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From *Superteacher* to a Super Teacher: The Career Development of Teacher Educators

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to portray and understand the course of teacher educators' careers. To this end, narratives were collected from 11 teachers relating to three periods of their professional lives. The narratives were analyzed using BARTHES' multidimensional method for literary analysis. Findings show that the teachers underwent changes in their perception of themselves, of their role, and of their learners, and that they are involved in educational activity and renewal despite being in a late stage of their careers. The explanations for this phenomenon are rooted in the work environment as well as in the teachers' personal traits and biographies, which include changes and success.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to portray the career of veteran teachers who teach in colleges of education. In many cases, these are veteran teachers who, after successfully teaching in schools for a number of years and acquiring advanced degrees, went on to teach in academic institutions. Using personal narratives and a structuralist approach for our analysis, methods which are uncommon in teacher development studies, we hope to gain new insights regarding the teacher educators' professional development in terms of their professional growth and career stages. [1]

Few studies have been conducted on the professional growth of teachers in colleges in general and in colleges of education in particular (DUCHARME & DUCHARME, 1996; FUGATE & AMEY, 2007). Research dealing with this population focuses mainly on two issues: research and teaching. Various studies (e.g. PARILLA, 1986; VAUGHAN, 1986) have examined the process of engaging in research as a form of professional development. Research is linked to better

teaching, to advancement in the college, and to awards for excellence (FAIA, 1976) as well as to the prevention of burnout and stagnation (VAUGHAN, 1986). However, PELLINO, BLACKBURN, and BOBERG (1984) found that only 22% of college teachers engage in research activity and that 60% of the teachers did not publish after obtaining their Master's degree. Even in colleges where research activity is required or promoted, the faculty members spend only a small portion of their time conducting it (DUCHARME & DUCHARME, 1996; FAIRWEATHER, 1997; ROSENTHAL et al., 1994). [2]

The second field that was investigated in the work of college faculty members, was teaching. As compared to university lecturers, college teacher have many teaching hours, and teaching ability is a crucial factor in their advancement (DUCHARME & DUCHARME, 1996; FREEMAN, 2002; MYERS & WALTER, 1999). FUGATE and AMEY (2007) claim that Community College lecturers perceive their primary role as teachers, and therefore perceived professional development as linked to the improvement of teaching abilities. KUGEL (1993) formulated five stages of development that lecturers go through on the way to good teaching: (1) focus on self (surviving), (2) focus on subject (extending knowledge), (3) focus on student (considering student diversity), (4) focus on student learning (devising various teaching approaches), and (5) focus on student as an independent learner (promoting independent learners). [3]

In recent years, academic teaching has been the focal point of many studies. (For an overview, see KANE, SANDRETTO & HEATH, 2002.) However, the aim of those studies, in most cases, was improving teaching ability by identifying outstanding lecturers and investigating their outlooks and deeds rather than describing professional growth. Other than those aspects, we did not find studies that dealt with the professional growth of teacher educators in colleges of education. [4]

Since the teacher educator population consists mainly of veteran teachers who taught in schools for a number of years (ZIV, ZILBERSTEIN, KATZ, & TAMIR, 1995; DUCHARME & DUCHARME, 1996)—with the school classroom serving as their first practical setting—we elected to explore the course of schoolteachers' careers. This topic was studied extensively with the emphasis on mapping career stages. Although differences exist among findings, various studies have defined distinct stages through which the teachers move throughout their careers. SIKES, MEASOR and WOODS (1985) found that the transition between such stages was made as a result of critical events of three types: (1) external events that occur in society (as war); (2) personal events (marriage, divorce, birth, or illness); (3) internal events that occur during the natural course of the work. Teachers base their choices and decisions on these events. The course of the career is also shaped by various constraints linked to the individual, the society, and the school in which the teacher works. Following is a survey of several studies that define the stages of teachers' careers. [5]

Many researchers have attempted to define the career stages of beginning teachers (see, for instance, BULLOUGH & BAUGHMAN, 1997; COLE &

KNOWLES, 1993; GODDARD & FOSTER, 2001; LORTIE, 1975; MAHLIOS & MAXSON, 1995; OLSON & OSBORNE, 1991; VEENMAN, 1984). In the main, these studies portrayed a gradual transition from an unrealistic perception of teaching to a reality shock and finally to a realistic perception and class maintenance. KAGAN (1992) surveyed 40 studies using the models of FULLER (1969) and BERLINER (1988) as references. She found that during the first years of work the teachers are characterized by an increased awareness regarding their pupils[1] and their knowledge, and that this knowledge is altered by rectifying ideal and erroneous images of teaching by progressing from concentrating on themselves to concentrating on teaching and their pupils' learning, by developing teaching and class-management skills, and by developing a multidimensional perception of the profession—a change that leads to better problem solving. [6]

Other researchers have attempted to define the stages of professional development beginning with the training period and ending with retirement. These studies describe the developmental process as lengthy and as a kind of "sine curve" in which there is an improvement in skills and in job satisfaction for about half the career, followed by a period of professional routine, and finally a decrease in energy and in the sense of commitment, which is sometimes accompanied by acceptance and sometimes by bitterness, until retirement. In many studies, the career stages described overlap; for this reason, some studies will be presented in detail, followed by other studies in brief. [7]

The classic and comprehensive work by SIKES, MEASOR, and WOODS (1985), which was based on case studies, described five career stages that are age-based and are affected by the teachers' stages of life both in and out of school:

1. *Ages 21-28*. The teachers check out options, and therefore avoid commitments. At this stage, many leave teaching shortly after completing their studies. They are struggling for survival, learning teaching and maintenance skills, and coping with the reality shock. After a few years, the focus of their interest shifts to the teaching profession when their teaching discipline becomes a part of their professional identity. The new teachers teach by trial and error, by seeking advice, and by imitating their teachers. Pupils are related to as younger siblings. They are active in extracurricular activities.
2. *Ages 28-33*. The teachers perceive their lives as replete with responsibility and obligations. Male teachers attempt to advance up the hierarchical ladder, while female teachers are obliged to take care of their young children. A number of teachers leave teaching or seek positions or advancement in the education domain for economic reasons. The teachers are comfortable in the classroom, develop teaching methods that suit them, seek innovation, and take an interest in pedagogy. They are disappointed when learners do not cooperate.
3. *Ages 30-40*. This is the physical and intellectual peak and it is expressed in energy, aspirations and self-confidence. The teachers try to specialize in particular fields. Many teachers wish to advance to positions of coordinators,

1 "Pupil" will be used to refer to a K12 learner while "student" refers to a college undergraduate.

advisors, and managers; and they are prepared to make personal changes in order to do so. Others enjoy teaching and the contact with pupils. Sometimes, the race leads to burnout and the desire to resign. They are judgmental and tend to speak about the poor quality of pupils. Conversely, they perceive themselves as experienced and serene teachers and are influenced by their roles as parents. Pupils consult with them about personal matters because of their parental image.

4. *Ages 40-50/55*. Many successful teachers can be found in administrative positions at various levels, and many have removed themselves from active teaching. They lead and safeguard the school's traditions and sometimes serve as its backbone. On the other hand, some of them feel that they have missed out and they become bitter. They become retrospective about their careers, and attempt to resign themselves to what they perceive as a plateau.
5. *Ages 50/55*. The teachers are described as feeling comfortable but experiencing a decrease in energy and enthusiasm. They are interested in retirement, and teaching is no longer enjoyable for them. What is important for them is their pupils' learning. They permit themselves more leeway in their work. They like their work with young people and feel vital because of it. They prefer a holistic educational outlook to a disciplinary specialization. [8]

Following his overview of studies on career stages, HUBERMAN (1989) formulated seven career stages and created possible tracks taken by teachers during their years of work:

1. *Survival and/or discovery*. At this stage of career entry, many teachers undergo a reality shock and are preoccupied with teaching and class management demands. Others are enthusiastic about controlling their pupils, teaching materials, etc. These dimensions may coexist.
2. *Stabilization*. After a few years of teaching, teachers feel greater instructional mastery and comfort and are committed to the teaching profession.
3. *Experimentation or activism*. There is no agreement regarding this career stage. Some studies find that after about 10 years in the profession, teachers experiment with materials and practice and seek new stimulation, while others find that teachers seek to increase their impact in their school by taking new responsibilities and roles and by trying to introduce changes.
4. *"Taking stock": self doubts*. Experimentation gives way to a "mid-career crisis." In this stage many teachers experience a sense of monotony and may even consider leaving the profession. Others may reassess themselves and go through a renewal phase in which they are again active.
5. *Serenity or bitterness*. After about 20 years in their profession, many teachers experience a loss of energy and enthusiasm but also a sense of confidence and self acceptance. They disinvest in relational closeness with their pupils. Others feel bitter towards their school and profession.
6. *Conservatism*. Studies find teachers, being serene or bitter, engage in conservative behavior in their last 10 years of teaching. They resist innovations and feel nostalgia for the past.

7. *Disengagement*. Towards the end of the career, teachers gradually disengage from their roles and withdraw to personal and reflective pursuits. They may leave the profession feeling satisfied and serene or bitter and worn out. [9]

Similarly, FESSLER and CHRISTENSEN (1992) define eight stages: (1) pre-service, (2) induction, (3) competency building, (4) enthusiasm and growth, (5) career frustration, (6) career stability, (7) career wind-down, (8) career exit. [10]

Another group of researchers relates to teaching as a life-long learning-to-teach process (FEINMAN-NEMSER, 1983). In this case, the stages described depict a perpetual increase in various skills and abilities. The teachers develop according to their ability, their qualities, their desires, and their influence on their surroundings, and therefore, not all of the teachers reach the "high" stages. [11]

For instance, STEFFY, WOLFE, PASACH and ENZ (2000) identify the career stages of outstanding teachers by collecting testimonies and case studies. These careers are described as a sequence of successes:

1. *Novice*. During their pre-service years, teachers learn teaching practices and skills while imitating experienced teachers.
2. *Apprentice*. This phase begins when teachers are responsible for their instruction and pupils. During the first years of teaching teachers are enthusiastic, active, and devote themselves to their pupils.
3. *Professional.* Teachers in this stage feel personally and professionally confident as they receive positive feedback from their pupils. They consult and work with their colleagues.
4. *Expert*. Teachers in this stage meet the expectations required for national certification. They are skillful practitioners and align instruction to pupil responses and needs. They are respected by pupils and parents. They constantly reflect on their practices and innovate. Some are members in local or national organizations.
5. *Distinguished.* Only few gifted teachers reach this career stage. They usually leave their schools and influence education-related decisions at local and national levels.
6. *Emeritus*. After retirement some teachers continue to serve the profession as tutors, substitute teachers, and mentors. [12]

Correspondingly, BERLINER (1994) describes cognitive-professional processes, which improve over the years: (1) novice, (2) advanced beginner, (3) competent, (4) proficient, and (5) expert. [13]

The above mentioned stages are distinct and linear, that is, the teachers "go through" stage after stage chronologically until retirement. In contrast, other researchers claim that the teaching career is not a matter of a single linear transition (BEJIAN & SALOMONE, 1995; LYNN, 2002). When referring to the person's professional cycle, SUPER (1990) discusses sub-processes and

repeated processes within the overall career cycle. In other words, within each career stage, the person gains experience in all career stages, from induction to retirement. Likewise, GRIFFITHS and TANN (1992) relate to the stages of the level of reflectivity teachers go through during their careers. The authors formulated two stages of reflection in action: (1) rapid action (action react), and (2) repair (react-monitor/rework-plan-act); they also present three stages of reflection-on-action: (3) review (act-observe-analyze and evaluate-plan-act), (4) research (act-observe-systematically analyze and evaluate-plan-act), and (5) re-search (act-observe-systematically analyze and rigorously-evaluate-plan-act). [14]

Other researchers define professional growth as a sequence of stages. For instance, SMYLIE and CONYERS (1991) claim that career stages are sequences that occur in parallel and reflect an increase in teachers' abilities: (1) From deficit based to competency based (a transition from the use of external knowledge to self-sufficiency); (2) from replication to reflection (a transition from engaging with knowledge transference to a reflective and analytic studying of one's work); (3) from learning separately to learning together (a transition from independent work to collaborative work and learning). [15]

In recent years, researchers have portrayed the career development of school principals (see, for instance, DAY & BAKIOGLU, 1996; KREMER-HAYON & FESSLER, 1992; OPLATKA, 2004; RIBBINS, 1999; WEINDLING, 1999). In this study, as mentioned previously, we focus on the professional development of teacher educators, a group that to the best of our knowledge has not been investigated from this point of view. [16]

Hence, in this study, the careers of teacher educators—a topic which was not extensively studied—was explored. In order to reveal the explicit and particularly the covert voices of these teacher educators and come close to the emic perspective, we elected to utilize personal narratives related to different stages of the teaching period. The study commenced with the assumption that personal narratives were an authentic tool for revealing research participants' inner and professional worlds. The personal narrative contains a particularly obvious element of choice on the part of the narrator. The choice of the topic of the narrative, of a particular lexicon, of the manner in which the salient figures are molded, and of the focal point of the conflict may reveal outlooks, attitudes, and ideas in a richer way than a questionnaire or an interview, which are structured tools that permit rational criticism of the participant to be activated. In addition, our interest lies not only in the individual narrative, but also in the picture reflected by all of the narratives. This study can therefore be associated with the group of narrative studies that POLKINGHORNE (1995) calls "analysis of narratives"; that is, studies whose aim is to achieve a general understanding of a topic by means of data that are derived from the narratives. It is a narrative investigation whose main interest is directed at the sociological facet, as opposed to research that emphasizes the personal level. In recent years, there has been an increase in research on work place narratives that shed light on the narrator's personal and professional worlds alike (KAINAN, 2002; PASTA-SHUBERT, 2000; SHACHAR, KAINAN, MUNK, & KEZEF, 2002). [17]

The story, or narrative, is considered a valuable research tool in various domains as well as in educational research (CARTER & DOYLE, 1995; DOYLE & CARTER, 2003; JOSSELSON, 1993). CARTER (1995) points out the uniqueness of narrative as a means of giving expression to the teacher's authentic voice as well as of perceiving the wealth of experience that is inherent in teaching. SCHWARZ (2001) combines two advantages that can be derived from the personal narrative—research and professional development. Most of the narrative studies in education deal with the beginning teacher population and relate to one point in time. In this study, we collected narratives from different points in time throughout the teacher's career, as will be explained in the next section. [18]

2. Method

2.1 Participants

The research population consists of the veteran teacher educators in a college of education in the south of Israel. For the purpose of this study a veteran teacher educator was defined as having a minimum of 20 years' teaching experience (at school and at the college). Of 180 veteran teachers, a random sample of eleven was taken—seven women and four men, ranging in age from 50 to 60, all of whom were engaged in different fields of teaching at the college. The teacher educators in this study have all been schoolteachers and after excelling in their practice and obtaining graduate and sometimes postgraduate degrees became teacher educators. [19]

2.2 Collecting the narratives

The teacher educators were interviewed and asked to tell three narratives: A story from the beginning of their career (first phase), then a story from the last years of teaching (third phase), and finally a story from the middle of their career (second phase). The narratives were oral and were written verbatim by the interviewers. Thus, 11 retrospective narratives about the narrators' careers were collected and divided into three periods—the beginning and middle of the career and a current story. [20]

2.3 The analysis of the narratives

The narratives were analyzed using a method proposed by BARTHES in his book, *S/Z* (1974). This method was used to analyze a literary novella, *Sarrazine*, by BALZAC. BARTHES divided the text into 561 *lexias*, that is, narrative units, and analyzed each lexia in terms of five codes, each of which examines a different aspect of the text (MAKARYK, 1993), as follows:

1. *The Hermeneutic Code (HER)* is used to examine discrepancies, questions, and puzzling elements that arise from the narrative and need to be deciphered. With reference to the HER, we inquired whether the narrators asked any questions or expressed any doubts in their personal narrative with regard to their work.

2. *The Semic Code (SEM)* is used to identify connotative expressions in the narrative. These help to build up the quality and depth of a character or an action. Taking the SEM into account, we inquired about what the dominant motifs of the personal narrative were.
3. *The Symbolic Code (SYM)* is used to examine symbolic templates that are reflected in the basic binary contrasts located in the deep structure of the narrative. In view of the SYM, we inquired about what the most frequent pairs of binary oppositions were.
4. *The Proairetic Code (ACT)* is used to examine the verbs in the narrative, whether these are trivial or taken from literary genres. With reference to the ACT, we inquired about what the main semantic fields of the verbs that were featured in the personal narrative were.
5. *The Cultural Code (REF)* is used to examine details that refer to the socio-cultural context of the narrative and are connected to cultural authorities and communal thinking. In view of the REF, we inquired as to which expressions the narrators employed when they relate to the world of teaching. [21]

Despite the fact that BARTHES analyzed one literary novella, whereas our study deals with 33 non-literary oral narratives, each code raises a unique question about the narratives. Utilizing BARTHES' method afforded us a synchronic, diachronic and multidimensional analysis of the narratives: (1) an individual analysis of each narrative (individual experience); (2) an analysis of the process each narrator underwent by means of a longitudinal examination of the three stories (personal development); (3) finding the common denominator of each of the three phases (group development). [22]

Thus, BARTHES' work S/Z (1974) was chosen as an analysis method in this study since we consider it a promising approach toward understanding personal narratives, especially when they come in large numbers. This structural method helped us resolve the challenge of examining personal narratives as self-standing texts, and at the same time referring to common issues of the group of narratives (TOHAR, ASAF, KAINAN & SHACHAR, 2007). The fact that BARTHES was a literary scholar compelled us to examine the boundaries between the humanities and the social sciences. As one can see in the next section, the postmodern mixture of the disciplines produces some interesting and unusual results. [23]

3. Findings

Below we present three stories from three periods—one story for each career stage, chosen from three narrators. We chose to fully present these stories because they clearly demonstrate the findings which arose from the 33 narratives. Thus, they will serve as representatives of the entire corpus. [24]

Text no. 1 is an example of a narrative from the beginning of the narrator's career, during her first year of teaching over 20 years ago:

> "I had a pupil who didn't study and didn't work. The club where I worked was for teenage dropouts. She really wasn't prepared to have a conversation or speak with anyone. That girl had attempted suicide twice. I decided to be her friend, but I couldn't be a real friend, because in spite of everything, we came from different places. I showed her that she was really important to me, that I cared. And after two months I think I succeeded in gaining her trust, and we became almost friends, because we'd meet in the afternoon, and we'd meet after club hours. I felt that I was doing a genuine service, that I'd saved someone. Afterwards, when she got married, she invited me to the wedding and that—you understand … That's a nice ray of light in the work. There were lots of stories in the club." [25]

Text no. 2 serves as an example of a retrospective narrative from the middle of the teacher's career:

> "At some stage in my career, I thought it was necessary to help the kids after lessons as well and work with them and sit with them as much as necessary. And there was a girl who was rather weak in something, I don't remember what, so I told her that twice a week she and her friend were to come to the teachers' room during their break and I'd teach them, I'd help them. I did that about six times and I felt, 'That's what a good teacher is', 'I'm really' … And then one day I was sitting and I don't remember how it came up, but the girl said, 'You've got a terrible nerve taking our break away like this.' I remember that I exploded, and her friend tried to say, 'It's not so bad, she's still young,' but I felt … you do so much for them and they throw it back in your face, and afterwards I tried to understand her and ease off a bit from the business of taking away their free time in order to teach them. Now I wouldn't give a kid half a minute after the bell [laughs]. That's not quite true. We have to, because of the ones who have learning disabilities; I have to." [26]

Text no. 3 serves as an example of a narrative about an incident that occurred recently, after over 20 years of teaching:

> "I'll tell you about an incident that happened to me not long ago. I'm a very open person, very straightforward, that is, I speak out even when something isn't good and I don't care about sharing it with others. I think that also from the professional point of view, we have to do so all the time. So even if something isn't 100%, you can succeed when you brainstorm with another person. During one of the pedagogical meetings at the beginning of the year, I had doubts about the students' growth process, because I teach them in the first, second and third years. The girls also came and complained to me that they were feeling kind of uncertain. They kept on changing instructors and each one presented the objectives in a different way. So I thought to myself, that we as instructors must serve together and reach some kind of consensus so that the learning is not all mixed up. So I consulted with our department head, and she told me, 'Bring it up at the pedagogical meeting.' The instruction coordinator was also invited to the meeting, and I brought it up, and afterwards everyone attacked me as if I were out of line. It seemed that they were all superstars and I was some kind of idiot! Then some kind of decision formed in my mind. Not that I'd be quiet, but that I'd do it more quietly, more modestly, and I'd solve the problems, for instance, only with the instructors. It sounds as if it's only our problem, but it's not

> only our problem. Students graduate and they still don't know how to build a lesson plan properly and determine objectives in the right way and accomplish the objectives in the right way. If they prefer to sweep the problem under the carpet, they should do whatever they want. But it wasn't pleasant, not at all. They criticized me, perhaps because they thought I was criticizing them. Perhaps it was my tone, or something I said. I don't want to blame only them, but it didn't turn out well. I thought, why did I start it? Why did I speak out? So I decided to take things in proportion, not that I'll keep quiet, but I'll say the things in the appropriate places. I've noticed that people don't tell the whole truth, as if everyone's lessons are wonderful, everyone's teaching is marvelous, everyone's students are excellent. So why do we have unsuccessful teachers? I have very weak students in my class, and I have brilliant ones. It still doesn't mean anything." [27]

Below we describe the method of analyzing the 33 narratives in light of BARTHES' five codes, and thereafter demonstrate the findings on the stories from the three interviewees presented above. [28]

1. *The Hermeneutic Code:* With reference to this code we checked whether the narrators had questions, deliberations or doubts with regard to their work in the framework of the narrative. We found that in the first phase, no questions were asked and no deliberations concerning the work were mentioned. On the contrary, in the first phase, the narrators portray themselves as being strong-minded and decisive, acting without external help or advice (e.g. "I taught French to a group of adults … I knew all the teaching material and I was confident about my teaching strategies"). In the second phase, questions like these appeared in 36% of the narratives. In the third phase, questions occurred in 73% of the narratives. Questions related to the continuation of the professional path, the legitimacy of a particular action, the status of the teaching profession, and interactions with students, principals and colleagues (e.g. "... you don't know what you are doing ... that things just happen … how things evolve"). [29]

We demonstrate this by means of the three narratives presented above:
It seems that in Text no. 1, no questions were asked and no doubts were expressed about the work. The prominent characteristic in the narrative from this point of view is the unequivocal approach toward decisions and behaviors. The success achieved by the narrator magnifies her feeling of confidence that this is how teenage drop-outs should be dealt with, and that the way to channel youth back into normal social functioning depends on devoting informal individual attention to them. In Text no. 2, questions and doubts appear. To a certain extent, this narrative serves as an antithesis of the previous one, since for the first time the voice of the pupil is heard. Thus, when the pupil speaks, her inner world is exposed, and it is suddenly clear that what the teacher confidently thinks is suitable for her is not necessarily right, and that every successful treatment of a problem must commence with a dialog. The narrator learns this the hard way, however. The pupil's reaction sparks deliberations in the teacher and inundates her with questions about issues that have never bothered her before. Text no. 3 describes an incident that occurs in the arena of the college. The veteran teacher has joined the college staff and is now occupied not only with questions of

imparting knowledge, but also with questions dealing with strategies of learning and teaching and with the consequences of the training process. An incident in a faculty meeting exposes her to a situation in which she asks questions and expresses doubts about her work—now, after over 30 years in the field of teaching. [30]

2. *The Semic Code:* With reference to this code, we sought templates or recurring motifs that expressed the teacher's work and world. Several motifs emerged in the analysis of the narratives, for instance: "the martyr," "one against many," "the deliberator," and so on, but these did not appear in many narratives. In the first phase, a frequently occurring motive (which appears in 55% of the narratives) is that of "the savior." The savior motif relates to the narrator who communicates with pupils (in most cases one pupil) and helps them through their darkest hour, whether by offering them social, study, emotional or physical aid (e.g. "There was a very violent kid … threw a hammer at me. I tried to reach him in various ways … I discovered that he wanted to play the guitar, so I told him that I would teach him guitar if he would let me teach him reading"). The savior motif usually appeared at the beginning of the career and gradually disappeared over the years. Thus, this motif occurs in 36% of the narratives in the second phase, and does not appear at the third phase at all. [31]

Demonstrating this code on the three stories, we see that in Text no. 1, the narrator, who is a beginning teacher, devotes herself to taking care of a pupil who is defined as problematic from the point of view of the establishment, since she neither studies nor works. It appears that the girl is suffering from a lack of trust in the adults who have tried to look after her up until now, since the narrator mentions that she is not prepared to talk to anyone. The narrator, who is young, begins to establish informal ties with the girl, outside of the club as well, in informal hours. Two months later, she succeeds in obtaining the girl's trust and restoring her to normal functioning, and the girl is so grateful that she even remembers to invite the teacher to her wedding. The teacher's framework of action takes place during club hours (in the afternoon) and outside of them as well, probably in the evening, when the narrator is certainly aware of the delicate situation in which she finds herself: "… I couldn't be a real friend, because in spite of everything, we came from different places." Nevertheless, she tries very earnestly to become the girl's friend. It also seems that since the age difference between the two is not particularly great she manages to make friends with the girl, even though the people who treated her previously failed to do so. Indeed, she obtains the results she anticipates and feels that she has succeeded with the girl. The narrator's feeling of being the girl's savior is very prominent here. In the narrative, she does not function as a teacher, but rather as a savior of souls. School studies are not the issue at all in this narrative, which overflows into the private lives of the characters and into the personal hardships that a teacher—an expert in a discipline—would not necessarily resolve in the optimal way. Not only does the narrative not deal with study material—it does not deal with a group either. Although the club is full of children with various types of problems, the narrator's entire attention is devoted to one pupil as an individual. The narrator's personal undertaking brings her to the point that she fails to mention the rest of

the pupils whom she presumably has to take care of as well. Text no. 2 demonstrates the process of change in this motif. Here, too, the savior motif appears. The teacher tries to help a girl, except that three changes occur here: First, the voice of the "client," the pupil, is heard undermining the teacher's confidence in the merit of her actions. The pupil has no desire to "be saved" in the manner the teacher has chosen. Second, the subject matter being studied enters the picture. The narrating teacher, after amassing some 10 years experience in teaching, focuses on the thing she has to do: teach. While it is true that once again she gets into a situation of providing struggling pupil with informal help, this time she focuses on the learning difficulty and not on difficulties that stem from other sources and from pupils' private lives. Third, the narrative is about two pupils, not one. During the third phase of the teachers' career, the savior motif vanishes altogether and no longer features in any of the narratives. Text no. 3 demonstrates this well. Here, the teacher expresses concern about the students in general. She operates in a formal manner and tries to get her colleagues to take part in finding a solution. She does not relate individually to a single student, but conducts herself professionally and rationally toward the whole group, her concern being how to enhance the performance of the entire group. [32]

3. *The Symbolic Code:* This code caused us to explore the narrative for pairs of opposites that express the narrators' state of mind. We found many binary opposites in the narratives, among them: "good–bad," "young–veteran," "conformist–nonconformist," "singular–plural," and so on, but the opposites "small–big" were conspicuous (appearing in 85% of the narratives). Throughout the narratives, a change occurs in the way in which the narrators present themselves in relation to their surroundings by means of this particular pair of opposites. The opposites exist in any case, but the narrator vacillates between the two. In 90% of the narratives from the first phase, the narrators present themselves as "small," whether physically or metaphorically (e.g. "I entered the classroom … here was a class of 40 teenagers and here was I—one 21 year old girl"). In contrast, a change occurs over the years, and by the third phase, 55% express a feeling that they are "big" in relation to their surroundings (e.g. "Students listen to every word I say, and the lesson is like a show"). [33]

This finding is apparent in the three narratives. In Text no. 1, the narrator appears as a "small" beginning teacher who helps a girl, and both of them together are presented as opposing the "big" establishment. In contrast, a change occurs in the narrator's status in Text no. 2. Initially, she depicts herself as someone who is sure of herself, and appears "big" and strong in relation to the pupils. Even though the pupil’s reaction causes her to feel "small" in front of the other pupils, the new insights she has obtained with regard to the teacher-pupil, teaching-learning relations make her stronger. In Text no. 3, the narrator appears as someone who operates from a position of strength and self-confidence. She is "big," and the conflict with her colleagues does not cause her to lose face in her own eyes. The ability to cast doubt is an ability that stems from her "big" and powerful status, and this is very evident in the manner in which she herself proposes options for continuing the actions in the future. [34]

4. *The Proairetic Code:* This code is used for examining the verbs found in the narrative. It helped us reveal the following: We found verbs that are linked to teaching and learning, which are ostensibly a natural part of educational discourse. These verbs can be classified into verbs that are linked to lesson administration (e.g. "I began," "I spoke," "I said") or into verbs that express different levels of thinking (e.g. "we learned," "we understood," "I thought"). It must be mentioned that while these and other verbs that are linked to the two above semantic fields were present in all of the narratives, the frequency of their occurrence in the narratives was not especially high. In parallel to these findings, two additional groups of verbs were evident in most of the stories: a group of verbs that are linked to doing and creating (e.g. "built," "established," "created," "developed," "gave birth to," "consolidated," "achieved," "implemented," "engaged in," "processed," "made," "saved"), and, conversely, a group of verbs that are linked to destruction and devastation (e.g. "killed," "committed suicide," "died," "buried," "destroyed," "exploded," "wiped out," "fell apart," "attacked," "hurt"). Expressions of creation were used by all of the narrators (100%) and in most of the narratives (70%). In the first phase of the career, a total of 17 verbs from this semantic field appeared in 64% of the narratives. In the second phase, 25 such verbs appeared in 55% of the narratives. In the third phase, 39 verbs occurred in 91% of the narratives. In other words, we see an increase in the use of doing and creating verbs throughout the career. Expressions of destruction and devastation were used by 10 of the narrators (91%) in at least one narrative during their careers, and by seven narrators (64%) in at least two narratives by the same narrator. Nine narrators (82%) used expressions of destruction and devastation in a narrative from the middle of their careers. The expressions of destruction and devastation can be classified according to the relationship between them and reality: we found literal expressions relating to real death ("died," "was killed," "committed suicide," "will kill") and a group of metaphorical expressions ("I exploded," "I wanted to bury myself," "buried her head in the sand"). The verbs were grouped as follows: metaphors of death occurred only at the second and third phases; literal death only occurred at the first and second phases; expressions of destruction and creation can be demonstrated in the three narratives: [35]

In Text no. 1, the girl is described as someone who had already attempted suicide twice, and in contrast, the teacher succeeded in earning her trust and saving her. In other words, expressions of literal death as well as of creation appear here. The verbs in this narrative deal dramatically with questions of life and death. In Text no. 2, the literal expressions become metaphorical, and the teacher mentions that she "exploded" with anger when the pupils dared to complain about her generous assistance at the expense of her break. On the other hand, there are also more low-key expressions of creation, such as teach and help. In Text no. 3, a disagreement between colleagues is described as an "attack," while simultaneously a variety of creation verbs are used, such as build, solve, give, do, and so on. In contrast to what is commonly thought, it is this narrative—the one about the present—that is laden with verbs of creation that attest to vitality, energy, and willingness to continue engaging in educational work. [36]

5. *The Cultural Code:* With reference to this code, we looked for expressions concerning the discourse linked to the world of teaching and discovered that the narrators make use of diverse mechanisms of power acquisition that enable them to influence their surroundings and accomplish their aims. For instance, narrators reported creating a coalition with members of the management, maintaining contact with parents, establishing personal ties with pupils, teaching in innovative ways that sparked special interest in the lessons, and so on. These mechanisms can be classified as two behavioral patterns. The first is the use of professional knowledge in order to accomplish educational and personal aims (through authentic teaching, relating to the class as heterogeneous, acquiring knowledge, and cooperating with colleagues, e.g. "I teach a course in didactics to a very heterogeneous group. Every lesson is a challenge, because of the need to reach a common denominator … I try to demonstrate my own working processes … how my plans meet the variety of student needs"). In the first and second phases, professional knowledge mechanisms were found in 36% of the narratives, while in the third phase, such mechanisms were found in 73%. The second pattern is power acquisition through personal ties with pupils, parents, colleagues, and the management. In the first and second phases this pattern is found in 45% of the narratives, and in the third phase we found mechanisms of personal ties in one story only ("I felt that she needed help … I spoke with her … she turned to professional help … I watched after her and I still do until today … My story sends a message … to be attentive to the kids"). In other words, personal ties are used at the beginning of the career as a means of power acquisition. Later on in the career this pattern changes to a use of professional knowledge. [37]

Thus, when we examine the three stories, we see that in Text no. 1, the power acquisition pattern is a way of establishing personal ties with one pupil—ties that persist until the invitation to the wedding. In Text no. 2, we find a combination of the two patterns. The teacher tries to establish ties (unsuccessfully) with two pupils through the use of professional knowledge. She does so by inviting them to take private lessons during breaks so that they can do well on the matriculation exams. In the third narrative, the teacher operates solely within the professional knowledge pattern. She describes a situation in which she is still constantly searching for ways to improve teaching. [38]

3.1 Summary of findings

An analysis of all the narratives by means of BARTHES' method (BARTHES, 1974) and viewing them along the narrators' axes of professional development leads to the following results. From the narratives of the first phase it is revealed that at the beginning of their careers the narrators were more significantly linked to people with whom they worked (a pupil/student[s], colleague[s], parent[s]). The emphasis is on interpersonal relations from the emotional point of view, with the narrator identifying with the learner as a colleague. Traumatic events linked to their learners' lives or their own lives made a profound impression on the narrators and were etched in their memories. The narrators experienced feelings of impotence as a result of the social reality and their work environment, and at the same time a feeling of power of a social (or romantic, if you will) mission. In

this situation, there was no room to ask questions about professional activity, which was still in its infancy. In contrast, narratives of the third phase reveal a contrasting picture. The more the narrators' professional knowledge expands and improves the more the narrators feel that they are in control of themselves and their surroundings, and they can relate to the needs of the whole class and less to individual learners. The interpersonal ties shift from identification to inclusion. Educational activity entails reflective processes. The teachers permit themselves to ask questions about themselves and about their work without it tarnishing their positive professional image, and feel greater freedom to create in the framework of their educational activity. [39]

4. Discussion

Currently much research is focused on the professional development of teachers and the recognition of the importance of the way in which teachers develop their careers (VAN DEN BERG, 2002) as a key to better teaching and learning (GEIJSEL, 2001). This study focuses on teacher educators, a group whose voice is heard less among the studies on professional development. [40]

The findings support the theory of the stages of professional development as a continuous process in which there is a progression among a series of relatively distinct stages in a set of topics, themes and tasks (GREENHAUS & CALLANAN, 1994). However, in our study we did not see a linear progression from stage to stage. The teachers' narratives show that the two central stops in the course of the narrators' careers, as they take shape in their narratives, are the beginning of the career, that is, the first narrative, and the present stage of the career, that is, the third narrative. [41]

The development of the teacher educators' careers can be summed up as follows. There is a transition from treating personal problems by means of interpersonal relations to relating to a group of learners and activating professional abilities; from determination and decisiveness regarding the methods of action to a state of doubt and questions; from a feeling of smallness in relation to the world and the institutional system to a feeling of power and an ability to control; and from taking care of cases of literal life and death to feelings related to a situation of metaphorical death—feelings that arise in the contexts of professional questions. The teachers have transformed from saviors of an individual to nurturers of a class. [42]

This process of change can be compared to the process of maturing, as a result of which one's point of view becomes more realistic. As a result of a feeling of omnipotence that is compatible with youth, beginning teachers have a desire to save, to rescue the individuals with whom they come into contact. This matches the claims of SIKES, MEASOR and WOODS (1985), who explain that a powerful motivation for choosing the teaching profession is the desire to affect the lives of the pupils (a missionary type commitment). It also matches the findings of VAN DEN BERG (2002), which state that ideological considerations play a role at the beginning of the career. In relation to the surroundings, the teacher feels "small,"

but can save the individual pupil, and perhaps for that reason directs energies to the individual. Subsequently however, the duality wanes. While there is no sense of an ability to save, there is also no inferiority vis-à-vis the surroundings. To a certain extent, the teacher relinquishes the ideological passion that characterizes beginning teachers, and shifts to conformity. Although teachers lose the individual and the passion, they gain the class and the professionalism that is supported by reflective processes. This matches previous findings about the renewal stage in which the integration of the personality polarization that characterizes youth occurs (WILLIAMS & SAVICKAS, 1990; LEVINSON, 1980). [43]

A parallel phenomenon of a transition from an idealistic to a realistic view of things is found in many studies that dealt with beginning teachers (for instance, KAGAN, 1992; MAHLIOS & MAXSON, 1995). The teachers arrive with a preconceived image of the teacher figure, based on their acquaintance with key figures, but the first years of teaching, when they encounter the school reality, are an epiphany, and the image changes. In the social fantasy, the teacher takes care of one child, since teachers begin their careers with a romantic image of the profession. The encounter with reality, in which the teacher is with the class on a daily basis, leads to a separation from the myth and to a transition to professionalism. [44]

It is important to mention that an unrealistic perception of the teacher figure also featured in various studies that examined teacher images in popular culture—television series, books, movies and games—images that accumulate into a cultural text and that create stereotypes. For instance, in various cultural products, WEBER and MITCHELL (1995) found a stereotypical figure of a nonconformist teacher "hero" who has the romantic outlook of a teacher who "saves" pupils. This is an unreal figure whom anyone who has not had long-term teaching experience will identify (FARBER, PROVENZO, & HOLM, 1994; TRIER, 2001; WEBER & MITCHELL, 1995). It is possible that teacher educators identified with such cultural products, and the latter influenced their professional outlook during their first years of teaching. [45]

The teacher educators explored in this study, having long since abandoned stereotypical perceptions of teaching, are now at the third stage of their careers, namely, midlife. This stage is liable to be characterized by maintenance, that is, by honing existing teaching abilities in parallel to only slight growth or discovery (BEJIAN & SALOMONE, 1995), or, as is indicated in a substantial portion of the studies that deal with teachers' professional development, by burnout and/or a feeling of routine (FESSLER & CHRISTENSEN, 1992; HUBERMAN, 1989; SIKES, MEASOR, & WOODS, 1985). At this stage in the professional career, the teacher is caught between two behavior patterns, as inspired by the sixth stage in Erikson's theory of development: creativity/generativity as opposed to stagnation, or maintenance versus renewal (OPLATKA, 2004). From the career cycles previously described this stage may be manifested either in a loss of enthusiasm, a feeling of stagnation, and detachment with few opportunities for personal growth (FESSLER & CHRISTENSEN, 1992; HUBERMAN, 1989; SIKES, MEASOR, & WOODS, 1985); or in feelings of self-satisfaction, contentment and

self-renewal (STEFFY et al., 2000). It is to the latter group that the teacher educators in this study belong. [46]

In the study, we have seen that the desire for creation and renewal characterized all the stages, even the beginning of the career, albeit less intensely. OPLATKA (2002), too, found that the tendency toward innovation among school principals intensified the more they acquired expertise in management. The development also is characterized by the game that takes place between two powers at work simultaneously—creation and destruction. It seems that there is an interesting game between them: Fear of routine, which is analogous to death, leads to the desire to innovate. At the same time, the ability to renew oneself is contingent on the destruction of what exists. The need for activity is so great for the narrators that they fear a situation of metaphorical death in the sense of their initiatives being halted or blocked, or as one teacher educator described it, "A teacher who does not innovate is a dead teacher." In the present study, the image attributed to the interactions that teaching entails is dramatic, an encounter of creation and destruction, in contrast to the "soft" images that appear in other studies (for instance, MAHLIOS & MAXSON, 1995). The sense of doing is actually nourished by the freedom to ask and the willingness to change—processes that are reminiscent of the concept of renewal that MURPHY and BURCK (1976) coined in order to indicate a period of doubt and self-examination that can lead to renewed commitment. [47]

Thus, the profile that emerges is one of teachers who develop, who oppose routine, who have a powerful need to create, and who consider change to be a value. These changes include physical actions and mental transformations which have allowed them to develop into reflective, active and professional practitioners. [48]

How can the choice of generativity rather than stagnation be explained? One explanation for the difference we found between teachers and teacher educators may found in the workplace. It is possible that the college, the work environment to which the teachers belong at this stage, enables and encourages reflective processes, and provides, as characterized in the literature, a knowing environment, as opposed to the school environment, which is characterized in the literature as a doing environment (BEIJAARD, VERLOOP, & VERMUNT, 2000). It has been found that the extent of challenge provided by the work setting serves as a catalyst for change and renewal (BEIJAARD, VAN DRIEL, & VERLOOP, 1999). [49]

A second explanation may derive from the population itself. The teachers who reach the college level do not fit the general profile of a teacher. KAGAN (1992) claimed that teachers' personal factors constitute an opening stage, an infrastructure, and enable professional growth. The transition from the school environment to the college can attest to teachers who have a great need for self-fulfillment and do not settle for the familiar and the safe. For this reason, they seek a new organization that will afford them the opportunity to achieve it

(OPLATKA, 2002). It is possible that the teacher educators in this study possess qualities that direct them toward progress and doing. [50]

Studies indicate that teachers decide whether to remain in the profession or quit during their first years of teaching (EICK, 2002; MAHLIOS & MAXSON, 1995). Their choice is not necessarily influenced by external factors such as the work environment, but rather by the internal factors—the feeling of personal satisfaction and caring. Those teachers who make the choice within the first five years are also the ones who will remain in teaching for a long time. According to MAHLIOS and MAXSON (1995), the teachers do not just decide whether they will remain in the system or not—they also decide what type of teachers they will be: fulfilled, complacent or reflective. In the first narratives, the teacher educators expressed satisfaction with the interpersonal relations with pupils and their activity in the educational field. While these qualities underwent a transformation, they are recognizable even at the present stage of their careers. [51]

These teachers decided to remain committed to the profession, and subsequently experienced success in their professional lives, advanced, were promoted, and studied. After the first years, the feeling of success serves as a resource and a moving force for renewal (OPLATKA, 2002). The decision to work in a college, which enjoys more prestigious professional status than a school, and entails studying for an advanced degree, may well charge them with renewed force. Thus, most of the stories depict professional people who derive significance from their educational activity. As CHERNISS (1995) claims, it serves as a "vaccine" against mental burnout. [52]

Thus, by persevering in the teaching profession and succeeding in it, the teacher educators manifested ongoing development in cognitive-professional abilities (BERLINER, 1994; STEFFY et al., 2000) and metacognitive abilities (GRIFFITHS & TANN, 1992)—development that does not characterize the entire teacher population. The absence of burnout and stagnation and, in parallel, the increase in teaching standards, exist when the "good" teachers have frameworks for organizational advancement (a position), theoretical-intellectual advancement (advanced studies), and emotional advancement (a feeling of efficacy that is based on success). In other words, the personal qualities that reinforce the need for personal fulfillment and advancement, as well as the personal biography that includes changes and success are factors that shape strong, reflective and active teacher educators. [53]

While this study focused on teacher educators, it urges us to conclude that there is a need to find settings that offer similar conditions to teachers in the school system so that they do not leave it, but rather are able to achieve self-fulfillment within it. [54]

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