



המכון הישראלי למנהיגות בית ספרית
المعهد الاسرائيلي للقيادة المدرسية

Significant Learning

Principles for best professional development of school leaders

The development and learning processes of school principals deal with diverse issues with affinity to the role perception of the principal that puts the pedagogical identity at the center. Thus, it is imperative to adapt the development and learning processes in that spirit, both in content and in methodologies.

Here are two main ways in which we need to act. Further, it is recommended to combine them:

I

Integrate study units dealing with a subject matter while taking into consideration two essential levels:

- A. Concepts and practices associated with significant processes of learning and teaching.
- B. Structural and organizational aspects that support the significant processes of teaching, learning, and managerial practices for their promotion.

II

Perform a thorough inquiry of learning and development processes as a case study of the quality of learning. The inquiry will be performed with the principals (regardless of content) during their learning time. This "modeling" process will help principals develop insights and conclusions about meaningful learning for other participants at the school they manage.

Research shows that principals promote teaching and learning processes when they are involved in their own learning (Evans & Mohr, 1999) It is in this spirit that one can conceptualize and demonstrate the principles of significance learning through the learning processes of the principals themselves- along with clarifying value, relevance and their involvement in the process.



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I The first way

Learning that invokes an emotional, value based social and cognitive learning experience (independent learning within interpersonal relationships), which is built on three simultaneously existing components: value for the student and the society, student and teacher engagement, and has relevance to the student.

Relevancy: The student believes that the content addresses his various needs: the intellectual, the emotional, value based social and the physiological; He can apply the learned content in problem solving at the academic level and in everyday life. The student expresses it explicitly as well as by choosing what to learn and how to learn.

Value: The student feels that the content has meaning and importance to him on a personal level as well as at a general level. His choice of content is done through a critical personal process.

Engagement: The learner is active and he is learning out of curiosity, motivation, pleasure and internal sense of investment. He demonstrates motivation, performs tasks, initiates expansion and deepens his thinking in the subject being studied and other materials.

In the process of development and learning of school principals, reference is made to a level that deals with organizational-structural aspects; At this level, the school principal also has a great influence on significant learning processes that will take place in school.

II The Second Way

Using the development and learning processes of the school principal as a model for meaningful learning for development and learning processes have diverse goals, yet there is a fairly broad agreement on its essential components (Goldring, Preston, & Huff, 2010). Content of meaningful development and learning processes should be rooted in the role, in line with relevant career contexts and stages. Significant professional development involves learning that allows for diverse options, both in terms of learning methods and in terms of context. Diverse methodologies help make learning meaningful, for it is known that engaging in learning content through different methods allows for better internalization of content in heterogeneous groups. Theory based on practical knowledge tends to reinforce value and meaning that school principals give to their learning. Therefore, professional development that provides considerable room for clarification of knowledge, coupled with the conceptualized practical knowledge grounded in research, increases the likelihood of meaningful and valuable learning. Significant learning of adults (and children) occur when it undermines familiar aspects from their experience and helping them to examine the new information in light of their work and role. One of the best ways to do this is through applications, exercises, and understanding performance that sharpen learning and become part of it. (Pierce & Fenwick, 2005).

Research and practice see schools as unique "emotional arenas" (Fineman, 1993). Emotions are the subject of teachers' educational work, and the development of emotions in students has an inherent place in the achievements of schools (Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier, 2009). Thus, dealing with emotions must have considerable place in both learning process as well as in the subject of learning by school principals. It is worthwhile preparing a coherent syllabus aimed at the activities of school leaders, as careful planning allows flexibility in its embodiment. Significant learning is done in a group, thus collegiate networks have a role to play in

supporting, creating discussions that allows reflection, appeal and idea exchange among school leaders).

Second Way Summary

Here are the key principles for the significant development and learning of school principals:

- Apply diverse opportunities for learning
- Use theory and applied knowledge for conceptualization
- Appeal current perceptions and applied knowledge
- Learning is rooted in context and in personal role
- Applied assignments are in the center of learning
- Careful planning of syllabus is the basis for "attentive syllabus"
- Learning is done in a safe and supportive setting, allowing for networking and collegial development
- On the job Involvement and continuous learning

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