

**UNIVERSITATEA BABEȘ-BOLYAI CLUJ-NAPOCA  
FACULTATEA DE PSIHOLOGIE SI STIINTE ALE EDUCATIEI**

**The Perceptions of Jewish and Arab Physical  
Education Student-Teachers of the Practicum in a  
Jewish Training School**

**ABSTRACT OF THE TEZĂ DE DOCTORAT**

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## **Introduction**

This work reports a study seeking to examine Jewish and Arab Physical Education student-teachers' perceptions of their practicum in the Jewish training school. It is highly important to expose these perceptions in order to improve teacher-education and make it more effective, especially in the case of student-teachers coming from one culture and practicing in a school belonging to another, such as the Arab student-teachers in Israel. These perceptions and attitudes are significant for teacher-education since there is no clear Ministry of Education policy regarding multicultural teacher-education.

**The goal** of the research was to improve the practicum, while emphasizing better integration of the Arab student-teachers in a multi-cultural college and in the Jewish training schools so as to train better future teachers while considering their home culture, perceptions and attitudes.

### **The research objectives were to examine:**

- ✚ The perceptions of Jewish and Arab Physical Education student-teachers regarding the practicum in a Jewish training school.
- ✚ Issues of cognitive dissonance with Arab student-teachers training in Jewish schools.
- ✚ How the student-teachers' culture influences their perceptions of their practicum.

### **The research addressed the following questions:**

1. What are the perceptions of Jewish and Arab Physical Education student-teachers about the practicum models in the training Jewish school?
2. What are the Arab students' main cognitive dissonance issues upon entering the practicum in the Jewish school?
3. How does the culture of origin influence these students' perceptions of their practicum?

The research questions served as grounds for the questions posed to the participants in the interviews conducted in the first stage of the research, and their analysis in the second research stage.

**The current research was based on a number of hypotheses:**

1. Jewish and Arab Physical Education student-teachers have the same perceptions regarding the practicum in the Jewish training school;
2. Both Jewish and Arab student-teachers perceive the practicum as a major aspect of their teacher-education process;
3. The Arab student-teachers' original culture creates a cognitive dissonance when practicing in a Jewish training school with a different culture.
4. The Arab student-teachers' culture of origin does not influence their perceptions of the practicum;

Since the current research engages in the perceptions of people in the education system as well as the student-teachers' beliefs, the research design is mixed-methods combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The data collected in the first stage, from which the findings derived were gathered via semi-structured interviews.

The research population of the current study consisted of Physical-Education student-teachers from a teacher-education college in the north of Israel in their second academic year in a four-year college program. Twenty student-teachers from both Jewish and Arab sectors were interviewed. The interviews were conducted in the college, recorded and content-analyzed (Shkedi, 2003). The second research stage consisted of 72 questionnaires including statements gathered from the interview findings. Questionnaires were filled by 34 Jewish student-teachers and 38 Arab student-teachers, and were statistically analyzed.

The main findings reveal that student-teachers from both sectors regard the practicum in the Jewish school as highly significant and express satisfaction with the master-teachers, the staff, the pupils and the school climate. An additional finding indicates that Arab students experience a cognitive dissonance in their practicum in the Jewish school. Nevertheless, most student-teachers prefer to practice in the Jewish schools due to the better conditions and good, positive attitude to Physical Education. They maintain their culture of origin does not affect their attitudes to the practicum.

These findings are consistent with studies in the domain of teacher-education (Zilberstein, 1998; Krothagen, 2001; Zeichner, 2010) discussing the significance of the

practicum and seeking to narrow the gaps of knowledge in the domain of multiculturalism in the teacher-education process.

It can be said that the research has expanded the existing knowledge regarding Jewish and Arab Physical Education student-teachers' perceptions regarding the practicum in the Jewish training school, which might improve the teacher-education process of a multi-cultural college.

**Key Words:** Teacher Education, Physical Education Teacher-Education, student-teachers, perceptions, practicum, cognitive dissonance, multi-culturalism.

## **Chapter I: Theoretical Perspectives**

Little has been done in colleges in terms of exploring the students' cultural backgrounds. Most researchers emphasize the significance of the practicum day, but few studies have been conducted about the cognitive dissonance of students from a sector with one culture practicing teaching in another sector. Shkedi (2008) writes that the students do not arrive in the college as clean slates, but rather with previous impressions, attitudes and perceptions. Zeichner (2010) notes the loose ties between theories studied in college and what actually happens in school.

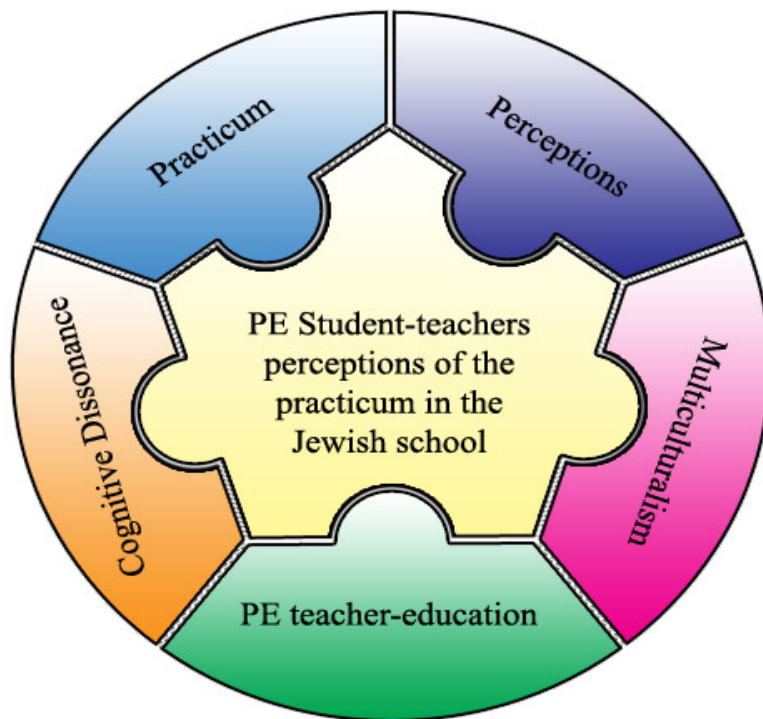
The framework of higher education provides the first actual encounter between Jewish and Arab students (Sabirsky, 1990). Research conducted thus far suggests this encounter affects the students' attitudes and values.

In Israel there is no overall Ministry of Education based policy, and teachers and teachers'-teachers lack knowledge as to education in multi-cultural societies. There are no structured curricula in teacher-education. Each college copes with the issue according to its understanding and resources. Training of Arab students in Arab colleges does not prepare them for teaching in multi-cultural societies either. They maintain this is one of the causes of the delay in the introduction of changes with Arab teachers (ElHaj, 1996).

The theories on which this research is based are the heart of its conceptual framework, Which consists of the following concepts: Physical Education teacher-education,

practicum in the teacher-education process, perceptions, multiculturalism and cognitive dissonance, and relies on teacher-education theories (Zeichner, 1990, 2010; Korthagen, 2004; Zilberstein, 1998,2005), their practicum aspect in particular, (Sidentop, 2000), theories of perceptions, attitudes and beliefs (Richardson, 1996; Woolfolk, Hoy and Murphy, 2001) and theories pertaining to multiculturalism and cognitive dissonance which are required for understanding the research topic (Kymicka, 1989, 1995; Samocho, 1996; Koben, 2001; ElHaj, 2004).

**The Conceptual Framework:**



The above figure depicts the concepts affecting the Jewish and Arab Physical Education student-teachers’ perceptions of the practicum in the Jewish school and the interaction of the concepts and their contribution to the student-teachers’ perceptions.

**Physical Education Teacher-Education:** The practicum appears to be of great significance in teacher-education; yet the prevailing approaches in Israel are still that of teaching as an applied science (Shulman, 1986) advocating the teaching of contents and its application in the field, and that of imparting practical-reflective knowledge, and these are applied by the student-teachers in their practicum. Integrating theoretical and practical knowledge contributes to the quality of teacher-education (Zeichner, 1990; Zilberstein,

1998). These approaches are applied in the Physical Education programs in Israeli schools. The student-teachers study Physical Education and education subjects in the college, and the practical-reflective part is applied on their practicum day in the training schools. Since Physical Education is a practical subject, the practicum is of great significance in the student-teachers' education.

The prevailing approach in Physical Education teacher-education colleges emphasizes the properties of effective teaching at schools and teacher-education colleges. One characteristic of effective teaching is the construction of teaching skills for enhancing teaching and learning processes. Teaching skills are part of the pedagogical abilities that can be acquired in the process of teacher-education, acquiring pedagogical and content knowledge in the course of the practicum. These skills are the teachers' working tools, and using them helps teachers plan, organize, implement and assess their work (Yariv, 1999; Siedentop & Tannehill, 2000; Hativa, 2003).

**The Practicum:** The day when the student-teachers enter the practicum constitutes a critical stage in the training process, where they actually experience real teaching. The student-teachers' difficulties in meeting the complex demands of teaching derive from lack of experience, lack of contacts with personnel and administrators, difficulties with pupils and more (Hsu, 2005). The teacher-education process gets its unique features from the student-teacher's accumulating experience, while the master-teacher and other teachers are involved in the experience, from the training school's culture, the training college's culture and its curriculum. Moreover, the interpersonal relationships among all parties involved in the program also affect its nature (Graham, 1997).

**Perceptions:** Student-teachers rely on their memories and experiences of themselves as pupils to help shape their own expectations of their pupils (Grossman 1990); They often have outspoken pre-conceptions and beliefs about teaching and interacting with pupils, and explicit ideas about themselves as teachers (Tillema, 2000). These ideas and beliefs are gained from their own school experience and from other personal experiences (Leinhardt, 1988). Various researchers define the term perceptions as attitudes, opinions and beliefs which develop in the learning process. The present research examined the student-teachers' perceptions via their attitudes as expressed in the interviews and the questionnaires. The practicum is of great significance in the development of the cognitive

dissonance with student-teachers (Hollingsworth, 1989; Kagan, 1992) from one culture and its “luggage” entering a different culture, such as the Arab student-teachers who enter their practicum in the Jewish school, are likely to experience a cognitive dissonance.

**Cognitive Dissonance and Multiculturalism:** Theory largely maintains that people have a motivational drive to maintain consistency between their beliefs and attitudes and their actions. A state where a person’s thinking copes with conflicting and contradicting ideas is known as a cognitive dissonance. Often there is a cognitive dissonance between the way people present their cultural beliefs and attitudes and who they really are.

An additional concept in this research is that of multiculturalism, since the research population comes from two sectors: the Jewish sector and the Arab sector. The term “multiculturalism” consists of differences between ethnic groups, gender differences, class differences, racial differences and religious differences. The political context of multiculturalism is where the cultural group plays a significant role in protecting individual liberties and self realization (Kymlicka, 1989, 1995). The existential context of multiculturalism stems from the insights of individuals understanding human existence as cultural existence. Within the teacher-education colleges, student-teachers of the Arab and Jewish sectors meet in the framework of the higher education institutions (Sabirsky, 1990). This encounter affects attitudes and values, whereby student-teachers express more liberal attitudes to social issues and there is a decline in their attitudes to tradition (Astin, 1977). Eventually, the research led to better understanding of both Jewish and Arab student-teachers’ perceptions of their practicum in the Jewish training school, and to a better understanding of the issues of moving from one culture to another. This, in turn, may lead to better practicum.

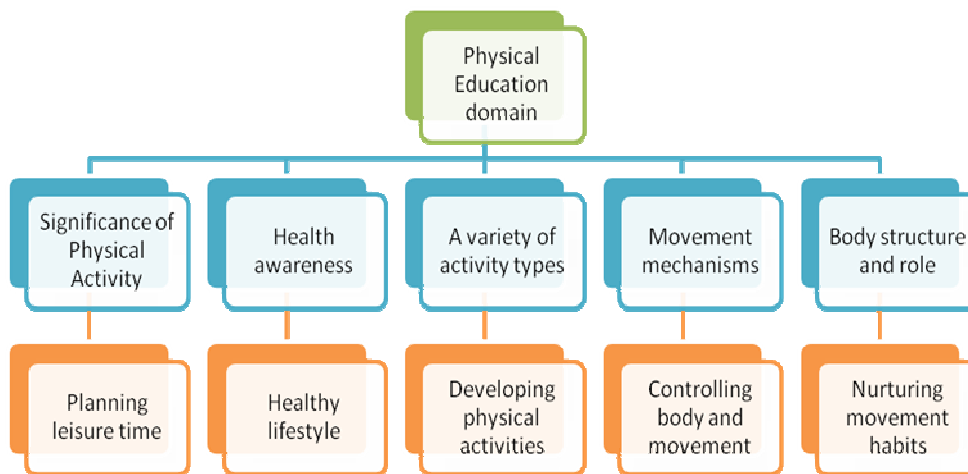
### **Physical Education in Israel**

The goals of Physical Education in the Israeli education system are to enhance the pupil’s health, develop the pupil’s physical fitness, which will contribute to the pupil’s performance of the tasks required on a daily basis. In addition, the state employs dozens of Physical education inspectors and other functionaries, as well as a system of Physical Education colleges for the training and enrichment of the teachers. Physical Education is



one of the teaching subjects, which engages in the development of Physical capabilities, physical fitness and proper movement and posture habits. Unlike other teaching subjects, Physical Education does not engage much in theory (Efrati, Artzi and Ben-Sira, 1995). According to the findings of different studies, Physical Education is considered “enrichment” (Hanegbi and Feigin, 1998). Much like in other countries, Physical Education is still mandatory at least in some of the school years. Implementation is 100%, the highest percentage compared to other countries.

**Physical Education Domain:**



Curriculum Structure and Contents”

The curriculum and its contents are structured according to age groups:

1. Pre-school – movement and music;
2. First and Second Grade – basic subjects;
3. Third – Sixth Grades – “A Market of Skills”
4. Seventh-Ninth Grades - A variety of sports;
5. Tenth-Twelfth Grades – Choice out of a limited selection.

There is a requirement to integrate theoretical subjects into the practical activities whereby the theoretical contents are grounds for implementing the practical program, and the theoretical subjects will be taught as part of the practical lessons;

### Physical Education in the Arab Sector

Most Arab schools allocate one weekly Physical Education hour in primary school and two hours in secondary school. Some of the high schools and most primary schools lack sports facilities that are necessary for physical activity. Thus it is hard to engage in consecutive, serious Physical education lessons. The situation is even worse with girls in the Arab sector. Due to gender differences in the perception of Physical Education on the personal and system levels, Moslem girls are influenced and have to face all the religious cultural factors as well as behavior codes that affect their participation in Physical Education lessons (Arar, 2006).

### Training Physical Education Teachers

All Israeli teacher-education colleges train Physical Education teachers from pre-school to high school, and provide their student-teachers with the skills of physically training adults. In the course of their studies, the student-teachers are provided with theoretical and practical knowledge as well as skills in the domains of education, teaching and Physical Education so as to train Physical Education teachers with comprehensive knowledge and multi-disciplinary skills.

College entry demands are the same for all sectors in the population: A high matriculation certificate average (85 and above) and meeting the State of Israel's threshold examinations. The program is a four-year route at the end of which the student-teachers receive a Physical Education degree and a teaching certificate.

None of the Arab Academic colleges in Israel has a Physical Education program, and therefore, most Physical Education student-teachers enroll in the Jewish colleges. Entry requirements in Arab colleges are much like those in the Jewish colleges. Usually, after graduation, Arab student-teachers integrate into schools in the Arab sector.

### **Structure and Content of the Physical Education Training Program**

The Physical Education curriculum was developed according to all of the above, and the "Ariav Guidelines".(Ariav Layout 2006). The program spreads over four years:

1. Studies for teaching Physical Education – 36 hours including: developmental and educational psychology, psychology of Physical Education, descriptive statistics,

- assessment methods, academic orientation, sociology of Physical Education, methods of Physical Education, teaching application and practicum, class management, practice workshops, integrating children with special needs, introduction to special education.
2. Disciplinary studies – Physical Education – 56 hours – sports branches, theory of movement, nurturing posture, motor control, bio-mechanics, anatomy and laboratory introduction to life science, physiology of effort, organizing sports enterprises, choice seminar, specializing in a secondary academic subject such as adult education, promoting health and recreation.
  3. Basic studies and enrichment – 6 hours, including English, language skills, computer skills, education for democracy and national heritage.
- Total: 96 hours over four years of training for teaching Physical Education.

### **Practicum in Teaching Physical Education**

The Physical Education Curriculum includes training from pre-school to the end of high school, which means for three years the student-teachers study to teach at all levels before the fourth practical experience year. In the course of training, the student-teachers engage in practicum in primary school for two years (first and second) and in high school during the third year. The practicum takes place once a week in the training school, and twice a year they engage in a full week practice (Yonai, 2003).

Most Physical Education colleges in Israel practice the traditional practicum model as most primary schools which serve as training schools only have one Physical Education teacher per school and the number of lessons is limited, so each teacher can only work with one or two student-teachers. Training schools are chosen based on the quality of their Physical Education teachers, recommendations of Physical Education inspectorate and the conditions provided by the schools such as gymnasiums and sports courts. Most master-teachers are veteran teachers willing to coach student-teachers.

The experience of teaching physical skills is especially significant for Physical Education student-teachers. The PDS model is an innovative and effective practice model, but it does not suit the Physical Education practicum, especially in primary schools, where there is only one teacher and the number of hours is limited.

In the third year – the student-teachers practice in high schools where student-teachers are accompanied by 4 - 6 Physical Education teachers (one or two student-teachers per teacher). In some colleges, the student-teachers experience a “laboratory class” model during their first year – a class is brought to the college and the student-teachers practice teaching them under the supervision of the class teacher and the pedagogical instructor. In addition, the “peer-teaching” model is used before starting the practice at school. According to the Ariav Layout (2006), student-teachers do 15 hours of practical experience in the course of three years.

**“Ohalo” Physical Education and Practicum** (the college where research was conducted)

The following table presents the different practicum models in “Ohalo”. These models expose the student-teacher to different teaching methods and events which are later discussed in class emphasizing “from the field to the class, and from class to the field”. Hence, the student-teacher can benefit from the practical experience at school.

### The Practicum Program in “Ohalo” College

Mentoring types	Number of Practice days	School choice	Focus	Year
Traditional model – Peer teaching and observation. The teacher visits training schools in rotation.	1. One day a week 2. A full practice week	First semester – in college. Second semester in a school chosen by the pedagogical instructor	1. Peer teaching – first semester 2. Teaching in elementary school	<b>1</b>
1. Traditional model 2. The training school – the pedagogical instructor places a group of student-teachers in the same school or spends time with them.	1. One day per week 2. Two full practice weeks during the year. A week each time.	By the pedagogical instructor approved by the inspector of Physical Education considering student’s request	Teaching in elementary school	<b>2</b>
The Training School Model. There are a number of master- teachers in each school, and a number of student-teachers	1. One day per week 2. Two full practice weeks during the year. A week each time.	Chosen by the student, approved by the pedagogical instructor	Teaching in Junior high or high School	<b>3</b>
Student returns to the college for an internship workshop usually coordinated by the pedagogical instructor	According to number of teaching hours. Accompanied by a master-teacher	The student’s choice directed by the inspector or directly by the school principal	The student-teacher becomes an intern in the school, where he or she is absorbed as a teacher	<b>4</b>

## **Chapter II: Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The research design is mixed-methods combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The research was conducted in two stages, whereby the findings of the first, qualitative stage generated the second, quantitative stage (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

The data collected in the first stage, were gathered via semi-structured interviews. The data collected in the second Stage were drawn from close-ended questionnaires administered to a greater number of student-teachers in order to enhance the data in accordance with the research questions

### **Research Population**

The research population consisted of second year Jewish and Arab Physical-Education student-teachers from a teacher education college in the north of Israel.

Ten student-teachers (50%) were from the Arab sector and ten (50%) from the Jewish sector. All the student-teachers had their practicum in Jewish primary schools in the North of Israel. The group was chosen randomly according to the student-teachers' availability and wish to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted in the college, recorded and content-analyzed (Shkedi, 2003). This analysis yielded the statements for the questionnaires administered in the second research stage.

In the second research stage, closed-ended questionnaires were administered to 72 (47.22%) second year students, practicing in the Jewish school: 38 (52.78%) Arab students and 34 (47.22%) Jewish student-teachers, and were statistically analyzed. The sample is one of convenience.

### **Research Methods**

In the first, qualitative research stage consisted of semi-structured interviews, and the second, quantitative stage consisted of closed-ended questionnaires. The choice of these tools was appropriate to this research as its main goal was to examine the perceptions of Jewish and Arab Physical Education student-teachers regarding their practicum in the Jewish training school. In order to do that, we had to use a qualitative tool such as a semi-

structured interview with the participants (Woolfolk, Hoy and Murphy, 2001) so as to expose their attitudes, and thus to reveal their perceptions.

The second, quantitative research stage included a closed-ended questionnaire based on the themes and categories arising from the analysis of the interview findings, so as to extend knowledge about the research questions and goals (Alpert, 2010).

## **Data Analysis**

### Analysis Stages:

In the first stage materials were analyzed according to the topical analytic method, dealing with the words and descriptions of the participating student-teachers as reflecting their perceptions and attitudes. The analysis focused on text excerpts in context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Then, I divided the data into meaningful chunks relating to themes by identifying chunks that deal with the same topic and are related to a common conceptual perspective, while asking questions and comparing the cases and giving names to similar phenomena (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Then in the mapping analysis stage, connections between the topical excerpts led to categories. I created a “category tree” which was divided into six main categories: Perception of Physical Education, Perception of the Practicum, Interpersonal Dimension of Physical Education Student-Teacher-Master-teacher Relationship, The Cognitive Dissonance, Multiculturalism the College and Jewish and Arab School Climate. These categories answered the research questions and reaffirmed the hypotheses.

In the second, quantitative stage, the data were gathered in the “Ohalo” multicultural college via questionnaires distributed to the Physical Education student-teachers and was statistically analyzed.

## **Chapter III: Findings**

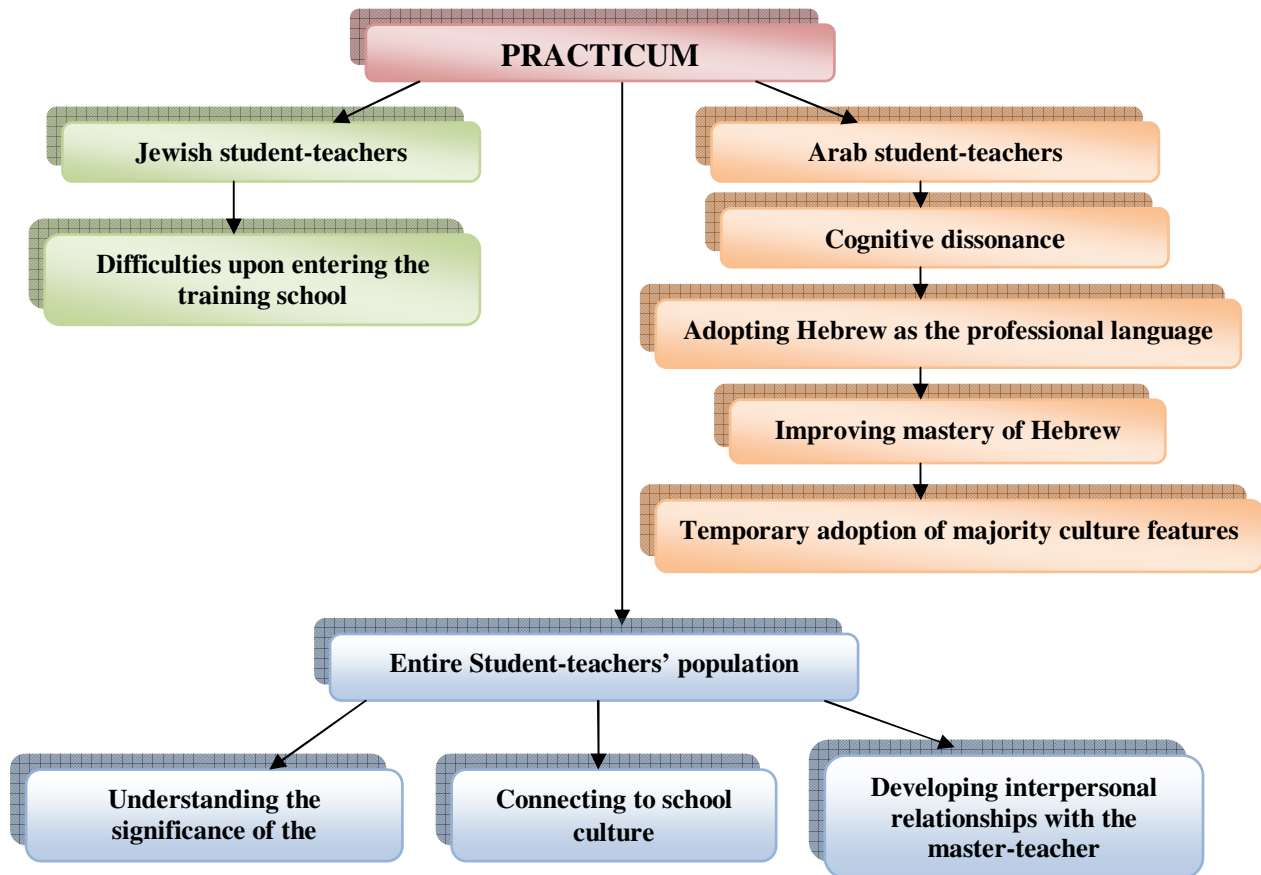
The main findings reveal that student-teachers from both sectors regard the practicum in the Jewish school as highly significant and express satisfaction with the master-teachers, the staff, the pupils and the school climate.

An additional finding indicates that Arab students experience a cognitive dissonance in their practicum in the Jewish school. The dissonance exists in all domains: language difficulties are expressed in this cognitive dissonance regarding Arabic speakers who

study, teach and have to think in Hebrew as professional terms are in Hebrew and they cannot translate them into Arabic; School culture is different, and so are the pupils' behavior, the teachers' attitudes and the atmosphere. This cognitive dissonance is also expressed regarding holidays. In college and school, Jewish holidays are acknowledged in ceremonies and parties, whereas the Arab students are allowed not to attend school on their holidays, but their own culture's holidays are not acknowledged.

Nevertheless, most student-teachers prefer to practice in the Jewish schools due to the better conditions and good, positive attitude to Physical Education. They maintain their culture of origin does not affect their attitudes to the practicum. The conclusions are depicted in the following figure:

**The Perceptions of Jewish and Arab Physical Education Teachers of the practicum in the Jewish Training School**



### **Explanation of Figure:**

In this research, Jewish and Arab Physical Education student-teachers in a multi-cultural college enter their practicum in a Jewish school. All the Physical Education student-teachers perceive the practicum as the utmost significance in the course of their training, and that is where they experience the real world of teaching, as stated in teacher-education theories (Zeichner, 2010). Upon their entry into this world, the student-teachers experience difficulties which are natural when encountering the training school. Although the Jewish student-teachers are familiar with the school culture and its climate from their own school days (Shkedi, 2008), they still experience difficulties as prospective teachers. Still, after the initial shock, the Jewish student-teachers find themselves operating in a familiar culture, and most of their difficulties center around their being student-teachers coping with practical teaching.

Beyond the obvious difficulties of entering the world of practical teaching, Arab student-teachers also experience a cognitive dissonance, as they come from one culture and enter another (El-Haj, 2006; Arar, 2009). In the Jewish training school, they are exposed to a world and a culture different from their own, but on the other hand, they are also exposed to the advantages of a well equipped school with good learning conditions and a positive attitude to Physical Education. This leads to their positive perception of the practicum in the Jewish training school. To cope with the cognitive dissonance, the Arab student-teachers help themselves by:

- ✚ Teaching Physical Education by using the professional terms in Hebrew. This enhances their professional development, but it causes difficulties in translating the terms into Arabic, and they may use the Hebrew terms in the future when they teach in Arab schools;
- ✚ The Arab student-teachers adopt the features of the Jewish culture by participating in ceremonies and celebrations of Jewish holidays. They want to be equal in all aspects, and these cultural features are part of the school's climate and culture.
- ✚ As a result of all of the above, the Arab student-teachers improve their mastery of Hebrew, thus decreasing the dissonance level. **This finding is unique to this research.**



✚ In addition, like their Jewish fellow student-teachers, the Arab student-teachers emphasize the significance of the practicum, they connect to the school's culture, where the staff help them in their practice by providing a good learning environment, a supportive approach, and encouragement especially in the interpersonal relationships which student-teachers from both sectors have with their master-teachers – understanding, help and support on the part of the master-teachers (Maskit and , 2001; Bullough, 2008), causing the student-teachers to perceive the practicum in the Jewish school positively and regard it in a special light.

Regarding multi-culturalism in college, it is evident that the Arab student-teachers wish to be equal, and feel they are, though it is hard in the beginning. However, As Sagi (1993) claims, people are multi-cultural creatures, although they may not be aware of it, and in this research all participants emphasize the equality of all student-teachers

These findings are consistent with studies in the domain of teacher-education (Zilberstein, 1998; Krothagen, 2001; Zeichner, 2010) discussing the significance of the practicum and seeking to narrow the gaps of knowledge in the domain of multiculturalism in the teacher-education process.

## **Chapter IV:Conclusions**

The conceptual conclusions arising from the factual ones shed light on the significance of the practicum in the teacher-education process in general and in Physical Education in particular in a multi-cultural college where there are no differences in perceptions between Arab and Jewish student-teachers. These conclusions emphasize the significance of a good training school, where the climate is positive, and which has master teachers, equipment and good learning conditions, as well as a supportive environment, where the student-teacher is helped on their practicum day. Even students from a different sector in the population appreciate the school and believe it is good for their practice, although it is not easy for them, and despite the cognitive dissonance they experience.

Seeking to improve the training process of student-teachers in a multi-cultural college, it is important to expose their beliefs and the culture from which they came. This will lead

to better understanding of what the student-teachers are undergoing during their practicum in the training school, where the culture is different from their own, decrease the level of their cognitive dissonance and ease their teaching experience.

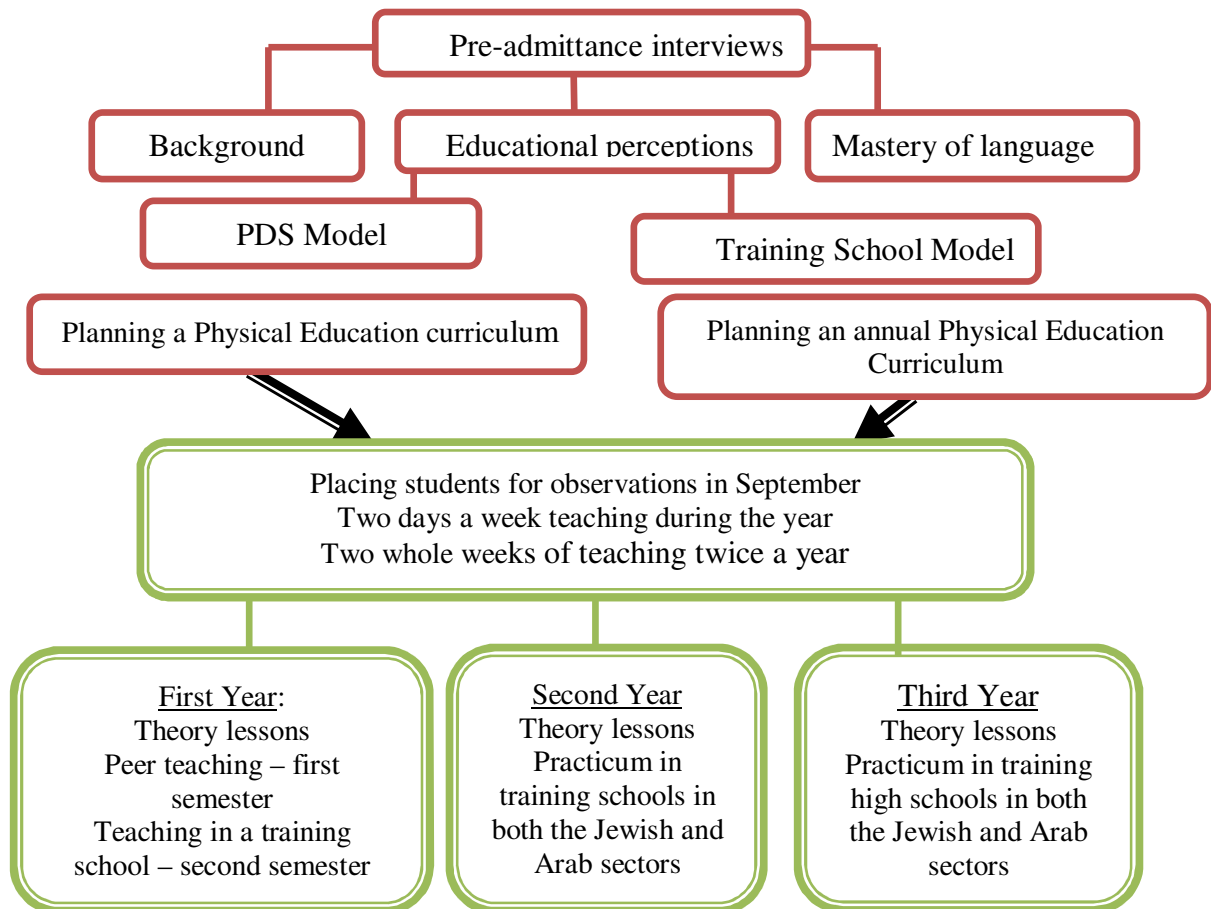
Therefore, the practical conclusions of this research are:

- ✚ Consideration of cultural contexts in the stages of accepting students to the college and preventing dropout. At this stage it is important to understand who the students coming to study Physical Education are, what their cultural background is and what motivates them to take up Physical Education teaching. This understanding prior to admitting the students may help to improve multi-cultural teacher education and make it more effective.
- ✚ Designing a better and more effective practice model which considers the student-teachers' cultural background, so as to minimize the level of cognitive dissonance by preparing student-teachers from a different culture towards their practicum in the Jewish training school, via guided visits and observations with both the pedagogical instructor and the master-teacher. Further, early on conversations with the students coming from another culture may expose their beliefs and attitudes to teaching and will also help the pedagogical instructor and the master-teacher design the practicum better.
- ✚ Furthermore, there is a need to develop good training schools in Arab schools, adopting the PDS (Professional Development School) Model, and thus change the involvement of pedagogical instructors in the study of the profession within the school, bringing the innovations from the college to the school, and thus raising the level of the subject in school, which will result in the school's more positive attitude to Physical Education.
- ✚ Improving conditions and equipment for teaching Physical Education in Arab schools, so that more student-teachers can experience in the best possible conditions within their own culture.
- ✚ Considering the different students' priorities, and coping with difficulties and problems as a result of the encounter between different cultural groups.
- ✚ In college: integrating a multi-cultural approach into the general and the didactic curriculum, and providing tools for creative skills in the design of multi-cultural

curricula, as well as teaching value related concepts such as justice and equality in different times and different places.

### An Optimal Practicum Model of PE in a Multi-Cultural College

The optimal practicum model for student-teachers from different cultures considers their backgrounds and culture. Training schools will be chosen based on their willingness to cooperate with the college and offer recommended master-teachers who are properly equipped for working with student-teachers, who have access to equipment and facilities and a positive attitude to teaching Physical Education. The college will cooperate with the school in designing and implementing the curriculum, train master-teachers, invest in increasing awareness of Physical Education and a healthy life style and accompany the student-teachers at in the school. The student-teachers will be assessed by both the master-teacher and pedagogical instructor.



During all teacher-education years, personal interviews will be conducted with the student-teachers, in order to gain better understanding of their backgrounds, educational perceptions and mastery of Hebrew (Arab student-teachers). Entry into the training schools will be gradual and accompanied by involvement in the planning and teaching Physical Education in the training school.

### **Contribution to Knowledge and Recommendations**

This research is innovative, as very little has been written about the entry of student-teachers from one culture into their practicum in another culture. The perceptions of the student-teachers shed a new light on teacher education in a multi-cultural college.

The research is also universal. The issue of multiculturalism is relevant world-wide, and this research could contribute to new insights regarding the issue of teacher education in multi-cultural countries. The theory developed in this research might be significant for education systems in general and to teacher educators in particular. Moreover, the new theory suggests different ways of selecting, accepting and developing student-teachers from different cultures, and so it may suggest changes in teacher education policies around the world. This new thinking may improve teacher education and make it more effective in the multi-cultural context.

This research may also lead to the understanding of various teacher education theories, thus leading to further teacher education and multiculturalism research. Moreover, this research calls for a follow up research by expanding knowledge via interviews and questionnaires to pedagogical instructors and master-teachers.

**Finally,** It can be said that this research has expanded the existing knowledge about the practicum in the Physical Education teacher education program in a cross-cultural context. Thus, this research has narrowed the gap in knowledge and led to a change in the teacher education policy pertaining to multi-cultural environments. The conclusions are universal and are appropriate for teacher education institutions in countries with multi-cultural societies, though the multi-cultural issue in this research is unique, as there is hardly any other place in the world where the citizens of a state (Israeli Arabs) belong to a nation (Palestinian) which is in a state of conflict with their state.

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