

## STORIES OF WOMEN TEACHERS: AN ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY WITH THE PROFESSION

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**Abstract:** *The study brings information on teaching profession by means of profession stories of fifty women teachers. We assembled the individual stories in a structure by motivation, experience, everydayness, work, significance, sense and teaching fate, comprised in those personal stories. After qualitative analysis we can conclude that teaching is a deliberate choice of the profession; by women teachers it is considered mainly traditionally, with a relatively high moral credit and with differentiation between surplus of upbringing or educational work. By identifying with the teaching profession, the teachers can reach life satisfaction, but they are also confronted with specific loads and problems that can lead to deformations, which are not foreknown by them.*

**Key words:** *teaching profession, personal story*

*„Teaching is a hard, laborious profession, which drains the soul, paralyses fantasy, absorbs strength from the organism; children who come to the school are bad, obstinate, erratically raised beings, crafty wicked, spoiled, lost, instinctually hostile and a high percentage of them is awfully incapable; after five education hours I return exhausted, both physically and mentally, disgusted, deadened, beclouded, dull, stolid and decrepit.“*

**Otokar Březina to Anna Pammrová, 8.10.1892**

*Teachers must be convinced that they stand in a high position of dignity and that they have been entrusted with a noble office, which can be surpassed by nothing greater under the Sun.*

**Jan Amos Komenský**

### Problem

Teaching belongs to very interesting professions and studies of teaching give substantial narrative value about the society, which - by our opinion - has not yet been fully

appreciated (Havlík, Kořa, 2002). The principle task of the teacher is – as it is evident from the name of this profession – to teach, more exactly to mediate *education* and *upbringing*.

The last mentioned two terms are discussed in our country in the present time and also in one of the last pedagogy textbook (Průcha, 1997) the terms *education/upbringing* are considered to be basic pedagogy terms. Unfortunately, the above mentioned terms are not interpreted in a uniform way; traditionally the concept of education “in a narrow and a broad sense of word“ was used, or we can see using the term education, which comprises both education and upbringing actions. Taking into account also foreign literature sources, J. Průcha proposed integration of the both terms under the Czech term *edukace* (in sense of the English word *education* that is also occasionally translated as “*výchova a vzdělání*“ (in English “*upbringing and education*“) or only as “*výchova*“ or only “*vzdělávání*“). Here we do not aspire to solve pedagogical terminology questions; for our research we consider the term “upbringing“ to belong to the category directed at personality development and the term “education“ to be a process focused on cognitive (information) development. From this standpoint we also understand a criticism or self-criticism of teachers - they often say that they pay attention first of all to *education*, i.e. teaching of a subject, not to development of a pupil personality as a whole (Kurelová, 1998, Průcha, 2002).

Furthermore, for this text we consider as necessary to mention beforehand the difference in interpretation of *profession* and *occupation*. *Profession* is understood as a specialized and skilled activity, which demands deep and planned training; getting skills only is not sufficient, but an effective personality education is necessary for identification with a profession. On the contrary, *occupation* means only outward handling of required tasks resulting from a job. By our standpoint, teaching is a profession.

Our studies have been focused on problems of teachers for many years. We explored problems of physical load and mental stress of teaching (E. Řehulka, O. Řehulková, 1998), coping with stressing situations and their consequences for women teachers (O. Řehulková, E. Řehulka 1988), personality characteristics and coping with workload of women teachers at primary schools (E. Řehulka, O. Řehulková, 1999); our studies were also focused on teaching from the gender point of view (E. Řehulka, O. Řehulková, 2001), stressing situations of teachers in the teacher-adolescent pupil relationship (O. Řehulková, E. Řehulka, 2003), we explored optimistic/pessimistic orientation of teachers (E. Řehulka, 2002), quality of life of teachers (E. Řehulka, O. Řehulková, 2003) and its structure in relation to workload (O. Řehulková, E. Řehulka, 2007), we obtained research results on strategies for coping with stress (O. Řehulková, E. Řehulka, 2004) and on own lifestyle evaluation of primary schools women teachers (E. Řehulka, O. Řehulková, 2004), we made attempts in creation of the “healthy personality“ model in pedeutology (E. Řehulka, 2006); we also worked at using of self-management approach in activities of teachers (E. Řehulka, 2007) and many others.

Here we made attempt to know more about teacher profession by analysis of life stories of women teachers, based in principle on their autobiographies.

In order to characterize this method we can proceed from the term anamnesis. Anamnesis is used in a routine psychological diagnostics, in psychiatric diagnostics or especially diagnostics in psychology and usually it means a registration of personality development in life course, from conception to the present time (in another context also the ability to recall past occurrences before illness), a set of all data and information befo-

re illness or before problematic state of a client (personal anamnesis, family anamnesis, social anamnesis, school anamnesis). Psychological anamnesis is concentrated on finding information on development of an individual as a whole (personal, family and career anamneses). Psychiatric anamnesis, in analysis of personality development of a client, is primarily concentrated on pathological aspects and development deviation of a client.

Curriculum vitae has become a broad source of information and has been in spotlight of psychologists for a long time. In Slovakia in 1957 I. Ruttkay-Nedecký and V. Zikmund published the research monographs on *psychobiographic analysis of curriculum vitae*; in that time they made attempt to analyse curriculum vitae from viewpoint of Pavlov's interpretation of the higher nervous system. A patient told his autobiography and it was later analyzed - adequacy of behaviour in four points, social adequacy and purpose suitability in registered affectogenic and hard life situations were evaluated; then the so called anamnestic index was simply calculated. The patient was asked to describe his/her family and social environment, childhood and adulthood. The authors tried to find connections of the anamnestic index with psychophysiologic characteristics according to Russian Pavlov's school. The book is interesting with pointing out importance of psychological and socio-psychological data for perception of human personality in such past times.

In this connection R. Atkinson et al. (2003) spoke about case studies that "use autobiography for scientific purposes" and advised to be beware of unreliable, distorted and incomplete memories. However, this distortion can be interesting in some sense, mainly if other life plans are projected to the autobiography or description of events is influenced by imagined or expected future.

Curriculum vitae, autobiography is a written description of an author's own life or several parts of his life. It can be formulate in a simple arrangement of outside events, in a complex literary description of the author's life stories, his development and philosophic creed. It can be arranged in daily records, annals, various literary forms, memoirs, historical records, essays and also artworks (literarily stylized dairy, autobiographical novel). In artistic literature there are also autobiographic fictions that use the first person singular form of telling in stories.

The phenomenon of curriculum vitae, autobiography, can be investigated in similar forms and so it can enter into other theoretical denotations, which is valid for theory of personal stories. In methodological manual published by R. Švaříček and K. Šed'ová (2007) the definition of *life story* is quoted by R. Atkinson (1998): "It is a story that is chosen by an individual, for telling about his/her passed life; it is told fully and frankly, to a degree permitted by his/her memory and influenced by his/her wish to provide personal information to others in some measure, usually as a result of a dialogue with the other person". The mentioned authors also called attention to possible difference between *life story* and *life history*. In the life story we can see "how people are living and how they understand living - mainly each of them his/her own life", whereas for the life history "observation, questionnaires, documents or interviews with the third party" are more frequently used (Švaříček, Šed'ová 2007). Probably we can say that the life story emphasises subjective view and the life history objective opinion. By Vybíral (2006) "human life can be seen as "woven of stories"". The story enables to see the life as a meaningful complex. "The story is taken as the unit of a significance that gives a frame for experiences being lived. Thus, the life experiences are interpreted by means of the story." (Čermák 2000).

Z. Dytrych and Z. Matějček (2001) published experience with the method of the life story; they understand this method as “reconstruction of a life story of an investigated individual, which was subjectively processed and now being told to another person“. They differentiate this method from a thorough anamnesis, structured interview or psychoanalytical investigation and also suppose that it can not be measured by use of standard mathematical statistics methods. The attitude of the investigating person is not standardized at all, in general it is recommended to be helpful, encouraging, sympathizing and with minimal influence on story telling. For our research it was important that the authors supported fluency by inciting questions. In spite of Dytrych’s and Matějček’s sceptical conclusions for the problem, evaluated by them as “refreshment of classical investigation repertoire“, we can state also several positives: the method brings not only “a set of anamnestic data but the authentic life story with its specific and hardly noticeable dynamic“.

Theme of the life story is also discussed by P. Gavora (2000) in his handbook for pedagogical research: “In a research of the life story it is not primarily about collection of facts on a man’s life. From the facts we can reconstruct subjective meanings; the facts in themselves are not an end, but a means of the research“. This author also quotes the British research of teacher careers published by J. P. Sikes, L. Measor and P. Woods (1985), who found the following phases in the teacher careers:

1. Choice of the profession
2. Starting practice
3. The first school year, probably also one half of the second school year
4. The third year after starting at school
5. The middle of the carrier in teaching
6. Time before retirement.

In the life story there are critical incidents or key event points of a turn that indicate change of actions/behaviour in the story flow and sometimes they also explain this change. Those events have been mostly filled with emotions and affectively tinged in expressions.

In our theoretical consideration we introduce three terms, namely ”anamnesis, “curriculum vitae“ and ”story“ that can be defined for our work as follows:

**ANAMNESIS** → data from the past to explain the present state

*(time perception: the past times)*

**CURRICULUM VITAE** → anamnesis + personal sense

*(time perception: the past times from viewpoint of the present time)*

**STORY** → curriculum vitae by personal interpretation

*(time perception: the past times and present from viewpoint of future)*

## **Research, results, discussion and conclusions**

In this study we analyze autobiographies of 50 primary school women teachers that described their autobiographies as personal stories of realization/self-realization in the teaching profession. The average age of the investigated persons was 37,5 years, the

youngest woman teacher was 29 and the oldest one 56. The investigated persons (hereinafter IPs) were offered an autobiography structure that could motivate IPs to a better reflection in their position as woman teacher in relation to their personal past times and their future. They told with ease their professional life story, some of them prepared principle parts in written form, because they had disposed of the non-obligatory offer “Questions proposed for personal story of woman teacher“. Theory of research of profession stories had been lectured and discussed in postgraduate psychology courses.

## **QUESTIONS PROPOSED FOR PERSONAL STORY OF WOMAN TEACHER**

*Experiences and memories of childhood and youth that have influenced you in choice of your profession (parents, teachers, books, environmen, films, friends) and formed your teaching work till now ...*

*Experiences and memories from professional preparation (secondary school and the university, courses), positive, negative influence, importance, uselessness; can teaching be learned?...*

*What substance and sense do you see in your woman teaching profession? Do you take it as vocation or only occupation? How has this work affected your personal development?...*

*What do you mostly appreciate in woman teaching and what is troubling you; what enrichment, damage or limits have you found in this work? Has it influenced your health, happiness and satisfaction?...*

*How has your teaching profession impacted on your private life, relationships with your husband, partner, friends, parents?...*

*Has been your relationships to children and young people influenced by your teaching profession? Or relationships with your own children? Have you more problems with your own children than other women? ...*

*What relationships have you with your colleagues? Are you socially engaged? Do you want to take part in public events? Are you interested in politics, in education topics?*

*Have you and important or milestone experiences from your teaching profession that had principle impact on your life? Can you describe it?*

*What are you interested in? What activities do you prefer? What would you like to do in your spare time? Do you devote time to self-education, culture, social activities?*

*What personal perspectives do you see in your work: personal satisfaction, fatigue, exhaustion, positive feeling of satisfaction, happiness, acknowledgement...*

*Would you choose your teaching profession again, never? Have you had another idea? Would you be pleased with succession in teaching in your family? Would (would not) you recommend this work? ...*

*Please try to express your idea and sense of teaching in a motto, slogan, quotation, aphorism, verse - your own or adopted.*

We analyzed the recorded stories and also the written form and so we obtained a lot of information to possible different interpretation. The research described here supplied us with a lot of knowledge; only a part was used in this study. Because of its extent we choose a process structuring the stories into the following fields of interest:

- Origin of "teaching" in the personal story
- Experience of "teaching" in the personal story
- Life with "teaching" in the personal story
- "Teaching" as a labour in the personal story
- Significance (*status*) of "teaching" in the personal story
- Sense (*role*) of "teaching" in the personal story
- Fate with "teaching" in the personal story

In each of the fields we could find essential moments for that the women teachers could express their opinions; for a simple illustration we quote here from the stories and make attempt to draw a general conclusion. Results for individual fields are as follows:

## **Origin of "teaching" in the personal story**

### **MOTIVATION FOR CHOICE OF TEACHING**

("from elementary school age I wanted to be teacher")

- *MOTIVATION FOR TEACHING IS MENTIONED ALMOST ALWAYS*

### **FAMILY INFLUENCE**

("my parent did not prevent me from being teacher but they did not recommended me such a choice")

- *FAMILY DID NOT PREVENT ME FROM BEING TEACHER*

### **INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCES**

("I wished to be similar to my favourite woman teacher; I have respected her greatly and I am still thinking of her often")

- *POSITIVE EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ARE IMPORTANT*

### **SUITABILITY/PURPOSEFULNESS AT CHOICE**

("I knew what teacher's work meant, what I would do")

- *CHOICE IS PURPOSIVE*

## PROCESS OF DECISION-MAKING

("working with children is the best experience of my woman teacher career; all my life I have strived for it")

- *STRONG MOTIVE: WORK WITH CHILDREN*

## LIFE PERIOD AND AGE OF CHOICE

("I choose teaching finally at the secondary school")

- *TIME AT SECONDARY SCHOOL*

## **Experience of "teaching" in the personal story**

### AM I SATISFIED WITH TEACHING AS MY PROFESSION?

("I like explaining various things, taking care of kids; I am mostly satisfied with it")

- *TEACHING IN ITSELF IS VERY SATISFYING FOR ME.*

### WOULD I CHOOSE THIS PROFESSION AGAIN?

("I think I would be teacher again but the profession is so hard and responsible that I would not dare to recommend it to others")

- *I WOULD LIKE TO BE WOMAN TEACHER AGAIN (BUT I CAN NOT RECOMMENDED TO ANYBODY).*

### WHAT ARE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF TEACHING FOR ME?

("one must believe that things will always go well", "When I evoke my pedagogical memories I can sometimes recall extraordinary deep experience", "... sometimes I am afraid that I could be unconcerned, inadequately to the situation")

- *"FORCED" OPTIMISM, "FLOW" STATES ARE NEARLY DESCRIBED, FEAR OF BURNOUT SYNDROME.*

### WHAT ENRICHMENT HAVE I FOUND IN TEACHING?

("in my teaching practice I have been enriched mainly by contacts with young people, they represent for me future")

- *REAL CONTACT WITH FUTURE*

### WHAT DISAPPOINTMENT HAVE I FOUND IN TEACHING?

("the profession and work of woman teacher I had known - therefore I started my own teaching practice so that I have not met either disappointment or surprise")

- *TEACHING DID NOT BRING ME EITHER SURPRISE OR DISAPPOINTMENT*

### WHAT DAMAGE HAS TEACHING BROUGHT ME?

("I thing I am woman teacher always and in every situations and without wishing. I just can not rid of it")

- *ENORMOUS ABSORPTION IN THE PROFESSION, MY LIFE HAS BEEN REDUCED TO TEACHING*

## **Life with “teaching“ in the personal story**

### HOW HAS TEACHING IMPACTED ON MY SOCIAL RELATIONS?

(“I often fancy that people relate to me as a woman teacher, with reserve and they are ready to disagree with me“)

- *TEACHING CAN INFLUENCE PERSONAL SOCIAL RELATIONS IN A NEGATIVE WAY*

### HOW HAS TEACHING INFLUENCED MY RELATIONSHIPS WITH MY FRIENDS /PARTNER?

(“women teachers are often said to moralize ... but I *think* it is not true“, “most my friends are my colleagues – women teachers“, ...”I am divorced and a lot of my colleagues, too“)

- *TEACHING CAN INFLUENCE RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS/PARTNER IN A NEGATIVE WAY*

### HOW HAS TEACHING BEEN PROJECTED IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH MY CHILDREN?

(“I think I have relations to my own children more complicated than other women... probably because I perceive them as children in a school class“)

- *COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN IN OWN FAMILY, PERCEPTION OF COMPLICATED ATTITUDE OF THE CHILDREN TO ME*

## **„Teaching“ as a labour in the personal story**

### DO I CONSIDER TEACHING TO BE PHYSICALLY DEMANDING?

(“I often return from school so tired that I must retire to bed“, ”I have not supposed that teaching is so physically demanding“)

- *TEACHING IS VERY PHYSICALLY DEMANDING*

### HOW CAN TEACHING AFFECT MY HEALTH?

(“I lost my health at school“, ”I got many health problems at school“)

- *TEACHING HAS A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON HEALTH*

### WHAT LOADS/STRESSES CAN BE INDUCED BY TEACHING

(“to outshout children“, ”to maintain discipline“, ”to hold own attention“, ”to handle negative emotions“)

- *SPECIAL PHYSICAL LOAD AND OTHER STRESSES*

### HOW CAN I HANDLE THOSE LOADS/STRESSES?

(“I have always been able to handle problems, somehow – but I have never been prepared for it“, ”I think often that I am exhausted unnecessarily“)

- *SUCH SITUATIONS ARE HANDLED UNPLANNED, QUITE INEFFECTIVELY, BY MEANS OF IMPLICIT PROCEDURES*

### IS TEACHING TIME DEMANDING?

(“teaching is very time-consuming, it does not mean only class hours and other work at school but also time for preparation of lessons, teachers are not able to shake school problems even at home“)

- *TEACHING IS VERY TIME DEMANDING*

### HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE AGING IN THIS PROFESSION?

(“in my profession I do not feel my age, probably only in my experiences that help me in situations of lack of energy“)

- *AGING IN TEACHING MEANS INCREASE OF EXPERIENCES, FULL MUTUAL COMPENSATION OF FORCES AND EXPERIENCES*

### FINANCIAL REWARD FOR TEACHING

(“I think, all teachers consider their salary to be lower than they deserve“)

- *LOW FINANCIAL REWARD*

## **Significance (status) of “teaching“ in the personal story**

### DO I FEEL RESPECT FOR MY PROFESSION?

(“I feel that people hold teachers in esteem but I am afraid it will not be long“)

- *TEACHING IS TAKEN WITH RESPECT BUT THERE IS A WORRY THAT THE RESPECT COULD BE LOST*

### IS TEACHING REPLACEABLE?

(“teacher’s personality can be substituted by nothing else, neither by computers, nor textbooks, sophisticated projects“)

- *TEACHING IS IRREPLACEABLE*

### POSITION OF TEACHING PROFESSION IN OUR SOCIETY

(“ I think people can not imagine our society without teachers but they do not think about it and are not interested in cooperation with them“)

- *TEACHING IS IN OUR SOCIETY APPRECIATED (with critical reservation to the society)*

### PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION/PREPAREDNESS FOR TEACHING

(“I feel that the university did not give me enough for my profession of women teacher; I do not know if it is a mistake of the university or my fault but pedagogical education of teachers at universities should be changed substantially“, ”by my opinion, for teaching a facility analogous artistic production is also necessary“)

- *MANY RESERVATIONS TO THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION/PREPAREDNESS*

### UPBRINGING VERSUS EDUCATION

(“I have no problems with explaining of my subjects and didactics but I know that I do not bring education with upbringing“, “I would prefer a real education“)

- *UPBRINGING IS MORE DIFFICULT THAN EDUCATION*

## HOW AM I PERCEIVED BY CHILDREN AND PARENTS?

("children and parents relationships to me are very different: from friendly and willing collaboration up to disdain and total indifference")

- *CHILDREN AND PARENTS PERCEIVE TEACHER VERY DIFFERENTLY*

## WHAT IS MY AUTHORITY AS TEACHER?

("formal authority does not work, informal one must be obtained by a long and hard work")

- *AUTHORITY MUST BE BUILT*

## **Sense (role) of "teaching" in the personal story**

### WHAT DUTIES DO I FEEL AS WOMAN TEACHER?

("I, as woman teacher, have a lot of *written* duties but the *unwritten* duties are important, for those I myself feel responsibility...")

- *IF TEACHING IS UNDERSTOOD IN A PROPER WAY IT IS „ABOUT DUTIES“*

### WHAT IS MY ENTIRE RESPONSIBILITY?

("when I see what all I could handle, what pupils and teacher expect from me, I am saying to myself I can not be responsible for all such things")

- *I HAVE MORE RESPONSIBILITIES THAN I CAN HANDLE*

### WHAT VALUES AND IDEALS DO I – AS WOMAN TEACHER - ASCRIBE TO ?

("my friends say me: 'You as a teacher are an idealist' but I answer them 'That's why I am teacher', "Teacher should first of all educate, not only instruct children")

- *IDEALS AND VALUES ARE CONSIDERED TO BE "IDEALISTIC"*

### DO I THINK THAT FOR MY PROFESSION I MUST DEFINE MY MORAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES?

("education is not possible without moral values; those moral values are evident. I accept them and act in accord with them")

- *MORAL NORMS AND VALUES ARE DEFINED IN A DECLARATORY WAY, ESPECIALLY BY BELIEVERS*

### DO I LIVE FOR TEACHING?

("I am convinced that a person satisfied with teaching is also fully identified with this profession")

- *I LIVE FOR TEACHING IF I AM SATISFIED WITH IT*

## **Fate of "teaching" in the personal story**

### HAS TEACHING AFFECTED MY LIFE?

("I can not imagine my life without teaching")

- *TEACHING IS MY LIFE*

## DO I TAKE TEACHING AS VOCATION?

(“work of woman teaching is a vocation, it means activity, creation and humility“)

- *TEACHING IS CREATIVE PROFESSION AND VOCATION*

## AM I A PERSON SUITABLE FOR TEACHING?

(“when my work does not go well I speculate whether my decision to become teacher was a good one“)

- *SUITABILITY FOR THIS JOB IS ADMITTED ONLY BY THOSE WHO ARE SATISFIED WITH THIS PROFESSION*

## HAS MY LIFE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED BY TEACHING?

(“I’m sure, I will never be able to do anything else than teaching – whether I like it or not“, “teaching is my fate“)

- *„I HOPE THAT TEACHING MISSION CAN ACCOMPLISH MY LIFE“*

## “ME“ AND TEACHING

(“When I am thinking about my profession, I mean I am a proper teacher in the situations when I am authentic - without keeping theories I believe in my experiences and my own feelings“)

- *TEACHING IS „MY TEACHING“*

## TEACHING AND SELF-REALIZATION

(“I think I would not find other profession except for teaching with such possibility to express my abilities and to act purposefully and intentionally“)

- *TEACHING CAN RESULT IN SELF-REALIZATION*

## TEACHING AND PERSONAL TRANSCENDENCE

(“woman teacher working, if it is taken honestly and deeply, can bring strong sense of life experiences, sometimes so strong that a normal contact with common world and life reality can be lost. “)

- *TEACHING CAN RESULT IN PERSONAL TRANSCENDENCE BUT THERE IS A RISK OF ODDITY*

Here we presented a palette of information with extract of women teachers’ life stories. Data of protocols were distributed to seven areas that we try to summarize now:

Teaching is a profession known practically by everybody; people have met with this profession in their youth, for many years, from “the outside“ as pupils, students and as parents. Women teachers choose this profession by deliberate motives, which originates soon at primary school and they make definite decision at secondary school in time of profession choice. For women teachers there is a strong, understandable motive for this profession – working with children. In the present time teaching does not belong among lucrative professions; it has, however, character of a respectable profession, particularly for a woman and so families of future women teachers did not protect them from this choice.

Personal experience of pedagogical work is satisfying for our investigated persons and they would usually choose this profession again. But they are conscious of some difficulties of this profession that could absorb and exhaust them. Teachers are forced to create simple, positive models of behaviour that are useful for world of children and therefore they tend sometimes to express naive or effusive opinions.

Each profession has influence on social life of a relevant individual – similarly it is valid for women teachers. Here the women teachers observe more negatives; they are often said to transfer school education procedures to relations with family and adults; it is negatively taken mainly by their partners. Women teachers deny often this fact but admit several social and communication unusualness resulting from their profession.

Each profession has character of a work and thus also teaching. Majority of women teachers perceive the pedagogical work as very time- and physically demanding, which is often surprising for publics and also for beginning teachers. For this reason women teachers try to see causes of their own health problems at school and can guess a lot of specific loads/stresses originating in pedagogical work by keeping discipline and own working productivity. Women teachers often say that they are not able to handle stress from teaching. Getting older is not taken as a handicap in this profession because the lower physical productivity is compensated by larger experiences. In the present time our teachers usually complain about relatively low salary.

How can teachers understand significance of their profession, in other words what they say about the teacher status? The answers and meanings are given mainly by traditional conception of teaching. This profession is perceived as socially accepted, irreplaceable but connected more with an individual authority than with the profession. Contemporary we registered a fear of endangerment of those qualities; some women teachers take it by supporting education more than upbringing. It probably can influence criticism concerning profession education of teachers; the criticism is often and noticeable but mainly only general, and seldom concrete.

More personally opinion of teachers appears in looking for a sense of their profession. In answers of women teachers they tell about duties, responsibility and often they mention high ideals, especially in moral level; more distinct opinion was expressed in answers of believing women teachers and those satisfied with their profession.

The most personal formulation we characterize as "the fate of teaching". Teaching is a mission that enables self-realization; it is creative and can fulfil life, sometimes up to possible deformation. Mostly those women teachers have such experiences that are satisfied with their job.

## Conclusions

- Teaching is a deliberately chosen profession that is usually well known by candidates.
- Teaching profession brings also physical, time and other loads and stresses and teachers are not professionally prepared for coping with them.
- Women teachers mainly consider teaching to be a traditional profession and in this sense they are afraid of future.
- Women teachers differ by their focusing either on upbringing or education.

- Women teachers highly appreciate moral values of their profession, namely those identified with teaching as a vocation.
- Teaching is a personal identification that brings job satisfaction and also fatigue.

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## PŘÍBĚHY UČITELEK: POKUS O POZNÁNÍ PROFESE

**Souhrn:** Studie přináší poznatky o učitelském povolání prostřednictvím analýzy profesního příběhu padesáti učitelek. Jednotlivé výpovědi jsme strukturovali z hlediska motivace, prožitku, každodennosti, práce, významu, smyslu a osudu učitelství v osobním příběhu. Po kvalitativní analýze docházíme k závěrům, že učitelství je vědomou volbou povolání, je učitelkami chápáno hlavně tradičně, s relativně vysokým mravním kreditem a s diferencí mezi převahou výchovné či vzdělávací práce. Při identifikaci s učitelstvím dochází k životnímu naplnění, ale současně k setkání se specifickými zátěžemi a problémy, které mohou vést až deformacím, na které nebývají učitelky připraveny.

**Klíčová slova:** učitelská profese, osobní příběh