

My Ideal School': The Development of Teachers' Professional Identity in a Teacher'
(Education Programme (0194

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In this paper, we present a method aimed at supporting the development of preservice student-teacher professional identity. The method was implemented in a course entitled: "The educational discourse mirrored by the school's physical environment"

.in the Master Teach programme at Oranim Academic College of Education in Israel

Bearing in mind the deep acculturation process involved in acquiring a teacher professional identity (Calleja, 2014), we designed the course according to the Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 2000). The theory is based on the assumption that to transform adults' frame of reference, one should be engaged in disoriented dilemma, critical reflection and critical discourse. The students' main challenge in the course was to plan an *Ideal School* using the *Location Task* (Zur & Eisikovits, 2011). The task encourages a dialogue about the meanings of places, in .which a variety of educational dilemmas are confronted

During the course, students exhibited their *Location Tasks* twice in class—at the beginning and the end of the course. The exhibitions were followed by a discussion on the students' *Ideal Schools*, and the students interviewed each other in pairs. Finally, they handed in a concluding assignment: a qualitative analysis of their partner's *Ideal School* and a general reflection on their learning experience during the .course

The paper presents an analysis of Sara's course assignments. Sara, aged 41, was a first-year student-teacher undergoing a career change from law to teaching. We chose her because of the following comment that was written in her concluding assignment: *I think the course allowed me to get a broader picture of types of schools and the places within them, but not to leave the fixed mindset of my old school*". This assertion implies that Sara was not engaged in a transformative learning process, but raised the question as to the reasons why. Izadinia (2013) remarked that most studies present a rosy picture of the teacher education programme's influence on professional identity development. In light of this, Sara's assertion provided an opportunity to explore the complexity of designing an effective learning environment supporting .socialisation for the teaching profession

The Location Task (Figure 1) comprises a task sheet of 24in. x 24in with spatial dimensions for the design of 19in. x 19in. The thick, oval frame on the sheet marks the boundaries of the place. The broader circle surrounding it (the fourth circle) delineates the place's outer area. The area beyond is defined as a margin, excluded from the task boundaries. In designing the *Ideal School*, the students were guided to choose places and locate them inside or outside the *school* area (Zur & Eisikovits, .(2011

The task sheet dimensions are based on Merleau-Ponty's (1962) phenomenological assumption that the human body is the primary axis for measuring and understanding the world. Thus, the space allocated for the *school* is approximately the width of a human body. It is intended to encourage participants to personify the designed place while entering into a direct discourse at the level of the .(lifeworld (Peled, 1976

Data resources included: the *Location Task* sheet; concluding assignments of Sara and her partner, and written texts prepared by Sara for the exhibitions presenting her vision. The analysis focused on identifying points of similarity and difference between Sara's first and second tasks. Data processing included triangulation between .the visual and the verbal texts

Sara's two task sheets are organised in a circular configuration. The **centre** reflects a desire to fulfil the experience of belonging and control. It includes large, structured public places designed for use by the school's local community. In contrast, the school's **external surroundings** convey the desire for freedom and autonomy. They include *woodland* and places scattered sparsely and randomly in the space. Beyond the task sheet area, Sara located *sea, city* and *woodland*. Breaking the task's limits can be interpreted as a projective expression of a tendency to ignore .social boundaries or a need to extend lifeworld experience

In the second task, compared with the first, we found several themes that express professional identity development. Three will be exemplified in the following :paragraphs

Dealing with identity issues. On the second task sheet, Sara added an •
entrance complex, which we named: "Who we are". Metaphorically, the function of the places located there can be interpreted as intent to clarify and present one's .self-identity to the world

Developing a pedagogical language. In contrast to the first task, Sara's •
second task included professional terminology such as: "*project-based learning*", "*formative evaluation*", "*the teacher as mentor*", etc. Additionally, she included *learning suites* (Nair, Fielding, & Lackney, 2009) instead of regular classrooms. This type of place was introduced during the course. We assume that it facilitated

formulation of her vision on learning environments, reflected in the language she used. Thus, the pedagogical and physical contexts converged and helped her .reconstruct her educational credo

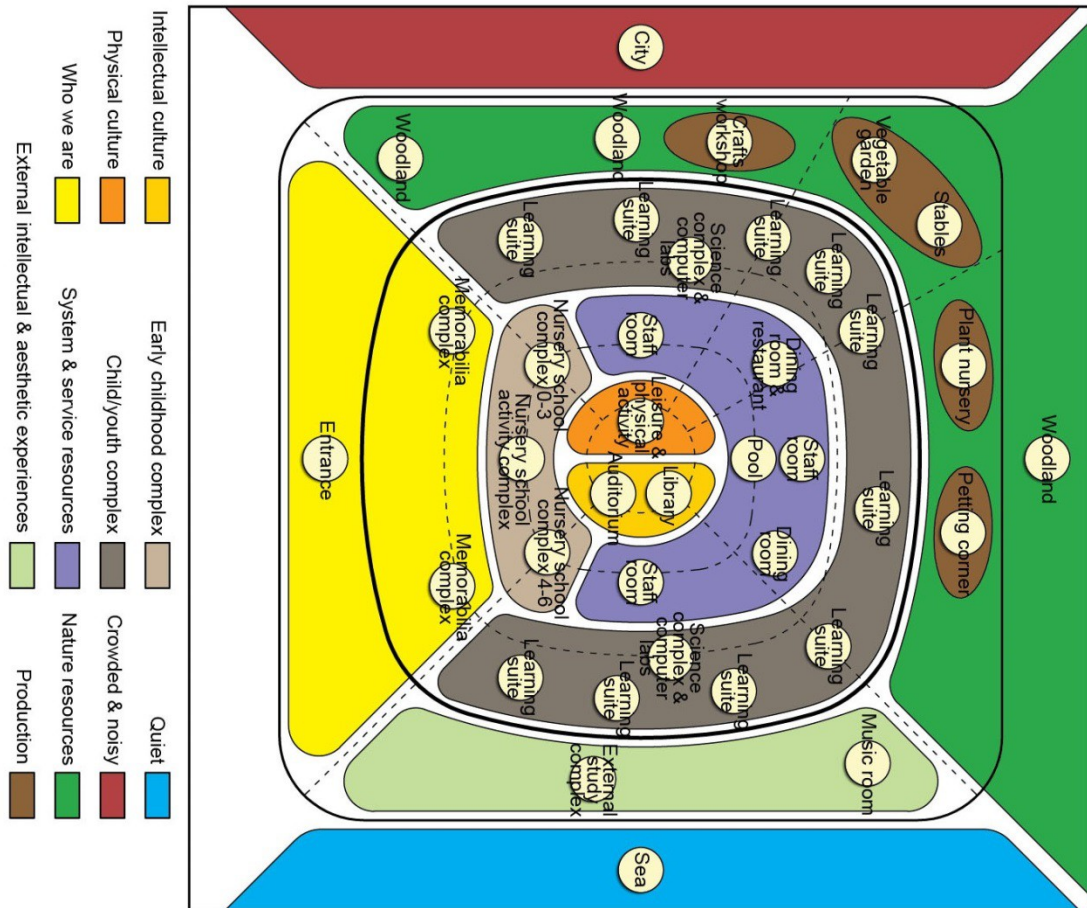


Figure 1: Configuration analysis of Sara's second task

Adopting the teacher's point of view. Sara added three staff rooms to the second task. She explained that the first task was designed from the child's perspective, whereas the second also adopted the teacher's perspective. She attributed .this change to the discussion with her fellow student

Alongside these professional development aspects, we recognised thinking patterns :that required negotiation. For example

- Ambiguity and incoherence.** Verbally, Sara emphasised the importance of vocational education, but located places relevant to this educational category .outside *school* boundaries. This illustrates a gap between overt and covert levels
 - Misconceptions.** During the course, a holistic phenomenological approach was introduced to the students. Although verbally, Sara stated that her ideal school was based on this philosophy, her second *Location Task* sheet represents a .dualistic interpretation of the world and misunderstanding of the course material
- In conclusion, although Sara broadened her professional identity, the potential of the method utilised was not fully realised. Thus, it is recommended that the course should .engage students in deeper critical reflective discourse

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