

# M U S T E R

Multi-Site Teacher Education Research Project

sponsored by DFID



## Discussion Paper

# 22

Primary Teacher Trainees  
in Trinidad & Tobago:  
Characteristics, Images, Experiences  
and Expectations

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**Cie**

## **Multi-Site Teacher Education Research Project (MUSTER)**

MUSTER is a collaborative research project co-ordinated from the Centre for International Education at the University of Sussex Institute of Education. It has been developed in partnership with

- The Institute of Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.
- The Institute of Education, The National University of Lesotho.
- The Centre for Educational Research and Training, University of Malawi.
- The Faculty of Education, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.
- The School of Education, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine's Campus, Trinidad.

Financial support has been provided for three years by the British Department for International Development (DFID).

MUSTER is focused on generating new understandings of teacher education before, during and after the point of initial qualification as a teacher. Its concerns include exploring how new teachers are identified and selected for training programmes, how they acquire the skills they need to teach effectively, and how they experience training and induction into the teaching profession. The research includes analytical concerns with the structure and organisation of teacher education, the form and substance of teacher education curriculum, the identity, roles and cultural experience of trainee teachers, and the costs and probable benefits of different types of initial teacher training.

MUSTER is designed to provide opportunities to build research and evaluation capacity in teacher education in developing countries through active engagement with the research process from design, through data collection, to analysis and joint publication. Principal researchers lead teams in each country and are supported by three Sussex faculty and three graduate researchers.

This series of discussion papers has been created to provide an early opportunity to share output from sub-studies generated within MUSTER for comment and constructive criticism. Each paper takes a theme within or across countries and offers a view of work in progress.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper considers the characteristics, images, experiences and expectations of primary teacher trainees in Trinidad and Tobago. It draws on data collected from a survey of one cohort of trainees in training, and qualitative interviews with a balanced sample selected from that group. It notes from a review of research in this field that trainees' prior knowledge is often ignored by trainers despite the fact that it can have a significant impact on perspectives on teaching. Certain key metaphors for making sense of teaching emerged. They were: "teachers as responsible for everything", "teaching as one's life", "teaching as caring", and "teachers as experts". The origins and understandings of these metaphors are then explored in depth in the paper. In the conclusion, the implications of these findings are considered in relation to the teacher education curriculum and the chief recommendation is that there is a need to engage more with views of teaching that trainees bring to training and perhaps a need to restructure teacher education to give it more of a developmental focus by giving more attention to in-service once trainees begin teaching.

## CHAPTER 1

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction

Candidates come to programs of teacher education with personal beliefs about classrooms and pupils and images of themselves as teachers. For the most part, these prior beliefs and images are associated with a candidate's biography: his or her experiences in classrooms, relationships with teachers and other authority figures, recollections of how it felt to be a pupil in classrooms.... The personal beliefs and images that pre-service candidates bring to programs of teacher education usually remain inflexible. (Kagan, 1992, p. 154)

Concern for the perceived lack of impact of teacher education programmes has continued to fuel interest in research on teacher identity. Weinstein (1989) refers to case studies by Crow (1987) which "have indicated that teacher candidates enter teacher education programs with a well established 'teacher role identity' (TRI) based on memories of previous teachers, former teaching experiences, and childhood events" (p. 53). Bullough (1991) suggests that "teacher educators typically ignore the novice's prior knowledge about teaching and instead approach the task of teacher socialization and development as though the beginner were a tabula rasa" (p. 43). Knowles and Holt-Reynolds (1991) assert that:

It is this very 'apprenticeship of observation' that makes the preparation of teachers so different from the preparation of professionals in other fields. Lawyers, architects, physicians, and others have not been immersed in their future professions before they enter professional schools. For the most part, they have little or no personal history with reference to these professions to bring to their formal study. The influence of twelve years or more of observing and participating--often successfully--in 'status quo' school and university classrooms introduces a tension unique to teacher education. (p. 88)

Therefore, teacher trainees believe that they have a good understanding of the work they will eventually carry out in classrooms (Clark, 1988), and the choices they make about how they behave as teachers are heavily influenced by their beliefs Knowles & Holt-Reynolds (1991). Teacher trainees thus come to the teachers' college with a well-developed sense of identity of themselves as teachers, and one of the major challenges facing teacher educators is how to access these beliefs and perspectives. Maxson and Sindelar (1998) suggest that students may use their beliefs to make sense of programme offerings, while teacher educators may simultaneously attempt to mould the students' images into the theoretical shape desired by a specific programme.

Two of the major components of an effective teacher education programme are knowing what to teach (content) and how to teach it (pedagogy). In Trinidad and Tobago, teacher education curricula, for the most part, tend to focus on the inculcation of subject content knowledge and teaching methods. Although courses are offered in the foundations of education, emphasis seems to lie mainly in the psychology of education, in ways that link up with teaching methods (Quamina-Aiyejina et al., 1998). Thus, trainees have less opportunity to explore philosophical and sociological issues about teaching and learning that are pertinent to the local context and which can impact on their previously-held notions of what teachers do and the reasons for teachers' actions. Pietig (1998) agrees that prospective teachers need to master the subject matter they will teach and to develop skills in using a variety of instructional methods; however, she insists that they also need a thorough grounding in social and psychological foundations if they are to work effectively in their classrooms, schools, and communities.

By largely ignoring the critical and reflective stance that philosophy and sociology entails, teacher trainees, in their courses at the teachers' colleges, may not get much of a chance to interrogate or confront their own, perhaps unconsciously held, ideas about teaching. A possible reason for the apparent lack of impact of teacher training might be the reluctance of the training institution to consider critical elements in the trainees' biography. Teacher trainees learn a great deal in college about subject content and teaching methods, yet that knowledge must be incorporated into their previously held *schemas* about teaching. Weber and Mitchell (1995) suggest that:

...beginning teachers inevitably pick and choose what they will respond to in teacher education. Drawing on their past experience, they seek first and foremost confirmation of what they assume to be true about themselves as teachers and about teaching. When these views prove to be faulty, as they often do during student teaching, beginning teachers must find a way to adjust to the situation, to make what Lacey (1977) labelled an 'internalized adjustment' by using various coping strategies aimed either at self-preservation (Rosenholtz, 1989), or at reframing the situation. (p. 30)

Therefore, if an attempt is not made to deliberately examine trainees' previously held schemas about teaching, it is possible that the new knowledge may not be strong enough to prevail over previously held beliefs. It may also complicate and confuse the notion of teaching for the trainee.

Bullough (1991) suggests that if student teachers lack a clear conception of themselves as teachers, then it is difficult to critique the context of schooling. For example, the pressure on a newly trained teacher to comply may lead to the conscious neglect of recent knowledge gained at college. A clear conception of being a teacher can only surface when a trainee is deliberately led into self-examination about their early beliefs and philosophies, alongside sociological and other assumptions about teaching.

Work on teacher identity, then, has come to the fore in recent years as a crucial element in the training of teachers. It represents an attempt to transform the nature of schooling,

through an examination of the ideas of teaching and learning that teachers possess. Although every year teachers are trained in child-centred pedagogies and humanistic ways of teaching and learning, the face of schooling remains largely unchanged. As yet, research on teacher identity is more evident in reports coming from industrialised countries. The present study is an exploratory study of aspects of teacher identity in one cohort at the teachers' colleges in Trinidad and Tobago. It will also describe the major characteristics of the student teachers in this cohort, as representatives of who becomes a teacher in Trinidad and Tobago.

## 1.2 The Concept of Teacher Identity

Teacher identity has been used in research (Ball & Goodson, 1985; Nias, 1989) to describe how teachers seem to understand themselves as teachers. The importance of this concept for research on teaching is captured by Ball and Goodson (1985), who argue that "The ways in which teachers achieve, maintain, and develop their identity, their sense of self, in and through a career, are of vital significance in understanding the actions and commitments of teachers in their work" (p. 18). They also refer to Ball's (1972) useful separation of the *situated* from the *substantive* identity:

...a separation that is between a malleable presentation of self that differs and alters according to the specific definition of the situation and a more stable, core self perception that is fundamental to the ways that individuals think about themselves. (p. 18)

In this understanding, the substantive or *core* self is thought to be close to the true nature of the person, or the typical characteristics and personality exhibited by that person. In the language of *symbolic interaction*, it is the *me*. It is the self that persons display when they are comfortable, at ease, and not perpetually engaged in *impression management*. The situated self, also called the *I*, is the self that alters and differs in its presentation of itself, according to context and situation. Symbolic interactionists look on this aspect of self as the *social self*, that is, it takes its cues from the larger social group about how the self should be presented in particular instances.

While the term has been loosely used by researchers, there seems to be consensus (Calderhead, 1987; Weber & Mitchell, 1995) that the components of teacher identity may be the *images, experiences, and expectations* that teachers have had and continue to have about teaching.

### 1.2.1 Images

Weber and Mitchell (1995) say that: "Images are constructed and interpreted in attempts to make sense of human experience and to communicate that sense to others. Images in turn become part of human experience, and are thus subject to reconstructions and reinterpretations" (p. 21). Images are an important component of one's *biography* and,

thus, in the construction of teacher identity (Kelchtermans, 1993). In addition to their personal biographies, Britzman (1986) notes that teachers also bring to their work:

Their implicit institutional biographies – the cumulative experience of school lives – which, in turn, inform their knowledge of the student’s world, of school structure, and of curriculum. All this contributes to well-worn and commonsensical images of the teacher’s work and serves as the frame of reference for prospective teachers’ self images. (Cited in Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p. 9)

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) expand on the notion of image:

By image we mean something within our experience, embodied in us as persons and expressed and enacted in our practices and actions. Situations call forth our images from our narratives of experience, and these images are available to us as guides to further action. An image reaches into the past, gathering up experiential threads meaningfully connected to the present. And it reaches intentionally into the future and creates new meaningfully connected threads as situations are experienced and new situations anticipated from the perspective of the image. Thus, images are part of our past, called forth by situations in which we act in the present, and are guides to our future. Images as they are embedded in us entail emotion, morality and aesthetics. (p. 60).

Therefore, memories of schooling as students, as well as in their own early teaching careers, help trainees to build images about teaching, learning, children, and schooling generally. Images, as Weber and Mitchell, and Connelly and Clandinin say, are largely conjured from experiences. Teachers would have had experiences of teaching as students in school; during their tenure as untrained teachers, in the case of Trinidad and Tobago; in the time spent at the teachers’ college; and as trained teachers. Teachers, then, have accumulated a wealth of images of teaching in their lives to guide the formation of a well-developed teacher identity.

This sense of identity of themselves must, necessarily, have a large *idiosyncratic* component. There is an aspect to the development of a teacher’s identity that is essentially unknowable and has to do with *agency* and personal constructs generated from one’s unique biography. Extended *phenomenological interviews* and methods employing *narrative inquiry* are ways of trying to penetrate this aspect of teacher identity. Weber and Mitchell assert that “Images exert their generative power largely through their fundamental role in metaphor” (p. 21), and Dickmeyer (1989) and Munby (1986), indicate that an analysis of *metaphors* shows that teachers themselves use to describe their thinking about their work can lead to a better understanding of teacher identity.

### *1.2.2 Metaphors*

Dickmeyer (1989) describes metaphor as: “a characterisation of a phenomenon in familiar terms. To be effective in promoting understanding of the phenomenon in question, the ‘familiar terms’ must be graphic, visible, and physical in our scale of the world” (p. 151). Metaphors include images and represent a coherent framework that has been devised to understand certain phenomena in a meaningful way. Thinking about

schooling, for example, in terms of *inputs, processes, and outputs* helps to conjure up images that speak to notions of efficiency, accountability, and cost effectiveness. In teacher education, when the metaphor of *child-centred pedagogy* is invoked, images that situate the child at the focus of teaching-learning experiences are evoked. Metaphors represent a linguistic shorthand method of describing what is desired through evoking images that transmit the meaning clearly. Bullough (1991) noted that trainee teachers used personally meaningful metaphors for their work such as *teaching as mothering*, *teacher as husbandman of the young*, and *teacher as devil's advocate*. The reasons for these particular metaphors were rooted in their biographical experience.

Researchers have commented on the powerful ways in which metaphors can portray complex meanings with economy (Bowers, 1980; Bullough, 1991, Provenzo et al, 1989; Weber & Mitchell, 1995). Provenzo et al (1988) say that "Metaphor allows the understanding an individual already possesses to contribute to the interpretation of experience for which present understanding and descriptions are inadequate" (p .555). On the other hand, when, over time, metaphors become ossified, half of the metaphor may be lost and what remains comes to be interpreted as reality rather than image:

A metaphor is only alive when there is a realization of duality of meaning. When there is no awareness of such duality, when the metaphor comes to be taken literally, so that schools *do* have an output, that man *is* a mechanism, we are dealing with a dead or hidden metaphor (Taylor, cited in Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p. 24).

### 1.2.3 Cultural Myths

While personal teaching metaphors may be instructive in helping individual teachers to better understand their practice, metaphors in common use in a society can also be unearthed to help trainees better understand the images they habitually employ in thinking about teaching. Britzman (1986) goes further and suggests that *cultural myths* occur at the societal and institutional levels, and they may also inform a trainee's perspective on teaching. She describes cultural myths as "... a set of ideal images, definitions, justifications and measures for thought and activity, [which] sustain a naturalized view of the reality it seeks to encode" (p. 448). Some of the myths she deconstructs in her article refer to the acceptance of the teacher's control of the classroom, the teacher as knowledge expert, and that teachers are born and not made. According to Britzman, myths about teaching are not necessarily negative or untrue, but "are culturally provided ways of seeing the teacher's world, and guidelines for interpreting the teacher's stance" (p. 452).

An examination of Britzman's myths shows that she alludes to them as images and also phrases them as metaphors, for example, *teacher as controller*. Myths, images and metaphors are thus closely layered and it may be difficult to unpack them precisely. For the purposes of this analysis, cultural myths are regarded as emanating at the societal and/or institutional level and metaphors are viewed as representations of images generated from experiences

The importance of this study of the characteristics, images, experiences, and expectations of primary student teachers in Trinidad and Tobago lies in the acceptance of the notion that “It is these personal theories and beliefs, often primarily the result of previous engagement in the processes of learning, of being in classrooms, and of thinking about teaching and teachers, that form the bases for many practices in classrooms” (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991, p. 95). If the student teachers generate their beliefs about “good” teaching from their own experiences, then it is necessary for educators to carefully examine these beliefs in order to “begin to understand and thus more directly influence how personal histories help to shape the conclusions that pre-service teachers reach as they participate in the formal study of teaching” (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, p. 87).

### **1.3 Focus of the Study**

This study was undertaken to provide some insights into the characteristics, images, experiences, and expectations of student teachers in Trinidad and Tobago, so that educators can provide programmes which take cognisance of these qualities in the attempt to prepare these trainees well for their work in primary school classrooms. The specific research questions pursued in the study were as follows:

- Who are recruited to be primary teacher trainees in Trinidad and Tobago?
- What do beginning teachers bring with them in terms of professional images, experiences and expectations?
- What are the implications of these images, experiences and expectations for the content and organisation of the programmes at the teachers’ colleges in the attempt to produce quality teachers for the primary school system?

The remainder of the report is divided into the following sections: Chapter 2 describes the methodology adopted in the study; Chapter 3 presents data on the biographical characteristics of trainees who entered the teachers’ colleges during 1995-1998; Chapter 4 is a description and analysis of the views of the 1998 cohort of trainees on their own schooling, teachers, and teaching, leading to a discussion on teacher identity; Chapter 5 presents a more focused investigation of teacher identity with a small group of the 1998 cohort of teacher trainees; and Chapter 6 presents the summary and discussion.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **2.1 Methodology**

This study was executed in three phases and three different data-collection techniques were employed.

One phase of the study sought to determine the entry characteristics of trainees who began their course of study at the two teachers' colleges during the period 1995-1998. Data for this phase were obtained by examining the personal files of trainees, which are kept at the colleges. A data-collecting sheet was devised and the appropriate information from each file was coded and entered directly on these sheets. The characteristics examined included age, gender, marital status, previous school-type taught at, length of service prior to entry and academic qualifications.

Another phase involved the collection of survey data by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of four parts. Part A elicited basic biographic information; Part B sought detailed information on trainees' education; Part C sought trainees' views of teaching, teacher training, and schools; and Part D was designed to gather information which would lead to an understanding of teacher identity. Part D was the only section with a fully open-ended item format; most other items were in the form of checklists or Likert scales. The entire entering cohort in both colleges in 1998 was targeted in the questionnaire data collection procedure.

The third phase of the study involved small group work. The sample for this phase consisted of 16 volunteers from the two Government Teachers' Colleges in Trinidad and Tobago - eight from Corinth Teachers' College and eight from Valsayn Teachers' College - who had entered college in 1998. These volunteers were sourced by personnel at the teachers' colleges on the basis of their willingness and their availability to be a part of the study. The sample consisted of 7 females and 9 males, representing the two major ethnic groupings of people of African descent and East Indian descent in the country.

These 16 trainees first responded to the survey questionnaire described above. Further data was collected from them through autobiographies, focus group interviews, and one-on-one interviews. Questionnaires were administered during October-November, 1998. Autobiographies were written by December 1998. Focus group interviews were conducted in April 1999 and semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were conducted in April 2000. With this long time period over which data were collected, it was hoped that it would be possible to detect any shifts in trainees' views as they experienced the teachers' college curriculum.

The technique of using autobiographies, coupled with focus group interviews and one-on-one interviews was deemed to be appropriate for this study. Knowles (1993) expounds the value of life-history accounts, coupled with extended conversations about the substance of these accounts, as a means of illuminating the pre-service teacher's personal perspectives about teaching, classrooms, schools and education.

The 16 volunteers were asked to prepare autobiographies, detailing their educational experiences from childhood through secondary school and up to the present time. The intention was to capture some of the trainees' images of teaching, schooling and teachers through this medium. Focus group interviews, with groups of 3-4 trainees, were conducted to probe further some of the issues that were identified in the questionnaire responses and in the autobiographies as being of importance to the sample under study. Further probing was done in the one-on-one, semi-structured interviews one year later. The interviews were all audio-taped and later transcribed.

Quantitative data generated was subjected to statistical analysis using the SPSS program. Qualitative data generated was analysed and coded and emergent themes were noted. Attempts were made to generate thick descriptions in response to the main research questions.

## CHAPTER 3

### CHARACTERISTICS OF ENTERING TRAINEES

#### 3.1 Introduction

This component of the study sought to determine the entry characteristics of trainees who began their course of study at the two Teachers' Colleges in Trinidad and Tobago: Valsayn Teachers' College and Corinth Teachers' College, during the period 1995-1998.

Each college has its own format for keeping student data with the result that slightly different data sets are kept. For example, Valsayn Teachers' College requires trainees to submit a photograph for inclusion in their files, while no such requirement exists at Corinth. Also, the Corinth files contained no information about the years in which trainees obtained their various CXC/GCE O-level qualifications, while this information was available at Valsayn. Further, particularly in the earlier years, the Corinth files contained no information on whether or not entering trainees had taken part in the On-the-Job (OJT) pre-training programme offered by the Ministry of Education, but the Valsayn files contained this information.

Data were collected for 1585 trainees over this period: 766 from Corinth and 819 from Valsayn. The intake of each college each year is roughly 200 trainees. This enrolment figure is officially set by the Ministry of Education.

The characteristics of trainees examined included gender, age, marital status, school-type at which trainee taught prior to entry into the Teachers' College; length of service prior to entry, and academic qualifications. All tables with statistical data for the separate years, 1995-1998, are presented in Appendix A.

#### 3.2 Findings

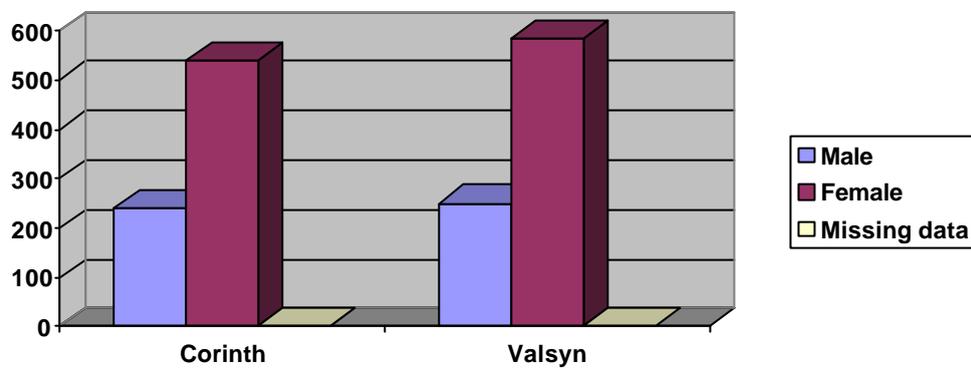
##### 3.2.1 Gender

Of the total group of 1585 trainees who entered the Teachers' Colleges during 1995-1998, 1122 (70.8%) were female and 461 (29.1%) were male. This preponderance of female trainees was evident in both Colleges as shown in Table 1 and Figure 1. The male:female ratio was roughly identical for the two Colleges in each of the four years under consideration. Detailed statistics on the gender composition of the entering cohort over these four years are given in Tables A1.1–A1.4 (Appendix A).

**Table 1: Gender Composition of Total Intake, 1995-1998**

Gender	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	226	29.5	235	28.7	461	29.1
Female	538	70.2	584	71.3	1122	70.8
Missing data	2	0.3	0	0.0	2	0.1
Total	766	100.0	819	100.0	1585	100.0

**Figure 1: Gender composition of entering cohort**



### 3.2.2 Age

Almost no one under the age of 21 years entered the Teachers' Colleges during 1995-1998. Just over 85% of the trainees entering fell within the age range 21-30 years (see Table 2). There was a slight increase in the percentage of entering trainees more than 30 years old over this period (see Tables A2.1-A2.4 in Appendix A), suggesting that a few people might be changing careers and entering primary teaching. This trend of an increasing entry age is more marked for Valsayn Teachers' College than for Corinth Teachers' College.

Of the 1352 entering trainees who fell into the 21-30 years age group during this period, 946 (70.0%) were female. This percentage is roughly the same as the percentage of females in the total entering population during these years.

**Table 2: Age Profile of Total Intake, 1995-1998**

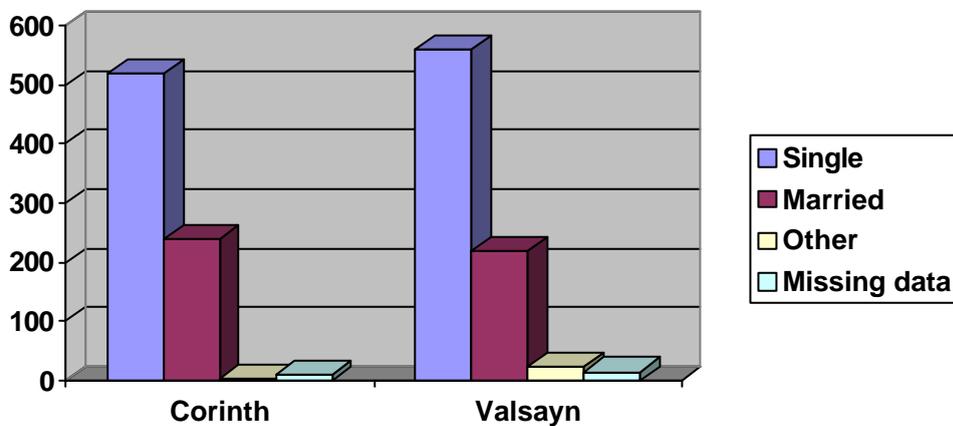
Age (years)	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<21	0	0.0	9	1.1	9	0.6
21-30	680	88.8	672	82.0	1352	85.3
>30	81	10.6	130	15.9	211	13.3
Missing data	5	0.6	8	1.0	13	0.8
Total	766	100.0	819	100.0	1585	100.0

*3.2.3 Marital Status*

A total of 1075 trainees (67.8%) entered the Teachers' Colleges as single people during the period under consideration. Overall, the number and percentage of single trainees in Valsayn were slightly higher than in Corinth (see Table 3 and Figure 2).

When the data over the individual years are examined (See Tables A3.1-A3.4), it is seen that there was a noticeable decrease in the percentage of single trainees in both colleges in 1998 when compared with the previous three years. At Corinth, this percentage changed from roughly 69% in 1995-1997 to 62% in 1998, whereas at Valsayn, the change was from roughly 69% in 1995-1997 to 66% in 1998.

**Figure 2: Marital status of entering trainees**



**Table 3: Marital Status of Total Intake, 1995-1998**

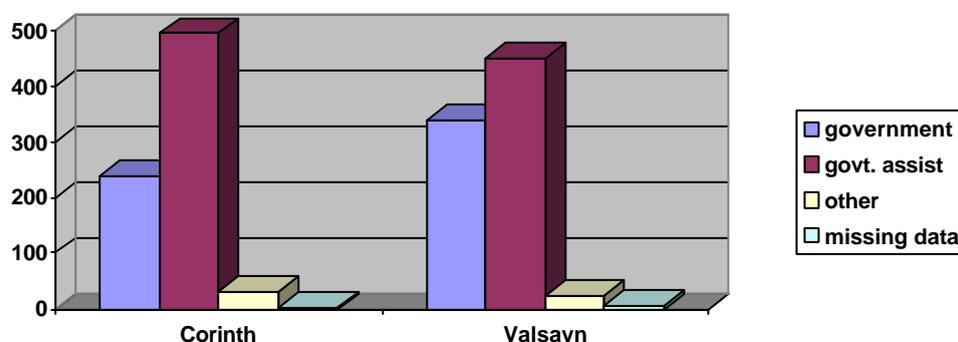
Status	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Single	513	67.0	562	68.6	1075	67.8
Married	240	31.3	219	26.7	459	29.0
Separated	0	0.0	12	1.5	12	0.8
Divorced	4	0.5	8	1.0	12	0.8
Common-law union	0	0.0	1	0.1	1	0.1
Missing data	9	1.2	17	2.1	26	1.6
Total	766	100.0	819	100.0	1585	100.0

*3.2.4 School Type Taught at prior to Entry to Teachers' College*

The majority of entering trainees had previously taught in Government Assisted Primary schools (see Table 4 and Figure 3). Of the 766 trainees who entered Corinth during this period, 496 (64.8%) had come from Government-Assisted Primary schools whereas at Valsayn, 451 of the 819 trainees (55.1%) had come from these schools. The higher percentage at Corinth might be due to the overlap between the geographical location of many Government-Assisted schools and the catchment area from which Corinth trainees are selected.

The ratio of Government-Assisted Primary schools to Government Primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago is roughly 2.5:1. Except for the situation at Valsayn Teachers' College in 1995, the greater proportion of entering trainees during the period 1995-1998 had previously taught in Government-Assisted Primary schools (Tables A4.1–A4.4). Taking the entire entering cohort into consideration, a trend of increasing percentages of entering trainees from Government-Assisted Primary schools was observed over the period, ranging from 48.5% in 1995 to 67.9% in 1998.

**Figure 3: Previous school type taught at**



**Table 4: School Type Taught at prior to Entry to Teachers' College, 1995-1998**

School type	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Government	235	30.7	338	41.3	573	36.2
Government-Assisted	496	64.8	451	55.1	947	59.7
Private	1	0.1	10	1.2	11	0.7
More than one type	31	4.0	14	1.7	45	2.8
Missing data	3	0.4	6	0.7	9	0.6
Total	766	100.0	819	100.0	1585	100.0

*3.2.5 Service prior to Entry to Teachers' College*

Of the 1585 trainees entering Teachers' College over this period, 914 (57.7%) had taught for three years and 563 (35.5%) had taught for four years. This yields a total of 93.2% of the trainees with a 3-4 year period of pre-college teaching experience (Note that any fraction of a year equal to or greater than 0.5 is counted as 1 year).

There is a common perception in the local context that beginning teachers from Government-Assisted schools gain entry to the Teachers' Colleges after functioning for a shorter period of time as an untrained teacher in the primary school than their counterparts in the Government schools. This was tested in the data and the findings are shown in Table 5. Whereas 58.0% of the trainees from Government-Assisted schools (with a higher percentage of trainee intake) entered the Teachers' College after 3 years of teaching, 59.3% of the trainees from Government schools entered after teaching for this period of time. In a similar vein, 36.7% of trainees from Government-Assisted schools had taught for four years as compared with 33.7% from Government schools. There, therefore, does not seem to be much difference in the speed with which entry to Teachers' College is gained from these two school types.

**Table 5: Length of Service prior to Entry x School Type**

Service	Government		Government Assisted	
	N	%	N	%
3 years	340	59.3	549	58.0
4 years	193	33.7	348	36.7
Other periods	22	3.8	25	2.6
Missing data	18	3.1	25	2.6
Total	573	100.0	947	100.0

### 3.2.6 Academic Qualifications

As shown in Table 6, the vast majority of entering trainees had CXC/GCE O-level qualifications in excess of the stipulated minimum requirements of “passes” in five subjects for entry to Teachers’ Colleges. The qualifications of students entering Corinth Teachers’ College seemed to be slightly better than those of students entering Valsayn Teachers’ College during this period, particularly in 1998.

**Table 6: Numbers (Percentages) of Entering Teacher Trainees with more than 5 CXC/GCE O-Level Passes, 1995-1998**

	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1995	148	87.1	167	82.3	315	84.5
1996	172	84.3	164	77.4	336	80.8
1997	160	83.8	167	81.1	327	82.4
1998	186	92.5	163	82.3	349	87.5

There was no data available at Corinth which would indicate whether or not entering trainees had obtained appropriate qualifications in five CXC/GCE at one sitting of the respective examinations. At Valsayn, some of these data were available but data were missing for about 17.2% of the entering cohort over these years. Nonetheless, overall, only 41.5% of those for whom data were available had secured these qualifications at one sitting during the period 1995-1998.

There is the general perception that primary teachers are weak in science. Secondary school students can take up to three science subjects at any one sitting of CXC/GCE O-level examinations. The statistics indicate that only 274 of the 1585 trainees under study (17.3%) had passed three science subjects at this level. More than half of the group (55.9%) had passed one science subject only. The most common science subject passed was biology (50.2%), followed by chemistry (37.9%). Physics was passed by 22.1% of the group over the period.

With regard to GCE A-level examinations, 1043 of the 1585 entering trainees during this period (65.8%) did not possess any qualifications at this level. Of the remainder, 144 (9.1%) had passed one subject, 247 (15.6%) had passed two subjects, and 136 (8.6%) had passed three subjects. The performance in A-level science subjects was lower than the overall A-level performance: 1392 (87.8%) had secured no A-level science passes, 83 (5.2%) had secured one pass, 90 (5.7%) had secured two passes and 6 (0.4%) had secured three passes.

### 3.2.7 Home Background

No data on the home background of trainees were available from the College files. However, such information had been sought in the questionnaire that was issued to the 1998 entering cohort. The discussion on the home background of trainees that follows therefore refers to the 1998 cohort only.

Completed questionnaires were received from 156 of the 201 trainees at Corinth and 143 of the 198 trainees at Valsayn. This represents a 77.6% return rate from Corinth and a 72.2% return rate from Valsayn.

Nearly half of the trainees (49.5%) came from homes in which the mothers were house persons. About 13.7% of the mothers were employed at the lower professional and managerial level, mainly as nurses, teachers and secretaries. The occupations of the fathers were mainly concentrated in the lower professional and managerial (14.7%), skilled (23.4%) and semi-skilled (12.4%) areas. They included teachers, civil servants and owners of small enterprise at the lower professional and managerial level; builders, plumbers and policemen at the skilled level; and factory workers, construction workers and taxi drivers at the semi-skilled level.

The School Leaving Certificate was the highest qualification held by 35.5% of the fathers and 40.1% of the mothers. CXC/GCE qualifications were held by 16.4% of the fathers and 15.1% of the mothers. Post-secondary qualifications were held by 16.1% of the fathers and 12.0% of the mothers.

### **3.3 Overall Characteristics of the Entering Teacher Trainee**

The overall characteristics of the entering primary teacher trainees can be summarised as follows. Trainees:

- Are mainly female
- Are mainly in the age group 21-30 years
- Are mainly single
- Have taught for 3-4 years prior to entry into the Colleges
- Have taught mainly at Government-Assisted schools
- Possess more than 5 CXC/GCE O-level passes
- Typically have not passed 3 CXC/GCE O-level science subjects
- Typically do not possess GCE A-level passes
- Come from homes in which the mothers are mainly house persons; the fathers operate at the lower professional, skilled and semi-skilled levels; and few of the parents possess post-secondary qualifications.

The profile of trainees seems to be changing as older people and a greater percentage of married people seem to be entering.

## CHAPTER 4

### TEACHER IDENTITY – WHOLE GROUP ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This section of the research report will first focus on the analysis of responses to each of the open-ended questionnaire items that was answered by the cohort of in-coming trainees to the teachers' colleges.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit information on the images, experiences, and expectations that beginning teachers seem to have and which are thought to be important in building a picture of their identities as teachers. As outlined in the introduction to this report, the research literature into teacher thinking counts as important the role of image, metaphor, and myth in the interpretation of a teacher's experiences and expectations.

To date then, the research literature regards teacher identity as constructed, and continuing to be constructed, by the individual and collective images, metaphors, and myths that people in a society hold about teaching because of their historical past. The idiosyncratic images born out of an individual's memory and biography are also believed to be woven into the strands of that identity as a teacher. Thus, studies of teacher identity recognise the dual nature to the concept - that it is a personal construct built up by individual life histories and also a social construct, built up by historical and cultural influences within a particular society.

The responses of the trainees to open-ended items on the questionnaire were analysed with this notion of teacher identity in mind. However, it is noted that prolonged interaction with the trainees is necessary to elicit the kind of data that may be useful in constructing a detailed picture of their teacher identity – both in its personal and social dimensions. Analysis of the questionnaire data for the cohort can only give broad themes relating to teacher identity, and these findings may quite likely be skewed towards the social dimensions of the construct rather than its individual, idiosyncratic dimensions.

#### 4.2 Findings

The entire population of trainees entering both colleges in 1998 was targeted. Completed questionnaires were received from 156 of the 201 trainees at Corinth (77.6%) and 143 of the 198 trainees at Valsayn (72.2%).

The data were analysed for the entire responding group of 299 trainees, and not by college.

#### 4.2.1 Responses to Questionnaire Items

A summary of the responses for each of eight open-ended items on the questionnaire is presented below.

##### ***Item #1: What was the best thing about your primary schooling?***

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Play/carefree life/friendships	78
Helpful and caring teachers/ mutual liking between pupils and teachers/good staff-pupil relationships	62
Extra-curricular activities	20
Good teaching	15
Treats/bazaars/concerts/outings	13
The laying of a good foundation	09
Art & craft & physical education	07
Receiving an “all round” education	07
Passing the Common Entrance examination	07
No response	20

Some typical responses to this item were:

- Having caring teachers and buyin g lots of snacks.*
- My friends and my standards I and II teachers, playtime.*
- Taking part in co-curricular activities (singing, socialising with others).*
- Playing with and making new friends.*
- Going to school and playing games.*

The majority of these responses have to do with the affective, with emotions, with positive and caring relationships, and with being engaged in a variety of activities outside of the formal learning setting. Purely academic reasons such as good teaching or passing the Common Entrance examination did not feature highly. What trainees seemed to cherish most was the quality of interaction they enjoyed, among people they liked, who liked them, and who shared common interests. The fact that the qualities of good teaching and the laying of a good foundation for further academic work occur with low frequency suggests that academic matters are not viewed as being as important as good relationships, fun, and activities which allow pupils to express themselves in a variety of ways.

Trainees’ best memories of primary school days seem to be related to instances where the *self* (Ball & Goodson, 1985) is allowed free expression through games, interaction with friends, participating in extra-curricular activities, and in the classroom with caring teachers.

**Item #2: What was the worst thing about your primary schooling?**

Codes	Frequency
Corporal punishment/ punishment of all kinds/unfair punishment	73
Pressure of work/rote and drill/teacher centeredness/not being allowed to go outdoors	57
Teachers who: were abusive and uncaring/had favourites/were too strict	43
Few extra-curricular activities/ no playing field	16
Failure at Common Entrance examination /placing low in test/ridiculed in class for not knowing work	15
Poor amenities (old buildings; bad toilets)	12
No negative experiences	11
No response	38

Some typical responses to this item were:

*-I was never given an opportunities (sic) becoming an independent thinker, never allowed proper explanation and always in fear because of poor information.”*

*-Not much attention was devoted to the aesthetic areas, especially the sporting disciplines. Also, pupils were required to carry quite heavy school bags each day.”*

*-The worst thing was skipping the standard 4 class and moving right on to standard 5 for a period of two years, with a teacher who used corporal punishment for everything and on everyone, no matter what.”*

*-Having to answer questions in front of everybody and being punished when it was incorrect.”*

*-Being punished with a fat strap.”*

Corporal punishment and the pressure of schoolwork were the negative aspects of primary schooling cited most often. Trainees recounted being beaten for not knowing their schoolwork properly, for example, for “...not knowing even vocabulary.” They seemed to feel that this is a wrong reason for administering corporal punishment. They were also able to cite many instances in which they thought they were punished unfairly. Failure at the Common Entrance examination, low placement in class tests, and unfair comparisons to other pupils were also highlighted as bad memories of primary schooling. Fear and humiliation seem to characterise much of what was wrong with primary schooling as seen by these trainees.

The experiences associated with their worst memories of primary schooling seem, again, to focus on the self. In this case, however, they focus on threats to *self esteem*. The high incidence of punishment, being the victim of uncaring teachers and teachers who cause humiliation, being pressured to toil over a “mountain of books,” and having to experience failure in examinations are all experiences that can threaten a person’s high estimation of self.

**Item# 3: We all remember good teachers who have helped us in our own schooling. Describe one good teacher who you remember well and say why you choose him or her.**

CODES	Frequency
Helpful and caring	88
Motivating	50
Made learning fun	31
Caring but stern	22
Dedicated 'above and beyond'	20
Gave good guidance in academics and beyond	16
Motherly	14
No response	27

Some typical responses to this item were:

*...was kind, generous, explained well, appreciated us as a class and me as an individual.*

*-She always encouraged me to reach for the stars in everything that I attempted to do.*

*-He knew his stuff. He never hesitated to repeat or do over. Lots of fun also. Our experiences were both fun and educational.*

*-He did not only deal thoroughly with the curriculum but he also helped us with general problems and guided us to face life in the future.*

*...who was more than just a 'teacher,' but a mother and a confidante. She helped me in times of despair and always motivated or encouraged me to do better and 'hang on' amidst adversities.*

Trainees remember teachers who were helpful and caring and who encouraged them in some way, for example, in developing confidence. Qualities such as acting as a mother figure, being dedicated, and making lessons fun are also indicators of teachers who care. Memories of 'best teacher' focus on outstanding individuals who contributed much more than academic knowledge to their pupils.

Many of the trainees who gave no response to this item had also given no response to the item on the worst thing about schooling. It would seem that for some trainees, primary schooling was not a memorable affair.

Again, responses to this item demonstrate the importance trainees attach to having the self affirmed.

**Item # 4: Teachers need to be trained because ...**

Codes	Frequency
They will be more efficient and effective on the job by:	
-having the required knowledge & skills/ learning about new technologies	119
- benefiting from training; it does not come naturally	42
- being aware of differences among pupils	39
- being able to inspire confidence, self esteem in pupils	05
They have a responsibility to fulfill	41
Training tends to change teacher perceptions	15
Training contributes to professionalism	15
No response	60

Some typical responses to this item were:

- ...they need to know about planning lessons, performing their duties in a professional and responsible manner and to what is expected of a teacher.
- ...teachers need to be trained because they are the people who mould the minds of the young. Therefore they need the necessary skills in order to produce future well-developed, adjusted individuals for tomorrow.
- ...they will have an idea as to what teaching is all about. Some people have the idea that all teachers do is stand in front of a classroom and talk.

The responses to this item were mainly ones which spoke of instrumental outcomes of the training process. Trainees outlined that teachers need specific skills in order to function effectively and that teacher training is necessary to equip teachers with these skills. It is interesting that trainees made no mention here of the nurturing qualities that they extolled in their descriptions of a good teacher.

**Item #5: I am doing teacher training because ...**

Codes	Frequency
To be an effective and competent teacher	70
To learn better teaching skills and techniques	48
To be an effective teacher/for remuneration /and it is compulsory	40
To be able to deal with a variety of students and their problems	36
It is compulsory	24
Enjoyment/commitment to children	15
For self and professional development	13
A "stepping stone" in career path	13
To be a professional	11
For remuneration/ a 'stepping stone' to a degree or further education	04
No response	10

Some typical responses to this item were:

- ...I want to know what I'm supposed to be doing in terms of new technology and ideas and I want to know how best to do it.

- ...Teaching is more or less stable, and a qualification to get a higher salary and to stay in teaching.
- ...I love children and I like to see them excel. I think I have a lot of patience with them.
- ...I feel that there is a need for me to develop better methods of teaching in order to effectively reach my charges.
- ...It is a mandatory exercise as a teacher.

The most prominent reasons given express trainees' view of training as the vehicle through which they would become better teachers by acquiring appropriate skills and techniques for dealing with children. Some trainees specifically mentioned that these skills and competencies must be learnt, making training essential. It is noteworthy that unambiguous, intrinsic motives such as their love for children and a commitment to helping children develop were cited by few trainees. However, this may well be a limitation of the questionnaire method of collecting such data; appropriate probing in an interview setting of trainees who had volunteered other reasons for undergoing training would have revealed whether or not those trainees were also intrinsically motivated.

**Item #6: When I leave Teachers' College, I hope to ...**

Codes	Frequency
Pursue a degree at UWI and move to the secondary system	91
Be an effective teacher	82
Pursue further education courses leading to: principal, guidance counsellors, measurement officers, Ministry of Education personnel	35
Leave teaching – pursue other studies to be more marketable	26
Pursue the certificate in education at UWI/courses in ECCE	24
Miscellaneous responses	23
Pursue specialist courses e.g., ECCE, Special Ed. to open own school	04
Teach for a number of years before moving on	02
No response	12

Some typical responses to this item were:

- ... to further my studies in early childhood care and education.
- ...go on to University to pursue a degree. Eventually leave the classroom and enter other areas in education e.g. research, counselling, admin.
- ... attend university and become a secondary school teacher. Primary school teaching is too hard.
- ... be able to make a greater impact on the lives of the charges I am given and to make a difference in the school I am sent to.
- ... one day become a specialized teacher or principal. Later on I hope to occupy a high position in the Ministry of Education and make important education decisions (and receive a more appropriate salary).

The pursuit of further studies is a dominant theme in these responses. This desire is, perhaps, understandable given that these are young people. However, it is noteworthy that many of the trainees are thinking of pursuing further training so that they could move

out of the primary school classroom. Many of them wish to enter the secondary school system or to advance in other sectors of the education system such as the specialist areas, for example, Early Childhood Care and Education, Guidance and Counselling, Measurement and Evaluation, and so on.

It is also noteworthy that some trainees stated quite clearly that they intend to leave teaching altogether as soon as this was possible, to become involved in the creative arts, to acquire a degree and a job unrelated to teaching, or to simply branch off in other directions after fulfilling their contractual teaching obligations to the government.

***Item #7: Below is a list of problems and challenges facing the teaching profession. Choose 3 problems you believe you will face when you begin teaching. Give reasons for your choice. List the problems in descending order of importance.***

The analysis for this item was done only for the top ranked response.

<b>Problems and challenges</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Overcrowded classrooms	134
Poor conditions of work, e.g. unfinished buildings	35
Too many duties to perform	35
No opportunities to advance my career	19
Continuous assessment	17
Children who misbehave	14
Low status in the eyes of the community	11
Miscellaneous responses	16
No response	18

The aspect of primary teaching that trainees think would be most problematic is the overcrowded classroom. They cited a variety of reasons why they thought this would be a problem. The most frequently cited reason was that an overcrowded classroom would restrict the teacher's attempts to use various strategies to reach the learners. They mentioned the futility of using strategies such as group work where space is needed for hands-on activities.

Trainees also cited poor conditions of work, for example, unfinished buildings, as a source of concern. This is another example of an unsuitable teaching milieu.

Another area of concern was the number of duties that they expected that they would have to perform. It was felt that, with an overloaded curriculum, they would be hard-pressed to find the time to perform the many other duties that some principals would expect them to perform. In referring to this dilemma, one trainee remarked that a teachers' college graduate was "...expected to be God."

**Item #8: Describe any experiences you have had before entering college, which you think are valuable in becoming a teacher, and say why these experiences are valuable.**

Codes	Frequency
<b>Previous experience as an untrained teacher</b>	
OJT (on the job training programme)/mentors as models	42
Making a difference in children's lives/enjoying interaction	33
Teaching in a variety of contexts/ levels; teaching different children	30
Changes in personal circumstances e.g., becoming a mother	21
Interacting with slow learners	18
Specific life experiences	16
Related courses taken	16
Actually teaching a class	9
Other miscellaneous experiences	63
No response	60

The most valuable experience reported was the pre-service training OJT programme mounted by the Ministry of Education. Trainees reported that this programme played a critical role in expanding their understanding of the nature of teaching. Respondents tended to focus on the technical skills that they acquired on the OJT programme. These responses reinforce the emphasis trainees place on the acquisition of technical competence. Some trainees valued the fact that they had been able to make a difference in children's lives in their pre-college experiences. Others, still, were influenced by the experience gained in teaching children of varying characteristics at various levels and in different contexts.

#### 4.2.2 Metaphors of Teaching

Several images and metaphors were evident in the trainees' responses. These images and metaphors can be used as a guide to understanding beginning teacher identity.

##### ***Teacher as responsible for everything***

From the trainees' accounts, it is evident that the teacher is seen as the central pivot in teaching and learning. Trainees outlined that competent teachers must orchestrate and control *all* the variables involved in their work. For example:

*I want to become the best that I can in all areas, content, knowing the child, parent and the school. I want to make a change, a positive one in our children's lives.*

Heavy responsibilities and individual effort are two main themes in this metaphor about teaching. They are also evident in the quotes below:

*I want to improve my skills and knowledge to become a competent teacher. To be a teacher is a big responsibility because you are (sic) play a part in the lives of future generations.*

*I have had a very delinquent student in a standard 3 class. All the teachers have tried with him but had been unsuccessful. I hope at the end of this training I will be better able to deal with children like that child. He is now a vagrant.*

There is an unquestioning acceptance of a wide range of things a good teacher is supposed to do. The trainees do not state what agencies they will enlist in helping their clients. They seem to have fully internalised that teachers go it alone.

### ***Teaching as one's life***

The prevailing cultural myth, emphasising the altruism and self-sacrificing virtues involved in teaching, may have prompted some trainees to identify themselves as teachers in terms of the benefits that accrue to others. They have fully accepted the notion of intrinsic rewards associated with the myth. For example:

*I have learnt that children like to emulate their teachers. I have decided to live my life according to "Let character speak (sic) for itself". Each day make a change for the better.*

*I want to cast a lifesaver rather than an anchor to any child God places in my care. I want to be like Miss Narine.*

Personal theories about children are implicit here. Memories of primary school and their years of working as untrained teachers in the system may have informed these personal understandings that the trainees have about children. There is the perception underlying these quotations that some children are at risk in the system and are in need of a crusader – someone to look out for their interests. Teachers are expected to take on this mission as part of their life's work.

### ***Teaching as caring***

This is a component of all the metaphors that have been discussed and appears to be an integral part of the cultural myth about the good teacher. The following quotations exemplify further this notion of the teacher as caregiver:

*I remember two teachers because both of them were like parents to me. I could spend time with them and they would help me during lunch-time with my schoolwork.*

*One good teacher I remember was my standard 2 teacher who subsequently was my standard 5 teacher. She always made me feel important. She showed me that she cared. She was understanding, thoughtful and generous. She made my self confidence rise.*

### ***Teacher as expert***

This is subsumed under the metaphor of the *teacher as responsible for everything*. Trainees see training as amassing a repertoire of skills, methods, and techniques that would help them to be experts in the classroom. This metaphor invokes the images of an enhanced self-esteem and self-image. It speaks also to the development of the selves of

children, because trainees feel that once they have mastered the techniques, they would be able to provide a curriculum that the children would enjoy:

*I once had a so called 'B' class. I tried different approaches, strategies to get them to learn but to no avail. I thought that I would lose part of my self. It made me stronger and it made me think about psychology and its applications to teaching.*

*Teachers need to be trained because ... we can become better teachers. Doing psychology, maths and other subjects teaches you a lot about the child's development, method of teaching, topics, etc.*

The myth of the teacher as expert in the transmission of knowledge is not challenged at the teachers' colleges. The teacher's prior beliefs and the college curriculum seem fashioned from the same myth.

### **4.3 Summary**

Beginning teacher identity seems to be connected primarily to issues having to do with *self* and, to some extent, with issues having to do with *society*. Trainees expressed admiration for teachers who are caring. Historically derived images of teaching perhaps play an important role in the minds of trainees. These historical images project an altruistic, caring side to teaching.

However, the negative or lowly prestige and status that society confers on primary teaching, at the same time, cause trainees to wrestle with the prospect of a career that promises mainly affective outcomes and intrinsic rewards and little by way of monetary rewards and status. For young people, at the beginning of their careers, these are important issues. The other problematic to this dilemma is that the poor working conditions that tend to prevail in primary schools threaten the self of both pupil and teacher. In such situations – overcrowded classrooms, dilapidated buildings, overloaded curricula – teachers may find it difficult to achieve the caring, affective outcomes which they value as primary teachers. In other words, the expressive curriculum may not surface in such a milieu.

The trainees also seem to have an image of the good teacher as being technically efficient and an expert in classroom instruction and management. Their notions of teaching and learning hinge around the teacher as one in control and within whom resides the knowledge to deal effectively with a wide range of incidents, clientele, and contexts. Thus, the beginning teachers see as valuable, training that enables them to perform better the role they perceive that a teacher should play.

On the whole, then, trainees have an image of the good teacher as caring and nurturing, as technically proficient in the classroom, and as performing in difficult contexts where intrinsic rewards can enhance their self image, but where poor working conditions and the low status accorded the profession may militate against a feeling of satisfaction on the job.

## CHAPTER 5

### TEACHER IDENTITY – SMALL GROUP ANALYSIS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this small group study was two-fold. First, the study sought to explore, in a more in-depth manner, some of the themes that had emerged out of the survey questionnaire data. Secondly, the study sought to explore whether any shifts in trainees' images, experiences, and expectations had occurred over the period of a year, which was the time span between the first set of interviews and the second set.

All of the metaphors identified in the whole group study were discerned in this small group study. The interview format used in this study allowed for greater explication of these metaphors. The findings are presented below.

#### 5.2 Findings

##### 5.2.1 Teacher as Nurturer

Whereas the metaphor *Teaching as caring* was used to describe the affective qualities of a good teacher as extracted from the survey data, it was necessary to use a more powerful metaphor to describe the qualities discerned in the small-group interview data. The metaphor *Teacher as nurturer* is probably a better metaphor to describe the very strong feelings that trainees expressed about the characteristics of the good teacher. There were no dissenting voices on this issue; trainees were unanimous in their view, both at the beginning of training and one year later, that the hallmark of a good teacher is that he/she is caring and is willing (even anxious) to ensure that his/her charges are well taken care of and are nurtured to attain their fullest potential. As one trainee explained:

*You have to be very caring and understanding of the children of today because kids come to you with so many problems. It is not just the adults who have problems...They come hungry, they come without the books, they may be experiencing domestic violence at home or they may have some kind of problems at home. You therefore have to be very understanding and caring. You can't be shouting at them and things like that. That just sets them off even more. You are their role model and you can't do things that you don't want them to do because you are an exemplar to them and they look up to you. You are their parent, doctor, nurse, friend; five days of the week.*

The teacher's knowledge of subject matter and competence in teaching were also considered to be important. However, these abilities are not considered to be nearly as important as the possession of the nurturing traits because:

*...you could be teaching well, but if the children do not like you, they do not learn.*

Thus, a direct link is made between the child's ability to benefit from instruction and the creation of a climate of mutual liking and trust between the teacher and the student. It would be quite possible for persons who do not have the identified nurturing skills to have the required pedagogical skills. However, trainees regard such persons as being deficient because of their inability to stand in *loco parentis*:

*The students would see you as a teacher but not someone who you would run and come to as a parent. They wouldn't think of them as a parent away from home.*

Trainees believe that the good teacher, as defined here, can accomplish things which might not be as readily accomplished by teachers who are otherwise competent, but who do not possess the nurturing attributes. One such skill is the ability to improve the performance of low-achieving pupils. Patience is regarded as a key attribute needed for helping low-achieving pupils to develop and the good teacher is one who possesses patience and can perform well in this capacity:

*Once children feel comfortable and they are not seeing the teacher like this big monster who would punish them if they didn't grasp what is taught, then they would perform better. If they see the teacher as a patient person who would go over work with them if they don't understand, they would eventually improve.*

A good teacher must also understand his/her charges well. This emphasises the need for child psychology, and, throughout the interviews, trainees often mentioned that courses in psychology at the teachers' colleges were proving to be quite useful.

Trainees believe that the effects of a good teacher can be discerned long after the formal teaching/learning situation with that teacher has ended. Several of them attested to the long-lasting effects that good teachers have had on their lives, for example:

*A good teacher to me is a teacher who seeks your interest in your academic development, your performance and things like that. I had good teachers. Two of them I remember quite well, even a third. .... Even after I left school and I told myself that I was not going to pursue academics and all that, she was the one to come and say, "But Jane (not real name), you were not so dull in school. Why don't you go further?" Even though I had three children and all of them were off to school, that was when I decided to take up what she said. That little piece of motivation meant so much to me and I worked on it.*

Overall, the attributes which trainees think are required by the individual who chooses to work with children were clearly defined in the trainees' definition of a good teacher. Some of the trainees view teaching as a vocation in that they believe that one of the teacher's roles is that of moulding the future citizens of the society. This can be done both by what is taught and by example:

*Teaching children good morals will produce a better society than teaching facts.... Teaching people morals will leave you with a society that says, "Look! This belongs to that man." It will leave you with a society that has a proper value system, with an appreciation for working hard, with respect for people's property. So, I think teaching*

*good morals and living an exemplary life, showing the students a positive attitude about work; coming to work early is important....*

Although the trainees suggested that many of the characteristics of the good teacher are innate, they also appreciate the need for teacher training for the development of an appropriate level of competence.

### *5.2.2 Teacher as Expert*

The metaphor, *Teacher as expert*, could also be discerned in the data provided by this small group of trainees. In addition to the nurturing traits which the good teacher must possess, trainees believe that teachers must be trained in order to acquire the required pedagogical and other skills. Trainees expressed the view that pre-service training is necessary:

*I believe that sending people straight into teaching from secondary school or whatever, you learn by trial and error, and so you do a lot of damage.*

*They need to be trained. You don't know everything. When you go as an AT II (untrained teacher), you are green. You are very green. Sometimes you might want to know why a child is acting in a particular way, not knowing that is how the child has to act. So you need to be trained to get all this knowledge about the children...*

In Trinidad and Tobago, pre-service training is provided by the OJT programme which, as yet, is not compulsory, (refer to sub-study on the OJT Training, MDP No. 19, George, J. et al 2000, for further details). It is, therefore, still possible for beginning teachers to be assigned to a classroom with no previous training in pedagogy. After teaching for a period of about three years (with or without exposure to the OJT programme) such teachers are sent to the teachers' college for full training. Trainees feel that this situation is less than ideal.

Those trainees who had been exposed to the OJT programme were generally grateful for the introduction to teaching that it provided. They thought that it provided a good orientation to the teaching profession:

*When I started the OJT, I saw it as just going into the school to interact and teach the children. As time progressed, I saw the importance of getting to know the parents and communicating with them. I also saw the importance of communicating with members of the community in which the school is located. It was something that I had overlooked before.*

Several of the trainees indicated that, if they had not been exposed to the OJT programme, they would have been quite handicapped on their first teaching practice assignment in schools as teachers' college students since they had not received any training in areas such as lesson and unit planning up to that point:

*When I really went out into the school, you would listen to the teachers in the classes that were next to you and you exclaim to yourself that they were good. But, if I didn't attend*

*those OJTs, I wouldn't know where to start. I felt it did a whole lot of good for me in the sense that you have something to go with, something to start from in terms of how you would deliver your lesson, how you would go about preparing the lesson in the first place. If I didn't attend OJT, I would be lost.*

Trainees gave very detailed accounts of their exposure to the teachers' college programme. A unanimous and very forceful view was that the training involved too much work. This same view had been expressed in the first interviews when the trainees had been exposed to the programme for only a short time. A year later, though trainees had devised strategies to cope with the situation, the view persisted, particularly with respect to teaching practice sessions in cooperating schools:

*It is still heavy but it all boils down to time management. And it takes a lot of time. Yet, I try to do a little piece of everything – socialize, do a little bit of housework, study and sleep. And so far, it has been going O.K. I have no complaints.*

*Well, it has been stressful. I just have to look for avenues of fun to help me relax myself. But it is a lot of work to be done and you have to do it. But you just get it done and get on with your life.*

Trainees used the strategy of working in groups and sharing ideas to help them to cope with the onerous workload. As one trainee explained: "You can draw strength from them (peers) and soldier on."

In their quest to become expert teachers, trainees reported that they had to wrestle with several issues. One of the issues that loomed large was whether or not corporal punishment should be administered in schools. At the beginning of their tenure at the teachers' colleges, trainees had expressed mixed views about corporal punishment. They recounted painful memories of primary schooling where they were beaten for misdemeanours such as stealing, not producing homework after being absent, and low performance in tests. Generally, trainees spoke in negative terms about this type of experience. However, at the same time, some of these same trainees indicated that corporal punishment should be available in schools because it can serve a purpose:

*I do however remember being punished. I was in standard two or three and I forgot to stay in at lunch time to complete an exercise. After lunch, I got a few lashes for not completing it. I felt embarrassed in front of the whole class. The punishment did serve me in good stead because I have always remembered to do all my assignments.*

*When I look back on my progress and so on through the primary school, especially the primary school, I could attribute it to teachers who administered corporal punishment...because even though I may look back at corporal punishment and say that isn't the best form of disciplining a child, I believe that was the best means that the teacher was exposed to then.*

After one year's training, trainees still held mixed views about the use of corporal punishment in schools. They were now able to relate that they had been exposed to other forms of discipline at the teachers' colleges, for example:

Well, my philosophy was like don't spare the rod and spoil the child. But with the psychology that steps in now, you realise that there are other things to motivate the children to get them to learn other than just beating them. There are other things like the conditioning and reinforcement... You don't really have to beat children to get them to learn.

However, in spite of exposure to other disciplinary measures, some trainees still see a place for corporal punishment in primary schools. For these trainees, the issue is deciding when corporal punishment would be useful:

*Actually, I feel it (corporal punishment) has its place because some students don't really know any other language. They are accustomed to that at home and when you come with your little talking and trying to show them nice ways and things like that, trying to use other disciplinary methods to manage the classroom, they don't get the message... I do feel it has its place. I do not feel it should be frequent in any way, but there comes a time when children must have a fear for something associated with wrongdoing.*

Other trainees are influenced in their attitude to the use of corporal punishment by the fact that it is frowned upon by some teachers' college lecturers and some school administrators. One trainee saw this as a big challenge that she would face when she returns to the classroom as a full-fledged teacher.

Other issues with which trainees wrestled had to do with their own experiences as students at the teachers' colleges. There was some level of dissatisfaction with the way in which some lecturers approached their work. Some trainees explained that they were practically left to flounder on their own:

*But here, the lecturers don't do anything in a sense. Here in College, they tend to leave it up to the student. 'You are adults; do it for yourselves' (they say).*

*Before we came, we thought it was to get training so that when you go out there you would know what to do. It is nothing like that. You learn on your own... Nobody teaches you anything. You go on TP, you make your mistake and you come back and it is 'You know you are not supposed to do this and you know you are not supposed to do that' but they are not telling you exactly what to do.*

The fact that trainees expect lecturers to tell them what to do is also revealed in trainees' comments that they do not know what lecturers are "looking for." There were concerns too about the lack of congruence (in some instances) between what is taught at the colleges and what is practised by lecturers. There were calls for greater collaboration among lecturers so that conflicting signals are not sent, more evidence of the espoused notions such as holistic development and self actualisation, and faster feedback on assignments. Trainees expressed grave concern about the perceived level of subjectivity in lecturers' grading practices, for example:

*My main problem with college is the subjectivity of some of the lecturers. I think there is too much avenue for victimisation. For example, I heard of a lecturer who don't give*

*anybody anything higher than a “C” on teaching practice. That I cannot understand for the life of me. Thus the grade you receive may very well be dependent on the lecturer and not on the performance of the individual. There is a drastic need for greater standardisation across the board.*

In spite of these and other problems with which trainees had to grapple, they reported that there had been some gains from exposure to the teachers' college after one year. Some did not think that the gains were of any great magnitude:

*for me, the only thing that pays off for me in teacher training is the fact that I am learning psychology, as to how to deal with children and so, and I could see it paying off in the teaching practice... but the fact that I have to repeat what I did in secondary school ...I can't see myself studying these things like in secondary school in a professional institution, just to pass an exam. I find that is nonsense. I find we should concentrate mainly on just child study.*

But others thought that some progress had been made:

*What I have learnt in college here ... looking back on what I used to do before I came into college, you realise that you did not know what you were doing. You were just trying to get the work done and not looking at the needs of the child. From my personal experience here, you learn a lot of sociology.*

*It (teaching practice) was much better than the last time. Now you have an idea of what to expect and you are better prepared. The first time you went there it was like a big shock. It was a bit more relaxed and more comfortable. I had no problem. The only thing is that the unit preparation is very stressful. To write all these units and then sometimes you get some of them disapproved and you have to do it all over...*

### 5.2.3 Teacher as Responsible for Everything

Trainees outlined that, because of the many demands made on teachers, teachers had to be able to do everything. In so doing, teachers have to make use of skills acquired outside of the formal training context:

*Teaching is demanding everything that I learnt, for instance, I learnt to play guitar before I was a teacher and I have to play; I learnt football; I have learnt swimming, everything. I have used all in my teaching.... And everything is demanded; not like a little of your music knowledge, everything is demanded, like in maths, like all your music knowledge, all your sports knowledge, all that you learn in secondary school, all that you learn in college...*

*(I am trying to be). a teacher who would care for his or her children - not just care in making them do their work, getting all their sums right, or having all their books in order, but actually making them enjoy learning, making them enjoy school, making them enjoy doing something. In school right now, I do not just teach them the academics. I teach them things like crochet and tie-dyeing, things they could do at home, even cutting paper for birthday parties and so on. I do teach them a lot of that just for them to make the little extra money.*

As was the case with the whole group study, trainees did not speak about sharing these many responsibilities with others; the implication seemed to be that teachers must be all-rounders and carry the burden alone.

#### 5.2.4 Teaching as Martyrdom

Linked with the idea of being responsible for everything is the notion that teachers are involved in the business of making sacrifices. Trainees contend that the status of teachers in society is falling, yet, teachers are still expected to be nurturer, expert, and responsible for everything. This necessitates the making of sacrifices by the teacher, especially with regard to status and finances.

According to some trainees, teachers were formerly highly respected members of the community. However, in more recent times, this status has been eroded by the growing materialism of the society which places more emphasis on money than on education. Nevertheless, in some sectors of the society, particularly the rural areas, there still seems to be a great deal of respect for the teaching profession.

Trainees contend that the steady erosion of the status of the profession in the eyes of the community is a consequence of several factors. One of the major factors is the level of remuneration paid to teachers. In fact, they feel that young people who have done relatively well in their academic careers may be actively dissuaded from going into teaching:

*Some of them would say that teaching has no money. When I was looking for a job, I was looking for a more scientific job because I did all the sciences ... and people would say: "All them subjects and you going and teach boy."...People would say, "What are you doing with that low paying and stressful job?"*

One of the major considerations on which the society accords status to its members is the acquisition of certain basic material possessions like a house and a car. One trainee suggested that teachers "take an oath to poverty" and so:

*You have to wait so long to build a house. You see people building a house when they become a principal. My first principal built a house when he was almost resigned. Except for those from wealthy families, you see teachers with the lower level and very economical cars...*

Another major factor affecting the perception of the teacher's status in the society is the issue of professionalism. The trainees believe that the society has a much higher regard for the product of the university than for the product of the teacher training college. The former is perceived as a professional while the latter is not:

*As I see it, here we are doing professional subjects, psychology and sociology ... yet we are not seen as professional ....*

*My sister-in-law went to university... She is younger than me but is working for twice my salary because she came out from university. She has a BA in something. She is worth more than me because she went to university and I went here.*

The trainees saw primary school teachers, therefore, as making sacrifices in that they take on a job that has a relatively low status, are not regarded as professionals, and do not receive good salaries. At the same time, they are expected to perform a multi-faceted role in the classroom with their pupils.

### **5.3 Summary**

In summary, trainees not only had images of the teacher as an expert, but they also expected to become experts as a result of their teachers' college experiences. Their experience, though, was that the route to becoming an expert at the teachers' colleges was not as facilitating as they had expected. Their expectations of how lecturers should treat with them were sometimes not met. Whereas trainees expected to be told what they should do, this was not the strategy adopted by some lecturers. In a sense, trainees seemed to be saying that the lecturers were not performing a nurturing role.

Trainees were also of the view that some lecturers were not practising what they preached in terms of appropriate pedagogical and other skills. Given trainees' descriptions of a good teacher as outlined earlier, these lecturers were, perhaps, not operating as good teachers in the eyes of the trainees.

There exists a tension between how primary teachers are regarded in society and what society expects of them. It is to be recalled that many of the 1998 cohort of entering trainees indicated that they wished to leave primary teaching, primarily to enter the secondary system. This is, perhaps, their way of dealing with the tension since better salaries and higher status are associated with teaching at the secondary level.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

#### 6.1 Deconstructing Beginning Teacher Identity

##### 6.1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to deconstruct beginning teacher identity through the use of the images, myths, and metaphors that seem to be embedded in trainees' understanding of their work. Cultural myths, because they have been around for a long time, tend to be internalised in such a way that they become part of the substantive identity (Ball & Godson, 1985), that is, they become part of the "true" nature of the person. The "teacher as caring" seems to be a metaphor that has become part of the cultural myth of a good teacher in Trinidad and Tobago.

##### 6.1.2 Cultural Myth – The Good Teacher

Most people in the society believe they have a good idea of what occurs in schools and what a teacher's work is about. This is because they have all been pupils at one time or another. In addition, we are all captive to the myths that are passed down from one generation to the next about teachers in this society. Teacher trainees are no different. They bring certain prior beliefs to bear in their approach to teaching. If the myths remain largely intact, despite changing societal and economic scenarios, there is a possibility that the myths may be masking real underlying changes. If this is the case, then we may have a situation where teacher training and the education system itself are acting out mythical assumptions against a social backdrop where such assumptions may not always be valid and, therefore, positive change in the education system may be difficult to effect.

It is the contention of this report that *beginning teacher identity* is enmeshed in a pervasive cultural myth in Trinidad and Tobago. This myth, that of **the good teacher**, intensified through initial training, offers a set of conflicting images from which metaphors are derived, resulting in a *becoming teacher identity* riddled with tensions and contradictions.

The study of teacher identity, then, becomes largely a process of deconstructing this myth, in order to gauge its consequences and study its implications. The findings generated in this study suggest that the myth generates a perpetual tension between the demands of self and that of society. Training in the teachers' colleges, for example, involves an intense socialisation into the myth. The training process focuses on the developing teacher in the classroom. It speaks mainly to the self of the beginning teacher and only explores the societal context in which this self must find expression in limited ways.

### 6.1.3 Genesis of the Myth

Teachers in Trinidad and Tobago have historically been accorded respect and acclaim in a manner similar to the way in which nuns, priests, and other self-sacrificing altruistic humanitarians are revered. The acclaim and respect are directly related to the low level of remuneration teachers were prepared to accept in order to dedicate themselves to the care and education of the young. Teaching, then, has historically been associated with matters of self-image, self-esteem, and self-respect. Rewards were mainly intrinsic. Nias (1989) refers to a common conception of teaching as an essentially *personal* activity.

Emancipation from slavery took place in the British West Indies in 1834. Trinidad, however, had proved to be a thorny problem for the British who only became colonial overlords in 1797. In the aftermath of emancipation, the British could see their hold on the island slipping. Trinidad was called a polyglot country. Its population – whites, coloureds, and ex-slaves – were mainly Roman Catholics, espousing legitimacy to Spanish and French culture, language, and customs. What schools existed at the time, pursued a French curriculum and were inextricably tied to religious ideals. To combat this pervasive French influence, the British conceived of a plan to institute universal primary education in the 1830s through state-run schools using an English curriculum and in which religion would be downplayed (Campbell, 1992).

Master teachers came from Battersea in Britain to train local persons to be primary school teachers. The local persons were from the ex-slave population, and the intention was that they would provide an education along anglophile lines, that would help the British to compete successfully with the French for the hearts and minds of the people. Education, then, was conceived in terms of bringing about political stability through a policy of Anglicisation.

Teacher training had to become rigorous, punctuated with many hurdles (examinations), so that the authorities would be sure that these ex-slaves would be able to legitimise British hegemony in the society. Hence, the training focused on content and methods and did not explore the social process of colonisation in which teachers were implicated. It did not conceive as important the notion that teacher training was propping up the *status quo* and was part of a policy for establishing order in the colony.

A myth about teachers seems to have emerged from this historical context. Teachers were seen as highly dedicated and special individuals who had taken on a difficult task that was in the interest of everyone. They were prepared to forego high salaries and status but would be suitably rewarded by the fulfilment of working with children and by the respect accorded them.

For a people newly freed from slavery, without land or capital, teaching appeared to be a respectable alternative to manual labour. Whilst the work of teachers was valuable to the British, they were not prepared to pay high salaries because they did not wish to alter the stratified nature of the society. They preferred to reward teachers with the universal

respect accorded them and the self-fulfilment that could accrue from applying themselves assiduously to their task.

The pervasive cultural myth of **the good teacher**, then, seems to have emerged from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today, it is still well represented in how the trainees speak of good teaching and their aspirations of being a good teacher. For example, note the hardship that this trainee was prepared to undergo as an untrained teacher:

*...walking 2½miles to school in a poverty-stricken area where no taxis worked and get to school on time. It is valuable to me because, against all odds, I wanted to be the best teacher I could be and I had to overcome the trials. It made me more stronger (sic) as an individual and I learn to take up responsibilities.*

Being a *strong individual, overcoming, and taking up responsibilities*, are pervasive themes in the beginning teacher identity. However, such a teacher enjoys the respect of all and is self-fulfilled:

*My children– my class. I really love them; they made me want to return to them filled with greater knowledge. It's valuable because I lean on their eagerness and love.*

In the beginning teacher identity, the cultural myth of the good teacher as described above seems to be alive and well.

#### *6.1.4 Beginning Teacher Identity*

The cultural myth which seems to dominate thinking about teaching in Trinidad and Tobago regards teachers, generally, as engaged in self-sacrificing work which they do because of a love of children and a desire to contribute positively to the country. Teachers have always been accorded some measure of respect because of their apparent willingness to forego the rewards that others may desire out of a career, for example, lucrative salaries and higher status. More specifically, the myth sees teaching as something peculiar to the classroom and the teacher as a powerful individual, within the classroom, capable of effecting change through love and selfless dedication. It seems reasonable to suggest, therefore, that the beginning teacher identity is located within this framework about teaching and teachers.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, lower-income, intelligent people saw teaching as a way out of a lifetime of manual labour. They would not necessarily be better off materially, but they would be comfortable with the respect their work accorded them and the advantages that came out of this. Today, we can see parallels with the trainee teacher. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the majority of the incoming trainees to the teachers' colleges tend to be drawn from the lower socio-economic classes and they possess basic secondary school credentials. It would seem that many of them are making teaching a career because it is a way out of unemployment. However, a large percentage of them have their eyes set on moving out of the primary school system, typically to enter the secondary school system or to obtain another job with a status and level of remuneration higher than what obtains at the primary level.

The beginning teacher identity, then, seems to be characterised by tensions. These tensions exist since trainees hold primary teaching in high esteem because of the attributes associated with the cultural myth of a good teacher, yet, many of them wish to leave teaching because it does not provide the extrinsic rewards that other professions do. Many are prepared to move into teaching at the secondary level where the tension might be eased, somewhat, because of higher salaries and, generally, more comfortable working conditions.

If we now draw reference to the concepts of the substantive self and the situated self, a picture emerges in which the substantive self has embraced the cultural myth of a good teacher, whereas the situated self will experience some difficulty as the young trainee embarks on a career that does not have the rewards that coincide with other dominant values in society such as money, success, and material possessions. Depending on the person's biography and life history experiences, *agency* will come to the fore here in the attempt to resolve this internal dilemma. Trainees may choose to commit to the altruistic values associated with teaching, and that will be the face they present to the world. On the other hand, the commitment may be only partial as they seek to discover greener pastures. The findings of this study suggest that many trainees fall into the latter category. Such an accommodation resolves some of the tensions in the beginning teacher identity. It, however, produces others because it does not address the myth.

A tentative picture of teacher identity is emerging where there are tensions caused by conflicting beliefs and experiences. Provenzo et al. (1989) raise the issue that a crucial component of teacher identity is the tension between the expected or desired and the experienced. Cultural myths and the teachers' college curriculum could be thought of as projecting a *desired* scenario, while the trainees who were exposed to the OJT programme and/or who operated as untrained teachers in the system prior to coming to college, *experienced* something, in most cases, that was radically different. Trainees *expect* that in lieu of material rewards, teaching will at least afford them some altruistic and fulfilling experiences. Yet they know that in the realities of primary school life (for example, overcrowded classrooms), such *experiences* are few. Thus, what the cultural myths of teaching say about teaching appears not to hold at all times. Even if one is prepared to forego material rewards, there is no guarantee that one can be satisfied by intrinsic rewards.

These insights about the beginning teacher identity do not augur well for the retention of teachers at the primary level or for the education system as a whole. As primary teachers use any means necessary to leave, the primary level will always be receiving new, untrained teachers, and newly qualified teachers, to swell the ranks of those who will not, or cannot leave.

## **6.2 Implications for Teachers' College Curriculum**

The foregoing points to the teachers' college curriculum as the medium to invoke change in the beginning teacher identity. Given the existence of the conflicting images described above, there seems to be the need for the teachers' college curriculum to recognise their

existence, and to provide learning experiences where trainees would be encouraged to explore these tensions. One way that the college curriculum can actively engage the myth and, thus, better prepare teachers for the realities of their profession, is to encourage trainees to explore, through philosophy and sociology, ways of interrogating what it means to be a teacher in Trinidad and Tobago today. This will open up the social and political contexts for debate. It will illuminate vexing questions as to why primary schooling suffers from such low status and prestige in the system although it is the foundation of education.

The teachers' college curriculum, as the first major training that the beginning teacher will encounter, must initiate consideration of these questions, otherwise the myth will continue unexamined. The myth will promise fulfilment as a teacher and not be able to deliver. Further, as the trainees leave the teachers' colleges as newly qualified teachers, they would need to be exposed to continued professional development activity if their ability to cope with the tensions is to be sustained. Such activity could be jointly planned and executed by the teachers' colleges and administrative personnel at the primary school sites.

It may also be useful for some consideration to be given to the assumption that primary teacher training prepares trainees for **life-long** employment in the primary education sector. Whereas this was the norm in the not-too-distant past, the expectations of trainees are changing and this view of primary teacher training is no longer a dominant one. Many trainees clearly indicated that they intend to seek upward mobility either to "higher" levels of the education system, or to more highly-regarded professions. Even if trainees are able to deal successfully with the conflicting images of teaching, the possibility still exists that the desire for upward mobility would persist. This scenario also has implications for the teachers' college curriculum. One would need to consider, for example, whether it would be more expedient to provide only **initial** training through the teachers' college curriculum, with further compulsory training provided at points along the teacher's career for those who are committed to remaining in teaching at this level of the system.

Teacher trainees are important stakeholders in the education system. Appropriate planning for the system cannot occur if the characteristics, images, experiences, and expectations of these trainees are not taken into consideration. This study has shown that, in this regard, there is much that needs to be considered if there is to be any hope for improvement in the system.

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## Appendix A: Characteristics Of Trainees

### A1: Gender

**Table A1.1 Gender Composition of Entering Cohort - 1995**

Gender	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	54	31.8	64	31.5	118	31.6
Female	116	68.2	139	68.5	255	68.4
Total	170	100.0	203	100.0	373	100.0

**Table A1.2 Gender Composition of Entering Cohort – 1996**

Gender	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	56	27.5	51	24.1	107	25.7
Female	148	72.5	161	75.9	309	74.3
Total	204	100.0	212	100.0	416	100.0

**Table A1.3 Gender Composition of Entering Cohort - 1997**

Gender	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	49	25.7	59	28.6	108	27.2
Female	142	74.3	147	71.4	289	72.8
Total	191	100.0	206	100.0	397	100.0

**Table A1.4 Gender Composition of Entering Cohort - 1998**

Gender	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	67	33.3	61	30.8	128	32.1
Female	132	65.7	137	69.2	269	67.4
Missing data	2	1.0	0	0.0	2	0.5
Total	201	100.0	198	100.0	399	100.0

## A2: Age

**Table A2.1 Age Profile of Entering Cohort - 1995**

Age (years)	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<21	0	0.0	4	2.0	4	1.1
21-30	156	91.8	172	84.7	328	87.9
>30	13	7.6	27	13.3	40	10.7
Missing data	1	0.6	0	0.0	1	0.3
Total	170	100.0	203	100.0	373	100.0

**Table A2.2 Age Profile of Entering Cohort - 1996**

Age (years)	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<21	0	0.0	2	0.9	2	0.5
21-30	179	87.7	174	82.1	353	84.9
>30	23	11.3	30	14.2	53	12.7
Missing data	2	1.0	6	2.8	8	1.9
Total	204	100.0	212	100.0	416	100.0

**Table A2.3 Age Profile of Entering Cohort - 1997**

Age (years)	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<21	0	0.0	3	1.5	3	0.8
21-30	162	84.8	170	82.5	332	83.6
>30	27	14.1	31	15.0	58	14.6
Missing data	2	1.0	2	1.0	4	1.0
Total	191	100.0	206	100.0	397	100.0

**Table A2.4 Age Profile of Entering Cohort - 1998**

Age (years)	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<21	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
21-30	183	91.0	156	78.8	339	85.0
>30	18	9.0	42	21.2	60	15.0
Missing data	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	201	100.0	198	100.0	399	100.0

### A3: Marital Status

**Table A3.1 Marital Status of Entering Trainees – 1995**

Status	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Single	117	68.8	143	70.4	260	69.7
Married	49	28.8	51	25.1	100	26.8
Separated	0	0.0	6	3.0	6	1.6
Divorced	1	0.6	1	0.5	2	0.5
Common-law union	0	0.0	1	0.5	1	0.3
Missing data	3	1.8	1	0.5	4	1.1
Total	170	100.0	203	100.0	373	100.0

**Table A3.2 Marital Status of Entering Trainees – 1996**

Status	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Single	140	68.6	145	68.4	285	68.5
Married	61	29.9	59	27.8	120	28.8
Separated	0	0.0	2	0.9	2	0.5
Divorced	1	0.5	2	0.9	3	0.7
Missing data	2	1.0	4	1.9	6	1.4
Total	204	100.0	212	100.0	416	100.0

**Table A3.3 Marital Status of Entering Trainees – 1997**

Status	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Single	131	68.6	143	69.4	274	69.0
Married	58	30.4	51	24.8	109	27.5
Separated	0	0.0	3	1.5	3	0.8
Divorced	0	0.0	3	1.5	3	0.8
Missing data	2	1.0	6	2.9	8	2.0
Total	191	100.0	206	100.0	397	100.0

**Table A3.4 Marital Status of Entering Trainees – 1998**

Status	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Single	125	62.2	131	66.2	256	64.2
Married	72	35.8	58	29.3	130	32.6
Separated	0	0.0	1	0.5	1	0.3
Divorced	2	1.0	2	1.0	4	1.0
Missing data	2	1.0	6	3.0	8	2.0
Total	201	100.0	198	100.0	399	100.0

**A4: School Type Taught At Prior To Entry To Teachers' College**

**Table A4.1 School Type Taught at prior to Entry to Teachers' College - 1995**

School type	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Government	57	33.5	113	55.7	170	45.6
Government Assisted	101	59.4	80	39.4	181	48.5
Private	0	0.0	1	0.5	1	0.3
More than one type	12	7.1	8	3.9	20	5.4
Missing data	0	0.0	1	0.5	1	0.3
Total	170	100.0	203	100.0	373	100.0

**Table A4.2 School Type Taught at prior to Entry to Teachers' College - 1996**

School type	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Government	67	32.8	86	40.6	153	36.8
Government Assisted	133	65.2	114	53.8	247	59.4
Private	0	0.0	4	1.9	4	1.0
More than one type	2	1.0	5	2.4	7	1.7
Missing data	2	1.0	3	1.4	5	1.2
Total	204	100.0	212	100.0	416	100.0

**Table A4.3 School Type Taught at prior to Entry to Teachers' College - 1997**

School type	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Government	56	29.3	73	35.4	129	32.5
Government Assisted	121	63.4	127	61.7	248	62.5
Private	1	0.5	3	1.5	4	1.0
More than one type	12	6.3	1	0.5	13	3.3
Missing data	1	0.5	2	1.0	3	0.8
Total	191	100.0	206	100.0	397	100.0

**Table A4.4 School Type Taught at prior to Entry to Teachers' College – 1998**

School type	Corinth		Valsayn		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Government	55	27.4	66	33.3	121	30.3
Government Assisted	141	70.1	130	65.7	271	67.9
Private	0	0.0	2	1.0	2	0.5
More than one type	5	2.5	0	0.0	5	1.3
Missing data	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	201	100.0	198	100.0	399	100.0

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