experiences you would like to relate that make you feel this way?
- g. Do you believe that any others should be involved in the decision making process of teachers in the classroom? If so, who else do you believe should be involved and to what extent? Explain.
- h. Do you believe that involving individuals in the decision making process of teachers in the classroom could help or hinder the ability of teachers to succeed in their profession? Explain. Are there any personal experiences you would like to relate that make you feel this way?

### *7. Implications for the Future*

- a. What implications, if any, do you think any of these attitudes have for the teaching profession?
- b. What implications, if any, do you think any of these attitudes have for education?
- c. Do you feel that there is a need for society to make changes in how they perceive the teaching profession? If so, what kinds of changes should be made? How do you think these changes can be accomplished?
- d. Have your attitudes changed as a result of your journal experience or this interview? Explain why or why not. Explain how or how not.





