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Orthodox Educators in Non-Orthodox Jewish Educational Settings

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Methodology

This article is the result of a study conducted over the course of three months during which forty individuals who self-identified as Orthodox Jews¹ and were previously employed and/or are presently working in non-Orthodox Jewish schools and other Jewish educational contexts; they were interviewed primarily by phone² for 35-60 minutes. The interviews were based upon a standardized rubric.³ Written notes were recorded for each of the interviews. Candidates for the interviews were identified by means of personal contacts in the Jewish education world as well as being self-selected by answering an announcement placed on the Lookjed Jewish education listserv sponsored by Bar-

Ilan University.⁴ Interviewees were guaranteed confidentiality with respect to their comments and judgments.

An Overview of the Current State of Non-Orthodox Jewish Education and the Role Played by Orthodox Teachers

Formal education is one of the means by which the Jewish people initiates younger generations into its beliefs, traditions, and folkways. While primary responsibility for educating the young is halakhically imposed upon a child's parent,⁵ the Talmud attributes to Yehoshua ben Gamla⁶ the establishment of formal schools in each Jewish community to oversee the educations of orphans and, by extension, those children whose parents for various reasons are unable to conduct and oversee their own children's Jewish education. Although home schooling has increasingly become a realistic option for some Jewish families,⁷ the overwhelming majority of structured Jewish education for the young currently takes place within the context of schools that are either under the auspices of synagogue congregations or independent institutions in their own right.⁸

Schools that dedicate at least a portion of their educational programming, curricular as well as extracurricular, to Jewish studies are faced with the responsibility to employ staff members who are expected to carry out a particular school's Jewish vision and mission during the course of their formal and informal activities.^{9 10} While an institution obviously has to allow for personal, background, and *hashkafic* (matters of *weltanschauung*, religious worldview) differences that will cause one Judaic studies teacher to be differentiated from another, the degree to which a particular instructor fits into the school's overall outlook, particularly when there is a "disconnect" between the individual's own religious perspective and the official school orientation in which s/he is working, will determine the teacher's appropriateness for that school setting. Furthermore, just as the school has to evaluate which teacher would be a desirable staff member, the educator will also need to consider the extent to which s/he can cope with challenges and conflicts that working in a school that may be at odds with his/her own religious and educational vision may entail. Clearly, in addition to the individual's professional competency and knowledge base, personality

traits such as the degree to which one is judgmental of others, open-minded, flexible, and respectful of differences in outlook and practice will have to be considered by both the school and the teacher in order to create a successful and satisfying job situation, particularly when school and teacher are ostensibly “out-of-sync” with one another.

Contemporary schools in which students obtain Jewish educations, whether they are individual nursery, elementary, middle, high schools, or combinations of these grade configurations, can be categorized into two basic groups with respect to their overall Jewish orientations: (1) institutions affiliated or at least identified with a specific Jewish denomination,^{11, 12} and (2) those that are intended to serve the Jewish community as a whole and therefore are designed to be practically, philosophically, and educationally welcoming to all students regardless of Jewish affiliation, halakhic Jewish identity,¹³ and practice.

Assuming that a denominationally oriented school is self-consciously ideologically committed to creating, developing, and strengthening adherents of its own particular Jewish perspective, the ideal candidates to teach Jewish studies¹⁴ in such institutions would obviously be proponents and adherents of the same religious point-of-view as that of the institution.¹⁵ Not only would the content of such teachers’ lessons be in consonance with the beliefs of the movement in question, but their personal example would further provide reinforcement for the learning taking place. As opposed to a secular university setting, where instructors in classes devoted to Jewish studies are expected to assume a stance of academic objectivity in order to appropriately present subject matter for consideration and analysis by their undergraduate and graduate students,¹⁶ Jewish denominational schools designed for students up to and including their high school adolescent years, pointedly intend to at the very least engender respect and sympathy for, if not outright passionate commitment to, Judaism in general and a specific perspective and mode of observance in particular. However, if the teacher him/herself does not personally share the religious orientation of the school,¹⁷ students quickly discern inconsistencies in behavior, outlook, and curricular content¹⁸ that can possibly result in the undermining of a successful transmission of the institution’s religious agenda. Nevertheless, the ideal pool of Jewish educators that

would afford denominational institutions the opportunity to employ individuals who are the personal embodiments of the institution's articulated religious philosophy, as well as who are endowed with the passion and charisma that will allow them to engage their students in a meaningful and substantive manner, simply does not presently exist,¹⁹ and there is no evidence that this situation will change in the short term. Consequently, among the "compromises" that non-Orthodox denominationally affiliated institutions feel they are "forced" to make is the hiring of Orthodox instructors.

Regarding Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist supplementary schools affiliated with congregations,²⁰ an educational context that has been bemoaned for a considerable number of years due to the perception and evaluation of this venue's relative ineffectiveness in contributing to the Jewish continuity and commitment of its students,²¹ interviewees reported that it is the obvious passion and deep personal commitment with which at least some Orthodox educators approach their students that cause school leaders to believe that Orthodox teachers would be best suited to succeed in these contexts, despite obvious religious divergences. As opposed to day school settings, certainly beyond the pre-school level, where the greater number of weekly sessions and the more in-depth nature of the curricula in several Judaic subjects require a relatively high acumen with respect to texts and overall Jewish knowledge, given the optimal educational outcomes presently associated with supplementary schools, some of the heads of these afternoon and Sunday schools feel that emphasis must be placed upon employing teachers who are able to forge personal relationships with their students, rather than those who might be subject-matter experts. One Orthodox supplementary school educator reported that while the non-Orthodox synagogue's rabbi, upon learning that an Orthodox teacher had been hired to fill an opening that had suddenly developed, was extremely hostile toward him, the rabbi's reaction was in sharp contrast to the feelings of the school's parents and even those of the school director, who were so pleased with the rapport that this Orthodox teacher managed to establish with his students that he was invited to return the following year.²² Another educator suggested to me that contemporary Jewish non-Orthodox parents²³ are for the most

part “post-denominational” in the sense that rather than caring that much about which denomination their children ultimately choose, they are interested primarily in their offspring’s developing some positive attachment to Judaism.²⁴ From their perspective, what is important is that their children ultimately feel positively disposed toward Judaism and once the parents overcome suspicions that the Orthodox teacher may be engaging in “proselytization,” that is, trying to “convert” students to “Orthodoxy,” they are extremely appreciative of the educator’s success in inspiring their children. Consequently, while the ideologues of the movements—the rabbis and other seminary-trained Jewish professionals—may be invested in institutionally preserving their own personal approach to Judaism, the viability of their respective movements, and the institutions directly associated with them, the actual constituencies of the synagogues that these professionals work in might have a significantly different agenda with respect to what they consider to be in their children’s best interests, leading at least some parents to prefer effective, engaging, passionate, and child-centered teachers of whatever denomination, including Orthodox instructors, to teach in their synagogue’s supplementary school.

From the perspective of an Orthodox teacher in a non-Orthodox denominational supplementary school, it would appear that their activities would be considered as informal rather than formal education. Several interviewees mentioned that their primary goal is to provide “fun” for their students so that their association with Judaism in general and Hebrew School in particular will be a positive one. Those who have extensive experience working with youth groups such as NCSY (National Conference of Synagogue Youth) and Bnei Akiva (an Orthodox Zionist youth group) appear to best be prepared to meet the challenges posed by this particular educational environment. An additional factor that might make this type of setting attractive to an Orthodox educator is that the expectations that a teacher become personally involved with his/her students are lower on the parts of school leadership and the parent body, such as inviting students to one’s home for *Shabbatot* and *Yomim Tovim* (Sabbaths and Jewish holidays), serving as a counselor for personal family issues, becoming a student’s singular religious role model, and so on, since there are far fewer sessions dur-

ing the course of the school year, and the teacher rarely lives near the synagogue sponsoring the school. One Orthodox educator working in a non-Orthodox pre-school setting stated that she welcomed being able to separate her personal and professional lives, something that Orthodox educators working in Orthodox schools cannot always do.²⁵ Supplementary schools generally do not run *Shabbatonim* (programs over the course of a Sabbath) or take trips outside of the classroom, two other areas where *halakhic* challenges to Orthodox observance typically arise.²⁶ Consequently many of the conflicts experienced by Orthodox instructors in non-Orthodox day schools never become points of conflict. Of course, this issue is balanced by the relatively low expectations that the instructor can reasonably entertain for the effect of his teaching upon his/her students, thereby seriously compromising his/her sense of accomplishment and the opportunity to experience some sort of “return” for his efforts. Interviewees realistically noted that often, monetary considerations provide the main attraction for working in this setting.

With respect to the denominational day school world, the majority of non-Orthodox day schools are affiliated with the Conservative movement²⁷ and are known as Solomon Schechter schools.^{28 29} It is important to note that just as synagogues associated with each of the denominational movements differ to some extent in perspective and practice, a range of religious views are similarly represented in non-Orthodox day schools of a particular denomination as well. One Schechter school was described by Orthodox teachers working in it as “more traditional” and therefore “not all that different from Modern Orthodox day schools”^{30 31} in light of the seriousness with which Judaic studies are pursued by the student body and commitment to Jewish practice such as *Kashrut* (Jewish dietary laws). On the other hand, an educator working in a different Schechter school, which he characterized as “left-wing Conservative” in light of the levels of learning, the sophistication of the curriculum, the degree of ritual observance, and interest in Jewish learning on the part of the majority of its student body, reported that he would be occasionally challenged by some of his students to the effect that “This is a Conservative school!” whenever they “sensed” that he was presenting a perspective they thought was

overly “Orthodox.”³² He further reported that the basis of the challenge was never with regard to his curricular choices and teaching, since he felt he was careful to respectfully present multiple perspectives; in his opinion the students’ impetus for their comments was merely due to his openly stating to the class, as well as to parents on Parent-Teacher night, that he had Orthodox ordination.³³ In this setting the dynamic between teacher and student was apparently being informed by pre-existing assumptions on the part of students about variations in denominational ideology between the school and the teacher, resulting in articulated conflict.^{34, 35} Whereas the “more traditional” Schechter school would tacitly acknowledge less of an inconsistency were it to hire an Orthodox instructor, it would be more hard-pressed to justify such a decision, other than that there was no other qualified teacher available, which as has been stated, is frequently the case.

Another variable that appears to force the hand of some non-Orthodox day schools to hire instructors at odds with the school’s religious orientation is the type of teachers required to enact the institution’s educational philosophy. Many of the interviewees stated that the reason some Conservative as well as community day schools may have a seemingly disproportionate number of Orthodox faculty members is the school’s commitment to teaching subject matter by means of seriously engaging with primary texts. These interviewees felt that the school’s hiring practices were influenced by the assumption that a teacher with an Orthodox education³⁶ is best equipped to teach text, and such a consideration often trumps any ideological concerns on the part of a school’s professional and lay leadership about the individual’s personal practice and beliefs. Not only was it pointed out that a school’s emphasis upon teaching primary text positions Orthodox teachers to be particularly desirable as staff members, but that such an educational philosophy also results in the Orthodox position about a particular topic or focus of study being clearly reflected in the primary text and therefore serving as the jumping-off point for all subsequent discussions of denominational modifications. Consequently, contrary to a particular non-Orthodox movement’s reforms and innovations, the textual emphasis in the classroom results in greater exposure being given to the more traditional perspective and practice.³⁷ Particularly

with regard to community schools, where a standard aspect to their approach to Jewish practice and *weltanschauung* entails reviewing what the various denominations each believe with respect to a specific issue, an objective presentation will result in the Orthodox approach's being repeatedly reviewed in order to illustrate how the originally singular practice has diverged in contemporary Jewish practice.

In contrast to the situation of Orthodox educators in denominational day schools, a fundamentally different dynamic would seem to apply to community day schools and their Orthodox faculty members. By virtue of the basic assumption underlying the community day school, Orthodox instructors teaching an Orthodox approach to text, ritual, and belief should be not any more or less welcome on the school's staff than would representatives of other denominations as well as secular advocates of Jewish culture. Community schools are founded upon the premise that just as the student body should ideally be comprised of the various types of Jews who make up the contemporary Jewish community as a whole, the Judaic studies faculty should be similarly constituted. Yet when it comes to how community schools throughout North America actually present Judaism and Jewish observance to their students, different overall approaches can be clearly identified. Dr. Marc Kramer,³⁸ the head of RAVSAK,³⁹ the Jewish Community Day School Network, describes at least four philosophical orientations of today's Jewish community day schools:

1. Schools that approach "pluralism" as a religious ideology.
2. Schools that value a diversity of denominations making up their student populations, but as a sociological statement rather than as a religious ideological point of view.
3. Schools that are non-ideological and deliberately non-denominational.
4. Schools that are officially under Orthodox auspices but are open to the entire community, regardless of denomination and even rigorous *halakhic* definition of Jewish identity.⁴⁰

While community schools that could be categorized as "under Orthodox auspices" should obviously not have an issue with hiring Orthodox staff members per se, and may even prefer to do so, provided

that these educators have the temperament and training to function comfortably in an essentially open environment comprising all types of Jews, the other types of community schools will vary in their attitude toward the desirability of hiring overtly Orthodox staff members.

The non-ideological, non-denominational community school attempts to avoid conflicts between various points of view, and unless the Orthodox individual will agree to suppress any positions that are exclusively associated with Orthodoxy, his/her presence on the staff will very likely be contentious. The school that wishes to be diverse rather than deliberately pluralistic will expect its staff members to present with equal emphasis and respect a variety of denominational positions on whatever topic is being studied. An alternate model of this type of school involves expecting teachers to be neutral in their presentations and to invite non-faculty rabbis representing the various denominations to present their perspectives to the students.⁴¹ But it should be pointed out that such schools derive a particular benefit from employing Orthodox faculty members despite the potential for conflict. The presence of Orthodox individuals on the staff is sometimes perceived by the community as giving “credibility” to the quality of Jewish education taking place within the institution, thereby alleviating the concerns of Orthodox and Ortho-prax families that their children’s level of observance will be adversely affected by the pluralistic nature of their religious education. As far as the Orthodox educator in such a school is concerned, his/her comfort level with presenting perspectives with which s/he fundamentally disagrees but is directed not to articulate that disagreement is questionable not only from the point of view of how subject matter is presented, but also with respect to the teacher’s personal conscience and concern for the ultimate religious outlooks adopted by his students.⁴²

In my view, the most intriguing community school orientation vis-à-vis whether Orthodox instructors should choose to join the Judaic studies faculty are those institutions that truly value pluralism as a religious ideal. In such a setting, representatives of various denominations and religious perspectives are invited to present their points of view and approaches as powerfully and passionately as they are able. It is assumed that this literal *kulturkampf* will create an intellectually

stimulating environment that will expose students to a variety of options and force them to reconsider where they personally stand religiously. Rather than being faced with deciding in very stark terms to either accept or reject a singular, essentially monochromatic religious perspective that a school might advocate, along with the traditions and observances presented to the child by his/her family, synagogue, and community, in the ideologically pluralistic type of community Jewish day school many more options are seriously and dramatically placed before the student, allowing him/her to potentially form his own, unique, position(s) as s/he goes through life.⁴³ Consequently, an Orthodox educator in such a setting will not be directed concerning what s/he can or cannot teach with respect to denominational ideology and might actually be provided with the opportunity to “win hearts and minds” on behalf of Orthodoxy. However, s/he is simultaneously participating in an educational environment where formerly Orthodox students’ hearts and minds could just as easily be lost to Orthodoxy. And while this could be the case even were s/he to teach in an Orthodox institution, that is, students for various reasons do not maintain either for the short run or the long term their Orthodox religiosity,⁴⁴ at least s/he was not consciously a part of a school that was philosophically accepting of such a result. In other words, that would consider a student who entered the school Orthodox and left it as something other religiously as much of a school success as the child who began with virtually no commitment and graduates living an Orthodox lifestyle, as well as so many other combinations lying between these extremes. With regard to such a school, the Orthodox educator faces the dilemma whether to opt for being involved in the institution’s educational process so that the Orthodox perspective is well-served and represented, or to deliberately avoid such a setting because s/he is not in consonance with what the school considers at least some of the optimal religious outcomes for its students.⁴⁵ ⁴⁶ At the very least, whether to accept an invitation to participate in such an educational setting, let alone seek out such an opportunity, were it possible to teach in other Jewish educational settings more similar to the educator’s personal outlook, seems hardly a clear-cut issue and would require significant research, consultation, and personal soul-searching.

Patterns and Trends Emerging from This Study of Orthodox Educators in Non-Orthodox Schools

During the course of the interviews, despite the fact that the interviewees were of different ages,⁴⁷ had different educational backgrounds,⁴⁸ worked in different capacities,⁴⁹ and taught in different types of educational settings,⁵⁰ several common themes and patterns emerged that in my estimation deserve comment, reflection, and analysis.

1. Motivations for Orthodox educators working in non-Orthodox educational settings

When reviewing the explanations given by the subjects for why they decided at least at one point in their careers to work in a non-Orthodox environment, aside from the expected reaction that the choice was necessitated by practical considerations, a significant number reported that they did so out of idealism.^{51, 52}

Of the fourteen educators (35%) who comprise this category, sentiments included: (1) “wanting to make a difference,” (2) “feeling that it was a huge educational *mitzvah* (fulfillment of a religious Commandment) to contribute to a marketplace of ideas” (with reference to a community school setting), (3) “since the educator had him/herself grown up in a non-Orthodox home, feeling the need to explore Orthodox religion with children who came from a similar background,” (4) “desiring to provide the type of Jewish learning that the educator thought had been lacking in his/her own formative years,” (5) “believing that the future of Judaism can be assured only by reaching out to non-Orthodox as well as Orthodox Jews,” (6) “desiring to interact with a true microcosm of *kellal Yisrael*” (the entirety of the Jewish people), and (7) “believing that the current Jewish educational scene qualifies as a situation of *pikuach nefesh*⁵³ (threat to [the] life [of the Jewish people], if not physically, then certainly existentially) and therefore requires heroic action on the part of educators.”⁵⁴ The apparent dedication of those who took on the challenges of working in an environment where so many students and colleagues did not share their basic assumptions about religious commitment and Jewish identity and would therefore inevitably involve conflicts and a greater set of

challenges than might be encountered in Orthodox institutions, was, in my view, notable and admirable.⁵⁵

2. Examples of conflicts and difficulties encountered by Orthodox educators in non-Orthodox educational settings

The conflicts that the interviewees listed as challenging their Orthodoxy, and at times making them feel as though they were “skating on the outside” of the institution in which they worked, were numerous and varied according to the position held, type of school, the age of the students, and probably the personality of the educator.⁵⁶ Here is a sampling of issues they mentioned when asked about the difficulties that they encountered working in non-Orthodox schools:

1. As was previously mentioned, teaching or even administering non-Orthodox supplementary schools requires less time, one is usually dealing with younger children, and the learning is more experiential than substantive. However, that fact does not insulate an Orthodox educator from challenges from parents suspicious of the teacher’s or administrator’s motives with regard to “making the children too religious.”
2. *Kashrut* issues arise at times, as does the challenge to respond to a Bar or Bat Mitzvah invitation in a setting in which the teacher/administrator might feel uncomfortable.
3. The fact that any number of the students may not be halakhically Jewish⁵⁷ can certainly constitute an issue—while there are leniencies, there are also stringencies with respect to teaching Torah to non-Jews—at every point when one is working in non-Orthodox schools.⁵⁸
4. The school calendar in a non-Orthodox school can also pose problems. The school’s view of not only a *chag* (religious festival) like Purim, but even *Yom Tov Sheini* (the second day of a religious festival that is observed only outside the land of Israel) will sometimes require negotiation with the institution’s leadership to ensure that proper coverage will be provided for the Orthodox educator’s classes.
5. With regard to teaching prayer, if the texts that non-Orthodox synagogues use diverge significantly from Orthodox practice,⁵⁹ can an

Orthodox teacher present this to his/her students as proper *tefilla* (prayer)? And while a teacher's declaration, "This is how some Jews practice but others do things differently," might be appropriate with older children already able to engage in abstract thinking, would this be developmentally appropriate for younger children? And if not, can an Orthodox educator sanguinely exclusively teach these materials and practices that are not in accordance with his own views?

Assuming that pre-school divisions that are part of day schools present challenges similar to those posed by congregational-affiliated supplementary schools, working in Jewish day schools on the Middle and High School level raises an additional array of issues.

6. Must the problem of the authorship of the Bible be discussed, and if so, how can/should one go about it?
7. With older students, personal modesty as well as physical contact⁶⁰ become important concerns.⁶¹ In a similar vein, how to handle gender issues as well as the question of homosexuality can be particularly daunting for an Orthodox educator.
8. How a *minyán* is arranged and conducted, as well as who can serve as *shliach tzibbur* when students are beyond Bar Mitzvah age, could also make the Orthodox educator uncomfortable.⁶²
9. If a male faculty member left an assembly at which *kol isha* (the restrictions in Jewish law against men's listening to women singing) was taking place, in what sort of light would that put him and how would the school, his colleagues, and the student body view him?
10. Can an Orthodox faculty member teach practices and interpretations even from objective, academic points of view and as part of a survey of Jewish practice, that are considered beyond the pale of Orthodox practice and thought? Can s/he do so only when allowed to make a personal disclaimer?
11. Because of the great number of trips and extracurricular activities, *kashrut* is obviously difficult to control, and will the requisite vigilance be exercised? Since food becomes a concern when faculty meetings are held outside of the school at a restaurant or private

home, to what extent can the Orthodox staff member participate and still be viewed as part of the “team”?

12. Can one be an active participant in a *Shabbaton* where students on different levels of observance are allowed even privately to observe Shabbat in their own way, including using electricity, handling *muktza* (articles inappropriate for Sabbath use), etc.?

In light of the relatively low status, salary, and benefits that educators receive in comparison to other professionals in American society, deciding to enter the field of education already requires a modicum of idealism and self-sacrifice. It would appear that an Orthodox teacher in a non-Orthodox school personally extends him/herself that much more—although several interviewees noted that the material benefits in non-Orthodox institutions were better than those offered by Orthodox schools. Where the physical amenities are superior, the educator goes through a “cost-benefit” calculus whereby s/he has to consider the trade-off between material inducements and the ideological and spiritual atmosphere of the educational environment. And perhaps this is why, in light of the relatively personally stressful religious climate that some Orthodox educators experience in a non-Orthodox school, a few interviewees commented that teaching in non-Orthodox schools over the course of a number of years⁶³ has been increasingly frustrating in terms of the relatively minute number of students that an educator manages to substantively engage with and influence to take Judaism more seriously,⁶⁴ and therefore if an opportunity presented itself where they could teach in an Orthodox school, they would seize it. Could such an insight be interpreted as indicating that as one advances in one’s career, an educator’s idealism ceases to insulate him/her from the awareness of the effectiveness of his activities, and therefore s/he begins to reflect upon how efficacious has been the individual’s activities to that point? It would be interesting to see whether by means of a longitudinal study, it could be determined whether Orthodox teachers in non-Orthodox schools experience “burn-out” either to a greater degree or more quickly than do those teaching in Orthodox schools.

3. A commonality of experience found among Orthodox educators in non-Orthodox educational settings

During the course of trying to determine why, in light of the challenges and difficulties mentioned above, certain Orthodox individuals nevertheless prefer to look for opportunities to work in non-Orthodox settings, one interesting common characteristic became evident.⁶⁵ All of those expressing “idealistic” motivations, as well as some of the educators that I would place in other categories, were able to identify some type of formative experience whereby either they achieved a comfort level with non-Orthodox Jews or they were inculcated with a sense of responsibility for the broader Jewish community. In addition to those possessing a *Ba'al Teshuva* (lit. a master of repentance; those who have come to more traditional observance relatively later in life) background which obviously allows for a heightened level of empathy for and understanding of non-Orthodox Jews, and which will be further discussed below, interviewees mentioned the following reasons why they were not only comfortable but also attracted to non-Orthodox educational settings:

1. Their youth group work for outreach organizations such as NCSY made them understand how important it was to try to positively influence non-Orthodox young people.
2. While at college, through Hillel, World Jewish Service, and other Jewish leadership programs, they came into contact with the broader Jewish world and felt drawn to working in such settings.
3. Exposure to non-Orthodox Jews as part of Federation work or other forms of Jewish communal activity created a desire to teach in a school populated by a broader range of Jews.
4. Listening to the messages insisted upon by family members, often stemming from Holocaust experiences, who stressed that we are truly responsible for every Jew, made a deep impression upon some of these individuals.
5. Having family members or close friends who were non-Orthodox Jews and therefore served as models for the greater non-Orthodox Jewish population created a sense of familiarity and concern for students in a non-Orthodox institution.

6. Coming to Jewish education after engaging in a secular profession, and having had exposure to not only non-Orthodox but also non-Jewish society, creates a greater capacity to feel comfortable working with non-Orthodox Jews.
7. Growing up in a small town where denominational lines are often crossed because of the mutual dependency of all Jews upon one another engenders an outlook that carries over into the individual's professional educational activities.
8. Israelis with *Bnei Akiva* and army experience which brought them into contact with broader Israeli society, including many non-Orthodox Jews, were not dismayed by a non-Orthodox Jewish school.⁶⁶

4. Is Yeshiva or Orthodox day school education a factor that would not lead to an Orthodox educator's considering working in a non-Orthodox setting?

An additional complementary factor is the number of these same educators who themselves never received an Orthodox day school or Yeshiva education.⁶⁷ Sixteen of the forty interviewees (40%) reported that their involvement with Orthodoxy began in adolescence or later. Consequently, (some of these individual's childhood home lives were described as Orthodox but most were not) these educators spent significant time interacting with non-Orthodox Jews in public, private, or non-Orthodox institutions, usually developing a comfort level and broad sense of tolerance. However, one interviewee astutely pointed out that before we assume that Orthodox *Ba'alei Teshuva* might make the best Orthodox teachers in non-Orthodox educational settings, such individuals should be categorized into at least two groups: (1) those who underwent a somewhat radical personal transformation and, either because of a sense of insecurity regarding their knowledge base or a fundamental rejection of the world from which they came, are disinterested in revisiting, let alone working in an environment similar to that in which they grew up, and (2) those who over time deepened their religious commitment incrementally to the point where they do not perceive themselves as rejecting their former religious and cultural lifestyle but rather modifying, improving, adding

dimensions of meaning and significance, and simply “growing into” their present state of religiosity. Whereas the former would likely be loath to engage in educational institutions which in their minds are associated with the world that they have striven so hard to abandon, the latter might not only feel comfortable in such settings, but even feel a sense of obligation to help others to potentially undergo personal journeys resembling their own.

5. The personality factor

Finally, one of the interviewees suggested that in order for an Orthodox educator to be successful in a non-Orthodox setting, s/he requires a particular personality trait: “To work in such an environment, a person needs to possess something of a ‘radical streak.’” Granted that an Orthodox person who works in these kinds of environments is breaking with convention to some extent and is possibly confounding the expectations of his/her own teachers, peers, and family members. Perhaps that is exactly what being a true idealist requires—the readiness to follow one’s deep-seated beliefs in the face of the more typical everyday choices that are made by others. I believe that this subgroup within the Orthodox educational community makes significant contributions, along with, at least for some, significant personal sacrifice.

Future Considerations

One policy question that arises from such research is whether Orthodox degree-granting institutions, such as Yeshiva University, Touro College, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, and others should self-consciously train those intent upon entering the field of Jewish education in dealing with non-Orthodox populations, or at least should create a track for those interested in working in such a context. The question impacts upon post-professional support and training as well—that is, should resources be provided that will allow such educators to share their experiences and be given ongoing professional assistance by their Orthodox training institution? If it is determined that a “significant” percentage of their graduates either choose or find themselves needing to work in non-Orthodox institutions, should these graduates’ career paths be acknowledged and specific formal training be provided, or

will they be forced to choose such a direction without institutional support or preparation?⁶⁸

With respect to denominational day schools, it could be maintained that the challenge to find qualified and effective Judaic studies teachers will become even more acute in coming years if the opening of day schools continues at its present rate. This concern is mitigated, at least in the short term, by the current economic crisis which is expected to result in lower day school enrollment⁶⁹ and even the closing of smaller, less viable schools. Furthermore, supplementary schools are not thriving, and this trend could result in a change in the total number of educational positions available as well. It will be interesting to observe whether the Orthodox presence in non-Orthodox schools will significantly change in the years to come, particularly in light of the common observation that the Jewish community is increasingly polarized, with individuals gravitating to “left” and “right” extremes. Could that development mean that even fewer Orthodox educators will be prepared to work in non-Orthodox settings?

Only time will tell whether Orthodox educators in non-Orthodox Jewish educational settings will continue to be viewed as exceptions who will be left by the Orthodox establishment to essentially fend for themselves, or whether their role will be acknowledged and even validated as an important professional option for Orthodox educational professionals.

Appendix 1

1. How old are you? Where did you study? Do you have academic, professional educational training? Do you have an academic degree? At what level?
2. How many years have you worked in Jewish day school and/or supplementary school environments?
3. Have you worked in other non-Orthodox educational environments?
4. In what other sorts of educational settings have you worked? For how long?
5. How would you describe your present job satisfaction compared with what you experienced previously?
6. How would you characterize your present professional experience?
7. Do you consciously think of *kiruv* (lit. bringing closer; a term representing the mindset whereby one individual attempts to bring another to a higher level of religious commitment) as a goal? (I would explain that by *kiruv* I meant not necessarily making someone Orthodox, but rather moving the students religiously along a spectrum of less observance/commitment to more.) How does doing this interact with other possible educational objectives, e.g., covering curriculum?
8. What sort of collegial relationships do you have?
9. How does your Orthodoxy affect your professional experience?
10. How do you relate to your school setting outside of school?
11. What sort of conflicts have arisen and how have you dealt with them?
 - a. With students
 - Students who are not halakhically Jewish?
 - Kol isha?
 - Kashrut*?
 - Trips?
 - Dramatic productions? (Issues of subject matter, character behaviors, language, etc.)
 - b. With parents
 - c. With administrators
 - d. With lay leadership

12. What are the benefits, advantages of your situation?
13. Would you recommend such a setting to your Orthodox colleagues? Why?
14. What would you consider the profile for an Orthodox individual who could succeed in a non-Orthodox educational setting?

Appendix 2

Date: Thu, 8 Jan 2009 10:01:27 +0200

Subject: [LOOKSTEIN] Announcements 415

To: LOOKSTEIN@listserv.biu.ac.il

The Lookstein Announcements list is a project of the Lookstein Center for Jewish Education.

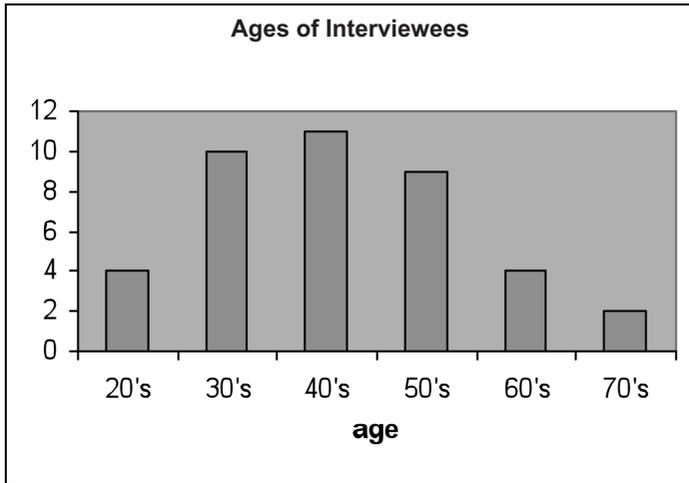
Announcements in this issue:...

3. Research request - "Orthodox Educators in Non-Orthodox Educational Settings"

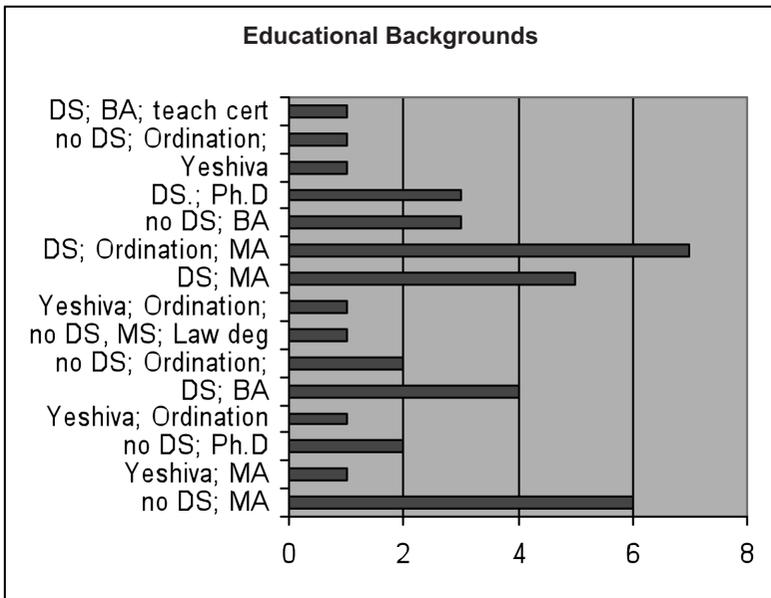
I am currently researching the topic of "Orthodox Educators in Non-Orthodox Educational Settings" for an upcoming academic conference. If you would like to participate in my research, please contact me offline at jackbieler@aol.com. What is entailed is a phone conversation lasting 20-30 minutes.

Rabbi Jack Bieler
Silver Spring, MD

Appendix 3

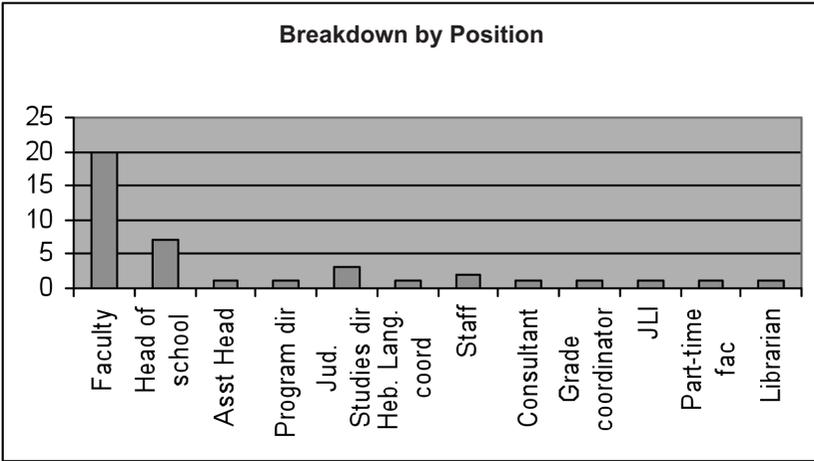


Appendix 4



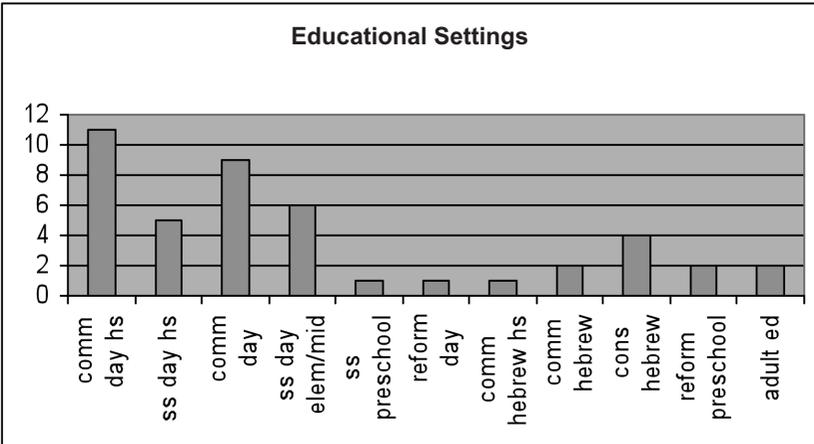
(DS = Day School)

Appendix 5

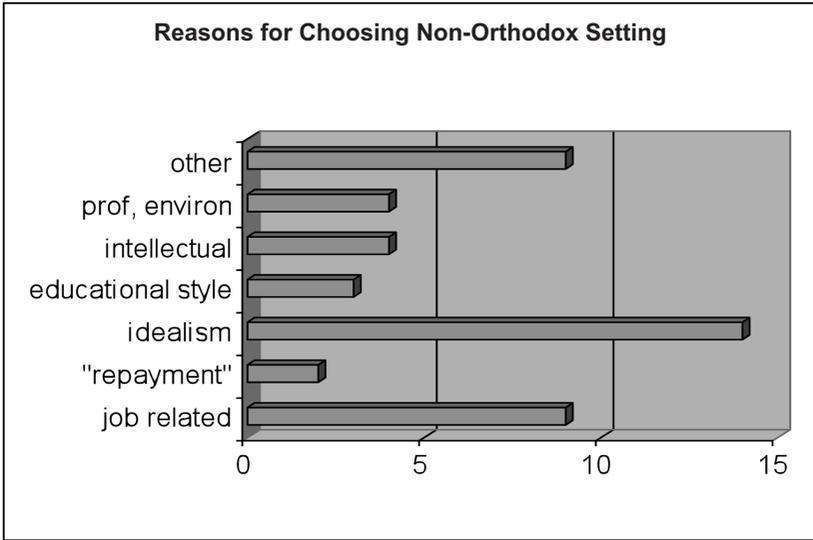


(JLI = Jewish Learning Initiative of Orthodox Union)
 (Staff = School Rabbi, Adult Education Coordinator, Board of Jewish Education staffer)

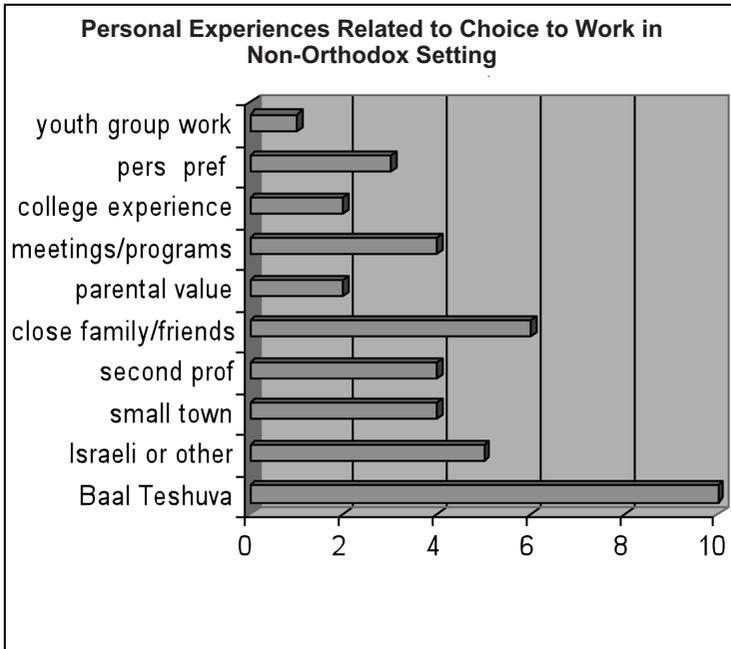
Appendix 6



Appendix 7



Appendix 8



NOTES

1. It was beyond the scope of my research to determine exactly what a respondent meant when s/he identified him/herself as “Orthodox” in response to the request that I placed on the Lookjed listserve.
2. Three interviews were conducted in person.
3. See Appendix 1.
4. See Appendix 2.
5. Deuteronomy 6:7; Kiddushin 29a; RaMBam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Talmud Torah 1:1.
6. Bava Batra 21a. However, Yerushalmi Ketubot, end Chapter 8 attributes this institution to Shimon ben Shetach.
7. Websites like those of the Jewish Home Educators Network <http://www.snj.com/jhen/faq.htm> and http://chinuchathome.info/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=372&Itemid=10514 reflect the demand on the part of Jewish families for curricula and other services designed for home schooling. During difficult economic times the difficulty of meeting tuition bills is also influencing more parents to consider such an option. There was a recent interchange on the Rabbinical Council of America listserve regarding whether home schooling could serve as a substitute for day school education in accordance with the GPS (Gerus Protocols and Standards of the Beth Din of America) initiative with respect to Giyur Katan (the religious conversion of a minor), particularly if the parents cannot afford the costs of day school education for their child.
8. There were 759 Jewish day schools in the United States in 2003-2004, with an enrollment of 205,000 children from age 4 to grade 12—Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_day_school.
In a 2007 study of Jewish supplementary schools, 230,000 children were enrolled in 1,720 schools. See Nate Sugerman, “Study Provides Snapshot of Struggling Supplementary Schools,” in *The Forward*, 8/13/2008, <http://www.forward.com/articles/13962/>
9. Although these instructors are employed by a particular school, from a halakhic perspective they are actually the *shlichim* (surrogates) of the parents. For that matter, the administrators who assemble the staff are similarly acting on behalf of the parent body of their students and should feel responsive to their expectations.
10. How many teachers are actually aware of a school’s mission/vision statement? How many schools have first worked carefully to produce such a document and then made sure to disseminate it to all of the institution’s stakeholders, reviewing it regularly to update it and bring school policies and practices into alignment with it?
11. This is true about both supplementary and day schools.
12. Not only are there supplementary schools of every type because of the various types of congregations sponsoring them, but in addition to Orthodox day schools, there are also Conservative, Reform, and Jewish cultural day schools. (I am unaware of the existence of Reconstructionist day schools.)

13. As will be pointed out later, just as denominational schools are not monolithic with regard to the positions that a particular institution establishes as its working principles and assumptions, the same is true for community schools. Consequently, although conceptually no one who is in some way part of the Jewish community should be excluded on the basis of not being “Jewish,” there are some schools that have instituted various types of policies in this regard. E.g., some schools have a “School Rabbi” who is charged with making these types of decisions on behalf of the school, and this individual’s religious orientation will obviously play a role in what sort of decisions are made. Other institutions might consult with a particular *posek* (halahkic decisor) or local Vaad Rabbanim (Rabbinic organization). Furthermore, particularly when schools have only a small Jewish community from which to draw their students, and there is a perceived need to attempt to attract Orthodox families to the school, particular policies might be put into place that could exclude some other potential students whose Jewish identity is questionable.
14. During the course of a consultation concerning the recent JESNA (Jewish Educational Service of North America) study, “Educators in Jewish Schools Study” (EJSS), http://www.jesna.org/jesna-publications/doc_download/2-ejss-report, the question was raised whether Jewish secular studies teachers, particularly those that are observant, should be considered as “Jewish educators” in the sense of their commitment to the field of Jewish education and their Jewish impact upon the student populations in the schools where they are employed. For the purposes of this paper, I have considered only educators directly engaged in teaching Jewish studies rather than general studies teachers in Jewish schools.
15. It is a theoretical conceit to assume that a particular individual, let alone all the members of the school’s faculty, will be in complete consonance with the perspective that the school’s founders envisioned for their institution. Religious belief and observance are extremely idiosyncratic to the point that among a group of people who purport to be adherents of a particular Jewish orientation, significant differences can be recognized when the totality of their respective religious practice and belief is rigorously analyzed. That being said, however, there are those whose similarities outweigh their differences, in contrast to others who diverge with respect to their religious norms to such an extent that they fall “outside the pale” of the school’s overall perspective.
16. During a session on Jewish prayer at the 2008 conference sponsored by Brandeis University’s Mandel Center for Jewish Education, entitled “Teaching Rabbinic Literature: Bridging Scholarship and Pedagogy,” when a university instructor who had just made a presentation on prayer was asked about how such insights could be transferred to the day school classroom and prayer experience in order to deepen students’ appreciation of their prayers, he responded categorically that it would be completely inappropriate for him as an academic to take into consideration the effects of his teaching on the inner experience of students, whether in

his own classes, or any other. Several of the attendees were not only taken aback by the assertion but also strongly disagreed.

17. Of course this is not only the case when the instructor identifies with a completely different denomination than the one that is associated with the school, but even if within the same denomination, e.g., Orthodoxy, if the school defines itself as Modern Orthodox and teachers represent more right-wing positions, significant dissonance between teachers and students can result. While some would argue that Modern Orthodoxy constitutes a separate denomination from those identifying themselves as Orthodox or Chareidi, such a distinction has not typically been applied or accepted.
18. This is far less of a concern in the younger grades, when students are not as discerning as when they become more mature and sensitized to issues of consistency versus hypocrisy.
19. However acute this problem is in larger metropolitan areas, it is more severe in smaller communities which have to recruit teachers from other communities to move to their area. Consequently, less than ideal “fits” will so much more be the case in smaller communities.
20. Fewer and fewer Orthodox congregations have offered a supplementary school option as ever greater numbers of Orthodox families have chosen to send their children to day schools. However, if current economic problems persist, just as there has been increased discussion regarding Hebrew charter schools, as well as an attempt in the Five Towns to work in tandem with local public schools to offer Jewish studies during part of the day resulting in significantly lesser costs for parents (see, for example, <http://www.ou.org/pdf/ja/5766/fall66/RadicalProposal.pdf>), it is possible that Orthodox families who are no longer able to send their children to day school might welcome a supplementary school option in their home synagogues.
21. See Nate Sugarman, <http://www.forward.com/articles/13962/>
22. The teacher never learned whether the rabbi also approved of his being rehired, despite his apparent success in the classroom with respect to engaging the curiosity and interest of the students.
23. Because of the greater comprehensiveness of Orthodox observance, loyalty to Orthodoxy is often considered more central to the overall lifestyle of its adherents, and therefore Orthodox parents are typically concerned that their children develop not only a general Jewish identity, but a specifically Orthodox one. While every movement includes some individuals who are passionately dedicated to the preservation of their Jewish perspective, the percentages among the Orthodox who possess such an outlook would appear to be higher.
24. This is not to claim that if their child became what they considered “too religious” they would be prepared to accept such a result. However, it would appear that most parents had such a low level of expectation regarding whether their children would react positively to their supplementary school experience, that this possibility never crossed their mind, unless it actually occurred.

25. While such a sensibility seemed to be more common in the supplementary school context, some Orthodox educators working in non-Orthodox day schools reported that whereas in an Orthodox institution they feared they would be overly self-conscious regarding being evaluated by colleagues, students, and the community regarding the manner in which their Orthodoxy manifested itself in their teaching and personal deportment, whether they would be required to see themselves as “standard bearers” or “role models” for Orthodox belief and practice, this would not be the case in a non-Orthodox school.
I am intrigued by such a position since an Orthodox educator could just as easily take the opposite position, i.e., an overtly Orthodox setting would challenge him/her to constantly reflect upon his/her personal level of observance and knowledge, whereas a non-Orthodox environment would be devoid of such an impetus. I suppose the degree to which an educator desires his/her professional environment to provide not only stimulation for perfecting his/her craft, but also for his/her own religious development and understanding is a matter of temperament, personality, and self-perception.
26. See, for example, points 11) and 12).
27. The official website of the Progressive Association of Reform Day Schools <http://www.pardesdayschools.org/schools/> lists seventeen member schools, one of which is in Israel.
28. The official website of the Solomon Schechter Day School Association (<http://www.ssdsa.org/?page=founder>) states that there are currently 73 schools serving 20,000 students.
29. The recent identity crisis that the Conservative movement is widely reported as experiencing has led a number of Solomon Schechter schools to redefine themselves as community schools. See, for example, http://www.thejewishweek.com/viewArticle/c36_a561/News/New_York.html#. One rationale for such a “re-branding” is that it might be easier to attract a wider range of students to enroll when a specific denomination no longer defines the nature of the institution. In my research, I did not encounter anyone who recounted that the redefinition of the school would cause him/her to reconsider continuing to work there, his/her having preferred a denominational school to one that lacks a specific religious orientation; however, I would imagine that such response might be possible on the part of some individuals.
30. These individuals also mention the differences between the Schechter and Modern Orthodox schools, and consequently the difficulties that they encounter working in these environments, and these will be discussed at a later point.
31. Naturally it is possible that such a view is a rationalization that lowers the dissonance that an Orthodox person might experience in such a setting; on the other hand, if it is possible for an Orthodox individual to carve out his/her responsibilities in such a manner that s/he essentially avoids the areas where s/he may encounter conflict, e.g., s/he is not asked to lead/participate in an egalitarian prayer group, s/he is not required by the curriculum to discuss authorship issues relating

- to the Torah, etc., the Orthodox instructor can compartmentalize his/her role in the school from the overall policies and orientation of the movement with which the school is associated, creating an acceptable personal comfort level.
32. The individual described his approach in the classroom as leaving no doubt that he was Orthodox. From a strategic perspective, one wonders whether such an approach is optimal if in the end it leads to students' being able to easily delegitimize what is being taught. On the other hand, is it intellectually honest for an Orthodox person to teach in such a setting without disclosing his perspective and point of departure? This would seem to be an interesting subject for discussion among obviously those who believe that it is legitimate to work in such a school in the first place.
 33. Does this case suggest that an Orthodox teacher in such a setting would be best served by not identifying the nature of his ordination?
 34. I realize that it is questionable to overly extrapolate from anecdotal evidence, since the biases of the teacher, his/her level of experience, the chemistry between instructor and his/her students, the level and motivation of students, overall school culture, etc. might all or individually be coming into play with regard to a particular interchange. Therefore it is important to keep in mind whether this comment was substantive in a stand-alone manner, or was evidence of some other undisclosed factor(s) influencing the teacher-student relationship.
 35. While it could be said that only one or two students vocalized the challenge, nevertheless there could be others who share the critique. Furthermore, even if initially the objectors were localized, the same complaints raised over time could influence other students to share such a concern.
 36. Although at least one interviewee described how s/he had received a traditional Orthodox education but had subsequently changed her religious orientation and as a result was more than comfortable working in a non-Orthodox environment, the overwhelming majority of interviewees who reported having received Orthodox educations continue to identify themselves as Orthodox in outlook, despite serving as educators in non-Orthodox environments.
 37. It is interesting to consider what will make a greater long-lasting impression upon the student: the first position about a certain issue that s/he confronts, or the final points of view articulated.
 38. These categories are based upon a phone conversation with Dr. Marc Kramer, 2/5/2009. While Dr. Kramer was very helpful in delineating these categories, I take full responsibility for any flaws in the manner in which I may have represented them as well as the implications of those representations that I have drawn with respect to Orthodox teachers working in these settings.
 39. *Reshet Batei Sefer Kehilatim*
 40. When I asked the interviewees about the policy of their school toward accepting students who might not have been halakhically Jewish from an Orthodox point of view, several stated that as long as the requirements of one of the mainstream Jewish denominations was satisfied, the child was accepted by the community

school. This might include patrilineal lineage and/or conversion by other than Orthodox *batei din*. It must be reiterated that this is not the policy of all community day schools.

41. The effectiveness of such rabbinical presentations will obviously depend upon the frequency, quality, and pedagogical acumen of these clergymen to work with students of these age cohorts.
42. A personal example perhaps could illustrate this issue. Many years ago, when I was working in a Jewish day school, I was asked to teach a course in Comparative Religion. One of the considerations that caused me to demur was the worry that if I attempt to be intellectually honest with regard to religions other than Judaism, how would I feel if one of my students ultimately chose to adopt a different religion and claim that at least in part my presentation was responsible for his decision to make the change. Similarly, would an Orthodox teacher be able to countenance his student's adopting a form of Judaism with which, from his own perspective, he would fundamentally disagree?
43. Rabbi Marc Baker articulates such a conceptualization of what an ideologically pluralistic Jewish day school offers its students in the August 2008 issue of the RAVSAK journal, *HaYidion*, entitled "Jewish Identities in Process: Religious Purposefulness in a Pluralistic Day School". <http://www.ravsak.org/news/138/115/Jewish-Identities-in-Process-Religious-Purposefulness-in-a-Pluralistic-Day-School/d,HaYidion/>
44. The much-publicized case of Noah Feldman is an example of such a phenomenon. See <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/22/magazine/22yeshiva-t.html>.
45. One of the classical strategies for developing a school's educational program is to conceptualize the profile of an ideal graduate and then work backward in order to create the longitudinal path that could contribute to the pro-active development of individuals reflecting these goals and values. While in theory, at least, one aspect of a Jewish day school's *raison d'être* is to contribute to Jewish continuity, would a student who has attended an ideologically pluralistic community day school, who has thoughtfully and energetically engaged in the school's Jewish educational program and emerges alienated from Jewish tradition and community, still fall within the definition of an "ideal graduate"?
46. During the first years of my career, I taught in a school where, albeit Orthodox, many of the students were not observant. I recognized that this was the case but felt that as long as I did my best to present Jewish studies and tradition as well and as convincingly as I could, I would have no personal responsibility for how my students turned out religiously. During the time I was a Jerusalem Fellow, my tutor, Dr. Michael Rosenak, challenged me with respect to this approach and stated that he considered my attitude a form of "irresponsible" religious education. He felt that it would be more appropriate if I established some sort of baseline for each of my students, whatever it might be, e.g., avoidance of intermarriage, affiliation with a Jewish institution, ongoing Torah study, etc., and evaluate the effects my teaching had upon my students in that light. While it might be unrealistic

to think that a single year-long class, or even the opportunity to teach the same students over the course of multiple years, the effect would be so long-lasting and profound that it could be observed in personal behavior many years in the future, on the other hand, to take no responsibility for how teaching is translated into practice, or whether it isn't at all, belittles and perhaps even trivializes the significance of the religious educational relationship.

However, with respect to the ideologically pluralistic school, it would appear that Dr. Rosenak would not be able to maintain his position, since as long as a student seriously and honestly engaged with the various approaches that fall within the rubric of Jewish tradition, the ultimate result, whatever it might be, is the student's own responsibility and deserves respect by all who have participated in his education.

47. See Appendix 3.
48. See Appendix 4.
49. See Appendix 5.
50. See Appendix 6.
51. See Appendix 7.
52. Categories besides "idealistic" were made up of the following comments made by interviewees:
 1. "job related"—the educator needed a job; a job was suddenly offered, and the educator felt s/he could not turn it down; the commute was more manageable; the educator needed the salary; the benefits and salary were better than what was offered at an Orthodox institution.
 2. "repayment"—the educator attended the same school when s/he was young and therefore was interested in being able to occupy the helping role that his/her own instructors served for him/herself.
 3. "educational style"—the non-Orthodox schools were perceived to be more progressive and technologically advanced.
 4. "intellectual"—more freedom with respect to what can be taught and discussed; less preoccupation with "externalities"; intellectual openness.
 5. "professional environment"—greater commitment to professional development; more open, honest, ethical.
 6. "other"—included needing a change in venue; female staff members being treated with greater respect; teaching being in fulfillment of requirement of graduate program; for an Orthodox educator, working in a non-Orthodox institution creates a separation between the work space and personal space; a sense that will be less subject to judgment of personal religiosity and level of learning in a non-Orthodox institution.
53. I recall many years ago while attending Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein's Shiur (Talmud class) in Yeshiva University when he used a similar metaphor in order to impress upon his students the importance of entering the field of Jewish education. The specific context to which he was referring was clearly not the world of non-Orthodox schools, but rather the need for Jewish educators to be involved with

students on the more elementary levels, since if the only way someone would be interested in entering the field was if he could be guaranteed that he would occupy the status of “Rosh Yeshiva” (head/lead teacher of the Jewish school) there would be no students sent his way because of a dearth of quality teachers in lower grades and at lower levels. It was a message that I for one took to heart.

54. As a Jewish educator who has worked for many years in Modern Orthodox schools, I could easily apply some of these same categories to the school environments in which I have taught. Unfortunately, there are many students in Orthodox schools who are unmotivated, disinterested, even alienated from Judaism and who would be extremely well served by teachers who were seeking to “make a difference,” who viewed helping many of these students as a matter of *pikuach nefesh*, and who wished to contribute a particular religious perspective to the “marketplace of ideas” extant in the school. Consequently, in my view, the truly unique emphasis of some of these educators upon *kellal Yisrael* and wanting to deal with the entire gamut of the modern Jewish community would be what sets apart Orthodox idealists in Orthodox schools from those who opt to teach in non-Orthodox settings.
55. During the course of my interviews, it became apparent that those teaching in Middle or High School, whether day or supplementary institutions, were generally harder pressed to deal with incongruities between their personal religious views and those of the student and parent body, than were those who taught in nursery or elementary schools. Furthermore, Hebrew language teachers were often insulated from religious orientations of the school and could choose to include as much or little Jewish culture and ritual observance as the subject matter would permit without entering into general conflicts with the school community. In fact several interviewees mentioned that avoiding teaching specific subject matter on the upper levels was a deliberate choice on their parts in order to avoid not only curricular issues, but also problems that would involve how to constitute a minyan, choosing *shluchei tzibbur*, and events like Shabbatonim that could bring religious disagreements to the fore. Similarly those working as librarians, programmers for adult education organizations or members of Bureaus of Jewish Education might face issues when interacting with co-workers; however they would be spared day-to-day student and parent conflicts.
56. Some individuals described themselves as preferring not to “rock the boat” and felt that challenging a practice or a curricular decision from an Orthodox point of view would be “disrespectful” to the non-Orthodox setting in which they worked. Others were not reticent about such matters and did voice objections to certain goings-on in the school. Aside from the pluralistic community school setting wherein everyone is defined as an equal stakeholder, this attitude raises the question of whether an Orthodox educator in a non-Orthodox school can ever become truly invested in the institution in which s/he works. Perhaps as long as one is devoted to his/her students, becoming an institutional “stakeholder” is of less importance. Or is it? I am fond of quoting one of TheodoreSizer’s principles

for Essential Schools, “Faculty should be generalists first and specialists second,” i.e., staff members should feel invested in advancing the entire institution rather than just their own subject area. Is doing this possible in the scenario that this paper is discussing?

57. Such an issue can arise from the school’s accepting students on the basis of patrilineal lineage or a conversion conducted by a non-Orthodox *Beit Din* (rabbinical court).
58. It was striking to me that a great number of the interviewees, when asked how they dealt with questions such as teaching Torah to a student not halakhically Jewish, either said that the problem never occurred to them or that they simply assumed that it was not a problem. This view was in contrast to the much smaller number who reported that they asked *She’eilot* (questions regarding Jewish law), researched the matter, and made sure that they were not violating any clear-cut *issurim* (prohibitions). Does this attitude reflect upon the degree of these individuals’ Orthodoxy, their personal level of Torah learning, or other phenomena?
59. A specific issue that was brought up several times was the inclusion of the *imahot* (the Biblical foremothers, Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, and Leah) in the introductory *Beracha* (blessing) of the Amida (the silent devotion prayer). What constituted Musaf (the additional prayer recited on Sabbaths and holidays) was another bone of contention.
60. One interviewee recounted how after a traumatic event at the school, some faculty members could hug their students, whereas he could not (because of religious restrictions regarding physical contact between men and women), possibly leading some students to consider him inconsiderate or distant.
61. Interestingly, the majority of interviewees who mentioned this issue were male rather than female.
62. Several Orthodox women commented to me that whereas Orthodox male faculty members would not be required to supervise the egalitarian tefilla (prayer) at their school, the same accommodation was not made for women.
63. In a recent issue of *Mifgashim*, VIII:45, edited by Rabbi Lee Buckman, an internet project under the aegis of Bar-Ilan University, a description of the most recent generation of teachers, obviously including those in Jewish education, suggests that long-term work in any one school, or even in the field of Jewish education in general, may not appeal to the “Millennial generation,” and therefore the issue of long-term frustration may be moot:

Marshall Memo: How Are Millennial Teachers Different from Gen-X and Boomers? In this Tools for Schools article, National Staff Development Council communications director Joan Richardson lists the ways that the Millennial generation of teachers (those born after 1977) are distinct from Generation X (1965-1977), Baby Boomers (1946-1964), and Traditionalists (before 1945):...

Millennials have a high tolerance for change, innovation, and learning. They don’t expect to stay in the same career for 30 years, which

means tenure has much less meaning for them, but they place a high value on continuing to learn and moving ahead quickly. “Packaged with this,” says Richardson, “is a higher level of assertiveness and confidence in their own abilities.” They may think that three or four years of teaching is plenty of time and then they’re ready to become a principal or take on another role in the field. . . .

64. Although Mishna Sanhedrin 4:5 contends that “whomever saves a single life is considered to have saved an entire universe,” suggesting that all human interactions are functions of quality rather than quantity, and even if a teacher manages to inspire a solitary student out of the many that s/he teaches, he has achieved a noteworthy accomplishment, nevertheless acknowledging that a conceptual idea does not always result in a sense of affective fulfillment and provide a stopgap against personal burnout.
65. See Appendix 8.
66. In my experience, Israelis do not have the same attitude toward non-Orthodox institutions in the Diaspora as many American Jews appear to have. Perhaps since the entire culture, society, and communities in which the non-Orthodox schools are located are perceived on the one hand as different from what the Israeli educators are accustomed to, even if they have lived in *chutz la-aretz* (outside the land of Israel) for many years, and on the other hand, still part of the Jewish people to whom they feel a deep sense of commitment, some of them look past denominational demarcations.
67. For my discussion of the effects of an Orthodox day school education on attitudes of students toward non-Jews, see *Formulating Responses in an Egalitarian Age*, ed. Marc Stern, Orthodox Forum, 2001, http://www.lookstein.org/articles/bieler_racism.pdf.
68. At one point in time, Orthodox institutions deliberately placed graduates into non-Orthodox synagogues, with the understanding that these individuals will decide whether or not to remain, on the basis of their ability to effect certain changes in the synagogue over the course of a specific number of years. Furthermore, institutions took upon themselves the responsibility of providing chaplains for the armed forces, even if doing so meant that the environments in which such individuals found themselves would not be ideal for Orthodox observance. Should non-Orthodox day schools and supplementary schools be viewed similarly?
69. While some parents approach the need to give their children day school educations in sacrificial terms to the extent that they will endure hardships to be able to pay high tuitions, others were not deeply committed to this type of education even during periods of economic prosperity, and the current difficulties will pressure them to conclude that they are unprepared to make the sacrifice and will send their children elsewhere.