Making Jewish Education Work:

Mentoring Jewish Educational Professionals Lessons Learned from Research and Evaluation in the Field

REPORT 2

Publications and Dissemination Project (PDP):
An initiative of JESNA's Learnings & Consultation Center (LCC)

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The PDP, an initiative of JESNA's Learnings and Consultation Center (LCC) aims to improve the delivery of Jewish education in North America by bringing the expert procedural and content knowledge that resides within JESNA to practitioners and policymakers in the field. JESNA's research and evaluation functions — performed primarily by the Berman Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education — have generated valuable lessons and useable data, which have been collected over the years through our work with communities. Intellectual capital is one of the primary resources JESNA contributes in order to lead the field of Jewish education toward consistent excellence. The role of the PDP is to leverage this intellectual capital by bringing it to the public arena using multiple media.

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- Distributes utilizable research and evaluation-based knowledge about Jewish education to those in the field through written, electronic, and face-to-face media.
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Introduction

Mentoring can be a highly beneficial component of professional development for Jewish educators and Jewish education professionals alike. It plays a crucial role in job satisfaction and effectiveness, and also contributes to lower rates of attrition.[1] Mentoring is a process that opens the doors to the school: helping to ensure that mentees have access to the accumulated instructional knowledge and expertise of their colleagues.[2] Mentees need not be new to the field; individuals can benefit from the mentoring relationship at any stage of their career.

The benefits can be both career-related and psychosocial. The mentoring relationship can be a source of professional guidance, provide emotional support, and assist with concrete problem solving. A mentor can help to facilitate a mentee's process of self-reflection and can provide feedback based on observations of a mentee's performance. The mentoring relationship can help to increase mentees' self-confidence. Mentees may also benefit from related networking opportunities or the prestige of their association with an established professional in their field.

It is not only the mentee who benefits from the mentoring relationship. Mentoring allows mentors to help others improve themselves, receive respect, develop collegiality, and profit from mentees' fresh ideas and energy.[3] When a culture of mentoring is cultivated in a school, the workplace can become a site where people build significant relationships and cultivate depth of meaning in their work.[4] In the book *Creating a Mentoring Culture,* Lois Zachary asserts that relationship skills learned through mentoring can reverberate throughout an organization.[5]

In the field of Jewish education, mentoring relationships occur in numerous contexts.[6] Jewish educational professionals participate in mentoring programs facilitated by a wide variety of organizations across the American Jewish landscape. Mentoring programs are offered by central agencies for Jewish education, institutions of higher education, philanthropic foundations, professional associations, denominational leadership bodies, national rabbinic associations, and initiatives to enhance Jewish education.

Peer-to-peer mentoring is also a widely utilized approach. Some individuals have mentoring relationships with colleagues who work in equivalent positions in different educational or organizational settings. Others collaborate in dyads or teams, working directly with colleagues. Peer mentoring relationships are usually cultivated in individuals' free time and often develop organically. These relationships are largely informal, and are rarely supported by individuals' places of employment. The line between colleague and friend are frequently blurred in this type of mentoring relationship. Mentoring "meetings" tend to be informal and impromptu, taking place when one colleague drops in to the other's office or classroom, in the hallway, or over

1 Yvonne Gold, "Beginning Teacher Support," *Handbook of Research in Teacher Education: A Project of the Association of Teacher Educators,* eds. Thomas Buttery, Edith Guyton and John Sikula, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1999).

2 Rebecca Feaster, "Mentoring the New Teacher," *Journal of School Improvement* 3.2 (2002).

3 Christine Hegstad, "Formal Mentoring as a Strategy for Human Resource Development: A Review of Research," *Human Resource Development Quarterly* 10.4 (1999).

4 Lois J. Zachary, *Creating a Mentoring Culture: The Organization's Guide* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass 2005).

5 Zachary, *Creating a Mentoring Culture: The Organization's Guide.*

6 We are grateful to Julie Jaslow Auerbach and Dr. Jeffrey Schein who articulated these frameworks in their unpublished 2006 report, "The Role of Mentoring Association of Institutions of Higher Learning for Jewish Education Graduates."

lunch. Many educators participate in this type of mentoring. They share resources, discuss philosophical issues and strategize about classroom management.

More formalized mentoring relationships are often established through programs facilitated by mentees' workplaces or graduate schools. Relationships are developed with senior colleagues and former supervisors. Many turn to former professors for mentoring. Some educational professionals are mentored by their supervisors.

This report includes insights from evaluations of programs that offer mentoring through various frameworks. It draws upon findings from evaluations conducted by JESNA's Berman Center for Research and Evaluation. The programs included are: The Leadership Institute for Congregational School Principals, NESS (Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools), The Ohio State University Covenant Project, The Professional Development Matching Grants for High School Judaic Educators — a program of the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE), and the Rabbi Soloveitchik Institute Teaching Fellowship Program. The *Appendix* provides background information about each of these programs, and describes the primary foci and methodological approaches of the evaluations.

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE FOR CONGREGATIONAL SCHOOL PRINCIPALS[7]

The Leadership Institute is a two-year certificate program for principals from across denominations who run congregational schools. The Institute involves two intense summer training sessions, eight 1-2 day symposia, mentoring and a seminar in Israel. The training curriculum focuses on three main areas: leadership, pedagogy and Judaica.

NESS (NURTURING EXCELLENCE IN SYNAGOGUE SCHOOLS)[8]

NESS is a community-based change initiative designed to address the need for synagogue school improvement. Using a holistic and systemic approach, NESS works to integrate schools into the overall functioning of their synagogue communities. Formal training is provided to participating lay and professional leadership to equip them with skills necessary to work cooperatively and effectively.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY COVENANT PROJECT[9]

This project (which is no longer running), was aimed at increasing the number of qualified congregational school teachers in Columbus, Ohio. Students at Ohio State University were afforded professional development opportunities in pedagogy and classroom management techniques as well as opportunities to improve their own Judaic skills and content knowledge.

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7 Leora Isaacs, Shirah Hecht, Miri Rozenek and Dov Jelen, *Summary Report: The Leadership Institute for Congregational School Principals, Interim Report 2* (New York, NY: Mandell L. Berman Jewish Heritage Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education at JESNA, 2006).

8 Leora Isaacs, Wendy Rosov and Lauren Raff, *Ness (Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools) Cohort 1: Final Report* (New York, NY: Mandell L. Berman Jewish Heritage Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education at JESNA, 2006).

9 Wendy Rosov, *Formative Feedback — Ohio State University Covenant Program* (New York, NY: Mandell L. Berman Jewish Heritage Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education at JESNA, 2002).

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MATCHING GRANTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUDAIC EDUCATORS, A PROGRAM OF THE PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE IN JEWISH EDUCATION[10]

The purpose of this grant is to strengthen Judaic teaching and learning in new Jewish day high schools by providing schools with funding to help build a professional environment for Judaic educators that is both collaborative and content rich. Funds are used to enable teachers to engage in ongoing reflective practice, develop expertise in Judaic subject content, improve classroom pedagogy, create new ways to use technology, and develop curriculum.

RABBI SOLOVEITCHIK INSTITUTE TEACHING FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM[11]

This program (which is no longer running), offered intensive training, education, and ongoing professional development to a select group of highly accomplished young men and women committed to careers in Jewish education. Recent college graduates were recruited from across North America and Israel. They received a living stipend during the 10-month preparation period they spent at the institute in Brookline, Massachusetts.

"This report includes insights from evaluations of programs that offer mentoring through various frameworks. It draws upon findings from evaluations conducted by JESNA's Berman Center for Research and Evaluation."

These programs serve(d) a broad range of populations from within the field of Jewish education. Beginning teachers, established teachers and educational leaders engage(d) in mentoring through these programs. The Ohio State University Covenant Project was geared toward individuals who were enrolled in college and worked as part-time teachers. NESS also provides mentoring to individuals who teach in synagogue schools. The PEJE Grants Program (as did the Rabbi Soloveitchik Institute), focuses on training new teachers who are recent college graduates or individuals who have come to teaching as a career change. Mentors work with school principals who have at least two full years of experience leading a congregational school as a part of the Leadership Institute for Congregational School Principals.

The mentoring components of these programs take place in different settings. They are facilitated by philanthropic institutions and affiliated with academies of higher education. They occur within the context of Jewish communal organizations and take place in association with mentees' workplaces.

Despite the marked differences in context and populations served, commonalities emerged among the mentoring components of these programs. The universal aspects of these programs form the basis of this report. Additionally, the findings from Berman Center evaluations of these programs are contextualized and extended with empirical data from research conducted under the auspices of the Association of Institutions of Higher Learning for Jewish Education (AIHLJE).

"Mentoring AIHLJE Graduates: A Multi-Method Study" reports Dr. Jeffrey Schein and Julie Jaslow Auerbach's systematic exploration of how and if Jewish education professionals who graduate from schools affiliated with the Association of Institutions of Higher Learning for Jewish Education have been mentored since graduation. The research design for that project included a triangulation of methods in three distinct

[10] Shani Bechhofer, *Evaluation Study of the High School Professional Development Matching Grants Program: Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education* (New York, NY: Mandell L. Berman Jewish Heritage Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education at JESNA, 2005).

[11] Shani Bechhofer, *Report on Site Visit to the Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik Institute Teaching Fellowship Program* (New York, NY: Mandell L. Berman Jewish Heritage Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education at JESNA, 2004).

phases: 1) interviews with AIHLJE department heads; 2) an online survey of graduates from AIHLJE schools; and 3) qualitative interviews with 20 graduates.[12]

By combining original research with findings from Berman Center evaluations, this report offers insights that surfaced from across the broad field of Jewish education. Five instructive lessons emerged. We learned that mentoring relationships are most beneficial when:

1. Orientation and training are provided to both mentors and mentees.
2. Mentor and mentee pairings are thoughtfully coordinated.
3. Roles and expectations are clearly defined.
4. Multiple avenues of frequent communication and feedback are available.
5. Mentoring programs are thoughtfully managed and evaluated in an ongoing and systematic manner.

Significantly, we learned that each of the lessons derived and disseminated from mentoring experiences in Jewish educational settings is supported by scholarship from the broader field of education. The mentoring experiences of a unique subpopulation — Jewish education professionals — reflect and support the practices of mentoring education professionals in the field at large.

This is by no means an exhaustive guidebook about effective practices for mentoring Jewish educational professionals. Rather, it is an effort to derive broad lessons from the evaluation reports compiled by the Berman Center and findings from the AIHLJE research. Consequently, we readily acknowledge that there are additional lessons to be learned from the many other excellent mentoring programs offered in the field Jewish education, which are beyond the scope of this paper. For example, the sources gathered for this report did not include enough data to explore the process of formal closure within mentoring relationships. Nor was there enough information available to examine how technological innovations have affected mentoring relationships. Moreover, this report draws exclusively upon data about mentoring relationships in formal Jewish educational settings. This report does not include in-depth and detailed descriptions of each mentoring program. Instead, it provides a summation of the sources' common characteristics.

Across the programs evaluated, and among the respondents from the AIHLJE study, there was a lack of shared language about the practice of mentoring. This is due, (at least in part) to the fact that we are drawing upon primary sources that include data about a broad array of professionals in the field of Jewish education, including teachers, administrators, and school leaders. These groups have distinct, yet overlapping needs for mentoring. By combining these sources, we offer the articulation of a definition of mentoring that rings true across the diverse population of Jewish educational professionals. When we speak of lessons learned about mentoring, we use the term *mentoring* to refer to a structured relationship centered on support, guidance, and encouragement aimed at developing professionals in Jewish education.

About the AIHLJE Research Participants

In total, 147 graduates from nine AIHLJE institutions completed an online survey developed by Dr. Jeffrey Schein and Julie Jaslow Auerbach. Of these, 20 self-selected respondents participated in follow-up telephone interviews. The interview participants graduated from six AIHLJE institutions. Half of the interview participants (10) attended Hebrew Union College. Another four graduated from the University of Judaism. The remaining six respondents graduated from Gratz College (1), Jewish Theological Seminary (2), McGill University (1) and York University (2). There were 15 women and five men among the interview participants. The gender imbalance in the sample reflects a larger trend: far more women then men work in the field of Jewish education. The majority of survey respondents completed their education within the past 10 years. The remaining three graduated within the past 15 years. AIHLJE graduates interviewed work as: education directors, teachers, directors and administrators of local, national, and international organizations related to education. A small number are pursuing additional graduate degrees in education.[13]

[12] Jeffrey Schein and Julie Jaslow Auerbach, *Mentoring Association of Institutions of Higher Learning in Jewish Education Graduates: A Multi-Method Study* (2006).

[13] Tobin Belzer, *Mentoring A.I.H.L.J.E. Graduates: A Multi-Method Study* (Cleveland, OH: Association of Institutions of Higher Learning for Jewish Education, 2007), 2.

Lesson 1: Mentoring relationships are most beneficial when orientation and training are provided to both to mentors and mentees.

Mentor Training

> "Mentors are not born but made and continually in the process of becoming.[14]"

In the field of education, there is widespread agreement about the importance of preparation for the mentoring experience. Learning to become a mentor is a conscious process; a mentor does not necessarily emerge naturally from previous professional experience. Support for training is exemplified by the fact that literature about mentoring is dominated by guides, workbooks and manuals designed to aid in preparation for the mentoring process.[15] A mentoring guide written specifically for Jewish educational professionals — *Bridging the Gap: The Power of Mentoring Teachers for Creating Teaching Excellence: A Practical Guidebook for Congregational Education* by Nancy Prager Levin, with Sara S. Lee — has been recently published.[16]

Research also corroborates the importance of mentor training. In February 1997, the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics published the report *Teacher Professionalization and Teacher Commitment: A Multilevel Analysis.*[17] According to the study, mentor training has a significant impact on the quality of the mentoring relationship. A mentor who is trained is more effective than a mentor who is simply assigned to a mentee and then "set loose."[18] Similarly, in a study that focused on master teachers' process of learning to mentor in an Israeli high school, findings showed that systematic orientation enabled the mentor to provide a more in-depth and substantial account of the subtleties and complexities of the process of learning to "read" mentoring situations.[19] The New Teacher Center at the University of California at Santa Cruz, a national resource center focused on teacher and administrator induction, has an exemplary model of induction that includes four elements to train mentors. These include:

1. Mentor articulation of best practices to help teachers make good pedagogical decisions.

2. Balancing immediate and long-term needs.

3. Approaching teaching as inquiry by helping new teachers analyze and reflect on their own practices.

4. Building collaborative relationships to help build strong school communities.[20]

An effective training program equips mentors with revelant knowledge and skills. Such training helps mentors value description over interpretation, develop multiple methods of observation, employ research-based frameworks as the basis for reflection, and refine their conferencing and feedback skills.[21] Mentor training programs that engage mentors in completing and reflecting on self-inventories are particularly helpful. Through that

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[14] Betty Achinstein and Steven Z. Athanases, "New Visions for Mentoring New Teachers," *Mentors in the Making: Developing New Leaders for New Teachers,* eds. Betty Achinstein and Steven Z. Athanases (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 2006) 10.

[15] See, for example: Kathleen Feeney Jonson, *Being an Effective Mentor: How to Help Beginning Teachers Succeed* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2002), India Podsen and Vicki M. Denmark, *Coaching & Mentoring First-Year and Student Teachers* (Larchmont, NY: Eye On Education, 2000), Gwen L. Rudney and Andrea M. Guillaume, *Maximum Mentoring: An Action Guide for Teacher Trainers and Cooperating Teachers* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2003), Lois J. Zachary, *The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000).

[16] Nancy Prager Levin, with Sara S. Lee, *Bridging the Gap: The Power of Mentoring Teachers for Creating Teaching Excellence: A Practical Guidebook for Congregational Education* (Los Angeles, CA: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Rhea Hirsch School of Education, 2006).

[17] Richard Ingersoll and Nabeel Alsalam, *Teacher Professionalization and Teacher Commitment: A Multilevel Analysis* (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997).

[18] Hal Portner, *Mentoring New Teachers* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 1998).

[19] Lilly Orland, "Reading a Mentoring Situation: One Aspect of Learning to Mentor," *Teaching and Teacher Education*.17 (2001).

[20] Susan Hanson and Ellen Moir, *Beyond Mentoring: The Career Paths of Mentor Teachers* (Santa Cruz, CA: New Teacher Center), 2.

[21] James. B Rowley, "The Good Mentor," *Educational Leadership.* May (1999).

process, mentors gain understanding of their own leadership and supervisory styles. Mentors must learn how to assist beginning mentees to identify and meet their own psychological needs.[22]

An extensive mentor training program, which focused primarily on the acquisition of practical skills, was evaluated by Berman Center research associates. Over the course of one year, mentors participated in six training sessions. Trainings focused on defining mentoring roles, acquiring mentoring techniques and strategies, and learning to solve challenging mentor situations. Text study was also included in mentors' training. When surveyed about how well prepared mentors were to advise mentees, the majority indicated that the training seminars prepared them well in all of the specified content areas. This was particularly true with regard to: helping them to engage in reflective practice, articulating their Jewish educational visions, and improving communication skills.

Both mentor and mentee should be oriented about their relationship, and each should be aware of the other's preparation. This finding emerged from a number of programs evaluated by the Berman Center. In one evaluation, a Berman Center research associate writes:

> *Many participants [in one program evaluated] commented that it could have been more effective to have the mentors and mentees together at the orientation and that the roles and goals of the mentor — mentee relationship could have been presented in a more explicit and organized fashion.*

Preparation should include a process in which both mentor and mentee spend time thinking about what they want to give and receive in the relationship. According to Lily Orland, orientation provides a necessary lens for both the mentor and the mentee to better understand the mentoring process.[23]

Ongoing Professional Development for Mentors

Ongoing mentor training is another feature of beneficial mentoring programs. According to Lois Zachary, mentors benefit from opportunities for renewal education, advanced skill training, networking and support groups that meet regularly to exchange best practices and promote peer learning.[24] This assertion is supported by the work of the New Teacher Center. The Center's Mentor Professional Development offerings emphasize mentors' need for ongoing training and support to develop new skills and understandings.[25] With this understanding, Berman Center researchers made the following recommendation:

> *Additional mentorship training should be provided to enable mentors to better serve as catalysts for skill development and application of learnings from the [program].*

Ongoing training serves to reinforce the program objectives. It also provides mentors with the tools and support needed to more effectively transmit program goals in the context of their mentoring relationship.

[22] Yvonne Gold, "Psychological Support for Mentors and Beginning Teachers: A Critical Dimension," *Mentoring: Contemporary Principles and Issues,* eds. Theresa M. Bey and C. Thomas Holmes (Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators, 1992) 32.

[23] Orland, "Reading a Mentoring Situation: One Aspect of Learning to Mentor."

[24] Zachary, *Creating a Mentoring Culture: The Organization's Guide.*

[25] "Teacher Induction: Mentor Professional Development." The New Teacher Center at University of California, Santa Cruz. http://www.newteacher center.org/ti_mentor_pro_development.php

Lesson 2: Mentoring relationships are most beneficial when mentor and mentee pairings are thoughtfully coordinated.

Criteria for Matching

The nuances of mentor and student teacher pairings emerged as strong concern across the Berman Center evaluations and AIHLJE research. Ideally, criteria should be established for pairing mentees with mentors who will serve as the richest learning resource available. These criteria might include: proximity, same or close job type, same or related grade or subject area, common planning period, similar personality or educational philosophy. It should be noted that experts disagree regarding the significance of shared educational philosophy. Some believe that a mentor who understands and believes in a mentee's philosophies and styles will be better able to help, and that the relationship will be more comfortable if the pair shares beliefs. Others say that mentor partners will learn more from each other if they have different styles.[27] Consideration should also be given to age, gender, race, class, culture, life experiences, and geographic proximity as well as personal interests, career trajectory, and schedules.

"Strong mentoring programs use careful processes to select, prepare, and support mentor teachers in their ongoing work with novices.[26]"

Some believe that personal compatibility is the single most important characteristic when matching mentoring partners. Many graduates of AIHLJE schools asserted that their mentoring relationships worked because of "good chemistry." They attributed this to shared characteristics, including gender. One young woman appreciated that her mentor had similar concerns about maternity leave and raising a family. Gender was also evoked as a characteristic that prevented chemistry: a young woman felt that her male mentor could not understand her experience because "it is very different to be a man in a female dominated profession."

The mentor's age mattered to some AIHLJE graduates but not to others. One woman appreciated her mentor's "fatherly energy" and another felt that her mentor understood her because, "she has kids my age." Still another felt that her mentor could relate to her because, "we are both young."

More than age, many mentees asserted that a mentor's experience, ability to listen, and capacity to impart knowledge significantly matters. They appreciated the opportunity to learn from someone with more experience. One graduate commented, "It is critical to have more seasoned colleagues and former professors to serve in a support role, to help me problem solve, brainstorm, and reflect." Most AIHLJE graduates credited good chemistry to similarities in teaching philosophies, ideas about education, and personality styles.

The majority of mentees surveyed for a Berman Center evaluation felt that their "matches" were excellent. Mentees based their assessments on instrumental factors, such as their mentor's availability and helpfulness, their experience as "seasoned professionals," and their ability to balance being supportive with challenging them to think differently. Another factor that mentors identified as contributing to good

[26] Sharon Feiman-Nemser, "From Preparation to Practice: Designing a Continuum to Strengthen and Sustain Teaching," *Teachers College Record* 103.6 (2001): 1037.

[27] Jonson, *Being an Effective Mentor: How to Help Beginning Teachers Succeed.* 23.

"matches" includes having a shared vocabulary. This was most often the case with mentors and mentees who had graduated from the same schools of education. Mentors' familiarity with the roles and settings in which mentees worked also proved useful.

Both mentors and (especially) mentees in a Berman Center evaluation described obstacles to productive matches and mentoring relationships they encountered. Challenges included: differences in ideology, lack of experience, and limited contact due to mentors' other responsibilities. Mentors tended to have greater success when they were familiar with the settings in which the mentees work. Failed relationships were attributed to distance, lack of common perspective, and personality conflicts. One AIHLJE graduate, who was paired with a mentor in a different city and with whom he never met in-person, said he felt like he was "going through the motions." Another mismatch was described by a mentee in these words:

> *While I really like and respect my mentor, this was the weakest branch of the [program] due to absences and not being [in the same position]. Therefore [the mentor's] insights are very different.*

The mentoring relationship significantly benefits when mentor and mentee are matched as closely as possible for job type. This type of matching maximizes the mentor's opportunity to use his or her expertise. Mentees benefit from a mentors' in-depth knowledge of their specific circumstance.

In addition to similarities in demographic variables — or even in spite of them — compatibility in the mentoring relationship is largely based on the interpersonal interactions that occur during the mentoring process.[28] A student teacher who was interviewed for a Berman Center evaluation illustrated this point by asserting:

> *When a mentor sits down and tells you what midrash he loves to teach, it's frustrating and it takes away your independence. It's a balance. I find it more useful to have freedom to think about what I want to do, in terms of content and style, rather than a mentor who tries to get me to do it the way he would do it.*

The fit between what the mentee wants to learn and what the mentor has to offer is primarily important.

Buy-In From Mentees

A mentee's desire to be a part of a productive mentoring relationship is also key. Several mentors commented on the importance of mentees' "openness" to the mentoring relationship as a determinant of the success of the relationship. In programs where mentoring is a mandatory component, participants may not always take part whole-heartedly. Individuals take jobs as congregation school teachers for many reasons, so they may not be motivated to develop themselves as educational professionals.

[28] Zulmara Cline and Juan Necochea, "Mentoring for School Reform," *Journal for a Just and Caring Education* 3.2 (1997).

Productive mentoring relationships require the commitments of both mentoring partners. One program evaluated faced resistance from teachers who were reluctant participants. A staff person described teachers' responses to the mentoring component of the program with these words:

> *They conceive it as pressure on them to change the way they do things. They did not see the mentoring component as supportive but judgmental and didn't want to be involved with it. [They] were freaked out by the mentoring piece even though we tried to move it into a cooperative, collegial thing.*

This underscores the importance of mentor partners' shared intentions. According to Lois Zachary, both mentor and mentee should have a sense of ownership in the mentoring relationship.[29] Before participating in a mentoring program, both mentor and mentee should be vetted to assure that both are committed to developing a mentoring partnership.

Match Making Processes

Mentor and mentee pairings by third parties (i.e. programs or organizations that coordinate mentoring relationships) were met with varying degrees of success in the AIHLJE research. Matches between mentors and mentees are sometimes based on convenience and availability. In a small program, there may be little choice of mentors. As a mentoring program develops, it is optimal for the process of mentor selection to evolve from: "who's ready, willing and able?" to: "what experienced mentor is the best match for a particular entry-level mentee?"[30]

Most graduates of AIHLJE schools were not paired with their mentors by a third party. While some were assigned to their mentoring relationships, the majority of mentees initiated the mentoring relationship themselves. Mentors approached others. A number of respondents described how their mentoring relationships organically evolved over time.

The majority of AIHLJE graduates actively pursued their mentoring relationships. "I was looking for an opportunity to be mentored, to learn a specific skill set, so I sought it out," one respondent explained. Another found an alternative mentor because the person who had been assigned to her was "not a good match." In a few cases, graduates returned to the communities where they grew up and pursued mentoring relationships with the people who initially inspired them to become educational professionals.

In some instances, established educational professionals offered to participate in mentoring relationships. One respondent in the AIHLJE study described how she initially reached out to an esteemed colleague for advice about how to "survive the first year." In response, that individual offered to engage in an ongoing mentoring relationship. Respondents were extremely moved by such gestures. "The fact that my mentor volunteered really matters to me," one graduate explained. She continued: "I knew that she was doing it because she really wanted to."

[29] Zachary, *Creating a Mentoring Culture: The Organization's Guide.*

[30] Podsen and Denmark, *Coaching & Mentoring First-Year and Student Teachers* 32.

Some AIHLJE graduates explained that their mentoring relationships "just happened." It was only in retrospect that some graduates even realized they had been mentored. "I didn't think of it as mentoring at the time," one respondent recalled. "We never used the word 'mentor' to describe our relationship," another said.

Mentoring relationships are most effectively cultivated on-site: at a mentee's workplace. The following observation was made based on a Berman Center evaluation:

> *Using the schools' education directors to identify, recruit and match mentor teachers from within their own schools to be paired with [program] participants teaching in those schools helped secure high levels of consistency, oversight and buy-in for everyone involved. It also addressed the serious logistical problem of finding time for mentor-mentee pairs to meet. This program succeeded where numerous others have failed in this regard.*

A survey of mentors in San Francisco schools corroborated the assertion that proximity is particularly relevant to the effectiveness of pairing. That study found that beginning teachers were more likely to look to someone nearby for guidance. A respondent explained: "mentees need instantaneous assistance sometimes and will first seek help at their own school site."[31] Close physical proximity can encourage frequent communication and thus increase the amount of time the mentor and the mentee actually spend together.[32]

The main difficulty in pairing lies with the fact that partnerships are usually made before a mentee's strengths and weaknesses can be assessed. Pairings are often made very early in a individual's career, often before that person's needs and strengths are realized. Occasionally, even with a strong mentor, the match does not serve the needs of the mentee. If this happens, there should be a system in place so a new pairing can be made.[33]

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[31] Jonson, *Being an Effective Mentor: How to Help Beginning Teachers Succeed* 23.

[32] Billie J. Enz, "Guidelines for Selecting Mentors and Creating an Environment for Mentoring," *Mentoring: Contemporary Principles and Issues,* eds. Theresa M. Bey and C. Thomas Holmes (Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators, 1992) 70.

[33] Jonson, *Being an Effective Mentor: How to Help Beginning Teachers Succeed* 24.

Lesson 3: Mentoring relationships are most beneficial when roles and expectations are clearly defined.

Mentoring is a complex interaction involving the personal, the psychological and the professional skills of both the mentor and mentee. The skills needed to be an effective mentor vary according to the specific work of the mentee and according to the mentee's career stage. The mentor of a novice teacher has a different role than a mentor of a school principal, who has a still different role than the mentor of an education director. In the Berman Center evaluations and AIHLJE research, mentors had a broad range of roles. Mentors acted as: teachers, guides, counselors, motivators, sponsors, coaches, advisors, role models, referral agents, and door openers.[35] For mentees who were new to the field, mentors tended to teach, guide and advise. They were often described as role models. Mentors of established professionals more often acted as counselors, coaches, and advisors. Whether working with a novice or an established professional, mentor's roles are fluid. A mentor might take on any number of roles in the course of the mentoring relationship.

"The impact of mentoring not only depends on appropriate matches, time, and training, but also on expectations that mentors and novices hold for one another and what they actually do together.[34]"

Role Clarification

Mentors' roles are multifaceted. They function variously as a trusted colleague, developer, symbolizer of experience, coach, supervisor, and anthropologist for their mentee.[36] Based on observations and interviews with participants in mentoring settings at 12 schools, John Sampson and Robin Yeomans assert that the role of mentor has three broad dimensions: structural (the mentor as planner, organizer, negotiator and inductor), supportive (the mentor as host, friend, and counselor) and professional (the mentor as trainer, educator, and assessor).[37] These dimensions were evident to differing extents in Berman Center evaluations and the AIHLJE research.

Across these sources, mentoring was used as a means for training, guiding, and encouraging Jewish education professionals to become aware of their psychological needs and to meet those needs in constructive ways. Mentees often turned to their mentors for emotional support. In a Berman Center evaluation, mentors were described as "supportive" and "non-judgmental." A number of AIHLJE graduates explained their mentor's most significant role was simply to help them feel less alone. "As an educational director, there is only one of me on-site…that can make this job very lonely," a respondent commented. Another concurred: "I sit in a room by myself everyday…a monologue doesn't get you very far." AIHLJE graduates were very reassured to know that they could call upon their mentors in times of crisis. "It gives you a sense of security to know you aren't alone in it," a mentee explained. These sentiments resonate with findings from the broader field. Sandra Odell and Douglas Ferraro, in their study of beginning teachers, found that respondents most valued emotional support from their mentors.[38]

Mentors frequently act as career advisors. Participants in a program evaluated by the Berman Center reported that their mentors helped them to make difficult decisions

[34] Fay A. Head, Alan J. Reiman, and Lois Thies-Sprinthall, "The Reality of Mentoring: Complexity in Its Process and Function," *Mentoring: Contemporary Principles and Issues,* eds. Theresa M. Bey and C. Thomas Holmes (Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators, 1992).

[35] *How to Get the Mentoring You Want* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Rackham School of Graduate Studies, 2004).

[36] Head, "The Reality of Mentoring: Complexity in Its Process and Function," 9.9.

[37] John Sampson and Robin Yeomans, "Analyzing the Work of Mentors," *Mentorship in the Primary School,* eds. Robin Yeomans and John Sampson (London: The Falmer Press, 1994).

[38] Sandra J. Odell and Douglas P. Ferraro, "Teacher Mentoring and Teacher Retention," *Journal of Teacher Education* 43.3 (1992).

about leaving their current positions and taking new positions within the field. Mentees also benefited from networking opportunities and resource sharing. "She helps me make contacts, network, and she is available for recommendations and references," a respondent said. In some cases, mentors helped AIHLJE graduates navigate relationships with supervisors. In other cases, individuals were being mentored by their supervisors. "Even though she's my boss," a mentee explained, "she is more invested in developing me as a professional."

A mentor can help provide a mentee with credibility by presenting him or her as a co-professional.[39] An AIHLJE graduate reiterated this point: "When a respected leader in the field thinks you are capable, it is easier for you to believe." Another respondent asserted that she feels more certain of herself as a professional because of the respect her mentor gives her. Many said they appreciated the prestige of being associated with established professionals in their field.

Mentees rely heavily on their mentors for guidance with problem solving. A respondent in a Berman Center evaluation explained:

> *I needed that support when I was trying to figure out what to do and how to do it. My mentor helps to keep me on track and guide me.*

As mentees articulate their own philosophies and navigate challenges, they also use their mentors as sounding boards. Some AIHLJE graduates mentioned how their mentors challenged them to think differently. One respondent said that her mentoring experience helped her to "view the challenges of [her] job from new perspectives." A number of respondents appreciated how their mentors pushed them out of their "comfort zone."

In one evaluation, Berman Center researchers found that mentors primarily served as "problem-solvers," and were spending much less time processing the material presented. Mentors were less focused on helping their mentees absorb and apply the program's primary goals and objectives. Based on this finding, the following recommendation was made:

> *The role of the mentors in facilitating the program's goals must be re-examined in light of participants' perceptions of mentors as problem solvers rather than catalysts of skill development and application. Once the mentorship model is more fully articulated, it should be clarified for mentors and principals.*

An important task of the mentor is helping mentees to develop an inquiring stance.[40] Many AIHLJE graduates described how their mentoring relationships evolved to facilitate processes of deep self-reflection. "I believe that the mentoring has helped me to become a more reflective practitioner," a mentee asserted. A mentor observed:

> *The seminar provided the novice teacher, many of whom had reached a pivotal point in their careers, with an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of being a Jewish educator for their lives, and on their lives as Jewish educators.*

[39] Beth Tatum, Patti McWhorter, with Christina Healan, Mindi Rhoades, Lillian Chandler, Margie Michael, Andrea Bottoms Jacobson and Amy Wilbourne, "Maybe Not Everything, but a Whole Lot You Always Wanted to Know About Mentoring," *Teacher/Mentor : A Dialogue for Collaborative Learning,* eds. Peg Graham, Sally Hudson-Ross, Chandra Adkins, Patti McWhorter, and Jennifer McDuffie Stewart, The Practitioner Inquiry Series (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1999).

[40] Sharon Feiman-Nemser, "Helping Novices Learn to Teach: Lessons from an Exemplary Support Teacher," *Journal of Teacher Education* 52.1 (2001): 18.

Self-reflection was a beneficial focus in a number of programs evaluated by Berman Center research associates. In one evaluation, both mentees and mentors identified engaging in reflective practice as an area where they experienced the greatest growth.

Expectations

The mentor and mentee's understanding of one another's roles and expectations is essential for establishing compatibility. Roles should be clarified during the orientation process. Differences in expectations and viewpoints can result in stress and a dysfunctional mentoring relationship.[41] To avoid such difficulties, Berman Center research associates offered the following mandate in one evaluation: "Clear expectations about the commitment level required to serve as a mentor teacher must be articulated."

Establishing appropriate boundaries is important. In one evaluation, several mentors noted the challenge of establishing and maintaining professional roles with their mentees. Creating a boundary to ensure that relationships are not only personal proved useful.

Shared understanding of the mentoring role can be the most difficult part of the mentoring relationship process. Individuals bring their preconceived assumptions to the mentoring relationship. A mentor who was interviewed for a Berman Center evaluation illustrates this point:

> *You don't know what kind of student teacher you're going to get. What type of person, their strengths and weaknesses. If you make false assumptions about their strengths in terms of preparation, relating to kids, basic knowledge base…that was a major challenge. I came with assumptions about the kind of student teacher I'd get.*

Additionally, the images and beliefs that mentees bring to their teacher preparation influences what they are able to learn.[42]

Mentors inevitably have ideas about the mentoring process based on their previous experiences, and a mentee may be uncertain about the process. Self-awareness and purposeful introspection enables students to move beyond their initial assumptions. "Unless teacher educators engage prospective teachers in a critical examination of their entering beliefs," asserts Feiman-Nemser, "…these entering beliefs will continue to shape their ideas and practices."[43] A mentee from a Berman Center interview suggested:

> *Maybe finding some way to establish expectations from the beginning… figure out beforehand who wants to work in which way and let people negotiate that kind of thing up front and in the open.*

Few graduates of AIHLJE schools said they had any expectations upon entering their relationships and even fewer discussed those expectations with their mentor. The lack of role clarification described by AIHLJE graduates was also evident in their mentoring meetings. Few participated in mentoring sessions that followed an agenda

[41] Kate Hawkey, "Roles, Responsibilities, and Relationships in Mentoring: A Literature Review and Agenda for Research," *Journal of Teacher Education* 48.5 (1997).

[42] Feiman-Nemser, "From Preparation to Practice: Designing a Continuum to Strengthen and Sustain Teaching," 1016.

[43] Feiman-Nemser, "From Preparation to Practice: Designing a Continuum to Strengthen and Sustain Teaching," 1017.

or curriculum. Most often, mentees introduced topics to direct the meetings. Other times the mentor guided the conversation. Respondents explained that meetings were often facilitated by both participants, and had no agenda. "The conversation simply flowed," one woman explained. Many others mentioned that meetings tended to include a lot of "schmoozing."

When roles are clear, the mentoring tasks are also more evident.[44] In one program, a Berman Center researcher found that a mentoring orientation booklet helped to facilitate role clarification:

> *Overall, mentors expressed that they had a good understanding of their role within the context of the program and generally felt well prepared to carry out that role. They thought the mentoring booklet distributed at the mentor orientation was good and that the orientation itself was generally helpful.*

Even when goals are clearly articulated, roles are well defined, and milestones are identified, each mentoring relationship is unique.[45] Each mentoring relationship occurs in a unique, interpersonal context.[46] Individuals cultivate different kinds of expertise and have distinct preferences about the way they take in, interact with and respond to stimuli in a learning environment.[47] To accommodate individual differences, an effective mentor is: sensitive to the needs of the mentee, a good listener, can communicate openly, understanding that mentees may be effective using a variety of styles, not judgmental, and a model of the philosophy that education is an ongoing process.[48]

Just as good teachers adjust their teaching behaviors and communications to meet the needs of individual students, good mentors adjust their mentoring communication to meet the needs of individual mentees. To make such accommodations, good mentors must possess deep understanding of their own communication styles and a willingness to objectively observe the behavior of the mentee.[49] This was not always the case with the programs evaluated by the Berman Center. A mentee asserted her dissatisfaction with the singular approach of the training, explaining:

> *[The administration] was very clear that observing is the way to learn. I'm not sure everyone works the same way. I was very frustrated and bored.*

For another respondent, this problem was ameliorated by the opportunity to work with more than one mentor. That mentee explained:

> *I loved [my various mentors'] three different approaches. To see three different pedagogical sets of skills and approaches. I get along well with all three despite their different styles. With one, we learned consciously and unconsciously how to ask questions. One was very nuts and bolts, a very much in your face style which I actually enjoyed. The other's strength was giving us the research and data we needed when we had a question. Observations, post-observation meetings and videos were extremely helpful with all three.*

44 Podsen and Denmark, *Coaching & Mentoring First-Year and Student Teachers* 31.

45 Lois J. Zachary, "The Role of Teacher as Mentor," *New Directions for Adult Continuing Education*.93 (2002).

46 Rowley, "The Good Mentor."

47 Rowley, "The Good Mentor," 35.

48 Jonson, *Being an Effective Mentor: How to Help Beginning Teachers Succeed* 17.

49 Rowley, "The Good Mentor."

Changing Needs and Roles

Mentees have differing needs in their mentoring relationships and those needs change over time. As such, the content of the mentoring relationships benefits from flexibility. In the course of the mentoring relationship, mentees become increasingly self-directed, taking on increasing responsibility for the learning process.[50] This was true of AIHLJE graduates. Concrete problem solving was the main focus of mentoring meetings for most AIHLJE graduates during the first stages of their mentoring relationships. As they gained confidence and experience, their needs changed and so did the content of their relationships. "The learning shifted from strategic and practical to philosophical," a graduate explained. Another said, "at first I needed support and validation, later I needed more feedback and suggestions."

Mentoring Beginning Teachers

The process of mentoring teachers is particularly specialized. Skills needed to work with novice teachers are not necessarily learned in the classroom.[51] Understanding the needs of the beginning teacher is at the core of being an effective mentor. In addition to understanding the problems and concerns of beginning teachers, familiarity with stage and age theories of adult development and learning processes is also beneficial.[52] A mentor should be empathetic with the beginner and aware that the mentee is in the process of developing both personally and professionally.[53]

One of the biggest challenges involved in being a student teacher is successfully playing roles of both student and teacher. Because of the insecurity prevalent during student teaching, the role of teacher is often difficult to assume. AIHLJE graduates expressed universal agreement that the first year working in the field after graduate school is overwhelming. "Getting through the first year was the roughest," one woman said.

Graduates said that initially, they looked to their mentors primarily for help navigating the practical details. For many AIHLJE graduates, being in the field enabled them to "use the tools they acquired in graduate school" for the first time. They were able to make important connections between theory and practice. One respondent said, "I wish I could take classes over, now that I have a live lab as a professional." Many commented on the difference between on-the-job training and the philosophies and theories they learned as students of education. "Learning to work with people, negotiate with lay leaders, talk to parents, pick out text books…they don't teach any of that in graduate school," a respondent remarked. For AIHLJE graduates, making connections between their experiences and education was an important developmental phase.

As the AIHLJE graduates emerged into their professional identities, many described how the nature of their relationships with their mentors changed. "Once we had more shared experience, our relationship became less hierarchical," a woman explained. Another said: "In the beginning, he had a better sense of me than I did…now I'm more worthy of being his equal." When her mentor called her for advice, one graduate realized she had become her mentor's colleague.

When an educational professional takes on the role of mentor, they mark a step in their own career ladder. AIHJE graduates noted that having a mentor motivated them to become mentors themselves. "After graduation, I had the occasion to be a mentor," a respondent explained. "I found the experience very gratifying and I think I learned as much as the student I mentored." Another said: "I feel very lucky to have been mentored and know I would benefit from being a mentor." Becoming a mentor demonstrates that an individual has acquired knowledge and experience that would be beneficial to share.

[50] Zachary, *The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships* 3.

[51] Podsen and Denmark, *Coaching & Mentoring First-Year and Student Teachers* 35.

[52] Rowley, "The Good Mentor."

[53] Jonson, *Being an Effective Mentor: How to Help Beginning Teachers Succeed.*

Lesson 4: Mentoring relationships are most beneficial when multiple avenues of frequent communication and feedback are available.

"Mentor-mentee collaborative reflection about education is crucial to the development of mentees' professional knowledge.[54]"

Frequency and Quality of Communication

Berman Center evaluations supported findings that ongoing and substantive communication is the fundamental tool of the mentoring partnership. Giving frequent and sensitive feedback is cited as the single most important action that mentors take, and is the item most missed when absent.[55] A mentee in a program evaluated by the Berman Center reported that she did not receive enough feedback:

> *There was very little feedback altogether, [it was] lukewarm, i.e. I couldn't tell if it was positive or negative. In general I think part of the program is to help people who haven't been teachers to know where they are, if they're on the right track. I feel I didn't get any of that.*

In another program evaluated by the Berman Center, the majority of mentors and mentees felt that their frequency of contact was "just right." Some mentoring partners maintained a mutually agreed upon regular meeting schedule. In other cases, mentees initiated "check-ins" with their mentors for advice as needed.

The majority of AIHLJE graduates indicated that meetings with their mentor occurred "as needed" or "randomly." Some indicated that meetings took place once a week or once a month. Mentoring meetings most often occurred in person. Emails and phone calls were also widely used. This supports Lois Zachary assertion that, "communication often gets accomplished in sound bites — email, quick conversations," less frequently, "longer conversations or exchanges take place."[56] The lines of communication should be open between mentoring partners, even if regular meetings are not possible.

The content of communication is as important as the frequency. In "Mentors: They Simply Believe," Thomas Lasley states that the crucial characteristic of mentors is the ability to communicate their belief that a person is capable of transcending present challenges and of accomplishing great things in the future.[57] "The good mentor," writes James Rowley, "communicates hope and optimism…both in private conversations and in public settings." He continues, "good mentors share their own struggles and frustrations and how they overcame them."[58] Mentors help to set the tone of a positive relationship by using open and supportive communication skills.[59]

Effective mentors are also willing and able to give corrective feedback. Mentees can display widely different attitudes toward the help offered by a mentor.[60] As such, mentors should gain permission from mentees to give honest feedback, since individuals are more willing to accept corrective feedback if they have agreed to hear it.

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[54] Jian Wang, Michael Strong and Sandra J. Odell, "Mentor-Novice Conversations About Teaching: A Comparison of Two U.S. And Two Chinese Cases." *Teachers College Record,* 106.4 (2004): 775.

[55] Rudney and Guillaume, *Maximum Mentoring: An Action Guide for Teacher Trainers and Cooperating Teachers.* 98.

[56] Zachary, *The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships* 35.

[57] Thomas Lasley, "Mentors: They Simply Believe.," *Peabody Journal of Education* 71.1 (1996).

[58] Rowley, "The Good Mentor," 21.

[59] Stephen P. Gordon and Susan Maxey, *How to Help Beginning Teachers Succeed,* 2nd ed. (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2000).

[60] Rowley, "The Good Mentor," 21.

Feedback is a powerful vehicle for learning and a critical enabling mechanism in facilitating mentoring relationships. When feedback is given and received appropriately, it nurtures the growth of the mentorship relationship. Based on findings that uncovered mentors' hesitancy to provide negative feedback, the following recommendation was included in a Berman Center evaluation:

> *Mentors need to know how to deliver negative feedback when necessary. Although they may not want to damage their relationship with their colleagues, mentors have to be honest; they can "go slowly" so they do not lose the trust of their colleagues.*

The ability to ask for feedback, receive it, accept it, and take action is an essential part of an effective mentoring relationship. The mentor's challenge is to "provide thoughtful, candid and constructive feedback in a manner that supports individual learning and development while encouraging the mentee's authorship and expression in meeting new challenges."[61] Among factors that contribute to effective communication are: frequency of observations; sensitivity and impartiality; familiarity with mentees' objectives; written observation and oral feedback; opportunities for the mentee to choose what is observed; and assurance that observation is undertaken in a disciplined, focused, and accountable manner.[62]

The importance of good communication rests in the fact that the potential for mistrust and miscommunication in a mentoring relationship is strong. Lois Zachary notes that mentoring partners with different styles can develop misunderstandings and conflict more as a result of style than substantive differences. She recommends that each mentoring partner be aware of their own and the other's communication style.[63]

Conflict is part of any dynamic relationship, remind Podsen and Denmark, and can arise because individuals are emotionally invested in the process.[64] Guillaume and Rudney assert that even in mentoring partnerships that are successful, the potential for a partnership to go awry looms large. When relationships go amiss, their research and experience points to faulty or absent communication as a main contributing factor.[65] The process of conflict resolution should be discussed at the very beginning of the mentoring relationship. An important part of a mentor's job is to model effective practices for working through an issue.

[61] Zachary, *The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships* 130.

[62] Paul Frecknall, "How Mentorship Happens: Evolving Procedures and Practices," Mentorship in the Primary School, eds. Robin Yeomans and John Sampson (London: The Falmer Press, 1994).

[63] Zachary, *The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships* 124.

[64] Podsen and Denmark, *Coaching & Mentoring First-Year and Student Teachers.*

[65] Rudney and Guillaume, *Maximum Mentoring: An Action Guide for Teacher Trainers and Cooperating Teachers* 30.

Lesson 5: Mentoring relationships are most beneficial when mentoring programs are thoughtfully managed and evaluated in an ongoing and systematic manner.

"Effective programs involve a cycle of planning, implementing and assessing results and using such results to renew planning for improvement.[66]"

Management and Oversight

Ensuring that a mentoring program is well managed is crucial. A well-managed program establishes credibility, enables the effective measurement of progress, and helps to identify areas that need improvement. Management of a mentoring program should include:

1. Regular communication with program participants.
2. Assisting mentors and mentees to define next steps for achieving mentee goals.
3. Establishing a process to manage grievances, resolve issues and offer positive feedback.
4. Assisting mentors and mentees whose relationship is not working out.
5. Ensuring that appropriate documentation is done on a regular basis.

Oversight of mentoring partnerships is an essential, and often overlooked aspect of the mentoring process. Many AIHLJE asserted that their mentoring partnerships seemed to lack sufficient oversight: their assigned mentors never contacted them, and the relationships simply "never took off." A Berman Center evaluation report included the recommendation that "mentors be monitored by program administration with regard to the amount of time, quality of feedback, and other factors the program deems important." The mentee's learning progress and process should be continuously monitored to ensure that the mentoring goals are being met. Learning milestones should be acknowledged and celebrated. Mentors should seek feedback about their mentoring skills and the effects of mentoring should be studied.

In developing mentoring programs, provisions and resources need to be specifically dedicated to an ongoing evaluation process. Program evaluation can yield valuable data and suggest alternative approaches to improving mentoring programs. Based on several case studies of mentoring programs in primary schools, Joan Stephenson and John Sampson emphasis the crucial role of organizational leadership in ensuring the effectiveness of the mentoring experience. They assert that leadership acts as a cultural creator, both in terms of how things are done and as educative leaders.[67] In response to evaluation feedback from Berman Center researchers, as well as direct reports from school leadership, the staff of one program significantly modified their mentoring strategy. They decided to phase out the role of a designated mentor teacher within the

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[66] Podsen and Denmark, *Coaching & Mentoring First-Year and Student Teachers* 37.

[67] Joan Stephenson and John Sampson, "Conditions for Effective Mentorship within the School," *Mentorship in the Primary School*, eds. Robin Yeomans and John Sampson (London: The Falmer Press, 1994).

schools, discontinue the mentor teacher course, and instead provide instruction on peer coaching and mentoring techniques to teachers and educational directors. The mentoring component evolved over time, in response to the challenges of implementing an effective model.

Many programs dedicate insufficient attention to specific evaluation of the mentoring components of a program. Four purposes for conducting evaluation studies have been identified as applicable to mentoring programs: accountability, improvement, understanding, and knowledge.[68] The specifics of what and how to evaluate mentoring programs depend importantly upon the purpose of evaluation.

[68] Odell and Ferraro, "Teacher Mentoring and Teacher Retention."

Recommendations

1. Provide orientation and training to both mentors and mentees.

- Learning to become a mentor is a conscious process and does not always emerge naturally from previous professional experience.
- An effective training program helps mentors value description over interpretation; develop multiple methods of observation; employ research-based frameworks as the basis for reflection and refine their conferencing and feedback skills.
- Mentor training programs that engage mentors in completing and reflecting on self-inventories are particularly helpful.
- Both mentor and mentee should be oriented about their relationship, and each should be aware of the other's preparation.
- Mentors benefit from ongoing professional development opportunities that might include: renewal education, advanced skill training, networking, and support groups.

2. Coordinate mentor and teacher pairings thoughtfully.

- Criteria should be established for pairing the mentee with a mentor who will serve as the richest learning resource available.
- Before participating in a mentoring program, both mentor and mentee should be vetted to assure that both are committed to developing a mentoring partnership.
- The fit between what the mentee wants to learn and what the mentor has to offer is primarily important.
- Mentoring relationships are most effectively cultivated on-site.
- Close physical proximity can encourage frequent communication and thus increase the amount of time the mentor and the mentee actually spend together.

3. Clearly define roles and expectations.

- The mentor and mentee's understanding of one another's roles and expectations is essential for establishing compatibility.
- An important task of the mentor is helping mentees to develop an inquiring and reflective approach to their work.
- Mentees have differing needs in their mentoring relationships and those needs change over time.
- Mentors should adjust their approach to accommodate the needs of individual mentees.

4. Make multiple avenues for frequent communication and feedback available.

- Giving frequent and sensitive feedback is the single most important action that mentors offer, and is the item most missed when absent
- The content of communication is as important as the frequency.
- Mentors help to set the tone of a positive relationship by using open and supportive communication skills.
- Feedback is a powerful vehicle for learning and a critical enabling mechanism in facilitating mentoring relationships.

5. Manage and evaluate mentoring programs in a thoughtful and ongoing manner.

- Effective programs involve a cycle of planning, implementing and assessing results to renew planning for improvement.
- Mentoring partnerships should be carefully overseen to ensure that goals are being met.
- The learning progress and process should be continuously monitored to ensure that the mentee's goals are being met.
- Provisions and resources need to be specifically dedicated to an ongoing evaluation process.

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Appendix: About the Evaluations

This report draws upon lessons from Berman Center evaluations of the following projects: The Leadership Institute for Congregational School Principals; NESS (Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools); The Ohio State University Covenant Project; The Professional Development Matching Grants for High School Judaic Educators, a program of the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE); and Rabbi Soloveitchik Institute Teaching Fellowship Program. The main goals and methodological approaches of each evaluation, as well as background information about each of these projects, are discussed on the following pages.

Leadership Institute for Congregational School Principals[69]

The Leadership Institute is a two-year certificate program for principals from multiple denominations — Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Orthodox — who run congregational schools. The Institute is a joint project of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Jewish Theological Seminary, and the UJA-Federation of New York. The program offers congregational school principals (from the greater New York metropolitan area), the opportunity to focus on three main areas: leadership, pedagogy and Judaica. The Institute involves two intense summer training sessions, eight 1-2 day symposia, mentoring, and a seminar in Israel.

The leadership curriculum introduces participants to current research on educational leadership and focuses on school management, the culture of the school, and congregation and lay-professional relationships. The Judaica curriculum helps principals communicate Jewish values, skills and practices in their schools by focusing on texts, theology, ideology, role modeling and personal religious growth. The pedagogy curriculum works to strengthen the identity and effectiveness of congregational school principals as mentors. Principals are introduced to current research on learning, and given the opportunities to hone critical supervisory and pedagogical skills.

A mentor is assigned to guide and supervise each principal. During the course of the program, principals make two visits to their mentors' schools. Those visits allow principals to shadow the mentors, and enable them to analyze instructional practices and curricular materials with guided reflection throughout the experience. Participants create an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) with their mentors, in which they define their goals for professional development and further Jewish learning. Participants decide with their mentors how to best invest their time to meet these goals.

The primary questions addressed by the evaluation focused on program accomplishments in light of the goals and logic model, and the factors that contributed to these accomplishments. Challenges were examined in terms of implementation and impact. Recommendations were provided to help program providers move forward most effectively. Data for the evaluation included: group and individual interviews with Leadership Institute faculty and staff, surveys from principals and their mentors, and written documents provided by staff.

[69] Isaacs, Hecht, Rozenek and Jelen, *Summary Report: The Leadership Institute for Congregational School Principals, Interim Report 2.*

NESS (Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools)[70]

The Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education (ACAJE) of Greater Philadelphia launched NESS (Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools) in 2003 as a community-based effort to address the need for synagogue school improvement. Using a holistic and systemic approach, NESS aims to integrate schools into the overall functioning of their synagogue communities. Formal training is provided to participating lay and professional leadership to equip them with skills necessary to work cooperatively and effectively. Training involves 1. assessment, to create a baseline from which to measure school change over time, 2. courses for participating teachers and education directors, 3. coursework and coaching for designated "Mentor Teachers," 4. professional organizational development for lay and professional leadership from each school, 5. leadership development for education directors; and 6. curriculum development.

ACAJE engaged evaluators from JESNA's Berman Center for Research and Evaluation to conduct a longitudinal evaluation of the pilot phase of the NESS program. The evaluation focused on both implementation of each of the primary NESS program components and the impact of NESS on synagogue school students, the individual program participants (education directors, teachers and lay leaders), and the schools as a whole. The NESS evaluation incorporated a multi-method, longitudinal approach to data gathering. Over the course of three years, evaluators collected qualitative data about program implementation and impact through indepth individual and group interviews with key informants from ACAJE and members of the "leadership teams" (education directors, rabbis, teachers, synagogue presidents and education committee chairs) from each of the six participating schools. Evaluators assessed the impact of NESS on students' attitudes toward Hebrew school by means of brief surveys administered to sixth grade students, before teachers had begun implementing the strategies introduced. A second cohort of sixth graders completed surveys at the end of the third program year. In addition, sixth grade students in six "Non-NESS" Hebrew schools in the Philadelphia area served as a comparison group. The Non-NESS students completed identical surveys.

The NESS evaluation was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. Do the main components of the NESS program provide participants with the skills and knowledge to create effective synagogue schools that reflect a thematic, meaning centered approach?

2. Are there differences in the classrooms (teachers and students), governance structures (within the school and synagogue), and the congregational school as a whole that can be attributed to NESS participation?

2a. If these differences exist, do they affect students' attitudes, knowledge and behaviors particularly with regard to Jewish identity, involvement in Jewish community, and continuation of Jewish learning and involvement beyond Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

[70] *Ness (Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools) Cohort 1: Final Report.*

The Ohio State University Covenant Project[71]

This project (which is no longer running), was aimed at increasing the number of qualified congregational school teachers in Columbus, Ohio. Recognizing that nearly one quarter of all congregational school teachers were hired from among the student population at Ohio State University, the initiative sought to provide these students with professional development in pedagogy and classroom management techniques as well as opportunities to improve their own Judaic skills and content knowledge.

The Covenant Project was comprised of two tracks: a teacher training and support track and a career exploration track. In each track, college students who were teaching in area religious schools gained pre-service training and in-service mentoring. Mentors, who are master teachers in Columbus area religious schools, worked one-on-one with students who were teaching in religious schools. The mentors' role was to impart pedagogical knowledge around lesson planning, problem solving, and content. Mentors also helped students make connections in the Jewish community.

In keeping with the Covenant Foundation's emphasis on evaluation as a tool for reflective practice and educational improvement, an evaluation process was designed from the inception of the Covenant Fellows program. The evaluation was designed to assess whether the Seminar did what it proposed to do and how closely the program, as executed, reflected the stated goals in the proposal and promotional materials. The evaluation also focused on ethnographic components of the seminar related to participants' experiences with the faculty, their colleagues, and the program in general. The short-term impact of the program on participants and their home institutions was also explored. The data included four components: 1. on-site observation of selected sessions during the Covenant Fellows Seminar, 2. written evaluations completed by Fellows at the end of the Seminar to provide feedback about their experience, 3. written follow-up evaluations completed by Fellows six months after the Seminar, and 4. collection of documentation of promotion of the Seminar (newspaper and bulletin clippings, etc.).

[71] Isaacs, Hecht, Rozenek and Jelen, *Summary Report: The Leadership Institute for Congregational School Principals, Interim Report 2.*

The Professional Development Matching Grants for High School Judaic Educators, a program of the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education[72]

The purpose of this grant is to strengthen Judaic teaching and learning in new Jewish day high schools by providing schools with funding to help build a professional environment for Judaic educators that is both collaborative and content rich. Funds are used to enable teachers to engage in ongoing reflective practice, develop expertise in Judaic subject content, improve classroom pedagogy, create new ways to use technology, and develop curriculum.

A number of schools turned to formal mentoring as a structure for the professional development of their teachers. At one school, mentor teachers work with each new teacher to set goals in the fall. Mentors observe and offer feedback about their mentee's teaching throughout the year, and hold a closure meeting with each teacher at the end of the year. Another school instituted a school-wide mentoring system, in which mentors from all departments meet weekly to discuss mentoring issues. At another school, an administrative intern (who is also a teacher) receives mentoring from the Head of School and other members of the administration.

The evaluation of this program occurred in three phases. The first evaluation report submitted to PEJE included findings on early implementation based on careful review of application materials, proposals, and work-plans submitted by the six schools receiving the grant, as well as in-depth telephone interviews with ten informants from the six schools. Telephone interviews were conducted mid-way through the first year of the grant. The report focuses on the grant application process, the matching funds, planning and design process, work plan implementation, and the professional development programs supported by the grant.

The mid-point evaluation report summarizes the developments at each of the schools receiving the grant. Semi-structured telephone interviews with nine informants from the six schools were conducted during the early summer after the first grant year. Interviews focused on implementation status, identification of challenges, strategies used by schools to overcome challenges, lessons learned, and revisions in the work plans for the second year of the grant. Interim reports were compared with initial proposals and work plans.

The third report contains two sections. The first section includes a summary of the developments at each of the schools receiving the grant during the second year of the grant. These school summaries are based on telephone interviews of 11 informants, which were conducted during the second grant year. Interviews focused on implementation challenges, strategies used by schools to overcome challenges, reflections on lessons learned from the experience, and feedback for PEJE. The report also contains an integrative analysis and report on the models and lessons learned that emerged from the evaluation of the program.

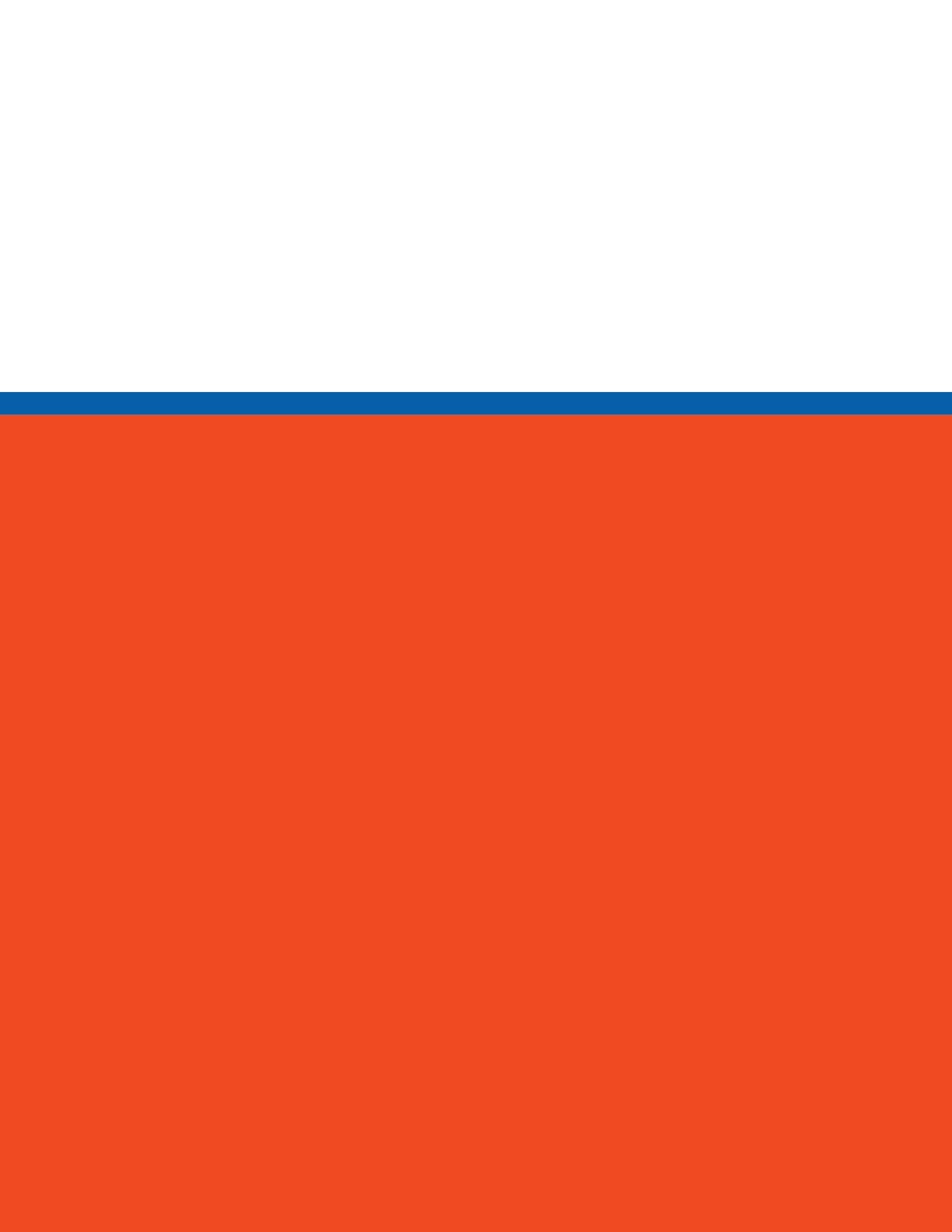
[72] Bechhofer, *Evaluation Study of the High School Professional Development Matching Grants Program: Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education.*

Rabbi Soloveitchik Institute Teaching Fellowship Program[73]

This program (which is no longer running), offered intensive training, education, and ongoing professional development to a select group of highly accomplished young men and women committed to careers in Jewish education. Recent college graduates were recruited from across North America and Israel and received a living stipend during the 10-month preparation period they spent at the institute in Brookline, Massachusetts. Throughout the school year, mentors who are master teachers worked with students. Mentors met with students and offered feedback about in-class observations.

A site visit to the Rabbi Soloveitchik Institute's Teaching Fellowship Program was conducted in May 2004. The purpose of the visit was to begin to collect data to inform program decision-making and evaluation design. Interviews were conducted with seven program leaders. Two student focus groups were conducted and all Fellows and mentor teachers were interviewed.

[73] Bechhofer, *Report on Site Visit to the Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik Institute Teaching Fellowship Program.*



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