



My Early Childhood Education Journey

My name is Meital Zaidel, and I have been working in early childhood education for over 25 years. My experience spans managing educational systems, training early childhood educators, and developing initiatives tailored for early childhood professionals. Additionally, I have conducted field research, collaborating with students as part of their professional growth. Recently, I returned to managing systems to examine whether the extensive knowledge I have acquired over more than two decades can meet the challenging reality in education systems and create bridges for the professional development of early childhood educators on the one hand and develop relationships of trust with parents on the other.

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WORK EXPERIENCE

Kibbutz Ha'ogen |  Kibbutz Ha'ogen, Israel

Early childhood system manager

11/08/2024 – Current


As part of the management and leadership of the early childhood education system, a community educational leadership process is constantly taking place, which has defined a vision and a common policy for its development, together with the community manager and the education committee. As part of the day-to-day process, a process of involving parents in academic activities is constantly taking place. At the same time, a multi-year process of developing a training and professionalization process for work teams. Management of education systems at the regional level, to lead a vision at the political level. Development and work in interfaces with the Ministry of Education for the benefit of training early childhood educators, support and development of initiatives for early childhood professionals. Continuation, conducting field research in early childhood education. Support for the professional growth of children across all age ranges. Continuous work with professionals to support children's development processes and reduce developmental gaps. Fostering trust-based relationships with parents.

Gordon College of Education |  Haifa, Israel

Higher education senior lecturer

01/02/2024 – Current

Gordon College of Education – Facilitating basic and advanced early childhood educator training courses

Oranim College of Education |  Tivon, Israel

Pedagogic instructor

01/09/2013 – 30/08/2023

Lecturer at Oranim College, Early Childhood Education Department – Pedagogical guidance in academia and the field. Key achievements include establishing a unique training track for women working in early childhood education, promoting their social mobility, and developing curricula aligned with this goal. Supervising, guiding, and writing field research, strengthening partnerships between academia, the field, local authorities, and early childhood education systems while driving long-term interventions. During my tenure at Oranim, I received three commendations for excellence in teaching from the college's rector and was recognized as an inspiring lecturer for 2023 by the college's president and the student union.

Oranim College of Education |  Tivon, Israel

: Head of the Early Childhood Pedagogical Center (Zwieg Center)

01/10/2014 – 30/06/2019

Supporting teaching and guidance processes for early childhood education at Oranim from undergraduate to graduate levels. Duties included mentoring students in research projects in collaboration with academic experts, fostering curriculum development processes, and embedding professional knowledge across early childhood education fields.

: Early Childhood Division Head at the Initiative for Educational Creativity Foundation (NPO)


13/09/2019 – 31/12/2023

-Establishing and developing the Foundation's pedagogy for early childhood education. Managing and mentoring a multicultural team of advisors, fostering partnerships, and deepening relationships between third-sector organizations and local authorities. Developing and managing the Foundation's entrepreneurial content for early childhood education, including leading dozens of initiatives across various sectors nationwide (Arab society, Haredi community, rural settlements). Guiding teachers, kindergarten teachers, and assistants in advancing educational initiatives and improving early childhood frameworks. Managing a large-scale entrepreneurial project with multiple stakeholders: PISGA, the Ministry of Education's supervisory network, and the Ramat Hasharon municipality. Tasks included creating a multi-year work plan aligned with the municipality's innovative educational vision, setting goals, and defining evaluation metrics for implementation. Among my achievements, leading a strategic, multi-stakeholder educational entrepreneurial process in Yerucham over three years. This involved complex initiatives such as establishing a forum for managers of private and regulated daycare centers, encouraging partnerships, and creating a municipal parent forum with local authorities, professionals, and daycare representatives. Planning, developing, and scaling a nationwide graduates' community of kindergarten teachers and doubling the participation in the forum. Leading research and evaluation processes for early childhood entrepreneurship initiatives in collaboration with the Democratic Institute.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Oranim College of Education

01/10/1999 – 30/06/2003

Bachelor's degree and teaching certificate |  Tivon, Israel

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<https://en.oranim.ac.il/>

Field(s) of study: **Teacher training with subject specialisation** |

Final grade: **90.2**

Haifa University

01/10/2008 – 30/06/2010

Master's degree in Educational Systems Management |  Haifa, Israel

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<https://www.haifa.ac.il/>

School of Education and Psychology, UBB University - Cluj, European Union

01/07/2018 – Current

PHD |  Cluj-Napoca, Romania

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<https://www.ubbcluj.ro/en/>

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Mother tongue(s)

Hebrew

Other language(s)

	Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	Writing
English	C2: Proficient User	C2: Proficient User	B1: Independent User	B2: Independent User	C1: Proficient User

SKILLS

Microsoft Office | Microsoft Word | Microsoft Excel | Microsoft Powerpoint | Social Media |
Google Drive

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

– Illuminating Meetings in Education

11/11/2015 – 11/11/2015

A junkyard playground with minimal stimulation- a field study.

This seminar presented an action research study conducted as part of a kindergarten teacher training program. The kindergarten teacher trainer, the student, and I investigated the play of three-year-old children in a junkyard. We wanted to examine whether reducing the stimuli would affect the children's play. We discovered that the children used more language, imagination, and symbolic ability as the items were reduced. We saw bursts of creativity and cooperation in social play and understood something more about children's play.

Walking Between the Raindrops

20/09/2022 – 21/09/2022

Levinsky Campus Auditorium, 15 Shoshana Persitz, Tel Aviv.

A local and global perspective on educational teams and parents, the Yeruham case study with Tami Bohbot – Early Childhood Education Manager – Yeruham.

In this seminar, the early childhood director and I presented a local case of joint work with the authority and directors of private, supervised daycare centers, as well as a work process that included establishing a joint forum of parents from each of the centers to improve the quality of education in the community.

HONOURS AND AWARDS

Teaching Excellence

20/08/2017

Oranim College of Education

That was the explanation for the honour:

"As a leading college of education, we strive for academic, pedagogical, and ethical excellence, and attach great importance to the quality of teaching. The centrality of the quality of teaching at the college stems, in addition to our commitment as an institution of higher education to students and their studies, from our intentions to improve the education system and to provide an inspiring teaching-learning model for teachers and those on the path. As a result, quality teaching at Oranim College relies on three central components: a high and broad-minded academic level, Pedagogical creativity that makes learners involved and active in learning, and human conduct that strives to see the 'person' in every learner.

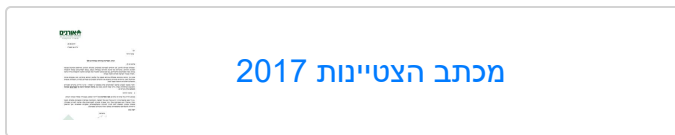
In light of the feedback findings recorded by your students in the second semester of 2017, based on both the ratings in the closed statements and the verbal responses, I am pleased to express my congratulations and great appreciation for your excellence in the quality of your teaching in the course(s):

Teaching Training - The average rating for this course is included in the top 10% of feedback ratings in the category to which the course is associated.

I do not doubt that this excellence is a result of your investment, constant academic and professional updating, thorough planning, and in-depth considerations. You offer our students an active, respectful, and ethical learning environment, inviting them to an intellectual, intriguing, and challenging learning experience. In this way, you make a unique contribution to their significant training as leading and influential future educators".

Good luck!

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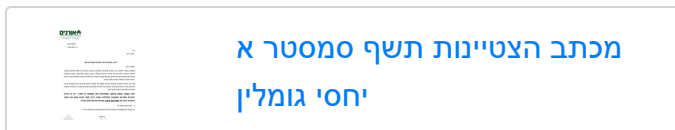
Teaching Excellence

20/04/2020

Oranim College of Education

In light of the feedback findings recorded by your students in the first Semester 2019 - based on both the closed-ended statement and verbal responses, I am pleased to express my congratulations and great appreciation for your excellence in the quality of your teaching in the course(s): Relational Relationships - Educating a Child

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Teaching Excellence

17/06/2021

Oranim College of Education

In light of the feedback findings recorded by your students in the first Semester 2020- based on both the closed-ended statement and verbal responses, I am pleased to express my congratulations and great appreciation for your excellence in the quality of your teaching in the course(s): Relational Relationships - Educating a Child

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PUBLICATIONS

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR KINDERGARTEN TEACHER'S ASSISTANT IN ISRAEL, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS A SECOND CAREER.

2019 | <https://www.europeanproceedings.com/article/10.15405/epsbs.2020.06.11> | Education, Reflection, Development – ERD 2019.. 10.15405/epsbs.2020.06.11

A new program, developed at a college of education in Israel, seeks to train kindergarten teachers. The target population comprises kindergarten teaching assistants and auxiliary personnel, to provide them with an employment horizon and social mobility, by improving their social status through academic education, which in the past was difficult for them to access. The article presents this program and its uniqueness against traditional kindergarten teachers' training programs. While the latter are based on four years of academic study followed by full integration into work in the field, this program recognizes participants' practical experience in the field. It allows for the learning environment to be adapted to their lifestyle as family members and employees, to gain experience in guided practical work parallel to their studies throughout their training period, to apply their academic and pedagogic knowledge on a day-to-day basis, and to customize studies and empower students. This article presents the program in comparison to the concept of "On-The-Job" training (OJT), common in other occupations. Faced with a severe shortage of quality kindergarten teachers, education systems need to encourage kindergarten teaching assistants to work, learn, and gain experience all at the same time, and help them cope with the academic load. Change is needed in a field to attract more applicants and contribute to their sense of coherence, self-efficacy, and future orientation. Program contribution will be studied in a PhD research.

Authors: **Meytal Zaidel , Cristian Stan** | Journal Name: **Education, Reflection, Development – ERD 2019** | Volume, Issue and Pages: **vol 85. European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences (pp. 102-111)** | Publisher: **European Publisher.**
<https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2020.06.11>

DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE ORIENTATION, SELF-EFFICACY, AND SENSE OF COHERENCE IN TEACHING SITUATIONS AS NECESSARY PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES AMONG STUDENTS IN A KINDERGARTEN TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM.

2020 | <https://www.europeanproceedings.com/pdf/article/10.15405/epsbs.2021.03.02.4> | The European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences EpSBS

This article addresses preliminary findings based on a mixed-methods study, using a questionnaire, examining future orientation, sense of coherence, and self-efficacy, and changes in these competencies of students in a kindergarten teacher training (KTE) program. 40 students, with different seniority, enrolled in the program, constituted the research population. Research tools included a questionnaire regarding the way they imagined their future as teachers. Open qualitative answers were recorded into

ordinal scales and analysed. A set of factors was built across background categories, e.g., gender and age, academic background, and experience. More personal sections included open self-reported hopes and fears - hopes for professional promotion, personal achievements, academic successes, and income increase; and fears regarding financial stability, employment success, personal goals, and graduation from the program. These binary items were used to map respondents on two unsupervised dimensions within a multidimensional scaling (MDS) framework. The findings showed various combinations of hopes accompanied by fears. Interestingly, the only difference was that older students reported more professional promotion than academic graduation expectations compared to younger students. The research may contribute to changes in KTE programs, allowing students to present their perceptions regarding their professional future, and the findings can help adapt training programs around the world.

Authors: **Meytal Zaidel (a)*, Cristian Nicolae Stan (b)** | Journal Name: **he European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences**

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