The presence of a school principal and the lack of his presence as a formative experience in reported success stories of Novice Arab teachers in their first year

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Abstract

This article is based on qualitative research intended to discover the attributes of novice teachers' success stories of their subjective experiences during this year. The research literature mainly emphasizes the many difficulties encountered by the new teachers at the start of their teaching careers, and diminishes reference to their success stories.

Data collection was based on in-depth interviews with Arab and Jewish novice teachers from the David Yellin Academic College of Education in Jerusalem. Their success stories revolved around four main issues: integration and involvement in the school system, working with the parents, creating a meaningful connection with students, and the need for the principal's beneficial presence.

The issue that discusses the need for his beneficial presence is only noted in the success stories of Arab novice teachers. This article presents the stories dealing with their attempt to appear and enjoy the appreciation of the principal of the school in which they worked: how they managed to influence or change his perception and behavior vis-à-vis them, to integrate in the school system and to initiate significant changes there can be observed.

These findings exemplify the principal's presence and absence as a transformative experience in the novice teachers' professional development.

Attention to the novice teachers' success stories facilitates understanding their needs and attempts to enjoy an appropriate response. The research findings can afford a basis for instruction in specialization workshops, in which it will be possible to process the issue of the principal's authority and consider ways to recruit him to their needs.

Key words: Novice Arab teachers, school principal, success stories, teacher burnout and dropping out, facilitating environment.