Urgent Questions, Pressing Problems, and Emerging Paradigms in Jewish Peoplehood Education

David Mittelberg

Abstract

What does it mean to educate towards Jewish peoplehood? How can Jewish educational tourism achieve this goal? This paper traces the historical development of Jewish educational tourism and explores the paradigm of Jewish peoplehood that emerges from it. This is accomplished through a close analysis of the different stages of programmatic activity at the Department of Jewish Peoplehood – Oren throughout its 25 years.

The paper describes three stages of educational programming at the Department of Jewish Peoplehood – Oren: (1) the Israel experience, which focuses on bringing Diaspora Jews to Israel and having Israel impact them; (2) the *mifgash* (facilitated encounter), where Israeli and Diaspora Jews come together to learn from one another; and (3) building an ongoing relationship between Jewish communities in the Diaspora and in Israel.

These three stages point to an emerging paradigm of Jewish peoplehood, including: belonging to the Jewish people, having a connection to other Jews, Jewish capital, and personal responsibility to fellow Jews. This paradigm has the capacity to address the various challenges facing Jewish educational tourism today, pointing the way toward new directions in Jewish educational tourism and educational tourism research.

Keywords: Jewish peoplehood, educational tourism, Israel experience, *mifgash*, encounter, Israel education, Diaspora education

Prof. David Mittelberg, Oranim Academic College of Education

Oranim Academic College of Education is the institution where the Department of Jewish Peoplehood has been located since its founding 25 years ago. Oranim College deserves a lot of credit for the success of the activities of this department. At first, it was an unwitting partner, then an unknowing partner, and, by today, a proud partner of the work that has been done by the Department of Jewish Peoplehood – Oren. This article will begin with a discussion of that work.

Since its establishment, the Department of Jewish Peoplehood – Oren was the result of collaborations. The first collaboration was with the late Professor Moshe Kerem, former head of Oranim. He and I, two members of the Habonim youth movement, a generation apart, wanted to take the secret of the Zionist youth movements and spread it to the Jewish world outside the youth movement structure. That is the hidden agenda of my life. Both he and I had been through the "Israeli experience" before it was called that. We had our lives transformed by it before people talked about it. We knew that if this secret was kept inside the youth movements alone, we would be doing a disservice to our own generation, and maybe even generations to follow. What we have done, and what we are all doing today, is trying to transfer that experience to the entire Jewish world.

The leadership of this institution over a quarter of a century ago was not committed to this vision. As Zionists, they were in favor of what we were doing, as long as we did not interfere with their work. So we set up our offices on the other hill, on the periphery of the campus. Even while Oranim, as an educational institution, was a warm supporter of the work being done, it was not seen as part of the mainstream. Today, our work is becoming part of the mainstream of this institution. Today, when the President of Oranim, Professor Yaarah Bar-On, speaks about her vision for the college, she talks about Oranim as an international center, as a magnet for those from abroad interested in learning about and experiencing Israel, the Galilee, and the many unique aspects of the Oranim campus. I hope that all of the educational institutions in Israel will become mainstream foci of global Jewish educational tourism. This point is central to my thesis in this article.

In the years since Prof. Moshe Kerem and I established the Department of Jewish Peoplehood – Oren, our work has continued to be characterized by collaboration. Some of the key players include: Dr. Roberta Bell-Kligler, who has been with Oren almost twenty years now, and who is the secret behind its powerful educational work; Professor Lilach Lev Ari, the co-convener of the 2014 conference on Jewish educational tourism, who has long been my colleague in evaluation and research; my colleague and friend Professor Leonard Saxe, who has helped build the kind of international, multicultural, and cross-cultural collaboration that is not only a keystone of, but a necessary condition for, successful global tourism research; and Dr. Dinah Laron, the Dean of the Faculty of Education at Oranim who, as a result of that collaboration with Brandeis, has been working with us in the evaluation of Boston-Haifa school connection programs.

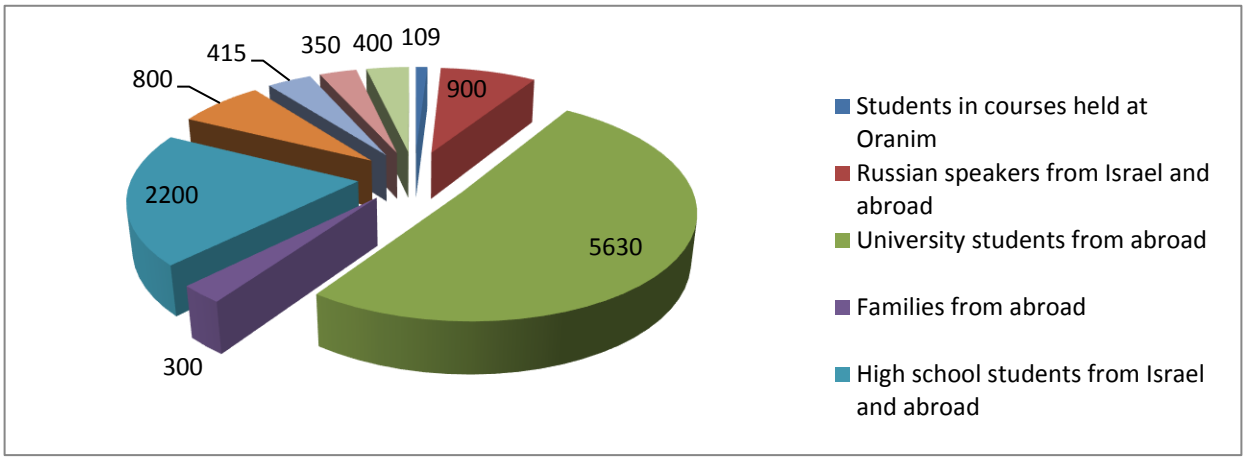
Educational Tourism

When I started this work at Oranim College 25 years ago (Mittelberg, 1988, 1999), the term "educational tourism" was an oxymoron. Nobody used the term educational tourism, and if they had, people would not have understood what was being discussed. Tourism in the academic world in general was regarded with derision, and those people engaging in tourism were thought to be interlopers, creeping into the academic world where they did not belong. The sociology of tourism, if included anywhere in academia, was in the department of geography. Today, that is certainly not the case, and tourism has become a very powerful arm in the academic world. Educators often had a problem with tourism, even those educators who themselves almost always benefited from educational tourism. While appreciating the effect on themselves personally, they have difficulty incorporating it into their rationale as educators.

There was disagreement among educators and tourist educators about Birthright, when Birthright was still an idea. Some argued that ten days could not possibly provide a meaningful educational experience; furthermore, Birthright was regarded with derision by many in the Jewish educational establishment. Of course, that kind of derision is no longer acceptable. Birthright's success has been documented. It seems a revolution was necessary to reach the point where educational tourism was acceptable language and a respected discipline. This was a dynamic process, and it is important to remember how much has changed since I began working in educational tourism a quarter of a century ago.

In 25 years, a tiny group of educators here at Oranim, dealing with a changing Jewish world, took the secret behind the Zionist youth movements' success, and applied it to diverse population groups, in order to develop a product and promote a message. The absolute numbers are not germane to the purposes of the article and have been presented elsewhere (Bell-Kligler & Mittelberg, in press), but suffice it to say that thousands of individuals took part in the programs offered. The following charts demonstrate the diversity of participants and serve as background for the discussion in this article.

Figure 1. Direct participants in Department of Jewish People – Oren programs between 1987 and 2011

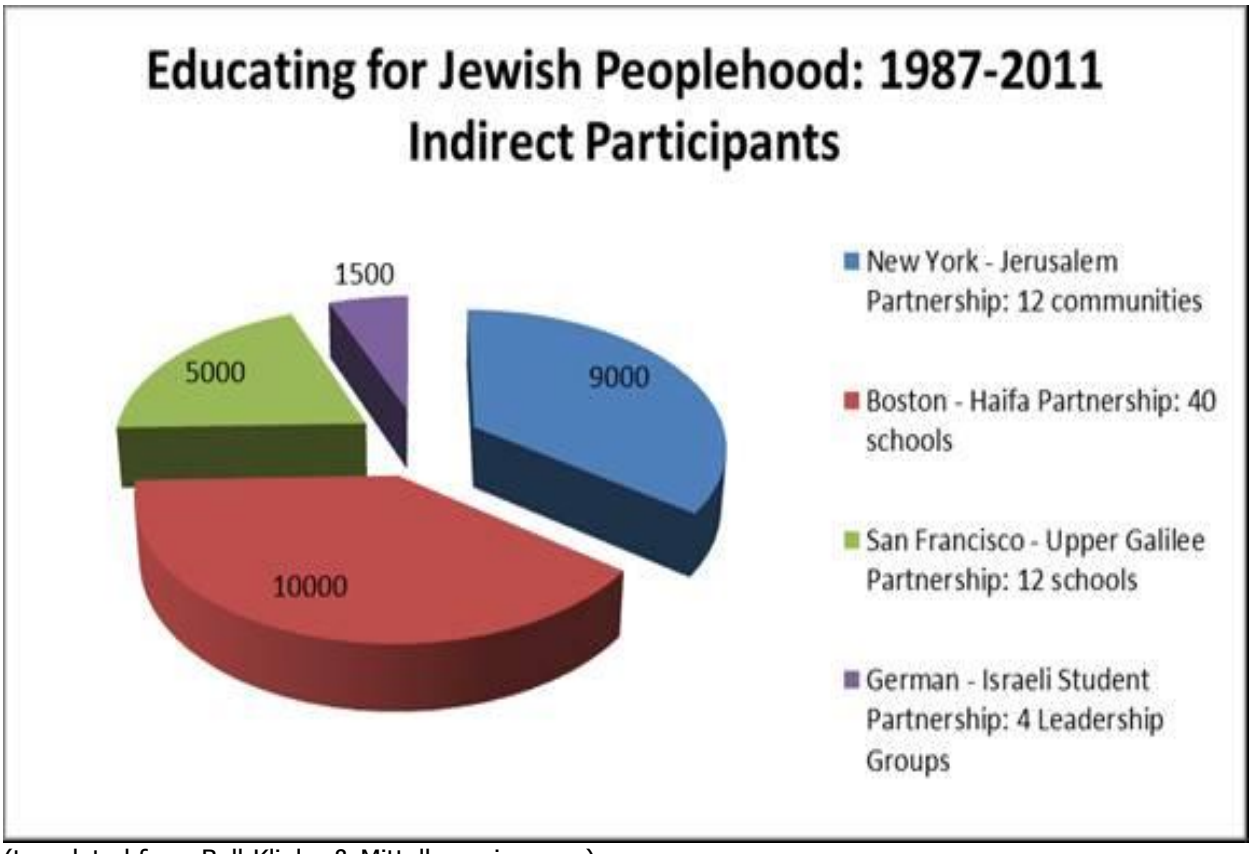


(translated from Bell-Kligler & Mittelberg, in press)

Figure one reports the total number of actual participants in the Israel Diaspora programming conducted by the Department of Jewish People – Oren over a quarter of a century. Table one below, describes the changing demographics of these participants along the historical timeline that is the developmental axis of this article.

Figure 2 illustrates the indirect impact of programming reported in Figure 1, as the Israel experience programs were most often embedded local organizations such as schools, communities, synagogues, and campuses, thereby impacting others—such as siblings, parents, lay leaders—who had not directly participated in the Israel experience program itself, but who heard about it and were impressed by its impact on those close to them.

Figure 2. Indirect participants in Department of Jewish People – Oren programs between 1987 and 2011



(translated from Bell-Kligler & Mittelberg, in press).

The Department of Jewish Peoplehood – Oren is just one small provider. We are not the Jewish Agency, the Reform Movement, the Conservative Movement, or the Orthodox Movement. We have no constituency in the Diaspora nor do we have offices there; we do not represent a single synagogue, any school, institution, or community. Yet we reached a very diverse range of direct and indirect participants.

Three Stages of Educational Tourism

I can summarize our activity over the years through describing a three-stage process. The first stage was what was called "the Israel experience." The term was first coined in 1984, when Morton Mandel was chairman of the Jewish Education Committee of the Jewish Agency (Mittelberg, 1988). Since then, scholars (Mittelberg, 2007; Cohen, E. H. 2008; Cohen, E.H., 2011a; Copeland, 2011) have written much about the field and its significance. In order to understand the first stage, it is important to appreciate that the Department of Jewish Peoplehood – Oren did have a constituency *inside* Israel. The programs that we facilitated were part of the activity of the Kibbutz Movement, which believed that it had a responsibility to the Jewish world, to reach out to the Jewish people, both for global and for collective reasons. The collective reasons or motivation of the Kibbutz Movement—the collective self-interest—was to recruit additional membership. Having new members join existing Kibbutzim was always part of the movement's agenda, and recruiting young members was the very reason that the Kibbutz movement, until recently, reached out to Israeli society. Oren, however, recruited people to its programs thematically. Its flagship program was *Kibbutz Institutes for Jewish Experience*. There were eight programs, each one on a different Kibbutz. Rather than saying that "it is important to come to Israel," Oren recruiters spoke about the importance of studying about contemporary Israel, learning archaeology, delving into Jewish texts, or participating in ceramics and drama workshops—while being in Israel. They encouraged people to come to Israel, for example, to enroll in a unique drama program, not because their parents or God said they should come, but rather because they would enjoy it and personally get something out of it.

This first stage lasted between 1986 and the first Intifada. The goal was to bring Diaspora Jews to Israel, and for Israel to impact them as individuals. Even though research had begun to demonstrate the impact of the Israel experience (Mittelberg, 1988) on Jewish identity, this research was not yet widely accepted in the scientific and educational community. Yet listening to comments by participants in the various Oren programs and reviewing the questionnaires they completed at the end of the programs, we were confident that the impact would be significant.

The second stage of the Oren programs began, not as the result of a conscious decision on our part, but rather because suddenly, travel from the Diaspora to Israel decreased dramatically. Many Jews from North America felt that Israel was dangerous, and a large Jewish denomination even cancelled its teen programs in Israel. Informed by theory about cultural encounters, we began to develop the notion of the encounter between Israeli and Diaspora Jews. Elan Ezrachi was then the chief scientist at the Charles R. Bronfman Centre for the Israel Experience: Mifgashim, and along with colleagues, he developed an entire pedagogy around the concept of *mifgashim*—face-to-face encounters (Ezrachi & Sutnick, 1997). For the first time, Israelis were beginning to be seen as important participants in programs designed for Jews from the Diaspora. This was a change from the first stage of the programs. Although these Diaspora participants all lived on Kibbutz and were adopted by Kibbutz families, which led to a very deep immersion in at least one segment of Israeli society, neither the Kibbutz itself nor its members were seen as the target

population of that educational experience, which was designed to impact the Diaspora participants. It is interesting to note, however, that when we would explain to the Kibbutzim why they should participate in the program, we would tell them that it was good for their children, and in fact, the children very quickly realized it was good for them, at least in achieving some short-term goals. These goals were both ideological—Kibbutz demographic growth—and economic— seasonal and marginal labor (Mittelberg, 1988). Kibbutz youth enjoyed meeting youth from abroad, discussing movies, music, fashion, and practicing their English. It goes without saying that certain social and even romantic connections developed, always a pleasant outcome.

During the second stage of our programs, the encounter helped develop a symmetrical relationship between Israeli and Diaspora Jews. An encounter requires that both sides be prepared, involved, and included as equals. This will impassion them. Educators have an important role in the success of an encounter. They have to make the culture of the other tolerable, understandable, and acceptable. In the first stage of our programs, we brought Diaspora Jews to immerse them in Israel and to try to make them Israeli. In contrast, in the second stage, when the encounter was central, we had to educate the Israelis to engage in and respect the other culture for what it is. Needless to say, we had to do the same for the Diaspora Jews. This encounter developed a completely different pedagogical and philosophical relationship.

The most public expression of the transition from the first to the second stage was Taglit. Taglit began as a classic "Israel experience." In the beginning of Taglit, Oren (and Oranim) was a program provider. We offered the educational content working in tandem with a travel agency who arranged all the logistics. We were very much involved in the first development of Israel experience models for Taglit, just as many other providers were. Yet it was clear to us that, since we had already done *mifgashim* (although we were not at all the only ones), that we should be doing more *mifgashim* since they were so important. At that time, Taglit mandated that within the ten-day experience, there would be encounters of one or two hours. Later, they encouraged a half-day mifgash with Israelis. Only after five years did Taglit mandate an encounter of a five-day minimum. Even then, it was meant for the sake of the Diaspora participants having a more meaningful, worthwhile, and impactful experience. The Diaspora participants were in fact able to have an experience that was less focused on the political aspects of Israel, and more of an engagement with everyday Israeli life, not the Israel of CNN that they saw in America. They were able to take part in honest conversations with similar age Israelis.

Some of the Taglit providers who had the means, the capacity, or the motivation to do so began to offer ten-day long encounters. Shorashim is the most famous of them, and several federations have also done so. In a recent E-Philanthropy blog, a professional from the St. Louis Federation argued that all Taglit *mifgashim* should be ten days (Frankel, 2013). But doing so requires additional funding. So the question is one of priorities: Do we lengthen all of the encounters and make them ten days long, or do we ensure that more people visit Israel? Is Taglit an exhaustive program or a gateway program? If it is a gateway program, you may want *more* people to go on it. If it is an exhaustive program, you may think

you can provide the maximum for each participant. This is an open question that invites more thought. To my mind, if the overriding goal is participant impact, then the former is the preferable option, however, if the goal is transform a generation and its future, then the latter is the course to adopt.

Regardless of its length and specific content, the *mifgash* gave a sense of symmetry between participants. Each participant came with his or her own unique background, beliefs, and values, to an encounter with peers both from the participant's country of origin and from the country of destination. What began as an *Israel experience* for Diaspora Jews became simultaneously a *Jewish experience* for their Israeli peers (Sasson, Mittelberg, Hecht, & Saxe, 2011).

The third and final stage of our programs began for many different reasons. One of them was the introduction of the Jewish Agency's facilitating platform of Partnership 2000, which set up the infrastructure for relationships between Jewish communities. As a result the *mifgashim* were about maintaining relationships, not only between participants, but between *communities*. This was not true in all cases or even in the majority of cases, but in many important cases, especially the ones in which Oren was involved, We transitioned between the encounter between two participants to the multi-year relationship between two communities, so that when an entire institution was involved, for example, older brothers and sisters, or people from the same college, synagogue, or other institution, would be engaged in a continuous relationship with the same community in Israel.

In Oren's case, the third stage mainly began with the Boston-Haifa relationship. We moved from the participant level and began working with one Jewish school in Israel and one in the Diaspora. When we facilitated encounters as part of Taglit, the participants engaged with each other, but there was no follow-up; we could not implement any long-term intervention program. In contrast, when we were involved in the carefully crafted partnerships between two schools (one in Boston and one in Haifa), the headmasters and teachers of the given partnered schools came to know each other. Even though the pupils came and went, and despite the faculty turnover, the schools continued their relationship. So the encounter moved a whole stage forward, by becoming not only an end in and of itself, but an agency for making a local connection between Jewish institutions in Israel and in the Diaspora and bringing about systemic change. Although we have global and local relationships, the world we actually live in is *glocal*. Living here in Israel, I skype with my grandchildren and my colleagues in Australia and or Boston, and I can be engaged in international relations beyond geography.

Approximately five years after establishing that school relationship between two schools, we moved to a paradigm that included building a broader based relationship between the communities. We did that by pairing twenty Jewish schools in Boston with twenty schools in Haifa. Of course, when a single community has twenty schools engaged in a unique program such as school twinning, the impact is greater. At the same time, we were also involved in bringing the paradigm of community-wide school connection projects to San Francisco and the Upper Galilee, Florida and the Galil, and Jerusalem and New York. Other educational providers engaged with Los Angeles and Tel Aviv and other twinned communities.

Jewish educational tourism continued to be about delegations of people traveling from one place to another and engaging in a cross-cultural, inter-cultural encounter, using multilingual and multicultural pedagogical instruments, trying to establish frameworks of meaning. This work was often inductive, from the bottom up, and not from the top down. At a certain point in time, we realized that it was important to try to articulate the theory behind what we were doing.

Before we discuss the theory, it is important to point out the role of Oranim College in this process. At the outset of our educational work with Jewish educational tourism coming from the Diaspora, Oranim moved from being an unwitting, unknowing partner to being a proud partner, and eventually becoming a player in its own right. When, approximately five years ago, Oren began building relationships with sister institutions of higher education in the Diaspora, principally with JTS—the Davidson School of Education, and Hebrew College in Boston, foreign students began spending time on the Oranim campus. As Oranim students and faculty became involved in the *mifgashim*, dialogues and interaction, Oranim began to see itself as a center of international relationships, at the tertiary, academic, and post high school level. That trend continued, and the centrality of that part of Oranim's identity is clear from the president's vision as articulated in various venues.[1]

Once, there were a number of Jewish Agency sponsored institutions in Israel that were devoted to Diaspora education and teacher training for Diaspora teachers (Cohen, E. H., pp. 162-166); most of them have, unfortunately, since been liquidated. Now, we should all be working toward the goal of turning the educational institutions that already exist in Israel, in partnership with peer institutions in the Diaspora, into institutions that also educate teachers for Diaspora students. We have a massive infrastructure of education in Israel which could serve this purpose. Oren and Oranim, have both been incubators for values-based educational programs for both Diaspora and Israeli Jews for approximately two decades.

Is this third stage still tourism? The goal now is not to bring Jews from the Diaspora to Israel, a place that "has all the answers." Rather, the encounter is a joint enterprise using tourism as a means to address problems that exist for both Diaspora and Israeli Jews who, although possibly different, nevertheless are existentially shared. In the case of Taglit, we have clearly found that the engagement of Israelis in the program enhances their Jewish identity in a way that the Shenhar Commission would be proud. These achievements, in terms of identity, could well have been achieved within the Israeli school system, but they were not (Shenhar Commission, 1994). The schools who willingly engage their pupils in Jewish educational tourism with Diaspora Jews, who have not come on *aliyah*, do so not only out of an altruistic commitment to world Jewry, but out of an existential need to promote a discussion of Jewish values in their schools. They are looking for a discussion of Judaism that goes beyond what the press relates, such as the elections of the Chief Rabbis, and all the other Jewish issues in the public media in Israeli society. How can a safe place be created to discuss the Jewish identity of Israeli children? In other words, we now understand that Jewish educational tourism—be it travelling to Poland, mainstreaming it as part of the curriculum in academic institutions and high schools, or inside Taglit, which now means

mainstreaming Taglit into a program of the Israeli army educational corps, but could also mean in the universities—is the key to advancing the Jewish agenda of the entire Jewish world, not more and not less (Laron & Mittelberg, 2013).

Changing Target Populations

In order to trace the development of the different stages of Oren's programmatic activity, the following table presents a summary of the characteristics of the different target populations that Oren addressed.

Table 1: Characteristics of Target Populations by Year

Type of Participants	Years	Number of Participants
Diaspora Only		
College Age	1987-2010	5630
Families	1997-2008	300
Israeli Only		
Russian Speakers	1996-2007	800
Israeli and Diaspora Joint Programs		
Young Adult Community Leaders	2002-2008	350
Jewish Educators	1999-2010	800
Twinned Tertiary Institution Programs with Oranim		
Four Institutions	2004-2010	415
Long Term Partnerships		
New York, San Francisco, Boston, Germany	2004-2011	400

In the beginning, the target population was only Diaspora participants. Then, for an unplanned interlude, due to two unconnected issues: the difficult security situation in Israel which led to a decrease in tourism from North America and the influx of new immigrants from the Former Soviet Union, the target population became only Israeli participants. These Israelis were new arrivals who spoke not Hebrew but Russian. At the moment that Diaspora Judaism decided it was too dangerous to come to Israel, the Russians felt it was more dangerous to stay where they were. For a few years, we used the very same infrastructure that we had built to educate Diaspora Jews, many of whom were no longer coming to Israel, to educate Russian college-age participants who were planning to remain in Israel. I must add parenthetically that when we began our work, we were one of only five institutions, outside of the universities in the State of Israel, dealing with college-age programming: Project Oren at Oranim, Livnot U'Lehibanot in Tzfat, Sheirut La-Am (JAFI), WUJS in Arad, and Pardes in Jerusalem. At that time, most

institutions in the Diaspora and in Israel focused on high school programming. Now with the appearance of Taglit, that has changed. Perhaps now that we have been in both places we will find a balance.

After a brief interlude during which the target population was only the newly arrived Israeli participants, the target changed into Israeli and Diaspora participants together. Through Partnership 2000, we targeted young adult community leadership, Jewish educators (teachers from both sides of the Israel Diaspora divide engaging each other), twinned tertiary institutions, and community wide partnerships. Without articulating any broader philosophy, the proliferation, diversification, and expansion of types of target audiences changed the pedagogy, the language, and the content of the educational agenda. The underlying message and the underlying need, however, remained the same.

Jewish Peoplehood

Having now discussed the three different stages and the changing target populations, we can begin to articulate a philosophy behind these changes. In order to try to encompass all of this programmatic diversity, scholars began to discuss the concept of Jewish peoplehood. (Kopelowitz & Engelberg, 2007; Ravid & Rafaeli, 2011; Kopelowitz& Grant, 2012).

The concept of personal Jewish *identity* was not sufficient to grasp the complexity of Jewish belonging. First, I attempted to give content to the concept of Jewish Peoplehood inductively (Mittelberg, 2011). I identified the dimensions of Jewish peoplehood as including the following:

(1) *A sense of personal closeness to other Jews*, meaning a sense of connection.

(2) *A sense of belonging to a shared destiny and common goals of the Jewish collective*.

In other words, unlike certain trends being noted about the individualistic, inward facing Jew (Cohen & Eisen, 2000), Jewish peoplehood claims that you are not just a Jew within. This paradigm is, from a metaphorical perspective, the antithesis to the Jew within thesis. It emphasizes the pull outward, toward the collective.

(3) *A sense of responsibility and commitment to other Jews and their communities*. Not only do you have a sense of connection with others, but if something happens to them, you care enough to do something about it.

(4) *Possessing the cultural knowledge and skills to feel at home within the Jewish culture(s) wherever Jews gather*.

My late father, when I was a young boy, forced me to go to Talmud Torah. He felt that even if he himself did not keep Shabbat because he had to go and work in the market to earn money for bread, it was important to study and acquire knowledge of Jewish sources. Afterwards we would be able to decide what we believed and what we wanted to observe. Knowledge first; practice later. The question now is to what extent are we concerned that our children, wherever they are, have the knowledge to move in the cultural milieu of other Jews, even if it is not the milieu in which they grew up.

(5) *Engaging in Jewish social networks, both local and global, with significant intensity and meaning*.

This means building relationships. Often the most important question on Jewish surveys is how many friends or close friends do you have who are Jews. Although these social networks could be restricted to local connections, today, they need to be both local and global.

(6) *Engaging in practices that both signify and realize all of the above.*

At Oren, this first typology of Jewish peoplehood was based on our observations from evaluation surveys and programming. The second, more developed typology of Jewish Peoplehood was based on a three year continuous transnational collaborative research program supported by the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, conducted by myself and Dina Laron here at Oranim, and Fern Chertok and Leonard Saxe at the Cohen Center, Brandeis University (Chertok, Mittelberg, Laron, & Koren, 2013; Mittelberg, Chertok & Laron, 2013). The evidence base is not central to the purposes of this present article. For further information, readers are referred to these sources. In brief, this analysis is based on multiple surveys of people engaged in the program, both before and after the program, including students, teachers, and parents, in Israel and the Diaspora, and in two languages, English and Hebrew. My colleagues and I have developed a multidimensional construct to summarize the dimensions of Jewish peoplehood (Mittelberg, Chertok & Laron, 2013), summarized in our table below.

Table 2: Jewish peoplehood Scales

Scale	Item
Belonging to the Jewish People	I have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people.
	I feel connected to my family's Jewish heritage.
	It is important for me to be part of the Jewish people.
Connection to Other Jews	I consider all Jews around the world like family.
	I feel connected to other Jews even if I do not know them personally.
	It's important for me to have friends with whom I can share the experience of being Jewish.
Jewish Capital	I feel comfortable entering a Jewish place of worship.
	I can follow along in almost any Jewish service.
	I have no problem interacting with Jews from more observant backgrounds.
Personal Responsibility	I feel a responsibility to take care of Jews in need wherever they live.
	I feel a responsibility to take care of Jews in need in my home country.
	I feel a responsibility to take care of Jews who live outside of my home country.

Why are we doing this work? Tourist providers do this work to make money. We are not doing this work just to make money; rather we have a different reason. We are doing this work to raise Jewish peoplehood consciousness or Jewish peoplehood belonging. If only one dimension of Jewish peoplehood is used, for example the most all-embracing one—that of Jewish belonging—then both the evaluation tool and the educational goal are shallow.

The following are explanations of the four dimensions as set out in Table 2 above:

(1) *Belonging to the Jewish people*. This dimension is the one that most people talk about explicitly, and the one reported in the NJPS surveys. We find that almost everyone, Israelis and Americans, say they belong to the Jewish people, although they may actually mean different things when they say so.

(2) *Connection to other Jews*. The relevant questions regarding this dimension are: Do you have relationships to other Jews, and is it important to you to have relationships with other Jews?

(3) *Jewish capital*. The Jewish renewal and other movements, rabbis, and Jewish professionals all talk about this dimension. Are you able to dream in some way in the world of Jewish symbols? This question is not about your halakhic status or observance, but about the extent to which you know, can articulate, feel comfortable with, and use as a resource Jewish symbols, values, and norms.

(4) *Personal responsibility*. This dimension refers to moral commitment.

These four dimensions are not an ideology, but a working paradigm. There could be a fifth dimension that would fit this paradigm. What is important is that in our work, we have found that participants, both from Israel and the Diaspora, see themselves in this paradigm.

Challenges Facing Jewish Educational Tourism

I will outline several challenges facing Jewish educational tourism, beginning with a number of fallacies:

- educational fallacy;
- ideological fallacy;
- travel duration;
- the challenge of *mifgash;*
- the secret of *mifgash;* and
- research challenges.

First, the educational fallacy is a linear way of looking at education. The fallacy is that the younger you are, the more impactful educational experiences can be, and that if you did not have a certain educational experience earlier, you cannot have it later. Early childhood, according to this fallacy, is the most important educational stage. This fallacy explains why many educators want to work with high school students. According to this view, one cannot make a significant educational impact with college-age students. We, however, have found in our work that it is never too late. We have long struggled to convince the foundations that they can make a major impact with college-age students (Israel & Mittelberg, 1998).

The ideological fallacy is two-fold. The first ideological fallacy is that *aliyah* is the exclusive goal of Diaspora education. The second ideological fallacy is that Israeli Jews are not in need of Jewish education. Significant Jewish foundations in the Diaspora have not yet come to the conclusion that engaging in the Jewish education of Israelis is just as important as engaging in the Jewish education of Diaspora Jews. When they understand the important of Jewish education for Israelis, they will understand the importance of ten-day Taglit *mifgashim for* all *Israelis*, not just all Diaspora Jews of the cohort.

The third fallacy is regarding travel duration. Everyone assumes that more is better, and that long-term programs are better than short-term. This assumption is obvious from a quantitative perspective. Yet the problem with long-term programs is that they are not effective if people do not come on them. Short-term programs are important as the gateway, for recruiting more people. We must look at educational tourism from a sociological perspective, not only a psychological one. Our goal is to reach a generation of Jews. Achieving this goal requires multiple strategies of Jewish educational tourism that target different age groups and life-cycle entry points.

The challenge of the *mifgash,* like the success of the *mifgash,* is double. The educational tourism provider always has to work simultaneously, using all available instruments, with both sides of the encounter. All aspects of the *mifgash* must be designed for both the guests and the hosts—the preparation, implementation, and follow-up for participants.

The secret of the *mifgash* is that it changes the context and the *relevance structure*, a la Alfred Schutz, of everyday Judaism for the everyday Jew (Mittelberg, 1988). Change occurs when an educational experience succeeds in changing the context of the environment in which people live. Certainly the *mifgash* has the power to change that context and the relevance structure. Because this change in context is key, it does not matter how long the program is, where it takes place, or at what age it takes place. The *mifgash* changes the relevance structure of the participants, which means that they do not automatically change, but that they become open to change.

The research challenges are the cross-cultural psychometric differences. Even when Israeli and Diaspora Jews say the same words, they often mean different things. When we administer cross cultural surveys, we often use identical questions. I have learned from my work translating and administering surveys simultaneously how difficult this can be. Therefore, this compels Jewish social science to engage in international, cross-cultural, and multilingual research.

What then are the additional challenges facing contemporary Jewish educational tourism?

Today, unlike when we started this work, we engage in reciprocal tourism. Tourism flows in both directions, such as with Boston-Haifa; each community becomes a destination in turn. However, there is an additional layer of reciprocity here, since there is also a direct rotation of guest and host roles. Unlike the typical tourist situation, the same people are both guests and then, later in the year, hosts, developing a continuous relationship. Altercasting (a notion that comes from interactionist sociology) and context restructuring predicate change (Mittelberg, 1988). This change in roles is itself the secret of our work. We also have multiple destinations—home land, host land, and "other" land. "Other" land means when American or Israeli Jews go to Russia, Poland, South America, or elsewhere.

As a result, Jewish educational tourism research must deal with the challenge of being multilingual, cross-cultural, and multicultural. These three words are not the same. Cross-cultural means trying to engage across boundaries. Multicultural is an ideology that asserts that different cultures can engage each other with acceptance, tolerance, and understanding, while valorizing diversity. In addition, Jewish educational tourism is *glocal*, meaning that our identities that are pluralistic, and hopefully hybrid and multiple. The paradigm of Jewish peoplehood presented in this article has the capacity to address these different challenges of pluralism, hybridism, and multiple identities; to traverse these distances; and to transcend these differences.

Endnotes

[1] For example, see the college's website: http://en.oranim.ac.il/

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