

A Teacher Reflects on her Career

English translation:

A: After secondary and primary, did you go to college?

B: I went to a teacher's college.

A: Why did you choose to become a teacher?

B: During those times, we did not have an option. For every girl child, it was either you become a nurse or a teacher. So I applied for those programs, nursing and teaching. The earliest offer I got was from a teachers' college. So I went to the teachers' college.

A: For how many years have you have been teaching?

B: Umm, a lot. We are in two thousand and ...?

A: Eleven.

B: Eleven. Since 1981. I started teaching since 1981. So it is now over 30 years.

A: Thirty years.

B: Thirty-one years.

A: So what age group do you teach?

B: I teach young children, the toddlers. Grade 1 and 2. Those are the ones that I really love to teach. They are not troublesome and you can play with them. They are obedient. They are good children that one would like to deal with.

A: Can you tell me your experiences of teaching young children? What challenges do you face?

B: Umm, I have a lot of experience. Very young children are children who can be molded easily. They are easy to deal with such that if you tell them about anything, they do not easily forget. They are not the kind of children who disagree with what they are taught. The challenges that we face in teaching children is that when a child has never been exposed to pre-school or *crèche*, those children have trouble with understanding what they learn.

A: Ok. So, for all the 30 years that you have been in the teaching field, can you tell me if there are any changes in the teaching field, or everything is still the same? If there are any changes, in what way have things changed?

B: Huh, there are changes. Back in the days, teaching was a profession which was loved by a lot of people. It was profession that was appreciated by people, what we call appreciation. People were happy with what teachers did in those years. That is years ago. Nowadays, it is a job that is not loved by the majority. Especially the youths, if you tell them they should become teachers, ha they do not feel good about it because of the money crisis that is there. The salary for a teacher is no longer a salary that would please people. It is just money in words unlike back in the days. People are no longer satisfied. A teacher used to be a respected person in different places. He/she was respected and honored because of the job that the person did and the salary that he/she earned. The money helped the person to take of his/her family, even relatives, or send his/her children to better (expensive) schools. But nowadays, a teacher's salary can no longer make him/her appreciated by the community, and even the teacher himself/herself can no longer meet his/her needs like he/she used to, because the salary is too little.

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