

June 17, 2016

The Minutes of the Seventh Meeting
of the Forum for English Department Heads
June 17, 2016

Participants: Elizabeht Karvonen (David Yellin), Iman Garra-Alloush (AlQasemi), Ofra Rosenstein (Gordon), Fran Sokel (Sha'anana), Miri Baum (Givat Washington), Orly Haim (Beit Berl), Tali Rubovitz-Mann (Hemdat Hadarom)

Apologies: Lindsey Shapiro-Steinberg (Herzog), Emmy Zitter (Michlala Yerushalaim), Inna Smirnov-Oknin (Kaye), Beverley Topaz (Kibbutzim), Yehudit Od-Cohen (Ohalo), Laura Major (Achva), Manal Yazbak Abu-Ahmad (Sakhnin),

We opened by continuing our discussion of next year's activities and major topics. Tali shared with the group the results of the poll regarding the day for next year's Forum meetings, in which there was again a strong preference for Friday among Forum members. Elizabeth suggested that she might try to organize a meeting in September (not on a Friday) with a representative from the HEC regarding the Quality Assurance process, before the beginning of the academic year at most colleges. It was also proposed that as there are going to be several new department heads in the Forum next year, it might be useful to have a management workshop of the type we had the year before (2015). This will probably take place during the semester break as a double session (not on a Friday). It was also suggested to focus next year on specific issues regarding teacher training.

In this context, Iman shared with us her experience with the אקדמיה-כיתה model in the English and Science programs at her college. Iman, who is a pedagogical advisor herself, described this year's experience as very successful. She pointed out that this model contributes to the sense of belonging to the school among novice teachers. She showed us a short video about the project, and it was evident that this model contributes to the students, the school teachers and the pupils at school. Teachers felt that the need to collaborate with a teacher-student motivated them to get the best out of themselves professionally, and pupils liked the fact that the student teachers were young and could more easily understand them. The latter, however, was noted by Iman as one of the weaknesses of the program, as sometimes the student-teachers, especially in the Arab sector, are too young to teach in highschool.

Elizabeth said that, unlike AlQasemi, David Yellin offers the אקדמיה-כיתה only to students who choose it, but there are students who find it too challenging and prefer the regular program so as to be able to invest more effort in getting good grades.

Elizabeth also thinks that the אקדמיה-כיתה program is not "real life", anyway. Orly noted that in a study about the accelerated English teaching programs which had been offered at some of the colleges it was found that the problems novice teachers faced at the schools were very similar to the problems faced by graduates of standard teacher training programs at the colleges.

Regarding the QA process, the problem of translation into English was raised again: it seems that at most colleges, English department heads are expected to do the translation of Hebrew materials and documents that are needed for the report. In David Yellin, an English speaking student might do this – and this could be a good idea for other colleges as well – but the payment will probably be based on student-rate. In Gordon, all the English staff is involved (about 20 members), and all the work has been divided between them. In many colleges, however, the English departments are much smaller.

Research corner: Tali presented the main ideas of a recently published position paper about rescuing education from its inherent crisis – a joint position paper based on the work of a Mofet team of educators, of which she is a member. (Mofet Journal, May 2016, pp. 74-85).

The discussion pertained to general problems in the Israeli school system, but we focused on teacher education and training. Some members shared their experiences as educators and parents, which reinforced the points raised in the position paper. Some were a bit skeptical regarding the feasibility of the suggested changes, particularly the suggested changes in the teacher education system. Some, however, thought it was critical to further publish the analysis and ideas presented in the position paper – in the media (newspapers) and among local and national parents organizations.

In her concluding remarks, Tali pointed out that the position paper reflects issues in education and teacher training which she finds critical. The major issues that she had tried to advance as Forum coordinator were the professional identity and status of teacher trainers and teacher training colleges, and the importance of educational and pedagogical considerations in teacher training programs.

Tali thanked the Forum members for their support, encouragement and active contribution to the Forum in the three years she had coordinated the Forum.

All the best,

Tali Rubovitz-Mann

העתקים:

מר נח גרינפלד - מנהל האגף להכשרת עובדי הוראה

ד"ר מיכל גולן - ראש מכון מופ"ת

גב' רות סרלין - ראש ערוץ מפגשי עמיתים

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