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A PLACE TO FEEL - PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' EMOTIONS DURING THEIR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

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Abstract

During their training period, in their first encounter with the field, pre-service teachers are required to cope with intensive emotions. Studies illustrate that education programs do not provide an appropriate emotional space for support, Both emotional and cognitive processing, as well as an introspection of one's feelings. Furthermore, the research field that deals with pre-service teachers' feelings and emotions during their training, is still at its very beginning and only few studies have explored this issue. In this paper I will review the literature that presents the need for delving into emotions within the socio-cultural context of education programs. This aims to offer a multi-dimensional view of emotional needs that pre-service teachers experience during their education program, with regard to five emotional foci: the first encounter with the educational field; differentiation, containment and empathy in the educational field; consolidation of the professional identity; development within a socio-cultural context; possession of partial knowledge and truth. The objective is to conduct a future study that will bridge the gap in knowledge regarding the formation of an emotional space for learning, support and processing of feelings and emotions of pre-service teachers during their training period.

Keywords: Professional development, teacher education, pre-service teachers, emotional space, professional identity, feelings and emotions.

1. Introduction

At the initial stage of becoming in-service teachers, the professional identity of pre-service teachers, has not yet been consolidated. The pre-service teachers engage in the building of new parts of their personal and professional self, face their confused and hectic inner world and have to cope with gaps and contradictions evoked in them. In the areas of knowledge, pre-service teachers are required to fulfil numerous tasks: curricular learning, internalization of disciplinary and inter-disciplinary knowledge and acquisition of teaching instruments. Moreover, pre-service teachers should deal with the transformations that have transpired in the Israeli education system during the last decade. Following the enforcement of the Special Education Act (State of Israel, 1988) and all that it implies, it became necessary to change the teaching practice in all the educational frameworks for children with special needs. At the same time, there has been a demand to acquire new competences as an integral part of teaching. For example, competences of addressing emotional difficulties and social functioning difficulties in class, updated teamwork. Another requirement was developing teachers' emotional world in order to facilitate coping with emotional encounters in the dynamic work environment of school. Many studies illustrate that the existing teacher education programs do not comply with the needs of the field. Although teachers are the key in the learning process, there are hardly any courses that focuses on teachers' needs, feelings and difficulties. More of the teacher education programs focus on homogeneous, constructivist learning that, on the one hand, relieve the pre-service teachers' feelings and, on the other, create a glass ceiling for learning, due to lack of an open space for reflection and creation. In the education conference ATEE 2018, it became evident that the dimension of emotions in the process of teacher education, has not been sufficiently investigated. The topics indicated were: pre-service teachers' sense of the self, the place of personal biography, beliefs and life experience as well as the time needed for challenging the self-understanding and looking at oneself in a different way (Golan, 2018). The trend now in teacher education is to mediate space for teachers as holistic people, while referring to their emotions and parts of their self. The present paper aims to offer a multi-dimensional view of emotional needs that pre-service teachers experience during their education program, with regard to five emotional foci: the first encounter with the educational field; differentiation, containment and empathy in the educational field; consolidation of the professional identity; development within a socio-cultural context; possession of partial knowledge and truth.

2. Literature Review

Preliminary meta-analysis conducted for this article indicates several emotional triggers in the training process of pre-service teacher. The literature review in this article will focus on those emotional triggers.

3.1 Emotional encounter with the educational field

The encounter with the field, the school, colleagues, pupils and additional pre-service teachers, confronts the pre-service teachers with intensive feelings of overload, unclear expectations, sense of loneliness, conflicts between various roles in the life of novice teachers and the reality shock (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). Throughout the teacher education process, the pre-service teachers undergo emotional

experiences, whereby they are required to manage their feelings (Gallant, 2013). Oplatka and Arar (2019) cite Hargreaves (2000), arguing that "life in schools is complex because emotion is integral to the processes of teaching and learning" (Oplatka & Arar, 2019, p. 5). In addition to feelings of interest, excitement, enthusiasm, satisfaction, arousal and other positive emotions, pre-service teachers experience also negative emotions, prominent among them are: nervousness, anxiety, disappointment, frustration and concern (Mapfumo, Chitsiko, & Chireshe, 2012). Many pre-service teachers experience the education period as hectic, menacing, pressuring and frustrating (Hascher & Hagenauer, 2016; Mapfumo et al., 2012; Wright, 2010).

This emotional arousal might affect the positions, behavior and reactions of pre-service teachers in the short- or long-range (Hargreaves, 2000). From the physiological point of view, an emotion is a phenomenon created in the brain as a result of a neural activity. One of its definition is that this concerns a process of attributing a meaning to a certain stimulus. This process helps people to choose the appropriate behavior for the situation in which they find themselves. Davidson & Begley (2012) from the University of Wisconsin explain the possibility of changing reactions to behaviours whose origin is emotional by processing, and that various styles of emotional information processing facilitate adoption of a behavioural style that is more flexible. According to Davidson, a person capable of making a rapid transfer of information from the amygdala, that is responsible for fear and pleasure, to the prefrontal cortex, that is responsible for self-control and directed activity, will experience a better way of coping with a difficulty. He adds that this activity is performed by an emotional "training" of the brain (Davidson & Begley, 2012). Gibbs (2003) suggested tutoring educational practitioners in techniques of emotional self-control out of awareness and, thus, develop their sense of self-efficacy. He argues that teachers who are aware of their emotions, know how to moderate and use emotions such as joy and enthusiasm, motivating themselves and others for learning. Those educational practitioners have a high social awareness and they know how their emotional expressions affect their interactions with others. Rots, Kelchtermans, and Aelterman (2012) conducted a study that engaged in teacher education processes. They found that the pre-service teachers' understanding of themselves and the option of raising and controlling tensions resulting from their deep beliefs, knowledge, goals and working conditions, assist in the development of the professional identity process. When pre-service teachers identify their own emotions and feelings and find out how to deal with them, they will be better equipped to deal with their inner world. This coping, originating in emotional processing, is highly important for increasing the sense of satisfaction at work, one's health and the burnout syndrome that might cause teachers to abandon the profession (Zembylas & Schutz, 2009). Kelchtermans (2005) maintained that in order to develop teachers' emotional capabilities, we have to explore in-depth their emotional experiences in teaching. On this basis, we can expand the understanding of emotions, emotional conduct and emotional language in the school environment.

Tarrasch (2015) created an emotional space for special education pre-service teachers, in which he investigated the effect of meditation exercising. This space consists of two parts. In the first space, the pre-service teachers exercised mindfulness and in the second they taught their pupils how to exercise. The study indicated a higher awareness of thoughts, feelings and behaviors, a continuous reduction of stress and better quality of sleep. Hence, Tarrasch (2015) recommended including mindfulness in the education programs for the purpose of improving the mental health of the pre-service teachers.

3.2. The encounter with the included child

About 10% of the pupil population in Israel belong to the special education sector - (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Children who attend the special education programs suffer from a range of difficulties, such as autism, mental retardation, learning disabilities, ADHD and other cognitive and/or physical developmental delays. Due to these difficulties , the learning process often becomes an obstacle, which, in turn, affect the pupil's emotional and psychological state. The educational staff in charge of these pupils need to contain these feelings and be able to handle the pupils with empathy and understanding, regardless of the emotional difficulties the staff encounter within their selves. Konza (2008) stipulates that inclusion of children with special needs in a mainstream class evokes sub-conscious resistance among teachers and pupils. It might undermine the teachers' sense of self-efficacy since they do not have emotional knowledge and pedagogical instruments for coping with these children in mainstream classes. Various studies have found a relation between educational practitioners' sense of self-efficacy and the level of empathy (Chen, 2010). Hence, the assumption is that in order to improve the level of components in the inclusion-efficacy-empathy triangle, we have to reinforce one of the two dimensions: pre-service teachers' sense of self-efficacy or level of empathy.

The term 'sense of self-efficacy' conceived by Bandura (Bandura & Walters, 1977), relates to people's beliefs related to their abilities and results of their efforts in various situations. These beliefs affect people's behavior, choices, efforts, coping capability and perseverance in their different life tasks. Studies illustrate that self-efficacy is based on self-perceptions of knowledge, personal ability, performance and control and is associated with specific future actions (Goddard, Hoy, & Woodfolk-Hoy, 2004). Studies of the importance of emotional capability among educational practitioners have shown that the higher the teachers' control of their feelings, the higher their sense of instructional self-efficacy and the more positive their attitudes towards their pupils (Gibbs, 2003).

Empathy have been discussed and researched for many years. Cooper (2011) defined empathy in the learning environment as the quality or merit of individuals, enabling them to accept others as they are, feel and distinguish situations from the latter's point of view and embrace a constructivist and long-term approach for the purpose of the other people's progress by looking for solutions that relate to these people needs (p. 11).

One definition of empathy refers to people's awareness, immediate sensitivity to others as well as the ability of individuals to identify and understand other people's feelings, perspective, world of experiences and meaning of emotions for them (Tettegah & Anderson, 2007). Empathy was investigated and conceptualized as an inborn ability that develops through interaction with a significant figure (Duan & Hill, 1996). Oktar (2009) argues that in order to develop teachers' emotional capabilities, we have to promote their ability to identify, understand, regular and manage their own feelings and those of others. According to Oktar (2009), these capabilities enhance the empathetic ability and the will to listen to the needs of the pupils. Cooper (2011) conducted a study that explored factors of empathy among pre-service teachers. Her study indicates that the two most meaningful empathy-promoting factors are in the field of expanding the knowledge and the ability to identify an emotional and academic situation of pupils, as well as the ability to comprehend a body language that promotes a process of listening. Following these two factors, she has also found a personal continuous relation with the pupils as an empathy-promoting factor.

Shapiro (2009) specifies that by allocating room to the emotional experience of educational practitioners, they will develop a higher level of empathy and higher sensitivity to their pupils. Weinberger and Bakshi-Brosh (2013) affirm that identification of pupils' body language reflects an initial stage of the empathetic interaction with them, and is valuable to the promotion of the step towards their inner world. Teachers should activate themselves as a human instrument for actively absorbing and collecting information about the pupils, while meticulously observing them. The researchers argue that competences can be practiced and honed. An emotional space comprising experiential parts with the pupils as well as facilitating process of a cognitive and emotional processing for the pre-service teachers themselves, might assist in learning to identify emotional situations. It might also enrich the pre-service teachers' knowledge, strengthen their personal relation with the pupils and enhance the senses of empathy and self-efficacy. In light of these findings, researchers concur that teachers should be provided with emotional instruments for attending to the pupils in a professional rather than merely intuitive way (Goldberger, Shatz-Oppenheimer, Shwabsky, & Basis, 2014).

3.3. Consolidation of the new professional identity

The developmental psychologist Erikson (1968) defined people's identity as a structure with many components that are dynamically integrated and are changing gradually as people grow up. Professional identity is part of people's identity. The professional development of novice teachers is a process of building their professional self-identity. This is an active process, that encompasses an attempt to bridge gaps between the ideal image of individuals about themselves as teachers and the context of the teaching, constraints of reality and expectations of others from the teachers (Dvir & Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2011). The growth of the professional identity is like "a voyage into the deep layers of teachers' self-awareness of their successes, failures, hidden fears and hopes" (Kagan, 1992, p. 164). This process gives rise to many questions about the components of identity as well as the feelings evoked in the face of identity (Mathews, Rodgers, & Youngs, 2017). The structure of the self, grants individuals a continuous sense of who they are, based on what they were in the past and on the way by which they can imagine themselves in the future (Marcia & Fraser, 2008). Kagan (1992) relates to this journey as a movement of focusing, first, on the self and, out of the focus on the self, to focusing on the pupils and teaching processes. Thus, the personal philosophy is affected by the daily reality and is not disconnected from the specific context of the class, the pupils, the staff, the school system and the entire society.

The gaps between the inner and external world, between fantasy and reality entail conflicts, some overt and some covert, as an inseparable part of the development process (Kozminsky & Kloir, 2012). There is a parallelism between the conflicts that arise in the process of building the professional identity in teaching and those arising in the processes of consolidating the self-identity at the age of adolescence. Kozminsky and Kloir (2012) argue that the process that teachers undergo, involves a constant and dynamic negotiation among the identity parts as well as between them and perceptions, expectations and assessment of the individuals and of others. Exactly like the adolescents, teachers who develop their identity, can through this dynamic process develop various styles of identity building in the perception evoked in their environment in an anxious, angry, tense or helpless manner. Moreover, it can lead to a delay in making decisions related to identity or, alternately, perceive the change as a constructive opportunity that enables growth and achievement of a coherent identity (Kozminsky & Kloir, 2012). Emotion is a meaningful factor

in the process of professional development and identity consolidation (Shapiro, 2009) and people's acquaintance with the parts of their self, while developing their self-awareness, will entail the emergence of the self (Kohut, 1985). Furthermore, various studies showed that raising to the surface conflicts associated with identity, might enhance professional efficiency, job satisfaction and perseverance in the profession (Chong, Low, & Goh, 2011; Kramer & Hoffman, 1981).

Rodgers and Scott (2008) call teachers to reinforce their awareness of their professional identity as well as the contexts, relations and emotions that comprise the entirety of their identities. Professional identity in teaching, the building style of which has led to a high sense of self-efficacy, will affect the willingness to adjust to and deal with transformations in the field (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000). Thus, teaching and education that views the subjective experience as an infrastructure of people-oriented pedagogy, observing the subjects, the entirety of their present and potential capabilities, might develop the pre-service teachers' insight about themselves as a basis for development, in order to build their personal and professional identity.

Azaria and Halabi (2016) examined how attending a course entitled "The Caring Classroom", in Talpiot Academic College in Israel, affected pre-service teachers' attitudes, caring and empathy levels. These were assessed through case studies, exercises and critical incidents presented and discussed by the participants. The process illustrated emotional development, development of empathy toward learners and generation of professional and personal changes.

3.4. Mental development and growth within a socio-cultural context

Identity is not a predefined concept, but is built through interaction with others (Widdicombe, 1998). Iluz (2008) examines the nature of emotions in teaching in the environmental context, indicating that emotions do have a practical aspect involving readiness for action. However, she distinguishes between the action itself and the emotion which is but an inner energy that drives people to act. The emotional energy that prepares people for action encompasses simultaneously the acknowledgement, the heart sense, judgement, motivation and body. According to Iluz (2008), what provides emotions with an energetic charge is the fact that it is "constantly connected to the self and to the relation between the self and other others with some cultural location" (p. 17).

Various theories present the perception that the development of the individuals' identity and their ability to observe part of their self, exist within a socio-cultural context. The Discursive psychology advocates that people's mental life can be explored by their interactive discourse (Wiggins & Hepburn, 2007). Every time people talk to others, they position in the discourse one or more aspects of their identity. The assumption underpinning the self-psychology theory (Kohut, 1984) is that people need others in order to establish their own self. According to Kohut (1984), who conceived the self-psychology theory, the self is formed and supported by incessant interactions with the environment. Today, teacher education programs integrate mentor-teachers in the process of education and numerous studies illustrate the emotional contribution derived by pre-service teachers from the relationships with the mentor-teachers and pedagogical tutors. Pre-service teachers believe that mentor-teachers and other significant figures have a positive pedagogical and educational role and, thus, affect their sense of self-affirmation (Simons & Kelchtermans, 2008). Zemsija (2012) points out the emotional value of successful interaction with other learners, indicating that it might make participants attain a sense of satisfaction. According to Rodgers and

Scott (2008), pre-service teachers should be challenged to be aware of the way in which their sense of the self as teachers (motivation, job perception, self-esteem, etc.), is shaped by the contexts and relationships in which they are involved within the frameworks of practical experience, thinking about it in a reflective way. Group sessions, which have a fixed setting and a mentoring/tutoring figure, encompass a potential of inter-personal work that will affect the self.

Foulkes (1961) argues that during the group session, individuals can observe interactions of other people, identifying in them aspects of their own behavior. The participants reflect a certain level of people's realistic perception of themselves that should be integral to their self-perception. Thus, a certain degree of disillusionment is attained (Foulkes, 1961). Moreover, during the interactions that develop in the group, individuals can mark their boundaries, enhance parts of themselves and, through the relations with others, can be themselves (Pines, 1989).

3.6. Bearing lack of knowledge

Learning is positioned in the threshold between knowing and not knowing (Franz & Simpson, 2004). It requires a certain extent of knowledge on the one hand and a willingness to engage in not knowing on the other. This process evokes anxiety and pre-service teachers have to agree to stay in the state of not knowing and to see it as fertile and fruitful. Freud (1968) argued in 1937 that teaching is "an impossible profession", He stipulated that education (with the government and psychoanalysis on his side) does not yield conclusive and satisfactory results, in cases where we expect such results. He indicated the gap that, according to him, cannot be bridged, between the ideal goal and the outcome people manage to produce. This is a gap between knowing and not knowing, some sort of space that does not allow finality and full uniformity of knowledge, resulting in unavoidable tensions and conflicts (Freud, 1968). Pre-service teachers are required to frequently cope with gaps, emotions and frustrations that come together with the failure to achieve an ideal result (Vanheule & Verhaeghe, 2004) and the inability to possess knowledge that is fully and satisfactorily true (Nobus, 2000). Many psycho-analysts, among them Winnicott, Bion and their disciples (e.g. Ogden and Philips), present the importance of the ability to bear ambiguity without dissipating it in favor of one closed and fixed meaning. Bion (1967) discusses the possibility to bear not knowing, uncertainty and doubts as well as renouncing the need to draw a conclusion and clear knowledge of facts by allowing oneself to engage in inner listening. The various teacher education programs in Israel tend to focus on a homogeneous and consolidated approach: constructivism, creation of a beneficial narrative, writing a personal project, aspiration to excellence, development of personal leadership, taming of revolutionary concepts. This focus originates in contemporary features of society. On the one hand, there is a growing reduction of time and resources dedicated to education processes. On the other, tightly connection to this reduction, we see an almost utopian anticipation to prevent confusion, inconsistency and contradictions of the contents studied by the pre-service teachers (Epstein-Yanai, 2014). The way of learning in the pre-service teachers' education process affects the way they will teach later on. The conclusion then, is that if education programs find it difficult to provide a space that develops being and thinking by giving solutions for the pre-service teachers, the latter will choose a similar way and will provide solutions for the pupils. The implications of this way of teaching affect the personal relation that is curbed and so does the pre-service teachers' ability to demonstrate empathy towards the pupils (Cooper, 2011). Vis-à-vis the inner need to close, know and identify an immediate solution, the option of being with

what is evoked, open to absorb the emotional experience is offered (Bion, 1967). Katzin (2013) found that the education process is manifested by the pre-service teachers' decreased critical reflection and reduced self-criticism of their teaching approach and working methods, almost to the point of disappearance of the tension between the desired and the existing situation mentioned above. Studies that engaged in pre-service teachers' perception during the teacher education process illustrated that these perceptions can be changed by a process that avoids coerced positions, strives to identify and expose the initial perceptions and focuses on a common reflective discourse in order to examine them (Katzin, 2013). Shapiro (2009) showed that increasing the reflective capability of educational practitioners, increased their emotional capability and affected their professional identity.

Georgopoulos and Vouyoukas (2018) explored the effects of a non-directive intervention group in the education process of pre-service nursery school teachers. These groups integrate art works, automatic writing, physical expression, psychodrama and instruments from the world of theater. The study illustrated that this intervention program, facilitating emotional work that is non-directive but experiential, the internalization being done through the experience, reinforced the senses of self-efficacy, self-esteem and personal growth. The pre-service nursery school teachers' experience, the empathetic approach prevalent during the sessions, combined with the unconditional acceptance, enabled them to "grow up" and internalize the tutors' behaviors, even without directed instruction (Georgopoulos & Vouyoukas, 2018).

3. Research Method

This paper is theoretical and is based on deep review of studies and papers dealing with this topic.

4. Conclusion

This review attests to the gaps embodied in the structuring of an emotional space in the education process of mainstream and special education pre-service teachers on the various layers. It focuses on five emotionally-stimulated foci: the first encounter with the educational field; differentiation, containment and empathy in the educational field; consolidation of the professional identity; development within a socio-cultural context; possession of partial knowledge and truth. Moreover, the review illustrates the need for creating an emotional space that enables processing and emotional work for pre-service teachers.

Pre-service teachers' emotions are the key mechanism for understanding their ability to deal with complex situations and the enhancement of this ability. Subjects' observation of themselves, the entirety of their current and potential capabilities and observation of their experience, aiming to evoke an insight about themselves, constitutes the basis for developing their identity and structuring parts of their self. This in-depth reflective process affects not only the development of the subjects' self, but impacts also the relationship and contact of pre-service teachers with their pupils as well as the empathetic approach towards them.

Today, the various teacher education programs are in a state of paradox. They strive to structure parts of the pre-service teachers' self, nurture the pre-service teachers and enable thinking out of emotional processes. This entails the need for relaxing the sense of emotional arousal by creating a closed and structured construct of learning. The philosopher Ortega y Gasset wrote: "How can we learn? In the learning

we learn things that someone has already investigated, discovered and wrote?" (cited in MacCragh, 1973, pp. 168). Hence, the knowledge delivered to the pre-service teachers has already been discovered and is known and the space that it offers for development, thinking and creation is poor and limited. Piaget (1972) also engaged in the space of discovery and said: "In order for a child to understand something, he must construct it himself, he must re-invent it. Every time we teach a child something, we keep him from inventing it himself" (p. 27). This learning process, that partly allows reduction of complex senses of not knowing and anxiety, making knowledge absolutely accessible, creates a glass ceiling and the emotional and professional development that it offers is limited.

Felman (1982) deliberates on this topic that evokes a sense of anxiety. She argues that,

> *once pupils acknowledge that learning has no end, they themselves can be teachers, assume the teacher's position. However, the teacher's position is in itself a position of a learner, who teaches nothing except the way by which he learns. The object of the learning is always the pupil. The subject of the teaching is always the learning. This is perhaps the most extreme and far-reaching insight that psychoanalysis can give to pedagogy.* (p. 37)

Teacher education programs should offer an opportunity for additional observations and, beyond them, for another being, at such a crucial stage in the professional life of pre-service teachers.

Following this paper, a future study will be conducted, aiming to explore the dynamics of the professional identity of pre-service teachers participating in a psycho-educational program. The model in the program draws its sources from a psychodramatic model created by Naharin (1985), and was adapted to its current formation by Pines-Cohen and Dr. Sarel-Mahleb (as cited in Pines-Cohen, 2020), in Levinsky College of Education, Israel. The current model consists of two groups: 1. A psychodrama group composed of pupils attending a pre-school in the center of Israel and pre-service teachers who study in Levinsky College of Education, Israel. 2. A supervision group for the pre-service teachers. Within this interdisciplinary space, using tools and techniques from psychodrama and special education theories and approaches, the pre-service teachers will be exposed to the inner world of the children, their emotional needs and the conflicts the children encounter inside the group and within themselves. The supervision group will be a place for processing thoughts, feelings and emotions evoked within the pre-service teachers, aiming to develop new roles consolidated within the professional identity of the pre-service teachers.

Acknowledgments

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