FACTORS AFFECTING ATTRACTION AND RETENTION OF PRE-SERVICE MALE PRIMARY TEACHERS IN A NON-GOVERNMENT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

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Abstract

This paper is set in the context of concern about boys' academic achievement and the decline in the numbers of males entering the primary teaching profession in Australia. It focuses on the views of male pre-service teachers as to factors that affect their attraction to and retention in the teaching profession.

This qualitative study is designed to provide well-researched information regarding factors that affect the recruitment and persistence of male pre-service primary teachers. The study consisted of two distinct stages, distribution and evaluation of a simple questionnaire and a series of semi-structured interviews that were analysed by Grounded Theory.

The major findings from this research identified three main categories (extrinsic, altruistic and intrinsic motivators) that contributed to males choosing the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course. Participants indicated that altruistic motivators contributed more to their attraction to the profession, than either extrinsic or intrinsic determinants.

Field and extended professional experiences were identified as having a positive affect on the retention of males within the Bachelor of Education (Primary) degree. Barriers to completion included gender related issues, the reactions of peers, family and classmates, department faculty, mentorship, course structure and organisation.

The major recommendations arising from this study for recruitment of male primary teachers were as follows: appropriate careers advice needs to be provided to all school

leavers, current teachers to be enthusiastic in their support of the profession and church and community groups need to support the involvement of males in programs with primary aged children.

Increased opportunities for micro-teaching, employment of faculty members with recent field experience and establishing a mentoring program were all recommended for the successful retention of male pre-service primary teachers.

Declaration

I, Heather Taylor hereby declare that:

I. this thesis is my own work;

II. all persons consulted, and all assistance rendered are fully acknowledged;

III. all references used are indicated in the text and accurately reported in the list of references;

IV. the substance of this thesis has not been presented, in whole, or part by me, to any University for a degree.

Date:_____ Signature: _____

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Chapter 1

THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

A. BACKGROUND

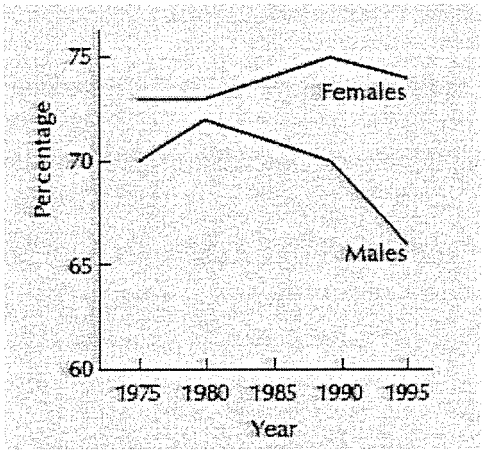
1. Boys' Academic Achievement

The academic achievement of boys' in almost all key-learning areas is on the decline, the cause of which is of great concern to educators and politicians alike (Buckingham, 2002, p. 1). It has been established that boys are more likely to "fail, to develop behaviour problems, to experience isolation and rejection and to drop out" (Lewis & Edmunds, 1999, p. 1) of school. Low educational attainment has also been linked to unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse and to imprisonment (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training, 2002, p. 36-39). As such, research is currently being undertaken in an attempt to identify factors that account for poor academic success in primary schools. It is suggested that an improvement in the academic achievement of boys will prevent the aforementioned problems and prohibit claims that boys are becoming the new, "educationally oppressed" (Lewis & Edmunds, 1999, p. 1).

One of the most reliable measures of academic success is identified as literacy (Buckingham, 1999, p. 2; Creswell, Rowe & Withers, 2001, p. 5). Achievement of fundamental literacy skills in "early childhood and early schooling are strongly correlated with successful educational outcomes in higher education" (Creswell, Rowe & Withers, 2001, p. 5). According to Buckingham (2002, p. 3) "inability or difficulty reading, writing and communicating can lead to disengagement, behaviour problems and, ultimately, lower than expected performance or failure" (Buckingham, 2002, p. 3). This

is compounded by the increase in scholastic activities requiring increasing levels of verbal reasoning and communicative skills in areas other than language and literacy. With studies indicating that only half of 11-year-old boys, reach the required level of English competence (Ridell, 1998, para. 9), this issue is currently under investigation. Also giving cause for concern is the general increase in the difference between boys' and girls' level of reading ability over the past three decades. Figure 1-1 illustrates the drop in proportion of 14-year old males attaining mastery on reading tests from 1975 to 1995 (Marks & Ainley, 1997).

Figure 1-1 Percentage of males and females achieving mastery in reading



Source: Marks & Ainley, 1997.

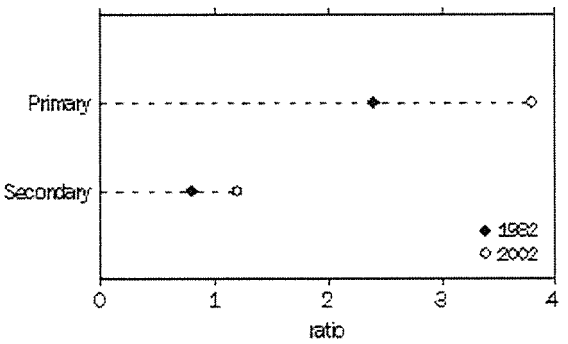
Biological differences are commonly implicated when discussing the declining rate of boys' performance. Research verifies that neural structure differs between males and females (Buckingham, 1999, p. 6). Males possess fewer interconnections between the left and right hemispheres of the brain than females, as is indicated by the size of the corpus callosum. Male brains also possess more numerous neural connections within the right hemisphere. As a result the brains of males' tend to function with a higher level of specificity and with greater visio-spatial skills than females. The implication is that males

tend to perform better in areas of science and mathematics but struggle in regards to literacy. Often, teachers fail to take the biological needs of males into consideration. This results in a lack of stimulation necessary for the maximum achievement of males (Moir & Moir, 1998, p.148-151). However, while this theory explains why academic results may vary between the genders, it does not explain the continuing drop in academic performance of boys.

2. Gendered Curriculum

Another aspect linked with the declining performance of boys, is the feminisation of the teaching profession. Female teachers currently outnumber their male counterparts by 4:1. This trend is likely to continue with a similar ration teachers in the age bracket 21 to 30 (Australian College of Education, 2001, p. 2; Doherty, 2004, p. 1).

Figure 1-2 Female to male ratios of school teachers



Source: Schools, Australia (ABS cat. no. 4221.0).

The overrepresentation of females has led to what is often referred to as a gendered curriculum that favours the academic tendencies of girls. Schools are said to feminise boys, forcing "active, healthy, and naturally rambunctious boys to conform to a regime of obedience, pathologizing what is simply normal for boys" (Kimmel, 2000, p. 2). Violation of many "codes of honor and the norms of boy culture" (Saxton, 1970 cited by,

Goodman, 1987 p. 35) are often necessary for boys to achieve success in the school environment.

The phenomenon of poor achievement is not restricted to students from low socio-economic areas. While it is true that socio-economic variables are related to school performance, boys still perform more poorly than girls at all socio-economic levels (Buckingham, 2002, p.2; Hawkes, 2001, p. 104). Even boys from high socio-economic backgrounds are not spared, although they do tend to perform better than others in lower socio-economic areas.

3. Importance of Male Role-models

The absence of positive male role models is another element that contributes to boys deteriorating academic achievement. Increasing numbers of female headed, single parent families have meant that many children are not exposed to male role models within the home. During the past twenty years single parent families have risen considerably, in 1974 the proportion of single parent families was 9.2%, by 1992 this had risen to 16.6% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1994, p. 5), ninety per cent of these families are headed by females. The predominance of females in the area of primary education can lead to the progression of children through primary school without the benefit of male teachers. A result of this is that many children finish primary school without having been exposed to a strong model of masculinity (DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997, p. 38).

Biological differences, a feminised curriculum, lack of positive male role models and a decrease in literacy levels have all contributed to the educational crisis that is faced by

boys. The danger is that the failure of the educational system will cause boys to resort to antisocial and disruptive behaviour. This not only negatively influences their own academic opportunities, but is potentially damaging to the success of other members of the school community.

4. Need for Male Primary Teachers

The feminisation of the teaching workforce in OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries is well-established, especially with regard to the field of primary education (Wylie, 2000, p. 3-6). Currently, female teachers in Australian primary schools outnumber their male counterparts by 4:1 (Doherty, 2004, p. 1). This phenomenon has been linked with boys' declining academic achievement within the context of primary education. Prior research has indicated that almost all of the academic problems faced by boys are positively influenced by an increase in the number of male role models they are exposed to (Buckingham, 2002, p. 3-4).

The rise in single parent families, 90% of which are female headed, has meant that positive male role models are being sought in areas other than the home. Given the proportion of time that children spend in educational institutions, the logical choice has been schools as a setting to increase interaction with male role-models. Unfortunately, males are underrepresented within primary schools and this trend appears to be continuing. During the period 1991 to 2001, the proportion of male primary teachers fell from 26 .3% to 21.3% (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training 2002, 2002, p. 154). As a result, an increased number of males within Bachelor of Education programs is deemed prudent.

However, upon entering university courses in teacher education, males frequently encounter a range of academic, social and financial difficulties that lead to attrition from primary education courses (DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Mullohand, 2001). Mullohand (2001, p. 24) identified school-based experiences as being preferred by male candidates and recommended that increasing amounts of early field experience should be included in university courses in order to increase retention of male students.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

A. RATIONALE

The high wastage of pre-service males within Bachelor of Education (Primary) courses is concerning given that there is such a shortage of males within the profession itself (Thornton, 1999, p. 1). Mullohand (2001, p. 24), suggested that an increase in opportunities for students to link theory with practise would be of assistance in retaining males within tertiary courses in the area of primary education. This study identifies barriers encountered by males within the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course at Avondale College and investigates the efficacy of professional experiences and early field experiences in the retention of these students.

B. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The first aim of the proposed study is to identify factors that contributed to males choosing the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course of study.

The second aim of this study is to identify barriers that males encounter when entering primary education at the undergraduate level and to identify the career aspirations of the participants.

A third aim of this study is to discover how early field experiences are perceived by male students involved in Bachelor of Education (Primary) courses.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study examined the following questions:

1. What factors do male, pre-service primary teachers report as motivating the selection of teaching as a profession?
2. What previous experience with children is reported by male, pre-service primary teachers?
3. To what extent do/did peers and parents support the choice of teaching as a career?
4. What barriers due to factors within the tertiary institution are reported as affecting completion of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) courses by male, pre-service primary teachers?
5. What barriers due to factors outside the tertiary institution are reported as affecting completion of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) courses by male, pre-service primary teachers?
6. Do pre-service male teachers in Bachelor of Education see gender as a barrier?
7. Do male pre-service teachers perceive field experience as being valuable to their professional development?

8. Do male pre-service teachers report that early professional experience influenced their retention within the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course?

D. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited because of the small size of the sample from which participants were drawn. This research is being conducted in one private tertiary institution and as such conclusions cannot necessarily be generalised. However, interesting issues were uncovered, many of which parallel the findings of other researchers.

Although information regarding the scope of professional experience was collected from universities, it was difficult to accurately distinguish between universities' early field experience and professional experience.

E. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Feminisation of teaching

This term can be applied to the large-scale entry of females into the teaching profession and the subsequent perceived decline in prestige of that profession. This term has three distinct meanings:

- a statistical meaning, used in the calculation of percentages as relating to men and women in a specified profession.
- "a meaning related to the effects of the weight of numbers; and

a rate of access of women into a profession (ETUCE, n.d., ref. 5139, p.6, cited by Wylie, 2000, p. 1).

2. Early Field Experience

Early field experience refers to "a process by which a student teacher becomes a competent teacher through laboratory and school experiences" (Nicholson, 2001, 4). School experiences might include classroom observations, tutoring, and assisting school teachers but generally does not extend to managing entire class groups, as in professional experience. Laboratory experiences may include viewing videotapes of teachers teaching or seeing live teaching through the use of fibre-optic cabling. Early field experiences are usually of limited duration.

3. Professional Experience

Professional experience involves actual teaching by student teachers over an extended period of time in which the candidate gradually assumes responsibility of the class in collaboration with a cooperating teacher. Professional experience occurs in one setting and culminates with the prospective teacher planning and implementing lessons involving the entire class (Huling, 2001, p. 1).

4. Professional Development Schools

A professional development school is "an exemplary, functioning school, ... which has as one of its fundamental missions the professional development of pre-service, novice, and practising teachers" (Abdul-Haqq, 1991, p. 1).

F. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant because it is among the first to investigate whether or not the structure of professional experience within pre-service education degrees influences males to remain in tertiary institutions until graduation. It also adds to a limited body of

Australian research regarding barriers that pre-service male primary teachers experience when completing a Bachelor of Education (Primary).

The identification of early professional experience as a key motivator for retention in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course also has implications on how tertiary institutions should structure courses to increase male engagement and retention.

Chapter 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

A. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first details pertinent goals of education. The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century states that schools should provide opportunities for students to fully develop their talents and capacities. Ideally this enables students to become effective community and family members (MCEETYA, 1999, 1.2). However, the gender imbalance in Australian primary schools has resulted in young men who "are feeling ... an abnormal sense of what it means to be a man" (Nelson, 2004; cited by Doherty, 2004, p. 5). In order for children to develop wholistically it is essential that they are exposed to positive male role-models.

However, males avoid teaching in primary schools for several key reasons. The second section of this chapter identifies perceptions relating to limited career opportunities, mediocre pay, child protection concerns and the teaching professions low social status as reasons why males do not choose to enter the field of primary teaching. In addition to this barriers faced by male pre-service teachers to completion of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) are also discussed.

The final area to be explored by this chapter involves educational methods for providing pre-service experiences to participants of education courses and explains the benefits of such programs.

B. PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE EDUCATION

1. Influence of male role models

Research has indicated that almost all of the academic problems boys face can be positively impacted upon by an increase in the number of positive male role models they are exposed to. In 1998, a Commonwealth parliamentary inquiry into family services concluded that two parent families' conferred benefits on children greater than that of higher socio-economic status (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Services, 1998, p. 2). This is a measure that has typically been regarded as one of the greatest determinants of literacy and academic success. However, the increase in single parent families, 90% of which are headed by females, has meant that children are being denied both the stability and the male role model associated with two parent families (Buckingham, 2002, p. 3-4).

It has been recommended that male role models be provided in other areas of children's lives. Given the proportion of time that children spend in educational institutions, the logical choice has been schools as a setting to increase interaction with male role models. Unfortunately there is currently a dearth of male teachers, especially at primary school level (Mullohand, 2001, p. 2). During the period 1991 to 2001, the proportion of male primary teachers fell from 26.3% to 21.3% (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training 2002, 2002, p. 154). In addition to this, 45.9% of males involved in primary schools are in administrative roles, effectively cutting down the number of males in the position to be successful role models (Australian College of Education, 2001, p.2, 6). This phenomenon is not confined to Australia. In 1995 Turkey

was the only OECD country that had less female primary teachers than male primary teachers (Wylie, 2000, p. 6).

2. Goals of Education

However, academic success is not the only motive for encouraging more males to enter the teaching profession. The "Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century" stated that schooling should develop fully the talents and capacities of all students. By the time that students leave school they should have "qualities of self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, and a commitment to personal excellence as a basis for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members" (MCEETYA, 1999, 1.2). For this to occur it is necessary for children to learn appropriate behaviours. Psychologists believe that learning would be "exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do" (Bandura, 1977, p. 22). Fortunately, most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling: from observing others (Underwood, 2000, p. 1). If boys are to develop into well-adjusted adults, it is imperative that they are exposed to positive models of masculinity that they can observe and emulate. Mancus (1992, p. 113) identified the optimum arrangement as a faculty of "female teachers who are high in instrumental competence and male teachers who are high in nurturing capacity". In this way boys would be able to develop characteristics of liberal masculinity that are advantageous when associating with members of today's society.

3. Need for More Male Primary Teachers

Researchers have speculated that more male teachers are needed to restore balance and to foster diversity (Brookhart & Loadman, 1996, p. 197–199). This would allow a teaching profession to develop that is representative of the balance and variety of society as a whole (Montecinos & Nielsen, 1997, p. 47) and therefore provide children with a model of social equity. Others believe that men and woman operate differently within the classroom and that having a more equal distribution of male and female primary teachers would provide children with a more balanced education (Lewis, Butcher and Donnan, 1999, p.6). These researchers all provide evidence for the preposition that learning would be advantaged by an increase in the number of male teachers.

A study by Brutsaert and Brack (1994, p. 9) indicated that boys in primary schools with a high proportion of female staff were found to have lower self-esteem, lower commitment to study and to be more sensitive to stress. It is also noted that a predominance of female teachers can cause confusion because boys are confronted with an incompatibility between "male sex-role standards" (Brutsaert & Brack, 1994, p. 4) and their role as defined by the (feminised) school setting. Conversely, over-identification with female teachers caused girls to "confuse "good behaviour" with learning and to take few risks" (Mancus, 1992, p. 112), encouraging a dependence on the resources of the given institution. An increase in the representation of males within the primary school would be of benefit to girls as well as boys.

However, there is some contention as to the relevance of same-sex role modelling. Allan, Coulter and McNay and Gold and Reiss (cited by Mullohand, 2001, p. 4) claimed that the

importance of same-sex role models for boys is not supported by empirical evidence. They believe that the rationale for increasing the amount of male primary teachers is based only on the perceived needs of children.

C. REASONS FOR AVOIDANCE OF PRIMARY TEACHING AS A CAREER FOR MALES

1. Barriers faced by males entering the teaching profession at the primary level

Despite this, a vast body of literature supports the theory that same sex modelling is extremely important (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training, 2002; Lewis & Edmunds, 1999). In an attempt to equalise the gender balance within schools, research has been conducted into factors that motivate men to enter the teaching profession, especially at the primary level. Research also identifies some of the reasons that males avoid a career in primary education, leave teaching or seek employment in an administrative role.

a. Teaching as a Gendered Career

One of the foremost reasons that males avoid a primary teaching the prevailing perception that education is a gendered career. There is an overriding belief that teaching, especially at the primary level, is better suited to women and as such it is supposed to be a domesticated profession (Brookhart & Loadman, 1996, p.198). In short, the community regards the idea of men working with children as running counter to the male psyche (Gray, 2000, p. 2).

b. Perceived Low Social Status of Primary Teaching

Another reason men avoid primary education is the low social status that is perceived as accompanying it. This is an observation that is perpetuated by the ongoing belief that men moving into what were traditionally female jobs are considered to be stepping down in status while females entering what are considered to be male professions are perceived as stepping up (DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997, p.38). Males that do enter primary education often seek promotion into administrative roles (Gamble, 1997, p. 1) in order to increase their social standing. It has been surmised that the further one gets from the children, "the more one gains in money and prestige" (Griffin, 1997, p. 14).

c. Teacher Salaries

The issue of teachers' salaries is another factor that discourages males from entering the teaching profession. The salaries of beginning teachers' are generally comparable to other public sector opportunities for graduates. However, "once employed, salary progression and promotional opportunities for teachers do not keep pace with the opportunities available outside teaching" (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training 2002, 2002, p. 157). It has even been speculated that a teacher's salary is considered adequate only as a second income for a family as signified by the overrepresentation of females in the profession (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training 2002, 2002, p. 157).

d. Teaching as a Demanding Career

An additional element that contributes to the lack of males in teaching, is the belief that teaching is a demanding occupation where financial rewards do not recognise the

difficulty. A 1996 Labour Force Survey found that 48% of teachers reported working in excess of eight hours of unpaid overtime per week (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1997, p. 4). As a result, increasing amounts of qualified and practising male teachers are leaving teaching for other, less stressful occupations (Gray, 2000, p. 1).

e. Child Protection Issues

Child protection issues are also regarded as significant factors in men's attitudes towards primary teaching. There is a "spectre of sexual abuse" (Dunn, 2003, p. 1) that can hang over men working amongst young children. Many males in the teaching profession would like to respond to children with "humanity warmth and empathy, but are warned off by a deep societal frown" (Gray, 2000, p. 2). It is now necessary for male teachers to suppress the pleasure of any physical contact with children (Jones, 2000, p. 1-8). Many male primary teachers are either leaving the profession altogether or seeking administrative roles in order to avoid this.

With the number of established male teachers on the decline, schemes are being considered to encourage a greater number of males to enter the profession. However, many of the same issues that cause men to leave teaching have been identified as factors that prevent males from studying to become teachers. Research conducted by DeCorse and Vogtle (1997, p.39) revealed that all but one of their participants had tried other career options before entering teaching. This was despite the fact that they all recognised working with children brought them enjoyment.

D. BARRIERS FACED BY MALES INVOLVED IN PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION

1. Parental Support

Upon entering university programs for teacher education, males frequently encounter other problems. Often males are discouraged from entering the profession by their families and by their peers. It was reported that some parents, "especially fathers" (DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997, p. 40) viewed the teaching profession as unchallenging or inappropriate. However it was encouraging to discover that these parents ultimately supported the candidates' career choices.

2. Peer Support

In regards to peers, male pre-service teachers reported that male friends considered teaching to be an easy job and teased them accordingly. In contrast, female acquaintances were more likely to be supportive and interested in their choice of teaching as a career. Mullohand concluded that peers not involved in teaching themselves, appeared to be "the only source of negativity toward the participants career choice" (Mullohand, 2001, p. 23).

3. Sociological Barriers

In addition to these components, university students in general also encounter a number of factors that contribute to their decision to leave university. In recent years, attrition rates have increased with approximately "half of a commencing intake of ... students withdrawing or taking extended leave of absence" (Elliott, 1999, p.2). Aspects identified as affecting students' decisions to withdraw from these courses included personal or family illness, competing family responsibilities, financial difficulties, failure to get into preferred course choice and to a lesser extent choosing the wrong course of study and

course difficulty (Elliott, 1999, p.4; Feder & Russo, 2001, p. 66). However it was stressed that the interplay of factors resulting in withdrawal ensured that the context and experience for each participant was unique.

4. Course Engagement

Brookhart and Loadman (1996, p. 207) discovered that male primary teachers were unique in that they rated the significance of their academic programs significantly lower than their female counterparts. Males also report that university courses become more interesting once they are directly involved in schools (Mullohand, 2001, p. 1). As such, it has been recommended that early field experiences need to become an integral part of theory subjects early in teacher courses. This experience would be geared toward engaging students in theorising, and encouraging the forging of links between theory and practise. It is suggested that an increase in course engagement would decrease the attrition rates of males in the area of pre-service primary education (Mullohand, 2001, p. 24; Imig & Switzer, 1996, p. 221).

E. METHODS OF INCREASING PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES

1. Early Field Experience

In order to discuss the relevance of early field experience it must first be defined. Field experiences are experiences whereby teacher candidates observe and work with "real students, teachers, and curriculum in natural settings" (Huling, 2001, p.1). The culmination of field experience is identified as student teaching where the teacher candidate gradually assumes responsibility of a class, under the supervision of a cooperating teacher. Studies have indicated that the benefits of early field experience are

twofold. They serve to increase students' engagement in university courses and have been reported to increase student competence upon graduation.

Anecdotal reports of teachers, candidates and employers all confirm that students with greater amounts of field experience early in their course are better prepared for the complexities of today's schools, classrooms and teachers. They have also been reported to "perform in their first year of teaching more like second- or third- year teachers" (Huling, 2001, p. 3). This is an extremely pertinent phenomenon given that as few as 50 percent of teacher trainees enter and remain in the school system for longer than three years "with many leaving to find less-stressful careers" (Murray-Harvey, 1999, p. 3). Book (1996, cited by Pritchard & Ancess, 1999, p. 7) stated that students that experience practicum in Professional Development Schools "feel more confidence in their knowledge and skill as professionals and subsequently experience less "culture shock" when they become practising teachers". It stands to reason that students that are more comprehensively equipped to deal with teaching the current teaching climate will be less stressed, and remain in the teaching profession for longer.

2. Professional Development Schools

Since attrition feeds shortages and concerns about teacher quality, reducing this is of extreme importance. One method identified as reducing attrition, is stronger pre-service preparation (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1997, p. 2). This is done by delivering field-based programs on-site, in schools, or by "field-basing specific faculty members who can deliver certain portions of the teacher preparation program in collaboration with public school educators" (Huling, 2001, p. 3). Historically,

these arrangements have most commonly occurred in Professional Development Schools rather than traditional campus-based programs.

A study by Fleener, (1998, cited by Huling, 2001, p. 5) revealed that the attrition rates of teachers prepared in Professional Development Schools were much lower than those of students prepared through traditional campus-based programs. A three-year longitudinal study revealed that only 4.8% of students prepared through field-based programs had left the profession compared with 12% of those prepared in traditional programs.

Therefore, it is the purpose of this study to discover how early field experiences are perceived by male students involved in Bachelor of Education (Primary) courses at a private tertiary institution identified as having a strong practical component. A second aim of the study is to identify factors that contribute to males choosing Bachelor of Education (Primary) course of study and the third aim is to identify barriers that males encounter when entering primary education at the undergraduate level and to further discover the career aspirations of the participants.

Chapter 3

THE QUESTIONNAIRE METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

A. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the research design for phase one of this study. It begins with a rationale for the selection of a qualitative approach to address key research questions. Design factors of the Questionnaire for Males in the Bachelor of Education Program (QMBEdPP) are outlined and examined as are the processes associated with the collection of quantitative data. This includes a description of the pilot and main questionnaire. Organisation of the data collection processes, procedures for contacting participants and strategies for the collection and analysing of data are also discussed.

The chapter then goes on to consider the findings of data obtained from the QMBEdPP questionnaire administered to male pres-service primary teachers at Avondale College during 2004. To analyse questionnaire data, responses were collated and entered into a database to allow for comparative evaluation.

B. INTRODUCTION

1. Research Design

This study was divided into two distinct stages. Stage one involved the distribution and evaluation of a simple questionnaire while stage two necessitated a series of semi-structured interviews. The purpose of stage one was to gather demographical information about male Bachelor of Education (Primary) students as well as gaining a general understanding of their perceptions of the role of male primary teachers within the school

environment. The results of stage one were then taken into account when considering the scope and development of the questions to be incorporated during the second phase of the study. The semi-structured interviews were designed to facilitate an in-depth investigation of the issues faced by male, pre-service primary teachers.

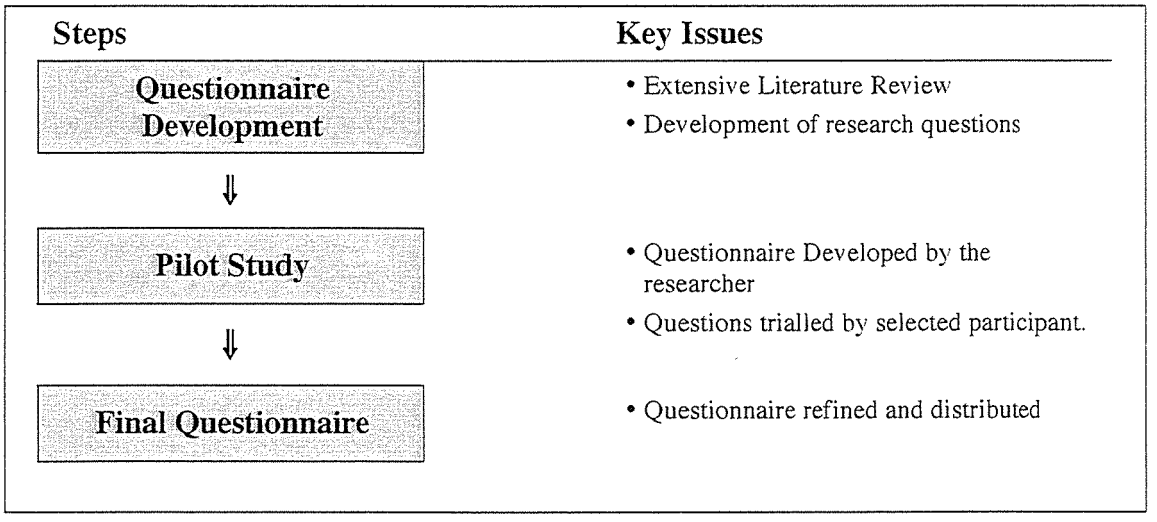
In contrast, the quantitative element of this study explored the demographic characteristics of male pre-service primary teachers at Avondale College. The questionnaire gathered data relating to age, marital status, categories of schools attended, career paths prior to entering teacher education, years taught by male primary teachers, years taken to complete the course, personal interests, views in the need for more male teachers and where participants see their career in five years time.

C. QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. Methodology

Figure 3-1 provides an overview of the major steps involved in the development of the QMBEdPP questionnaire.

Figure 3-1 Major Steps in the Development of the Questionnaire



2. Literature Review

A trial questionnaire was developed based upon general categories as specified by Mullohand (2001, p. 7). The categories addressed by Mullohand's research included "age, marital status, schools, locations and years of primary and secondary schooling, career paths prior to entering teacher education, years taken to complete the course, personal interests, understanding of masculinity, views on the need for more male teachers and where they thought they would be career-wise in five years" (Mullohand, 2001, p. 7). A further question regarding the future aspirations of the male pre-service teachers was incorporated into the QMBEdPP questionnaire, while the question relating to the understanding of masculinity was removed. The issue of masculinity was addressed in interviews as the situation warranted. In addition to this, questions concerning the location and type of schooling were generalised in order to maintain the anonymity of respondents.

3. Research Questions

Table 3-1 details the particular research questions that were addressed through the QMBEdPP questionnaire. Each of the questions answered in the QMBEdPP, indicated possible areas of particular concern for further investigation in the interview situation.

Table 3-1 Research Questions Addressed by the QMBEdPP

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	SURVEY	LITERATURE
Question 1		
What factors do male, pre-service primary teachers report as motivating the selection of teaching as a profession?		Montecinos & Nielsen (1997).
Question 2		
What previous experience with children is reported by male, pre-service primary teachers?		Mullohand (2001)
Question 3		
To what extent do/did peers and parents support the choice of teaching as a career?		Feder & Russo (2001), Mullohand (2001)
Question 4		
What barriers due to factors within the university are reported as affecting completion of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course?		Feder & Russo (2001), Elliot (1999)
Question 5		
What barriers due to factors outside the university are reported as affecting completion of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) courses by male, pre-service primary teachers?		Sandler (2000) Elliot (1999), De Corse & Vogtle (1997)
Question 6		
Do pre-service male teachers in Bachelor of Education see gender as a barrier?		Feder & Russo (2001), Goodman (1987)
Question 7		
Do male pre-service teachers perceive professional experience as being valuable to their professional development?		Huling (2001), Abdul-Haqq (1991)
Question 8		
Do male pre-service teachers report that early professional experience influenced their retention within the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course?		Huling (2001), Nicholson (2001)
KEY		Indicates questions that are addressed in the QMBEdPP.

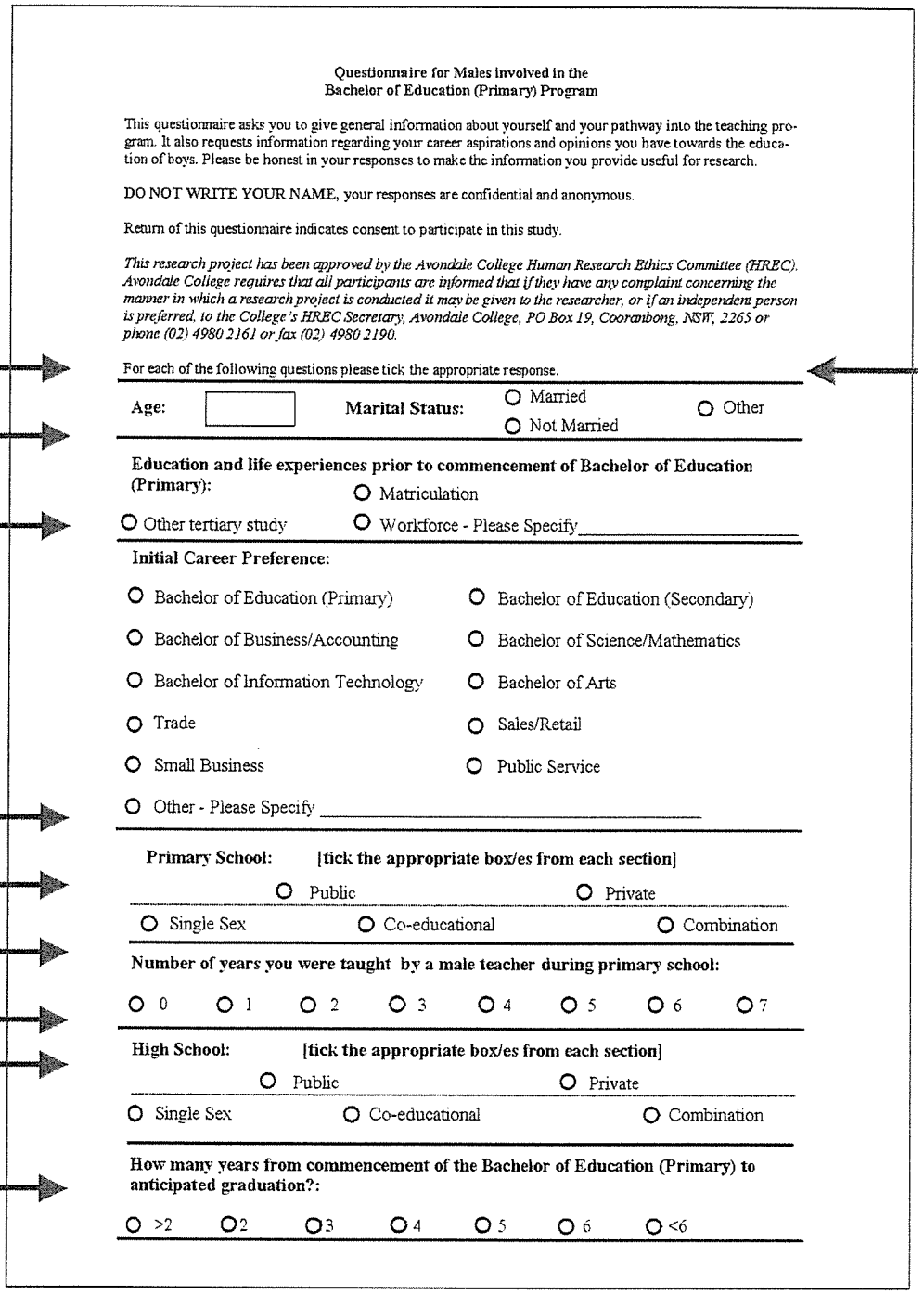
4. Instrument Development

One randomly selected male currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program was approached to evaluate the QMBEdPP. In consultation with this participant, a number of minor alterations were made to the questionnaire. The first alteration involved adding "Other" to the options relating to marital status in question S2. Prior to this the only two options were "Married" or "Not Married".

The second change recommended concerned the wording of question S3 (refer to Figure 3-2). "Pathway to Bachelor of Education (Primary)" was rewritten as "Education and life experiences prior to commencement of Bachelor of Education (Primary)". Similarly, question S10 (refer to Figure 3-2) was revised from the original "Years taken to complete the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course" to "How many years from commencement of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) to anticipated graduation?"

Lastly, a number of formatting alterations were made at the discretion of the researcher. The final draft of the survey appears in Figure 3-2 and Figure 3-3.

Figure 3-2 Final Draft of the QMBEdPP – Page 1



Questionnaire for Males involved in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Program

This questionnaire asks you to give general information about yourself and your pathway into the teaching program. It also requests information regarding your career aspirations and opinions you have towards the education of boys. Please be honest in your responses to make the information you provide useful for research.

DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME, your responses are confidential and anonymous.

Return of this questionnaire indicates consent to participate in this study.

This research project has been approved by the Avondale College Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Avondale College requires that all participants are informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted it may be given to the researcher, or if an independent person is preferred, to the College's HREC Secretary, Avondale College, PO Box 19, Cooranbong, NSW, 2265 or phone (02) 4980 2161 or fax (02) 4980 2190.

S1 → For each of the following questions please tick the appropriate response. ← S2

Age: ☐ **Marital Status:** ○ Married ○ Not Married ○ Other

S3 →

Education and life experiences prior to commencement of Bachelor of Education (Primary):

S4 → ○ Other tertiary study ○ Matriculation ○ Workforce - Please Specify _____

Initial Career Preference:

○ Bachelor of Education (Primary) ○ Bachelor of Education (Secondary)
○ Bachelor of Business/Accounting ○ Bachelor of Science/Mathematics
○ Bachelor of Information Technology ○ Bachelor of Arts
○ Trade ○ Sales/Retail
○ Small Business ○ Public Service

S5 → ○ Other - Please Specify _____

Primary School: **[tick the appropriate box/es from each section]**

S6 → ○ Public ○ Private
○ Single Sex ○ Co-educational ○ Combination

S7 → **Number of years you were taught by a male teacher during primary school:**

S8 → ○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7

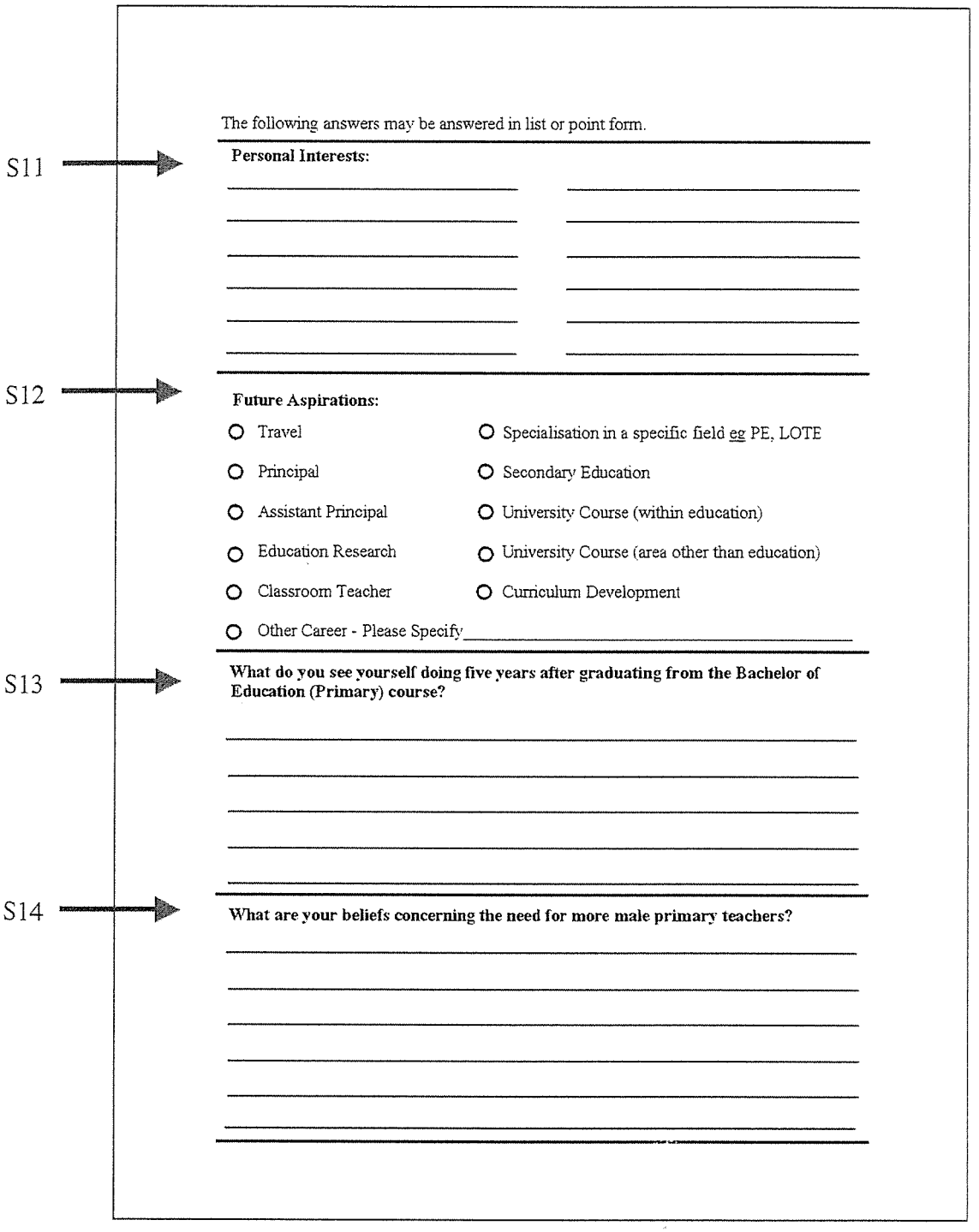
High School: **[tick the appropriate box/es from each section]**

S9 → ○ Public ○ Private
○ Single Sex ○ Co-educational ○ Combination

S10 → **How many years from commencement of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) to anticipated graduation?:**

○ >2 ○2 ○3 ○4 ○5 ○6 ○<6

Figure 3-3 Final Draft of the QMBEdPP – Page 2



The following answers may be answered in list or point form.

S11 → **Personal Interests:**

S12 → **Future Aspirations:**

- O Travel
- O Specialisation in a specific field eg PE, LOTE
- O Principal
- O Secondary Education
- O Assistant Principal
- O University Course (within education)
- O Education Research
- O University Course (area other than education)
- O Classroom Teacher
- O Curriculum Development
- O Other Career - Please Specify_____

S13 → **What do you see yourself doing five years after graduating from the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course?**

S14 → **What are your beliefs concerning the need for more male primary teachers?**

5. *Ethical Considerations*

a. Questionnaire Construction

In order to maintain the anonymity of participants, the QMBEdPP contained clear instructions for participants not to write their names on the questionnaire paper. This instruction was also reiterated by those who administered the questionnaire forms.

In addition, the following statement, put forward by the Avondale College Human Research Ethics Committee was also incorporated onto the survey:

"This research project has been approved by the Avondale College Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Avondale College requires that all participants are informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted it may be given to the researcher, or if an independent person is preferred, to the College's HREC Secretary, Avondale College, PO Box 19, Cooranbong, NSW, 2265 or phone (02) 4980 2190."

b. Population

The sample population of this study was confined to male participants of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course at Avondale College during the year 2004. As such, the number of available participants was limited. Given the confined number of contributors, several questions in the QMBEdPP were worded so as to obtain the pertinent information whilst maintaining anonymity.

For example, questions S5, S6, S8 and S9 (refer to Figure 3-2) were worded so as to enable the researcher to determine the nature of schools attended by participants of the QMBEdPP, rather than having students specify which schools they attended.

c. Collection of Questionnaires

Students were instructed to hand their completed QMBEdPP's to the lecturer that distributed them, or to a specified member of the faculty in the event that questionnaires were completed outside of class time. The specified faculty member then returned the completed forms to the researcher to ensure that the identity of the participants remained unknown.

6. Response Rate

At the time that the QMBEdPP was administered, twenty-eight males were enrolled in primary education at Avondale College. Twenty-two surveys were returned to the researcher, a response rate of 79%.

D. DATA ANALYSIS

1. Age

Figure 3-4 Age Characteristics of Males Completing the Bachelor of Education (Primary) at Avondale College, 2004

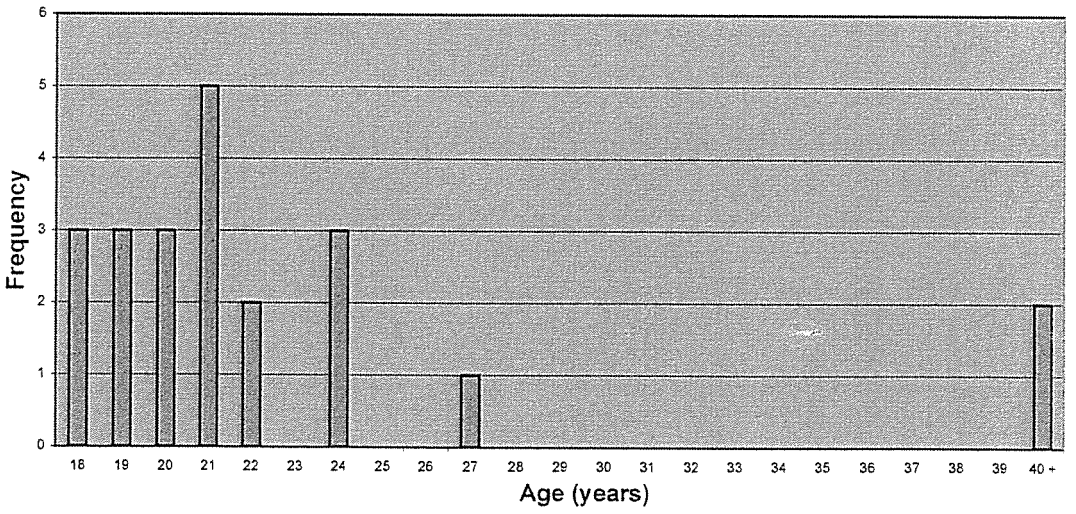
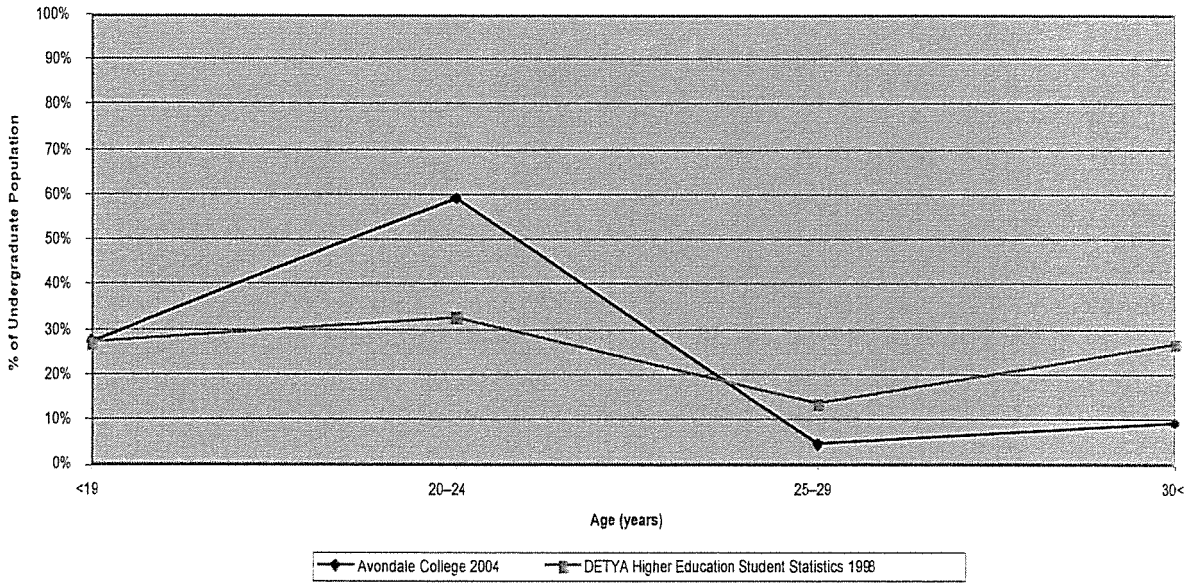


Figure 3-4, "Age Characteristics of Males Completing the Bachelor of Education (Primary) at Avondale College, 2004" details the frequency and range of ages displayed by the current population of males in the Bachelor of Education course at Avondale College. Figure 3-5 then goes on to compare relative percentages of each age bracket in order to provide a basis for comparison to the national average.

Figure 3-5 Age Characteristics of Male BEd (Primary) Students Compared with National Averages



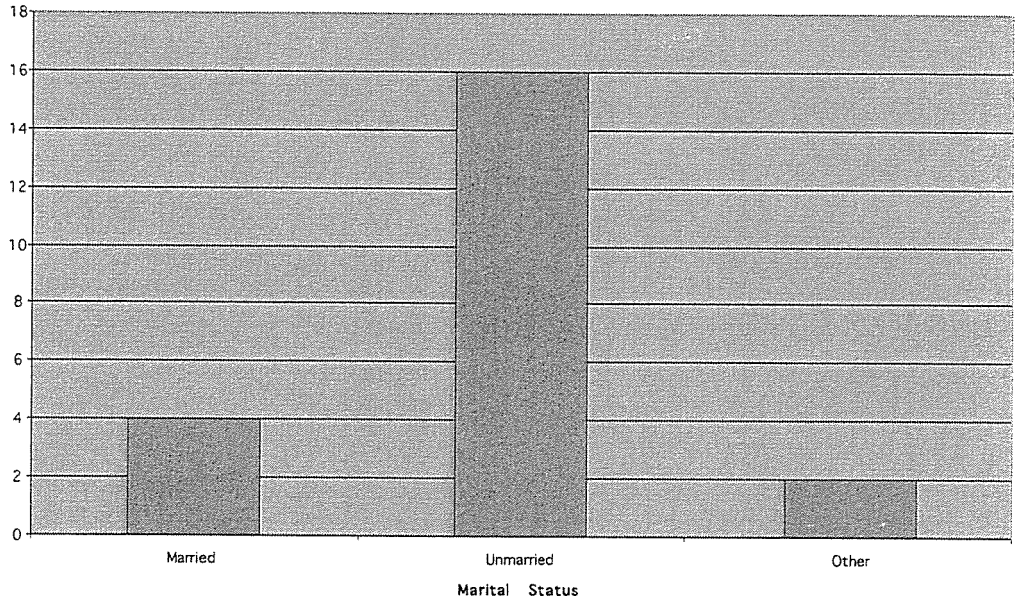
Source: DETYA 1999, Selected Higher Education Student Statistics 1998.

The Avondale College, male, primary education undergraduate population differed from the national average by 28% in the 20 to 24 year old bracket and only 10% lower in the 25 to 29 bracket indicating that younger students are attracted to Avondale College.

2. Marital Status

The majority of males in the sample population were unmarried (Figure 3-6). However, this is not an unusual ratio given that the national median age at marriage for men is 31 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2003, para. 8). As the cohort average is 23 years, the proportion of unmarried students was not unexpected.

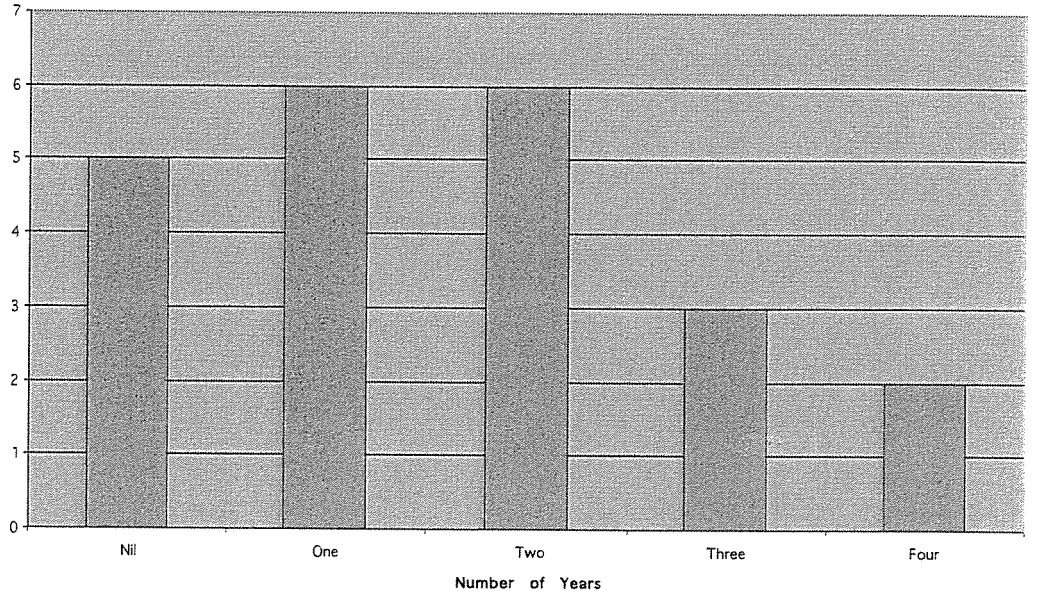
Figure 3-6 Marital Characteristics of Males Completing BEd (Primary) at Avondale College, 2004



3. Number of Years Taught By Males in Primary Schools

QMBEdPP question S7 (refer to Figure 3-2) was incorporated into the questionnaire in order to assist in the determination of the influence of male role models in encouraging males to enter the field of primary teaching. This survey determined that 77.3% of respondents had been taught by a male teacher at some point of their primary school experience. None of the respondents reported having been taught by a male primary teacher for more than four years.

Figure 3-7 Number of Years Taught by a Male During Primary School as Reported by Males Completing BEd (Primary) at Avondale College, 2004



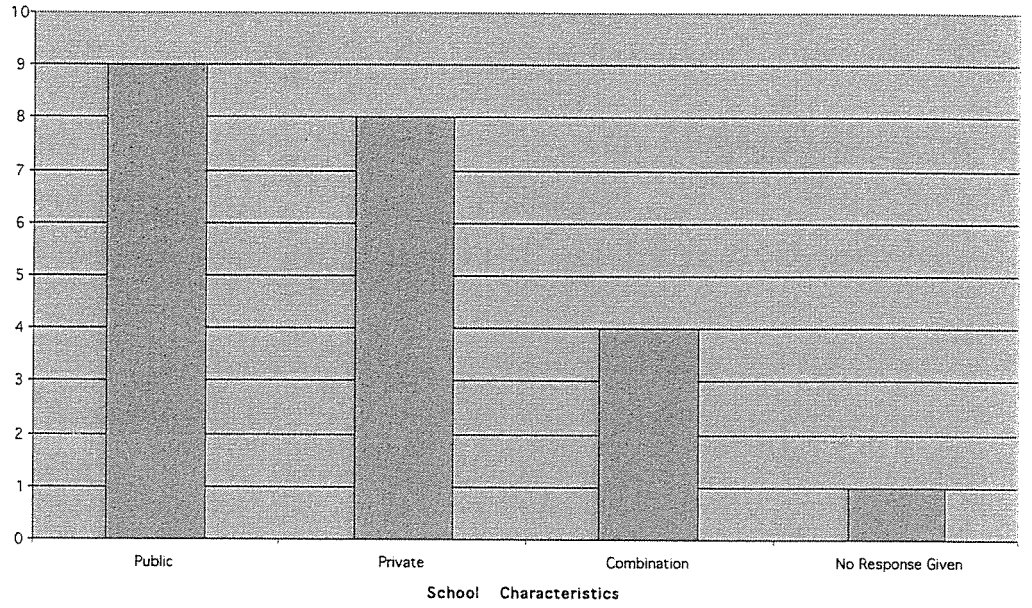
4. School Characteristics

a. Public Vs. Private

I Primary School

A considerable portion of this cohort had attended a non-government institution during primary school. Currently, only 28% of students enrolled in primary school are registered in private schools (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004, p. 3). This sample population however recorded that 54% of participants had attended a non-government school at some point during primary school. This accounts for almost twice the national average.

Figure 3-8 Primary School Characteristics of Males Completing BEd (Primary) at Avondale College, 2004 (Public VS Private)



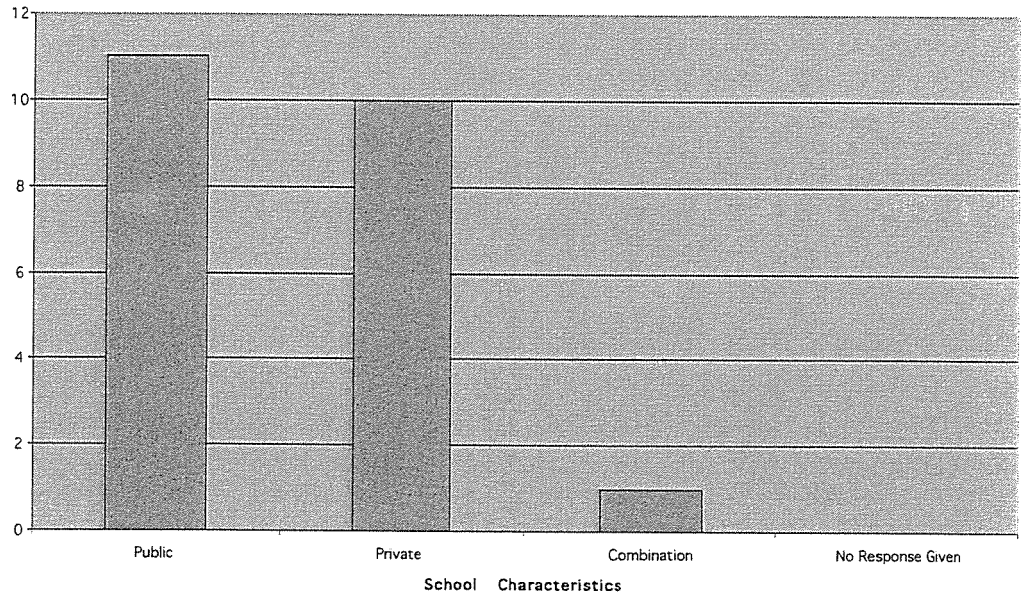
II High School

This tendency towards privately educated participants continued in the high school characteristics of males enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program at Avondale College. However, the trend was not as marked when comparing the results to the national average. 37% of high school students attend non-government schools, this is an increase of 9% when compared to the proportion of students attending private schools during primary school.

However, school characteristics as reported by male, Bachelor of Education (Primary) students indicated that 50% of students had attended a non-government school at some point during high school. While this proportion is still significantly higher than the national average, it is interesting to note that the percentage of male Bachelor of

Education (Primary) students attending private schools during high school decreased by 4%, while the national trend was an increase of 9%.

Figure 3-9 High School Characteristics of Males Completing BEd (Primary) at Avondale College, 2004 (Public VS Private)

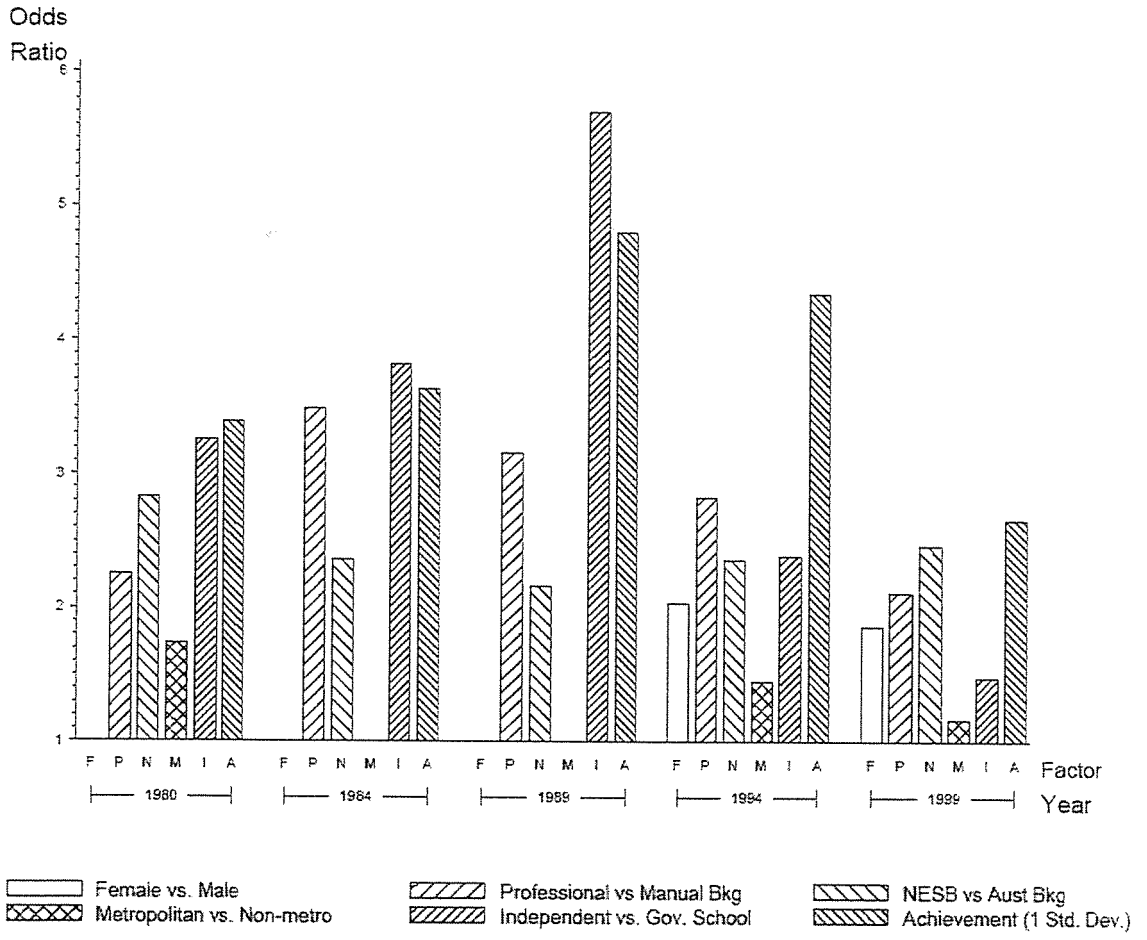


This phenomenon may be attributed to a number of factors the two foremost being the nature of Avondale College as a privately operated tertiary institution, the other takes into account the socioeconomic resources generally attributed as being available to students engaged in the non-government education sector.

Secondly, children attending private schools generally achieve more highly and therefore have an increased likelihood of completing tertiary studies (Long, Carpenter & Hayden, 1999, p 34). Figure 3-10 details an analysis of the "Effects of Selected Social Background and School Factors on Participation in Higher Education". Given that the most recent

statistics identify the odds ratio of independent school participants as being 1.5 more likely to participate in higher study.

Figure 3-10 Effects of Selected Social Background and School Factors on Participation in Higher Education



Source: Long, Carpenter & Hayden, 1999.

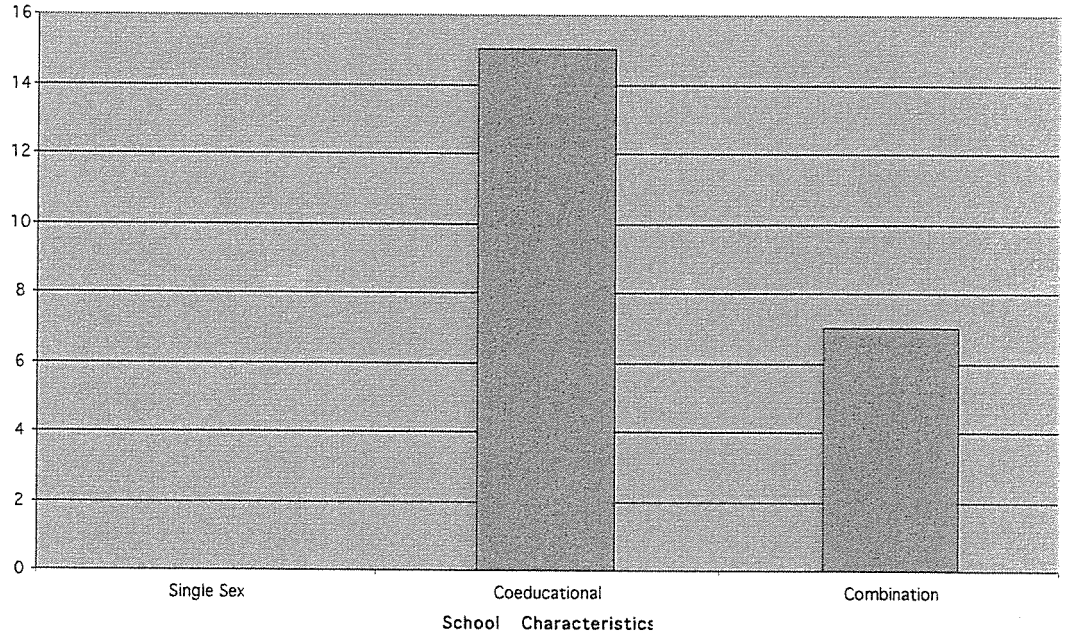
b. Single Sex vs. Co-Educational

I Primary School

The majority of students in Australian schools attend co-educational institutions, therefore the results recorded in Figure 3-11 were not unexpected. None of the respondents of the QMBEdPP questionnaire reported being involved in a single sex

classroom for their whole primary school experience. However, 32% did report having spent at least a portion of time in a single sex schooling environment.

Figure 3-11 Primary School Characteristics of Males Completing BEd (Primary) at Avondale College, 2004 (Single Sex VS Coeducational)



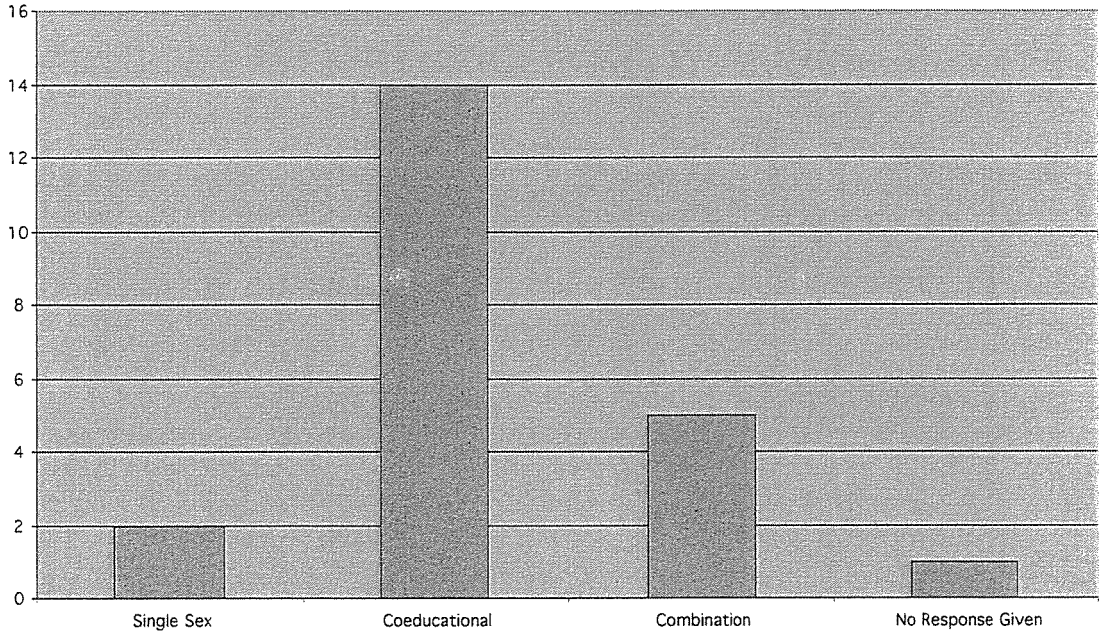
II High School

32% of the surveyed population reported having spent at least some time in a single-sex schooling environment. Of these students, 29% had spent the whole of their time at high school at a single sex school. This is significant because, when compared to the proportion of single sex attending participants in Mullohand's (2001, p. 28) research, this is relatively low.

Of the fourteen participants detailed in Mullohand's (2001, p. 28, 29) research, eleven reported attending a single sex school. This accounts for 79% of her sample population. As such, it was anticipated that attending a single sex school may have influenced

students decision to enter the teaching profession. This research does not support that premise.

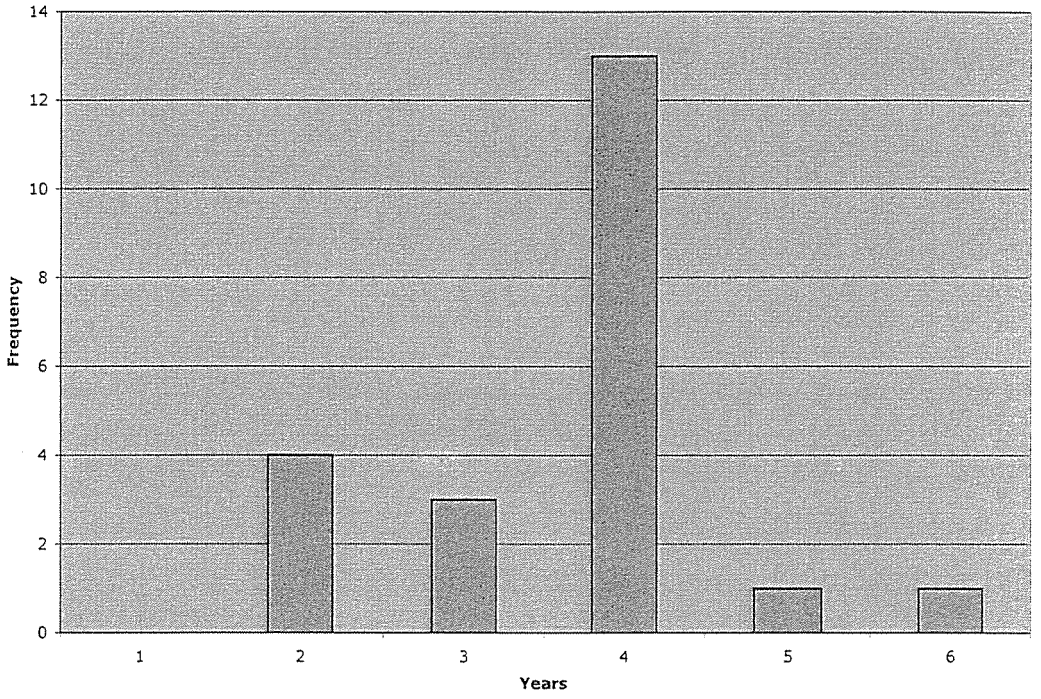
Figure 3-12 High School Characteristics of Males Completing BEd (Primary) at Avondale College, 2004 (Single Sex VS Coeducational)



5. Years to Anticipated Graduation

The responses of male, pre-service teachers indicated that the majority of participants expected to graduate with qualifications in primary education after four years of study as is represented in Figure 3-13 Years Until Anticipated Graduation as Reported by Male Bachelor of Education (Primary) Participants". However, responses ranged from two years to six years with an average of 3.62 years. Responses of less than four years were assumed to have originated from males enrolled in the Diploma of Education (Primary) course and replies of four years, from students studying part-time.

Figure 3-13 Years Until Anticipated Graduation as Reported by Male Bachelor of Education (Primary) Participants



6. Personal Interests

Table 3-2 details some of the various personal interests reported by males completing the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course at Avondale College. The scope of the responses given by the participants indicates that males entering the field may benefit from increased opportunities to develop these skills, particularly in the areas of sport and music.

Sport and music were the top two responses given by the sample population and occurred significantly more frequently than any of the other responses. This poses interesting implications as to methods used for the attraction and retention of male pre-service and early service teachers.

Table 3-2 Personal Interests of Males Completing BEd (Primary) at Avondale College, 2004

Interests	Frequency
Sport • Team Sports 8 • Outdoor Activities 7 • Water sports 4 • Kite flying 1 • Athletics 1 • Snow skiing 1	18 Respondents detailing more than one sport were included only once under the heading 'Sport'. Specified sports were included in sub sections.
Music	15
Christianity	4
Family	3
Intrapersonal skills (eg understanding people)	3
Acting	2
Arts	2
Cooking	2
Nature	2
Reading	2
Science	2
Travel	2
Working with children	2
Archaeology	1
Bikes	1
Bird Keeping	1
Cars	1
Children with disabilities	1
Community Service	1
Computer Games	1
Crafts	1
Film	1
Frogs	1
Fun	1
Hair dressing	1
History	1
Juggling	1
Mechanics	1
Motorcycles	1
Photography	1
Puppetry	1
Television	1

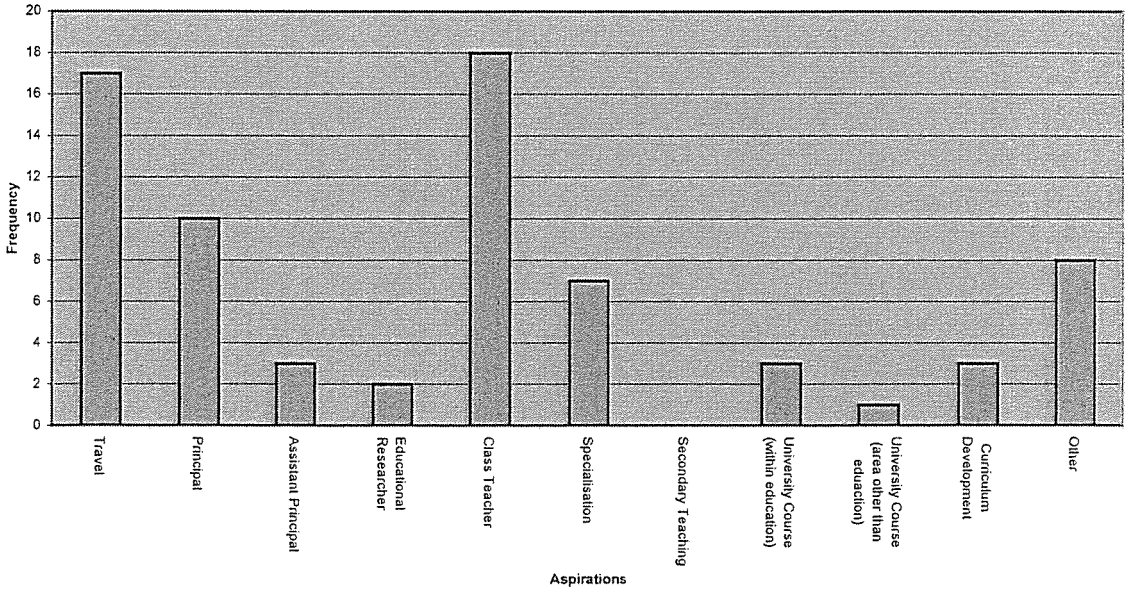
7. Future Aspirations

a. Professional Development Aspirations

Fourteen of the twenty-two participants indicated that they would like to receive additional qualifications at some point in their professional careers. It is interesting to note that of the males that indicated they would like to achieve the "rank" of principal, 30% did not indicate that they thought any additional qualifications were necessary. However it was gratifying to see that 82% of males aspire to be classroom teachers. This was the most common response of the participants.

Travel was the second most highly regarded future aspiration with seventeen participants indicating that they would like to travel. No patterns emerged in relation to those who wanted to travel.

Figure 3-14 Future Aspirations of Males Completing BEd (Primary) at Avondale College, 2004



8. Perceptions of Career Five Years After Graduation

Ten pre-service male primary teachers displayed commitment to longevity within the field of education by reporting that they would like to develop professionally within the first five years after graduation. In addition to this, fifteen respondents reported that they anticipated teaching within a classroom at this point.

Seven of the responses indicated that pre-service teachers do not necessarily see themselves as teaching in the profession indefinitely. Some of the alternatives identified by the Bachelor of Education (Primary) students included church ministry, tertiary study, volunteer work and the pursuit of an acting career.

Table 3-3 Five Year Career Perceptions of Male BEd (Primary) Participants at Avondale College, 2004

Response	Frequency	Analysis
Teaching in the Primary School	15	#
• Teaching lower primary 3		#
• Teaching Grades 3-6 2		
Teaching overseas	5	#
Further study within the field of education	3	Dependant on mode of study.
Undertaking tertiary study in an area other than Education	3	
Family – eg "stay at home dad"	2	♦
Church ministry	2	*
Head of Department within Primary School	2	#
Specialist teacher	2	#
Unsure	2	
Progressing towards principalship	1	#
Pursuing Acting Career	1	*
Involvement in weekend sports	1	♦
Travelling	1	♦
Working within Special education	1	#
Deputy Principal	1	#
Home ownership	1	♦
Volunteer Work	1	*
KEY # Males anticipate working in a primary school * Males do NOT anticipate being in the Primary Classroom ♦ Non career related aspirations		

9. Perceptions of Male Primary Teachers

Beliefs of male pre-service primary teachers as to the need for an increased number of male teachers within primary schools were largely altruistic in nature. Respondents commented that they felt that their presence as role models was essential to the rounded development of children, especially with the increase in single-parent families. Responses included:

> "Definitely more males needed [as primary teachers], as always a balance is needed between males and females, but in today's society with many single

parent families, predominantly with the female having custody of the children, more males are needed for the boys to model behaviour off" (Survey response).

"I believe that the need for male teachers are urgent; that male role models are critical for the developing child. In a world where many males are treated with fear or suspicion, problem behaviour is rising – studies link this to ineffective or lack of male role models. I believe that male teachers are critical to the rounded development of children" (Survey response).

"Boys need to know how to be men and to do that they must see and have interaction with men. I am tired of seeing confused men today" (Survey response).

"I've seen the very best of female teachers, some of the boys simply won't open up to them. Their behaviour, or lack of, may be the result of simply not having a male role-model in their life, someone they feel safe talking to. This goes for girls also in some circumstances. That's why we need more male teachers" (Survey response).

A number of concerns were also raised as to reasons why men avoid the teaching profession. Apprehensions include lack of career incentives, fear of child protection laws and a boring pre-service education course. Responses included:

"There needs to be more incentives to be primary teachers. The course is boring and needs to be livened up a bit so it appeals to males more" (Survey response).

"Some males ... [afraid] of unfairly being done in by child protection laws" (Survey response).

"Teenage men, choosing their profession don't see the appeal in helping children, or getting along with children" (Survey response).

"Cynically speaking, might impair my lust for power as a principal with more male competitors" (Survey response).

Table 3-4 Perceptions Regarding Male Primary Teachers as Reported by Male BEd (Primary) Participants at Avondale College, 2004

Beliefs concerning the need for more male primary teachers	Frequency
There are currently not enough males doing primary teaching.	11
The increase in female headed single-parent families means children require positive male role models at school.	9
Students need a balance between male and female teachers.	8
Boys and girls will be benefited from an increase in male role models. Male role models help children to the rounded development of children.	5
Students relate to male teachers differently.	4
Boys relate to male teachers more easily.	3
Child protection issues make it difficult for males wanting to enter the field of primary teaching.	3
There needs to be incentives to entice males to become primary teachers.	3
There is a gender imbalance within the school system. Male teachers are a "diminishing breed".	2
Cheaper course fees would be encouraging.	1
Increase in males within the profession may make job advancement more difficult.	1
Ladies do an excellent job.	1
No particular belief	1
The course is boring and needs to be livened up.	1

E. CONCLUSIONS

The QMBEdPP explored the demographic characteristics of male pre-service primary teachers at Avondale College. Age, marital status and school type were discussed however these factors were not identified as significant to the retention of male pre-service primary teachers at this institution.

The influence of prior experience with children, issues pertaining to child protection and the role of mentorship were identified as areas to be explored further during the semi-structured interviews.

Chapter 4

INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

A. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the research design for phase two of this study. It outlines the philosophical perspectives, design and methodology of a qualitative study examining factors that affect the attraction and retention of male, pre-service primary teachers. The procedure for data collection and analysis, will be described and ethical considerations outlined. The chapter then goes on to consider the findings of data obtained from the interviews conducted.

B. INTRODUCTION

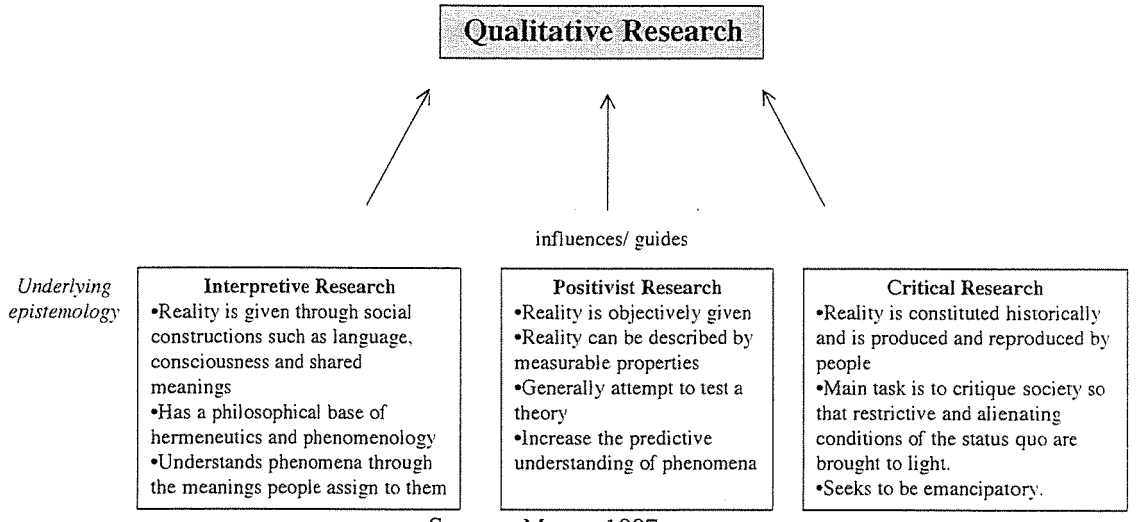
Perceptions of the influence of professional experience, early field experience, motivators, previous experiences, family and peer support, barriers to completion of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) and gender related issues were discussed as they influences the participants. The resultant information identified the effectiveness of current professional experience from the perspective of males within the Bachelor of Education (Primary) within the given tertiary institution.

C. PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

An analysis of philosophical assumptions as detailed in Figure 4-1 indicates that this study operates within the context of interpretive epistemology (Chua, 1986). This research is presented within the premise that the researcher and reality are inseparable. It is recognised that knowledge of the world is deliberately constituted through a person's

lived experiences, and that the responses of participants are interpreted in light of the meaning structure of the researcher's life experiences and are involve an element of subjectivity (Weber, 2004, p. 4).

Figure 4-1 Underlying Philosophical Assumptions of Qualitative Research



Source: Myers, 1997.

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

The findings of the QMBEdPP were taken into consideration as the questions for the semi-structured interviews were developed. This chapter details the processes and analysis of the interview stage of this study.

1. Interview Phase

A combination of individual and small group interviews were conducted among twenty pre-service male primary teachers. Two males previously enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) degree were also interviewed in conjunction with this research project. All participants were invited to take part in a focus group style interview format. However, participants unable to attend the scheduled focus group sessions, but who were

still eager to contribute to the discussion, were given the opportunity to participate in an individual, semi-structured interview.

a. Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are one of the most frequently used methods of gathering qualitative data, the object being to understand the respondent's perceptions of reality rather than making superficial generalisations. In this study, the researcher used open-ended questions to facilitate the candid exchange of ideas and opinions. An interview script consisting of a set of questions was developed as a starting point to guide the interactions. However, the aim was to capture as much of the subject's thinking as possible and as such, the interviewer followed thought processes as closely as possible and posed new questions accordingly. Consequently, the wording of the questions was not always the same (del Barrio, 1999, p. 2; Zorn, 1999, p. 1).

Table 4-1 Strengths of the Semi-structured Interview Approach to Qualitative Data" details some pertinent advantages of the semi-structured interview approach that led to the selection of this method of data collection.

Table 4-1 Strengths of the Semi-structured Interview Approach to Qualitative Data

STRENGTHS/USES OF METHOD	WEAKNESSES/LIMITATIONS OF METHOD
1. **Positive rapport** between the interviewer and interviewee, very simple, efficient and practical way of getting data about things that can't easily be observed (feelings and emotions, for example). 2. **High Validity.** People are able to talk about something in detail and depth. The meanings behind an action may be revealed as the interviewee is able to speak for themselves with little direction from the interviewer. 3. **Complex questions and issues can be discussed/clarified.** The interviewer can probe areas suggested by the respondent's answers, picking-up information that had either not occurred to the interviewer or of which the interviewer had no prior knowledge. 4. **Pre-judgement**: Problem of researcher pre-determining what will or will not be discussed in the interview is resolved. With few "pre-set questions" involved, the interviewer is not "pre-judging" what is and is not important information. 5. Easy to record interview (video/ audio tapes).	1. Depends on the **skill** of the interviewer (the ability to think of questions during the interview, for example) and articulacy of respondent. 2. Interviewer may give out **unconscious signals** / cues that guide respondent to give answers expected by the interviewer. 3. **Time Consuming / expensive** 4. **Not very reliable** – difficult to exactly repeat a focused interview. Respondents may be asked different questions (non-standardised). Samples tend to be small. 5. Depth of qualitative information may be **difficult to analyse** (for example, deciding what is and is not relevant). 6. Personal nature of interview may make findings **difficult to generalise** (respondents may effectively be answering different questions). 7. **Validity:** a. The researcher has no real way of knowing if the respondent is lying. b. The respondent may not consciously lie but may have imperfect recall. c. An interview can sometimes be a "second chance" to do something; having been given the time to reflect on something they did, the respondent tries to make sense of their behaviour by rationalising their actions.

Source: Livesey, www.sociology/org.uk/methfi.pdf .

Small group, semi-structured interviews were the primary method of data collection used in this study due to the belief that values, attitudes and beliefs were more likely to be

revealed in the social gathering and the interaction which being in a small group entails (Gibbs, 1997, p.2). They also enabled the researcher to gain a larger amount of information in a shorter period of time and provided an ideal environment for the exploration of the degree of consensus on a given topic (Catterall & Maclaran, 1997, p.2).

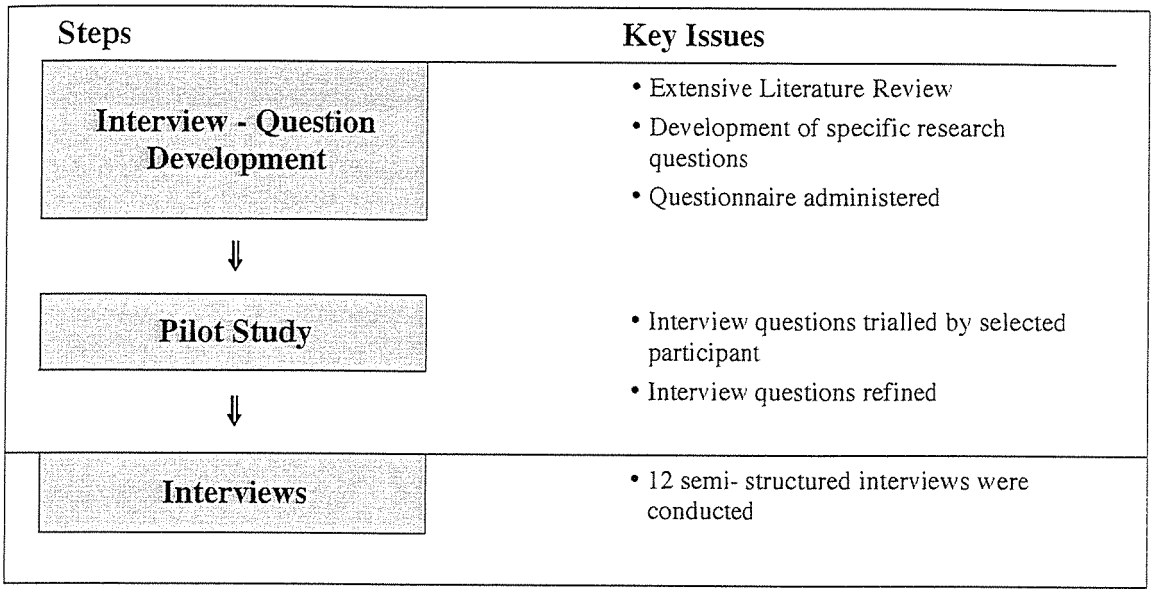
b. Grounded Theory

Following the semi-structured interviews, transcripts were typed verbatim and analysed by means of grounded theory. Grounded theory refers to "theory that is developed inductively from a corpus of data" (Borgatti, n.d., p. 1). Developed by Glaser and Strauss (1990), the analytic process ingrained in grounded theory allows for creativity while still supporting the criteria for good science: significance, theory-observation compatibility, generalisability, reproducibility, precision, rigor, and verification (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 31). The innovative aspects of this theory enable the researcher to ask pertinent questions of the data and to make comparisons that allow new data to be elicited. Grounded theory also allows the researcher to draw "new insights into phenomenon and novel theoretical formulations" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 31).

E. INTERVIEW DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Figure 4-2 "Major Steps in the Development of Interview", provides an overview of the major steps involved in the development of the interview questions.

Figure 4-2 Major Steps in the Development of Interview



1. Question Development

The development of interview questions was based largely upon research conducted by Mullohand (2001) and Feder and Russo (2001). The studies performed by these researchers, provided a basis from which the research questions of this project were formulated. Extensive research into the issues raised by the two projects enabled a series of sixteen interview questions to be developed. Figure 4-2 "Major Steps in the Development of Interview" details how each of the interview questions assist in answering the research questions.

Table 4-2 Research Questions Adressed by Interviews and the Corrosponding Interview Questions

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	INTERVIEWS	LITERATURE
Question 1		
What factors do male, pre-service primary teachers report as motivating the selection of teaching as a profession?	IP1; IP2; IP3; IN1; IN2; IN3	Montecinos &Nielsen (1997).
Question 2		
What previous experience with children is reported by male, pre-service primary teachers?	IP4; IP5; IP6; IN4	Mullohand (2001)
Question 3		
To what extent do/did peers and parents support the choice of teaching as a career?	IP7; IP8; IP9; IN5; IN6	Feder & Russo (2001), Mullohand (2001)
Question 4		
What barriers due to factors within the university are reported as affecting completion of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course?	IP10; IP11; IN7; IN8; IN10; IN11; IN12	Feder & Russo (2001), Elliot (1999)
Question 5		
What barriers due to factors outside the university are reported as affecting completion of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) courses by male, pre-service primary teachers?	IP12; IN13	Sandler (2000) Elliot (1999), De Corse & Vogtle (1997)
Question 6		
Do pre-service male teachers in Bachelor of Education see gender as a barrier?	IP13; IN9	Feder & Russo (2001), Goodman (1987)
Question 7		
Do male pre-service teachers perceive professional experience as being valuable to their professional development?	IP14; IP15; IN14	Huling (2001), Abdul-Haqq (1991)
Question 8		
Do male pre-service teachers report that early professional experience influenced their retention within the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course?	IP16; IP17; IP18; IN14	Huling (2001), Nicholson (2001)
KEY IP – interview questions as addressed to participants currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (**Primary**) course IN - interview questions as addressed to participants **no longer** enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course		Indicates that the corresponding research question has been addressed.

b. Interview Questions

Two sets of interview questions were formulated. The first set of questions were developed for male Bachelor of Education students currently enrolled in the primary course. The second set of questions was slightly modified to address issues surrounding the attrition of males previously enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course.

Those participants currently involved in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course were asked the following questions:

IP1. What motivated you to choose teaching as a profession?

IP2. Was there a significant role-model that encouraged you to enter the field of primary teaching?

IP3. Was primary teaching ever discussed/recommended by a careers advisor?

IP4. What experience did you have with children before entering the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program? Did this prior experience contribute to your decision to enter the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program?

IP5. Do you think that the interaction with children during the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program course encouraged you, or will encourage you to complete the course?

IP6. How did your parents react to your choice to study a Bachelor of Education (Primary)?

IP7. How did your peers react to your choice to study a Bachelor of Education (Primary)?

IP8. How have your fellow classmates reacted to your presence in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course?

IP9. Have you received adequate support from faculty members? Why/why not?

IP10. Would it have been beneficial to have had access to a male mentor within the Education Faculty?

IP11. What other factors have made completion of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course difficult?

IP12. Do you feel that you have been disadvantaged during this course because of your gender?

IP13. In what way do you view professional experiences?

IP14. Do you think that professional experience sessions will advantage you during your first year in the classroom?

IP15. Did you find that early professional experience affected your enjoyment of teaching? Did this affect your decision to remain in the course?

IP16. Do you think that early field experience will advantage you when you begin teaching in a full time role?

Participants no longer associated with the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course were issued with the following, slightly modified list of questions:

IN1. What motivated you to choose teaching as a profession?

IN2. Was there a significant role-model that encouraged you to enter the field of primary teaching?

IN3. Was primary teaching ever discussed/recommended by a careers advisor?

IN4. What experience did you have with children before entering the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program? Did this prior experience contribute to your decision to enter the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program?

IN5. How did your parents react to your choice to study a Bachelor of Education (Primary)?

IN6. How did your peers react to your choice to study a Bachelor of Education (Primary)?

IN7. How did your fellow classmates react to your presence in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course?

IN8. Did you receive adequate support from faculty members? Why/why not?

IN9. Did you feel that you had been disadvantaged during this course because of your gender?

IN10. Would it have been beneficial to have had access to a male mentor within the Education Faculty?

IN11. Did you find that early professional experience affected your enjoyment of teaching? Did this affect your decision to remain in the course?

IN12. What factors contributed to your choice to leave the Bachelor of Education (Primary)?

IN13. In what way did you view professional experiences? How did this affect your choice to pursue a different course of study?

2. Participants

The participants in this study were recruited from the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course at Avondale College. All males within this course were given the opportunity to complete the QMBEdPP questionnaire identifying general demographic characteristics of males completing the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course within the given institution. From this group, five males from year one, two and three, and four males from year four of the Bachelor of Education (Primary), were randomly selected to participate in a more detailed investigation of the research questions involving the interview process (a total of nineteen participants).

In addition to this, four males previously enrolleded in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course and currently studying other courses within the same tertiary institution were also interviewed. These participants were randomly selected from a list of students identified from the Orana, a document published annually by Avondale College that includes photographs, country of origin and course details of all current students.

Participants were sent a letter of information and invitation to participate in a semi-structured interview. Willing Bachelor of Education (Primary) students were then met in person, and an interview was arranged at a place and time of convenience to the participants. Students were interviewed within their peer group where possible, in order to promote an atmosphere of informality and minimise the hierarchical situation. In the event that a mutually agreeable interview time was unable to be scheduled, an individualised interview time was arranged.

Verbal agreement and attendance at the interview was considered as indicating willing and informed consent. In the case of an invitee declining, an information and invitation letter was sent to another, randomly selected student from the remaining list.

a. Ethical Considerations

Participants were informed of the ethical code prior to involvement in this study, as deemed necessary by the ethics committee of the tertiary institution at which this study took place. Participants were allowed to leave the interview or withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were also informed that they were able to pass or decline any question if this was their wish.

In order for the anonymity of all participants to remain intact, all participants were issued with code names. To further protect their identity, transcripts were typed personally by the researcher and seen only by the researcher and research supervisor in order to establish the validity of the themes identified.

3. Methodology

Detailed information regarding factors contributing to the retention of males within the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course were based on the 'lived experiences' of the participants and took place in the form of semi-structured, small group and individualised interviews.

The information gathered represented the participants' perceptions of reality, which assisted in the creation a holistic picture of motives and barriers experienced by males when completing a degree in primary education.

a. Data Collection

A series of five, small group interviews involving fifteen of the twenty- two participants, and seven individual semi-structured interviews were conducted in an informal atmosphere with moderately scheduled interview questions. Due to the nature of the questions – a slightly modified set of questions were presented to participants no longer involved in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course.

Respondents that participated in group interviews, took part in one interview lasting between forty and fifty-five minutes, while Bachelor of Education (Primary) students involved in individualised semi-structured interviews were generally engaged for an average of thirty minutes. The wording and sequence of interview questions were formulated in advance, allowing respondents to answer the same set of questions, thereby increasing the comparability of responses.

b. Data Analysis

Data was collected from audio taped semi-structured interviews lasting between 30 and 55 minutes. Interviews were then transcribed verbatim. Pauses of more than four seconds were marked by the word [pause] while shorter pauses were marked by [...]. Laughter and thinking words were also recorded.

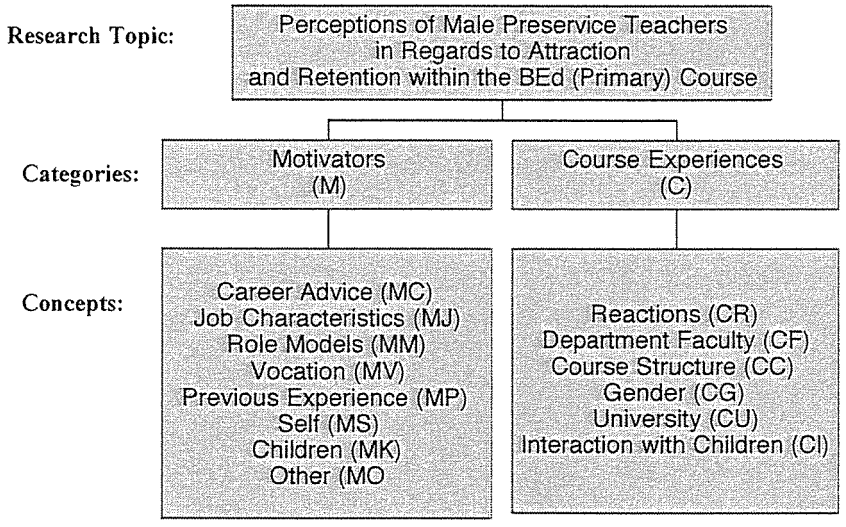
I Open Coding

Transcripts were then read and coded, which led to the identification of two key categories. These categories were labelled:

1. Motivators (M), and
2. Course experiences (C).

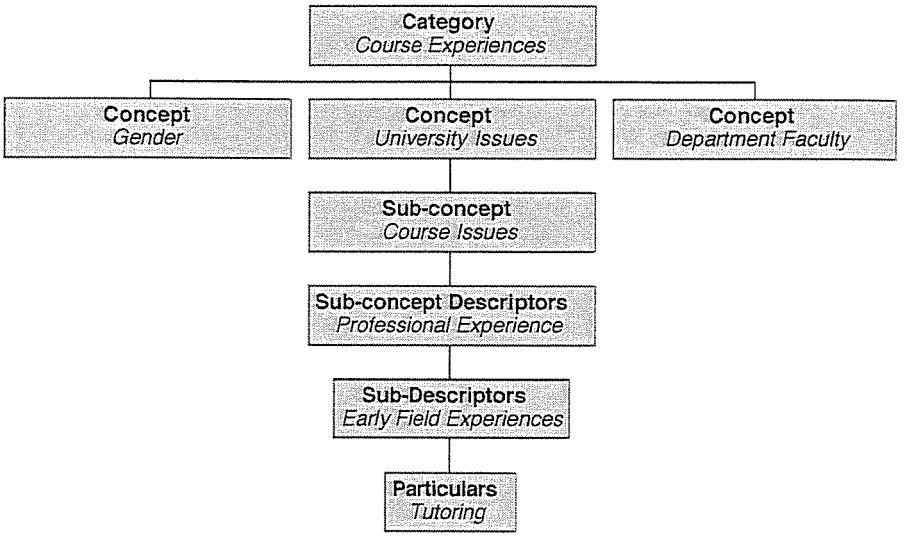
Transcripts were then reread to identify specific terms used by the participants with which to label common concepts. Categories were presently clarified and given specific properties and dimensions. Figure 4-4 "Organisation of Categories and Concepts" the basic organisation of categories and concepts within the context of this research.

Figure 4-4 Organisation of Categories and Concepts



Concepts were then refined further to identify sub-concepts as necessary. The levels created reflect the complexity of participants' responses and identify important areas for discussion. In order to refer to the varying levels of student responses, a scheme was developed as detailed in Figure 4-5. To ensure clarity, level labels have been placed in bold while examples appear in italics.

Figure 4-5 Labelling Terminology used in this Study



II Literature Comparison Phase

The final step of the Grounded Theory approach was to compare and contrast the emerged theory with extensive literature. This allowed for examination of similarities and differences to occur and thus facilitated speculation (Pandit, 1996, p. 10).

F. RESULTS

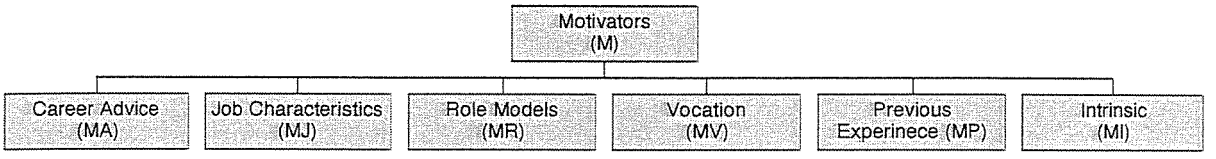
The results of interviews conducted with male, pre-service primary teachers at Avondale College are recognised in the following section. Discussion occurs under the two categories; motivators and course experiences. Within each of the categories, subsequent concepts are identified and examined.

1. Motivators

Six distinct areas were acknowledged as motivating males to enter the field of primary teaching. These factors are represented in Figure 4-6 and include advice given in regards to appropriate career choices, characteristics of teaching as a career, various role models,

the perception of teaching as a vocation, previous experience with children and elements of one's character that indicated a predisposition for the teaching profession.

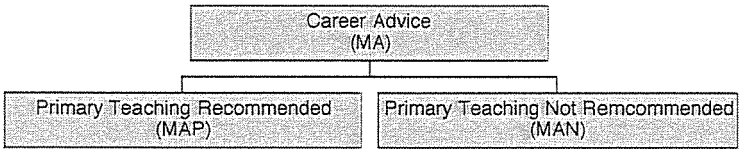
Figure 4-6 Factors Identified as Influencing Entrance into the Field of Primary Teaching



a. Career Advice

The efficacy of positive career's advice towards the attraction of males to the teaching profession is relatively unknown (Flores, 2002, p. 22). However, many strategic plans refer to the importance of guidance officers and university career counsellors in the attraction of males to the occupation (Queensland Government, 2002, p. 3). For the purposes of this study student responses were coded into two categories as represented in Figure 4-7.

Figure 4-7 Motivators Influencing Attraction to the Field of Primary Teaching - Career Advice



I Primary Teaching Recommended

Of all of the respondents, only one mentioned that primary teaching was recommended as a viable career choice by a career's advisor. Keegan (2nd year student) reported that primary was "one of the many options she gave me".

Other responses indicated that teaching or counselling had formed one of a list of alternatives. However, teaching was always mentioned in generic terms and never specifically at the primary level. Instances where teaching was recommended tended to occur as a result of career's testing rather than in consultation with a career's advisor. Generally, career's advisors were perceived as suggesting " a general area" (Tod, 3rd year student) rather than any particular career.

II Primary Teaching Not Recommended

Nineteen out of twenty-one participants stated that a career's advisor had never recommended primary teaching to them. These responses fell into two categories; participants who had never accessed a trained careers advisor and those who had had other career options suggested to them.

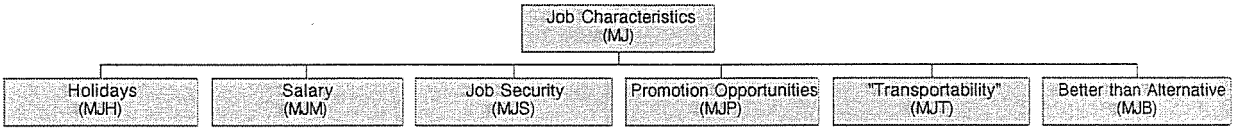
Of the participants who had not been exposed to a trained careers advisor, Luke (3rd year student) looked at a careers book. Simon (4th year student) and Layton (4th year student) who had accessed a careers advisor inferred that their career's testing was difficult to understand or simply ineffectual.

Other career options that were suggested to the participants of this study included bee keeping (Darren, 3rd year student), counselling (Robert previously enrolled Bachelor of Education (Primary) student), civil engineering (Fergus, 3rd year student), communications (James, 2nd year student), business (Dwayne, 3rd year student), tourism (Jake, 3rd year student) and engineering science (Andrew, 2nd year student).

2. Job Characteristics

Various characteristics of the teaching profession were identified as motivating students to participate in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program. These characteristics include duration of holidays, salary, job security, transportability and opportunities for promotion. Student responses were coded into six categories as represented in Figure 4-8 for the purposes of analysis and evaluation. In the succeeding section each of these topics will be explored in further depth.

Figure 4-8 Motivators Influencing Attraction to the Field of Primary Teaching - Job Characteristics



I Holidays

Long vacations were perceived as one incentive of choosing teaching as a career. Of the participants, only Graham (1st year student) appreciated holidays enough to mention them in the interview as a motivating factor. Research conducted by Goh and Atputhasamy (2001, p. 5) corroborates the finding that although the length of vacations has been identified as an inducement to enter the field of teaching, it ranks as being of lesser importance than altruistic motives.

II Salary

It is widely believed that lower salaries relative to alternative occupations are responsible for teacher shortages (Han, 1994, p. 4). Therefore, it was not anticipated that salary would be mentioned as a motivating factor in the enrolment of males into the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program. However, two participants did identify financial incentives

as encouraging them to continue with the course. Luke (3rd year student) mentioned that he was pursuing a career in primary education mainly "because of the money... it is better than child care". Keegan (2nd year student) also reported that "the pay packet is much better than I could ever earn labouring".

III Job Security

The second most frequently mentioned motivator as identified by male pre-service primary teachers at Avondale College was the high likelihood of employment associated with graduating from the course. Due to the high demand for teachers in general, and in particular male primary teachers, several participants espoused the belief that they would be highly employable. As Andrew (2nd year student) commented, "it's going to be very easy to get a job as a male. Basically, there aren't many guys so I'll be targeted as a male. Just because of that fact". This concept is a valid one, especially in light of the current political climate surrounding boys' education and men-only teaching grants (Doherty, 2004, p.1).

IV Promotion Opportunities

Increased likelihood of promotion associated with being a male in a female dominated profession was also identified as a motivating males to enter the field of primary teaching. Often promotion opportunities were discussed along side issues relating to salary. As Bill (2nd year student) commented, "dudette [wife] it's easy to get to principal".

Male pre-service primary teachers clearly recognise the "possibility or perceptions of a gendered career advantage" (Thornton & Bricheno, 2000, p. 202) and view this as an incentive to join the profession.

V Transportability

Another reason identified as encouraging males to study primary teaching was the transportability of the qualification. Many males reported aspiring to travel and the fact that a teaching qualification is recognised overseas was a big incentive, allowing participants to live abroad and support themselves in their chosen profession.

James (1st year student) said that he wanted "to be able to travel pretty widely" and "seeing as how it [Bachelor of Education (Primary)] is an international degree, there is really big motivation for me".

VI Better than Alternative

Also identified as motivating students to enter the field of primary teaching was the fact that it was perceived as better than other options. Responses included:

> "I was working and I didn't like work so I decided to come to college" (Fergus, 3rd year student).

> "I was in the factory working for a year, and it was pretty much a dead end job ... and I thought primary [teaching]" (Simon , , 4th year student).

"My dad kept on saying "don't be a builder, don't be a builder", so primary teaching it was "(Luke, 3rd year student).

Or, students were not able to study their first course and chose to study primary teaching rather than entering the work force indefinitely. Comments included:

"I was planning... to end up in like an engineering science sort of field ... that wasn't really an option and marks etc" (Andrew, 2nd year student).

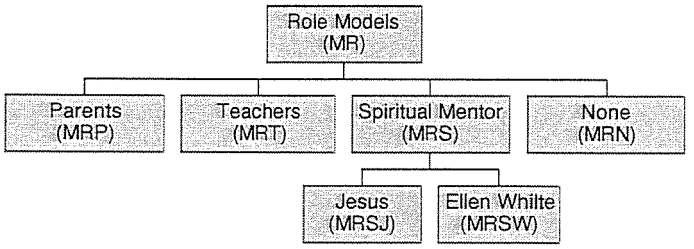
"I didn't even think about it [primary teaching] and I didn't get into any of my first preferences – I was going to do civil engineering but I didn't get into it" (Fergus, 3rd year student).

Goh and Atputhasamy (2001, p. 5) also discovered that some respondents choose to study teaching because no other option was open to them. However, only 5.6% of their sample agreed with this statement compared with 13.6% of the current one. This indicates that males are more likely to study primary teaching as a second or subsequent option, than their female counterparts.

b. Role Models

Several different individuals were singled out as inducing participants to enter the teaching profession. Consideration of the impact of role models on the attraction of males into the profession occurs in the following section. Student responses were coded into four concepts and two sub concepts as represented in Figure 4-9.

Figure 4-9 Motivators Influencing Attraction to the Field of Primary Teaching - Role Models



I Parents

Both mothers and fathers were reported as encouraging students to enter the field of primary teaching. Parents tended to fall into two categories of support, either they introduced the concept of primary teaching as a viable option, or they were teachers themselves and thus modelled the benefits of the profession to their children.

Frequently, parents pointed out the benefits of the teaching profession such as long holidays and the high likelihood of promotion, or supported their children by affirming that they were suited to the occupation.

Of the respondents, only two had parents who, at one stage had been primary teachers. This indicates that having parents in the profession does not serve as a significant motivator for males to enter the profession, paralleling data collected by Goh and Atputhasamy (2001, p. 5). As Bryan (2nd year student) commented "I had my dad as a primary teacher for two years ... he was the one that steered me, told me not to do it."

II Teachers

Teachers were viewed as the most significant of role models in the promotion of teaching as a career. Six participants mentioned inspiring teachers as motivating their choice of

Bachelor of Education (Primary). The responses of Andrew (2nd year student) and Robert (Interview Previously enrolled BEd (Primary) student) are recorded below:

> "I had a year four teacher who I thought was a great guy... a really good teacher who really cared about the class" (Andrew).

> "My year five teacher... He really made the time for everyone and my brother had an excellent experience with him too... I just thought to myself it would be really really rewarding to be in a position like that where you can help out kids" (Robert Previously enrolled Bachelor of Education (Primary) student).

Although only male teachers are cited here as being inspiring teachers, the overarching theme of the participants responses was that caring teachers, regardless of gender, were those who spurred them on to become primary teachers.

Even after respondents had finished primary school, primary teachers were still recognised as performing a special role in the recruitment of males into primary teaching. As Zaachary (1st year student) reported, his main mentor was "probably my pastor's wife ... she just saw me with a few kids and she saw something special so she threw me in Sunday school classes ... She was a teacher from the States."

III Spiritual Mentor

Two participants made specific mention of a spiritual mentor as motivating them to enter the area of primary education. These two mentors were identified as Jesus and Ellen White.

III-a Jesus

Luke (3rd year student) remarked that "Jesus himself is probably more of a role model... than any particular person". A faith commitment often "inspires teachers, gives them hope and purpose, keeps them going, and grounds their work' (McNay, 2001, p. 1). Luke (3rd year student)'s response to this question indicates what has been defined as a call from a Christian God. The notion of calling will be discussed further when the concept of vocation is addressed.

III-b Ellen White

Ellen White was another spiritual mentor identified by a participant of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program. Bill (2nd year student) mentioned that while reading the book "Education" by Ellen White, he came to the conclusion that primary teaching "could be a good idea to help change ... kids for God".

Ellen White is regarded as one of the founding members if the Seventh-day Adventist church and is said to have received prophetic messages from God. Several of her prophetic messages concerned the "proper" principles of education. Writings appearing as early as 1872 stated that the right kind of education should "pay attention to the physical, mental, moral, and religious life of students" (Schwarz & Greenleaf, 2000, p.120). Bill (2nd year student)'s response also indicates that his motivation for studying education is as a vocation.

IV None

Another motivator mentioned in relation to role-modelling, was actually the absence of a significant role model. Participants felt that it was essential to become primary teachers because they did not have positive experiences with teachers while attending school. Respondents felt that where their teachers had failed, they could succeed.

Gary (2nd year student) suggested that he didn't really have "any significant role models... I guess that is what spurred me on to become a teacher". Keegan (2nd year student) on the other hand mentioned that he was motivated to teach by a bad teacher. "I didn't like the way she taught; I didn't get a lot out of the class; I hated going to school every day that year... if I could be a good teacher, then I could get the kids to learn something out of ... school rather than hating every day".

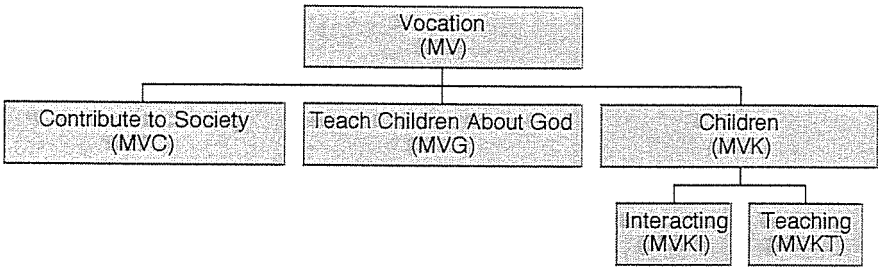
c. Vocation

For the purposes of this research paper, vocation is defined as a person's "calling" (Sanner, 1978, p. 33). It refers to altruistic motivation such as a strong desire to teach or to participate in a job that they feel to be socially worthwhile. In this discussion, a person's vocation also takes into account the notion that a "calling" may be divine in origin. This belief is consistent with many faith systems, most notably Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Participant responses were divided into three sub-concepts; the desire to make a contribution to society, wanting to "make a difference" in children's lives, interaction

with children and the aspiration of teaching children about God. Figure 4-10 gives a diagrammatic representation of the organisation of ideas as they pertain to vocation.

Figure 4-10 Motivators Influencing Attraction to the Field of Primary Teaching - Vocation



I Contribute to Society

The majority of participants expressed the desire to make a difference in children's lives and thus contribute to society. Rod (Previously enrolled BEd (Primary) student) articulated this idea very succinctly when he said, "I wanted to make a difference... I was sick of working in the computer industry, but mostly I was sick of ... ripping people off. I wanted to put something back into society" (Rod Previously enrolled BEd (Primary) student).

Many of the participants also felt that primary teaching would benefit from a greater male presence. Respondents said that this was due to the rise of single parent families and the lack, for many students, of a male role model in their lives. Responses included:

> "Having a male role model in the early stages of life is important and a lot of them (children) probably don't, cause most dads now are working full time" (Zaachary, 1st year student).

> "I've not had that many strong (male) role models. Maybe that's why I've come to want to help other kids to have that in their life" (Nicholas, 1st year student).

> "I think kids ... boys especially need role models... I think that male primary teachers ... can make a difference, as a role model, as a father figure".

The general perception of male, pre-service teachers was that one of the central ways they could contribute to society was as a substitute father figure and model of masculinity to their students. This view is corroborated by Thornton (2001), who identified that males engaged in pre-service teacher education programs were largely idealistic in their views towards primary education and who stated that "primary education was the building block of education, socially vital" (Thornton, 2001, p. 483).

II Teach Children about God

Another incentive for choosing primary education as a profession was the evangelical aspect of teaching. Males attending Avondale identified that to "influence children for God" was central to their choice of primary teaching. As Tod (3rd year student) mentioned:

> "I think you can make a difference when you teach, and I love God and Jesus and I want to be able to ... show that to kids and show His love. That is the most important thing for me about teaching" (Tod, 3rd year student).

Avondale College is affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist system and therefore it was anticipated that respondents would have an increased likelihood of professing ideals

promoted by this organisation. Given that the first objective of Adventist schools is that students will demonstrate "acceptance of God and His Word through conversion and use the Bible as a basis for a friendship with Jesus Christ and a guide in all areas of life" (Seventh-day Adventist School System in Australia, 2004, p. 1), these responses were not unexpected.

III Children

The motivating influence of children upon enrolment of males into the Bachelor of Education (Primary) has been divided into two areas; love of teaching and enjoyment associated with interaction with children. Both of these concepts have been identified as altruistic motivators and are discussed further in the following section.

III-a Interacting

Goh and Aputhasamy (2001, p. 5) identified working with children as the most highly ranked motive for choosing teaching. Of the 680 students surveyed, 87.2% agreed or strongly agreed that working with children motivated them to join the profession. Of the participants of this study, 71% valued their experiences with children highly enough to mention that they had either reinforced their decision to enter the course or contributed their decision to enter the course. Comments included, "you need to love kids ... to do primary teaching" (Tod, 3rd year student), and "well I just love kids" (Zaachary, 1st year student).

III-b Teaching

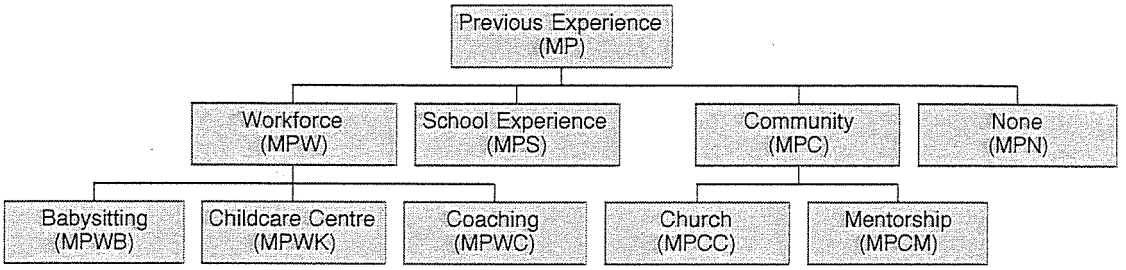
Love of teaching was also identified as a key motivator towards entrance into primary teaching. Goh and Aputhasamy (2001, p. 5) ranked love of teaching as the second most

dominant motive for entering the profession. Zaachary (1st year student) provided an eloquent explanation of this when he said " I just love kids... seeing them grow and develop, it's really rewarding... the reaction (of children) to teachers who they really really love, it's just a passion. They just want to work."

d. Previous Experiences

Previous experiences were another factor identified as motivating males to enter the field of education. The current social trend is for fewer men to spend less time with young children than women (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001, p. 2). As such, it is proposed that females are more readily able to recognise a love of children and/or learning than males, due to the fact that they have not had adequate experience to enable them to do so. This theory is substantiated by the scope of prior experiences as reported by the male Bachelor of Education (Primary) students. Only two of the males interviewed reported having no experience of children before entering the program. The remainder revealed that they had had extensive interaction with children at some point in time prior to studying primary teaching. The following component of this paper discusses the various experiences as they pertain to participants of this study. Figure 4-11 details situations experienced by male, pre-service teachers at Avondale College that allowed for interaction with children.

Figure 4-11 Motivators Influencing Attraction to the Field of Primary Teaching - Previous Experience



I Workforce

Eight instances were mentioned of males receiving monetary rewards for working with children outside of the school setting. Opportunities that were capitalised upon included babysitting, working in a child care centre, and coaching soccer at a sports club.

I-a Babysitting

Of the options mentioned under the workforce sub-concept, babysitting was the most commonly referred to activity. The interaction with children associated with babysitting appeared to be a substantial motivator, especially in the case of James (1st year student).

> "It was really the experience with Ned... just sitting with him doing his reader and even his little three year old sister doing her reader... [it was] just like wow ... cause reading sets kids up for life. I was like awesome, I get to teach these kids a skill that they are going to need forever."

The very nature of babysitting lends itself well as early experience. The number of children to be supervised is a generally fairly small, and assisting student with homework allows the babysitter to involve themselves in the educational process.

I-b Childcare Centre

Experience within a childcare centre was also mentioned as motivating one of the participants to study as a primary teacher. However, the reasons associated with this choice are indicative of reasons often associated with the attrition of males from primary teaching. Luke (3rd year student) mentioned that inadequate pay and community perceptions of child care workers as babysitters made him angry, "you spend a day in a child care centre and you are knackered at the end. You are absolutely knocked out". The failure of the general public to appreciate the complexity of child care work led him primary teaching, even though he had identified that working with younger children brought greater satisfaction.

I-c Coaching

One respondent mentioned coaching in relation to prior experience with children. Jake (3rd year student)'s response was that he "always got stuck with the younger kids... I've always gotten along with kids but I never considered... [coaching] as too much of an influence".

Although the respondent did not consider coaching to have influenced his decision to enter the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course, it is interesting to note that Jake (3rd year student) confirmed that experiences during coaching sessions reinforced the fact that he had a natural affinity with children.

II School Experiences

In school experiences fell into two categories; work experience and teacher's aide. However, the two often merged as students completing work experience within a primary

school were given the duties of a teacher's aide. Comments regarding working within the school were as follows:

> I was offered "teacher's aide work and I thought that would be a lot of fun. And it was a lot of fun and I don't know - I never really looked back... ever since then I have found that it was a real prominent ... career choice for me and I kind of just followed it right through" (Robert Previously enrolled BEd (Primary) student).

> "I wanted to do teaching when I was in year 11 ... [and] did work experience at the primary school ... I just like mucking around with kids and I thought - primary teaching" (Simon , 4th year student).

One respondent also identified having had experience within a high school, which consolidated his decision to study primary teaching instead. Zaachary (1st year student) reported that "one of the down sides [of teaching in the high school] was it was a bit too intellectual".

Therefore, previous experience within the school setting can be identified as a significant motivator in the attraction of males towards the profession.

III Community

Also identified as providing opportunities for males to interact with children were a number of community organisations. Foremost amongst these was the church body (no particular denomination was specified).

III-a Church

Fifteen of the twenty-two participants of this study identified that involvement in church allowed them to take on roles of management amongst children. These experiences included activities such as organising Bible classes, taking on leadership roles in the church, leading out in children's Sabbath/Sunday Schools and participating in clubs.

Similarly to babysitting, church programs are often ideal early experiences for males interested in teaching. Programs that are implemented are generally taught to a small group of children and in collaboration with a team of other church members. As James (1st year student) put it, "it is sort of like a primary classroom but it's a bit different ... the kid's are there because they want to be there."

III-b Mentorship

Participants also indicated that they acted as mentors to younger children. Keegan (2nd year student) and Robert (Previously enrolled BEd (Primary) student) both saw their role as creating an inclusive environment for the younger elements of their peer, social and community groups. This in turn led to "very positive experience[s] being able to help these little kids... I used to say gi-day and their faces would light up or something, so I thought that's cool" (Keegan, 2nd year student).

IV None

Individuals that indicated they had no experience with children before entering the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course numbered two. Since conducting the interviews, one of these individuals has withdrawn from the primary course. The other student indicated that he had been afraid of children because:

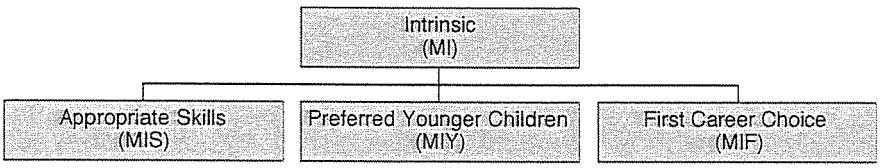
"I didn't know how they [little kids] thought, I didn't know ... if I get up in front of the class you know, are the little kids going to think ..., what a loser or anything ... I didn't know that little kids worship the ground that you walk on ... [I thought] these little grade twos are going to be really critical of me" (Luke, 3rd year student).

Previous experience with children assists in the attraction of males to the teaching profession and reduces anxiety once one is pursuing primary teaching as an occupation. Sixteen out of twenty-two participants in this study overtly mentioned that their prior experience with children contributed to their decision to enter the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program. An additional two participants stated that their experiences had encouraged them to maintain their decision to become primary teachers.

e. Intrinsic Motivators

For the purposes of this study, intrinsic motivators have been defined as inherent characteristics that male, pre-service teachers identified as contributing to their choice of primary education as a career. These include identifying skills appropriate for primary teachers, a preference for interacting with younger children and pursuing their chosen career. Figure 4-12 gives a diagrammatic representation of the organisation of ideas as they pertain to intrinsic motivators.

Figure 4-12 Motivators Influencing Attraction to the Field of Primary Teaching - Intrinsic



I Appropriate Skills

Several participants in this study mentioned that they were motivated to study primary teaching because they felt that they had appropriate skills for the job. James (1st year student) mentioned that he had a "good public speaking ability which [gave me] ...confidence", while Graham (1st year student) understood that he had "the right personality – sort of soft and quiet and helpful". The closest parallel to this finding was also provided by Goh and Aputhasamy (2001, p. 5), and was labelled as inborn talent.

II Preferred Younger Children

A number of males mentioned that they were particularly attracted to primary teaching because it allowed them to interact with younger children. High school teaching in comparison was viewed as "too intellectual" (Zaachary, 1st year student). Other comments included: I have always had "a passion for teaching ...especially like, the younger kids" (Peter , 4th year student) and

I "like working with little kids and everything like that" (Graham, 1st year student).

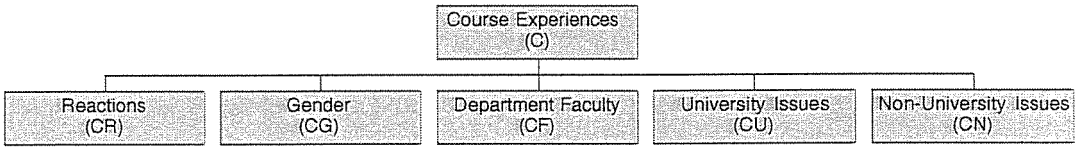
III First Career Choice

Primary teaching was actually the first career choice of a variety of different participants. Comments such as Layton (, 4th year student)'s "it's just what I always wanted to do" and Peter (4th year student)'s " I always had ... a passion for teaching" corroborate findings by Bastick (2000, p. 8). His research indicated that the reason entitled, "it is the profession I have always wanted" (Bastick, 2000, p. 7), was the motive most highly ranked by the male participants of the study.

3. Course Experiences

The next major category was course experiences. Five areas were acknowledged as having distinct implications towards the retention and attrition of male pre-service primary teachers. These factors are represented in Figure 4-13 and include issues relating to gender, reactions of family, friends and classmates, experiences with faculty members, matters within the tertiary institution and problems relating to factors outside of the tertiary institution.

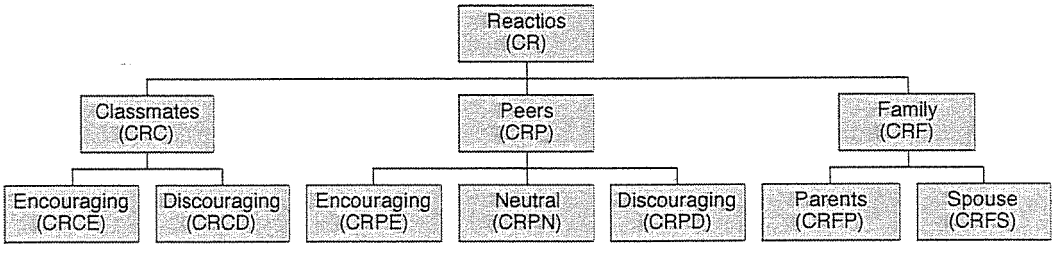
Figure 4-13 Factors Identified as Influencing Course Experiences of Male Pre-service Primary Teachers



a. Reactions

The reactions of significant groups were discussed as they related to male, Bachelor of Education (Primary) students. Groups identified as having considerable influence were classmates, peers, family and teachers. This section goes on to discuss the implications of the various levels of support received by the participants of this study as indicated by Figure 4-14.

Figure 4-14 Experiences of Males Completing the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Course - Reactions



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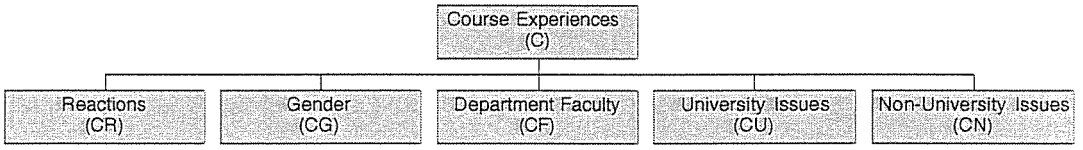

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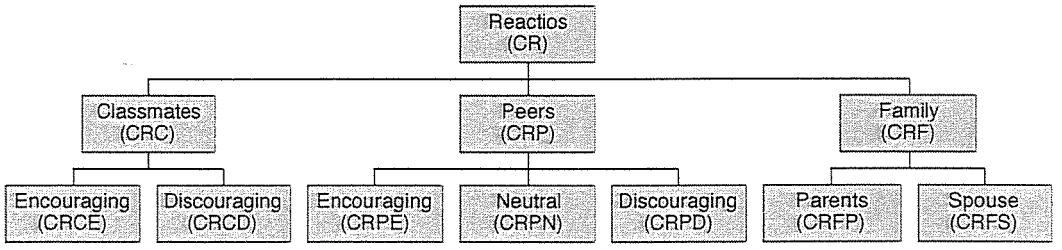


I Classmates

The reactions of classmates fell into two core divisions; the encouraging and the discouraging. Of the feedback regarded as positive, participants further refined their comments to identify their "special role" in the class, and maintained that the males offered each other company and support.

I-a Encouraging

The overarching theme of responses indicated that males within the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Course felt accepted and valued. Some of the comments made by the participants are as follows:

"I think it's kind of good to be the minority of the class. ... we do get helped a lot by the ladies, we get taken under their wing I guess, but in other aspects we kind of carry them" (Bryan, 2nd year student).

"I think it [Bachelor of Education (Primary)] is a pleasant environment, I think people are accepting ... it's a team now" (James, 1st year student).

"We got lots of support and affirmation ... even when I decided that um, I was going to do secondary [teaching] instead of doing primary [teaching]" (Robert Interview Previously enrolled BEd (Primary) student)

In addition to feeling included in the educational experience at Avondale College, male participant's also felt that they played a special role within the context of the class climate. As Gary (2nd year student) stated, the girls "are always looking to us for a bit of

laughter or for a joke here or there ... I think we add the spice to our class if I do say so myself".

Participants also derived a lot of support from other males in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course. Many commented that "it was great to find guys that are doing primary teaching and want to have fun at the same time" (James, 1st year student) because "you don't want to be on your own and stranded". Comments collected from participants of this study indicated that males had informally adopted support networks that allowed them to "encourage mutual support, the sharing of experience, and to overcome feelings of isolation" (Thornton, 1999, p. 3). Thornton also indicated that an artificially imposed forum was less affective with male students. It is suggested that the small class sizes apparent at Avondale College encouraged the male participants to network together in a way that is not evident at larger tertiary institutions.

I-b Discouraging

Despite a majority of positive comments, there was a core of discontent that became apparent as the interviews progressed. Jake (3rd year student)'s comment was that "we [the boys] joke around a little bit and they [the girls] hate us because they are very serious". Andrew (2nd year student) also mentioned that he thought the girls "get sick of us [boys], or sick of me in particular because I can go on with bits of here and bits of there". Although no classmates were overtly discouraging, male pre-service primary teachers perceived that their female counterparts did not always approve of their light-hearted approach to the course.

II Peers

The responses of peers, in contrast varied from overtly supportive, to neutral, to skeptical. Male pre-service primary teachers shared few common experiences in regards to the reactions of their peers. As such, peer reactions were divided into three sections; encouraging, neutral and discouraging. These sub-concept descriptors can be regarded as being a kind of continuum and therefore no precise cut off point can be distinguished. Responses are described under the various headings at the discretion of the researcher.

II-a Encouraging

The most supportive of peers not only offered verbal affirmations to the participants, they also provided them with guidance. Keegan (2nd year student) reported that he had "a lot of friends that are teachers ... They would say "ohh great" and they would give me resources and advice and um it was really good to get that positive support from people who are actually in the profession".

Most encouragement however came from peers who had not progressed as far as university. Some of the responses are as follows:

> "A lot of my peers haven't made it as far as tertiary institutions. They are still stuck in ahh Woollies up in Mt Foss. So yeah they are all pretty happy with it" (Darren, 3rd year student).

> "I've really got respect for the fact that I've gone this far, cause a lot of them [peers] haven't" (Jake, 3rd year student).

Other expressions of encouragement are expressed below:

> "The ones [peers] that I have talked to since school ... said you'd be so good in that area...I just wish they had told me that while I was at school!" (Andrew, 2nd year student).

> "Most people have encouraged me and thought that I'd do a good job at it ... they have always been on the good side" (James, 1st year student).

> "All my peers are doing teaching so it's more of a support than anything" (Simon , 4th year student).

II-b Neutral

Responses that were neither overtly supportive nor discouraging are referred to as being neutral. One participant reported that it was "just kind of like, well you've all left school and this guys doing that and this guys doing that and I was doing primary [teaching] and they were doing business and that's just what we ended up doing" (Robert Previously enrolled BEd (Primary) student). Another respondent mentioned that he had:

> "very easy going friends so it [primary teaching] really didn't bother/phase them a bit. I don't know, if I had gone down to King's Cross to work on the streets they would have been "yeah, alright, what's the pay like?" and they wouldn't really care" (Keegan, 2nd year student).

II-c Discouraging

DeCorse and Vogtle (1997, p. 38) indicated that peers were the main source of negativity, a view that is supported by the findings of this study. Most peers did not explicitly discourage their friends from studying primary teaching, but disapproval was conveyed in other, more subtle ways. Nicholas (1st year student) reported that he:

> "went to a pretty decent high school, like selective and they [peers] are all going into business degrees and things like that ... I said yeah I'd like to get into primary teaching and they sort of gave me looks ... I always liked the idea of it [primary teaching] so I didn't really listen to them."

Many of the participants of this study found that their friends did not expect them to enter the field of primary teaching and so had to get over their initial shock before they offered any encouragement. It is also important to remember that different peer groups can offer completely different opinions to pre-service male primary teachers. Peter (4th year student) described having two groups of friends, one set questioned his motives for entering the profession while the other supported him, "there was two different reactions you know".

III Family

The reactions of family members are discussed in two main areas; the reactions of parents and reactions of the spouse. Although most family members supported the individual participant's right to make their own choices, some commonly held perceptions of teaching were brought to light.

III-a Parents

Parents were generally considered a source of encouragement for male pre-service primary teachers. Some of the comments made by the participant's of this study are:

> "They [parents] were, yeah they were excited about it ... cause they were aware of the um need for male primary teachers. They thought it was a good choice" (Simon , 4th year student).

> "My parents encouraged me to get into primary education. They kind of popped the idea of the profession for me originally ... my parents weren't negative at all" (Andrew, 2nd year student).

> "Mum was really proud and dad I think in his own way was really proud that I had followed after his footsteps" (Bryan, 2nd year student).

Other parents proved to be very supportive because they were pleased that their sons were completing a university degree. Some of the comments that were received are as follows:

> "Mum and dad were really happy that I had decided that I was going to go to uni. ... my parents have always been really encouraging with me in my whatever I thought to do... they were also really glad that I had made the decision myself to go to uni." (James, 1st year student).

> "I think they [parents] ... hoped their whole lives that we would end up somewhere in a tertiary institution ... [it was] a bit of a goal of theirs to see us,

like their children, myself, achieve something like more than what they did... I think when they see me with a little hat on and the little gown it will be ... their greatest day" (Gary, 2nd year student).

However, there were some parents who did not believe that primary teaching was a suitable job for a man. Jake (3rd year student)'s father "was a little bit against it because he is a bit old fashioned – a coal miner and now he is a police officer "Get into a man's work you big pussy"".

When considering the reactions of parents, it is important to remember that parents will generally be supportive of their children, even if they do disapprove of their choice to become primary teachers.

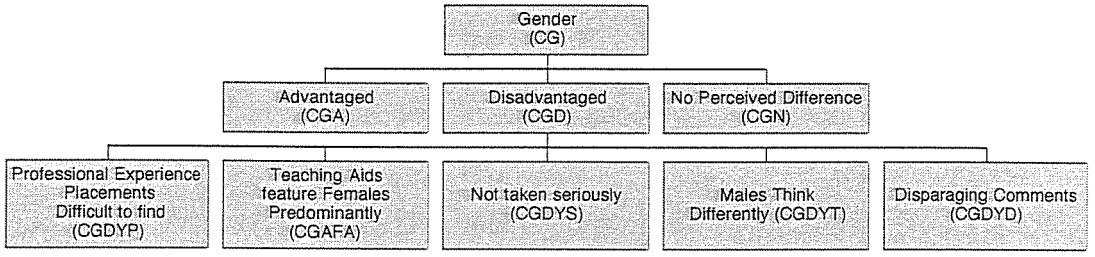
III-b Spouse

Very few of the males interviewed were married and therefore reactions as relating to spouses were scarce. Bill (2nd year student)'s was reported to have said "well what about the salary?" but other than that no other responses related any concerns expressed by wives.

b. Gender

Gender related issues are discussed in the following section. Subjects were divided into three sections according to whether or not males felt that they had been disadvantaged as a direct result of their gender, advantaged as a result of their gender, or noticed no gender connected differences. Figure 4-15 details the organisation and scope of topics to be discussed.

Figure 4-15 Experiences of Males Completing the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Course - Gender



I Advantaged

Responses from the participants of this study actually indicated that many males within the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Course at Avondale College actually felt advantaged because of their gender. Some of the remarks of students included the succeeding:

> "If anything, people have more like encouraged us as like "gee you guys doing primary teaching". That's sort of been my experience ... because of my gender ... If anything we have been advantaged because it's like – guys, primary teaching" (James, 1st year student).

Other participants agreed that they felt advantaged during this course because, as a minority set they were targeted for employment. Replies included "it's going to be easy to get a job as a male. Basically, there aren't many guys so I'll be targeted as a male... there is an element of an advantage" (Andrew, 2nd year student). Even one pre-service teacher who had withdrawn from the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program attested to the fact that he was "really encouraged ... I was guaranteed a job pretty much, being a male" (Rod Previously enrolled BEd (Primary) student).

II Disadvantaged

However, there were males who did report that at one stage or another they had felt disadvantaged because of their gender. Responses fell into one of five sub-concept descriptors; not being taken seriously, not having access to teaching aids featuring males, difficulty in finding practicum placements, receiving disparaging comments and not having gender differences in thinking catered to by faculty members.

II-a Professional Experience Placements Difficult to Find

One of the respondents mentioned that he had problems finding practicum placements due to his gender. Peter (4th year student) remarked that the "last prac [professional experience session] I went out on I had a lot of trouble getting a school because most of the teachers in the primary school are women. So they want another women there ... I don't know why but that was one of the reasons I was given as to why I didn't get into the school".

II-b Teaching Aids feature Females Predominantly

Another participant felt that many of the teaching aids used by faculty members were lacking a male perspective. Chris (4th year student) commented that "a lot of our videos, our teacher aide videos and you know, explanation videos are all female orientated... every person on there who's got advice is a female".

II-c Not Taken Seriously

Not being taken seriously was also mentioned as a gender related disadvantage of male pre-service primary teachers. Some of the respondents' replies are as stated below:

> "I just feel with marking we are sometimes we are treated as if ... we don't take things seriously" (Jake, 3rd year student).

"They automatically, think well these guys don't take it seriously therefore we won't give them the marks" (Tod, 3rd year student).

"We are not [considered] up to the standards ... the women set the standard and we are still kind of trailing behind" (Dwayne, 3rd year student).

II-d Males Think Differently

Interwoven with the belief that males were not taken seriously, was the perception that males think differently and that the course structure did not consider this. As Gary (2nd year student) commented, there are some instances that "make it easier for a female to get into a lot of the stuff that we do... We do think differently". Jake (3rd year student) also mentioned that the males in the class "do things but in a slightly different way and they are not accepted because they are different to what the girls are doing and because the girls are a majority". Differences in brain structure and chemistry are a well-documented fact and it would seem judicious to use a variety of assessment tasks when appraising student work (Gurian & Henly, 2001, p. 18).

II-e Disparaging Comments

Males in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course also recounted incidents where they were discouraged because of comments made to them by members of the department faculty. One lecturer in particular was reported to have said "look Tod, you are not a distinction student but that's alright because you are a male student, you'll get a job anyway... I was quite cut up about it" (Tod, 3rd year student).

This emphasises the importance that pre-service male primary are not made to feel that they are suffering from the 'prestige' penalty often associated with men working in predominantly female occupations. Thornton (2001 p. 478) stated that males are "vulnerable should any further 'status' attributes be lost (such as course failure or lack of course progression)".

III No Difference

Other males felt that there was neither an advantage nor a disadvantage associated with joining a class of predominantly females. Instead they reported that the course was generically structured, there was an even spread of the genders amongst faculty members and that those lecturers that were present were equally supportive of both genders. Keegan (2nd year student) reported that:

> "the course is a very generic, like we haven't hit a course like ... the Female's role in Christian Education... [there seems to be a] pretty broad array of male, female lecturers, maybe not in education but we get other classes so you get a good balanced feel over most subjects".

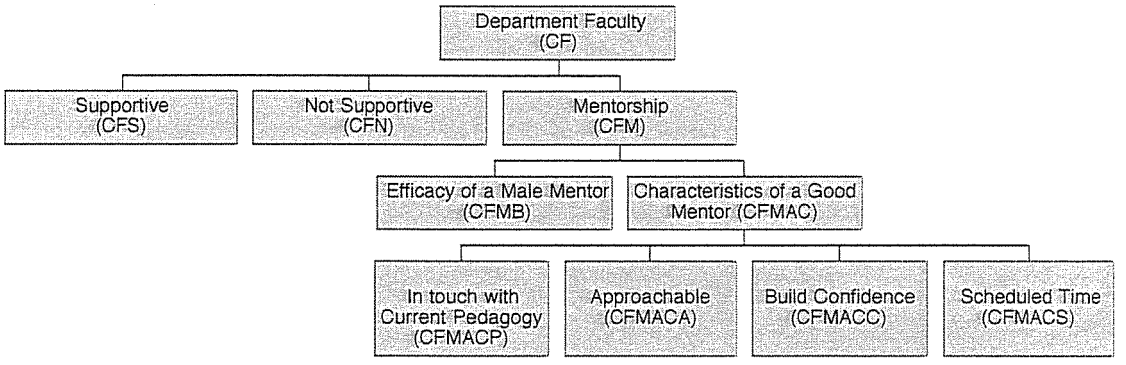
James (1st year student) also reiterated, "the faculty here [Avondale College] are very supportive of both genders". This is an important point for discussion and is the next concept to be investigated in greater depth.

c. Department Faculty

The role that department faculty play in the retention of male primary education students is discussed in the following segment of this research paper. The participants of this study

identified behaviours they perceived as supportive as well as those that weren't considered helpful. Respondents then went on to identify characteristics of a good mentor. Figure 4-16 details the breakdown and organisation of this concept.

Figure 4-16 Experiences of Males Completing the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Course - Department Faculty



I Supportive

The overwhelming majority of participants reported that department faculty were extremely encouraging and helpful. Some of the comments are as follows:

> "They [the lecturers] are always happy to give you a hand, a helping hand" (Graham, 1st year student).

> "We can just rock up to a lecturer and chat for half an hour and they are cool about that" (Andrew, 2nd year student).

> "You know I feel really lucky ... I have talked to people who go to other unis and they are just another faces in the crowd whereas these lecturers say "we have an open door policy, come knock on our door if you want to say something or want to ask us something". And they are always very genuine, if you are willing to go

out and make a fool of yourself by asking a question, they are more than willing to help you out, and answer your question" (Keegan, 2nd year student).

It also became apparent that lecturers at Avondale were unique in that they were also willing to interact with students on a more personal level.

"You can talk about anything – spiritual matters as well which is always good. Um and yeah just anything really, he's really easy to talk to... I didn't know anyone and just talking to teachers and about spiritual matters yeah you know it was really really encouraging" (Zaachary, 1st year student).

"Lecturer 2 also was a reference for me going on a lease for my house. He did that and he had never really talked to me before and he did that so. Yeah have had some good support there" (Bryan,, 2nd year student).

Personal conversations and interacting with students in an informal basis has long been identified as an effective way to make school students feel valued (Lewis, 2001), this appears to also be true within the tertiary setting.

II Not Supportive

Students did have a few qualms about faculty members. James (1st year student) felt that "it would be nice if there was a faculty member, especially in education, who sat you down and just paced out where you were in your activities, found out what you were doing. Is there any problems? Is there anything you need to talk about? Just, just, I know they are busy but just to have that extra support cause ... you still walk away from a

lesson ... you are not really sure on." The main theme of discontent by participants in regards to faculty members was the fact that it was always the responsibility of the student to approach lecturers. The solution proposed by James (1st year student) lends itself to the conception of mentoring, which is the next topic for discussion.

III Mentorship

The notion of mentoring began in the 1970s as many governmental agencies and corporations launched mentoring programs. Since then it has been applied in a variety of differing contexts, amongst them teacher education programs with varying levels of success (Gold, 1996, p. 572). This study attempted to ascertain perceptions of male pre-service primary teachers towards mentorship and its perceived efficacy.

III-a Efficacy of a Male Mentor

A variety of different responses were received when male pre-service primary teachers were questioned as to the usefulness of a male mentor. This question was slightly problematic as it was largely based upon conjecture (Avondale College students do not currently participate in a mentoring program). Replies were many and varied. Some students felt that the existing program was effective while others were excited by the prospect of interacting with a specially appointed male mentor.

Currently, students are free to confer with lecturers at their leisure. No set times are specified as student periods, and interactions tend to be on a needs basis. Faculty members are generally consulted as needed. The comments of students who perceive the existing arrangement as adequate are consistent with the following statement:

> "I have always had ... someone to go and see when I need to. Not that often I do want to see outside of class time, but when I do they are there and I can have a yarn" (Bill,, 2nd year student).

However, there was a core of respondents that believed that a male mentor would be extremely beneficial. Gary (2nd year student) commented that he was "always on the look for a male mentor. They are very hard to find um even out there in professional experience field ... I've had a few male teachers, I've enjoyed them but I wouldn't see them as mentors and I see the importance of mentorship".

Others felt that a male mentor would be useful because "it would be great to be able to talk to a guy who has done primary teaching to see how he overcame it [issues pertaining to child protection]. Like, not that we are going to be paedophiles or anything but just to find out ... what his experiences are" (James, 1st year student). Joshua (1st year student) added that it would be nice to have access to a "male perspective".

III-b Characteristics of a Good Mentor

The males that disclosed that they would benefit from the presence of a male adviser also specified characteristics that, in their perspective, would make for an ideal mentor. These features included remaining in touch with current pedagogy, having an approachable and affirming manner and being available for scheduled visits.

In touch with Current Pedagogy

One of the aspects that the participants of this study stressed as being of vital importance in a mentor was that they be in touch with current pedagogy. Dwayne (3rd year student) commented that "the teachers that come through ... who have just been out in the classroom we can relate to them more" he then went on to reiterate that "they [mentors] need more experience in the field".

Faculty members that encourage "humour and exciting things" (Darren,, 3rd year student) and who support the philosophy that "to learn you have to have fun" (Darren,, 3rd year student), in a word those who support "less traditional" (Jake,, 3rd year student) forms of pedagogy were regarded as being preferable to mentors who did not.

Approachable

It was also mentioned that in order to be a good role model, faculty members need to be approachable. Some of the comments that pertained to this aspect of a mentor are as follows:

> "They [Education Faculty] need someone who is primary trained and kind of more outgoing and younger" (Peter, , 4th year student).
>
> "Someone who can relate to us and our situation" (Tod,, 3rd year student).
>
> "Male primary teachers, like late twenty sort of thing ... are just heaps of fun to be around and they know all the stuff ... maybe not as much as these guys ... but they know how to relate it to us a lot more" (Fergus,, 3rd year student).

AVONDALE COLLEGE LIBRARY

Someone who "makes you feel more welcome in his office rather than your being more of a pest" (Simon , 4th year student) was regarded much more highly as a mentor than a faculty member who was well educated but unable to connect with respondents. On the other hand, participants appreciated lecturers who are "just as excited about teaching content" as they were "forty years ago" (Jake,, 3rd year student).

Build Confidence

Another element that was stressed was that mentors should be able to build confidence. As Tod (3rd year student) reported, "what I think we need mostly is just the confidence and the reassurance that we are doing the right thing and that is, if a mentor can give that then that's all they need to do really".

Scheduled Time

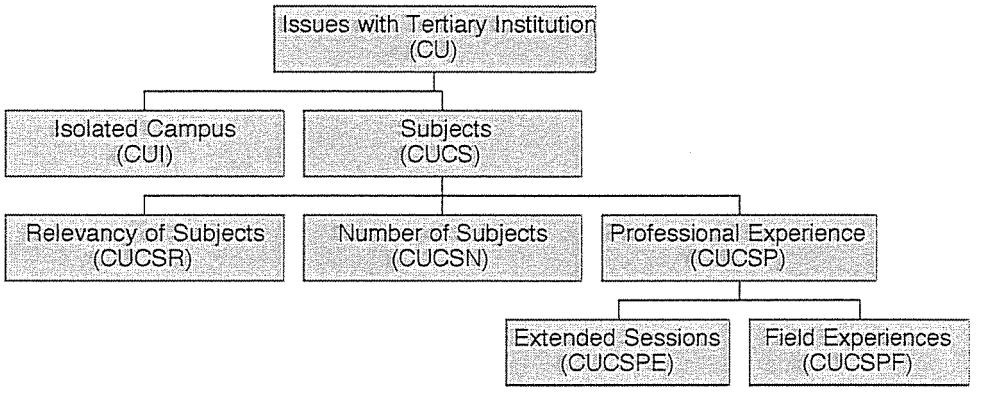
The final aspect of a mentorship program that male pre-service primary teachers considered important was the importance of scheduled meeting times. Some participants of this study reported that they "wouldn't feel comfortable... approaching a lecturer" (Chris , 4th year student) and would rather have a set appointment time where topics of concern may be discussed.

Ultimately, the characteristics identified by male pre-service teachers as contributing to effective role models were consistent with those identified by Gold (1996, p. 573) of caring individuals who are committed to their profession and who demonstrate integrity. Mentoring relationships are ideally supposed to occur over an extended period of time (Van Eck Peluchette & Jeanquart, 2000, p. 2).

d. Issues with Tertiary Institution

The role of the tertiary institutions in the retention of male primary education students is relatively unknown. The following section of this paper discusses issues that male, Bachelor of Education (Primary) students identified as having an impact on their college experience and thus their retention or attrition. Figure 4-17 details the breakdown and organisation of this concept.

Figure 4-17 Experiences of Males Completing the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Course - Tertiary Institution



I Isolated Campus

One issue that was raised in relation to the tertiary institution of Avondale College was its location, 150 km north of Sydney. Respondents commented, "we're quite secluded you know" (Chris, , 4th year student). The implications of studying at an isolated campus are mentioned below:

> "We have to travel down every day, I, ... have to come down on Friday for one class ... you have to spend more time in the car or on the train " (James, 1st year student).

" I live fifty kms away but I think the whole commuting thing develops a motivation and a discipline ... not to do homework at all" (Keegan,, 2nd year student).

Also mentioned in conjunction with the isolation of this campus was the lack of distance education courses offered at Avondale College, Luke (3rd year student) student said that he found "completion of the course difficult...because of the course structure and [it] not being able to be done externally". James (1st year student) also reported that he was "disappointed that there is not as much stuff on the network – that they [Avondale College lecturers] don't utilise the internet as much".

II Subjects

II-a Relevancy of Subjects

Many males mentioned that one aspect of the course that made completion difficult was the perceived lack of relevancy. Some of the comments are as mentioned below:

"I just think Info Management in particular is ... quite irrelevant ... We are not training to be IT people we are training to be teachers so we want to learn about teaching – not computers" (Graham, 1st year student).

"Some of our courses are just pointless" (Jake,, 3rd year student).

It's the "other subjects I have found the toughest. They haven't go much to do with teaching ... we've got child development in the psychology text book and we haven't touched it..." (Nicholas, 1st year student).

However subjects that were perceived as useful to teaching such as Introduction to Teaching and Pedagogy received very positive comments.

> "Yeah – they are teaching you teaching which is good. I like it cause what you do you remember" (Nicholas, 1st year student).

This comment corroborates the findings of Mullohand who discovered that males enjoyed the practical aspects of their university course more than the subjects "designed to provide background information for teachers" (2001, p. 22).

II-b Number of Subjects

Other students found that the number of subjects they were required to take was quite overwhelming. Unlike the standard loading of four subjects per semester, Avondale graduates are currently required to undertake the equivalent of five subjects per semester plus professional experience. This equates to an average of six less comprehensive subjects, in comparison to the regular four subjects required of other tertiary institutions.

Joshua (1st year student) mentioned that he found "the workload overwhelming for the time period we are here". Simon (4th year student) also agreed that workload was "a bit overwhelming, fist year was a bit hard, there was heaps and heaps of assignments for six subjects... the best part of it was um prac teaching [professional experience]".

The predilection of males for field and professional experiences was well documented and as such forms the next topic for discussion (Mullohand, 2001, p. 24).

II-c Professional Experience

The topic of professional experience has been divided into two distinct areas; comments pertaining to extended professional experience sessions and observations as to the efficacy of early field experiences.

Extended Sessions

The tertiary institution at which this study was conducted had a unique program of professional experience activities that made it ideal for a study of this nature. Table 4-3 details the scope and sequence of professional experience activities.

Table 4-3 Scope and Sequence of Extended Professional Experience Sessions: Avondale College 2004

Semester in Course	Length of Professional Experience Session	Field Experiences
Semester 1	10 days	5 school visits
Semester 2		6 school visits
Semester 3	10 days	11 school visits
Semester 4	15 days	13 school visits
Semester 5	20 days	9 school visits
Semester 6	10 days	10 school visits
Semester 7	10 days	3 school visits
Semester 8	30 days	Course dependant.

Comments of male pre-service primary teachers towards professional experience sessions are referred to below. The statements of first year students are mentioned first to allow for the progression of thought to be distinguished.

"I'm a bit nervous about it [professional experience] actually...we've been here for about three months before we actually go on to an actual school and it's like why we have actually got to prepare lessons for it so I it will be good experience but it's also nerve making" (Joshua, 1st year student).

"I think it is great cause that's exactly, that's what we are going to be doing ... having like professional experiences so early ... if we are not as confident to start with, by the end of the fourth year we are going to be absolutely cracking it cause we are like this like, this is really easy" (James, 1st year student).

"When you do prac it's what matters. It's like you learn all this stuff but if you can't teach kids then it's no point you knowing all this other stuff" (Bryan,, 2nd year student).

"I enjoy professional experience, I love it. Like we were saying before really, it gives us a focus, a passion, reignites probably the flame of primary teaching" (Andrew,, 2nd year student).

"Gets me back in focus after the hum drum of classes" (Keegan,, 2nd year student).

"I honestly think that the amount of theory that we go through as teachers is is incorrect. I think that more of the emphasis should be on the practical cause it is a practical profession" (Luke,, 3rd year student).

"Cause prac [professional experience] is like the only fun bit of this course really. All the other bits we are learning are really boring. But when you get to prac it's a bit nervous but you have heaps of fun. And you learn heaps more I think when you are on prac than when you are in class anyway" (Fergus,, 3rd year student).

"It's [professional experience] a definite, essential part of our course because it provides oh just consolidation of all the, you know, stuff we've already learnt. Brings it all together ... you think "ahh it does work" or "yeah or I need to change this" or it just refines you as you go you know buffs you into yeah - a better teacher" (James, , 4th year student).

"I just view them [professional experiences] as you get, you get rid of all the mistakes out of your system. You know, because you get out there and to me its, its practise to be perfect – practise makes perfect ... you make the mistakes that in the classroom that you won't make on you know, when you are out there teaching" (Peter, , 4th year student).

However, not all comments were positive and a number of concerns were raised in relation to different aspects of professional experience sessions. Participants felt that they were placed at a financial disadvantage as a result of professional experience sessions. As Gary (2nd year student) commented:

> "I think sometimes they [professional experience sessions] can be difficult because of the distances and journeys you have to take to ... make yourself available for this school at this place at this time ... when you have moved on in life a little, and see the value of money and working and to have weeks off doing teaching that you are not payed for I think that's ... something that may be corrected".

Andrew also went on to add that:

> "The only disadvantage I think about professional experience is that ... a lot of schools will charge us ... which can be a bit dodgy ... especially if we are paying for fees and paying text books and to top that off they [schools] will charge us twenty-two bucks a day to work for them in the school and help out really ... especially if you cop a teacher who experiences you working instead, as opposed to working experience" (Andrew,, 2nd year student).

The concern relating to teacher practitioners was also expressed by other respondents who mentioned:

> "Supervising teachers play a big role. A very big role and as a general rule I like country teachers not city ones. I hate city teachers cause ... they get to the city

because you know they are good and they have clocked up their points in the country and they have moved to the city and they are selected in their schools because they are great teachers. And personally I find that quite – what's the word? Scary" (Luke,, 3rd year student).

"Every teacher does things differently and we get given the same assignment. They [supervising teachers] have different expectation of us so therefore they mark differently" (Tod,, 3rd year student).

Field Experiences

Field experiences are another method of gaining experience in the field. Two major areas that were discussed in regards to field experiences; observation lessons and micro teaching.

Observation Lessons

The views of participants as to the efficacy of observation lessons was largely dependant on the level at which they were operating at college. First year Bachelor of Education (Primary) students reported very positively about these in school experiences. As Nicholas (1st year student) commented, "its been good just seeing teachers working the craft and such".

However by second year students remarks revealed that they were becoming slightly disillusioned with observation lesson. Andrew's (2nd year student) remark was "well

they don't disadvantage you.... but the later field experiences tended to be a bit frustrating." Third and fourth year students also concurred with this comment and added:

> "Half the time we were just up the back talking anyway and um it does help in a way but it is only one lesson really and its only showing how – modelling how to teach not how to organise yourself" (Simon, , 4th year student).

> I "don't like them [observation lessons], I think that they are out of place... Field teaching if it was in a sequence and you were actually teaching something as in taking a role of a ..., teacher aide and doing something, or taking a small group and doing like reading classes or teaching social skills or anything like that would be fine because it is invaluable. You know you are actually teaching something that you would use later" (Luke,, 3rd year student).

Comments such as Luke's suggest that male pre-service teachers prefer field experiences where they are able to interact with children rather than just observe, especially as they progress through their course.

Micro-teaching

Micro-teaching lessons provide just such opportunities. It was interesting to note that all participants, regardless of their course level responded positively to micro-teaching experiences.

Tod (3rd year student) expressed that he "would rather go with a few kids before I go into the big, daunting, intimidating class. Just getting a bit more practise". Layton (4th year

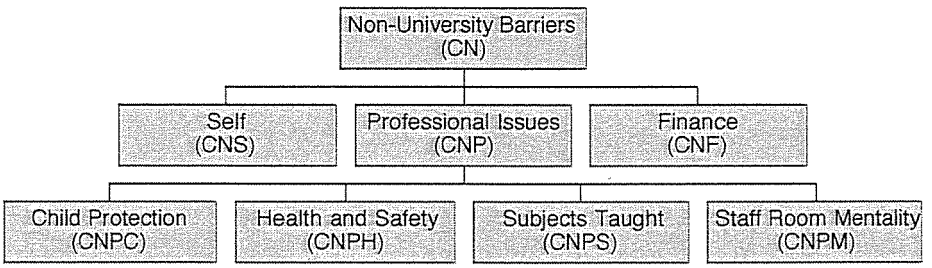
student) also felt that "it [micro-teaching] is an advantage, ahh especially [when] ... you go up to do a special speciality program" such as "infant literacy".

The implications of student responses in relation to field experiences may be pertinent when considering the scope and sequence of professional experiences. The general consensus of male pre-service teachers was that observations lessons, other than those very early in the course, were of limited value. Micro-lessons however, were perceived in a more positive light because students weren't "just sitting ... at the back of the classroom ... idiot[s]" (Bill,, 2nd year student).

e. Barriers Outside of the Tertiary Institution

Students also identified a number of barriers outside of the college that had made completion of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Course difficult. These factors included uncertainty as to whether participants were suited to the primary teaching profession, financial difficulties, relationship concerns and a feeling of apprehension in regards to the primary teaching profession. Figure 4-18 details the breakdown and organisation of this concept.

Figure 4-18 Experiences of Males Completing the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Course - Barriers Outside of Tertiary Institution



I Self

Two participants reported that not being sure of their choice to pursue the field of primary teaching had made course completion difficult. Gary (2nd year student) and Bill (2nd year student) reflected that:

> "I think it's more the analysing ones own self and ones journey that has made it difficult for me ... – doing it [Bachelor of Education (Primary)] a few years ago and then leaving and then coming back" (Gary,, 2nd year student).

> "Sometimes battling with my own self, wondering whether I am supposed to be here blah blah blah. Does God really want me doing this sort of stuff?" (Bill,, 2nd year student).

Comments such as these are consistent with research that identified choosing the wrong course as a principal reason for withdrawing from university courses (Elliot, 1999, p. 4). It is also interesting to note that since these interviews took place one of the aforementioned respondents decided to pursue a different course of study, giving credence to this finding.

II Professional Issues

A number of factors relating to the profession of teaching itself were also discussed as they affected students' decisions to remain in the course. These issues were broken down into four sub-concepts: child protection concerns, issues pertaining to health and safety, the scope of subjects taught and the "staff room mentality" apparent in the professional environment.

II-a Child Protection

A major area of apprehension expressed by male Bachelor of Education (Primary) students was in regards to child protection, especially as it affected male primary teachers. James (2nd year student) summed up his opinion of community perceptions saying "as a guy teacher, if you hang around guys you are seen as gay if you hang around the girls you are seen as a perve".

The implications of this were then applied to the issues of child protection legislation, the comments of some of the respondents are reported below:

> "It will be interesting to see if I am falsely accused ... I don't think about it too much because otherwise why would you bother doing the degree?" (Bill,, 2nd year student).

> "Being a male I had to watch myself ... I had a lot of these younger girls come up and give me hugs on my last day, and I'm like well don't do that. It was really hard – like I had to push them away. And I thought I was being mean but I had too, cause I didn't know who was watching. I mean some parents could have gone and complained or something" (Simon, , 4th year student).

Even amongst pre-service male teachers, there is still concern regarding issues of child protection. As Peter (, 4th year student) said "lot of people wreck it for others".

II-b Health and Safety

Health and safety issues were also mentioned as a potential problem faced by male primary teachers. As Luke (3rd year student) reported:

> "Health and safety is a big thing I have found. It is like "oh this is heavy – can you lift it?" Or um, you know we are moving the room around today can you help with most of that... It just depends how you see it ... it is not good because you don't always get a chance to do your own work".

II-c Subjects Taught

The key factor reported by males previously enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program as to their decision to pursue another course of study related to the number of subjects that primary teachers are required to teach. Robert (Previously enrolled BEd (Primary) student) put it succinctly when he said;

> "It [the decision to withdraw from Bachelor of Education (Primary)] wasn't because of the kids or the age group or anything like that or like ... it was mostly due to the fact that I didn't really like the idea of having to teach science and mathematics and English subjects and subjects that I don't really consider myself that strong in".

II-d Staff Room Mentality

The lack of male primary teachers in the profession also has a role on effect on pre-service male teachers in that they have reservations about what their role in the school environment will be. Luke (3rd year student) remarked that, "you go to the staff room and they are all women and you are like huh. Who am I going to hang out with? Who am

I going to talk to? ... I don't really get my social fix by being in the staffroom". He then went on to add:

> "I would rather see a lot more males instead of bottling everything up express it [their concerns] in a positive manner ... most men bottle it up, most women just bitch about it in the classroom ... It is hard to keep your mind and your language healthy when everyone is saying the same thing about the kids. It is like the mongrels are here today. Or they were little mongrels today. You know it is just – I find that that is the worst thing about teaching for me is the way that they [women teachers] just refer to kids. I really don't like it."

III Finance

Money is another factor that has made completion of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course difficult for many of the respondents. Males who entered the course after being in the workforce reported finding the transition back to student status especially difficult. Responses included:

> "All my friends are out there earning money getting that and I did that for a year or two last year and the year before you know. Got some money and it is a nice life. Um but now I am a poor student again and everyone is out there working" (Luke,, 3rd year student).

Financial difficulties are often cited as reasons for students leaving or postponing tertiary study (Elliot, 1999, p. 4) and although none of the respondents of this study found it necessary to withdraw from the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course, it is a pertinent issue that has been recognised by governmental bodies. A 2002 parliamentary report

recommended that that HECS-free teaching scholarships be offered to equal numbers of men and women (Doherty, 2004, p.1) in order to attract them to the profession.

G. SUMMARY

Six distinct areas were acknowledged as motivating males to enter the field of primary teaching, each of which played an important role in encouraging the participants to enter the profession. The interplay of factors was unique for each of the individuals interviewed. A combination of the characteristics of teaching as a vocation, role modelling, previous experience with children and elements of one's character influenced enrolment into the course rather than one factor in isolation.

Upon enrolment in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course, different aspects of the teaching career and pre-service education were found to have an impact on the retention of male Bachelor of Education students. These course experiences included gender related issues, the reactions of family, friends and classmates, experiences with faculty members, matters within the tertiary institution and problems relating to factors outside of the tertiary institution.

Chapter 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

This study investigated factors that contributed to males choosing the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course of study. It then went on to examine elements of the current course structure that either encouraged or discouraged them to complete the degree. The perceptions of male students involved in Bachelor of Education (Primary) course towards professional experiences were also discussed. Limited research had been conducted into the effect of early field experiences or extended professional experiences on the retention of male pre-service primary teachers in Australia (Mullohand, 2001, p.24). The present study scrutinised the motivating factors and course experiences that influenced retention of its male pre-service teachers.

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the current educational context confronted by male primary teachers and the challenges associated with continuation in the profession. In Chapter 3 a description of the QMBEdPP questionnaire and results was presented. Interview questions, methodology and a discussion of the findings relevant to the research questions were presented in Chapter 4.

The present chapter seeks to summarise key findings of the questionnaire and interview questions, and concludes with recommendations. Suggestions as to further research are also put forward.

B. DISCUSSION

1. Research Question 1 – Motivating Factors of Male Pre-service Teachers

What factors do male, pre-service primary teachers report as motivating the selection of teaching as a profession?

This study considered a range of motivators relevant to pre-service male primary teachers including career advice, job characteristics, role models, vocation, previous experience and intrinsic motivators. These fell into three broad categories; altruistic motivators, intrinsic motivators and extrinsic motivators. The scope and relative consequence of each of these dimensions are addressed in turn.

a. Altruistic Motivators

Altruism has been defined as unselfish concern for the needs of others. As such, altruistic motivators are commonly understood to be inducements such as putting "something back into society" (Rod, Previously enrolled Bachelor of Education (Primary) student) or making "a difference, as a role-model" (Tod,, 3rd year student). Within the context of this study, altruistic motivators were regarded more highly than either intrinsic or extrinsic motivators.

As such, altruistic motivators played a significant role in the motivation of Bachelor of Education (Primary) students at Avondale College. Nineteen of the twenty-two participants of this study indicated that they were motivated to join the profession because they felt that many children were denied access to a male mentor at home and therefore needed contact with a male role model within the school setting. One respondent reported, "male teachers are critical to the rounded development of children" (Survey Response).

Also identified as a critical altruistic motivator, was the chance for respondents to "influence children for God" (Bill, 2nd year student). This response was unique and has not been extensively reported as an altruistic motivator in prior research (McNay, 2001, p, 10; Bastick, 1999, p. 7). The nature of the tertiary establishment as a denominational institution of the Seventh-day Adventist Church could be considered as attracting a higher proportion of Christian students, which may have contributed to this response.

b. Extrinsic Motivators

Extrinsic motivators were also discussed as an important incentive of male, pre-service primary teachers. Holidays, salary, job security, promotion opportunities, and "transportability" were all identified as contributing to respondents' choice to enter the profession but were not considered as motivational as altruistic factors. Careers advice was also discussed as it related to entry into the Bachelor of Education (primary) course but was not reported as an important motivator.

Of the extrinsic motivators mentioned, job security and promotion opportunities were the most commonly mentioned. Males enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course at Avondale College were often aware of the career advantages associated with being a male in a female dominated profession and cited these as reasons that contributed to their choice of career.

Holidays, "transportability" and salary were less frequently remarked upon. Of the three, salary was also mentioned as being a cause for concern, and as such may not be

effectively used in the recruitment of male primary teachers. Holidays also did not appear as often as was expected, which corroborates the finding that men commonly enter the profession for altruistic reasons, not merely because it does not conflict with family responsibilities. The "transportability" of the degree is not commonly reported in literature and may have interesting implications for the recruitment of male primary teachers.

c. Intrinsic Motivators

Identifying skills appropriate for primary teachers, a preference for interacting with younger children and pursuing their chosen career were all identified as being intrinsic in nature. Remarks of male, pre-service primary teachers indicated that intrinsic motivators were the least influential of motivators.

2. Research Question 2 – Previous Experience with Children

What previous experience with children is reported by male, pre-service primary teachers?

Pre-service male primary teachers reported a variety of experiences before entering the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course. Among these experiences was babysitting (reported by 9 participants), working in a childcare centre (reported by 3 participants), coaching (mentioned by1 participant), church organisations (mentioned by 15 participants), community groups (mentioned by 2 participants) and school experiences (mentioned by 5 participants).

Previous experience with children aids in the attraction of males to the teaching profession and reduces anxiety once one is pursuing primary teaching as an occupation. Nineteen of the twenty-two participants in this study mentioned or inferred that their prior experience with children encouraged them to enter the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program and as such must be regarded as a crucial to the attraction of males into primary teaching.

3. Research Question 3 - Extent of Peer and Parental Support

TO WHAT EXTENT DO/DID PEERS AND PARENTS SUPPORT THE CHOICE OF TEACHING AS A CAREER?

The responses of peers and family members in regards to choosing primary teaching as a profession varied from overtly supportive, to surprised. Peers were more likely to be sceptical or unsupportive than family members but were inclined not to be overt in their criticism whereas participants. This contrasts with prior research (Mullohand, 2001) that indicated peers were more vocal in their disapproval. Family members on the other hand tended to be explicit in either their encouragement or their censure, which is consistent with previous studies.

4. Research Question 4 – Barriers within the Tertiary Institution

What barriers due to factors within the tertiary institution are reported as affecting completion of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) courses by male, pre-service primary teachers?

A number of barriers were reported by males as making completion of the Bachelor of education course more difficult including fellow classmates, unsupportive faculty

members, lack of mentorship, an isolated campus and the number and relevancy of subjects.

Male pre-service primary teachers reported that their female counterparts did not always appreciate their approach to learning, a view that they also felt was reflected by faculty members. Participants found this discouraging in that "you can't beat the system" (Fergus,, 3rd year student).

Many students ascertained that a male mentor would be beneficial in reducing the gender disparity, but this research cannot determine whether or not such a mentor would increase the retention of male pre-service primary teachers.

Males tend to enjoy the practical aspects of tertiary study more than subjects "designed to provide background information for teachers" (Mullohand, 2001, p. 24) and so commented that many classes lacked relevance. This is consistent with the finding of Mullohand (2001), and Brookhart and Loadman (1996).

5. Research Question 5 – Barriers outside the Tertiary Institution

What barriers due to factors outside the tertiary institution are reported as affecting completion of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) courses by male, pre-service primary teachers?

Barriers independent of the university that made completion of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Course difficult included uncertainty as to whether participants were suited to

the primary teaching profession, financial difficulties, relationship concerns and a feeling of apprehension in regards to a career in primary teaching.

Another major area of apprehension expressed by male Bachelor of Education (Primary) students was in regards to child protection. The fear of actions being misconstrued was of major concern to male pre-service primary teachers and parallels Jones' (2000) report regarding males currently engaged in the teaching profession.

The key factor reported by males previously enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program as to their decision to pursue another course of study related to the number of subjects that primary teachers are required to teach. These participants were disinclined to teach all subject areas, especially those that they did not consider themselves strong in.

Pre-service male teachers also mentioned reservations about their role in the school environment and uncertainty regarding career choice as making course completion difficult. Although reported in literature, these concerns were not considered to be considerable enough to prevent participants from entering the field.

Financial difficulties are often cited as reasons for students leaving or postponing tertiary study (Elliot, 1999, p. 4) and although none of the respondents of this study found it necessary to withdraw from the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course, it is a pertinent issue.

6. Research Question 6 – Gender Barriers

Do pre-service male teachers in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course see gender as a barrier?

Responses from the participants of this study indicated that males within the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Course at Avondale College felt both advantaged and disadvantaged because of their gender.

I Advantaged

Many participants agreed that they felt advantaged during this course because, as a minority set they were targeted for employment. Replies included "it's going to be easy to get a job as a male. Basically, there aren't many guys so I'll be targeted as a male" (Andrew,, 2nd year student).

II Disadvantaged

Not being taken seriously, not having access to teaching aids featuring males, difficulty in finding practicum placements, receiving disparaging comments and not having gender differences in thinking catered to by faculty members were each identified as gender barriers faced by Bachelor of Education (Primary) participants.

Not being taken seriously was mentioned as the most significant gender related disadvantage of male pre-service primary teachers. Respondents indicated that they felt that the differences in learning styleswere not appreciated by faculty members, which left them at a disadvantage.

Disparaging comments were also mentioned as a barrier to males completing the Bachelor of Education course. Pre-service male primary teachers should not be made to feel that they are suffering from the 'prestige' penalty often associated with men working in predominantly female occupations by being targeted for criticism.

It may be concluded that males encounter a number of barriers as a result of their gender. However, these barriers are offset by advantages associated with participating in a female dominated profession such as a high likelihood of employment and encouragement.

7. Research Question 7 – Field Experiences

Do male pre-service teachers perceive field experiences as being valuable to their professional development?

Field experiences have been divided into two sections to aid in the discussion of this topic; observation lessons and micro-teaching.

I Observation Lessons

Views of participants were largely dependant on the level at which they were operating at college. First year Bachelor of Education (Primary) students reported positively about these in school experiences. However second year students revealed they were becoming disillusioned with observation lessons. Andrew (2nd year student) remarked "well they don't disadvantage you.... but the later field experiences tended to be a bit frustrating" and of limited value. Third and fourth year students also concurred with this comment and added that they prefer field experiences where they are able to interact with children rather than just observing.

II Micro-teaching

Micro-teaching opportunities were viewed more positively than observation lessons through all stages of the course as this allowed for interaction with children and the practising of a predetermined skill. This finding is in accordance with Mullohand's (2001, p. 24) recommendation that more links should be made between theory and practise.

8. Research Question 8 – Extended Professional Experiences

Do male pre-service teachers report that early professional experience influenced their retention within the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course?

Pre-service male primary teachers report that early professional experiences influenced their retention in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course. As Andrew (2nd year student) commented "the first six months of uni you're doing courses that don't seem relevant ... after that first prac ... its like a re-motivation, a refreshing thing – you get more of a focus".

The progression of professional experience was also advantageous because it also encouraged male, pre-service primary teachers to become reflective practitioners. Students identified that professional experiences allowed them to identify weaknesses that they were able to work on between sessions. Reynolds, Ross and Rakow (2001, p. 8) also found that increased opportunities for professional development resulted in greater competence when reflecting on teaching and student learning.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of the study are divided into main sections: suggestions for the attraction and recruitment of male pre-service primary teachers and direction for increased course engagement.

1. Recruitment

a. Recommendation One

Appropriate careers advice is made available for school leavers as they attempt to plan their careers.

Many respondents reported that no careers advice was offered at their school prior to entry into tertiary study. Those respondents that did have access to careers testing frequently had difficulty understanding the implications of it. It is recommended that careers advisors make themselves available for appointments after careers testing is administered and encourage students to visit if needed. Careers advisors should also promote primary teaching as a attractive option for both males and females.

b. Recommendation Two

Teachers working in the profession vocally support and promote a career in education.

Teachers that are unexcited about the teaching profession are unlikely to motivate students to enter it. Conversely, teachers that are enthusiastic about the teaching profession were reported as encouraging students to study primary teaching. It is suggested that having teachers vocally support the profession would make students look at a teaching career more favourably.

c. *Recommendation Three*

Churches and community groups should encourage males to become involved in programs with primary aged children.

Previous experience was reported as aiding in the attraction of males to the teaching profession and also reduces anxiety once students have commenced study. It is suggested that increasing opportunities for males to interact with children will increase the likelihood of males entering the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course and will assist in their retention once enrolled.

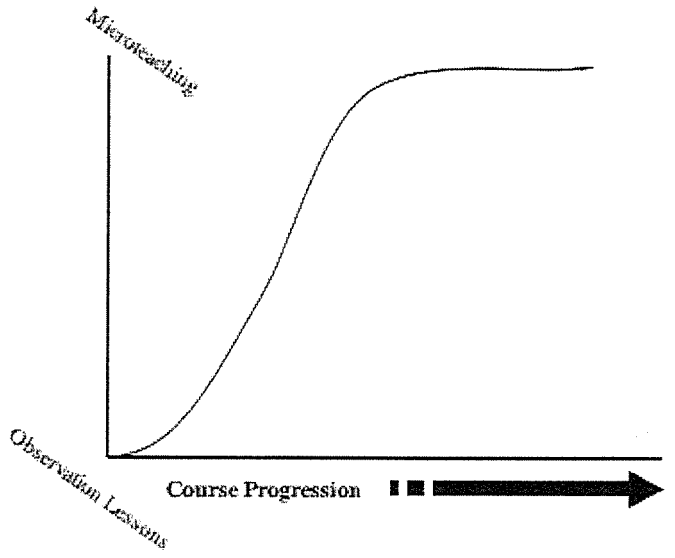
2. Retention

a. *Recommendation Four*

Observational lessons are provided predominantly in the early stages of the course followed by increases in opportunities for micro-teaching.

Field experiences should follow a progression. Observational lessons were considered to be effective before students had gone on extended professional experience sessions, after which male students reported that they were of limited usefulness. Micro-teaching on the other hand was considered valuable and a good opportunity to increase confidence, especially following an extended professional experience session. It is recommended that opportunities for micro-teaching are increased as students progress through the course and observation lessons are decreased as is illustrated in Figure 5-1.

Figure 5-1 Suggested Progression of Field Experiences



b. Recommendation Five

Faculty members in the Education department of tertiary institutions should have recent field experience.

Male students reported relating better to, and having more respect for faculty members with current field experience. It is recommended that tertiary institutions put into place: systems to enable staff members to gain current experience in the profession and/or selection criteria specifying current professional experiences as required.

c. Recommendation Six

Mentorship programs should be established amongst male pre-service primary teachers.

It is suggested that a mentorship program be trialled amongst male pre-service primary teachers to ascertain whether or not mentoring increases the retention of male Bachelor of

Education (Primary) students. Mentors do not necessarily need to be faculty members but may also include male teachers who are currently working in the field.

3. Implications for Further Study

There are four major implications for further study arising from this research.

1. Coping Strategies.

   It was identified that male primary teachers used a variety of coping strategies during their Bachelor of Education (Primary) courses. It would be beneficial to identify through further study, the various coping strategies and to what extent they are used.

2. Christian Influence.

   It appeared that involvement in church communities, and being a Christian, had a positive influence on the attraction and retention of male primary teachers. Further study into this area could be of significance.

3. The Role of Altruistic and Extrinsic Motivators.

   A third area that warrants further investigation is the anomaly between male and female Bachelor of Education students responses to motivators. In this study it was found that the male students identified altruistic motivators as more important than extrinsic or intrinsic motivators. Recent literature identifies extrinsic motivators as more important to female Bachelor of Education students. An investigation of the incongruity between male and female responses within the context of primary education could be of consequence.

4. Professional Experiences

It is recommended that a similar study be conducted in other tertiary institutions. Additional data would allow for comparisons and similarities to be drawn, which would assist in the generalisation of conclusions.

D. CONCLUSION

This research was set in the context of concern about boys' academic achievement and the decline in the numbers of males entering the primary teaching profession in Australia. It focused on the views of male pre-service teachers as to factors that affect their attraction to, and retention in, the teaching profession.

Factors that contributed to males choosing the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course of study fell into three main categories (intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic motivators). Participants indicated that altruistic motivators contributed more than either extrinsic or intrinsic determinants.

Issues pertaining to gender, the reactions of peers, family and classmates, department faculty, mentorship, course structure and organisation were all discussed as they affected the retention of males currently completing the degree. Field and extended professional experiences on the other hand were reported by male pre-service teachers as encouraging them to complete the degree.

The major recommendations arising from this study included providing appropriate careers advice to all school leavers, encouraging teachers to be vocal in their support of

the profession and having churches and community groups support the involvement of males in programs with primary aged children. Increasing opportunities for micro-teaching, employing faculty members with recent field experience and establishing mentoring programs were also recommended as techniques through which the retention of male pre-service primary teachers may be improved.

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Appendices

APPENDIX I - Male Bachelor of Education (Primary) Participants

Questionnaire, First Draft

Questionnaire for Males involved in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Program

This questionnaire asks you to give general information about yourself and your pathway into the teaching program. It also requests information regarding your career aspirations and opinions you have towards the education of boys. Please be honest in your responses to make the information you provide useful for research.

DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME, your responses are confidential and anonymous.

Return of this questionnaire indicates consent to participate in this study.

This research project has been approved by the Avondale College Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Avondale College requires that all participants are informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted it may be given to the researcher, or if an independent person is preferred, to the College's HREC Secretary, Avondale College, PO Box 19, Cooranbong, NSW, 2265 or phone (02) 4980 2161 or fax (02) 4980 2190.

For each of the following questions please tick the appropriate response.

Age: ☐ **Marital Status:** ○ Married ○ Not Married

Education and life experiences prior to commencement of Bachelor of Education (Primary):

○ Matriculation
○ Other tertiary study
○ Workforce - Please Specify_____

Initial Career Preference:

○ Bachelor of Education (Primary)
○ Bachelor of Education (Secondary)
○ Bachelor of Business/Accounting
○ Bachelor of Science/Mathematics
○ Bachelor of Information Technology
○ Bachelor of Arts
○ Trade
○ Sales/Retail
○ Small Business
○ Public Service
○ Other - Please Specify _____

Primary School: **[tick the appropriate box/es from each section]**

○ Public ○ Private

○ Single Sex ○ Co-educational ○ Combination

Number of years you were taught by a male teacher during primary school:

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7

High School: **[tick the appropriate box/es from each section]**

○ Public ○ Private

○ Single Sex ○ Co-educational ○ Combination

The following answers may be answered in list or point form.

Personal Interests:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Future Aspirations:

- ○ Travel
- ○ Principal
- ○ Assistant Principal
- ○ Education Research
- ○ Classroom Teacher
- ○ Other Career - Please Specify_____
- ○ Specialisation in a specific field eg PE, LOTE
- ○ Secondary Education
- ○ University Course (within education)
- ○ University Course (area other than education)
- ○ Curriculum Development

What do you see yourself doing five years after graduating from the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What are your beliefs concerning the need for more male primary teachers?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix III - MALE BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (PRIMARY)

PARTICIPANTS QUESTIONNAIRE, FINAL DRAFT

Questionnaire for Males involved in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Program

This questionnaire asks you to give general information about yourself and your pathway into the teaching program. It also requests information regarding your career aspirations and opinions you have towards the education of boys. Please be honest in your responses to make the information you provide useful for research.

DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME, your responses are confidential and anonymous.

Return of this questionnaire indicates consent to participate in this study.

This research project has been approved by the Avondale College Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Avondale College requires that all participants are informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted it may be given to the researcher, or if an independent person is preferred, to the College's HREC Secretary, Avondale College, PO Box 19, Cooranbong, NSW, 2265 or phone (02) 4980 2161 or fax (02) 4980 2190.

For each of the following questions please tick the appropriate response.

Age: ☐ **Marital Status:** ○ Married ○ Not Married ○ Other

Education and life experiences prior to commencement of Bachelor of Education (Primary):

○ Matriculation

○ Other tertiary study ○ Workforce - Please Specify_____

Initial Career Preference:

○ Bachelor of Education (Primary) ○ Bachelor of Education (Secondary)

○ Bachelor of Business/Accounting ○ Bachelor of Science/Mathematics

○ Bachelor of Information Technology ○ Bachelor of Arts

○ Trade ○ Sales/Retail

○ Small Business ○ Public Service

○ Other - Please Specify _____

Primary School: **[tick the appropriate box/es from each section]**

○ Public ○ Private

○ Single Sex ○ Co-educational ○ Combination

Number of years you were taught by a male teacher during primary school:

○ 0 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 6 ○ 7

High School: **[tick the appropriate box/es from each section]**

○ Public ○ Private

○ Single Sex ○ Co-educational ○ Combination

How many years from commencement of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) to anticipated graduation?:

○ >2 ○2 ○3 ○4 ○5 ○6 ○<6

The following answers may be answered in list or point form.

Personal Interests:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Future Aspirations:

- O Travel
- O Principal
- O Assistant Principal
- O Education Research
- O Classroom Teacher
- O Specialisation in a specific field eg PE, LOTE
- O Secondary Education
- O University Course (within education)
- O University Course (area other than education)
- O Curriculum Development
- O Other Career - Please Specify_____

What do you see yourself doing five years after graduating from the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What are your beliefs concerning the need for more male primary teachers?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX III - Letter of Consent

[Name]

Date:

Information required for honours research.

Dear [Name],

I am conducting research for my honours degree in education. The subject of my research is the identification of issues faced by males completing Bachelor of Education (Primary) courses at a tertiary institution noted for its high degree of professional experiences.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study, as your views are important to my understanding of this subject area.

Participants in this study will take part in a group interview/discussion, lasting for approximately 45 minutes, in which you will be given an opportunity to discuss and share your experiences in relation to completing a Bachelor of Education (Primary) degree at Avondale College. There may also be the possibility of a personalised interview at a later date to clarify responses, this interview should not exceed 20 minutes. All interviews will be recorded, with the information and comments treated with the utmost confidentiality. Code names will also be used to ensure your anonymity.

Participation in this study is purely voluntary and this letter places you under no obligation whatsoever. Furthermore, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time should you desire.

This research project has been approved by the Avondale College Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). Avondale College requires that all participants are informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted it may be given to the researcher, or if an independent person is preferred, to the College's HREC Secretary, Avondale College, PO Box 19, Cooranbong, NSW, 2265 or phone (02) 4980 2161 or fax (02) 4980 2190.

If you have any questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor [Name] or myself.

Yours Sincerely

Heather Taylor

Honours Researcher

Jean Carter

Honours Research Supervisor

Appendix IV – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: MALE BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (PRIMARY)

IP1. What motivated you to choose teaching as a profession?

IP2. Was there a significant role-model that encouraged you to enter the field of primary teaching?

IP3. Was primary teaching ever discussed/recommended by a careers advisor?

IP4. What experience did you have with children before entering the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program? Did this prior experience contribute to your decision to enter the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program?

IP5. Do you think that the interaction with children during the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program course encouraged you, or will encourage you to complete the course?

IP6. How did your parents react to your choice to study a Bachelor of Education (Primary)?

IP7. How did your peers react to your choice to study a Bachelor of Education (Primary)?

IP8. How have your fellow classmates reacted to your presence in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course?

IP9. Have you received adequate support from faculty members? Why/why not?

IP10. Would it have been beneficial to have had access to a male mentor within the Education Faculty?

IP11. What other factors have made completion of the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course difficult?

IP12. Do you feel that you have been disadvantaged during this course because of your gender?

IP13. In what way do you view professional experiences?

IP14. Do you think that professional experience sessions will advantage you during your first year in the classroom?

IP15. Did you find that early professional experience affected your enjoyment of teaching? Did this affect your decision to remain in the course?

IP16. Do you think that early field experience will advantage you when you begin teaching in a full time role?

Appendix V –INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: NON-MALE BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (PRIMARY)

IN1. What motivated you to choose teaching as a profession?

IN2. Was there a significant role-model that encouraged you to enter the field of primary teaching?

IN3. Was primary teaching ever discussed/recommended by a careers advisor?

IN4. What experience did you have with children before entering the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program? Did this prior experience contribute to your decision to enter the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program?

IN5. How did your parents react to your choice to study a Bachelor of Education (Primary)?

IN6. How did your peers react to your choice to study a Bachelor of Education (Primary)?

IN7. How did your fellow classmates react to your presence in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course?

IN8. Did you receive adequate support from faculty members? Why/why not?

IN9. Did you feel that you had been disadvantaged during this course because of your gender?

IN10. Would it have been beneficial to have had access to a male mentor within the Education Faculty?

IN11. Did you find that early professional experience affected your enjoyment of teaching? Did this affect your decision to remain in the course?

IN12. What factors contributed to your choice to leave the Bachelor of Education (Primary)?

IN13. In what way did you view professional experiences? How did this affect your choice to pursue a different course of study?

APPENDIX VI –CODING SCHEME: MOTIVATORS

Motivators (M)
Intrinsic (MI)
Appropriate Skills (MIS)
Preferred Younger Children (MIY)
First Career Choice (MIF)
Career's Advice (CM)
Primary Teaching Not Recommended (MCN)
Primary Teaching Recommended (MCR)
Teaching (MV)
Teach children about God (MVG)
Children (MVC)
Teaching (MVCT)
Interacting (MVCI)
Wanted to make a difference (MVD)
Practice Experience (MP)
Community (MVC)
Mentorship (MVCM)
Church (MVCC)
School Experience (MPS)
Coaching (MPWC)
Workforce (MPW)
Childcare centre (MPWK)
Babysitting (MPWB)
Job Characteristics (JM)
"Transportability" (MJT)
Salary (MJS)
Holidays (MJH)
Job Characteristics (MJC)
Job Security (MJS)
Role Models (MR)
Home (MRH)
Spiritual Mentor (MRS)
Ellen White (MRSW)
Teachers (MRT)
Jesus (MRSJ)
Parents (MRP)

APPENDIX VII –CODING SCHEME: COURSE EXPERIENCES

Course Experiences (C)
Child Protection (CNPC)
Health & Safety (CNPH)
Subjects Taught (CNPS)
Staff Room Mentality (CNPM)
Professional Issues (CNP)
Self (CNS)
Finance (CNF)
Classmates (CRC)
Encouraging (CRCE)
Discouraging (CRCD)
Peers (CRP)
Encouraging (CRPE)
Neutral (CRPD)
Discouraging (CRPN)
Family (CRF)
Parents (CRFP)
Spouse (CRFS)
Teachers (CRT)
Supportive (CFS)
Not Supportive (NCFN)
Mentorship (CFM)
Characteristics of a Good Mentor (CFMAC)
Efficacy of a Male Mentor (CFME)
Scheduled Time (CFMACS)
Build Confidence (CFMACC)
Approachable (CFMACA)
In touch with Current Pedagogy (CFMACF)
Issues with Tertiary Institution (CU)
Isolated Campus (CUI)
Subjects (CUCS)
Relevancy of Subjects (CUCSR)
Number of Subjects (CUCSN)
Professional Expectations (CUCSP)
Extended Sessions (CUCSPE)
Field Experiences (CUCSPF)
Professional Placements Difficult for Females (CGDSPF)
Not Taken Seriously (CGDYS)
Male think Differently (CGDYL)
Disparaging Comments (CGDYD)
Teaching Aids Feature Women (CGYAFA)
Disadvantaged (CGD)
Advantaged (CGA)
Not Prepared Different (CGND)

APPENDIX VIII –INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interviewer	The first question is – what motivated you to choose teaching as a profession?
Luke	I choose teaching, well back when I was a little, young little tadpole um. Actually it was probably through my grandparents mostly. They said "you are not much good at anything else so try teaching."
Interviewer	Really?
Luke	Umm, this is like and um I don't know – my dad kept on saying "don't be a builder, don't be a builder". So teaching it was.
Interviewer	Fair enough
Luke	That's about the only thing, that or a park ranger.
Interviewer	Park rangers are good.
Luke	That was the other choice I made though. Everyone was going for park ranger at the time and no one was going for teaching so I thought I would go for teaching. I had it right up the top of the um the shortage and I'll be laughing.
Interviewer	Sounds good.
Luke	And as it is everyone is staying behind and there wasn't a shortage and there is going to be a shortage now when I am coming out – so I still laughing!
Interviewer	Well, that's good. Alright. Was there a significant role model that encouraged you?
Luke	Nah, not particularly. No specific role models. Although I have developed role models now. More along the lines of just just Jesus himself if probably more of a role model in my teaching now than any particular person.
Interviewer	Sounds good. Alright was primary teaching ever discussed or recommended by a careers advisor?
Luke	Umm, I never actually talked to a careers advisor (laugh).
Interviewer	Well – I suppose that explains it really (laugh).
Luke	So that sort of caps that question off.
Interviewer	Yeah.
Luke	(laugh) I did look at a careers book and that was as far as it went for things like that but yeah - no one ever talked about it really.
Interviewer	Fair enough. Alright. What experience did you have with children before beginning primary teaching?

Luke	Very little. Umm, yeah. Basically, almost nothing. I had my brother and sister who were both younger but that is about it. Umm since then like I did my two years and I have done child care in between in which I got heaps of experience with young kids. And now I am back into primary teaching again and so I have got a lot of experience now but back then I had almost none.
Interviewer	OK so, did the experience that you did get like encourage you to?
Luke	No. Actually I was quite scared of it.
Interviewer	Really?
Luke	Mmm. I was actually scared because I didn't know what little kids were thinking, I didn't know what they thought.
Interviewer	OK
Luke	I didn't know how they thought, I didn't know umm you know, if I get up in front of the class you know are they little kids going to think umm, what a loser or anything of that sort of thing. I didn't know that little kids worship the ground that you walk on or anything like that. And I thought you know these little grade twos are going to be really critical of me so I had no expectations in that sense
Interviewer	So…
Luke	I had no idea what to expect.
Interviewer	Fair enough. So did realising that they worshipped the ground you walk on help?
Luke	Umm, it did yes. Just sealed it. Otherwise I probably would have gone into something else otherwise. But my first, my first practical experience was quite positive so that was good.
Interviewer	Excellent. OK. Do you think that the interaction with children within the course encouraged you or do you think it will encourage you to keep on going to finish it off?
Luke	As in my going out to the school here?
Interviewer	Yeah, well just anything really. Like your practical experiences – you just said you had a good one
Luke	My first one was good yes. Other ones I have had I have like failed two pracs. Umm which were very negative and I almost gave it up altogether in that sense. So it's been a bit of both in that sense. Sorry what was the question again?
Interviewer	It was just the interaction with children.
Luke	The interaction with children is the best bit. I mean I did yeah, by far the best bit. Um I hate planning but I love interacting.
Interviewer	Good. So you think that is what will get you through the course?

Luke	Very little. Umm, yeah. Basically, almost nothing. I had my brother and sister who were both younger but that is about it. Umm since then like I did my two years and I have done child care in between in which I got heaps of experience with young kids. And now I am back into primary teaching again and so I have got a lot of experience now but back then I had almost none.
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Interviewer	OK
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Interviewer	Yeah, well just anything really. Like your practical experiences – you just said you had a good one
Luke	My first one was good yes. Other ones I have had I have like failed two pracs. Umm which were very negative and I almost gave it up altogether in that sense. So it's been a bit of both in that sense. Sorry what was the question again?
Interviewer	It was just the interaction with children.
Luke	The interaction with children is the best bit. I mean I did yeah, by far the best bit. Um I hate planning but I love interacting.
Interviewer	Good. So you think that is what will get you through the course?

Luke	Umm, no. My planning will get me through the course. Umm, I've just got to get my planning, like I can interact with kids all the time as long as my planning is fine.
Interviewer	OK, so is that – is the planning where the problem has been. Like you like the kids, the kids have always been great?
Luke	Yeah the kids love me. It's not the planning itself like um as in what I write. It is remembering what I write.
Interviewer	(laugh) I know that feeling.
Luke	There is nothing worse than writing up a beautiful lesson plan and getting in there and having a mind blank and then looking back – "what did I write what did I write?" And then your kids start mucking up. OK and then they loose all respect for you because you don't know what you are doing. Or it seems like you don't know what you are doing. And so yeah, and then you have behavioural issues and then you, your supervising teacher looks at you as very incompetent because you can't manage the class properly.
Interviewer	OK – so that's where you see the problem?
Luke	Yeah – that's been where my problem is.
Interviewer	Umm how did your parents react when you chose to do?
Luke	Oh they were pretty supportive. Umm, I first started out at a university in [location]. I did two weeks there before coming down here.
Interviewer	Really?
Luke	Two weeks. Um, yeah my step mother actually had a big hand in me coming down here cause she like goes "you know you should apply for Avondale". I went yeah yeah it's all good. "You should apply for Avondale, I've applied to Avondale for you".
Interviewer	So she applied for you?
Luke	Not really for me but she basically got everything ready for me it's like "send it away, send it away" OK fine. Yeah – she was a big kick in the pants sort of thing to get me going.
Interviewer	Ok so she was really encouraging was she?
Luke	I wouldn't say encouraging. More umm, forceful (laugh).
Interviewer	Fair enough.
Luke	Sort of encouraging. But yeah- I am glad she did it. I didn't appreciate her doing it at the time. Umm, but I am glad she did cause um yeah the people down here are very supportive.
Interviewer	So your friends, how did they take it?

Luke	My friends in high school?
Interviewer	Yeah, any friends really?
Luke	Umm...next question.
Interviewer	You don't want to answer?
Luke	Nah, I actually didn't have any friends. So it's not very good.
Interviewer	Well, you've got plenty of friends here.
Luke	I know I've got heaps of friends here. I've got tonnes of friends from the first time I was here but in high school it was different. Which was rather sad.
Interviewer	I think we all go through it at one point or another. At least you have got it over and done with now.
Luke	Amen to that.
Interviewer	Umm, how have your fellow classmates reacted to you being in the Bachelor of Education primary course?
Luke	My presence?
Interviewer	Yeah
Luke	So like classmates?
Interviewer	Yeah.
Luke	Owww. It depends on what group I am in. Umm, as in well fellow classmates. In the first lot, in my first two years you know I fitted in pretty good, quite well actually. Um especially with the girls, I got on quite well with the girls – with the guys not so much. Umm, this year I am getting along with both. Both groups pretty well but it is a lot more difficult this time cause I didn't actually start with the group. So my fellow classmates back then I fitted in really well and they were really happy for me to be there and I was happy for them to be there so it was all good. This time umm, you know I am really having to work my way into friendships and really try hard to for people to want to go out of their way to meet me or whatever and things like that. But I, I think its all positive and like as far as the groups I am in I have made a lot of friends because I work hard
Interviewer	Fair enough. And you haven't really had any negative sort of...?
Luke	Not really. Umm, I have had some negative, no not really.
Interviewer	Well that's good.
Luke	Not really negative feedback as in you shouldn't be here or anything like that umm what else?

Interviewer	Don't worry.
Luke	I can't think of anything else that question could use.
Interviewer	No that's cool – that's good. Umm – Faculty members, how have they been? Have they been supportive?
Luke	Yes. Very much so actually. They have sort of mellowed in their old age.
Interviewer	Yeah.
Luke	I know Lecturer 1 has umm. Ahh incredibly mellowed.
Interviewer	Really?
Luke	She has mellowed. Lecturer 6 – I haven't had much to do with Lecturer 6 I thank God. Umm she's not hearing this is she? (laugh) Lecturer 3 though I have to say is like a highlight. She is like she is just gold that woman. Ahh other than that I haven't had much to do with umm, I've only had Lecturer 4 for the first time this year and he has been OK, he has been OK but this is the first time I have really had anything to do with him. There have been a lot of staff change overs since I was here last time I was here so. Yeah. Cause Lecturer 9 used to be here, Lecturer 10 was the captain of the ship and um before Lecturer 13, Lecturer 13 and um Lecturer 12 so yes. I enjoyed Lecturer 12 actually. In a lot of ways he was a role models – sort of. Back then he was.
Interviewer	Not any more?
Luke	Not any more thankfully. Cause it is too long ago.
Interviewer	Well that's alright. So they have been helpful. How have they been good?
Luke	Umm just in like ohh you came here late you know or you know we can give you all this advice or you know, you know. I come up to Lecturer 3 and say look I have bought this book but it is the second edition not the third, um you know can I go through this book and try to figure out what's what without having to but the third one and spend an extra fifty bucks or whatever like that you know. And so she actually sat down, and went through the book and she goes alright this bit and this bit and this bit is missing from the third edition or this edition that is in the third. So she went and photocopied those pages and gave them to me so it was like "thankyou".
Interviewer	Ohh well that's good.
Luke	So it was really good. It was like yeah supportive people. It's like. I come down and can you read through this assignment and tell me if it is on the right track you know and they will do it most of the time.
Interviewer	Oh good. Alright, do you think that it would have been beneficial to have had access to a male mentor in the education faculty?
Luke	A male mentor?

Interviewer	Yeah. Well I mean there is Lecturer 4 who most people don't get until fourth year and I have a feeling that Lecturer 7 is actually primary trained...
Luke	Lecturer 7 is probably more of a mentor to me at the moment simply because I know him from where we used to live last year. Cause we both lived in [location & recognisable characteristics of Lecturer 7, deleted to sustain anonymity].
Interviewer	Yeah – so do you find that an advantage?
Luke	Ohh yeah. Very much so because Lecturer 7 when he first started everyone is going what is this guy on about he has just like come along and give us a break, and like we think he is an idiot because of the way he is doing everything a little bit differently. And I don't know I kind of stand up for him a bit.
Interviewer	Yeah.
Luke	You know, try to spread a bit of positive positive aura around.
Interviewer	So you think that just having another male
Luke	Because he knows me I can just knock on the door and say how you doing and you know it is fine because you know we basically have a friendship there and that is what I really see as a male mentor to be. Not something that I can just come along and say what do you think about this? What do you think about that? Someone that I have a friendship with and then when I have a problem I can just say what do you think? You know cause it is hard to have a mentor that is just purely professional. It is just – yeah it doesn't work very well. Well at least not for guys.
Interviewer	Yeah – I think it is both.
Luke	You need yeah. You definitely need to have a sort of friendship there before it gets really mentory. For myself at least um like any prac I have done I have always done well when I know the teacher likes me as a person. If I don't believe the teacher likes me as a person I do really badly.
Interviewer	Good.
Luke	Yeah I think Lecturer 7 yeah Lecturer 7 would have to be the best at the moment.
Interviewer	That's good.
Luke	Cause I haven't had much to do with Lecturer 5 .
Interviewer	Yeah – I think he is secondary. Not that it must matter but
Luke	Hmm, but he is more aloof I think in some ways.
Interviewer	He is alright once you get to know him actually.
Luke	I know he is very friendly and um I know his kind of extended family which is very nice um like nephews and brothers I think. I think it is that – well they are all Smiths

	and anyway and they do so yeah
Interviewer	Yeah the Sevie
Luke	Yeah it is all a bit Sevie circle to go on.
Interviewer	Alright. The next question is what other factors have made completion of the bachelor of education course difficult?
Luke	Mmm. As in well completion of this course is difficult, one because I didn't have the money to stay here last time so I left. Umm completion of the course being difficult now is because I guess because of the course structure and not being able to be done externally umm.
Interviewer	What about family, any family complications?
Luke	Family hasn't really complicated things um I try to keep my family out of that as much as possible. Um that sort of thing. I try to keep my family at arms length a lot actually which is quite bad.
Interviewer	Sometimes it is necessary.
Luke	Yeah. What is really odd is that I started teaching and then my sister did teaching and did an early childhood major.
Interviewer	Really?
Luke	And then – which I am grading with apparently. Um but I did mine differently. And then my dad is now doing teaching
Interviewer	Wow
Luke	Yeah
Interviewer	It is as bad as my family except we all started as teachers anyway.
Luke	Well there was no teachers in our family. And now everyone is a teacher. And then my brother is has done IT at Tafe and he is thinking about being a teacher as well.
Interviewer	Just think you're on a role.
Luke	Yeah I think it is like I am the trend sender hello (laugh). It is kind of degrading though because is out before me.
Interviewer	Yeah
Luke	But that is alright – I don't mind that too much. The worst problem is um putting a break between this actually like all my friends are out there earning money getting that. And I did that for a year or two last year and the year before you know. Got some money and it is a nice life. Um but now I am a poor student again and everyone is out there working. They are starting to buy houses having families like that. And there is like I want to have a family and I can't really afford well not that I can't afford to have

	one.
Interviewer	Um – what about child protection and stuff, has that been a problem?
Luke	Child protection oh goodness yes. Like um, yeah not being able to hug kids or touch kids in primary school. Like in, I find it very inconsistent actually cause in child care you are encouraged to do that. Hug kids, hold kids, carry kids have fun with kids – whatever. Anything. You know you are encouraged to do it.
Interviewer	OK
Luke	You know if you don't do it you are frowned upon. Where as in primary teaching or in teaching in general you know, as a male nuh – cut it out. Touch them and basically you are open to all sorts of allegations. So you just don't touch them at all. And that is sad because I did child care because I like that and I hated not doing that in teaching. That reminds me – I am doing teaching mainly now because of the money.
Interviewer	What? Because it is good?
Luke	Yeah. It is better than child care.
Interviewer	Really? Much better?
Luke	Yeah. Ok child care is casual umm you don't get holidays umm, you get crap pay and it is just as much work – possibly more. So yeah. It is really – education is the much better deal.
Interviewer	Fair enough. I suppose they just view it as babysitting and then they don't see it as
Luke	Yes and that is scary but it is the general perception yes. I get quite angry when people say that.
Interviewer	Yeah, well it is not true. Seriously.
Luke	You spend a day in a child care centre and you are knackered at the end. You are absolutely knocked out.
Interviewer	Don't worry. I did grade kindy, one, two and I was stuffed at the end of each day.
Luke	Mmmm
Interviewer	So I can just imagine
Luke	[Location] is going that sort of line. Like um the grade one is or preschool is being replaced with their prep year in which it is a fun based curriculum. Umm which is basically what child care is so play based curriculum. You are still teaching things only it is just through play.
Interviewer	It is so important not to forget play though.
Luke	I think primary teaching or teaching in general has cut out a lot of the fun which is why kids are suicidal by the time they are in their HSC. Cause they don't see the fun

	in it any more. And people and teachers don't emphasise the fun in life. And um I think people would learn a lot better if they had more games. Kids are kids. The UN bill of rights say you know every kid has the right to play. So you know play all they can while they can .
Interviewer	Good.
Luke	I am going to be using a lot of games in my teaching when I am out there.
Interviewer	Yeah – I think you learn more.
Luke	You do. And you learn more without even trying.
Interviewer	Yeah. Good. Alright. Do you feel that you have been disadvantaged during this course because of your gender?
Luke	No not really. Umm I actually, think that they look up at me being a male in primary teaching. "ahh you are a primary teacher you are a guy! Oh, you've got a job no worries." It is not like people look at me and go "ohh, you're a guy ahh – you are in primary teaching oh my goodness". Yeah it is not like that. So usually it is quite positive reactions.
Interviewer	That's good.
Luke	Everyone is like goo don you. We need more primary, more male primary teachers. So it is all positive. Very little negative stuff.
Interviewer	Well, that is nice to hear.
Luke	How have other people found it.
Interviewer	Umm not hugely. They are usually like umm nah. But that is about the extent of what they say, but it is good that you have been encouraged.
Luke	Well I think it is because a lot of them, largely because I am actually coming down. But you know most people are very vocal about ohh you know so why are you down here? Ohh you are doing primary teaching that is good. We need more male primary teachers. So it has actually going the other way and vocalising more, I think because of my situation but I am not sure.
Interviewer	Well that's good.
Luke	Yeah they are going "yeah we can see that you are going to need the encouragement".
Interviewer	I doubt it – I don't think they think that way.
Luke	(laugh)
Interviewer	Don't worry. Umm. In what way do you view professional experiences?
Luke	I actually approach them with fear and trepidation. Um because of I failed two in [location]. So I have actually – it I was scared. [Tape change] We'll try that again.

	What was that question?
Interviewer	Professional experiences.
Luke	Ummy yeah like I said. Fairly nervous about practical experiences, like um I have had really good ones and really bad ones so and some in the middle of the road ones. So it is like oh I just don't know how I am going to go because it has been so inconsistent. But I love kids and I love getting out but I am scared of my supervising teachers.
Interviewer	So you think that is the number one. I was going to ask – so you think that, what characterises a good one? What pracs have you felt good about and why have they been good?
Luke	Umm, pracs I have felt good about when I – the lessons I plan run well and the teacher gives me good feedback. Umm, as in good mixed with bad sort of thing. As in some teachers I have had just focus on the bad things, things to improve. Some teachers mix it up and some teachers don't say a word to you. You know they just "she's good" and at the end of the day fail you. Umm yeah. Or something like that or "do you want a reduced work load?" I have had that one told to me. Yeah would you like a reduced work load so you can just focus on small steps. Hmm. Not good so
Interviewer	So you think supervising teachers
Luke	Supervising teachers play a big role. A very big role and as a general rule I like country teachers not city ones. I hate city teachers cause they are all cause they get to the city because you know they are good and they have clocked up their points in the country and they have moved to the city and they are selected in their schools because they are great teachers. And personally I find that quite – what's the word? Scary
Interviewer	Overwhelming.
Luke	Overwhelming, scary – yeah.
Interviewer	I have to agree with you actually.
Luke	I would rather go with a teacher that we can discuss issues on discuss um techniques on whereas instead of some almighty person looking up to up there umm to just someone that I can talk to and say what do you think about this. And they can say well you know I tried this and it didn't really work you know. Instead of a teacher who is so worried about their reputation that – which I know some teachers who are so.
Interviewer	I have to agree. Like it is good to watch some of these teachers but to actually be with them is quite daunting.
Luke	Yeah. It is good to watch them – I agree with that. Like to go to Avondale and to watch good teachers – fine, good. But when it came to prac I would rather go to Morisset.
Interviewer	Fair enough. Alright – shall we skip to the next one. Do you think that professional experience sessions will advantage you when you begin teaching?
Luke	Mmm. Hard to say. In some ways no. Simply because um practise teaching sessions

	are little snippets. I would actually prefer to see umm primary education – or any education subject really become a umm apprenticeship.
Interviewer	OK
Luke	I would much rather see that. Where it is, you are in the classroom and you are teaching for six months at a time and then you go away to uni and TAFE. Yeah go away to uni and and you study for the next semester you know. And you do your theory and then you go back and do teaching again. And I would much prefer to see that you know if you get a bad teacher then obviously that is not good but then you can always swap I guess.
Interviewer	Yeah
Luke	You know. But like yeah I I honestly think that the amount of theory that we go through as teachers is is incorrect. I think that more of the emphasis should be on the practical cause it is a practical profession.
Interviewer	So, as they are now you don't see professional experience as being hugely rewarding?
Luke	In the in the – when you first start out it is good umm, in the middle no not really and at the end your final internship. Well I haven't got there but I imagine I am thinking to myself that it will be very handy. Cause it is the longest session that you have got. Umm other unis have nine weeks we've got six but you know it is a least a month and a half to two months.
Interviewer	Yeah we spread ours. What was the other uni you were at?
Luke	Griffith
Interviewer	And they do nine weeks?
Luke	Umm no but that's, that's they do nine weeks at the uni Rebecca was at.
Interviewer	OK
Luke	I haven't got that far so I don't know yet.
Interviewer	So did she do much early on? Did she do any earlier?
Luke	Her prac was actually very different from the way that we do ours. As in in her prac they say throughout this year you have got to do the equivalent of 10 days in class. And she goes Ok so through out the year she will organise with the schools say can I come in and spend some time with this class or any class for a while you know and the schools will say yeah whatever. And she goes along and helps teach that class. So…
Interviewer	Ok
Luke	Umm and that will count for two weeks or four weeks of her total program. You know and at other times she will have a block prac. Like a week here a week there.

Interviewer	Strange – do you think you would prefer that? A day here a day there?
Luke	Ohh not really. I think that it would be very hard to do. It is very hard to do for most people. And it would not fit in for most people cause when you think about it most people have work and things like that. Block prac is much better but I really don't like it being on the holidays because you don't get the you don't get a break. You don't get a rest and teachers need a rest.
Interviewer	That's true. Did you find that early professional experience affected your enjoyment of teaching and did this affect you decision to remain in the course?
Luke	We have touched on that one. Yeah, yeah my early on experience were good and they encouraged me to stay in the course. And then I had some very very bad experiences um, which put me into the brink of insanity because I actually burnt out – had a nervous break down. And then I did nothing for six months umm. Actually I went to up to [location] Grammar School and worked as a boarding master. After the alter boys – I worked fifteen, twelve hours a week and got food and board and rent. All sorted out – food electricity. And I did nothing but watch TV and work a couple of hours a week and that is exactly what I needed. But then I went back into child care so it was like yeah – the first experiences lasted and you know they prompt you to keep coming back and say well it can't be all bad.
Interviewer	Uh huh.
Luke	The first experience was really good. I really enjoyed it. So there must that out there somewhere again.
Interviewer	Spurred you on?
Luke	Yeah it spurred me on, also I just wanted to finish it. Finish what I started.
Interviewer	Alright and the last question is – do you think that early field experience will advantage you when you begin teaching? And I didn't tell you this before, field experience in comparison to professional experience just tends to be like the dem lessons you see up at the school or you know how Lecturer 6 gets you to do those little reading intervention programs – stuff like that? So yeah – good bad or ugly?
Luke	Will advantage you when you begin teaching in a full time role? In a word no. I disagree don't like them, I think that they are out of place I think that they are you know umm. Field teaching if it was in a sequence and you were actually teaching something as in taking a role of a umm, teacher aide and doing something. Or taking a small group and doing like reading classes or teaching social skills or anything like that would be fine because it is invaluable. You know you are actually teaching something that you would use later. But umm, when it comes to reading stories to one kid or one kid reading stories to you. That has it's value in that cool the kids can read to you – you know what to look for how to help. That's good. But, you know it is a bit you know. When you have got 25 kids clammering for your attention or you need to have them organised so that they are not – it's not realistic. You know – more realistic would be to have a group of five or six kids um and hat way it reflects cooperative learning in groups.

Interviewer	Fair enough.
Luke	Or rotation groups.
Interviewer	And basically now if you want to say anything at all that I haven't covered or that I have covered and you just want to emphasise you can.
Luke	I did write down a whole heap of points. Shall I read that?
Interviewer	If you want to.
Luke	OK. I'll go get it. Ahh. Cause this is what you said – just different impressions that people have. This is what I wrote down. A lot of people think it is a bludge doing primary teaching, or doing teaching in general cause "you get lots of holidays". It's like yeah thanks – if you only knew what we did on our holidays. Umm yes so people, I get pretty narky at that.
Interviewer	Yep – so do I.
Luke	Yeah – just people saying that it is babysitting. Rrrr. Um, like I said people think it is good for men to be in primary teaching and people think that um. If you can't handle older kids some people say oh you can't handle the older kids huh. Oh OK. It is sort of a negative response going for the younger kids. I haven't come by that very much though. It is good. Umm probably the biggest problem with being a primary teaching though is that when you get out in the field there is not many primary teachers out there to hang out with. I mean you go to a umm, you go to the staff room and they are all women and you are like huh. Who am I going to hand out with? Who am I going to talk to it is just nasty stuff. I can't handle it. Cause all they are talking about is my sex life is bad. I don't know what they talk about but
Interviewer	Well if it is any consolation I don't think I have heard teachers talking about their sex life in the staff room.
Luke	(laugh) Well I. Thanks that means a lot. It is just like what women talk about what I would tend to talk about given a choice is not the same thing.
Interviewer	Yeah
Luke	And so it is like I don't really get my social fix by being in the staffroom. So I would prefer to be out in the playground playing with kids. Then I get branded as anti-social by the teachers. Well – there is the possibility of that. But I know that I have meddled with the fringe of that you know. "So you would rather be with the kids than with us."
Interviewer	Well der.
Luke	Yeah. It is like yeah so yeah. It is just one thing you have got to be careful of I guess. Umm – duty of care, health and safety is a big thing I have found. It is like "oh this is heavy – can you lift it?" Or um, you know we are moving the room around today can you help with most of that.
Interviewer	So you find that

Luke	So as a guy you get asked to do a lot of things like that.
Interviewer	Is that a good thing or a bad thing?
Luke	Umm. It just depends how you see it. Umm in some ways it is not good because you don't always get a chance to do your own work. Umm and in other ways it is, it's sort of reinforcing because people see you as a masculine person which is. No but like (laugh) but people have that expectation of you which is wrong. No – the stereotype should not be there, I don't believe. And then there is ahh yes. It is very difficult for guys to model appropriate behaviour well it is not seen for men to model appropriate behaviour. Cause like I know it is important but for example: if you ever sit down chair or a time out chair as a teacher if you get angry you should be using it yourself. Do you know what I mean?
Interviewer	Yeah.
Luke	You should use it as well. So it ceases begin a time out chair and becomes a calm down place.
Interviewer	Yeah
Luke	So it is more if you are angry calm down rather than if you are angry time out. Sort of thing like that. That is kind of my personal philosophy. And I would rather see a lot more males instead of bottling everything up express it in a positive manner. Which most men bottle it up, most women just bitch about it in the classroom. Even my wife is getting like that now. She will bitch to me on the phone ahh the little mongrels… she is just getting it from other people.
Interviewer	Yeah.
Luke	It is hard to, it is hard to keep your mind and your language healthy when everyone is saying the same thing about the kids.
Interviewer	Mmm.
Luke	It is like the mongrels are here today. Or they were little mongrels today. You know it is just – I find that that is the worst thing about teaching for me is the way that they just refer to kids. I really don't like it.
Interviewer	Well thanks. If that is it.
Luke	Yeah.