Teacher Educators and the Practical Component In Teacher Education

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Abstract
The aim of the research was to identify the characteristics of the roles and work of teacher educators responsible for the practical component in teacher education. The research was conducted as a narrative case study by collecting the narratives of a veteran teacher educator who served as pedagogical instructor, responsible for the teaching practice. The conclusions call for pedagogical instructors to form solid professional world-views in order to ensure that their performance will be professional; they should possess specific skills, engage in perpetual study, and demonstrate a mastery of the latest pedagogical instruction theories. Furthermore, they should function competently in two diverse work environments, namely, the school, which is the practice field, and the teacher education institution. These characteristics imbue pedagogical instruction with the status of a profession, and the teacher educators with the status of expert professionals.
Keywords: teacher education, practice, pedagogical instruction, teacher educator

1. Introduction

Teacher education, which signifies preparation for a practical profession (Silberstein, 1998), contains programs that are built from two components: a practical component in which learning occurs through teaching situations, and a component in which learning is theoretical-academic. The teacher education institutions build various models of programs comprising a combination of these two components and the teaching practice is conducted by means of partnerships with schools. The practicum in schools affords the preservice teachers opportunities for professional practice by integrating what they learn in theory with the teaching situation that occurs in the educational field (Brandon & Alexander, 2012). Researchers stress that two of the cardinal elements of the practical component are teaching practice and the accompaniment of the preservice teachers by the teacher educators responsible for it (Korthagen, Loughran, & Lunenberg, 2005; Lunenberg, Korthagen, & Swennen, 2007; Zeichner, 2010, 2012).

The latter guide the preservice teachers and take advantage of the practice afforded by teaching situations in order to impart knowledge, tools, and skills in areas such as lesson management, teaching methods, classroom management, evaluation of the learners' achievements, development of the learners' knowledge and thinking, exercising pedagogical discretion, building the preservice teachers' professional identity, and so on (Silberstein, 1998). In this article, those teacher educators are called pedagogical instructors (PI or PIs).

In the research literature, teacher educators are perceived as professionals who possess specific capabilities and skills that are essential for their role (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Murray, Swennen, & Shagrir, 2008; Swennen, Jones, & Volman, 2010). The PIs, who are responsible for the teaching practice, are required to perform additional professional roles (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009; Silberstein, 1993; Zeichner, 2006, 2010). The research presented here was conducted for the dual purposes of identifying the principal characteristics of these unique roles and of comprehending their nature and importance.

The article consists of three sections, the first of which presents a review of the research literature dealing with the characteristics of pedagogical instruction, the characteristics of the teacher educators' role, and the work relationships they have to build as a result of being responsible for the practical component. The second section presents the research and the research findings, which demonstrate a work model that utilizes examples and descriptions of authentic cases, and examines perceptions pertaining to both the nature of instruction and the professional image of the role-holder. The third section presents the conclusions that emerged from the research – conclusions that may well enrich the body of teacher education knowledge and bolster the stance that teaching practice should be the central component of teacher education (Zeichner, 2012).

2. Theoretical background

The review of the research literature focuses on an aspect that examines the teacher educators' professional roles, and on an aspect that examines the work relationships and collaborative ventures they have to establish and foster in the framework of their role.

The practical component obliges the students to practice teaching that provides an encounter with the reality and

the real world of the school and the classroom, as well as with the mentor teachers, as part of the preparation for their roles as teachers. The encounter enables them to establish meaningful connections between the theory and their acts of teaching (Grossman, et al., 2009), to apply the teaching theories 'here and now' in their work as teachers, and to develop practical knowhow (Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2009). Therefore, "What makes a teacher education course practice based is its systematic focus on developing teacher candidates' abilities to successfully enact high-leverage practices" (Zeichner, 2010).

Researchers call for the teaching practice not only to be accorded the place it deserves in teacher education programs (Zeichner, 2012), but also to be afforded a range of opportunities for frequent implementation in various subject matters, in diverse ways of teaching, and at different levels of complexity (Grossman, et al., 2009). The teacher educators who accompany the preparation in the schools exert a significant influence on the future teachers' preparation process, and it is incumbent upon them to train the students to be skilled and professional teachers (Dinkelman, 2011; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Shagrir, 2010; Smith, 2005). The literature dealing with the complexity of their roles examines the complex professional nature of the role, the way they work with colleagues, the way they work with students, the manner in which the policy of the teacher education institution and that of the mentoring school are combined, and so on. The effect of these aspects differs in accordance with the teacher educator's personality, professionalism, and experience (Dinkelman, 2011).

Researchers point out that professional teacher educators must possess specific abilities, skills, and knowledge, and employ the best and most effective ways to lead the practicum both toward teaching in general and toward teaching subject matters (Bates, Ramirez, & Drits, 2009; Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Cochran-Smith, 2003). Because of their centrality, teacher educators serve as role models for the students from the point of view of the teaching method they employ, their educational personality, and the way they conduct themselves with the students (Berry & Scheele, 2007; Shagrir, 2010).

In teacher-education settings, the teacher educator is always an example of a teacher. In this respect, he or she may have a strong impact on the student teachers' views of teaching…. the way teacher educators model the promotion of certain views of learning could be a more important factor in shaping teacher behavior than the content of the messages they are sending (Lunenberg, et al., 2007).

In order to succeed, teacher educators should perform a broad range of roles, as follows: demonstrate ways of combining theory and practice in classroom teaching (Bates, et al., 2009), increase the future teacher's knowledge, exert an influence on their willingness to teach and their professional development, introduce them to teaching models, tools, and skills, help them build up a teaching repertoire of their own, and lead them to form their identities and world-views as teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Lunenberg, et al., 2007; Silberstein, 2002; Zeichner, 2012).

Observation, apprenticeship, guided practice, knowledge application, and inquiry all have a place in field-based learning. Teacher candidates need opportunities to test the theories, use the knowledge, see and try out the practices advocated by the academy (Feiman-Nemser, 2001)

Teacher educators impart ways of devising lesson plans that are tailored to both the learners and the context. They teach their students to utilize teaching methods that are consistent with the pupils' abilities, conduct lessons, and manage the class. They evaluate the students' achievements with regard to their teaching abilities by setting clear-cut performance standards (Zeichner, 2006, 2012). Following their evaluation the teacher educators have to provide professional, focused feedback on a regular basis, a feedback that will empowers the students and enables them to improve (Grossman, et al., 2009). They have to execute a clear integration of teaching theories and the practice of good teaching, and teach their students how to engage in reflection on their teaching. This includes critical reflection, which permits them to be aware of their practice and examine it critically (Bates, et al., 2009; Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2009).

In parallel to all the above-mentioned roles, teacher educators have to establish work relationships with their students. They educate the teachers who will educate the next generation (Dinkelman, 2011; Feiman-Nemser, 2001) by maintaining relationships of trust and respect, a professional dialog that supports the students' growth as educators (Silberstein, 1993). The research literature stresses the importance of the informal, interpersonal student–faculty relations. These relationships are formed both in the classroom and outside it, in individual encounters that focus on personal issues, and in mentoring and instruction sessions (Cox & Orehovec, 2007). The existence of informal relations between teachers and students in higher education has been found to exert a significant effect on the development and achievements of all the students, irrespective of gender, race, social status, and so on (Anderson & Carta-Falsa, 2002; Cox & Orehovec, 2007; Endo & Harpel, 1982; Lamport, 1993). It is recommended that the teachers take the advantages of fostering informal relations with the students into account, since such relations contribute to the fact that the students expend greater effort on their studies and looking for interactions (Cotten & Wilson, 2006). The time the PIs and the students spend together during the

long days at the mentoring school generates far more opportunities for situations of informal communication. Teacher educators should try to create a pleasant atmosphere and orchestrate situations in which positive and meaningful interactions occur (Cox & Orehovec, 2007; Hagedorn, Maxwell, Rodriguez, Hocevar, & Fillpot, 2000; Young & Sax, 2009). An informal system as a part of the practice and the educational activity serves as an example that teaches the students – when they become full-fledged teachers – to establish positive and empowering relationships with their pupils (Shagrir, 2010).

Other roles performed by teacher educators are associated with establishing work relations within the schools (Brandon & Alexander, 2012). The need for multiple opportunities to gain practical teaching experience (Grossman, et al., 2009) necessitates close ties between academia and the schools (Zeichner, 2010). These ties enable the core of pedagogical instruction to be conducted, and transforms the school into a practice field – a mentoring school. Since the training is required for the teaching practice, teacher education institutions maintain constant ties with the schools. Teacher educators are responsible for establishing the ties and maintaining work relationships over time. They establish relationships with the teaching staff, the position holders, and the school administration. The nature of the relationships is crucial and indicative of their professional identities (Clandinin & Downey, 2009).

It is important to mention that in the last decade, the research literature has stressed that teacher educators must make sure to conduct themselves in the manner of academicians. The professional skills, proficiencies, abilities, and tools that they possess also include roles that are common to all academicians (Author, 2012; Murray, 2010; Swennen, Shagrir, & Cooper, 2008). Teacher educators, be they the ones responsible for the practical component or the ones responsible for the theoretical component, must work unceasingly in the fields of research and science, engage in life-long learning for the duration of their professional lives, contribute to the body of knowledge in teacher education by conducting and publishing research, and so on (Author, 2011; Dinkelman, 2011; Korthagen, et al., 2005).

In conclusion, this review demonstrates the important place occupied by the teaching practice, and includes a lengthy list of roles that teacher educators have to perform as well as a broad spectrum of tasks that are imposed on them. In order for teacher educators to function professionally and successfully, it would be appropriate to perform an in-depth investigation of their role and the principal professional characteristics of pedagogical instruction. To this end, the present study examined the authentic professional characteristics devised by a veteran teacher educator by analyzing situations that arose from her everyday practice in the performance of her role and examining her professional world-views.

3. Research methodology

The research was conducted in Israel, where the practicum takes place in public schools. In the college of education in which the research was performed, some of the teacher educators serve as pedagogical instructors (PIs) responsible for the practicum. For the purpose of the research, a narrative case study was conducted by collecting the personal written narratives of Lynn (pseudonym), a teacher educator who served both as a lecturer and as a PI for three decades in the same institution.

The use of a case study based on a single participant can be found in the literature (Caffarella & Zinn, 1999; Murray, 2010; Veem, Sleegers, & Ven, 2005); its aim is to perform a phenomenological investigation of a unique case and to enable others to listen to this voice, to be influenced, and to learn from it (Eisner, 1991; Yin, 2003). A suitable participant was identified for the research: hers was a rare, unique, and atypical case, as is required in a case study (Yin, 2003). When the research commenced, Lynn had 40 years' seniority in teaching, and was in her final year of work before retirement. In her professional past, she worked as a home-room teacher in an elementary school for 13 years. She held a Master's degree, and had embarked on studies toward a Ph.D., but did not complete them. It is worthwhile mentioning that I, the author of the present study, had known Lynn for many years prior to the research, and that we were professional colleagues for several years.

Our college of education did not implement a formal procedure of granting ranks or appointing 'expert teacher educators'. Informally, however, Lynn was considered to be an expert in the field of instruction and in the accompaniment of preservice teachers during their teaching practice. This status crystallized as a result of her superiors' excellent opinions after observing her work over the years. Her colleagues frequently consulted with her for the purpose of learning, seeking advice, and receiving direction. She was considered to possess a great deal of knowledge and mastery of the instruction skills as well as a mature professional world-view, all of which accompanied her everyday work. As a college faculty member, she was not available for administrative roles, nor did she strive to climb the ladder of academic ranks. She consciously elected to devote her efforts to excelling in performing her role.

The investigation of the work of an experienced, veteran teacher educator by means of a case study facilitated

the identification of the insights and professional relationships of an expert by examining the ways in which Lynn performed her professional roles. As was mentioned in the theoretical background, teacher educators are obliged to engage constantly in professional development, namely, learning, conducting research, writing, publishing, and so on. Since Lynn did not engage in any of those professional activities, other than learning, she did not publish the knowledge and expertise that she had accumulated. The present study documents the characteristics of Lynn's expertise and ways of working, thereby providing an indication of the functions of pedagogical instruction and the practicum in teacher education.

For the purpose of data collection, I documented Lynn's personal written narratives. Lynn selected this form of documentation as a result of her outstanding ability to write well-formulated narratives employing academic language and style. She and I decided in advance upon the type of narratives that would be collected, defined the research areas (Yin, 2003), and agreed that the research would be submitted for publication. In the personal narrative, various aspects that can serve as tools for the creation of meanings, understandings, and theories can be identified (Polkinghorne, 1991). The use of the technique of writing narratives enabled Lynn to document her practice, report on her performance, and pinpoint topics that might offer an insight into her professional life:

A narrative way of thinking about teacher identity speaks to the nexus of teachers' personal practical knowledge and the landscapes, past and present, on which teachers live and work (Clandinin & Downey, 2009).

The narratives contain descriptions of occurrences, perceptions, opinions, professional knowledge, professional arguments and claims, insights, and approaches and beliefs. Writing of this kind creates an evidence-based narrative containing profound details of Lynn's professional life, as well as a description of her personal, practical knowledge and how it was reflected in her work, in her perception of the role, in her relationships with her students, the mentor teachers, and her colleagues at the college, and in her reflection on her performance. The narratives are accompanied by documents, letters, and email correspondence that illustrate and exemplify what was happening.

In order to collect the narratives, I devised a set of open questions whose objective was to examine the research topics. A question consisting of several parts and dealing with one central topic only was sent to Lynn by email. Lynn subsequently added clarifications, explanations, and descriptions. As mentioned previously, the research topics were determined in advance; however, I operated in an adaptive and flexible manner (Yin, 2003) in order to ensure a fruitful and pertinent dialog with Lynn. The data that were collected gave rise to rich, critical, unique, and exceptional information that enabled professional insights to be obtained (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Johansson, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1991).

As concerns the duration of the research, Yin (2003) mentioned several rationales for justifying research based on a unique case study. One of these states that for the purpose of the research, longitudinal case data collection was performed at several points in time. The research was conducted in two stages over a period of two years: The first stage was conducted over the course of an academic year – Lynn's final year of teaching prior to concluding her career and retiring. Research conducted during this period enabled her to relate to a range of situations that occurred in her everyday work during the research, from the beginning of the year when she welcomed a new class of learners, and through the stages of the learners' absorption into the mentoring school. She accompanied the work in the school, observing teaching situations, providing feedback and evaluating students during the year and at the end of it.

Lynn wrote her narratives whenever she had the time to do so. She was not obliged to adhere to a schedule or a strict routine. Occasionally there were brief or long intervals in the discourse because of her workload and her desire to devote thought and time to writing that was both in-depth and broad in scope. The reason for taking Lynn's schedule into consideration was so that she could document her activity when she was available to do so voluntarily and out of a sense of collaboration.

The second stage of the research was conducted a year after Lynn stopped working. At this stage, she was asked to reread her narratives and relate to them. This interlude permitted Lynn to examine her attitude toward the things she had written a year previously and to examine her professional perceptions. Lynn's rereading of the narratives after she had been out of the work setting for a year enabled her to view the topics under discussion from a different perspective and examine the extent to which her world-views had remained the same or had changed.

4. Research findings

The narratives collected in this study deal with Lynn's description of her ways of working and her professional activities alongside clarifications regarding the considerations that had directed her work, her perceptions, and her beliefs, as well as the opinions that guided her and helped her make professional decisions. In order to obtain the findings, two main aspects of these narratives were examined: one demonstrates the characteristics of

pedagogical instruction, and the other demonstrates the characteristics of teacher educators' roles. The findings are presented in relation to these two aspects.

4.1 The characteristics of pedagogical instruction
In the narratives that were analyzed, Lynn related to the characteristics of pedagogical instruction both during her last year of work and a year after her retirement. The findings indicate that three principal characteristics can be identified: (4.1.1) Pedagogical instruction is based on the perception of teaching practice as central to teacher education; (4.1.2) Pedagogical instruction is conducted according to dynamic models of instruction that facilitate adaptation to changes in education; (4.1.3) Pedagogical instruction is based on communities of discourse that enable a professional dialog to take place.

4.1.1 Principal characteristic: Pedagogical instruction is based on the perception of teaching practice as central to teacher education
The main starting-point of Lynn's world-view argues that teaching practice centered teacher education is necessary because it prepares the students for a practical profession. For this reason, the emphasis in teacher education is placed on practice as well as on opportunities of applying the theories of teaching and the science of the disciplines that are studied. Preparation for the role of a teacher cannot be carried out properly without practice in teaching:

> *[Teacher education is] a practical, reflective subject that is based on professional and practical knowledge alike ... a connection between two cultures that are sources of knowledge: the practical knowledge that is created and studied in the school community, and the sum total of the academic knowledge that is consolidated and acquired at the college.*

> *Pedagogical instruction is the central axis of teacher education ... [it] is learning by means of constant work in the school. Without the teaching field, there is no place for teacher education.*

Relating to the importance of teaching practice a year after her retirement, it transpires that Lynn continues to view teaching practice as a component that cannot be renounced:

> *Pedagogical instruction is the axis around which the preparation process both in the college and in the field revolves.*

> *This combination of field and college or of academic knowledge and practical experience is ... the basis for the processes of learning, practice, reflection, and insights for continuing the practice. It is a necessary basis.*

> *In my opinion, the combination of the practical field and academic preparation constitutes the right combination for accompanying the students during their teaching studies.*

> *Even today, I view pedagogical instruction as a powerful element, like a strong spinal column that carries the ribs.*

To sum up, the findings indicate a principal characteristic of pedagogical instruction to be the analogy of the practical component as a spinal column that carries the teacher education programs. Maintaining this characteristic direct both the ways of teaching that teacher educators adopt and the manner in which they conduct their instruction. By locating the practice in the center, the teacher educators afford their students frequent opportunities to practice teaching skills, all the while offering guiding tools, professional confidence, and personal empowerment.

4.1.2 Principal characteristic: Pedagogical instruction is conducted according to dynamic models of instruction that facilitate adaptation to the changes in education
In her descriptions of the characteristics of pedagogical instruction, Lynn revealed herself to be particular about working according to dynamic models that she had built over the years. Working according to such models enabled her to tailor her teaching to the changing needs of both the education system and the teacher education system. The dynamism also enabled her to integrate and implement the decisions occasionally taken by the college administration with regard to topics associated with the preparation policy:

> *I developed a special and unique model that combines the educational work in the school and its adaptation to the various theoretical perceptions by crystallizing and coordinating the school vision and the college vision.*

The teaching… necessitates an up-to-date, professional response in conjunction with the needs of the changing system. I have to design implementable models of instruction, models that respond to the diversity of abilities and needs of the pupils.

Don't get hooked on a permanent and well-known instruction model! The emergent reality is more powerful than any permanent, preplanned learning. This necessitates a change in our perceptions of instruction and our thinking habits.

The dynamism and flexibility of pedagogical instruction also permitted the integration of innovations and changes in ways of teaching and in the use of advanced technological teaching tools:

There is no 'main highway' in education and teaching. Whether it's the dynamic reality of life, technologies that are constantly evolving, knowledge change… there is no single path that leads to all the destinations.

The child and the young student are in a process of adapting to constant change in their environment, and as a result, they have to adapt to changes in ways of learning and teaching… the changes that are occurring all the time demands attention.

Lynn considers her seniority and experience as well as the professional identity that she developed to be advantages that permit her to operate flexibly and modify her instruction by implementing variable models:

I direct my practice toward practice that is in tune with the spirit of the changing times and imbues it with uniqueness that suits my personality and is fully expressed in my role as a pedagogical instructor at the college.

I study the practice that is emerging in the changing spirit of the times and give it a suitable interpretation.

The same perception is emphasized when Lynn describes the characteristics of her instruction a year after her retirement:

The dynamics of the changes oblige us to respond differentially to various needs within the school system, and for me it constitutes a constant processual standard of personal practical learning that gained significant validity in my years of work and in my ability to understand what the needs of the changing school system were, what the changing needs in my instruction, as a pedagogical instructor, were … and the combination of the two.

To sum up, the findings demonstrate a principal characteristic in pedagogical instruction to be the need to work according to flexible and dynamic models of instruction that direct the way of working and help adapt it to changes and innovations. The use of this characteristic facilitates the identification of factors that influence the education system and teaching, and the implementation of modifications as a result of the changes that occur. Furthermore, it prevents the use of rigid models that perpetuate antiquated ways of teaching that are out of step with reality.

4.1.3 Principal characteristic: Pedagogical instruction is based on communities of discourse that enable a professional dialog to take place

In her descriptions of the characteristics of pedagogical instruction, Lynn mentions that she was particular about building communities of discourse in which the students and the staff from the mentoring school participated. The dialog took place among her, the students, and the teaching staff, between the students and the teaching staff, and among the members within each community. These communities engaged in a professional dialog that was navigated and led by Lynn. This entailed building channels of dialog for mentioning achievements, successes, difficulties, and so on, and holding a professional discussion on various topics:

Consistent organizational planning requires assistance and the incorporation of learning strategies. This is when my strength and ability help… in providing the daily practical response … establishing work relationships and the mutual learning processes of both the mentor teachers and the students. They become learning and teaching team with constant collaboration.

This is professionalism that has to be learned and implemented with the teams in order to construct success. It is not a personal feeling but rather a product that is constructed in several channels of communication simultaneously, in long-term processes that yield an experience of success…

Personal learning alongside the emerging discourse in changing learning settings facilitates a dialog that is nothing but respect for the other, … interest in the other's personality and world as a result of his

uniqueness, a discourse that invites shared thinking and enriches with new insights, a starting-point of mutual belief and openness, ... a dialog that promotes some kind of improvement in the interlocutors' quality of life, an improvement in the level of awareness in the relationship of the student as a person with himself, with other people, and with his surroundings.

A year after her retirement, too, Lynn stressed the importance and centrality of discourse and dialog in pedagogical instruction:

Positive attention and listening with optimism constitute the melody with the quiet strength that I miss.

It was a routine of paying attention that was built stage by stage.

Here I see the foundation of instruction…this attention without time and without limits. Communication, speech, mutual discourse. I'm proud of the insights I discovered a long time ago.

In retrospect, I comprehend the extent to which I broadened my professional field of training from the point of view of both personal learning via studying and practical experience, and the development of my profession in research-based study frameworks in various academic settings.

Studying in changing teams over time hones strategic thinking and constructs the concreteness of the topics under discussion.

To sum up, the findings demonstrate a principal characteristic of pedagogical instruction to be the building of channels of professional dialog with and among the groups with which one works, namely, the students and the mentor teachers. Teaching that includes work in such channels not only enables the discourse participants to think, discuss, plan, and operate cooperatively and transparently, but also to learn from the expertise and experience of the PIs.

4.2 The characteristics of the pedagogical instructors' roles

As mentioned previously, in the framework of her roles at the college, Lynn served both as a PI and as a course lecturer. These two occupational channels enabled her to integrate her theoretical knowledge into the instruction she gave the students during their practicum. Her mastery of the teaching theories helped ensure that she was equipped with tools for authentic and professional instruction. From her words, it transpires that her professional knowledge is knowledge which enables rapid, intuitive understanding or response (Eraut, 2000).

The narratives that have been analyzed contain a wealth of findings that explain both her attitude toward the broad range of roles that PIs have to perform, and the nature of these roles. In the collection of data relating to the above-mentioned roles, four principal characteristics can be identified: (4.2.1) PIs perform a central and important role in the practicum in teacher education; (4.2.2) in order to perform the role, PIs are required to study constantly; (4.2.3) the range of their roles necessitates expertise, skills, and unique abilities; (4.2.4) they have to maintain interpersonal relations in their work.

4.2.1 Principal characteristic: Pedagogical instructors perform a central and important role in the practicum in teacher education

The findings reveal that Lynn frequently highlights the importance of the PI's position in teacher education as someone who is responsible for the practical component. The PI is the one who leads and directs the students' practical experience toward their professionalization as good teachers. Teaching practice requires the accompaniment and professional instruction of the PI, who is an expert in these fields:

Pedagogical instruction is a profession… The pedagogical instructor is the principal leader of pedagogical instruction.

As a pedagogical instructor, I do intensive, processual work throughout the year with each of the students differentially; I influence and lead the students to the anticipated output. Like earth that is plowed and yields seeds, plants, trees, and fruit… this dynamic activates the academic knowledge in conjunction with practical wisdom, and that's why it is so important.

Professional development is an ongoing process that seeks to enhance [the students'] learning in a range of active settings whose purpose is interaction with the learners that permits personal, cognitive, social, emotional, and ethical growth all together. As an instructor, I can be the professional accompaniment that promotes success. To this end, organizational, personal, and professional skills are all necessary.

A year after she retires, Lynn discusses similar topics:

Today, too, I view the pedagogical instructor's role as a lodestone for restoring young force to the field of teaching. An exemplary model of the instructor may well influence the preparation of students for teaching… I have attained the insight that individual power is necessary in order to comprehend the magnitude and importance of the role. Not everyone who has been trained in academia and meets the requisite criteria can engage in pedagogical instruction.

To sum up, the findings demonstrate a principal characteristic of pedagogical instruction to be the importance of the PIs' role in teacher education – a role that only suitable individuals should undertake to perform. The PIs' professionalism is critical; it determines the success of the preparation as well as the students' success as teachers in the future.

4.2.2 Principal characteristic: In order to perform the role, pedagogical instructors are required to study constantly

The findings reveal that Lynn devoted time and effort to life-long learning during her professional life. She considers collaborative work in professional learning communities to be important and to contribute to her professionalism as an instructor. Lynn created a community of learners at the mentoring school that included the students, teachers, and position holders from the school staff. At the college, she was a partner in a community of learners in which lecturers, disciplinary instructors, and PIs from all tracks and specialization programs participated. Lynn reports that the entire community operated as a team of learners and researchers:

My professional training consisted of constant learning all the way. Research based, and collaborative learning with colleagues from our department and with the entire college faculty. Learning that broadened my thinking processes and established me as a lecturer who was aware of the importance of professional knowledge that includes both field knowledge and research knowledge.

In a teacher education institution, the teacher educator must be a part of a community of peers that operates frequently. A community of peers consisting of teachers and pedagogical instructors who study together and investigate their work together… an ecosystem that crystallizes within a shared, supportive climate. Each of the discourse partners has a need for recognition of his achievements, for approval, and for the acceptance of his colleagues. He brings a professional, emotional, and personal load with him. The mutual discourse gives the participant a platform for thinking and discussion.

A year after her retirement from her job, Lynn adds her deliberations as an experienced individual with regard to the important professional characteristics that the PI must adopt, including the acquisition of professional knowledge:

The teacher education field must offer a shelf of far-reaching alternatives of information acquired constantly from the research field. It will link actual work with the efficiency of the research that is appropriate for the place and time of the occurrence, while looking toward the future. Our ability to exercise informed discretion that depends on thinking that is neither personal nor intuitive, but rather demonstrative knowledge that is rich in cutting-edge examples from scientific research, will permit not only a view of concrete achievements, but involvement in a perspective of distant and future things.

Studying in changing teams over time hones strategic thinking and constructs the concreteness of the topics under discussion… My feeling today, too, derives pleasure from the memory of those enlightened encounters.

To sum up, the findings indicate that in order for PIs to perform their roles professionally and successfully, they have to make sure to study constantly. Studying imbues them with extensive knowledge and enables them to keep abreast of the research field. In-depth mastery of the innovations in the world of teacher education permit them to enrich their ways of working by applying what they have learned and instilling the knowledge in their students.

4.2.3 Principal characteristic: Pedagogical instructors perform a range of roles that necessitate expertise, skills, and unique abilities

According to the findings, Lynn stresses that in order to succeed in pedagogical instruction, it is necessary to perform a broad range of roles. PIs have to be experts in performing the roles, and possess specific skills and abilities to this end. To describe the broad spectrum of roles that Lynn was required to perform, she employed numerous verbs such as: coordinate; mentor; slot in; examine; analyze; develop; shape; give advice; listen; approve; observe; evaluate; provide feedback; accompany; impart tools; decide; influence; offer a shoulder;

enhance; improve; provoke thought; advise; clarify issues; hold conversations, and so on.

Leading students toward success obliges the PIs to function as role models and to demonstrate mastery and expertise in their work:

> I am able to identify the nature of every difficulty and find its solution by means of a systemic, practical viewpoint.

> The students look at me. My appearance must be neat. I have to be pleasant, sensitive, with humor. Surprising. I identify the looks directed at me. I hear the voice of the students who are looking at me, who are seeking my help with a word, with support, with advice, with availability, with understanding, with knowledge. I am there for them.

> The weekly lesson plans… are sent to me for my approval. This is a regular weekly interaction … If my approval is not given, the students cannot teach and I will not supervise them.

> We think together and plan in tandem. The technological channels of communication permit a dynamic relationship in real time. Then the output is both relevant and feasible. Only in this way am I able to check how the lesson plan has been put into practice, and give advice and direction to the student and to the mentor teacher as required… [In this way,] I improve the thinking processes and enrich the student.

From the above narratives, it is clear that part of Lynn's roles entailed giving the student detailed work procedures for every stage of the teaching practice activity. As far as the accompaniment of the students during the time they spent in the mentoring school is concerned, Lynn stresses that she worked toward empowering them and imbuing them with confidence in their ways of working:

> Professional accompaniment promotes success… Professional development is a permanently ongoing process. My intervention does not have to be present all the time. There are inner forces within the group of learners that can enrich one another. One must know how to reduce one's presence and role and provide the students with learning scenarios that necessitate interpersonal discourse and mutual learning.

When Lynn gave the students feedback after observing their lessons, she had to perform a range of roles:

> Consultations take place, and then reflective feedback about the practice teaching … a reflective interpretation of the planning stages of the lesson and its practical execution is given. Issues are clarified in order to learn lessons, draw conclusions; new perspectives and changes in attitudes are revealed. The instructional discourse identifies interactions between practical knowledge and theoretical knowledge… the discourse and the feedback take place in different forms: in a personal discourse between me and the student or in a full-class group discourse.

One of the chief roles performed by Lynn was establishing collegiality with the mentoring school. She familiarized herself with the structure of the school and the characteristics of its learners, and gave the students directions accordingly. Her role was to recognize the needs of the school and to tailor her mode of instruction to those needs:

> Relations with a mentoring school facilitate the implementation of the instruction model in the framework of active preparation whose aim is to create an encounter between practical experience and theoretical knowledge. We belong to the school as a framework that shapes the educational and ethical learning patterns of both the teachers of the future and the children.

A year after Lynn had stopped working, she stressed:

> Nowadays, I am gaining the insight that individual power is necessary in order to comprehend the magnitude and importance of the role. Not everyone who has been trained in academia and meets the requisite criteria can engage in pedagogical instruction. It is a role that positions you at a crossroads with many channels and directions, and you have to possess not only knowledge, but also a powerful and charismatic personality that can control both the wheels of the role and the subordinates.

> The descriptions [I have written] move me. They rekindle the instruction model I developed, and I station myself behind them and sort of touch those situations that characterized the communications between me and the students once again. Those are the communications that trigger nostalgia in me as well as the desire to go back and be exposed to this arena of instruction. Many things are evident here… in the fine details that characterize the sum total of the pedagogical instructor's roles, and those are the ones I would like preserved as a lever for instruction in the future.

> *In retrospect, the plethora of abilities I possessed explains the totality that enabled me to do my unique work. Only from today's perspective is the personal insight about myself as a person, as a personality, as an educating figure, and as an instructor possible. In this totality, I see the real quality of teacher education.*

To sum up, the findings demonstrate a principal characteristic of the PIs' roles to be the need to work well and perform a broad range of roles. This range obliges them to utilize specific abilities, proficiencies, and skills effectively, expertly, and simultaneously. The extreme versatility of the roles and the wealth of characteristics that PIs have to acquire in order to perform them are indicative of the complexity and depth demanded of them.

4.2.4 Principal characteristic: Pedagogical instructors have to maintain interpersonal relations in their work

The findings reveal that Lynn differentiates between the interpersonal relations she established with the students and those she established with the staff of the mentoring school. In her descriptions of her work with the students, she talks about the establishment of interpersonal relations as an approach that enables PIs to do their instruction work according to the needs and abilities of each future teacher. In her opinion, there are many advantages to the establishment of interpersonal relations in teacher education. This reflects the approach we found in the research literature, as mentioned previously. Lynn perceives herself as someone who lends the students a sympathetic ear, who can be of assistance in distressful situations, or who can accede to personal requests. To this end, she makes sure to be available to the students, and allows a differential discourse to take place:

> *Being heedful of distress, of needs, of personal assistance, of unending availability, causes me to understand the extent to which this channel of communication is essential, dynamic, and meaningful to me. The differential discourse with each student… enables me to offer individual accompaniment that is always available, and inspires in me a sense of professionalism.*

> *Constant dialog is important to me, a dialog of respect and humanity, and offering individual accompaniment that is always available, professional accompaniment that promotes success… The processes of interpersonal acquaintanceship over time permit rapprochement and the building of a language of emotional, interpersonal communication that is warm and sensitive.*

> *Knowledge is interwoven with human experiences, with memories of emotion, of excitement, of coping, of success, and those are the important relationships that express the success of the pedagogical instructor, as I see it.*

As mentioned previously, Lynn considers the establishment of collegiality with the teacher education field to be one of her most important roles as a pedagogical instructor. She believes that a clear and binding relationship between the school and the college constitutes the basis upon which the whole of pedagogical instruction is built. To this end, she worked hard to establish interpersonal relations with the school administration and teaching staff:

> *The pedagogical instructor translates the needs of the system into instructions for action and, in conjunction with the principal and the teaching staff, creates the connection between the training needs and the classroom needs. This is a partnership relationship rather than a relationship of leading… The importance of the collaborative work between the pedagogical instructor and the disciplinary teacher from the college and their influence on the learning processes in the mentoring school are meaningful and important to the mentor teachers, to the students, and to me.*

Lynn mentions that the teaching staff cooperated with her and accepted her professional advice:

> *Mentor teachers request my assistance in responding to the children's needs and the parents' demands…. The cooperation between us was already established from the beginning, from the first day. I was there to assist, to think, to plan, to design, as necessary.*

A year after retiring from her job, Lynn stresses that the establishment of interpersonal relations as part of the demands of the PI's role makes an important contribution:

> *The power of the interpersonal discourse and directing it in a careful and reasonable manner constitutes the very core of the instruction model.*

To sum up, the findings indicate a principal characteristic in PIs' roles to be the establishment of interpersonal relations. The latter are helpful in the development of work and instruction relationships both with the students and with the mentoring staff. PIs have to invest in the establishment of good relations as a powerful basis for work relationships in which they, in their capacity as experts, also have to give professional criticism, evaluate achievements, and provide constructive feedback.

The findings concerning the characteristics of pedagogical instruction and of the instructor's roles make it possible for Lynn's work experiences to be shared with the teacher education community. An examination of her

professional beliefs, world-views, and the reflection she performs sheds light on her ways of working and her relations with the people in her professional surroundings, and yields significant conclusions regarding the world of knowledge of the teacher education profession.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The findings of the research presented in this article give rise to three principal characteristics of pedagogical instruction and four principal characteristics of the PIs' roles. From these characteristics, it is possible to outline three main conclusions concerning professional practice in pedagogical instruction. The first conclusion calls for PIs to form solid professional world-views in order to ensure that their performance is correct and professional. This conclusion stems from the fact that throughout the narratives, Lynn presents crystallized world-views that are part of her professional identity. She considers teacher education to be a practical profession, pedagogical instruction to serve as a crucial axis in the preparation, and PI to be the leaders who are responsible for its success. It is upon those foundations that she formed her world-views – perceptions that reinforce Zeichner's (2012) call to restore the practicum to the important position it occupied in teacher education several decades ago. Professional world-views would be useful to PIs in their everyday performance and would serve as a kind of compass that would guide their way of working and ensure consistent work that displays layers of expertise, particularly when they are required to build flexible instruction models that are attuned to the changing needs of the world of education. On the basis of their world-views, PIs would exercise their discretion and know how to justify their decisions consistently and rationally. They would work with a great deal of wisdom and professionalism, and crystallize both their professional perceptions of self and their professional identities.

The second conclusion relates to the fact that PIs' roles are extremely complicated and unique, and for that reason, it is crucial for them to possess specific capabilities and skills, engage in perpetual study, and demonstrate a mastery of the latest pedagogical instruction theories. This conclusion reinforces studies that were presented in the theoretical background (Bates, et al., 2009; Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Silberstein, 2002). Viewing the practice component as central to teacher education obliges PIs to exhibit a broad knowledge of instruction theories and to implement the combination of the two components namely, the practical component and the theoretical component in the programs. They have to persist in the development of instruction models while displaying flexibility and maintaining their professional world-views, as mentioned above. They have to study constantly and develop an ability to use educational theories in teaching situations by providing a full response to the teaching requirements in the practice field, as well as being attentive and possessing the abilities to respond appropriately to the needs of the preservice teachers. They have to bring about the empowerment of those teachers and lead them to excellent, context-focused teaching. These requirements oblige PIs to implement clear work procedures at every stage of the instruction, and to maintain the partnership between the practice field and the teacher education institution. This connection enables the teacher education system to take societal changes into account, and to respond to them in the settings of the education system and the school system. It also enables the dynamic reality of life, technological innovations, knowledge expansion, and so on, to be taken into account, and ensures that ways of teaching and learning are tailored to these factors.

The third conclusion relates to the fact that in order for PIs to perform their roles properly, they have to function competently in two diverse work environments, namely, the school, which is the practice field, and the teacher education institution. They have to be blessed with social and communicative capabilities in order to establish in parallel several relationships with the people with whom they collaborate at work. The presentation of Lynn's experience demonstrates that she was prudent enough to establish relationships with the entire school faculty, and succeeded in maintaining the relationship between them and the college in accordance with the needs of both sides. The conclusion that can be drawn from this calls upon PIs to work toward building models that bridge the gap between the teacher education system and the practice field in order to expand and deepen the channels and patterns of the practicum in teacher education, and to establish communities of discourse consisting of teachers, students, and position holders. Maintaining work relations is achieved by building channels for shared educational discourse, and devising cooperative work procedures among the PIs, students, and staff of the mentoring school. The nature of these collaborations depends on the instructor, his/her way of working, and his/her professional approach. The establishment of communities of practice and work relations must be based on inclusion and partnership, with the PIs refraining from attempts to operate like experts who dictate the way of working in the school. Collegiality that is characterized by a pattern of one-sided intervention and attempts to effect changes in the school is doomed to failure. The changes that occur within the school system oblige the college to operate in tandem and in a dynamic manner, and to provide a differential response to the changing needs. The relations between the two institutions must result in mutual benefit and a fruitful dialog.

Furthermore, PIs are called upon to establish informal relationships with their students by offering personal

instruction to each of the future teachers in accordance with their needs, difficulties, abilities, and strengths. Professional and individual instruction strengthens and empowers the student, guides him/her toward positive teaching experiences, and renders him/her capable of receiving constructive feedback and formative evaluation. PIs serve as models of both teaching and conduct within the school and in their work with the mentor teachers. Good instruction transforms the students into a learning community of peers that affords them channels for sharing emotions and events and exercising their discretion with regard to their teaching practice. In addition to the challenges of teaching, PIs have to perform a very broad range of unique roles in their work with students such as accompanying, demonstrating, counseling, mentoring, evaluating, empowering, cooperating, and so on. This spectrum of roles creates channels of communication with the students that are different from the relationships that exist between teachers and students in the academic setting of the teacher education institution. The research demonstrates that it is important to take into account the fact that professional PIs, whose work includes the characteristics mentioned in the conclusions above, may well bring about an improvement in the standard of teachers as well as in the image of teacher education in the eyes of the public and of the position holders in the education system. The unique characteristics that emerged from the research show that PIs are required to possess specific abilities and proficiencies that are not required by teacher educators who are not responsible for the practicum. These characteristics imbue pedagogical instruction with the status of a profession, and the teacher educators with the status of expert professionals who possess a mastery of the skills in their toolbox.

Moreover, the conclusions that arise from the research may well pave the way for building teacher education programs that accord the practicum a central position. They also reinforce the call to restore the practicum to its place at the center of teacher education (Zeichner, 2012) by comprehending its importance and its contribution to the preparation of good teachers.

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