

Summary of Van Leer Jerusalem conference

Prof. Audri Addi-Raccah: Private teaching tutoring in elementary education seems to be one of the features of schools that appear to turn to educational enclaves that perpetuate social inequality. (A true leader's role is to diminish such inequalities).

Prof. Michal Beller deals with a significant evaluation in the service of learning. Can teachers and principals work in a vacuum where they have no objective scale to measure how much they have contributed to improving their students' learning? Of course, no. The question, therefore, is how to evaluate. There are no ready answers, but effective models of measuring and evaluation are the only way we can ascertain that there has been meaningful learning. (The duty of a real educational leader is to find and use effective models of measuring and evaluation learning).

Dr. Anat Ben-Simon looks for solutions to the reduced ability of expressing oneself in writing (one of the most complex scholastic tasks). The teachers sometimes lack the knowledge, time and means needed to help their students in writing. One innovative solution to this problem involves the use of online tools. Among their other advantages, the online tools provide individual instruction that is adapted to the pupil; multiple options for practice and experience; immediate computerized assessment of the composition; the chance to rewrite and resubmit the composition. (The principal as a leader should be familiar with the online tools and not hesitate to use them where needed and possible).

Dr. Randy E. Bennet talks about the CBAL- "Cognitively Based Assessment of, for and as Learning". The presentation described the CBAL system design and theory of action, show examples of how the system works and presents research results related to the extent to which the theory is supported in practice. (Another important tool to measure and support learning a true leader should be familiar with).

Dr. Yariv Feniger compares attitudes, aspirations and science achievements among minority students in Israel. There is a distinction between voluntary and involuntary minorities. Pupils who are members of social groups that become minorities

involuntarily tend to develop a resistance to school. By contrast, pupils from immigrants families (voluntary minorities) tend to be optimistic about their prospects for success in the host society. The findings revealed that, in contrast to the theoretical argument, the Arab pupils had the most positive attitudes about their school and the highest aspirations, but their achievements were significantly lower than those of their Jewish counterparts, both veteran Israelis and recent immigrants.

(It is a meaningful piece of information for the principal as a leader).

Naomi Friedman-Sokuler investigates gender gaps in Arabic and Hebrew language schools in Israel. The gender differences across the two school types were tested taking into consideration a broad range of outcomes, ranging from dropout rates and matriculation certificate eligibility, through differences in grades and the estimation of high school value added, and concluding with the patterns of choice of intensive science and mathematics courses. It turns out that girls are higher achievers than boys in both sectors, but the girls' lead over the boys is significantly greater in Arabic-language schools than in the Hebrew- language ones.

(Maybe, in the Arab sector the future educational leaders will be women who seem to have much more motivation to succeed in their studies).

Kim Frunim talks about the Data Wise Improvement process that offers teachers an eight-step process to analyze data collaboratively and then create, enact, and evaluate a focused action plan.

(The tools to improve teachers' and not students' performance are extremely important for a leader since there is still little to suggest how teachers can improve their performances).

Dr. Hagit Glickman is concerned about reading and writing mother-tongue skills in the Arabic, Druze and Bedouin sectors.

(The lecture provides various findings in this domain, which are valuable information for a principal in these sectors).

Dr. Sara Hershkovitz talks about the evaluation- based learning processes by means of "big data". This technology can be used to support decisions, based on solid data, about teaching processes that are suited to the pupils' abilities. In addition, current

technology, which permits data collection and analysis on a large scale ("big data"), makes it possible to design adaptive computerized system. Each pupil's work is analyzed with regard to the types of problems, quality of the solutions, pace and more, and this enables the computerized system to learn the pupil's abilities and construct a learning track specific to that pupil.

(A valuable learning tool- important to the educational leader)

Prof. Moshe Justman explains how standardized tests affect equal opportunity in education. The impact of these tests depends on the incentives that work on the information they provide.

Dr. Tzur Karelitz says : Education in the 21-st century requires evaluation methods that can diagnose cognitive abilities and capacities in order to provide relevant and usable information to teachers, principals, parents and pupils. Such information can be used to make decisions on the individual level and on the collective level. Specifically, researchers and educators have been investigating the benefit of diagnostic classification models. These models can identify whether the subject has command of a wide spectrum of specific abilities. As a result, the examinees can be classified into groups by the aggregate of their abilities (and information of this sort has great education and practical potential, especially to the principal as a decision maker).

Dr. Patrick C.Kyllonen tells that there has been growing appreciation for the importance of social, emotional, and self-management skills for success in K-12 education, in higher education, and in the workplace. Employer surveys show that companies are as interested or more interested in applicants' soft skills than they are in their content skills. Predictive validity studies show that soft skills predict grades, educational attainment, and labor market outcome as highly as cognitive test scores do. In international large- scale assessments, as much attention is given to contextual variables, such as opportunity to learn, student engagement, and teacher-student relations as to the league tables that rank countries on their mathematics, reading and science scores.

Nurit Lipshtat investigates an equality of opportunity in education. She points out that providing equal opportunities allows students to develop their talents and realize their potential whatever their individual and social circumstances are such as gender, socioeconomic background and ethnic origins. Thus every student has a chance to find a job suiting his/her abilities and preferences, thereby increasing social mobility. (The equality should be a vision of a real educational leader).

In practice, however, there are huge disparities between different population sectors in Israel. The study deals with the extent to which there is real equality of opportunity in Israel for junior high school and senior high school students and at the transition between these institutions. The goal is to investigate equality (or inequality) in the scholastic achievements of the various groups, such as Hebrew speaking schools and Arabic speaking schools, girls and boys, those from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Deborah Nusche talks about evaluation and assessment policies. How can they improve student outcomes in primary and secondary schools? Countries use a wide range of approaches to student assessment, teacher appraisal, school evaluation and education system monitoring, providing many opportunities for peer learning across countries. The study offers an international perspective on policy and practice and provides a range of suggestions (the educational leader should take into consideration) on how evaluation and assessment arrangements can be embedded in a consistent framework to improve the quality, equality and efficiency of school education.