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Recommendation for Tovi Admon

The Talmud teaches us that we learn from our students. In addition to this truism, I add that I have learned from the teachers and staff with whom I have been privileged to work. There have been some master teachers that have been inspirational in their effort at self-reflection, innovation and improvement to reach and support each student.

Tovi Admon is such an educator. We worked together in Charleston when I was Head of School at Addlestone Hebrew Academy. She was a teacher who connected to each student while she taught. Never still, she walked about, patting one student on the shoulder, putting a star on another's page, praising a third—all while the lesson continued smoothly.

We had an opportunity to create a multi-age, multi-leveled classroom in a shared space with co-teachers. I knew Tovi Admon was the person to develop the program. She and her co-teacher worked diligently over the summer and later after school, often their children with them. They visited a local Montessori school, whose principal I knew, to observe multi-age classrooms. We discussed curriculum and materials, various classroom set-ups, multi-level instruction and modification, teaching student independence and collaboration with peers.

A master teacher like Tovi took the challenge of implementing such a classroom, created it into her own model and developed a successful classroom learning community with engaged and supported students. After much hard work, the co-teachers found a comfortable pacing and collaboration. They continued to analyze feedback from their students and share this progress with parents. Their students were not just receivers of information. They shared their learning with their peers, learned independently, and were given a "voice."

The models of co-teaching on multiple academic levels in multi-age classrooms have been tried in a number of schools and programs. Giving students the ability to work independently, with peers, in experiential lessons and at a pace that best fits them builds self-confident learners and future leaders. It was an idea that I constantly came back to, knowing that it was an environment in which students can learn and thrive. My own ideas evolved from such many sources. I read extensively about non-traditional educational paradigms, including educators as John Holt and Lucy Calkins, from the Montessori and Reggio Emilia systems and from my own teaching experiences in public high school, junior college, universities and homeschooling my children.

Tovi Admon and her co-teacher created a learning community that we were all proud of and I am so very gratified that she was given the freedom to develop the program again and to mentor others in such an environment.

All the best
Susan Weintrob