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**ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER'S  
WORK AND CAREER**

MASTER'S PAPER

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SKOLOTĀJU IZGLĪTĪBAS NODAĻA

**ANĢĻU VALODAS SKOLOTĀJU UZSKATI PAR  
SKOLOTĀJA DARBU UN KARJERU**

MAĢISTRA DARBS

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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of the Master's Paper is to explore English teachers' perceptions of teacher's work and career in order to contribute to the understanding of English teachers' career development.

The topicality of the MA Paper is predetermined by the fact that there is a shortage of English teachers in schools of Latvia. Many English teachers choose to follow different career paths. The need to explore the factors determining English teachers' career choices emerged in order to explain the shortage of English teachers.

Narrative research design has been chosen for the study to explore the lived experiences of practising and non-practising teachers by retelling stories in order to provide insights into the English teachers' perceptions of teacher's work and career. Data collection methods include a questionnaire, telephone interview, narrative interview, biographical document analysis and content analysis.

As the result, conclusions are made on the factors influencing the attrition of English teachers.

**Keywords:** career, career development, motivation, life-stories, narrative analysis

## ANOTĀCIJA

Maģistra darba mērķis ir izpētīt angļu valodas skolotāju priekšstatus par skolotāja darbu un karjeru, lai veicinātu izpratni par angļu valodas skolotāju karjeras attīstību.

Maģistra darba aktualitāti nosaka tas, ka Latvijas skolās trūkst angļu valodas skolotāju. Daudzi angļu valodas skolotāji izvēlas sekot dažādiem karjeras ceļiem. Tika konstatēta nepieciešamība izpētīt faktorus, kas nosaka viņu karjeras izvēli, lai skaidrotu angļu valodas skolotāju trūkumu skolās.

Naratīvais pētījums ir izvēlēts kā pētījuma metode, lai, atstāstot stāstus, izzinātu praktizējošo un nepraktizējošo skolotāju dzīves pieredzi un sniegtu ieskatu angļu valodas skolotāju izpratnē par skolotāja darbu un karjeru. Datu vākšanas metodes ietver anketu, telefonintervijas, naratīvās intervijas, biogrāfisko dokumentu analīzi un kontentanalīzi.

Rezultātā izdarīti secinājumi par faktoriem, kas ietekmē angļu valodas skolotāju atbirumu.

**Atslēgas vārdi:** karjera, karjeras attīstība, motivācija, dzīves stāsti, naratīvā analīze

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## INTRODUCTION

The world is changing due to the intensification of the globalisation and the effects of these processes can be felt in all disciplines and career development is no exception. Over the past few decades, significant changes in how individuals perceive their careers have taken place. Careers have increasingly been developing horizontally rather than vertically. Especially, English teacher profession has been impacted by the globalisation. Nowadays, English teacher's profession more than ever can offer various career choices outside the educational sector. As English is the most common foreign language, the knowledge of English offers travel and work opportunities and good English language skills are valued by many international organizations. Thus, attracting English teachers to schools can be affected by the demand for the English language professionals in corporate environment.

The topicality of the MA Paper is predetermined by the fact that there is a shortage of English teachers in schools of Latvia. According to the newspaper article of August 2018 (<https://nra.lv/latvija/izglitiba-karjera/280856-pedagogi-noveco-vakances-aug.htm>), there were in total 380 teacher vacancies available in Latvia. 151 out of 380 vacancies were full time jobs. At the top of the list there were the vacancies of English teacher jobs. There were 52 English teaching jobs available. According to the latest information of May 24, 2019 on vacancies available on [www.izglitiba.riga.lv](http://www.izglitiba.riga.lv) the official online e-school webpage, schools in Riga are looking for 18 teachers of the English language. Every year a sufficient number of English teachers graduate from the university, but very often they try out the teaching profession and leave for another career. In some cases new teachers do not even try to pursue a teaching career. Many different studies have been done on teacher profession exploring the reasons for teachers' attrition. Most of those studies are done by the professionals within the educational sector. This Paper offers a fresh outsider's view on teacher's career by examining practising and non-practising English language teachers' perceptions from various perspectives, in contrary to many studies which have focused on exploring the perceptions of one specific group.

English teachers can be found in various kinds of occupations. Many English teachers have remained in educational sector at some level, but many have chosen completely different career path. There might be English teachers who have left teaching profession for another career but would like to return. Examining English

teachers' perceptions from various perspectives can contribute to the understanding of reasons for choosing another career path and their perceptions of teacher's work and career may hold valuable insights into necessary changes that need to take place to prevent English language teacher attrition. The author of this Paper, being a former English language teacher herself can identify with the selected research participants and, thus, an effective collaboration can be established that according to Creswell (2007), is essential for doing narrative research.

In order to understand and explain the shortage of English teachers, the author of the Master's Paper collaborates with chosen research participants and retells their experiences by creating life stories. The author of the Master's Paper aims to interpret the stories so the deeper meaning can emerge and the research participants' perceptions of teacher's work and career can be revealed.

To sum up the above mentioned, there are many qualified English teachers who have chosen a different career path. Why one would study to become a teacher, but never work as a teacher? To provide the answer to this question, the need to explore teachers' perceptions surfaces.

**The aim of the Master's Paper** is to explore the English language teachers' perceptions of teacher's work and career in order to contribute to the understanding of teacher's career development.

The study should lead to better understanding of English teachers' career choices.

**The objectives of the Master's Paper:**

1. To study the theoretical literature on the career development and motivational theories.
2. To examine the reasons for choosing a career path by collecting and analysing life stories.
3. To explore the experiences of non-practising and practising teachers by conducting interviews and analysing their stories.

**The research questions of the Master's Paper:**

1. What the reasons are for studying to become a teacher, but choosing another career path;
2. What the effects of further education on career success of the English language teachers are;
3. How teacher's qualification influences their career path.

**The research sample of the Master's Paper:** qualified teachers (practising and non-practising teachers). Research sample is selected by categories:

1. Teacher with many years of experience in teaching;
2. Teacher on the break from teaching;
3. Teachers who have chosen a different career path;
4. Teachers who work at with the teacher's work-related spheres.

Sampling by categories is chosen to gather the data from various perspectives. The author of the Paper sets out to spend a considerable time with research participants to gather the data for stories to emerge from the interviews.

**The research design:** narrative research. Narrative research design has been chosen for the study to explore the lived experiences of practising and non-practising teachers by telling stories in order to provide insights into the English teachers' perceptions of teacher's work and career and to reveal different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning. People are naturally inclined to tell stories about themselves. The role of the author of the Master's Paper is not limited to being an author and researcher. The goal is to listen to the stories and retell them so the deeper meaning can emerge.

The author of the Paper aims to promote and present the voice of the participants of the study as unchanged as possible. However, it must be said, as it is often with narrative research methods, it is subjected to open interpretation. According to David Silverman (2016) most narrative analysts eschew the simplistic claim that the researcher can reveal the truth with in depth interviews only. The author of the Paper shares the view with David Silverman, therefore the triangulation is used (narrative interviews, biographical documents of research participants are analysed and a questionnaire).

The focus of the study is not on revealing the "truth" of the stories. The focus is on the hidden meanings behind these stories. The intention is to unfold the ways teachers make sense of their lived experiences concerning their career path. The study is aimed as collaboration between the author of the Paper and teachers who agreed to tell their stories. The intended result is an insightful research that should be seen as collaboration between those involved.

To sum up, the focus is put on reconstructing the stories told by eight teachers in certain social contexts. Research participant No. 1 has never settled into teacher's profession and is currently working in a fashion store. Research participant No. 2 is a

teacher on maternity leave. Research participant No. 3 hasn't completed studies but, nevertheless, is working as a support teacher assistant. Research participant No. 4 is a part-time teacher and part-time translator. Research participant No. 5 is a teacher who has left the teacher's profession for another career. Research participant No. 6 has worked as an e-Learning specialist before maternity leave. Research participant No. 7 is a teacher who works as a trainer in the corporative sector. Research participant No. 8 is working as an administrator at the language school. The research sample was selected by analysing the respondent's answers from the questionnaire. The initial sampling was done by focusing on the required category 'qualified English language teachers who work in other spheres'. The focus was put on those respondents who provided their contact details and expressed willingness to participate in the study.

**The methods of data collection** are narrative interviews, document analysis (autobiography), questionnaires and content analysis (interviews and the results of studies published in newspaper and magazine articles).

Four narrative interviews are conducted in order to gather detailed information from the research participants. Four written stories by the research participants are analysed and rewritten by the author of the Master's Paper. Eight curricula vitae are analysed to confirm or disconfirm the information collected from the narrative interviews and written stories.

A questionnaire is used in order to collect the data on English language teachers' who work in other spheres than teaching. The content analysis (interviews and the results of studies published in newspaper and magazine articles) is used to gain an insight into teachers' perceptions of teacher's work and career from various perspectives.

The expected outcome of the research is the detailed analysis of the stories as told by chosen research participants and insight into teachers' perceptions of teacher's work and career.

### **The outline**

The Paper consists of three main chapters:

Chapter 1 discusses the concept of career and career development, theories of human motivation and teachers' decisions of leaving or staying in the profession.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the methodology and research design.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of research sample and analyses the selected participants' perceptions of teacher's work and career.

## 1. CAREER AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

In order to explore teachers' perceptions on their career it is important to try to understand and define the concept "career." According to Mikelsone (2008) the concept "career" can be defined as deliberate and successful progression at work or other activity spheres where achievement is possible. Career is a sequence of various socially significant human roles related to the individual's work, studies, self-expression and leisure activities. According to Super & Hall (1978) a career is a sequence of positions occupied by a person during the course of a life-time.

Watson and McMahon (2012) view career development as a discipline in transition striving to revision and reposition itself in a global world. 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterized by the globalisation and the globalisation has affected career development as well. A noticeable feature of globalisation is the emergence of English as a dominant language. Hartung (2012) speaks of internationalisation of career development. He is of the opinion that career development needs a common language that could unify the discipline.

Good career choices will result in satisfaction and personal fulfilment (Watson, McMahon, 2012). However, it is not to generalize, as the occupational landscape is not equal for everyone. When economic and personal survival is at stake, personal satisfaction and fulfilment may be less relevant. Watson and McMahon (2012) argue further that the contextual location of career decision making should be taken into account, as many people are motivated by values other than personal satisfaction and fulfilment. They point out that in a global world it is important to understand the relational nature of career development, such as how individuals construct their identities and interact with contextual influences such as workplaces, families and communities. Akkerman & Meijer (2011) note that identity is not a fixed entity, but one that is dynamic and continuously constructed. People develop themselves through time and position themselves differently in various situations and differently towards other persons. Jenlink (2014) also points out the relational nature of identity and describes it as "an intersection of different experiences and social interactions within the self, the family unit, the cultural community and the schooling process" (Jenlink 2014: 27).

Hartung (2012) analyses four major traditions of career theory: person-environment (P-E) fit, developmental, social cognitive, and constructivism - social constructionism. Hartung (2012) suggests adapting these traditions to career

development in a global context thus creating a basis for shaping a common international language of career development with four dialects: 1) the dialect of individual *differences* to match people to jobs;

2) the dialect of individual *development* to fit work into life;

3) the dialect of social - cognitive *deliberation* to regulate and guide career beliefs, behaviours and motives;

4) the dialect of life *design* to construct personally meaningful and socially relevant life careers.

Hartung (2012) concludes that each of these dialects emerged in response to the problems and conditions existing at given times in history.

Super's (1976) developmental view of career development in the context of the self allows for changes over time. This is very appropriate in the 21st century workplace.

*Table 1.1 Super's life and career development stages (Super, 1976)*

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
Growth	0-14	Development of self-concept, attitudes, needs and general world of work. This stage includes four major career developmental tasks: becoming concerned about the future, increasing personal control over one's own life, convincing oneself to achieve in school and at work, and acquiring competent work habits and attitudes.
Exploration	15-24	"Trying out" through classes, work hobbies. Tentative choice and skill development. This stage involves three career development tasks: 1. the crystallization of a career preference; 2. the specification of a career preference; 3. The implementation of a career preference by completing appropriate training and securing a position in the chosen occupation.
Establishment	25-44	Entry-level skill building and stabilisation through work experience. This stage involves three developmental tasks: 1. stabilizing or securing one place in the organization by adapting to the organization's requirements and performing job duties satisfactorily; 2.the consolidation of one's position by manifesting positive work attitudes and productive habits along with building favourable co-worker relations; 3. to obtain advancement to new levels of responsibility.
Maintenance	45-64	Continual adjustment process to improve position. The career development tasks: holding

		on, keeping up, and innovating.
Decline	65+	Reduced output, prepare for retirement.

Super & Hall (1978) point out that a type of task that dominates during a given chronological life stage can be encountered at other life stages. They explain that exploration and planning can become important in midcareer, for example, when maintenance processes fail and new occupation must be found.

### Positions, Roles and Tasks

According to Super (1976) there are at least ten major types of roles: In the approximate order in which these roles are dominant, they are those of:

1. Child
2. Student
3. Worker
4. Spouse
5. Parent
6. Homemaker
7. Citizen
8. "Leisurite"
9. Annuitant
10. Patient

These roles have a simultaneous and sequential nature. Super depicts it as a rainbow.

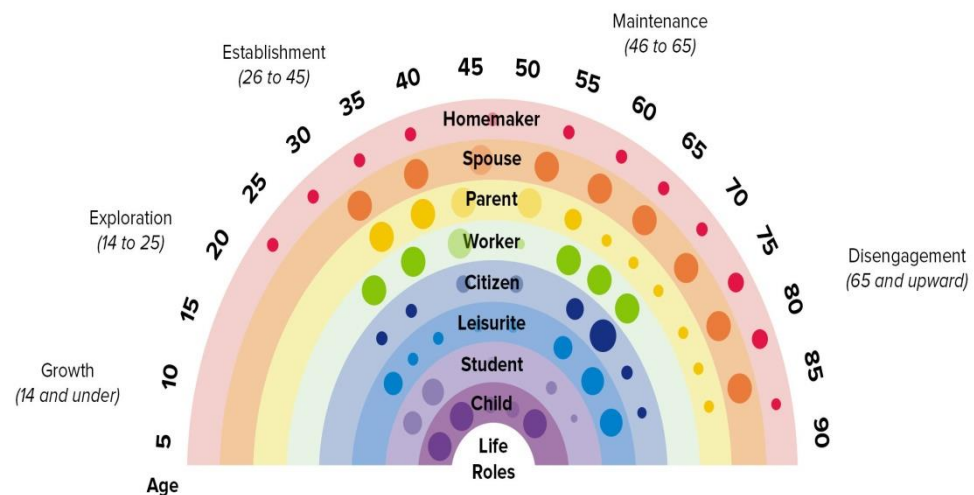


Figure 1.1 The Life-Career Rainbow by Donald E. Super (retrieved from [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCDV\\_95.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCDV_95.htm))

Super's Life-Career Rainbow shows graphically that nonoccupational and occupational roles are relational.

Occupying any position means that one assumes and is given a role, expected to perform certain functions and to act in certain ways.

Super (1976) contends that roles shape people and people shape roles in varying degrees - just as some people choose roles (e.g., many lawyers) and others are cast in them (e.g., many who clerk in family stores).

Each type of role has a type of theatre in which it is typically but not uniquely played. A child is still a child in school, while a teacher is also a parent and a mother is still a mother while at work if she has an emergency at home. According to Super (1976) the major theatres in which roles are played are:

1. The home
2. The community
3. The school
4. The workplace
5. The retirement community or home

### **Career patterns**

According to Super (1976) a better psychological and sociological definition of a career is that of the sequence of positions occupied by a person during the course of a working and work-related life. This takes into account the facts that most people change occupations several times during their careers and that for many people occupational mobility is horizontal rather than vertical.

Super (1976) refers to his earlier works and highlights that careers have been found to include four patterns for men and seven for women.

These are, for men (Super, 1976):

1. the conventional (some change, followed by stability),
2. the stable (entry into an occupation after finishing training and remaining in it),
3. the unstable (often called serial, alternating periods which may be long and infrequent, of stability and of change),
4. the multiple-trial (frequent change and short periods in any one occupation).

For women, according to Super (1976) the conventional pattern involves homemaking after a period of paid work, the stable pattern may involve either homemaking instead of paid work or it may mean paid work in only one occupation,

and there are also the interrupted pattern (paid work, then homemaking, and again paid work) and the double-track career pattern (the simultaneous paid work and homemaking that is increasingly common today).

Super (1976) contends “it is the individual who supplies the continuity in the career, even when the sequence of occupations is discontinuous, for the career belongs to the person, not to the occupation” (Super 1976: 31). Of course, a person may make a career of an occupation. Thus, most people in well-paid, prestigious, and secure occupations such as medicine, especially those which require considerable involvement of affect, time and effort, do pursue a career i-. those occupations in which the investment is made. But many people make a career of an industry, changing occupations as they move up a ladder in banking, in steel, in transportation, or in education (for example, moving from teacher to counsellor to principal to director of school). Many others make a career, by design or otherwise of changing occupations and industries as economic or climatic conditions make this seem desirable.

According to Super (1976) there is a large number of people who pursue unstable, multiple-trial, and interrupted careers and career counsellors and career educators need to take this into account.

### **Subjective and objective career success**

Career success has a dichotomous nature: an objective and subjective dimension. Typically, objective career success can be measured by external indicators of career advancement, such as salary and promotions.

Measure of subjective career success is typically attitudes, emotions, and perceptions of how individuals feel about their accomplishments rather than the objective amount of achievement.

Boundaryless career involves a new form of employability in which the individual, rather than the organization, takes an active rather than passive role in managing his or her career (Ballout, 2007). According to Ballout (2007) multiskilling is essential in the boundaryless career. Integral aspects of the boundaryless career are portable skills, the motivation to tolerate change and ambiguity, foci for new learning, personal identification with portfolio careers and the development of multiple networks of relationships. According to the study results conducted by Gerli, Bonesso and Pizzi (2015) emotional competencies positively relate to a boundaryless career. Emotional self-control enables a better management of stressful situations connected with crossing

geographical boundaries and adaptability in new locations. They also found that a boundaryless career relates positively to objective career success. According to Gerli, Bonesso and Pizzi (2015) people who build experience in a variety of fields and roles strengthen their job profile, acquire a wider view of the phenomenon and consequently have more opportunities to be promoted. Social competencies positively relate to objective career success. Supportive relationships may have an impact on career advancements. According to de Janasz and Forret (2008) networking is a critical skill to be learned in the era of boundaryless careers. Networking skills such as the ability to establish contacts are essential for career and personal success. “Networking is a key human capital skill that is unique in its ability to increase an individual’s social capital” (de Janasz & Forret 2008: 630). Networking enables to build relationships in and outside the organizations. By developing relationships, one’s social capital can be enhanced, for example, information about potential opportunities can be shared, new ideas can be generated.

Another new form of career is a “protean careers.” The focus is put on the individual. According to Ballout (2007) individuals are responsible for their careers and that their unique human resource qualities (including human capital and capabilities) drive their success in multi-employer settings. It is based on continuous learning and the development of self-knowledge and adaptability.

Ballout (2007) also discusses the concept of the “intelligent career”. As Ballout (2007) indicates, “it involves the development of three “ways of knowing”:

1. Knowing-why: has to do with an individual’s work motivation (in a particular occupation or industry), the construction of personal values and interests, and the identification with the employing firm’s culture.

2. Knowing-how: Knowing-how has to do with an individual’s career-relevant skills, abilities and competencies available to support current role behaviours.

3. Knowing-whom: refers to an individual’s set of interpersonal relationships within and outside current work behaviour available to support career opportunities and employability” (Ballout 2007: 745).

Ballout (2007) contends that careers are becoming increasingly intelligent and they are moving from the traditional vertical career paths to horizontal career paths.

Ballout (2007) refers to the career literature and concludes that career success has two dimensions: intrinsic and extrinsic. Extrinsic success represents the objective

component of career success, and refers to observable career accomplishments or outcomes, such as pay, promotions, ascendancy, and occupational status. Intrinsic success represents the subjective component of career success, and refers to individuals' feelings and reactions to their own careers, and is usually assessed in terms of psychological success such as career satisfaction, career commitment, and job satisfaction.

“Human capital factors, including education level, work investment, work experience, and the number of hours worked are each positively related to career success” (Ballout 2007: 747).

In this study the focus is put on subjective career success.

Ballout (2007) concludes that the fit of person and environment is a dominant force in employee selection and in explaining individuals' job satisfaction, performance, and career success.

Super and Hall (1978) describe that persistence is one factor in a successful transition from school to occupational training. They contend that occupational persistence is related more to personal self-confidence and motivation than to support from the environment.

## **1.1 THEORIES OF HUMAN MOTIVATION**

When speaking about career development, it is essential to review some theories of the development of human motivation.

Abraham Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" describes the pattern through which human motivations generally move. According to Maslow (1954) there are 5 human needs. Each of them needs to be satisfied prior to the moving to the next level. The ultimate goal is to reach the fifth level or stage – Self-actualization. However, it is to note, that it must be seen in a historical context in which the theory was written. Some scholars argue that Maslow has overexaggerated the need for safety. They contend that the need for love should be fulfilled first. Indeed, it is to look at the Zeitgeist in order to understand the prioritisation of safety need over love/belonging. The theory was developed after the World War II, which could explain the importance given by Maslow to safety need. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the hierarchy of needs is still topical to explain human motivation, but the context is different. 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterized by the intensification of globalization and its consequences: climate change, multiculturalism,

social inequalities. The society is impacted by all of these issues. However, it must be said, the human needs haven't changed.

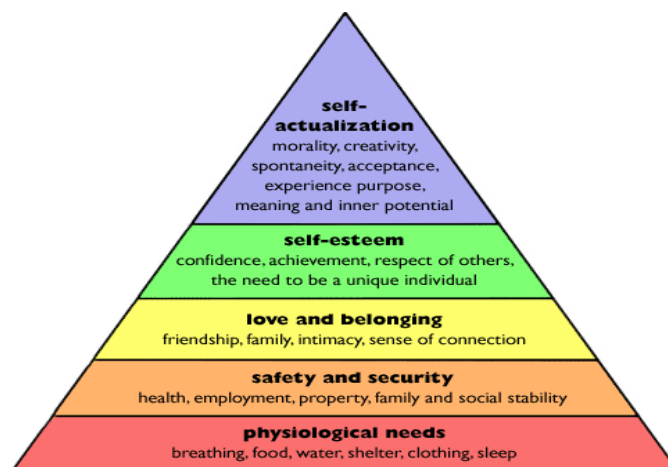


Figure 1.2 Maslow's hierarchy of needs (2012, retrieved from <http://www.researchhistory.org>)

As Alsup (2005) contends “without attention to the bodily, without admitting that the core identity is not only intellectual or ideological but also corporeal, the new teacher will have a difficult time developing self-actualized professional identity” (Alsup 2005: 95).

The question arises if the integration of personal and professional selves is possible. Alsup (2005) argues that teacher's identity is a combination of the personal and the professional. What to do when personal self doesn't fit the professional self? Values, beliefs are different. Alsup (2005) notes in her study that sometimes “non-traditional” teacher education candidates choose to follow other professional paths because of the perceived demands and expectations based on a narrow set of believe.

Carol Gilligan's Ethic of Care Theory starts from the premise that “as humans we are inherently relational, responsive beings and the human condition is one of connectedness or interdependence” (2011, <https://ethicsofcare.org/carol-gilligan/>). Gilligan (2011) defines her theory as an ethic grounded in voice and relationships, in the importance of everyone having a voice, being listened to carefully (in their own right and on their own terms) and heard with respect. The basis of the theory is empathy and mutual understanding.

## **A Motivational Theory of Life-Span Development by Heckhausen, Wrosch and Schulz**

Heckhausen, Wrosch and Schulz (2010) contend “an individual’s developmental potential is won or lost by mastering the challenges of regulating motivational processes.” Major challenges faced by individuals throughout the life course and the motivational and self-regulatory processes used to meet these challenges are identified. The life course is viewed as being organized around a sequential series of action cycles. Those action cycles involve goal selection, goal pursuit, and disengagement from goals. Individuals can influence their own development by setting developmental goals. Heckhausen, Wrosch and Schulz (2010) name three characteristics of developmental goals:

1. developmental goals are directed at developmental processes (e.g., become more independent from my parents);
2. developmental goals comprise desired outcomes at an intermediate level of aggregation (e.g., improve my grades, graduate from college, have a child);
3. developmental goals typically reach into the intermediate future, 5–10 years ahead, either within the current or next phase of the life course (e.g., within adolescence or from adolescence into early adulthood).

Thus, an individual is viewed as an active agent in life-span development.

### **Vroom’s Expectancy Theory**

Vroom’s expectancy theory model consists of three components:

1. valence;
2. expectancy;
3. instrumentality.

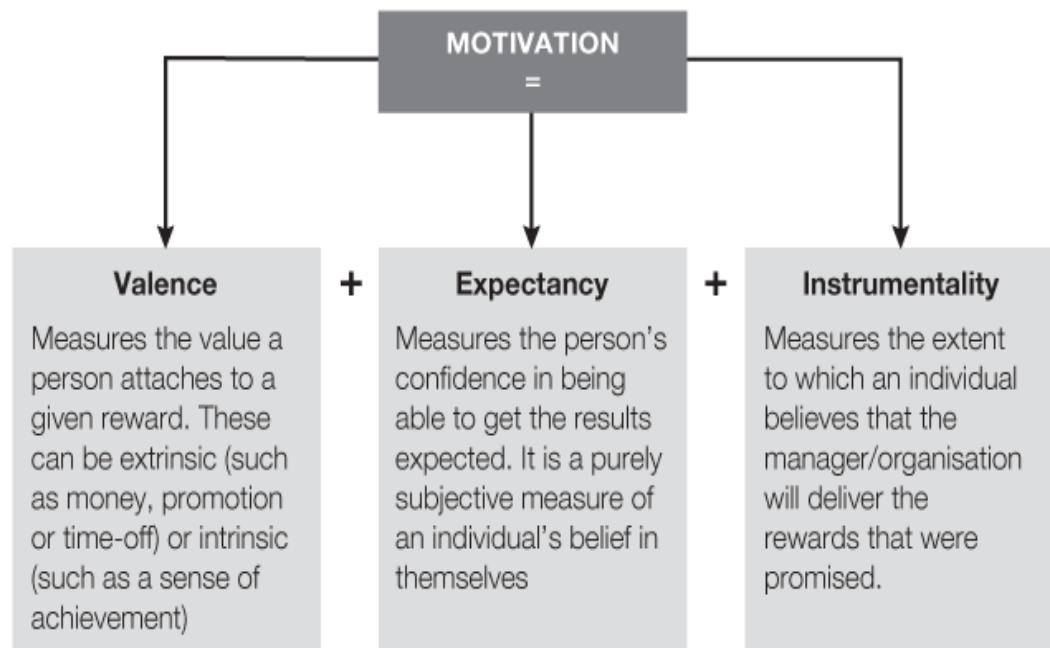


Figure 1.3 Vroom's Expectancy theory (retrieved from <https://www.oreilly.com>)

Van Eerde and Thierry (1996) argue that Vroom's model is abstract and open to interpretations. They contend that the concept of "valence" was defined as all possible affective orientations toward outcomes, and it is interpreted as the importance, attractiveness, desirability, or anticipated satisfaction with outcomes. The concept of "instrumentality" has been interpreted not only as a "relationship between an outcome and another outcome but also as a probability to obtain an outcome. The concept of "expectancy" is defined as a subjective probability of an action or effort (e) leading to an outcome or performance (p) expressed as  $e \rightarrow p$ " (Van Eerde and Thierry 1996: 576). Vroom's expectancy theory seems to be subjective and based on perceptions and more relevant for 21<sup>st</sup> century, as individuals have different skills, abilities, personalities and experiences. Vroom's expectancy theory unlike Maslow's needs theory recognises the differences in individual needs. In order to explore English teachers' perceptions, it is important to recognise that while English teachers might represent one common group, they still are individuals with different experiences and needs. Therefore, the author of this Paper found it important to explore their individual experiences by collecting and analysing their stories.

## 1.2 THEORIES ABOUT LEAVING OR STAYING IN THE TEACHER'S PROFESSION

In order to gain insight into teachers' perceptions of teacher's work and career, it is important to have a look at some theories of leaving or staying in the teacher's profession and reasons why many teachers leave the teaching career for another career.

Prospective teachers bring with them earlier experiences of, and ideas on, what teaching is and should be, when they enter the field.

Lindqvist and Nordaenger (2016) refer to the ideas of Hodkinson and Sparkes, who describe a person's career as "the interrelations between pragmatic decision-making, choices as interactions within a field, and choices within a life course" (Lindqvist and Nordaenger 2016: 90).

Lindqvist and Nordaenger (2016) describe attrition as identity-making process and refer to, citing Merton, "the concept of anticipatory socialization". The concept describes a process of identification, which includes preparing for a coming professional membership by adopting attitudes and values that are apprehended as typical for members. When those attitudes and values do not correspond with personal attitudes and values conflicts in identity making process can arise (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011).

One of the theories about teacher's profession is represented by Rinke (2013). Rinke (2013) distinguishes two groups of teachers: those who view teaching as a long-term profession and others who see teaching in an exploratory manner. They try out teaching and leave for another career. Rinke (2013) describes in her research how individuals' goals, visions, and morals can both cohere as well as conflict with workplace practices in determining professional futures.

As Rinke (2013) suggests the importance of incorporating ideas about teaching into recruitment, enhancing the status of teaching, and offering opportunities for early classroom experience as a means to building a committed workforce of professional educators.

Ingersoll (2001) points out four particular organizational conditions in schools that have consistently been found to be crucial for employee turnover: the compensation structure for employees; the level of administrative support, especially for new employees; the degree of conflict and strife within the organization; and the degree of employee's input into and influence over organization policies.

However, according to Borman and Dowling (2008) contextual factors within schools, such as lack of support from administrators, student discipline issues and lack of input and decision-making power seem to play a larger role than a remuneration.

According to the study conducted by Struyven & Vanthournout (2014) there are five main reasons for attrition: job satisfaction, school policies, workload, future prospects and relations with parents. The results of the study demonstrated that a lack of future prospects was the predominant reason for attrition. The results also showed that experienced teachers do not take exit decisions lightly.

According to survey conducted by Independent Education Association (<https://nra.lv/latvija/izglitiba-karjera/257104-petijums-vairak-neka-pusei-skolu-trukst-skolotaju.htm>), the main reason for teacher attrition is the low prestige of the teacher's profession. The prestige is not only determined by the level of the remuneration, but also by the attitude of the senior officials. The government needs to give the support to the teaching profession. Respect and authority, as well as the general attitude of the society are equally important.

## 2. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Narrative research design has been chosen for the study to explore the lived experiences of practising and non-practising teachers by reciting stories in order to provide insights into the English teachers' perceptions of teacher's work and career.

Cambridge dictionary defines narrative as a “a [story](#) or a [description](#) of a [series](#) of [events](#); a [particular](#) way of [explaining](#) or [understanding events](#)” (narrative. (s.d). Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/narrative>). ‘*Narrare*’ means from Latin to tell, to report a story. Daiute and Lightfoot (2004) use the term ‘narrative’ as equivalent to ‘story.’ They contend that to qualify as a story, essential criteria should be met: a story has to have a beginning, a middle, and an ending, and the presence of a moral issue.

According to Lieblich, Rivka Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) narratives provide access to people's identity and personality. “Life stories may provide researchers with a key to discovering identity, which “resides” in the hidden domain of inner reality. Life stories are subjective, as is one's self or identity” (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, Zilber 1998: 8). They conclude that personal narratives are people's identities. “Stories imitate life and present an inner reality to the outside world; at the same time, however, they shape and construct the narrator's personality and reality. The story is one's identity, a story created, told, revised, and retold throughout life. We know or discover ourselves, and reveal ourselves to others, by the stories we tell” (Lieblich, Rivka Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber 1998: 7).

Lieblich, Rivka Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) represent the view that life stories may enable researchers to discover identity and understand it, and the teller's culture and social world can be revealed. “By studying and interpreting self-narratives, the researcher can access not only the individual identity and its systems of meaning but also the teller's culture and social world” (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, Zilber 1998: 9). As Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) point out the life story develops and changes through time, therefore a life story that is provided in an interview is a hypothetical construct. There are many aspects to be considered: the aim of the interview, the context, the nature of the “audience”, the relationship between teller and listener, the mood of the narrator, and so forth. In this study, the author of the Master's Paper shares the view with Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) that life stories may enable researchers to discover identity and understand it.

As Creswell (2007) writes a narrative research is a challenging approach to use. There is a need to collect extensive information about the participant and individual's life needs to be seen in the context.

In narrative research the focus is on the stories told from the individual. The task of the researcher is to arrange the stories in chronological order.

The type of the problem is the need to tell stories of individual experiences.

According to Creswell (2007) an individual needs to be studied when an individual can illuminate a specific issue or problem – “someone who illustrates a problem, someone who has had a distinguished career, someone in the national spotlight, or someone who lives an ordinary life” (Creswell 2007: 94).

Creswell (2007) describes the data collection process as gathering material about the person from conversations or observations. Creswell (2007) suggests that individuals for the research are selected depending on the person (e.g., convenient, politically important, typical, a critical case).

Narrative as a method “begins with the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals” (Creswell 2007: 54). “Experiences become narratives when we tell them to an audience and narratives become part of narrative inquiry when they are examined for research purposes or generated to report the findings of an inquiry” (Barkhuizen 2016: 28).

“A story is a frame – a frame that emerges and is tried out, a frame that is developed and elaborated, or a frame that can easily absorb the new event” (Czarniawska 2004: 39).

As Bridget Somekh and Cathy Lewin state “life and narratives are inextricably related and that human life is interpreted in and through narratives.... Life is meaningful, but the meaning is implicit, and it only becomes explicit in our narratives or stories” (Somekh, Lewin 2011: 158). They explain “narratives and stories provide order, structure and direction in life, so helping develop the meaning in life in richer and more integrated ways” (Somekh, Lewin 2011: 158).

To tell the stories of lived experiences of teachers, it is important to speak about identity, not simply as a psychological concept of ego identity. According to Somekh and Lewin (2011) identity is simultaneously cultural, historical, social and personal. “Identity and narrative are intrinsically connected....” (Somekh, Lewin 2011: 158).

Narrative research method can be described as a process of developing understanding. “Part of the research aspiration is co-constructing meaning. The research can resemble a process of people coming together to know about their lives and why they are so lived” (Somekh, Lewin 2011: 159).

There is no clear definition of what ‘narrative’ itself is. Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou (2008) point out the difficulties within this approach, “there are no self-evident categories on which to focus as there are with content-based thematic approaches, or with analyses of specific elements of language” (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou 2008:1). They state that narrative research can contribute to understanding and explanation of important aspects of the world.

Describing narrative research method Squire, Davis, Esin, Andrews, Haarrison, Hyden & Hyden (2015) state “Narrative research seems to allow us vivid pictures and deep understanding of people’s lives. It let us grasp some of the complexity, multiplicity and contradiction within lives as within stories” (Squire, Davis, Esin, Andrews, Haarrison, Hyden & Hyden 2015: 77).

In the study the social research approach to narrative research is used. “Within social research, a related approach is that focused on life stories, such as in biographical and autobiographical writing, where major life events are read as organized into the logic of, and giving texture to, the trajectory of the life course” (Squire, Davis, Esin, Andrews, Haarrison, Hyden & Hyden 2015: 77). In order to retell and reconstruct the stories told as meaningful as possible, major life events of participants are taken into account by analysing participants’ biographies.

The study focuses on experience-centered narrative research. Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou (2008) describe experience - centered narrative research as being sequential in time and meaningful. Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou (2008) represent the view that narrative research is sequential in time and meaningful, it is the means of human sense-making, it involves some reconstruction of stories across times and places. Narratives cannot be repeated exactly, since words never mean the same thing twice, and stories are performed differently in different social contexts. It addresses themes, rather than clauses. “The focus is on accounts that construct emotions, worldviews, characters or events in ways that illuminate why particular accounts are produced in particular ways – i.e. on sense-making processes” (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou 2008: 67).

In this study the holistic approach is preferred – the person as a whole is explored.

## 2.1 NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

According to Mārtinsone, Pipere, Kamerāde (2016) narrative analysis requires in depth texts in order to uncover person's identity or essential aspects of his/ her life. In order to gather in depth texts, the author of this Master's Paper conducted narrative interviews and additionally asked the research participants to provide biographical documents.

“A narrative can be a metaphor for a life course, a developmental theory, a reference to a totalizing cultural force, and/or the method for interpreting oral or written narrative discourse” (Daiute and Lightfoot 2004: x). For the purpose of this study a narrative is used as a method for interpreting oral and written text.

According to Daiute and Lightfoot (2004) narrative research is done because of four main reasons:

1. It allows to examine phenomena, issues, and people's lives holistically;
2. Social histories that influence identity and development can be explored;
3. Relations between self and society can be illuminated;
4. The infiltration of value and evaluation into the research process is permitted.

In this study narrative research is used because it allows to explore individual experiences holistically.

Mārtinsone, Pipere, Kamerāde (2016) note that narrative analysis normally is not a detailed sentence by sentence analysis as it is with discourse analysis. In this study the analysis is done holistically. The gathered material is read several times to get the main idea. First impressions are noted. The main themes of the narrative are determined and analysed. The themes are reexamined several times in order to identify the main themes. Mārtinsone, Pipere, Kamerāde (2016) describe steps of narrative analysis:

1. Reading and getting to know the text. It requires to analyze the interview transcript in detail in order to get familiar with the text. It is advised to read the transcript six times. In this study the interview transcripts were read several times in order to get familiar with the text.

2. Defining the meaningful concepts. The main elements of narration should be covered. Mārtinsone, Pipere, Kamerāde (2016) describe three fields that should be explored:

- 1) Tone of the narrative – it is characteristic for the whole narrative, it can be distinguished by the content of the narrative or by the type and form how it is told. In

this study the attention is paid more to the content of the narrative than to the type and form.

2) Image of the narrative – when telling stories each person uses a unique form of imagery. A person can use personally important images, symbols or metaphors. Researcher should ask the following questions: Are they rooted in the family? Are they based on broader cultural context? etc.

3) Themes – what themes dominate in the narrative?

3. Determining the tone of the narrative. It can be determined by the content of the narrative or by the manner and style in which the narrative is told. It is quite subjective analysis.

4. Determining the themes and images of the narrative. Researcher should be searching simultaneously for both themes and images, as overlapping is possible. Researcher can use following interpretative perspectives:

1) storyline – fable

2) holistical content perspective. What are the main parts of the narrative, and how they come together with the whole narrative? Reading the narrative repeatedly, several themes will appear, and some of them will reappear several times (the importance of those themes will be pointed out). At the same time, it is the task of the researcher to determine the main theme of the narrative – meaningful, important theme, which is characteristic to the whole story.

3) holistical form perspective. This approach focuses on form rather than content. What is the storyline of the narrative? Mārtinsone, Pipere, Kamerāde (2016) refer to Hiles and Čermak (2008) who describe four main narrative categories:

1) love – that rather means approval of social order than what is done with it;

2) comedy – destruction and restoration of social order;

3) tragedy – involves the loss of social order;

4) satire – involves cynical challenge of social order.

Creswell (2007) describes two approaches to narrative analysis. The first approach involves analyzing text data for five elements of plot structure, i.e., characters, setting, problem, actions, and resolution. The second approach involves analyzing the data for three elements:

1) interaction (social and personal);

- 2) continuity (past, present and future);
- 3) situation (physical places or the storyteller's places).

Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber (1998) offer a model for the classification and organization of the types of narrative analysis. They state that there are two main independent dimensions for reading, interpreting and analysing life stories and other narrative materials:

1. Holistic versus categorical approaches;
2. Content versus form.

These two dimensions consist of four modes of reading a narrative, as follows:

1. The holistic-content reading – the entire story is taken into account and focus is on its content;
2. The holistic-form reading – the complete life story is also looked at but the focus is on its formal aspects rather than its contents;
3. Categorical-content reading – focus is “on the content of the narrative as manifested in separate parts of the story, irrespective of the context of the complete story”( Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber 1998: 16);
4. Categorical-form reading – focus is on formal aspects of separate sections or categories of a life story.

In this study the holistic-content-reading method is preferred. The main parts of the narratives are identified. The major themes that are characteristic to the whole story are determined. The narratives are read several times in order to enable the identification of major themes. Some themes are regrouped or removed after reexamination.

## **2.2 THE NARRATIVE INTERVIEW**

According to Bauer and Gaskell (2000) during the narrative interview the interviewee is encouraged to tell a story about some significant event in their life and social context.

Bauer and Gaskell (2000) describe story-telling as a self-generating schema with three main characteristics:

1. Detailed texture. The less listner knows, the more detailed information will be given. Story-telling is close to events. The author of this Master's Paper is not familiar with the research participants, thus there is no prior knowledge involved.

2. Relevance fixation. The account of events is selective. It unfolds around thematic centres that reflect what the narrator considers relevant. The research participants revealed details of their experiences which they considered as relevant, and main themes appeared in all of the stories.

3. Closing of the Gestalt. A core event in the story has to have a beginning, a middle and an end. This threefold structure can be seen in a collected written stories from the research participants.

Bauer and Gaskell (2000) describe narrative interview as a form of unstructured, in-depth interview with specific features. Pre-structuring the interview is avoided. Most interviews follow the question-response schema. The objective of narrative interview is to elicit a less imposed rendering of the teller's perspective, therefore the interviewer should influence the interview process only minimally. It involves story-telling and listening. Bauer and Gaskell (2000) point out that "the perspective of the interviewee is best revealed in stories where the informant is using his or her own spontaneous language in the narration of events" (Bauer and Gaskell 2000: 61). However, it is not to deny that a narrative has a formal structure, it follows a self-generating schema.

Bauer and Gaskell (2000) summarize the basic steps of the narrative interview as follows:

1. Preparation: it is a time-consuming process to prepare for narrative interview. Researcher needs to be familiar with the field of the research. Exmanent questions are formulated.

2. Initiation – the context of the research is explained to the interviewee. The permission to record the interview is obtained. The procedure is explained – uninterrupted story-telling, questioning phase and so on. Central topic is introduced and it should trigger the process of narration.

3. Main narration – the narration must not be interrupted until the interviewee indicates the end of the story. Only non-verbal encouragement to continue story-telling is allowed. Note taking is allowed if it does not interfere with the narration. Non-verbal or paralinguistic support and showing interest must be avoided ('hmm', 'yes', 'Oh', 'I see'). When the interviewee signals the end of the story, interviewer may try for anything else: 'is this all you want to tell me?' or 'is there anything else you want to say?'

4. Questioning phase – questions concerning events should be asked (‘what happened before/after/then?’) No why questions, no opinion and attitude questions.

5. Concluding talk – the recording is stopped and why - questions are now allowed. During small talk interesting discussions can develop. It is advisable to have a notebook to summarize the contents of the small-talk immediately after the interview.

However, it must be noted, that an interviewee might have a hidden agenda that is beyond the interviewer’s control, therefore the study reflects the author’s interpretation of the interview situation.

As Bauer and Gaskell (2000) point out that the boundary between the narrative interview and semi-structured interview may be occasionally blurred.

### **Telephone interview**

According to Holt (2010) a telephone interview for narrative research can be preferred, as there is a need to explicitly direct the conversation because of an absence of non-visual cues. Holt (2010) also notes that telephone-interviewing offers an increased availability of potential participants, therefore there is reduced concern about low response rates. The use of the telephone for narrative interviews can be viewed as a more practical option for more geographically dispersed participants (Holt, 2010).

“The lack of ‘ethnographic’ information derived from participants’ homes, communities and, indeed, their ‘selves’, enables the subsequent discourse analysis of data to ‘stay at the level of the text’. No ‘contextual’ data can be added, as there is not any available” (Holt 2010:115).

The use of the telephone enables the participant to control the privacy of the conversation.

The use of the telephone provides participants with a resource to both control their own social space and to protect them from being interrupted by other family members – a resource which would not have been available in face-to-face interview encounters.

As Holt (2010) concludes telephone interviewing can produce rich and detailed data and this method should not be considered as ‘second best.’

### **Document analysis**

Curricula vitae of research participants are analysed in order to confirm or disconfirm the information obtained from narrative interviews. Robson (2002) points out the advantages of document analysis as a data collection method:

“1. They are unobtrusive and non-reactive. There is no need to be in direct contact with the person(s) producing the trace.

2. They can provide valuable cross-validation of other measures, either in support or disconfirmation of them.

3. They encourage ingenuity and creativity on the part of the enquirer” ( Robson 2002: 349).

### **Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is used in order to select a research sample. The aim of the questionnaire was to select the research participants among the qualified English language teachers who have or have had work experience in other fields than teaching and the ones who are on the break from teaching. As Robson (2002) points out the requirement for designing a questionnaire is that it is known what kind of information is being collected. According to Robson (2002) the questions of the questionnaire should be designed to help to achieve the goals of the research and in particular, help to answer the research question.

### **Content analysis**

The content analysis (interviews and the results of studies published in newspaper and magazine articles) is used to gain an insight into teachers’ perceptions of teacher’s work and career from various perspectives. Content analysis is used for triangulation purposes.

## **3. RESEARCH ON THE TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER’S WORK AND CAREER**

In order to select the research sample a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was carried out. The aim of the questionnaire was to select the research participants among the qualified English language teachers who have or have had work experience in other fields than teaching and the ones who are on the break from teaching. The questionnaire was sent to 137 former students of the English language at the University of Latvia from study years 2007-2017 with the aim to find out about their working experience. According to Robson (2002) the questions of the questionnaire should be designed to help to achieve the goals of the research and in particular, help to answer the research question. 89 responses were received to the questionnaire.

The first question “Have you got a teacher’s qualification?” (see Appendix 2) was aimed at finding out about the respondents’ qualification. 95.5%, 85 out of 89 respondents have got teacher’s qualification, which means that 4 respondents didn’t obtain teacher’s qualification. The second question “Have you started work as a school teacher after receiving teacher’s qualification?” (see Appendix 2) was aimed at finding out how many of the respondents had tried to work as school teachers. This question was asked assuming that there might be respondents who had never tried working as a teacher. 67.4%, 60 out of 89 respondents had started working as a school teacher after receiving teacher’s qualification, whereas 29 out of 89 respondents had not started working as a teacher, which might indicate to the disappointment experienced during their practice time. The third question “Why did you choose to study to become a teacher?” was aimed at finding out about the respondents’ motivation. 88 responses were received to this question. The data collected from the responses can be summarized in the following table:

**Table 3.1 Responses to the question “Why did you choose to study to become a teacher?”**

<b>Reasons for choosing the profession</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
Interest about the teacher’s profession	42
Other	26
Parents wanted me to learn this profession	10
Wasn’t accepted to other study programmes	9
My teachers/ career consultants advised me to learn this profession	1

The fourth question “How would you define your current occupation? (please choose one or several answers)” was aimed at finding out the respondents’ occupation. 89 responses were received to this question.

**Table 3.2 Responses to the question “How would you define your current occupation? (please choose one or several answers)”**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
School Teacher	32
School Teacher + Private Teacher	5
Private Teacher + Other	2
Private Teacher + Teacher of the Courses	5
School Teacher + Teacher of the Courses	2
Private Teacher + Teacher of the Courses + Oher	1

School Teacher + Other	1
Teacher of the Courses + Other	2
School Teacher + Private Teacher + Teacher of the Courses	1
Private Teacher + working in a field not related to the teacher's work	1
Teacher of the Courses + working in a field not related to the teacher's work	2
Currently not working	3
Private Teacher	2
Other	10
Teacher of the Courses	3
Working in a field not related to the teacher's work	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>

The data collected in the *Table 3.2* show that 41 out of 89 respondents are working as a school teacher. 32 out of 41 school teachers have no other occupation, while, on the contrary, five out of 41 school teachers are also private teachers, two are also the teachers of the courses, one has another occupation as well, and one is also a private teacher and a teacher of the courses. So, it can be concluded that majority of the school teachers do not have other occupations. This could be seen as an indicator of the job satisfaction.

20 out of 89 respondents are working in a field not related to the teacher's work, while one respondent is also working as a private teacher and two of the respondents are also teaching in courses. 10 out of 89 respondents didn't fall under any of the offered categories and defined their current occupation as 'other.'

3 out of 89 respondents are not working. The respondents provided the following reasons for not working: 1. *Child care leave*;

2. *Searching for a new profession*;

3. *No answer*.

Less than 50% (46.1%) of this questionnaire respondents are working in mainstream schools as school teachers. What are doing the other half of the respondents? 22.5% of respondents are working in with education unrelated spheres. In order to answer the research question "What are the reasons for studying teacher education, but choosing another career path" the in-depth interviews were conducted with those respondents who indicated as not working as school teachers.

The fifth question "If you work as a teacher, what makes you stay in the profession?" was aimed at finding out about the respondents' motivation. 73 responses were received.

**Table 3.3 Responses to the question “If you work as a teacher, what makes you stay in the profession?”**

<b>Motivation</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
Love for the profession	22
Love for the subject you are teaching	18
Family reasons	1
Stable income	15
Other	17

The sixth question “If your occupation is not related to teacher’s work, please describe your occupation? (please provide your e-mail address)” was aimed at selecting the research sample. The following participants were selected as research sample: assistant to the chairman of the board, teacher assistant (students with special needs), e-learning specialist, translator, trainer in corporative sector, maternity leave and student services co-ordinator. 32 respondents provided the following information to the question (*for confidentiality reasons the e-mail addresses are removed*):

**Table 3.4 Responses to the question “If your occupation is not related to teacher’s work, please describe your occupation? (please provide your e-mail address)”**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Assistant to the chairman of the board	1
Make-up artist	1
Teacher assistant (students with special needs)	1
Sales specialist	1
Medicine	1
Writer (poetry and literature)	1
E-learning specialist	1
Translator	3
Warehouse intake supervisor	1
Foreign student recruitment	1
Middle level manager	1
Maternity leave	2
Education related sphere	1
Student services co-ordinator	1
SPA specialist	1
English language teacher for adults	1
Gardening	1
Government	1
Pre-school teacher	1
Human resources	1
Advertising agency	1
Trainer in corporative sector	1
Project management	1
Senior specialist in education co-ordination	1

department	
Self-employed (interpreter, jewellery artist and other creative activities)	1
Looking for a new profession	1
Librarian	1
	Total 32

*Table 3.4* reveals interesting data on how some of the respondents see the teacher's profession. The following occupations were named as not related to the teacher's work by some of the respondents:

1. Teacher assistant (students with special needs)
2. E-learning specialist
3. Foreign student recruitment
4. Education related sphere
5. Student services co-ordinator
6. English language teacher for adults
7. Pre-school teacher
8. Trainer in corporative sector
9. Senior specialist in education co-ordination department

Indeed, these professions are not directly connected with English language teacher's work, but still the data reveal that 9 out of 32 respondents have remained in educational sector at some level. In the study, these occupations will be referred to as with education related sphere.

The seventh question "If you are not working as a teacher, what are the reasons?" was aimed at finding out about the respondents' motivation. 39 responses were received.

**Table 3.5 Responses to the question "If you are not working as a teacher, what are the reasons?"**

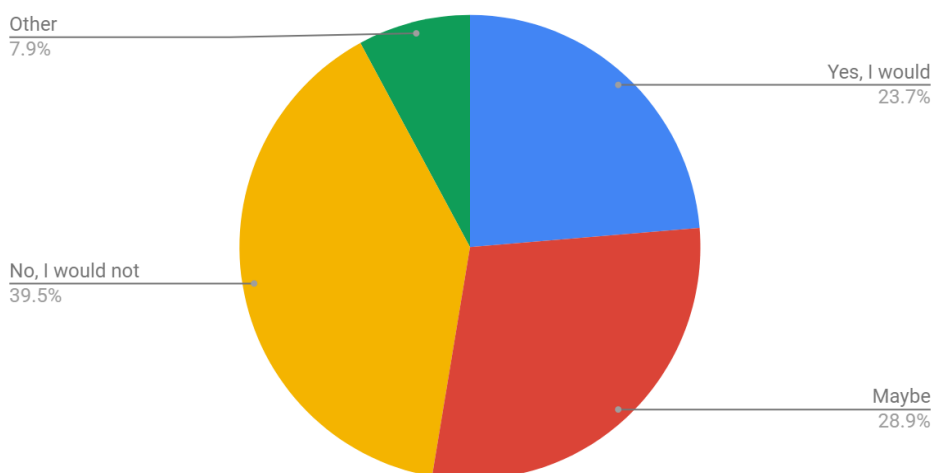
<b>Reasons for not working as a teacher</b>	<b>Number of the respondents</b>
Other	14
Dissatisfied with the teacher's salary	10
Too much pressure	8
Low prestige of the teacher's profession	5
Due to family matters	2

The majority of the respondents (35.9 %), 14 out of 39 respondents answered the question with "other." What exactly is meant under "other" will be explored in this study by carrying out in-depth interviews with the selected research sample. The data

reveal that 10 out of 39 respondents are not working as teachers because of financial reasons.

In order to find out respondents' future aims the participants were asked whether they would consider to return or start working in a teacher's profession. 38 responses were received.

**If you are not working as a teacher, would you consider to return or start working in a teacher's profession?**



*Figure 3.4* Responses to the question “**If you are not working as a teacher, would you consider to return or start working in a teacher’s profession?**”

The data show that the majority (39.5 %) 15 out of 38 respondents would not consider to return or start working in a teacher’s profession. 11 respondents would maybe consider. Only 9 respondents would definitely consider. The gathered data from this question, revealed the necessity to explore the main reasons for the reluctance to work as a teacher. This will be explored in the study with in depth interviews. The gathered data also reveal that the majority of respondents – 20 (52.6%) out of 38, are not completely lost to the teaching profession.

The ninth question “If you would consider start/ return working in a teacher’s profession, what should change?” was aimed at finding out about the respondents’ motivation. 46 responses were received.

*Table 3.7* Responses to the question “**If you would consider start/return working in a teacher’s profession, what should change?**”

<b>If you would consider to start/return working in a teacher’s profession, what should change?</b>	<b>Number of the Respondents</b>
Government’s attitude	3

Payment system	23
Work assessment system	6
Content of the study programme	2
Other	12

The majority of the respondents (50%) would consider to start/ return working in a teacher’s profession if the payment system would change. 12 (26.1%) out of 46 respondents replied with “other.”

### 3.1 RESEARCH SAMPLE

The research sample was selected by analysing the respondents’ answers from the questionnaire. The initial sampling was done by focusing on the required category ‘qualified English language teachers who work in other spheres’. The focus was put on those respondents who provided their contact details and expressed willingness to participate in the study. The responses of selected respondents are summarized in the tables. A detailed justification of the selected research sample follows after each table.

*Table 3.1.1 Research sample: Research participant No. 1*

Gender	Female
Age	25
Marital status	In a relationship
Graduated as an English language teacher from the University of Latvia	yes
Year of graduation from the university	2017
After the graduation started working as a teacher	yes
Chose to study pedagogy	Interest in English language
Current occupation	Merchandiser at the fashion store
Not working as a teacher because of	Personal reasons
Would consider to start/return to teaching	Yes, maybe
Would consider to return to teaching if.....	other

Sindija (*for confidentiality reasons the name is changed*) was selected as research sample based on e-mail correspondence with her. An introductory e-mail was sent to the respondents with the attached link to the questionnaire. Sindija was one of those respondents who chose to email the author of this Paper directly without providing much details on the questionnaire. Sindija e-mailed saying that she worked as a merchandiser at the fashion store. In order to answer the research questions of the Paper, and most importantly the question “*Why would one study teacher education, but work in other spheres?*” it was important to select Sindija for in depth interviews, as by telling her story she could help to answer the research question.

**Table 3.1.2 Research sample: Research participant No. 2**

Gender	Female
Age	26
Marital status	widow
Graduated as an English language teacher from the University of Latvia	yes
Year of graduation from the university	2016
After the graduation started working as a teacher	yes
Chose to study pedagogy	Interest in English language
Current occupation	Maternity leave
Not working as a teacher because of	Family reasons (child care)
Would consider to start/return to teaching	Yes
Would consider to return to teaching if.....	the government's attitude would change

Liene (*for confidentiality reasons the name is changed*) was chosen as a research sample based on her responses in the questionnaire. Prior to the maternity leave, Liene was working as a school teacher. In order to explore the teachers' perceptions on teacher's work and career, it is necessary to look at the research questions from various perspectives. As Liene is on the break from teaching, it was important, for the purpose, of this study to explore Liene's perceptions of teacher's work.

**Table 3.1.3 Research sample: Research participant No. 3**

Gender	Female
Age	33
Marital status	married
Graduated as an English language teacher from the University of Latvia	no
Year of graduation from the university	Left studies in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> year
After the graduation started working as a teacher	no
Chose to study pedagogy	Wasn't accepted into other programs
Current occupation	Assistant Teacher (Students with special needs)
Not working as a teacher because of	other
Would consider to start/return to teaching	Yes, maybe
Would consider to return to teaching if.....	the payment system would change

Vija (*for confidentiality reasons the name is changed*) didn't fall automatically under the required category 'qualified English language teachers who work in other fields'. The attention was drawn immediately to the fact that she was one of those 4 out of 89 respondents who didn't graduate as a teacher from the University of Latvia, but

still worked as an assistant teacher. Vija's case seemed to create an excellent opportunity for exploration of the construction of teacher's professional identity. Although, she hasn't qualified as a teacher, she still works as an assistant teacher. Moreover, according to her response, she chose to study teacher education because wasn't accepted into other programmes, but still has remained in educational sector as an assistant teacher. And she said that she would maybe consider to start/return to teaching. Her responses seemed to be contradictory and therefore an excellent material for further research into the essence of teacher's professional identity. According to Creswell (2007) the sampling can change during a study and researchers need to be flexible.

**Table 3.1.4 Research sample: Research participant No. 4**

Gender	Female
Age	33
Marital status	-
Graduated as an English language teacher from the University of Latvia	yes
Year of graduation from the university	2008
After the graduation started working as a teacher	yes
Chose to study pedagogy	Interest in pedagogy
Current occupation	School teacher + translator
Not working as a teacher because of	Dissatisfied with the teacher's salary
Would consider to start/return to teaching	Is working as a teacher part-time
Would consider to return to teaching if.....	Work assessment system would change

Nate (*for confidentiality reasons the name is changed*) indicated that she was a school teacher and a translator. Nate was chosen as research sample as she fell under the required category.

**Table 3.1.5 Research sample: Research participant No. 5**

Gender	Female
Age	37
Marital status	divorced
Graduated as an English language teacher from the University of Latvia	yes
Year of graduation from the university	2007
After the graduation started working as a teacher	yes
Chose to study pedagogy	Other
Current occupation	Assistant to the Chairman of the Board
Not working as a teacher because of	Unsatisfied with the teacher's salary

Would consider to start/return to teaching	No, I would not
Would consider to return to teaching if.....	the payment system would change

Santa (*for confidentiality reasons the name is changed*) noted her current occupation as an assistant to the Chairman of the Board, so automatically she fell under the required category for the sampling strategy.

**Table 3.1.6 Research sample: Research participant No. 6**

Gender	Female
Age	32
Marital status	-
Graduated as an English language teacher from the University of Latvia	yes
Year of graduation from the university	2009
After the graduation started working as a teacher	yes
Chose to study pedagogy	-
Current occupation	On maternity leave (e-Learning Specialist)
Not working as a teacher because of	-
Would consider to start/return to teaching	-
Would consider to return to teaching if.....	-

Eva (*for confidentiality reasons the name is changed*) didn't provide her contact details in the questionnaire, so it was impossible to gather her responses from the questionnaire. Eva contacted the author of the Paper on Facebook and provided with her e-mail address in case the author of the Paper should have any questions. Eva seemed to be very eager for her story to be heard. As Cresswell (2007) contends the individuals need to have stories to tell about their lived experiences. Eva wanted to tell her story. So, the sampling strategy in Eva's case was opportunistic. Prior to the maternity leave, Eva was working as e-learning specialist at a pharmacy company.

**Table 3.1.7 Research sample: Research participant No. 7**

Gender	Female
Age	35
Marital status	In a relationship
Graduated as an English language teacher from the University of Latvia	yes
Year of graduation from the university	2007
After the graduation started working as a teacher	yes
Chose to study pedagogy	Parents wanted me to study pedagogy

Current occupation	Trainer in corporative sector
Not working as a teacher because of	-
Would consider to start/return to teaching	No, I would not
Would consider to return to teaching if.....	-

Berta (*for confidentiality reasons the name is changed*) was selected based on her current occupation and willingness to participate in the study. Berta responded to the questionnaire as one of the last of the respondents. In the questionnaire Berta didn't mention the reasons for not working as a teacher. These reasons will be explored further in the study by conducting interviews.

*Table 3.1.8* **Research sample: Research participant No. 8**

Gender	Female
Age	33
Marital status	married
Graduated as an English language teacher from the University of Latvia	yes
Year of graduation from the university	2008
After the graduation started working as a teacher	no
Chose to study pedagogy	Interest about the teacher's profession
Current occupation	Student Services -Coordinator
Not working as a teacher because of	Dissatisfied with the teacher's salary
Would consider to start/return to teaching	Yes, I would
Would consider to return to teaching if.....	The payment system would change

Una (*for confidentiality reasons the name is changed*) provided her e-mail address in the questionnaire. She marked her current occupation as not related to teacher's work.

As per the sampling strategy eight research participants were selected as research sample of the study.

The sampling strategy revealed the following groups of the research sample:

1. Qualified school teachers, but currently working in with the teacher's work unrelated sphere – Sindija and Santa;
2. School teacher on maternity leave – Liene;
3. Unqualified teacher who works in with the teacher's work-related sphere – Vija;
4. Part-time school teacher and part-time translator – Nate;
5. Qualified teachers who are working in with the teacher's work-related spheres – Eva, Berta and Una.

### **3.2 DATA COLLECTION AND NARRATIVE ANALYSIS**

Data collection was done in three stages:

1. Telephone interviewing;
2. Follow-up interviews;
3. CV analysis.

Data collection stages lasted from February 2019 till May 2019. The telephone interviewing stage began on February, 27 when the first research participant was interviewed. After each telephone interview, a concluding talk with the research participant was done and the notes were taken. The telephone interviews were transcribed. The transcripts were read at least six times in order for a pattern of the story to emerge. The transcripts revealed the need for the gaps of the stories to be filled, therefore each research participant was invited for the follow-up interview. The questions for the follow up interviews were compiled based on the needs of each particular case. Some of the research participants preferred to provide their answers in a written form per e-mail. In one case the follow-up interview was declined. Follow-up interviews were not transcribed, but the notes were taken. The written correspondence with the research participants was analysed. After follow-up stage, the research participants were asked to provide their CVs for the study in order to support, confirm or disconfirm the analysis results from the telephone interviewing and follow-up interview stage. All research participants provided their CVs.

The collected data were analysed using a narrative analysis approach. Eight stories were written by the author based on the collected data from the research participants. All names used in this study were changed to protect the research participants' privacy. After each story follows a description of stages in which the story was divided into in order to provide an overview of life stages, and thus facilitating the interpretation of the story as a whole.

Each story was analysed for content in a holistic manner. The process can be summarized as follows:

1. The material was read several times until the pattern of the story emerged.
2. Initial impression of the case was put into writing. Exceptions to the general impression were noted.

3. Major themes were identified and summarized in a table. According to Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou (2008) the analysis of major themes is one of the central elements of narrative research.

4. Conclusions were noted. A special attention was paid to episodes that seemed to contradict the theme in terms of content.

Detailed description of the data collection stages will follow with analysis of each case.

Several symbols appear in the text below as follows:

- Brackets [-] signify the addition of a missing word or phrase by the author.
- Parentheses (-) signify the addition of a descriptive or explanatory word or phrase by the author.
- Three periods - ... - signify a pause in the flow of speech.
- Quotation marks in italics signifies a direct quote by the narrator.
- New paragraphs signify change of subject

### **3.2.1 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT NO. 1**

Sindija, graduated from the university as English teacher in 2017. She left teacher's profession after several attempts at teaching at school. She is currently working as a merchandiser in a fashion store. She lives with her fiancée.

Sindija was interviewed twice. First, a telephone interview was held with Sindija on February, 27, follow up interview was conducted on March, 3. She was interviewed in person.

Sindija was asked to tell about the stage after the graduation from the university.

She told the author of the Master's Paper that she started to work as a full-time teacher when she was in the 4th year at the university. Before she had worked in kindergarden as a teacher, but that was only part-time. After graduation from the university, Sindija wanted to find work closer to the place where she lived, so after the first school year she decided not to continue teaching at that school. Then she was offered to work at the Gymnasium, where she stayed only for one month due to health issues. She remembered being on sick leave until November. Her doctor recommended her not to go back to school. In the follow up interview Sindija was asked to tell more about this stage. She said she couldn't handle the pressure, but she realizes now that it was her who put that pressure on herself. She said she probably had to talk to someone

about her problems. It is not easy for Sindija to talk about such things. The school environment was supportive, teachers's room was very nice. One of her colleagues was a former university lecturer and Sindija felt she could turn to her. But in a follow up interview, Sindija recalled one episode from this stage, which doesn't look like a supportive working environment "... *I did not have my own cabinet, and then I had my lessons in the X teacher's (for confidentiality reasons the name of the teacher is not specified) cabinet. I had the last lesson and went home and checked my phone and saw that she had called me. I wondered why? I called her back and she started to scream at me down the phone, there was some coffee spilled in the classroom, how you didn't even check your pupils! Are you controlling them in the classroom? Ok, maybe she was worried, but I was like, why am I screamed at?*"

The first job Sindija could find was at the office as a stand-in – to replace someone when he/she is off sick etc. She had very little to do and was bored the whole time, so stayed there only for 2 months. Everyone around her had advised her to stay because the salary was quite good, but she decided that she wanted to go back to teaching at school. So in January she started to work at X school (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the school is not specified*). After one semester, she finally decided that "*I will stop teaching at school*". In the follow up interview she was asked to tell more about this stage. She told me she applied for teaching position at that school, because the school was very close to her place. "*X school (for confidentiality reasons the name of the school is not specified) was very close to my place, so I sent my CV, the next day I had an interview. I went to the interview and the interview was so peculiar. I was interviewed by the school principal who retired last year, and in an interview, he asked me all the standard questions and then he asked me if I was smoking... I said I was smoking because I was still smoking. You know, he says, in our schools such teachers are called 'sluts' (laughs). It perplexed me, but I needed a job at that time, so went to work there...*"

Generally, she liked it there, she was able to manage her students, but there was one difficult 6th grade class – she didn't manage to establish contact with them. She recalled one particular episode. "*I had so to say a half cabinet there which was an informatics cabinet at the same time, I had computers in the classroom and the children had drawn something on them, and there was a teacher of informatics who also happened to be a learning manager or something. She used to raise her voice at me*

*constantly. And I really don't like adult people raising their voice.*" After one month, she started to doubt her decision, if it was the right decision to start teaching. She had one particularly difficult student, she was scared to go to class because of him " *I waited for those lessons completely with torture. I couldn't do anything there. I used to call my mum. We couldn't establish contact at all. And yes, then I knew that at the end of semester I will leave.*"

Now, the only thing she does in connection with education is teaching English in courses.

Sindija was also asked what made her want to return to teaching at school after sick leave. Sindija said she liked working at school very much. She didn't like working from home. She organised her work so that she came in early in the mornings, so she didn't have to bring work home. She said she liked working with children, teenagers in particular.

The first year at teaching was psychologically very demanding. The transfer from small school to a big school wasn't easy for Sindija. She felt under pressure and couldn't handle the situation. The expectations were very high at that school, very controlling and strict teaching environment. As Sindija said, she broke down under pressure. Sindija felt she lacked in self-confidence " *I didn't feel very confident about myself.*"

She chose to study pedagogy because of the English language, only in last year at university she realized she could try teaching. Initially, she didn't want to become a teacher. She tried at another high school first, but nothing was interesting for her there, so she chose to study English.

Sindija speaks a lot about bureaucracy in schools, and that there are many teachers who don't want to change.

She has been living with her fiancée for 2 years. During her study time she used to live together with her friend who is also a teacher.

In a follow up interview, Sindija was asked to tell more about her current job. She said she was working as a merchandiser at a fashion store. She chose this job because there were two things she was interested in: pedagogy and fashion. A contradiction surfaces in Sindija's story here. Previously Sindija said that she went to study pedagogy only because of the English language, but in the follow-up interview she said that she was interested in pedagogy. Her work as a merchandiser is physically demanding and she enjoys it. She works from 7am till 3.30pm. Her duties are not connected with

customer service. She has to re-organise the store, do the reports, train the new colleagues. Although, she likes her job, she is in conflict with herself, because the fashion industry is not environmentally friendly.

Sindija's mum is in medicine. She doesn't know her father. Her grandmother used to be a pre-school teacher. The first 2 years at the university she struggled. Only in the last year she realized that she liked pedagogy. Her mum was very happy when she chose to study pedagogy and when she started to work at school. Her mum thought it was a perfect job for her. But she didn't blame her when she decided to stop teaching either.

Currently, Sindija has no plans to return to teaching, but she is open to it. She might consider it in future.

During the whole conversation with Sindija the feeling of disappointment, regrets and contradictions emerged.

Sindija's story can be divided into following stages:

1. Teaching during studies at university
2. First attempt at teaching since graduation from university
3. Break from teaching
4. Second attempt at teaching at high school no X.
5. New career

Major themes

Sindija's story suggests the following themes:

1. Doubts/Confidence issues
2. Regrets
3. Teaching environment
4. Personal problems/issues

#### **Doubts/Confidence issues**

Throughout her story Sindija expresses doubts on numerous occasions. After the graduation from the university, before she started her first full-time school teacher job, she had doubts. But it was her university lecturer who recommended her to that school. So she says "*How could I not accept it, if my university lecturer recommended me to the school's director, so I went there.*" Sindija explained, that she liked her university lecturer very much, so could not refuse.

She told me that she doesn't like rating students. When she was asked if she would consider working in alternative schools. She said she wanted, but couldn't say why she hadn't tried. *"Yes, I remember there was some kind of an offer in Valdorfa school, I thought maybe to apply, but I don't know why I was somehow afraid."* When talking about her first teaching experience since graduation, she doubts herself *"maybe when I went to that gymnasium I felt somehow unsure of myself."* She describes her feelings *"all the time I had a feeling, that I had to talk to someone, but I didn't know who to turn to, it wasn't clear to me..."*

When Sindija discusses her break from teaching and the decision to go back teaching, she sounds unsure of herself again *"In all that inaction I realized that maybe I wanted to return to teaching."* She frequently uses such expressions as "I don't know", "maybe" which indicates her having doubts.

Even when Sindija speaks of her decision to study pedagogy, she says *"I wasn't sure whether to go to study philology or pedagogy, I don't know why I chose pedagogy."*

At the end of the conversation, Sindija said that she used to switch schools when she was at high school. It could indicate that already at that time she doubted her decisions and couldn't decide what she wanted. According to Marcia's typology of "identity statuses", Sindija could have an identity status "diffusion", as it doesn't seem that she had developed a firm identity yet.

### **Regrets**

Sindija says she probably shouldn't have gone to work at gymnasium *"from the small school straight to a big school. The expectations were very high there and the bureaucracy is on a much higher level, certain amount of marks should be given each month, everything very strict and controlled. That was it that I crumbled under pressure, let's say so."* It can be seen by her body language and by how her voice trembles when she speaks about it, that it is a very painful subject to her. When Sindija recalls her first school teacher experience, she says she shouldn't have left without talking to someone about this. She went on a sick leave and told that she had a flu. She says she cannot even remember if she told the real reason after all. The fact that she can not even remember that, shows the degree of stress she was under during that time. It becomes apparent from the conversation that Sindija regrets her decision to accept work offer at gymnasium.

## **Teaching Environment**

Sindija mentions the teaching environment on several occasions during the conversation. In the first school she used to work, the teacher's room *"was very beautiful, sense of community, they had lunch together, supportive environment."*

She describes her colleagues as very supportive *"it happened so that one of my former lecturers from university worked there and I had a feeling, I could go to her and entrust something, if I had something on my mind, but it wasn't like that with emotional things, it was regarding work related things, yes, there was a really good atmosphere."*

When she describes her experience at another school, she remembers one specific episode: *"I had, so to say, a half cabinet which was the informatics cabinet at the same time. I had computers in the classroom and then the kids had drawn something on them and the IT teacher, who also happened to be a learning manager used to scream at me and I don't like adult people raising their voice. Yes, in a loud voice..."*

Sindija describes another episode. Sindija didn't have her own classroom, so had to switch different classrooms all the time. On one occasion she had a lesson in X teacher's classroom *(for confidentiality reasons the name of the teacher is not indicated)* and apparently there was a coffee spilled during Sindija's lesson. Sindija describes how her colleague called her and screamed at her down the phone. Sindija was getting blamed for not controlling her students. Sindija says it made her cry.

Sindija speaks about one occasion when she visited her friend who works as a school teacher. Her friend took her to her classroom. Sindija visited this school for the first time and she was surprised how beautiful and modern it was from the inside. She describes the classrooms as *"very cosy, not that usual coldness."* It made her want to work there.

## **Personal problems/issues**

During the conversation with Sindija, she mentions her personal problems several times. She remembers herself as a teenager and says *"I used to have issues with authority, it seemed to me often, that other people do bad things or do them incorrectly, and I don't understand it. Secondly, it was very difficult for me to do things which seem to me meaningless. Other people say you must do them, but I cannot, and I know many students have this type of problem."*

When Sindija remembers the time when she worked at the office and was considering going back to school, she says: *"Then I went [back to school] and realized,*

*that I am that person myself who excludes me from others, who shuts those doors and doesn't want to be with other. I don't know, why it is like this.*" She explains further *"I've never been a very social person. It is not easy for me to establish a [deeper contact], I can sustain friendly relationship, but not a deeper contact."* It becomes apparent that Sindija had thought about this a lot, as she concludes *"I realize it is my own fault, it turns out."*

Sindija compares her practise time with teaching after graduation, and says that she enjoyed that they had teacher seminars where they could discuss their problems. Whereas as a qualified teacher, it is more difficult, as you don't want another teacher to think that you are a bad teacher.

Sindija tells more about her personal problems. She says she would go back to teaching if she could promise herself that she will change, but she cannot promise this. Even more, she was advised to visit psychotherapist, to have someone from the side who could tell her *"what my thoughts are, and what is really."* She uses the metaphor to address this problem *"I cannot promise myself that I will change and go there and will get involved and go to eat pretzels when everyone eats pretzels. I don't know."*

Finally, Sindija admits that she cannot do it [*to teach at school*] because *"literally every little thing made me feel like, if I said something to a student, and then I thought what if I had traumatized him. I don't know."* As Sindija puts it *"I've always been in my head."* She analyses every little detail and that is putting a psychological pressure on her.

### **3.2.2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT NO. 2**

Liene is an English teacher on maternity leave. She is a widow and has a son who is 1,8 months old.

A telephone conversation was held with Liene on February, 28. In comparison with Sindija's interview, Liene's conversation went very differently. Whereas Sindija could not stop talking and wanted to speak, Liene needed encouragement and direction.

Liene started to work in the second semester of the first year at the university. After one semester she changed job and up until the graduation worked in another school. After the graduation she continued working at the same school. The only change was that she could work now on Fridays as well. She had been working there for 4 years until she went on maternity leave. She is not coming back to that school,

because her husband died one year ago, and now she needs to take care of her child. There is no place for a child in the kindergarden.

Throughout conversation Liene insists she would go back to work, if there was such an opportunity. She says she has some offers from schools, they want her, but she can not. Currently she is studying social work at Stradinu University. She went to study there together with some friends. She wants to use the skills and experience she gains during studies in her work as a teacher. She insists she doesn't want to change the profession. She remains trustful to teaching profession.

She chose to study pedagogy because of English. She is sure that almost everyone in her group had that reason. Although now, according to her almost everyone works in school.

The first year of teaching at school was challenging, but it helped that she could work for 7 months at a small private school – there were only 40 students and 10 teachers. That was valuable experience for her. All subsequent years were easier. She used to support her new colleagues, when they wanted to quit in the first year. Liene is confident, that she has chosen a right profession. She is missing her job while she is at home.

She has no teachers in her family.

Major themes

1. Circumstances
2. Teaching environment

### **3.2.3 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT NO. 3**

Vija is 33 years old. She works as a study support assistant in the UK. She is married and has one child. She didn't qualify as a teacher.

Vija is originally from Riga but has been living in United Kingdom for the past 10 years. She had married a local guy and has one child who is 3 years old. She moved from Latvia to England for job in autumn 2008. Before moving to England, Vija was studying for teacher's qualification at University in Riga, but didn't complete her studies. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> course she gave up her studies and moved to England.

A telephone conversation was held with Vija on March, 19. She told me that she was studying to become an English teacher at the university, but couldn't combine the studies with work. She was working in the hotel as an administrator to support herself.

The job involved shift work – she had day and night shifts, so it was nearly impossible to attend the lectures at the university, and in the end, she decided to quit the university – it was just before course work and teacher practise. So, she quit without the qualification. It was year 2008, the financial crises were at its height. Vija was affected by the financial crises and applied for jobs abroad through recruitment agency. In autumn 2008, she moved to United Kingdom. First, she had jobs she didn't want to talk about – they were - *'little, insignificant'* jobs, as she referred to those jobs. She didn't want to provide any details about them.

The next phase began when she met her future husband George. They quickly fell in love and got married. It was her husband who advised her to apply for the job as administrative assistant at school where he worked. Vija went for an interview, but wasn't offered that position, because *"I didn't have any experience in office work"*, but was offered another position as a study support assistant for students with special needs. Without questioning about this, Vija said that she thinks they must have liked her for giving her that job. Vija has been working as a study support assistant for 9 years now. Mainly, she works with autistic children aged between 16-18 years old. When she was asked if she had completed any courses to do that job, she replied *"in England you learn on the job, there is no such requirement to have a qualification"*. Although, she wanted to attend courses, but they were very expensive in England. She works at the mainstream school; *"the classes are not as big as in Latvia – only about 16 students in one class."* Her job is to attend to students with special needs. Normally she is assigned 1 or 2 students. She has to follow that student everywhere she or he goes. If the student goes to the bathroom, Vija needs to follow too. As Vija describes it, she is like a shadow to them. Sometimes those students don't want Vija to follow them, so they run away and hide. Vija's job is to look after them. Sometimes she has to attend to students who are inclined to self-harm. Vija needs to make sure that they don't harm themselves.

She also had one student who was visually impaired – Vija helped him with reading.

Vija loves her job, as it gives her the feeling of satisfaction and meaningfulness. As she says *"it is a joy for the soul, the feeling of being needed"*.

Throughout the conversation with Vija, she expressed several times that she regretted that she didn't finish her studies in Latvia. She said it was a mistake of being young. Her priorities weren't right at the time. Now, she wouldn't have left the studies.

She went back in time during the conversation and provided the details about her studies – she didn't like the methodology – she said it was very time - consuming, involved a lot of planning and she simply felt overwhelmed by all of it at the time. But now, reflecting on her past experience, she said, it wasn't that bad, she just had to sit down and do her studies. She chose her job in a hotel over her studies. '*How stupid of me!*' – are her exact words. She said she needed money, but now she recognises that there were other type of jobs she could have applied for, for example, part-time jobs or teaching jobs, which would have involved less time.

Her regret can be felt throughout the conversation. As this is a telephone conversation, there is no possibility to see her body language, but by how her voice trembles when she speaks about that time, it can be concluded that it is a painful subject for her. When asked, if she didn't want to study in England, she said it was too expensive.

When she started her studies at university in Latvia, initially she was in a budget group, she didn't have to finance her studies, but soon after was out of budget group and needed to finance her studies herself. Her father was a guarantor and had to repay the money to the bank, so the father was very angry with her for not completing the studies. Her mum according to Vija didn't mind that much. Her mum is a pre-school teacher. As Vija says, she might have inherited from her mum the gift for teaching, as she sometimes asks her mum for advice in relation to her job. Vija also recalled that she used to watch at home how her mum prepared materials for her students. This might have affected Vija's ability to work with children.

The conversation is interrupted by Vija's 3 year old son. Vija sends him back to dad by saying:

*"Gustavs, hold on, go back to the daddy, mummy is busy!"* ( my attention immediately is drawn to the fact that her son has a Latvian name - Gustavs).The fact that her son has a Latvian name, prompted the author of the Paper to ask Vija if she wanted to move back to Latvia. And, yes, as it was assumed, she confirmed. And even more, she told me that she and her family were already planning to move to Latvia next year in summer. Her husband works from home for a German company, so for him it doesn't really matter, where he is located. They had already been to Latvia to look for a house or land to buy. It was essential to ask that question in order to get additional information to support the study. Without encouragement she probably wouldn't have

told me. It was at the end of the conversation. She told me they wanted to move to Latvia because of what is happening in England at the moment “*brexit which might not even really happen and the killings. England is no longer a safe place to live.*”

Vija was also asked how often she visited Latvia. And once again, she referred to the money aspect – only once a year, because it is expensive for them to travel with a child – a three year old child needs a full price plane ticket. Although, the money aspect is not the only reason, she can travel only during school holidays.

The conversation ended with agreeing on keeping in touch. I intend to follow up on this conversation at the later stage.

Vija’s story can be read in the following stages:

1. Study time in Latvia
2. Moving to the United Kingdom
3. Meeting her future husband
4. Job as study support assistant

Major themes

Vija’s story suggests the following themes:

1. Money aspects
2. Regrets
3. Teaching environment
4. Support from others

#### **Money aspects**

During the conversation Vija mentioned money aspects on several occasions. She didn’t finish university because she couldn’t combine the studies with work. She went to work abroad because of the financial crises in 2008. When she was asked why she was not studying in England, once again the money aspect appeared – she said to study in England is very expensive. When she was asked how often she visited Latvia. She said not very often. She would like to come home more often, but it was very expensive to travel with a small child. Her son is 3 years old. Indeed, it is so that most airflight companies charge full ticket price for children from 2 years of age.

#### **Regrets**

Vija has regrets that she didn’t finish her studies in Latvia. She said she was immature at that time.

Personal reasons for career switch – Vija plans to return to Latvia next year. She has personal reasons – politics (brexit), safety – she says UK has become an unsafe place to live.

### **Teaching environment**

Vija has been working as a study support assistant for 9 years now. Although, Vija didn't qualify as a teacher, she has found an interest and satisfaction in the teaching profession. Of course, her job differs from a regular school-teachers job in that she only has 1-2 students to support every day. She feels that she has found a right career for herself. As Vija says her job is the joy for the soul.

### **Support from others**

Vijas mum is a pre-school teacher. Vija has always felt that she can rely on her mum. Her mum helps her with advice. She remembers watching her mum preparing materials for her students. It seems like it has influenced Vija's career choice.

## **3.2.4 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT NO. 4**

Nate agreed for interview on March, 18. She is a part-time teacher of English and a part-time translator. She also qualified as a teacher of history in 2013. Additionally, she organises summer language camps and has completed special needs education courses. She also teaches religion at a Sunday's school. Nate has 11 years of teaching experience. She lives and works in a small town (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the town is not specified*). She is 33 years old has two children. She didn't mention her husband at all. It seemed that she didn't want to talk about her husband.

Nate started to work as a teacher in the 1st year at university. The most active and productive work was when she was studying. After graduation she continued to work at the same school for several years, actually at two schools. She had a break from teaching for 3 years when her children were small, but recently she has returned to teaching. During her break from teaching, she worked at pre-school as self-employed. She compiled the program herself and quality service approved it. She liked to work with small children the most. She works as a teacher and translator both part-time. Teaching job is more like a hobby to her. Translation job is paid better, but unstable. School offers regular income.

Nate says even though she loves teaching profession, she would never want to work full-time, as she would not be able to provide quality of work. She had tried to work full-time, but didn't like it.

She remembered her years at the university with fondness and said she was the best teacher during those years, as she didn't have her own children and could focus completely on teaching. With children the priorities changed. In the 2nd year of her studies she used to teach at small urban school and she used to travel from capital city to small town. She put her soul into it and enjoyed very much, even though she was paid very little.

She remembered her first full-time teaching job being at a small country school. She had seen an advert and applied. And they took her "*an inexperienced 20 year old girl as the only teacher of English for the whole school.*" Colleagues were quite supportive of her. Although, during university time, colleagues were more supportive. She could learn from more experienced colleagues. Children liked her, and the results were achieved.

Nate says she is not a teacher who is very strict, but she likes to engage her students, to make the lessons interesting. She is friends with many of her former students, as the age difference is small – they are 28, she is 33 years old.

She can understand why many novice teachers leave teaching profession after the 1st year. According to Nate, the teaching environment plays an important role in whether the novice teacher will stay or leave. Her first teaching experience was in a small school. She had no more than 11 students in one class. And it made a difference.

Nate shows confidence in herself as a teacher. She sometimes attends teacher seminars and she concludes that she is a better teacher than some more experienced teachers. "*Teachers are very different and the levels are different.*"

She chose to study teacher education, because she was interested in English language and it was easier to get in. Initially, she wanted to study interpreting at another university, but couldn't afford to pay the study fee. Only when she studied and practised pedagogy she realized that she liked it, but only, as she specified, "*in normal doses.*"

In 2013 she qualified as a teacher of history. It was a two year program. Nate describes the studies as "*quite dry and not much connected with pedagogy. It is impossible to learn history in 2 years.*" She used to substitute a history teacher on

maternity leave. She describes her experience as a history teacher as “...*quite overwhelming, I had to study at nights in order to be able to teach.*”

Nate also attended special needs education course and works with children with special needs.

Nate’s story can be divided into following stages:

1. Teaching during studies at university
2. Teaching after the graduation
3. Three year break from teaching due to maternity and child care leave
4. Return to teaching

Major themes

1. Stability
2. Teaching environment
3. Money aspects
4. Self-confidence

### **Stability**

Nate talked about the stability on several occasions. Nate works as a teacher only part-time. She says teaching job offers her stable income and it is more reliable. Whereas translation job is “*for the money.*” Part-time teaching job doesn’t only offer stability for Nate in terms of money, it also provides Nate with psychological stability “*I am a better teacher because of it [working only part-time as a teacher]. This way I am able to provide better teaching quality for my students.*” Nate said she had worked as a teacher full-time before, but didn’t enjoy it at all. As she put it ‘*it was a stressful situation.*’”

### **Teaching environment**

Nate remembered her first year of teaching experience as being a teacher in a small country school. She had about 11 students in one class. She was able to pay attention to each of them and it made a difference. In Nate’s opinion, it is crucial for a novice teacher to be in a supportive teaching environment.

### **Money aspects**

Nate mentioned money aspects on several occasions. Initially, her studies were financed by the state, but once Nate started to work, her focus on studies diminished and her marks were affected. As a consequence she had to finance her studies herself. Although, Nate insists she has never regretted, as the teaching experience during the

study time was the most valuable and she believes she is a better teacher because of it. Nate pointed out that she worked as a translator for the money.

### **Self – Confidence**

Throughout the conversation Nate appeared as self-confident. She seems to be clear about her career choices and there are no regrets. Therefore the identity status of Nate could be described as “identity achievement.” She pointed out that she didn’t regret that she was not able to keep the state’s financing for her studies, as otherwise she wouldn’t have gained her first teaching experience, which played an important role in her professional life. It was during that time when she realized that she could teach.

When Nate described her experience of attending teacher seminars, she said that by observing some more experienced teachers she thought “*I am doing that better.*”

When Nate was on the break from the teaching [*during maternity and child care leave*] she worked in the kindergarden for a while. She compiled the program herself and presented it and it was approved. This indicates the level of self-confidence.

She feels herself as an established teacher, even though she doesn’t work full-time as a school teacher. She qualified as a teacher of history in 2013. All her professional activities turn around teaching ( *pre-school teacher while on the break, organises summer language camps, teaches religion on Sundays*). As Nate put it herself “*once a teacher, you are always a teacher.... I always find myself teaching.*”

### **3.2.5 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT NO. 5**

Santa is 38 years old and works as an assistant to the chairman of the boards at X company (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the company is not specified*). She graduated from university in January 2007. Santa is divorced and has no children. Telephone Interview was held on March, 22 at 11:00 am.

The opening question of the interview was: “*please tell me about the stage after the graduation from the university.*”

First two years Santa was studying full time, after the second year she took academic leave and went to America for a year. After she returned to Latvia, she went to study part-time and started to work at X school (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the school is not specified*) as an English teacher. She said there was not a big difference after the graduation from the university because she already had been

working as a teacher at the same school since 3rd year. After the graduation she continued the same job at the school.

It's been already 6 or 7 years since she hasn't been working at school. It was year 2009, the payment system changed. Prior to 2009 she earned about 800-900 lats, but because she was offered only 300 lats, she didn't want to continue. In 2009 she went to America again for 2 years. While in America, she was working in fields unrelated to education. After she returned to Latvia, her husband went to Netherlands for 4 months and while he was settling there, she spent those 4 months in Latvia. She started to work for three education centres in Riga – X (*for confidentiality reasons the names of the language centres are not specified*) and ... But that was only for to wait to leave Latvia. She spent three years in Germany and Netherlands. When she came back, she started to work at X language centre again. It was a full-time work from the mornings till evenings. Santa had one student who had a high position at X company (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the company name is not specified*). She went to teach that student at her office and they became friends. Soon, Santa realized she wanted to work for that company.

Santa was asked if she still had some connection to education. She said that almost none. She only has some private students, and, as she pointed out, they are her friends. She said she has enough everything else to do. Currently, she is an assistant to the chairman of the board and it is nothing to do with education.

When Santa was asked what attracted her to the current job, Santa noted that she never wanted to work in a mainstream school. She pointed out again that she used to work at X school, which was a professional school. Her students were aged from 16 and above. As Santa contended” *I never wanted to work with small children.*” According to Santa “*language centres are very cool.*” When Santa talked about working at language centres, money aspect appeared. Some months she could get 1200 euro, but some months only 200 euros. It wasn't a stable income, but Santa was looking for financial stability. So, the financial aspect was the main reason why she decided to stop working at the language centre. Santa contends that she has no regrets. After her former student, now friend recommended her, Santa started to work at X company (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the company is not specified*) as a client administrator. Then, after four months she was promoted to the position of an assistant. Currently, Santa is an assistant to X person (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the person is not*

*specified*). Santa said she is very busy and has no time to having regrets. *“No regrets workwise nor financially.”*

When asked if she would like to come back to teaching, Santa replied with a firm ‘no’. As Santa explained *“...even if the teaching job was financially on the same level as my current job, I would not return to teaching. All the preparation for the lessons, the planning of the lessons. I got the lamp fever.”* Santa didn’t stop there. She explained further *“Another reason was that the students weren’t motivated to learn English, they were there to learn the profession. I had only 2-3 students who were able to work normally, but the rest had a very low level.”* Santa fought for four years to change something, but then realised she doesn’t need it. *“I realised it was not my profession.”* As Santa admitted, she went to study pedagogy only for the English language. She points out that *“I didn’t go to study biology or chemistry, but I went to study English in depth.”*

Santa spoke about motivation and pointed out that she didn’t like to work with small children, because they were not motivated for learning. She says she has a high self-esteem and she sees herself as a great teacher. She likes to work in education centres, because students are motivated there *“they pay money to learn, but children go to school because they have to. They have no motivation.”* As Santa notes *“it is not my job to motivate them.”*

When Santa was asked if she had considered staying abroad at some stage. *“Maybe yes, in America. I have some relatives there. I would consider moving there.”* Currently she is studying again. She is studying social sciences. She would probably consider moving abroad after she gets the diploma. She would never want to move to Germany *“certainly no, maybe to Netherlands 50:50.”* She doesn’t like Germany because of language. Santa never liked German. She couldn’t learn it and didn’t like the attitude of Germans. Her position is: *“if you don’t need my English, I don’t need your German.”* Whereas in the Netherlands she wanted to learn the language. She even had attended language courses, but unfortunately broke her leg, and therefore didn’t finish. As Santa contended *“I wanted to learn because I liked the language.”*

Santa pointed out that she went abroad because of work and for change. The second time she went with her future husband who struggled to get work in Latvia, and Santa’s salary was reduced considerably, so she thought why not. She was 27 at the time.

When Santa was questioned about her family, she told that her parents didn't have a higher education. Santa wanted to study sociology at X university (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the university is not specified*), prior to that she wanted to study psychology, but there was a huge competition and math, so didn't fit. In sociology they had problems with accreditation, so she didn't want to risk it. Then she chose the University of Latvia, she was good at Geography, Biology and English. She looked at the program of teacher of English and literature and thought why not. Santa pointed out that she chose to study at the University of Latvia because of the English language. As Santa explains "*I thought I would be able to work as a translator, which I later did.*"

After many years, she decided that she wanted to study again. Only option was the University of Latvia. She chose to study sociology because she wanted to be a journalist since her childhood. Currently, she is studying communication sciences. Her colleague went to study there first, (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the colleague is not specified, he is famous in Latvia*), so she got interested as well. He gave up the studies, but she continued. Throughout the conversation, Santa mentioned famous people in Latvia she works with. Santa seems to be proud of it and the author of the Paper got an impression that this contributes to her job satisfaction.

Santa noted "*I started to study communication sciences only for myself. I have no thought of changing my job, and this is not a requirement from my employer.*" After 11 years, she is a student again. Initially, Santa was looking for courses, but soon realised that "they were not serious." She is in the second semester now. The study course consists of seven semesters in total. Santa points out that she is studying for personal growth and concludes "*if I start something than I finish it.*"

At the end of the conversation, Santa shares her view on teacher's work and why so many qualified teachers work in other spheres. In her opinion remuneration is connected with the prestige of the profession. "*If the teacher's work would be paid sufficiently than there will be the prestige.*"

Santa's story can be divided into following stages:

1. Academic leave – going to America
2. Return to Latvia – started working at X school
3. 2009 Financial crises – went to America again for two years
4. 2011 Return to Latvia for 4 months

5. Went to Netherlands, later Germany. Spent 3 years in the Netherlands and Germany

6. 2014 came back to Latvia, started working at language centre, became friends with one of the students who helped her to get job at x company

7. 2018 started to study communication sciences at the university

Major themes

### **Money aspects**

Santa decided to leave her school teacher job because of the money issues “*My salary went down from 800-900 lats [ currency in Latvia prior to 2014] to 300 lats, so I told the school’s director that I am not coming back.*” Money plays definitely an important role in Santa’s story but money is not the main reason why Santa has changed her profession. As she tells me even if the teacher’s job was equally paid for as her current job, she wouldn’t want to return to teaching. According to Santa, remuneration goes hand in hand with the prestige of the profession.

### **Self-confidence**

Although Santa hasn’t been working as a teacher for a while now, she refers to herself as a very good teacher. She seems to be very confident about her decisions and in her story I don’t feel any regrets. Santa seems to know exactly what she wants and what she needs to do to get it.

### **Status**

Having famous colleagues is a motivational factor for Santa. Intrinsic motivation “*If I start something, I finish it.*” The fact that one needs to finance his/her studies, can be seen as motivational factor for completing the studies.

## **3.2.6 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT NO. 6**

Eva responded to the e-mail on March, 17 and agreed for telephone interview but specified that she is only available when her baby sleeps. We agreed that she will let me know when she will be available. She emailed me on March, 19 saying that we could talk at 2 pm and gave me her telephone number. The telephone number revealed her location. Her email wasn’t read until later that day, so it wasn’t possible to talk. A second e-mail was sent to Eva. She only replied on March, 21 asking if she could tell her story in writing. The following questions were sent to Eva in order to encourage her to tell her story.

*I am interested in the stage after the graduation from the university. Please tell me about this stage?*

*Did you start to work at school?*

*As I understand, you are in Denmark right now?*

*Please tell me about your current occupation?*

*What determined your career choice?*

*Why did you choose to study pedagogy?*

*Please tell me about your family?*

Eva replied on March, 24 with the description. The notes were taken from her written description. In order to fill some gaps, the following follow-up questions were sent to Eva on March, 31:

*You wrote that you were disappointed at your practise place. Please tell me more about this?*

*Please tell me more about your work experience in Iceland? You wrote that there was a time when you were looking for a job in Latvia? Please tell me what kind of jobs were you looking for? Please tell me more about your current job?*

Here is Eva's story as retold by the author of the Master's Paper:

Eva lives and works in Denmark since 2010. She is currently on maternity leave. She has a small baby who is 4 months old. Prior to the maternity leave, she was working as web- and e-training designer at a pharmacy company. She is a student of international masters program "Anthropology of Education and Globalisation" at the X university in X city (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the university and city are not specified*).

After graduating from the university, Eva went on a paid traineeship to a primary school in Iceland for two semesters (European Economic Area Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Government Financial Mechanism Grants Grants Sub-Project Applications March 2009 Call). Eva remembers being somewhat disappointed with her practice at the school in Riga within LU program "*and possibly in the school/teacher culture in general*", so she wanted to find out how it was elsewhere. In the follow up e-mail Eva wrote that she didn't feel supported by her practice mentor. In contrary, the mentor thought that Eva didn't make an effort and proposed Eva to repeat the practice if she wanted to achieve a better result. She applied for many schools as an assistant, but one small, friendly primary school in Iceland responded. Eva calls it a valuable life

stage, as she not only gained professional experience, but also was able to “*explore my personality, desires and future opportunities.*” Eva was asked to tell more about her experience in Iceland. Apparently, in Iceland, school children are encouraged to go outside and play in every break, and there is one such hour where students go outside and play every week, the assistants are looking after them, while the teachers can go and have lunch and rest. She said that people in Iceland are very nature friendly. Another thing, Eva remembered from that time is the school’s philosophy that the process is more important than the result. Students should not be compared with each other, as each of them has his/her own rhythms. “*Students were allowed to do what they wanted in the lesson, but with the condition that they will respect each other.*” Eva found it interesting that the students were aware of their learning difficulties. Eva thinks they must have been recognized and professionally diagnosed. Eva provides with an example: “*there was one girl who announced in a loud voice that she is not going to read because she is dyslexic.*” Eva says that when she was a student, the teachers would never consider that someone might have learning difficulties. At university they used to talk about this during lectures only occasionally. According to Eva the school’s social life is very important. Eva used to work with some students individually as well, who often were immigrant children. There was in a pre-school one boy from the Latvian family too.

In August 2010, she went to continue her studies accompanied with her Icelandic boyfriend of that time to X city (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the city is not specified*) in Denmark, where she studied multimedia design and digital communication in a two-year program. It seemed to her that it was what she needed at that time in order to develop professionally. As Eva points out “*I was not sure the school environment was for me.*” However, already being in Denmark she applied for the Comenius sub-program of the European Union Lifelong Learning Program, where she had opportunity to spend two more semesters (2011-2012) in a school environment in one of X city’s (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the city is not specified*) schools, assisting in English classes. Simultaneously she gained practice at a school in X city and by studying learned new skills. Eva concludes “*it seemed that this peculiar combination of skills and competences proved to be very topical for companies developing e-learning courses.*” During her studies of multimedia, she got her first practical experience in an international logistics company by developing e-learning course for staff. This is how

she got assurance that she wanted to continue her professional career in this field. According to Eva, in some places it is still developing in a cooperative working environment.

Eva gave the explanation on how she could stay in Denmark without having a permanent work. In Denmark young professionals are financially well supported by trade unions, so Eva could continue to live in X city (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the city is not specified*) while searching for new opportunities. After couple of months of searching, she found a position as a web designer at a medium-sized company, but, as she was on a short term contract, after a year she had to look for something more solid. At this stage she was also looking for new job opportunities in Latvia, but couldn't find anything suitable, so decided to study at the International Master's Program at X University (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the university is not specified*). When Eva was asked to tell more about this stage, she told me that she had applied for a teaching position at International school in Latvia, but a company in Denmark offered her a job in the office, and she accepted, "*I wanted to gain experience in an office.*" So she started to work as a web and e-learning designer in one pharmaceutical company even before she started her studies. It was expected of her that she develops the e-learning materials (interactive video), as well as maintain Intranet and internal communication as a multimedia specialist. Eva feels appreciated by her employers and says "*I have an opportunity to express myself. If I have a vision or idea how to improve work or services, I am listened to and supported.*" Eva also says that she educates her colleagues about the latest e-learning technologies and methods. She still works at the same company. Combining work with studies worked out well, as Eva had access to her research field when writing Master's thesis. In its turn, studies gave her ideas for improving the quality of work.

Eva said she was always keen on creative things and professions. After the highschool she was accepted simultaneously to both -the University of Latvia and Culture College, but influenced by her mother she started her studies at the Faculty of Pedagogy in the University of Latvia. Eva explains that for her parents the teacher profession was more understandable and reliable – "*will be needed in the future as well.*" Even after primary school she wanted to go to art school, before primary school to ballet. Eva concludes that she has always liked creative artistic activities, but the practical influence of her parents has always been felt in her choices.

Eva can not see herself working in a mainstream school. She prefers alternative schools and teaching methods.

Eva's story can be divided into following stages:

1. 2009: Traineeship in Iceland
2. 2010: studies of multimedia design and digital communication in Denmark
3. 2011-2012: through the Comenius sub-program of the European Union Lifelong Learning Program working as Teacher assistant in English classes at school in Denmark
4. 2014: studies at the International Master's Program in X University and work as a web and e-learning designer at a pharmaceutical company
5. 2018: Maternity leave

Major themes

### **Disappointment**

Eva opened her story with the description of her disappointment in her teaching practice place and school/teacher culture in general. But Eva turned the feeling of being disappointed into something positive by researching other opportunities. She didn't give up on teaching career, but wanted to see how it is to be a teacher in other countries.

### **Personal development**

When describing her experience in Iceland, Eva calls it a valuable life stage. She was able to develop professionally and personally "*I was able to explore my personality, desires and future opportunities.*" Eva mentions the importance of personal development on several occasions. Eva wanted to develop further, therefore started to study multimedia and digital communication. She applied for the Comenius sub-program of the European Union Lifelong Learning Program, which indicates Eva's commitment to the principle of lifelong learning. It is important for Eva to have an opportunity to express herself "*If I have a vision or idea how to improve work or services, I am listened to and supported.*"

The fact that Eva prefers alternative teaching methods indicate that Eva is an open minded and creative individual. At that stage when Eva considered going back to Latvia, she was offered a job in the office in Denmark, so she chose to stay in Denmark. As she explained "*I wanted to gain experience in an office.*"

### **Money aspects**

Money theme is apparent in Eva's story. After the graduation from the university in Latvia, Eva could go to Iceland because of a paid traineeship. She could stay and live in Denmark because of the financial support from trade unions. When she couldn't find a suitable work position for herself, Eva decided to study at the International Master's program in university.

### **Teaching environment**

When remembering her teaching practise time in Latvia, Eva speaks of unsupportive teaching environment. "*I was disappointed by my practise mentor.*" When describing her experience in a school in Iceland, she says the school was "*small and friendly.*" Eva points out the school's philosophy: the process is more important than the result. Students should not be compared with each other. Students are allowed freedom, they can do what they want, but should not disturb each other. According to Eva's observations students in Iceland are aware of their learning difficulties and they are not afraid to talk about them, whereas in Latvia it is not the case. Eva says that school's social life is very important as well.

## **3.2.7 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT NO. 7**

A telephone conversation was held with Berta on March, 31. Second follow up conversation was held via social media using WhatsApp next day. Second conversation was necessary in order to gather more information about specific life stages. Berta was also asked to provide her CV.

These are the notes and general impression from the first interview:

Berta has been living in the UK for the past 11 years. She has a dual citizenship and has bought her own apartment. She lives with her boyfriend and has no children. She works as a learning and development trainer.

After the graduation from the university Berta worked as a teacher for 3 years, but never really settled as a teacher. According to Berta, it was the culture and the teaching environment which made her think that a school teacher profession is not for her. She explained that generally students lacked in motivation. Berta said that she felt trapped in a school environment and needed change. As Berta noted: "*I was young and thought this cannot be it, to work in a school and one day to realize that I am 65, no, that's not for me. I needed to get out.*"

So, in 2008 she went to UK, as she contended, she wanted change and couldn't find a suitable position in Latvia. Initially, she wanted to go to Australia, but that didn't work out. Berta was reluctant to tell the reason. She also wanted to go to Africa to teach English there, but in order to do that she needed money which "*I as a student didn't have.*" In the UK she applied for a position of a teaching support assistant at one of the learning centres there. Berta explained that in the UK there are many privately owned learning centres which offer different kind of courses for children and adults. Apparently, there is a shortage of teaching support assistants in the UK, and she had no problem to get that job. However, she stayed in that job only for one year, as she wanted to develop further personally.

She had been working as a personnel trainer for Japanese company for seven years. She had to learn on the job, as the job involved specific knowledge. After seven years Berta felt she needed change again, and changed to a similar position at another company. She stayed there for 2 years. As she explains "*I wanted to move closer to my home.*" So, currently she is working as a learning and development trainer.

The whole conversation with Berta was very structured. Berta talked about her professional life, but only a small glimpse was offered into her private life. It seems, Berta as a trainer is used to talk about her professional life and that can be felt in the conversation. She is confident and knows who she is and what she wants. Whereas in my conversations with some of the other respondents, there was a feeling of regrets and disappointment, Berta tells me her story in a very confident manner. Several times Berta points out that she has acquired specific skills and knowledge, which she is not sure are even needed in Latvia. She says there are no such companies in Latvia, where she could possibly work. Particularly, when Berta remembers the time when she worked at a Japanese company, she points out that she had to learn the knowledge on the job, as that was very specific. It can be concluded that Berta sees herself as an accomplished professional and feels very content with her role. She asked me if there was such a job in Latvia as a learning and development trainer. When it was explained to her that there are similar jobs, but possibly with different titles, she didn't seem to believe. Berta seems to be convinced that Latvian companies are unable to offer her similar work opportunities. Berta is settled in the UK and has no doubts about the life choices she has made. At the end of the conversation, she points out that she has got British citizenship and has no plans to return to homeland.

Berta's story can be divided into following stages:

1. 2005-2008: school teacher in Latvia
2. 2008: Move to UK, started work as a teaching assistant
3. 2008-2015: work as a trainer at Japanese company
4. 2015-2017: work as an instructor trainer
5. Since 2017: current job as a learning and development trainer

Major themes

1. Teaching environment
2. Money aspects
3. Personal growth

### **Teaching environment**

When Berta spoke about teaching environment in Latvia, she said it was very old-fashioned and the teachers who worked there didn't want to change. Berta pointed out that she worked at the same school for three years and she was able to work as a teacher, but couldn't work because of the teaching environment and need for change. The fact that Berta stressed that she was a teacher at the same school, indicates once again that Berta sees herself as a professional. It is, in fact, very common, that many novice teachers change schools during the first years of teaching quite frequently. Berta doesn't fall into this category.

### **Money aspects**

Berta mentioned money aspects on several occasions. She pointed out that she has bought her own home. When remembering the time when she was a student, she recalled having little money. Berta went abroad in 2008. In 2008/09 Latvia was hit particularly hard by the global economic crises.

### **Personal growth**

Berta felt trapped in a school's environment and "*needed to get out.*" Berta stayed in the job as a support teacher only for one year, as she wanted to develop further. On several occasions Berta pointed out that she has acquired specific skills and knowledge while learning on the job.

## **3.2.8 RESEARCH PARTICIPANT NO. 8**

An e-mail was sent to Una with the request to tell the story on March, 17. Initially, no response was received. A response from Una was received on April, 3. Una

replied apologising for not replying earlier and saying that she would like to share her experience. She specified that she would like to do it in writing. The following questions were sent to Una on April, 3:

1. *Please tell me about the stage after the graduation from the university?*
2. *What made you want to study Pedagogy?*
3. *Please tell me more about your current occupation?*

These questions were sent with the purpose to encourage Una to tell her story.

During the study time at the university Una went abroad several times – language courses, Campus Europe exchange program and study practise abroad. Una says this experience was very enriching and captivating, therefore in the last semester parallely she started working in a tourism agency as a tour operator. She used to organise tours for foreign tourists. She had been working there after the graduation from the university for about a year. Soon after Una realized she wanted to go abroad. She applied for a job as a volunteer in Portugal. She started working as a volunteer in after school club teaching English and organizing other activities. After volunteering she stayed in Portugal for three more years. Meanwhile, she had met her husband and a daughter was born, and parallely she was working as an English teacher in several language schools and as a tutor.

In 2015, Una's husband was offered a job in the UK, so he moved to the UK. Una went with her daughter to Latvia for 2 years, because Una wanted for her daughter to learn Latvian and she was missing her family and as she says "*I missed being the Latvian*". During that stage Una was working at X language school (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the school is not specified*) as an English language teacher.

In 2017, Una and her daughter went to the UK to live with her husband and currently they are living there, but as Una says, they are not going to stay there.

Una chose to study to become an English language teacher, because she was very good at English at school, and her mum is a teacher and everyone would always say to her that she should not study only philology, but should go to study pedagogy, as this way she would learn both language and the profession. It was very important for Una to get state's financing, because she comes from a small town and her parents couldn't afford to pay for the studies.

Currently Una is working at X language school (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the school is not specified*) Foreign students come to learn English. Una is not

working as a teacher, but she has administrative duties – preparing visas, permits, organizing the correct courses, making sure that the students can live and learn in the UK, and ensuring positive learning process. But nevertheless, Una is also doing other activities – informal language clubs, where she can apply the skills she learned while studying to become a teacher. Una is very happy with her job, but, as she points out, for now.

Una's story can be divided into following stages:

1. Travelling during study time
2. 2008-2009: Work as tour operator
3. 2009-2015: Volunteering and working in Portugal
4. 2015-2017: Return to Latvia for 2 years
5. 2018: Move to the UK

Major themes

1. Wanderlust
2. Family
3. Need for change

### **Wanderlust**

Una's story is characterized by a strong desire to travel. When describing her travel experience during study time, Una uses such expressions as “*very enriching and captivating.*” Influenced by her travels, she decided to work as a tour operator at the travel agency.

### **Family**

Una mentions her family on several occasions. She met her husband while working as a volunteer in Portugal. She and her daughter went back to Latvia to be with the family. She moved to the UK to be together with her husband. Una mentions her mum “*my mum is a teacher.*” When deciding on her study program, Una listened to her parents and chose to study pedagogy.

### **Need for change**

Una points out in her story that she is very happy with her job, but “*just for now.*” Una says she didn't start working in school because it is a job where one does the same job for many years. Una pointed out that she has never felt so stable in her life in order to stay in one place for many years.

### 3.3 MAJOR THEMES

The analysis of research participants' stories revealed following main themes.

#### 3.3.1 Table Major themes collected from the stories

Major Themes	Justification from the collected material
Doubts/Confidence Issues	<p><i>"Yes, I remember there was some kind of an offer in Valdorfa school, I thought maybe to apply, but I don't know why I was somehow afraid."</i></p> <p><i>"How could I not accept it [a teacher's job position at the gymnasium], if my university lecturer recommended me to the school's director, so I went there."</i></p> <p><i>"...maybe when I went to that gymnasium I felt somehow unsure of myself."</i></p> <p><i>"all the time I had a feeling that I had to talk to someone, but I didn't know who to turn to, it wasn't clear to me..."</i></p> <p><i>"In all that inaction I realized that maybe I wanted to return to teaching."</i></p> <p><i>"I wasn't sure whether to go to study philology or pedagogy. I don't know why I chose pedagogy"(Sindija).</i></p>
Regrets	<p><i>"...from the small school straight to a big school. The expectations were very high there and the bureaucracy is on a much higher level, certain amount of marks should be given each month, everything very strict and controlled. That was it that I crumbled under pressure, let's say so"(Sindija).</i></p> <p><i>"I should've finished my studies. I was immature" (Vija).</i></p>
Teaching environment (physical and emotional) and	<p><i>"I used to work at one small private school, there were forty children and ten teachers and it was a completely different experience than in a municipal school" (Liene).</i></p> <p><i>[the teacher's room] "was very beautiful, sense of community, they had lunch together, supportive environment."</i></p> <p><i>"it happened so that one of my former lecturers from university worked there and I had a feeling, I could go to her and entrust something. If I had something on my mind, but it wasn't like that with emotional things, it was regarding work related thing, yes, there was a really good atmosphere."</i></p> <p><i>"I had, so to say, a half cabinet which was the informatics cabinet at the same time. I had computers in the classroom and then the kids had drawn something on them and the IT teacher, who also happened to be a learning manager used to scream at me and I don't like adult people raising their voice. Yes, in a loud voice..."</i></p> <p><i>"... I did not have my own cabinet, and then I had my lessons in the X teacher's (for confidentiality reasons the name of the teacher is not specified) cabinet. I had the last</i></p>

	<p><i>lesson and went home and checked my phone and saw that she had called me. I wondered why? I called her back and she started to scream at me down the phone, there was some coffee spilled in the classroom, how you didn't even check your pupils! Are you controlling them in the classroom? Ok, maybe she was worried, but I was like, why am I screamed at?"</i></p> <p>The classrooms are described as "very cosy, not that usual coldness." (Sindija)</p> <p>"...the classes are not as big as in Latvia – only about 16 students in one class." (Vija)</p> <p>"I was disappointed by my practise mentor" (Eva).</p> <p>"...small and friendly [school in Iceland]" (Eva).</p> <p>"the process is more important than the result. Students should not be compared with each other" (Eva).</p> <p>"Students are allowed freedom, they can do what they want, but should not disturb each other" (Eva).</p> <p>"teaching environment was very old-fashioned and the teachers didn't want to change" (Berta).</p> <p>"I liked my practise time in school, it was easy to communicate with both – students and colleagues" (Una).</p> <p>"Students weren't motivated to learn English, they were there to learn the profession... I had only 2-3 students who could learn normally, the rest had a very low level" (Santa).</p> <p>"Children go to school, because they have to, they don't have motivation" (Santa).</p> <p>"I started to work in a small country school... I had to work 3 days a week...I had enough time to prepare lessons... I was the best teacher during that time. I really liked it" (Nate).</p> <p>"I could learn a lot from more experienced teachers" (Nate).</p> <p>"I used to live in the countryside and spend some time with my students outside the classroom as well, so I actually got some friends too. We had a small age difference" (Nate).</p> <p>"I had no more than 11 students in one class. It was perfect" (Nate).</p> <p>"As soon as I have a full workload, it's too much of a stressful situation. Work only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. I like to have those free days" (Nate).</p>
<p>Personal problems/issues</p>	<p>"I used to have issues with authority, it seemed to me often, that other people do bad things or do them incorrectly, and I don't understand it. Secondly, it was very difficult for me to do things which seem to me meaningless. Other people say you must do them, but I cannot, and I know many students have this type of problem."</p> <p>"Then I went [back to school] and realized, that I am that person myself who excludes me from others, who shuts those doors and doesn't want to be with others. I don't</p>

	<p><i>know why it is like this.”</i></p> <p><i>“I’ve never been a very social person. It is not easy for me to establish a [deeper contact], I can sustain friendly relationship, but not a deeper contact.”</i></p> <p><i>“I realize it is my own fault, it turns out.”</i></p> <p><i>“I sometime cannot tell what my thoughts are, and what is really” (she was advised to seek help from psychoterapist)</i></p> <p><i>“I cannot promise myself that I will change and go there and will get involved...”</i></p> <p><i>“...literally every little thing made me feel like, if I said something to a student, and then I thought what if I had traumatized him. I don’t know.”</i></p> <p><i>‘I’ve always been in my head” (Sindija).</i></p>
Circumstances	<p><i>“...yes, I got married and a year ago my husband died and I have returned to Riga and as I have no place to put my child in, I will not return to work” (Liene).</i></p> <p><i>“ I have time now, so I went to study social sciences at X university” (Liene).</i></p> <p><i>“...Brexit, which might not even happen, UK has become an unsafe place to live” (Vija).</i></p>
Money aspects	<p><i>“...well, I had a very good salary...but in all that inaction I realized that I wanted to go back to school [work as a teacher]” (Sindija).</i></p> <p><i>“I put my soul into it [teacher’s work], and there was like no salary, I had 97 lats...” (Nate).</i></p> <p><i>“I work as a translator for money” (Nate).</i></p> <p><i>“ I got state’s financing , but once I started to work, my marks were affected and I had to pay for my studies myself” (Nate).</i></p> <p><i>“teaching job offers me a stable income” (Nate).</i></p> <p><i>“ I didn’t finish university because I couldn’t combine work with studies”(Vija).</i></p> <p><i>“... went to the UK because of the financial crises”(Vija).</i></p> <p><i>“ I wanted to attend courses but they are expensive” (Vija).</i></p> <p><i>“ I would like to come home [to Latvia] more often, but it is very expensive to travel with a small child” (Vija).</i></p> <p><i>“My salary went down from 800-900 lats [ currency in Latvia prior to 2014] to 300 lats, so I told the school’s director that I am not coming back” (Santa).</i></p> <p><i>“...even if the salary would be on the same level, I wouldn’t want to return to teaching” (Santa).</i></p> <p><i>“I went on a paid traineeship to a primary school in Iceland” (Eva).</i></p> <p><i>“ I could stay in Denmark, because I was financially supported by the trade union” (Eva).</i></p> <p><i>“ I couldn’t find a suitable job position, so decided to study in International Master’s program” (Eva).</i></p> <p><i>“... salaries for a new teacher starts from GBP 20.000 p.a. which is on the same level as a salary for an administrative</i></p>

	<p><i>function roles” (Berta).</i></p> <p><i>“I’ve bought my own home” (Berta).</i></p> <p><i>“ I wanted to go to Africa, but couldn’t go, because as a student I had very little money” (Berta).</i></p> <p><i>“At that stage it was important for me to get the state’s financing, as I am coming from a small town and my parents couldn’t afford to pay a study fee” (Una).</i></p>
Support from others	<p><i>“I sometimes ask my mum for advice in relation to my job...My mum is a pre-school teacher” (Vija).</i></p>
Stability (financial and/or psychological)	<p><i>“...school is like a stable backup option, somehow” (Nate).</i></p>
Self-confidence	<p><i>“I am doing that [teaching]better[than other more experienced teachers]” (Nate).</i></p> <p><i>“ I am a better teacher because of it [working part-time as a teacher” (Nate).</i></p> <p><i>“If I start something, I finish it” (Santa).</i></p> <p><i>“ I am a very good teacher” (Santa).</i></p>
Status	<p><i>“I am an assistant to X person (a famous person in Latvia)” (Santa).</i></p> <p><i>“ I went to the same university course as my famous work colleague” (Santa).</i></p>
Wanderlust/Need for change	<p><i>“I used to travel a lot during my study time – language courses, study exchange programmes, study practise abroad, this experience was very enriching and captivating, and therefore in the university’s last semester I started to work at the travel agency as a tour operator” (Una).</i></p> <p><i>“So, we are living currently in X city (for confidentiality reasons the name of the city is not specified), but certainly not for to stay” (Una).</i></p> <p><i>“ I like my job very much, for now” (Una).</i></p> <p><i>“I’ve never applied to work in school, as I think it is a huge responsibility for many years. Once you have started working with one class, you have to finish it. Maybe I have never felt so stable in my life to say that for the next 10 years I will stay in one place and do exactly the same job” (Una).</i></p>
Disappointment	<p><i>“I felt somewhat dissapointed in my teaching practice place and school/teacher culture in general” (Eva).</i></p>
Personal growth/development	<p><i>“After few years I went to study history additionally” (Nate).</i></p> <p><i>“I was able to explore my personality, desires and future opportunities” (Eva).</i></p> <p><i>“If I have a vision or idea how to improve work or services, I am listened to and supported” (Eva).</i></p> <p><i>“I wanted to gain an experience in an office” (Eva).</i></p> <p><i>“I was young and thought this cannot be it, to work in a school and one day to realize that I am 65, no, that’s not</i></p>

	<p><i>for me. I needed to get out” (Berta).</i></p> <p><i>“I stayed in the job as a teacher support assistant only for one year, as I wanted to develop further” (Berta).</i></p> <p><i>“I had to learn on the job... I acquired specific knowledge and skills” (Berta).</i></p> <p><i>“One day I would definitely work in school, but for now I want to see the world and develop personally” (Una).</i></p>
Family	<p><i>“My husband was offered a job in X city, so I and my daughter moved back to Latvia for two years” (Una).</i></p> <p><i>“I met my husband in Portugal” (Una).</i></p> <p><i>“My mum is a teacher” (Una).</i></p>

The initial major themes were re-examined to determine the relevance of its contents. Themes dealing with similar matters were grouped together and certain themes were removed or renamed. The following main themes were revealed:

1. teaching environment (support from others moved to this category),
2. money aspects,
3. self-confidence (doubts/confidence issues and regrets are grouped under this category),
4. and personal growth/development (wanderlust/need for change re-grouped under this category),
5. personal problems/issues (circumstances and family are re-grouped under this category).

### **Teaching environment**

Teaching environment emerged as an important factor for choosing to stay or leave the teaching career. The theme was discussed in all the stories on several occasions. Liene points out the importance of positive first teaching experience. *“I used to work at one small private school, there were forty children and ten teachers and it was a completely different experience than in a municipal school.”* Nate also describes her first teaching experience *“I started to work in a small country school... I had to work 3 days a week...I had enough time to prepare lessons... I was the best teacher during that time. I really liked it.”* And they both stressed that they do not want to change teaching career for another career.

When describing her teaching experience as a support teacher, Vija notes *“...the classes are not as big as in Latvia – only about 16 students in one class.”* The number of students in a class is also important for Nate *“I had no more than 11 students in one class. It was perfect.”*

Eva felt disappointed in her practice mentor, therefore didn't want to start working as a school teacher. But she turned her experience into something positive. She decided to go abroad to see how teaching is done in other countries. She went on a paid traineeship to Iceland and describes the school there as "...*small and friendly.*"

Berta describes her teaching experience "*teaching environment was very old-fashioned and the teachers didn't want to change.*" Even though, she had remained in the teacher's profession for three years.

Una notes the importance of communication "*I liked my practise time in school, it was easy to communicate with both – students and colleagues.*"

Prior to the career change, Santa was working as an English teacher in X professional school (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the school is not specified*). When speaking about leaving the teaching profession, she says "*Students weren't motivated to learn English, they were there to learn the profession... I had only 2-3 students who could learn normally, the rest had a very low level.*" She points out "*Children go to school, because they have to, they don't have motivation.*" In Santa's opinion it is not her job to motivate them.

Sindija constantly mentions the teaching environment in her story. Prior to career change, Sindija had three attempts at trying to work as a school teacher, but they all were unsuccessful. In one school she describes the teacher's room as "... *very beautiful, sense of community, they had lunch together, supportive environment.*" She notes that she couldn't speak about emotional things. Her experiences in an another school seems to be particularly negative "*I had, so to say, a half cabinet which was the informatics cabinet at the same time. I had computers in the classroom and then the kids had drawn something on them and the IT teacher, who also happened to be a learning manager used to scream at me and I don't like adult people raising their voice. Yes, in a loud voice...*" When Sindija had already left the teacher's profession for another career, she went to see her friend who worked at X school. Sindija liked the school's environment "*very cosy, not that usual coldness*" and she pointed out that it made her want to work there. The disappointment in teaching environment can lead to the career change. Sindija's case reinforces Rinke's (2013) suggestion of the importance of early classroom experience.

## Money aspects

Money aspects play a secondary role in the collected stories. It is evident from the stories that the career choice primarily is not determined by the financial aspects. Ingersoll (2001) pointed out that remuneration has been found in many studies as a crucial factor for employee turnover. In this study it is not confirmed. Santa gave up her teaching job because her salary was reduced considerably, but later in the story she reveals “...even if the salary would be on the same level, I wouldn’t want to return to teaching.” It becomes apparent that Santa has other reasons than salary for not wanting to work as a teacher. Status is an important factor for Santa. As she states “*I am an assistant to X person (a famous person in Latvia).*” “*I went to the same university course as my famous work colleague.*”

Nate remembers her first years as a teacher and points out that her salary was ridiculous “*I put my soul into it [teacher’s work], and there was like no salary, I had 97 lats.*” But nevertheless, she is still working as a school teacher 11 years later.

Berta says that in the UK teachers’ salaries are on the same level as salaries of administrative workers “*salaries for a new teacher start from GBP 20.000 p.a. which is on the same level as a salary for an administrative function roles.*” Berta started to work as a teaching assistant when she moved to the UK in 2008, as she noted “*there is a huge demand for support teachers in the UK,*” so her career choice was determined by the opportunities in the job market. However, it must be noted, that the teacher’s qualification obtained in Latvia, played an important role in choosing work.

Sindija left her office job even though it was very well paid and returned to school teacher’s work. “...well, I had a very good salary...but in all that inaction I realized that I wanted to go back to school [work as a teacher].” Sindija wasn’t motivated by the salary.

Initially, Vija seems to be motivated by the money, as she mentions “*I didn’t finish university because I couldn’t combine work with studies.*” As Vija explained, her job was very well paid, and she couldn’t attend lectures because of work schedule. However, Vija pointed out on several occasions that she has major regrets about not completing her studies. Although, undeniably, money plays an important part, Vija has been working in the same job for the past 9 years which indicates her preference for stability. She seems to use money aspect as an excuse of not doing certain things “*I wanted to attend courses but they are expensive.*”

In Eva's story money aspect appears as a means of achieving goals. After the disappointment in her practice place, Eva wanted to explore the teaching environment elsewhere, so she used the opportunity of a paid traineeship and went to Iceland "*I went on a paid traineeship to a primary school in Iceland.*" When Eva was looking for a job, she was able to remain in Denmark "*I could stay in Denmark, because I was financially supported by the trade union.*" Eva describes her struggle to find a suitable job position, and therefore, decided to study again, as this way she could get financial support. "*I couldn't find a suitable job position, so decided to study in International Master's program.*"

In Una's story money aspect appears as a motivator for making an effort. "*At that stage it was important for me to get the state's financing, as I am coming from a small town and my parents couldn't afford to pay a study fee.*"

While Liene doesn't mention money aspect in her story directly, she points out "*as I have no place to put my child in, I will not return to work.*" It becomes obvious that Liene cannot afford to pay for a private kindergarten.

#### **Self-confidence (doubts/ confidence issues and regrets)**

It emerged from the stories that one needs the confidence in order to be able to work as a teacher. Sindija expresses doubts about her choices on numerous occasions "*Yes, I remember there was some kind of an offer in Valdorfa school, I thought maybe to apply, but I don't know why I was somehow afraid.*" ..."*How could I not accept it [a teacher's job position at the gymnasium], if my university lecturer recommended me to the school's director, so I went there.*" Sindija is not sure of herself. Whereas, on the contrary, Vija regrets her past decision of not finishing the university "*I should've finished my studies. I was immature.*"

Nate has been working as a teacher for 11 years now and she is confident "*I am doing that [teaching] better [than other more experienced teachers].*" Nate's story shows the importance of knowing yourself. "*I am a better teacher because of it [working part-time as a teacher.] Nate knows her abilities and limits. As she admits "As soon as I have a full workload, it's too much of a stressful situation. I work only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. I like to have those free days."* The need for self-awareness is highlighted as an essential factor for job satisfaction. Nate knows her strengths and weaknesses and has found a way to well-being. Nate's career can be described as 'intelligent career' (Ballout, 2007).

Even though Santa doesn't work as a teacher she says that she is a very good teacher "*I am a very good teacher.*"

### **Personal growth/ development (wanderlust/ need for change)**

The need for change and personal development is particularly evident in Eva's, Una's and Berta's stories. When Berta describes her decision to give up school teacher's job, she says "*I was young and thought this cannot be it, to work in a school and one day to realize that I am 65, no, that's not for me. I needed to get out.*" Undeniably, the teaching environment played a role in her decision as well "*teaching environment was very old-fashioned and the teachers didn't want to change.*" When Berta describes her first work experience in the UK as a teaching support assistant, she says "*I stayed in the job as a teacher support assistant only for one year, as I wanted to develop further.*" It becomes apparent from Berta's story that her career choices are determined by the need for personal development. As Berta notes "*if you are a teacher you are able to learn new things quickly.*" She describes her current job "*I had to learn on the job... I acquired specific knowledge and skills.*" Berta's career development path can be viewed as a boundaryless career.

Eva went to Iceland because she wanted to see how the teaching is done elsewhere. When describing her choice to stay in Denmark, Eva notes "*I wanted to gain an experience in an office.*" When talking about her experiences, Eva says "*I was able to explore my personality, desires and future opportunities.*"

Career choice is influenced by the geographical location. "*I was looking for a job closer to my home*" (Eva). Berta changed her job to similar position at another company, because that company was closer to her home. This is another characteristic of boundaryless career – the career path develops horizontally rather than vertically. As Super (1976) noted most people change career many times during their life time and career develops horizontally rather than vertically.

### **Personal problems/ issues**

Personal problems can strongly influence one's career choices. It was particularly evident in Sindija's story. As Sindija noted "*teacher's work is not for everyone.*" Sindija admitted she was having few psychological problems that prevented her from a successful teaching career. Whereas in Liene's case, it is the motherhood and personal circumstances "*I got married and a year ago my husband died and I have returned to Riga and as I have no place to put my child in, I will not return to work*" that has a

major effect on her career. Una's career choice is also strongly influenced by personal circumstances. She met her husband in Portugal, so stayed there. Once her husband moved to UK, she followed him soon. Una moved to Latvia and stayed there for two years, because she wanted for her daughter to experience Latvian culture.

The major themes collected from the research participants' stories revealed the relational and contextual nature of career development. A teacher's qualification has a major impact on one's career path, but it has to be seen in the light of such factors as personal circumstances and preferences.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of the Master's Paper was to explore English teachers' perceptions of teacher's work and career in order to contribute to the understanding of English teacher's career development. The theoretical literature on career development theories (Super's Life- Span Theory) and human motivation theories (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Vroom's Expectancy Theory, Carol Gilligan's Ethics of Care and a Motivational Theory of Life-span Development by Heckhausen, Wrosch and Schulz) were studied. Additionally, theories about leaving or staying in the teacher's profession were reviewed and used for the analysis. A questionnaire was sent to 137 former students of the English language at the University of Latvia from study years 2007-2017 with the aim to find out about their career paths after the graduation from the university. The collected data from the questionnaire were analysed in order to have an overview of English teachers' professional paths and to select research sample for in-depth interviews. Eight respondents with different career paths were selected for narrative interviews in order to get an insight into career development from various perspectives. A story of each research participant was interpreted and re-written by the author of this Paper. Additionally, the biographical documents of research participants were analysed in order to confirm or disconfirm the collected data from the interviews. A narrative research design was used. Major themes of each story were identified and analysed using the holistic-content reading approach offered by Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber (1998).

The analysis of the life stories provided an insight into English teachers' perceptions of teacher's work and career. However, it must be noted that there may be some possible limitations in this study. Due to the small research sample size the collected information from the stories should not be generalized, but it is to conclude that the results of the analysis outline the problematic of the target group. A second limitation concerns the analysis of the stories. It must be pointed out that the analysis is open to interpretation, as it is often the case with qualitative research methods (Creswell, 2007).

The research participants were asked to tell the stories concerning their work experiences after the graduation from the university, thus complete life stories were not collected. Each story was analysed and the main themes were identified. The identified

themes were re-examined and themes dealing with similar matters were grouped together and certain themes were removed or renamed.

During the research it was concluded that the main reason for studying to become a teacher, but choosing another career path was the combination of the following factors: teaching environment, money aspects, self-confidence, the need for change/ personal development and personal problems/ issues.

Teaching environment emerged as an important factor for choosing to stay or leave teaching career. Teaching environment is not only the physical environment, but it also includes such factors as relationships with colleagues, communication with students and parents and support from school's administration. It was concluded that negative first teaching experience can trigger the career change. Triggers for career change in relation to the teaching environment were identified as: unsupportive colleagues, poor relationships with pupils and lack of motivation. The importance of the positive first teaching experience was highlighted. Positive first teaching experience included such factors as small number of pupils in one class, support from colleagues and administration, friendly relationships with colleagues and pupils.

Money aspects played a secondary role in the collected stories. While money aspect appeared in all the stories, it has to be seen in context. In the collected stories money aspect appeared as a means of achieving goals, as an excuse of avoiding certain things and as a motivator for making an effort. It was evident from the stories that the career choice primarily was not determined by financial aspects. The theory of Borman and Dowling (2008), that contextual factors within schools, such as lack of support from administration, student discipline issues and lack of input and decision-making power play a larger role than a remuneration, was confirmed. Therefore it can be concluded that the relationship between earnings and job satisfaction is minimal.

The author of the Master's Paper concluded that self-confidence is a crucial character trait needed for a successful teaching career. Lack of self-confidence can lead to unsuccessful first teaching experience and ultimately to the change of career. One needs confidence to be a teacher. Confidence helps to be persistent and persistence will help to achieve goals. Thus, it can be concluded that occupational persistence is related more to personal self-confidence and motivation than to support from the environment.

A need to research the character traits of successful teachers emerged. Self-awareness emerged to be closely linked to self-confidence. Knowing who they are and

what they want, the ability to identify one's strengths and weaknesses is a key to building one's confidence.

It has been concluded that career choices are strongly determined by the need for personal development and need for change. It can be confirmed that further education has an positive effect on objective and subjective career success. Further education and training build on foundations laid earlier on: future opportunities depend on past accomplishments.

Personal problems/ issues is a primary reason why individuals decide for career change. Personal problems can include such factors as specific character traits that are not suitable for a chosen profession and family circumstances.

Reasons for studying to become teacher, but choosing another career path, is a combination of five main factors as outlined above. However, it must be pointed out, that these factors need to be viewed in the light of contextual settings. 21st century is characterized by the intensification of globalisation and it has affected all disciplines and career development is no exception. A career for life is no longer appealing for young professionals, nowadays, they prefer boundaryless careers or protean careers. Commitment to life-long learning and adaptability to changes are hallmarks of protean careers. In many cases the school environment can not satisfy the need for personal development and change. The information collected from the stories revealed the teaching experiences of research participants and in most of the stories the teachers were described as being reluctant to changes, thus confirming the theory of Alsup (2005) who noted that a novice teacher can choose to follow other professional paths because of different personal values and beliefs.

Having analyzed the data collected of the questionnaire, it can be concluded that teachers' skills are highly transferable to other professions ( see *Table 3.4*). As one of the research participants stated "*If you are a teacher, you are able to learn new things quickly.*" Teacher qualification can be seen as a solid grounds for further development.

Moreover, a combination of English language plus a teacher's qualification confirmed to be a good basis for work opportunities in multinational companies.

The need to explore the motivation of potential teacher education students surfaced during the research. The responses from the questionnaire revealed that 42 out of 88 respondents chose to study in teacher education programme because they were interested in the teacher's profession. After analyzing the collected stories, it appeared

that none of the eight research participants chose to study teacher education because of interest in teaching. Even though, two of the research participants initially had stated that reason, during the conversations it was revealed not to be the case. In all of the collected stories, the wish to study the English language in depth was expressed as a main reason for applying to study in teacher education programme. Thus, it can be concluded that the teaching career is perceived by the English teachers in an exploratory manner. This coincides with Rinke's (2013) research who described teaching as an exploratory career.

## **THESES**

1. Career development is affected by the intensification of globalisation. There is a need to understand the relational nature of the career development in a global world.
2. Teaching career should be seen in the light of the new career tendencies in the world, such as boundaryless careers, protean careers and intelligent careers.
3. A career choice is influenced by the combination of the following factors: teaching environment, money aspects, self-confidence, the need for change/ personal development and personal problems/ issues.
4. A career choice primarily is not determined by financial aspects. Money aspect appears as a means of achieving goals, as an excuse of avoiding certain things and as a motivator for making an effort.
5. A self-confidence is a crucial character trait needed for a successful teaching career. Lack of self-confidence can lead to unsuccessful first teaching experience and ultimately to the decision to change career.
6. Self-awareness is essential for building a successful career.
7. Further education has a positive effect on objective and subjective career success.
8. Teacher's skills are transferable to other professions. Teaching qualification offers solid grounds for further development.
9. A motivation of potential students of teacher education should be explored during the recruitment stage.
10. Early classroom management experience should be provided for new teachers in training.
11. Teaching career is perceived by the English teachers as an exploratory career.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix No. 1

#### **Anketa par skolotāju uzskatiem par skolotāja darbu un karjeru**

Labdien! Maģistra darba ietvaros veicu pētījumu par skolotāju uzskatiem par skolotāja darbu un karjeru. Šī aptauja ir anonīma. Aptaujas aizpildīšana Jums prasīs apmēram 5 minūtes laika. Paldies par atsaucību.

**1. Vai Jūs esat ieguvis/usi skolotāja kvalifikāciju?**

Jā

Nē

**2. Vai pēc skolotāja kvalifikācijas iegūšanas sākat darbu vispārizglītojošā iestādē?**

Jā

Nē

**3. Kāpēc izvēlējāties apgūt skolotāja profesiju?**

Interese par skolotāja profesiju

Vecāki vēlējās, lai apgūstu skolotāja profesiju

Mani skolotāji/karjeras konsultants ieteica apgūt šo profesiju

Netiku uzņemts(a) citās studiju programmās

Cits....

**4. Kā Jūs definētu savu patreizējo nodarbošanos? (Atzīmējiet vienu vai vairākas atbildes)**

Esmu skolotājs(a) vispārizglītojošā iestādē

Esmu privātskolotājs(a)

Pasniedzu kursus

Strādāju ar skolotāja darbu nesaistītā jomā

Šobrīd nestrādāju

Cits..

**5. Ja Jūs esat nodarbināts kā skolotājs, kas liek Jums palikt šajā profesijā?**

Mīlestība pret skolotāja profesiju

Mīlestība pret savu mācību priekšmetu

Ģimenes apstākļi

Stabili ienākumi

Cits

**6. Ja Jūsu nodarbošanās nav saistīta ar skolotāja darbu, aprakstiet, lūdzu, savu nodarbošanos? (norādiet lūdzu savu e-pastu)**

---

**7. Ja Jūs nestrādājat par skolotāju, kādi ir iemesli?**

Neapmierina skolotāju alga

Zemais skolotāja profesijas prestižs

Pārāk liela spriedze

Ģimenes apstākļu dēļ

Cits..

**8. Ja Jūs nestrādājat par skolotāju, vai Jūs apsvērtu domu atsākt vai uzsākt darbu skolotāja profesijā?**

Jā, apsvērtu

Nē, neapsvērtu

Varbūt

Cits..

**9. Ja Jūs apsvērtu domu sākt/atsākt darbu skolotāja profesijā, kam būtu jāmainās?**

Valdības attieksmei

Atalgojuma sistēmai

Darba novērtēšanas sistēmai

Skolotāja studiju programmas saturam

Cits

**10. Jūsu dzimums**

Sieviete

Vīrietis

**11. Jūsu vecuma grupa**

< 25

26 >

## Appendix No. 2

### Responses from the questionnaire about teachers' perceptions of teacher's work and career

1. Vai Jūs esat ieguvis/usi skolotāja kvalifikāciju? 89 responses

Jā 85

Nē 4

2. Vai pēc skolotāja kvalifikācijas iegūšanas sākāt darbu vispārizglītojošā iestādē? 89 responses

Jā 60

Nē 29

3. Kāpēc izvēlējāties apgūt skolotāja profesiju? 88 responses

Interese par skolotāja profesiju	42
Vecāki vēlējas, lai apgūstu skolotāja profesiju	10
Mani skolotāji/karjeras konsultants ieteica apgūt šo profesiju	1
Netiku uzņemts(a) citās studiju programmās	9
Cits....	26

4. Kā Jūs definētu savu patreizējo nodarbošanos? (Atzīmējiet vienu vai vairākas atbildes) 89 responses

Value	Count
Esmu skolotājs(a) vispārizglītojošā ies...	41
Esmu privātskolotājs(a)	17
Pasniedzu kursus	16
Strādāju ar skolotāja darbu nesaistītā ...	20
Šobrīd nestrādāju	3
Cits..	16

5. Ja Jūs esat nodarbināts kā skolotājs, kas liek Jums palikt šajā profesijā? 73 responses

Mīlestība pret skolotāja profesiju	22
Mīlestība pret savu mācību priekšmetu	18
Ģimenes apstākļi	1
Stabili ienākumi	15
Cits	17

6. Ja Jūsu nodarbošanās nav saistīta ar skolotāja darbu, aprakstiet, lūdzu, savu nodarbošanos? (norādiet lūdzu savu e-pastu)32 responses

Esmu Valdes priekšsēdētājas palīdzē gāzes kompānijā sandijaeihe@gmail.com

Apvienoju 2 profesijas - tehnikuma pasniedzēja un vizāžists

Ir saistīta ar skolotāja darbu

Esmu bērna kopšanas atvaļinājumā. podzina.laura@gmail.com

Esmu skolotāja palīgs Lielbritānijā (strādāju ar bērniem ar īpašām vajadzībām) (evijarw@hotmail.com)

Preču pārdošanas veicināšanas speciālists

Medicina

Es nodarbojos ar rakstniecību, dzeju, literatūru. ingapizane@gmail.com

Strādāju starptautiskā farmācijas uzņēmumā par eapmācības speciālisti.

Tulkotājs, renchina@inbox.lv

Tulkotājs (iltulkojumi@gmail.com)

Warehouse intake supervisor. Responsible for all the stock that comes in- checking, booking in and sorting out any issues with customers.

ārvalstu studentu rekrutēšana savejais18@inbox.lv

vidēja līmeņa vadītājs

piedzima bernis. nekad ari nestradata!!! macijos jo milu angļu valodu + psihologijas zināšanas

Strādāju ar izglītības jomu saistītā darbā (īstenojot ES finansētus projektus saistībā ar izglītības politiku, mācīšanās rezultātiem, akadēmisko atzīšanu utt.); sarmite@aic.lv

Studentu Servisu Koordinatore valodu skola (EF Manchester)

montadance.edu@gmail.com

SPA specialists (tatjana.cascina@gmail.com)

Angļu valodas pasniedzēja kursos pieaugušajiem

Mācos dārzkopību.

valsts pārvalde

Pirmskolas pasniedzējs Irija epostdreglea@gmail.com

Hr jomā

Reklamas aģentūra

Esmu pasniedzēja korporatīvā sektora Lielbritānijā. baibaeberte@gmail.com

Projektu vadība

Strādāju augstākās izglītības iestādē (koledžā). Esmu Izglītības koordinācijas nodaļas vecākā speciāliste. Mana e-pasta adrese- anda82@inbox.lv

Pašnodarbinātais, tulks, rotu mākslinieks u.c. radošās aktivitātes.

Esmu citas profesijas meklējumos

Bibliotekāre

Tulkotāja

7. Ja Jūs nestrādājat par skolotāju, kādi ir iemesli? 39 responses

Neapmierina skolotāju alga	10
Zemais skolotāja profesijas prestižs	5
Pārāk liela spriedze	8
Ģimenes apstākļu dēļ	2
Cits..	14

8. Ja Jūs nestrādājat par skolotāju, vai Jūs apsvērtu domu atsākt vai uzsākt darbu skolotāja profesijā?38 responses

Jā, apsvērtu	9
Nē, neapsvērtu	15
Varbūt	11
Cits..	3

9. Ja Jūs apsvērtu domu sākt/atsākt darbu skolotāja profesijā, kam būtu jāmainās?46 responses

Valdības attieksmei	3
Atalgojuma sistēmai	23
Darba novērtēšanas sistēmai	6
Skolotāja studiju programmas saturam	2
Cits	12

10. Jūsu dzimums 86 responses

Sieviete	82
Vīrietis	4

11. Jūsu vecuma grupa 89 responses

< 25 9

26 > 80

TRANSCRIPT AND NOTES OF INTERVIEW WITH  
RESEARCH PARTICIPANT NO. 1

**Date:** 27.02.2019

**Duration:** 10min 46s

**Location:** Home (telephone interview)

**Interviewer:** Inese Zeltina

**Respondent:** Sindija (*for confidentiality reasons the name is changed*)

**IZ:** Lūdzu pastāsti man par sevi?

**Sindija:** mmmm, tā kā kaut ko konkrētu vai vienkārši?

**IZ:** Vai Tu varētu lūdzu pastāstīt par laika posmu pēc skolotāja kvalifikācijas iegūšanas? Es saprotu, Tu esi ieguvusi skolotāja kvalifikāciju?

**Sindija:** aha, jā, tad nu, vienvārdsakot, es pabeidzu universitāti pagājušajā vasarā sanāk, ē, nevis astoņpadsmitajā gadā, bet septiņpadsmitajā, jā, un es sāku skolā strādāt, tad kad es mācījos ceturtajā kursā. Pirms tam es biju strādājusi bērnudārzā, piestrādājusi, bet nu tā pilna laika darbu es sāku strādāt ceturtajā kursā skolā, un tad pirmo gadu es, nu pirmo mācību gadu es nostrādāju vienā skolā ārpus X pilsētas (*konfidencialitātes nolūkos intervijas transkripcijā netiek norādīts*), tas bija X vietā (*konfidencialitātes nolūkos intervijas transkripcijā netiek norādīts*) un tad man, nu tā kā es pabeidzu universitāti, beidzās mācību gads es jau zināju, ka iešu prom no turienes, un tad nu es tā kā biju plānojusi iet uz kādu citu skolu, es gribēju tuvāk mājām kaut kur X pilsētā (*konfidencialitātes nolūkos intervijas transkripcijā netiek norādīts*), un tad man piedāvāja strādāt X ģimnāzijā (*konfidencialitātes nolūkos intervijas transkripcijā netiek norādīts*) un es aizgāju uz turieni strādāt, tas bija tad kad jau es biju pabeigusi universitāti sanāk, nu tas bija tā kā pagājušais mācību gads un tur es nostrādāju tikai mēnesi (*ietrīcas balss*) un tad es aizgāju prom no turienes un un jā, jo tad nu tas bija teiksim nu veselības dēļ, es biju mājās principā uz slimības lapas... līdz (*domā*) sanāk novembrim apmēram, jā, un tad es, nu tad bija tā ka es vairs nevarēju īsti mājās nosēdēt, bet nu man ārsts teica, ka labāk nevajag uz skolu atpakaļ iet, jo tas bija nu tā kā saistīts ar nerviem, teiksim tā, un un tad es aizgāju, nu principā pirmais darbs, ko es varēju atrast bija ofisā, un man sagādījās tā, ka tas bija tāds darbs, kur man bija ļoti maz darba,

un man sanāca nu es tur nostrādāju 2 mēnešus, man bija tā, ka principā 8 stundas, es aizgāju uz darbu un es sēdēju, man nebija, ko darīt, bet nu man bija diezgan laba alga, tāpēc man visi, nu visi teica, lai es tur palieku, bet nu tas darbs bija tāds, tāpēc ka tā pozīcija bija vairāk kā, nu kā stand bys (*pauze*), kā cilvēks, kas aizstāj tevi, ja kādam citam kautkas notiek, slimības lapas un tā tālāk, un tad visā tajā bezdarbībā es sapratu, ka es gribu laikam uz skolu tomēr atpakaļ iet un, ka es pamēģināšu vēlreiz un tad es aizgāju, nu sākās otrs semestris, tas bija pagājušajā ziemā, janvāra beigās es sāku strādāt X vidusskolā (*konfidencialitātes nolūkos intervijas transkripcijā netiek norādīts*), nu jā, tad es principā nostrādāju līdz mācību gada beigām, un tad es izdomāju, ka jā, tad es tā kā tiešām metīšu mieru, un un jā, tad mācību gada beigās es aizgāju prom, un tagad principā vienīgais, ko es daru saistībā ar izglītību ir tas, ka es vadu kursus, dažādus, nu to es daru jau vairākus gadus, vēl pirms es sāku skolā strādāt, es mācīju pieaugušajiem latviešu valodu, tad es vadīju kautkādu angļu valodas kursus, un tagad es vienā privātskolā pasniedzu sagatavošanas kursus, nu pusaudžiem. Jā, tā.

**IZ:** Nu jā, tad pamatdarbs Tev ir tajā ofisā, es sapratu pareizi?

**Sindija:** ne, no turienes es aizgāju prom, un tagad pamatdarbs man ir, es esmu merčendaizers veikalā, jā, nu tas ir stilists, teiksim tā.

**IZ:** Nu jā, bet kā Tu teiktu, mm, kāds bija galvenais iemesls, kāpēc tomēr Tu gribēji atgriezties atpakaļ skolā pēc tā slimošanas laika?

**Sindija:** Nu, man (*pauze*) man vispār ļoti patika skolā strādāt, es nevaru teikt, ka man tas darbs nepatika, un es pieļauju, ka es joprojām varbūt to arī darītu, es mēģinātu, bet man vienkārši, nu viens man bija tas, ka es man nepatīk strādāt no mājām, man nepatīk, ka jāņem darbs ir uz mājām, un skolā tas ir, es principā nepazīstu nevienu skolotāju, kurš to nedarītu, un un man tas ir, nu es nezinu, es to īsti neatbalstu, nu principā, teiksim, es jau pagājušajā gadā beigās biju saorganizējusies tā, ka es varēju visu izdarīt nu darbā, bet es gāju ļoti agri no rītiem uz darbu, lai man nebūtu ilgāk jāpaliek un nebūtu brīvdienās nekas jādara. Nu jā, tas bija viens iemesls, kas man nepatika, bet principā tā jau, tā es varu teikt, ka skolā man ļoti patika, man patīk, nu ar bērniem man patīk strādāt, nu tieši es mācīju pamatskolas klases galvenokārt, tieši tie pusaudži ļoti patīk un tā.

**IZ:** Tieši angļu valodu mācīji vai citu priekšmetu kādu?

**Sindija:** Es mācīju angļu valodu un un un pirmo gadu tad kad es strādāju mācīju arī latviešu valodu kā otro valodu.

**IZ:** Nu jā, bet tieši tā slimošana bija saistīta ar stresu vairāk?

**Sindija:** Nuuu, ne nu es teikšu godīgi, man principā nu tas, tas bija tāds tā kā, tas izraisīja saasinājumus, jo man tāda rakstura problēmas jau ir bijušas ilgi principā jau no pusaudža gadiem, bet es nezinu, kāpēc, jo es nu es zinu jau ka tas pirmais gads, kad es skolā strādāju viņš arī bija tāds psiholoģiski ļoti grūts, bet tad es kaut kā es nezinu tiku galā, bet tieši varbūt, kad es aizgāju uz to ģimnāziju es kaut kā jutos, es nezinu varbūt es nejutos kaut kā ļoti pārliecināta par sevi un tur bija uzreiz tas no tādas ļoti mazas skolas tādā ļoti lielā skolā, nu tur uzreiz kā jau ģimnāzijā tā latīņa ir ļoti augsta un viss, un tā teiksim birokrātija ir daudz, lielāka, nu viss, ka ir jābūt tik un tik atzīmēm mēnesī, un viss tā ļoti strikti un ļoti kontrolēti un tas laikam bija tas, ka es neizturēju to spiedienu un vienkārši, salūzu, teiksim tā.

**IZ:** Es tomēr pēc tās sarunas saprotu, ka tomēr ir tā vēlme strādāt ar tiem bērniem, priekšmetu mācīt?

**Sindija:** Jā, es teiktu jā pilnīgi, es domāju, ka varbūt, ja skolā, nu es pat pieļauju tādu domu, ka es pat varētu strādāt skolā, ja tas man nebūtu tā kā pamatdarbs. Es varētu varbūt vadīt kādu pulciņu vai strādāt, nezinu, divas dienas nedēļā, nu kaut kā tā un paralēli darīt vēl kaut ko citu. Nu, bet kā pilnu slodzi, to es nevaru, jā.

**IZ:** aha, un kā Tu teiktu, kāpēc Tu izvēlējies studēt pedagogiju, mācīties par skolotāju?

**Sindija:** Nu, tajā laikā, kad es izvēlējos mācīties, tad man, tad es vispār nedomāju, ka es iešu skolā strādāt, jo man bija tā, ka man principā vienīgais kas man padevās bija angļu valoda, un sākumā es aizgāju mācīties Kultūras Akadēmijā, bet es sapratu, ka mani tur īsti nesaista nekas, un tad es domāju, kur es varētu mācīties angļu valodu vairāk, un tad es principā domāju, vai nu uz filologiem iet vai arī pedagogiem, un tad es nezinu kāpēc aizgāju uz to pedagogiju mācīties un principā es sapratu, ka es gribu skolā strādāt tikai, kad es biju, sanāk, trešajā kursā, tad kad man bija, nu tāda nopietnāka prakse beidzot bija, tad pēc tās prakses, es sapratu, ka es varētu arī mēģināt, un tad es tai ceturtajā kursā arī sāku.

**IZ:** Aha, nu jā, varbūt Tu varētu arī pastāstīt par savu privāto dzīvi?

**Sindija:** ā (*smejas*) konkrēti ko?

**IZ:** Pastāsti lūdzu par savu ģimeni?

**Sindija:** Nu, šobrīd es dzīvoju ar savu līgavaini (*smejas*). Mēs dzīvojam, esam kopā (*domā*) 2 gadus apmēram, kaut kā tā. Un pirmajā gadā, tad kad es sāku strādāt

skolā, tad es dzīvoju kopā ar savu draudzeni, mana labākā draudzene arī ir skolotāja. Un jā tā īstenībā tā bija tāda forša lieta tai universitātē un pēc tam man sagādījās tā, ka man ir divas tuvas draudzenes, kas abas ir skolotājas, viena ir no universitātes laikiem, un tad viena ir vēl no skolas laikiem, nu viņa neaizgāja uz universitāti mācīties par skolotāju, bet viņa pabeidza Kultūras Akadēmiju un izgāja pedagogu kursus un sāka strādāt un tad man bija tas pirmais gads grūts, bet man bija visu laiku kaut kāds atbalsts apkārt, nu ka man bija cilvēki ar kuriem varēju to visu tā kā pārrunāt, un izdabūt ārā no savas sistēmas, nu tā. Jā, bet nu tā (*smejas*).

**IZ:** Nu jā, skaidrs. Bet vai Tu apsvērtu tādu domu strādāt skolā kā pamatdarbā? Kam, teiksim, būtu jāmainās, lai Tu tā gribētu?

**Sindija:** man, ā, nu pirmā lieta, kas būtu man pašai ar sevi būtu jātiek psiholoģiski galā, jo es saprotu, ka man ir lietas, kas man pašai ir, teiksim, no pusaudža gadiem ievilkušās, nu vispār par skolu, par attieksmi pret mācīšanos un visu to kas man pašai ir ievilkušās, un es saprotu, ka ja es gribu strādāt tā lai es nenodotu saviem skolēniem tās lietas, tad man tās ir vispirms jāatrisina, un tad par tādām praktiskākām lietām, viens būtu, man ļoti nepatīk, ja skolās, manuprāt ir ārkārtīgi daudz birokrātija un ka ļoti daudzām lietām es piemēram neredzu jēgu un viņas tiek darītas vienkārši tāpēc, ka visi viņas dara. Un vēl man ir tāda sajūta, ka bieži vien skolotājiem, nu tā kā skolotāji ir viena no tām profesijām, man liekas, ka cilvēki negrib īpaši tā kā padoties pārmaiņām. Ir tas, ka mēs esam sākuši kaut ko darīt, kas ir saprotams un tātālāk, bet man liekas, ka tieši skolotāja profesija ir tāda, ka ir jābūt gatavam iet līdzī laimam un visam tam. Nu jā, varbūt tās ir tās lietas.

**IZ:** Paldies Tev par šo interviju.

**Concluding talk off the record:** It is agreed to meet for a second interview in person. I find out that Sindija works in the X shopping center (*for confidentiality reasons the name of the center is not specified*) every day till 4 pm. We agree to meet at weekend. The time of the interview will be specified at the later stage.

**TRANSCRIPT AND NOTES OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW  
WITH RESPONDENT NO. 1**

**Date:** 03.03.2019

**Duration:** 14 min 23s

**Location:** Costa Coffee shop

**Interviewer:** Inese Zeltina

**Respondent:** Sindija (*for confidentiality reasons the name is changed*)

**IZ:** Tu vari man lūdzu pastāstīt vairāk par to posmu, kad tu strādāji X. Vidusskolā (*konfidencialitātes nolūkos intervijas transkripcijā netiek norādīts*)?

**Sindija:** Jā, tā tad es sāku strādāt janvāra beigās, ja nemaldos, tas bija pagājušajā gadā, nu astoņpadsmitajā un es tur, nu jā es turieni aizgāju strādāt, tāpēc, ka es izdomāju, ka es gribu iet atpakaļ uz skolu, nu ir tas portāls skolas.lv vai kaut kas līdzīgs, tur kur ir tie piedāvājumi tieši konkrēti skolotājiem un tobrīd bija divās skolās, bija X. un Y un man X skola (*konfidencialitātes nolūkos intervijas transkripcijā netiek norādīts*) bija ļoti tuvu mājām, jo es pie X vietas (*konfidencialitātes nolūkos intervijas transkripcijā netiek norādīts*) dzīvoju, tāpēc es uz turieni uzreiz aizsūtīju CV, nākamajā dienā man bija intervija. Es aizgāju uz interviju (*smejas*) un tā intervija bija tāda ļoti īpatnēja, mani intervēja skolas direktors, kurš aizgāja pensijā pagājušajā gadā, un intervijā, nu viņš man uzdeva visus tos standarta jautājumus un tad viņš man prasīja, vai es smēķēju, nu man likās nu ok, es teicu, ka es smēķēju, jo tai laikā es vēl smēķēju, nu zini, viņš saka, mūsu skolā tādas skolotājas sauc par maucām (*nervozī smejas*) Es paliku mazliet uz pauzes, bet nu labi, nu neko, man vajadzēja tobrīd to darbu, tāpēc es arī aizgāju uz turieni strādāt un, nu (*pauze*) bija lietas, kas man patika tur, ļoti patika, lielākoties skolēni bija ļoti forši, man bija tieši tie vidējie, man bija 5, 7 un 8 klases un tas ir vecumposms, ar kuru man pašai patīk vislabāk strādāt un un strādāt lielākoties bija ļoti viegli, jo bērni bija teiksim valdāmi un tādi, kuri aktīvi gribēja mācīties, bija arī protams tādi ar kuriem bija grūtības, man tur bija, ā man tur bija arī viena sestā klase ar kuru ļoti grūti gāja, bet ar viņiem es tā arī līdz semestra beigām es tur neizcīnīju, tur mēģināju, bet man galīgi nekas nesanāca ar viņiem, un jā, bet bija arī lietas, kas man tā kā ne visai patika, piemēram, man bija tāds tā kā puskabinets varētu teikt, kas bija informātikas kabinets paralēli arī, man bija datori tai klasē, un tad tur tie bērni kādreiz uz monitoriem bija ko sazīmējuši vai kautko, man bija blakus kabinetā arī informātikas

skolotāja, kas bija arī kaut kāda mācību pārzine vai kaut kas, nu viņai bija viņa mūžīgi blāva uz mani, un man ļoti nepatīk, ka pieauguši cilvēki paceļ balsi. Jā, nu skaļā balsī. Es saprotu, ka daži cilvēki tādi ir, viņi vienkārši fundamentāli, bet man tas nepatika. Nu jā, tās bija tādas lietas, kas man ne visai varbūt. Nu man tur, bija arī ar kuriem, man izveidojās kolēģiem nu tāds kontakts, principā nu normāli, tāda vidēja skola, varētu teikt (*iesmejas*).

**IZ:** Tu stāstīji, ka Tu nostrādāji tikai līdz mācību gada beigām. Vai tas bija to iemeslu dēļ, kurus Tu minēji?

**Sindija:** Nu, bija tā, ka es biju nostrādājusi laikam mēnesi varētu teikt, es sāku domāt, vai tas bija pareizais lēmums, ka es aizgāju atpakaļ uz skolu, jo es sapratu, ka es skolā negribu palikt, jo bija tie iemesli, un tad man bija viens tāds ļoti sarežģītais skolēns ar ko man bija tā, es tās stundas gaidīgu pilnīgi ar mokām, nu es nevarēju, es tur galīgi netiku nekādi, es tur mammai zvanīju un viss, nu briesmīgs gadījums vienvārdsakot, arī no manas puses es neko nevarēju darīt, nu mums tas kontakts galīgi neveidojās, un tad tas man arī bija tāds liels bieds un jā tad jau es zināju tā kā, ka es iešu prom, ka tikai līdz mācību gada beigām un tad es domāju vai meklēt kādu citu skolu vai nē, es nezinu, es tad tā kā nometu tam visam mieru.

**IZ:** Vai tas tāpēc, ka tā iepriekšējā pieredze arī citās skolās? Tu stāstīji arī par X. ģimnāziju tur arī...

**Sindija:** Nu, X. ģimnāzija (*konfidencialitātes nolūkos intervijas transkripcijā netiek norādīts*), tur bija vairāk no manas puses tā problēma, ka es vienkārši man bija nu es izjutu to spiedienu, bet ka tas spiediens uz mani nemaz nebija uzlikts, man visu laiku bija tā sajūta, ka man vajadzētu varbūt runāt ar kādu, bet es nezināju pie kā man vērsties, man nebija tā kā skaidrs, un arī bija cilvēki, nu kas piemēram ir administrācijā vai arī ilgāk kas strādā, nu tiem skolā strādājošajiem cilvēkiem bieži vien ir tā tendence runāt par kaut ko un man tas ir uzreiz, nu es nevaru, nu man nepatīk.

**IZ:** Bet vai Tev mentors bija, vai nebija mentora?

**Sindija:** Tur nebija tā sistēma, es atceros, ka bija runa, ka vajadzētu. Mēs runājām, es atceros, mums bija sapulce, mēs bijām visi jaunie skolotāji, mēs bijām diezgan daudzi un direktors tieši teica, ka mums vajadzētu tos mentorus, un katram izvēlēties vienu skolotāju, bet beigās tas tā arī nenotika.

**IZ:** Runu līmenī tā arī palika?

Bet es nezinu, varbūt ka pēc tam tas tika darīts, jo es tur ilgi tiešām nebiju, kādu mēnesi un tad jau viss.

**IZ:** Bet vai no kolēģu puses bija kaut kāds atbalsts? Tā kā jaunajam skolotājam?

**Sindija:** Nu jā, X. ģimnāzijā (*konfidencialitātes nolūkos intervijas transkripcijā netiek norādīts*) ļoti bija, tur bija tā kopības sajūta tiešām, tur bija visas tās kopīgās pusdienu ēšanas, piemēram, tur bija ļoti skaista skolotāju istaba, tur bija kolektīvs nu tiešām ļoti atsaucīgs, man sanāca, ka tur strādāja viena kura bija no universitātes man pasniedzēja un bija sajūta, ka varēja pie viņas aiziet un uzticēt piemēram kautko, nu ja kautkas bija uz sirds, bet tas nebija tā, ka varbūt tās emocionālās lietas var stāstīt, bet par darba lietām tur jā tiešām bija laba atmosfēra.

**IZ:** Un tagad Tu strādā X t/c (*konfidencialitātes nolūkos intervijas transkripcijā netiek norādīts*) par stilistu?

**Sindija:** Jā.

**IZ:** Tāda krasa maiņa tomēr, vai ne? Tā bija tāda sakritība, tā vienkārši sanāca vai apzināti gāji uz to?

**Sindija:** Nu tas ir, tas bija, laikam īstenībā jāsaka bija apzināti. Tad, kad es meklēju darbu, es zināju, ka visticamāk es iešu uz veikalu atpakaļ. Man bija divi varianti vai nu par vadītāju vai stilistu, kur es skatīšos, kas būs. Nu par stilistu bija tā vakance un es aizgāju, jo es jau to iepriekš biju to darījusi un man mode vienmēr, man bija divas lietas pedagoģija un mode. Es jau pēc vidusskolas gribēju braukt uz ārzemēm modi studēt. Un tad līdz ar to man bija tās divas jomas, kas man interesē.

**IZ:** Varbūt pastāsti vairāk par savu patreizējo nodarbošanos?

**Sindija:** Man darbs ir ļoti fiziski smags, teiksim, kas man patīk, jo kad ir fiziskais darbs, tad ir garīgā atpūta, un jā es strādāju, mans darbs ir iekārtot veikalu tā, lai veicinātu pārdošanu, nu kas ir mečendaizings, es arī apmācu jaunos stilistus, kas man nāk nu mana ikdiens ir es pārkartoju veikalu, strādāju ar atskaitēm, klientus es praktiski neapkalpoju, tikai ja kādreiz sagadās, bet nu tas nav manos darba pienākumos, man patīk, man ir ļoti labs darba laiks no septiņiem rītā līdz pusčetriem, tā kā man principā viss vakars ir brīvs.

**IZ:** Principā mācīt sanāk tik un tā – jaunos stilistus, nē, bet jaunos kolēģus.

**Sindija:** Nu, jā.

**IZ:** Tad man būtu vēl viens jautājums. Tu man ļoti daudz stāstīji par savu pusaudža vecumu, Tu pieminēji, ka Tev ir kaut kādas lietas, kuras Tu neesi atrisinājusi

un negribētu nodot tālāk saviem skolēniem. Varbūt Tu varētu man pastāstīt par tām lietām, ja Tu, protams, vēlies?

**IZ:** Jā, viens bija tas, ka man bija, es biju no tiem pusaudžiem, kuram bija problēmas ar autoritāti, man, es to tā baigi neizpaudu varbūt, bet man vienmēr tas bija iekšā, un es atceros, ka skolā man dažreiz likās, ka dažreiz skolotāji varbūt dara lietas, kas man nepatīk un es to nesaprotu, man vēl joprojām ir tas, tas standartvariants, kad ir jānes kautkas un tad saka, kuri puisī nāks, tas man jau tajā laikā likās nepareizi, tagad man tas liekas dīvaini, es saprotu, es tā kā to, ui, un tai pašā laikā, kad es pati nonācu tai situācijā, kad bija kautkas jāpārnes, man bija, nu kurš puisis palīdzēs (*smejas*). Un tad tu saproti, ka pats atgriezies pie tā, ko citi dara, tad man bija, nu jā, man bija tas ar to autoritāti, ka man bieži likās, ka kāds kautko slikti un nepareizi dara, es nesaprotu to, un tad otrs bija tas, ka man ir ļoti grūti darīt lietas, kas man liekas bezjēdzīgas, ko citi saka, tas tev vienkārši ir jādara, es to nevaru un es zinu, ka ļoti daudziem skolēniem tagad arī ir tā problēma un es pati, man pašai, es nemāku paskaidrot.

**IZ:** Vai Tu teiktu, ka Tu esi līderis?

**Sindija:** Pēc personības?

**IZ:** Jā.

**Sindija:** Es varu uzņemties līdera lomu, bet es neesmu tāds tā kā no dabas dots.

**IZ:** Bet Tev patīk autoritāti uzņemties?

Jā, jā, varētu teikt, ka patīk.

**IZ:** Atbildību uzņemties, un tā?

**Sindija:** Jā.

**IZ:** Vai kāds no Tavas ģimenes- māte, tēvs, arī bija saistīts ar pedagoģiju?

**Sindija:** Ē, nu, es uzaugu tikai ar mammu, jo es savu tēti nepazīstu. Nu, mana vecmāmiņa bija bērnudārza audzinātāja. Un mamma nē, mamma ir medicīnā.

**IZ:** (*Pauze*) Nu jā, labi. (*garāka pauze*) Vai tieši no mammas puses Tu sajuti atbalstu, kad Tu mācījies par skolotāju un pēc tam sāki strādāt?

**Sindija:** Jā, man mamma, viņa bija priecīga, kad es aizgāju mācīties pedagoģiju, viņai likās, ka tas ir ļoti priekš manis un viņa bija ļoti.. nu es baigi cīnījos ar universitāti, pirmie divi gadi bija ļoti grūti, es negāju uz lekcijām, es tur tā izšmaucu cauri, bet pēdējā kursā bija labi, kad es sapratu, ka man tas arī interesē, mamma bija priecīga, viņa arī bija ļoti priecīga, kad es aizgāju skolā strādāt, nu arī kad es aizgāju prom, viņa saprata, galīgi neko ne pārmeta, mierīga bija.

**IZ:** Tu man iepriekšējā intervijā stāstīji, ka Tu biji tajā ofisā, tā kā tas cilvēks, kurš aizstāj citus, kad kāds ir slimš vai vienkārši vajag. Tev citi teica, lai Tu paliec tajā darbā, jo alga ir laba un tā, vai ne? Bet Tu tomēr izdomāji, ka, nē, Tu iesi projām un tad es saprotu, ka Tev tomēr ir svarīgāks darbs kā tāds nevis tik daudz tā nauda, tā alga, vai ne?

**Sindija:** Jā, es pat varētu teikt, tas atalgojums, protams, viņš ir svarīgs, bet man ļoti svarīgs ir tas, ka man patīk mans darbs, tas ir viens un otrs man brīvība ir ļoti svarīga, lai man viss nav jādara tā kā pēc grāmatas, katru dienu viens un tas pats, man vajag iespēju izpausties, nu skolotāja darbā tas ir.

**IZ:** Nu jā, neviena diena nav tāda pati. Tu vairākas reizes pieminēji sarunā arī birokrātiju, un tad es saprotu, ka Tu nevari tā vienkārši darīt tāpēc, ka tas ir jādara, ka Tev vajag kaut kādu jēgu.

**Sindija:** Jā, man bija tādā ziņā vislielākās problēmas saprast to, piemēram, iepriekšējā skolā. Tad kad es mācījos augstskolā, es atceros, man bija viena kursabiedrene ar kuru mēs vienmēr runājām, ka ir forši, ka ir tās skolas, kur nav vērtēšanas un nav atzīmju. Nu es nezinu, es nevaru piedāvāt labāku variantu, man nav tāda. Bet tajā pašā laikā, kad es mācīju, man bija grūti, es nesaprotu, kā tas ir, kāpēc tam vienmēr ir jābūt. Es it kā saprotu, tas ir lai tur kaut ko pārbaudītu, lai skatītos kā tur kaut kas uzlabojas, bet man liekas to var darīt arī bez tām atzīmēm.

**IZ:** Tu esi domājusi par alternatīvajām skolām, kur ir tā visa sistēma tāda savādāka, brīvāka.

**Sindija:** Jā, tā kā vienu brīdi es atceros Valdorfa skolā bija kaut kāds piedāvājums, es tā kā domāju varbūt aizsūtīt, bet es nezinu, kāpēc es tā kā tomēr baidījos.

**IZ:** Vai Tu esi apmierināta ar savu patreizējo nodarbošanos un īpaši mainīt neko nevēlētos?

**Sindija:** Ir tā, ka jā no vienas puses esmu ļoti apmierināta, jo man darbs kā tāds man tiešām patīk, vienīgais, kas man tāda kā iekšējā konfliktsituācija ir tas, kā jau es teicu, ka man darbs pārsvarā ir ar rokām, nevis ar galvu. Viens ir tas, ka tu kādu laiku nestrādā ar galvu, tu izjūti, ka zūd tā spēja uzturēt kaut kādu inteliģentu sarunu, otrs ir tas, ka es strādāju industrijā, kas ir ļoti slikta dabai, nu kaitīga, un mans mērķis, mans mērķis ir spiest uz pārdošanu, tai pašā laikā es saprotu, cik slikti tas ir un un kā...

**IZ:** Ko Tu tieši pārdod tur?

**Sindija:** Nu, es tā kā strādāju apģērbu veikalā. Manam darbam, mans tā kā mērķis ir nodrošināt, lai visu laiku būtu rotācija, tas kas ir uz vietas, lai tiktu pirkti. Tai pašā laikā es saprotu, cik slikti tas ir dabai, un tas man rada to iekšējo konfliktsituāciju.

**IZ:** Nu jā, saprotams, aha (*garāka pauze*). Tu man arī stāstīji, ka tavas divas labākās draudzenes arī ir skolotājas. Vai viņas strādā skolā? Vai nav nomainījušas profesiju.

**Sindija:** Jā, viena ir, viena strādā, kura nav pabeigusi pedagoģisko augstskolu, nu pedagoģijas fakultāti, nu otra ir, kur es sāku strādāt pirmajā skolā, kur es strādāju, viņa strādā tur vēlprojām un arī strādā vienā citā skolā, tā kā divās - pusslodzes. Jā.

**IZ:** Vai viņas ir apmierinātas ar darbu?

**Sindija:** Nu, cīnās. Vienkārši strādā, jā.

**IZ:** Varbūt vēlies kaut ko vēl pastāstīt?

**Sindija:** Tu strādā skolā?

*End of transcript.*

**Due to technical problem the recording of the interview is interrupted. Notes from the further conversation:**

I tell Sindija that I don't work in school. Sindija tells me, that she is not a social person. She doesn't like to get involved with things. She doesn't know why it is like that. It is difficult for Sindija to establish a deeper contact. Sindija says she realizes that it is her fault. When speaking about her practise time, Sindija says that it was very good to have people who shared the same problems. Sindija asks me what I think of adverts about recruiting teachers. Sindija is of an opinion that it is wrong to do so, as the teacher's job is not for everyone. Sindija was advised to go to see a psychoterapist who could tell her what is real and what is her imagination. She can not promise that she will change. She realizes that she needs to change in order to be able to work as a teacher. The main problem for Sindija is the fact that she overanalyzis everything and is afraid of traumatising her students. Sindija regrets that she didn't talk about her problems. She went on a sick leave when she worked in the gymnasium and decided not to return, as per advice of her doctor. The director of the gymnasium wanted her back, but she didn't want to promise and wasn't sure if she would be able. Sindija went to work to the gymnasium, as her former lecturer from the university had recommended Sindija to the director. It seems she regrets her decision now.

Concluding Talk: We agree to keep in touch in case I need more information.

