

# EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN THE ERA OF COVID'19: The case in Israel

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Author: Reforming Education in Developing Countries-From  
Neoliberalism to Communitarianism (2019, Routledge)

# The events...

- **March – April, 2020**: The first closure of schools and the transition to a remote learning (Zoom).
- Responses: shock, difficulties, what about the unprivileged students (not enough computers).
- **The summer vacation** (July-August) as a time of preparation for another SPECIAL year.
- **Sept** – School attendance as in the pre-corona time.
- **The end of this Sept.2020** – another lock down in the country. Schools are blamed for that...
- **January 21**: another lockdown
- **April**: 70% of the adults have been vaccinated. FREEDOM!

# The policy is unstable...

“It is important to open schools, at least because each day in which the students out of school costs 800,000\$”.

**The school year (20-21) will be different:**

- Zoom
- School attendance in small groups of 18 children.
- Different solutions for different places (Special education, students at-risk, lower grades vs. upper grades).

So much confusion, so much a lack of organization and order

# A differential view

**Kindergarten:** all kids in the same setting

**1-2 grades:** half of the class in the school for 3 days.

**3-4 grades:** only 18 kids in one classroom.

**5-6 grades:** zoom, two days in the school (18 kids in class). If possible, they will attend school 3 days a week.

**7-12 grades:** Zoom plus two days in school (half class each time).

2 meters between children, special equipments for teachers against Corona, alcohol gel in every class

# Central needs of the new policy

- A massive purchase of new softwares for e-teaching
- The development of new digital contents.
- In service trainings for instructional staff in digital teaching/learning
- The absorption of 13,000 teachers/ instructional assistants.
- Digital systems – a supply of computers to 144,000 children.
- Infrastructure – increasing internet wifi in schools, a purchase of more computers.
- Upgrading computers in schools.
- Lending lap-tops to unprivileged children

After two weeks the increase in corona cases is dramatic  
and the government declares on another lock down

BACK TO THE ZOOM



September  
2020

# Zoom is simply not working...

- 30% of the first/second graders don't participate in the lessons.
- 490,000 students can't connect to the Net.
- Unprivileged families can't cover the expenses of printing learning materials.
- 34% of the parents reported having insufficient computers at home.
- The effectiveness of learning via Zoom is very limited.
- Rich parents hire special tutors for their kids.
- A feeling of 'lost year' in education.
- An increase in latent dropout, especially among disadvantaged students.

# Afterwards...

- Due to public criticism, the MOE allows teachers to meet their students in small groups in parks and school yards.
- Children attend kindergartens again.

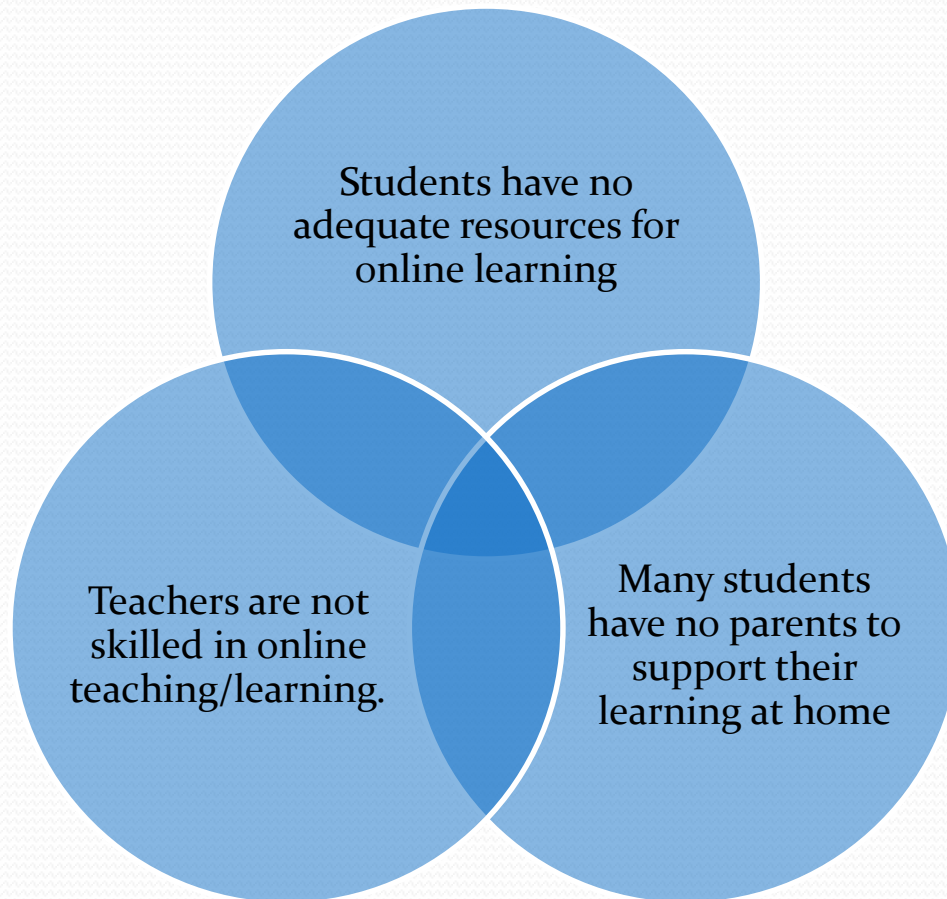
## A light in the tunnel...

- Special education students kept attending the schools regularly during the lock down.
- Many school principals informally encouraged low-achievers and at-risk students to attend the school in small groups.

An unstable  
policy



# The challenges of teachers



# Initial conclusions

- Confusion and uncertainty – main responses to the crisis in education.
- Policy-makers response to public pressure unsystematically.
- A lack of information about the Virus and its sources leads to contradictory policy drafts in education – are small children spread the virus? More than others? Less?
- Fears about the emotional development of young children/ the achievements of the graduates.

# After the pandemic...

