UNIVERSITY FACULTY MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE NEED FOR

ACCOUNTABILITY AND/OR IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHING

AS A RESULT OF STUDENT EVALUATIONS: A CASE STUDY

**Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Leicester**

by

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Abstract

University Faculty Members' Perceptions of the Need for Accountability

and/or Improvement of Teaching as a Result of Student Evaluations:

A Case Study

Submitted by Julia Borenstein

The increasing demand for quality in institutions of higher education in Israel
prompted this qualitative case study of university teachers' attitudes towards
accountability and improvement of teaching. The direct catalyst was the widely used
student evaluation of faculty. The respondents in this case study were faculty
members from one teaching unit in an Israeli university. Questionnaires completed by
all of the teachers in the unit provided the researcher with preliminary data concerning
demographic details of the faculty members and an impression of attitudes and
perceptions. Subsequently, 19 faculty members were selected and questioned in depth
by the researcher in individual semi-structured interviews on topics concerning,
accountability, evaluation and appraisal, student evaluation of faculty and improving
teaching. The interview tapes were transcribed and the data coded, sorted, and
categorized to enable efficient use of large quantities of material. Emerging themes
and sub-themes from each of the four areas mentioned above were thus located,
analyzed and interpreted by the researcher in order to 'tell the story' of this particular
teaching unit and answer the research questions. The findings reflect the following
perceptions among the faculty members. First, the respondents feel accountable to
their students, their profession and their institution albeit their accountability does not
reflect the current market attitude of accountability present in higher education
throughout the world. Second, teachers have voiced the desire to receive more
direction in the area of staff development from the administration even though they
are not particularly involved in it at present. Third, teachers do not generally value the
feedback from the official university student ratings and fourth, they do not use the
results of these ratings as a basis for improving their teaching. Finally, teachers'
responses indicate a desire for more involvement in the areas of evaluation and
improving teaching.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The role of the lecturer in the university classroom is a complex one including the functions of both researcher and teacher (Eble, 1988). The question of priority of one function over the other has been the source of controversy. It has often been argued that on the one hand research productivity helps to improve teaching because the teacher is kept up to date in the field, but on the other hand it presents an obstacle to teaching effectiveness because faculty who spend more time on research have less time to spend on teaching (Wachtel, 1998). This tension raises the issue of accountability. To whom is the lecturer responsible and accountable? Is it to the academic department, to the university research and development board or is it to the student (Frazer, 1991)? Depending on the particular societal setting and the particular period of history, the answer changes and with it the emphasis on appraisal of performance, accountability, and professional improvement among others. Appraisal of performance for example may be carried out by department chairmen, deans, peers or students or any combination of the above-mentioned elements (Hall and Fitzgerald, 1995). Accountability may also lean in varying directions depending on the answer to the questions posed above (Sockett, 1990). If the role of the lecturer emphasizes the teaching aspect then the accountability may be focused towards the student as the consumer and the place of student evaluation of faculty becomes of prime importance (Delucchi and Smith, 1997). If the role emphasizes research, then the accountability will be directed towards the university department sponsoring the research and development project. These aspects also reflect the kind of institution in which the faculty member is employed. If it is a research-oriented university or a more teaching-oriented four-year institution the emphasis may change.

Historical Background
Student Evaluation of Faculty Members in the United States
Evaluation of teaching exists in various forms. It can be summative or formative or a combination of both. Ratings can be conducted by various agents including administrators, peers, outside consultants or students. Evaluation involves collecting and analyzing information about a particular activity and then drawing conclusions as part of a decision making process (Aspinwall et al., 1992). This

research focuses specifically on evaluations conducted by students on teachers in institutions of higher education.

Regardless of the nature of the institution, student evaluations have been used in the United States as far back as 1915 to enable students to choose courses with the best and most popular professors (Spencer and Flyr, 1992, quoted in Wachtel 1998, p.191). The evaluation forms were designed by the student government organizations and it was optional for faculty to distribute them to their classes. Ory (1990), in an historical survey of students' ratings from the 20's to the 90's, explained that this procedure with some minor modifications continued until the 1960's when students' demands for faculty accountability and course improvement changed the way that the ratings were administered. On some campuses faculty committees became involved in developing questionnaires and rating forms. In the 1970's increased costs of higher education added to student demands for accountability and caused campus administrators to implement systematically collected student ratings of instruction as part of decision-making processes relating to retention or termination of faculty. In the 1980's continued financial problems caused administrators to make difficult decisions based on students' ratings which were considered to be valid, reliable, useful and necessary indicators of professors' teaching ability. The 1990's saw most colleges and universities using student-rating information for decisions about merit and promotion. Information about students' ratings was also published on the Internet so that the ratings became available nationally and internationally.

As the use of student evaluation of faculty increased over the years in the United States and in some other countries, the practical and ethical problems and dilemmas continued to surface. Many faculty members and administrators had negative attitudes towards student ratings (Newport, 1996). The complaints about the fabrication of results of the students' ratings by some professors and the misuse of the results by administration mushroomed. There was even a claim made that student evaluations of faculty may be unconstitutional, as such evaluations constituted an invasion of privacy, or that they could be seen as an infringement on academic freedom (Haskell 1997, p.1). The call for accountability from the teachers to the consumer population of students went hand in hand with a call for ethical responsibility and behavior from the institutions in the collection and use of the ratings (Ory, 1990). There also remained the unanswered question of the relationship between the evaluations and improvement of teaching. Was such a relationship a valid expectation from student ratings (Seldin, 1988)?

Higher Education in Israel

An Israeli university located in the center of Israel is the setting for this study. The State of Israel was established in 1948 and therefore Israel has a relatively young higher education system when compared to the history of European universities that date back to medieval times. Israel's first higher education institutions were established in the 1920's, about twenty-five years before the official establishment of the State (Guri-Rosenblit, 1999). The Technion in Haifa and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem were modeled on the German University ideal of unity of research and teaching (Ben-David, 1986;Guri-Rosenblit, 1993,1996). The Weizmann Institute, Tel-Aviv University, Bar Ilan University, Haifa University, and Ben Gurion University were opened between 1934 and 1965. These institutions also followed the model of the first two veteran institutions and the research aspect was considered of utmost importance in all of the universities. For many years there was no diversity in higher education in Israel. The system was composed of only research-oriented universities and institutes. Israeli universities are responsible for almost all basic research done in Israel. Other types of post high school educational institutes were looked down upon as inferior in status and were measured by the yardstick of academic standards set by the research universities (Guri-Rosenblit, 1999).

In 1974 the Open University of Israel was established, and was completely different in nature from the other universities that were completely research oriented. This institution allowed many students who were previously unable to gain acceptance at the other universities to pursue a career of academic studies. It was modeled on the British Open University. Research was not its mainstay but instead it presented opportunities for distance learning to a broad based population whose aim was to get a recognized academic degree and enter the job market, which required academic study as a prerequisite for gaining employment.

Since the 1980's the Council for Higher Education in Israel has authorized many teacher-training colleges to grant BEd degrees. Other institutions such as colleges for practical engineers, nurses, and art design have also been upgraded to an academic status giving the potential students a greater choice of option for higher education.

The 1990's have brought not only the growth and expansion of the existing universities but also the opening of a large number of smaller accredited academic colleges, located at various sites around the country as well as the opening of a number of degree granting academic programs sponsored by foreign universities

with branches located in Israel. In 1948 about 1635 students were enrolled at the Hebrew University and Technion (Herskovic, 1992), as compared to 163,725 students studying in higher education institutions in 1997 (Herskovic, 1997; Mendelzweig, 1998).

Acceptance to the seven main universities was originally highly competitive and elitist. Places in choice programs were severely limited in size because of financial constraints suffered by the universities. For many years graduation from high school and completion of matriculation exams (Bagrut) was limited to a select population and from that small group the competition to gain acceptance to an elite research institution was fierce. Disappointed students were often forced to go abroad for study purposes. This led to a substantial brain drain from Israel, as many students did not return home after obtaining their foreign education.

With many more pupils now graduating from Israeli high schools with their eyes set on higher education a new society of student consumers has emerged in the education market. A university education is no longer considered to be the private domain of an elite group. The student population now includes a broader spread of ages and economic backgrounds as many older people with strong financial backgrounds, but seeking mid-life career changes choose to enter the world of students. At least partly because of this growing, powerful student market and the growing number of institutions of higher education, students are able to choose between programs and their voices have been growing in importance in their feedback about programs, courses, curricula, and lecturers.

Demographic Characteristics of The Israeli Student Consumer

An examination of the characteristics of the Israeli student consumer reveals a reflection of the consumer in Israeli society in general. The nature of Israel as an immigrant society is mirrored in the student body with its heterogeneous and diverse population coming from dozens of countries and many differing cultures. Israel has experienced various waves of immigration in its short history. Each wave expanded the society and the number of students in higher education. The original large waves of immigration from African/Asian countries as well as those from European/American origin have slowed down significantly in the last decades in comparison with the most recent wave of Russian immigrants in the late 1980s and 1990s (Guri-Rosenblit, 1999). This latter group arriving in tremendous numbers has had a profound impact on the education system in Israel especially in the higher education sector. A hardworking nature and keen interest

in getting the best from a university education characterize these students. Many of these students had already begun university studies in the Former Soviet Union and had interrupted them to immigrate to Israel. They arrived with built-in expectations as to what university education should be. The ethnographic picture of the Israeli student body also shows non-Jewish populations composed mainly of Muslim Christian and Druze Arabs.

The gender distribution of Israeli students has changed over the years. There are now a large segment of women represented in the student population of higher education institutions. Women are currently represented in the student population of higher education institutions in greater proportion than their share in the total population. In 1997-8 they made up 56% of the recipients of bachelors' degrees (Herskovic, 1997; Central Bureau of Statistics, 1999). The percentage of female Arab students in Israeli higher education has also grown significantly from 1967 through 1989/90 (Malawi, 1995). Each of the above groups has its own expectations from university education and expresses them openly. Each one of these groups has become part of the consumer society in the education market in Israel.

On one hand the average age of the Israeli university student is older than his/her counterparts in the United States and Europe because of compulsory military service for men and women from the ages of eighteen to twenty-one in Israel. Israeli students are generally in their early to mid-twenties before they begin university studies. This influences their desire to compress study time to a bare minimum in order to finish and get out into the world and start their lives and careers. On the other hand however, there are also younger students entering the world of higher education while they are completing their high school education. Several of the universities now offer special tracks of study for high school students that will aid them in getting an undergraduate degree at an earlier age than normal. This large range in the ages of the students gives rise to different sets of needs for the student consumers of higher education.

Consumer Choice

Likewise the choice of major courses by students in the universities reflects the trend away from research-oriented disciplines and more towards professional training. The most popular selected subjects for study are Business Administration, Economics, Accounting, Law, Computer Science, and Psychology (Herskovic, 1997, Table 2.10). At one time the only place to pursue

these studies was in one of the original seven universities and only those students with the highest psychometric scores were admitted. However, all of these fields are now offered in a wide variety of recognized degree granting institutions all in competition for the Israeli student. The students have assumed consumer behaviors: checking and comparing acceptance requirements, course loads, financial aid possibilities and reputation of faculty members.

Israeli students have also been exposed to the impact that information technology has had on the nature of teaching and learning processes in universities (Guri-Rosenblit, 1999). Students may attend courses in "virtual classes" in which they may converse with professors via e-mail and computer chat groups. In most departments an introductory course in computer applications has become compulsory. Some large lectures may be transmitted by satellite to students and communities spread over the country and abroad. E-learning has been initiated at the universities in Israel and has achieved unexpected momentum. These interactive technologies have a direct effect on the relations between students and faculty (Guri-Rosenblit, 1999). They change the nature and essence of the curricula and modify the ways in which knowledge is transmitted and acquired. They are likely to necessitate different teaching styles and techniques.

Students appear to be the major beneficiaries of the competition between universities and colleges. Before the advent of the competition when universities were smaller institutions, demand for entry to university always exceeded supply (Guri-Rosenblit, 1999). Students who were lucky enough to gain admission to an elite university could either take it or leave it, as someone would always be there to take a vacant place. Given this situation students' feelings about the quality of lectures and education in general were largely ignored and the needs and preferences of students were rarely dealt with and catered for prior to the expansion of higher education. Consumerism was a word foreign to the vocabulary of Israelis in general and to students in particular (Miron and Segal, 1986). Since the inception of the State, Israel has not been known as a consumer oriented society. For many years choice of consumer goods was limited and customer service, as known in the West did not exist. The concept that the "customer is always right" was not part of the Israeli culture. Now the situation has changed and universities are battling in the competition for students largely because government budgets to these institutions are based on the numbers of students admitted annually.

Some of the ways in which the universities are showing their responsiveness to students are through scholarships, stipends, and grants to enter direct tracks for MA and PhD studies. Some graduate level courses have been streamlined in order to allow quicker completion time. The universities have begun to offer non-thesis track graduate programs to attract students away from the smaller colleges. Now, student opinions have new meaning and weight. Dissatisfaction means fewer enrollments and this in turn means less funding for the institutions.

Profile of University Faculty Members

Most of the original faculty members in all of the first seven institutions were from European backgrounds, the product of the Germanic style of education they had received in their own studies before emigrating to Israel. Their attitudes towards imparting knowledge and towards their students were firmly imprinted in their behavior patterns. They believed in maintaining distance from the students who were there to serve as receptacles for the knowledge that was to be imparted. Fenstermacher (1990, p.137) considers that the social distance that some teachers prefer to keep from the lives of their students only inhibits the capacity of teachers to do their job well. The concepts of consumerism and student evaluation were definitely not part of the "ivory tower academic environment" which the faculty wished to maintain.

Faculty members at Israeli universities like their colleagues around the world have always been under pressure to "publish or perish". Success is measured by the number of articles published in international refereed journals and the number of books accepted for publication by international publishing houses. Promotions were slow in coming and a professorship was a long sought-after treasure granted only to a select chosen few. Research was the key to success. Universities depended on research projects for a large part of their annual budgets. It was common to have professors employed at more than one university thus making tenure track positions scarcer. Upward mobility was rare as department chairmen held onto positions for many years keeping newer staff without chance for promotion. Committees for promotion and advancement were unmanageable because of the heavy bureaucratic procedures involved in the process and it tended to take years for promotions and tenure to be granted.

The one element that faculty members in Israeli universities did not have to contend with for many years, in contrast to their American and some European counterparts, was student evaluations of faculty as this was not part of university

processes. Students were not asked for their opinions about faculty performance nor did they offer unsolicited opinions. The only student opinions were those that were passed on informally from student to student about which lecturers were popular and which courses were worth attending. Students were not considered as consumers and the lecturers were not seen as offering a product for sale (Miron and Segal, 1986). It was the task of the university administration to make decisions about the termination or retention or promotion of the lecturers and the formal student evaluations of university faculty members were not part of the process.

Faculty and Professional Accountability

Dill (1999) explains that for the past ten years universities have been subjected to various forms of academic accountability designed to maintain or improve the quality of their teaching and learning. He believes that universities should become "learning organizations". In Israel the situation seemed to be that university teachers felt no accountability to students as consumers of higher education. The teachers were responsible to department chairpersons or deans and felt the necessity to participate in and generate research, but there did not appear to be a separate feeling of accountability to the students. Because the universities saw themselves as research units first and foremost, there was no need to be concerned about the standards of teaching and the students' reactions to the teaching. In the 1970's the first student evaluations of faculty began to appear on an unofficial basis. These evaluations were not compulsory or mandated by the universities and were administered by the student union organizations of the universities. The results were then published by the students' unions and distributed to students for the purpose of helping students choose courses with the best lecturers. The lecturers themselves were not officially informed of the results and actually only heard about them as second hand information from students who may have incidentally showed them the results. Administrators did not use these evaluations for making any personnel decisions regarding the employment status of the lecturers. At approximately the same time some faculty members, who had either received their education in American universities before immigrating to Israel or who had traveled to America for education and then returned to Israel to assume an academic position, began requesting student evaluations on their courses based on questionnaires that they composed on an individual basis. Again the results were not shared with anyone and the only person to see the results was the lecturer

him/herself. The lecturer still did not see the student as a consumer or customer nor was there the feeling of necessity for accountability to the students.

At this point it should be noted that according to the Official Academy of Hebrew Language there is no official word in the Hebrew language for accountability. There is a word for responsibility and in its legal definition in Israel the concept of responsibility involves payment of a penalty if a wrongdoing occurred. The Thesaurus offers synonyms for accountability as answerability, responsibility, or liability. However the concept of accountability in Hebrew with these meanings is non-existent (Hoffman, 2003). This taken with the fact that neither students nor faculty seemed to view the students as customers in the lecturer–student relationship meant that there was no reason for a lecturer to feel personally accountable to a student.

As the competition between colleges and universities became stronger there was a natural increase in the use of student evaluations of faculty in institutions of higher learning. From a situation where the evaluations were completely student generated there was a change in that the university senate became a partner in the management of these evaluations. Seldin (1988) claims that there are two outstanding purposes for faculty evaluations. The first one is the improvement of teaching performance and the second is for administrative decision-making. The evaluations for the Israeli faculty were carried out with the advice and consent of the university upper echelons and the format of the questionnaire was created in a partnership arrangement between the students' union and the university senates. The stated purpose of the student unions was that the evaluation had two objectives (Appendix D). One objective was to inform students who were the best teachers and the other was to help the lecturer find ways to improve teaching by pointing out the deficiencies in the classroom performance. There was no national policy on what kind of evaluation should be used, nor was there a policy as to what should be done with the results.

Current State of Student Evaluations and Improvement of Teaching

Since 1994 the Israeli Council for Higher Education has officially recommended student evaluations of faculty in all institutions of higher education (Appendix C). Universities are expected to carry out these evaluations as part of a longer list of requirements in order to receive a large section of their annual operating budget. This is vital because all of the universities in Israel exist in great part because of government funding. The Council does not control the method or contents of the

evaluations nor what is done with the results. The Council does not request an examination of the results or want any other information except for a declaration that the evaluations have been carried out. Each university is left to its own design to evaluate. The universities do not have an overall structure for dealing with the results of these evaluations either. Some department chairmen pass on the results to the lecturers in their departments and some only file them in the lecturers' personnel records. When the latter occurs the lecturers have no idea as to what the analysis has shown about their performance. In some universities the students publish full evaluation results while in others the students publish only those results of high- ranking lecturers allowing the lower graded teachers to save face. Another change that has taken place since the official recommendation for use of student evaluations by the Council is that the results are often used by the administration in making decisions for retaining or dismissing faculty members. Sometimes department chairmen or deans do this in conjunction with other data from observations and sometimes it is used alone. What is missing in the composite picture is the use of the student evaluations for improving teaching and the teachers' attitudes towards this possibility.

In order for improvement of teaching to take place there are several conditions necessary to be fulfilled (Seldin, 1988). One is that there be an awareness on the part of the teacher that the teaching needs to be improved. A second is an awareness of the most current, state of the art techniques and methodologies available. Another is that there is motivation to work towards improvement. Yet another condition is that the general culture of the organization be supportive of the need for improvement in teaching.

The awareness that there is need for improvement comes from several sources. Some faculty members consciously carry out periodic informal self-evaluations and have a heightened awareness as to what students feel about their courses, their teaching styles, and their attitude towards the students. These evaluations may be based on discussions with students individually or as a group or may be in the form of written comments submitted voluntarily by students at the request of the lecturer. Some lecturers may produce their own questionnaires focusing on certain pre-determined aspects of teaching, which are of interest to the lecturer. These would be distributed either mid-way through a course or at the end. The results from both types of teacher-generated evaluations are generally not shared with colleagues or administration and the teacher's reaction to the students' comments is private. One would assume that such teachers would be motivated to improve

teaching. The question is how does that motivation turn into practice? This leads us to the second condition mentioned above: an awareness of the techniques and methodologies available for improving teaching. Hativa (1995b) described the steps involved in moving from theory to practice in order to improve teaching in an Israeli university. She experimented with a department-wide teaching improvement model incorporating the use of an Instructional Specialist to assist teachers in improving weak areas that had been identified through student feedback procedures. Even though the prospects for success appeared to be promising for improving teaching the results showed a certain lack of success in improvement effort. Hativa suggested that additional qualitative studies of the model should be carried out in other academic departments.

The other scenario, mentioned previously, where the university recommends student evaluation of faculty may also provide information about weaknesses in classroom teaching. But it too reaches the same impasse, and the question of what happens with the results remains. Are faculty members motivated to improve their teaching? Do they feel accountable to their students? If they do, how is this implemented?

Centers for the Improvement of University Teaching

Since 1995, several Israeli universities have taken steps to create centers for the improvement of university teaching. Each center was created at the individual initiative of each specific university, usually the result of a policy decision made by the university senate. In some cases more than one center was established in a single university to service staff from different departments. The idea was that faculty members who wished to improve their teaching would find appropriate help and guidance in these centers. Faculty from the Schools of Education from the different universities staff the centers. However one university officially decided to open a center for the improvement of teaching but did not allocate any budget to implement the decision.

There appear to be two major problems with the situation as it exists now in several of the Israeli universities. The first one concerns the analysis of the student evaluations and the funneling of the information back to the faculty members. To date the process does not appear to be well organized. Faculty members either receive the analysis of their evaluation or not, depending on the priorities of their department chairmen. Those who do receive the results do not participate in any discussion of these results with any representative of the administration.

On the other hand the results are sometimes used by administration in making difficult decisions about the future of a staff member at the university. In addition the students often receive reports before they are made known to faculty members. The second major problem with this situation is that there is no existing mechanism ensuring the connection between faculty members needing improvement and the teaching centers. The universities have not made it compulsory for teachers with weak evaluations to attend the centers for improvement. It was felt that tenured teachers could not be forced to seek improvement and non-tenured teachers with weak results may not feel the desire to seek improvement. The service is being offered for those who feel the motivation to improve their teaching. To date very few faculty members have availed themselves of this service. Arreola and Aleamoni (1990) believe that an evaluation system implemented without reference or connection to a faculty development program will generate greater amounts of anxiety and resistance among faculty than a system that is part of a larger faculty development and instructional improvement effort.

A series of questions concerning the feelings and perceptions of faculty members about the current situation on the issue of improving teaching need to be asked. One issue refers to motivation: Are teachers not motivated to improve? Do teachers give preference to research rather than teaching? Do teachers feel that they are beyond improvement? Are teachers not interested in instructional excellence? A second issue refers to accountability and responsibility: Do teachers feel a responsibility and obligation to provide the best possible lectures and impart knowledge in the most skillful manner to their students? Don't teachers have professional accountability to their departments and their students? A third issue deals with the evaluation process and the fears that accompany it: Are teachers not interested in the results of the student evaluation of faculty because students are not capable of adequately evaluating the teaching process? Do teachers feel that students should not evaluate them because this represents an intrusion into the privacy of their classroom or lecture hall? Are teachers afraid that administration will make use of student evaluation of faculty in unjust, harsh, and damaging ways?

Underlying Theories
The answers to the above mentioned questions require an investigation into certain management based theories and themes which underpin this research.

These are connected to four categories: evaluation and appraisal, accountability, student evaluation of faculty and improvement of teaching. Each of these categories will be discussed at length in the Review of the Literature section of this thesis. A thorough understanding of them and their relevance to higher education will be reflected in the survey of the literature. Most of the literature in these areas does not come from the Israeli context and therefore the researcher will have to show the relevance to Israeli society and institutions of higher education in Israel.

Purpose of Study

General Research Questions

Keeping in mind the history of the student evaluation of faculty process in the United States and the place of importance that it has now attained, it is the purpose of this research to examine the relationship between student evaluation of faculty and improvement of teaching, and faculty attitudes towards accountability to students in a university in Israel. The researcher proposes to investigate these three intertwined elements and attempt to understand the relationship between them.

- Do faculty members consider students to be consumers of a "product" called education, which is supplied by the faculty at universities?
- What is the reaction of the faculty to the "consumer report" called student evaluation of faculty?
- Does the faculty seek to improve teaching by relating to the student evaluations as a valid, reliable, tool offering a window into the classroom and an appraisal of performance resulting in a possibility for change?
- Does the faculty recognize its obligation for professional accountability to the university administration, department chairman and especially to the students and thereby view the student evaluations of faculty as an important comment and report on classroom teaching and an expression of what students' demands are from faculty?

Student evaluations, while carried out in effect on a non-compulsory, voluntary basis for close to thirty years have only recently been officially recommended by the Council on Higher Education in 1994. On this basis, the objective of this investigation is to ascertain whether the practice of carrying out student evaluations of faculty in an Israeli university does indeed merit continuation

because it affects teaching improvement and aids in maintaining consumer accountability by the faculty to the students. Or, on the other hand, should the practice be altered, modified, or dropped?

This study will attempt to gather information from questionnaires and interviews concerning the attitudes of the faculty members about student evaluations, accountability to the student consumer and improvement of teaching as a result of those evaluations. The population under investigation is composed of university faculty members from one of Israel's major institutions of higher education. This will be carried out in a modified case study of one teaching unit within one Faculty of one university by means of individual semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. These staff members will initially be asked to respond to Likert style questionnaires reflecting attitudes towards the four areas chosen for investigation in this thesis. The main research question for this thesis is two pronged:

- Is there a perceived connection between the student evaluations of university faculty members in Israel and improvement of teaching?
- Do Israeli university faculty members recognize the need for student evaluations as part of their accountability to the client?

The answers to all of these questions will be pursued by investigating the Israeli university teachers' attitudes towards the various factors that influence their professional behavior.

Thesis Rationale and Significance

By gathering this information through questionnaire and interviews and analyzing and interpreting the data carefully, it may be possible for the researcher to provide the institution with sufficient insights and information about faculty's perceptions to enable it to successfully provide an environment for effective professional development and profitable use of the centers for improvement that have been established. Or in a situation where no Center exists the research may provide information that will enable the institution to take proper steps to ensure a positive climate and motivation for improving teaching strategies. This is necessary for the creation of a successful management organization in the Israeli universities as well as fostering the improvement of teaching and developing an atmosphere of moral accountability of the teachers to the students. Sockett (1990, p.226) stresses the moral and ethical aspects of the teaching profession and says that an

accountability system for teachers includes among others the perception of the teacher as a moral agent.

Overall Structure of the Thesis

Following the introductory chapter this thesis consists of four more chapters which contain the literature review, methodology, major body of the research, findings and analysis and interpretation. The thesis is completed with references and appendices.

The Review of the Literature chapter provides a context for the study and explains its timeliness and importance to the field. This chapter clarifies the relationship between four major elements necessary for an in-depth understanding of the purpose of this research: management of evaluation and appraisal, quality and accountability, student evaluations of faculty members and improvement of teaching. The review offers a combination of background literature showing the theoretical basis for the study and relevant research studies related to the issues.

The Methodology chapter opens with a statement of the research questions and sub-questions and then describes the steps that were taken to address these questions. An explanation for the choice of the qualitative paradigm for the research is offered as well as a justification for the selected method. Issues concerning data collection, population, instrumentation and data analysis and interpretation will be developed and discussed in this section to enable the reader to understand the links between the research problem, the method and the results. The important topics of trustworthiness of the research, ethical considerations and limitations of the research will be attended to in this chapter.

 The Findings and Analysis chapter is unique to qualitative research. This chapter weaves the findings and analysis together into a non-linear, non-mathematical structure. The purpose is to present a profile of the unit of analysis that was the subject of the investigation. The first part of this chapter reports on the questionnaire findings and analysis. The second part of the chapter is divided into four sub-sections corresponding to four topics of investigation probed by the interviewer. Each sub-section presents the reactions of teachers to the interviewer's questions and a discussion of the themes that emerged from these responses related back to the review of the literature.

The Interpretation and Discussion chapter concludes the main body of research in this thesis. By answering each of the research questions this chapter brings the entire investigation together, synthesizes the themes, offers the significance of the

findings and suggests possible applications and makes recommendations for future research. The References section and Appendices complete the structure of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In order to provide a comprehensive background on the issues that are pertinent to the research questions in this thesis the literature review will deal with four major themes: 1.management of evaluation and appraisal, 2.quality and accountability, 3.student evaluations of faculty and 4.improvement of teaching. The framework for all of these themes is the realm of higher education in Israel with comparisons made when possible with higher education in England, the United States, and Australia. There is considerable overlapping of these themes and the writer will attempt to clarify them separately or individually but it will become evident that the thread running through the four themes cannot be divided into completely distinct units.

Appraisal and Evaluation

The purpose of this section of the literature review is to provide an understanding of the different approaches to appraisal and evaluation and the crosscurrents that exist between them as reflected in the professional literature. This review will explain and clarify issues that are specific to appraisal and evaluation in higher education and will identify and define key concepts and terminology. Potential teacher appraisal schemes and the student as an evaluator will be investigated, and the necessity to deal with under-performance in teaching in higher education will be made evident.

Definitions and the Need for Clarification

The terms 'evaluation' and 'appraisal' of performance are often interchanged even though each term officially has its own definition. Summarizing briefly, evaluation in education is a general concept, focusing on instruction or teachers, that refers to "a judgment about the quality, value, effectiveness or impact of something"(Cangelosi, 1991, p.4). Evaluations can be used for judgmental (summative) or developmental (formative) purposes depending on the needs of the institution. Appraisal is a more specific concept providing a method of "needs identification for the purpose of improving performance by recognizing either skills or non-skills discrepancies and growth points"(Riches, 1997, p.26). One could assume that appraisal is a specific activity or set of activities carried out for

the purpose of evaluation. This usage is evident in Bush and Middlewood's "Managing People in Education" (1997). However, the literature also reflects a blurring of the distinction between the two concepts. This is evident in Cangelosi's text, "Evaluating Classroom Instruction" (1991), that deals with issues of evaluation and appraisal without specifically using the word appraisal at all. Other terms such as 'assessment' and 'review' also appear in the professional literature with reference to appraisal (Middlewood, 1997, p.172). For the purposes of this thesis the terms evaluation and appraisal will be interchanged freely throughout the discussions of performance evaluation and appraisal.

Terminology

There are additional concepts and a substantial body of terminology associated with appraisal and evaluation in higher education that must be attended to in this discussion. Some general clarifications for usage of two of the major terms have just been offered in the previous paragraph. Other terms are often overlapping and refer to various activities and sets of responsibilities (Middlehurst, 1999). An argumentative voice was heard from Gil (1987) who called for a change in the lexicon of evaluation and offered the concept of "feedback" for consideration. He defined it as "information provided to instructors about their performance that includes recommendations for future improvement(p.57)". He maintained that the focus should be on the instructor and not on the measurement or evaluation tools or on the product or outcomes. This concept will be explored further in the section of the review dealing with improvement of teaching. According to Mills and Hyle (1999, p.352) researchers have reported the use of different word sets such as 'summative v. formative', 'hard v. soft', 'judgmental v. developmental', 'managerial v. developmental', 'assessment v. appraisal' and 'institutional v. individual', all of which demonstrate the need for the organization or institution to judge past performance and distribute rewards accordingly as well as to encourage employees to develop abilities that match their career goals and the anticipated needs of the organization. The terms appraisal, evaluation, rating, monitoring, external quality assurance, auditing of quality, performance indicators and assessment of teaching performance are also used in discussions of appraisal and evaluation in theory and practice. The term 'performance indicator' is a special concept that necessitates a lengthier explanation.

Performance Indicators in Evaluation

One controversial tool for assessing or evaluating or reviewing teaching performance which has been under consideration for many years in Britain and the United States and more recently in Australia is the 'performance indicator' (PI). Cave et al (1988) in England and Ramsden (1991) in Australia have explained the theory behind performance indicators, outlined the history of the development of PIs for teaching and have offered their own viewpoints on the possibility of using PI's effectively for evaluating the teaching of the individual teacher. It would appear that the term performance indicator could include any of the tools previously mentioned used to assess, evaluate or appraise performance. However the particular use of the term Performance Indicator (PI) relates to the idea of public accountability, in other words the universities' and colleges' accountability to their paymasters (Ramsden, 1991).

> " The idea of performance indicators derives from
> economic models of the education system as a process
> within a wider economic system, which converts inputs
> (such as academics' salaries) into outputs (such as
> research papers)" (Ramsden, 1991, p.129).

Performance indicators included measurement of output, enrollments, pass and attrition rates, and information on graduate employment by course. These are all outcome measures and they are supposed to be quantifiable (Cave et al, 1988). Ramsden (1991) further explains that PIs entail the collection of data at different levels of aggregation to aid managerial judgments either within institutions or at the level of the higher education system as a whole. It is important that the PI is unambiguous and not susceptible to manipulation and that process, output and input measures all have a part to play. The term was fairly popular in the early and mid-seventies, for all practical purposes it has dropped out of the higher education literature in recent years. In 1985 the UGC told universities:

> "Research can be assessed through peer judgment and a
> variety of performance indicators, but there are few
> indicators of teaching performance that would enable a
> systematic external assessment of teaching quality to be
> made" (UGC, 22/85, quoted in Cave et al 1988, p.56).

Cave et al (1988) have concluded that: "neither taken singly nor as a group do PIs for teaching emerge as being well developed" (p.78). Ramsden (1991) however wanted to try a different approach in using student evaluation of teaching quality as a PI and not simply reject its use out of hand. He suggested that by redefining the goals, by rating performance of units in which they work and not rating individual staff the PI could be feasible. He stressed that PIs basically concern relative performance of aggregates and offered the development and potential application of such an instrument, the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ). Ramsden's goal was to develop a tool for use as a PI that would help with decisions of resource allocation. The conclusions however, were unclear.

> "The proper relationship of this PI to resource allocation nevertheless remains uncertain. The greatest benefits at present seem likely to be gained from the use of the data within universities and colleges for diagnostic purposes" (Ramsden, 1991, p.148).

Within the boundaries of this thesis the term "performance indicators" will be referred to in its general meaning as any tool for evaluation purposes and not with the specific economic intention of the PI mentioned by Ramsden (ibid).

Purpose and Importance of Evaluation and Appraisal

Hounsell (1999) reports that the first books on the evaluation of university and college teaching first began to appear in Britain about thirty years ago, bringing heavy controversy along with them. Nowadays evaluation is seen "not only as a necessary adjunct of accountability, but also as an integral part of good professional practice" (Hounsell, 1999, p.161). It is no longer sufficient to merely pay lip service to evaluation and appraisal in higher education, as they have become serious issues to contend with by all stakeholders involved.

The issue of evaluation in higher education has prompted widespread debate as to the purpose of evaluation and its potential role as a rationalizing influence for improvement or as an instrument of political control. Aspinwall et al (1992) proposed an exhaustive definition of evaluation in general:

> "Evaluation is part of the decision-making process. It involves making judgments about the worth of an activity through systematically and openly collecting and analyzing information about it and relating this to explicit objectives, criteria and values" (p.2).

They feel that evaluation is a process which needs to be carefully managed to ensure that it is systematic, accessible, appropriate and will contribute to planning and decision making processes. They believe that the process is as important as the product and successful evaluations depend on effective management of the process. Even though Aspinwall et al have directed their thoughts to evaluation of any activity their ideas can easily be transposed to evaluation in higher education. Similarly the definition of evaluation provided by West-Burnham, (1994) in the model of effective management can also be applied specifically to higher education. He has defined evaluation as "an internal or external formative process designed to provide feedback on the total impact and value of a product or activity" (p.158).

Seldin (1988, p.47) and Mills and Hyle (1999, p.352) among others, believe that the two-fold purpose of faculty evaluation is personnel management and self-improvement, growth and development. Implicit in the growth of evaluation by systems and their components is the issue of teacher evaluation (Kogan, 1989, p.21). Six components of evaluation were offered by Dressel and Marcus (1982) who showed concern about the function of evaluation of teaching in universities and colleges. These included the ideas that evaluation of teaching must start with finding out what the learners have done, what they are currently doing, and what they continue to do. Secondly, the need to know what attitudes students have toward learning, third, the need to know the learners' motivations for learning, fourth, the need to learn how a department and an individual teacher evaluate success in teaching. Another aspect involves the teacher's assessment of student effort and of student accomplishment. Finally, the evaluation includes standards and procedures for grading used by the teachers.

Evaluators or Appraisers

Further issues in the controversy surrounding evaluation of teaching concern whether the evaluators should be laymen or professionals or students and which tools of appraisal should be used in the evaluation. The leadership aspect that is crucial to the successful implementation of an appraisal scheme is described by Rutherford (1992). He explains how appraisers can become more effective and analyzes a systematic strategy for planned change with its two essential components; the stakeholders who are affected by change and the decisive factors that effect the change. Rutherford further describes the 'Domain Theory' proposed

by Kouzes and Mico in 1979, which he claims, is an invaluable starting point in examining the strategy. There are three domains; service domain, policy domain and management domain to which Rutherford suggests a fourth, the consumer domain. Whereas Kouzes and Mico used these domains in describing human service organizations Rutherford suggests applying the extended model to higher education and in particular to staff development and appraisal schemes. Henkel (1998) believes that evaluation is an essential component of higher education and has several functions; the appraisal of new knowledge; certification of students, legitimization of academics, ranking of students and academics, allocation of rewards, maintenance of common standards within a higher education system and scholastic improvement. Peer evaluators have traditionally performed the task but a complex range of stakeholders has challenged the evaluation system.

> "New student populations, new concerns about value for
> money in higher education and the growing influence
> upon higher education institutions of the quality
> movement have opened up new debates about what
> constitutes good education, in what circumstances and
> how it is to be assessed" (Henkel 1998, p.293).

Another prominent evaluator or appraiser is the student who may use the results of the evaluations in making decisions about which lecturer is preferable to hear and which courses to take (Wachtel, 1998). Student evaluations of faculty in institutions of higher education are being carried out in colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, Australia, England, and in Israel as well as other places throughout the world. According to Wachtel (1998) a review of the literature points to the fact that thousands of papers have been written on the topic of student evaluations of teaching performance of college faculty in the United States, the earliest dating back to the 1920's. Even though Marsh and Roche (1993) have held that the student ratings of instruction are basically reliable and stable, the issue of student evaluators or appraisers is far from simple. One of the problems that has been raised concerning student evaluations concerns the lack of optimism felt by students about the overall weight put by administrators and faculty on student opinion (Spencer and Schmelkin, 2002). These issues will be raised in more depth in the literature review section on student evaluations of faculty (SEF).

Summative or Formative Evaluations

Evaluations may be used for purposes of appraisal by administrators for summative purposes in evaluating teaching performance and effectiveness in the classroom. This process leads to decisions as to the future of the lecturers, their promotion and advancement or possible termination of employment (Avi-Itzhak and Kremer (1986) and may meet with objection from senior and tenured faculty. Mills and Hyle (1999, p.351) report that faculty members in American universities often face their annual evaluation reviews with annoyance or even anxiety. Faculty members may approach their evaluations with the feeling that there is a lack of clarity in purposes, imprecise objectives and criteria, inconsistent administration, and limited returns to be applied through the process. According to Beer (1985, p.319):

> " The central dilemma in the appraisal process is how to
> have an open discussion of performance that meets the
> individual's need for feedback and the organization's
> personnel development needs while preventing damage to
> the individual's self-esteem and to his confidence about
> organizational rewards".

Hounsell (1999) remarks that the American evaluation system, which was judgmental at base, was not really applicable in Britain or Australia where the chief use of the evaluation was developmental or formative rather than judgmental or summative. They therefore had to develop an approach, which was more contextualized than standardized.

Evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of university teaching is carried out for a variety of reasons. Hounsell, (1999) suggests that new lecturers are usually eager to find out if they are succeeding and what their strengths and weaknesses are as novice teachers and how their teaching compares with that of other colleagues. More experienced teachers may want to determine how well a new course is running. Students are also happy to have an opportunity to "let off some steam" about how they feel about a course and the evaluation serves that purpose as well. But according to Hounsell "the motives for seeking feedback to evaluate teaching may be extrinsic as well as intrinsic". He further explains (p.162):

> "that the advent of quality assurance has brought with it
> the expectation that academic departments and faculties
> will regularly make use of feedback to investigate whether

their curricula are succeeding in their aims and achieving

appropriate standards. In this light it has become

necessary to provide documentary evidence to show that

feedback has been sought and has been responded to".

Management of Appraisal and Evaluation

"Appraisal of teachers and lecturers is well established in schools, colleges and universities in the UK, USA, Canada and Australia" (Middlewood, 1994, p.171). He further explains that the effective managing of people includes some form of feedback about their performance. Foreman (1998) relates that the initial practice of involving leadership and management in evaluating performance had its origins in industry and commerce in the United States in the late 1970's. The motive according to Foreman was improved performance in the work place. Good workers would receive raises or bonuses and those whose work was inadequate could be dismissed. According to Mills and Hyle (1999) the situation in which business practices are foisted on or adapted by colleges and universities in many countries as indicators of the performance appraisal of faculty has gained international momentum. This idea was transferred to the world of education in England and Wales, and in 1988 a White Paper demanded recognized standards of competence in education. This began with the measurement of performance of senior managers in schools in 1990 with the National Educational Assessment Center. The transfer to appraisal of teachers in the classroom occurred later on. From 1996 Ofsted inspectors used "characteristics of good teaching" to judge classroom performance in schools. The widespread appraisal of university teaching in England also began only in the mid-1990's following the publication of the Jarratt Report in 1985. Appraisal of performance has become widely accepted as central both inside and outside education walls (Middlewood, 1994). If appraisal is seen in this light, then the way in which it is managed becomes a fundamental issue relevant to staff management in any organization. (Hunt, 1986; Fidler, 1992, quoted in Middlewood 1994, p.169). A possible tension between the developmental purpose and the evaluative purpose in appraisal is described by Beer (1986) as quoted in Bush and Middlewood (1997, p.170). Most educational institutions are involved in some kind of evaluative activities on the institutional level (West-Burnham, 1994). In the Progress Report on the Introduction of Appraisal into Universities in the United Kingdom published in 1990 concerning eight universities in Great Britain which had introduced appraisal of academic

staff and academic related staff there is a comparison of appraisal methods and systems of implementation for the purpose of highlighting crucial issues and further developments which may be needed to ensure that appraisal is a successful and worthwhile activity (Bull, 1990). The report mentions the problem of fitting appraisal to the existing context within which the academic staff works.

> "In general academics were used to working on their own with minimum supervision. People here are self-starters in attitudes to work and have been content to take lower salaries in exchange for being left to their own devices and research. There is a danger in that appraisal would interfere with what people are doing already" (Bull, 1990,p.33).

Academics are involved in two main fields of performance, teaching, and research. According to Kogan (1989) research is an area in which evaluation should be the most feasible. The products of the research are available for all to see and are subject to multiple and public review. The research issue will be touched upon later in this review. In many universities it is the quality of research and publications, which grant lecturers possibilities for promotion and advancement in their fields. In fact for many years appraisal and evaluation of performance referred to an examination of the research capabilities of the lecturer. With the advent of the "new" consumer, the student, there has been movement from researcher performance to teacher performance in the classroom as the target of the evaluation and appraisal. It is this aspect that is the concern of this thesis.

Management of Underperformance

According to Foreman (1998) management of performance in education also requires the management of underperformance. Underperformance usually refers to incompetence or incapability. This phenomenon can appear in every profession including education and at all levels from elementary school through university. Foreman (ibid.p.208) says that: "it is the role of senior management to initiate action when the performance of a member of staff is causing concern". The action taken could either be dismissal from the job or the offer of opportunities to help improve performance. The basic problem in this area is that there are no precise definitions or criteria for underperformance. Bridges (1992, p.4) offers an example of this difficulty and states that "in the United States, 'incompetence is a

concept without precise technical meaning' and that successful dismissal is
dependent on the administrator's ability to demonstrate incompetence to an
impartial third party". In the university setting in Israel the area of
underperformance and its accompanying penalty is usually only applicable to non-
tenured teaching staff whose jobs are on the line every year as their contracts face
renewal. Cases of underperformance are rarely dealt with in senior staff because
they are protected by tenure rights. However under present circumstances when
the student is considered an important customer or client of the institution, if there
is failure to act against what staff and students regard as unacceptable standards
then the result itself is regarded as incompetence on the part of the management.
This is mainly because the interests of staff and students are being neglected
(Kedney and Saunders, 1993, p.2-3). Methods of identification of failure in
teaching performance are mentioned by Bridges (1992). Some of these are:
Supervisor rating and observations; complaints from other teachers; complaints
from students and/or poor text or examination results. Appraisers would have to
collect many examples of such shortcomings to demonstrate the pattern of failure.
Bridges (1992) suggested that underperformance comes from three possible
causes: shortcomings of the manager, shortcomings of the teacher and outside
influences. What is essential is that management deal with unsatisfactory
performance in such a way that it is obvious that the goal of disciplinary action is
to improve performance (Kedney and Saunders, 1993). Issues pertaining to
improving teaching performance will be dealt with in a separate section of the
literature review.

Cross Currents in the Value and Management of Appraisal

The literature also attends to the various voices struggling with the issue of
evaluation and appraisal and warns that combining processes and mixing goals
can lead to potentially confusing and ineffective faculty evaluation. Cohen (1974,
p.21, quoted in Mills and Hyle, 1999, p.353) concluded that: "one faculty
evaluation scheme cannot both judge and assist. The procedure that gathers
evidence for dismissal is different from that which reflects a climate of support, of
communication, and of growth inducement". However in practice the call for
separate evaluation processes is seldom incorporated into the design of personnel
evaluation systems in higher education institutions (Hutchinson 1995b; Mark
1982; Whitman and Weis 1982; quoted in Mills and Hyle 1999, p.354). Because
of the time consuming nature of the evaluations and the fact that both the

appraiser and the evaluated find the experience stressful and unpleasant most institutions conduct only one formal evaluation of faculty each year (Mills and Hyle, ibid). Appraisers are aware that the consequences of a thorough and objective assessment of an individual may well have consequences opposite from those intended. Relationships between the chairperson and the faculty member may be damaged. Instead of motivation the result may be alienation and low morale. In higher education the situation is complicated especially when the appraiser in the role of department chairman returns to the department as a faculty member after a limited term in office and still wants to maintain a collegial connection with the people in the department (Mills and Hyle, ibid). The problem is summed up by Beer (1985, p.313, quoted in Mills and Hyle, 1999, p.355) who noted that: "both managers and subordinates have ambivalent feelings about performance appraisal and share a natural tendency to underplay or avoid dealing with the negative aspects of the procedure. As a result, no real appraisal occurs or, more likely, a shallow appraisal just skims the surface". Centra (1987) adds criticism to evaluation methods and their uses by building a scenario in which there are four different factions that a college has to consider when developing a system of faculty evaluation. He cynically names four groups: 1.**purists** who want faculty performance to be quantified and measured with microscopic precision. 2. **utopians** who find fault with every instrument or system of evaluation that has ever been devised, 3.**saboteurs** who pretend to support attempts to develop evaluation systems but find fault at every turn and call for infinite refinements, 4.**naive** who are willing to adopt any instrument without thoroughly considering its implications. Centra (1987, p.54)) adds a final member to the group. He calls them **realists** because they know that things change from one year to the next and they are aware that people are going to be evaluated whether you set up a system or not and that not setting up a system is worse than working on a year-to-year basis until something worthwhile evolves. In other words something is better than nothing.

Bligh (1982, p.80) presented a number of propositions about the professional development of teachers. He said in Proposition 5.5 that: "There should be systematic and formal procedures for the evaluation of teaching". He explained the traditional objection to the formal assessment of teaching, which says that teaching cannot be assessed and countered it with the idea that teaching in higher education is different from school teaching but not so different that it cannot be assessed at all. He agrees that methods of assessment have their limitations but he

disagrees with those who claim that research can be evaluated while teaching cannot. Bligh suggested a method of evaluation of teaching involving procedures used for the assessment of doctoral research. It involved teachers submitting documents, materials, and evidence that would contribute to the evaluation to an external assessor. Teachers invited the external assessor to visit their classes and observe teaching. They could also invite advocates to speak for them. In this way: "there was respect for a teacher's specific circumstances and the application of uniform criteria was avoided" (p.81). The importance of evaluating teaching is so important that Bligh (1982, p.82) says "The failure to evaluate teaching, and with it the failure to reward those who teach well, is the result of ignorance, not impossibility".

Yet another voice of concern about evaluating the quality of instruction came from Ericksen (1984). He claimed that, "A narrowly based evaluation system can penalize the inventive or unconventional teacher by giving rewards to those who conform to pre-established norms about teaching. Instructional diversity is a resource to be enhanced, not washed out" (p.128).

Ericksen adds that another crosscurrent is between evaluation performed for administrative purposes and evaluation carried out for diagnostic information leading to instructional self-improvement. He also discusses peer review as "an acid test of the legitimacy of the collegial form of faculty governance" (p.135). A common pitfall in making an evaluative analysis is to assign too much weight to easily measured elements and to bypass qualitative distinctions. Ericksen does not want the cancellation of evaluation procedures but he understands the resistance of teachers to current practices and he defends their desire for an "appraisal to take into account the distinctive qualities emerging from their interaction with peers and with students, and the situation-specific demands of a particular subject" (p.127). Wilson and Beaton (1993, quoted in Mills and Hyle, 1999, p.356) caution evaluators and appraisers that: "appraisal does not exist in isolation and must be linked to decision-making over resource allocation, work scheduling and other related decision-making". For the evaluation system to be effective it is necessary to "include both forms of assessment in one review" (Licata and Andrews 1992, quoted in Mills and Hyle, 1999, p.356).

An additional perspective on the problems in evaluation of post-secondary classroom teaching was presented by McKnight (1990) with reference to what he called a "wicked problem". After explaining that a "wicked problem" is an aggressive or vicious problem that does not have a clear definiton nor are there

criteria by which to tell if and when the problem has been solved, he then showed application of this concept to faculty evaluations. He presents ten properties of

"wicked problems" as reflected in the work of Rittel and Webber (1973) and considers their relevance to the problem of faculty evaluation. After an in depth discussion of the issue he concludes:

> "In sum, it appears that the "wicked problem" construct is
> useful and should be considered carefully in planning for
> evaluation procedures. It seems clear that we are subject,
> in varying degrees to the conditions and dilemmas
> represented by the ten properties of "wicked problems"
> reviewed here, and we must try to identify and control for
> their pernicious influence on our work"(p.62).

McKnight (ibid) does add a positive note and assures the reader that evaluation is not going to be suspended or ended just because it involves aspects that may be influenced in "wicked" ways.

In another argument as to the value of these evaluations Nixon (1992, quoted in Bush and West- Burnham 1994, p.166) believes that educational evaluation may only supply responses to rather simplistic questions. Another problematic aspect of individual and organizational evaluations is raised by Aspinwall et al. (1992) quoted in Bush and West-Burnham (1994, p.167). He argues that it cannot be assumed that common views of purposes and practice are shared by all members of an educational organization. O'Neill et al. (1994) raise the issue of the professional autonomy of teachers and lecturers as well as what rewards or benefits accrue and the attribution of key "results" which must be taken into account when managing appraisal in education (p.82). O'Neill et al. (ibid) assert that appraisal should be primarily for growth and development and kept separate from procedures used to address competence, grievance or discipline matters. Middlewood (1994) points out that: "the purposes of appraisal relate both to improving individual performance and to greater organizational effectiveness, the latter ultimately being in the organization's key purpose, i.e. pupil or student learning"(p.169). Collectively, academic staff have the responsibility of ensuring that the design, management and teaching of their programs facilitates effective learning by their students (Middlehurst, 1999, p.200). With all of the problems inherent in appraisal and evaluation the literature reflects the fact that these

procedures are in fact being carried out as they indeed should. As Knight (1993, p.20) says, "so, however imperfect may be the exercise of assessing teaching quality, we return to it". He explains that appraisal comes in two basic forms, summative and formative appraisal. Knight distinguishes between the two forms and explains the conflict situations that arise from their incompatibility. However even with the anticipated difficulties in appraisal one must not ignore the need for it.

How to Appraise or Evaluate

The issue then turns to the way in which the appraisal or evaluation of teaching performance should be carried out with maximum efficiency to gain meaningful insights. There are many opinions as to where the best, most reliable and valid data can come from when evaluating teaching. Seldin (1988) believes that colleague visits to the classroom can be an effective approach to improve teaching implementing a three-part procedure of pre-observation consultation, the observation of a full class and a post-observation conference to discuss conclusions and recommendations. Seldin (ibid) suggests that colleagues doing classroom observations must be trained in observation techniques. According to Knight (1993) common sense dictates that direct observation of teaching is the obvious method to use, but it does have its limitations. Teaching is not always easily observed. Knight explains that observations cannot be simply translated into points on a scale so as to allow fine comparisons between tutors and departments even though in the 1970s the Flanders Scale of Teacher-pupil interaction did attempt to translate behavior into data that could be mapped. Self-appraisal is another method of evaluation of teaching discussed by Seldin (1988), which also has limitations. Some teachers do not know how to assess their own performance. Others can identify weaknesses in themselves but do not know how to work toward improvement. And yet others may be under the illusion that they are superb teachers. And as Knight (ibid) adds there is the problem of interpreting records and the inability to produce rank-orders in self-appraisal. Evaluation could be carried out by the administrator responsible for the performance of the appraisee such as a department chairperson or a dean of a faculty. Another option for appraisal is the peer appraiser: one colleague observing and critiquing the work of another and then submitting a report to management. This option too is fraught with difficulties such as objectivity and sensitivity and experience. Seldin (ibid) proposed that audio and video recording viewed by the instructor and a

teaching improvement specialist could help teachers become aware of their teaching strengths and weaknesses. Similar components of appraisal systems were suggested by O'Neill et al (1994). They stress that there is almost universal agreement that any appraisal will need to include the following components: some sort of self-review, some collection of data about the appraisee which include both quantitative and qualitative data, observation of the appraisee at work, interview meeting between appraise and appraisee, establishment of targets which are valuable because they carry an explicit commitment to action related to them, and follow -up issues to ensure improvement in performance. O'Neill et al (ibid p.83) brought evidence from research conducted by Montgomery and Hadfield (1989) showing that there is a need for a positive approach to appraisal if it is to be successful. They found that:

* " An emphasis on being positive and constructive in comments on teaching performance was critical to the success of appraisal.

* Because a teacher's personality and self-image were so evident in classroom performance, any comments were inevitably construed as very personal in nature.

* A concentration on weaknesses rather than identified strengths simply led to hostility and negative reaction".

The findings of this research can influence the construction and development of the appraisal tool and can be applied to university teachers as well as schoolteachers.

An alternative opinion about the appraisers comes from Centra (1996) who suggested that colleagues, administrators, deans, and alumni be used to identify exemplary teachers. Colleagues can best judge content knowledge and other specialized aspects of teaching. Colleagues and department chairpersons and deans may employ various kinds of data for evaluations. Centra said that the more observers used in making judgments would probably lead to increased consensus about the evaluation of the teacher. He also spoke about the necessity to add dimensions to the evaluation of teaching beyond the classroom observation. He offered McKeachie and Cohen's (1980) ten criteria of effective teaching that could be used in making judgments. These items include issues related to mastery of content, selection of course content, appropriateness of objectives, commitment, organization etc. Centra (1996, p.52) claims that the first six of these

criteria are best evaluated by colleagues in the same field as the person being evaluated. Other criteria can be judged by colleagues who are outside the department but who have some knowledge of good instructional design. Questionnaires, examination of course documents, or visiting the classroom could be used to gather the data. The student as appraiser must also be taken into consideration and this will be discussed in depth and greater detail in a separate section of the review of the literature. The consensus among the educators is that a combination of measures will offer the widest range of information for evaluation and offer the greatest benefit for improvement of teaching.

> "The combined appraisals of students, colleagues, audio
> and videotapes, and the professor's self assessment are
> required for a more accurate and complete picture of an
> instructor's teaching performance" (Seldin, 1984).

No matter which method of appraisal is selected a change occurs in the position of the teachers and the pressures applied to them. Kogan (1989, p.21) points out that the university teacher becomes more explicitly part of a line management hierarchy and moves away from the role of the freestanding practitioner nurtured within a publicly funded institution. Sheen (1995) stresses that "teachers as public servants must face scrutiny of 'differentiation of performance' (i.e. they must accept that appraisal will make it clear that some teachers perform better than others)"(p.13). It is the task of effective management to "involve setting the climate, establishing procedures, taking action, ensuring links with development plans, monitoring and evaluating appraisal" (Middlewood 1994, p.178). O'Neill et al (1994, p.84) stress the importance of selecting a suitable approach for the appraisal process. One possibility is an approach based on a list of competencies against which each teacher is 'measured'. Another possible approach for appraisal involves the appraiser and appraisee negotiating and agreeing on which areas of the teacher's work will be appraised. Each approach has its strengths and weaknesses, which deem it necessary for the management level to make careful choices based on specific criteria of the educational institution. O'Neill et al (ibid) maintain that the method of choosing appraisers is critical to the success of the eventual match between appraiser and appraisee. Whichever method is used for selection, it should be publicly documented and consistently applied. Both of these issues, the choice of approach and the choice of appraiser are crucial parts of the role and functions of the managers in the educational organization. O'Neill et

al (ibid. p.86) conclude that: "effective management practice will involve regular evaluation of the appraisal system itself, to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the organization and all who are in it".

Conclusion

In concluding this section of the literature review the author would like to summarize the importance of appraisal and evaluation as "the principal process for managing the performance of individuals" (O'Neill et al, ibid, p.88). This refers to teachers in schools, colleges, and institutions of higher education as well. The managers in the guise of team leaders or department chairpersons or deans of faculties need to establish clearly defined procedures for appraisal and evaluation that are linked to the development priorities of the institution as a whole and which will enable opportunities for development and growth and improvement in teaching for individual teachers in a positive atmosphere. This should reflect the institution's commitment to provide the best education for its customers while providing opportunities for individual development for academic staff members.

Quality, Quality Assurance and Accountability

Introduction

"Just as no-one would normally object to goodness, so too it is hard to disagree with the requirement that HE institutions provide quality teaching"(Knight, 1993, p.10). Some academics actually feel that teaching is not their concern since they are dealing with an elite population who only need contact with distinguished thinkers. It is sufficient for highly motivated, highly intelligent students to be in the company of outstanding scholars and researchers. There is no need for these scholars to perfect teaching techniques and be concerned about the delivery of material to the students in the lecture hall. This may have been the reality when higher education was reserved for a small, select, elite sector in society, but reality has radically changed the scene. As higher education has moved towards the masses this belief has lost many of its proponents. While some academics still feel that the focus on teaching quality is a symptom of declining standards and a relinquishment of the pioneers of research in order to spoon-feed students, in fact the concept of professionalism in higher education is being reshaped. "The legitimacy and importance of taking teaching seriously need to be established" (Knight, ibid.).

Assessing and auditing teaching quality is one way of doing that, but these steps can seem coercive and distasteful, forcing people to comply with a policy with which they disagree. Subjecting academics to procedures of evaluation and appraisal without proper preparation and groundwork on the part of the university leadership may result in negative attitudes and responses and an unwillingness to co-operate. A solution needs to be developed which will empower academics rather than threaten them and turn the quest for quality instruction into a positive endeavor.

"Universities are currently under considerable pressures to demonstrate to the outside world that they are providing 'quality'. Clearly a university cannot convince of its quality unless it has procedures in place to ensure quality"(Cryer, 1993, p.33). A plethora of questions concerning the nature of 'quality', why universities are so concerned with quality, what procedures exist for quality assurance and how can quality be assessed must be attended to by the leadership of each university within its individual context.

This section of the literature review will deal with the concepts of quality, quality assurance, and accountability as they are relevant to the thesis topic. Despite the strong affinity of these concepts to each other, this review will attempt to clarify them separately at first and then show the links that inter-relate them.

History Of the Concept of Quality

It is important to note the history and origins of the concept of 'quality' in order to understand its appearance in the world of educational management. The concepts of 'quality' and Total Quality Management had their origins in the spheres of industry and commerce in Japan after the Second World War. According to an account provided by Oakland (1993, pp.446-447), two Americans, W.E.Deming and J.M. Juran extended and developed the concepts and were concerned with the use of statistical techniques for measuring deviations from the norm in product manufacture in the engineering industry. Their work was re-exported to Japan where it was further developed by management writers such as Ishikawa and Taguchi. Japanese success in industry in the 1960s and 1970s has been largely credited to the successful application of the ideas and methods of the Total Quality movement. West-Burnham (1995) offers further historical background concerning Deming and P.B. Crosby. In the 1970s the work of Deming was 're-discovered' and led to an explosion of activity in American industry with P.B. Crosby emerging as the most avid supporter. Crosby believed that quality is

precise and measurable and part of the characteristic of the product. Deming emphasized that quality had to be a concern for the workforce as a whole and that workers worked best when they were not driven by fear but by a pride in their workmanship. Employee involvement was an important aspect of Deming's system and still exists today in Japanese-owned manufacturing. Many of Deming's recommendations for enhancing and maintaining quality involved getting the systems right, so that a concern for quality was reflected in management structures. Peters and Waterman (1982) published "In Search of Excellence" which reinforced the fundamental message about the role of the customer– customer satisfaction is everything. They believed that 'quality' becomes synonymous with 'excellence'. This movement began to make an impact in Britain in the early 1980s and led to a number of national quality initiatives and the development of quality standards such as BS5750(ISO9000). The beginning of the 90s saw an awakening of interest concerning quality in the education sector in Britain including further and higher education, eventually leading to the development of national standards and 'improved' inspection regimes (Middlewood and Lumby (1998); Winch, 1996a). In Israel, this heightened interest in quality in higher education was only manifested for the first time in documentation by the Council for Higher Education (CHE) in the second part of the 1990s.

Terminology

The language of the production industry has permeated the language of discourse of higher education (Knight, 1993, p.10). Terms such as quality, quality control, quality assurance (QA), quality assessment, quality enhancement, and Total Quality Movement (TQM) are a few examples of the specialized terminology frequently found in the literature in the field of quality assurance. According to Boyle and Bowden (1997, p.114) these terms in addition to a range of paradigms or rubrics and particular schemes for the accreditation or certification of quality standards or systems often result in inhibiting useful discussions of approaches to QA. Educational communities in many parts of the world favor the term quality assurance over terms which can carry strong inspectorial or control connotations (e.g. quality control) and which are often considered inappropriate for the culture and complex dynamics of educational enterprise. It should be noted that: "Thirty years ago 'quality' and standards were not topics with which British academics were at all preoccupied" (Alderman, 1996, p.78). Nowadays, "increasingly, higher education is being referred to as if it were a service product that is marketed, like

banking or insurance" (Brindley et al, 1998, p.97). A similar situation has evolved in Israel in the realm of higher education. Whereas as late as 1986 there was no reference to the university student as a consumer and no discussion of quality education, the late 1990s have exhibited a change in attitude and the Council for Higher Education in Israel uses the vocabulary of 'quality' and 'standards' in its documents. Therefore the relevancy of 'quality' terminology has become even more pertinent to this thesis.

Quality – The Definition Controversy

Because some of the terms and concepts have more than one meaning many writers first offer definitions of the terms and then proceed with their arguments. This is necessary for anyone who wishes to make a meaningful contribution to quality issues both inside a university and in the national forum (Cryer, 1993, p.33). She explains that the most widespread meaning of quality is 'high standards' or 'excellence'. But there is another meaning of quality which refers to 'satisfying needs or being fit for a particular purpose' The British Standards Institute uses this aspect of quality in its definition: "quality: the totality of features and characteristics of a product of service that bear on its ability to satisfy a stated or implied need" (BSI 1987). Cryer, (ibid.,p.34) explains that even in the university world where academics are used to equating quality with the high standards meaning, it is the fitness for purpose /meeting needs that is used by those who have the task of implementing and assuring quality. According to Smith (2000, p.2): "as with many management concepts, whilst there is universal support for the theoretical concept, there is far less unanimity as to how to define and achieve it". This lack of unanimity in definition is evident in the literature as seen in the following examples. The importance of quality on one hand and the difficulty of defining 'quality' and problems of assessing it are described by Sallis (1996, p.1):

> "Quality is at the top of most agendas and improving
> quality is probably the most important task facing any
> institution. However, despite its importance many
> people find quality an enigmatic concept. It is
> perplexing to define and often difficult to measure. One
> person's idea of quality often conflicts with another
> and, as we are all too aware, no two experts ever come
> to the same conclusion when discussing what makes a
> good school, college or university. We all know quality

when we experience it, but describing and explaining it is a more difficult task".

A similar idea is voiced by Ball (1985, p.96) who claims that 'quality in education' is an extremely difficult subject to come to grips with and full of problems but cannot be avoided. The adjectives 'elusive', 'slippery', 'problematic', and 'controversial' have been used by Green (1994,p.12), Walsh (1994,p.52), Liston (1999,p.4) and CHES (1994,p.18) to describe the difficult nature of the concept. Further advice on the importance of defining quality concepts is offered by West-Burnham (1995,p.15):

> "The status of the concepts of quality largely
> determines the management behavior it generates. This
> is best exemplified in the uncertain and often
> ambiguous use of the terms inspection, quality control,
> quality assurance, and quality management. It is very
> important to adopt sharp definitions of these terms as
> the implications of each are very different".

The controversy in definition may further be illustrated by examining Crosby(1979,p.9) and Nightingale and O'Neil(1994,p.165). The former defines quality as "conformance to requirements" and uses the concept of "Zero Defects, the thought that everyone should do things right the first time." While on the other hand Nightingale and O'Neil in a discussion of higher education state that:

> "Because we believe that the higher education system
> must be dedicated to a reject the idea conception of
> quality which is primarily focused on continuous
> improvement, we that quality means 'getting it right
> first time' or 'zero defects'. Mistakes are OK; they are
> expected. But they must be a source of a new learning
> experience and of progress".

Referring to Cryer's explanation of quality as being fit for a particular purpose one also finds Juran (1989, p.15) who wrote: "quality is fitness for use" and Ball (1985, p.96) who said "quality is fitness for purpose". And once again there is evidence of controversy with this notion from Green (1994, p.15) who wrote: "The problem with this definition of quality is that it is difficult to be clear what the purposes of higher education should be". Another differing viewpoint comes from Goodlad (1995,p.8) who said that there is an additional weakness of the fitness for purpose definition of quality:

"it also omits the notion that some universities may be 'better' in
some way than others in the sense that the purposes
they serve may be more comprehensive or more
desirable than the purposes of their competitors".

And yet another difference is added by Liston (1999, p.4) who wrote:

"Quality is related more to the relevance and value of
each institution's mission, purpose, goals and
objectives and the achievement of identified
outcomes".

There were attempts made to synthesize the various approaches to defining quality
such as those explained by Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993, pp.45-46) who tried to
make sense of seemingly contradictory definitions:

"There are a great many competing views of the nature
of quality. Some see quality as implicit and
indefinable-'you know it when you see it'. Others take
what might be termed a 'measurement view' of quality
– it is satisfactory conformance to some predefined
standard. Still others claim that quality is simply a
matter of reputation. How can we make sense of these
different, somewhat opaque, and often opposing views
of the nature of quality? There are three basic
definitions of quality –quality assurance, contract
conformance and customer-driven".

Yet another option is offered by Middlehurst (1992, pp.21-22) who suggested four
different ways in which the term quality is commonly used within the debate of
'quality as an organizing principle'. First, quality refers to the defining
characteristic or attribute of something. Second, the term quality is used to refer to
a grade of achievement. Third is the association of the term quality with a
particularly high level of performance or achievement that comes to be seen as a
standard against which to judge others. Middlehurst says that this third aspect is
widely used in higher education. A fourth definition refers to quality as: "fitness
for purpose achieved through conformance to specifications where the
specifications are set by the customer or by the customer and supplier in joint
negotiation". This definition spans both industry and education as it is widely
used in the manufacturing industry and is gaining prominence in higher education
as well.

Winch (1996, p.9) also identified four approaches to quality using language which appears to be different than that used by Middlehurst. A closer look at Winch's ideas reveals that they are quite similar to Middlehurst's approaches with the exception of the fourth approach where Winch brings in the addition of value for money. First, there is a total approach, where quality becomes synonymous with excellence. This was pioneered by Peters and Waterman as mentioned above. The second approach is product-based, where quality is precise and measurable and part of the characteristics of the product. This is associated with Crosby, also previously mentioned. The third approach is user based, where quality is judged according to whether it meets the needs and wants of the user. Fourth, there is a value-based approach, where quality is defined in terms of 'value for money'.

Winch explains that: " in education we have seen a shift to user-based approaches from the first two, with an increasing emphasis on reconciling the value-for-money approach with a user-based approach. One of the problems in applying this kind of approach to education is that of specifying 'users'"(p.9). This brings us back to the question of who is the 'user' or 'consumer' looking for the quality in education.

The bottom line in summarizing the quality controversy is that in higher education the quality issue cannot be pushed aside and must be dealt with no matter which operative definition is selected by the institution. As Cryer (1993, p.38) sums up the situation: "At this stage, the situation regarding quality matters in universities is changing under our feet, but what ever the future may hold, 'quality' in some form is here to stay". Management systems will obviously be influenced by the bias of the definition. In addition the definition of the customer or user or stakeholder holds prominent importance in quality discussions whether they be based on 'fitness for purpose' or 'excellence of product'. A detailed discussion of the 'customer' topic will be dealt with at a later point in this review of the literature.

Quality- Related Concepts

a. Quality Control and Quality Assurance

It is important to note the distinction between quality control and quality assurance. The following definitions are representative of those offered for the term **'quality control'**.

1. Quality control tells us that a product or service is wrong or defective (West-Burnham, 1994,p.168).

2. Quality control is concerned with the testing of product to see whether or not they meet specification (Winch, 1996, p.10).

3. Quality control is the oldest quality concept. It involves the detection and elimination of components or final products which are not up to standard. It is an after-the-event process concerned with detecting and rejecting defective items. Quality control is usually carried out by quality professionals known as quality controllers or inspectors. Inspection and testing are the most common methods of quality control, and are widely used in education to determine whether standards are being met (Sallis, 1996, pp.19-20).

4. Ellis (1993, p.5) argues that quality control is:

"more difficult to apply to a service since once a service has been delivered it cannot be retrieved and recycled. But at least a service can be identified as deficient and steps taken to ensure a better performance next time".

All of the above ideas on quality control pertain to some existing deficiency or negative aspect of the product that influences the standard of the product or service. Quality control works on how to treat the defective trait in the product or service. Applied to the world of higher education, issues of quality control might therefore carry with them punitive, fault-finding, associations, particularly when quality is linked with teaching performance (Knight, 1993, p.11). This idea of control would probably evoke negative reactions and an unwillingness to cooperate in the very populations in higher education where leadership wants to implement it.

Quality assurance in contrast to quality control is defined quite differently. Boyle and Bowden (1997, pp.114-115) and Hart (1997, pp.295-308) find no great value to definitions of QA if they are products of the narrow manufacturing industry which emphasizes notions such as compliance with tight specifications and the achievement of zero effects. Hart is quite critical of "invoking the notion of quality" and argues that: "the notion of quality which has emerged from industry is a very limited one and that importing the latter into education would change our educational thinking and practice in significant ways for the worse" (p.295). He does not agree with the concept of the student as a customer who is to be satisfied by the teacher. "The teacher's job, therefore, is not to satisfy the student, in the sense of giving him what he wants, but to help him to form new wants and interests, new possibilities of satisfaction and of course, dissatisfaction" (p.301). Hart calls for a fuller appreciation of the kind of quality and standards which are

proper to education and which depend upon the exercise of personal judgment. He does not like the idea of "quality-in-the-abstract" (p.296). Boyle and Bowden suggest a further need for tightening the definitions used in QA and separating them from the strict ideas of industry:

> "The notions of product, manufacturer, supplier,
> customer and other terms which are the common
> parlance of TQM and other quality approaches and
> movements outside educational contexts do not readily
> translate into university functions and environments,
> even though attempts are made to use them in higher
> education" (p.117).

Instead they propose a small number of definitions of QA that fit better with the reality of educational environments, with their complex goals, processes, and cultures. These definitions from Johnson (1993, p.23), Warren-Piper (1993, p.7) and Boyle (1994, p.17) all have a number of basic though important ideas and issues concerning 'quality' and QA. These ideas include:

1. a concern for quality expressed through planned and systematic action.

2. QA activities can span a large range of aspects including customer-client needs evaluating, effecting improvement, etc.

3. quality needs to be defined in terms of the values, goals and intended outcomes and how these serve the needs of customers, clients or stakeholders.

Boyle and Bowden (1997) feel that any approach to QA in higher education contexts needs to recognize the complexity of the situation in which there are questions about applying the term 'product' to degree programs or the actual degree conferred upon successful participation or to the person who has graduated. A similar question arises about applying the term 'supplier' to the government who funds programs, or the university which endorses and runs them or academics who devise and teach within them, or to the students themselves who are in fact the only ones capable of producing the final outcome. This situation together with the need to balance a quality improvement orientation with the accountability function must be taken into consideration when forming a systematic approach to QA. Such a system must take account of the attitudes and values of academic staff on these matters. With these thoughts in mind Boyle and

Bowden developed an evolutionary model for comprehensive educational QA (EQA). They characterize it as evolutionary because 1. it is built on and integrates ideas from research, practice and case evidence, 2. it integrates key elements of educational environments which influence the quality of climate, process and outcome, and 3. it has continual quality improvement in student learning at its heart and as its primary goal with accountability as an important consequence. The model includes a number of conditions, basic principles, and values and a set of related key elements which are primary to the institution and its vision of education. The emphasis of the model is on QA with regard to educational programs. The basic principles reflect a commitment to ongoing quality improvement and a concern with the quality of student learning. The principles show the need for effective evaluation and evidence for actions and claims concerning quality and quality improvement. Academic program teams should have responsibility for facilitating high quality educational programs. Lastly accountability is seen as an important consequence, not the primary focus of QA. Most importantly Boyle and Boyden stress that models for educational quality assurance are required which recognize the need for integration of the key elements which shape quality in educational environments (Boyle and Bowden, 1997, p.117-119).

A different aspect of quality assurance is attended to by West-Burnham (1994, p.168) who believes that quality assurance prevents a product or service from going wrong. He stresses the importance of establishing a management system to ensure prevention of mistakes. He also identifies the components of a management system that will be able to assure quality in educational systems:

      1. clearly defined roles and responsibilities

      2. documentation to formalize procedures

      3. identification of customers' requirements

      4. a quality policy

      5. clear work instructions and process control

      6. procedures for corrective action

      7. management audit

      8. inspection and testing

The implementation of these suggested components within an institution will allow the individual members of that institution to assume responsibility for maintaining quality education for its customers.

Winch (1996, p.10-14) says that quality assurance (QA) is concerned with ensuring that the production processes are such that defective products are not made in the first place, so that the need for extensive quality control mechanisms at the end point of production is not as pressing. Winch also addresses the analogy between commerce and education and says that in some cases the analogy is quite close while in others it is more difficult to comprehend. He believes that "the outcomes of education are neither products nor services in the sense in which those terms are used in commercial enterprises, for they are not just 'user values' for a customer in any straightforward sense. This is because education is concerned with the long-term gains of various kinds". Therefore he concludes that caution should be encouraged in considering the wholesale adoption of private manufacturing practice by public sector education.

Another proponent of the idea that quality assurance is different from quality control is Sallis (1996, pp19-20) who believes that quality assurance occurs before and during the event process. Its concern is to prevent faults occurring in the first place. The quality of a good or service is ensured by the existence of a system, known as a QA system which lays down exactly how production should take place and to what standards.

In the same respect Ellis (1993, p.4) defines quality assurance as a process whereby the manufacturer or producer guarantees to a customer or client that the goods or service concerned will meet standards consistently. The idea of the need for a management system for QA that is evident in the previous definitions is found once again in Munro-Faure and Munroe-Faure (1992, pp.6-7) where the key features of an effective quality assurance system are described as; an effective quality management system, a periodic audit of the system and a periodic review of the system to ensure it meets changing requirements.

The British Standards Institute defines quality assurance as "all those planned and systematic actions necessary to provide adequate confidence that a product or service will satisfy a given requirement of 'quality'" (BSI 1987).

All of the quality assurance definitions share the common idea that a management system or process is necessary to have an operative quality assurance scheme. The process or system can take various forms "because there is no single route whereby universities can assure the public they are assuring quality" (Cryer, 1993, p.35). Each institution of higher learning has to establish its own system for quality assurance based on the individual contextual needs of that school.

It should be noted that many academics had significant difficulty in accepting
the need for the Quality Assurance movement.

> "To many academics the QA movement was perceived
> as yet another example of the Government's continual
> interference with academic work, and yet another threat
> to academic freedom. We believe that those who would
> promote 'quality' initiatives in higher education need to
> be particularly aware of recent history and local
> context, and anticipate the suspicions, tensions and
> preconceptions that already exist or are sure to rise"
> (Boyle and Schwab, 1996, p.13).

Cryer (ibid) suggests that as a general guide for design and implementation of a
quality system in university, the tenets of Total Quality Management (TQM) need
to be considered.

b. Total Quality Management (TQM)

This approach developed from Deming's philosophy and takes the requirements
of purchasers (customers) as the starting point and says that the organization,
practices, and attitudes (sometimes known as the culture of the enterprise) should
be tailored to those requirements. The notion of totality comes from the
ramifications that follow from making the customers' priorities those of the firm.
They extend through the organization, from marketing to design for example, to
ensure that the kinds of products that are designed are the kind that the customer is
likely to want (Winch, 1996, p.11-12).

West-Burnham (1994) summarizes TQM in the following manner. He says that
total quality can be seen as the logical extension in terms of organizational
autonomy and maturity in that it focuses all aspects of management on its core
purpose- the provision of appropriate services and products to customers. In 1992
West-Burnham identified eight key features of total quality, the first one states
that quality is defined by the customer, not the supplier.

Sallis (1996, pp19-20) also describes TQM as being about creating a quality
culture where the aim of every member of staff is to delight their customers. In the
total quality definition of quality the customer is sovereign. It involves moving
with changing customer expectations and fashions to design products and services
that meet and exceed their expectations.

However exciting the use of TQM appears to be, there is according to West-Burnham (1994) only limited empirical evidence as to the appropriateness and effectiveness of total quality approaches in schools and colleges. At the time of writing West-Burnham's book he says that there are no known documented examples of a school or college in Britain that has successfully implemented TQM and sustained it over a period of time. In 1995 West-Burnham stated: "Quality assurance is properly a component of TQM. It is an element of TQM and not a substitute for it" (p.15). He identified four possible objections to TQM in the education service. These objections concern the solitary nature of the teaching activity, the goals of individualism in education, the definition of the customer-who is education for and lastly the problematic outcomes if education is viewed as liberal, humanizing, long-term, and heuristic process. These elements present difficulties and may be seen as alien to the TQM approach.

A warning issued by Cryer (1993, p.37) alerts the reader that there must be considerable discussion before TQM can be applied to universities.

> "For example the question as to who is the customer:
> students, employers, society, government? A
> professional institution of Higher Education will not
> want to lose sight of the fact that it has many
> 'customers' employers, professional bodies, society, the
> tax payer, funding bodies, even the professionals who
> deliver the service, to name just a few. Each university
> must decide and prioritize for itself'.

In summary it could be said that TQM has become an important concept in educational management. It purports to offer a holistic approach to managing and improving institutions. It is not a panacea for all management issues in higher education, but taking the various criticisms into consideration, it does offer some interesting ideas that may have the potential to enhance the quality of education.

c. Quality Assessment

Quality assessment is a component of quality assurance. According to Middlehurst (1992, p.28) quality assessment involves the judgment of performance and outcomes against certain criteria or objectives, in order to establish whether the required standard has been achieved, and if failures or shortfalls occur, to ensure that they are corrected. In Britain, at the national level, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) was established in 1997 to undertake the

function of securing the assessment of the quality of education in publicly funded institutions. The way to achieve this quality is through implementation of systems of appraisal and evaluation. While there are layers of responsibility for quality and standards at all levels of the higher education system, individuals make the difference between an effective, vibrant, dynamic system and an ineffective, bureaucratic, or static system. Individual commitment, care, consideration, competence and imagination affect what students experience within higher education and what they achieve" (Barnett 1992, quoted in Middlehurst 1999, p.199).

If quality and quality assurance and quality assessment are vital aspects of higher education then the next logical step is to examine the need for responsibility on the part of various stakeholders to achieve that quality. This leads us to the next section of this literature review dealing with accountability.

Accountability

This section will reflect the literature on accountability as a general concept and specifically in education with a view of the models of accountability structures as suggested by various writers. The change in focus from fiscal accountability of an institution of higher learning to the governing body to accountability of the teacher, lecturer, or professor to the customer, client or student will be demonstrated. The necessary link between accountability, evaluation, and quality will be presented.

It must be noted that this review of the literature on accountability can only begin to skim the surface because as Dahllof (1991) has explained:

> "The complexity of the situation has increased so much
> in recent years that to describe and explain the
> development of the accountability movement and its
> impact on evaluation of teaching is almost a
> dissertation subject in its own right-particularly if due
> justice is to be shown to the intrinsic dissimilarities
> between countries" (p.102).

Introduction

Much has been written about accountability in education at the institutional level usually referring to the need for financial accountability to a governing body. This meant that an educational institution had to account for public funds invested in it

by showing how these funds were spent (Kogan et al., 1994). In higher
education this could mean showing successful research programs, prolific
publications as well as an increase in numbers of students registering for
undergraduate and graduate study at that institution. The institution would be
accountable to a board of governors, trustees, or the state or government to show
that finances were in order and that could influence further allocations of funds.
Kogan et al. brought examples from the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Sweden,
Australia, and France demonstrating the differences in these countries in
evaluating and assessing institutions for the purpose of accountability. The audits
and modes of assessment and allocation processes differed in each place.

In 1996 in a paper presented by Paul LeBlanc the issue of accountability in higher
education was discussed with an emphasis not only on the fiscal aspect of
accountability but also on the ethical aspect facing the professors within academe
and the need to address issues of faculty accountability. He stressed the need to go
deeper than the fiscal responsibility of the institution and delves into the
importance of ethics in the classroom. LeBlanc cited the economist Adam Smith's
concept of the need for external ethical constraint and focused on the special
obligation of accountability faced by public colleges and universities. The
problem of accountability versus academic freedom was also broached from both
sides of the dilemma. In conclusion, "the paper recommends that professional
organizations develop professional codes of ethics, and that such codes address
principles related to the responsibilities of faculty in their relationship to students,
to other faculty, to the university, to the discipline, and to society as a whole"
(LeBlanc, 1996, p.1).

Similarly, Dahllof (1991) expresses the urgency to focus on accountability and
use of performance indicators at the teaching angle as well as at the university,
college, or department level:

> "The crucial issue is how a system of accountability-
> however justified it may seem in principle or at a
> particular level- is implemented, and how it affects the
> teaching situation and working conditions for
> professors, lecturers and other instructors, as well as for
> their respective students within the various
> departments" (Dahllof, 1991, p.102).

The discussion of accountability for the purposes of this dissertation will focus on
the specific need for accountability of the teacher, or lecturer or professor to

certain stakeholders, the students, who can be called customers or clients of the institution. Dahllof (ibid.) referred to the students as a group with good reason to guard their interests. They are looking for quality education not only to get 'value for money' but 'value for time':

> "since the time they spend at college or university amounts to a critical formative period of their lives, a unique experience where they have the right to demand the highest quality, provided that they themselves are prepared to work hard in order to digest what is offered and to develop their skills in accordance with the basic aims of higher education"(Dahllof, 1991, p.103).

What Dahllof has said here is that students have the right to expect accountability from the university with the obligation to provide them with quality education but in the same vein students have to be accountable for their own actions and demonstrate a commitment to study and hard work in order for the system to function successfully.

Another example as to the importance of the students in the accountability discussion is reflected in a quotation from Yorke (1998, p.105) who like Dahllof showed the need to add a dimension to what has been generally referred to as accountability:

> "The higher education system has, over the last decade, become increasingly called to account in respect of its processes and outcomes. This mirrors the pressure in the US for what is termed 'outcomes assessment' and which deals with the performances of students as a consequence of their time in higher education. For an institution to have an explicit policy for assessment is to provide it with a basis for accountability to external bodies- but it tends to get forgotten that there is a dimension of accountability that is directed more within the institution and particularly towards the student body. Accountability is not only directed upwards".

Definitions and Terminology

Accountability is a term that means different things to different people depending on their professional, political, or social perspectives. As Burgess says, "it can be

of many kinds: personal, professional, political, financial, managerial, legal, contractual"(1992, p.5).

A Webster's Dictionary (1956) definition of accountability and the English Law Dictionary (1986) definition of the same term both show the following: "liable to being called to account, responsibility". In the 1970's in the United States a discussion of the meaning of the term accountability reflected the possibility of expanding the term because it "conveys a too limited conception of the responsibility an educator is supposed to assume regarding the quality of his efforts" (Popham, 1973, p.106). The result was the suggestion for implementing three different accountability strategies: personal, professional, and public accountability. Popham believed that educators in general had only a superficial understanding of the meaning of accountability and by implementing these new strategies the educator could make an enlightened choice regarding his/her own participation in strategies involving a commitment to educational accountability. It is important to note that already in the 70s in the United States there was a concern about the nature of the decision maker who demands evidence regarding the outcomes of instruction. Twenty years later one sees a similar point of view, but with a slant to educational management expressed by Bush (1994, p.310). He says:

> "At minimum, accountability means being required to
> give an account of events or behavior in a school or
> college to those who may have a legitimate right to
> know. One of the central aspects of accountability
> relates to establishing which individuals and groups
> have that legitimacy".

Similar ideas were expressed by Laukkanen (1998) from Finland. A problem was presented by Dahllof (1991) concerning the distortion of the balance between the different interest groups that exert pressure as to which courses should be offered at a university or college. This is basically questioning who needs to know and who is in control.

Accountability and the Stakeholders

It has become clear in the preceding paragraphs that the interested parties in higher education are not solely the board of governors or trustees of the university but the student consumer as well. In a discussion of accountability in higher

education Pollitt (1987) discusses the complex relationship between the professional provider and the consumer. Concerning the latter he wrote:

> "higher education may be thought to have special
> advantages in that its consumers are normally
> a.intelligent, b.adult, and c.volunteers. These attributes
> may be thought to increase the probability that many of
> them will be willing and capable of engaging in
> complex and discriminating judgments concerning the
> services they receive. Equally it would be naïve to
> suppose that the interests of consumers and
> professional providers are identical. Only rarely will
> this be the case" (p.97).

He concluded that: "consumer assessment is best thought of as complementary to professional development or peer review" (p.97). In other words, if the professional is accountable to the consumer, the student in this case, one must be wary of making decisions based only on the consumer's judgment. In a later article Pollitt (1990) expanded on the concept of the consumer and divided them into two groups, the direct consumers of higher education- the students themselves and the indirect consumers, the employers of highly educated men and women. Pollitt says: "the interests of these two groups will sometimes, but by no means always, overlap" (1990, p.64). The reader then still faces the question of who is the focus of the accountability.

Both Sockett (1980) and Kogan (1986) have struggled with the concept of accountability and reached certain conclusions. Sockett places an emphasis on the 'obligation' to deliver an account and in some cases the accountability is for due process rather than for results of a professional activity. Kogan goes even further and says that: "Accountability is a condition in which individual role holders are liable to review and the application of sanctions if their actions fail to satisfy those with whom they are in an accountability relationship" (p.25). This leads directly to Bush's question of who has the right to know or to whom is the teacher accountable.

Sockett offered a list of eight different bodies or groups to whom teachers ought to be accountable. These range from pupils to parents to government to professional organizations to employers or to the public.

Models of Accountability

In defining the concept of accountability there are writers who attempt to distinguish between accountability, responsibility and responsiveness while others often use the terms interchangeably as synonyms. Scott (1989, p.17) finds it necessary to distinguish between accountability and responsiveness and claims that "responsiveness is freely arrived at and accountability is imposed from outside". He created a four-part Responsiveness model comprised of 1. political accountability, 2. market accountability, 3.professional responsibility and 4.cultural responsibility in order to differentiate between the two concepts. In the first one Scott says that because the school or college is supported by public funds it must be accountable for the best use of those funds and because the government supports the schools financially it has a right to determine the character of the schools and colleges. The second part, market accountability, raises the issue of who is the customer, the pupil or student, parents or the government. According to Scott the "complexity and ambiguity of these questions undermine the idea of a market in education". This philosophic problem of the marketplace and education is discussed at length by Winch (1996, pp 97-113) who believes that "accountability is a moral requirement" but is aware of the problems associated with the concept. He offers a comparison of the classical economic marketplace with the education market. In the former the customer has an exit option, he can refuse to continue to buy the product or service on offer if he no longer likes it or the price at which it is offered. "But because education is not a true market, voice is only backed up by the exit option to a limited degree, giving the educational 'customer' a much smaller degree of autonomy than the economic customer" (p.101). He concludes by saying that the notion of an educational customer is not a straightforward one and can be highly problematic. This is directly in line with the issues raised by Sockett and Scott and mentioned above in their attempts to determine to whom the teacher or school is accountable.

The third part of Scott's model suggests an additional responsibility of the professional. This places responsibility not only to the student customer but also to the standards and practices and values set by the profession itself. The professional has a responsibility to stay abreast of the field, be up-to-date with the latest knowledge in the discipline and to demonstrate a state of the art competence, all in an effort to provide quality education. This requires self-motivation by the professional to be accompanied by external motivation from the university. The final section of the model proposed by Scott refers to the

importance of cultural responsibility of the professional. Universities shoulder the heavy burden of impacting culture and society both through new research developments that may bear ethical overtones and sometimes, difficult implications for society and through personal contact and influence on students who become the transmitters of new philosophical and political ideas directly into society.

Another perspective differentiating accountability and responsibility is presented by Kogan (1986, p.26) in which he explains that accountability has a legal aspect whereby the individual can be called to account for his actions. Responsibility, on the other hand, according to Kogan is a moral issue, a sense of duty, which cannot be forced upon anyone. Other writers have struggled with the issues of accountability vs. responsibility or responsiveness or autonomy and have attempted to examine the complicated relationship or links between them (Elliott et al, 1979, Edwards, 1991, Hughes 1976).

However, Bush (1994, p.315) suggests a method for handling this difficulty by saying "while the distinctions between accountability, responsibility and responsiveness are valid, it may be more useful to regard all these categories as simply different modes of accountability". Furthermore, Bush links the notion of accountability to five theories of educational management: 1. bureaucratic 2.collegial 3.political 4.subjective and 5.ambiguity, explaining how individuals are accountable or answerable in each one. His conclusion is that "the uncertainty inside and outside the institution makes the process of accountability unpredictable and its outcomes unclear. Any or all of the models of accountability may apply but the procedures may be blurred and participation may vary from one accountability setting to another" (p.322). In order to foster accountability, whether it be professional or consumer oriented, within an institution of higher education it is important for the leadership in the department to be aware of the different models of accountability and management roles and to create a positive attitude towards responsibility and accountability.

Change in Focus of Accountability

A clear move to a market economy in education has become evident and with it the focus of accountability has changed. Accountability to clients or customers or students has become a major focal point because without them institutions face reduced incomes and even closure (Bush, 1994, p.324). A direct continuation of this thought is that "if teaching institutions must be accountable, inevitably the

accountability must be passed down to the individuals who do the teaching" (Bligh, 1982, p.131). Bligh was concerned with the level of accountability that teachers in higher education have and to whom and would that accountability impinge upon the academic freedom and rights of the teachers. His attitude towards the student population however reflected the time period in which he was writing. "There is also some accountability to students and this, one may anticipate, will increase as staff/student relationships become less paternalistic and if courses become more negotiated" (p.136). Bligh wrote this in 1982 before the major educational reforms in British universities mandated by legislative changes (1991 HE White Paper, the Further and Higher Education Act 1992) were inaugurated with an importance placed on quality control and a growing concern about increased accountability and the place of the student as a prominent customer was established (Haselgrove, 1995, p.160; Newton, 1999, p.216). A contrasting viewpoint, reflecting the situation in American universities in the 1980's, placing the responsibility of the university teacher to the student in a different light was presented by Dressel and Marcus(1982). They describe A Code of Teaching Responsibility that stipulates the obligations of university teachers at Michigan State University to their students and their accountability to them concerning material to be taught, grading processes, meeting classes regularly, office hours. Teachers who did not provide these services would not be paid a salary. The writers explain the difficulty with implementing this code and its penalty in that much time and effort would be required to collect evidence and tension and ill will would be generated.

Changes in Consumerism in Higher Education

For the purpose of this discussion it is necessary to examine the differences in attitude towards the student client or customer in the British and American and Israeli experience. America has been known as a consumer society "with a relatively high frequency and institutionalization of evaluation in all areas of life" (Miron and Segal, 1986, p.264). This means that consumerism exists among university students because of student mobility and the vast selection of institutions of higher education that are available. As a result, Miron and Segal believed that "American education may be a product for consumption which must be sold to prospective students" (p.264). Eight years later Benson and Lewis (1994) wrote that many professors view consumerism as "eroding academic standards that faculties have toiled so long to construct"(p.195). They feel that

. teachers should turn their attention to issues "pertaining to teaching assessment and accountability rather than focusing exclusively on beliefs about how students' evaluations can be biased" (p.196). A few years later in a debate published on the topic of student consumerism in higher education in the United States a clear crosscurrent view was presented. Delucchi and Smith (1997) believe "student consumerism is a product of a new historical era-postmodernism- and not easily amenable to ethical teaching or the use of responsible authority"(p.322). They contend that consumerism creates very difficult problems and has a negative influence on the classroom environment in the university setting by vesting authority in students as consumers. The result is that professors may lower standards, demand less work, and be more lenient in general towards the students. "Few institutions of higher education are immune from this phenomenon although it is one of the dirty little secrets we deny publicly" (p.324). They claim that in a postmodern environment of "increasing relativism and consumerism, some faculty members begin to pander to the allure of students as consumers" (p.324). In a rebuttal to the claims of Delucchi and Smith the contrasting view presented by Eisenberg (1997) is that educators today must know the needs of the student consumer whose demographics have changed over the years. Educators must adapt teaching strategies to the needs of the consumer population after discovering and understanding their needs and expectations. As the debate continued Delucchi and Smith responded to Eisenberg with the thought that students should be part of the learning enterprise but not as customers. "Higher education should promote a partnership between students and faculty members in their mutual pursuit of a life for the mind that is unavailable elsewhere" (Delucchi and Smith, 1997, p.337).

A look at the Israeli experience reflects a completely different situation regarding consumerism in higher education. In fact, there is very little written in the literature about the Israeli setting and the attitude towards the Israeli student as a consumer. Miron and Segal (1986) wrote that in Israel in the 1980s consumer awareness in higher education was still nascent. This would affect the attitude of the Israeli universities towards their students. Another Israeli writer and educator in the field of higher education, Nira Hativa (1997), whose concern is teaching effectiveness and improvement in university teaching, does not refer to the Israeli student in a consumer or customer capacity at all. The conclusion to be reached from this lack of articles and research on the topic would appear to be that Israeli university students are still far removed from riding the wave of consumerism in higher education that has swept the western world.

In Britain the situation was still different. In a historical survey of universities and their students focusing on universities in the UK, Holmes (1986) has described the dramatic changes occurring from the early sixties to the mid-eighties in both the numbers of students in the universities and their relationship with the institutions. These changes showed an increasing demand to have a say in campus life and to exert more student power and preserve their rights of freedom of speech. As of the mid-1980s Holmes said, "Students are becoming more self-sufficient, their unions more entrepreneurial and the consumer and market forces which will be engendered by demographic decline until the early 1990s will undoubtedly make the student voice a powerful one" (Holmes, 1986, p.113). The study made no mention of the UK students' interest in or demand to participate in evaluation of faculty or of seeing faculty as accountable to them. This only changed after 1987 with the passing of legislation for Staff Appraisal Procedures for Academic and Academic-Related Staff at the university level. The procedures involved questionnaires for students on aspects of teaching (Bull, 1990, p.30). However, this still did not reflect the atmosphere of the student as a powerful consumer as seen in the United States. In fact before the 1992 general election in Britain, Prime Minister John Major proposed a student charter "which would improve quality in higher education by defining the minimal level of rights and responsibilities of students and institutions in relation to one another" (Cryer in Knight, 1993, p.36). A survey of 116 HE institutions concluded "that a growing fear of litigation by dissatisfied students threatened to limit its adoption, although the very fact of its existence was generating useful debate on students' needs" (p.36). This meant that the British universities were beginning to take the issue of students' reactions seriously. There is still however a great distance between the student consumer/customer model in the United States and their counterparts in Britain.

Linking Quality and Accountability to Evaluation and Appraisal

The first section of the review of the literature dealt with issues of evaluation and appraisal. Quality and accountability are clearly linked to those issues. The Jarratt Report referred to accountability and its affinity to appraisal. The Report states:

> "The world has changed and it is not good enough just
> to pay lip-service to accountability. As appraisal
> becomes established, there will be a cultural change
> over accountability. Hitherto academic accountability

rested on peer assessment of research, articles, and papers. Now
through appraisal there is face to face discussion about
a wider range of activities. There should be new ideas
about responsibility for getting things done" (Jarratt
Report, quoted in Bull, 1990, p.35).

In managing evaluation "it is essential at an early stage to consider to whom you
are accountable for this particular piece of evaluation and how this accountability
arrangement is to operate" (Aspinwall et al., 1992, p.104). They explain that in
some cases the line of accountability may appear to be quite clearly mandated
while in others there may be multiple and confused lines of accountability. A list
of possible stakeholders is suggested by Aspinwall et al. including, a line manager
such as a head of department, colleagues, a formal group such as an academic
board, an outside agent like the LEA and to individual clients such as students or
parents. These writers say that some of these bodies may expect an account and
some may represent situations where a moral responsibility is felt to offer an
account although it is not required. They explain that there are two important
dimensions of evaluation, development, and accountability that might be seen by
some as contradictory. However, "while recognizing the tension between them,
we would argue that an evaluation activity could be high in both aspects or
perhaps sadly lacking in either"(p.5).

The 1991 Hong Kong Conference Report on Quality Assurance in Higher
Education linked quality assurance and accountability and suggested that higher
education be accountable to at least three different groups as depicted in a
triangular formation: society, students and colleagues. According to this model,
society is the government.

"However, accountability to society is not only a
matter of return on investment. Universities exist to
safeguard and transmit a cultural heritage. Society
needs assurance that universities are not failing in this
duty" (Frazer, 1992, p.16).

Here once again we see the importance of cultural accountability. The model
continues with students cast in the role of the clients of higher education. "They
desire to have the best possible education available and then to receive
certification that particular levels of knowledge and professional competence have
been achieved" (p.17). The third angle in the triangle of accountability is that of
the colleagues. "Teachers are accountable to their professional colleagues that the

integrity of their discipline is upheld and that students develop positive attitudes towards the subject and its use in society" (p.17).

Following the ideas of Scott and Winch and Bush concerning education and the marketplace, Frazer continued the analogy: "The relation between teaching and learning is much the same as between selling and buying. Nothing is sold until it is bought; nothing is taught until it is learnt. In other words, the essential purpose of universities, departments, programs, and teachers is to promote learning" (p.18). The bottom line according to the Frazer report is that the purpose of evaluation for the purposes of accountability is the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of learning. He believes that it is important

> "to bring together the clients (students and employers)
> and the university, to ensure that student feedback and
> view of employers of graduates make their full
> contribution to maintaining and enhancing quality. Part
> of staff development programs should be directed
> towards learning how to seek views of students and
> demonstrating that student feedback is valuable in
> improving programs and teaching" (p.19).

Another view connecting accountability with quality assurance and student feedback may be found in Kwan (1999, p.181) where the writer states, "With the surge in public demand for accountability in higher education and the growing concern for quality of university teaching, the practice of collecting student ratings of teaching has been widely adopted by universities all over the world as part of their quality assurance system".

An additional opinion as to the importance of accountability for maintaining quality in higher education is presented by Ramsden from Australia (1993, p.51) in which he says that accountability is important but has to be the right sort of accountability, one that fosters working together and fosters improving teaching and learning and not one that generates "inter-individual competitiveness". He is against top-down appraisal where individual lecturers are in competition for prizes and rewards and prefers team-work, collaboration and responsibility where "excellence derives from individual commitment to a common end, and quality grows from a subtle mixture combining challenge, clear goals, sheer enjoyment in teaching, and humane leadership" (p.52).

Moving in a different direction but still with an emphasis on accountability for the purpose of improving the quality of teaching and learning is an idea presented by

Dill (1999) that maintains that universities should become "learning organizations". "By applying organizational characteristics of business and industry, academic institutions will be able to redesign their internal organizations to better cope with a more competitive environment" (Dill, 1999, p.132). In this way the academic learning organization will be able to evaluate whether learning is actually occurring and using "learning audits" to assess whether the concepts of organizational learning are in fact understood or supported. Dill explained that this is necessitated by three things: first, there are more varied student cohorts who resist traditional methods of instruction, second, external mechanisms of accountability designed to assure and improve academic quality, and third, emergence of new competitors in the form of Internet-based distance learning programs. The result is that "academic institutions may need to reconsider the basic organization and governance of their system for teaching and learning" (Dill, p.132).

In conclusion, whichever model of accountability an institution opts to use within its framework as part of a quality assurance process, a suitable tool of evaluation and appraisal must be selected. If, as the literature suggests, the teacher is the unit of account to the student consumer, then one widely used evaluative measure is the student evaluation of faculty. This will be discussed in the next section of the literature review.

Student Evaluation of Faculty (SEF)

Introduction

Student Evaluation of Faculty (SEF) is a tool or Performance Indicator (P.I.) for evaluation of teaching and performance in the college or university classroom that has been extensively examined and written about for over 70 years by educators and researchers in the United States (Cohen, 1990; Ory, 1990; Wachtel, 1998). SEF is "easily the largest and most visible component of a faculty evaluation system" (Arreola and Aleamoni, 1990, p.37). "There exist today over 1,300 articles and books dealing with research on student ratings of teaching" (Cashin, 1988). The appearance of SEF in the literature in Great Britain and Australia is noticeable on a small scale from the mid-1970s (Page, 1974, p.87). The practice of using SEF in those countries was only mandated much later (Neumann, 2000; Ballantyne et al., 2000). It is safe to say that now: "the practice of student evaluation of teaching (SET) in universities is ubiquitous in the UK and the US" (Shevlin et al., 2000, p.398). It should be noted that there are various acronyms

used to name this tool: SEF, SET and CEQ and SIRS are some examples of the titles of student evaluation of faculty questionnaires.

"Student ratings are pencil-and-paper instruments in which students are requested to judge one or more characteristics of the course or instructor by selecting responses on a Likert scale" (d'Apollonia and Abrami, 1997, p.60). The SEF often appears in questionnaire format with either Likert type questions or open-ended questions concerning global items and/or items evaluating specific instructional behaviors. This instrument is usually developed by a committee in the individual institution of higher learning and used for varying purposes by that institution.

The administration of the SEF varies from school to school as to when during the academic year and how often it will be implemented.

This section of the review of the literature will reflect several aspects of the SEF topic within the larger context of the research that looks at evaluation in relation to accountability and improvement:

1. a historical survey of the development of SEF

2. consensus and controversy surrounding SEF

3. faculty resistance to SEF

4. alternatives to the "standard" SEF questionnaire

Historical Survey

In a historical survey of evaluation of instructor effectiveness d'Apollonia and Abrami (1997) delve deep into the annals of history and offer the example of Socrates' execution in 399 B.C. for having corrupted the youth of Athens with his teachings as the first example of summative evaluation. They suggest that the first formal student evaluations probably took place in medieval Europe where students "reported any deviations from the schedule provided in the 'course outline' to the rector who subsequently fined the instructor for each day's negligence. Instructors were paid in direct proportion to student enrollment and so students' judgments impacted on the pocketbook" (1997, p.47).

The United States saw the first use of a teacher rating scale in 1915 (Wachtel, 1998). In the 1920's student evaluation procedures were introduced at several major US universities (Marsh, 1987). According to Ory (1990, p63):

> "Many systems for collecting such ratings were
>
> originally developed by student government
>
> organizations, as early as the 1920's to help students
>
> select professors and courses. Students developed the

forms, and faculty could decide whether they wanted to
distribute them to their classes. Student initiated
evaluation and voluntary faculty participation prevailed
for the next three decades".

Research on student evaluations of teaching at that early period was pioneered and
carried out by Remmers in the late 1920's (Cohen, 1990; Ory, 1990; Wachtel,
1998). Remmers and his fellow researchers from Purdue University focused on
reliability, validity, and bias issues of the SEF. "They initiated a new field of
study-the research into students' evaluations of teaching effectiveness. They
examined the association between student ratings and student learning and student
ratings and alumni ratings and the reliability of student ratings of instructional
effectiveness. The Purdue scale served as a model for the design of future student
rating forms" (d'Apollonia and Abrami, 1997, p.61).

In 1924, a group of Harvard students published "Confidential Guide to Courses",
the first evaluation produced to help students select courses and instructors
(d'Apollonia and Abrami, 1997). At that point in time, terminology related to
'quality assurance' or 'accountability' in the context of higher education was not
yet an integral part of the students' lexicon. However the concept of evaluation
and the students' need to evaluate which lecturers would provide them with the
best education, as they understood it, were the motivating factors for the
publication of their guide. This was the beginning of what many decades later
became a nationwide industry in universities throughout the United States for
student-sponsored evaluation of faculty members.

The next important period in the historical survey is the 1960s in the United States
during which time the use of student evaluations was almost entirely voluntary
(Centra, 1993, p.49). The large-scale use of SEF during this period was spurred by
student protest movements in which students demanded a voice in personnel
decisions at the universities. Students demanded faculty accountability and
requested mandatory faculty participation (Ory, 1990). As this did not occur to
their satisfaction, student organizations set up, administered, and published their
own rating systems of instruction. In light of this situation the universities began
implementing their own student rating systems which were at first administered
by the faculty themselves on a voluntary basis (d'Apollonia and Abrami, 1990 ;
Ory, 1990).

In the 1970s, rising costs of higher education and increasing financial problems
pushed students to continue their cry for accountability from the faculty members

(Ory, 1990). This period was referred to by Centra (1993, p.49) as "the golden age of research on student evaluations". It was during this period that much of the basic research on psychometric properties of student rating scales was carried out. These studies demonstrated the validity and utility of student ratings and supported their use for both formative and summative purposes (d'Apollonia and Abrami, 1990; Centra, 1993). By the end of the 1970s most institutions of higher education in the United States used student ratings as their most important source of information on instructional effectiveness (Murray, 1984). Some of the student rating forms still in use like the SIRS from Michigan State University had their origins in the 1970s. It should be noted that: "in its infancy, evaluation in British universities was strongly influenced by American practice, in which the use of standardized and centrally administered student ratings questionnaires had been the predominant approach"(Page, 1974, p.86).

The 1980s were considered the "peak period for administrative use of student ratings. Many administrators began to view student ratings as a useful and necessary indicator of professors' teaching ability"(Ory, 1990, p.64). "From the early 1980s to the present day is a period during which time there was continued clarification and amplification of research findings, including meta-analyses which synthesized the results of many other studies"(Centra, 1993).

Ory (1990) wrote that: "As the 1990s begin, we see most colleges and universities using student-ratings information for decisions about merit and promotion, while most faculty view the information as a valid but single indicator of teaching effectiveness"(p.64). Looking beyond the United States there was an expansion of formal student evaluation of teaching systems during the 1990s in Australian and British universities being recognized as a legitimate and expected university activity (Jarrett Report, 1985; Neumann, 2000). However, "the upshot is that the data from student evaluations need to be interpreted with caution, especially if used for summative purposes" (Knight, 1993, p.20). Even though there may be a tendency to equate Britain and Australia concerning use of SEF tools because their higher education systems are broadly similar to one another: "it should not be assumed that an instrument developed in Australia would necessarily transfer to a British context" (Richardson, 1994, p.60).

Israel has been administering student evaluations of faculty members in institutions of higher education since the 1980s but the number of studies undertaken in the field is very small and limited in scope compared with the rest of the world. There is no evidence in the literature of research in Israel on the

psychometric aspects of SEF. Instead, research was carried out by Miron and
Segal in 1986 to gather data on the student opinion of the value of student
evaluations. This study did not however investigate the instrument itself for
validity and reliability. It was an empirical investigation of students' attitudes
towards evaluation of instruction questionnaires (Miron and Segal, 1986). A
quantitative study investigating the attitudes of faculty members towards student
rating and organizational and background factors was carried out by Avi-Itzhak
and Kremer (1986) but this study did not touch the question of student ratings and
improving teaching. Another piece of research carried out in Israel by Neumann
and Neuman (1989) involved the development and testing of an organizational
behavior model of students' evaluation of instruction in order to understand the
determinants of students' instructional evaluation. Hativa, a much published
Israeli researcher has been using the SEF to learn how dimensions of effective
teaching can help teachers improve their teaching (1995b), and to examine
differences in disciplines with regard to teaching practices (1997b). A third area of
interest to Hativa was teacher awareness of effective teaching strategies (Hativa et
al., 1999). This study involved four cases of exemplary university teachers who
used different effective teaching dimensions and strategies to achieve excellence
in different ways. The latest study in Israel concerning teachers' attitudes towards
student ratings of faculty members was carried out in an academic college by
Persko and Nassar (2001). In this quantitative study, 100 teachers in an academic
college completed questionnaires about various aspects of the student ratings of
faculty members. Even though this college places an emphasis on teaching as
opposed to the research stance of most universities, the results of the study
showed a spread of both positive and negative responses to questions about the
use of the student ratings to improve classroom teaching skills.

Consensus and Controversy Surrounding SEF

In light of the historical review presented in the previous section it can be
concluded that the use of student ratings of faculty is firmly entrenched in North
American universities and gaining momentum in other countries around the
world. D'Apollonia and Abrami(1997) point out that "massive research on the
psychometric properties of students established students' ratings of instructor as
the prevailing method of collecting evidence on instructor effectiveness"(p.48).
This process has also gained firm footing in Britain and Australia and Israel. This
does not imply however that there is complete consensus and that there is a void

of controversy surrounding the topic. This section will describe the areas of agreement and disagreement pertinent to SEF today.

H. W. Marsh is one of the most prominent figures in research on student evaluations. His name appears in the bibliographies of almost every piece of literature appearing in the field. Marsh's seminal work on the topic was written in 1987 and has been cited consistently up to the present by other researchers. Marsh's (1987) view on student evaluations is that they are the only indicator of teaching effectiveness whose validity has been thoroughly and rigorously established:

> "student ratings are clearly multidimensional, quite
> reliable, reasonably valid, relatively uncontaminated by
> many variables often seen as sources of potential bias,
> and are seen to be useful by students, faculty, and
> administrators" (p.369).

He also argues that students' ratings can be "useful for feedback to faculty, useful for personnel decisions, useful to students in the selection of courses, and useful for the study of teaching"(p.369). This opinion is echoed in a review of literature amassed by Wachtel(1998) who concurs:

> "However, after nearly seven decades of research on
> the use of student evaluations of teaching effectiveness,
> it can safely be stated that the majority of researchers
> believe that student ratings are a valid, reliable, and
> worthwhile means of evaluating teaching"(p.192).

Both Marsh (1987) and Wachtel (1998) believe that the bulk of research has supported continued use of SEF tools but they do recommend further scrutiny. It is important to briefly describe the nature of the works of Marsh and Wachtel. Marsh conducted in-depth research in the field of SEF in areas concerning validity and reliability of the tool for many years, and eventually developed an instrument for Student Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ). On the other hand, Wachtel is a mathematician with an interest in evaluation of college teaching with special interest in the field of mathematics. In 1998 Wachtel published a lengthy review of the literature entitled, <u>Student Evaluation of College Teaching Effectiveness: a brief review</u>. He divided his review into ten major sections and 24 subsections reflecting the aspects covered by the research encompassing 157 pieces of literature on SEF of which Marsh was a significant contributor.

Wachtel's overview of the topic comparing the views of many researchers confirms Marsh's support of continued use of SEF.

This basic consensus also has its critics concerning how the consensus itself was reached. Cohen (1990) called Marsh's work of 1987 an "excellent narrative review of the overall student-ratings literature"(p.128). He however favored using "meta-analysis" to make sense out of conflicting research findings and offers five advantages to using this system to review the literature on SEF. Cohen defined this method as "statistical analysis of a large collection of results from individual studies for the purpose of integrating findings" (1990, p.127). And Cohen too concludes from meta-analysis that researchers are in much greater agreement about the reliability, validity and use of student ratings (1990, p.129). Consensus with a caveat comes from Wagenaar (1995) who clearly says:

> "Student evaluations of teaching provide an important slice of data for understanding teaching. They are best at detecting consumers' perspectives on those teaching behaviors most noticeable to students. They should be used but be used cautiously. And they should be used with other data sources to provide a multifaceted view of teaching. Finally, any teaching evaluation efforts will work best within a larger social structure that supports a comprehensive and analytical view of both individual and collective teaching efforts" (p.68).

The same message comes from d'Apollonia and Abrami (1997) that while there is consensus that student ratings are reasonably reliable, valid, generalizable, and useful, there are concerns voiced by teachers and researchers about the use of the ratings. The question that begs to be asked was posed by Theall and Franklin(1990):

> "If there is consensus among researchers, and increasingly widespread acceptance of the practice of collecting ratings, why are campus debates on the issue frequently so acrimonious? Why are users of student-ratings data so often unaware of even the most fundamental precepts of the literature? What is wrong with ratings practice? Are student ratings falling short of the goals they were intended to serve" (p.18)?

Basically what has happened is that the use of SEF is widespread in the United States and in Europe for collecting data about teachers and courses for both summative and formative evaluations. And there is confirmation by the researchers that this is a reasonable tool to use with reservations of various kinds pertaining to situations involving how, when, where, and by whom the SEF should be administered. The information collected is subsequently used by administrators, department chairmen, supervisors, and students for a wide variety of decision making processes many of which are critical to the future of the careers and professional lives of the lecturers often determining issues of promotion, advancement or even the termination of employment. The acrimonious debates referred to previously by Theall and Franklin (1990) are often engaged in by the teachers and lecturers who are under scrutiny, even though as Marsh (1987) has pointed out, as previously cited, that the SEF is useful to faculty, useful for personnel decisions, and useful to students in the selection of courses and useful for the study of teaching. With this apparent contradictory situation it is necessary to examine the reasons for faculty unhappiness with the practice of using SEF.

Resistance of Faculty to SEF

According to Benson and Lewis (1994, p.195) student evaluations of classroom teaching in higher education has been defined by many academics as a "necessary evil". Many faculty members are very hesitant about using formal evaluation methods to assess teaching performance in the classroom.

Theall and Franklin (1990, p.25) presented a model of an institution of higher education with a 'negative synergism system' of evaluation of faculty. This is a system with rampant hostility and suspicion on the part of the faculty because rating reports are being forwarded directly to the administration, data was misused and misinterpreted, teachers from one discipline were compared with teachers from others and a lawsuit resulted because a professor did not receive tenure because of published SEF results.

Some other arguments frequently posited by faculty against the use of student ratings are (Aleamoni, 1987; Cohen, 1990):

1. Students cannot judge instructional effectiveness.
2. Students can only judge the value of instruction after completion of university studies.
3. Student rating forms are neither valid nor reliable.
4. Student rating systems are popularity contests.
5. Students reward lenient instructors with high ratings.
6. Irrelevant variables bias student ratings.

7. Colleagues are more competent judges of instructor effectiveness.
8. Feedback from student ratings does not improve instruction.

In comparing these arguments with those listed by Page (1974) one sees that the issues bothering faculty about SEF have not changed substantially in over eighty years. Page reviewed the American experience in student evaluation of teaching from its inception in 1915 until the seventies. He found that the fears expressed by faculty were groundless and probably stemmed from: "ignorance of the dimensions and status of the process"(p.72). His conclusions fall in line with those of the more recent researchers that will be presented below.

D'Apollonia and Abrami (1997) examined the above mentioned arguments against SEF and presented research that attempted to resolve them. But the complaints themselves reflect the deep-rooted feelings of faculty about the evaluation system. Sometimes the hostility and suspicion and fear of SEF results can result in unethical behavior on the part of faculty members, administrators and students. Cohen (1990) has referred to the items listed above as myths that could be dispelled by research findings but he says that:

> "negative attitudes toward student ratings are especially
> resistant to change, and it seems that faculty and
> administrators support their beliefs in student-ratings
> myths with personal and anecdotal evidence which
> outweighs empirically based research evidence. We
> invest enormous energy in counteracting these myths,
> with relatively little effect"(p.124).

Cohen feels that advocates of student ratings can act on the negative attitudes by convincing administrators to follow sound ratings practice that is based on research. Ory (1990) describes nine scenarios of ethical situations involving SEF in which instructors at various levels in the professional hierarchy altered results of questionnaires, only collected them from certain courses, impressed upon students the importance of the ratings with a plea for positive ratings, or did not leave the room while students filled out questionnaires. Similar to d'Apollonia and Abrami, Ory also offers recommendations and operative suggestions to solve these situations but the behavior resulting from negative feelings of faculty towards the SEF must be noted.

A serious criticism of the SEF process was voiced by Newport (1996) from the United States in research that probed the qualifications of student raters and novice teachers. He claims that:

> "untrained, amateur student raters are routinely asked
> to evaluate teaching performance in higher education,
> and their ratings are routinely used in making salary
> adjustment, tenure and promotion decisions- decisions
> that sometimes have severe consequences for those
> affected"(p.20).

He points out that even though this criticism is valid most administrators will not change the practice of using SEF because having student ratings is an easy and inexpensive way to gather data that can be used in making decisions. The problem according to Newport is that:

> "students cannot be held accountable and are not available
> to answer questions after the suspect ratings have been
> used. Instructors who receive low ratings from their
> students can blame their low ratings on the biases or
> inadequacies of the evaluation processes"(p.21).

This situation also saves administrators time and effort in observing instructors and having to face them personally to justify low ratings.

One of the strongest opinions against the use of student evaluation questionnaires is proffered by Johnson (2000) who starts out by taking the UK government policy to task for advocating students' feedback on courses as 'good practice'. She also finds fault with the concept of 'quality' in higher education and terms it a 'slippery rhetoric of empowerment' that has been imposed upon managerial procedures. She is against the student evaluation questionnaire (SEQ) and finds it to be an evaluative activity that: "does not allow students and lecturers to discuss, evidence, explain, justify, negotiate, or gain new insights into their own or the others' view, interests, values and assumptions" (p.423). Johnson also claims that Herbert Marsh, a leading figure in research on SEQ both in the United States and Australia has been misinterpreted in his opinions about SEQ by other researchers who attempt to offer Marsh's findings in an unbalanced manner and thereby put SEQ in a positive light when in fact she would prefer an opposite interpretation. The conclusion reached by Johnson is that SEQ will really have no impact on a lecturer's professional development. Instead it: "generates fear, damaged relationships and self-doubt" (p.433).

Some faculty members who agree and accept the principle of student ratings offer criticism of particular items that appear on multi-item forms. "Such criticisms are almost as frequent and strong as the complaints that student evaluations are popularity contests and that students cannot judge how well they have learned" (Abrami and d'Apollonia, 1990, p.110). These writers strongly suggest that debate and disagreement among faculty over specific rating items should be taken into consideration by administrators when they use SEF for summative purposes.

The last issue of faculty complaint or contention that will be mentioned here is the impingement of SEF on academic freedom. According to Haskell (1998, p2) "formal surveys of faculty views on this issue are relatively rare". However he finds many examples of statements in the research literature that clearly demonstrate that SEF is an infringement on academic freedom. Some of these claims (p.2) are:

1. SEF is prima facie evidence of administrative intrusion into the classroom.
2. SEF is often used as an instrument of intimidation forcing conformity.
3. SEF creates pressure for a lowered teaching standard.
4. SEF is responsible for considerable grade inflation.
5. SEF manipulates behavior of faculty when used for promotions, raises etc.
6. SEF does not eliminate poor teachers but increases poor teaching practices.
7. SEF illustrates a mercantile philosophy of "consumerism" that erodes standards.
8. SEF has lowered the quality of U.S. education.
9. SEF leads to inappropriate dismissal of faculty.
10. SEF constitutes a threat to academic freedom.

A careful look at these claims shows that many of them are similar to those already mentioned in this section but Haskell has interpreted them with a different slant and feels that they are leading to a huge problem. Haskell's conclusion is that: "SEF creates an educational conflict of interest between faculty and student impacting on the quality of instruction" (p.4). He believes that SEF is no longer a "benign instrument" because on many campuses the traditional model of student and teacher belongs to a past age. "Faculty now teach in a litigious context. The new role and impact of SEF need to be reassessed accordingly"(p.2). This point of view has not been prominent in any of the literature of other countries outside the U.S. This probably reflects a sociological characteristic specific to the United

States that is a stronghold of consumerism and litigious activity that has not yet widely caught on abroad.

In summary, most of the complaints or concerns of faculty about SEF have shown to be largely treatable or resolvable or not supported by research at this stage (Abrami, 1989; Seldin, 1993; d'Apollonia, 1990; Cohen, 1990).

However that does not necessarily make the worries disappear from the scene and:

> "they can detract attention from more important
> discussions on aspects of teaching accountability and
> assessment, such as who controls the process; how faculty
> members are to be involved; how teaching is evaluated,
> and with what consequences; and whether and how other
> "publics" are to be involved" (Benson and Lewis, 1994,
> p.196).

Alternatives to Standard SEF Questionnaire

This brief section will present examples of four different perspectives to the standard SEF questionnaire taken from recent research in Britain and Australia. The alternative methods for SEF were developed for a variety of reasons most having to do with dissatisfaction with the "usual" questionnaires that were described in the beginning of this part of the review of literature. The alternative proposals to SEF questionnaires were to be used for the most part in conjunction with the questionnaire or other traditional methods of evaluation.

A group of researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University carried out a study to investigate whether focus groups would be acceptable to students and whether focus groups might be a better course evaluation technique than the current questionnaire based approach. They chose focus groups because they are a qualitative research method that is popular with market researchers. It is used to support questionnaire research, particularly where they wish to explore customer perceptions, attitudes, and motivations (Brindley et al; 1998). The results showed that students believed that focus groups are more likely to generate more comprehensive, in-depth data on their perceptions. "Thus focus groups would enable the university to listen to students and if run successfully, would provide a valuable source of data for quality assurance purposes"(p.101). The results also suggested that students are not interested in completing questionnaires. The researchers attributed this to the feeling of students that a questionnaire is not a

participative mechanism. As with many alternative ideas the researchers warn

us that caution needs to be exercised during the operation of the focus groups.

Another innovative approach to student evaluation of courses was investigated by

McKenzie et al (1998) in Australia. They tried a holistic approach in which

students illustrated their experiences in courses through self-portraits, cartoons,

metaphorical images, and diagrammatic representations, in other words, non-

verbal communication. The results showed that drawings by students or staff can

be a valuable source of information for course evaluation. This was information

that is not usually obtained from written comments and could be discussed by

staff in the process of improving their courses and teaching (p.153). The

researchers concluded that: "all good evaluation processes collect information

from multiple sources using multiple methods. Drawings can be one of these

methods"(p.162).

Australia was the site of yet another development in the area of performance

indicators. This time it was in the form of a questionnaire called CEQ, Course

Experience Questionnaire that was designed to measure the teaching performance

of academic organizational units. Ramsden (1991) explained that the purpose of

the CEQ and its greatest benefit was to use the data within universities and

colleges for diagnostic purposes. The innovation here was the diagnostic

characteristic of the questionnaire that is often missing from the traditional SEF

questionnaires.

Sometimes class size becomes an issue in the effort to acquire accurate qualitative

evaluations. Addressing this situation were Powell et al (1997) from Britain who

developed an alternative method of evaluation by whole student cohorts. Student

consultation meetings (SCM) were held in which cohorts of students and 2 staff

members discussed many varied aspects of a course and aired views on specific

issues and comments on the course as a whole. A written report about the course

based on the SCM was published and passed on to the relevant Course Leader and

Head of Department. Results showed that questionnaires are a cheaper and faster

means of accessing large numbers of student opinions than any qualitative

techniques. However the main advantage of SCM over questionnaires is their

ability not only to identify a problem area, but to pinpoint the causes at the same

time. Most important, students said that most of the points they wished to make

were not covered on the university questionnaire. The final recommendation

stated that: "it is probable that a general purpose questionnaire combined with a

cohort SCM would yield a more useful evaluation for a specific course, whatever the cohort size" (Powell et al. 1997, p.403).

Conclusion

Arreola and Aleamoni (1990) believe that it is possible to successfully operate a faculty evaluation system without a lot of anxiety and resistance provided the conditions are suitable. In their opinion it is necessary to combine several kinds of evaluation procedures to get the best picture possible of the teaching situation and they are proponents of peer review in its various forms. However they acknowledge the prominence of the student ratings and offer advice as to how do deal with designing and operating a large student-ratings system and designing a student-ratings form. It is most important to have open lines of communication between student evaluators and teachers in the planning and administrative processes of the evaluation. Because most faculty are not versed in statistical analysis of any kind, results need to be interpreted for them and be made user-friendly.

> " In short, the evaluation system should provide diagnostic information on the strengths and weaknesses that faculty members possess and then follow up with programs or materials to help them enhance their strengths and overcome their weaknesses"(p. 54).

The literature has reflected the lack of consensus on the SEF issue with strong opinions expressed on both ends of the continuum. Despite the lack of agreement often couched in strong language of dissent, the fact is that SEF evaluations still maintain a strong foothold in the world of higher education and do not appear to be diminishing in use and in impact. The first three sections of the literature reviewed issues concerning: 1.evaluation and appraisal, 2. quality assurance and accountability and 3. student evaluations of faculty (SEF). The links between them have been presented and the next stage in the logical progression of the literature in this research is about improving teaching.

Improving Teaching

Introduction

The quest for improvement in teaching which is necessary to ensure quality in higher education stems logically from the accountability, appraisal and evaluation processes described in the previous sections of the literature review. The issue of

improving performance or teaching is integral to the three areas mentioned
above. It is at once both a purpose and a consequence of evaluation. "Actually,
there is no greater purpose for evaluation than to improve performance"(Seldin,
1989, p.89). Or as Ramsden (1993, p.50) has put it: "Evaluation isn't a
mechanism additional to teaching: it's a process concerned with learning how to
teach better".

In any discussion of improving teaching it is first necessary to deal with its
negative aspect known as poor performance. An indication of poor performance
by the teacher as reflected in the SEF could lead to one of three consequences.
One might be removal of the teacher or lecturer from a permanent post on grounds
of conduct or capability (Middlewood, 1997, p.209). This kind of decision made
by senior management in the institution is often very difficult to carry out because
of the constraints of union involvement and employment laws which place a
burden of proof where there are no clear standards of capability or unequivocal
cut-off points. Indeed, in higher education often the faculty members who are in
need of improvement are: "at the top of the academic ladder and veteran
teachers"(Hativa and Raviv, 1996, p.349). Obviously their removal from the
institution would be next to impossible and hardly desirable. Another option
available for management is to use the student ratings for providing diagnostic
feedback to instructors and: "assume that this feedback will challenge instructors
to work (either on their own or with instructional consultants) on improving those
aspects of their teaching identified as weak or problematic"(Hativa and Raviv,
1996 p.341). This involves motivating teachers in order to get the best out of them
and encouraging them to improve their teaching performance through programs of
staff development. The third option is to do nothing at all about effecting change
and to remain with disgruntled students and possibly a poor reputation for the
institution. It would mean ignoring the need for accountability on various levels;
to one's profession, to the institution and to the student/consumer/client. In light
of the reality that "over the last decade universities have been subjected to various
forms of academic accountability designed to maintain or improve the quality of
their teaching and learning"(Dill, 1999, p.127), the option of doing nothing about
poor teaching performance does not appear to be an acceptable one. Dill explained
further that universities must become "skilled at creating knowledge for the
improvement of teaching and learning"(p.127). He felt that: "the traditional means
of assuring academic quality within universities were frequently passive and
implicit" (p.128). For these reasons and because of the influence of "student

cohorts" on traditional methods of instruction Dill (p.132) felt that the universities had to make serious changes in academic structure taking into consideration the mechanisms of academic accountability that were designed to assure and improve academic quality.

This section of the literature review will focus on the second option mentioned above and will attempt to establish a connection between the evaluative tool SEF and developing programs for improving teaching in higher education. It must be mentioned however, that in the mass of literature supporting the value of student feedback as part of the process of improving teaching there are occasional voices of dissent. One example is presented by Kerridge and Mathews (1998) who claim that feedback from student questionnaires will provide results but: "these may not be particularly helpful in improving courses or teaching quality"(p.71). They base their argument on the controversy concerning student as customer or student as client. Their claim is that until there is agreement within the education sector on the definition of the role of students as customer or client creates difficulties in interpreting the student originated results of the questionnaires. Another example is found in Johnson (2000, p.419) who questions the 'authority of the student evaluation questionnaire' and attempts to prove why the SEQ is detrimental to professional development. A more detailed discussion of her work was offered in the previous section of this review of the literature. These two examples however, represent a minority view within the review of the literature on the topic at hand, and therefore will not be dwelt upon any further at this point.

It is also important to note at this time that the issue of what constitutes good teaching or effective teaching will not be examined within the scope of this thesis. No one has the final answer to the question of what constitutes effective teaching. But as Seldin (1988, p.48) has said:

> "The key ingredients of effective teaching are
> increasingly well known. They include a deep
> knowledge of the subject, an ability to communicate
> with and motivate students, enthusiasm for the subject
> and for teaching, clarity of presentation and fairness.
> Students, faculty colleagues, professors themselves all
> take part in a shared judgment of the effectiveness of
> college teaching, and all contribute to its
> improvement".

These are issues that are each extensive enough to merit in-depth treatment on their own and could serve as topics of another thesis. The assumption for the purposes of this research is that improvement refers to a positive change or increase in successive feedback collections or evaluations.

A further issue that will not be examined within the scope of this thesis pertains to the topics of induction and training initiatives in higher education. Even though initiatives involving programs for professional qualifications for lecturers in higher education such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE), the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN), and the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILTHE) are operative in England, there are no comparable programs operating in Israel at the time of this research. The need for such induction programs for new entrants in higher education may seem obvious (Coleman, 1994) but the Council for Higher Education in Israel has not yet taken upon itself the mission of implementing such programs. Therefore the literature review will not include any further discussion of these topics.

Educational Leadership and Improving Teaching

Developing and improving the quality of educational programs involves management issues (Kerridge and Mathews, 1998, p.72). In the attempt to develop an effective program for improving teaching there are two competing models of evaluation and improvement that need to be considered (Knight, 1993, p.52):

> "Choice number one takes us down the road of top-down appraisal, distant management, and individual lecturers in competition with each other for a small number of prizes. This is a model that sees better teaching as emerging from alternately frightening and threatening people, from bullying and cajoling, from sticks and carrots. Choice two is the road of quality through team-work, collaboration, responsibility, and freedom to choose. In this model excellence derives from individual commitment to a common end, and quality grows from a subtle mixture combining challenge, clear goals sheer enjoyment in teaching, and humane leadership. That kind of leadership fosters the priceless organizational pearl we call morale".

In order to successfully implement the second model in an institution of higher education a commitment to the ideal must be made by the whole institution with all aspects of management of the learning environment contributing to the quality of teaching.

One of the management issues concerns the type of leadership necessary to effect the desired changes leading to improvement of teaching in higher education. Transactional and transformational types of leadership are described by Coleman (1994, p.69) as those associated with effective schools and school improvement. The transformational type is very useful when speaking of improving teaching in higher education as well. It involves empowering staff members, inspiring, stimulating, and motivating them to improve and do their best. According to Leithwood (1992) transformational leaders have three fundamental goals:

> "1). helping staff members develop and maintain a
> collaborative, professional school culture
>
> 2). fostering teacher development;
>
> 3) helping them solve problems together more
> effectively".

The leader in the higher education context would be the department chairperson and the followers would be the lecturers in the department. In accordance with Duignan and Macpherson (1992, p.83) the leader is referred to as an educative leader whose responsibility is to "take responsible leadership actions to create organisational cultures that enhance the growth and development of all involved in teaching and learning".

A problem arises when the person who has been designated as a leader experiences role conflict. This conflict may manifest itself as a split between the administrative and academic roles. When a department chairperson faces conflict between allocating resources for promoting research and writing grant proposals as opposed to allocating resources to promote excellence in teaching and establishing staff development programs the result can be stress, strain, ambiguity and uncertainty both for the chairperson and the entire department (Hall, 1997, p.72). This appears to be a rather distressing state of affairs but Hall is more optimistic in her outlook. She sees the possibility of role holders shaping their own roles, developing opportunities, and setting the parameters for others' roles. In the context of this research the department chairperson can assume the role of motivator and manager of staff development.

The concept of motivation is a complex one and according to Riches (1997) there is no one definition that completely explains it. He does stress the importance of people as the key resource and of the awareness that training and development are key elements in raising levels of motivation among the staff. The literature presents three terms that are basically used interchangeably: staff development, professional development, and faculty development. The common goal of all these concepts is to improve the performance of the individual instructor and therefore be beneficial to the institution and the individual student. There is a "tension between individual and organizational development because of the school's or college's need to improve performance and the recognition that the teacher or lecturer is at the center of any improvement drive" (Middlewood, 1997, p.188). The "form" of the activity in a staff development program will also influence the participants even if they sympathize with the content. If they are uncomfortable with the form, they may resist the content (Middlewood, p.191). Resistance among faculty members will hinder any possibility of implementing a program to improve their performance in the classroom.

Delving further into the role of the leader Lucas (1989) discusses the task of the department chairperson who is a transformational leader as opposed to being a manager. It is the goal of the transformational leader to create a shared commitment to the quality of college teaching among the faculty members of the department:

> "A distinction between a manager and a leader is that a
> manager focuses primarily on maintaining the status
> quo, while a leader inspires others to a shared vision,
> thus empowering them so that extraordinary things can
> be achieved in an organization. A leader is a role model
> who shows what can be done by example, an individual
> who recognizes individual contributions and celebrates
> accomplishments. When one is functioning as a leader,
> there is an excitement about being a department
> chairperson; when one functions as a manager, the job
> is dreary and uninspiring" (Lucas, 1989, p.6).

Lucas reported that in a survey of about a thousand department chairpersons concerning faculty development problems, about three-fifths of them indicated that they were unsuccessful or very unsuccessful in at least one of the following; "improving the overall teaching effectiveness of the department, improving the

quality of performance of those who are poor teachers, motivating alienated tenured faculty and motivating burned-out faculty members"(p.7). She went on to show that transformational leadership offers remedies to all of the above mentioned problems. The chairperson needs to recognize that power is legitimate and necessary and develop a shared vision of a department in which both lecturers and students participate in forming a high-quality experience. The chairperson as a transformational leader must be prepared to take risks and be willing to fail. He or she must make an effort to motivate alienated faculty members, to be an active listener and non-judgmental and caring. The chairperson must orient new faculty members and prevent alienation. Burned-out faculty members offer a special challenge to the chairperson or transformational leader. They must make these staff members feel like they make a difference and have something to contribute. Lucas believes that "We must make our departments places where people can share a sense of excitement and know they make a difference"(p.14).

Another description of the department chairperson in the capacity of a transformational leader, without referring to it by that name, is offered by Trask (1989). He speaks of the need for a committed chairperson to help build a supportive community in the department that will foster professional growth and development and repair the damage done by so much competitive individualism over the years. "The chairperson, like a player-coach, has to be fully familiar with the professional strengths and weaknesses of all department members, in order to know how to encourage their very best efforts as teacher-scholars. That requires, in turn, an ongoing process of professional evaluation"(Trask, p.103). He stresses that the chairperson should help to develop an internal network for mutual assistance, which strengthens the communal character of the department. "The department chairperson must take the lead, first through personal example, and work vigilantly to maintain a sense of common purpose concerning the department's teaching mission"(p.106).

Arreola and Aleamoni (1990) refer to the department chairperson in the role of administrator with responsibilities for rank, pay, and tenure considerations and as facilitators in understanding the results of student feedback questionnaires. Unlike Lucas and Trask, they do not describe the chairperson as a leader with a vision and responsibility for faculty development programs but seem to be staying with the 'manager' role.

Once it has been established that leadership is important in effecting change and improving teaching then it is necessary to examine the different perceptions of improvement that have appeared in the literature over the years.

Perceptions of Improvement

1. Traditional

The ideas concerning improving teaching have been discussed for decades by educators with certain threads remaining constant and new operative suggestions cropping up from time to time. Evidence of this may be seen in the works of W.J. McKeachie that appeared in the early 1950's and were reprinted seven times until the end of the 1970's. He discusses improving teaching and its connection with student feedback. His message was, "teachers can improve, they don't need complete psychoanalysis; and not everyone can use the same methods equally successfully" (McKeachie, 1978, p.273). He too related to the issue of student feedback of faculty and evaluation of instruction and said that: " it is apparent that information from students is required to provide a basis for improved teaching. Student evaluation of instruction is a relatively direct method of obtaining this information"(p.275). McKeachie offered an analysis as to why teachers don't improve their teaching. He mentions four barriers standing in the way of improvement: effort, fear of loss of status, fear of failure, and fear of unfavorable reactions from colleagues. These barriers can be overcome, according to McKeachie, by teachers thinking through their educational goals and by gaining group support and seeking professional help through faculty development programs (p.278). Motivation is also referred to by McKeachie (p.284) as very important if teachers are to be able to respond to feedback from their students "in order to achieve better and better approximations to optimal solutions to the problems of teaching".

2.Organizational

Moving from the earlier decades described above into the latter part of the twentieth century finds the long standing problem of how to improve teaching approached from different angles. One of these is the organizational approach. Dill (1999, p 128) called for universities to turn into "academic learning organizations" with all of the accompanying organizational characteristics and structures. One of these structures is systematic problem solving:

> "One of the clear lessons from the quality management
> movement that recently swept through industry and the

universities is that new knowledge to improve core processes can

emerge from systematic study of those processes in situ

by those who carry them out. This insight motivated

formal training sessions in many organizations

designed to develop skills among operational staff in

objectively observing core processes and in working

collectively to improve them"(p.135).

Dill reports that universities in Finland and Australia and Italy have attempted to develop a culture of systematic problem solving within the academic community as a means of improving processes of teaching and learning. One of their aims was to use processes of evaluation as tools to help faculty members define issues of teaching and learning as functional problems rather than academic or scientific problems. This provided the faculty members with an impetus to become involved in developmental activities aimed toward improvement of teaching and learning. Dill stressed that an important contribution of the quality management movement is that improved outcomes result from collective collaboration of all the individuals and less from refinements made by individuals in their own work. Several of the universities that Dill mentioned created university-wide Centers for Teaching and Learning which provided training in pedagogy, teaching evaluation and student assessment for interested instructors. However, the emphasis in these centers was on individuals rather than groups of faculty members and this according to Dill "limits their contribution to organizational learning" (p.139). In the long run it appears that the movement to turn universities into learning organizations still has a long way to go and most of the academic world will still continue to view faculty members as individuals and offer help for improvement of teaching on an individual basis.

3.Consultation-Based Improvement

Improvement means change. And "people are not likely to change merely because someone tells them to"(Gil, 1987, p.59). It is necessary therefore to find an effective means of inducing change and preventing an attitude of defensiveness. For defensiveness on the part of the instructor would only result in negating change, improvement and growth, loss of encouragement, anxiety and loss of enthusiasm (Seldin, 1989, p.92).

This section of the literature review will reflect the significance of the use of consultation together with feedback from student evaluations in the effort to improve teaching while preventing defensiveness as much as possible. In contrast

to the collective collaboration described previously by Dill, a different method to give direct help to faculty members to improve their teaching was presented by Aleamoni (1978), Erickson and Erickson (1979), Aleamoni and Stevens (1983), Wilson (1986), McKeachie(1987), Seldin(1989), Marsh and Roche(1993), Griffin and Pool (1998) and Piccinin et al.(1999) to name a few, in which a consultation process was used to give individual teachers good ideas about how to improve those aspects of their teaching on which students may have rated them low.

For example, Wilson (1986) describes how teachers participated in half-hour consultations during which the teacher was given prescriptions for improving their lowest rated items. These prescriptions for improvement were arrived at by interviewing thirty-nine excellent teachers and collecting their suggestions for good teaching practices. A Student Description of Teaching questionnaire and a Faculty Self-Description of Teaching questionnaire were also used to broaden the picture and supply information for the teachers in question. The consultation process had several steps or stages to it:

  a. assessment,

  b. preliminary feedback session,

  c. preparing for the main consultation,

  d. conducting the main consultation,

  e. follow- up letter,

  f. friendly phone calls,

  g. additional measures including classroom observations, additional consultations and mid-term evaluations,

  h. second assessment,

  i. third set of teaching evaluations.

The hypothesis of the study was that "there should be statistically important improvement from the first time the course was taught, to the second time on the mean ratings for the items in the Student Description of Teaching for which ideas were given" (Wilson, 1986, p.205). The results showed that certain aspects of teaching improved. "The more behavioral, specific or concrete a suggestion is, the more easily it can be implemented by a teacher and the more likely it is that it will affect students' perceptions of his teaching or her teaching" (p.206). The study continued for a second year with a smaller group of participants.

This group felt that by learning some good ideas they could become better teachers. The results however were not forthcoming. It became clear that knowing about new ideas for things to do in the classroom was not sufficient to cause

improvement. The important step is being able to "actually do something

different of which you have knowledge" (p.210). Just knowing about them does

not mean that the person will be able to carry them out.

Similarly, McKeachie (1987) adds that mere understanding of theories of teaching

and learning is not sufficient. "Faculty need opportunities to develop skills and to

practice these skills with a minimum risk of embarrassment in order to make

improvements"(p.3). Wilson concluded that it was possible that interpersonal

expectations established in the consultation sessions create for some faculty a

desire to fulfill an implied contract with their consultant:

> "It is certainly true that the consulting process sets up a
>
> situation for producing change that is not created by
>
> merely sending faculty members a book of good ideas
>
> along with their Student Description of Teaching results.
>
> Making an appointment and spending an hour talking
>
> with a teacher consultant about concrete ideas gives
>
> structure and impetus to a faculty member's taking steps
>
> to improve teaching" (p.211).

Wilson (1987, p.22) suggests that it may be a good idea to use emeritus faculty as

mentors: teachers who could draw on their many years of experience to pass along

the "tricks of the trade of teaching" to the junior staff members.

It is important to note that Wilson (1986) mentions the commitment on the part of

the faculty to change what he supposed was implicit in their acceptance of the

invitation to participate in the research project. This commitment may reflect the

feeling of accountability discussed in previous sections of this literature review.

The importance and effectiveness of working with a consultant to help improve

teaching was also fostered by McKeachie (1987, p.6). He mentions three

functions that can be performed by the consultant: first, identification of important

information from the evaluation data, separating the critical from the superficial,

second, lowering anxiety and distress and instead providing hope and

encouragement. Third, the consultant can provide operative suggestions about

what to do about the data, offering alternative methods of teaching that may lead

to improvement and more productivity in the classroom. It is also important that

the consultant is independent and unconnected or related to any decision-making

group such as a promotions committee otherwise the attitude of defensiveness

referred to previously may set in. Similar sentiments about the value of working

with consultants were echoed by Gil (1987, p. 59) who said: "With feedback the

consultant develops interpersonal communication with the instructor and uses support and encouragement to help him or her improve". Gil strongly supports establishing an agreement or contract between the consultant and the instructor so that they can work well together to achieve improvement in instruction. An earlier study carried out by Stevens and Aleamoni (1985) found that instructors who received student-ratings feedback with consultation maintained higher student ratings over a ten-year period than instructors who received student-ratings feedback alone. The Wilson study of 1986 prompted Marsh and Roche (1993) to conduct another investigation along similar lines because they felt that "despite the obvious appeal of Wilson's feedback/consultation process and its successful application, empirical support for its effectiveness is weak, based on a non-experimental design that does not rule out alternative explanations"(p.224). They felt that the consultation intervention should work and in their investigation they attempted to "provide a methodologically stronger paradigm for testing this intervention and an apparently stronger evaluation of its potential usefulness" (p.225).

There were other limitations in the various research projects on consultation based improvement that motivated a group of Canadian researchers, Piccinin et al.1999) to conduct additional research as to the impact of individual consultation on teaching improvement as measured by changes in student ratings. These researchers felt that previous research was limited in several aspects of design. First was the problem of sampling. If volunteer professors were used to test the effects of consultation "they may be more highly motivated to improve their teaching than professors who actually seek consultation services at a university teaching center" (p.76). Marsh and Roche (1993) made a similar comment about the sample tested in the Wilson (1986) study. Piccinin et al. (1999) decided to use subjects who sought help on their own initiative. The second design issue concerned the failure of previous studies to use longitudinal designs. These researchers covered a period of seven academic years and used a larger sample size than previous studies. A third problem concerned the nature of the consultation service- providers. Other studies had used emeritus faculty mentors as consultants, or trained faculty or trained graduate students. According to Piccinin et al (1999). "It is difficult to compare teaching improvements across studies when results may have been confounded by the consultant's level of expertise"(p.76). Lastly, "no study was found comparing the impact of different forms of individual consultation, yet it is apparent that various consultation

processes have been employed across studies"(p.77). For this reason the Piccinin et al. research allowed for a comparative examination of the effects of different types of consultation on teaching improvement. The research findings in Piccinin et al. showed support for the "efficacy of individual consultation for improving student ratings of teaching"(p.86). The results also showed that the positive effects lasted for up to three years after the consultation process. And it was also clear that "intervention approaches differentially affect teaching improvement. These results point to the appropriateness of utilizing different consultation approaches based on the needs of the individual consultee"(p.86). An effort to oppose the widespread popularity of the consultation intervention was attempted by Hativa (1995) when she proposed a new model for teaching improvement designed to overcome the "shortcomings of centralized consultation-based teaching improvement"(p.378). She suggested the implementation of instruction specialists (IS) who would deal with teachers on a one to one basis. The IS would function as a participant-observer in the classroom and would also use information from the student feedback on classroom teaching in order to suggest methods for improving weak areas which had been identified through these two sources.

The problem with this model is that the IS does exactly what the consultants do in the other research described in this section, even though Hativa has expressed criticism of their work because of their centralization. The emphasis of consultation however as described by the other researchers in this section is on the individualized treatment and not a mass effort as reported by Hativa. Interestingly enough, a few years later, Hativa and Goodyear (2000, p.5) reverted to an earlier opinion about the value of consultation-based improvement. "However, of all types of interventions, individualized consultation based on feedback from students is the most promising method for improving instruction". In conclusion it appears that consultation-based improvement procedures in conjunction with data from the student feedback questionnaires are overwhelmingly accepted by the researchers as the most efficient and productive methods of achieving the goal of improving teaching in higher education.

Interpretation and Communication Foster Improvement

Much of the literature on the topic of improving instruction and student feedback refers to an article by Rotem and Glasman (1979, p.507) in which they conclude that: "feedback from student ratings...does not seem to be effective for the

purpose of improving performance of university teachers". In contrast, other researchers including the widely quoted Marsh, brought evidence to show that feedback to the teacher did indeed produce gains in student ratings and in student motivation and achievement. Arubayi (1987) comments on this difference of opinion:

> "Though some authors disagree, the balance of findings
> in the literature agree that student ratings of instruction
> lead to teacher effectiveness and improvement of
> instruction provided appropriate feedback and expert
> advice are made available to instructors" (p.274).

Another attempt to explain this apparent inconsistency by attributing it to "methodological differences in how feedback is provided and to the interaction of instructor characteristics with the feedback methodology" was made by Stevens (1987, p.34). He suggested the need to learn how to maximize the effects of feedback for instructional improvement and the need to identify factors that either limit or allow for improvement. Stevens offers a model consisting of external and internal conditions that influence the instructor's cognitive state. This state consists of three aspects: motivation, attitudes and beliefs and knowledge and skills. The external and internal factors may greatly influence the way in which feedback information is received and used by the instructor. The situation varies from individual to individual. Stevens concludes that in order to achieve instructional improvement it is necessary to examine another model that "suggests the use of reliable but flexible methods for providing feedback information to the instructor. It also suggests a system of institutional support, reward and training for instructional improvement"(Stevens, 1987, p.37). What Stevens is saying basically, is that the instructor must be taught how to conceptualize, interpret and apply feedback information. The instructor must also learn how to implement alternative teaching methods in response to the feedback he/she has received from the students or his peers or his supervisors. Without going through such a process the instructor "may be unable to gain the knowledge or support that is necessary to effect change"(p.37). If this were to be the case then the student feedback would not lead to improvement in instruction.

The problems involved in interpreting the feedback and evaluation data by the instructor and by other users of the data were dealt with by Franklin and Theall (1990) who claimed that it is necessary to design and implement methods for communicating ratings to those who use them and prevent improper use of ratings

results. "Utilization of ratings is one of the least often studied or discussed issues in the realm of ratings phenomena" (p.79). An example of the problems of interpretation of results of SEF by teachers is offered by Cashin (1990) based on the idea that students rate different academic fields differently:

> "The primary implication is that we need to decide what to do about this phenomenon when we interpret student-ratings data. Administrators can no longer look at data from a variety of fields and unquestioningly compare numbers directly. Instructors cannot look at two courses they are teaching and necessarily assume, if their ratings for the two courses are the same, that they taught both courses equally well"(p.118).

In direct contrast to this view we find Murray and Renaud (1995, p.38) who claim that: "it is reasonable for student rating forms to be similar or perhaps even identical in content in different fields or departments". One concludes from this situation that the inconsistencies in the research on student ratings will impact on the interpretation of the ratings by the users.

In an experiment run by Baxter (1991) in an Australian university, teachers who had undergone evaluation by students in a process called TEVAL were given a summary that provided university mean ratings for all TEVAL users. They were then polled to determine the helpfulness of the summary. Most (72%) found it helpful but some asked for more help in interpreting the results.

Wagenaar (1995) also felt that evaluations are important to faculty members but they must receive assistance in interpreting evaluation results and constructing appropriate responses in the classroom.

A balance is struck by Hounsell (1999) who believes that on the one hand the teacher is best equipped to make sense of feedback, and "weigh its significance against a knowledge of the subject matter in question, the teaching aims and objectives and the interests, aspirations and capabilities of the students who provided the feedback"(p.170). While on the other hand "it does not seem unreasonable to concede that there are occasions when involving others in the challenge of analyzing and interpreting feedback has very particular and distinctive benefits"(p.170).

Neumann (2000) discussed the issue of interpretation of feedback results in a study done on the use of Rating Interpretation Guides (RIGS) in Australian universities. Student evaluation of teaching has been taking place in Australian

universities since 1987 and is done on a voluntary basis. Neumann stresses the
fact that "there are multiple evaluation users who have different purposes for
which they need and use evaluation results"(p.124). She mentions four of them:

> "The first of the users is the individual academic
> requesting an evaluation of their course and teaching.
> The second are those users who are members of
> selection, tenure, and promotion committees. The third
> group of evaluators are staff developers who are called
> on to advise members of the university community on
> all aspects of evaluation. The fourth group of users are
> students".

The common denominator of all of these users is that they all relate to the aspect
of the evaluation concerning quality of teaching. The study concerned how rating
results are communicated to the four groups of users to assist them in the
interpretation and use of evaluations. If the users examine the statistical data
without any assistance then they may make major errors in comparing themselves
with other teachers and in forming decisions. "In practice, with the natural need to
draw conclusions, the means provided are often treated as absolutes rather than as
indicators of perceptions"(Neumann, 2000, p.125). In light of this situation and
because there is increasing use and importance of student evaluation of teaching
in Australian universities the researchers believed that they had to "improve the
reporting format to encourage fair and meaningful interpretations and
comparisons of results"(Neumann, 2000, p.126).
This led to the development of Rating Interpretation Guides (RIGS) adopting
categories for comparison: discipline, course level, and class size. Academics who
elected to evaluate their teaching then received their own individual report and a
RIG that provided a way of comparing their results with those of other teachers
within a similar teaching context. The system has been in use for four years with
positive feedback from the users. The researchers feel that now the time has come
for in-depth and large-scale evaluation of the RIGS. They conclude that: "while
RIGS assist in providing an appropriate comparative context for the purposes of
overall result interpretation, they do not provide the complete answer to
understanding an evaluation result"(Neumann, p.129). We are reminded once
again by these researchers that student evaluation surveys provide one source of
information and one method of data collection. In order to make reasonable

decisions and judgments it is necessary to have different data sources and means of gathering data.

Similarly, another team of Australian researchers, Ballantyne et al (2000), researched the usefulness of student evaluation of teaching in contributing to improved teaching performance. While Neumann was concerned with interpretation of results, this group was concerned with the extent to which staff responded to and applied the information obtained in the student evaluation of teaching. Their research concerned a staff development project at an Australian university which illustrated how student evaluation data can be extended and contribute to the improvement of teaching performance and course effectiveness across the university.

> "Staff can be encouraged to take follow-through action
> on information obtained through the use of student
> evaluation instruments, thus providing a significant
> value-added component to the student evaluation
> process" (Ballantyne et al., 2000, p.222).

The research showed a considerable difference in perception between staff and students concerning the need for academic and course development designed to improve university teaching and learning. The students perceived a greater need for this than the staff. "Whatever the reason for the differences, these findings reinforce the need for staff and students to share their perceptions and so gain a better understanding of the whole process and context of teaching and learning"(Ballantyne et al., p.231). In essence what is needed is greater communication between staff and students. In an effort to apply the results of the study, staff and students were invited to participate in a collaborative attempt to develop booklets to support and complement the student evaluation process. The result was a series of booklets called Enhancing Teaching and Learning and comprised ten issues. The booklets provide resources to enable staff to respond to problems and challenges that had appeared in the student evaluation data. There was widespread distribution of the booklets that covered over 25% of the 1000 full-time academic staff at the university. The researchers concluded that "users' responses do support the contention that the booklets have been able to offer an approach to academic staff development that is, above all, easily accessible to those in most need of it" (Ballantyne et al., 2000, p.235). They stressed the point that "if the quality of teaching and learning is to be addressed in any real sense in our universities, the need to look at teaching and learning from the students'

perspective must be recognized"(p.235). This is reminiscent of a thought expressed at an earlier date by Feldens and Duncan (1986, p.648):

> "Aren't all these efforts at improving university
> teaching made in order to improve the quality of
> students' experiences and educational outcomes; if so,
> shouldn't we get used to the idea of listening to what
> students have to say about their teachers and,
> consequently, about the quality of university
> teaching?"

This section of the literature review has dealt with the topic of improving teaching and its various components. Student evaluations of faculty serve as a trigger, pointing to a need for improvement at a time when quality in higher education is given top priority. A link has been established between concepts of leadership, motivation, perceptions of improvement and the need for tools of communication and interpretation of student evaluation of faculty. These issues will be pursued in the questionnaires and interviews that will be conducted as part of the research for this thesis followed by analysis and interpretation of the data in an attempt to answer the proposed research questions.

Chapter Three
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will reflect the paradigms within which the research will be carried out and analyzed. The choice and 'fit' of the paradigms and justification for using them for the research questions of this thesis will be explained. Moreover, the role and responsibility of the researcher in the chosen paradigm will be clarified. This section will also describe where and from whom the data will be collected, the sampling process, and determination of instrumentation and procedures for data collection and the types of analyses to be used in this piece of research. The issue of trustworthiness or validity of the research will also be dealt with. This chapter of the thesis will also explain the limitations of this study and the ethical issues involved in carrying out this research.

Research Questions and Sub-Questions

The research questions that have emerged from the review of the literature concern four areas: evaluation and appraisal, accountability, student evaluations of faculty and improvement of teaching. Questions were asked in order to shed light on the main issue of this thesis: University Faculty Members' Perceptions and Attitudes towards Accountability to Students and Improvement of Teaching. It was the aim of this study to attempt to reach a deeper understanding of the attitudes of university faculty towards their profession and their students. It was in this light that the following research questions were posed:

1. Do university faculty members in one teaching unit in a university in Israel feel accountable to their students, their profession, and their institution?
    a. Do faculty members perceive their students as customers or clients?
    b. How do staff members stay abreast of their field professionally?
2. Do teachers value the feedback from the Student Evaluation of Faculty (SEF)?
3. Do teachers seek to improve their teaching based on the SEF?
4. What are the means by which teachers improve their instruction?
5. What is the function of the chairperson of the teaching unit in effecting improvement in teaching?

Locating the Study: Choice of Paradigms

The choice of a paradigm to be applied to research requires a decision to be made by the researcher. This is by no means an easy task as Robson explains: "The task of carrying out an enquiry is complicated by the fact that there is no overall consensus about how to conceptualize the doing of research"(Robson, 1996,p.20). It is possible to assign two labels to all of the different views that are associated with research models. "One is variously labeled as positivistic, natural science based, hypothetico-deductive, quantitative or even simply "scientific"; the other as interpretive, ethnographic or qualitative - among several other labels"(p.20).

The literature on educational research reflects a myriad of opinions on the terminology and explanations of the different paradigms. Every writer has his/her own preference and engages in a battle to justify the importance of that specific approach to problem solving. For example, Bassey (1999, p.42), an advocate of qualitative research, says: "Of the various terms used to describe these beliefs I use the terms positivist paradigm and interpretive paradigm. (Students need to recognize that my drawing of this distinction and my attempts at using these terms are unlikely to be acceptable to all academics)". He explains that the methodology of the positivists is often described as 'quantitative' because they deal with quantities that can be measured and subjected to statistical analysis. Positivists according to Bassey's explanation believe "there is a reality 'out there' in the world that exists whether it is observed or not and irrespective of who observes"(p.42). They believe that the entire world is rational and given enough time it should be possible for it to be understood through patient research. The results of the research may provide predictions about future events.

Another example of the debate among the researchers is mentioned by Cohen and Manion (1998) who refer to the controversy as the positivist – anti positivist debate. They use the terms 'normative' and 'interpretive' to describe the contrasting sides.

> "The normative paradigm contains two major orienting ideas; first that human behavior is essentially rule-governed; and second, that it should be investigated by the methods of natural science. The interpretive paradigm, in contrast to its normative counterpart, is characterized by a concern for the individual. Whereas normative studies are positivist, all theories constructed

within the context of the interpretive paradigm tend to be anti-positivist"(p.36).

Positivist Approach

The scientific or positivist approach to research usually begins with a theory. A hypothesis is deduced from the theory, it is expressed as a relationship between two variables, and it is tested by experiment or another type of empirical investigation. The outcome will confirm or negate or modify the theory. Replication is possible when necessary. This kind of research approach appears to be orderly and linear as opposed to the interpretive approach where theories and concepts "tend to arise from the enquiry"(Robson, 1996, p.19).

Interpretive Approach

Some people tend to refer to the interpretive approach as "hypothesis generating" as opposed to "hypothesis testing" research. Interpretive research is exploratory hoping to lead to discoveries in the field. Bassey (1999) offers a description of the interpretive researcher. "The interpretive researcher cannot accept the idea of there being a reality 'out there' which exists irrespective of people, for reality is seen as a construct of the human mind"(p.43). He explains that the data collected by these researchers is usually verbal. The data may come from interviews, fieldwork notes, diaries etc. This data is usually "richer in a language sense, than positivist data and perhaps because of this quality, the methodology of the interpretive researchers is described as qualitative". Interpretation is a search for deep perspectives and theoretical insights. In contrast to the positivist view, "interpretation may offer possibilities, but no certainties, as to the outcome of future events"(p.44).

A variation on the theme of qualitative research is found in the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.39-45) who are advocates of 'naturalistic enquiry'. They present a range of characteristics for what they refer to as 'naturalistic enquiry' and claim that these characteristics are appropriate for real world research and are compatible with case study. Some of these traits are: natural setting, human instrument, qualitative methods, purposive sampling, emergent design, case study reporting mode, tentative application and special criteria for trustworthiness.

There is one researcher who is adamantly qualitative and convinced that at some time in the future everyone will come around to the interpretive point of view. Stake (1995, p.46) says: "There are times when all researchers are going to be

interpretive, holistic, naturalistic, and uninterested in cause, and then, by definition, they will be qualitative inquirers."

Resolving the Conflict

Real life has very few absolute situations. A dialectical approach usually tries to resolve conflicting issues. This can be seen in an attempt to resolve the positivist vs. interpretive debate. Robson is of the opinion that:

> "Undoubtedly there are situations and topics where a "scientific" quantitative approach is called for and others where a qualitative naturalistic study is appropriate. But there are still others that will be even better served by a marriage of the two traditions. This view that the differences between the two traditions can best be viewed as technical rather than epistemological, enabling the enquirer to mix and match methods according to what best fits a particular study, is essential to the approach taken in later chapters of the book "(p.20).

Indeed, the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research can be misleading. Qualitative researchers do not possess a distinct set of methods that are all their own (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). They can use a variety of methods such as interviews, surveys, participant observation, and statistics. In general, qualitative research implies an emphasis on processes and meanings over measures of quantity, intensity, and frequency.

Miles and Huberman (1994) also believe that there should be a linking between qualitative and quantitative data. "But at bottom, we have to face the fact that numbers and words are both needed if we are to understand the world"(p.40). They present three designs linking the two types of data "These designs underline an important point. Both types of data can be productive for descriptive, reconnoitering, exploratory, inductive, opening-up purposes. And both can be productive for explanatory, confirmatory, hypothesis-testing purposes"(p.42).

Focus

The study in this thesis belongs mainly to the qualitative rubric but will also involve some quantitative aspects. The title of the research and the research questions are concerned with perceptions of faculty about accountability to

students and improvement of teaching by means of the student evaluations of faculty questionnaires. The purpose is to explore the situation in one teaching unit in one Faculty at the university and to emerge with an understanding of what is happening there, but not to generalize to other departments or even other universities. This involves questioning teachers, allowing them to tell their stories and trying to understand their feelings and perceptions and the reasons behind them and arriving at a meaningful and coherent interpretation of what they have said. Stake (1995, p.42) emphasizes the centrality of interpretation in qualitative research. "An ongoing interpretive role of the researcher is prominent in qualitative case study"(p.43).

Role of the Researcher

In the qualitative paradigm the researcher according to Wellington (2000, p.41) is a key instrument in the research and by virtue of his/her "positionality" does not have a neutral stance and is not a neutral observer. In Wolcott's (1995, p.186) view every researcher has a healthy bias from which he/she is drawn to a particular issue and seeks to deepen knowledge and understanding of the problem or situation under investigation. The researcher in this study for this thesis is a veteran teacher with thirty-four years employment in the specific teaching unit that is the unit of analysis for this research. The researcher has had personal experience over the years with the issues being investigated but does not feel that this presents a prejudice which can affect her role as the researcher. On the contrary, the researcher believes that prior experience with the evaluation procedures at the university has served to sharpen the interest in and focus of the investigation. The researcher is a colleague of the interviewees with no administrative role in employing, terminating employment or promoting fellow teachers and therefore presented no looming threat to the other staff members. The personal relationships with the colleagues gave the researcher the status of an "insider" in this case study and allowed the interviews to proceed on familiar common ground. One further consideration in the positioning of the researcher as an insider is that there are many colleagues in this unit who are also engaged in doctoral research projects thereby creating an atmosphere in which there is mutual interest in helping colleagues with their research.

Case Study

The study in the research of this thesis also falls within the parameters and definitions of 'case study' (Bassey, 1999, Miles and Huberman (1984) Robson (1996) and Punch(2000). It is a study of singularity as defined by Bassey:

"An essential feature of case study is that sufficient data are collected for researchers to be able to explore significant features of the case and to put forward interpretations for what is observed. Another essential feature is that the study is conducted mainly in its natural context. Case study is a study of a singularity conducted in depth in natural settings"(p.47).

A similar sentiment emphasizing the notion of singularity was expressed by Bogdan and Biklen (1982, p.58) who offered a suitable operative definition for case study: "A case study is a detailed examination of one setting, or one single subject, or one single depository of documents or one particular event". The unit in the case of this thesis was a teaching unit in a large university in the center of Israel.

Although some writers refer to case study as a methodology and even have written a book with the title, <u>Case Study Method</u> (Gomm et al. 2000), other scholars in the field refer to case study as a strategy, not a method or a methodological approach. "Case study is a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence"(Robson, 1996, p.52). However, just to make the situation somewhat more confusing, Robson also refers to 'case study methodology' (p.51) in the same source quoted above.

An important part of the case study strategy is the issue of 'boundary'. Stake (1995) describes case study as having a boundary and containing a coherent system. He said that case study was: "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances"(p.xi). Bassey (1999) refers to the issue of boundary as connected to the idea of 'a singularity' mentioned in the previous paragraph. But a specific reference to both terms is offered here: "An educational case study is an empirical enquiry which is conducted within a localized boundary of space and time (i.e. a singularity)"(p.58). This research study was bounded by the fact that it involved

faculty members from a single teaching unit in a single university and the research was carried out on the campus of the university that was a real-life context.

Three other characteristics of case studies are explained by Punch (p.153). He stresses the need to give focus to the research, to preserve the "wholeness, unity and integrity of the case (p.153)" and that "multiple sources of data and multiple data collections methods are likely to be used, typically in a naturalistic setting"(p.153). In these respects the research of this thesis can qualify as a case study. The focus of this investigation was on a small group of individuals (teachers) functioning within a group setting (the teaching unit) and interacting with other individuals (students) and involved in a process (evaluation) that led to a chain of actions and reactions.

The characteristics of the research also are compatible with the characteristics of 'naturalistic enquiry' set up by Lincoln and Guba and mentioned previously in this section.

It is important to note the drawback or limitation that some people find in using case study. "A common criticism of the case study concerns its generalizability"(Punch p.153). The question that arises is how can one generalize from examining just one case. It was not the purpose of this study to arrive at generalizations about any or other or all teaching units at Israeli universities. Rather, some concepts and propositions were put forward at the conclusion of the research for future inquiry. Bassey (1999) refers to the idea of "fuzzy generalizations" arising from case study research. "They are 'qualified generalizations' carrying the idea of possibility but no certainty"(p.46).

A rather different approach to the issue of generalization was taken by Wolcott (1995). He responded by posing a question and supplying an answer. "What can we learn from studying only one of anything? All we can"(p.17). He later added the "Each case study is unique, but not so unique that we cannot learn from it and apply its lessons more generally"(p.175).

This particular case study can also be referred to as an 'exploratory' case study. It is a study that does not begin with propositions but it does have a purpose. As Yin (1994, p.21) explains: "Instead of stating propositions, the design for an exploratory study should state a purpose, as well as the criteria by which an exploration will be judged successful". It poses questions without predictive hypotheses.

To summarize very briefly, a review of the literature on research paradigms led the researcher to the conclusion that the research for this thesis may be characterized as a qualitative, modified, exploratory, case study. This rather lengthy classification reflects the multiple facets that characterize this research.

Data Collection Procedures

Sampling

The literature reflects many explanations as to sampling strategies for all kinds of research models. However, with regard to the research in this thesis, a modified case study, the relevant literature concerns sampling for qualitative research. "There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry"(Patton, 1990, p.184). This indeed follows the notions mentioned above about qualitative investigations. The unit of analysis in this study is a specific group of university teachers in one teaching unit. For the purpose of this study the sampling was purposive, involving the "handpicking of typical or interesting cases"(Blaxter et al. 2001, p.163). The case under investigation was one teaching unit selected by the researcher out of a field containing a much larger number of teaching units.

> "Purposive sampling increases the likelihood that variability common in any social phenomenon will be represented in the data, in contrast to random sampling which tries to achieve variation through the use of random selection and large sample size"(Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p.45).

Procedure: Questionnaires

Teachers from one teaching unit from one Faculty at the university were asked to fill out questionnaires for the purpose of providing descriptive information about the population and knowledge about the 'real life' use of the SEF evaluation, teachers' attitudes and perceptions of their roles. With permission from the department chairperson, the questionnaires were distributed at the opening staff meeting of the academic year to the thirty-five teachers of the teaching unit who were scheduled to be teaching that year.

The researcher explained to the entire group that the results of the questionnaire were going to be used in research as part of a doctoral thesis and stressed the voluntary nature of their participation in the research. Teachers were given pre-addressed return envelopes and were requested to return the questionnaires to the

researcher by return mail or inter-office mail. Complete anonymity and confidentiality were promised.

Two weeks later reminders were sent out with replacement questionnaires to all staff members in case any questionnaires were lost or missing. There was full co-operation and within one month all 36 questionnaires were returned.

Procedure: Interviews

The researcher subsequently selected a sample of 19 teachers from the group of 36 teachers who had filled out the questionnaires and conducted interviews with them to explore the issues in greater depth. Each potential interviewee was contacted by phone by the interviewer and asked if he/she was willing to participate in the research. As with the questionnaire the issue of voluntarism in this effort was stressed. Once agreement was reached an appointment was scheduled at the interviewee's convenience. A one-hour time slot was allocated for each interview with most of them actually lasting about 45 minutes. The interviews were carried out over a six-week period during a faculty strike at the university. Whereas a strike might be perceived as injecting a negative influence over activities at the university and creating bad tempers among staff members, in fact the opposite was true. Within the Israeli context strikes on university campuses are not rare occurrences. It is common for either students or faculty members to declare grievances concerning tuition rates or salary scale issues before the onset of the academic year. Therefore more often that not the academic year commences with either a teachers' strike or a student strike. Tempers are rarely riled and people appreciate the extra time available for dealing with issues other than work at the university. The strike at this point in time afforded a non-pressurized time for both the interviewer and the interviewees to arrange and conduct interviews. The meetings were conducted individually either in the interviewee's office or in the interviewer's office depending on the space availability at the particular time. At the end of each interview each interviewee was told that he/she would receive a copy of the transcribed interview for their perusal and comments. Although most of the interviewees declined the offer they were all sent copies anyway. Only one interviewee requested to add some information to the transcript.

Context of the Research Population

The 36 teachers who received and returned the questionnaires are all employees of the English as a Foreign Language Unit at a large Israeli university located in the

center of Israel. Part of this group of teachers are full-time employees and a larger portion of the population is employed on a part-time basis. The population consisted of both male and female teachers from a variety of national backgrounds. Other demographic information relevant to this group will appear in the Findings-Analysis sections. The 19 teachers who were interviewed were those who taught at least twelve hours a week out of a possible sixteen-hour workload. The researcher's assumption was that these teachers had a greater commitment and obligation to the university as an employer than those who teach only two or four hours per week. These key informants had the following characteristics: tenured and non-tenured, veteran staff and fairly new appointees, full-time and part-time, a variety of professional ranks and representatives of both sexes. All of the teachers in the unit hold at least MA degrees with several holding PhD degrees. Some teachers have special teaching certification qualifications. The diversity in the population allowed for a more complete view of the situation in the particular teaching unit in a large university in central Israel. All of the teachers in this population teach EFL courses to undergraduate and graduate students at the university. The courses are compulsory for all students and the average class size is about 25 students. The teaching unit focuses mainly on instruction but encourages teachers to engage in research whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Development of Data Collection Instruments

Three types of instruments were used for data collection purposes:

Questionnaires

Semi-structured interviews

Documents pertinent to the research.

Traditionally it has been accepted that "some methods (structured interviews, postal questionnaires, standardized tests of performance and attitude inventories) have been categorized as quantitative, while others have been categorized as qualitative"(Scott and Usher (1996, p.59). However this view of two distinct and opposed approaches is being challenged. "This is not to deny that differences exist; but it is to suggest that the two methods do not belong within separate research paradigms and thus can sensibly be used within the same investigation"(p.59). It is in this light that the above- mentioned instruments have been chosen and used in the same research.

Data Collection Instrument: *Questionnaire* (Appendix A)

The questionnaire has traditionally been considered an instrument belonging to the quantitative camp, usually used for surveys of large groups and containing questions which were closed, structured and factual. However, it is possible to use open ended, opinion, and unstructured types of questions as well. This would allow the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data in written form (Scott and Usher, 1996, p.61).

For the purposes of this research a short questionnaire was used to gather two types of data. First there was basic demographic information about the target population concerning: years of experience in university teaching, training, or preparation for university teaching, age, rank, gender, and status (full or part-time staff). In the second section questions were also asked about teachers' awareness of the SEF questionnaire and their individual contact (or lack of) with that evaluative measure. The availability of opportunities and desire for improving teaching were also investigated in the questionnaire.

Because of the nature of the target population in this case study, the questionnaire was prepared in English. Even though the research is being carried out in an Israeli university where Hebrew is the primary language, all of the respondents in this case are English teachers and have mother tongue fluency in English even though they may be native speakers of other languages. The questionnaire was composed of open and closed questions, fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, comment-on, ranking, and Likert scale type questions.

> "Likert scales provide an excellent means of gathering
> opinions and attitudes and they can relate to terms
> other than agree or disagree. They provide a great deal
> of information in a short period of time and lend
> themselves to simple and effective analysis.
> Additionally the data can provide descriptive
> information or it may be manipulated in more complex
> way"(Anderson and Arsenault, 1999, p.175).

The questionnaire for this research was designed by the researcher. It had a booklet format of four pages, for easy reading and handling. The first page had an introductory paragraph indicating that confidentiality would be observed and

informing the respondents as to how and where to return the questionnaires.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections: the first section requested personal background information and the second section asked about attitudes and perceptions concerning student evaluation of faculty. The first section had nine questions requiring respondents to circle the appropriate answer or respond in one-word answers. The questions related to gender, age, native language, employment, professional training, interests, and status at the university. The second section was composed of 13 questions of which four were open-ended, five questions required circling appropriate answers and four questions which involved using a scale to rate responses in the Likert style. The questions in the second section were concerned with topics of Student Evaluation of Faculty, accountability, improving teaching and quality of teaching.

This tool lent itself to both qualitative and quantitative analyses providing descriptive statistics as well as opinions and views. It should be noted that the questionnaire was used for numerical analysis offering descriptive information and did not seek to establish statistically significant relationships between variables. This is in contrast to what is commonly perceived as the quantitative use of a questionnaire. Questionnaires of this type will "serve most needs and achieve reliable and valid responses" (Anderson and Arsenault 1999, p.171). The questionnaire was piloted on six EFL teachers from a separate small college prior to its distribution. Revisions and modifications were made on the questionnaires subsequent to the piloting process. The pilot teachers were specifically requested to relate to the clarity of the questions in their comments on the questionnaire. The use of the survey questionnaire helped me as the researcher locate central themes of the thesis and heightened my sensitivity to the core problems.

Semi-structured Interviews – (Appendix B)

One month after the administration of the questionnaire, a series of semi-structured interviews were held with selected respondents. Interviews are an accepted method of inquiry in qualitative research and in case study. In fact, "the interview is a prime source of case study data"(Anderson and Arsenault, 1999, p.155). These interviews, involving personal interaction, afforded the researcher the opportunity to move into uncharted territory when possible and brought new depths of understanding to issues relating to the study. "Interview can reach the parts which other methods cannot reach" (Wellington, 2000, p.71). A second use of the interview was to identify key informants who are part of the case. "Often

key informants have inside knowledge which is critical to the case and these individuals can enhance the validity of the conclusions drawn"(p.156). The semi-structured interview also allows the researcher to gear parts of the interview to each respondent individually. The researcher had a free hand in the sequencing of questions and topics, in their wording and in the time and attention given to various topics (Robson, 1996, p.237).

Some scholars have pitted various types of interviews against one another as part of the 'paradigmatic quantitative/qualitative hostility of past generations' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p.72). However an increasing number of researchers are using multi-method approaches to interviewing to obtain broader and hopefully better results.

Open-ended questions are commonly used in interviews because of the advantages they afford the researcher. Cohen and Manion (1998, p.277) mention that open-ended questions offer flexibility, allowing the interviewer to probe and go into more depth if he/she chooses. This type of question encourages cooperation and rapport between the interviewer and the respondent. It also enables the interviewer to make a truer assessment of what the respondent really believes. Open-ended questions may also lead to unexpected or unanticipated answers that may bring forth previously un-thought-of relationships. An obvious disadvantage is that the interviewer could lose control of the interview itself. And as will be explained in the analysis section an un-structured interview is more difficult to analyze than a structured, closed one.

The interview consisted of open-ended issue-oriented questions. "The purpose for the most part was not to get simple yes and no answers but description of an episode, a linkage, an explanation"(Stake, 1995, p.65). At the start of each interview the interviewer provided opening background information and explanation as an introduction to the topic for the interviewee. The interviewees were told that there were four different areas to be covered in the interview. A verbal promise was made to each interviewee that no parts of the interview would be shared with any other teacher or administrator and that all participants' identities would remain anonymous. The interviews were tape-recorded with permission from the interviewees. The accounts were transcribed and submitted to the respondents for an accuracy check (p.66). This was done in order to heighten the reliability of the data.

Documentation - <u>Appendix C</u>

Documents such as the SEF evaluation form, the booklet published by the students' union with the written SEF results, letters, and other intentional documents from the Israel Council on Higher Education as available were used as important sources of data for this research. Examination of certain documents by the interviewer and the interviewee during the actual interview provided an opportunity for a hands-on interaction between the respondent and the document. Other documents provided the interviewer with insights concerning the processes in question. The documents in question have a policy focus, "examining materials relevant to a particular set of policy decisions"(Blaxter et al. 2001).

Four basic criteria for evaluating documents were summarized by Denscombe (2001, p.167). He referred to checking authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. Denscombe mentioned that these are categories that had been presented previously by Platt (1981) and Scott (1990).

Triangulation

The three sources of data described above should allow for the process of "triangulation: the use of multiple data sources, data collection methods, and theories to validate research findings. Triangulation also helps to eliminate bias and can help detect errors or anomalies in your discoveries"(Anderson and Arsenault, 1999, p.131).

As Richardson (1996, p.193) explained in discussing triangulation: "the essential rationale is that if you use a number of different methods or sources of information to tackle a question, the resulting answer is likely to be accurate". If used properly triangulation should make it difficult to refute conclusions coming from multiple data sources. A further explanation of the triangulation process will be presented in the analysis section of this thesis.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Qualitative

Qualitative data from the interviews needs to be analyzed as it is received. The data analysis was inductive, as the purpose of the study was to reach an understanding of individual perceptions and not prove a preconceived theory. The analysis was a constantly evolving activity. According to Robson (1996, p.370): "There is no clear and accepted set of conventions for analysis corresponding to

those observed with quantitative data. But there are ways in which qualitative data can be dealt with systematically."

In this research the raw data was organized as it was collected into a filing system. The taped interviews were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriber and checked for accuracy. After numerous re-readings of the transcriptions the data was then organized by the researcher into manageable units, combined and synthesized so that constructs, patterns and theme would become evident. Anderson and Arsenault (1999, p.158) mention two approaches to analyzing the data from a case study:

> "One approach is to use an analytical strategy which takes the literature and theoretical background of the case and uses it as an organizational framework. The second approach, the qualitative research approach, organizes the data into descriptive themes that emerged during the data collection and preliminary analysis. It is possible to merge these approaches by first organizing your analysis according to emergent themes, then extending the analysis to examine the findings in consideration of existing literature and theory".

This study employed such a combination of analytical methods for the case study in question. The eclectic choice of analytical methods is based on the various options suggested by researchers in the area of case study and qualitative analysis that will be reflected in the coming paragraphs. Despite the differences and the wide range of views that are offered to the researcher, there is in practice a lot of similarity in the procedures that will be described. One premise that was shared by all was that the information that was collected would start shaping and informing the analysis.

Firstly, there is now a wide range of software computer programs on the market an example of which is NUD*IST (Non-numerical unstructured data indexing, searching and theory building) available for analyzing qualitative data. However, due to financial and other pragmatic considerations the analysis for this research precluded the use of a packaged program and therefore was managed completely by the researcher.

In contrast to the commonly accepted idea that researchers are outside of the data it is felt that in qualitative research the researcher has an important place within the data as an insider. One such possibility for approaching qualitative analysis is

based on five basic phases of analysis that have been identified by Moustakas (1994, p.122). These phases belong to the phenomenological tradition that is not the focus of this research, but can readily be adapted to other types of qualitative research such as case study. They describe the researcher's own experience with the data:

> " 1) **immersion** with the experience; 2) **incubation**, a
> time of quiet contemplation; 3) **illumination,** a time of
> increased awareness, expanded meaning and new
> clarity; 4) **explication**, new connections are made and
> one prepares to communicate findings; and 5) **creative**
> **synthesis**, the research findings and experience are
> wound together, written and communicated".

A similar idea was presented by King (1996) in which she discussed the aspect of reflexivity of the researcher as a fundamental part of the qualitative research process.

> "Opening up the structures and operations that underlie
> our research and examining how we as researchers are an
> integral part of the data will amplify rather than restrict the
> voices of the participants, even when this openness is
> impeded by the researcher's unrecognized biases and
> discrimination"(p.176).

In analyzing the research data in this thesis the researcher tried to adapt a reflexive and reflective approach to the material.

Because of the quantities of qualitative data: nineteen interview transcripts, it was necessary to reduce the data by developing categories or codes for sorting and refining them. This was achieved by using processes of unitizing and categorizing. The former involves a coding operation in which information units are isolated from the text. In the latter information units derived from the unitizing phase are organized into categories on the basis of similarity in meaning. This process, known as the "constant comparative method", was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). It is an inductive process that requires constant modification and changes until all new units can be placed into an appropriate category. The research for this thesis however will not use 'grounded theory' for which the

above process is suggested but the process did lend itself to help in organizing the data from case study interviews as well.

A different type of analysis for case study was suggested by Bassey (1999). He described analysis of the data in two sections. The first is a process of creating analytical statements from the raw data and then the second section arises from findings in the first part. Whereas quantitative research may yield statistical results from which generalizations may arise, this is not the situation with case study research. Results may be stated as 'fuzzy generalizations' as described by Bassey and mentioned in the Case Study section above. A fuzzy generalization carries an element of uncertainty. It reports that something has happened in one place and that it may also happen elsewhere (p.52). Bassey has constructed a model depicting the analysis of case study data. It is a six-step model showing the links between each step. It may lead to "fuzzy generalizations":

1. Research questions lead to raw data.
2. Raw data are stored as data items with a locatable reference.
3. Creative and reflective thinking leads to draft analytical statements.
4. Draft analytical statements are tested against the data items and are amended or discarded as necessary. (steps 3 and 4 are an iterative process aimed to get the most out of the data.)
5. When iterative process is exhausted the analytical statements are re-expressed as empirical findings.
6. The empirical findings may lead to fuzzy propositions in a report, or to an evaluative report, or to a story or portrayal according to the type of educational case study (Bassey, 1995, p.85).

Yet another contribution to the idea that there are many ways of analyzing qualitative case study data comes from Yin (1994). Yin warns the researcher that: "the analysis of case study evidence is one of the least developed and most difficult aspects of doing case studies"(p.102). He explained that: "unlike statistical analysis, there are few fixed formulas or cookbook recipes to guide the novice. Instead, much depends on an investigator's own style of rigorous thinking, along with the sufficient presentation of evidence and careful consideration of alternative interpretations"(p.102). Yin stresses the need for the researcher to establish a general analytic strategy in the first place.

His suggestion is to examine two types of strategies for analysis. The first is relying on theoretical propositions and the second is developing a case description. "In the absence of such a strategy, the investigator is encouraged to

play with the data in a preliminary sense, as a prelude to developing a systematic sense of what is worth analyzing and how it should be analyzed" (p.125). The study at hand did not apply to the first strategy because it is exploratory. It could be connected to the second strategy of developing a case description.

Many of the writers in the area of educational research offer generally accepted guidelines as to how to approach qualitative analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994, p.10) offer very specific suggestions as to the components of data analysis in qualitative research. They have composed a flow model in which three types of analysis activity and the activity of data collection form an interactive, cyclical process. "The researcher steadily moves among these four 'nodes' during data collection and then shuttles among reduction, display, and conclusion drawing/verification for the remainder of the study"(p.12). They present it as a "continuous, iterative enterprise" (p.12). According to Miles and Huberman one very important element of the flow or cycle is the 'display'. By this they refer to a visual format that presents information systematically so that the researcher will be able to draw valid conclusions. Many qualitative researchers choose to display results of analysis in a written case study report. Miles and Huberman pointed out the difficulties both with unreduced text and long case studies that demand a long time for comprehension and can be 'monotonous and bulky'. To solve this problem of display they present different types of matrices, charts, and checklists with their advantages and disadvantages according to the research purpose and types of variables (p.90-135).

Robson (1996) supports Miles and Huberman's approach and remarks that:

> "No self-respecting experimentalist or survey
> researcher would dream of producing quantitative
> analysis devoid of display in the form of graphs,
> histograms, scattergrams, and the like. Miles and
> Huberman have sought to give corresponding tools to
> qualitative researchers that encourage the creation and
> display of innovative and reliable data displays for
> qualitative data"(p.390).

Miles and Huberman compared their model with analysis modes used by quantitative researchers and claimed that their process was no more difficult to implement. The main difference according to them is that the quantitative

activities "are carried out through well-defined, familiar methods, are guided

by canons, and are usually more sequential than iterative or cyclical. Qualitative

researchers on the other hand, are in a more fluid- and a more pioneering –

position"(p.12).

A further attempt at dealing with data from a case study is offered by Stake

(1995). He proposes two strategic ways that researchers reach new meaning about

cases. These are "through direct interpretation of the individual instance and

through aggregation of instances until something can be said about them as a

class"(p.74). He said further that: "both categorical aggregation and direct

interpretation depend greatly on the search for patterns. Often the patterns will be

known in advance, drawn from the research questions, serving as a template for

the analysis. Sometimes, the patterns will emerge unexpectedly from the

analysis"(p.78). Another point raised by Stake concerning the researcher was

reminiscent of Moustakas' ideas presented in the beginning of this section.

Moustakas described the researcher's experience with the data. Stake believes that

qualitative case study is 'highly personal research' (p.135). He urges the

researchers to include their own personal perspectives in the interpretation, "the

quality and utility of the research is not based on its reproducibility but on

whether or not the meanings generated, by the researcher or the reader, are valued.

Thus a personal valuing of the work is expected"(p.135).

The data from the nineteen transcripts were examined in batches of three at a time.

This was in recognition of the difficulty in handling too much data at one time.

"Large amounts of data cannot be processed unless all material that belongs

together topically is assembled conceptually and physically in one place" (Tesch,

1995, p.96). The researcher chose to use word-processing facilities instead of

scissors and paper and paste in processing the data.

The unitizing of the data was based on the four categories of questioning

mentioned in the section on Data Collection. Appropriate bits of data were

registered in the four categories. As each batch of three was completed the

researcher reflected on the data, took notes and noticed the various themes

emerging from the data. Wolcott (1990) suggested identifying the broadest

categories available. "Some topical categories, relating to a conceptual framework

or to particular research questions, may exist before analysis begins, but for the

most part the data are 'interrogated' with regard to the content items or themes

they contain, and categories are formed as a result"(Tesch, p.96). The literature

repeatedly reflects the idea that there is no one 'right' way to manipulate

qualitative data. Researchers do not like to give 'prescriptions' or standard formulae for the process. "The hallmark of qualitative research is the creative involvement of the individual researcher" (Tesch, p.96). And "each qualitative analyst must define his or her own process" (Patton, 1980, p.299). When the process was completed the researcher decided which method or methods of display of the data to use in accordance with the suggestions mentioned by Miles and Huberman (1994), Silverman (2000), Wolcott (1990) and others.

Quantitative

"The data collected by questionnaires may, of course, be either qualitative or quantitative"(Blaxter et al., 2001, p.215). This means that the data could appear in the form of discrete items which can be referred to as quantitative data, or as open-ended answers to open questions which can be called qualitative. In the scope of the present research the questionnaire was used at first to obtain discrete items of information in either numbers or words that were coded and represented as numbers. Four to six weeks was allowed for response time when in actuality within four weeks all of the questionnaires were returned. Upon receipt of the completed questionnaires, an outside expert engaged by the researcher coded the questionnaires and completed the data entry process. The expert then computed basic statistics for many of the items on the questionnaire. Then the qualitative data on the questionnaire were reviewed by the researcher to get a feeling as to the range of responses and to determine the context from which people responded. The questionnaire provided descriptive statistics using variable frequencies, averages, and ranges. This was found in the first section of the questionnaire called Personal Background Information. In the second section of the questionnaire entitled Attitudes and Perceptions Concerning Student Evaluation of Faculty, the respondents replied to 12 questions of a variety of types including open-ended and Likert types. The researcher determined how many respondents answered given questions in a certain way by either the number or the proportion of the total answered, and that the answers given to particular questions appear to be related. This analysis made use of proportions and percentages and measures of central tendency such as averages and ranges. As was previously stated the numerical analysis of the questionnaire is not seeking to establish statistically significant relationships between variables but rather to provide a descriptive account of the characteristics of the population and to aid in locating central

themes of the thesis. The information derived from the questionnaire is presented in the findings and analysis section of the thesis both in written and chart form.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a general term representing what is generally known as internal and external validity and objectivity. Validity refers to whether the methods, approaches, and techniques actually relate to, or measure, the issues that have been explored by the researcher (Blaxter et al, 2001). External validity refers to the replicability of a study by others according to Miles and Huberman (1994) who also believe that qualitative research also demands internal validity. This is not the classic measurement-oriented view but rather a process of checking and questioning. Smith (1996) says that people who go along with the principles of the old paradigm will say that "qualitative research will always be found wanting". However, there are corresponding terms in qualitative research to take the place of the terms usually used for quantitative research. These are: auditability, credibility, and fittingness (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). The researcher achieves this by keeping an audit trail: keeping meticulous records of all sources of information, using detailed transcripts, taking notes of all communications and reflective thinking. The audit trail allows the researcher to defend choices in interpretation and to take a look as to why the analysis veered in a particular direction. Along with this is another activity known as a chain-of-evidence. This chain takes the information recorded in the audit trail and records the decisions made concerning all aspects of the research process as they unfold and demonstrates how the links and conclusions between the data and analysis were derived (Anderson and Arsenault, 1999, p.134). In order to assure trustworthiness in a case study Yin (1994) recommends: "making as many steps as operational as possible and to conduct research as if someone were always looking over your shoulder. A good guideline for doing case studies is therefore to conduct the research so that an auditor could repeat the procedures and arrive at the same results"(p.37).

In the research for this thesis the researcher has the original questionnaires that were returned by the 36 teachers and the encoding results that were supplied by the outside expert statistician. The original audio-tapes were copied so that two complete sets of the nineteen interview tapes exist and the written transcripts have been copied as well. The written transcripts were compared with the audio-

cassettes for accuracy verification. Validation of the process was carried out by showing the transcripts to the interviewees for confirmation. Hand written notes showing unitization and categorization decisions have been saved for future reference. The documents have also been copied to prevent loss or damage. To summarize, this same case study could be carried out again by following the same procedures outlined in the audit trail.

Ethical Issues

Introduction

"All human behavior is subject to ethical principles, rules and conventions which distinguish socially acceptable behavior from that which is generally considered unacceptable" (Anderson and Arsenault, 1999, p.16). This statement applies to the practice of research as well. Historically there have been many reported instances of research on human beings in medicine, psychology and education in which innocent people became the subjects of abuse by researchers who felt that they were above scrutiny. As a result there was a need for regulation and codes of behavior among researchers. And now most professions have well-defined codes of ethics (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Even though the control of ethics may not make research more ethical, the responsibility for ethical research ultimately lies with the individual researcher (p.17).

Miles and Huberman (1994) surveyed general ethical theories and a series of specific ethical issues some of which will be discussed by the researcher in this section. They concluded that: "Dealing with ethical issues effectively involves heightened awareness, negotiation, and making trade-offs among ethical dilemmas, rather than the application of rules"(p.297).

Informed Consent

Informed consent is one of the most fundamental principles of ethics that the researcher must attend to. The researcher must inform the participants in his/her research project of the nature and purpose of the project, its risks and benefits and their consent to participate must not involve any feeling of coercion. As regards in-depth interviewing the interviewees must be made aware that they are not obliged to answer all the questions should they prefer not to, and that they can stop the interview if they so wish (King, 1996). The researcher at the outset of the research project took these steps. In some circumstances participants may sign a letter or contract of informed consent before becoming involved in the research.

Access and Permission

Issues of access and permission to carry out research are also of major concern to the researcher. As Stake (1995, p.57) has explained: "almost always, data gathering is done on somebody's home grounds". It is therefore necessary to gain access and official permission to proceed with the research. For this case study involving university faculty members, the Dean of the specific Faculty was approached with a request for official permission and access to the teaching staff in the teaching unit of the proposed case study. The researcher asked for permission to distribute questionnaires and engage teaching staff members in individual interviews. The researcher explained the research topic in general terms and engaged in a short discussion about it with the Dean. Oral permission was granted by the Dean and the researcher was informed that no further steps need be taken. The Dean of the Faculty explained that as the university is a research institution and encourages staff to engage in research, there was no need for written permission. All that was necessary was to inform the Department Chairperson of the Unit about the topic of the research and request permission to address the staff members at the opening meeting of the academic year. Individual staff members were free to decide to participate or not as they so chose.

Peer Pressure

One could suppose that peer pressure or an expectation that one should participate might cause some people to join the study who would otherwise not take part (Anderson and Arsenault, 1999, p.19). This researcher believes that the willingness and inclination of the faculty members to participate in the research stems first from the knowledge that any staff member may need his/her colleagues to help out with research in the future and wants to be assured of the availability of help from colleagues. Therefore professional reciprocity becomes an important issue. Secondly, this researcher believes that there was genuine interest in the research topic because of its personal relevance to each teacher on staff in the teaching unit.

Conflict of Interest

Yet another cause for concern in the ethical framework is the problem of conflict of interest. Conceivably there could be fear of conflict of interest in researching the teaching unit in which the researcher is an insider who is employed as a

teacher. However if the researcher is a peer with no administrative authority such as the power to hire and fire other staff members and no other sword to dangle over the heads of the participants, then the risks of personal interest influencing the objectives of the study are minimal.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Obviously confidentiality is of utmost importance and participants must be guaranteed that any information or opinions offered by them will not be transmitted to the Department Chairperson or be made public, otherwise, opinions would not be freely expressed and no conclusions could be drawn. Anonymity is often linked to confidentiality (Blaxter et al. 2001). Careful consideration had to be made by the researcher as to how to properly disguise people's identities when quoting from interviews.

Manipulation

Manipulating respondents during interviewing is an ethical problem raised by Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p.70). This occurs when researchers treat respondents like objects or numbers rather than individual human beings. The writers strongly urge researchers to exercise common sense and moral responsibility to the subjects first, then the study and finally to themselves. "To learn about people we must remember to treat them as people, and they will uncover their lives to us"(p.73). In this regard the researcher must inform the participant as to expected time commitment to complete his or her involvement in the research. This step shows the researcher's respect for the participants' valuable time. In the present research the participants were told that it would probably take about half an hour to complete the questionnaire. The allocated time for the interviews was approximately forty-five minutes. Every effort was made to ensure a prompt start and comfortable surroundings for the interview part of the research.

Debriefing

Debriefing is another part of the research process that has an ethical aspect to it. Transcripts of interview data should be shown to the respondents for confirmation and also to allow them to make any alterations they feel necessary in order to feel that their ideas have been represented accurately. Anderson and Arsenault (1999) suggest that "in studies which employ questionnaires it is advisable, when possible, to offer participants a summary of results"(p.20).

Wasting Time

There is one further ethical issue raised by Anderson and Arsenault that they claim is not usually mentioned in standard works on research ethics. "It is unethical to waste the participant's time by asking him or her to complete irrelevant questions or participate in studies which by their nature cannot lead to significant results"(p.21).

It was the honest opinion of this researcher that the information coming from the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews from the key informants could inform on a situation at the university that needed attention and could possibly lead to effecting change. Certain changes were in fact implemented in department policy possibly as a result of the intervention of this research. These changes are described in the analysis section.

Palatability

The researcher has an ethical responsibility to treat the participants with care, consideration, respect, and sensitivity (Wellington, 2000, p.57). One must take care that no participant should experience distress or feel that personal criticism was made or implied as a result of the study. Cohen and Manion (1998, p.377) refer to the need for "humaneness" in showing consideration to the feelings and sensitivities of those participating in research. It is important that anyone reading the thesis not receive the impression that any subject was singled out for criticism or was portrayed in a negative light. The problems that were raised by the interviewees in answer to the researcher's questions and presented in the findings and analysis section reflect a systemic problem in the university that cannot be attributed to any specific individual. The recommended guidelines referred to in the last chapter of the thesis call on the administration in general to implement changes.

Limitations of the Study

The inability of qualitative research findings to be generalized to other communities has been argued as a limitation and this issue has been explained previously. However as generalization is not a fundamental component of this type of research, this need not interfere with this study. Case studies are not meant to generalize but rather to gain knowledge about the particular case itself. The

issue of "fuzzy generalizations" arising from Case Study research has been discussed in a previous section.

"Other critics of the case study method argue that it lacks reliability and that another researcher might come to a differing conclusion. The defense against this claim argues that good case studies create a database that incorporates multiple data sources and goes beyond a single questionnaire or set of interviews. Triangulation is used to interpret findings, test alternative ideas, identify negative cases, and point the analysis towards a clear conclusion based on the evidence collected. Findings based on conclusions suggested by different data sources are far stronger than those suggested by one alone" (Anderson and Arsenault, 1999, p.159).

In reflecting over the research design of this study I think that the use of focus groups in addition to the questionnaires and interviews may have added another valuable aspect to this investigation. Dividing the 19 interviewees into two or three focus groups could have given even richer information and added to the depth of the interviews. The fact that the interviewees all know each other would have probably served as a positive factor in the focus groups as it is necessary for the members to feel at ease with each other and interact in a conducive environment. However I did not engage the interviewees in focus groups for one pragmatic reason. Teachers' schedules are spread out over the entire week and the planning was just too difficult to manage successfully. On the other hand I was fortunate that the one on one interview schedules were relatively easy to plan because of a student strike that coincided with the exact time that I had plan to carry out the interviews.

Another limitation of the study concerned the questionnaire. I felt that one of the difficulties in being a novice researcher manifested itself in the questionnaire that was administered at the outset of this research. Even though the questionnaire was piloted and revised according to the pilot results, there were still some problematic areas. I found that the answers to some of the questionnaire items contradicted the answers to similar questions in the interviews. This could be due to the difference in peoples' attitudes when answering questionnaires. They had more of a chance to express themselves in the semi-structured interviews and were not boxed in by the rigid questionnaire structure. Or the problem could be the lack of experience of the researcher in questionnaire construction. This situation can hopefully improve with time and more experience.

A third limitation of the study involved the taking of field notes. I would have liked to take more copious notes during the interview process. However, in the process of managing the tape recorder and making sure that the interviewees had my full attention, meaning constant eye contact with them, the note taking process became minimal. It was my feeling that note taking can be distracting for the interviewee (Nunan, 1992, p.153), but I did make notes at the end of each interview in order to remind myself of any critical occurrences during the interview session.

One further remark is necessary concerning the interview process. As I reflect back over the entire group of interviews and reread the verbatim transcripts it became clear to me that as time went on I became more adept at the skill of interviewing. I learned as a I got more experience and as a result the later interviews flowed more smoothly than the initial ones.

CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

Because the findings and analysis in qualitative research are inextricably woven together this chapter will deal with both findings and analysis as one body, in contrast to what is usually done in quantitative research. The findings are non-linear and non-mathematical and demand analysis and interpretation in order to understand them and achieve meaning from them. The purpose is not to quantify the findings but to develop a profile of the teaching unit that was the subject of the investigation of this research and understand the thinking of teachers at the university level. It should be pointed out that "there is extensive research which attempts to "get into the heads" of teachers at the school level, but only a very limited parallel literature which tries in this same way to understand the thinking of teachers at the university level"(Johnston, 1996, p.213). The need to encourage teachers' voices to be heard led this researcher into the interpretive paradigm and this chapter will reflect those voices and hopefully project them to the higher education audience.

The first part of this section deals with the data collected from the questionnaires that were circulated among the teachers at the outset of this research project. An examination of this data will help the reader attain a closer look both at the context in which this research was carried out and at the perceptions of the participants in this study.

Part I Findings and Analysis of Questionnaire Data

The questions in the questionnaire were constructed to examine the four areas pertinent to the research questions: evaluation and appraisal, accountability, student evaluations of faculty and improvement of teaching.

The information gathered from the questionnaires helped the researcher in two areas of the investigation. First of all, the researcher gained insight into the demographic background of the population in this case. In order to describe the context of the case it is necessary to provide background information regarding the population of participants. These details add richness and color and reality to the tapestry of the case. Secondly, the answers to the open-ended questions and the Likert style questions opened a window into the general perceptions of the teachers in the unit regarding the value of SEF to them as a method of helping them improve their teaching and their attitudes towards their students. The

information gleaned from the questionnaires paved the way for further in-depth questioning in the ensuing interviews with selected participants. The act of filling out the questionnaire opened a window of introduction to the research topic to the teachers in the unit and as attested to by the teachers, provided them with food for thought.

The administering of a questionnaire in research is often considered to be a "quantitative" measure, associated with surveys and quantitative research. However, the data gathered from the questionnaires in this research was used for descriptive purposes and not for the demonstration of mathematical relationships between the elements.

A.   Describing the Population

Thirty-five teachers from the EFL unit in a large university in the center of Israel participated in the first part of the research project. This comprises the entire population of teachers in this particular unit. The picture that emerges from an examination of the answers concerning personal background information is one of an eclectic group of teachers reflecting differences in almost every aspect. Their only common bond appears to be that they are all teachers in the same unit.

1.*Gender and Age*

As is typical of most other language-teaching units in Israel, the female gender is dominant with only 3 males in this specific population. The ages of the teachers in the unit range from 27 to 71.

2. *Native Languages and Countries of Origin*

The teachers in this unit represent native speakers of five languages: the majority are native English speakers followed by native Hebrew, Russian, French, and Portuguese speakers in this order. The native English speakers immigrated to Israel from the United States, South Africa, England, and Canada. Other teachers in the unit have immigrated from different parts of the Former Soviet Union, Romania, and from South America. All of the non-native English speakers have mother tongue fluency in English and therefore are qualified to teach all the levels of English reading comprehension courses offered by the unit. Even those native Hebrew speakers have studied English in Israel since the age of 10-11. In the Teachers' Room in the EFL unit one hears conversations held between teachers in a variety of languages although staff meetings are conducted in English.

3. *Academic Credentials and Teaching Certification*

Traditionally the EFL unit has required that its teachers have MA degrees. The degree could be in any discipline not necessarily TESOL or linguistics. Actually when this research was underway 68.5% of the teachers held MA degrees in Science, Social Science and Education, 22.9% of the teachers held PhD degrees and 8.6% had BA degrees. The teachers who had BA degrees were hired on a part-time basis only. Teaching certification was not a prerequisite for employment in the unit but 65.7% of the subjects do hold teaching certification. Most university faculty members both in Israel and abroad do not have much, if any, formal training in teaching even though they may find themselves in situations where their careers may depend on teaching skills. The high percentage of faculty with teaching certification in the unit upon which this research is based should reflect a knowledge base of classroom teaching skills and concepts of effective teaching as well as the recognition of the importance of evaluation, staff development and the need to constantly attempt to improve teaching.

The range of seniority for the population is from one year to thirty-five years of teaching in this unit at this university.

4. *Professional Ranking*

Examination of the professional ranking of the teachers in the unit shows that only 23% are ranked as lecturers or senior teachers and belong to the senior staff, while 46% belong to the junior staff. About 37% of the subjects did not respond to this question probably because they are part time staff and are unaware of their official ranking. Over half (54%) of the EFL unit teaching staff are employed on a part time basis and teach less than 16 hours per week. Many part-time teachers have additional teaching loads at other colleges or high schools thereby lessening their availability to attend and participate in staff development programs. Some of the teachers are (about 10%) are employed in other language departments at the university as well.

5. *Devotion to Teaching and Preference*

A full-time teaching position in this unit at this university consists of 16 classroom teaching hours while in most other units and departments in the university full-time means teaching a maximum of eight hours. This basically separates the teaching population from the research-oriented population in the university. The teachers in this unit have teaching contact with over 3000

undergraduate and graduate students each academic year. The fact that the university experiences of so many students are touched by teachers from this unit, places the burden of providing quality instruction to the students squarely on the shoulders of the teachers in the unit. This makes the need for smooth functioning evaluation procedures and a well-developed program for improving teaching of utmost importance.

The teaching load of the population of 35 teachers in this unit ranges from a minimum of two hours to a maximum of 16 hours. There are 22 staff members who teach course loads from 12 – 16 hours. In this group there are four senior teachers with tenured positions all of whom have been with the unit for over 30 years. There are another ten teachers who have yearly contracts. All the others are employed on an hourly basis on eight-month contracts with no frills or social benefits. In addition to their teaching responsibilities all teachers, regardless of rank, seniority, tenure, full-time or part-time position, are expected to actively participate in committees for preparing exams, creating new course syllabi, planning colloquia, preparing new textbooks, dealing with dyslexic students, developing computer-assisted language learning programs and implementing e-learning courses. The weight of these extra responsibilities may affect teachers' attitudes about investing additional time in staff-development programs to improve their teaching.

As would be expected in a teaching unit as opposed to a research unit, 89% of the teachers said that they devote most of their time to teaching. However when asked what they would prefer to devote most of their time doing, only 57% answered "teaching". Others stated that they would like to devote more time to research interests in addition to their teaching. This may be a result of the growing number of PhD holders and doctoral students among the teaching population in the unit. At present at least six staff members are completing doctoral theses. This may account for the expressed growing interest in research in addition to teaching responsibilities.

B. Attitudes and Perceptions Concerning Student Evaluation of Faculty

This section of the questionnaire contained thirteen questions concerning familiarity with the SEF, attitudes towards the document and the procedures involved in the administration of the document. There were questions about teachers' attitudes towards students, their relationship to the SEF process, attitudes towards accountability and improving teaching.

Most teachers (71%) had classes evaluated by the SEF during the year preceding this research, and many (82%) expressed familiarity with the questions in the SEF questionnaire. However only 54% of the teachers had seen the results of the most recent SEF evaluation. This represents a major problem in a system that declares that the intention of the SEF is to improve teaching. Seeing the results of the SEF is a vital step in the awareness raising process for teachers. As long as they don't see the results they can plead ignorance of their situation. This leads to the next issue as to how teachers do see their results.

In responding to "how the results reached the teachers", there were several response options ranging from: "a letter from the Students' Union", "a letter from the Dept. Chairman", "a booklet published by the SU", various combinations of possibilities and one option that said "I have no knowledge of the results". Teachers chose from the whole range of options but only 17% of the teachers claimed that they received their results from the Department Chairperson. This figure points to a glaring weakness in the evaluation process. It is clear that more than 80% of the teachers were not contacted directly by the Dept. Chairperson concerning the results of the SEF and were left to their own devices, either active or passive, to discover the results of their evaluations. Clearly not all of those people tried or succeeded in revealing their results because the largest percentage (29%) chose the option that said "I have no knowledge of the results". The others had to search for the booklet published by the Students' Union for the use of the students or see an article in the newspaper that carried the results.

The picture that emerges here reflects a situation in which an official evaluation procedure with a declared intention stated by the university senate is conducted annually in many classes taught by teachers in the unit, but few teachers had officially seen the results or even had knowledge about the results. For some reason there did not appear to be a viable and efficient vehicle for transferring the results of the SEF from the Dept. Chairperson to all of the teachers. Why did this happen? This issue will be dealt with further in the interpretation of the interviews.

1. Responses in Teachers' Own Words

There were four questions in the present section of the questionnaire where the respondents were asked to voice opinions in their own words. Once again the divergent views among the staff members about the SEF tool and procedure become evident from their answers.

When asked to express an opinion about the **purpose of the SEF questionnaire** (question 11), the teachers' opinions reflected nine different ideas ranging from the positive to the negative. Some teachers placed emphasis on their own work and teaching activities and thought about the purpose of the SEF with the focus on what personal benefit they could reap from it such as "feeling good about themselves and their teaching," while others stressed the students' wants and desires including "revenge" or "advice on which teacher to choose for the course". Some teachers focused on the "carrot and stick" idea and a few teachers claimed not to have any knowledge about the SEF. More than 35 responses were elicited because some teachers expressed more than one idea in their answers. Only two teachers in the group thought that the purpose of the questionnaire was to facilitate improvement in teaching as had been stated on the questionnaire itself. The question that begs to be asked here is why? Haven't the teachers been informed by university as to the purpose of the SEF and convinced as to its importance in assuring quality instruction? This issue will also be dealt with in the interpretation of the interviews.

> Question 11: **What do you think is the purpose of the university sponsored SEF questionnaire?**

Responses:

Fifteen teachers	-	to give feedback on teachers' activities or to evaluate instruction
Two teachers	-	to help teachers improve
Four teachers	-	to get input from students, to find out if the students are satisfied with my teaching.
Two teachers	-	for students to get revenge
Ten teachers	-	to advise students which lecturer to choose
Two teachers	-	to encourage good teachers
Two teachers	-	to keep teachers on their toes
Three teachers	-	I don't know, I have no idea, if we could see it, it could be helpful
Two teachers	-	to let the administration evaluate teaching

> Question 15: **What did you learn about your teaching from the results of the SEF?**

Here too the results ranged from positive ideas to negative ones. Once again some teachers voiced feelings of self-complacency and satisfaction with their present

positions, while many others said that they learned nothing at all about their teaching from the SEF procedure or that they had received no feedback. There was almost no feeling reflected that called for change. Only one teacher reflected on taking action as a result of the SEF. If indeed improvement is based on effecting change then most of these teachers are not in the change mode. A critical question emerges: why is a climate for change that is a prerequisite for improvement, not being cultivated by the leadership of the unit?

Responses:

Ten teachers	-	Students were satisfied with my teaching, students like me as a person
One teacher	-	I learned that student and teacher had similar goals
Sixteen teachers	-	I learned nothing, I received no feedback, it was irrelevant
Four teachers	-	The SEF confirmed my strengths and
One teacher		weaknesses
One teacher	-	My students don't like to work hard
	-	What my students felt was strong – I will
One teacher		continue.
	-	What my students felt was problematic – I will
One teacher		think about changing.
	-	My results were a bit higher than the average.

Question 16: **Do you want to construct your own SEF? Explain**

This question was asked because the researcher assumed prior to the research that there may be teachers who were not satisfied with the university standardized SEF and would prefer to construct their own tool for evaluation to be used either along side the official one or instead of it. Based upon an examination of the responses to the previous question where half of the teachers said that they had learned nothing or received no feedback or that it was irrelevant, it is clear that this question about constructing their own tool was indeed in place. The yes/no responses to this question were very close in number. Seventeen people responded yes and eighteen people responded no. The explanations however continued to reflect a problematic situation. Half of those who answered no felt that "SEF was irrelevant", "had no point", "don't like SEF" or just said "no". Even the offer of

autonomy and the construction of their own tool was not a satisfactory suggestion to these teachers. Once again the negative attitude towards SEF evaluation has reared its head. Those who answered **yes** wanted a tool that would be more informative to them, that would contain more items of interest to the specific teacher and would be more objective. There was only one respondent in the group who replied "**I want to know what to change and how to improve.**"

Question 19: **Does the SEF procedure conducted by the SU infringe upon your autonomy in your class? Explain.**

The responses to this last open-ended question reflected two interpretations of the question by the teachers. Some referred to the physical presence of the Student Union representatives who enter the classrooms towards the end of the semester in order to conduct the SEF. Some of them found the procedure to be a physical nuisance. Their responses were: "**I mind the interruption, there must be another way**"; another recognized that this is not an everyday occurrence: "**this is a one time occasion it really does not disturb the class**"; and still another reflects confusion about the procedure, should they remain in the room or stay outside: '**no one has told me what to do while the SU representatives are in my room**'. Other respondents referred to the notion of carrying out the SEF in general. Their responses went in another direction: '**I don't teach for the results**', '**it has no effect on my methodology**', '**I'd maintain my own standards anyway**', '**I believe in freedom of speech**'. There was only one respondent in the whole group who voiced anything about the importance of the SEF even though it created some anxiety for the teacher: '**I am uncomfortable being evaluated, though I understand its importance**'.

2. Likert Style Questions

Four questions on the questionnaire (17,20,21,22) used Likert style or dichotomic questions to explore feelings and perceptions without giving the respondent an opportunity to go into greater detail in his/her own words. An opportunity for this would be forthcoming during the in-depth interviews. There were 19 separate items checked in these four questions. The results are summarized in Table 1 and Table 2 that appear on the following pages.

TABLE 1

Questions	Responses
17 –a Students are customers in the classroom.	66% agreed
17 – b Students should have a say in teachers' promotions.	77% disagreed
17 – c Teachers are accountable to students.	80% agreed
17 – d SEF has influenced my behavior in the classroom in the past.	73% disagreed
20 – a Improving teaching is an important part of my professional responsibility.	94% agreed
20 – b The university should be responsible for helping me improve my teaching.	80% agreed
20 – c Autonomy in the classroom means that teaching should not be evaluated by students.	91% disagreed
20 – d SEF can help me improve my teaching.	80% agreed
21 – a Importance of discussion with department chairperson to get feedback on quality of teaching.	74% important 11% important +
21 – b Importance of discussion with your students to get feedback on quality of teaching	43% important 40% important +
21 – c Importance of SEF questionnaire to get feedback on quality of teaching	65% important 11% important +
21 – d Importance of self-evaluation to get feedback on quality of teaching	23% important 66% important +
21 –e Importance of peer observation to get feedback on quality of teaching	49% important 40% important +
22 What does the expression 'teachers are accountable to students' mean?	For responses see Table 2

TABLE 2

Responses to item 22:

22. What does the expression 'teachers are accountable to students' mean?	Responses
a. Teachers should be penalized if most of their students don't pass the course.	63% disagreed
b. Teachers must explain their aims and objectives to their students and make changes if students don't agree with them.	57% disagreed
c. Teachers must draw conclusions about their actions in the classroom based on student evaluations of faculty and act accordingly.	77% agreed
d. Teachers should be required to participate in staff training programs to improve the quality of their teaching.	77% agreed
e. Teachers have a moral responsibility to their students to provide them with the best teaching possible.	97% agreed
f. Teachers' primary responsibility is to students and then to the administration.	97% agreed

Discussion of Questionnaire Findings

An interesting picture emerges from an examination of the results of this section of the questionnaire. The teachers in general perceive their students in the role of customers in the classroom and they feel accountable to their students in this respect. This accountability appears to be consistent in everything involved in the dynamic of teaching and the classroom. They feel that improving teaching is an important professional responsibility and that the university should be involved in helping them improve. Receiving feedback on the quality of their instruction from students via the SEF, peers, and self-reflection is important to the teachers, as is participation in staff development programs. The teachers feel a moral responsibility to their students to provide them with the best education possible and they think that their primary responsibility is to the students and then to the administration. With regard to the SEF most of the respondents agreed as to its importance as a tool for evaluation and concurred that they should draw conclusions about their actions in the classroom based on the results of this tool.

The attitudes change however when a move is made from the world of the classroom to the realm of employer-employee relationships. Most teachers did not feel accountable to students in any aspect that concerned teachers' status and relationship with the administration. They did not feel that students have the right to be involved in the issue of teachers' promotions nor did they agree that teachers should be penalized if students did not pass the course. Accountability, as described in the review of the literature, means moral responsibility with a demand for reckoning if that responsibility is not carried out, or if it has not been deemed satisfactory. The respondents here report feeling a moral responsibility to their students but do not think it is necessary to be penalized if students feel that teachers' responsibility has been lacking. There is a definite feeling of a need for separation from the students' influence in non-classroom issues. As accountable as teachers felt to the students as customers in the classroom situation there is unwillingness on their part to engage students in administrative decisions. These are perceived by the respondents to be separate from classroom activities.

The idea of implementing the SEF was warmly received as mentioned above. However this may be theoretical at best, because in answering these questions most teachers agreed that in the past the SEF did not influence their behavior in the classroom. If they have positive responses to the SEF at this point in the questionnaire then why did most feel that the SEF had no effect in the past? The answer lies embedded in the sentiments expressed by teachers in answer to questions previously mentioned in this section. We were told there that 83% of the teachers did not directly receive the SEF results nor did they have first hand knowledge as to what they meant nor was there any contact with the Dept. Chairperson to discuss the results. If this is the case it is possible that a significant change in conducting the evaluation procedure could lead to a productive use of the SEF by the teachers given the generally positive attitude held on the part of the teachers.

Now that a preliminary basis for teachers' perceptions has been established through analysis of the data from the questionnaire that was administered to all 35 teachers in the unit, we can now proceed to examine and analyze the findings of the 19 interviews and subsequently reach the answers to the research questions pertinent to this thesis.

Part II: Findings and Analysis of Interview Questions

The findings in this section of the chapter result from individual interviews conducted with 19 staff members from a teaching unit at a large university located in the center of Israel. One of the 19 interviewees was the Department Chairperson. This person functions both as a teacher and an administrator in a two-year renewable term of office. This position is a rotating one usually occupied by a senior staff person. The other interviewees were all members of the teaching staff of the unit who teach from 12 to 16 hours per week.

The interviews were open-ended and semi-structured and focused on questions from four general topics related to the central research questions of this thesis. The participants were asked about how they viewed their students in the world of customers and clients, how they felt about accountability to various stakeholders in the university, how they perceived the usefulness of the Student Evaluations of Faculty and what were their perceptions about improving the quality of their teaching. The chairperson was asked the same questions as the other interviewees but was requested to relate to the questions from the point of view of an administrator. Prior to the interviews, the 19 participants together with the rest of the teachers in the unit completed an anonymous questionnaire based on the same topics that would later be explored in the interviews. The questionnaire exposed the participants to the topics of the research and gave the researcher more descriptive information about the thoughts of the 35 staff members which would help in the analysis of the interviews. Transcripts were made of the interviews and analyzed for common themes that are the subject of discussion in this chapter.

An exploration into the myriad of possibilities of presentation of the findings and analysis revealed flow charts, hierarchical trees, graphs, diagrams or unfolding matrices as described in the literature by Miles and Huberman (1994), Burgess (1994), and Maykut and Morehouse (1994) as mentioned in previous chapters. A decision was made to organize the findings and analysis according to the four interview questions and themes and sub-themes arising from them. This decision was inspired by Aronson (1994) who said, "themes that emerge from the informants stories are pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of their collective experience". Hopefully simplicity of design will aid the researcher in 'telling the story' in a systematic, orderly fashion and in a coherent logical sequence, and will aid the reader as well in comprehending the data. It should be noted that the focus of this research is on the teaching unit as made up of individuals but not the individual teachers themselves. Therefore one of the goals

was to provide a profile of the unit as a whole and not place a special focus on each individual part of it.

From this point on in this chapter the researcher will 'speak' in the first person as is commonly done in interpretive or qualitative analysis, in contrast to the third person traditionally used in positivist research. This will allow me to place myself in the 'story' when necessary by adding relevant information based on my personal knowledge of the teaching unit and the individuals in it. As Morrison (2002) has explained the qualitative researcher is "deeply implicated, and s/he, in turn derives those codes from her/his stock of knowledge, experience, complementary research evidence and interpretive skills. This is what is meant by the ongoing interactivity between data collection and data analysis-the iterative process-well established in interpretive research"(p.2).

Presentation of Interview Findings

The findings and analysis will be presented below in four sections. Each section will present the questions and answers relating to a particular area, this will be followed by the emerging themes as perceived by the researcher. A discussion and analysis of these themes completes each section.

At the start of each interview I handed a written statement of my research questions and thesis topic to each staff participant. I explained to them that it would be easier for them to read the topic than to try to digest it by listening to it because it is rather lengthy. After giving them time to read the topic statement, I explained that the interviews would focus on four areas of concern connected to the research questions and topics and that I would appreciate their help and cooperation. Most of the teachers recalled that they had completed my questionnaire several weeks before and had some memory of what they had been asked. Some said that they found the issues interesting and were glad to have the opportunity to participate in this endeavor. I promised the participants anonymity and confidentiality and only then did I start the tape recorder.

Section One
Question: Do you perceive students as customers or clients?

In an effort to reach an understanding of teachers' feelings and perceptions about accountability to students and the need to improve their teaching based on students' evaluations of their teaching it was necessary to ask this particular question. This question is associated with issues of quality assurance, appraisal,

and evaluation that have been discussed in the review of the literature. It was a 'difficult' question because it raised an issue that some of the teachers felt uncomfortable with but it was a necessary one because it introduced a context that was central to this investigation and therefore it was the first question to be asked. It should be noted that the section dealing with the first of the four questions, concerning customer/client relationships, yielded a smaller quantity of responses than any other section. I believe that this was because of the general feeling of alienation and discomfort that many teachers felt towards the customer client issue. They seemed to feel that marketing concepts like customers, clients etc. are not part of their professional culture.

I introduced the first question to each participant with a short introduction explaining to them that it has become commonplace in the competitive world, for institutions of higher learning to consider themselves as markets with a product called education and with a goal to attract as many students or customers or clients as possible. "The higher education system, uniquely in the commercial world, must see its students both as its customers and as its product"(Perry, 1991, p.92). Biggs (1999, p.2) refers to the additional pressures on academic staff from the "student-as-paying-client" because the university system is more subject to economic and managerial considerations than used to be the case. In light of statements like these, which reflect a 'new' reality in the world of higher education, it was imperative that the question be posed to these Israeli teachers concerning their perceptions of students as customers or clients. It is important to note that the students in this teaching unit pay special fees for their EFL courses that are in addition to the regular yearly university tuition fees.

Responses

Eighteen teachers and the department chairperson answered this question, articulating firm though differing views on this issue. Their answers ranged from "absolutely yes to absolutely no" with a whole range of possibilities in between: 'partially agree', 'yes but', 'no but', ' good question but problematic', 'not sure about it', 'yes and no', 'other kinds'. These eclectic answers typified even the eleven participants of American, British, or South African backgrounds where it has become common to discuss education in a "business" atmosphere. It might have been expected that the customer/client idea be taken for granted among this population, however all of these respondents have been living in Israel for fifteen years or more and they may have been influenced by their "new" Israeli cultural

background that has only more recently assumed a "consumer" attitude. This may also account for the fact that several in this group with Anglo-Saxon background did not like the use of consumer terminology when describing students. When I asked the question I had predicted that the responses would be different and that those native born Americans in the group would unhesitatingly respond positively and express feelings about the need to serve the student 'client', but I quickly saw that the responses were contrary to my expectations. Two of the other eight participants were born in the Former Soviet Union but have been living in Israel for many years and the other six participants were born in Israel. Both of these groups of teachers are fluent speakers of English, which may give them a cultural affinity to the Western world and its consumerism outlook. However several of their answers also reflected a dislike of referring to students as customers or clients, which may mean that their Israeli 'experience' has had significant influence over their lives and perceptions.

Emerging Themes

The yes/no answers to the question of perceiving students as customers or clients were just the tip of deeper more substantial answers that appeared after careful reading of the interviews and led to two emerging themes: "How Teachers Perceive Their Students' Needs" and "How Teachers Feel About Their Part in the Relationship". These themes and ensuing sub-themes will be illustrated with excerpts of the voices of the participating teachers quoted from the interview transcripts in order to establish a composite picture for the reader. Particularly significant words and phrases will appear in bold print to demonstrate the connections between the sections and the emerging sub-themes. The summary discussion on both emerging themes will appear after the excerpts of the second emerging theme in order to tie both thematic sections together.

A. Theme # 1   How Teachers Perceive Their Students' Needs

The teachers' responses to the customer/client perception of students question offered ideas that informed on what they perceived were their students' needs in the classroom or at the university in general. The voice of one American born teacher reflected a business-oriented attitude that she saw in her students.

> " Students want a **product**. They invest **time and money** to acquire that skill which they want. They come to get something. It's not a specific skill that

they're out to get, **it's a piece of paper that says you are a university graduate**"(S).

This leads us to think that students may be less interested in this specific course than in just getting their degree. This course is just one requirement of many on the road to graduation. Students place the responsibility for their passing the course in the hands of the teacher. Teachers are aware of the special fees that students pay for these courses.

In a similar vein another American born teacher says:

" Practically speaking I would say that they are clients, that they demand treatment as clients from teachers. **They expect teachers to help them pass**. They expect teachers to make it easier for them. They come and say, Look, I have to get through this and you have to help me because if not, **it's going to be your fault that I don't get my degree**" (DA).

Yet another American born staff member sees students as consumers who try to play on the sympathy of the teacher for special consideration in order to achieve their goal of passing the course:

" Some students make it more of a point to make you feel that they're consumers. **They will bring into account their private lives, economic conditions, jobs to get my sympathy, or empathy** and consider their situations"(ST).

In contrast to this approach, an Israeli born American educated teacher sees an attitude among her student population about obtaining a product at the university with little interference or intervention from the teacher. This teacher differentiates between students who are looking for a product and those looking for an education:

"Some of them have the attitude that they deserve something, a **product** that they need; and some of them treat it as something, either they get it or not, it's their business. **So whether they learn out of it or not, is also part of the attitude that if they're buying a product, therefore, whatever I do with it, you cannot tell me what to do.** But I think **some of them are still within the old frame of they're coming to**

get an education. It's getting to be more of a business like attitude" (IE).

A Russian born teacher with experience in teaching first in Russia and then in Israel reflects on her students' frustrations as paying customers and their expectations:

> " Here **students feel frustrated paying so much** and they keep comparing, keep contrasting and saying that other universities they do not pay so much. But they don't mind a lost lesson or a lesson that ends early. In summer courses they say, "look, it's so expensive," and they expect, that's where I feel it a little bit. That's where it's heard, and that's where they say, **"Look, we paid so much,** It's so expensive, **so we expect to pass"**(AA).

Three more American born teachers express similar feelings about what their students expect from the course. Notice that these teachers do not refer to students as customers and clients or as wanting a product from the university. In these instances the teachers see the students as having short- term goals: expecting to pass the course, get it over with and be done without demanding special treatment from teachers.

> **"Many will expect to pass.** That's part of the problem. They think that if they just come but what you have to explain to them is that there's a certain amount of what I call contact with the chair"(BI).

> " **Their short-term goals are to pass the course** and do the work. Their long term goals are to be able to function at the university level that the university requires of them in terms of reading material, academic material" (OF).

> "I think that the students come in with the idea that English is something difficult, they have to do it, **let's get it over with, you have to get through it**, you have to pay your dues. You can't get rid of it with a monetary metaphor" (BE).

Three other teachers in the unit expressed dislike with the notion of
considering students as customers or clients. These faculty members are of Israeli,
American, and Russian heritages.

> "If students try to dictate to the teachers how the
> teachers should teach, then there's something wrong
> with this definition of customers, because **customers**
> **don't know exactly how they learn the best way. It's**
> **like a client telling a doctor how to give him**
> **treatment.** And that's what I don't like in all this
> definition" (KO).

> "**I think that the customer/client relationship is very**
> **limiting on the teacher and on the student.** I think
> that the customer/client relationship doesn't develop
> the kind of atmosphere in a class that will bring the
> students to committing themselves and demanding of
> themselves what they need to in order to advance their
> English" (SS).

> " **Students are not clients**" (AD).

This teacher did not add any description of the students' part in the customer
client relationship or explain what their needs were.

Another group of four teachers sees the students as customers with specific needs
and demands for quality to be attended to by the teachers. These teachers are from
Israeli and British backgrounds.

> "**They are customers,** in a way, and they **should be**
> **happy with their teachers and their studies,** because
> otherwise they won't stay" (NL).

> "They have to get the best I can give them. **And they**
> **should expect the best that I can give**"(SR).

> "I think that **students can be considered customers or**
> **clients,** although I don't like the term because of the
> financial overtones that it has" (HP).

> "**They have needs and we have to cater to those**
> **needs.** This is a customer/client as far as we have
> defined it. **Students have to say what they want and**
> **need.** So, it's not customer and client period, it's

> customer and client comma, other things characterize the
> relationship" (SM).

The administrator, born and educated in the United States, voiced several ideas in answer to the customer/client question.

> "(the concept of)Customers I find hard because it's a
> marketing concept, but **I'd say there is something to
> the effect of clients....**Some students come with
> complaints, some trying to get the easing of
> requirements because of personal problems. So yes,
> besides registering **there is quite a bit of relationship
> with the students in terms of their demands**" (BO).

It is clear from the administrator that the students, as clients, approach the department chairperson with an array of various demands both of an educational nature: wanting to study with a certain teacher, or to study at a particular hour of the day as well as demands of a personal nature: social, family and health problems that create special demands and needs from the student. The administrator expressed discomfort with the concept of students as customers just as some of the teachers had expressed in their interviews, but was willing to consider the students as clients.

B. Theme #2   How Teachers Perceive Their Role in the Relationship with Students

The second theme emerged naturally from the original question "do you perceive your students as customers or clients?" The teachers clearly seemed to prefer voicing their ideas about their role in the relationship, rather than speaking about students' needs as clients. Many of their voices sounded stronger and more authoritative in general when discussing their own roles and functions in the classroom. This could be due to the apparent discomfort or insecurity that they felt when dealing with issues of consumerism and education. Several of the teachers did however adhere to the business metaphor during the interviews probably because of the language of the initial question concerning customers and clients. Six teachers representing Israeli, American and Russian cultural backgrounds used the commercial terminology in expressing their thoughts about their roles. Several of these teachers feel the need to please the students as part of their service. Feelings of responsibility, obligation, and a desire to help the students all emerge here as well as parts of the teachers' role in the university classroom.

"I try to show them that this is a **product that you do want**. My job is to give them that skill in a **pleasurable way. I** want to give them that something. You are there to serve the students. You're helping them" (S).

"It's right to say that **we are selling something and we want them to be pleased** with the teaching. I see myself as a guide, a mentor, a friend. I try to do the lesson as humorously and as interestingly and as friendly as possible"(KO).

" **I do have two responsibilities when I take this job.** One is to the employer and to do the job that I'm asked to do; and the other is to the students, to **give them what they have paid for**, what they have come for. I feel there's **a mutual obligation, I am obligated to them to do as well as I can and to do as much as I can and teach them what they need to know**" (ML).

"The teacher's role is more important. I feel it is **my duty to do my utmost** because here this **education is fee- paid and they pay enormous sums of money for the courses**. I say "You must get your money's worth out of this course. So I feel like we shouldn't overburden them. We shouldn't be too hard on them, too severe. **We should help, I think I should help them**, I feel if there was a little, just a very little rightful chance to help them, I do. I think that's the way we should feel about it" (AA).

"Gearing teaching only towards pleasing the student is not the way…On the one hand, **to please the students, and also to do whatever is necessary, what is professionally right to do.** They should **get what they paid for**. I prefer to view student as customer or client rather than as a partner in a relationship. I think **it's my obligation to explain to the customers** the importance of their studies" (NL).

"I do believe that my behavior toward them should be as **I am giving them a service.** I learned from experience that **I had to make it worthwhile, their coming.** And I think that should be the attitude to every single class"(H).

In contrast to the previous group, six other staff members of American, South African and Russian backgrounds assumed a firm anti-commercial attitude to their teaching role, placing an emphasis on the professional obligation, moral responsibility and 'giving' aspects of their positions.

"I consider them students and I consider myself the teacher. In the classroom I'm **not conscious of them as consumers. I feel tremendous professional responsibility-** having lessons planned and developed. I feel **moral responsibility** to do my job as best I can. I feel that my **responsibility is to give them the tools** as perceived by my colleagues" (ST).

"I owe them all my **professional ability.** I must give them that, I feel **bound to that morally and ethically.** I don't want to relate to my students as a client. **I give them more than clients**. I give them everything I've got. **I'm not just there doing a job like in a customer/client relationship. I think I give them much more**. That doesn't mean that you can't do a lot of the services that one gets in the customer client relationship. But I think that the relationship that I build in my class does much more for the student that the customer/client relationship"(SS).

"It **bothers me to a certain extent to think of students as customers or clients** because I don't think of it as basically a business relationship. I feel I'm not a business man. I feel I have a **certain obligation to them as a teacher** to put over to them what I'm trying to put over without thinking about personal profit or a special business relationship towards the students themselves"(BS).

"I feel that **I'm giving no matter what they've paid** and no matter what I'm getting paid" (BE).

"**Education is not a business. I should be the director or the guide of what they need.** I know more than they know and I know more what they need to know. A partnership implies that we have some equal input. I don't really see it as an equal input. **I don't see it as a democratic process that we are equal partners.** I think they should have (some) input"(SR).

"I would **never say the students are clients,** I would say our aim as teachers, is to **provide the best of treatment possible** meaning to help them solve their problems. To help them towards their goal .It is the teacher who **sets the tone.** There is **no negotiation** about ..." (AD).

The remaining six teachers represent a more compromising voice concerning their role in the classroom. The compromise is evident when the participants speak of providing a service but not feeling part of a business-client relationship. Some of them refer to the teacher- student relationship as some kind of a partnership or meeting of equals. Most refer to feeling responsible for their students and being there to help them, to get them through the course.

" I'm here to **provide a service.** I'm not sure if exactly they are the clients of that service in the sense that I have to try and get as many as I can, but definitely, once they're there I am there to provide a service. I see the relationship as a **relationship of equals.** The difference is that my **responsibility is a little bit higher because I am there for them.** I'm not trying to be on their good side. It's not really a real business-client type terminology"(IE).

"I take their ideas into account. I constantly get feedback from the students during the year. Some of their ideas I implement and some I don't. **My interest is to get them through the course.** I'm **here to help them,** not to go against them"(KG).

"I think education is **not a product that can be bought with customer satisfaction** in the sense that, if they knew what they needed, then they wouldn't need us. But yes schools and institutions are definitely marketing because they're running for the same market. On the other hand if it becomes entirely market, it's going to lose on the educational perspective. **On the one hand I play the role of trying to actually teach them. On the other hand, I'm trying to accommodate their needs** and what they think their needs are. It's a service that has to be worked on. What I say to them is that **we're partners in this endeavor"**(BI).

"That's a **service I am providing to the university**. In a partnership things are negotiable. If they are the clients and they have all the power, then there's no negotiating. I try to show them that **I am offering them a tool to achieve their goals. Negotiating gives the students choices.** They have a choice yes or no. In a client relationship I wonder how it would go"(OF).

"We are a **kind of service,** it takes a lot of the **creative or artistic or whatever part of the professionalism of the teacher** not only to serve the content but to serve ideas. Teachers have **obligations** and students have rights"(SM).

"In my teaching, I try to **keep a balance.** I try to **keep the authority of a teacher,** a university lecturer. On the other hand I'm aware that these students need help. **We're here to teach them and get them through the course"**(DA).

The administrator referred to the position of the department as a whole in similar terms to those expressed by the teachers themselves except when the financial aspect was mentioned raising a previously unmentioned issue:

"We are all here to **service students** whether they pay for the courses or not. It is true that the fact that they pay so much money and extra money for these courses we hesitate not to drop students from the courses

because we feel that they actually bought into them. And then
the only thing we can actually do is effect their class
grades. So I would say **there are slight differences as
an effect of the money because we
feel we can't just throw them out**" (BO).

Discussion

According to the literature on higher education (Bush, 1994), throughout the
world universities have made a clear move to a market economy in a highly
competitive world, by marketing a product called education to the consumers
called students. Marketing involves an exchange or transaction between the
provider or giver of a service called education and the purchaser or receiver of
that service known as the student. The transaction takes place at the university and
the product is purchased at a fixed price. The purchaser receives various services
from the university such as library facilities, dormitories, lecture halls,
laboratories and lectures, all combined to provide the consumer with his/her
ultimate wish, an education. Quality assurance procedures are often employed to
determine an objective level of quality of the various services and to aid the
purchaser in the decision as to where to make the transaction or more simply put,
into which institution of higher education should the student or parents invest
money and time. The decision is a difficult one involving consideration of many
aspects of a composite picture.

For the particular purpose and focus of this thesis the service provider is the
university lecturer, the service is the classroom instruction, and the purchaser or
consumer is the student. The main research questions, which were explained in
detail in the introduction and methodology sections of the thesis, involve the
perceptions and attitudes of university lecturers to student evaluations of faculty
and to improvement of teaching. With this in mind, the concepts of service
provider and consumer necessarily assume places of prominence in the discussion.
Hence, the first interview question probed teachers' perceptions of students as
customers or clients. Why should the question be asked? If the consensus is that
higher education belongs to a marketing economy, isn't the answer to the question
an obvious one?

The literature on the subject of higher education and consumerism in Israel points
out that the Israeli situation is not identical to that of the Western world. Miron
and Segal (1986) explained that while "American education may be a product for

consumption which must be sold to prospective students" the term
consumerism was still foreign to the vocabulary of Israel. Even though Israel
strives to keep up with Western standards in material goods, it has not kept up
with trends of consumerism. Only recently has the idea of the 'customer is always
right' begun to penetrate into certain facets of Israeli society. Are the university
teachers at the university in question keeping pace with these trends of
consumerism? Do their attitudes affect the quality of the product, the education
that was promised to the consumer, the student. The following discussion should
shed some light on these questions.

Emerging Themes

In terms of emerging themes the teachers in the unit present a picture not unlike
what one would predict from reading the literature related to quality assurance and
consumerism in higher education. The literature identifies the on-going debate
between those such as Pollitt (1987 and 1990) who calls for identifying the
student as a direct consumer or customer or client of higher education and Benson
and Lewis (1994, p.195) who have written that many professors view
consumerism as "eroding academic standards that faculties have toiled so long to
construct".

The participants in this research seem to reflect the sides in this debate even
though they would probably attest to having no knowledge of the existing
literature on quality assurance or consumerism. The descriptions and explanations
given by the teachers are the result of intuitive reflection on their own experience.
The first emerging theme reflecting teachers' perceptions of their students' needs,
presented an array of thoughts similar to the voices heard in the debate mentioned
above.

Some teachers taking the Pollitt view referred to the students as seeking a product
called education (S), and considered them as customers and clients (NL, SR, HP)
who had made a monetary investment (AA, BI, OF, BE) and were therefore
looking for gratification in terms of passing the course as a necessity on the way
to getting their university degrees. Others referred to the rights of these customer
clients and the necessity to give them what they needed and wanted (BO). A few
teachers stated an outright dislike for the terminology of customer/client (KO, SS,
AL) confirming the view of Benson and Lewis as mentioned above. Only one
teacher (IE) mentioned that some students actually want an education and not just
a piece of paper or graduation.

Given the fact that all of the teachers participating in this study have many years of experience in the EFL teaching field and enjoy a high level of autonomy in the way they teach how can we account for the diversity in their attitudes towards their students in the customer/client relationship? I initially assumed that teachers from similar cultural backgrounds would react similarly to the customer/client question. Teachers born and educated in the United States, Britain or South Africa "should" have been more consumer oriented, while Russian born and Israeli born and educated "should" have been less so. But a check of their nationalities against their responses indicates that this is not so. Their attitudes seem to be mixed and there appears to have been substantial Israeli "acculturation", among the staff as a result of the many years each respondent has spent living in Israel, where the student "consumer" does not merit special attention (Guri-Rosenblitt, 1999). So that what I heard in the interviews was many teachers using the consumer terminology but not feeling good about it. (HP, KO, SS). This may mean that they are experiencing external pressures to adopt marketing attitudes but do not feel comfortable with the process because of its possible consequences. This sense of discomfort portrayed in their comments is compatible with ideas presented by Delucchi and Smith (1997) who contended that consumerism creates very difficult problems and has a negative influence on the classroom environment in the university by vesting authority in students as consumers. The result is that teachers may lower standards, demand less work, and be more lenient towards the students. "Few institutions of higher education are immune from this phenomenon although it is one of the dirty little secrets we deny publicly"(p.324). It is this very feeling that may be irritating the teachers without their openly admitting it or even being aware of it. Delucchi and Smith's expression of consumerism as "a dirty little secret" may match those teachers (KO, SS, AL) who expressed dislike with the notion of considering students as customers or clients. Those people, in the teaching unit in question, who feel this way, may feel that consumerism runs counter to the professional aura surrounding the lecturer in the university classroom. They may feel that the market attitude is actually demeaning and lessens their "ivory tower" prestige. It should be noted that in the EFL unit in question the teachers are involved primarily with teaching and secondarily with research and hence, the diversity in their views about what students needs are.

An examination of the second emerging theme concerning the teachers' roles in the customer/client relationship revealed however that the often expressed

negative feelings about using market terminology in characterizing students did not, however, negatively affect the teachers' feelings about their own roles in the customer/client, teacher equation. They may have felt "dirty" about using the words customer or client but that did not seem to affect their relating to the students in these very terms. The theme that emerged from the customer/client question clearly expressed the voices of what they perceived to be their role in the customer/client relationship. A group of six (SS, KO, M, AA, NL and HP) addressed the students as customers and clients and spoke of their strong feelings of **responsibility and obligation to the students and the necessity to please them** with their teaching by presenting material in an interesting way. **"You are there to serve the students"** was the message voiced by an American born and educated teacher (SS), clearly echoing the influence of her American consumer background in spite of her many years living and working in Israel. In their own words the teachers wanted the students to feel that their coming to class was **worthwhile** and the teacher was to feel responsible for creating that feeling. This was true even for one of the teachers (KO) who as previously noted, voiced clear dislike for thinking about students as customers or clients. The feeling of **duty** on the part of the teachers to give the students **what they paid for** comes across clearly, once again reflecting a clear market attitude on the part of the teachers (AA, NL, ML) representing a mixture of Russian, Israeli and American cultural backgrounds.

Interestingly enough four teachers (ST, SS, BS, SR) all of Anglo/Western highly consumer-oriented backgrounds spoke of **responsibility** on a different plane. We might refer to it as a higher moral plane. They voiced feelings of **moral** responsibility, **ethical** responsibility, and **professional** responsibility but not in the context of customer/client relationships. This group felt themselves to be "above" referring to students as customers or clients and felt that the connection and responsibility to the discipline they were teaching took precedence over the business or market attitude expressed by other colleagues. SR clearly pointed out that **"education is not a business".** It is my feeling that these teachers are rather reluctant to "dirty" their hands with consumerism and the marketing attitude, and feel as Benson and Lewis mentioned, that dealing with consumerism in higher education would "erode academic standards that faculties have toiled so long to construct"(1994, P.195).

The last group of teachers mentioned added a different aspect to the discussion. They spoke of their feeling of a partnership relationship of some kind with their

students. For some it was a **relationship of equals** (IE) or a **partnership in this endeavor** (BI) or **negotiating gives the students choices** (OF).

In some cases the teachers felt the partnership to be part of the customer/client relationship: teachers **perform a kind of a service and teachers have obligations and students have rights** (SM). While others felt the partnership was exclusive of it: **"If it becomes entirely market, it's going to lose on the educational perspective"**(BI).

To summarize briefly, at this stage we have seen that the second emerging theme concerning teachers' role in the customer/client relationship presents the teachers having certain similarities concerning their dedication to the students and/or to the discipline they are teaching, regardless of the diversity of views of their students as customers or clients. They all express in different voices their feeling that **quality** is important either as part of a customer/client orientation or a higher moral and ethical responsibility. They want to "serve" the student as client, or the specific discipline or subject of instruction, in the best possible manner. Some will seek a partnership with the student/client and others will assume a higher level of authority. All of this is in an effort to do the best job possible, and offer the best "product" on the market. The effect of these views on attitudes of accountability to students, employers, and profession will be examined in the next section of findings and analysis.

Section Two
Questions: Do you feel professional accountability?
Do you feel accountable to your students?

Introduction

The two questions that will be dealt with in this section were natural outcomes of the preceding discussions and responses to the subject of customer/client relationships between teachers and students. In the review of the literature the strong connections between accountability, evaluation, and quality were explained as well as the bond between the professional provider, the university teacher in this case, and the student as a consumer. Dahllof et al (1991) commented on the development of the accountability movement and its impact on the evaluation of teaching and stressed the complexity and importance of the issue. He explained the need to examine a system of accountability and how it affects the teaching situation, suggesting that the subject is almost a dissertation subject in its own right. Pollitt (1987) wrote about the student in the role of consumer and in 1990

referred to them as the direct consumers of higher education. Yorke (1998)
also pointed out that accountability is directed towards the student body and not
only upwards. And as the Jarratt Report stated: "the world has changed and it is
not good enough just to pay lip service to accountability"(Jarratt Report quoted in
Bull, 1990, p.35).

The concept of accountability is difficult to discuss in general because of the
many facets and various aspects of the term. As Burgess (1992) pointed out "it
can be of many kinds: personal, professional, political, financial, managerial,
legal, contractual" (p.5). The difficulty encountered by university teachers in an
Israeli institution of higher education in relating to accountability is enhanced by
the fact that the Hebrew language does not have an official Hebrew translation for
the term. This has been attested to by the Official Academy of the Hebrew
Language. Accountability is variously referred to in Hebrew both as
'responsibility' or 'legal responsibility' and as *divuchiut* in Hebrew translated as
"reporting". The latter usage comes from a translation of the word "account" in
accountability. This obviously does not begin to recognize the deeper levels of
meaning attached to the word as found in the discussions of accountability in the
literature. Speculation as to why this is the situation in Israel, leads to the
conclusion that accountability is a heavily loaded cultural issue which has not yet
reached a high level of relevance in Israeli society. One need only examine events
on the political and economic fronts in Israel where leaders do not accept their
accountability for what has happened and proceed to shift blame for errors to
someone else. Even though a large part of the population under investigation in
this study is made up of English speakers, most of them have spent more than half
of their adult lives in Israel and have not been exposed to the accountability issues
in the literature on education which are pertinent to this research. This seems to
match the findings in the previous section on students as customers or clients, a
topic widely discussed in the literature around the world but with little or no
discussion in Israel.

With this awareness in mind I felt it necessary to introduce the questions
concerning accountability to the teachers, regardless of their native language, with
a fairly detailed explanation of the terminology and examples of its usage.

Emerging Themes

A. Theme #1 How Teachers Stay Abreast of The Professional Field

The first theme to emerge from the question about professional accountability concerned teachers' awareness of the need to keep up professionally and stay abreast of their professional teaching field. Two sub-themes emerged as well. The first sub-theme concerned the teachers' perceptions of the attitude of the department regarding staff development and research and the second concerned the teachers' perceptions of their colleagues' attitudes to those issues. Because the first theme and the two sub-themes are so closely related and intertwined, I have presented them together in order to emphasize the inter-relationship between them. The responses of the teachers to the first question were divided into two groups of unequal proportions. This division into two groups surfaced as a logical result of their answers to the questions.

Respondents: Group A

The first group, by far the largest, consisted of eleven teachers all of whom hold PhD degrees or are doctoral candidates. These teachers (AD, HP, AA, NL, IE, KG, BO, BI, BON, OF, SM) with only one exception, all spoke of the importance of participating in research projects and keeping up with the latest research by attending conferences pertaining to the discipline as vital to their staying abreast of their profession. This clearly reflects the academic nature of their personal backgrounds.

One veteran PhD, tenured staff member, educated in the Former Soviet Union voiced the message in the following way:

> "And I think that this is something that should be required of anyone who is being hired to teach in this department, which means to be really up-to-date with all the **developments in the field, with the research in the field of applied linguistics** and in the field of **methodology** of teaching English as a foreign language" (AD).

This same teacher also felt that the department should help newer teachers gain competence in the research process:

> "by a **mentor** who would be ready and willing and able to share the experience with younger staff **of how to do**

research or how to prepare things for conferences"(AD).
Another experienced teacher, a recent recipient of a PhD from a British university,
expressed the connection between keeping abreast with the field for herself and
her students:

> "I have always believed that the **research I do should
> be connected very closely to the work I do with my
> students** in class. I do believe **these things are so
> connected** that it's very **hard for me to say whether
> I'm keeping up for keeping up, or whether I am
> keeping up for my students.** I think it's really for both
> sometimes" (HP).

But in contrast to AD she feels that the department's attitude in this area is
lacking.

> "**I do not feel that the departments** in general support,
> for whatever reason, **support research** – departments
> of TESL in general" (HP).

And she is disappointed that the research that some of her colleagues are doing, in
spite of their very busy and hectic schedules, is not being invested in the
department.

> "people are just running off to classes and doing all sort
> of other things as well, and I find, from what I hear
> from colleagues of mine, that they're doing – that have
> done their research or are doing their research in things
> that I don't see revolving back into the department. I
> see **people doing things that interest them for their
> own purpose,** but not necessarily – and I think **it's a
> shame that this research does not get back to the
> department** in some form that the department can use.
> **And I think it's a shame**" (HP).

The importance of research in professional accountability comes through again
quite emphatically in the words of BE, a veteran teacher, American born, with a
PhD from an Israeli university. Not only is she personally very involved in
research but she feels that her colleagues should be as well.

> "I think of people who are **involved in research** and
> the people **who go to conferences** and the people who
> are on committees or, you know, sort of think tanks to

improve what's going on and to. ... I think to a fairly good

extent. Not 100 percent (staff who are involved in

keeping up with the field). Some people just get by. **It**

(research) happens to be my interest, so maybe that's

why I'm so vocal about it, but I think that, given the

prevalence of material, of information, the numbers

of journals, the research and everything in this

particular field-now we're not talking about an

obscure field. We're talking about an international

field that has gained such momentum in the last 20,

30 years that it's a damn shame if people are

not"(BE).

This teacher also expresses the connection between her interest in research and

her responsibility to her students. She echoes ideas mentioned previously by HP.

"If there is some little part of the field that you're

interested in, I can almost guarantee there's a journal

for it or there's going to be a conference next summer

or a special interest group. There's no question about it.

And **I think we owe it, again to ourselves, to our**

students" (BE).

Another PhD holder, (IE) Israeli born and American educated, who reads

professional journals and attends conferences, doesn't believe that the department

is doing enough to promote professional accountability nor does she feel that

teachers are acting on what they are being given.

"**No, I don't think so (that the dept. is doing**

something). Some of the things that are done- we're

meeting twice a year, and in those meetings, some

things might be pushed a little bit, but I don't think

they're enforced. And even if we are told, and **people**

are not responsible enough to take what they are

told and actually apply it"(IE).

Her suggestion for getting more staff to a better level of professionalism is similar

to AL's idea of **requiring** teachers to be up-to-date with developments in the

discipline:

"But **if we have more colloquia in general, then**

maybe forcing them to come – I mean you can't force

them to listen, but at least forcing them to come. And **if we had**

more presentations on different topics. **Maybe they**

should be forced to go to conferences and at least

show that they went to one conference"(IE).

Another colleague with a PhD, (SM), also Israeli born, American educated with many years of university teaching in the United States stresses the importance of reading as part of professional accountability:

"**we cannot be disconnected from the field**. I'm a

better teacher if I'm reading number of articles,

even if I don't write anything" (SM).

This teacher however, feels as if she is caught up in a problematic situation. She feels that teachers **should be reading professional articles** but **would not like an imposed policy**. She is concerned that imposing such a policy would not be pragmatic especially in Israel. There are logistical problems:

"**the weekend is short**" so it is difficult to

find time to read"(SM).

And subscriptions to professional journals such as the TESOL Quarterly are very expensive. She feels that these:

"**are things I'm missing** in my professional

environment in Israel"(SM).

The unfortunate result for this teacher is that she now feels:

"I've kind of **gotten smaller and smaller and**

smaller in terms of my professional backup,

knowing what is going on out there because, at

some level, **it steals into my teaching**" (SM).

This last statement reflects once again the connection between professional accountability and teaching.

(SM) also is disappointed in her colleagues' attitude towards professional accountability:

"I would **expect more of professional cooperation.**

I don't hear interest. People can't attend colloquia

because they have another job. **Those who really need**

it, unfortunately cannot make it" (SM).

Only one teacher (AA), a non-native English speaker, out of the group of PhD staff members, was not involved with research in any way. Nor did this teacher verbalize the necessity to remain up-to-date in the professional discipline. She did

however explain her reasons for not reading professional journals in her teaching discipline (TESL):

> **"Had it been literature it would have been different.**
> I don't know why. Maybe I've got some complexes,
> and I don't do the professional reading in TESOL.
> **What**
> **I feel I should do is reading in English. Reading**
> **things, novels, books in English. To keep up my**
> **English standards. That's something that I do, and**
> **that's what I keep doing".**

She explained that her training in Russia was for a different discipline and that she really still does not feel completely comfortable in her present discipline.

> "Maybe because of my **Russian background**, I wasn't
> used to this. It was 22 years of teaching before I came
> here (Israel). I **specialized in something else.** My
> **interests were in a different field.** I forgot to mention
> all kinds of **workshops I attended in the past, and I**
> **still attend while working here. I feel like an**
> **outsider, like an intruder".**

The last of the group of PhD staff members (BO), spoke both as a colleague and an administrator. She said that she felt it was very necessary to keep abreast of the field but that in her opinion most of the people in the department do not. Like the other PhDs in the department, she voiced the feeling that keeping abreast of the profession went in tandem with doing research in the field. Her wish was that more be done to get the other teachers involved in professional development and thereby raise their level of professional accountability.

> "Some of our teachers do a lot of **research in the field,**
> and therefore they're obviously reading and **being**
> **abreast of the field**, each one in their own different
> expertise. Unfortunately, I feel there is a **body of**
> **teachers that are not making themselves**
> **knowledgeable about what's going on and keeping**
> **abreast of it,** and they're too involved in teaching what
> they have to teach per week and getting it done. We try
> to **encourage them to go to conferences,** and push

them to **read more**. But I do feel that's **an area which we need**

to work on more" (BO).

All seven teachers mentioned above have PhD. degrees. The next group I will

present are four staff members who are doctoral candidates at various stages of

completion of their research. They think that research per se is important but they

do not all voice the feeling that their research is or should be relevant to their

classroom teaching and their professional accountability.

One example is (NL) an Israeli born and educated doctoral candidate in

comparative literature. She feels that the department is helpful in enabling her and

the other teachers to maintain professional accountability.

" **We are given workshops and conferences and**

material is sent to teachers. **Many teachers are**

involved in research, and it also sort of comes when

teachers present and talk about it. So we get

updated.

The department takes care of updating. The

atmosphere is such an atmosphere that we do it. I

usually participate but not as much as I would like to. **I**

read journals and implement the latest trends in the

classroom as they are presented".

This teacher's doctoral research however, does not have relevance to her

classroom teaching:

"**It's literature**. It has nothing to do with language

acquisition. **It's not connected**".

Another Israeli born doctoral student (KG) is very proud of the professionalism of

the teaching unit on an international level:

"I felt that **we were up there in terms of what are we**

doing, where are we leading our students. I think that we're

and I'm looking at myself as part of the staff- that **we're**

doing a good job"(KG).

She shows a strong interest in research in the discipline and in applying it to her

classroom whenever possible. She also feels that more should be done in this area:

"I would **like to hear professionals** come to the

department and **speak more about the latest research**

that's been done in the field. I feel **that there's a lack**

there in terms of research" (KG).

"But **whatever I know**, and every colloquium that there is in the department I go to, I pass on to the students as well. **I let them feel part of what I know. I share my knowledge** with the students as much as I can"(KG).

"(Development sessions) **should be compulsory**. I think that it can add a big... it can add a lot of knowledge to everyone"(KG).

Yet a different voice came from American born and educated, doctoral student (BI). She expresses her independent reasons for doing a PhD that seem to be different than those of her colleagues:

"I'm a curious person and academic by nature, so **I'm not doing it because I'm accountable to the university and my job**. This is what I do, and I try to do what I do well, and I try to do it from an informed position. **I'm doing this PhD in this because I want to do it**" (BI).

She feels that her non-doctoral colleagues think that doing a PhD puts you in an ivory tower:

" People don't realize that **everything helps you in the classroom**"(BI).

Her feeling is that you cannot require staff members to participate in professional development programs because the teachers will resent it if it is imposed on them.

"If you **do it by force, people resent it**. The theory of **Big Brother- if I don't go or if I do go and if I open my mouth**. You see that at meetings. There's a – sometimes there's **a very uncomfortable feeling that people are talking just to be heard.**"

"If it could come **no strings attached** and be honest, it would be great".

The last doctoral candidate in the group is also American born and educated (OF). This teacher is actively engaged in research projects in the teaching unit in addition to her doctoral research. She often presents papers at local and international conferences. However, she did not refer to her own research or to the need for others to engage in research when participating in this interview. Maintaining professional accountability is important to her:

"I try **to read the literature**. I also **try reading a lot beyond our specific field**, in linguistics and other

areas. **I try to keep things fresh**, for myself as well. **I will try
to use technology**, I'm not afraid to try it. Again, **I'll
read the literature how it's being used, what's the
theory behind it. I attend conferences**. I spend a lot of
time **on the Internet looking for different trends,
different materials**"(OF).

As far as her colleagues' professional accountability is concerned this teacher
(OF) expressed feelings that:

**"Some yes and some no. Some teachers are very
active**. Sometimes **I see them in the library reading**."
"I think that when we have speakers, it's very helpful"
"The mechanics of getting everyone together for a
workshop would be problematic with everyone's
different schedules. **Exposure to reading is
important**" (OF).

Respondents: Group B

The teachers in the second group (SP, SS, DC, BS, SR) all hold MA. or MEd
degrees and are all experienced EFL/ESL teachers. They also expressed their
ideas about their efforts to stay abreast of the field. In contrast to the respondents
in Group A, these teachers do not have a research-focused orientation and their
emphasis is definitely on the more pragmatic side of the pedagogy.

"I think the most important thing is **talking to
colleagues, the workshops-** I almost always go to the
workshops, **I find they help**" (SP).
"**I listen to guest lecturers** and go to **workshops.** I listen
carefully to hear if there's anything new. Some things I
actually **integrated into my teaching**" (DA).
"I feel that the department could give **more workshops**
and things like that in the **way we teach** certain aspects
of the course" (BS).

(BS) tried to explain why the department doesn't do more to foster professional
excellence:

"I feel that the **department doesn't do enough in** ...
possibly on the grounds that **we hide behind the
academic freedom**, once you get in and you're

standing in front of a class, you can do what you want because

essentially that's your right as a teacher".

This group of colleagues does not however make a practice of engaging in serious reading of professional journals:.

> **"I would like to say I read the journals religiously.** I
>
> don't **unfortunately, I don't**. If I come across an article
>
> that seems interesting to me, yes I'll sit down and read it.
>
> **I fool around in the Internet. I fool around here and**
>
> **there** and I'll look something up" (SP).
>
> **"I don't have the time or energy to sit in the library**
>
> **and read** up in journals"(DA).

Another staff member does engage in reading to keep up with the discipline but again with the emphasis on the practical:

> "I read the TESL Journal, which is a **practical journal**.
>
> I keep up **less with the** TESOL Quarterly which is
>
> more **theoretical**. But from time to time I dip in.
>
> Interestingly enough the TESL Journal is made for
>
> classroom teachers. It is **implementable. I wish I had**
>
> **a bit more direction about it** because there's so much
>
> that's out there. I **pick up** what looks interesting to me,
>
> what I think is **relating to what we are doing**"(SS).
>
> **"I don't attend conferences and colloquia** as much as
>
> I think I should" (SS).

The last teacher in this group (SR) introduced a different aspect to the professional accountability discussion. Whereas the other teachers placed the "blame" for not engaging in reading professional literature on themselves, this teacher foisted the responsibility for her actions on another factor. While other teachers in this group claimed that their schedules were too crowded to allow for library and journal reading or would have like to have more direction in choosing reading material, the teacher in question (SR) offered a completely different reason for her lack of reading and non-participation in staff development activities. She felt bored with the presentations that were made and irritated at the fact that she did not receive any recognition for having participated in staff development programs. However, if an effort had been made by the department to show personal interest in this teacher, her attitude might have been different:

"and the reason is because **I was very involved and I was
really making all efforts to go to these things, read
up, go to conferences, be part of colloquia**, and I
found at some point that **I was getting more and more
frustrated with the repetition and the feeling that I
was wasting my time. I'm also getting no kind of
recognition for it**. So I stopped, but I was not happy
about stopping either" (SR).

"I think that **if there were a little bit more
encouragement, we'd make that extra effort** to get
there" (SR).

When (SR) mentions the need for more encouragement she is referring to personal recognition: a letter from the department chairmen or a kind word here and there. However, a previously mentioned colleague (SP) from this group referred to encouragement in another vein. She felt that the reason that younger or newer colleagues were not involved in reading or workshops or attending professional "getaways" was due to resentment. The solution that she offered involved giving a monetary reward as encouragement for participation in staff development and thereby furthering one's professional accountability.

"I'm not in that position because I'm past the age where
I'm going – but especially the younger people in the
department, there's **a lot of resentment between those
who do have and those who don't have, those who
get social benefits and those who don't. And on top
of that they want me to read? Why?**" (SP).

"The other way it could be done is – what I said, when
we had a retreat- is twice a year give everybody an
article, have a weekend, and the **university will cover
the weekend for every-one.** If you say okay, **we'll
spring everyone a weekend, and in return would you
be willing to report on an article, you will probably
get a lot more.** So I think there has to be **some type of
reward**" (SP).

B. Theme #2: How Teachers Express Their Accountability to Students

When asked about having feelings of accountability to their students, teachers responded with a wide variety of answers ranging from 'absolutely' to 'yes, but'. In contrast to the findings in the preceding theme, there was no clearly defined division between the PhD/doctoral candidates and everyone else. Generally speaking the teachers referred to accountability as having the meanings of 'responsibility', 'obligation', 'caring', 'showing interest in' and even 'guilt'. Some teachers referred to particular issues that represented accountability to them and others voiced ideas that reflected the existence of a two-way street for accountability. Only one teacher voiced negative feelings about using the term accountability in discussing his responsibility to his students. The sub-themes that emerged will be reflected in the examples that follow.

Four staff members (SP, ML, SS, NL) used the marketing or business analogy in their discussion of accountability to students:

> "They **pay my salary**. They are **the buyers, they're the clients**. We only exist for them. Without them, we have nothing. **So we do have accountability to them**" (SP).

> "That would be terrible because basically **these students paid for something** that they didn't get, and if it was my fault- **if I felt it was my fault- then it's like I stole their money**"(ML).

> "There is **a price that has to be paid, whether that price by having to do XYZ**, whether the price is **having your job be on the line**. There are too many bad teachers out there and it's not fair to the students. **They don't deserve bad teachers**"(SS).

> "I think that **professional accountability and accountability to students are identical**. If I am a good professional then **I provide the merchandise that the student should get**" (NL).

The voice of accountability as 'owing' students something specific came from seven other colleagues:

> "I think **teachers owe students a clear structure of the course**. They **owe students being ready for class every time, and setting up the goal of every single lesson,** so that when the student comes to class, **he**

knows exactly what is expected of the student during the lesson"(AD).

"It is the teacher's **responsibility – and that's how he becomes accountable- to create the conditions for this kind of learning** to go on, for some kind of learning to go on. Yes, the **teacher is accountable to the student**"(HP).

"I definitely **feel responsibility,** and I know **the list of things they absolutely must do** and **a list of tricks and a list of stratagems** that I absolutely must teach them. And I give it to them, and **I make sure they understand it. Of course, there is a responsibility"**(AA).

"I feel **absolutely accountable** to my students. I'm **supposed to teach them something** that is A useful to them in real life and B to get them through an exam. **If I felt they weren't doing either of these two things, I would be very upset.** I'm wasting my time and their time" (SR).

"I feel that **I'm responsible for how they're doing in the course,** and I would take the **necessary steps to make sure that they're with us"**(KG).

"I'm **accountable** to them **because of what I give them or what I think I should be giving** them, but I also know that **every minute of that hour and a half that I spend with them** once or twice a week is crucial. I feel that it's **a crime to waste the students' time.** I think the university doesn't respect the students enough to realize that **their time is just as valuable as our time. In other words, it's connected to the whole business of accountability"**(BE).

"We talk about teacher accountability as something else. **We can't demand from students what we don't give. In other words, coming on time, being there.** There are certain things that as a **"role model" I have to do. I have to** come. **I have to** have my homework

done. I **have to** have my things orderly. **And then when I
demand of the student, it's a fair demand**"(BI).

This last comment moves us into the idea of accountability being a two-way
street with mutual obligations existing between the teacher and the student. We
previously heard the teachers who viewed their accountability in a business
framework. Now we find an added aspect of teaching and learning viewed in
contractual terms. These teachers express their feelings about their responsibility
to the students and the students' obligation to them:

> "If they respect you that you're not out to get them
> you're out to help them and you show that in many
> different ways, **then there is accountability on both
> sides**. What used to be **called contractual teaching**. I
> do mine, you do yours, and let's get this over with
> successfully. I very much keep **them part of the
> partnership**. It's not talked at them it's talked with
> them. **I'll negotiate** a lot of things" (BI).
>
> "**I do feel accountable to them if they're doing their
> part**. Are we accountable to them? Yes, but **they have
> to accept the responsibility**. And that's why it's so
> **hard to be accountable for the end result**. If the
> student has given his all, yes. Accountability can only
> go so far. So you have an accountability to the students,
> but the **student has double accountability**. He has to,
> A, have the basic ability to do what he's required to do;
> and B, he has to be willing to put his time into it"(SP).
>
> " I feel like there's **a sort of mutual obligation. I am
> obligated to them to do as well as I can** and to do as
> much as I can and to teach them what they need to
> know. And I feel like **they have an obligation to me –
> or not to me. To the course or to themselves** in order
> to pass the course – in order to pass the course and **not
> be obnoxious, meaning when they're in class, they
> should behave within certain reasonable bounds of
> behavior, and to come to class**"(ML).
>
> "**The students might not have been doing their part**

as well. The students, if they are-if they **expect the teacher to**

be accountable to them, they also have to be

accountable to the teacher in a way"(HP).

"I'm **trying to make them accountable to me as**

much as I am accountable to them for the

material"(IE).

There was one veteran staff member (ST), rather close to retirement, who took a rather dim view of using the language of accountability. This did not mean however, that the teacher did not feel accountability to his students in his actions in the classroom:

"So I'm **not dismissing accountability, but I**

wouldn't make the analogy in that sense of products.

But I just feel that **my responsibility is to give them**

the tools as perceived by my colleagues, by the

department, etc., etc., **that will facilitate** and give them

the skills that they ultimately have to get. Beyond that,

in how they utilize them, I shouldn't say I don't care,

but I'm not involved. I can't be involved because I'm

not there"(ST).

Discussion

Referring back to the review of the literature section on accountability we found that Kogan (1986, p.25) claimed that: "accountability is a condition in which individual role holders are liable to review and the application of sanctions if their actions fail to satisfy those with whom they are in an accountability relationship". He also differentiated between accountability on one hand, with its legal aspect whereby the individual can be called to account for actions and responsibility on the other hand, which is a moral issue, a sense of duty that cannot be imposed on anyone. A different approach was explained by Bush (1994), who felt that even though one could make distinctions between accountability, responsibility, and responsiveness, it might be more helpful to consider them all as simply different modes of accountability. It is with this thought in mind that I would like to discuss the emerging themes from the two questions related to accountability. For the purposes of this research the individual role holders are the university teachers in the particular teaching unit that is the subject of this research. The students

themselves are indeed also role holders but their perceptions are not being questioned in the scope of this investigation.

After listening carefully to the interview responses it would be very easy to conclude that the teachers in this teaching unit don't realize the "true" meaning of the concept of accountability as expressed by Kogan and do not act accordingly. Indeed, there was no declared readiness on their part to accept sanctions for failing to satisfy those with whom they are in an accountability relationship. This could be due to the fact that, similar to the customer/client issue that was previously discussed, the teachers are still unacquainted with the full extent of the literature on accountability in higher education and are therefore not as conversant on the topic as should be expected. All of this could result in placing a negative shadow around the teachers if we were in fact judging them on certain accountability criteria. But if we allow for Bush's more moderate approach to the issues and consider responsibility as a key factor in a discussion of modes of accountability, then a different truth emerges from the teachers' voices. A close inspection of what they have voiced and the emerging themes and sub-themes, indicates strongly that they do indeed engage in a constant encounter with their feelings of responsibility and accountability both to their profession and to their students.

As seen in the emerging theme of how they stay abreast of their professional field, the respondents in Group A, who either have PhD degrees or are doctoral candidates, almost all expressed the need to maintain their research profiles while maintaining their commitment to teaching. They felt that the research helped them stay **connected to the field and the work they did with their students and would be better teachers** if they kept up with professional reading and research. There were regrets expressed that **not enough of the teachers in the department were involved** in research and that the **department was not doing enough to promote and support more research** projects. The feeling was that this was **owed to themselves and to the students**. The importance of research in their professional lives and in their place of employment is interesting because the teaching unit in question is just that. It is a teaching unit and not a research department. Evidence of involvement in research activity is not required in order to gain employment in the unit, nor is it demanded for continuing employment or promotion in the unit. Yet these teachers who compose Group A definitely feel the necessity for research in their professional lives and would like to see more of it in the unit as a whole. For them professional accountability or responsibility or

obligation definitely requires a research component. The point of divergence in this group concerns enforcement of policy. One teacher (IE) feels that teachers **should be forced to go to conferences,** while another lecturer(SM) **would not like an imposed policy.** This refers directly to the debate between Scott (1989) and Winch (1996b), as to whether accountability should be moral requirement or imposed from outside.

The respondents in Group B express their ideas on professional accountability in different ways without directly referring to it as accountability. Although they feel that keeping up with the profession is important, most of them reflect some kind of frustration in participating in the process. **Reading professional journals is important** but there is **not enough time to keep up with it** or they **don't receive enough direction about what to read.** Some even said that there should be some kind of recognition to those who made the effort to go to conferences and keep up with the reading. **For some, verbal or written recognition would suffice,** for another, **monetary incentives would help encourage teachers** to **attend workshops and professional getaways** and become more active in the "keeping up" process.

The second theme that was articulated in the interviews on the topic of accountability concerned how teachers express their accountability to their students. We can see the relationship between the first and second themes in Frazer (1992) when he speaks about accountability and says: "Teachers are accountable to their professional colleagues that the integrity of their discipline is upheld and that students develop positive attitudes towards the subject and its use in society"(p.17). Frazer also stressed the idea of the importance of promotion of learning in the universities and said, "nothing is taught until it is learnt"(p.18). These ideas were voiced by the teachers themselves when they spoke of **the need to create the conditions for learning,** to **serve as "role models"** for the students, **to teach them something useful.** Teachers spoke of the personal **responsibility they had to the students** to teach them and get them to pass the course. What we do not see here is evidence of teaching as a performance to be monitored and judged by others, except perhaps by their students (Johnston, 1996).

The teachers all expressed a desire for their students to do well but they steered clear of talking about the necessity of having their teaching monitored by any external factors. Many of the staff members voiced feelings of **mutual accountability** on the part of the teacher and the student. Students must be doing

their part, **they too have to accept responsibility,** they **expect the teacher to be accountable** to them, **they also have to be accountable to the teacher** in a way.

In spite of the pressures and tensions felt by teachers to keep abreast of their discipline either through research or reading or talking to colleagues and to maintain accountability or responsibility to their students, the teachers still transmit a sense of confidence in what they are doing and pride in what they are achieving with their students and do not want to waste the students' time. They may not be aware of, or have been touched by the wide context of increased accountability requirements as expressed in the literature. But these teachers show a commitment to their profession and a motivation to be effective teachers. According to the literature, accountability is clearly linked to quality in higher education. Appraisal and evaluation have been shown to be clearly linked to accountability and responsibility. Kwan (1999, p.181) said "with the surge in public demand for accountability in higher education and the growing concern for quality of university teaching, the practice of collecting student ratings of teaching has been widely adopted by universities all over the world as part of their quality assurance system". This statement leads us to the next section of interview questions concerning student evaluation of faculty.

Section Three
Questions: How Do You Feel About the Official Student Evaluation of Faculty – SEF?
Do You Think that the SEF Tool can Help Improve Teaching?

Introduction

According to the literature, the subject of Student Evaluation of Faculty (SEF) as a tool for evaluation of teaching and performance in college or university has been researched and written about for more than 70 years (Cohen, 1990; Ory, 1990; Wachtel, 1998). The literature review informed us that there have been thousands of research articles published, examining every aspect and characteristic of the SEF. The review reflected a myriad of opinions on the SEF as a tool of evaluation, disputes as to the worth and value of the tool, its validity and reliability, questions as to the ethics of using such tools by students and the impact of the tools on teachers' careers. Psychometric aspects of the questions comprising the tool were also examined. Philosophical issues of academic

freedom and the constitutional right to privacy with regard to the use of the SEF tool were raised and hotly debated as well. It was quite clear from the literature that the whole issue of student evaluations of university faculty is fraught with controversy with very little agreement. The only thing that can be attested to by everyone is that student evaluations of faculty are a prominent part of the university scene on campuses around the world and having withstood the test of time, they appear to be here to stay despite all of the controversy involved. One can easily claim that the use of SEF has become ubiquitous in universities in the UK and the US (Shevlin et al., 2000). The practice of administering SEF questionnaires for evaluation of faculty has become commonplace in Israeli universities and colleges as well. However in contrast to the rest of the western world, there has not yet been major research carried out in this field in Israel. From 1986 through 1997 only a handful of research reports on SEF were published in Israel, while from the early 1980's to 1993 there was continued clarification and amplification of research findings in other countries around the world (Centra, 1993). One problem in the literature that led to this current research was the insufficient amount of existing research into university teachers' perceptions of the value of SEF as a tool to improve their teaching. Wachtel (1998) in the concluding remarks of his review of the literature states that "it might also be worthwhile to do further surveys of faculty to determine how often and what types of changes they make in their instruction based on the results of student ratings" (p.205).

Background Information

As part of the background research for this investigation two key figures were interviewed. One was the faculty liaison who served as the link between the university Senate and the Student Union. This person is a department chairperson who coordinates special activities involving the lecturers and the students that require approval of the university Senate .The other person was the representative from the Student Union in charge of administering the SEF. The faculty liaison explained that the actual questionnaire was developed with input from the students' union and expertise from university staff and it carries the academic approval of the university Senate. The SEF referred to in this research follows the parameters described by d'Apollonia and Abrami (1997). "It is a pencil and paper instrument in which students are requested to judge one or more characteristics of the course or instructor by selecting responses on a Likert scale"(p.60). The

administration of the questionnaire was supervised and carried out by the Student Union with representatives visiting every classroom during the last month of the semester if it is a semester course or year if it is a year course. Teachers are asked to sign the envelope containing the questionnaires. Teachers are not requested to leave the room while the students fill out the questionnaires. The questionnaires are distributed to the students and then collected by the SU representative after they have been filled out by the students in the classroom. This procedure is supervised personally in each class by a Student Union representative. All of the questionnaires are sent to an outside institute for statistical analysis. The results are returned to the university and are distributed by the Rector, the highest-ranking member of the Senate, to the department chairmen for distribution to individual faculty members. The results are also published by the Students' Union in a pamphlet for distribution to the students.

The above description of the process is what is reportedly 'supposed' to happen. The reality as reflected in the interviews of the teachers in this investigation was somewhat different. The teachers' stories about what 'really' happens in the SEF procedure and the themes emerging from the responses to the two main questions are the subject of this section of the findings and analysis.

Responses and Emerging Themes

The responses to the interview questions concerning the Student Evaluation of Faculty, which will be referred to in the discussion of the emerging themes as 'SEF', were lengthier and much more detailed than the responses in the previous two sections of Findings and Analysis. This is indeed compatible with the length of the literature review on the same topic and probably results from having more first hand experiences with this issue than with the issues of accountability and customer/client relationships.

Before the teachers were asked to comment on SEF they were shown a copy of the latest edition of the university SEF questionnaire and asked to read it over and familiarize themselves with it. The purpose of this was to ensure that all the teachers were informed specifically as to the nature of the tool that was under discussion in this investigation. Their responses will be reflected in the following discussion of emerging themes. The first question that was asked concerning their feelings about the SEF generated discussions on three themes: the university sponsored SEF, teacher generated written or oral SEF, and informal SEF. The

following discussion will reflect the responses of the interviewees to the first of the two questions posed by the researcher.

Question #1 How Do You Feel About The Official Student Evaluation of Faculty- SEF?

Emerging Theme #1: Dissatisfaction with the Official University Sponsored SEF

All of the interviewees attested to some prior knowledge of the official university SEF document although many had never personally seen it until our interview session. Their knowledge stemmed from having had their classes interrupted by the Student Union representatives who came to administer the questionnaire. While most of the teachers interviewed said that they wanted feedback from their students, the majority of the respondents reflected a wide spectrum of dissatisfaction with the university administered SEF questionnaire. Their dissatisfaction can be broken down into three sub-themes: **procedure, content, value**. In some cases the voices of dissatisfaction showed overlapping of the three issues and in some cases teachers' complaints were focused on one aspect only. The first sub-theme, **'procedure'** included issues of administration of the questionnaire, publication of the results and feedback to the teachers. The picture that emerges here is one that reflects a lack of uniformity in the procedure of administering the questionnaire and in the distribution of SEF results to the teachers. The voice of **confusion** about the process is evident in the teachers' interviews along with the stated desire to get more analytic information about the SEF:

> "So I'm **basically familiar with it**, yes. I really **don't get any feedback**. In no way was it presented to me in any official format. A few years ago we did get **a little slip of paper with some numbers and no great explanation. No one discussed it. I don't know how it's ever utilized really. This particular form doesn't have much to offer me anyhow. This year I fortuitously received my results without any official format or presentation. I haven't even looked at the form intensively** enough to say, okay, it's a tool"(ST).

(SP) like (ST) doesn't know too much about who put the SEF questionnaire together and would like to see the results more than every couple of years.

> "I **did receive the results once or twice. Once I did, about**
> **three years ago, when I got a letter from the dean. I**
> assume it's put together by students or teachers. **I don't**
> **know. Nobody** told me what the breakdown was at
> all".

(SS) also claims to have no knowledge about the official SEF and considers
it to be an **intrusion** into her class:

> "I resent the fact that I have no say as to when they
> come into my courses. I can be in the middle of a test".
> This teacher is not against the SEF in principle. "I don't
> have any problem with an evaluation by the Student
> Union. **But what do they want it for? Who is getting**
> **the information?** The whole thing is **very fuzzy.** I've
> **never seen the results regularly**".

(ML) feels that:

> "**part of the problem is the form** and **part of the**
> **problem is the way students fill it out**".

Some students pick one number and give all 3's or 4's or 5's. There is no
distinction made on different items. She has heard that the SU publishes the
results in a booklet but **"I've never seen it".** She has received the results in her
mailbox but nobody sat with her to discuss the results.

Most of the teachers interviewed logged strong complaints about the procedure of
administering the official SEF:

> "The problem with it is that **they never get back to us.**
> **I never see any feedback** from those things". She finds
> the process of filling in numbers totally useless because
> everyone has a different idea about what the numbers
> mean (DA).

> "I saw it (SEF) once a couple of years ago. In the last
> few years **I haven't even heard the results. I never**
> **got any feedback from the office. There should be**
> **feedback. I think the teachers should know** what the
> scores are for themselves"(BS).

> "I am not familiar with the form. Last year no one
> came to my classroom. Sometimes I've seen the results

in the students' booklets. I got the **results by chance** not directly from the office" (NL).

"I know it (SEF) is there but **I've never read it**. I got the **results once from the Rector's office and once from the department. It's done in the middle of the class. The class is disturbed. They don't feel like filling it in and not all of them take it seriously. I think it is dangerous to use it as part of our evaluation"**(IE).

"I am familiar with it. I didn't get the results this year. **They (SU) came to the course but I didn't get the results.** Some of the courses they missed. **There was a big mix-up. I only saw the elements in the SEF when the results were returned"** (KG).

"I am familiar with the SEF. The **people doing the survey come to the classes that are at convenient times for them.** They don't come to classes at late hours and they don't check attendance to see if most students are there. **They miss some classes. There is no accountability of theirs to make it a reliable measure. If they stop** doing the SEF **it wouldn't make any difference"**(BI).

"**I'm familiar with it, but I have to look it over again. The people who send around the questionnaires have a wonderful way of coming in at the end of the semester, the end of the year when things are already becoming redundant. I haven't seen** my particular results. I **didn't see any numbers** but I knew it had to be **excellent because I got that monetary prize** two years in a row"(BE).

"When evaluations are bad, no letters, no nothing. Nobody calls you, not the head of the department. **I've only seen SEF grades at this university once**. Every year I sign the envelope that they (SU) come in and I've never seen them. And I find that very strange. This

reinforces my feeling that **the university SEF is useless**"(OF).

"This is the **first time I am seeing the form. One**
semester I had three courses and they showed up only
once. **I was wondering what happened to the other**
two classes. I went outside when students filled in
the SEF because that is my habit. **No one gave me**
instructions to do so"(SM).

"I have seen the questionnaire. **Last year no one came**
to my classes only two years ago. **I do not walk out**
when the SU representatives come in to distribute the
SEF" (SR).

(DC, BI and SM) also compared the SEF process at the university in question
with that of other institutions of higher education in Israel or abroad where they
had previously taught. They found their previous SEF experiences in other places
preferable to the present experience. Their comments reflect issues of procedure
and administration of the SEF as well as issues concerning content and value.
(DA) talking about another college in Israel:

"They **used to send the teachers the results and ask**
them to draw conclusions and to try to incorporate
whatever they've learned from the feedback into their
teaching. But I think that this university doesn't have to
worry about having enough students here, or isn't
worried enough yet. **They** still don't consider the student
the ultimate customer".

(BI) referring to her experience in the United States:

"When I saw the one in Indiana it made me think. They
ask the students what their grade **point average is**, and
do they attend class regularly and on time. **That made**
sense. The students here don't give a damn. They
realize the farce that it is".

(SM) also discussing her experiences in the United States:

"First of all **the SEF would be returned to us. Then**
every year there would be an award, distinguished
teaching award to the teacher who was highly
recommended by the students. **Also in the USA we**
were not allowed to remain in the room when the

students filled out the questionnaires".

The next two sub-themes: **value of the SEF and content of the SEF**, became evident from several contradictory statements in (HP)'s interview. They very clearly show the confusion in the teacher's feelings concerning the value and the content of the SEF.

> (HP) says that: "On the one hand **it is not a bad**
>
> **questionnaire**, it is not offensive, not aggressive. There
>
> is **professional administration** and it is professionally
>
> done". On the other hand she says: "**what a teacher can**
>
> **learn from it is very little. I don't think it can reflect**
>
> **the quality of teaching going on very much**. It can
>
> reflect the **popularity of the teacher**. Students put 'x'
>
> anywhere **with no thought**, it is too late to make
>
> changes in the course, every new class is a new situation
>
> and the questions **don't deal with the content** of the
>
> course".

(ML, SS, DC, KG) shared the view that (HP) had concerning the value of SEF to the students. The SEF offered a special power to the students that it did not give the teacher:

> "I thought it was **sort of a protection that students**
>
> **were giving themselves** for themselves". "It gives **the**
>
> **students** the feeling of **some kind of control or**
>
> **power**"(HP).
>
> "Some of the **students think that if they write a**
>
> **negative report, the course will be exempted** in the
>
> future, meaning **future students will not have to do**
>
> **it**"(KG).

Perceiving the SEF as a popularity measure was a troubling thought for (ML, HP and AD) who felt that popularity with the students was not a value to be considered when rating their teaching. The **content** element is also present in their statements:

> "It's an overall **popularity thing**. But the overall result
>
> is that I **don't feel like the results mean anything**.
>
> And again, there's the question of **how relevant are**
>
> **those particular questions to what we do**, and that's

also problematic". "**I don't know to what extent these**

evaluations can improve the teaching of the staff. It

is more a measure of popularity. And some of the

questions have no relation that can be expected

between our course and any lecture anywhere".

(AA) and (AD) who were educated and trained in the FSU also clearly voiced dislike for the formal university SEF and felt that there was **no value** attached to it. A similar thought was voiced by (SR), a British born and trained teacher.

"**I don't think that I personally need this evaluation**

on the part of the students **to know whether I'm doing**

the right thing or not Sorry to say that, but it's what I

think"(AD).

"Basically what I meant is that **I don't care much for**

those questionnaires and I don't care much for the

students' opinions"(AA).

"I really **don't think that they should be telling me**

what I should be teaching them, or give us tests or

don't give us tests. **I consider myself a professional**

who **knows a little bit more than they do, or can see**

where they're coming from and where they're going

to"(SR).

The **content sub-theme** as a point of discontent became clearer in the voices of (KG, BI, OF, SM) who complained about the nature and type of questions. One of the teachers (SM) even suggested some alternative types of questions for the university SEF:

"**questions should be rephrased** and the **perspective**

should be **different**"(KG).

"**I think this kind of questionnaire is not necessarily**

suited to our needs. We teach a skills course. All of

this is content based. All these **questions could be**

misinterpreted in a skills course"(BI).

"**I did not like the questions**. It's too much a

personality issue. **It's not focused enough on**

professionalism"(OF).

"Some of the **questions are too general**. What I would

like to see is **more open-ended questions, like one**

thing you enjoyed in the course and explain why"(SM).

Emerging Theme #2: Possible Use of Teacher Generated or Departmental SEF

The idea of using departmental or teacher generated SEF as an alternative to the standard format SEF which is produced for university-wide use, emerged naturally as the interviewees reacted to the initial question about SEF in general. The interviews reflected once again a cross current of opinions on this theme. Some teachers felt that a tool that was produced either by a committee of teachers in their department or by individual teachers for their individual classes would be more suitable and profitable for them and their specific needs than a tool that was mass produced. Other lecturers expressed strong opinions against teacher generated or departmental SEF just as they had voiced against the official university SEF mentioned in theme #1.

The **sub-themes** emerging from theme #2 concerned comments **reflecting teachers' suggestions and reservations about constructing "personalized" tools for evaluation.** Some teachers had strong **opinions about whose eyes should examine the results of these SEF questionnaires.**

> "**Teacher made** questionnaires is an **interesting** idea. I think it would be a good idea to mandate doing that. **A departmental** questionnaire should be prepared by a committee **and each teacher given a choice of 10** items. The problem is that you don't want teachers teaching for the form. It would be better if the **results were for the eyes of the teachers only**. I think the **department should prepare** it, and have the teachers use it for their own **personal use**"(SP).
>
> (ST) prefers **teacher-made** questionnaires with more **questions about materials.**
>
> (SS) gives **her own SEF at the end of the course.** "I thought about giving it to them in **the middle of the semester also**". She has some reservations about it however. "**If I don't act on those comments**, I think the **students would be very resentful. What if I can't?** I don't know if I could go ahead and get all new materials together in the middle of the year".

(ML) has given **her own SEF** over the past few years. "The

kinds of **questions I want to ask are less holistic**

than on the form given by the university. I ask **about**

specific activities, do you find this helpful or not?

Sometimes the **responses are driven by thoughts of,**

will this create more work for them".

(AD) the former administrator, sometimes constructs **her own short written**

questionnaire, but not on a regular basis:

"**Every now and then to satisfy my own curiosity**. It

may be **important for people with less experience**".

(HP) a recent PhD graduate administers **her own SEF every semester** that

reflects her **personal research interests:**

"It has no administrative questions, **only open**

questions. I ask them about materials of the course. I

also include what they learned outside the course or

the course syllabus, because **that was part of my**

research". She does this only at the end of the course

and "it can only profit the next group, if at all".

She **does not want a departmental SEF. "I would**

feel that it's an imposition if it were required. I

would feel that was an imposition and an

interference".

(KO) who as we heard before approves of the university SEF, also gives her own

questionnaire:

"I ask them **if the course met their expectations**, or if

they feel the course helped them, if they feel prepared

for the exam. I ask them for comments. **Their**

comments are important". She reported that she tries

to accommodate their requests as reflected in their

comments.

(AA) said that:

"maybe because of my Russian background I wasn't

used to this SEF process". She only gave **her own**

questionnaire once in her career. It was not about her

teaching but about her students' personal backgrounds.

She wanted to know why their English was so poor. She is against a departmental SEF. "I think it **would put additional pressure on our teachers, an unnecessary pressure.** I think **it's unnecessary.** A real teacher knows. I know my strengths and weaknesses. And as a good and experienced teacher – **I don't need their approval or disapproval".**

(DA) has tried several kinds of teacher-made SEF and finds **they are totally useless, even open-ended questions:**

"I at one time asked three questions about their satisfaction with the course and what they would like to change about the course. And they wrote open answers. They wrote in Hebrew or English. The ones that answered seriously, you could possibly learn something from. But I find that, in general, **students don't want to be bothered.** By the time you give them the evaluation, **they're finished with the course and they don't really care.** I would consider giving them something in the middle of the course when I would have another semester to do something about changes".

(BS) says that after a couple of years:

"I **stopped giving out my own questionnaire** because I found I was getting the **same answers every year".** He suggests that as an **alternative to a departmental SEF** there should be "a kind of a **brainstorming session** in which people threw out **ideas for improving standards of teaching on a unit level and on a personal level.** If a departmental SEF is used **the results should be seen only by the teacher and some by the department head or anonymously shared by everyone. I don't know".**

(NL) never gives her own teacher-made questionnaire:

"If they have complaints they come up and tell me. So **I don't think I need anything structured,** in any structured form". She has reservations about a

departmental SEF also. **"I don't think that students can decide or have any knowledge to judge a teacher professionally".** But (NL) concedes that: "If I were asked to do it, I would do it".

(IE) does not want to use a teacher-made SEF. She feels the **students wouldn't be serious enough about it:**

"The students and I don't have the same terminology".

She **suggests that: "the students devise the questions** so that they're more interested in filling it out correctly. But **I don't know how reliable it's going to be".**

(KG) and a group of teachers produced a questionnaire to see what exactly the students liked about a course, which elements within the English reading skills were helpful. This was to verify research results:

"One year I gave a three or four question pointed questionnaire to my students. I didn't get anything fascinating or something that I didn't expect so I just left it. **I didn't do it again".**

(BO) the unit administrator **is aware that some teachers conduct their own** teacher-made SEF and therefore has not considered mandating the process in all classes:

"When it's done at the end of a course it doesn't help that group but it helps the next group. **I know many teachers give their own versions** of SEF because they've shared their results with me. I've **done that quite a few times too,** and teachers have sometimes given me copies of their results. This is done primarily at the advanced levels. They don't really give it as much on the lower levels. So, **I didn't really consider doing it as a kind of uniform thing".**

(OF) does not believe that teachers can construct their own SEF questionnaires:

"If they are not aware of their problems then they won't ask about a specific characteristic or situation. And **even if the students comment, they (the teachers) won't know how to fix".**

As an alternative to teacher-made SEF, (OF) would **agree to a committee in the department writing up a questionnaire** and asking teachers to administer it **but not to hand the results in to the department:**

> "I think that would be much better. I don't see why any teacher should object to it. The **teachers are not accountable to the department if there's a problem, teachers accept it as their problem or they ignore the negative comments".**

(SM) asks students to express themselves in writing about their **individual expectations** at the beginning of the course. Then in the **middle or towards the end** she asks:

> "**what things should be added or focused on,** sometimes I get some good ideas and we incorporate them". She also feels "that the **department should mandate some type of evaluation.** The department has to do what it has to do. It should do. I would **like open-ended questions.** They can write as much as they want, whatever they want. No names. **It should show the students that it's important for the department, the teachers.** And by the back door, **it holds the students accountable for what they are doing".**

Emerging Theme #3: Informal or Oral SEF.

Quite a few of the interviewees who voiced dissatisfaction with the formal university SEF and were not too positive about written departmental or teacher-made SEF, spoke about the fact that they do get **oral feedback from their students** either through informal meetings with them or classroom discussions. Teachers mentioned that they found this type of feedback **more spontaneous, less threatening, and more honest.** Some teachers even spoke about the changes that they undergo as a result of this informal, oral feedback:

> "When they **come to you and tell you something** spontaneously, it's generally much **more of an honest assessment"(ML).**

> "Sometimes it may be **one-to-one during the teacher reception** hours, **when they come to talk to you.**

> Sometimes, at the end of a certain activity, I ask them to what
> extent they liked it, to what extent they feel it was
> important for them. I'm all the time **trying to feel the**
> **pulse** or the **atmosphere** in the classroom"(AD).

(AA, NL and SR) express their perceptions that they can tell how their students feel without asking them directly:

> (AA), who claimed in the interview that she does not
> believe in SEF questionnaires, says that she can judge
> the success of a class or a course by "**a feeling that** you
> get sometimes. **I see it in their eyes**. I can read their
> eyes. By their reaction, **their simultaneous**
> **reaction,** I can feel it went down as if a penny dropped.
> This is a purely subjective feeling of evaluation"(AA).

(NL) shares this view:

> "But again, **even nonverbally, you can see** from the
> students how they feel, how they think. Of course
> **verbal feedback would be much more elaborate,**
> **more effective**".

(SR) says that she does not use a questionnaire or have a discussion with her students about a lesson or a teaching technique:

> "No, not a feedback, but **I think I can tell**. I walked
> around the class watching them work and they just
> came out saying, Wow what a great lesson. **I didn't**
> **ask them what they thought, and they just said it**".

(BS) said that as a teacher **he hears about students' feelings** about quizzes or their understanding of what's going on in class in an informal way rather than directing specific questions to them.

(IE) engages her students in **discussion and asks what she should have done** differently, what they would like her to repeat and so forth. She writes down their comments and tries to change things:

> "**I think I can feel** when a lesson was bad or when a
> lesson was good, **plus their feedback,** plus just **trying**
> **to be attentive**".

(KG) also uses discussion to try to get feedback:

> "**I ask for their opinions**. I ask for their feedback. I
> don't have a questionnaire, but I ask them for their

> feedback in general". She also uses writing. "**Write a**
>
> **paragraph** about what **you felt about the course**, the
>
> advantages, the disadvantages".

(BI) is a strong advocate of informal, oral SEF but not solely for the purpose of teacher evaluation:

> "I'm **definitely a feedback person, but not in writing**,
>
> because I find, for me and them, that **accountability**
>
> **sometimes scares both of us.** And therefore, if it's an
>
> open conversation, do I feel people are holding back?
>
> Sometimes. So I take them out on the side and say,
>
> **What were you really thinking?** And sometimes it
>
> works and sometimes it doesn't". She is aware of what
>
> the students are saying. "Sometimes, the **loudest voices**
>
> **are not necessarily consensus.** That's why **we discuss**
>
> **it, to sort of balance our sights** to what's manageable
>
> and efficient for this class".

(BE) also receives oral comments that serve as feedback:

> "Students will come to my conference hour to talk to
>
> me about their own issues with English, but they will
>
> also **really tell me about what they think** about
>
> things. I get feedback all the time. **I feel they express**
>
> **themselves.** I think it's a constructive way of
>
> getting feedback- **listen to what they have to say** and
>
> then make your decision for the next day's lesson".

(OF) speaks of informal, oral feedback as negotiation and explains what she gets out of the process:

> "I **get constant feedback.** And because we do
>
> **negotiate,** and I initiate the negotiation, after a while
>
> they are comfortable. They'll tell me what they think in
>
> front of everyone". This teacher attests to a change in
>
> her role in the classroom as a result of the negotiation.
>
> "I think now I'm more into negotiation, and as I get
>
> older I change. So **I'm more into negotiation less into**
>
> **I'm the teacher.** I think I see results".

Question #2: Do You Think That The SEF Tool Can Help Improve Teaching?

The second question in this section concerning the SEF touched on teachers' perceptions of the value of using the SEF to improve teaching. This is only one specific aspect of the broader issue of improving teaching that will be discussed in the section four of the Findings and Analysis chapter. This aspect is being discussed separately at this point because of its direct connection to the university SEF tool, the subject of investigation at the moment. The question at hand pertained to using the university sponsored SEF for the purposes of improving classroom instruction. In order to give all the teachers the same frame of reference for discussion on this issue I showed them the sentence that appeared in bold print at the top of all of the university sponsored SEF questionnaires. It states "It is the intention of the university to take practical measures to improve the quality of instruction of the lecturers through use of the results of the evaluation" (Appendix D). As reported previously, many of the teachers said that they had never seen the questionnaire at all. When the stated purpose of the questionnaire was pointed out to all of the teachers most reported that they had never actually read the statement before and were unaware of its existence. For some teachers the fact that the questionnaire is written in Hebrew may be the reason for this lack of knowledge. Many of the native English speaking teachers in this unit reported that they do not make an effort to read documents or signs written in Hebrew because of their low level of Hebrew knowledge. Others never had occasion to read the questionnaire and still others just didn't pay attention to it.

The responses to the second question focused on three basic themes: where to go for help, awareness of the university's intention and helpfulness of the questionnaire.

Emerging Theme #1: Where to go to get help with your teaching.

(SP) is consistent with her responses to other questions in previous sections which show an empathy for her colleagues and reflect the importance of considering teachers' feelings and emotions in dealing with them:

> "You maybe need somebody whose job would be both
> teacher training, teacher improvement, and methods.
> **Someone who the teachers will feel-** and who will tell
> the teachers, I'm on your side. You need someone **to**
> **be an ombudsman,** not to report to the department

chairman, not here to criticize or fire me, but is **here to help me**".

Emerging Theme #2: Awareness of the university's intention to use the form to improve teaching

"**No, the form wouldn't do anything. It was never made clear to me** in the sense that you just pointed out, which is very vague, **the value of this form**. And I **haven't even looked at the form intensively** enough to say, it's a tool"(ST).

"**I know nothing about it.** I know nothing about- **why would I?** I don't even know my own grades. **No one has ever approached me** and said you need help in X. I didn't know the university offered a course to help I don't know. I've never heard of it. I never heard about courses for improving teaching"(NL).

"**I have no idea**"(SR).

Emerging Theme #3: Helpfulness of the questionnaire in improving teaching.

The range of thoughts went from negative to positive with some ideas in the middle as to what the questionnaire might or might be able to do and whom it could possibly help. The next six voices reported here reflect a definite negative posture on this issue:

"**No. From what I remember of the questionnaire,** the kinds of questions whether the program is complete, whether the relationships between the teacher and students are good or not, **that's not going to improve** because of a questionnaire. I don't think this can really improve the quality of teaching **except by – as a boomerang in a way. The teacher knowing that he or she is being checked will try to improve other things aside from this**"(HP).

"**I don't think it's really so critical,** so vital to self-improvement"(AA).

"**No, it's a lie** (that the evaluation could help). Because nowhere are

the teachers ever informed formally, officially, of the results of their evaluation. **It's an outright lie because it has no effect or relevance**"(DA).

" **I don't know if it does**. But if it does this, **it would be horrendous** because, again, what are we using for criteria? In other words, if this were the sole basis, **I think it could be used in addition to** – if it bolsters a case but not as – in other words, if there's dissatisfaction on other levels, and then this says, aha, this too. But **I don't think that this, again,** because of its lack of accountability, **the way it's done and everything** else, it should not be used as a criterion. **It can only be used as a last straw**"(BI).

"I think that statement of intention is a way of **giving the students the feeling that they have some say**, they have a voice, they're being heard, **but no one is listening**. In practice **nobody's listening but they don't know that**"(OF).

(IE) made a face when she was shown the statement of university's intention on the questionnaire. She is a native Hebrew speaker who holds a doctorate from an American university. I asked her to explain her non-verbal negative facial reaction to the statement:

> "**Because of the reliability**. If it's not reliable, **then it's not fair for you to use it**. There are people who are tough. They're not as pleasant, but they're good teachers. So because they are less pleasant, that will make them worse teachers **and they should lose their job because of that**" (IE)?

The next group of voices reported here are more positive than the first group reported above.

(BS) assumes a conciliatory stand on this issue and refers to the market aspect of the university's attitude towards the students. What he expects may happen, however, is different than the university's stated intention and wouldn't affect him personally:

> "**Practically I'm not so sure how it could be implemented** as such. **But I think that a teacher who is not exactly doing his job**, he's not teaching to the best of his or her ability, **will be put on the alert** and will

automatically try and improve teaching methods because of

the fear that it may come out that he's not such a

good teacher. At least the students are going to get a

better deal than they're getting now. I don't think the

students are going to end up getting worse teaching or a

lower standard of teaching because of this questionnaire.

Either it will remain the same or it's going to

improve. I think the initiative, the idea behind the

questionnaire is possibly to either weed out

incompetent teachers or simply to give the students a

better deal. They spend good money and they expect

to get better teaching"(BS).

(KG) also doesn't think the questionnaire can help her personally but did hear a

rumor about possible help for others:

"**I don't think it helps me improve my techniques.** If I

want to improve my techniques, **I wouldn't base it on**

this kind of questionnaire. But I heard that **teachers**

who get low grades on this questionnaire are **sent to a**

course to improve their teaching. I heard this from

some of my students who are on the Student Union

committee"(KG).

(BE) takes a more positive attitude towards the university's declaration of

intention. Yet she voiced serious reservations about the process. Thoughts about

teachers' accountability are also reflected in her response:

"**I think it should. Whether it does in fact, I don't**

really know, but I think that it should. I think – look, **a**

teacher who is accountable to his students, to his

work, to whatever he or she does, doesn't have to worry

about it. The teacher **will get very high marks** and you

know, good enough marks. **By the way,** just in

parentheses, I want to say that **obviously, this student**

evaluation is not geared 100 percent to the picture. It

can give a lot of the picture, but I wouldn't go entirely

by this because you never know, **there's a whole**

dynamic going on in every single classroom. **There are**

all kinds of problems"(BE).

The last teacher to be mentioned here (KO) is the only one of the whole group to express a positive attitude towards the university's declaration of intent on use of the SEF questionnaire. This attitude is consistent with her generally positive attitude concerning the university written SEF as previously reported in other sections of the findings and analysis:

> "**Yes, I think it can help**. I think just looking at what I got in the past, before I took these two courses, and **I realized that I wasn't the kind of teacher that I wanted to** be. **I felt very depressed** and **I didn't know how to help myself**. These two courses were a wonderful tool"(KO).

Discussion

Official University SEF

The strongest impressions that I received from the conversations with most of the respondents on the subject of the official university SEF as a tool for evaluation and improvement ranged from irritation, annoyance and displeasure, to confusion concerning virtually every aspect of the topic. First of all, many of the teachers claimed that they had never seen the SEF form until my interview with them. Others had taken no more than a cursory look at the questionnaire form in the past and had no knowledge of the scope or content of the questions. The interviewees complained about the intrusion by the Students' Union representatives into their classroom disrupting critical lessons and examinations at inconvenient times at the end of the semester. The teachers witnessed students' behavior when completing the questionnaire and characterized it as insincere, unthinking, and sometimes revengeful. It was suggested by some teachers that the students viewed the university SEF as a sort of protection for themselves; a way of controlling teachers. The claim that students are not capable of judging the professionalism of teachers was also stated in criticism of the process. Some teachers viewed the SEF process as a popularity or personality contest with no educational value. These teachers felt that the reportedly 'easy' teachers got the highest ratings making the results highly unrealistic. There were complaints about the publication of the results in the pamphlet issued by the Students' Union and the difficulties involved in teachers' access to the results. According to the guidelines set by the Senate and the Students' Union teachers were supposed to receive the results directly from the department chairperson but many claimed that there was a breakdown in this

process and results never arrived. The lack of communication from administration concerning the interpretation and evaluation of the results was another difficulty encountered by the interviewees. Teachers who had received the results either directly or indirectly claimed that there was no information concerning the meaning of the numbers appearing on the slip of paper. No one had ever been invited to meet with the unit chairperson for a discussion of the results. Even teachers who had received awards for excellence in teaching claimed no knowledge of the results of their SEF evaluations. One further shortcoming of the university SEF concerned the content of the questions themselves. Teachers said the questions were too holistic and therefore not suitable to the courses taught in this particular unit. Some interviewees said that the questions needed to be rephrased and be more specific to a skills oriented course. There was a call for more open-ended questions so that students could express themselves in their own words. A suggestion was made that students be asked about their personal attendance records in the course and their class averages in order to see if the results were reliable.

Teacher Generated SEF

A more positive attitude was reflected by six of the teachers when they spoke about the possibility of teacher generated SEF. They felt that teacher-made questionnaires were an interesting idea. They could be constructed by a committee of teachers from the unit but the results would be only for the eyes of the teacher and not for public consumption. However, other teachers told that they had given this type of teacher-made questionnaire in the past but had stopped because they did not feel that they had gained anything from it. Still other teachers who constituted a majority in this case voiced dissatisfaction with this possibility as well. It was felt that teachers are incapable of constructing such a questionnaire.

Informal SEF

The third option of using informal SEF was viewed by most of the interviewees as more spontaneous, less threatening and a more honest method of evaluation. Informal SEF occurs when students approach teachers after class and offer unsolicited remarks, comments or criticisms about the material taught or the quality of a particular lesson. Eleven of the interviewees referred to this type of SEF in a very positive light. They felt that there was great value to "listening" to students' feelings about what goes on in the classroom. Some teachers reported

making changes in their teaching based on these informal comments. Teachers who are advocates of this informal SEF claimed that students are more open and honest in a one-to-one conversation. They claimed to value students' opinions and desired their feedback but definitely not in writing. Others claimed that the informal SEF could serve as the basis of negotiation for change in the classroom.

Improving Teaching

All of the interviewees were shown the written statement at the top of the questionnaire concerning the university's declaration of intention for use of the results of the SEF questionnaire to help improve teaching. Most of the teachers reported no prior knowledge of the statement. Even those who had seen the questionnaire in previous years had paid no attention to that statement.

The voices reflected in the three themes that emerged in this section concerning improving teaching based on the SEF tool were resoundingly negative. Most teachers felt that the SEF form would be of no avail in helping to improve teaching. The kinds of questions asked would do nothing to improve the quality of instruction. There was also the feeling that the statement of intention was only presented as a way of giving the students the feeling that they have some say but that no one is really listening. Another claim was that an unreliable tool cannot be used to improve teaching. The strongest of the negative remarks stated that the university's statement was indeed a lie because the questionnaire has no effect or relevance to improving teaching.

Several more neutral voices were heard stating that they were not sure how exactly the help in improving teaching could be implemented but at least students would not receive worse teaching as a result of this questionnaire. One teacher heard a rumor that teachers who receive low grades on the SEF are sent to a course to improve their teaching.

Two teachers took a more positive stand on this issue saying that the SEF should help in improving teaching. One of these teachers voiced a reservation warning that other factors have to be taken into account when dealing with the SEF process. The student evaluation does not give a total picture of what goes on in the classroom with its dynamic and problematic nature. Therefore many things need to be considered in trying to improve classroom teaching. The second teacher was one who had received weak ratings for her teaching in the past and on her own initiative decided to enroll in a course for improving university teaching. She was

very happy with the courses and felt that they had been extremely helpful to her in improving her teaching.

The three sections that have been considered thus far in this chapter lead directly to the next and last section that will deal with the more general issue of improving university teaching. The teachers' perceptions of the students as customers or clients, teachers' feelings of accountability to the student or the profession and teachers' reactions to the student evaluations of faculty all directly relate to the teachers' feelings as to how university teaching can be improved.

Section Four
Questions: Should Universities Be Responsible for Improving Teaching of Faculty Members?
Can a Center for Improvement of Teaching (CIT) Help University Teachers Improve Their Teaching?

Introduction

The connection between evaluations, the SEF, for example, as was discussed in the previous section, and improving teaching, the topic of this current section is clearly shown in the literature by Seldin (1989) and Ramsden (1993) among others. Seldin claimed that the reason or purpose behind conducting evaluations is to improve teaching and Ramsden argued that evaluation is part of a process in learning to teach better. The accountability aspect of this research, also a topic of previous discussion, comes into the forefront in the present discussion. "Over the last decade universities have been subjected to various forms of academic accountability designed to maintain or improve the quality of their teaching and learning"(Dill, 1999, p.127). These ideas taken along with the decision of the Council for Higher Education in Israel in 2001(Appendix C) that quality assurance is a matter of major importance, reinforces the position of realizing the need for improvement of teaching in universities (Herskovic, 2003). The traditional argument that universities are bastions of research and therefore the teaching aspect is insignificant, no longer stands as irrefutable in the competitive market for higher education (Eble, 1988). The students in the role of customers or clients are actively seeking quality education of which quality teaching is clearly an important part.

The literature includes a further issue that is important to the question of improvement of teaching and concerns the role of the administrator or department chairperson in the area of educational leadership and improving teaching. Is the

leadership creating a department "where people can share a sense of excitement and know they make a difference (Lucas, 1989, p.14)"? Or is the chairperson, as described by Arreola and Aleamoni (1990), merely involved in responsibilities for rank, pay and tenure considerations and as facilitators in understanding the results of student feedback questionnaires?

Background Information

Five of Israel's seven universities presently operate centers for the improvement of teaching at their universities (Anon, 2003). The oldest center was established 30 years ago in the 1970's and the newest center was just opened in 2002. The five existing centers for the improvement of teaching are each different in the variety of possibilities offered to academic staff members. Some offer workshops just for beginning teachers and some for more veteran staff members as well. The centers offer group counseling and one or two offer individual counseling as well. One center offers help in improving voice and body language. Another center divides its services by disciplines. Still another offers training sessions for teacher mentors. Some of the centers offer advice and planning for student evaluation questionnaires and one conducts on-line internet student evaluations for all academic staff members at that university. Two universities, including the one under investigation in this research, do not have official centers for improvement of teaching but do conduct off-campus specialized workshops and seminars established for the purpose of improving teaching at the university.

The university Senate in the specific university mentioned in this research did pass a resolution to establish a center for the improvement of teaching but due to severe budgetary constraints was unable to take steps to open the center. Instead this university has been offering a "workshop for the improvement of the quality of teaching". The workshop is in its third year of operation and is held on an off-campus site. Participation in the workshop is voluntary and is open to all members of the academic staff from all Faculties. The cost of the workshop is borne by the university. The workshop takes place towards the end of the academic year and during summer vacation. During the first two years of its operation the workshop was advertised on university bulletin boards in the various departments. In its third year (2003) the workshop was advertised in three ways: on the department bulletin boards, by mail sent to the home of each academic staff member, and on the internet available to each staff member.

Responses and Emerging Themes

Before the conversations on this topic began the teachers were given background information on two subjects. First their attention was brought to a notice that had appeared on their department bulletin board several months before the interviews, concerning the university-sponsored workshop on "improving teaching in the university classroom". Second, they were told about the proposal for establishing a university CIT, a center for the improvement of teaching, that had been passed by the university senate the year before but had not yet been implemented because of budgetary considerations. Teachers' reactions to these two pieces of information as well as their responses to the specific questions posed by the researcher comprise the major part of this fourth section of findings and analysis. The reader should take into consideration that the respondents were answering a theoretical question concerning the center for improvement of teaching, something with which none of them had any prior experience. The voice of the department chairperson will be reflected with regard to her position on improving teaching. The emerging themes and sub-themes as voiced by the interviewees will be the subject matter for this section of the analysis. The responses to the two questions will be integrated because of the nature of the connection between them. Therefore the emerging themes and sub-themes pertain to both questions.

Emerging Theme # 1: The Need to Improve Teaching

One might think that everyone would say 'of course', teaching can and should always be improved, that it is a politically correct opinion. But the respondents were not uniform in their replies. Their voices once again reflected a cross-current of ideas in their responses. They ranged from the **absolutely positive** about the university's responsibility for helping teachers improve teaching and about teachers taking steps to improve their teaching on the one hand, to the **quite negative** about the responsibility of the university to take any measures and of the need for the individual teacher to do anything towards improvement.

Positive   (KO) "Teachers **should want to improve** themselves if they are getting bad reports. I think they **should be happy to take the course.** It's **their profession.** Why shouldn't they want to **be the best they can**".

                 (ML) " Teachers **should be sent to a school for improving teaching.** If they don't improve then they go home".

(IE)" It is **definitely the responsibility of the university** to help teachers improve teaching. If we accept untrained teachers then **you have to give them training**".

(BI) "University has **a moral obligation to try and improve teaching.** It is a moral and **ethical obligation** especially if the person has been here for a while".

(BE) "The **university should definitely do something** about weak teachers".

Cautious   (SP) "You can ask people to improve themselves but **be very careful** about how it is done".

Negative   (AA) "There are **teachers who cannot change. Not all teachers are flexible**".

(ST) "**I don't believe that every teacher is capable of being a good teacher.** I do believe you can improve up to a point".

(AD) "It is **not our job to train people for their work.** We can instruct on syllabi and materials but **teachers should have been trained elsewhere**".

Emerging Theme #2: Need for a CIT

(AD and OF) express their feelings that although the CIT may be helpful and useful under certain circumstances, it may not be the answer for dealing with weak teachers:

(AD) "**A CIT could help a young researcher** who doesn't have teaching experience. Our work is of a different nature. We have to have people who are teachers. **If they are not good enough to teach here, I don't think we should send them to those centers. We should hire other people**".

(OF) "**Does the university want to invest** in the teacher, making him better, or **replace the teacher and get somebody else** who might be better. **Will the CIT make them better**"?

(HP) places a single condition on the functioning of the CIT:

(HP)" **A CIT could help if teachers only got together to talk about their teaching**".

(DA) reacted positively about CIT and offered her particular definition as to the goals and purposes of the CIT:

> **Definitely. Yes. Sure.** Anything. Any professional
> needs to be reminded of what they need to know,
> and to keep them updated on look, again it comes
> down to time. **If there were a place where someone**
> **else did the first –you know, looking for materials**
> **on how to improve your teaching** and finding
> specifically materials that interested me, yes. I think
> I would be happy to take advantage of it. I think that
> if teachers are really interested themselves in their
> careers and what they're doing, they should want to
> go, **because if it's not a threatening** situation, **it's**
> **not go or lose your job**, then they should be
> interested in improving, especially **if people have**
> **set it up for them** so that it can be easily digested. The
> **department can tell teachers** that we have a **structured**
> **idea** for **you to improve your teaching**. Why don't you
> try to improve your teaching by **going to this number**
> **of classes or seminars or whatever**".

(BS) reacted positively to the notion of a CIT but offered alternatives as well:

> "My **gut reaction (to a CIT) is yes.** It is possible to
> **draw out skills that are dormant or underdeveloped**
> **and improve. Apart from this amorphous idea of a**
> **center in the university for improving teaching, I**
> **think just getting teachers to come sit in other**
> **teachers' classrooms**, as happened to me- I was made
> to **mentor** another teacher who would come to observe
> me and sit in the back. And I think **more teachers**
> **would benefit from observing other teachers**".

(NL) expresses concern about possible negative labeling or stereotyping of participants in the CIT and has definite ideas about its functions:

> "I would be the first one to sign up **if there's not a**
> **kind of stigma** to do it. The **CIT should help with**

methods of – classroom methodology, what to do to make the lesson more interesting. The **personnel for the CIT could be from any department**, not just from our department."

(IE. KG, OF, SR) share similar questions concerning the functioning of the CIT:

(IE) "CIT **could be productive as long as we recognize what the problem is: if the problem is discipline specific** or **if it is a general teaching problem. If our goal is professionalism**, then absolutely. This **(CIT) is a part of your training".**

(KG) "Yes, **CIT can be compulsory** for those who are deemed to be weak. If you feel, before you tell that person to go home, **give them a chance to improve.** If after the course you see that they still haven't changed much then send them home. **CIT program has to offer both subject specific skills as well as general teaching tools".**

(OF) "It **depends what is done** with it (CIT) and **what it's focused on.** If it stays as a center where they do research and make proposals and exchange only ideas then this would not be advantageous. One way it could be done is workshops, to have **workshops that people could go on a voluntary basis.** They have to find a way of making it available to teachers and of **finding the teachers who really need it".**

(SR) "I **don't know what these things are (CIT), what they do at them,** and how long teachers would spend there".

(BI) reflects skepticism concerning the teachers who would actually come to the CIT. The respondent also expresses care about the emotions of the teachers and their impact on decisions to try and improve their teaching:

"You can lead a horse to water. The **person has to be aware** of the fact that **they need some fine-tuning** and **be willing** to do it. Unfortunately, the people who come are the people who don't need it, or **are least aware that they need** it. It's all a **matter of trust and**

honesty and the person actually believing that **you're not out
to fire them** You're out to see if you can still save
them and **help them for them and for the job**. And
sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't like
everything else".

(SP) also expresses concern about the reservations and suspicions of younger
teachers confronted with the existence of CIT:

"I think **it could help**. It depends tremendously on
how the teachers see it. You've **got to be very
careful**. I think a very young teacher might be very
suspicious. Do they see it as **something they can
trust or something that's judging them? If the
image is right, I think yes, it can help**".

(BE) confronts the theoretical existence of the CIT very pragmatically and
suggests possible alternatives:

"**As far as CIT, the university isn't supplying** it.
They're talking about it, but **they are not doing** it. But
if not the university, **then peers, then other places**,
lesson plans should be looked at".

Emerging Theme # 3: Awareness of University Sponsored Workshop

(DA) voices frustration and anger at the way the workshop was advertised and
offers an operative suggestion as to how it could be changed:

"That's **a failure of the department**. If they can
criticize people's teaching, then they **have to also give
people the opportunity to improve** themselves. At
least a **letter could have been put in everyone's
mailbox**, and then if – I hate to say this, but **if the head
of the department isn't interested in teachers
improving their teaching, at least you could allow
the teachers to make a decision for themselves.** And
of course if such a thing is offered and there **are
teachers at risk of being fired or being let go, then
they should have been given an opportunity to take
advantage of that course.** I would have gone. I would
have been interested. I would have been interested just

to measure myself against what they're teaching in a course like that. Too bad. **There's only very few people to blame for that, not knowing**".

(NL) also regrets not knowing about the university sponsored workshop. She voices expectations about what she would have liked to gotten out of it.

"No, I was **not aware of it. I would have gone**, because these are things that **I would like to get more guidance, more information in classroom management, methodology. It shouldn't be compulsory**. People do it because they are really interested, **not because somebody is looking over their shoulder**".

(BS) was taken by surprise when presented with the information about the bulletin board advertisement about the university sponsored workshop:

"I'm **embarrassed to say that I have no idea what you're talking about**. and actually, I usually look at the bulletin board. Possibly **because it was in Hebrew, I may have just glanced over it** and not taken much notice. But I usually do look at all the colloquia advertised. Maybe it should have been **put in a more prominent place because that notice board is not in the best position**".

(SP) also suggests putting the announcement in a place more accessible to staff members and taking language into consideration:

"I **don't remember that particular** one. **If it were on a computer**, I would pay more attention to it. And I actually read that bulletin board, because I read everything. If **the announcement had been in English** it might have made a difference".

(HP) was not aware of the announcement of the workshop probably because it was written in Hebrew:

"I read Hebrew, but going by, it **doesn't catch my eye if it's in Hebrew**, unless I know it's there and I have to go look at it and read it, then I'll go and read it. **But if I'm going by and not alert to anything in Hebrew-** I'll read the **English very quickly as I go by, but I won't read the Hebrew**".

(KG) a native Hebrew speaker also did not see the notice for a different reason:

> "I **don't have time to spend in front of the bulletin**
>
> **board whatever it says** there".

In contrast to the six teachers mentioned above, (KO) and (OF) both native Hebrew speakers, saw the letter on the bulletin board and were aware of the course but had quite different reactions to it. (KO) read it, felt that this could help her with some of her teaching problems, and immediately registered for the course. The voice of enthusiasm emerges loudly and clearly in her response to the interviewer's question:

> (KO) "I didn't hear about the course. **I read it (the**
>
> **notice). All the department heads got this letter. I**
>
> **saw it here, (on the bulletin board) and I**
>
> **immediately registered. Teachers benefit so much**
>
> **from this course** that I would **oblige all the teachers**
>
> **in this university to take it.** The **only way** that **one**
>
> **can improve teaching is by taking these courses** that
>
> make you do all these good activities. And **by doing**
>
> **the activity, that's the way you learn".**

(OF) on the other hand read the notice and thought it interesting, but voiced an opinion that the department didn't seem to take it too seriously. She felt that maybe the department should focus on hiring better teachers:

> "I thought, **this is interesting.** I think I noticed the date
>
> and the time. I was **aware of it. If this were taken a**
>
> **little more seriously** and the **department** actually
>
> pinpointed teachers who need help and the **department**
>
> **wanted to invest in those teachers, then you send**
>
> **them to this course.** If you pay for the course for them
>
> then it means that **you have to justify the expense.** On
>
> the other hand you hope the **department hires**
>
> **effective, good teachers and therefore the**
>
> **department doesn't have to do anything".**

Emerging Theme #4: Alternative Options to the CIT for Improving Teaching

When broached on the issues of improving teaching and the CIT and off campus university sponsored workshops many teachers responded by offering their own ideas about other options or possible alternatives to those mentioned in the

researcher's questions. These ideas included a variety of suggestions such as:
observations of weak teachers by an experienced teacher from the department,
observations by weak teachers in other teachers' classrooms, mentoring in its
various formations, colloquia, bringing in outside observers to visit weak
teachers' classrooms, meetings between colleagues to discuss educational
problems and share materials and ideas, and bringing an outside consultant to the
department. As we have seen in the previous discussions of themes it is difficult
to find consensus among the teachers.

Suggested Alternatives for Improving Teaching:

1. *Observing Weak Teachers in Their Classrooms*

(AD) "I would send **someone to observe the weak
teacher in class.** An **observational tool and
discussion of that observation.** Not the department
chairman so as not to frighten them. I think that **helps
the teacher much more**".

(AA) " When our **coordinator comes to observe and
analyzes with you,** helping you, **giving you advice,
approving of something or disapproving,** that's very
useful".

(IE) "It would be a good idea to go into a (weak)
teacher's class to **observe when they were teaching
skill and when they were teaching the application.**
This could **help identify the source of the problem.** I
wanted someone to come in and **pay attention**".

2. *Observing Good Teaching*

(ML)"To **observe good teachers.** I feel that has **helped
me to improve a lot**".

(BS) "I think just getting **teachers to come sit in other
teachers' classrooms,** I think **more teachers would
benefit from observing other teachers**".

(HP) "If **teachers visited each other's classes more,**
that could **definitely improve teaching. However
teachers need to be compensated financially** for their

extra efforts. They **need the motivation to make the time** and to come. **Time is money"**.

3. *Videotaped Observations for Yourself and for Others*

(KG) "I would also **recommend the use of the video** because **if you videotape a lesson that you think is a good model and you show it to people, you see yourself, you see how the class responds"**.

(IE) "We should invest in one set (video), and you can go into each class and just **observe yourself. You'll discover things that you would never discover**, if you're **open enough to look at it"**.

4. *Colloquia and Workshops*

(IE) "The department could give **small colloquia, one every week.** Maybe every teacher who is good in one field **should give a lecture on that specific topic**, both on **the methodology, how to teach it, and maybe also some things that you don't do.** It's **actual things and teachers can relate to them"**.

(ML) "I consider them (colloquia) **one of the perks of working here.** The more **relevant it is, the better,** but sometimes it's just interesting enough. **They're great"**.

(ST) "**Colloquia are good for younger staff. Senior staff should come to show support. To show this is an important activity"**.

(BE) "**Colloquia should be mandatory for senior staff** members because you **have to set an example.** I think there are **senior teachers who can benefit** from **certain workshops. What kind of example are we setting for the younger teachers** who are dying to become senior teachers and wonder how we got there. People in our **department are not interested enough** in what's going on in the field. **They don't read enough** and they **don't know about research"**.

(AD) "Once a month **we can share the experiences of what is done in a certain field** of our instruction, **an idea that someone developed**, or an **idea someone read** about, or an **interesting article that someone came across in the journal**, an article about the **methodology of teaching**. I think this can **really raise the level of teaching**".

(SS) "There are **colloquia for improving teaching, I** think they are a **good idea**".

(KO) " **I have offered to give a workshop based upon the course I attended**. They wanted us **to be messengers in our departments** and to **give this workshop to the people here so that they'll also learn. I have spoken to the department chairman, and it is in her hands now**".

(NL) "**What** would be **more helpful is workshops, teachers** that are **experienced teachers and are very comfortable with students**, that have this experience **and that are good actors, because that's also part of it, to give workshops. One could learn a lot through that**".

(AA) "**Classical tedious workshops**, everybody sitting there and sleeping through the report, then it's **not going to be very effective**. I think they **should be run on the practical side of the matter**".

5. *Sitting together informally to exchange ideas and information*

(BI) " We should do things like **sitting together and not necessarily in workshops**. But some of the pointers I **learned from colleague's throw-away comments**".

(ML) "One thing that has really helped is just **sitting around that table** and **talking to everyone about ideas. I think that helps**".

(AA) "Teachers could come and **share their experiences and tell each other** what's **been done,**

what **they're doing in the classroom** and **what worked** and what **didn't work"**.

6. *Outside Consultants*

(BI) "An **outside consultant has an advantage** than someone in the staff room".

(SS) "I think probably **outside help would probably be very helpful**. It may be even **healthier because it takes away that conflict or resentment** that sometimes may **pop up within a department"**.

(HP) "Maybe a **person from the outside, a consultant, might be a good** idea. The **person from the outside might be able to diagnose something on the inside that a person on the inside**, even with a colleague, **would not see. People from the outside might come in with new ideas which are not implanted in the department yet, and that could be beneficial"**.

(SP) " **I don't know if you can have an outsider come in and have the teachers trust them.** It would have to be **someone who has the teachers' confidence**, and that's going to take a while to build up".

7. *Mentoring*

(SS) "In the past we've had a **mentor system which worked very nicely** for the most part".

(HP) " Teachers could **benefit from mentoring,** exchanging ideas, **a pairing up** of people within the department. I mean **more experienced teachers with younger, less experienced teachers"**.

(NL) " It can be helpful if the people in charge guide the new teachers. It should be on a **voluntary basis.** Both the **mentor and the mentee should come out of free will** and not compulsion".

(IE) "**Mentoring is a lot of responsibility.** The guidance should be given in a way that although I am

giving the guidelines, I'm giving my help, I am giving whatever information you need, **you should still be able to think, use it and then apply** it in your own way. But it **shouldn't be dictated.** You **shouldn't be afraid** to take any steps on your own. One **shouldn't have to accept everything the mentor told him/her".**

(KG) "I think a **mentor-mentee program** where a more experienced teacher grouped with a less experienced teacher **is very helpful.** They **observed each other's classes, commented".**

(BI) "One of **the biggest problems of mentoring** is that people **see it as a threat,** that **what they say or do is going to go back to the authorities** and that it's going to **influence their job.** There has to be a **large amount of trust and no gossip".**

(OF) "I think having the **mentor look at the lesson plan could be helpful, an experienced teacher looking through somebody's lesson** plan could give advice and say you can save some time here, you've missed the point there. I know there **were times when I wanted to have one".**

(SR) "Appoint a mentor, someone who could not be threatening".**

8. *Appoint a Senior Staff Person*

(SS) "Maybe there needs to be someone, a **senior staff member** who needs to be **responsible for the pedagogical aspects,** and to see that the **staff knows what it is doing".**

Emerging Theme #5: Role of the Administrator in Improving Teaching

Dealing with Senior Teachers

(BO) "I find just in **terms of the power structure** as it is, that there's **very little I can do except maybe have a chat with the teacher** and say what's going on, just

as a **kind of awareness kind of thing** so that the teacher, who

probably has all this experience, will probably know

what to do about it. If the teacher came to me for

advice, then I could probably go further. But the

situation with **tenured teachers is such that they're**

usually very senior members of the

department, **and I think at most it would be a chat**,

and maybe not even that in some cases because they're

already where they're supposed to be. **I don't see**

forcing him to do anything, but only to make

aware. Force has no play here in terms- particularly

as a tenured teacher, and most of them are older than I

am".

Dealing with Non-tenured Junior Staff Members

(BO)"**If a CIT existed** I would **definitely tell teachers**

who I felt needed improvement to go there. **I don't**

see myself doing it en masse because most of the

teachers are okay. But definitely **if I thought teachers**

could benefit from it, I would strongly suggest they

do it".

Mentoring

(BO)"I think the **mentor program is a good idea**.

However, **we don't have a formal mentor program**.

We have people at different levels that kind of give

things, and sometimes **we urge them to have this**

buddy teacher who's also teaching that particular

course, to sort of help them out– till they get totally

into it. We do **suggest to people to sit in on classes**

and also get from them what our teachers are doing.

This year I **suggested that we appoint somebody**, one

of the teachers, to be **responsible for the little things**.

No so much for the teaching **but all kinds of little**

things to know about, so that they could slowly

bring them in".

Staff Development

(BO)"Staff development is **directed downward from the top. Not everybody goes** to these things. When there's a conference somewhere, **we sort of have to push.** There are **some people who always go and some people who don't go.** When we have speakers or meeting at our special meeting time, again, **they're supposed to come** and it's a so-called **required activity, it doesn't have 100 percent attendance,** but **there's more attendance because it's one of the required things of teaching in this unit".**

Staff Reaction to Staff Development in the Eyes of the Chairperson

(BO)"It's **usually lack of time, busy with everything else,** have to get home to the kids, or **the idea that maybe this isn't really going to help me, I know what I 'm doing anyway,** which is probably part of it. **Some people won't commit.** I don't think on an ideological level there's a resistance. **There are probably some teachers who don't realize the importance of keeping up with the literature and doing these things, but I think they're a minority.** Most people would love to do it, and **it's just always a question of time and choosing this over another activity,** like preparing for the next lesson".

Differences in Attitude to Staff Development Between Full-time and Part-time Staff Members

(BO)"On the whole there are **differences between those teachers who have 12 month contracts and the others.** But there are exceptions to this too. **Some of the part time people are very devoted. They contribute and serve on all kinds of committees and come to staff development programs like colloquia**

and workshops. They're the ones that do beyond the call of duty. **Some of the full time staff do not contribute as much or are not as interested in some of the staff development activities.** I think **individual motivations do play a large part.** Some of the part-time people are hoping to become full-time and therefore want to take an active role".

At this point I have completed the presentation of the findings and analysis, emerging themes and sub-themes based on the respondents replies to the interview questions. The interview section of this chapter was divided into four parts, each one pertaining to a different issue and set of questions all of which were related to the major topic of this research: university faculty members' perceptions of the need for accountability and/or improvement of teaching as a result of student evaluations. We have now come to the final chapter of this thesis dealing with the major issues of interpretation of the thematic data that have emerged from the findings and analysis section of this research and their relevance to the research questions as well as my recommendations for future action.
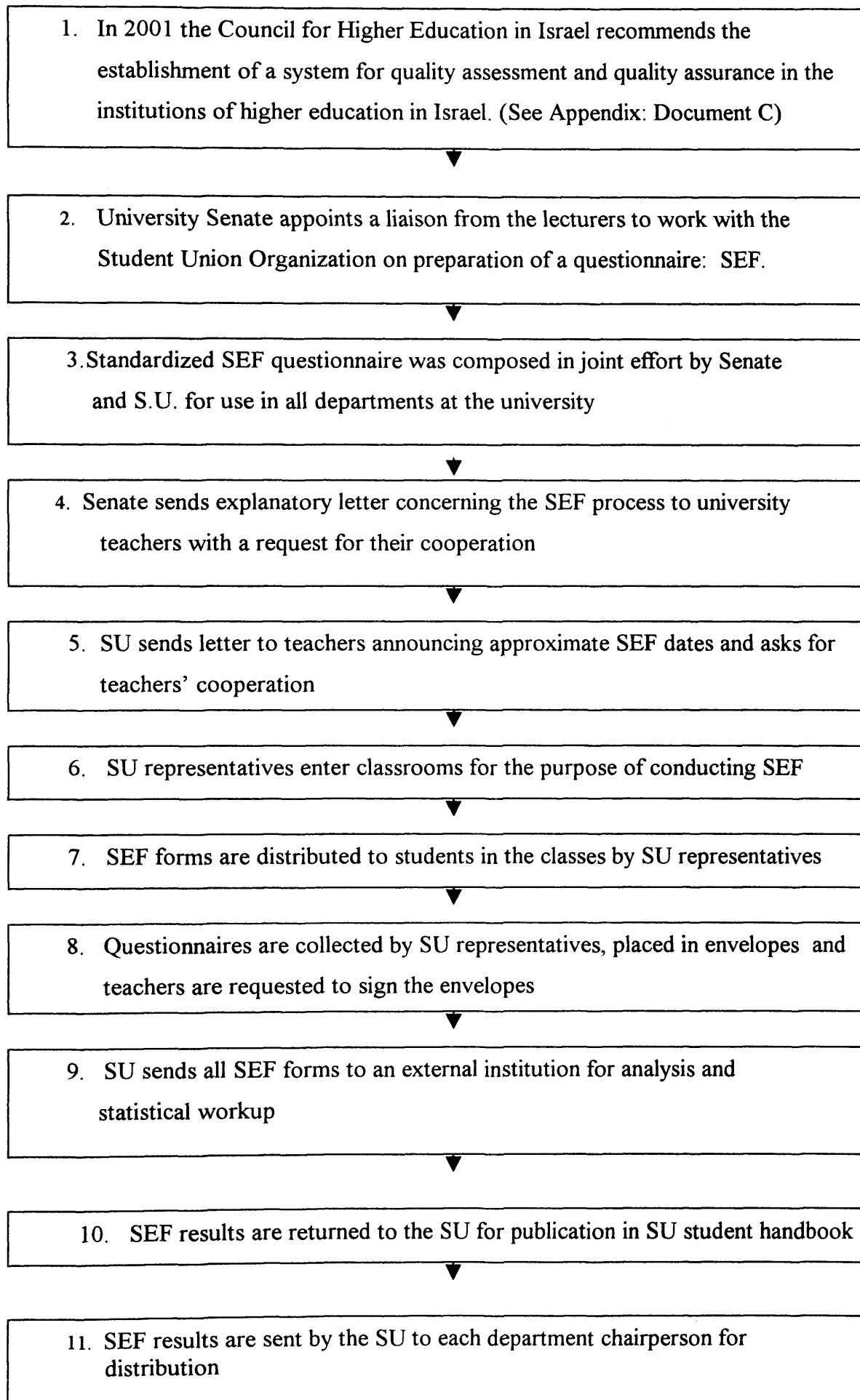
CHAPTER FIVE
THE REPORT: INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION
and ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Introduction

The final section of a qualitative research study is sometimes referred to as "writing the narrative report", "composing the report", "telling the story", "significance of the data", or "interpretation of the findings" (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 1989; LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). No matter what name is given to this section, there is general agreement in the literature as to the supreme importance of this section in the presentation of qualitative research. This is the section that brings the entire study together, synthesizes the themes and interprets them, and offers applications or significance of the findings. It is here that the research questions and the answers are presented. This is the place for the researcher to "tell the story" that has evolved from the data. It is important to note that in its presentation "the case study report does not follow any stereotypic form" (Yin, 1989, p.127). Although there is no prescribed formula for presenting the interpretation, the literature stresses the importance of writing this section with a clear knowledge of the intended audience in mind (Creswell, p.169). Potential audiences could include colleagues, policymakers, those involved in the interviews, the general public, or as in this specific case, an academic examining committee. Focusing on the audience should influence the structure and writing of the report. It is important to keep in mind however, that the overall structure of the qualitative report does not conform to the standard quantitative format and the writing style should be more personal, familiar and perhaps "up-close" (Creswell, p.170).

The interpretation of the interview findings and analysis must be prefaced with a look at the chain of events in the SEF procedure at the university at the time of this research. See Table 3.

Table 3

Chain of Events in SEF Procedure   (at time of research)

> 1. In 2001 the Council for Higher Education in Israel recommends the establishment of a system for quality assessment and quality assurance in the institutions of higher education in Israel. (See Appendix: Document C)

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> 2. University Senate appoints a liaison from the lecturers to work with the Student Union Organization on preparation of a questionnaire: SEF.

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> 3. Standardized SEF questionnaire was composed in joint effort by Senate and S.U. for use in all departments at the university

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> 4. Senate sends explanatory letter concerning the SEF process to university teachers with a request for their cooperation

▼

> 5. SU sends letter to teachers announcing approximate SEF dates and asks for teachers' cooperation

▼

> 6. SU representatives enter classrooms for the purpose of conducting SEF

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> 7. SEF forms are distributed to students in the classes by SU representatives

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> 8. Questionnaires are collected by SU representatives, placed in envelopes and teachers are requested to sign the envelopes

▼

> 9. SU sends all SEF forms to an external institution for analysis and statistical workup

▼

> 10. SEF results are returned to the SU for publication in SU student handbook

▼

> 11. SEF results are sent by the SU to each department chairperson for distribution

The Report – Interpretation of Interview Analysis and Answering the Research Questions

Background

Student evaluation of university faculty by means of student feedback questionnaires is the most widely used form of teaching evaluation in higher education throughout the world. This is not a new phenomenon and the subject has generated interest and controversy for decades and spurred the writing of many articles and inspired much research. Few attempts have been made, however, to answer the questions about whether this procedure really has the impact of improving the quality of teaching (Kember, et al, 2002) and how faculty perspectives relate to this issue (Spenser and Schmelkin, 2002). Israeli universities are relatively new to this arena and are still in the throes of developing systems for appraisal and evaluation that will serve the ultimate goal of providing for quality assurance in higher education. There is indeed a dearth of research conducted in Israel in the areas of student feedback questionnaires, improving teaching and faculty perceptions of these issues.

Teachers at Israeli universities have undergone various types of yearly evaluations by their students for almost two decades. These were carried out at the initiative of the Students' Unions at the different institutions of higher education. The purpose of collecting this feedback was to allow students to inform other students as to the best choices for lecturers for each course based on difficulty or ease in passing the course, or which teachers were boring or stimulating, etc. The results were published in pamphlets or student guides without necessarily reaching the teachers themselves. Only in 2001, in the context of increasing pressure for accountability in research and in teaching in institutions of higher education did the Council for Higher Education in Israel (CHE) officially begin to concern itself with the issue of quality assurance in the universities by deciding to establish a system for quality assessment and quality assurance in the institutions of higher education. This decision established general guidelines for the stated purpose of "improving the quality of the institutions of higher education and of the programs of study that they maintain" (Appendix Document C). The guidelines were concerned with a focus on the quality assessment of the programs of study and review processes but did not go into details of their execution. The guidelines had the status of recommendations and were not subject to enforcement procedures. Each university was left to its own designs in the creation, administration, analysis, and eventual use of the evaluations. Enforcement of the guidelines or lack thereof

incurred no official consequences. In short the document with its recommendations and intentions contained no provision for ensuring its execution. Nor did it specify the responsibilities of the university hierarchy in this procedure. The Rector, Deans, and Department Chairmen were free to act according to their own inclinations and feelings regarding the significance and value of the SEF.

Subsequent to the decision of the CHE, the Senate of the university in which this research is being carried out appointed a faculty member as a liaison representative to work jointly with the SU in preparing a standardized SEF questionnaire to be administered in the classrooms by SU representatives. Although this procedure was officially supported by the university Senate and the Rector, the Deans of the various faculties were not given instructions as to how to deal with the feedback process. At the outset of the research for this thesis I conducted several background interviews with certain figures at the university such as the Dean of the Faculty, the Senate liaison in charge of SEF, and the Head of the Students Union. I wanted to obtain information that would enable me to ask more meaningful questions in the interviews with the teachers in the case study. In a background interview with the Dean of the Faculty of the unit in which this research was carried out, I was told that he attached no particular importance to the SEF procedure and therefore did not mandate a policy for Department Chairmen to handle the SEF feedback. He said the chairpersons are free to use the results or not use them at their own discretion.

The reactions and perceptions expressed by the teachers in this report reflect events both prior to and subsequent to the CHE decision in 2001.

Research Questions and Answers

The semi-structured interviews were built around four basic questions that were designed to provoke discussion and allow for expression of teachers' thoughts and perceptions. An analysis of these would then lead to answers to the research questions. The findings and analyses were presented at length in the previous chapter. Brief selections will be presented in this section for illustrative purposes in presenting the answers to the research questions. Each question will be presented and followed by a discussion.

Question: Do university faculty members in one teaching unit in a university in Israel feel accountable to their students, their profession and their institutions?

      a. **Do faculty members perceive their students as customers or clients?**

      b. **How do staff members stay abreast of their field professionally?**

Discussion

In order to discuss teachers' feelings of accountability two sub-questions concerning issues relevant to accountability were posed. The purpose of the first question was to probe teachers' perceptions of their students as customers or clients and it elicited two emerging themes. These themes were actually the flip sides of a coin. The first theme focused on **how teachers perceived their students' needs** while the second theme dealt **with how the teachers perceived their own roles in the relationship with the students.** There was a clear contrast with the responses in the questionnaire to the statement "students are customers in the classroom". Whereas in the questionnaire most teachers agreed with this statement, this was far from the case in the interviews probably because the teachers had the freedom to expand their responses and express what was on their minds. The responses in the interviews showed, on the one hand, recognition of the existence of a consumer culture in higher education by some teachers who referred to the students as **customers purchasing a product,** or **having needs that need to be catered to.** But on the other hand, other respondents voiced hesitancy and in some cases a negative attitude towards the idea that students could be considered as customers or clients in the classroom; "**I think that the customer/client relationship is very limiting on the teacher and on the student**" or "**I would never say students are clients**" or "**I am not conscious of them as consumers**". The use of the consumerism or business metaphor with its accompanying marketing attitude reduces the aura of professionalism that many teachers feel should surround the bastion of higher education. This was the case regardless of whether the teachers come from Western backgrounds, the Former Soviet Union or the Middle-East; places where consumerism, business attitudes and marketing in education have all developed at different rates.

The flip side of the emerging theme concerning how teachers perceived their own roles in the relationship also reflected two contrasting directions. On one hand

there were teachers who reflected external pressures to adopt marketing
attitudes who said, "**we are selling something and we want them to be pleased**"
and "**It's my obligation to explain to the customers the importance of their
studies**" and "**I should be giving them a service**". In contrast there were those
who disagreed with or did not feel comfortable with the business metaphor and
claimed, "**I give them more than clients. I'm not just there doing a job like in
a customer/client relationship. I think I give them much more**" and
"**education is not a business**". These feelings are compatible with the ideas of
Delucchi and Smith (1997) who wrote about the problems that consumerism
creates in the classroom environment in the university by vesting authority in
students as consumers.

 The fact, however, that many of the interviewees did not perceive their students
as customers or clients in the business sense did not prevent them from having
strong feelings of accountability to their students and their profession. This
appeared in strong expressions of moral duty and ethical responsibility and
obligation: "**I feel tremendous professional responsibility**", "**I owe them all
my professional ability**", "**I feel bound to that morally and ethically**" and "**I
have an obligation as a teacher**". Some teachers explained in detail what they
thought were their responsibilities to their students; preparing the course, coming
on time and telling students what was expected of them. These teachers do not
feel that they are just paying lip service to accountability in the way described in
the Jarratt Report. Some even said that they would feel guilty if they did not live
up to their responsibilities. "**If I felt they weren't doing either of these two
things, I would be very upset. I'm wasting my time and their time**". However,
the concept of a 'price' to be paid if their job is not done successfully was not part
of the teachers' responses. Some respondents did say that they would need to
work harder, or take another look at what they were doing, but a heavier 'price' or
penalty as is compatible when one speaks of accountability and its consequences
was not discussed. No one thought of leaving the profession or being penalized
for lack of success. This was also reflected in the answers that appeared in the
questionnaire where most agreed that teachers were accountable to students but
most disagreed that teachers should be penalized in some way or be passed over
for promotion if their students did not pass the course. So according to the teachers
accountability is an acceptable concept, one that is taken for granted by the
teachers. They see their teaching as something that requires personal
accountability, something that they are constantly monitoring and desire to do

better as a personal endeavor. There is a high level of self-motivation and the teachers take pleasure in their teaching. They express a commitment to their students and their profession. But there are limitations. They do not voice the feeling that their teaching performance is something to be monitored by others, especially by their students, nor do they feel that there is an obligation for external reckoning with the institution if the students are not satisfied. We can conclude that: "the broader context of increased accountability requirements has not yet touched the teachers in this study in significant ways"(Johnston, 1996, p.223). This attitude reflects a cultural aspect of Israeli society that was mentioned in Chapter One but deserves reiterating. The Hebrew language lacks a word for "accountability" as it is used in the literature that has been the basis for this research and this has obviously had its influence on the respondents who have been living in Israeli society for many years (Hoffman, 2003, p.3).

The need for accountability to the profession as part of the general concept of accountability was another aspect that was referred to by the respondents. The emerging theme here dealt with 'staying abreast of the professional field'.

A problematic situation in the department surfaces upon examination of these findings. On the one hand all of the interviewees voiced the importance of maintaining a high level of professional accountability even though not all of them felt capable of carrying out everything necessary to achieve this goal. The teachers offered many examples of their own efforts to maintain professional accountability: involvement in research, reading professional journals, attending conferences, maintaining a high level of academic English, participating in workshops, and colloquia and mentoring. The fact that involvement in research was at the top of their list reflects the changing character of this particular teaching unit. Even though there is no official requirement by the unit to engage in research activity the fact that this unit is not an external commercial language institute but rather part of the academic university community has had an impact on the teaching staff in the unit. A growing number of teachers are pursuing doctoral studies because of the climate in the country that espouses continuing and furthering education, and therefore the rising interest in research activity. The MA degree that secured employment for teachers in the unit for several decades is no longer adequate in the minds of many teachers who fear possible professional stagnation. This feeling was reflected in the questionnaire as well when more than half of the staff members said that they would like to devote more time to research projects. It must be mentioned that research projects are also the point of focus for

many of the interviewees who are not doctoral candidates but who enjoy the intellectual challenge of research and see it as a way of staying abreast of their professional field, which in turn contributes to the students' learning. (HP) expresses it this way:

> **"I have always believed that the research I do**
> **should be connected very closely to the work I do**
> **with my students in class. I do believe these things**
> **are so connected that it's very hard for me to say**
> **whether I'm keeping up for keeping up, or whether**
> **I am keeping up for my students. I think it's really**
> **for both sometimes".**

On the other hand this optimistic picture of interest in research and scholarly activities is not completely accurate. The involvement in research projects is carried out on an individual basis at the initiative of individual teachers in order to satisfy personal needs. The department as a whole is less successful in fostering a climate that promotes teachers staying abreast of their field professionally. The official department policy according to a former department chairperson is that: **"people who are hired to teach in this department should be really up to date with all the developments in the field, with the research in the field of applied linguistics and in the field of methodology of teaching English as a foreign language" (AD).** But the feeling of the one of the teachers was: **"I do not feel that the department in general supports for whatever reason research. People do things that interest them for their own purpose and I think it is a shame that this research does not get back to the department in some form that the department can use. I think it is a shame".** Another teacher proposed imposing mandatory attendance at conferences and colloquia while realizing that: **"you can't force them to listen, but at least force them to come".** There was also a suggestion to urge teachers to engage in more professional reading. Other teachers raised the problems inherent in keeping up to date; 'there isn't enough time,' 'weekends are too short', 'too many papers to grade', 'this is not my only job', 'if you force it, people will resent it,' 'I get no recognition for my efforts so I stopped'. So, it may have been politically correct for all the teachers to say that keeping abreast professionally is important but the evidence in the field shows a different reality. Some of the teachers do practice what they preach but others do not. Yet there is an expressed desire for change in the situation. Teachers would like to have more direction and initiative from the department. They would like

more department sessions with guest speakers on topics of the latest research in the profession. And they would like time to talk with colleagues in hands-on workshops. They want to deal with issues concerning the way things are taught in the classroom. Most touching was the response that made a request for '**a little more encouragement**'. This statement turns our attention to an additional aspect of the issue: the function of the department chairperson as a facilitator of change in the attitude of the department towards professional development. While it is true that some staff members are self-motivated and act on their own behalf to stay abreast professionally and show accountability to their students and their profession, there are many others in the department however, who are asking for help in doing so and expressing frustration in their lack of success thus far. The only possible source for this direction is the department chairperson given the hierarchy of the department. She herself voiced disappointment with the status quo in the department:

> **"Unfortunately, I feel there is a body of teachers**
> **that are not making themselves knowledgeable**
> **about what's going on and keeping abreast of it, and**
> **they are too involved in teaching what they have to**
> **teach per week and getting it done. We try to**
> **encourage them to go to conferences, and push them**
> **to read more. But I do feel that's an area which we**
> **need to work more on" (BO).**

Even though we have heard these feelings echoed by other respondents in the department, the initiative to create a more positive climate for professional learning must originate in the chairperson's office and gradually be infused into the awareness of the teachers. It is not sufficient to mandate certain activities with the hope that they will generate excitement and interest among the teachers. Encouraging staff members to stay abreast professionally by making a concerted investment of time and energy even though they have very busy schedules and no extra time, needs careful strategic planning in order to be effective. Teachers have to be helped to reach the conclusion that as critical stakeholders in the education of their students they bear a heavy burden of accountability to their profession and to their students and to themselves that stretches beyond their present perceptions.

Questions: Do teachers value the feedback from the Student
Evaluation Of Faculty (SEF)?
Do teachers seek to improve their teaching based on the SEF?

These two questions are interrelated and therefore the discussion on the answers
will encompass both of them. A comparison of the questionnaire responses with
the interview responses on these two issues raises some difficulties and seeming
contradictions. Responses to the questionnaire on 'effectiveness of the SEF in the
past' are mostly negative, while when asked if they think the 'SEF is helpful'
answers were mostly positive. These answers were in sharp contrast to the
interview responses because the interview mechanism allowed the respondents
much more leeway to develop their answers with in depth explanations instead of
limiting them to single choice responses.

The widespread use of SEF in institutions of higher education around the world is
based on the assumption that "externally imposed quality assurance measure will
improve the quality of university teaching"(Johnston, 1996, p.224). However the
experiences of the interviewees clearly show a resistance to standardized
measures and checklists of effective teaching and classroom behaviors. In this
study the standardized measure is the official university SEF. The respondents
voiced their **dissatisfaction** with the university administered SEF questionnaire
and described shortcomings in terms of **procedure, content, and value of the**
SEF. Briefly summarized from the previous section, **procedure** included
administering the SEF, publication of the results and feedback to the students. The
complaints were detailed and involved every aspect included in administering the
SEF: starting with rude SU representatives interrupting valuable class time, to
lack of instructions to the teacher as to what role they were to take during the SEF,
to not knowing where and how the feedback would be made available to them.
Content pertained to the nature and type of questions in the SEF and **value**
referred to the worth of the information coming from the SEF. These were issues
of great contention among the interviewees. The complaints ranged from **"I did**
not like the questions" and **"It's not focused enough on professionalism"** to **"I**
really don't think the students should be telling me what I should be
teaching".
Even alternative options such as departmental SEF or teacher generated SEF did
not bring more satisfaction to the teachers. Although some respondents felt that a
departmental or self-generated SEF might be more suitable for them than the

university standardized form and had actually experimented with this option on their own initiative, and had positive reactions to their efforts, there was still considerable negative input expressed against these options. Many of the reservations were the same as those concerned with the university SEF, plus the teachers who felt unqualified to compose such a measure on their own, but there was also an expressed fear as to whose eyes would see the results of the SEF even if its format were changed. Teachers were not too optimistic about their students taking the procedure seriously, "**the students just don't want to be bothered.**" or "**I don't think that students can decide or have any knowledge to judge a teacher professionally**". All of these reactions are compatible with those appearing in the review of the literature on SEF. Each complaint or remark could be countered with a suggestion or the offer of a different perspective but the story as it was told by the teachers in this unit was not an optimistic one. With the attitudes that have been presented it is not likely that these teachers will ever contemplate using the official university SEF as a basis for improving their teaching. If the department chairperson were able to create a positive, encouraging, climate for change as was discussed in the previous section then there might be a chance for more positive use of departmental or teacher generated SEF for the purpose of improving teaching. At the moment the chairperson is rather skeptical as to the benefits of such measures and is not taking any initiative: "**I really didn't consider doing it as a kind of uniform thing**".

A ray of light appeared in the discussion of use of informal or oral SEF. This refers to impromptu meetings and discussions between teacher and student where students may voice reactions to class activity or teacher behavior in an unsolicited manner. Sometimes reactions are solicited but not in writing. Most of the respondents felt that this type of verbal feedback "**was more spontaneous, less threatening and more honest**".

Before exploring informal SEF any further it is necessary to examine the reasons for the threatening feeling expressed by the teachers with reference to the standardized SEF. One teacher who does not advocate written SEF claimed, "**I'm definitely a feedback person, but not in writing, because I find for me and them, that accountability sometimes scares both of us**". The threat and fear of written feedback that was mentioned by teachers may be due to the discomfort felt when a teacher has to read negative evaluation comments. The teacher is forced into self-confrontation with the written standardized answers from the SEF without room for explanation, justification, negotiation, or mutual reflection and

learning. Compounding the problem for the teacher is the fact that the results of the SEF reports will also be scrutinized by the department chairperson or other administrators in order to make decisions about job termination. The results are also published in pamphlets produced by the SU for the benefit of the student body and often appear in local newspapers as well.

For the teachers the way to circumvent this very sensitive issue was by advocating informal or oral SEF. The teachers wanted to "**hear their students' opinions about the course**", to "**engage students in discussion**" and "**ask what could have been done differently**", to "**listen to what they had to say**", to "**balance sights**" and to "**enter into negotiation with them**". It was extremely important for them to manage this feedback in a calm, non-threatening environment and then to make appropriate changes as deemed necessary by the teacher. Even in light of the university's declared intention, appearing in writing on the official SEF questionnaire, to use the results of the official SEF to improve instruction in the university classrooms, most of the teachers considered informal or oral SEF to be a more honest method of evaluation. Seeing that there is no evidence that the university plans to cease using the official SEF, at least in the foreseeable future, and given the negative feelings expressed by the teachers in this unit concerning the official SEF and also given the need for an evaluative procedure as expressed both by the university and the teaching staff perhaps it is time to seek a solution from a different perspective.

The problem I have described is not unique to Israel and has been discussed in the literature in the discussion of alternatives to SEF. The need for solutions to an unsatisfactory situation has prompted experimental work in various locations around the world. England and Australia for example have been the sources of creative attempts to deal with the dissatisfaction with the standard SEF procedures. Several suggestions for alternatives have arisen. One such suggestion, tried in England, considered the use of focus groups with each group consisting of a small number of students and a teacher. A trial study was carried out and the results showed, "Focus groups would enable the university to listen to students and if run successfully, would provide a valuable source of data for quality assurance purposes" (Brindley et al; 1998, p.101). Another innovation from Australia employed the use of non-verbal communication from students in the form of self-portraits, cartoons, and diagrammatic representations as a valuable source of information for course evaluation. The students used these methods in order to illustrate their personal experiences in their courses. Australia was the

base for another attempt at changing the traditional SEF. Ramsden (1991) supervised the construction of the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) with diagnostic features that are usually missing in the traditional SEF questionnaires. Still another attempt at innovation in the SEF process came from Britain. This time there was the use of Student Consultation Meetings (SCM) where cohorts of students and two staff members discussed many varied aspects of a course and aired views on specific issues and comments on the course as a whole. A written report was then published and given to the teacher and the department chairperson. One of the objectives of these innovations is to use qualitative techniques in accessing students' opinions. These methods allow students to have their voices heard in non-numerical responses and provide valuable insights for teachers to consider. It is important to note that the literature offers these suggestions to be used in combination with traditional SEF. McKenzie et al (1998) concluded that: "all good evaluation processes collect information from multiple sources using multiple methods"(p.162). If a positive climate for evaluation can be cultivated in the teaching unit in this research, then there will definitely be place for experimentation with qualitative alternatives to SEF to be used together with the existing traditional questionnaires. Teachers' creativity need know no bounds in developing methods for accessing students' opinions and evaluations. The examples from England and Australia are just a few of a myriad of possibilities that can develop from creative thinking. The next step for the teachers is to use the results of this diagnostic information, whatever its source may be, to help them enhance their strengths and overcome their weaknesses in the classroom in an effort to reach a new level of quality instruction. This leads us directly to the subject of the last two research questions concerning improving instruction in the university classroom.

Questions: What are the means by which teachers improve their instruction?
What is the function of the chairperson of the teaching unit in effecting improvement in teaching?

These two research questions were answered as a result of interview responses on two related topics: the responsibility of the university for improving teaching of faculty members and the benefits or lack there of in Centers for the Improvement of Teaching.

Once again a comparison of the responses to the three statements in the questionnaire that dealt with the topics of improving teaching and the responsibility of the university in the process with the interviewees responses showed significant differences. On the questionnaire most teachers were in agreement with the idea that improving teaching was an important part of their professional responsibility, that the university should be responsible for helping them improve their teaching and that teachers should be required to participate in staff training programs to improve the quality of their teaching. The interview responses reflected a different more varied set of reactions, probably due to the same reasons that have been explained in the previous sections.

Whereas in the past teaching may have taken a back seat with relation to the importance of research in institutions of higher education, that picture according to Eble (1988) among others is no longer accurate. In the competitive market in higher education students are actively looking for quality education of which quality teaching plays a major role. The literature reflects this change in attitude in describing the new call for quality. "Rather, university teaching has come under much scrutiny in recent years and governments throughout the world are attempting to introduce broad strategies to enhance the quality of teaching within our higher education institutions" (Johnston, 1996, p.213). One of these strategies has been the use of standardized SEF with the hope that teachers will learn from them, draw the proper conclusions, and be able to implement change that will improve and enhance their teaching. As has become evident in this research the teachers perceive the SEF procedure to be severely lacking in many aspects and the teachers interviewed in this study have consistently voiced negative reactions and attitudes to it. But even though the teachers have shown strong resistance to the use of standardized measures of their competency in the classroom, they insist that they do care for their students, are doing their best to be effective teachers and want to do their jobs even more effectively. Even if the department was to foster the use of alternatives to the official SEF in order to show teachers their strengths and weaknesses as suggested above, the issue would still remain as to how teachers would approach improving their teaching. That being the case I asked the teachers to express themselves on the topic of improving teaching and the responses branched out into four themes: the need to improve teaching, the need for a center for the improvement of teaching (CIT), awareness of the university sponsored workshop, and alternative options to the CIT for improving teaching. Diversity and criticism are the best descriptors of the teachers' reactions as voiced

in these themes. Whereas the teachers say that improving teaching is important, it seems that they feel that it is important for the **other** person, the weak teacher, and not specifically for themselves: "**Teachers should want to improve themselves if they are getting bad reports**", or "**You can ask people to improve themselves but be very careful about how it is done**", or "**I don't believe that every teacher is capable of being a good teacher, I do believe you can improve up to a point**". Without having the benefit of a satisfactory tool for diagnosing strengths and weaknesses of the teachers in the university classroom there is a tendency for teachers to deny that they themselves may need to improve their own teaching. It is easier and far less threatening to say that someone else needs help than admit ones' own shortcomings especially when there is no climate of constructive criticism or assessment in the department as we have seen in other parts of this research.

 The idea of people seeking non-threatening situations appeared again in the second theme concerning the need for a center for the improvement of teaching (CIT). Five of Israel's seven universities presently operate centers for the improvement of teaching on their campuses. The university Senate in the university specific to this research passed a resolution to establish a center for the improvement of teaching but at present lacks the budget to open the center. I informed the teachers of the university's plan and asked them to consider theoretically, at least, the advantages and disadvantages of such a center in helping teachers improve their teaching. Because CITs are presently functioning in the five other universities in Israel, I felt it was important to find out what the teachers in this unit thought of the prospect with the potential of providing useful input for the successful future management of the center. Because of the theoretical and hypothetical nature of the discussion the teachers were not hesitant in expressing themselves and an interesting thread appeared. First of all some of the teachers continued to speak in the third person describing which teachers, not necessarily themselves, could obtain help at a CIT: "**Yes, CIT can be compulsory for those who are deemed to be weak. Before you tell that person to go home, give them a chance to improve**". or "**They have to find the people who really need it**". This is similar to the style that I reported about in the previous theme. However there were teachers who actually spoke about themselves and the way they would feel if a CIT was established. "**I think I would be happy to take advantage of it....if it's not a threatening situation, it's not go or lose your job**". or "**I would be the first to sign up if there is not a**

kind of stigma to do it". or **"It's a matter of trust and honesty and believing that you're not out to fire them".** The idea that had been expressed in previous sections about not wanting to feel threatened has reappeared here and is obviously something that has been troubling many teachers. They do not negate the idea of a CIT, just the opposite; teachers spoke about the benefits they could receive with materials, workshops, and teaching strategies. Other teachers questioned the functions of the CIT and sounded willing to receive more information about the pragmatics involved. However the teachers want to be secure in their positions and know that by taking advantage of this center they will not be endangering their careers or their professional reputations. Knowing the severity of the financial crises that are plaguing Israel's universities at this time, the probability of establishing the CIT at this university now or in the near future is extremely low. One day, however, the center will be established and it will be important to take the teachers' concerns into account in creating a non-threatening, encouraging atmosphere so that maximum benefits can be derived by the teachers who need help and they will be able to achieve maximum support in their efforts to improve their teaching.

The third theme concerning the university sponsored workshop emerged in a flurry of responses laden with frustration and anger. In lieu of the CIT the university has been offering an annual summer off-campus workshop for the improvement of the quality of teaching for teaching staff from all departments in the university. Participation is voluntary and the cost is defrayed by the university. The problem was that teachers in the unit in this research were almost completely unaware of its existence. Only two members of the teaching staff said that they knew about the program and only one actually attended the program a year before this research took place. Complaints were aimed at the department chairperson for not informing teachers about the announcement, for not displaying it in a prominent location, for not translating it into English, for not urging teachers to participate. **"That's a failure of the department. If the head of the department isn't interested in teachers improving their teaching, at least you could allow the teachers to make a decision for themselves."** Teachers voiced disappointment and said that had they known about this program they would have gone to get more **"guidance, more information in classroom management, methodology."** Many teachers in this unit do not have 'native' command of the Hebrew language so expecting them to pay attention to a Hebrew announcement placed onto an already full bulletin board is really a false expectation. It should be

noted that since this research was carried out the notices are placed in each teacher's mailbox and also advertised on the university Internet site. However, the language is still Hebrew and the department has not yet taken the initiative to translate the document for the non-Hebrew speaking teachers. Only one staff member from the unit, a native Hebrew speaker, has taken advantage of the summer workshop. This teacher read the notice and immediately registered. She attended the workshop and was very excited by it and felt that it contributed to her professional abilities. **"I would oblige all the teachers in this university to take it. The only way that one can improve teaching is by taking these courses."** The other teacher in the department who had seen the notice criticized the department for lack of action. **"If this were taken a little more seriously and the department actually pinpointed teachers who need help and the department wanted to invest in those teachers, then you send them to this course"**. The recurrent picture that emerges from each analysis of the findings portrays a group of teachers who are very individualistic by nature but do share one dominant characteristic. They would like to see more initiative, direction, and guidance from the department in the different areas that have come under discussion concerning evaluation and improving teaching.

The fourth theme that emerged in this section provided some very pragmatic suggestions for ways to improve teaching in the absence of a CIT or any other university-sponsored program. Eight ideas emerged from the interviewees' responses: observations of weak teachers by experienced teachers, observations by weak teachers in other teachers' classrooms, mentoring in several formats, workshops and colloquia, bringing in outside consultants, appointing a senior teacher to be responsible for pedagogic aspects in the department, videotaped observations and arranging in-house sharing sessions. Some of these ideas were related to prior personal experiences of the teachers and others to the fruits of wishful thinking on their part. What was clear from this discussion was the excitement that was generated and reflected in their voices. Even though there was no consensus as to which proposal would be most effective and the responses reflected different emphases that were important to different colleagues, it was obvious that all of the teachers were interested in exploring ways in which to improve their teaching. Several senior staff members stressed the importance of their participation in activities like colloquia, workshops, and mentoring as a show of support for the less experienced staff members.

As in the previous section, the desire for non-threatening experiences was voiced especially pertaining to the suggestions involving observations, mentoring and outside consultants. A suggestion was made that someone other than the department chairperson carry out the observations "**so as not to frighten teachers.**" As regards mentoring: "**One of the biggest problems of mentoring is that people see it as a threat, that what they say or do is going to go back to the authorities and that it's going to influence their jobs.**" Regarding outside consultants there was also hesitation: "**I don't know if you can have an outsider come in and have the teachers trust them.**" In order to combat the fears of threatening situations, lack of trust and fear of job loss it is necessary for the leadership in the department to facilitate the development of a positive atmosphere leading to constructive activity that will enable teachers to improve their professional skills. Despite the hesitations expressed by some of the staff members that can be dealt with, there is a strong desire to create change and deal with the pressing professional issues that has been voiced by the respondents throughout the interview process in this research. The missing elements and the keys to success are direction and guidance from the top. Without this initiative from the leadership in the department, the teachers will continue functioning in their classrooms as best they can, talking to each other in the staff room when they have time, generally stagnating professionally. Certain individuals will of course forge on, become involved in research projects, search out staff development possibilities and stay 'state of the art' but this will continue to be the exception rather than the rule.

The final emerging theme stemmed from the interview with the department chairperson on the issue of the role of the administrator in improving teaching. Some background description is necessary in order to understand the role of the chairperson in this unit. The position of chairperson is a rotating one for periods of between two and six years. It is generally an appointment made by the Dean of the Faculty to a senior staff member from within the department. Only twice in the history of the department has an outsider briefly occupied the position of chairperson. Usually the first year and a half is spent learning the role in consultation with the previous chairperson. The more time a person spends in this position the greater the possibility for leaving a personal imprint on the department. Different department chairpersons have made significant innovations in areas of testing and assessment of students' progress, production of new teaching materials and textbooks for use in the department, initiation of programs

for computer-assisted language learning, and modernizing the language laboratories. No one yet has taken on the areas of teacher evaluation, staff development, and improving teaching as first choices of emphasis for innovation in the department. There have been minor efforts over the years to implement a 'buddy system' or 'modified mentor' program to help new teachers acclimate to the department and the university but these came to a halt after a brief existence. The incumbent chairperson also has her own interests that occupy her hours outside the classroom. It is important to note that the department chairperson in this unit teaches six hours a week in addition to her administrative duties which include responsibility for managing a department servicing approximately 3000 students per year. It is clear that with such a busy schedule one must carefully prioritize one's choices for investment of energy and resources.

The literature on educational leadership differentiates between a department chairperson who functions as a manager and whose main responsibilities are administrative (Arreola and Aleamoni, 1990) and one who is a transformational leader 'who will make departments places where people can share a sense of excitement and know they make a difference' (Lucas, 1989, p.14) and describes the type of leadership necessary to effect desired changes leading to improvement of teaching in higher education. According to Lucas (1989) what is required is a department chairperson who as a transformational leader has the goal of creating a shared commitment to the quality of college teaching in the department. A problem sometimes arises when there is role conflict experienced by the designated leader. This conflict can cause stress, strain, ambiguity, and uncertainty both for the individual and those around him or her (Hall, 1997). The present department chairperson is seen by the teachers as an excellent manager and administrator because of the smooth flow of events in the department. Classes are populated and staffed, teacher absences are kept to a minimum, state of the art teaching materials are available, examinations are produced and administered, interdepartmental issues are dealt with efficiently, the secretaries are kept busy and students' complaints are dealt with efficiently. The transformational characteristic of a department chairperson as described in the literature is not as clearly apparent in the unit in this research. Trask (1989) described the chairperson as "a player-coach, fully familiar with the professional strengths and weaknesses of all department members in order to know how to encourage their very best efforts as teacher-scholar. That requires, in turn an ongoing process of professional evaluation" (p.103). This description does not apply to the leadership

of the unit at this time according to the voices expressed by the teachers. Their expressed desires for encouragement, direction, and motivation to help them improve their teaching in a non-threatening atmosphere remain unattended at the moment, as are their expressed complaints and dissatisfaction with the SEF procedures. This becomes evident when reviewing the responses of the chairperson to the interview questions.

These responses touched on six different themes related to the issue of improving teaching: dealing with senior teachers, dealing with non-tenured junior staff members, mentoring, staff development, staff reaction to staff development in the eyes of the chairperson and differences in attitude to staff development between full-time and part-time staff members. In general the attitudes expressed by the chairperson were positive although with some reservations. She voiced some frustration in dealing with senior teachers about the need to improve teaching: **"there's very little I can do except maybe have a chat with the teacher, just as a kind of awareness kind of thing."** These teachers do not feel threatened about their jobs because they are tenured and some are often complacent about doing their jobs and do not actively seek to update their teaching methods. The chairperson obviously feels helpless in dealing with them. The only thing she feels she may be able to do is to try to raise their awareness of their problems. This also manifests itself in a lack of discussion with them about their SEF results. In dealing with the junior staff members the chairperson was more willing to take action but thinks that **"most of the teachers are okay"**. She did not specify how she came to the conclusion that most of the 35 teachers were teaching satisfactorily. The chairperson thought that the **"mentor program is a good idea,"** but did not take steps to formalize a program. Instead suggestions were made to teachers that they sit in on one another's classes or pair themselves up with buddies. Without any follow up or encouragement for the development of a formal program, the suggestions fell by the wayside. The chairperson said that **"staff development is directed downward from the top"** but according to the teachers' voices throughout this research the direction is not felt. She spoke about **required attendance** at activities but hasn't heard the teachers' reactions about attending only because they feel threatened or that the activities were not interesting. In responding to the staff's reaction to staff development she realizes that there **is no ideological resistance to participating in staff development but rather it is a matter of time available.** Throughout the interviews teachers have expressed willingness to become involved in activities to improve teaching and

general staff development but they do not perceive the interest of the department to match their own. In this light it would seem desirable for the chairperson to assume a more transformational leadership position and take new initiatives, prioritize the significant issues concerning evaluation, staff development and improving teaching, and cultivate a departmental attitude that encourages professional accountability and quality instruction. As Lucas (1989, p.6) so aptly put it, "when one is functioning as a leader, there is an excitement about being a department chairperson; when one functions as a manager, the job is dreary and uninspiring".

In order to put things into proper perspective one must take into account the fact that this department chairperson is one of a large group of chairpersons within the Faculty. The Dean is the highest authority in each Faculty and the Deans receive guidance from the Rector who is the highest-ranking academic authority in the university hierarchy. The Dean stated in an interview that SEF procedure and its consequences do not hold high priority for him and this is the message that has funneled down to the department chairpersons in the Faculty. In order for the department chairperson to facilitate change in attitudes towards SEF or anything else there has to be motivation for change from the upper echelons. However, while the university does plan to open a CIT at some point in the future and a summer workshop for improving teaching has been offered to all the teachers, there still is no visible strategy in motion for raising levels of motivation among the staff and to promote excellence in teaching. The difficult economic situation in Israel with rising unemployment and calls from the government for major financial cutbacks throughout the public sector including institutions of higher education has a strong impact on the priorities set by the universities. Institutions of higher education face the difficult conflict between allocating budgets that are already stretched beyond belief for promoting research and development programs against allocating budgets to promote quality instruction and establish staff development programs. One would hope that the administration of the unit described in this study, which is by definition a teaching unit as opposed to a research and development based unit, would naturally sway to the side of using available resources for effecting change and improving teaching. "The department chairperson must take the lead, first through personal example, and work vigilantly to maintain a sense of common purpose concerning the department's teaching mission" (Trask, 1989, p.106). Instead of preserving the status quo in the Faculty concerning SEF procedures, perhaps the department chairperson could set

an example for other units and work towards motivating the teachers in the unit to become involved in staff development to improve the performance of the individual instructor. This would be beneficial both to the individual student and the institution.

Conclusions

The focus of this research was a teaching unit in a major university in the center of Israel. In a case study nineteen faculty members from the unit were questioned individually in semi-structured interviews on four broad topics for the purpose of gaining insights into their perceptions on the need for accountability and/or improvement of teaching as a result of student evaluations. The topics covered in the interviews were: teachers' views of students as customers/clients, accountability, student evaluations of faculty members, and improving teaching. Teachers were asked opening questions and their responses were taped and then transcribed for analysis and interpretation. Each interview was approximately an hour in duration. Emerging themes were sorted and categorized and then analyzed with reference to the review of the literature on these topics. Prior to the interviews a questionnaire was distributed to all thirty-five teachers in the unit. The results of the questionnaire provided descriptive, non-numerical information concerning the context of the population of teachers. The questionnaire also served to introduce the teachers to the subject of the research and stimulated some thought before the interview sessions began.

Through the analysis of the emerging themes and the subsequent interpretation I have reached certain general conclusions pertinent to this particular case. With regard to the specific research questions I will summarize briefly: Firstly, the university teachers who were the subjects in this study definitely feel accountable to their students and their profession and their institution albeit their accountability does not reflect the current market attitude in higher education that is widespread throughout the world. In this light they generally do not perceive their students as customers or clients. On an individual basis, teachers take various steps in order to stay abreast of their field professionally. These have been discussed in previous sections. Secondly, in general, the teachers do not value the feedback from the official university SEF and thirdly, they do not use the results of the SEF as a basis of improving their teaching. The reasons for these responses have been described quite specifically in the findings and analysis section. The issues that emerged in response to these two questions are crucial to the perceived

problematic situation in the unit and were discussed at length in the analysis and interpretation sections. The teachers do however, realize the need for feedback from students, and have tried various alternative methods to achieve that information on an individual basis and not through departmental channels. Fourthly, the teachers are not particularly involved in staff development programs to improve their instruction. They have speculated as to possibilities of programs for improving teaching and would like to see more direction in this area from the administration. Lastly, the function of the chairperson of the teaching unit can be described as managerial leadership with interests in administration and curriculum planning. Teachers' responses indicated desires for more direction in the areas of evaluation and improving teaching that would call for administration with a transformational leadership orientation.

Examination of the broader picture shows the following scenario: The Council for Higher Education in Israel has called for quality assurance measures to be installed in order to improve the quality of instruction in Israel's institutions of higher education. They have no procedures for enforcing or regulating the directive. The Senate of the university in this study has activated the use of an official university student evaluation of faculty (SEF) throughout the university in conjunction with the Student Union Organization. The Dean of the Faculty has not implemented any official procedure for communicating the feedback of the SEF from the department chairpersons to the individual teachers. Teachers receive feedback sometimes directly from the department and sometimes via the student union pamphlet and sometimes not at all. Such a scenario as attested to by the teachers in their responses cannot lead to a positive attitude towards improving teaching based on SEF. In order to move forward in a positive manner and overcome the existing barriers in the SEF system the administration must take control and effect change. Teachers must be provided with an impetus to become involved in developmental activities aimed toward improvement of teaching and learning (Dill, 1999). Teachers must be convinced to listen to the voices of their students and take their perspectives into account in addressing the issue of quality teaching and learning in the university (Ballantyne et al., 2000).

It is not possible to make broad generalizations from the results of a case study but careful reflection on the results of this particular case and consideration of the messages coming from the teachers' voices will definitely open a window of insight into other departments and units in this university. The SEF procedure is currently in effect throughout the university and the results of this research should

indicate new directions that can guide the administration in implementing procedures for improving instruction in the university.

Recommended Guidelines for SEF Procedure

The following guidelines are recommended for implementation in order to enable effective use of the SEF procedures within the teaching unit. These guidelines have evolved as a result of the analysis of the findings in this study. They are in contrast to the Chain of Events in SEF presented at the beginning of this chapter. Each element in these guidelines answers a difficulty or vagueness present in the original Chain of Events. The use of these guidelines requires communication and interaction between the department leadership, the teachers, and the students in order to foster improvement in the system.

Guidelines

1. The university administration should promote interest in the importance and significance of SEF as a tool for evaluating and improving teaching for both veteran and new teachers via staff development workshops. The role of the Student Union as a partner in the SEF process must be determined.

2. Evaluation of existing SEF questionnaire for the purpose of checking its strengths and weaknesses may lead to the construction of a new more individualized SEF questionnaire which will better answer the needs of the teachers and the department. This may be done in consultation and cooperation with teachers, administrators, and students. All teachers in the unit should be aware of the purpose of the SEF and have first-hand knowledge of the items in the SEF.

3. Administering of SEF by SU representative in each course once each semester according to a pre-determined schedule in order to preclude unwarranted interruptions of classroom activities.

4. The role of the teachers during the SEF procedure must be clarified. Policies concerning teachers leaving the classroom and non-intervention while students are filling out the questionnaire must be established in order to ensure a serious, non-threatening environment for the evaluation.

5. An efficient system for informing teachers of SEF results must be operative to ensure that each teacher receives them personally in writing and not from some outside source. An explanation of SEF results should come as part of an individual consultation with the department chairperson

as soon as possible following the receipt of the results. This meeting should allow for an exchange of ideas and reactions and clarifications on behalf of the teacher and the department chairperson.

6. Options for improving teaching offered by the university such as staff development programs, mentors, outside consultants, in-house workshops and centers for the improvement of teaching should be explored with each individual teacher and the department chairperson.

7. Initiation of a follow–up program including observation, re-evaluation, and re-assessment by peers or department chairperson after teachers participate in programs designed to help them improve their teaching.

Recommendations for Future Research

The present research was a case study based on a single teaching unit in the university. The results and conclusions are obviously limited to the particular case (Bassey, 1999). Because the phenomenon of the SEF is university wide, it is my recommendation based on the findings that similar studies be carried out in other units and departments in the university and the results then be compared with this case in order to see if the scope of the issues that has emerged is similar and could then be dealt with on a wider scale or if the issues are different in different departments and would require more individualized departmental treatment. Communication between departments with similar problems or situations could provide a wider range of solutions and methods for handling the difficulties (Hativa, 1995b; Knight, 1993).

I would also recommend a research project concerning the effectiveness of the Centers for the Improvement of Teaching that have already been opened at several universities in Israel. It would be interesting to determine if these centers are able to provide the assistance and guidance necessary to help university teachers improve their teaching in a manner that is non-threatening to their status (Dill, 1999). Questions as to the population of teachers attending the centers, the compulsory or voluntary nature of attendance at the center, the type of programs offered, and the availability of follow-up feedback are all interesting issues to be broached in further research.

Contribution to the Research Field

From an examination of the wealth of literature written on student evaluations of faculty one might assume that research has saturated the field from all possible

angles leaving nothing further to be investigated. However, in this vast amount of written material there is in fact a dearth of literature investigating the perceptions of teachers at the university level on the issues of student evaluations (Johnston, 1996). In a comprehensive review of the literature on SEF, Wachtel (1998, p.205) specifically mentioned the need for research concerning "how often and what types of changes they make in their instruction based on the results of student ratings". In Israel the research on this topic was even sparser. Finally in 2001 a survey on college teachers' reactions to student feedback (Persko and Nassar, 2001) was carried out but this study emphasized teachers' views on administrative issues relating to the SEF. It did not relate to improving instruction or making changes and it was a quantitative study based on a questionnaire survey and not in-depth interviews. In fact, the voices of the teachers in institutions of higher education in Israel and around the world have not been heard on the most important issues concerning their careers. It has been the focus of this qualitative research in the form of a case study to allow the university teachers' voices to reach a higher education audience and express their feelings and perceptions as to what is occurring in their profession in the areas of evaluation and improving teaching. Hopefully these voices will be heard and the teachers will have an impact on those events and will aid in evolving change in an important policy decision at the university. Therefore, I believe that the case study research for this thesis has made a contribution to qualitative research in the area of higher education in Israel based on the specific problem investigated, the particular context, and the implications for implementation from the lessons learned.

Researcher Learning

At the outset of my career as a researcher I had envisioned carrying out a large-scale quantitative survey study on the topic of university teachers' reactions to student evaluations of faculty. I considered comparing the results of responses from several Israeli institutions of higher education, even comparing results of colleges with results of universities. A meeting with the Head of Research and Computer Applications at the university in order to obtain permission to use the university e-mail lists to distribute my questionnaires quickly curtailed my plans. I was informed that there is a strict university policy against "spamming" or using the lists for distribution of unwanted materials. Moreover I was told that the return rates on questionnaires sent to the academic staff at the university were extremely low. Upon rethinking my options and following the advice of colleagues with

more research experience and my PhD supervisor, I decided to narrow my sights and embark on a different path. Qualitative research design and specifically the case study approach appealed to me and despite warnings about the difficulties and length and complications I began my arduous journey into the world of qualitative research. My choice of topic was both personally and professionally motivated. On the one hand, having spent over 30 years in the same work place in an institution of higher education and being exposed to the SEF phenomenon that had become embedded in the system made me feel that this was the norm and as such it was an acceptable situation. On the other hand, exposure to reading material in educational management issues: accountability, appraisal, evaluation, and quality assurance in higher education gave me an awareness that perhaps the evaluation process at the university was a situation that was worth delving into as a researcher. I felt that by asking teachers to reflect on how they perceived their students in a market economy, how they valued their evaluations, what they did to improve teaching, and did they acknowledge a responsibility for accountability, I could gain an understanding of the particular unit of analysis that I had chosen. Reading the literature in each of these areas helped me formulate my research questions. Learning about selecting participants and data collection instruments in the qualitative paradigm was next. This was followed by the questionnaire distribution and interview sessions. The most difficult part by far in the research process was working with the data, reading and rereading until the emergent themes appeared from the voices of the participants. Analysis and interpretation which seems to be never-ending processes are difficult tasks but extremely satisfying when a picture emerges and the story is told. Most significant is the impact that this research has had on me personally. As this research has come to a close I have been appointed to be the department chairperson of the unit that was the subject of my case study. I feel the special responsibility and privilege of being in a position to implement changes based on information gleaned from this research and then examine the results.

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APPENDICES
CONTENTS

Appendix A

Questionnaire

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for agreeing to help me with a personal research project.

Kindly fill in the questionnaire and return it in the pre-addressed envelop to Julia

Borenstein. The information will remain confidential and no individual will be

identifiable in a discussion of the research.

Please leave the questionnaires in my mailbox by October 23, 2001.

Sincerely yours,
Julia Borenstein

Questionnaire

I. **Personal Background Information**
       Circle the appropriate answer
   1. Gender: 1.Male   2. Female

   2. Age: _____

   3. Native Language _____ 4. Number of Years Teaching at Bar Ilan ___

   5. Professional Rank: Circle the appropriate answer:
       a. Moreh Aleph   b.Moreh Bet   c.Moreh Gimmel
       d.Moreh Daled   e. Moreh Heh

   6. Job Description: Circle the appropriate response
       a. Full-time (16 teaching hours)   b. Part-time   How many hours?___

   7. **Main** Professional Interest   Circle your answer
       I devote most of my time to: a. teaching   b.doing research

       I would prefer to devote most of my time: a. teaching   b. doing research

   8. Academic Degrees (circle the most advanced degree you have completed)
       BA __   BSc__ MA __   MSc___   MEd ___   PhD __   EdD__

   9. Do you have Teaching Certification? a. Yes b. No
       If yes, is it from Israel or from abroad?   a. Israel   b. abroad
       If it is from abroad please state the country._____.

II. **Attitudes and Perceptions Concerning Student Evaluation of Faculty**

   10. Were any of your classes evaluated by the Student Evaluation of Faculty
       (SEF) questionnaires last year?   a. Yes   b. No
       If yes, then how many classes were evaluated?___

II. Attitudes and Perceptions Concerning Student Evaluation of Faculty

10. Were any of your classes evaluated by the Student Evaluation of Faculty (SEF) questionnaires last year?   a. Yes   b. No
    If yes, then how many classes were evaluated?___

11. In **your** opinion what is the purpose of the Student Evaluation of Faculty questionnaire?

    _____

    _____.

12. Are you familiar with the questions in the student evaluation questionnaire?   a. Yes   b. No

13. Have you seen the results of the last Student Evaluation of Faculty questionnaire for your classes?   a. Yes   b. No

14. How did the results reach you? (Circle all relevant answers)

    a. In a letter to you from the Students' Union
    b. From your Department Chairman
    c. In the booklet published by the Students' Union
    d. Any other way _____ (please explain) _____
    e. I have no knowledge of the results

15. What did you learn about your teaching from the results of the Student Evaluation of Faculty questionnaire?

    _____

    _____.

16. Would you prefer to construct and conduct an individual Student Evaluation of Faculty for your own courses? a. Yes   b. No
    Please explain your answer.

    _____

    _____.

17. Please react to the following statements on the scale below based on your experience at the University.
    Circle a number from 1 to 5 for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
a. Students are customers in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5
b. Students should have a "say" in teacher promotions	1	2	3	4	5

c. Teachers are accountable to students.	1	2	3	4	5
d. SEF has influenced my behavior in the classroom in the past	1	2	3	4	5

18. To whom should the results of the Student Evaluation of Faculty for your courses be shown?
    Circle as many responses as are relevant to you.

    a. Only to the teacher being evaluated
    b. Department Chairperson and teacher being evaluated
    c. Students only
    d. Students and teacher being evaluated
    e. Any other combination _____.

19. Does the SEF procedure conducted by the student union infringe upon your autonomy in your class? a. Yes   b. No
    Please explain _____
    _____.

20. Please react to the following statements on the scale below based on your experience at the University. Circle a number from 1 to 5 for each statement.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
a. Improving teaching is an important part of my professional responsibility	1	2	3	4	5
b. The university should be responsible for helping me improve my teaching	1	2	3	4	5
c. Autonomy in the classroom means that teaching should not be evaluated by students	1	2	3	4	5
d. SEF can help me improve. my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5

21. What is the best way to get feedback about the quality of your teaching?
    Use the scale to rate the following methods in order of importance to you.

	Unimportant	Important	Very Important
Discussion with Dept. Chairperson	1	2	3
Discussion with your students	1	2	3
SEF Questionnaire	1	2	3
Self-evaluation	1	2	3
Peer observation	1	2	3
Other: Explain :			

22. What does the expression "teachers are **accountable** to students" mean?
    Circle **Agree** or **Disagree** for each statement.

a. Teachers should be penalized if most of their students don't pass the course	**Agree**	**Disagree**
b. Teachers must explain their aims and objectives to their students and make changes if students don't agree with them	**Agree**	**Disagree**
c. Teachers must draw conclusions about their actions in the classroom based on student evaluations of faculty and act accordingly.	**Agree**	**Disagree**
d. Teachers should be required to participate in staff training programs to improve the quality of their teaching.	**Agree**	**Disagree**
e. Teachers have a moral responsibility to their students to provide them with the best teaching possible.	**Agree**	**Disagree**
f. Teachers' primary responsibility is to students and then to the administration	**Agree**	**Disagree**

Thank you for your cooperation in my research project. Your participation in filling out this questionnaire is much appreciated.

Sincerely yours,
Julia Borenstein

Appendix B
Sample Interview Protocol

1. At the start of each interview each teacher was shown a written copy of the title of the research.

2. Each interviewee was told why he/she was selected as a key respondent in this research.

3. Teachers were reminded of the topics on the questionnaires they had previously completed and told that this would be a follow-up discussion

4. A brief explanation of the four specific topics to be dealt with during the interview was given to each teacher.

5. Teachers were asked for their permission to have their answers tape-recorded.

6. A promise of confidentiality was given to each interviewee.

7. Four topics for discussion in semi-structured interviews:

   a. The image of the student as a customer or client in higher education in Israel

   b. The issue of accountability to the student, the profession and the Administration

   c. Student Evaluation of Faculty (SEF)
   Before the discussion on this issue each teacher was shown a copy of the latest SEF form so that there would be a common basis for discussion

   d. Improving teaching at the university level: how to do it, is it necessary, the establishment and use of a Center for the Improvement of Teaching (CIT)

8. Interview Schedule – Questions are based on the four topics listed above.

   a. Do you perceive your students as customer or clients?

   b. Does the fact that your students pay special tuition for these courses give them any special rights?

   c. How do you perceive your role in your relationship with your students?

   d. What input if any should students have in your classroom?

   e. Do you feel accountable to your students?

   f. Do you feel you are accountable to your profession?

g. How do you express your accountability to your students?

h. How do you stay abreast of the latest developments in your field?

i. What do you see your colleagues doing to keep up professionally?

j. How does professional development affect what goes on in your classroom?

k. What is your opinion of the officially administered Student Evaluation of Faculty?

l. Have you seen the questionnaire? Are you familiar with the form?

m. Do you feel that the SEF can be used to improve your teaching?

n. Were the results of your personal SEF results discussed with you?

o. Were you offered any kind of analysis of the results of the university SEF?

p. What kind of Student Evaluation of Faculty would you choose for yourself? What alternatives would you consider?

q. How do you get feedback from your students at present?

r. How do you judge is a lesson or a course has been successful?

s. Should the university be responsible for improving the teaching of faculty members?

t. Can a Center for the Improvement of Teaching (CIT) help improve classroom teaching?

u. What does your specific teaching unit do in order to improve the teaching of its staff members?

v. How can a teacher tell if his/her teaching has improved?

w. How would you feel about bringing in outside consultants to observe teaching?

THE COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
DECISION NO. 753/9 OF JULY 10, 2001

Quality Assessment and Assurance in Institutions of Higher Education

The Council for Higher Education decides to establish a system for quality assessment and quality assurance in the institutions of higher education in Israel, according to the following guidelines:

1. The purpose of quality assessment and quality assurance in the institutions of higher education is to improve the quality of the institutions of higher education and of the programs of study that they maintain.

2. The assessment of quality in the higher education system in Israel and its assurance will be carried out on two levels: a) at the level of the individual program of study (programs that have received permanent authorization) – once every six years, and b) at the institutional level (accredited institutions) – once every eight years. The subjects to be examined and the procedures of the examination are set out in sections 5 and 6 below.

3. The process of quality assessment and quality assurance in institutions of higher education will be based, inter alia, on self-study within the institutions of higher education, questionnaires to be answered by the institutions, and review by external committees.

4. Reports of the review committees, accompanied by the responses of the institution, will be presented to the Council for Higher Education, and after the Council discusses them they will be published.

5. The Level of the Individual Program of Study:

5.1 Quality assessment of programs of study will focus on the following:

- The aims and goals of the program of study: What is the final product that is desired, and is it achieved? How does the program of study fit in with the faculty and how does it promote the goals of the faculty? Overall policy regarding the development of programs of study in the faculty and the development process itself.

- The curriculum: academic level; scope of the curriculum; the structure and content of courses; the process of renewal and updating of content; the instruction and learning process in the program; suitability to the stated aims of the program.

- Teaching staff: qualifications; quantity; suitability for teaching the curriculum; teaching load; development of teaching capabilities; support for research; readiness to teach and attitude toward students.

- Requirements: for admission to the program; for progression in the program and requirements for graduation; methods of assessing student achievement and the existence of a mechanism for testing the reliability and validity of these methods.

- Physical infrastructure: buildings and classrooms, laboratories, computing rooms, library, the level of equipment and if it is available in sufficient numbers.

- Administrative infrastructure: the level of administrative services and support available to students.

- The existence of internal institutional procedures for quality assessment and quality assurance of programs of study; overall responsibility for programs of study and their administration; procedures for carrying out changes in the program.

5.1 The Review Process

- A review of the quality of the program of study will be carried out once in six years, according to specific fields or sectors. This review will be based on institutional self-evaluation of the program under review, and on questionnaires to which the institution will provide replies.

- The review will be carried out by a committee on behalf of the CHE and appointed by it, composed of three-four senior academic staff members in the field under review, not including the chairman of the committee. A senior academic staff member from the field under review and, as necessary and as far as possible, from one of the leading institutions of higher education abroad, will be appointed to serve as chairman of the committee. The number of members of the committee shall not exceed five. If the field of study is offered at more than eight institutions, two committees will be appointed to review the subject, dividing the institutions between them.

6. The Institutional Level (an accredited institution)

6.1 The assessment of quality of an institution: the review of the quality of an institution will be based on the findings of all the reviews carried out on programs of study in that institution, as

well as on information gathered on the institution according to reports made to the Planning and Budgeting Committee of the CHE within the framework of the budgeting model for institutions of higher education – quality component.

6.2 The Review Process: a review of the quality of an institution will be carried out once in eight years. The review will be carried out by a committee on behalf of and appointed by the CHE, which will be composed of two-three senior academic staff members, a representative of the public, and a representative of students. A senior academic staff member, as necessary and as far as possible, from one of the leading institutions of higher education abroad, will be appointed to serve as chairman of the committee. The number of committee members shall not exceed six.

The CHE will decide upon a detailed system of quality assessment and assurance that will include quality standards, indicators for assessment of various subjects, questionnaires, guidelines for institutional self-study activities, the schedule for implementation, procedures, etc. After approval of the mechanism and upon the implementation of the process, a working program for review will be presented yearly.

B.　The CHE requests that the Secretariat of the Council present to It a detailed proposal for the methods of work and processes of ensuring quality, that will Include: quality standards, Indicators according to which various subjects can be evaluated, questionnaires, schedules for the Implementation of the process, etc.

After approval of the mechanism and upon the implementation of the process, a working program for review will be presented yearly.

<u>**Appendix D**</u>

The Student Union	**The University**
Student Evaluation of Faculty SEF	(A Translation)

Dear Student,

The administration of the university in cooperation with the Students' Union is administering a student evaluation of university lecturers during the 2001 academic year. The questionnaire is intended to supply data concerning students' attitudes towards the course and the instructor. Please read it carefully and answer the questions seriously.

(Bold) **It is the intention of the university to take practical steps to improve the level of instruction by use of the SEF.**

Course Code	**Course Name**	**Instructor's Name**	**Date**

_____.

Place an X in the correct box. Use a blue or black pen only.

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	—	—	—	—	—

<u>**Planning and Organization of the Course**</u>

    1. **The course was well planned**

    2. **There is coordination between the lecture and the tutorial**

<u>**Method of Instruction**</u>

    3. **The lecturer presented the material clearly**

    4. **The lecturer presented the material in an interesting manner**

    5. **The lecturer encouraged curiosity and independent thinking**

<u>**Lecture – Student Relationships**</u>

    6. **The lecturer tried to facilitate understanding of the material**

    7. **The lecturer related nicely to the students**

    8. **The lecturer is willing to receive criticism and evaluation**

<u>**Contributions of the Course**</u>

    9. **The course assignments (tutorials and seminar papers) contributed to the understanding of the course material**

    10. **Your presence at the lectures aided in your understanding of the course Material**

Remarks:_____

_____.

Thank you for your cooperation

SPECIAL NOTE

THE FOLLOWING IMAGE IS OF POOR QUALITY DUE TO THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENT. THE BEST AVAILABLE IMAGE HAS BEEN ACHIEVED.

מורה של שאלון הערכה

_____

שאלון: _____

	5	4	3	2	1
10. בכוונתי להמשיך ולהרחיב ידע לתחומי הוראה נוספים לתחומי הוראה נוספים	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. מסייעת להכין (הוראה, בעיות מעשיות) ולתן הוראות להכין	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. ההוראה פותחת/מחזקת הבנה וחשיבה	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. ההוראה מעייסת/בהירה ברורה למשתתפים	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. ההוראה מעשירה/מסייעת לידע את ההוראה	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. ההוראה מעניינת ומשיבה מעניינת	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. ההוראה מעניינת ההוראה ברורה ומתאימה	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. ההוראה מעניינת ההוראה ברורה ברורה	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. כיצד הייתם בין ההוראה לבין ההוראה	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1. הידע ואופן הערכה	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	במידה מאוד רבה	רבה במידה	במידה בינונית	במעט במידה	לא כלל
	5	4	3	2	1

סמן/י X בתשובה המתאימה בכל פריט או שורה בלבד.

ציון ההוראה:	שם ההוראה:	שם ההוראה:	הערה:

בכוונת האוניברסיטה לפרסם אזורים מחקרים לשיפור החוג ההוראה של המרצים ולפי שימוש בתוצאות הסקר.
האצלון את ניתוח לספר מידע אודות ההוראה המשתתפים כלפי המרצים וההוראה.
התכלית האוניברסיטה בתשובות אזורים המשתתפים מדייקת לפי החוג לברר הסקר בתוצאות הסקר.

הערות/או כלליות:

סקר הערכת ההוראה
אוניברסיטת בר-אילן

אזור המשתתפים

Sample Interview Transcript

Today is the 13th of November, 2001. The interviewee is DC from the teaching unit at the University.

17th.   DC, the first issue that I want to discuss with you is the following. Over the past 15 or 20 years, in the United States, the universities have begun to look at students as customers or clients coming to purchase some kind of product. First of all, it's a business orientation, and then it moved into education, where the university, as an institution, is under a lot of competition and looking for students. So they're going out and trying to sell a product to students.

Slowly, the concept of the customer/client has worked its way into teacher-student relations. Now, I'm talking about the phenomenon in the United States at the moment, where teachers very often treat their students as if they are customers or clients, they're coming to pay for something, and they've got to satisfy the customer or client and deliver the goods.

Now, Israel is usually a bit later in taking on these kinds of concepts, and what I want to do is to find out, in this first part here, is what you think. Do you regard students as customers or clients? If yes, why? If no, why not? And if not, then how do you see the relationship between students and teachers?

1st.   Ideally, I'd say they should not be clients. They should be students, and they should come because they want to learn. But that's ideally. Practically speaking, I would say that they are clients, that they demand treatment as clients from teachers. They expect teachers to help them pass. They expect teachers to make it easier for them. And they, especially in our department, we can't turn around and say to them, Look, you wanted to come learn English, because they come because they have to. So they come to you and say, Look, I have to get through this, and you have to help me get through it because, if not, it's going to be your fault that I don't get my degree. On the other hand, we say, You came to get your degree, and that includes studying English.

So I would say, in my teaching, in my classroom management, I try to keep a balance. I try to keep the authority of a teacher, a university lecturer. On the other hand, I'm aware that these students need help – some more than others – and that, in my view, they should be helped. We're not there to fail them. We're there to teach them and get them through the course. That's pretty much how I treat my students. And I look for the ones that particularly won't come and demand. It's like an instinct. You want to help the ones that are less demanding that need the help, than the ones who come with the attitude of, you know, this is your problem. Get me through.

17th.   Do you think you have a way of successfully changing that attitude, or is that something that they come with and it's fixed?

1st.   I do change it. I first use humor. I say to them, What does the A stand for? They don't know, most of them. And I say, You're all here for your intellectual curiosity, and therefore, I expect you to go and find it out. And they laugh when they hear intellectual curiosity, because then they know that I know that they're not really there for intellectual reasons. But then I say to them, Look, let's get serious. This is a university, and we do want to be academicians, we do want to be academics. So let's approach this more academically. And usually they go along with me. I can't really

remember having students that said, you know, I don't like your approach. They're mature enough to understand that that's the approach to take, that they have to be there anyway. They might as well be involved in the academic advantage and get through it the best they can.

17th.　And what happens to a student with an attitude who fails?

1st.　Well, if they have an attitude of this is your problem, then I tell them – first of all, I isolate students like that. I try to get them to come to me after the class during my reception hours, and I explain to them what the problem is, that basically I'll do the best I can as a teacher, but basically they have to get through the course, and they're not going to get through it with the attitude that they're carrying around. I talk to them about attitude. I have a good example of Whoopie Goldberg saying, Your problem is attitude, man. It's from a movie that they all saw, and they laugh. And then I say, But this is a serious problem. With your attitude, or with your background of failure – usually, the attitude comes from failure, not because they hate English. Nobody in Israel really hates English. They just have a history of failure, and they come and take it out in this classroom. So I try to convince them that the first thing they have to change is their attitude, and the second thing they have to do is trust me and let me guide them. If they're going to resist me, if they come with resistance, we're not going to get anywhere and maybe they should try another teacher. As soon as I say that, they say, No, no. I'll stick with you.

I've been criticized by – I won't mention names – for projecting too much maternal caring for my students, and I shouldn't show them that I care whether or not they pass the course. But when you work with a person on an individual basis and they come to you five, six times a year to reception hours, or they tell you how bad their sick mother is and why they can't come to class, that develops because we're human beings.

The most I can do for them is – some of them also have learning disabilities. In the past, I've taken students by the hand and taken them into (?), written letters that they have disabilities and they should have certain consideration. It's really an individual thing, and I try to – does that answer the question?

17th.　Whatever it is that you say answers the question. Now, students can choose their English courses, as long as there's room left in the course. It's not that they're assigned to a particular lecturer. As rumor would have it, you're a very popular teacher based upon the number of students who come knocking on the door. How could you account for that popularity?

1st.　Well, first of all, I would say that 50 percent of the students pick – I want to back up for a minute. I don't think that most students pick the teachers, especially not anymore, because what they have now – it may have been true up to about two years ago that students came with lists of teachers. I want this one. If not that one, the next one. But what's happening now is, we're dealing with first-year students mainly – 90 percent I think – and they get from their department a set schedule for the first year. And then they fit in their English and their general courses. So basically, they come and take the course that fits into their schedule. Then they ask, you know, how's this teacher.

The students that come with my name on their request list are the ones that have either failed previously, have a fear of taking a course in English, who are told

by the secretary – and the students have told me this – go to DC. She's very understanding and she'll help you get through it. Or by other students who say, Take her. She's a lot of laughs.

This is not good for me. First of all, other colleagues don't like to hear students walking out and saying, They told me to take DC's course, but they don't say why. People resent that. And for some reason, the faculty, the staff, think if the students are coming and asking for my course, it must be because I'm an easy grader, that I give them a grade that they don't deserve. And I'd like to say for the record that smiling at students, asking students where they were when they were absent, making a point of remembering their names at least for the time that they're my students, is the part of the teaching that I do – that I give the students. In other words, that's what I give that other teachers don't give, not grades.

When it comes to grades, I wouldn't say I'm very strict, but I'm careful, because when it comes right down to it, sometimes I even have to fail the students that became attached to you or were nice to you or you were nice to, and you need to have records. I have to have those little numbers and the X's and checks for their absences. And in the end, I always feel that – and this is from bad experiences in the past – that I have to have a paper trail, a record. And if a student comes to me and says, Why did you give me a 60, even though I came to your reception hours and I went to the reading lab, I say, These were your grades on the tests. And I appreciate their effort. The maximum I give – and I tell them at the end of the year when I give them their grades – the maximum I give a student for coming to class and doing all the homework and participating is between three and, in rare cases, five points. But never never more than five points, and only in very rare cases.

17th.   Don't the students all take the same exam at the end, so there will be a standard?

1st.   Yes.

17th.   And all the students in the department take the same exam?

1st.   Right. But there's that little bit of play where a teacher can make or break a student before they get to the test. If there's a very weak student and you give them a 60, then there's no way they can pass the course. Even if they get a 50 on the test, they don't get a 60 on the course. I guess that would be a case where, if you give more than five points, if a student did everything they possibly could do, and I would give them a 68, and give them the opportunity and say, if they manage to get a 50 on the test, they'll pass the course.

17th.   It's hard. The next issue that I want to talk about also has to do with something that started in the United States and we're not sure how far the concept has crept into Israel. And that's the concept of accountability. Now, it's interesting because, in Hebrew, we don't even have a word for accountability. They say it's a culture thing, and if we would have a word, it would mean that it would be part of our culture.

Now, accountability also started with the whole concept in the world of business and moved into education, first on the institutional level where institutions are accountable to a Board of Governors for financial things – how much money comes in, how much money goes out. That kind of thing. In the same was as

customer/client issues connected to teaching, accountability is now discussed in the realm of teaching in the States and around the world much more than it ever was before.

And before I ask you to comment, I just need to point out that there are three kinds of accountability that I'm talking about and that I would like to hear from you about. One is what we call professional accountability, meaning the responsibility that a person has to the profession, to being up-to-date, state-of-the-art, to know what is going on in the profession.

The second kind of accountability is accountability to employer or administration for doing a job as it's set out and performing the way the boss expects.

And the third kind of accountability, which is important to this research, has to do with feelings of teacher accountability to the students, either as the customer/client or in any other respect.

So I'd like to first talk about the professional accountability. Do you think that teachers in the ESL unit do something about maintaining a level of professional accountability, of staying state-of-the-art? I mean everybody has MA's, most people in fields like TESL or something like that. One thing, it's a job. Do you think that they do something to maintain a level of professional accountability?

1st.   Well, I'm speaking only from impressions because I really don't know. I don't think there's enough sharing in the department to know who's writing research and working on papers. In general, my answer would be no. In general, I think – I can only think about the people that I know and myself.

As far as myself is concerned, I tend to be very open to new ideas in ESL, but I don't go out looking for them. When a new lecturer is brought into the department and we have these days – workshops, and I try to go to the Haifa thing. I listen carefully to hear if there's anything new. I tried Marcia's ideas in the classroom. Some of them I actually integrated into my teaching. But I don't have the time or the energy to sit in the library and read up in journals. Last year I wanted to do a (?) on line, a materials workshop on line, using the Internet, but in the end – and BO was willing to give JY and I whatever it cost. But in the end it sounded like too many hours sitting on the Internet, and we didn't do it.

17th.   Was that something that you heard about on your own?

1st.   Yes. That we heard about on our own, and it sounded very interesting. But then we got afraid because of the time involved, the commitment of time. Very few, maybe two or three – including you – of the teachers that I know in the department seem to be involved in research. But even the ones involved in research, I don't know how much – in other words, how much they stick with what they do in order to afford them the time to do the research. What they have, they have. There's not much material-sharing in the department.

There isn't what I'd call constructive interaction on, you know, if I give somebody, now, as a result of what happened this week – and I don't have to go into what happened – I'm thinking of things that I've given colleagues and not gotten back any comment, which maybe I should have insisted on, but if I give things to other people and they don't think they're good, maybe there should have been a way of finding out that they thought it wasn't good.

17th.   Or if they just used them.

A.   Or even if they use them, I should have heard that it's good and it worked.
Part of it is good. This works, this doesn't work, or there's just nothing good about it.
I'm trying to think back to stuff that I've given to people and maybe that gave them
reason to say, well, what she's doing (?) –

17th.   When you went to Marcia, that was for the purpose of looking at something
she was doing that you don't do?

1st.   Yes.

17th.   How did you find out about her in the first place?

1st.   From the department. She gave a lecture at the department and I liked what
she said. I liked the way she presented it. I liked her ideas, and I followed through.
And I use a lot of her ideas.

17th.   Let's go on a bit to accountability to students. You mentioned before the need
to give students what they need. Let's say that a teacher has a class of students, and at
the final exam, most of them fail – which can happen. Should the teacher hand in a
resignation slip and leave?

1st.   Okay. Then the teacher is between a rock and a hard place. Because we have
very little input, some but very little input about what's going to be on the final exam
– and sometimes we're as shocked as the students – that's where we get stuck because
we have to maintain a loyalty to the department. On the other hand, you feel like a
fool that you spent nine months teaching something, and then the test was way
beyond the capability or out of the ballpark as far as what you taught. So the best you
can do at that point is protest to the head of the department, and I've done this.
        I've found that you can't just walk in and say the test was too hard. You have
to walk in and say, This question was terribly difficult. These are some of the
answers they got. Could any of them be acceptable? That's a much more diplomatic
way to go than to say, The test was terrible. My students didn't stand a chance.
        But then, maybe you really weren't teaching what you should have been
teaching. But that's where only the teacher can be a spokesman for the students with
the head of the department or the test committee. Usually, I find that they resist their
comments, but in the end they listen. In other words, especially when they finally get
back the final statistics on the exam, if they see that too many people failed, they're
not going to call in the teachers and say, You were right. The exam was too hard.
But at least with the present head of the department, she even called back students to
do another exam one summer when we had a very similar catastrophe. She did a few
things to help the students pass, and I totally agree with that.

17th.   That's basically saying we owe the students a fair deal?

1st.   Absolutely. I don't think we have a right to – it's lo hochma to fail them. We
don't have the right to fail them. A student that gets a passing grade in class should
be able to pass the exam. That's what we tell them all year. Not do well, and they
took the exam, it's supposed to show them what lies ahead in academia. But if they
pass the course somewhere in the 70's, it doesn't make sense that they should fail the

final exam. There has to be a correlation between the exam and the course. Otherwise, we're doing one thing and whoever writes the test is doing whatever they want.

17th.   Do you get feedback from your students? Other than the official feedback that we'll talk about in a minute, do you have a way of feeling the pulse of what the students think about your teaching, other than the fact that they register for the course?

1st.   While they're in the course?

17th.   Yes.

1st.   Well, in my teaching – I'm talking about during the year – I encourage them to come speak to me. Also with humor, I remind them of my reception hours at one o'clock or at five o'clock. I tell them I'm in a little room all alone, you know. If they have any questions, I'll be happy to see them. Sometimes I find that students linger after class. So instead of packing up and running out, I say to them, you know – I ask them a question, not necessarily about English. Or even, you know, did you understand what we were doing today? Was it clear to you? I find I'm more in their signals, even in their eyes, sometimes you can see when they're with you and they sort of nod. They won't raise their hands, God forbid, and volunteer any information, but the students that are in trouble send out signals. Of course, you also have the tests and the quizzes to see what they're doing.

At the beginning of the year, I don't give number grades. I give good, very good, excellent. I tell them excellent is everything is fine, very good is one mistake, good is two mistakes, okay is you're not trying very hard but you're getting through, and please come see me is you're in trouble. And they laugh, but they come. And that's how I do it. A lot of talk, a lot of explaining to them that it's not impossible to get through the course, but they have to work.

17th.   Once a year, most years, the Student Union comes around and administers a form – this is the last one – or something like it more or less. What do you feel about this process of them doing it, what the form says?

1st.   To me personally it means nothing as an evaluation, mainly because of who does it. Mainly because it's coming – and they make a point of telling you that it's not from the university, it's from the Student Union. And I think, for where it's coming from, it does what it's supposed to do. It gives the students the feeling of some kind of control or power.

The problem with it is that they never get back to us. I was never, except once when I got a letter from the Rector – and I'm not even sure that it was the same survey that they did – telling me that I was chosen as the most popular or whatever – not popular – teaching – whatever. I don't remember the wording –

17th.   Excellence in teaching.

1st.   Something like that, yes. I never say any feedback from these things. So it gives the students the feeling of some kind of control. It would be a democratic tool if we ever got to see the results.

17th.   Do you know how the students see the results?

1st.   Popularity.

17th.   I mean physically.

1st.   Oh, they get some kind of a magazine. They get a journal, and I've heard varied reports. Some say the teachers can request not to have the results published. One year they told me that if the results are worse than a four evaluation, they don't publish it. Once I got hold of the journal and I looked at the English department, and there were only three or four teachers mentioned. So I'm not exactly sure what their criteria are for publishing the results. And after, for some reason – you know, I make a joke of it. I make a point of leaving the classroom when they answer to give them the feeling that they can write whatever they want.

And afterwards, sometimes I tell them what we heard from Ginnie. Do you remember? That these things tend to do two things actually, that the students – I mean who are the students – how professional are the students? Who are they to give an evaluation of a professional person? It's not like buying a product and being satisfied or not satisfied because what they're judging here is not their results as a result of my teaching, but how good they feel while they're sitting in the classroom, you know, my personal relation to them.

So I tell them that what Ginnie told us is that it evaluates two things. First of all, what the teacher is wearing, whether they like the way the teacher dresses for class; and second of all, how democratic the teacher is in the classroom. In other words, if the student feels that the teacher is interested in what a student has to say, a student will give the teacher a high evaluation. If the student feels that the teacher is just talking at them and not the least bit interested in their opinion, they'll give a lower evaluation. People want to feel important. So I don't know how much of that is true, but I know they feel good after they've done it.

In the other college where I taught, they used to send the teachers the results and ask them to draw conclusions and to try to incorporate whatever they've learned from the feedback into their teaching. They also used it against you. They would fire teachers. They would say, For two years you've gotten terrible ratings. You're out of here. They were very interested in student satisfaction. But I think the university doesn't have to worry about having enough students here, or isn't worried enough yet. They need money, but they still don't consider the student the ultimate customer. They still consider that if they offer the right program, they'll always have enough students.

17th.   If I can point out one thing on this form that a lot of people didn't see, there's a statement in black here that says that it's the university's intention to use the results of this student evaluation of faculty for the purposes of improving teaching.

1st.   It's a lie.

17th.   Why do you say that it's a lie?

1st.   Because nowhere are the teachers ever informed formally, officially, of the results of their evaluation. If a teacher never sees the results of an evaluation, even a

verbal, even the head of the department calls the teachers in and says, Look, this was your evaluation. Do something about it. But it's an outright lie because it has no effect or relevance.

17th.   The other college, where you said that they do give you the results, did it come with any analysis, or was it just, these are the numerical --

1st.   (?) and the average number that you got for the semester for each question. Some teachers would get very upset because, if you understand a tiny little bit about statistics, if you have ten students and three students decided to give you a low rate because they were angry about something, or they didn't like the way you dressed, then the whole evaluation is very low.

17th.   Do you give any kind of evaluation like this in your classes? Self-constructed.

1st.   I did at one time. I tried all different kinds. I find these are totally useless, giving them numbers to fill in, because everybody has a different idea of what the numbers mean.

17th.   How about the questions themselves that are asked?

1st.   I at one time asked three questions. Something like, are you satisfied with what you learned in the course, what was the most satisfying or dissatisfying part of the course, and what would you like to change about the course. And they wrote open answers. They wrote things in Hebrew or in English. The ones that answered seriously, you could possibly learn something from. But I find that, in general, students don't want to be bothered. They're finished with – by the time you give them the evaluation, they're finished with the course and they really don't care.

17th.   Would you consider giving such a self-constructed evaluation at the end of a semester where you still have another semester to do something about it?

1st.   Yes. That would be a good idea.

17th.   Do you think that each teacher, if such a thing were a good idea, do you think each teacher could build their own questionnaire, or that there should be something that the department would mandate everybody to use?

1st.   The thing that would be closest to improving my personal teaching would be to give an evaluation using the texts that we worked on, to write the titles of the texts. Because I constantly remind them, where did we learn this word, where did we learn this word.

17th.   You give them the context.

1st.   Yes. I find that it helps them remember words if they remember what they connected to. So if I were to take the time to write an evaluation, I would write for each – not – in other words, list the – I would write general questions, and how each text that we worked on, did it help them improve, did they learn a lot from it.

First of all, what we're always trying to figure out is what they're interested in. I mean sex, drugs and violence are things we can't use in the classroom. But to what extent was it interesting, to what extent did it contribute to their learning, did it motivate them, do they remember the context. In other words, to be very specific so I would know whether to use another text again, not to use it.

Although some texts that I think are structurally very important, they find boring. So I may be evaluating myself out of (?).

17th. That's an interesting thought, to do it with the texts. Now, you said something which leads me to the fourth issue here. You mentioned improving teaching. That's the fourth thing that I want to talk about.

Three or four universities in the country have set up what they call a center for the improvement of teaching. Last year, the dean of the Humanities faculty at Bar-Ilan informed me that Bar-Ilan's Senate agreed to set up a center at Bar-Ilan, but they didn't allocate any budget for it, which means, unless there's been a change over the past number of months, it means that it's still quite a distance away from us.
Do you think that a university center for the improvement of teaching could help people on our staff improve their teaching?

1st. Definitely. Yes. Sure. Anything. Any professional needs to be reminded of what they need to know, and to keep them updated on – look, again it comes down to time. If there were a place where someone else did the first – you know, looking for materials on how to improve your teaching and finding specifically materials that interested me, yes. I think I would be happy to take advantage of it. I understand if it involves the whole –

17th. So you think that a center for the improvement of teaching could do something. But then how would you get people to go to that center? Would you take people who got lousy results?

1st. Like they do now for driving, new drivers have to go for a certain refresher course. First of all, I think that if teachers are really interested themselves in their careers and what they're doing, they should want to go, because if it's not a threatening situation, it's not go or lose your job, then they should be interested in improving, especially if people have set it up for them so that it can be easily digested. It's all chewed up. You just have to do.

And also, if the university and this department can use it – if these evaluations had any effect on what we do, they should be given to the department. The department could use it to call teachers in and say, We have a structured idea for you. Why don't you try to improve your teaching by going to this number of classes or seminars or whatever. And like I said with the driving, new teachers should have to go at the end of the first year to do four hours at the center, and at the end of the second year – or the opposite. The longer you're doing it, the more you need to – and if there were more feedback on the job.

17th. Someone pointed out to me yesterday in an interview that they had attended a course over the summer that the university was offering for improving teaching, and I said to the teacher – and it was a terrific course run by people from outside the university, and not just for English but for whoever.

And I said to the person, How did you find out about the course? And they said there was a letter that had been sent to the head of the department, and it was put on the bulletin board right outside the teachers' room. Now, that person was looking for something to do for improving, and saw that and went for it. And that person said that that person was the only person from the English department to be part of it. My jaw kind of dropped because I said, Wow. It's good that you found it and did it, but it's kind of sad that nobody else –

1st.   That's a failure of the department. If they can criticize people's teaching, then they have to also give people the opportunity to improve themselves. There's an example of a teacher who more than 50 percent of his class failed the summer school exam. And I said to him, What are you doing? Well, they called in the students. They gave them another exam. Yes. But what are you doing about the teaching? He seems so capable and he was dying to – you know, I even gave him materials. But did anybody go and observe him? Did anybody help him? He was very interested in teaching. He's not there anymore, so I don't know what happened to him, but nobody said that they were working on helping him.

Again, it comes down to who's running the show. At least a letter could have been put in everyone's mailbox, and then if – I hate to say this, but if the administration isn't interested in teachers improving their teaching, at least you could allow the teachers to make a decision for themselves. And of course, if such a thing is offered and there are teachers at risk of being fired or being let go, then they should have been given an opportunity to take advantage of that course.

I would have gone. I would have been interested. I would have been interested just to measure myself against what they're teaching in a course like that. I don't think I'm perfect. I don't think I'm terrible. But there's always room for improvement, and I'd like to get feedback on what I'm doing, good or bad, to measure what I'm doing. Too bad. There's only very few people to blame for that, not knowing.

17th.   If we assume that the department would run a program for improving teaching, do you think you can compel people to go to that kind of program?

1st.   Yes. Just like they compel people to do extra duty and just like they tell people that this is part of the teaching duty, marking papers, preparing lessons, improving your teaching is part of your duty. Why not? Yes. For sure. I think that they should. I think it's like helping people that even don't know that they need help. Definitely. Definitely.

Q.   Okay. Thank you very much.