

Teaching is no longer  
a vocation essay



Today, society looks at teaching as just a temporary vocation. Teachers no longer regard their profession as a job for life. What was once regarded as a career for life is now a career which lasts several years. A TV recruitment campaign claimed “ Those who can, teach.

Well they might teach, but they will not do so for long”. Looking back in the early 20th century. Teachers especially head teachers had far more control over the shape of the school and were more independent from politicians and local councils than they are now. In today’s society, the system has radically changed and that new teachers do not stay teaching for as long as one might expect them to. Carol Adams, chief executive of the General Teaching Council, recently described that the £13, 000 spent on training every teacher as ‘ not good value for money’, because a third of all new teachers quickly leave the profession.

In a survey by The Guardian which was reported on 7th January 2003, showed that one in three teachers expected to leave the teaching profession in the next five years. Low pay, lack of respect, increasing workloads and pupil behaviour were all regarded as reasons for the increasing low morale among teachers. Looking at this, it almost begs the question of why anyone would want to enter into such a profession in the first place. The offer of £6, 000 for each person completing a post-graduate certificate of education (PGCE) is certainly one reason, as is the virtual guarantee of being able to find a job at the end of it.

However, a survey by The Guardian, suggested these reasons soon wore off which leads to the large number of teachers moving on to other careers.

Even though these show why teachers leave the profession, there are some positive aspects in teaching that motivates some to stick with it. In a report published by the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) it said “ Teachers are relatively positive. That’s perhaps surprising given the recent media coverage in terms of recruitment and retention. The image is that teachers are unhappy, but there are definitely aspects of the job that still motivate them.

Job satisfaction, job security and positive working relationships were all factors identified by teachers as positive aspects of their profession. Job satisfaction among many teachers was shown to be higher than among the general population. The lack of commitment to teaching today relates to the way the profession is associated as just a career among many. There are still people entering the profession because it is what they always wanted to do, regardless of low pay or lack of respect. But many who train as teachers do not have a vocation.

To them teaching is just simply another job. However, as I have said earlier on, teaching never used to be just another job, with normal working practices. It is a career where traditionally people have given more than what is asked for. Lunch-time clubs, extra teaching, hours of marking and preparation, all give the impression of someone who loves to teach as they teach for the love of it, not the money. The problem has not gone unnoticed. It has been discussed and still is to this very day.

Former Conservative leader William Hague spoke out at the Secondary Heads Association’s (SHA) annual conference.” We are making the colossal

mistake of stripping head teachers of the opportunity to exercise their own judgement and experience and instead imposing on them national policies which they have no choice but to implement,” Mr Hague said. He ridiculed the government ministers for telling classrooms teachers what they should teach and how they should teach it. The former Tory leader re-emphasised his ‘ free-schools’ policy, where heads would receive funding directly.

This would prevent “ interference from politicians” making schools more independent from government and local councils than ever before.” Head teachers should be free to change the character and ethos of their schools by setting their own policies and exercising their own judgement,” Mr Hague added. This would very much bring the traditional ways of teaching and teaching would then become a vocation. But it should be noticed that as it is with any issue, political parties would promise everything the public wants before the election, but not keep up to it if they are elected. There is the need to return the teaching profession to the way it was, in order to get more teachers into the classroom, until this is done, the teaching profession will go on as it is, with more and more teachers only staying in the profession for several years.

Looking at the teaching profession in today’s society, until any changes is made by the government, I see many people who love to teach, becoming teachers but only staying in the profession for several years at which they find a new career to move on to. This is because they cannot see themselves either surviving in the conditions they are in, or the level of pay they are receiving or the amount of work they are asked to do, because to them, it isn’t worth it.