

## Dr. Mishkat Al Moumin: Define It or It Doesn't Count

### ON THE ROAD AGAIN

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Education is shifting away from test scores and toward human-centered outcomes like engagement, well-being, and innovation. The intention is right, but the execution can be inconsistent.

**The issue is not the shift itself. The issue is the lack of definition. Engagement is treated as a feeling. Well-being is described as a goal. Innovation is labeled as an activity. None of these holds unless they are translated into observable, measurable indicators.**

### **Clarity**

If engagement matters, then engaged students need to be described through what they do. They contribute ideas, ask questions, complete work with depth, and persist when tasks become challenging. Without these indicators, engagement becomes subjective and inconsistent.

Well-being requires the same clarity. It cannot rely on general satisfaction alone. It becomes visible through patterns such as attendance, participation, peer interaction, and students' sense of safety and belonging. Without defined indicators, well-being remains broad and difficult to act on.

Innovation also demands precision. Counting programs or tools doesn't demonstrate innovation. Innovation is reflected in use and impact.

Students adopt new tools in meaningful ways, and those tools change how learning occurs or what students can produce. Without evidence of change, innovation becomes implementation without effect.

**Every intangible is strengthened when anchored in observable indicators. Engagement becomes visible through participation, persistence, and quality of work.**

Well-being becomes visible through attendance patterns, sense of belonging, and student voice.

Innovation becomes visible through adoption rates, changes in instructional practice, and measurable improvements in student outcomes.

This shift also changes the role of data. The goal is not to collect more data, but to collect the right data. Anything prioritized benefits from being defined clearly enough to measure and act on.

## **Connection**

A decision-driven, indicator-based approach is already in practice in places like Summit Public Schools, a public charter school network in the United States originally founded in California, where student agency is treated as a measurable and actionable part of learning. Students set goals and track their progress weekly, learning is partly self-paced through an online platform, and each student meets regularly with an advisor. When students fall behind their goals, the system responds through structured check-ins and adjustments to learning plans. Student ownership is defined, monitored, and supported through clear indicators and timely action.

**There is a second layer to this work. Human-centered metrics connect to outcomes.**

***If engagement increases, learning deepens.***

***If well-being improves, attendance and participation stabilize.***

***If innovation is implemented, it changes how students learn and what they can do.***

Without these connections, schools risk replacing one set of disconnected measures with another.

The work ahead is not to name new priorities. It is to define them, measure them, and act on them with consistency.

Education will not be judged by what it claims to value. It will be judged by what it defines, tracks, and improves.

*Mishkat Al Moumin*

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***On the Road Again** is an exclusive monthly feature on our Roadmap 2031 initiative, written by Dr. Mishkat Al Moumin, a leading voice in thought leadership on the future of public education. We house her collective work on our official [Roadmap 2031](#) page. Follow her there!*