

Abstract:

According to a theoretical approach developed by Schachter & Rich (2011), certain teachers perceive the development of their student's identity as an important part of their pedagogical objectives. Identity education is, according to this approach, a pedagogical practice which aim is to support psychological processes related to the development of students' identity. These teachers may wish to introduce study materials of their respective subject while concentrating on the learning process itself and on the different aspects of the study material which relate to their students' personal and interpersonal life in a way that contributes to their process of self-determination. Research has shown this pedagogical practice is used by teachers of various subjects, but the case of art teachers was yet to be examined. This research examines and describes art teachers' perceptions of their involvement in their adolescent students' process of identity development. This research was done using qualitative research and measuring tools: interviews and observations. We interviewed art teachers who teach at middle school or high school level in public schools in Israel. We have interviewed 12 women and 3 men, all over the age of 30, who teach at public schools for more than 4 years. All of which are graduates of art education colleges. The interview was done in accordance with the *theme-based life story* approach (Schachter, 2004). Interviewees were asked to tell their life story while focusing on their experiences as school students and later as art teachers. Afterwards, we observed their teaching, and finally an additional interview was held for clarifying issues that arouse in the observation in relation to the first interview. The research found that teachers perceive themselves as being involved in their student's identity development, and that both their and their student's identity affects their pedagogical considerations. The research describes three different identity positions which affect the art teacher's perception of their role. These positions are described through three unique tensions that the art teacher is subject to: the teacher's identification with their student in relation to the school; the teacher's identification with the school in relation to the student; the teacher's relation to the identification of their students with the school. We found that these tensions, deriving from the teacher's relationships within the school, affect the teacher's chosen pedagogy and the behavioral rules established by the teacher in their classes. We also found that these tensions have effect on questions relating to identity and

content that comes up during classes, explicitly and implicitly. Most teachers in the research find themselves moving between the prementioned positions while teaching, adopting various forms of coping with the different tensions they entail. The discussion revolves around wider questions related to the background and circumstances which affect the teacher's perceptions in the different positions they take, about the identity education they form in their classes and about if and how they go about dissolving the tensions these positions hold.

This paper offers a new perspective on the art teacher's role and on their unique pedagogy while focusing on the causes that formed it and formed the teacher's interactions with their students in support of their identity development. The three tensions presented in this paper expand existing understanding regarding the complex and dynamic position of the art teacher within the school, taking upon themselves diverse and often contradicting roles as an identity agent.