What are Teachers' Main Goals?  

FIT-Choice surveys asked questions about your main goals, and concerns, for those who were or had been teaching, and for those who were considering teaching. In this section, we outline some of the main goals and concerns expressed by teachers and school leaders. There are many reasons why teachers start teaching, and many reasons why teachers leave teaching. Some of these reasons are related to the work environment, others to personal and family reasons. Teachers may also have different goals and concerns at different times in their careers. We hope that this section gives you some insight into what others have told us about teaching, and what is important to you.

Project Update

We hope that this newsletter finds you well. Thank you again for participating in the FIT-Choice project, to help us study why people choose teaching careers, why they choose to leave teaching, or how they develop in the profession, and what supports and sustains them. We really value the time you have taken to respond to our questionnaires in the past. All of your time has been worth it. This is the only study in the world that has been able to obtain information from this number of teachers across such a wide range of countries, and over this period of time. 

Many countries worldwide are having difficulties attracting and retaining teachers, especially in the areas of mathematics, science, and foreign languages, and in rural or remote geographic areas. It is important to determine what factors motivate individuals to teach, which increase the likelihood of staying in the teaching profession, those conditions which are valued by teachers, and what supports and sustains them.

We value and respect the privacy of all participants; we are not asking for you to send us the contact details of any individual directly. Any help you can provide in helping us to reach "lost" participants will be greatly appreciated.

Take Us With You!

The ongoing success of this project depends on us being able to keep in touch with you. For this reason we have produced a f. You can “take us with you” when you move. Please contact us if you move so we can keep in touch.

Can You Help Us?

We have been working hard to recontact all the previous participants we have been unable to follow up with, however, there are still some with whom we have lost contact. If you are still in contact with others who taught or are teaching in the teacher education program who would have participated in the FIT-Choice project, or if you have any suggestions about reaching them, would you be willing to ask them to get in touch with us? We would also like to invite them to continue in the research.

We value and respect the privacy of all participants: we are not asking for you to send us the contact details of any individual directly. Any help you can provide in helping us to reach “lost” participants will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you again for participating in the FIT-Choice project. As two topical examples, teachers in Germany are better paid; and, there is an overlay-of-applicants to teacher education programs in Turkey. We will be able to explore how salary impacts teachers’ perceptions about teaching, and whether teaching seems to be a more attractive career in Turkey.

Take Us With You!

The ongoing success of this project depends on us being able to keep in touch with you. For this reason we have produced a f. You can “take us with you” when you move. Please contact us if you move so we can keep in touch.

Can You Help Us?

We have been working hard to recontact all the previous participants we have been unable to follow up with, however, there are still some with whom we have lost contact. If you are still in contact with others who taught or are teaching in the teacher education program who would have participated in the FIT-Choice project, or if you have any suggestions about reaching them, would you be willing to ask them to get in touch with us? We would also like to invite them to continue in the research.

We value and respect the privacy of all participants: we are not asking for you to send us the contact details of any individual directly. Any help you can provide in helping us to reach “lost” participants will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you again for participating in the FIT-Choice project. As two topical examples, teachers in Germany are better paid; and, there is an overlay-of-applicants to teacher education programs in Turkey. We will be able to explore how salary impacts teachers’ perceptions about teaching, and whether teaching seems to be a more attractive career in Turkey.

Take Us With You!

The ongoing success of this project depends on us being able to keep in touch with you. For this reason we have produced a f. You can “take us with you” when you move. Please contact us if you move so we can keep in touch.

Can You Help Us?

We have been working hard to recontact all the previous participants we have been unable to follow up with, however, there are still some with whom we have lost contact. If you are still in contact with others who taught or are teaching in the teacher education program who would have participated in the FIT-Choice project, or if you have any suggestions about reaching them, would you be willing to ask them to get in touch with us? We would also like to invite them to continue in the research.

We value and respect the privacy of all participants: we are not asking for you to send us the contact details of any individual directly. Any help you can provide in helping us to reach “lost” participants will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you again for participating in the FIT-Choice project. As two topical examples, teachers in Germany are better paid; and, there is an overlay-of-applicants to teacher education programs in Turkey. We will be able to explore how salary impacts teachers’ perceptions about teaching, and whether teaching seems to be a more attractive career in Turkey.

Take Us With You!

The ongoing success of this project depends on us being able to keep in touch with you. For this reason we have produced a f. You can “take us with you” when you move. Please contact us if you move so we can keep in touch.

Can You Help Us?

We have been working hard to recontact all the previous participants we have been unable to follow up with, however, there are still some with whom we have lost contact. If you are still in contact with others who taught or are teaching in the teacher education program who would have participated in the FIT-Choice project, or if you have any suggestions about reaching them, would you be willing to ask them to get in touch with us? We would also like to invite them to continue in the research.

We value and respect the privacy of all participants: we are not asking for you to send us the contact details of any individual directly. Any help you can provide in helping us to reach “lost” participants will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you again for participating in the FIT-Choice project. As two topical examples, teachers in Germany are better paid; and, there is an overlay-of-applicants to teacher education programs in Turkey. We will be able to explore how salary impacts teachers’ perceptions about teaching, and whether teaching seems to be a more attractive career in Turkey.

Take Us With You!

The ongoing success of this project depends on us being able to keep in touch with you. For this reason we have produced a f. You can “take us with you” when you move. Please contact us if you move so we can keep in touch.

Can You Help Us?

We have been working hard to recontact all the previous participants we have been unable to follow up with, however, there are still some with whom we have lost contact. If you are still in contact with others who taught or are teaching in the teacher education program who would have participated in the FIT-Choice project, or if you have any suggestions about reaching them, would you be willing to ask them to get in touch with us? We would also like to invite them to continue in the research.

We value and respect the privacy of all participants: we are not asking for you to send us the contact details of any individual directly. Any help you can provide in helping us to reach “lost” participants will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you again for participating in the FIT-Choice project. As two topical examples, teachers in Germany are better paid; and, there is an overlay-of-applicants to teacher education programs in Turkey. We will be able to explore how salary impacts teachers’ perceptions about teaching, and whether teaching seems to be a more attractive career in Turkey.
Tips for Work-Life Balance

1. Prioritise your time: Make a balance plan of how much time you want to dedicate to your personal life and to your work activities each day, week or month. Make sure they are balanced; remember (like a budget), stick to your plan.

2. Learn to say "NO": When you have your plan, learn to say "no" to things that aren't a good fit. Important things pop up, make sure you put the time back into the activity you dismissed later on.

3. Use stress management techniques: Unfortunately, work stress and personal stress are often unavoidable, so learn how to cope with them effectively. Understand more about stress: what are the sources, it affects you. Work out what helps you to relax, such as exercising, meditation, listening to music, talking to family, friends or spending time with your pets. Make time for it in your balance plan.

4. Talk to your friends and family: Sometimes the best way to deal with work and personal life conflict is to make your feelings known to your family or friends. They can offer great advice and support. Establish and use a social support network. Ask for and accept help, cultivate good relationships.

5. Talk to your boss and colleagues: Making your difficulties known at work can help you to obtain support from the people who can do something directly about the problem or issue. If nobody knows you are feeling pressured and stressed, then no-one can help you.

6. Decide what works for you: Some people find that separating work from personal life is best (e.g., don’t check your work emails at home); others find that integrating the two domains, depending on your lifestyle (e.g., socialising with work colleagues). Decide which option best suits your individual life situation. We are all different, after all.

Helpful Coping Strategies

DON’T:
- bottle it up,
- work long hours,
- take work home,
- be a perfectionist,
- procrastinate and avoid,
- squeeze out hobbies.

DO:
- delegate,
- say "no",
- take breaks,
- talk about it.

A Healthy Lifestyle

A healthy lifestyle is important for everyone’s wellbeing. Exercise releases muscle tension and accumulated adrenaline, is a relaxant, good for circulation, and lowers blood pressure. Endorphins that are released through the body are natural stress depressants. Exercise clears the mind, improves mood, self image, energy and weight. Adults are recommended to aim for 30-60 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, such as walking, 5-7 times per week. Physical activity can impact their students’ achievement, learning, and engagement. They are also more likely to participate in extracurricular activities, are balanced; remember (like a budget), stick to your plan! and have a positive effect on their own health and stress levels. Enjoy everything in moderation!
Wellbeing & Work-Life Balance

Why Does Teacher Wellbeing Matter?

Teacher wellbeing is central to effectiveness, productivity and satisfaction at work. When teachers are motivated, they positively impact their students’ achievement, learning, and engagement. They are also more likely to participate in extracurricular activities, are more satisfied with their career, and more committed to the teaching profession.

Teaching young people is complex and responsible work. It is very rewarding, but also challenging. You need to maintain your own wellbeing in order to work effectively and support your students; having the right skills to do this is an important resilience factor for adolescents who are at risk. Promoting well-being in your school culture must include looking after yourself and your colleagues.

Within the first 5 years of teaching, many teachers will leave the profession. There are no reliable statistics concerning the exact numbers, which is one of the areas the FIT-Choice project aims to address. Teacher attrition has been largely attributed to low work-related wellbeing and engagement (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2005), due to factors such as workload and overall job characteristics, job design, role behaviour and role clarity.

Wellbeing means having realistic expectations of yourself as well as the ability to deal with stress in your daily life. Within this area, we distinguish three levels of wellbeing: emotional, psychological and physical. Emotional wellbeing means feeling positive, being happy and resilient. Psychological wellbeing means having a sense of self-worth, self-esteem, and confidence. Physical wellbeing means having good health, being able to manage stress and recover quickly from illness or injury.

All three levels are important for your wellbeing. Caregivers need to be aware of the interconnections of the three levels and the importance of their holistic approach.

The role of wellbeing in your work is very important. Your wellbeing can impact on your ability to work effectively (Ch. 10, pp. 155-176). In A. Berry, A. Clemans, & A. Aronson (Eds.), Personal, professional learning: Dimensions of professional learning: Professionalism, practice and identity. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

A healthy lifestyle is integral to achieving wellbeing. Exercise releases muscle tension and accumulated adrenalin, strengthens our immune system, and enables us to cope. High levels of stress and disappointment.

Tips for Work-Life Balance

1. Prioritise your time: Make a balance plan of how much time you want to dedicate to your personal life and to your work activities each day, week or month. Make sure they are balanced; remember (like a budget); stick to your plan.

2. Learn to say "NO!": When you have your plan, learn to say “no” to things that aren’t a priority. If important things pop up, make sure you put the time back into the activity you dismissed later on.

3. Use stress management techniques: Unfortunately, work stress and personal stress are often unavoidable, so learn how to cope with them effectively. Understand more about stress: what are the sources, it affects you. Work out what helps you to relax, such as exercising, meditation, listening to music, talking to family, friends or spending time with your pets. Make time for it in your balance plan.

Read professional literature: the impact of stress on work-life balance and work-life conflict, and, the buffering role that professional identity and research experience at work. Juliette’s research is examining burnout among beginner teachers, and, the high incidence of teachers on stress leave and leaving the profession. She would like to continue working in schools once she qualifies as a psychologist. Ideally, she would work closely with teachers, in whole-staff approaches, aiming to improve wellbeing, and, to meet the needs of challenging students.

Bethany Nosey: Teacher Wellbeing & Career Development

Amanda works 3 days a week in the FIT-Choice project. Her roles include newsletter development and management of our library of resources. As well, she tutors in the preservice teacher education program at Monash University. Amanda’s research has focused on the influence of job design on work-life balance and work-life conflict, and the buffering role that spirituality can play. She works with Australian academics indicates that the academic profession faces particular challenges, especially in balancing work and personal life, and suffers poor psychological health and wellbeing. Consequently, tertiary educators would benefit from better stress management techniques and for employers to provide stress reducing initiatives in the workplace.

FIT-Choice Publications

All downloadable at www.fitchoice.org

Helpful Copping Strategies

DON’T:
- bottle it up
- work home
- be a perfectionist
- procrastinate and avoid
- squeeze out hobbies.

DO:
- delegate
- say “no”
- take breaks
- talk about it.

Journal Articles


Book Chapters


FIT-Choice Postgraduate Thesis Supervisions

Effects of gender and gender role orientation on high school students’ teaching perceptions and aspirations in Hong Kong (Wai Shan Ku 2009)

What teachers believe, say and do: A study of the relationship between teacher perceptions, teaching engagement, their engagement practices, and student engagement (Fiona Morrison 2009)

Personality and teachers: A multifaceted approach (Kevin Quin 2008)

Identifying factors that deter engineering students from pursuing a STEM teaching career (Nilusha De Alwis 2008)

Indonesian English teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs (Baslin 2008)

Attitudes of university students towards teaching as a career: A study of the influence of difficult work experiences (Amy Young 2007)

Teachers - the next generation: Issues in teacher recruitment (Amy Young 2007)

Candice Poon: Future Social Science Teacher Bachelor of Arts & Bachelor of Commerce, graduating 2012

Chris has worked for FIT-Choice since 2008. He maintains our databases and organises mailouts to participants. Chris plans to teach secondary level history, politics, and economics, and to pursue a leadership role in schools as a Reflective Assistant in the FIT-Choice project for secondary students. Chris hopes to use the experience of working withFIT-Choice for Chris to gain a valuable insight into the experiences and wellbeing of teachers, and shape his future roles and career path.


Glad to have been a part of the team and looking forward to continue working for FIT-Choice.


Zoe has been a Research Assistant with FIT-Choice since 2008. Zoe’s role in the project is varied and involves data management and analysis, writing up research findings as well as cataloguing our growing research library of resources and stories, and teachers, and works with preservice secondary teachers in their classrooms and experiences at work. Zoe has been a fantastic team member for FIT-Choice and Chris, gaining a valuable insight into the experiences and wellbeing of teachers, and shape his future roles and career path.

Annabelle Fourie: Teacher Perceptions & Engagement Bachelor of Psychology (Education & Development), graduating 2011

Annabelle also conducts interviews with FIT-Choice participants. Her research explores teachers’ perceptions and engagement for different aspects of their work, and their impact on career retention. Having worked as a secondary teacher for a number of years, Annabelle has found that there would be some students in every class who didn’t quite know how to help. This inspired her to undertake further education in psychology. Her research interests derive from having experienced the pressures of teaching, and observed the high incidence of teachers on stress leave and leaving the profession. She would like to continue working in schools once she qualifies as a psychologist. Ideally, she would work closely with teachers, in whole-staff approaches, aiming to improve wellbeing, and, to meet the needs of challenging students.

Nilusha De Alwis: Beginning Teachers & Burnout Bachelor of Psychology (Education & Development), 2011

Nilusha has been involved with FIT-Choice since 2009. Her responsibilities include data analyses and interpretations of the surveys and interviews. Nilusha’s research project examines burnout among beginner teachers, and how this impacts persistence in the teaching profession. After her degree, Nilusha aims to work as a psychologist and organisational psychologist. Being a beginning teacher in the FIT-Choice project has given Nilusha a great opportunity for research skills and, to learn more about psychology and teachers.

Candice Poon: Nursing & Wellbeing Bachelor of Nursing (Mental Health) 2003

Candice has worked for FIT-Choice since 2008 and is completing her graduate nursing year in a private Melbourne hospital. Candice’s main roles have been to locate participants who have moved address, she has also transcribed participant interviews. Although nursing and teaching are two different roles, Candice has found similarities in her own experiences starting out in nursing. Candice is considering postgraduate studies either in theatre or midwifery.
What are Teachers’ Main Goals?

The FIT-Choice surveys asked questions about your main goals, and concerns, for those who were achievement to teachers and make main goals what brings satisfaction and a sense of achievement to teachers and make main goals, which is a significant change for teaching in turn influence their students’ motivations and behaviours.

Your goals as early career teachers were concerned with helping children and adolescents value learning and developing the social and emotional skills that are necessary for them to be able to do so. However, these goals are still there, with some teachers (or were) teaching. This section outlines some of the main goals and concerns that you identified.

Motivate them to learn, and make them believe they could do at their own level and just prepare them for life.

Leads to stress, and lowered levels of confidence and undermining satisfaction and commitment. This then relationships and respect among staff, this can be difficult to attain goals for their students. Teaching is unique in that the goals of others (their students) are core to a teacher’s own professional motivations. This is not the case in most other occupations.

In interviews, you talked about wanting “to make their learning” and “to engage a love of learning”, so that students can “achieve the best that they could do at their level” as well as to have “confidence in themselves and in their ability to be able to learn.”

The kinds of goals that were most important to you included the goals that bring about optimal teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes, to scaffold and promote learning activities, to understand students’ motivation, goals and achievement. Problems arise when teachers are unable to attain your participation, which can be due to situational constraints and competing demands.

Even though you may have enjoyed teaching, you often acknowledged that work pressures were “intense” and “daunting”, resulting in being “absolutely exhausted” and “tired out” after demanding a heavy workload, too little time, and not being able to “leave work at work.”

Your main concerns clustered around issues which interact to impact on job satisfaction: leadership support, time pressure, relations with parents, and support, time pressure, relations with parents, and support, time pressure, relations with parents, and support.

“Motive them to learn, and make them believe they could do at their own level and just prepare them for life.”

Some of you spoke about what it means to work in supportive school environments characterised by good, socially engaging, and collaborative relationships, and a strong sense of community.

Unfortunately, not all schools are supportive. Other workplaces where there are not good relationships and respect among staff, this can undermine satisfaction and commitment. This then leads to stress, and lowered levels of confidence and perceived competence.

“Motive them to learn, and make them believe they could do at their own level and just prepare them for life.”

What brings satisfaction and a sense of achievement to teachers and make main goals, which is a significant change for teaching in turn influence their students’ motivations and behaviours.

“I find it satisfying if I can build a rapport with a kid who’s maybe, not as interested in school.”

In interviews, you talked about wanting “to motivate them to learn” and “engender a love of learning”, so that students can “achieve the best that they could do at their level”, as well as to have “confidence in themselves and in their ability to be able to learn.”

The kinds of goals that were most important to you included the goals that bring about optimal teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes, to scaffold and promote learning activities, to understand students’ motivation, goals and achievement. Problems arise when teachers are unable to attain your participation, which can be due to situational constraints and competing demands.

“Motive them to learn, and make them believe they could do at their own level and just prepare them for life.”

Some of you spoke about what it means to work in supportive school environments characterised by good, socially engaging, and collaborative relationships, and a strong sense of community.

Unfortunately, not all schools are supportive. Other workplaces where there are not good relationships and respect among staff, this can undermine satisfaction and commitment. This then leads to stress, and lowered levels of confidence and perceived competence.

“I find it satisfying if I can build a rapport with a kid who’s maybe, not as interested in school.”

In interviews, you talked about wanting “to motivate them to learn” and “engender a love of learning”, so that students can “achieve the best that they could do at their level”, as well as to have “confidence in themselves and in their ability to be able to learn.”

The kinds of goals that were most important to you included the goals that bring about optimal teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes, to scaffold and promote learning activities, to understand students’ motivation, goals and achievement. Problems arise when teachers are unable to attain your participation, which can be due to situational constraints and competing demands.

“I find it satisfying if I can build a rapport with a kid who’s maybe, not as interested in school.”

In interviews, you talked about wanting “to motivate them to learn” and “engender a love of learning”, so that students can “achieve the best that they could do at their level”, as well as to have “confidence in themselves and in their ability to be able to learn.”

The kinds of goals that were most important to you included the goals that bring about optimal teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes, to scaffold and promote learning activities, to understand students’ motivation, goals and achievement. Problems arise when teachers are unable to attain your participation, which can be due to situational constraints and competing demands.

“I find it satisfying if I can build a rapport with a kid who’s maybe, not as interested in school.”

In interviews, you talked about wanting “to motivate them to learn” and “engender a love of learning”, so that students can “achieve the best that they could do at their level”, as well as to have “confidence in themselves and in their ability to be able to learn.”

The kinds of goals that were most important to you included the goals that bring about optimal teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes, to scaffold and promote learning activities, to understand students’ motivation, goals and achievement. Problems arise when teachers are unable to attain your participation, which can be due to situational constraints and competing demands.

“I find it satisfying if I can build a rapport with a kid who’s maybe, not as interested in school.”

In interviews, you talked about wanting “to motivate them to learn” and “engender a love of learning”, so that students can “achieve the best that they could do at their level”, as well as to have “confidence in themselves and in their ability to be able to learn.”

The kinds of goals that were most important to you included the goals that bring about optimal teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes, to scaffold and promote learning activities, to understand students’ motivation, goals and achievement. Problems arise when teachers are unable to attain your participation, which can be due to situational constraints and competing demands.

“I find it satisfying if I can build a rapport with a kid who’s maybe, not as interested in school.”

In interviews, you talked about wanting “to motivate them to learn” and “engender a love of learning”, so that students can “achieve the best that they could do at their level”, as well as to have “confidence in themselves and in their ability to be able to learn.”

The kinds of goals that were most important to you included the goals that bring about optimal teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes, to scaffold and promote learning activities, to understand students’ motivation, goals and achievement. Problems arise when teachers are unable to attain your participation, which can be due to situational constraints and competing demands.

“I find it satisfying if I can build a rapport with a kid who’s maybe, not as interested in school.”

In interviews, you talked about wanting “to motivate them to learn” and “engender a love of learning”, so that students can “achieve the best that they could do at their level”, as well as to have “confidence in themselves and in their ability to be able to learn.”

The kinds of goals that were most important to you included the goals that bring about optimal teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes, to scaffold and promote learning activities, to understand students’ motivation, goals and achievement. Problems arise when teachers are unable to attain your participation, which can be due to situational constraints and competing demands.

“I find it satisfying if I can build a rapport with a kid who’s maybe, not as interested in school.”

In interviews, you talked about wanting “to motivate them to learn” and “engender a love of learning”, so that students can “achieve the best that they could do at their level”, as well as to have “confidence in themselves and in their ability to be able to learn.”

The kinds of goals that were most important to you included the goals that bring about optimal teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes, to scaffold and promote learning activities, to understand students’ motivation, goals and achievement. Problems arise when teachers are unable to attain your participation, which can be due to situational constraints and competing demands.