

Abstract

The year of internship in teaching is for many teachers that are beginning their careers, a significant milestone in the continuation of their work as teachers at school. During this year, the teachers change status from students of education to full-fledged teachers. The process of entering the work force and beginning to teach presents many difficulties and pitfalls, since the new teacher is required to deal, on his/her own, with various challenging situations.

The mentoring program for intern teachers during the beginning of their carriers, enable these teacher to seek professional support from a senior teacher – a mentor.

This study deals with the perceptions of intern teachers and mentor teachers to the subject of “learning from successes”. This approach aims to investigate successful events experienced by the intern teacher in the school, in collaboration with teacher’s mentor, in order to uncover the processes and factors that led to the success. This process of mutual learning may generate a change that will result in a positive and empowering dialogue between the intern and his mentor.

The objective of the study is to examine the perceptions of intern teachers specializing in a variety of areas, and specialized during their internship year, and the perception of teachers who mentor interns with respect to the subject of “learning from successes”. The study also examines the factors driving “learning from successes”, and the factors that may inhibit such learning.

The study population consisted of: 37 teachers, 17 of them teachers and tutors with 6 years of experience in education to 33 years, 20 new interns, who are all teaching in their internship year. The study was conducted using semi structured interviews. Later, two screenings were done according to content categories:

The first screening led to the following findings: “learning from successes” is seen by the interns and the mentors as part of their professional cooperation. “Learning from successes” must be part of organizational culture in school; “learning from successes” is a personal positive professional leverage for the intern teacher.

The second screening led to findings that were divided into categories of factors that drive “learning from successes” as opposed to factors that inhibit such learning.

The findings pointed to four main factors driving “learning from successes”:

Communication between intern and mentor; communication with additional professional teams; the internship year as part of personal growth; definition of success - identifying and dismantling the success factors.

In addition, the findings indicated nine main factors that hinder “learning from successes”: difficulty in identifying the factors for success, success that opposes the values and organization's policies, lack of cooperation between the facilitator and professional teams in school, single-track and un-open thinking, excessive professional security, gaps and different conceptions of educational practice, lack of professional esteem, fear of failure and non-sufficient allocation of resources.

The study aimed at examining the perceptions of intern teachers during their internship year, and mentors that mentored new teachers, with respect to the term “learning from successes”, in order to enable the education system to test new models for learning, that contribute to the enhancing of the intern teacher in his/her new working environment. These models allow the teacher to examine his/her work in light of successes in the field of work within the school’s dynamic and challenging environment.