

# The Value of Research

## FROM YOUR NEWSLETTER EDITOR

RENEE RUBIN ROSS

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The recent NRJE conference showcased a number of research projects. Some involved a school, camp, or curricula, while others were much broader. Returning home, I couldn't help but reflect on what comprises good research: Is it enough to do a smaller inquiry about one site or learning process, or do we need to be more expansive to make an impact? And how do we define impact: improving one school, improving the field as a whole, or elucidating an educational process that is not yet clear?



RENEE RUBIN ROSS

An experience a few weeks later provided one answer. In July, I attended the graduation of the DeLeT (Day School Leadership through Teaching) program at Brandeis where I am a post-doctoral fellow at the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education. As the name suggests, DeLeT (which is run by the Mandel Center at Brandeis on the East Coast and Hebrew Union College on the West Coast) prepares Jewish day school teachers: after two summers and a school year of courses and student teaching, fellows receive a Masters in Teaching. Most graduates of Brandeis DeLeT are now immersed in their teaching careers in day schools in the Boston area, along the East Coast, or even

further away.

*...a good research project transcends its particular time and place.*

teachers, family members, and whoever else came to support them and learn from them.

What is practitioner research? Like any research project, it starts with a question, in this case a question about teaching practice. To give a concrete example, one DeLeT fellow wondered whether certain kinds of questions or instructions would be more effective for teaching science to her third grade students. She explored research about ways in which questions about scientific phenomenon might be asked and the impact of asking questions with different levels of specificity. Then, she taped three of her lessons on scientific topics. The last step was to analyze these videos to better understand the kinds of questions she had asked, and how her students responded to these questions. One conclusion was that when she was clearer about what students should look for as

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MICHAEL ZELDIN – Senior Editor, *Journal of Jewish Education*

# Research Opportunities Amid Economic Challenges

## FROM THE CHAIR

JEFFREY KRESS

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It is hard to believe that it has been three months since our conference at NYU. I would once again like to thank everyone that helped make the conference a success: Ben Jacobs put together a very strong and diverse program; the NYU team — Harold Wechsler, Erich Dietrich, Naomi Kalish, Wendy Paler, and Jenny Auerbach — ensured that we were comfortable and well fed. As always, Ada Maradiaga was instrumental in all aspects of planning. Carol Ingall coordinated the Emerging Scholar



JEFF KRESS

Award process, and Meredith Katz organized the travel stipends. Renee Rubin Ross continues to create a quality Newsletter, and our new Tech team — David Bryfman, Sara Shapiro-Plevan, and Daniel Held — has set up a NRJE Facebook page (with over 400 members!). And, as always, my appreciation to Michael Zeldin, Sue Huntting and the rest of the editorial team for their extraordinary work with the *Journal of Jewish Education*. Finally,

I want to welcome Rachel Lerner and Abby Uhrman to their roles as Graduate Student Representatives.

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I recently listened to an economist on the news talking about “mixed signals” with regard to the economic outlook. Some indexes were up, many were down; reasons for optimism can be found even within the reports of financial difficulties. It seemed to me that we can say the same about state of our community of Jewish educational researchers. There is no doubt that this is a challenging time for many Jewish organizations. The financial crisis impacts the places in which many of us work as well as the settings in which many of us conduct our research. Schools, synagogues, “experiential settings,” and other programs are cutting back.

At the same time, however, there are signs of extraordinary strength. Support for the Network and for the *Journal of Jewish Education* has been consistently generous (and of course very much appreciated!). Many programs have received funding to support a variety of initiatives. New resources (the *International Handbook of Jewish Education* and *What We NOW Know About Jewish Education* as just two examples) enrich our field greatly.

In some ways, the financial crisis makes the work of the Network and its members ever more crucial. The combination of research and action that characterizes our work is needed to provide solid grounding for responses to the challenges faced by contemporary Jewish education. Research can continue to show

that the question “What works?” is not one that can be answered simply, or by pointing at this or that program or setting. Rather, the answer is one that emerges from the ongoing exploration of teaching, learning, development, organizations, etc.

The complexity of such answers should not sway our task. Rather, the time seems ripe for increased collaboration among researchers. I do not believe this to be a compromise for tough financial times. In many fields, particularly in the social and natural sciences, collaborative work is the norm (the current issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* includes an article with 15 co-authors!) and seen as a necessary model to study complex phenomena. I encourage our members to make use of Network to think in terms of the type of multi-site and multi-method projects that can grow from collaboration.

Best wishes to all for a Shana Tova!

## The Value of Research

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they did an experiment, students more clearly observed and described the scientific processes involved.

The result of this practitioner research was that this new teacher learned about the research on teaching science (and how to explore this research), applied this research to her setting, and now had evidence about not only what worked in her classroom on a particular day with particular students, but also a more general theory of how to increase her effectiveness as a teacher.

Listening to these presentations, I felt hopeful about the value of research. While this project may not have immediately improved the fellows’ teaching, its impact was significant: they learned a method of research, observation, and analysis that could inform their teaching many years into the future, helping them to continue to be reflective practitioners. They are also likely to share this process with future colleagues, thus improving the field as a whole.

So one answer is that we need to think about how we define impact: no matter what the setting, a good research project transcends its particular time and place. At the same time, as Jeff points out in his article, impact does not occur in isolation; all of us need feedback and critique from colleagues to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of our ideas. May we continue to create opportunities to work together and learn from one another, thus improving our impact as individuals and a community.

# Newbie at the Network:

## My First-Time Impressions of the Network Conference

JANE SHAPIRO

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*Editor's Note: I asked Jane Shapiro, a member of the first cohort of the executive doctoral program at JTS and the founder of Jane Shapiro Associates, a consulting firm in adult Jewish education, to recap her experience at the NRJE conference. Her report appears below.*

It is a highly stimulating experience. Synapses were firing every minute of the day with new ideas, new terminology, new methodologies, and most important for this graduate student, new books and articles to devour. It was also extremely beneficial to hear how presentations were structured. Clear articulations of the research process taught me more about how to think about my work. It is a great induction into the field.

It is an exciting time to be in our field. So many talented young people are breaking ground in research, raising the bar on discourse and approaching problems innovatively! Experienced and inspiring scholars are starting again as new learners so they can do research from a fresh perspective, from historic to quantitative. Fruitful partnerships between Jewish studies and Jewish education seem to be emerging as well, all to the benefit of teachers in real classrooms.

It is a historic time to be in the field. The opening plenary challenged us to elevate the study of Jewish history to its rightful place and subsequent sessions drew on Jewish history again and again. Kaplan, Benderly, Saidie Rose Weilerstein and Mamie Gamoran are alive and well! There was something comforting and rich about unhinging from "Renaissance" and "Continuity" and looking at our present moment as parallel to the last turning of a century. Historic perspective gives us a focus on the trends and questions that need to be considered and which are just the natural course of communal life.

The conference is a high-minded and collegial experience. No one shines intellectually at the expense of another. There is a palpable sense of shared vision and purpose. We are all there to think about, the practice of education, knowledge and where meaning is made. We are all there because we want to link our answers to Jewish education and Jewish life. We are all there in support of the Jewish community and its future.

This presents possibilities of real change. I noticed how many people in our field are in positions to make policy recommendations. Unlike in general education, our "degrees of separation" are few and it is possible both to do research and affect change. Peter Nelson's power point had a slide that spoke to me in this regard, perhaps because it was formulated

in the shape of a (Hawkins) triangle: intellectual rigor, ethical reflection and emotional engagement all dynamically at work to create informed civic responsibility. I am so grateful that my professors encouraged me to attend and I look forward to being in Toronto next year.

### Report from the NRJE Conference

June 2010

WENDY PALER

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On June 6-8, 2010, more than one hundred scholars in the field of Jewish education converged upon the Washington Square campus of New York University to participate in NRJE's 24th Annual Conference. NYU's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development and its Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies co-hosted the event. Professor Benjamin Jacobs, recently appointed the Associate Director of NYU's Education and Jewish Studies programs, served as conference program chair.

Orley Denman, an EJS doctoral candidate, received the Network's Emerging Scholar Award. Carol Ingall, chair of the selection committee, and Mary Brabeck, dean of the Steinhardt School, presented the prize.

NYU was delighted to welcome this community of scholars. NRJE next meets at York University in Toronto in June 12-14, 2011. Please feel free to contact us for more information about NYU's Graduate Programs in Education and Jewish Studies: <http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/humsocsci/jewish>

## 2010 Emerging Scholar Award goes to Orley V. Denman

CAROL INGALL

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On June 7, 2010 at the annual conference of the Network, the Emerging Scholars Award Committee enthusiastically conferred the 2010 Award to Orley V. Denman, a London native who is currently studying for her doctorate at NYU's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. The clarity with which she described her research endeavor and its implementation, as well as its possibility for adding to the research literature and enhancing the practice of Jewish education impressed the committee, consisting of Isa Aron, Shani Bechhofer, Shira Epstein, Miriam Heller Stern, Meredith Woocher, Harold Wechsler, and Carol Ingall, chair. This year's award presentation included an introduction of Orley to the group, after which she described her research proposal. (This is an innovation that will be continued at future Network conferences: an opportunity for the award winner to discuss his or her research project with the conference attendees and to be welcomed by the community of scholars that he or she is joining.) For those of you who could not attend, I have

taken the liberty of quoting from Orley's application:

"My doctoral study will unpack the reflective practice of a group of new mentors in the context of a university-based mentoring program that works in partnership with participating Jewish day schools in Northern and Southern California (to be referred to in my study by the pseudonym ATID – Always Teach in Dialogue). My research question is: How does helping a novice learn to teach shape a mentor's teaching and thinking about teaching?"

...My goal is to co-construct in collaboration with a small group of mentors cohesive narratives of their mentoring experiences that will provide a meaningful context for my focus on reflection and practice. My focus on the particulars of the individual teachers' mentoring experience calls for a qualitative study, while my question calls for the twin methods of observation and interview as the means for answering it."

Kol hakavod to Orley, this year's winner of the Emerging Scholar Award. We look forward to future presentations of her work at NRJE conferences to come.

## UPDATE FROM THE JOURNAL OF JEWISH EDUCATION

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- The fall issue of the *Journal* includes articles by Scott Goldberg/Elana Weinberger/Nina Goodman/Shoshana Ross, Orit Kent, Joe Reimer and a rejoinder from Jon Levisohn to the recent "conversation" in response to his article on teaching rabbinic literature.
- We welcome Bethamie Horowitz as a new Associate Editor and Sarah Tauber as our new Book Review editor.
- The winter issue, due out in December, is a special themed issue on Congregational Education. This important issue includes articles by David Schoem, Stuart Schoenfeld, Isa Aron, Jonathan Woocher/Kate O'Brien/Leora Issacs, Amy Sales/Nicole Samuel/Annette Koren/Michelle Shain, and Nicole Greninger.

In his Editor's Note, Alex Pomson, Associate Editor, describes the significance of the issue:

*This Journal issue constitutes, then, a landmark publication. First, it provides scholars and practitioners with a timely sense of the state of an important field. It makes explicit the core questions that engage both researchers and practitioners, and it provides significant insights in how to improve the field's educational quality. Second, this issue has afforded an opportunity to turn to scholars who over the last three decades have written some of the most influential studies in the field and invites them to update their conclusions in light of what they have subsequently learned from their own work and the work of others.*

# Focus on... New Books in Jewish Education

**Editor's note:** At the recent Network conference, I heard about a number of new books from Network members. I asked the authors or editors to share a bit about the "back story" of their books: How did each come to be? The books and stories from the authors or editors are below.

**SACRED STRATEGIES: TRANSFORMING SYNAGOGUES FROM FUNCTIONAL TO VISIONARY** by Isa Aron, Steven M. Cohen, Lawrence Hoffman and Ari Y. Kelman. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute Press, 2010.

*From Isa Aron:* In 1998, after the Experiment in Congregational Education (which Sara Lee and I founded in 1992) grew large enough to support a full-time director, I was able to step back and devote myself to writing about it. The first book I wrote, *Becoming a Congregation of Learners*, explained what it means to be a "congregation of learners;" outlined the ECE's five-step process towards achieving that goal; and offered sample exercises and text study sheets. My second book, *The Self-Renewing Congregation*, focused on the way a synagogue should operate in all of its sectors, not only learning. Both books were devoted to advocacy, rather than inquiry. Neither asked the questions a researcher would ask: How do we know that these outcomes are desirable? And what evidence is there that the processes the books describe actually lead to these outcomes?

By 2005 the first cohort of ECE alumni had been engaged in transforming their synagogues for over a decade. I knew that some of the congregations in that cohort had been more successful than others. What was not entirely clear was why. My colleague Larry Hoffman had similar impressions about the Synagogue 2000 project, whose goals related to worship and healing. We agreed that a study of the long-term outcomes of our projects was in order, and were fortunate to entice Steven M. Cohen and Ari Y. Kelman to work with us.

The book is about eight synagogues that went through one of our projects, or a synagogue change project of their own devising, made significant changes in keeping with the projects' goals, and continue to work at transformation today. Over a period of two years we interviewed an average of 18 lay and professional leaders at each of these sites. We found that they shared six traits: sacred purpose, holistic ethos, participatory culture, meaningful engagement, innovation disposition, and reflective leadership and governance. Though not every synagogue fully exemplified each of these traits, taken together, they qualified as "visionary," in contrast with those that were only "functional."

Part 1 of the book demonstrates how these six characteristics are exemplified in four sectors of synagogue life: worship, learning, community building, and social justice. Part 2 asks: What enabled some congregations to become visionary? What

hindered others from doing so? And what advice might we give to concerned congregational leaders, Federations, and funders?

**THE WOMEN WHO RECONSTRUCTED AMERICAN JEWISH EDUCATION, 1910-1965.** Carol K. Ingall, ed. Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2010.

*From Carol Ingall:* I was shopping in my favorite Providence supermarket when I met a congregant from my synagogue. She had heard that I was teaching at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) and wondered if I had ever heard of her mother who taught Hebrew there for almost forty years. I was puzzled; I had never heard of Anna Grossman Sherman, not when I was a student at the Seminary College nor as a faculty member. My interest piqued, I searched the two-volume history of JTS, *Tradition Renewed*, and other published works in my collection and in the JTS library. Nary a word. Several months later, during a particularly long commencement, I noticed in the program a prize awarded for excellence in Hebrew in memory of Anna Grossman Sherman.

This serendipitous meeting led to my writing the first of three portraits of women who seemed to have been ignored or downplayed in the traditional JTS narrative. I wrote about Tzipora Jochsberger, who founded the Hebrew Arts School and Sylvia Ettenberg, a force in the Teachers Institute, Camp Ramah, Prozdor, LTE, and more. At that point, I realized that my research led me to an issue broader than filling in the gaps in the history of JTS. I began to look for colleagues, researchers in education as well as historians, who were also interested in feminist issues and the Hebraist-Zionist approach to Jewish education during the progressive era in the United States. One email led to another; I began to seek out authors, many of them researchers I had met in the Network, to add diversity to the collection of portraits: in geography, denominational affiliation, and for a broad representation of educational venues. Seven years after my fortuitous chat over a shopping cart, I had a book and a contract.

**TOURS THAT BIND: DIASPORA, PILGRIMAGE AND ISRAELI BIRTHRIGHT TOURISM** by Shaul Kelner. New York: NYU Press, 2010.

*From Shaul Kelner:* The biggest challenge I faced in writing *Tours That Bind* was one that I suspect many in the Jewish education world will face when reading it: breaking out of the evaluation

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## New Books

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framework for thinking about Israel experience programs. The first question that people usually ask me when they hear I have written a book about Israel trips is, “Do they work?” It is a seductive question. Think, however, about how much it prevents us from seeing: When we ask, “Do the programs work?,” we essentially stand with the organizers and look at the participants. But what if we stood with the participants and looked at the organizers? What questions would we ask then? Either way, we’d get a skewed, partial picture. For *Tours That Bind*, I analyzed organizers and participants as a system whose interactions produce something that neither party fully controls, or even expects.

Making the shift from “Do they work? How?” to “What’s going on here?” involved a process of intellectual growth for me. I had been asking the “How does it work” question for years. I found, though, that to make the Israel experience comprehensible to colleagues who are not steeped in the world of Jewish education, I needed to stop taking for granted things that Jewish educators treat as axiomatic. The more I translated the Israel experience for different audiences in my discipline of sociology, the more I found alternative paradigms for making sense of the enterprise.

In *Tours That Bind*, I draw mainly on the sociology of tourism, transnational and diaspora studies, and the sociology of culture and consumption. These are perspectives that have largely been absent from educators’ conversations about the Israel experience. One of my hopes is that this book will feed back into Jewish educational discourse these powerful frameworks and vocabularies for conceptualizing Israel experience education in new ways.

**SOWING THE SEEDS OF CHARACTER: THE MORAL EDUCATION OF ADOLESCENTS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS** by Judd Kruger Levingston. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2009.

*From Judd Kruger Levingston:* My career has brought me to teach in a wide variety of settings, from a non-sectarian boarding school to an all-girls school, an all-boys school, an Episcopalian school, and Jewish schools. When I was in high school, I attended a New England boarding school with a strong moral mission, and ever since then, I have been interested in the ways in which schools inspire young people to make thoughtful moral decisions. Having made my career in Jewish education, I am responsible for the moral development of 300 young people every day!

As an outgrowth of these interests, I wrote my doctoral dissertation under Professor Carol K. Ingall on the moral lives of Jewish adolescents, and then, a few years later, I began research in a wide variety of schools to learn whether there is one approach to moral education that seems more successful

than others. I spent a few days in each school, visiting classes and meeting with students and administrators. After having visited a comprehensive public school and Muslim, Quaker, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Chinese and non-sectarian private schools, I found that there is no single “best” approach; instead, each school needs to reflect the values of its own community and its own leadership. I came to identify three moral outlooks in the schools I visited, giving them convenient mnemonics, “Authentic and Assured,” “Bridging and Binding,” and “Constructing and Considering.”

I have begun to plan my next research project, exploring the moral dimensions of play. Why is it, for example, that play can bring people to set aside differences, and why do so many students hold their coaches in awe? Authentic play can allow young people to feel a sense of abandon while also feeling a sense of belonging. Teachers and coaches are in a unique position to nurture a healthy sense of play that develops moral character and citizenship.

**INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK ON JEWISH EDUCATION.** Ed. Helena Miller, Lisa Grant & Alex Pomson. London: Springer, 2011 (forthcoming).

*From Helena Miller:* The *International Handbook of Jewish Education* will add to a growing list of substantial volumes that inform and debate issues within religious education traditions and frameworks. The starting point was a conversation in 2007 with Professor Gerald Grace, of London University’s Institute of Education, who was then editing *The International Handbook of Catholic Education*. It seemed that a sister publication for, and by the Jewish education community would be a meaningful addition to this family of Springer publications.

I wrote to Springer, suggesting the idea, and two of their publication managers travelled from the Netherlands to London to meet me. Clearly reassured, the process of designing the structure of the book began. I knew from early on that editing a book of this magnitude would require help. I knew I needed the most conscientious, efficient, well-organised, fast working, erudite, wise and sensible people to work with me. Alex Pomson and Lisa Grant, both of whom I knew primarily through the NRJE, fitted the bill exactly.

The stages of editing a 1,200-page publication has been a fascinating, hard and time-consuming journey, full of surprises and a fair amount of humour. We shaped and re-shaped the sections to reflect the contributing authors and the focus of their chapters. We have nagged, cajoled and celebrated as the book has taken shape. Alex, Lisa and I exchanged thousands of emails, “met” on the phone frequently and in person twice.

The book will be published in Spring 2011. We are waiting for proofs to send to our authors. We anticipate that Springer will ask for a fast turn-around. But we are not daunted – just determined that the *International Handbook of Jewish Education* will be finished and ready for you before long!

SHARON FEIMAN-NEMSER, Mandel Professor of Jewish Education at Brandeis and director of the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education, is a co-editor of *Teaching as a Moral Practice: Defining, Developing, and Assessing Professional Dispositions in Teacher Education*, available from Harvard Education Press in December.

A group of researchers from the DELET LONGITUDINAL SURVEY PROJECT, led by ERAN TAMIR, has completed a comprehensive report on beginning Jewish day school teachers who graduated from the DeLeT Program at Brandeis University and HUC-JIR in Los Angeles. This report, entitled *The DeLeT Alumni Survey: A Comprehensive Report on the Journey of Beginning Jewish Day School Teachers*, includes data about teachers' background, preparation, working conditions and career aspirations. It can be downloaded from the project's website at: <http://www.brandeis.edu/mandel/projects/delettracking.html>

This summer saw the graduation of DeLeT Cohort 8 and the launch of DeLeT Cohort 9. (Admissions for Cohort 10 is already underway.) We also bid *l'hitraot* to retiring faculty leader SERENE VICTOR, and welcomed NOREEN LEIBSON to direct the program. Noreen comes to the Mandel Center after twenty years as the Education Director at Temple Beth Abraham in Nashua, NH and is a graduate of the Mandel Teacher Educator Institute.

JON A. LEVISOHN, assistant academic director, has been named a Fellow of the North American Scholars Circle of the Shalom Hartman Institute. He recently published "Negotiating Historical Narratives: An Epistemology of History for History Education," in the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 44:1 (2010).

The BEIT MIDRASH RESEARCH PROJECT, directed by ORIT KENT, continues its research on text study, group learning and meaning making at the Keshet School in Cambridge. This pilot study, in its second year, explores the ways in which a professional development approach based on havruta

learning can help teachers create meaningful opportunities for text study and group learning in their classrooms. For more details, see [http://www.brandeis.edu/mandel/projects/beitmidrashresearch/beitmidrash\\_keshet.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/mandel/projects/beitmidrashresearch/beitmidrash_keshet.html)

Postdoctoral fellow RENEE RUBIN ROSS's article "Building School Community: Connection and Conflict" appeared in the current issue of *HaYidion*, a publication of Ravsak.

The Center welcomes SUSANNE SHAVELSON, our new assistant director of communications, succeeding JANNA ROGAT DORFMAN who served in this position for the past two years. Susanne brings a background in Jewish studies and Jewish education, as well as communications and strategic planning. No stranger to Brandeis, she served as assistant director for the Institute for Informal Jewish Education for over a decade.

THE INITIATIVE ON BRIDGING SCHOLARSHIP AND PEDAGOGY IN JEWISH STUDIES is preparing the manuscript for *Turn It and Turn It Again: Studies in the Teaching and Learning of Jewish Texts* (Jon A. Levisohn and Susan P. Fendrick, eds.), an edited volume forthcoming in 2011.

Registration is now open for the 2010 DELET-PARDES ALUMNI CONFERENCE, which will take place at the Pearlstone Conference and Retreat Center on October 28-31. The conference theme is "Chazak, Chazak V'Nitchazek: Exploring our Identity, Strengthening Our Teaching." The goals of the conference — which for the first time will bring together alumni of the DeLeT and Pardes teacher education programs — are to offer teachers inspiring learning and professional development that integrates Jewish and general education and excellent pedagogy; to energize teachers and expand their vision of Jewish day school education; to strengthen teacher leadership; and to explore the nexus between personal and professional identity and teaching. The conference will include presentations by DeLeT alumni and faculty, as well as other educators. For registration and other information, go to <http://www.brandeis.edu/mandel/delet/Alumni/conference.html>

## News from the Davidson School

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OFRA BACKENROTH  
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The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), in recognition of its leadership in Jewish education, has received an a grant from the Jim Joseph Foundation of \$15 million for the purpose of significantly increasing the number and quality of trained and credentialed Jewish educators.

The grant will benefit and be administered by the William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education. It will provide for academic fellowships for students in The Davidson School's full time doctoral and executive doctoral program and the master's programs. Funds will also be directed toward supporting two new master's tracks in The Davidson School:

1. Jewish early childhood education
2. Experiential education programs that take place at summer camps, museums, and Jewish Community Centers (JCCs).

In addition, JTS will develop a new program that will allow Davidson School students the opportunity to spend a full academic semester in Israel, leading to a certificate in Israel Education.

The grant will also help support new faculty and personnel hires, as well as internships for students in a variety of Jewish educational settings.

For more information about the program, contact:

JTS Admissions Office  
Director of Graduate Admissions:  
Abby Eisenberg  
phone: (212) 678-8022  
email: edschool@jtsa.edu

## NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

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Network Chair **JEFFREY KRESS** has been promoted to Associate Professor with Tenure at the William Davidson School of Jewish Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

**BENJAMIN M. JACOBS** has joined the faculty of New York University as Assistant Professor of Education and Jewish Studies. He will be working with the masters and doctoral programs in Education and Jewish Studies as well as the social studies teacher preparation program. He can now be reached at [bjacobs@nyu.edu](mailto:bjacobs@nyu.edu). Ben also reports that his article, "Affordances and Constraints in Social Studies Curriculum-Making: The Case of 'Jewish Social Studies' in the Early 20th Century," published in the Winter 2009 issue of the journal *Theory and Research in Social Education*, was awarded the 2010 Exemplary Research in Social Studies Award by the National Council for the Social Studies.

**DAVID SCHOEM**'s newest book is *College Knowledge for the Jewish Student: 101 Tips*, published by U of Michigan Press. Elie Wiesel writes about it: "Students and parents alike will benefit from reading David Schoem's well-written, lively, and documented guide."

**RABBI DR. MICHAEL SHIRE** is a co-editor of the Spring 2011 issue of the *CCAR Journal*: Fifteen rabbis, writing as reflective practitioners, contribute articles about the shaping of their rabbinate and the impact it has had on them.

**MIRIAM HELLER STERN** has been appointed Dean of the Fingerhut School of Education at American Jewish University.

**LAURA WISEMAN** completed her Ph.D. this winter at the University of Toronto, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Studies [NMC]: Hebrew Language & Literature. Her dissertation is titled, *Lamentations of a Lovelorn Soul: Self Portraits in the Poetry of Dahlia Ravikovitch*. Laura is now engaged as tenure-stream faculty by York University as of July 2009 to look after the Jewish Teacher Education Program. She looks forward to welcoming colleagues to the annual NRJE Conference at York University in June 2011.