

Teachers' Disability Disclosure: A Multiple Perspective

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Abstract : Disability disclosure is one of the most complicated dilemmas that people with invisible disabilities face. There are only a few research studies that have focused on the difficulties and dilemmas of teachers who have different disabilities. In addition, there are currently no research studies focusing specifically on the different aspects of disability disclosure, which are unique to teachers. This research has, therefore, broadened the knowledge base and understanding of the dilemma of disability disclosure among teachers with invisible physical disabilities. In addition, it has shed light on the ways this issue is perceived by different groups: the perspective of school principals, the perspective of colleagues, and the perspective of teachers with physical disabilities themselves. The study sample included 12 teachers with invisible physical disabilities, 10 school principals who employ at least one teacher with an invisible physical disability, and 10 professional colleagues of at least one teacher with an invisible physical disability. This particular research study was conducted using a qualitative approach through the Narralyzer computer program based on a series of in-depth interviews. The data analysis was carried out by grouping major points of interest into specific categories and sub-categories. The findings of this research suggest that teachers with disabilities struggle with the dilemma of whether or not to reveal their disability to the school staff and to their students. It was found that there were considerable differences between the issues that faculty members considered regarding this dilemma and the ones that teachers with disabilities considered. While the principals and professional colleagues focused solely on their own interests, the teachers with a disability emphasized more on the ways that they might have a positive influence on their students, as well as their own individual interests. In addition, school principals on a whole tended to view negatively the option of disclosing the disability to the students and were often critical towards teachers who concealed their disability from the school staff. The importance of this research is in its potential to influence policy decisions that can be implemented by the Ministry of Education regarding the support system for teachers with invisible physical disabilities.

Keywords : education, employment, invisible disabilities, teachers

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