


Ethical Dilemmas of Teachers with Physical Disabilities for Integration into Schools

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Teachers with disabilities in the education system

- There are no formal assessments of how many teachers with disabilities are in the Israeli education system.
- Teachers with disabilities make a unique contribution to pupils who are perceived as "different"
- Teachers with disabilities have a positive effect on the ways that children perceive of people who are disabled

Anderson, Keller & Karp, 1998; Duquette, 2000; Dvir 2013;

Vagel & Sharoni, 2009



What Is an Ethical Dilemma?

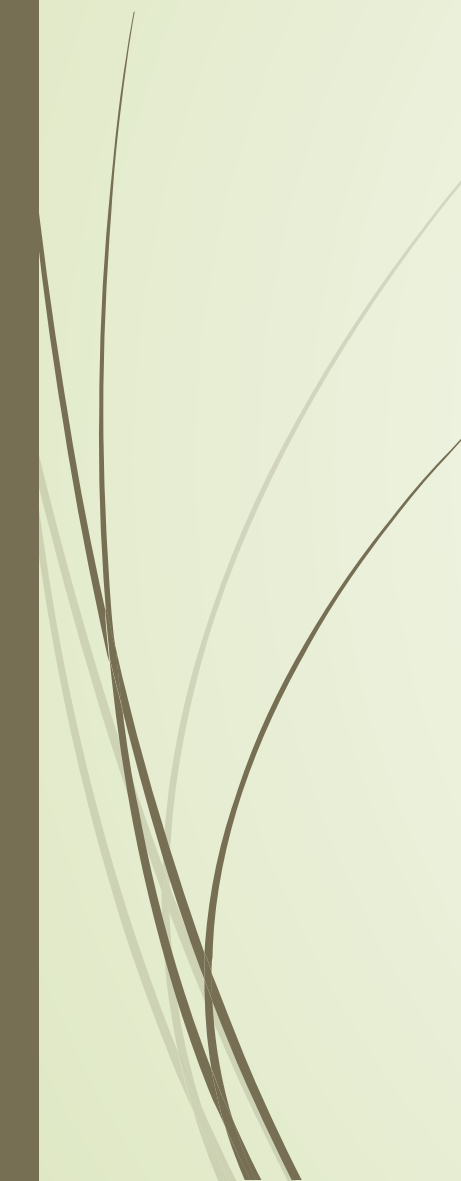
- An ethical dilemma is a choice between several options, in which each specific option has its disadvantages and obstacles that make the decision harder.
- An ethical dilemma always contains different values that contradict each other.

Glanz, J. (2010). Justice and caring: Power, politics, and ethics in strategic leadership. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 38(1), 66-86.

Burkhardt, M. A., & Nathaniel, A. K. (2002). *Ethics and issues in contemporary nursing* (2nd ed.). New York: Delmar.




Methodology

- ▶ Qualitative Research
 - ▶ Data collection: Multiple In-depth interviews
 - ▶ Participants: 20 teachers (4 men & 16 women) with physical disabilities
 - ▶ Teachers with a motor disability
 - ▶ teachers with a sensory disability
 - ▶ Teachers with health disabilities (chronic illnesses)
 - ▶ Data analysis based on Ground Theory
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Ethical Dilemmas of Teachers with Physical Disabilities

- ▶ Personal well-being dilemma
 - ▶ Coming-out-of-the-disability-closet dilemma
 - ▶ Classroom management dilemma
 - ▶ Equality dilemma
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Coming-out-of-the-disability-closet dilemma

- Whether or not to reveal the disability to the school staff?

"I had many dilemmas, especially whether or not to tell the staff and the school principal. On the one hand, I was carrying this really big secret which was very hard, and on the other hand, there is a price for telling." (Dana).

Classroom management dilemma

- ▶ How to conduct a lesson without letting the disability interfere in any way

“In the first class, they [the kids] had so many questions about my blindness. So, I decided to dedicate the whole first lesson to this subject” (Gal).

“Once, my insulin pump started beeping during class. The beep is relatively quiet and sounds like a cell phone [...]. I looked into my bag, as if I was looking for the phone ringing. I spoke louder. Much louder” (Rachel)



Equality dilemma


- Should one try to appear "like all the other teachers" or take advantage of the legal rights regarding reasonable adjustments?

"Because of my disability, I know I have to be a hundred times better than all the others." (Sofia)

"When there was a field trip scheduled, I came with my private car and took the crutches in the back of the car." (Jonathan).



Conclusions

- ▶ Even though teachers' dilemmas are diverse and complex, most of them concern how the teacher is perceived by others
 - ▶ Many teachers fear that if their disability becomes to "obvious" they would be rejected by their colleagues
 - ▶ Teachers who have an invisible disability struggle more with allowing their disability "to have a place" in their professional life
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Recommendations

- ▶ The education system should provide support and consultation to teachers with disabilities, and to the school staff who work with them



Thank you