# SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE TEACHING CAREER IN BRAZIL

**GISELA LOBO B. P. TARTUCE**

Researcher from the Carlos Chagas Foundation

gtartuce@fcc.org.br


**MARINA M. R. NUNES**

Researcher from the Carlos Chagas Foundation and Educational Adviser of the Santa Cruz High School

mnunes@fcc.org.br


**PATRÍCIA CRISTINA ALBIERI DE ALMEIDA**

Professor on the Teaching Course of the Institute of Sciences and Humanities of the Mackenzie Presbyterian University

patrícia.aa@uol.com.br


Translation: Robert Dinham

## ABSTRACT

*SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF A TEACHING CAREER IN BRAZIL. This article presents the results of research, the objective of which was to investigate the attractiveness of the teaching career in Brazil from the viewpoint of students in the final year of secondary education, since it has been widely disclosed that adolescents have lost interest in choosing teaching as a profession. The study was carried out in public and private schools in large or medium-size cities in different regions in Brazil. The data used for the analyses originated from two sources: a questionnaire and discussion groups. The results show that rejection of a teaching career is a recurrent theme among the young people involved in the research. The justifications of the students for the lack of attractiveness of the career are related to the absence of any personal identification with teaching, the social and*

*financial conditions associated with exercising the profession, the students' own school experience and family influence.*

*TEACHER EDUCATION – CAREER CHOICE – TEACHERS – PROFESSIONALIZATION*

The reduction in the number of young people looking to go into the teaching profession has become the object of concern over the last few years. The recent lack of well-trained teachers and the scarcity of professionals for some subjects in the final years of elementary school and of secondary school have been discussed both in academic articles as well as in the media. At the same time the decline in the trend of demand for university courses in teacher training and in the number of those graduating has been publicized, as has the change in the profile of those seeking to go into teaching.

A report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2006), which brings together a series of data about the realities of different countries, reveals two major concerns related to the teaching career: one has to do with the scarcity of teachers, especially in some areas; the other refers to their quality, in other words, the profile of the professional in terms of gender, academic background, knowledge and skills. Furthermore, among nations there is a concern not only in attracting, but in maintaining teachers in the teaching profession.

In Brazil, the percentage of teachers with specific initial training in the discipline who teach at secondary school level is low. The most critical situation, that of teachers working in specific disciplines unrelated to their initial training, occurs in the exact sciences (Brazil, 2007). According to Gatti and Barretto (2009), 39% of the students on teacher training courses who completed the questionnaire of the National Courses' Exam (Enade) in 2005, came from backgrounds where the family income was up to three minimum salaries. These are students who had difficulties to access higher education. Mainly because of financial restrictions they had few resources for investing in actions that would provide them with more varied cultural experiences, with greater access to reading, the cinema, the theater, events, exhibitions and trips. This profile change has implications for courses that prepare people for the teaching profession; they now need to deal with the new cultural background of students (André, 2009).

If the reduction in the search for teacher training courses becomes more pronounced in Brazil, as the data suggest (Gatti, Barreto, 2009), and with the expansion in school

enrollments that is being forecast for secondary and infant education, in the near future we shall have even greater problems with supplying teachers for the whole of basic education. As a result, concerns with the quality of teaching and the learning of students, which are already heavily compromised, are increasing. What should be done to reverse this situation?

Although, at the international level, there is a whole set of research projects and articles that discuss the need to make the career of teacher more attractive (OECD, 2006; Vaillant, 2009), in Brazil this subject is only just beginning to be aired. So, given this scenario in which the teaching profession has ceased to be a professional option for young people, the research entitled the Attractiveness of the Teaching Career in Brazil was developed. It was carried out from the viewpoint of final year secondary school students in order to investigate which factors interfere in the position they adopt within the Brazilian context[1].

The text first analyses the factors involved in the process of professional choice and examines how literature has either directly or indirectly discussed the attractiveness of a career in teaching and the scarcity of teachers. It then briefly highlights data that portray the teaching panorama in Brazil. Finally, the research methodology is outlined and its main findings are presented and discussed.

## ASPECTS INVOLVED IN THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE TEACHING CAREER

Literature about professional choice has long indicated that the possibilities of this choice are not just related to personal characteristics, but mainly to the historical context and the socio-cultural environment in which the young person lives (Bock, 2002). Therefore, the professional decision process has to be seen as the result of factors of both an extrinsic and intrinsic nature, which combine and interact in different ways, thus generating dilemmas and tensions for those who experience them.

---

[1] The research was carried out by the Carlos Chagas Foundation during 2009 at the request of the Victor Civita Foundation. In addition to the authors of this article, who coordinated the study, the following also took part in the research: Ana Maria Calil, Ana Maria L.Teixeira, Bruna Cardoso, Heloísa Borges, Ilze M. C. Machado, Jaqueline S. Lopes, Joana Romanowski, José Veríssimo do Nascimento Filho, Julia Franco, Kátia M. Mendes, Líliam Maria B. Martinelli, Márcia Hobold, Maria Aparecida de Aguiar, Maria Helena Besnosik, Marília M. Mira, Marlyse B.da C. Oliveira, Maysa Gaiarsa, Nayana Teles, Neusa B. Ambrosetti, Pura Lúcia Martins, Rita de Cássia B. M. Lima, Rosalina Moraes, Sheila D. Guimarães, Sofia Lerche Vieira.

The subjective perspective includes the way in which individuals perceive careers and themselves within the work context, in which aspects like identification, self-opinion, interests, skills, maturity, values, personality traits and expectations with regard to the future interfere. At the same time, it has to be taken into account that social contexts undergoing transformation interfere in relationships between the individual and the social and, therefore, in social and professional identities.

Since the 1980s, society has been undergoing economic, political, social and technological transformations that have altered the way of work and its content in various professional fields. We live at a time in history that is permeated by complex and contradictory social and working relationship scenarios, which have generated a new understanding of career and of professional development. Professional careers are characterized by instability, a lack of continuity and by sideways movement, unlike the model of prior years, when they were marked by relative stability of employment and type of activity and by vertical linear progression (Chanlat, 1995); in other words, stable and well-paid jobs are being replaced by more flexible forms of contract that do not guarantee employment stability over the long term (Levenfus, Nunes, 2002). Work, whatever it is, has become a challenge for recognition of oneself, a time of uncertainty and great social implication, which has demanded an ever greater personal investment (Dubar, 2006).

Specifically choosing teaching forms part of the context described. As Valle (2006) explains, the motivations as to why a young person becomes a teacher rests on logic that is related to the representations they have of themselves, to the meanings they attribute to involvement in the world of work and, in particular, to the practice of teaching. Various studies have attempted to understand the logic of the professional choices of practicing teachers and why they remain in the profession. Several find that the motivation for entering teaching lies in the field of altruistic values and of personal achievement, and are strongly anchored in the image of self and in the daily experience, namely: the gift and the vocation, the desire to teach, love (of children, of other people, of the profession, and of knowledge), the possibility of social transformation and the need to rapidly achieve a certain financial autonomy (Mello, 1981; Silva, Espósito, Gatti, 1994; OCDE, 2006; Valle, 2006). We also cannot fail to consider that fact that the part-time working hours provided by teaching is one of the attractions for women, making the question of gender one of the intervening factors in these motivations.

At the same time, the literature available in the area of teacher training has analyzed problems that are either directly or indirectly related to the discussion about the attractiveness of the teaching career, working conditions, low salaries, the feminization of the teaching profession, training policies, precariousness, making teaching more flexible, violence in schools and the emergence of other types of part-time work.

The report from the OECD (2006) on research carried out in 25 countries[2] shows that over the last twenty years in most of them the earnings of teachers have decreased in comparison with other occupations that demand the same levels of education and training. Furthermore, in 70% of these countries, the study concludes that at least twenty years are necessary for the teacher to move from the bottom of the salary scale, which is a long time relative to other professions.

Another aspect that must be taken into consideration has to do with the increase in demand for the teaching activity nowadays. The work of the teacher is increasingly more complex and demands greater responsibilities, whether as far as concerns teaching activities, per se, or by reason of issues that extrapolate mediation with knowledge, like violence and drugs. So, the changes in various sectors of society establish a new dynamic in the daily life of teaching institutions, which reflect directly in the work of teachers and on their professionalism (Fanfani, 2007; Dussel, 2006; Tedesco, 2006). There is, therefore, a degree of discomfort among teachers caused by these growing demands of the profession, at the same time as there is decrease in social prestige.

In a study on the social construction of the professional identities of teachers in France, Lang (2006) analyses teacher uneasiness, which has affected more than 60% of the teachers, and suggests that other research developed in Europe allow these findings to be generalized. According to the author, although the teaching is becoming increasingly complex, the social prestige of the profession is tending to reduce, at the same time that the gap between the ideal definition of teaching and the reality under which the profession is

---

[2] The report in question is the result of a survey carried out between 2002 and 2004. The project involved the preparation of national background reports, visits to some countries by external monitoring teams, data collection, research into specific issues and workshops. Twenty five countries took part: Germany, Australia, Austria, Bélgium, Canada (Quebec), Chile, South Korea, Denmark, Slovakia, United States, Finland, France, Greece, the Netherlands, Hungary, Ireland, Israel Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, Sweden and Switzerland.

developed is tending to increase, generating a feeling of impotence, frustration and a lack of enthusiasm.

As Fanfani (2007) explains, society expects more than the school can produce, i.e., there is a distance between the ideal image of the teaching function and its relational and temporal reality in practice. In the daily life of the school, teachers, in order to develop their teaching activities, need to deal with problems of indiscipline and violence, with a lack of student interest, with the need to work with a large number of students and to develop their educational task within and for diversity. What is more, the introduction of technology in teaching produces changes in relation to knowledge, generating a feeling of obsolescence in many education professionals.

In the same vein, Jesus (2004) considers that the social image of teachers, which is in decline, may be linked to the change in the traditional role of teachers in the local environment, i.e., the school is ceasing to be the primary place for accessing knowledge and a means whereby certain layers of society rise economically and socially

The author also draws attention to the fact that this profession has become largely unselective. Many people are engaged in teaching that have no specific training or professional preparation, or are inadequately prepared. This situation has contributed to the stereotype that "anyone can be a teacher" in which "anyone" implicitly means lacking in qualifications. Moreover, many enter the teaching profession in a transitory way; or put another way, they did not choose to carry out a previously established project, but entered it as a provisional alternative profession, or the only feasible one at a particular moment in time, which might result in a lack of commitment, thus contributing to establishing the social image of a secondary profession.

In a study on abandoning the teaching profession, Lapo and Bueno (2003, p.76) show that in the group of teachers they studied, no one really wanted to be a teacher: "Being a teacher was a possible choice at the beginning of my professional life. Becoming a teacher appears as a possible and feasible alternative to dreaming of being a doctor, a lawyer, a vet, etc." Apparently, what is observed is that teaching presents some possibility of a job offer, starting with a training course that is considered accessible, which makes some students enter higher education teaching courses, but with no real interest in working as a teacher.

It is, therefore, important that any discussions on the attractiveness of a teaching career consider the strong contradictions highlighted by the research into "being a teacher," which

range between satisfaction and frustration and between choice and necessity. The feelings of professional discomfort built up by practicing teachers are embodied in representations that go beyond comments and attitudes and have an impact on young people in their daily experience with teachers and spill over into other social environments.

## METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES OF THE ANALYSIS

The research was carried out with secondary school students and in order to ensure a broader reach for the study it involved both public and private schools in large and medium-size cities in different regions in Brazil.

The choice of location was guided by the following criteria: regional reach in the country, size of the municipality, density of secondary school students and employment opportunities. This resulted in the research being carried out in 8 cities, involving 18 schools[3].

Questionnaires and discussion groups were the tools used for collecting the data[4]. In each school first the discussion groups were carried out with 10 students and then questionnaires were given to all the students in the 3rd year of secondary school. This guaranteed that the students were not influenced by the questions on the questionnaire and did arrive at the group discussion with preconceived ideas. In both cases they were told that this was an investigation into their choice of profession, without specifying that the focus was a teaching career.

The teams of researchers were oriented to define, jointly with the school coordinators, the best way of composing the group, which should be diverse as far as gender and school performance were concerned. The invited students agreed to take part in the research.

The script used in the discussion groups was pre-tested and adapted. Its aim was to

---

[3] Southern region: Joinville (two schools) and Curitiba (three); Southeastern region: São Paulo (three) and Taubaté (two); Mid-West region: Campo Grande (two); Northeastern region: Fortaleza (two), Feira de Santana (two); Northern region: Manaus (two).

[4] A group discussion is a research technique that allows data of a qualitative nature to be obtained. It is based on sessions with groups of between 8 and 12 people, who share some common traits and experiences and who discuss aspects relating to a suggested theme. In the case of this research it is their common experiences in a same school that enabled us "to know not only the experiences and opinions of those interviewed but the collective experiences of a particular group" (Weller, 2006, p. 245).

learn the perceptions that young people have of teaching, of what it is "to be a teacher" and of their possibilities, or otherwise, of entering this career. The script consisted of questions to be followed, but the researchers could use their own sensitivity for conducting the discussion, by formulating whenever they felt it necessary, questions for exploring interesting aspects and/or for helping the group relax.

What was said was recorded to guarantee the data were fully covered and subsequently transcribed and analyzed. The analysis initially focused on each school, seeking to tie together the meanings contained in the reports of the young people participating in the discussion groups. Then, a horizontal analysis was carried out to identify similarities and differences between the groups, as well as relationships between them and the research problem.

The questionnaire was prepared with the idea of obtaining information that would allow the students to be characterized, including data about their ages, gender, schooling of their parents, period in which they study, if they work and indicators of their socio-economic level. An attempt was also made to obtain data about choice of profession and about a career in teaching.

Data from the questionnaires were processed by optical reader in the case of closed questions and categories were created *a posteriori* in the case of open questions. This led to a database being prepared and the information statistically analyzed.

**Characterization of the schools**

The group of schools investigated comprised institutions indicated by local researchers and in some cases by the State Education Departments. The public schools were characterized by being schools in lower middle class districts that also served the population from neighboring communities that were, as a rule, needier. The private schools in the study are institutions established many years ago in their respective cities that generally serve a middle and upper middle class population. The schools selected cannot be considered as representative of the homogeneity of their regions nor of the country, but they allow hypotheses about the theme investigated to be formulated.

**Characterization of the student sample**

All the schools were generally very receptive to the research and the young people replied to the questionnaire in a serious way; there were 1501 respondents. The discussion groups brought together 193 male and female students, with varying school performances. Participation was voluntary and the debates were favorably regarded by the students. They proved to be very enthusiastic and expressed themselves freely.

Male and female respondents accounted for 56% and 44%, respectively, and this proportion was practically the same in both public and private schools. As far as age was concerned the vast majority (73%) of the young people were in the 17 and 18-year old age-band, with a 10% difference between the two types of schools: 68% in public schools and 78% in private schools. Attention is drawn to the fact that almost 15% of individuals in public schools are over 19, while this percentage does not reach 2% in private schools. As regards self-declared color, most are white (53%) or colored / mulatto (35%), and there are also significant differences between public and private schools: while 64% of young people at private schools claimed to be white in public schools this percentage was 44%; in the latter, practically the same number of people say they are colored / mulatto, while in the private schools only 27% say so. In private schools, less than 4% call themselves black.

The schooling of the father and mother is the aspect that most differentiates the two types of school in the sample investigated: the majority of fathers (72%) and mothers (81%) of students in public schools have, at most, finished secondary school, while most of the parents of students in private schools have completed higher education: 68% of the fathers and 74% of the mothers.

The data about the period when they study and whether they work reveal that there is, in fact, a different profile in the sample of students in the public and private schools studied: all of the students from private institutions study during the day and 93% of them do not work, while in the public schools 34% of the young people study at night and 39% work.

**HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT BEING A TEACHER? IS TEACHING A POSSIBLE CHOICE?**

The research subjects have a future project which includes going to university at some time and the majority are willing to work and study. They revealed the factors that interfere in this professional project and spoke of the relationship between their wishes and the reality, taking into account not only their own personal interests and characteristics, but also the circumstances of their lives. While students from private schools are certain that they will do a higher education course, for students in public schools this is a possibility that comes with limitations. So when the young person analyses his or her priorities, professional choice is limited by an imposed reality and one that involves everything from economic factors to family expectations, which are not always compatible with their wishes. These aspects of an individual and contextual order are essential for understanding the attractiveness of a career in teaching in the perception of the young person, in other words, the option, or not, for teaching must be analyzed considering both intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

The study reveals that most students have no intention of becoming a teacher. When they are asked the question "Are any of you thinking, or have you recently thought about becoming a teacher?", the automatic response of many was "No", accompanied by expressions of rejection, followed by discomfort (silence or laughter). After a few seconds came the systematic and more "politically correct" answers, but even so, always accompanied by a negative. Rejection of the profession is even more apparent when they refer to the teacher.

The questionnaire was used to investigate which course had been chosen by the student as their first option for taking the university entrance exam in the current year and the results also explain their distance from the teaching profession: only 2% (31 out of 1501 subjects) indicated, an education course or some other teaching degree (when the students wrote explicitly "bachelor" in a particular area) as their first choice of course for entering college. Graph 1 shows this data and indicates the courses related to basic school subjects, without specifying teaching, such as History, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Literature, Music, Philosophy, Sociology, Biology, Geography, Art and Physical Education (the latter is the most frequent) that, together, involve 9% of the young people. It is possible to infer – and reports of the discussion groups confirm this idea - that some of these students will eventually

go into teaching, but as a result of motivation and their affinity for a specific area of knowledge. The most striking fact, however, is that 83% clearly chose careers unrelated to teaching.

**GRAPH 1**
**FIRST CAREER CHOICE IN THE UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAM**
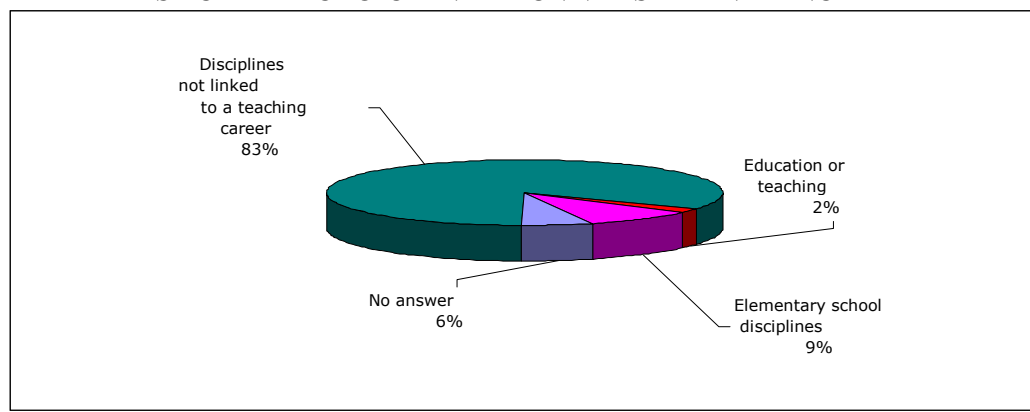


It has to be asked: who are these young people who want to be teachers? Among the 31 students who expressed this intention as their first choice of profession, there is a predominance of women (77%) and of coloreds or mulattos (48%). Of these, the higher the educational level of their parents, the lower their intention of becoming a teacher. Another fact that differentiates them has to do with the type of school at which they study: 27 (or 87%) of these students come from a public school. These data are in line with the results of the National Secondary School Education (Enem), School Census and literature in general (Brazil, 2007, 2009), which reveal a tendency of a change in the profile of students who opt for teaching, as already pointed out.

The number of students who said they had already thought about being a teacher, but had given up on the idea was significantly greater: 32% (cf. Table 1), a trend that was also observed in the discussion groups. Of these, 59% are female and 41% male. It is interesting to note that the difference between the number of men and women who had thought about a career in teaching is less than among those who actually opted for teaching, i.e., more men desist. It is known that a career in teaching is closely associated with the feminine role and with caring, and is seen as not producing wealth. Literature indicates that these characteristics are taken as natural and innate qualities that are learned in the home and by reproduction, and are linearly associated with females, which makes it even more difficult for men to choose this career.

Considering merely the group that thought about being a teacher students coming from public schools (54%) are still more numerous than those from private schools (36%), although a decrease is observed in the difference between them, when compared with the group that wants to be a teacher.

**TABLE 1**
**CONSIDERED BEING A TEACHER IN THE PROCESS OF CHOOSING A PROFESION**

|  | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Thought about being a teacher | 476 | 32% |
| Did not think about being a teacher | 1015 | 67% |
| No reply | 10 | 1% |
| General total | 1501 | 100% |

What is it that makes these young people give up wanting to be a teacher?  Do they lose the motivation to emulate their teachers throughout their school life? Is the idea of being a model, a reference point for their students, a frightening prospect? Is this is a representation that causes a certain discomfort when it comes to opting for this particular profession?

To understand the reason for rejecting or desisting from a career in teaching, students were asked about the reasons for choosing whether or not to be a teacher. The responses confirm that the choice of teaching involves factors of an intrinsic and extrinsic nature that are inter-related.

**Unattractive features of teaching**

The question "What are your reasons for not wanting to be a teacher?" was replied to by 1168 of the individuals[5], who indicate intrinsic factors as the major reason for their lack of interest, in other words, first of all they consider that they do not have the personal characteristics they judge to be necessary for being a teacher (48%).

> Well, I once thought about being a teacher, but it's just that I've already given up on this idea. There's no way I could manage it, *I can't do it;* you have to know how to manage the subject matter; *I don't have this type of vocation*, this skill. (Ivan[6], private school, Campo Grande).

---

[5] Not everyone replied to this question.

I never thought about being a teacher, mainly because *I'm shy;* I couldn't speak in front [of a class]. (Lara, private school, Campo Grande)

Yes [he thought about being a teacher], but I think that maybe *I wouldn't have the* patience to do what teachers do, listening to what others say about me, or criticizing me, or praising me and leaving me with my self-esteem stable. Maybe I wouldn't have this motivation. I thought about being one, but I saw that I wouldn't do well in this area (Tatiana, public school, Joinville)

A lack of identification with the activities inherent to the profession (19%) - also a factor of a personal nature – appears in third place, being exemplified by statements such as "liking other professions," or that there are "more interesting activities in another area." These two factors are mentioned especially by those who never thought about being a teacher, as can be seen in Table 2.

It is students from the discussion groups in private schools who most frequently attribute a financial situation and a better quality professional life than that of the teacher to other occupations.

But the incentive of the teacher no longer exists in the classroom; like there was before in the elementary school: "Oh, you're going to be a teacher!" As Vitória said, there used to be a comic book, in fact she had a dream, but nowadays, no; *today, we think big and thinking big often refers to a company, or something big in this sense.* So, I think that that's why today young people no longer think much about this. (Maria Clara, private school, Joinville)

An important point to highlight has to do with the social and financial conditions associated with the teaching profession. Low pay appears as the second reason why young people are not interested in a teaching career (25%), and, it is worth emphasizing, the first cause of desistance for those who once thought about becoming a teacher (40%). Other factors that are extrinsic to teaching that proved to be relevant when it came to distancing some candidates from teaching were the devaluing of the profession and the lack of interest and disrespect shown by students, both cited by 17% of those who had already thought about teaching professionally (Table2). As will be seen, motivations of a social and economic nature do not appear as attractive factors associated with teaching, in other words, nobody thinks about becoming a teacher because this is a symbolically and financially valued profession.

---

[6] All names are fictitious.

**TABLE 2**
**REASONS FOR CHOOSING NOT TO BE A TEACHER**

| Categories | Sub-categories | Had thought about being a teacher | | Had not thought about being a teacher | | No reply | | General total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Factors extrinsic to teaching | Low pay | 102 | 40 | 188 | 21 | 2 | 29 | 292 | 25 |
| | Social undervaluation of the profession | 43 | 17 | 113 | 12 | | | 156 | 13 |
| | Disinterest and disrespect of the students | 42 | 17 | 67 | 7 | 4 | 57 | 113 | 10 |
| | Working conditions | 29 | 12 | 43 | 5 | 2 | 29 | 74 | 6 |
| Factors intrinsic to teaching | Demand for personal involvement in the profession | 38 | 15 | 83 | 9 | | | 121 | 10 |
| Factors of a personal order | They do not have the characteristics they judge necessary for being a teacher | 49 | 19 | 505 | 56 | 1 | 14 | 555 | 48 |
| | They do not identify with activities inherent to the profession | 33 | 13 | 183 | 20 | 1 | 14 | 217 | 19 |

In the discussion groups, the idea that teachers are generally underpaid and lack prestige is clear, and a many of the problems currently faced by the profession come from this, such as the dissatisfaction of those who are already in the field of teaching and rejection by those still on the verge of entering the labor market. The reports reveal that teaching is not an easy profession: there is a level of training demand and personal involvement that does not justify the undervaluation to which it is currently subject.

I think that being a teacher is very difficult; it's a lot of hard work and because of what they earn I think it's very difficult for someone to leave university wanting to be a teacher. *That's why this profession is undervalued, because it's a lot of work, it's very wearing.* You have some students who don't want to learn; you don't want to leave the university to do this, so much so that there's very little competition for the courses for being a teacher, because no one wants to be one. So, it's a lot of work and very difficult; I think it's not worth it. (Marcos, private school, Campo Grande)

Teachers *don't have proper working conditions; the schools are not organized, they don't have working material and that causes stress:* teachers can't do their work properly and they're also not paid as they should be, because it's a very important profession because the basis of young people is their studies and I agree with everything. (Ana, public school, Feira de Santana)

I believe that we young people think about our lives; we plan on having our own home, our car, except that ... and why not be a teacher? Because *being a teacher leaves us far away from these dreams because of the pay,* while there are other professions where you do a quick course and enter the labor market right away. And, what's more, there are our parents who are a bit afraid of what people are going to say. (Vivian, public school, Manaus)

As far as concerns social recognition one student sums it up:

From what I know it used to be a very highly valued and highly respected profession and nowadays that's not the way it is. Often, when you're a teacher people look at you and say: "*Are you going to be a teacher? Oh! What a pity! Like, my condolences*!" Because the guy's not going to be valued and is not going to earn much. (Thais, private school, Manaus)

Another aspect that proved to be relevant from the perspective of young people is the lack of possibilities of career progress. The chances of promotion are remote and imply giving up teaching and leaving the classroom:

The issue of the teacher is a complicated profession. The only people that make a go of a career as a teacher are those who have sufficient vocation for it; managing to be a teacher is a profession of love that's bigger than your own heart. So, you go ahead, but if not *it's a career that gives you no future as a professional.* There are few people who manage to reach the post of head master in the school, or the maximum situation, as state secretary of education. I know teachers who've been giving lessons for 20 years and they're still in the same position and with the same working hours (Breno, private school, Campo Grande)

The discussion groups also contributed to bringing about an attempt at reconciling the choice of a better paid career that has greater social recognition and valuing teaching as a socially relevant activity. Some of the students, especially those from private schools, who had a higher socio-economic level, admit to teaching as a complementary and secondary activity, which they might do at the same time as another professional activity (treating it like a hobby, voluntary work, or "spare-time work"), or a later age, when people are already financially stable.

Oh, some two years ago I though about it [being a teacher], but I've already given up on the idea. It's very difficult. What I really want is the engineering area. Only if it were just now and again, *like volunteer work*. (Danilo, private school, Campo Grande)

I think that my hobby is already prepared for Uece. At Uece, as they don't have any of the courses that I'm thinking about doing, I'm going to do my hobby at Uece, although in fact I'm in doubt about which of two to do; Philosophy or Literature. (Camila, private school, Fortaleza)

I think as follows: when I reach the height of my profession, when I'm sure I'm good at what I do. And that ... *When I'm around 40 or 45, you know? I intend to teach.* I think it's cool for you to pass on your knowledge to other people, and I think it's a very noble profession. (Daniel, private school, Fortaleza)

Yes, so I've already thought about becoming a teacher too, but I'm thinking about having a job where I can go higher, it's rather an ambition of mine, and I think that teachers don't rise much in life, like in their careers; the guy's going to be a teacher .. . The salary increases every year, I know that, but ... Not that I'm a selfish person as far as my knowledge is concerned; I'd share my knowledge ... lecturing at a college, like, one day, but something else ... twice a week, I'll go there and give a class and leave ... it's for pleasure, like.(Alberto, private school, São Paulo)

There are also two other factors that discourage students from following a teaching career - and which only appeared in the group discussions: their own experience in the school environment and the influence of their families. In the first case, some students explicitly state that they feel  demotivated by teaching because of what they see their teachers going through on a day to day basis (they put themselves in their place and do not wish to undergo the same process), through their interaction with them or because of their own experience within the school or classroom.

As class leader, having to talk to the students for five minutes is already hard enough*, imagine the teacher who gives six classes per period, each lesson of fifty minutes.* Speaking with students who don't want to pay attention to what you're saying is very wearing. (Jorge, private school, Campo Grande)

*I think we no longer want to be teachers because,* as we spend a lot of time at college inside the classroom, sometimes all day long*, we can't stand the classroom any longer.* (Marta, private school, Joinville)

Well, I think that no one wants to study for four years and then not be valued. I think that everybody here wants some return. *And like, we live with the teachers on a daily basis; we know what they go through;,* it's not easy going into a classroom and managing a lesson, making everybody pay attention to you! It's difficult for you to manage that situation. As we're able to see what happens I think that many people think: "Goodness, I wanted [to be a teacher] but I'm not going to manage it." (Jussara, public school, Joinville)

These phrases illustrate the fact that in the classroom, in situations of interaction, students and teachers experience different feelings, both pleasant and unpleasant, pleasure and frustration, confrontation and conflict. It is worth emphasizing that the task of mediating between content, the teaching object and the learner has demanded a major investment from teachers, which is both objective and subjective, and creating different tensions that are perceived by the students. Furthermore, as the experience young people go through in school seems very distant from their daily reality – school is often "boring", not stimulating –, the hypothesis may here be raised that his experience does not create the desire for constructing a career in this particular area.

Students say things that reveal that teachers use the classroom to complain about their working conditions, which ends up creating an aversion to the possibility of being a teacher.

> [...] because if you train to be a teacher you're going to be a teacher your whole life, with a salary that doesn't offer you the best conditions and *the complaints that you don't get paid for this, that the salary is low, go directly into the heads of young people, which creates a myth that if you're a teacher you're going to suffer,* you're going to have a rotten life, no prospects, it's going to be just that. Before, being a teacher was a good job, you had a good salary and you were recognized. Today there's no more love for this profession; culture has generated nothing for a teacher to be a good professional. Today, the myth has been created that being a teacher is a really bad profession. (João, public school, Manaus)

Finally, there are young people who quote examples of someone from their family who is a teacher to justify their refusal to go into the profession. This refusal may come from what they see in their family experience and/or because of what they receive as advice.

> I once thought about being a teacher when I was much younger; I thought about being a teacher of elementary school children. I think it must be something very nice, like, you looking at someone and saying "They know such and such a thing because I taught them it"... You taking part in forming a child, particularly with children, however easy the subject may be, these are basic things that they're going to use for the rest of their lives... *In my mother's day to day life, seeing her giving lessons, I discovered that that's not what I want for myself.* (Betina, private school, Campo Grande)

> Well, as *I have parents who are teachers I know it's a very tiring profession.* Sometimes they have to deal with students that don't respect them, that are not very honest; there are parents who blame the teacher if their child doesn't get a good mark.. And this profession also has to be better paid. So, I don't think about being a teacher. (Silvana, private school, Campo Grande)

> I think that my mother would be the first one to say: *"Are you going mad? You've seen me working with teaching my whole life, being a teacher and not earning money",* so like giving up everything to try and do well in life... She wouldn't believe it because of her own experience. (Camila, private school, Fortaleza)

Generally speaking, the comments coming from the discussion groups reveal that the perception of the teaching profession, as a not very attractive, socially and financially devalued job, is reinforced by the closest social groups, like family and friends.

> I think that some people in my family would support me, but I think my father would say to me: *"Stop, think a bit more and it'll pass".* (Roberto, private school, Curitiba)

> I think that my friends would think that I was smoking something. I think that *my family too, would think that I was on something.* I think that they would not accept it because after so many years investing in me, and I decide to be a teacher, *it's a profession that doesn't have such a future as the one they expect of me.* (André, private school, Campo Grande)

> When I said that I was going to be a teacher *my mother said: Good Lord, what a level you've dropped to!* (João, private school, Manaus)

**Attractive features of teaching**

The intrinsic aspects that have to do with activities that are inherent to teaching were the most emphasized. In this category (Table 3) our attention is drawn to the fact that the most attractive characteristic of the profession is the possibility of teaching and transmitting knowledge (40%). Despite whether they are thinking about being teachers or not, those interviewed recognize that there is a pleasure related to the teaching that offers something important to others; it appears to be rewarding to work with the learning of other people, as exemplified by the response of one student: "Getting pleasure from helping a person who doesn't understand the issue you have mastered"

The second most quoted factor, in general, was an interest in a specific area of knowledge (19%) that, regardless of the desire to teach or be a teacher, motivates expressions like that of one student who said: "History is a very nice area - its studies, the research. I find it fascinating." It is worth mentioning an example of someone who reconciles the two interests: "Because I like the subject; I like it so much that I'd like to share it with others who wish to learn." The third attractive aspect of teaching has to do with professional identity

(13%). These two reasons are especially strong among students who have already thought about being a teacher.

In the discussion groups it becomes clear that these two factors – a specific interest in some area of knowledge and identification with the profession - seem fairly closely associated with positive experiences with certain teachers. The students in the discussion group in one of the private schools are a good example of this relationship. When reflecting on teaching, they got excited and talked enthusiastically about their secondary school teachers. The tone of what they said conveyed the feeling that it was very good to speak about "their" teachers, generalizing about what makes a good teacher and showing their admiration for them and for the profession. The passion and sparkle in they eye of the teacher who loves his/her job appeared in some of the things that were said:

> ...the secondary school teachers, at least in this school, *try to make you create your own concepts;* they try to half deconstruct these things that have already formed in your head. I think that this is *something cool about being a teacher.* (Camila, private school, São Paulo)

> But I think that the function of the teacher is to teach, basically, but for me there's a lot of difference between a teacher and good teacher; a good teacher is someone who, in addition to teaching their subject, *opens your mind to things in the area he's teaching.* [...] I didn't like reading, like, I wasn't very interested; I used to read what the school asked me to, *but I had some really good teachers this year and last year in Literature that they kind of changed me...* in fact, I used to hate Portuguese, so I don't know, they're my idols because *I love them and it's a pleasure for me to attend their lessons.* (Marina, private school, São Paulo)

For these students the teachers passed on a positive image of the profession, awakening in some the desire "to be a teacher", even though the interest is to teach in the school they attended:

> Well, I've already thought about it too; I'm still thinking about it. I think it's very cool [being a teacher] and I think*, mainly because of my time at school*, which was not at all traumatic, nothing untoward happened to me. I had a *good time at school and I think that this makes me want [to be a teacher], you understand? Because I like this environment and because I took good advantage of it.* (Sara, private school, São Paulo)

The influence of the teacher seems to be relevant when it goes beyond the classroom and becomes transformed into passion for an area of knowledge or for a way of directly intervening in society. Nevertheless, the direct indication of the influence of teachers as a stimulating factor for teaching was insignificant.

**TABLE 3**
**REASONS FOR BEING A TEACHER**

| Categories | Sub-categories | Had thought about being a teacher | | Had not thought about being a teacher | | No reply | | General total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Factors intrinsic to teaching | Possibility of teaching and transmitting knowledge | 171 | 40 | 18 | 37 | 2 | 40 | 191 | 40 |
| | Interest in a specific area of knowledge | 85 | 20 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 20 | 90 | 19 |
| | Admiration for the profession | 60 | 14 | 1 | 2 | | | 61 | 13 |
| | Possibility of forming/influencing new generations | 44 | 10 | 5 | 10 | 1 | 20 | 50 | 10 |
| | Possibility of working with children | 45 | 10 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 20 | 48 | 10 |
| | Valuing inter-personal relationships | 42 | 10 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 20 | 46 | 10 |
| | Possibility of influencing/transforming the social reality | 36 | 8 | 7 | 15 | | | 43 | 9 |
| Factors of a personal order | Personal achievement (pleasure, love, desire, liking) | 37 | 9 | 6 | 13 | | | 43 | 9 |
| | Personal identification (talent, vocation, skills, aptitude and gift) | 23 | 5 | 2 | 4 | | | 25 | 5 |
| Factors extrinsic to teaching | Opportunities in the labor market | 15 | 4 | 1 | 2 | | | 16 | 3 |
| | Family influence | 10 | 2 | | | | | 10 | 2 |
| | Teacher influence | 6 | 1 | | | | | 6 | 1 |

An interesting detail has to do with the factors that prove to be most attractive to the group of students who actually show an interest in being a teacher (2%). Analysis indicates that the motivation of this core of young people is fairly diverse, generating a certain dispersion in the data, but their preference lies with the possibility of working with children, as indicated by 9 of the 31 students. This is an aspect that brings together identification with activities that are inherent to the profession and personal characteristics. Next, appears the possibility of teaching and transmitting knowledge, which was mentioned by seven students. One hypothesis that can be raised from this information is that among those who do not abandon the idea of being a teacher are girls who cherish the pleasure of looking after others, which is why "working with children" is strong.

Although in the questionnaire the reasons indicated are more diluted and therefore appear in greater quantity, the debates that took place within the discussion groups clearly reveal that it is the unattractive and discouraging factors that most emphatically fill the majority of the reports.

**Initial grades of elementary school: not at all attractive in terms of work...**

Work in the initial grades of elementary school is less attractive in the opinion of most of the young people interviewed.

[Working in the *first grades* of elementary school] *would be like death,* wouldn't it? [Laughter] Because I imagine some little brat getting on your nerves the whole morning and all afternoon and you go home, and there's your own child, or your nephew, getting on your nerves morning, noon and night. Children getting on your nerves wouldn't work out right. (Vando, public school, Feira de Santana)

Oh, but you have to stand people pulling your hair, things like "come here, I like you. I want o hug you, ". *You've got to have patience with that*; you've got to know how to deal with it. I work with children. I know what it's like. (Fabíola, public school, Taubaté)

Various people show how valued teaching in higher education is:

There are teachers who earn a lot, but look at where *they teach; university, private university entrance exam...* (Gabi, public school, Feira de Santana)

One day, like, who knows, I might become a teacher, but not in a public school. *A university professor because it's an extra level...* (Marta, private school, Feira de Santana)

*It depends on the place where I'm going to teach.* A professor who gives lessons in a university has a higher salary because he also needs to have a higher qualification; to have a Master's degree or a PhD. In an elementary school, the salary is lower. (Roberto, private school, Taubaté)

The information from the questionnaires ratifies this divide between teaching levels and the lack of value attributed to the early years of elementary school teaching. When asked to say at what level they would teach, the reference point is for teaching a specific subject, which enables teaching in elementary education II and secondary school. Probably, closeness with secondary school teachers at this particular moment in time makes them the main

benchmark of the profession for many of these students. Graph 2 also reveals that working with the early grades of elementary education motivates less than 11% of the students, in other words one case or another. In turn, among those who chose to be teachers, infant education proved to be fairly attractive (32%). While for those who thought at some time or another about being a teacher, it is higher education that seems to be the second most interesting alternative (18%), which becomes the final option for those who in fact intend to teach.

**GRAPH 2**
**INTEREST IN TEACHING BY EDUCATION LEVEL**
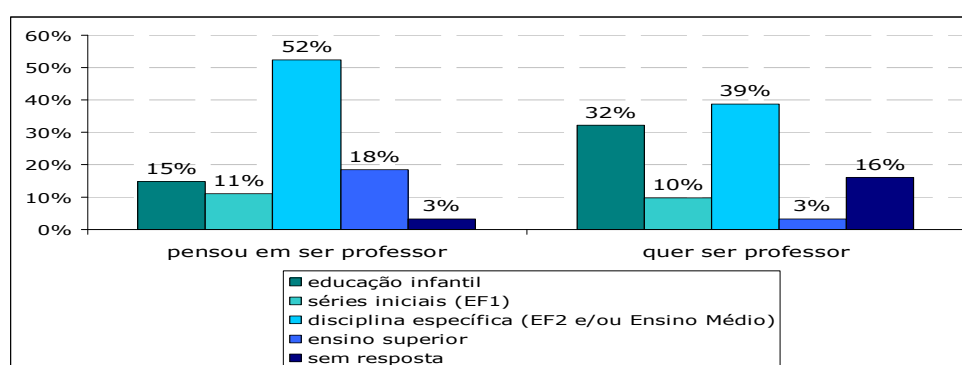


Thought about being a teacher      wants to be a teacher

Infant education

Initial grades (EF1)

Specific subject (EF2 and/or secondary school)

Higher education

No reply

This differentiation is directly related to the type of school attended: students from public schools, where most of those who actually want to be a teacher are to be found, prefer infant education, while in private schools, where there is a relative percentage of young people who have thought about being teachers, higher education is the level that most motivates them, after secondary school.[7]

**...but recognized for its social importance**

---

[7] For more details see Almeida, Nunes, Tartuce, 2009; Gatti, et al., 2010.

Despite feeling attracted by teaching and mainly by the initial grades of elementary school, the group discussions showed that young people value, and value a great deal, the importance of this professional.

> I find it funny that *teachers from 1st to 5th grade earn a very low salary and teachers in higher education*, like my mother*, earn very well.* Except I think that it should be the opposite, *because those who are forming citizens are teachers from the 1st to 5th grades;,* by the time they get to higher education they're already formed; they've already made their minds up about things; they already have their values and their character, so there there's a contradiction that should be questioned. (Breno, public school, Curitiba)

> ...here in Brazil a lot more is being invested in secondary school education and higher education than in *elementary schools which should be much more important* [...]. Furthermore, the people value it less than secondary education, or a teacher on the university entrance exam course and in higher education, despite *elementary education being more important, to my mind.* (Fernando, private school, Curitiba)

For some students, for example, the work in the initial grades of elementary school is seen as more difficult, because it demands an educational responsibility based on the construction of values and attitudes that even constitute the formation of children's characters. They believe that teachers who work in the early years are the basis of this formation and because of this they need to be very responsible, motivated and creative in order to attract the attention of the children.

> It is precisely the sense of responsibility and the critical, ethical and moral sense of a person that are formed at this time. It is in this phase that children begin to form the basic knowledge in their heads for having good relationships with other children, also. *So the responsibility of the teacher at this stage is much greater*. I think that it's very difficult, because at the end of the day if you don't unable to prepare them for the future, everything's going to come unstuck later on. (Marcos, private school, Campo Grande)

> I think it's going to stay with children for a pretty long time; I believe that it's up to 15 when the character of the child is formed, so that's when the first corrections in the child are going to be made. Sometimes, the father and mother are away and the child is formed in the school, because they pass their day-to-day lives in school, and they spend half their days here. *So, it's the teacher who's going to educate them for a large part of their lives,* some 6 years or so. (Bruno, public school, Joinville)

**Image of the teaching profession**

The impressions that young people have of the profession of teacher and that seem to help distance them from it emerged from the analysis of the discussion groups

Something that strongly marks the profession is that the students think about the difficulties that are inherent to the career, because it is "difficult", "tiring", "demands a lot"; "it's work that goes beyond the classroom", that requires listening to and making others become involved in the learning process.

> Because, like, in addition to the hours they have to stay in the classroom many teachers even *work in various shifts and then even have to prepare lessons and tests when they get home*. There's also the salary that doesn't reward them sufficiently, isn't there? (Leila, public school, Feira de Santana)

> *I think that being a teacher is a profession that demands a lot from people because they have to tolerate countless ways and manners of thinking.* One student is against something, another is in favor and the teacher has to know how to tolerate this. I think that it's just like M... said, the person has to like what they do; but I also believe that sometimes people learn to like what they're doing. (Maria Clara, private school, Joinville)

> *...because we see the sacrifice that the teacher makes to be able to teach,* because for example, to teach a class like mine, you can't be a beginner; it can't be your first day, no way. You have to have a lot of energy; you have to know; you have to have had three or four years [experience] with a very good head on your shoulders, with psychology, to be able to face up to the classroom; if not you're really not going to stand it. (Jeane, public school, Taubaté)

Given all the difficulties and the complexity of the profession, the students conclude that to be a teacher it is necessary "to like what you do a lot", "love what you do a lot", "have a lot of patience" and – something that was the same in all discussion groups – "have a vocation", "have a gift". These are the attributes they find for defining teaching and that largely reflect how young people see the profession.

> I think that to be a teacher *you have to have a vocation and I also think that you to have the patience to know how to deal with people;* you have to have the capacity to communicate with people. I think it's something very cool. (Roberta, private school, Curitiba)

> I think that teachers, in addition to transmitting what they know to people, if they really *do this with love*, because they like doing it, they end up leaving a little of themselves in each student they have [...]

And I think that good teachers are those who really do it with love and *are passionate about the profession*. (Camila, private school, Fortaleza)

But I think you also really have to have a *gift*. I think thatthe gift you have of passing on what you know to others *has to be very phenomenal!* (André, private school, Joinville)

I think that what drives them *is love for the profession, the will to do* this, but above all, for the teacher what puts you down and what drives you is seeing – and this is my opinion – when you see a child with difficulty, you want to help them even if it's with a letter, but when you see that child learning because of you, that's marvelous; that fills you with satisfaction, do you understand? (Vivian, public school, Manaus)

If young people attribute the need for "love", "passion", "patience" and "gift" when faced with the difficulties of the profession they also seem to see it in a romanticized way, in other words, loving feelings, like the ones mentioned, are sufficient for working as a teacher. In some cases, the love must be so big that it replaces the financial aspects.

It's a profession where you have to like what you do a lot; you have be a teacher *without any type of financial interest, simply loving what you do.* (Betina, private school, Campo Grande)

I want to be a teacher. People say: "Ah! You're not going to earn much; you're going to be poor...". So, I think that if you do what you're *doing well and like what you're doing you're going to be fulfilled; it's not a question of the money,* but the question is inside you; you don't need to be rich to be happy... So, *if you're fulfilled professionally,* you're going to be fulfilled in your whole life, both personally and professionally. (João, private school, Feira de Santana)

And I also think that being a teacher is a gift. *You work happy, regardless of whether you earn a lot or a little*. (Anderson, public school, Joinville)

From this evidence the hypothesis can be put forward that students see teaching, not as a profession, but as a priesthood, a mission in response to a calling, in the sense attributed by Carol "it's not a profession, it's a gift [...] being a teacher; you have to have a calling to stand, like, all this we're talking about. And like, it's not just a profession" (private school, Fortaleza). This view of teaching, which does not have the nature of a profession where specific knowledge is brought together to be learned and professionally mastered, might be one of the factors contributing to the lack of empathy for or identification with the career, and to the distancing of young people from it.

Daniel, a student in a private school in Fortaleza, sparks a pertinent discussion - and one that summarizes a good part of the unattractive factors that professional choices are the result of a social construction of the image that one has of the profession. Rejection of the teaching profession is related, in his opinion, to the lack of a positive reference point of the teacher. Not only does society attribute less status and value to this career, but also teachers themselves construct an image of themselves that does not favor their students following them. Socially, the image of teachers competes with other careers that really *are* valued:

> No one dreams of being a secondary school teacher from when they're a child [...] and "I'm going to be like him". No one is born thinking: "Ah, I want to be a systems analyst, I don't know, I want to work with telemarketing". No one's born like that. *You build your own dreams.* You're not born with your dreams; you build them. *You build them ... with your examples, with your own reference point.* What's your reference point today? It's to be a doctor, a lawyer, a scientist, an engineer. (Daniel, private school, Fortaleza)

> And there's what my colleague said, too, about being a doctor, "I'm a doctor", "Oh!"*There's that image, too, that the best people are in companies,* the best are doctors and things like that... *And those who can't be the best they teach, they become teachers.* This is at least the image they passed on to me. (Antonio, private school, Joinville)

Despite all the difficulties associated with the work of a teacher, most of the young people in the research revere teaching as a "nice profession", a "noble function", because they see in it work that is fundamental for the formation of individuals: it is having the possibility of teaching people, influencing them and modifying them. Students notice that one of the defining characteristics of teaching is its dependence on others for achieving ones professional goals, and in this sense the personal achievement of the teacher also depends on the "success" of the student. When this is realized, the work, in fact, becomes gratifying: "it's one of the nicest professions [...] one of the nicest and one that brings the greatest self-consideration".

> The teacher, in addition to teaching what he knows, is an *opinion-maker;* he makes you like one thing or another, do you understand? I think that that's what a teacher is; all angles, the emotional, knowledge, value, everything [...] I think the teaching profession must be one of the most highly valued professions because the person that 'makes' the doctor, lawyer, journalist and psychologist is the teacher (Camila, private school, Fortaleza)

So, I think being a teacher is having the possibility of molding minds, *forming opinions, forming people.* I think that if I was to choose this for my life it would be because of this... I think that the achievement of a teacher is to form people with a good minds and I think that a good part of what I think and what I do is because of what I learned from my teachers. I think they and my parents made me what I am. (André, private school, São Paulo)

Oh, I think that the work of the *teacher is very important*, because via the teacher – not only teachers, but educators –… so everything we learn, like, in terms of knowledge, those things, a large part, the biggest part, comes from the teacher because he already knows it and is going to pass on his knowledge. (Pilar, public school, Taubaté)

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The objective of this research was to investigate the aspects that young people highlight for justifying the attraction, or otherwise, of a teaching career, looking for evidence that might help in an understanding of this problem. However, it has to be pointed out that little is still known about the attraction of this career and that the research sample is not representative of the heterogeneity of Brazil and, therefore, does not allow for generalizations. In this study there are no findings, but a series of clues and exploratory hypotheses that may constitute themes or analysis focuses for new investigations, in addition to letting the decision-makers know what young people say.

As has been seen, for the young people surveyed, the rejection factors of the teaching career were more emphasized and appeared more frequently than those that might attract them to it. The reasons for non-attraction are to be found both in the subjective sphere as well as in the extrinsic aspects of teaching. In the first case, the lack of personal identification appears as the main allegation for not being a teacher. This idea that the possession of some personal attributes (gift, patience, skill in dealing with children) is sufficient for being a teacher corroborates certain preconceived ideas that no specific training is needed for teaching. Despite students recognizing the complexity and demands of the career, teaching is not seen as a profession that has any specific knowledge that characterizes it and differentiates it from other professions and that needs to be learned. The closer one gets to the initial grades of education the greater the perception that it is unnecessary to prepare; all that is needed is care.

When thinking about the teaching profession, as Roldão (1998, p. 81) explains, there is a historical picture and social representation that has a certain ambiguity, since being a

teacher "has, in a variable way and in different contexts, given it a status that is closer to that of an employee, or a technician, or socially idealized it in terms that are closer to an artist or a missionary." It is difficult to say in what measure these factors interfere in the perception that society has of the teaching profession, but in any event, there is frequent reference to "vocation" and to the "way" to be a teacher, which does not occur in the same way with other professions.

With regard to the extrinsic factors, in other words, the influence of external aspects as demotivators of the choice of the teaching profession, social and financial conditions, the school experience itself and family influence stand out. Social and financial conditions proved to be determining factors for giving up the idea of being a teacher for those who had once thought of it. In short, the justifications of the students for distancing them from teaching are associated with the following ideas: 1. teachers are badly paid; 2.. the working conditions of teachers are poor; 3. teaching and having to face up to situations with students are increasingly difficult; 4. there is no social recognition of the teaching profession.

The data also indicate that negative experiences distance students from choosing teaching. However, when this image is good, which helps with having a more positive experience at school, there is, perhaps, the possibility that students might think about becoming teachers, even if they give up the idea for various other reasons. In this sense, the image that the teachers construct of themselves by their words and acts that end up having an influence on their students cannot be overlooked.

This influence, when positive, may be reflected in factors that attract others to the teaching career. In fact, the aspects that may attract young people to teaching are the possibility of teaching and transmitting knowledge and their interest in a specific area of knowledge. In other words, a good experience with learning situations may encourage the desire to try "the other side of the coin."

In this study we also observed the tendency of those who seek a profession in teaching to change profile. This raises the question: is choosing teaching really an option for young people from classes C and D, or is it an option by default, almost a giving up of what this young person would really like to do? It is generally considered that the choice occurs by default, because it is a question of free or cheap courses that are fast, easily accessible and, therefore, feasible not only from the economic point of view, but also from the point of view of the demands of an academic nature. However, it has to be considered that for many lower

class young people, teaching is a possible and interesting choice and, therefore, it is not simply an escape, an option by default. For many who today enter teacher training courses, teaching seems like a real and concrete possibility that goes beyond the concept that teachers only give lessons. In this case, what has to be taken into account is the perspective of exercising a professional activity that provides the possibility of transforming reality (Bock, 2008).

Most of the students heard in the research, regardless of the type of school they attended , are aware that the teaching profession has proved to be less motivating than other professional options, which will lead to a lack of teachers in the future. Given the shortage of teacher candidates some students believe that the teaching profession is doomed to disappear.

> Nowadays, almost no one wants to be a teacher. Our parents don't want us to be teachers, but they want there to be good teachers. But how are there going to be good teachers if my father doesn't want [me to be a teacher], her father doesn't want...? How are there going to be any teachers? (Cláudia, public school, Feira de Santana)

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

ALMEIDA, P. A.; NUNES, M. M. R.; TARTUCE, G. L. B. P. *Atratividade da carreira docente no Brasil*. [Attractiveness of a career in teaching] São Paulo: Fundação Carlos Chagas, 2009. Research report. Available at: <www.fvc.org.br>. Accessed in December. 2009.

ANDRÉ, M. (Coord.). *O Trabalho docente do professor formador*. [The teaching work of a teacher-trainer] Brasília: CNPq, 2009.( Final resreach report).

BOCK, S. D. *A Escolha profissional de sujeitos de baixa renda recém-egressos do ensino medio*. 2008. [The professional choice of low income individuals who have recently entered teaching] PhD thesis – School of Education, Unicamp, Campinas.

_____. *Orientação profissional*. [Professional guidance] São Paulo: Cortez, 2002.

BRASIL. Ministry of Education. Inep. *Censo escolar da educação básica*. [Elementary school census] Brasília, 2007.

_____. Quem quer ser professor no Brasil? O que o Enem nos diz. [Who wants to be a teacher in Brazil? What Enem tells us] *Na medida*, Brasília, v. 1, n. 3, p. 5-9, Sept. 2009.

CHANLAT, J. F. Quais carreiras e para qual sociedade? [Which careers and for which society] *Revista de Administração de Empresas*, São Paulo, v.35, n.6, p.67-75, 1995.

DUBAR, C. *A Crise das identidades*: a interpretação de uma mutação. [The identity crisis: interpreting a change] Porto: Afrontamento, 2006.

DUSSEL, I. Impactos de los cambios en el contexto social y organizacional del oficio docente. [The impact of changes within the social and organizational context of the teaching profession] In: FANFANI, E. T. (Comp.) *El Oficio de docente*: vocación, trabajo y profesión en el siglo XXI. [The teaching profession: vocation, work and profession in the 21st century] Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2006. p. 143-174.

FANFANI, E. T. Consideraciones sociológicas sobre profesionalización docente. [Sociological considerations of the teaching profession] *Educação & Sociedade*, Campinas, v. 28, n. 99, p. 335-354, May/Aug. 2007.

GATTI, B. A.; BARRETTO, E. S. S. *Professores do Brasil*: impasses e desafios. [Teachers in Brazil: impasses and challenges] Brasília: Unesco, 2009.

GATTI, B. et al. Atratividade da carreira docente no Brasil. [Attractiveness of the teaching career in Brazil] São Paulo: Fundação Victor Civita. 2010. (Educational studies and research studies carried out in 2007, 2008, 2009).

JESUS, S. N. Desmotivação e crise de identidade na profissão docente. [Demotivation and identity crisis in the teaching profession] *Revista Katálysis*, Florianópolis, v. 7, n. 2, p.192-202, 2004.

LANG, V. La Construcción social de las identidades profesionales de los docentes em Francia: enfoques históricos y sociológicos. [The social construction of the professional identities of teachers in France: historical and sociological focuses] In: FANFANI, E. T. *El Oficio de docente*: vocación, trabajo y profesión en el siglo XXI. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2006. p. 107-132.

LAPO, F. R., BUENO, B. O. Professores, desencanto com a profissão e abandono do magistério. [Teachers, disillusionment with the profession and abandoning teaching] *Cadernos de Pesquisa*, São Paulo, n. 118, p. 65-88, March. 2003.

LEVENFUS, R. S.; NUNES, M. L. T. Principais temas abordados por jovens centrados na escolha profissional. [Main themes dealt with by young people centered on professional choice] In: LEVENFUS, R. S.; SOARES, D. H. P. (Org.). *Orientação vocacional ocupacional*: novos achados teóricos, técnicos e instrumentais para a clínica, a escola e a empresa. [Vocational, occupational guidance: new theoretical, technical and instrumental findings for the clinic, the school and the company] Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2002. p. 61-78.

MELLO, G. N. *Representações e expectativas de professores de 1º grau sobre o aluno pobre, a escola e sua prática docente*. [Representations and expectation of 1st grade teachers on poor students, the school and their teaching practice] São Paulo: Fundação Carlos Chagas, 1981. (Education and social development).

OECD. *Professores são importantes*: atraindo, desenvolvendo e retendo professores eficazes. [Teachers are important: attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers] São Paulo: Moderna, 2006.

ROLDÃO, M. C. Que é ser professor hoje? A profissionalidade docente revisitada. [What is it to be a teacher today? Teaching professionalism revisited] *Revista das Eses*, n. 9, p. 79-87, 1998. (Nova série)

SILVA, R. N.; ESPÓSITO, Y. L.; GATTI, B A. Características de los professores de primergrado em Brasil: perfil e expectativas. [Characteristics of 1st grade teachers in Brazil: profile and expectations] *Boletin del Proyecto Principal en Educación en America Latina y el Caribe*, Santiago de Chile, n. 34, p. 36-53, 1994.

TEDESCO, J. C. A. Modo de conclusión: una agenda de política para el sector docente. [Conclusion mode: a policy agenda for the teaching sector] In: FANFANI, E. T. (Comp.) *El Oficio de docente*: vocación, trabajo y profesión en el siglo XXI. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2006. p. 321-339.

VAILLANT, D. A Profissão docente. [Teaching profession] In: SCHWARTZMAN, S.; COX, C. (Org.). *Políticas educacionais e coesão social*: uma agenda latino-americana. Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier; São Paulo: iFHC, 2009. p. 125-169.

VALLE, I. R. Carreira do magistério: uma escolha profissional deliberada? [A career in teaching: a deliberate professional choice] *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos,* Brasília, v. 87, n. 216, p.178-187, ago. 2006.

WELLER, W. Grupos de discussão na pesquisa com adolescentes e jovens: aportes teórico-metodológicos e análise de uma experiência com o método. [Discussion groups in research with adolescents and young people: theoretical and methodological contributions and the analysis of an experience with the method] *Educação e Pesquisa*, São Paulo, v.32, n.2, p. 241-260, May/Aug. 2006.