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Personal Narratives as a Way to Understand the Worlds of College Lecturers

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Abstract: Personal narratives about the workplace were collected from 28 lecturers at a teacher education college in order to study their personal and professional worlds. The topic, characters and workplace terminology of the narratives were examined. Additionally, they were analyzed using LEVI-STRAUSS' structural approach, GERGEN and GERGEN's evaluative model, and ARISTOTLE's aesthetic approach of the dramatic plot. The analyses reveal that the lecturers have no unified terminology or conception regarding their place and role. Issues of identity are revealed in the narrators' overt and tacit attempts to gain acceptance in the college and to have input in what goes on there. We thus infer that the lecturers are occupied with questions of belonging and control. Since many of the lecturers are part-time employees, they have few interactions in the college and this may have resulted in their lack of full participation at the college.

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1. Introduction

The research described in this paper focuses on a group of lecturers teaching in an academic teacher education college in Israel. This group includes the teaching staff responsible for discipline specific courses, rather than the pedagogical instructors who attend to the students' practical training. At the beginning of the 21st century, most of the teaching staff in Israeli teacher education colleges is comprised of lecturers who take up the major part of the instructional hours in the

students' schedule. We wished to see if this group has common characteristics and, if so, what are the questions that engage the group's attention. [1]

Over the last two decades, teacher seminaries in Israel have undergone a process of academization, that is, a transformation of the seminaries into academic colleges. This process has had certain consequences. First, the training period has been extended. Second, the academic requirements have been raised. In parallel, the colleges demand a teaching staff with graduate degrees, with a clear preference for those with doctorates, both when offering employment and when considering promotion (KFIR et al., 1997). At the same time, the status of these lecturers is unique, because they are required to teach clearly academic courses within a framework of an institution offering professional education, which naturally emphasizes practical and pedagogical skills. [2]

It appears that two central aspects portray the lecturer's unique position in today's college: from the organizational point of view, the number of lecturers has increased. However, many of the lecturers work less than full-time and thus have little interaction with staff, administration and students within the college. It is the pedagogical instructors who have much of the influence in the college. [3]

From the point of view of content, it appears that with the processes of academization, which emphasizes the disciplinary aspect of teacher education, an over-fragmentation has developed between the various subjects being taught (AVDUR, 2001). Thus, a situation has arisen in which the individual lecturer has little power to influence the system. In addition, the lecturers have no established and required program for either further training or professional development; several of them have not studied education or have not practiced teaching, but serve as teacher educators. [4]

In recent years, the research on teacher educators in Israel and abroad has focused on four main areas. First, the status of these teachers has been investigated, in relation to university lecturers, with the finding that the status of the former is lower than that of the latter (GOODLAD & KLEIN, 1970; CORRIGAN & HABERMAN, 1990; HOYLE & JOHN, 1995). [5]

A second group of studies investigates the criticism regarding teacher preparation at the teacher colleges. This criticism is linked to a sense of dissatisfaction with the whole educational system (SPARKS & LOUCKS-HORSLEY, 1990; RACHIMI, 1995). It is directed towards various fields: criticism of the efficiency of training methods in the preparation of trainees for work (BEN PERETZ, 1990); criticism about the neglect of the ideological dimension, as compared to the technical-formal side of teaching (KIRK, 1986); and criticism of the neglect of the research aspect of teacher education (DUCHARME, 1985). [6]

A third direction taken by researchers points to the tension between the practical and theoretical aspects of teacher education, while drawing comparisons with teacher education in universities. The studies by GOODLAD (1990), CORIGAN and HABERMAN (1990), and PORAT (1994) indicate that students tend to value

the courses with an applied character, so that lecturers are under pressure to neglect the purely theoretical side in order to meet the demands of the population they teach. FEINMAN-NEMSER (1990) also found logical conflicts in the lecturer's work, resulting from the tension between theoretical and practical orientations. [7]

The fourth direction of research has the most relevance to our concerns here: the emotional aspect of the lecturer's work that is, how the teacher's motivation is influenced by work conditions, the need to "belong," the need for self-fulfillment, interpersonal relations, autonomy, and the sense of justice, equality and adequacy. WERING (2001) claims that lecturers come to the college seeking a sense of both autonomy and community. TYREE, GRUNDER and O'CONNELL (2000) use MASLOW's hierarchy of needs to underpin their claim that the teaching conditions of the staff must improve for a sense of belonging, self-esteem and self-fulfillment. In addition, EVANS (2001) argues that there is a direct link between the design of the teachers' environment and their level of work satisfaction. [8]

In order to reveal the overt and covert voices of the college lecturers and to approach the viewpoint of the subjects (emic perspective), we chose to use work-related personal narratives. We set out with the assumption that personal narratives are authentic tools for revealing personal and professional experiences. Personal narratives are shaped by the experiences of narrators and in turn convey coherence and meaning to their lives and shape their identity (MCADAMS, 2001). Also, the narrator's choice of topic, vocabulary, leading characters and conflicts, may reveal attitudes, positions, and concepts in a richer way than those illustrated by a questionnaire or interview, which are structured instruments calling for greater exercise of the narrator's rational criticism. [9]

Personal narratives are an expressive medium but are manifested using social building blocks as language and discourse. Therefore, all narratives embed personal and social identities (HABERMAS & BLUCK, 2000; MCADAMS, 2001; ROSENWALD, 1992). Reflecting not only on the narrator but also on the culture in which they were formed. We are mainly interested not in the individual's story, but in the context reflected in the story and in issues common to a group of stories. This study may thus be described as an analysis of narratives (POLKINGHORNE, 1995), that is, research, aimed at reaching a general understanding of a topic from data extracted from narratives. For CONNELLY and CLANDININ (1990), this is the study of narratives dealing with their sociological aspect, in contrast to research that emphasizes the personal level. In recent years, there has been increasing need for narratives from the workplace that open a window, not only to the personal world of the narrator, but beyond—to the organization in which the narrator operates and its distinguishing culture, including typical myths, norms, and folklore (SABAR Ben-YEHOSHUA, 1990; KAINAN, 2002; MARTINE et al., 1983). [10]

Personal narratives have established their value in various fields of knowledge—such as educational research (CARTER, 1993; CARTER & DOYLE, 1995;

ELBAZ-LUWISCH, 2001; JOSSELSON, 1993; SABAR BEN-YEHOSHUA & DARGISH, 2001). CARTER (1993) indicates the unique aspect of this tool, as a way of expressing the authentic voice of the teacher, as well as grasping the wealth of experience involved in teaching. CONNELLY and CLANDININ (1990) also used stories to focus on the development of the teacher's practical and personal knowledge, and ZEMBYLAS (2003) refers to narratives as a form of emotional discourse which shapes the self identity of teachers. [11]

Other researchers noted that personal narratives help teachers to demonstrate and construct their professional knowledge and experience. For example, DOYLE and CARTER (2003) stress that narratives can be used as a powerful means for the assessment and design of the pre-service curriculum because of their ability to reveal the assumptions and knowledge of the student teachers. Similarly, CARTER (1993) argues that narratives can help young teachers define and construct their situated knowledge and GUDMUNSDOTTIR (1991) asserts that teachers use stories as a framework for organizing and integrating their knowledge. CARNTON (2001) also stresses the power of the story as a means to define one's role as an educator and thus improve performance. Finally, SCHWARZ (2001) relates to narratives as a means for both research and professional development. She argues that professional development of teachers must be humanistic and constructivist, recognizing the teacher's authentic personal "voice." One way of revealing authentic voices is through personal narrative research. [12]

Among the various definitions that designate the term "narrative," there are those that emphasize scenario and character (OCHMANI, 1987), while others stress the process of textual creation as a communicative process, during which the text is transmitted from the sender to the recipient (JAKOBSON, 1960). RIMMON-KENAN (1983) emphasizes three components: a sequence of events, a structure, and an existence of a narrator. Other definitions, such as that of LABOV and WALETZKY'S (1967), stress the structural aspect, while relating to the subjective dimension, that is, the narrator's point of view, as expressed in the way the description of the incident is constructed. POLANYI (1979) argues for the centrality of the message, which is the reason the story was told in the first place. Such a message may be directed outwards—in so far as the story is told to someone else, but also, inwards—as part of a process of construction of a personal meaning for human behavior. [13]

For the purpose of the current study, we decided to adopt two components that often appear in various definitions of the narrative (SABAR BEN-YEHOSHUA & DARGISH, 2001): the temporal dimension, which shows that the events took place in a time sequence, and the dimension of evaluation, which reveals the narrator's point of view. [14]

This research poses questions about a population of college lecturers by means of personal narratives linked to their place of work. The stories were collected in order to investigate not only the private world of the individual narrators, but also

the organization within which they work, taking into account the fact that this is a significant group with a unique status. [15]

2. Method

The study took place at the major teacher education college in the South of Israel. The population in this area is predominantly multicultural, with a concentration of Bedouins and new immigrants, generally of middle to low socioeconomic status. [16]

In this research, we focused on the lecturers of the college, and more specifically on a group of lecturers holding no other positions in the college beyond their teaching position. These lecturers teach courses dealing with theoretical or practical aspects of teaching and education. For the purpose of the research, only those lecturers with teaching positions were selected, excluding work as pedagogical instructors or as administrators. In the year in which the study commenced, 113 lecturers from a wide scope of disciplines taught in the college, with positions that ranged from 2 hours per week to full time: 68% taught half-time or less, and the other 32% taught more than half-time. At that time this group made up about one third of the total teaching staff. [17]

With the help of a stratified sample, based on number of hours of weekly employment and seniority in the college, a sample of 28 lecturers was chosen—16 men and 12 women. The chosen lecturers were instructed to narrate a story "about something connected with the college." The narratives were collected over a two-month period. [18]

In order to carry out a general and initial mapping procedure of the corpus, the narratives were first checked for subject, for central figures, and for terms that were used by the narrators to describe themselves, their students and their work. [19]

For a deep analysis of the texts, three central methods were used:

a. The structural-paradigmatic approach of LEVI-STRAUSS (1963/7) that breaks the chronological sequence of events. This is carried out by revealing binary oppositions that are dyads of opposing concepts embedded in the text. These binary oppositions are classified into paradigmatic schemes. In his classic work "The Story of Asdiwal" (1967), LEVI-STRAUSS refers to four paradigmatic schemes in the deep structure of the narrative: the *Geographic Scheme* which relates to physical conditions as place or time; the *Economic Scheme* which relates to economic conditions as food or other material possessions; the S*ocial Scheme* which relates to social structure as manifested in class, ritual and religion; and the *Cosmologic Scheme* which relates to metaphysical aspects. In this study, the forth scheme is irrelevant, but we formulated a new scheme, called the *Ideologic Scheme*, which organizes abstract ideas and values.
b. The evaluative model of GERGEN and GERGEN (1984) which graphically portrays the sense of well-being of the narrator during the plot. GERGEN and

GERGEN classify three types of plots: two dramatic plots—a *progressive plot* in which the narrators' sense of well-being is initially portrayed as being low or negative and it rises throughout the plot, and a *regressive plot* in which the sense of well being declines throughout the events; and one *static plot* in which the sense of well-being is stable throughout the plot.

c. An analysis of the dramatic plot based on aesthetic criteria as suggested by ARISTOTLE (BRADLEY, 1961; HALPERIN, 1978). ARISTOTLE portrays the classic tragic plot as a course of events, intertwined in causal relations. The plot develops from a conflict to a crisis (Egon), through a turning point (Peripetia), thereafter to a point where the main characters recognize their mistake (Anagnorisis) and finally to an ending (solution or catastrophe) that leads to a catharsis. The narratives in this study do not have "classic" tragic plots. Nevertheless, ARISTOTLE's basic concepts are valid for our analysis. [20]

Each of the methods emerges from a different paradigm and thus leads to a focus on a different aspect of the text. Their simultaneous use allows the researcher to reach a multi-dimensional interpretation of the text under scrutiny: one model to analyze the structure, another to evaluative aspects of the narrator, and the third to analyze the dramatic plot, thus covering three central aspects of the narrative. The three methods use a formalist approach and thus enable us to reduce the amount of data of the group of narratives, on the one hand, and to keep the authenticity of the single text, on the other. In this way, each narrative was regarded both as a single phenomenon and as a part of a group. [21]

3. Findings

3.1 Themes

Regarding the leading figure, we find that in 23 of 28 cases (82,1%) the narrators placed themselves at the center of the scenario, in four stories (14,3%), a student was at the center of the action, while in one case (3,6%), the staff, as a unified group, was central. [22]

The themes of the narratives were varied, but mostly described encounters between the lecturers and different participants in the college: students, colleagues, administration and management. The majority (60,7%) had numerous interactions with students dealing with issues such as: successes or failures in class, handling disciplinary problems, uncertainties regarding the conduct of a lesson, and adjusting the material to the standards of students. In addition, a number of stories described a student of unique character who had an impact on the lecturer. [23]

The interactions described in the narrative were positive and negative to an equal degree: In four narratives (14,3%), the lecturer was placed between the students and the administration, and was asked for backing or for action—in one case, the action taken was satisfactory. Five stories (17,9%) related to interactions with colleagues. In four of these, the colleagues were described as a source of support, enrichment and enjoyment, while in one case; the colleagues were

alienated and inconsiderate. Two stories (7,1%) described a negative encounter with the college administration. In these cases, the system was described as unresponsive to initiative, or to a personal problem of the narrator. [24]

3.2 Terminology regarding work

The narratives were examined for the way the narrators referred to themselves, their students, and their college work, in order to reveal their attitudes towards themselves and their work place. The terms used by the narrators may be an indication of their reference group, and of their perspective towards teaching and learning and towards their addressees and roles. [25]

We found that the students (mostly female), were simultaneously called, even by the same narrator, "students," "pupils," "teachers," "girls," "young women," or "women." The courses were related to as "course," "lesson," "class," "seminar," or "lecture." The narrators sometimes referred to themselves and their colleagues as "lecturers" and sometimes as "teachers." This mixed jargon stems from two worlds—the university and the school. The lack of a unified terminology raises questions regarding an existence of norms and traditions that characterize the college. [26]

Here, for example, is a section from Text No. 1, in which a lecturer complains about the difficulty of giving make-up lessons due to lesson cancellations during the Moslem holiday of Ramadan. In this case, various expressions are used for the lecturer and students, sometimes in the same sentence (our emphasis):

> "The *lecturers* must choose a date for a make up lesson, one that fits the *students'* schedule. It's not easy for the *pupils*, and for the *lecturer* its a nuisance ... these are traditional Bedouin *girls* from the Negev[1], ... so out of 30 *pupils*, half remained ... This is my point of view, my suggestion! And the question is why trouble the *students* if it's a holiday that applies to both the *teachers* and the *pupils*. [27]

After relating to some overt features of the narratives, we will hereafter present three additional analyses which are used to reveal issues which are embedded in the deep structure of the narratives and of their plots. [28]

1 The lecturer stresses this because traditional Bedouin girls are forbidden to stay at the college after official studying hours.

3.3 Deep analysis

3.3.1 An analysis according to LEVI-STRAUSS' Model

The following is an analysis of the deep structure of the stories according to LEVI-STRAUSS' structuralist model (1963/7). Breaking down the sequence of events and searching for abstract units in the text revealed a very wide range of binary oppositions, which are implicit representations of the root of the thought of the narrators and their reference groups. [29]

However, two oppositions were revealed in most of the stories; a fact that may indicate the existence of a deep pattern common to the experience of the group under investigation: "inside/outside" and "together/alone."

a. The "inside/outside" opposition: this binary opposition appeared in all the stories and can be classified into the following four schemes: the *Geographic Scheme* (in and outside—the class, the college and state; and the center versus the periphery), the *Economic Scheme* (obtaining a teaching diploma or not), the *Social Scheme* (social acceptance or not in a class, among colleagues or society), and the *Ideologic Scheme* (acceptance or rejection of the norms or ideology of the college and society).
   The manifestations of the "inside" pole were varied and included expressions perceived of as positive (e.g., a lecturer describing the support he received from the college when he was submitting his dissertation), and others perceived of as negative (e.g., a lecturer whose assimilation into the college was more difficult than he anticipated). Similarly, the manifestations of the "outside" pole tended to be expressed by means of positive and negative metaphors ("in the other college where I work it's better," or "outside the college, the political situation is stormy").
b. The "together/alone" opposition: this opposition appeared in 17 (60,7%) of the narratives and mostly related to the social scheme. The "together" pole was perceived to be uniformly positive (for example a lecturer offered support by a group of colleagues), while the "alone" pole was universally perceived as negative (lack of backing, or feelings of inability, e.g., a lecturer who felt offended when she did not get adequate backing from the administration in dealing with a particular student). [30]

No linkage was found in the stories between the two pairs of oppositions. Sometimes, *together* was linked to the *inside* and sometimes to *outside* aspects. [31]

Text No. 2 is an example of a story in which these two pairs of oppositions appear in a wide range of manifestations:

To Be in the College[2]

"We began to study a story by a South African who writes about his experiences in London. We didn't get far. He is black, not accepted in South Africa, comes to the metropolis. The class suggested various categories for him: exile, refugee, émigré, stranger, tourist, peripheral, all examples of the 'other'. The class included: two immigrants from the USA, an Israeli who had lived there for years; three immigrants from Russia, two Palestinian girls from the North; and some whose parents or grandparents had come to Israel from various places, including the teacher too. 'What are the differences between the various categories' I asked. In response, many —not all—told me a personal story about their feelings as strangers, as emigrants, as members of a minority, as 'others', and it was clear that everyone had a story like that, whether as an official category as result of crossing a border, or whether as an experience in a society to which they are new … The stories were, perhaps, to be expected, but not the mosaic they created, the dialogue of different experiences, antithetical, corresponding, relations of power and hierarchy that were created between the stories. They spoke from their own point of origin; some of those who didn't talk indicated their agreement with the representative of their own 'group' had said. The identifications even crossed the lines, mostly between the immigrants and the Arabs[3]. The topic of the lesson, the weekly story, was forgotten and pushed aside, and the teacher was silent: although I really wanted to express my identification, to define a norm, to establish values of relationships, although I was afraid of losing control, perhaps of causing offense, of politicization, although I was supposed to 'get through the material', I found the strength to be silent. The final words, some minutes after the official end of the lesson, were in the statement by one of the Arab pupils: her daughter is studying in a school where she is the only Arab. On the first day of Ramadan, the girl approached her teacher and told her about the festival, the presents, the happiness, and asked the teacher to let her father come to the class and tell about Ramadan. No, replied the girl's teacher, I don't think that will interest anybody. My student, the girl's mother, wanted to meet the teacher, so she had to leave, she was already late. I took the opportunity to say a few words of summary: I suggested that our task as teachers is always and in all places to teach that there are different possibilities. Always to fight against indifference, injustice and inequality, and an educational approach in this context means, in the main, to explain, with the hope of creating dialogue in which there is room and respect for every participant. The next lesson was more routine. It's rare to find the ethnic, social, and cultural variety of Israel in one class. It's one of the great privileges of teaching here, and therefore, this story is almost unique to our college. It's even rarer to find or create the opportunity to present the differences we know exist within us in a non-threatening manner, differences that we generally do not refer to directly. I didn't express my opinion, only my empathy, and I allowed everyone present to air things that are not easily said. The pupils knew how to listen without interfering, and took an

2 Titles are presented if they are stated by the narrators.

3 The term used by the narrator here is "members of a minority," which in Israel is a term meaning Arabs.

> interest in the viewpoints of the other speakers. Thus, a discussion took place that was multi-cultural, and so it succeeded in being so Israeli." [32]

In this narrative, the "inside/outside" opposition is revealed in three schemes:

a. In the *Geographic Scheme* a situation is portrayed in which minorities are trying to assimilate into the mainstream of their society. Many of the students, as well as the fictional character presented in this literature lesson, have underwent some form of exodus as they are either Bedouin from nomadic families, new immigrants or are Arabs who moved from the North of Israel to its South; others were offspring of immigrants or refugees. The college itself is located in the periphery of Israel. Viewing the class demography as well as the students' empathy towards the literary character, one can imply that all the participants in the narrative are trying to pave a way for becoming legitimate participants in the Israeli Sabra/Jewish/urban setting.
b. The *Social Scheme* reveals a clear hierarchy between the lecturer, representing the elite of the Israeli society, and his students, of which many can be categorized as people from the fringe of society. There is a dichotomy between the lecturer and his students with regards to various social criteria (lecturer vs. student, low vs. high social economic status, majority vs. minority, knower vs. learner, etc.), characteristics which the students aspire to change. Thus, the students may feel as outsiders wishing to fit in the "central circles" of society, socially as well as geographically. Thus, in this narrative the geographic and social schemes are intertwined.
c. The *Ideologic Scheme* also deals with belonging and integration. We find didactic dilemmas of the lecturer, who wonders whether he should take part in the discussion or remain an outside observer. The lecturer notes that, for himself, he would have liked to define certain normative attitudinal values—to discuss which attitudes are acceptable in class and which are not. He wants to teach the students to accept the "other" inwardly, and to demonstrate that all participants have a place in such a discussion, through inclusion of the various points of view within the bounds of legitimate debate. [33]

The narrative expresses the narrator's norms as an educator and not just as a lecturer. In this successful lesson, an emotional bond is formed between the students, so that students want to enter into the circle of debate and experience a sense of "togetherness." [34]

The "together/alone" opposition also finds expression here. Being *together* fortifies the individuals and reinforces them, so that, even in a class in which students feel torn or disconnected in one way or another, a single social fabric is created. The good atmosphere produced in the lesson is an "island of sanity" in the Israeli reality, and it is broken when the Arab mother has to leave in order to deal with her personal problem. This is to say that outside the class, there is a harsh reality standing in opposition to the atmosphere of support within it. The group is shown in a positive light as tolerant, whereas the individual characters in the narrative (the immigrant in the story, the Arab mother and daughter) are delineated as weak and as outsiders. [35]

We noticed that experiences related to "inwards" are linked to those of "being together" and complement them. So, in this narrative, to be "together/inside" has positive meaning, while to be "alone/outside" has negative connotations. [36]

This story represents the other narratives in the corpus in this sense, that in all those we analyzed, we found positive and negative attempts of integration into various fields: a discussion, a lesson, a group of colleagues, the college system, and into the Israeli and Western society in general. [37]

3.3.2 An analysis according to GERGEN and GERGEN's model

A second criterion used in our analysis of teachers' narratives is that of mapping of the narrators' sense of well-being throughout the incidents related in the story. [38]

We found that the great majority of the narratives (92,9%) have dramatic plots that, in the terms of GERGEN and GERGEN (1984), are progressive or regressive, with only two having a static plot. Text No. 3 can act as an example of a progressive plot:

> "As I promised you on the phone, here is one of the more pleasant experiences I've enjoyed in class. In the textbook there are texts the teacher can read aloud and analyze with his pupils. I chose the song 'Imagine' by John Lennon, which I always teach in the mixed groups of Jews and Bedouin. This year I felt uneasy about the discussion which always arises because of John Lennon's ideas. My nervousness stemmed from the Al Aqsa Intifada which was at its height at that time. My fears proved groundless and I and my pupils enjoyed a few minutes of open discussion (that I didn't allow to slide in any current political direction) when both the Jews and the Arabs seemed close together. Quiet and tranquillity, a world of dreamers, without heaven or hell, a world with no possessions, a world of 'nothing to kill or die for'." [39]

The narrative begins with the lecturer's fear, in light of the political situation. Despite the worry, the lesson was a success, and the lecturer emphasizes that this was one of the most pleasurable experiences he had had. Thus, the sense of well-being and success of the narrator is greater at the end of the story than at its beginning which was filled with apprehension, a situation that GERGEN and GERGEN (1984) describe as a progressive narrative. The lecturer's autonomy in his choice of the lesson's content causes him some distress because of the make-up of the students in his class and the general national political situation, while the success of the lesson dispels the initial fears. This narrative manifests and expresses some of the factors that can bring about an improvement in a lecturer's sense of well-being: an unusual emotional experience, and a feeling of cooperation both between himself and his students and among the students themselves. [40]

In contrast, Text No. 4 has a regressive action:

> **The Wicked Will Not Suffer**
>
> "The incident occurred about six years ago, in my second year of work in the college as a full time teacher. In my course, a group of trainees for junior high school participated, as well as a group from the elementary school department. In general, the social relations between the girls were good, but the two groups didn't know each other particularly well. One of the pupils in the elementary department sometimes exhibited vulgar, insolent and even aggressive behaviour towards me, but up to that point I had not brought the matter to a head. In one of the lessons, I tossed out a not trivial question for the class to think about, and after some time, one of the pupils in the junior high department wanted to have a go. She started to talk, but her speech was not flowing and she was making an obvious effort to understand and express her answer. Because of the effort and her nervousness, her words were louder than usual and broken. Suddenly, the elementary school trainee I mentioned before interfered and started to shout at the speaker: 'Shut up already, shut up, ah, ah, ah' and so on. I don't remember the specific words, but her shouts were noisy and her tone was also excessive. Because of the aggression and extreme vulgarity of her outburst, and also, I suppose, because I was not the subject of the aggression, but an outside observer, her behaviour seemed serious and intolerable. I tried to stop her at once, but she kept right on and my attempts quickly turned into shouting as I tried to overcome her yells. I demanded that she leave the classroom and she refused again and again, until after quite a long time, she did leave. I felt I couldn't let the matter drop and went to the head of department. It turned out that the coordinator had heard not a few complaints about that same pupil. She asked me to raise the matter in writing and so I did. From the responses it became clear to me that this was some kind of precedent—a few lecturers had already complained about her, but none had done so in writing. The heads of department said to me she had heard about aggressive behaviour against the art teacher and she thought she should suspend the pupil's studies. The procedure was to call the ethics committee, headed by the dean of students, to bring in the pupil and call on me to give evidence. From the initial conversation with the dean I understood that her intention was not to halt the pupil's studies (probably because the college rules did not provide for expulsion at that stage). At the committee meeting, I told the story in a dry and unemotional way, and although I don't remember the committee's decision in detail, it took the form of a reprimand and notation in her personal record. The pupil completed her studies in the college and received her teaching diploma. Now, since I have recalled the incident to tell the story, I'm curious to know how that same teacher is functioning, after earning 4 or 5 years of seniority, how her relations are with her pupils, parents, and colleagues. I am sure some of those people have suffered at her hands." [41]

The lecturer presents the incident in three stages: in the first stage, the lecturer is herself attacked by the student, but does not regard it as serious and notes that she had not "brought the matter to a head." In the second stage, the student attacks a fellow student, and this time the lecturer regards her outburst as intolerable, so she initiates an appeal to the college ethics committee. In the third stage, the student,

despite her behavior, is able to complete her studies, and become a teacher in school, obviously in contact with pupils, parents and colleagues. [42]

This fact is viewed by the narrator as even more serious and she closes her narrative surmising that her pupils "have suffered at her hands," a harsh verdict in an educational context. [43]

This narrative exemplifies a situation in which the narrator's well-being is identified by the way in which she subjectively perceives the reality and, although the lecturer is personally hurt by the student, she views this as less serious than when she does the same to a fellow student. [44]

It would thus appear that in this story, the narrator's sense of well-being decreases as the action advances, and in GERGEN and GERGEN'S (1984) terms, it is a regressive narrative. Similar to Text No. 3, here, too, the narrator's well-being was undermined as a result of the social functioning of the students and their inter-relations—and the narrator accords great importance to the social climate in her class. She is prepared to overlook vulgar behavior towards herself, but cannot do so when the target is another student in her class. [45]

From an analysis of the dramatic tension and the level of evaluation of all the narratives investigated in terms of the GERGEN and GERGEN method, it appears that the progressive stories hint at a positive attitude regarding work in the college. While regressive stories stand in contrast, we did not find a particular trend in perceptions of work in the college as either positive or negative. [46]

3.3.3 An analysis of the dramatic plot

A great majority of the narratives (92,9%) describe a conflictual situation that the lecturer encountered, so they have dramatic plots usually involving disorder, with the narrator making efforts to restore order. [47]

Identification of the dramatic plot by ARISTOTLE (BRADLEY, 1961; HALPERIN, 1978), a mapping of its themes, and some basic assumptions underlying the conflicts, led us to the conclusion that all the conflicts in the narratives we collected deal with questions of control and hierarchy. [48]

In every case, the cause of the conflict is a disturbance of an order regarded by the narrator as natural, and the lecturer's attempt to solve the internal or external dissonance that follows in its wake. The source control is hierarchic (position or academic degree) or professional (knowledge or experience). [49]

The concern with control in the narratives takes on various forms—on the conduct of a lesson, teaching methods, the students, the college framework, regulations, field conditions, minority culture, and the lecturer's life. A solution to the crisis is achieved after active attempts by the lecturer (personal action or approach to management) or in passive waiting for an external change (a change in the students, the management or the equipment). [50]

Active endeavors or passive procrastination are described equally and without connection with how the conflict is resolved. Thus, in 16 of 26 narratives (61,5%) a conflict resolution is found that satisfies, or seems reasonable to the narrator, while in 10 stories (38,5%) there is either no solution, or the resolution does not satisfy the narrator. [51]

Text No. 5 describes a situation of lack of control by the lecturer when confronted by one of her students. The lecturer's intervention is minor and the positive solution comes from the student herself.

> "Once there was something nice—nothing particularly special. I was teaching a group of girls, I think it was two years ago. I had one girl who wasn't really cooperating. Usually I give them certain tools in the first semester, because it's different from the other subjects they study. In the second half, I ask the girls to apply material to other songs, other works, its in a way part of their grade. That particular girl didn't really cooperate. You can reach everybody via music. In her case I wasn't quite able to understand what was going on. She even announced that the grade didn't matter, and it could even be less. She just didn't agree to do this part. The grade was made up of a song and listening and this part—she had to teach a lesson—a kind of mini-lesson simulation. It was nearly the end of the year, all the girls had already taken part, when she brought a cake and balloons and decorations and said: 'Today I'm doing a lesson on the subject of birthdays'. I didn't even know how to respond, she had always sat passively and here she was suddenly happy and glowing, decorated the blackboard and balloons and brought a tape-recorder, this is absolutely true. I said, 'wow, what's this, I'm so happy', and she said, 'I enjoyed myself so much during the year'—and I said, 'I didn't feel it, I thought you aren't happy and you're not interested, that it doesn't speak to you'. 'Today is the exact date [she said] and I didn't even want to tell', a story that shocked me so! 'It's the birthday of my brother who was killed on this very day.' She gained entrance to the college three years before, exactly when it happened and she couldn't recover, then two years later she again was accepted and started studying. The brother was younger than her, was in high school and worked as a waiter in a coffee house. He was coming home from work one night and at a place not well lighted a car ran him down. This is, in fact, his story and she says, 'You know, all the time I was looking for a topic and today is his birthday and I wanted to dedicate this lesson to my brother's memory'. She said that this lesson gave her … I don't know, the lessons, one after another, the subjects, the songs, what we studied. She didn't really feel the music, she was too sad all the time and was influenced by the tragedy and actually gave a beautiful lesson and I was so happy for her." [52]

In this story, the narrator confronts a problem that bothers many lecturers: a student's lack of participation in a class. The student's lack of cooperation is perceived as an outward struggle she has with the lecturer. As a result, the lecturer confronts the question of how to handle the student's behaviour. [53]

The struggle between the two is not open, but it exists and is hard to ignore, due to the workshop character of the course. The change that took place in the student's behavior leads to a resolution, since on her deceased brother's birthday

she suddenly breaks free and applies what she learned in the course to the lecturer's satisfaction. [54]

The crisis and the solution are stressed in the narrative by means of the student's motives, which the narrator reveals only towards the end. She builds the narrative like a mystery story, leaving out much information that she provides only at the end, thus completely resolving all the questions. It turns out that the student had been quiet because she was in mourning for her brother—the negative effect on her grade was meaningless to her when compared to the loss of her brother. [55]

After the turning point, the plot surprisingly moves from sadness to happiness, since the reader does not expect a drastic change in the student's behavior. The lecturer's failure to get the student to talk ("… You can reach everybody via music. In her case I wasn't quite able to understand what was going on") expresses "trouble," for both the student and lecturer—the lecturer inability to reach the student, who was in danger of failing the course, potentially has serious consequences. [56]

The turning point occurs when she comes to class with the cake and decorations. The lecturer does not understand what is happening, but lets the student do as she wishes, and only then does she hear the sad story and gets to the stage of recognition (Anagnorisis) (BRADLEY, 1961). In fact, they both reach an epiphany; the student realizes her own strengths and the power of the catharsis contained in musical experience, while the lecturer realizes that "an uncooperative student" is an external characteristic that can conceal great pain. [57]

One conclusion to be reached from the story is that every pupil has a life-story, and the lecturer must be tuned in to that story. In addition, the narrative reinforces the lecturer's insight that through music you can reach everyone. From the moment of the transformation in the student's behavior, to the end, the resolution occurs when all the questions and speculations find their answer and the story moves from a condition of failure and impotence to one of success and happiness. [58]

Both the student and lecturer have a feeling of achievement: the lecturer sees her theory about the power of music substantiated, while the student manages to overcome her grief. From the moment of reversal, the narrator uses a combination of speech forms by moving from the technique of *telling* to the technique of *showing* so that the dimension of time is extended and the importance of the dialogue emphasized. The tension rises to a climax, as a precursor to the resolution. [59]

3.4 Conclusion

In most of the narratives the lecturers placed themselves at the center of the plot, the topics being interactions, mostly with students. In all the stories, the "inside/outside" opposition is revealed, and in most cases, so is "together/alone." One cannot characterize the well being of the lecturers as positive or negative. [60]

Most of the plots are dramatic and focus on conflicts involving the breaking of order. At the same time, in most of the narratives the conflict is resolved: in half of the stories, there is an active attempt to solve the problem by the narrators, while in the others, the conflict is resolved by an external factor. [61]

The work place terminology in the narratives reveals that there is no agreed use of professional jargon to describe teaching practices in the college. [62]

The picture emerging from these findings can be organized around two major issues appearing in all the narratives—the feeling of alienation and coping with disorder. The mixed jargon, the progressive and regressive plots, and the binary concepts of "inside/outside" and "together/alone," imply that the narrators are concerned about their status in the college. In addition, the dramatic plots deal with conflicts regarding aspects of order and disorder. [63]

We will demonstrate and elaborate on each of the issues. [64]

3.4.1 Aspects of alienation

As seen in the narratives, aspects of alienation are prominent. Text No. 7 is an example that demonstrates how, in addition to the characteristics mentioned above, the narrator describes his involvement in the life of the college as minimal:

> "I come on Sundays; teach two classes and leave. I have no special involvement. I feel good. I read all the memos, the trips that are taking place, but I take no part in that because my world is more in the university than in the college." [65]

This lecturer ends his narrative with a sentence which further emphasizes his limited involvement in the college:

> "I'm here on Sundays if you want more information." [66]

These words express a feeling of transience, a lecturer who is present but absent and makes a prior declaration of lack of involvement in the life of the college. Although, on the declarative side, he does not complain about his situation and states "I feel good," yet by the fact that he mentions this twice, both at the start of the narrative and at the end, the narrator admits to being quite aware of his transitory situation in the college. [67]

This excerpt clearly shows the "inside/outside" opposition, the transitions between his different workplaces are conspicuous, and he comes and goes as a foreigner. His mobility does not allow him to establish contacts and therefore there are no traces of togetherness in the narrative—not with colleagues or with students. [68]

3.4.2 Aspects of order

Conflicts regarding aspects of order and disorder appear in all the narratives. Text No. 6, for example, reflects a threat to a "natural order," but this time the

narrator's internal dissonance is not resolved. The topic of the story is the lecturer's uncertainty about his teaching methods in the college, stemming from the fact that he does not accept the institution's norms, which are perhaps not sufficiently clear to him. He thus finds himself struggling with a reality over which he has no control. We here quote part of the narrative:

> "… as a result, there arose criticism of the content of the lesson: [they said] 'it's hard to concentrate when it's too theoretical, too abstract and at such a late hour of the day (17.35-19.00). There aren't enough concrete examples (which surprised me). Human communication? So why discuss communication between other animals? Look, last year we took part in a communications workshop. It was great! We took an event and analyzed it, like that, all the time.' I didn't like what they described. There was no theoretical analysis there, only 'practical' analysis. In that workshop, they didn't reach any theoretical conclusions or generalizations. I explained the difference between that kind of workshop and an academic course for credit. At the same time, I promised we'd spend more time on practice, observations and events. I warned them: the output would be less—and the students would have to do more homework, including material we didn't deal with in class …" [69]

The lecturer is supposed to be concerned with teaching, but instead, finds himself in a conflict with a group of students who do not accept his authority because it becomes apparent that his lessons do not fit their expectations. To his surprise, the narrator discovers that their expectations are nurtured by the general character of their studies in the college, in other courses—that is, by the accepted and long-standing teaching norms in the college. [70]

The conflict relies on the differences in which the lecturer and the students perceive a college course: First, the lecturer is sure that an academic course is supposed to deal with theoretical generalizations and not with the description of individual events. Second, the lecturer claims that workshop-type work takes up too much valuable time, and in order to adequately learn the material, the students will have to study the material not dealt with in class on their own. This presumption leads to a third perception: in an academic course, covering the material is a principle that must be met. [71]

The lecturer learns the hard way that in order to "save" the course, he must give in to the demands of the students, even though he is not happy about it. In the end, the lecturer is left with his questions unanswered, although he believes in his way. Nevertheless, he changes the course contents under pressure from the students:

> "In the two following sessions, we had time to experience a practical example, to discuss it a little, and they were asked to prepare theoretical diagnoses at home, to present in class. A few presented what they had done at home. There was a description; there were practical and pedagogical conclusions. There was no attempt to summarize, to generalize, to demonstrate, to form a theory. I had no time left to do so, except by implication, and even so, I took care not to get involved that way." [72]

The compromise he has had to carry out in order to preserve peace gives him many pangs of conscience, and he concludes his story as follows:

> "My fears merely increased: am I avoiding a demand for necessary methodical thinking? Am I leaning towards populism? Am I giving in to a lack of concentration skills for that kind of thinking? Pupils find it hard to comprehend anything beyond merely specific individual descriptions. They tend towards 'educational' generalities of a preachy-self righteous character. There's only a very partial ability to categorize. Beyond that? The mission seems impossible. Perhaps I tried to accommodate too much to the situation." [73]

This narrative exemplifies a situation in which meeting the expectations of the lecturer and students does not work, because while the lecturer regards his job in terms of a kind of natural order, in contrast, he is not exactly clear about what is expected of him in an academic lesson within a teacher education college. The students' behavior suggests that his colleagues do not teach in college the same way they teach at university, despite official declarations. This fact increases his sense of frustration. If he stands firm, there may be serious repercussions regarding his employment. If he gives in to the demands in the field, it would be an abuse of his discipline. For his part, he has a strong sense of vocation and respect for the discipline, with a positivistic approach that places scientific doctrine firmly in the center. [74]

4. Discussion

Our findings show that the lecturers are concerned with questions of "belonging." First, they seem to have no unified concept of the norms of the college and of their roles within it. Second, they tell many narratives dealing with attempts to fit in or integrate into various circles. Third, the deep structure of the narratives shows shifts between states of inside and outside, together and alone, moving from one extreme situation to the other, and within different states of well-being. Fourth, the narratives generally lack references to colleagues as a group. [75]

In parallel, we found many questions in the stories regarding "control," questions that stem from the fact that the narrator relates to many aspects of teaching in terms of a "natural order." When that order is violated for some reason, a conflict arises; in the wake of which there is a need to control the situation, in order to restore order. [76]

The upsetting of order appears in the stories in a variety of guises and the concern with control manifests itself in a variety of ways. In some cases the breaking of the order may not actually have occurred, but the lecturer expresses a fear that it may happen. [77]

The narratives show that the source of authority from which control emerges is hierarchical (position or academic degree) or subject matter-based (knowledge or experience). This system of hierarchical control is viewed by the lecturers as positive and as a kind of natural order. [78]

Our assumption is that there is a connection between the two variables. A sense of belonging to the workplace gives the workers a feeling of stability and a psychological sense of control. For if people concern themselves with questions of belonging, they may not be sure that they are in the right place—and if this is so, their sense of responsibility towards the place must suffer. [79]

SCHEIN (1985) speaks of the fact that individuals in a working organization find sanctuary in the group, that is, enjoy companionship, share viewpoints, values, norms, common beliefs, and so on, as a result of interactions with colleagues and sharing regular social activities. This process allows the organization to control the individuals and direct them towards the organization's overall goals. Organizational culture finds expression in everything linked to the life of the organization, including language, behavior and dress code. And thus, the lecturers' feelings of confusion and being temporary are quite in line with the use of the eclectic jargon apparent in the narratives. [80]

Control and belonging, separately and together, express a situation in which a large and central group has doubts about belonging to the college activities. The phrase "college activities" requires precise definition, since it includes more than just teaching. Workers need "peripheral learning," in addition to formal studies, in order to become practitioners of the organization (BROWN, COLLINS & GUGUID, 1989) in the full sense of the term. That is, a worker becomes a practitioner when he learns "to speak the language" of the organization. "Peripheral learning" does not include official rules and regulations, but rather access to the periphery of activities: getting mail, computer access, participation in formal and informal meetings, knowledge of local customs and folklore, and also legitimate access to various aspects in the organization. Such learning is neither deliberate nor orderly, but it is necessary in order to turn a worker into a full practitioner of the organization. [81]

Alternatively, if the learning process does not take place or is unsuccessful, then the workers find themselves on the fringes of the organization and its activities, physically and socially isolated. One of the central problems of workers who have not internalized the organization's culture is that they are unsure if mistakes they make at work arise from personal failure—in which case there is a need to conceal matters—or from an eminent problem of the place itself—when there is a need to "open up" the problem and deal with it thoroughly at a high level (BROWN, COLLINS & GUGUID, 1989). Lack of familiarity with a place's norms may lead to an incorrect understanding of its activities, to the undermining of the worker's self-confidence, and lack of appropriate handling of the problems that arise. [82]

The issue that must therefore be dealt with is finding ways in which a unified culture can be formed in an organization in which dozens of lecturers are concerned with questions of control and belonging. [83]

It is important to see if this phenomenon indicates a path for the future development of the character and color of the college, particularly in a period

when it is undergoing a process of transformation from a small teachers' seminary to a large academic college. [84]

It becomes apparent that an organization undergoing a continuous process of change extending over several years has difficulty in creating and defining norms that can form a permanent backbone during times of change. [85]

Finding the right balance between theoretical and practical training, defining the disciplinary lecturer's task vis-à-vis the practicum instructor; setting official norms of behavior between lecturers and students, and between the students themselves; all of these topics must be faced in order to define the meaning of the college unambiguously, as a unique institution, in the same way that schools on the one hand and universities on the other are defined and thus have achieved a traditional stability. [86]

An unambiguous definition of the meaning of college teaching would be beneficial for all concerned. The academic staff would come with realistic expectations of the institution and could carry out its task in a more suitable manner, while the college itself would know what to demand of its lecturers. Transparency among the work of the three bodies: management, pedagogical staff and lecturing staff would lead to a better distribution of tasks, to a consensus of more realistic expectations and a better feeling both for the lecturers and students. [87]

The lecturing staff at Israeli teacher education colleges bears the burden of the academic ambitions of these institutions. At present, they lead the way in undergraduate degree studies, and in the near future will do so also for master degree studies—in a framework where their proportion of total teaching hours is increasing. [88]

It appears that the question must be faced as to how the college can create, promote and develop the sense of cooperation and involvement of these staff members, so that they participate more meaningfully in college life. Since the old norms of the seminary are no longer relevant, this group must take part in erecting new norms that will be suited to the current character of the teacher education college. [89]

The aim of this research was to reveal various aspects of the lecturers' professional worlds. We hope that our findings can be of value to college administrators, management and policy makers when dealing with faculty employment, induction and college culture. [90]

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