THE TRAINING LECTURER (TL): THE LECTURER TEACHES AND GUIDES

Simha Sharf
Western Galilee College, Israel
E-mail: simhash@zahav.net.il

Yaffa Moskovich
Kinneret College, Israel
E-mail: mosko777@gmail.com

Abstract

There have been studies on action research in small-group learning in exact and social sciences in colleges and universities in Israel and worldwide (Gorsky & Caspi, 2005; Gorsky, Caspi and Trumper, 2006). This paper is based on research which investigates teaching social sciences in higher education by means of a Training Lecturer (TL). This teaching method uses frontal instruction, immediately followed by the students working in small groups under the TL guidance. The main research question was: How do both following the class with the tutorial, as well as the lecturer himself guiding the students , affect the students' thinking and learning process, their conceptualization skills, and their satisfaction with the learning process?

The method in this study was based on combination of qualitative (open interviews) and quantitative samples of 92 students, from two classrooms. Our new method (TL) was the independent variable, the students' academic achievement, self efficiency and demographic characteristics were our dependent variables.

The main research finding was a correlation between students' attitudes toward the TL method, and improvements in both self-efficacy and academic achievements. There was a strong correlation between the TL method and friendliness, self efficacy, comprehension, interest and success. The TL method discussion group, which serves as a platform for developing thinking and learning, is the greatest contributor to explained variance at 13.971% and credibility Cronbach's Alpha = 0.779. The students participating in this project generally had higher achievements in the final test in comparison to the average achievements after previous teaching. There are usually 40% failures in courses such as "organizational behavior"; the amount of students failing dropped to 10-15%.

Key words: *active learning, training lecturer, self-efficacy.*

Introduction

The principle characteristic of the population of the universities and colleges in the USA is the enormous variance in race, religion, and culture, and the multi-cultural nature of most of the campuses (Banks, 2003). In Israel, public policy has adopted a social goal, providing equal opportunities to students of different sectors, by establishing academic colleges in the periphery. Higher education has become more available and has brought about an increase in, and diversity of, the populations represented in academic education. Establishing the colleges in the periphery encouraged students from a low socioeconomic background, new immigrants, and minority sectors, to study in colleges, particularly because of the accessibility of the college to where they lived (The Council for Higher Education, Planning and Budgeting Committee, 2000). Dispensations in college entrance requirements, similar to the process which has occurred in the USA (Duke, 1998), have contributed to the increase in the number of students who do

not meet minimum university entrance requirements (Davidovitch & Iram, 2005; Davidovitch, 1993).

The central goal of our study was to examine an active teaching method, which suits the needs of students in academic colleges in the periphery. The students in these colleges are of inferior quality to those studying at universities. The college lecturers encounter an extremely heterogeneous population, both culturally and scholastically, and have to contend with different scholastic levels. This study aims to examine a teaching method using an intervention study, with the lecturer also training immediately afterwards in a double lesson. The first two hours comprise a frontal lecture and during the second lesson the students work in small groups with the lecturer's intervention and supervision.

The primary goal of this study was to examine to what extent the Training Lecturer (TL) teaching method affects the participants' learning process in outlining the research by teaching assistants who are not the teachers, and at times not immediately following the class.

The contribution of the anticipated study is in creating a tool, which will, on one hand, help other lecturers in colleges in the Galilee and periphery contend with difficulties in teaching, while also facilitating the student learning process and making it more significant for them. We were involved directly in our study through participant observation, heard comments from the students, and received instant ongoing feedback. Our main research question was; How do joining the class and the tutorial on one hand, and the guidance of the lecturer himself, on the other hand, affect the students' thinking and learning process, their conceptualization skills, and their satisfaction with the learning process?

Theoretical Perspective

Characteristics of the Population Studying in Academic Colleges

The population in the colleges in northern Israel includes Jews, immigrants from the CIS and Ethiopia, and large percentages of Arab students, who view higher education as a channel for social mobility and professional advancement (Soan, 1999). The great variation in the students' cultural-demographic background, and the naturally low acceptance statistics, and that the teaching methods must be adapted to the facts as they exist (Hativa, 2000). One of the teaching methods which suits colleges in the periphery is active learning in small groups.

Learning in Groups

The human group is the basis for social interaction (Johnson & Smith, 1998; Macionis, 1999). It is usual to sort the groups into primary – those which meet an emotional and survival need (primary groups), and those created to achieve goals (secondary groups). Primary groups can be a helpful tool for effective learning; by using an emotional and social connection to facilitate understanding and thinking processes (Broom & Selznick, 1979). A learning group is a type of task-oriented group (Shapiro & Ben-Eliezer, 1987) which meets academic requirements, but also provides the students with emotional support.

There have been studies on small-group learning in the exact sciences and social sciences in colleges and universities in Israel and worldwide (Gorsky & Caspi, 2005; Gorsky & Caspi, 2006). Studies in Australia on psychology and medicine students showed that a learning group encourages the student to have autonomy and self-management (Duke, 1998; Eggen, Jacobsen & Kauchak, 2006). It increases the responsibility and personal commitment, and contributes to higher levels of involvement and cooperation among group members. Working in learning groups increases the sense of personal satisfaction and productivity level, from both the individual and group aspects. An effective learning group is built on mutual trust which supports the learning

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processes by helping understand the material, transferring content between the group members, and increasing personal motivation. Researchers create small learning groups to improve academic abilities and skills (Hendry, Hyde & Davy, 2005; Lizzion & Wilson, 2006).

College students desire interpersonal dialogue with peers and lecturers when they encounter a difficult problem, or when they wish to improve their learning ability (Hendry, Hyde & Davy, 2005; Hatiba, 2000b). Such dialogue can create a supportive learning environment with strong lecturer-student ties (Kember, Leung & Ma, 2006). In most cases students do not have significant conversations with the lecturer, but rather only a casual, academically insignificant, exchange of words. Group conversation without a lecturer is usually suitable for introductory courses which are considered easy, but is unhelpful in advanced and complex courses. Close interaction with the lecturer in a small group contributes to solving academic problems, and we can learn from this that the student has a need for active contact with the lecturer (Joliffe, 2007).

Active Learning

Ausubel's (1962) theory of significant learning gives the student authentic experiences, and enables him to absorb the new knowledge by linking it with previous knowledge. Learning in groups, with the TL's guidance, becomes more tangible and concrete (von Glasersfeld, 2000). There is a two-fold benefit to active learning: firstly – breathing life into concepts and theories while arousing academic interest, and secondly – correcting, clarifying, and simplifying the concepts, while making long-term memory significantly easier (Marcus, 2005).

Social science courses rely on abstract theories and concepts. Clarifying and demonstrating them in the classes helps the student understand the concepts and bring them closer to his world (von Morzé, 2008). Active learning in social science teaching arouses interest in the topic, and promotes problem solving methods. Additionally, it encourages substantiation, critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, comprehension, memory, and reflection on the curriculum, and thereby increases the student's learning and responsibility (von Glasersfeld, 2000; Bold, 2008).

The goal of our study is to find the didactic method which can be used to create active learning using group work, under the guidance of the lecturer teaching social science topics. At the same time, the study examined the connection between active learning in groups by empowering students' sense of self-efficacy.

Self-Efficacy

The sense of self-efficacy is understood as the individual's evaluation of ability to organize knowledge and learning skills (Bandura, 1997; Pajares & Schunk, 1999). Tshop (2000) reached the conclusion that group therapy contributes to self-efficacy, and not only develops study skills. Self-efficacy helps in coping with academic challenges as part of the student's overall motivation. Students with a high sense of self-efficacy believe they will overcome difficulties and succeed, as opposed to their friends with lower self-efficacy, who give up confronting the difficulty from the beginning (Bandura, 1997; Pajares & Schunk, 1999). This approach is also marked when studying students in Israeli universities and colleges. Davidovitch (1993) discovered a positive link between evaluating the student's own ability and his academic success and between perceiving self-efficacy, which is influenced by his attitudes towards the learning-social climate on campus.

Methodology of Research

In the method we examine in our study, the lecturer who teaches sociology in an academic college also teaches and guides the tutorial for his lecture. The lecturer teaches social sciences using the TL method in a regular frontal lesson, and immediately afterwards he himself gives a tutorial on the topic and concepts of the lesson. During the tutorial the students work in small groups. This teaching structure is currently considered unconventional in academic institutions, since the exercises for academic classes are usually taught by teaching assistants who are not the teachers, and at times not immediately following the class.

We conducted our research based on quantitative and qualitative methods. The qualitative method was based on Naama Sabar's (1999) book: "The qualitative research in teaching and learning". Her book brings many examples from the classroom. It explains how the teacher becomes involved in the teaching and learning procedure. The research methodology is based on elements and techniques using some demonstrable best practices in the implementation of action research, the self-case reports documented by the writers (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Shulman, 1992), and qualitative methods using interviews with students who participated in this process (Shkedy, 2003).

Teacher-action researchers have contributed educational methods from multiple studies about effective learning. The present research is an interactive, spiral-steps model inquiry aimed at revealing the main problems and demonstrating applicable ways to cope with the learning problem, and resolving them by remembering, understanding, and internalization of abstract terms to improve learning (Moskovich and Sharf, 2012).

A four-section questionnaire for the study was created: 1) The first section relates to the participants' demographic characteristics, such as: funding, religion, residence. 2) The second section is comprised of 28 statements which describe characteristics of satisfaction from the double class. It was constructed based on free expression by a class of students after several trials. 3) The third section was constructed according to Hadar's (1996) perception of self-efficacy adapted into Hebrew by Zeidner (1981). 4) The fourth section allows the participant to write freely about the double class. The reliability of the study questionnaire was measured by Cronbach's Alpha = .842.

Research hypothesis and research questions – The central hypothesis is that while carrying out the TL teaching experiment, there will be measurable correlations and mutual influences between the attitudes of the experiment participants, in relation to the TL method (these attitudes will henceforth be called factors) and their self-efficacy, demographic characteristics, and academic achievements. We discovered four factors: Factor 1: "The TL method discussion group, serves as a platform for developing thinking and learning", Factor 2: "Thinking and learning using the TL method are user-friendly and effective", Individual learning alongside the TL (what are the advantages of individual learning comparing to TL method), 4. The TL method arouses understanding, interest, and success.

Principal research questions:
1. How do joining the class and the tutorial on one hand, and the guidance of the lecturer himself, on the other hand, affect the students' thinking and learning process, their conceptualization skills, and their satisfaction with the learning process?
2. What is the link between student self-efficacy and attitude toward the TL method? The assumption is that the TL method contributes to self efficiency.
3. Is there a link between demographic characteristics, and characteristics of the TL method and self-efficacy?
4. What is the link between participation in the TL method and the students' academic achievements?

Procedure Details for Suggesting Intervention

The suggested teaching method takes place in two stages: during the first stage there is a frontal lecture, during which the lecturer presents the new concepts or relevant theory for 90 minutes (two academic hours). During the second stage – the tutorial – the students divide into small groups of five and answer the questions given on a worksheet. The questions refer to the previously learned concepts and theories. The lecturer checks the exercises together with comments, and gives a grade on the group task. A representative example of exercises for the "Introduction to Sociology" course, to summarize the class on the topic: "Status and Role" is given below. The students worked with a newspaper story and had to analyze it using the concepts they had learned.

Illustration of TL Method Group Work

The students read "The story of Yair Packer[1]", and then had to answer questions with their group.

Instructions to the group: Explain the passage with concepts from the "Status and Role" topic. The concepts are: achieved status, ascribed, basic, independent, stereotype, status symbols, status rank, role, role partners, role relations, role set, status conflict, role expectation, role conflict, status inconsistency.
For exercises for the "Organizational Behavior" course, the students were asked to refer to newspaper articles, such as "The story of Yair Packer". We will now bring a further example.

Shufersal example
Here is a typical example of analyzing an article about the Shufersal supermarket chain, which discusses organizational environment.
The articles refer to the Shufersal chain, the first is taken from Wikipedia, and the second from the Shufersal website.
The students discussed during the course the ways in which the organization copes with uncertainty:
1. Buffering: forecasting, buffering, levelling, rationing.
2. Bridge strategy: exchange, subsidiaries, co-option, dominance (organizational merging), inter-organizational integration, organizational competition.
3. Indicate in the exercise which strategies Shufersal uses to cope with uncertainty.
4. Demonstrate and explain each strategy based on the articles.
5. What organizational strategies can you suggest for Shufersal, to reduce its environmental uncertainty? Explain the rationale for each strategy.
6. Classify the strategies you chose according to the material learned from Samuel (1996).
Example of practice tasks for the student
Other exercises dealt with analyzing organizational events and movies: when the students learned about total institutions and bureaucratic organization, they saw the movie *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. The movie is analyzed using the models of Goffman (1989) and Weber (1989).
Here is the worksheet for the total institution exercises for the movie *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.
1. Read Goffman's paper, "On the Characteristics of Total Institutions", in the book *The Individual and the Social Order*, edited by Roth Heller & Nissan Naveh (1989).

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2. Read Weber's article "Bureaucracy," which appears in the same book.
3. Which prominent characteristics in psychiatric hospitals fit Goffman's model of the "total institution"?
4. Which characteristics do not fit the model?
5. What are the bureaucratic characteristics of the hospital which fit Weber's model of bureaucracy?

Methodological Problems

Methodological difficulty – in the described study, there was no possibility of comparing the research groups with other groups, since only one group from the "Introduction to Sociology" course and one from the "Organizational Behavior" course studied in this manner. We would note that the researchers have been teaching in the conventional way for more than a decade. This study allowed us to compare the students' results in the year the study was carried out, with those in previous years, and student grades in previous years served as the control for this study. In all the previous years of teaching, these courses had between a 30% and 40% failure rate. The composition of the student population has not changed over the years, meaning that comparison can indicate direction of the change – improvement or poorer results, though not all the variables were probably taken in consideration.

Study Population

The study population comprises 92 students from two classes, each from a different academic college. Approximately one third of the study population is male, and the rest female. 47% of the students are aged up to 21, and 33% are aged 22-26. 50% live with their parents. 88% have no children, and 26% support their families, 63% do not work. 52% are Jews, and the rest non-Jews (Moslems, Christians, Druzes). Half of the students have parents with only a high-school education. 36% of the fathers are unskilled workers, and 36% of the mothers are housewives. 51% of the parents have an income of up to NIS 12,000 and 34% have an income up to NIS 5,000. In general, we can characterize the population as having typical Galilee periphery characteristics, meaning lower-middle or lower class.

Results of Research

Findings for Question 1

The first research question: How do joining the class and the tutorial on one hand, and the guidance of the lecturer himself, on the other hand, affect the students' thinking and learning process, their conceptualization skills, and their satisfaction with the learning process?

Several factors were analyzed to examine this question, which are actually attitudes towards the characteristics of the suggested method, at the cut point of intersection of 0.50. This produced four factors with different attitude statements for each one. Total explained variance for all factors is 46.751.

Breakdown of Findings According to Tables

Table 1. Factor 1: "The TL method discussion group serves as a platform for developing thinking and learning" F1.

Contribu-tion	Item	Item number
0.748	Possibilities for self expression in the group arouse comprehension, discussion, clarification, and utilization of the new concepts.	23
0.714	Working in groups also teaches us social skills such as accepting someone else's opinion.	36
0.700	We hear different opinions in the small group and so learn better.	25
0.649	We learn from each other without being embarrassed in small groups.	22
0.624	When I am in a lecture, sometimes I don't understand something. I'm sure that in a group I'll be able to understand and internalize material.	28
0.617	The most important thing is learning from other students in the groups, and it helps implement what was learned during the lecture.	33
13.971%	Contribution of the factor to the total explained variance	Total
	Cronbach's Alpha 0.779	Credibility

The first factor – "The TL method discussion group, serves as a platform for developing thinking and learning" – is the greatest contributor to explained variance at 13.971% and credibility 0.779 Cronbach's Alpha. This factor characterizes group learning of all types: becoming familiar with the other, ability to express oneself without embarrassment, accepting a different opinion, faith in the group's affectivity also regarding material not understood during the lecture.

Table 2. Factor 2: "Thinking and learning using the TL method are user-friendly and effective" F2.

Contribution	Item	Item number
0.850	Topics are made clearer.	13
0.793	By this method of having a double lesson, we can study the course in one semester while maximizing comprehension.	12
0.670	The whole method is more user-friendly than regular study.	14
0.598	The new concepts are simpler.	18
0.569	The regular class at the beginning of the meeting focuses us on the material and topics.	11
13.332%	Contribution of the factor to the total explained variance	Total

The second factor – "Thinking and learning using the TL method are user-friendly and effective" – contributes 13.332% and credibility .752 Cronbach's Alpha. All the statements comprising it emphasize the effectiveness of learning the topics and concepts, the two sections of the TL method complement each other, and therefore much can be learned in one semester. This is the most important factor.   This factor does not deal directly with learning but that a friendly environment helps to internalize new materials during the learning process.

Table 3. Factor 3: "Individual learning alongside the TL" F3.

Contribution	Item	Item number
0.737	The TL method wastes lots of time on all kinds of arrangements.	21
0.711	Individual tutorials with a lecturer are better.	37
0.605	I could learn the material by myself. It's a shame to waste a double lesson on a social meeting.	24
0.567	It's a shame the lecturer is not more involved with the groups' discussions.	26
0.559	It's difficult for everyone to participate equally in the group.	38
10.747%	Contribution of the factor to the total explained variance	Total
	Cronbach's Alpha 0.650	Credibility

The third factor – "Individual learning alongside the TL" – contributes 10.747% to variance and its credibility is 0.650 Cronbach's Alpha. This factor expresses a preference for individual learning as opposed to group learning. It would seem that individual guidance in a double lesson is sometimes preferable to group guidance. The criticism refers to it being desirable that instead of only group learning, the lecturer would also teach on an individual basis, allowing a personal relationship with his student. We can also understand this as the student's wish to increase his connection with the lecturer.

Table 4. Factor 4: "The TL method arouses understanding, interest, and success" F4.

Contribution	Item	Item number
0.660	Even though the class lasts for 4 hours, it's not at all boring.	31
0.604	A long lecture leads to lack of concentration, even when people sit quietly.	19
0.567	For me to succeed in my studies, it's important for me to study in a small learning group where we can understand the teacher's lecture.	15
8.701%	Contribution of the factor to the total explained variance	Total
	Cronbach's Alpha 0.447	Credibility

The fourth factor – "The TL method arouses understanding, interest, and success" – contributes 8.701% to general explained variance and its credibility is 0.447 Cronbach's Alpha. This factor clusters together statements which note satisfaction from TL, which helps achieve better comprehension than that achieved in a lecture, and which will certainly also lead to study success.

Table 5. Summary of factor contributions.

Factor	Factor name	Credibility	% Explained variance
F1	"The TL method discussion group, serves as a platform for developing thinking and learning"	0.779	13.971
F2	"Thinking and learning using the TL method are user-friendly and effective"	0.752	13.332
F3	"Individual learning alongside the TL"	**0.650**	10.747
F4	"The TL method arouses understanding, interest, and success"	0.447	8.701

Note: in the Secree Plot graph, there is not even one statement which falls below the minimum of 1.

Findings for Question 2

The second research question: What is the link between student self-efficacy and attitude toward the TL method?

Self-efficacy is measured by an internationally accepted questionnaire (Hadar, 1996; Zeidner, 1981). The credibility test of all ten self-efficacy statements has a value of 0.824. The connection between efficacy and all factors (Pearson 0.67) combined is significant ($p<0.01$). The most significant connection is between efficacy and Factor 2, which significantly characterizes the TL method and its advantages in developing thinking and learning. The connection between factors 2 and 4 shows the connection the students find between the TL method characteristics and study success.

Predictive ability of pre-academic requirements

The pre-academic requirements from the college student are the matriculation examination grade average, and minimum grades in English, Arabic, and Hebrew. In the study population, one group (nursing students) was also required to pass the psychometric examination, and the second group was accepted on the basis of their matriculation grade average. The pre-academic achievements were not found to influence the student's academic achievements, apart from the psychometric grade, which produces a significant connection with efficacy ($r=0.304$, $p<0.23$).

Findings for Question 3: Positive correlations between demographic characteristics and the TL method

The third question was: Is there a link between demographic characteristics, and the characteristics of the TL method and self-efficacy? The connections between demographic characteristics and efficacy and factors are brought below: The Jews significantly prefer Factors 2 and 3, as compared to non-Jews (Arabs). Although all the study participants prefer the TL method to the regular teaching assistant method, the Jews prefer it more (Factor 2). The Jews also criticize the regular method to a greater extent than the Arabs (Factor 3). The living at home variable, compared to living away from home, only affects the preference for the third factor which is a kind of preference for individual learning rather than group ($p<0.044$); it must be taken into consideration that over 50% live with their parents. The students who do not support a family (63), expressed greater satisfaction than others and prefer the fourth factor which describes the TL method as leading to comprehension, interest, and success ($p<0.045$). The female students (62) prefer the third factor more than the males ($p<0.035$). The better the mother's education, the more the students favor the second factor which characterizes TL ($r=0.211$, $p<0.049$). The more studies are funded by the family, the more the students favor the second factor ($r=0.250$, $p<0.019$).

Negative correlations between demographic characteristics and the TL method Students who are parents are dissatisfied with Factor 1 which characterizes developing thinking in the small group (r=-0.236, p<0.028). The greater the number of people in the household, the less favorably the students view Factor 2 which characterizes the thinking and learning with the TL method (r=0.252, p<0.017).

The more the students work to support themselves, the less they favor Factor 3, (r=-0.339, p<0.001), meaning they are interested in group active learning. If funding comes from the family, the student does not favor Factor 3 which expresses the wish for individual choice in how to study in the TL method (r=-0.248, p<0.022).

Open Attitude Findings

The findings in this section are based on the free expression section for the responders. The statements written by the students were grouped according to their attitude to the unique learning they had experienced.

1. For Factor 1 – "The TL method active discussion group serves as a platform for developing thinking and learning," there were a few replies, and here are a few examples; "The worksheet helps understanding," "leads to concentration and comprehension," "contributes to understanding the material," "the class is taught well and can be understood," "helps the learning process," "adds interest to the class," "explains thoroughly."

2. Most of the statements referred to Factor 2 – "Thinking and learning with the TL method are user-friendly and effective." Here are a few examples: "Yes, it helps," "Helps absorb the material," "I had stress and panic attacks, but now I am coping pretty well," "I couldn't manage well in class, but in a group I even understood more," "the method is very good," "it helps most people," "contributes to concentration," "easier to cope with the material studied," "we can finish things concisely and comprehensibly," "it helps to practice the material we learned," "helps with understanding the material," "effective for me," "practice is excellent," "it helps," "reinforces understanding of the lecture," "helps a lot," "the material is better understood."

3. Factor 3 – "Individual learning alongside the TL", which also includes a note of individual preference, was referred to by the following statements: "For sure there were difficulties, but I overcame them with the help of the group," "the group practice helps in understanding the material," "too bad that we wasted four hours," "group work doesn't help me understand the material better that much," "you need to provide more help when working in the groups," "the group practice really helps in understanding the material," "group work is very effective for applying what we learned," "group work helps apply the theoretical material," "group practice internalizes the material studied," "working in groups is enjoyable and interesting."

4. For Factor 4 – "The TL method arouses understanding, interest, and success" – the written comments were very uniform: "the project encourages success," "the worksheet helps us with our final grade," "we will be better prepared for the exam," "it's obvious we'll succeed in the exam too."

Findings for Question 4

The fourth research question examined the connection between the TL method study and the students' grades. Participation in the group activity together with submitting the practice exercises was found to have a significant effect on the final course grade. In a class of 52 students, we examined the connection between active participation in the practice groups and the final semester course grade. The mean grade for 44 students who participated in 7 or 8 exercises was 67.32. In contrast, the mean for the 8 students who participated in 6 exercises or less was 53.7. The difference between the means was significant ($p > 0.01$).

Summary and Discussion

Academic Facets

The suggested learning method is particularly suited to the periphery population, as characterized by Davidovitch and Iram (2005). The lecturer's close guidance in small groups allows students to handle complex and abstract material better. The study group comprises an ideal platform for solving problems about studying, in contrast to a regular, frontal class, where the student has difficulty in creating individual dialogue with the lecturer (Gorsky et al., 2005; Gorsky & Caspi, 2006).

The TL teaching method provides the student with easy access to the lecturer; he is allowed to ask things which are unclear to him from the class before the exercise. The lecturer receives immediate feedback about the material, and so can improve his teaching. Other teaching methods do not provide immediate feedback. In many cases the feedback takes place during the final class of the semester. The conclusions drawn from the group cannot be implemented on them. In the current study (Factors 1,2,4), we found that the study group provides a solution to emotional and task based requirements (Broom & Selznick, 1979; Shapiro & Ben-Eliezer, 1987; Macionis, 1999). The TL learning method reinforces the student's self-efficacy (Tshop, 2000) which is linked to the various factors, particularly the second factor (Hendry et al., 2005).

The students' high satisfaction, their productivity and efficiency prove without a doubt, that active learning achieves its goals. Group learning supports the TL's social ties with his or her students and the connections between the members of the group themselves. It creates trust and friendship within the group, and a supportive learning environment. The pleasant and empathetic atmosphere comprises a comfortable platform for deeper thinking, analyzing factors, reflection and criticism (Kember et al., 2007; Bold, 2008; Lizzio and Wilson, 2005).

During the study the students examined the cases in the light of theoretical and practical criteria (movies, field trips, analyzing events). Analyzing the texts illustrated and demonstrated the study material in the frontal lecture, thereby contributing to understanding and internalizing the sociological concepts (von Glasersfeld, 2000; Marcus, 2005).

The feeling of self-efficacy is tangibly expressed for the students in their academic achievements. The students who participated in most of the group activities, improved their grades: the percentage of failures fell to 15% in contrast to 30% or 40% in the past (compare Tshop, 2000; Bandura, 1997; Pajares & Schunk, 1999). We did not find an improvement in the other grade range, but since the failure rate decreased markedly, the mean class grade rose by around 10%. We can learn from the study that the suggested method is especially effective for weak students, since the better students also succeed in reaching high standards with the frontal teaching method, and they had no significant change in their grades.

The TL method encourages students to continue their studies, since the learning process is easier and understood. Similarly, it contributes to a greater feeling of satisfaction (Factors 2,1,4). The usual teaching method separates lecturer and assistant teacher, presumably because

an assistant teacher's hourly pay is lower. Separating the lecture from the tutorial is not always effective, and sometimes misses its academic goals. The continuity between the material learned in the lecture and the tutorial is interrupted. As college lecturers we hear the students' comments and complaints about the quality of the tutorials. The TL method is more expensive, since the lecturer both teaches and conducts the tutorial. But, on the other hand, the advantages are obvious: the connection between what is learned in the frontal class and the tutorial is clear. The internalization process is faster. The lecturer moves between the groups, and can better understand the learning difficulties. The connection between lecturer and student and access to him are better and quicker. The students themselves connect between the TL characterization and success in study (Factors 2,4).

Out of all the academic requirements for accepting students to the college – general matriculation grade average, average grades in Arabic, Hebrew, and English, and the psychometric examination which is only required for certain tracks – only the psychometric score creates a connection with self-efficacy. We can therefore see that we must invest renewed thought in the acceptance conditions for academia.

The Jewish students prefer Factors 2 and 3, with clear satisfaction demonstrated for the TL method, and also criticism and desire for more individualization.

From the other demographic characteristics affecting how much the TL method is preferred, we see that students living in their parents' home and with their studies funded and who are not required to support the family explicitly prefer TL. The more educated the students' mothers – the more the students favor the TL method as providing them with a better opportunity to understand and internalize the material. The others feel that they lack the time. For example, those working to support themselves, parents and students from homes with large families, prefer a feature which takes up less time, and therefore create negative correlations with Factor 2, which describes the TL method better.

Criticism of the TL method concerns saving time and finishing the material. Less material is covered with this method, since a large portion of the lessons are used for practice, comprehension, and internalization instead of acquiring new material. A few of the participating students viewed the TL method as a waste of time, and preferred individual study alongside the group learning (Factor 3). When we consider the quality of the material alongside the quantity, the quality wins. Through TL the students internalized what they had learned and understood the content on a deeper level and were able to cope autonomously with new content and concepts which had not been studied in class, using transfer.

Operative Aspects

The learning method presented in the study requires the lecturer to prepare exercises and obligates checking the tasks after class. There will be no achievements without immediate feedback from the lecturer. It is important to consider how to create interesting and challenging exercises, so that the students will not be bored. As noted, the suggested method demands that the lecturer be open minded, attentive to the students, approachable and creative, and also invest time in planning the exercises. The current study is a preliminary experiment, and we need to consider how to improve the exercise and the research process. It would be preferable to examine this again and create a control group for the experimental group.

We would recommend and favor trying out the TL method within other populations, such as university students, and those studying sciences other than sociology. It is desirable and necessary to develop additional tools for researching the TL method. In our TL method experiment, the lecture and tutorial lasted for two academic hours, but short exercises could be carried out as part of a regular lecture. A two hour lesson can sometimes be divided up into a frontal lecture hour and a tutorial hour (each unit lasting 45 minutes). We estimate that

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integrating exercises into a lecture will contribute to interest and variety. The suggestion needs to be tried, and have examined if similar results to those achieved in the above-mentioned study can be achieved with its help.

Conclusions

The TL method discussion group, serves as a platform for developing thinking and learning. The TL method arouses understanding, interest, and success. The TL learning method reinforces the student's self-efficacy. The TL method creates a friendly environment for students that helps them achieve academic success.

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Appendix
The story of Yair Packer

As one of four sons in the Packer family, Yair Packer was supposed to participate in the development of his father's store for the giant Packer Steel corporation. However, his attempts to join the company under the management of his eldest brother made it extremely clear to him that he could tolerate steel even less than he tolerated his family, and it led him to abandon the company and realize his true love. At the age of 65 he is close to his first Hollywood movie and far away from his brothers.

His family mocked him and regarded him as a black sheep. "I was a doormat. They did whatever they wanted with me," says Yair, but he decided not to give in. He left the family business, Packer Steel Industries, sold all his stocks, and at the age of 62 he made contact with the Disney representative in Israel. Four years ago he began to write screenplays. "If I would have stayed in the plant, I would have withered completely and no longer be alive. I didn't want anything to do with the company. Mickey Mouse has more of a soul than steel does. The Packer family thinks he is weird. "I didn't even show them movies, they wouldn't have taken them seriously anyway. In our family writing isn't a business, a

business is something with cars, reserves, equipment – that's a business. Someone who writes isn't doing business and so doesn't even deserve to be taken seriously."

Despite the scorn, Yair Packer is a success. Last week he won the contest held by the American website Riff Raff. As a result of the win, his screenplay will be made into a movie to be produced by a cable TV company in New York and Hollywood. A few days ago he signed a contract with a Pittsburgh agency. It will try and push his screenplay to Hollywood. Packer is certain it will succeed: "I'm convinced that the screenplay will be made into a movie next year," he says. A short screenplay he wrote will be produced as a movie in London, and another will soon be made in Los Angeles. Relinquishing the family goldmine turned out to be the right decision," he adds. "In the end I think I have moved far away from my entire family. It's true I don't have $40 million in the bank and apartments in Zurich and London. I feel true to myself and am doing what I want. From being the black sheep of the family I have become important, nothing to do with my brother. He is where he is, and I'm where I am, I see us as equal." (The article was published in the Yediot Aharonot newspaper).

Advised by Angela James, University of KwaZulu - Natal, South Africa

Simha Sharf	Lecturer, Education Department, Western Galilee College, Senir Street 78 P.O. Box 492, Israel. E-mail: simhash@zahav.net.il
Yaffa Moskovich	Head of Sociology Department, Kinneret College, Halamish Street 4/21, Haifa Israel. E-mail: mosko777@gmail.com