"Maintaining the image of a desired teacher": major issues of late-career senior teacher educators

Mary Gutman and Izhar Oplatka

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"Maintaining the image of a desired teacher": major issues of late-career senior teacher educators

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ABSTRACT

This narrative study explores the late-career issues among 15 senior teacher educators from Israeli Academic Colleges of Education (ACEs), in light of the growing conversation about pre-pension maintenance of senior faculty members employed in teacher education institutions. The data analysis of semi-structured interviews highlighted dedication to daily tasks (research activity, administration, teacher education and leading Professional Learning Communities), and a sense of mission during career experiences (leaving legacy to student teachers and colleagues). It was reflected in two parallel work patterns: the 'work pattern of sharing', and the 'work pattern of expertise'. The discussion raises similarities between the literature and the first work pattern, in line with the unique culture of teacher education systems in the world. However, the existence of the 'work pattern of expertise' in the literature remains vague and requires more in-depth thinking and research.

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Introduction

A dramatic rise in retirement age has not excluded the staff employed in higher education in general (Stonebraker and Stone 2015), and teacher educators in particular. This is in light of the age-related inflation of entry and retirement into teacher education career, due to the fact that integration into this profession requires a long-term investment in the acquisition of teaching experience as well as a doctoral degree (Czerniawski, Guberman, and MacPhail 2017; Lunenberg, Dengerink, and Korthagen 2014). Such a situation calls for a discourse on the employment of senior teacher educators before retirement, which may affect the institutional culture and the professional practice of teacher educators in the various stages of their careers.

This study presents an effort to examine the daily tasks and career experiences of senior teacher educators in the pre-retirement period (known in the literature as the "late-career"), particularly vis-a-vis their professional needs, the perception of mission and contribution to the field of teacher education in general and younger teacher educators in particular. We will discuss these issues, which have not received sufficient attention so far, and thus may serve as a missing link in our understanding of the career cycle of teacher educators in general, and unique work patterns of their late-careers in particular.

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Career stages of teacher educators

The 'career-stages framework' (Thompson, Baker, and Smallwood 1986) consists of four stages, beginning in early career (i.e. the first 5 years after entering the organisation), moving to the establishment and maintenance stages (both belong to the mid-career stage), and ending with late-career stage (which usually refers to the decade prior to retirement). Researchers emphasise that the transition among sequential career stages is accompanied by changes in attitudes towards the profession or the organisation, which affect the employee's professional behaviour (Author 2012). This classic framework, which has been introduced several decades ago, is designed to delineate behaviours and generic characteristics of various career stages in the professional life cycle. Recently, the applications of this approach have appeared in studies on specific groups of employees, including teacher educators (Griffiths, Thompson, and Hryniewicz 2014) who are distinguished by the unique elements of each stage along their career cycle. Although many researchers have described the various characteristics of a teacher educator's career (Cochran-Smith 2003; Murray and Male 2005; Olsen and Buchanan 2017; Shagrir and Altan 2014; White 2014; Author 2019a), they have indicated some similarities between their sources and the classic framework, as is presented below.

The early career (also known as the *induction* stage), is characterised by various issues inherent in confronting challenges, such as achieving acceptance, learning the organisational culture and finding ways to overcome a sense of insecurity and the novice's professional inexperience. Examples for such challenges are provided in the study of Murray and Male (2005), that highlights the early career teacher educators' (former school-teachers') challenges. Accordingly, this educator has to face with the expectation to adapt teaching methods to higher education standards and the features of the adult learners, as well as acquiring research identity. Griffiths, Thompson, and Hryniewicz (2014) also describe the development of both identities (pedagogical and research) as parallel paths of their early career: while the first axis usually emerges as a positive and empowering experience, the second axis elicits ambivalent feelings, and sometimes feelings of a lack of success or frustration.

The subsequent *establishment* stage is characterised by a sense of stability, moderation and control. It is accompanied by a shift from the search for ideals to a more realistic view of the professional workplace. In contrast, the *maintenance* stage (typical of people who have worked for two decades in the same organisation) appears sometimes to be more pessimistic, as it is accompanied by stagnant emotions and a lack of opportunities for professional growth. Admittedly, researchers of teacher educators' career tend to attribute to this phase a parallel pattern (the optimistic side of the coin), i.e. the renewal track in mid-career. They add new layers to daily activities, and especially career transitions (Griffith and Thomson 2014), as a tendency of teacher educators to move from one role to another in their institution (Harrison and McKeon 2008). Teacher educators may also transfer between educational institutions (Wood and Borg 2010), and sometimes even across a broader international radius (Author, 2019b).

In the late-career stage (often referred to as the *disengagement* stage), a long-serving employee may feel imprisoned without showing any interest in new professional horizons. Looking closely at the sector of teacher educators in late-career stage, described in

the literature as "experienced teacher educators", one can identify some patterns of a failure to acquire new areas of knowledge and a tendency to rely on intuition and past experience (Brody and Hadar 2015). Another characteristic identified as challenging late-career teacher educators is the difficulty to absorb, articulate and share latent areas of knowledge in their areas of expertise (Shim and Roth 2007). However, with regard to senior teacher educators in late-career, the determination and decisiveness in solving dilemmas in sensitive situations were noted as their main point of strength (Author 2018).

An earlier example is given by Cochran-Smith (2003) who described the professional lifespan of teacher educators, distinguishing significant issues from different career stages. Accordingly, while early career teacher educators, who have not yet positioned themselves as veteran faculty members and often incorporate their teaching in teacher education with teaching in compulsory education, are busy formulating their professional role in accommodating student. Mid-career teacher educators are involved in formulating their academic identities and ways of conducting research. Alongside these two groups, senior teacher educators (at late-career stages, who are often held responsibility for administrative positions, advising students and accepting new candidates for institutions), are tend to re-define their role in student guidance, supervision and research. Furthermore, many of them are engaged in re-invention of their life-long learning patterns and taking academic initiatives.

The research context

Twenty-one Israeli Academic Colleges of Education (ACEs) provide theoretical basis and practical training for 26,000 students in a wide variety of teacher education programmes. This basis is provided by thousands of teacher educators (between 100 and 700 lecturers in each ACE). Moreover, the senior teacher educators (those who hold degrees of 'lecturer' and 'senior lecturer'), who usually constitute 5% −10% of all faculty members in ACEs, usually serve in management positions (heads of departments, programs, tracks) in addition to their teaching duties. Along with these high numbers, it is hard to ignore the explicit minority of professors who constitute a "bottleneck" for academic development in ACEs, such as opening and approving M. Teach programs. According to the Council for Higher Education (CHE 2016), each year, the rank of professor is awarded to no more than 9 to 12 senior faculty members.

In order to bridge this gap, an "enhanced" promotion agreement has been signed in recent years, which promised to shorten the promotion path to four stages (instead of six, as was customary in the past), reducing bureaucratic requirements such as waiting times between ranks and minimum tenure. At the same time, the new agreement promised to prioritise the academic excellence of faculty members in preparation for the professorship, as is the practice in other academic institutions. An additional objective of this agreement is to provide a pension scheme for encouraging the retirement of teacher educators who reached the age of retirement (67). The issue of employing senior teacher educators after their retirement is often discussed in Israel and is controversial. In the current situation, many of the professors remain part-time at the ACE as part of programs they have established in the past, and some even engage in research and supervising students.

The new face of the teacher education system and a reform in academic promotion policy are also expected to change this reality, and although the subject remains the shadow, it is necessary to explore how those in their late-careers perceive their daily tasks, career experiences and professional vision. More specifically, we posed two questions: (1) What are the particular experiences of late-career teacher educators? (2) What are the work patterns and the underlying vision of late-career senior teacher educators from educational and interpersonal perspectives in the shadow of changes expected in promotional policies in ACEs?

Exploring the professional lives of teacher educators in late-career increases our understanding of the particular experiences of teachers whose role is composed both of teaching and academic responsibilities. Their experiences and tasks might reflect the unique combination of teaching and academic tracks; thereby provide insights in the complexity of teaching in teacher education institutions.

Methodology

Sample and sampling

This qualitative study included 15 teacher educators, all associate professors (eight males and seven females), who work at six Israeli ACEs. The sampling procedure was purpose-oriented in line with late-career definitions (Shin, Jung, and Kim 2014) and the current study objectives. The selection of the potential participants was conducted via informants or via the ACEs' websites.

Using the criterion method (Ritchie et al. 2013), which included age (55 and over), seniority in teacher education (15 and over), and rank (associate professor for 2 years or more), a sample of 15 interviewees was formulated. An effort was made to create a diverse sample group in terms of age, gender, areas of expertise and background in academic management, in order to rule out a different interpretation of the research findings (Table 1).

Data collection and analysis

The narrative-qualitative approach was conducted using semi-structured interviews, during which the interviewees were asked about their main tasks and experiences that are typical to their late-career emphasising the work patterns and emotional aspects of coping with it. The interview was structured in three parts: (1) the biographic section and demographic data; (2) questions about late-career tasks, experiences and feelings (with reference to the most recent period as a teacher educators at ACEs, starting at age 55); and (3) life-events that illustrate a difficulty or challenge they dealt with recently, work patterns and its underlying vision. The interviews lasted 70 minutes on average. In order to uphold the ethical principles of educational research (AERA 2004), the process was conducted in a sensitive ways during the interview meeting, while maintaining the privacy and anonymity of the interviewees. Interviewees signed a consent form for recording the interview and for using their quotes for future analysing and writing research papers.

Data analysis began by identifying themes that emerged from the narrative data as dominant and repetitive in different interviewees. In the second stage, mapping of

Table 1. The sample data.

#	Pen Name	Age	Gender	College Location	Teaching-Research Area	Position	Period of			
							Professorship (years)	Holding the position (years)	Working in the ACE (years)	Teacher educating (years)
1	Prof. A	61	M	Centre	Philosophy	Head of Chair	8	4	30	30
2	Prof. D	55	F	Centre	Sociology	Dean of Facility	2	4	16	18
3	Prof. G	67	M	Centre	Psychology	Head of Research Authority	6	2	24	24
4	Prof. O	65	M	Centre	Music education	Dean of Facility	18	4	4	32
5	Prof. L	62	F	Centre	Music education	Dean of Facility	15	3	15	15
6	Prof. T	58	M	South	Biology	Head of Research Authority	8	1	22	22
7	Prof. R	65	M	Jer.	Stem education	Head of MA programme	7	7	7	28
8	Prof. S	57	M	Centre	Philosophy	Head of school	8	2	2	23
9	Prof. B	66	F	Centre	Educational Studies	Dean of Facility	7	4	32	32
10	Prof. I	59	F	Centre	Sociology	Member of professional committees	4	18	24	24
11	Prof. K	59	F	Jer.	Special Education	Member of professional committees	5	9	15	15
12	Prof. E	67	M	North	Psychology	Head of professional committee	3	5	15	15
13	Prof. P	62	F	Centre	Mathematic Education	Head of MA program	6	8	30	30
14	Prof. N	65	F	North	Educational Management	Head of MA program	4	4	4	16
15	Prof. Z	67	M	Centre	History	Head of professional committee	15	28	30	30

quotations and examples typical of interviewees' daily tasks and experiences was done. Phrases that did not reflect one of the main aspects (the 'dedication to daily tasks' or 'mission through career experiences') were taken from the continuation stages of the analysis. Finally, quotations and examples identified in the previous step were divided into two key categories ('work pattern of sharing' and 'work pattern of expertise'), in light of identifying two parallel and common working patterns. This deductive method of analysis was conceived by Corbin and Strauss (2008), it was applied in previous studies examining career pathways for teacher educators (Brody and Hadar 2015), and was found to be suitable for this study, in light of the complexity of role components in this group.

The reliability of this method was validated by means of a structured analysis produced with the assistance of another expert from the field, who was asked to relate to significant quotations from the interviews, and to classify them into work patterns, which would constitute the main themes of the study (Marshall and Rossman 2014). Any disagreement regarding the division into themes, or the themes themselves, was resolved during our discussion.

Findings and discussion

This section introduces the voices of senior teacher educators and presents their work patterns in two areas: their dedication to daily tasks and a sense of mission through career experiences. The analysis revealed two parallel narratives that presented distinct and sometimes contradictory work patterns: "sharing" versus "expertise". The work pattern of sharing was typical of eight teacher educators, portrayed as ***"I share, therefore I am"***, and was characterised by a sense of wellbeing at collaborative work, satisfaction from establishing the culture of sharing creative ideas within a team, creating the links between core areas of their activities and sharing insights. In contrast, the work pattern of expertise espoused by seven teacher educators, was self-evident in terms of ***"I go on, therefore I am".*** This was expressed in the value of performance, ongoing professionalisation and specialisation, satisfaction from constantly growing and strengthening strategies for coping with daily challenges and expertise.

The work pattern of sharing

The work pattern of sharing among teacher educators was reflected in two channels: dedication to daily tasks (viz. research activity, administration, teaching, professional learning communities-PLCs), and mission through career experiences in emotional and social aspects (viz. leaving a mark on student teachers and colleagues, sharing stage and spotlights). In both areas, the pattern of sharing resonated in various ways as a prerequisite for successful formation in professional contexts, a sign of maximising of the late-career benefits, as a salient feature of their dedication to daily tasks and their mission.

Work pattern of sharing: dedication to daily tasks

Dedication to daily tasks was seen as a product of the combination of two components: (a) creating the nexus of research and administration and sharing the insights; (b) ongoing learning and sharing creative ideas as a way of coping with the obsolescence of

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knowledge and serving as a model. An example of the first component appears in the testimony of Prof. D (55):

> I feel that my empirical works are as different as they are, touching upon each other, nourishing each other. And my growth (in research) occurred during the transition between roles; each time I got a bigger role, it opened up new perspectives and combinations … I talk a lot at work meetings, how important to make these combinations, and encourage people to get out of the box.

The impact of past experiences of linking between research and administrative activities can be seen in the evidence of Prof. L. (62) who has added new layers to her administrative work and did not contradict their activity of writing and research, but rather leveraged it.

> When I received the position of management of the MA program, I had a dilemma as to whether I saw myself as a researcher or as an administrator, and I later realized that for me this connection was perceived as part of the intention and change I wanted to bring about.

In her view, this pattern has a great importance for the future generation of teacher educators:

> I always tell the staff of candidates for promotion that they should not think of research as a separate unit of practice. Research is a way to think in depth about what you do, and that's how I've seen it all these years.

Prof. N. (67) referred to the particular importance of this work pattern in the current era of reform for younger colleagues.

> Creativity and doing new connections help a lot. Today, given the changes in academic conditions; one has to be creative and thoughtful. Today in order to promote yourself, need to do research first. And you have to be a person with an initiative that can interact with people at the international level. Bringing a funded research project to the department requires relationships with peers around the world.

These examples reveal the tendency of teacher educators to examine their different roles from a holistic stance. Identifying relationships between them, or creating new relationships and sharing these insights are characteristic of adult workers according to literature. An example of this can be seen in the study (Buckley and Du Toit 2010), in which the pattern of the nexus between the daily tasks of academics (such as research and teaching) is presented as a variable subject to the later academic career. According to Shin, Jung, and Kim (2014), the rise in age and work experience in academia creates a greater longing to share theoretical insights based on their research with the emphasis of interpretation into the real world. Since the present study focuses on the senior teacher educators, which are characterised by hybrid identities and diverse roles, this connection appears to be leveraged and at the same time covers the administrative activity.

In the other testimonies, the pattern of **sharing creative ideas** is used as a way of **coping with their professional obsolescence**. Such example came from Prof. B. (66), who spoke about her motives for conducting and PLCs, where she has been engaged for a long time:

> I constantly challenge myself to re-refresh my courses because people come back every year to attend my (PLC) groups, so I have to constantly bring new material. It forces me to read and

> follow innovations. That explains why I continue to guide the group towards [...] for so many years, even though it is burdensome. 250

The interviewees also referred to additional tasks that are not an essential component of their roles but that indicate a pattern of knowledge-sharing that appears to be an incentive to maintaining mental and intellectual ability. In the words of Prof. R. (65):

> It's an incentive for me to be involved. I have to constantly renew myself and it forces me to read and keep up-to-date and to listen, because when I listen to my colleagues I am exposed. 255

Prof. N. (65) talked about the pattern of continuous learning and sharing insights as a trait that entitles her to remain a model for her students:

> No one ever trained me to be a teacher educator! And here I learn a lot as I work. First of all, it taught me how much I do not know. At this professional stage you stand at a much higher level and you must read, be prepared and arrive as you want your students to arrive. You have to be a model. At this stage there is a great deal of thinking about ways of **maintaining the image of a desired teacher**". 260

Continuous learning and patterns of sharing insights are emerging in empirical studies (Buckley and Du Toit 2010; Tahir et al. 2016) as an optimal way of working life that ensures 265 a "high place" in interaction with colleagues and students, and even emerges as a salient feature of the role of academics in their late-careers (e.g. Franz 2013). Alongside the concern of some researchers (Stonebraker and Stone 2015) that the ageing of human capital in academia will lead to obsolescent knowledge and a tendency to recycle old practices, there is a recommendation to encourage such a pattern. This is in light of the fact that the academic 270 world is based on creating up-to-date knowledge on an ongoing basis, and on keeping academic staff up-to-date and constantly innovative. Senior teacher educators employed at ACEs, who raised their voices for this study, mentioned the issue of leading PLCs as an incentive for these patterns. Since in a professional culture of teacher educators, the most professional learning occurs in this medium (Brody and Hadar 2015; De Hei et al. 2016; Olsen and Buchanan 275 2017), it seems natural to share knowledge this way as a tool for coping with obsolescence. In the present study, this pattern is also driven by the desire to serve as an exemplary teacher to the student teachers, and by the willingness to share their wisdom with those around them.

Work pattern of sharing: mission through career experience

Late-career experiences were described by teacher educators with an emphasis on 280 a sense of mission through interpersonal relations with colleagues and student teachers. From their testimonies, it was implied that the adherence to the work pattern of sharing is an expression of maximising benefits and advantages of being a late-career senior teacher educator. These testimonies reflected the great privilege they have, by sharing a professional agenda for the sake of leaving a legacy, and sharing "stage and spotlights" 285 with colleagues, which was seen as their energising force. The need to be a significant figure, to share an intellectual agenda and to leave a legacy in the institution and in the field of teacher training was revealed in the testimonies of Prof. L. (62):

> I always felt that I had a responsibility to return to society something I had received. After all, I did not just come here to teach and do my little research. I had an agenda to make a change. 290

I cannot tell you that I saw her in retrospect and that I succeeded in the full sense of the word, but I certainly made some progress.

It appears that the typical trend for teacher educators is to bring a vision to be realised by projects they lead and share their wisdom in different contexts. Such spirit of things was revealed from the testimonies of Prof. P. (62):

> Entrance to the [project] award among my student teachers helps them connect theory and practice, which is a very significant approach for me. And I would like any teacher, even at the class level, to have a vision of what he would like to move. I want to see my students motivate themselves to initiate change. It is important that they do not remain trapped only in the classroom but will actually make a difference.

Another feature that is seen as a privilege for senior teacher educators is the willingness not only to motivate and nurture their younger colleagues, but also to push ahead and **_share the spotlight and credit with them_**. This was expressed by Prof. N. (65), who preferred to give up her place at centre-stage in favour of talented early career colleagues:

> I developed a curriculum but did not agree to head it. And here comes another great thing about my age, that I can be a "motivating teacher". I can give the young people their way and encourage them. Push ahead. I think the young people deserve this, they have more energy and they have to move forward .... I gave part of my managerial role to my [former] student, who is a talented and charming person. She would soon be a senior staff member and later, I am convinced, a young professor as well. It makes me very proud.

The pattern of pushing younger colleagues forward was also seen in the following two testimonies. Firstly, Prof. O. (65):

> I see my role among other things to be growing people to lead change. That way we can see what our actions are doing to the field.

Secondly, Prof. L. (62):

> My personal perception is that you may recruit people only if you can give them a creative space where they can prove themselves, show who they are and what they can do. To develop their identity, or sense of belonging, they must feel that 'it is theirs'. If I always insisted on being there, and put my name everywhere, I don't think anyone would like it. I will help them in any way to promote what they want to do.

In summary, the examples presented above are clearly indicative of senior teacher educators' desire to leave a legacy by sharing their professional competencies and wisdom. They also seem to have a strong need to delegate authority and instil a vision among their young colleagues. Similar experiences have been documented by Author (2010), who examined the late-career among school principals. His findings pointed to the need to leave a legacy as a central motif, expressed in the creation of initiatives, in the attempt to harness staff members to active involvement and to raise their level of motivation. The new element that emerges from this study relates to sharing the stage and spotlight as indicative of the search for a successor. This pattern is typical of late-career teacher educators, probably due to the fact that in Israeli ACEs appointments are made internally and in light of recommendations by faculty members shortly before their retirement. This is in contrast to the appointment of school principals, which are determined by tenders of the Ministry of Education.

The work pattern of expertise

The pattern of work expertise has emerged as a salient feature of late-career experiences among interviewees. Teacher educators who demonstrated their adherence to this work pattern, similar to the previous group, also talked about the sense of mission as a central motif in their careers, and the need to leave a mark on the younger generation of students and colleagues. Although, for them these two needs are embodied in other forms. First, their area of expertise has emerged as a major and autonomous segment that is not linked to other areas of work life. Second, there was a tendency among them to use their expertise to bridge cultural gaps between generations. Third, a pattern of leaving a legacy for them was evident by creating groups of experts with similar specialisation to theirs. In contrast to the first group who sanctified the pattern of sharing and the tendency to collaborate on ideas and knowledge as a supreme goal and believed in the mutual influence of their fields of activity, these advocated the vision of advancing their expertise as a foundation for late-career experiences.

Work pattern of expertise: dedication to daily tasks

These teacher educators expressed their dedication to daily tasks by placing their expertise in a central place in their agenda, which is not necessarily influenced by other areas of practice. This is in contrast to the previous group of teacher educators who shared various examples in which core areas of their professional lives are mutually nurturing and promoting. This can be seen in examples that express the perception of **core areas as discrete and isolated from each other**. Thus, for example, Prof. Z. (67) reflected on his position, stating that experience of teaching in college and writing about teaching are not necessarily in harmony with each other, and sometimes they even clash. His experience suggests that these two areas of activity should be done separately per se, in order to reach a theoretical conceptualisation of the subject.

> My experience has shown that teachers who work in the field find it difficult to conceptualize theory on teaching. In order to reach a more theoretical conceptualization of things, you have to have a completely different kind of understanding of reality. And I'm a person who likes to learn and that's why I started reading a lot, and started to write about teaching. Now, writing helps me formulate my thoughts.

Another example emerged from Prof. I. (59), teacher educators in the field of sociology of education, who makes a distinction between her professional identity as an expert in sociology, her role as a college teacher and academic administrator:

> My profession is sociologist, not a lecturer in an educational organization. I do not perceive myself as a teacher. And no, I did not want to manage, even though I have no problem with responsibility. Even though I'm a professor in the Department of Education, why should I head it? I am not an education expert and it seems unfair to me.

Another issue that arose in this group was strong perseverance in trying to **cope with professional obsolescence** by continuing to study and explore in depth their areas of expertise. They testified that their perseverance helps them stay mentally fit and prevents obsolescence, as seen in the testimony of Prof. E. (67), teacher educator in the field of educational psychology.

> It is very important to me to conceptualize the things I am conveying, because I am essentially a psychologist. The difference between a teacher and a psychologist is that a teacher stands in front of a classroom and needs to know how, at a relatively low level, to manage a group of people, whereas a psychologist always re-learns a single case. And in one sense I'm going over to the psychological side. In other words, today it is important for me to go deeper than just reaching large audiences. Because I really love learning and moving forward all the time, it keeps me fit.

Prof. K. (59) talked about her age, experience and expertise as facilitators in **coping with obsolescence** or factors that slow down her productivity, while defining clearly delineated boundaries in her research activity.

> Age is an advantage (in writing) because the technique improves and it is the key to success in research. Experience also helps me define the boundaries of writing. I write all the time, no less since I was younger. I wrote two books and over 50 articles. I write only qualitative academic articles to international peer-reviewed journals and only in my field of expertise. Today I work much faster and more accurately than ever before.

She felt satisfied with passing on her legacy to young colleagues, hoping it would leave a mark and help succeed in the era of teacher education reform.

> Today has to be very professional, very rigorous in terms of his research interests and able to manage time. I always tell the young lecturers – Take a topic for research on which you can publish several articles. Time is pressing and needs to be productive. Today, the level of research is much higher than it was.

In the area of daily tasks, one can identify a pattern of expertise and clear boundaries between different task areas, selectivity and specialisation in research and writing. Although such pattern is seen as typical of these teacher educators, its connection to the late-career framework, as presented in the professional literature, is rather tenuous. Among the few examples, we can see Brody and Hadar's (2015) study which pointed to common patterns among experienced teacher educators in the context of professional learning in community, highlighting the importance of long-term experience and self-perception of expertise. Their study also mapped two common patterns in this group: those with a continuous self-inquiry pattern towards their practice and those with a full confidence in their expertise. Admittedly, overlap can be seen between these findings and those presented in the present study in the context of daily tasks and late-career experiences, which raises several questions and outlines the need for further examination.

Work pattern of expertise: mission through career experience

Throughout the interviews, the interviewees highlighted the tendency to bridge cultural gaps between them and the student teachers by using their area of expertise. As well as, they considered it appropriate to **leave their mark** by mediating their area of expertise in a way that is accessible to all. The example of this is in the words of Prof. A. (65), teacher educator in the field of philosophy of education:

> I am constantly re-discovering the great gap between my culture, the content of my world, and that of the younger generation. I talk to them a lot about the spirit of education, about groundbreaking philosophers. But there is a problem in that each year students have less of the educational and cultural infrastructure that I build on. They read fewer great works and

have less general education; this is a generation that grew up with smartphones and reality TV shows. To reach them I must dive into the content of their world. 420

Further, on to the ways of bridging intergenerational gaps with teacher students through expertise as mentioned above, prof. Z. shared the feelings about his positioning with younger colleagues, and the longing to retain his authority as an expert.

I think there is awareness of the difficulties in our position within the college faculty in the years before retirement. There is a sense that on the one hand there are young people, whom 425 you may know less well, new college teachers, and on the other hand there is still a desire to be dominant, to remain a prominent voice in the college and be considered an expert. I keep asking myself, do you have anything else to innovate. And if my retirement is traumatic, will they remember you in college. Will you leave a mark on the people?

Alongside experiences expressed in interactions with the younger generation, much has 430 been said about a professional community and the associated experiences. Their testimonies signalled distances between them and colleagues from their colleges. For example, Prof. I. spoke of various events she had experienced during her career; with an emphasis on doing independent work and on the tendency to **attract the spotlight** as an energising force. 435

My professional community consists of colleagues from abroad, where real wide-ranging research is done, rather than only in the educational sphere that I teach at the college. I am hardly in a professional relationship with the people from the college, and I do not have any colleagues in the field of education even though I'm a lecturer at the college of education. And yet, people from the college respect me very much, calling me a 'devourer of articles'. 440

Other testimonies related to the feeling of satisfaction during their late-careers that was largely due to the glare of the spotlight being directed at them, the feeling of being selected as a reputable expert, or by the willingness of other international experts to join their initiatives and professional events.

Prof. G (67): I am a member of a national team of leading professionals who came from 445 different countries. Each of them wrote a chapter on social and emotional education in his country. The book was published by […], a very well-known name and part of a very rich family. It's fun in the sense that you can really tell yourself that it seems to be a sign of success, the fact that you did it abroad and that they invited you and no one else. I cannot deny it. It's human and it's there. 450

Prof. A. (65): Since I am socially and culturally active, people I know come to lecture at my conferences. The people are well known – it gives me a good sense of being in an elite environment and this is neither financial elite nor political elite but spiritual and moral elite.

Looking at these career experiences, it is possible to identify a yearning for recognition expertise in various work circles (classroom with student teachers, colleagues, local and 455 international communities). Alongside this, there were signs of concern in this group about the undermining of authority as being senior and older faculty members.

A supporting example of this can be seen in a study of O'Meara (2004) that presents the beliefs of late-career faculty members regarding their autonomy and collegiality. Interviewees in his study saw their careers as isolated from the institutional culture that 460 promotes peer feedback processes and professional development. A similar finding emerged from other study (Bexley et al., 2013), which indicated that academics at

different career stages tend to create isolation as an integral part of their professional experiences. In the context of the current study, it should be noted that the state of minority of faculty members in the professor rank, which is typical of Israeli ACEs, can explain the polarity of work patterns of expertise. On the one hand, there is a need to strengthen reputation as an expert by being of high academic standing, and on the other, there is a fear of widening gaps between them and a younger generation of students and colleagues. It is appropriate to re-examine this polarity in further studies.

Summary and conclusions

Looking at the findings of the study, it can be concluded that late-career among teacher educators may lead to opportunities to developing work patterns, which will be of great importance and contribution to teacher education institutions, teacher educators, and student teachers. Examples of this can be seen in their dedication to institutions, a sense of mission, a need to leave a legacy, and even in the longing for continued independent work and maintaining endless energy. This conclusion adds another layer to the discussion about the contribution of reputable faculty members employed in teacher education institutions (Shagrir 2015), and also leads to the need to think deeply about potential employment opportunities for them in their later, pre- and post-retirement careers. Whereas most studies in the field raise issues related to professional development and career transition among teacher educators (Griffiths, Thompson, and Hryniewicz 2014), this study can be viewed as suggesting a unique perspective on this professional group, illuminating age-related career work patterns and orientations. The findings of this study reveal the explicit tendency of teacher educators in favour of growth, with the secondary division into two parallel work patterns, reflected through the statements "I share, therefore I am" (work pattern of sharing) and "I go on, therefore I am" (work pattern of expertise) (Figure 1).

The significance of this study and its practical contribution to teacher education stems from typical trends in work patterns for this group that hold many role components, as is suggested by findings. This group can undoubtedly have ways of influencing its redesign and serving as a pillar during a reform era. When Cochran-Smith, Stringer Keefe, and Carney (2018) pointed out common problems in teacher education systems and the position of teacher educators as reformers and leaders of its solution, they did not address differences in career stages. We believe that these are an important factor in the role of teacher educators and their ability to contribute to managerial reform. The present study refers to the place of late-career teacher educators as mediators of the gaps created in the era of reform. These are reflected in a pattern of sharing insights and efforts to grow leaders in the spirit of academic reform on the one hand, and in promoting and institutionalising expertise on the other. In both cases, the findings indicate the need for late-career teacher educators to remain a prominent figure and to play a role model of a desired teacher.

In contrast to the tendency towards the work pattern of sharing that exists among teacher educators in the research (De Hei et al. 2016; Shagrir, 2015; Shim and Roth 2007), and also mentioned in the context of other groups of senior academics employed in the higher education system (Buckley and Du Toit 2010; Tahir et al. 2016), the work pattern of expertise is not explicitly discussed for late-career teacher educators. Our recommendation is to investigate such pattern among college-based teacher educators, in order to
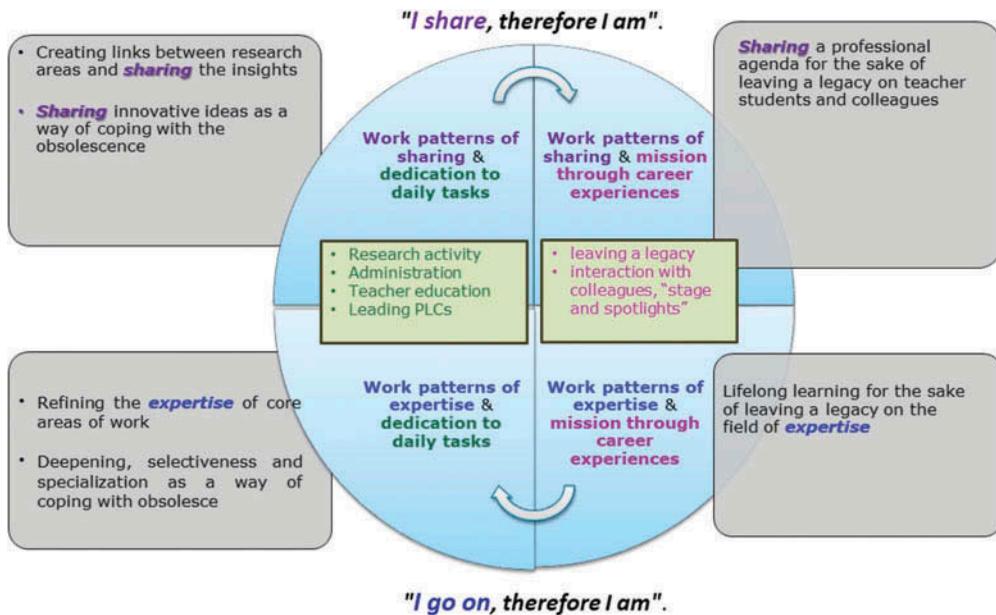
Figure 1. Mapping of daily tasks and career experiences of later-career teacher educators, divided into two work patterns (sharing and expertise).

understand in-depth the long-term effects of high academic orientation on their image in the eyes of colleagues and students in teacher education contexts and cultures. Another recommendation is to explore career patterns for senior teacher educators at various career stages in the era of teacher education reforms worldwide.

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Disclosure statement

Funding

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