Formulating a New Model of Israel Education for the 21st Century
Based on Concepts of Peace Education

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Abstract

This research project focuses on how Israel is taught in American Jewish institutions. We propose that a new model is needed to meet the needs of the current generation. The new curriculum is based on various concepts within the field of peace education, such as global citizenship, multiculturalism, human rights, identity development and conflict resolution. The overall idea of the new model is that if the Jewish commitment to social justice is incorporated into Israel education, American Jews will through an increased association between Israel and social justice, create a more relevant connection to Israel and stand up to act for peace and justice in Israel and worldwide.

Introduction

Education plays a powerful role in shaping the values and beliefs of an individual. It has the ability to inspire the ideals of justice, equality, and respect for human life; and yet it can also play a role in instilling hatred and fueling tensions between people of different backgrounds, as we see occurring all too often across the world today. In shaping the minds of young people, educators must be especially careful to take these opposing effects of education into consideration. As educators, we have a responsibility to be conscious of how we teach, what we teach and do not teach, and the messages we send about our values. In Jewish or any religious education for that matter, this teaching of values takes on a particularly crucial role. Jewish educational institutions must take this responsibility seriously, especially when it comes to the potentially controversial area of Israel education. What values, beliefs, and sense of identity do we consciously, or subconsciously, impart to young people through the current model of Israel education in United States Jewish educational institutions and how can we ensure that these are our intended messages?

This study explores this issue in depth, providing an overview of the current model of Israel education in the United States and suggesting a new model based on the concepts of peace
education and the underlying theme of social justice. The overall framework proposed suggests a combination of elements of Zionism and cosmopolitanism, as will be defined in detail later. In this way, the model allows young Jews in America to explore their connection to Judaism and to Israel in a particularistic way, while also providing them with a universal lens through which to investigate their identity. A necessary change given globalization and an emphasis on multiculturalism in today’s world and particularly in American society, the curriculum allows Jewish youth to find connection and relevance in their study of Israel. At the same time, it provides them with the opportunity to understand the complexities of the country in a way that encourages them to work for peace and justice. The proposed curriculum makes use of a number of concepts from the field of peace education, including global citizenship and cosmopolitanism, human rights, conflict resolution, multiculturalism, and identity development. Pedagogically, it also emphasizes critical thinking, reflection, action, and creativity. Through the combination of these elements, this curriculum has the potential to change the way young Jews relate to Israel, to the world at large and hopefully will take action towards a more just and peaceful place to live for all.

**Background and Context**

**A. Overview of Israel Education in the United States**

American Jewish education is seen as an essential part of the community in order to continue the traditions of Judaism. According to the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (www.peje.org, 2009), there are 700 full-time Jewish day schools in North America, which educate nearly 200,000 students. Young Jewish Americans receive education about Israel not only through school. Among the many agents that possibly play a role in their learning about Israel are their parents, the media, youth movements, camps, and schools. Although not much
has been formally written about Israel education in the United States, certain trends can be observed. Eisen and Rosenak (1997) point out that Israel education and the place Israel holds has entered a new stage “in the lives of contemporary Jews” (p. iii). The historic times where Jewish institutions taught about the struggles for a place to belong, a homeland, and the importance of the creation of a state have ended (Eisen et al., 1997). Israel today is a dynamic and vibrant place with many struggles, complexities, and successes that have evolved and changed tremendously. A new area of Israel education therefore also needs to develop.

**Conceptual Framework**

*A New Model of Israel Education*

How can we engage young American Jews in Israel in such a way that allows them to simultaneously foster a connection to Israel, a deep and comprehensive understanding of the country and allow space to take action for a socially just world? In the following analysis, we propose that combining Israel education with peace education will allow young American Jews to foster this deep and comprehensive connection to Israel while also be empowered to work for social justice in the region and the world at large.

Our new model for Israel education, described in Figure 1, includes various themes of peace education and serves as a tool to help incorporate the different concepts which we believe are crucial in order to achieve the deep and comprehensive connection to Israel. The model is dynamic; there is no one direction or perspective for which this model should be viewed. Rather, there are multiple ways to look at it and use it as a tool in organizing educational activities about Israel.
Figure 1: New model of Israel education with a peace education orientation

The center circle represents the goals which we aim to achieve in our model of Israel education. These are connection, complexity, relevance, and peace and justice. The reason it is important for young Jews in America to have such a relationship with Israel is because, as outlined above, Israel and Zionism are important parts of Jewish identity. Therefore, in order to meet the needs of Jewish education, establishing a sense of connection and relevance is important. Moreover, we believe that in order to have a true cosmopolitan identity, a focus on the particular threads of identity need to be established. A connection to Israel therefore does not need to exclude a connection to humanity as a whole, and in fact is an important part of a holistic sense of identity development (more on this in the Zionism and Cosmopolitan section below).

The middle set of circles contains different themes of peace education which are necessary to succeed at the stated objectives. These themes include multiculturalism, human
rights, global citizenship, conflict resolution, and identity development. These are fields which will not only help foster the aims of most Israel education, to have a meaningful connection to Israel, but will also serve the students in their daily life in America by encouraging them to become active citizens and to be aware of who they are and where they stand in relation to other people around them.

The outermost circles represent the different pedagogies which are part of our Israel education model. These include creativity and experimental learning, action, reflection, and critical thinking. At least one if not all the suggested subjects and pedagogies will be an underlying part of each lesson. These pedagogies are important part of the peace education field and will also help students to make Israel more relevant to their lives. The lens through which the entire curriculum will be viewed is Zionism and cosmopolitanism, as discussed in detail below.

In the coming sections we will briefly delve into each part of the model, and explain the reasons why we chose those aspects of peace education, how they are relevant, and most importantly how those themes help achieve our objectives: a meaningful connection to Israel, an understanding of the complexities of Israel, the relevance of Israel, and how peace and justice can be achieved in the region and in our lives today.

Overall it is important to remember that every class, every school, and every teacher differs from one another. Therefore, we purposely constructed a model and not a set curriculum so that it is flexible enough to adjust to different circumstances. Eisner (2002) refers to this concept as intellectual flexibility; we sometimes need to alter the goal, and shift strategies according to who we teach.
B. Why Peace Education

Synott (2005) outlines the importance of peace education,

One of the clear strengths of peace education that makes it especially relevant for our times is its inclusive, global orientation. The futility of violent solutions to international conflicts…and the growing concerns over local violence in many places are other factors that have encouraged people to call for the introduction of peace education into schools. (p. 6)

Peace education is more than a set of topics or lessons but “must be seen as an educational orientation that provides the objectives and the instructional frame work for learning in schools” (Bar-Tal, 2001, p. 31). While composed of a variety of sub-fields and differing depending on context, peace education has as its primary goal to create “a more humane society, be that on a community, national or global basis… a society that derives from positive, mutually beneficial relationships among the members of the society, regarded both corporately and individually” (Reardon, 2000, p. 3).

From the variety of themes of peace education we will concentrate on the following interconnected topics: human rights, conflict resolution, global citizenship and cosmopolitanism, and identity development. Additionally, a number of pedagogies will be emphasized: critical and independent thought, reflection, action, and creativity and experiential learning.

Peace, according to the paradigm we set forth, includes both negative and positive peace, in other words, the absence of violence as well as the presence of justice (Reardon, 2000). This educational paradigm will be successful in reshaping Israel education so that it is relevant to the realities of young people living in America, allows space for critical thought necessary to create connection, will be creative, and has the ability to empower young people to take action. Bar-Tal (2001) explains that if you want to be successful with the “educational mission of peace
education” you have to take an innovative and creative approach (p. 31), which we aspire to carry out.

In today’s globalized world, young people are constantly surrounded by diversity, difference, and constant change. Multiculturalism is accepted as the norm and the value of global citizenship is taken for granted. Many young people in the United States see themselves not just as members of their own religious community or country, but as citizens of a larger interconnected world. Cultural difference is valued in its own right as a positive element of a society in that it provides richness and vitality to a community. As such, rather than portraying Israel as morally superior or ethnically different, Israel education under the rubric of peace education would emphasize the multiculturalism of the country and the place of Israel as a unique nation for Jews among the larger body of nations. Israel is multicultural in that it incorporates many different immigrants and cultural groups. These include but are not limited to, Ethiopian, Former Soviet Union, South American, Eastern and Western European, and American subgroups. Additionally there is a large Arab population, divided within itself, making up another of the cultural groups within Israel. While these Arab subgroups are, Muslim, Christian, and Jewish a tension arises for conceptualizing a Jewish state while respecting its diverse peoples. By placing Israel within this multicultural and Jewish context, young people will be able to relate to the country in a more meaningful manner.

Another essential component of peace education which will strengthen Israel education in America is the emphasis on critical thought. Instead of simply telling students how they should feel and think about Israel, under this new model of Israel education, students will be encouraged to raise questions and struggle with finding answers. Rather than simply accept everything that the Israeli government and parts of its society does as right, students will grapple with the issues,
such as the status of minority groups, poverty within society, and its relations with other
countries.

The final element of peace education which makes it instrumental for the success of
Israel education is its commitment to social justice and action. Peace education does not simply
include the acquiring of knowledge, but also the development of skills for action. Under this
model, students will not only learn information about Israel, but will become empowered to act
on this information and learn the skills necessary to do so. In this way, students will become
more engaged with Israel, thereby strengthening their connection to the country. They will feel
that they play an important role in shaping the country’s future, particularly in working towards
peace and justice in the region. Rather than telling students exactly how they should become
engaged, students will learn about the country in such a way so that they can choose how to be
involved. Central to such a challenge is providing students with the “skills, knowledge and
authority they need to inquire to act upon what it means to live in a substantive democracy…to
fight deeply rooted injustices in a society and world founded on systematic economic, racial and
gendered inequalities” (Giroux, 2004, as cited in, De Bie, 2007, p. 29). The same author
continues to write how Horton and Freire remind us that such social change cannot be forced
upon people. Peace education should therefore be student-centered, a process of mutual learning
among students and educators (De Bie, 2007).

C. Zionism and Cosmopolitanism

The thematic framework and lens which we use to formulate our new model of Israel
education combines two different theories. On the one hand is Zionism, the support of a Jewish
state in the land of Israel. It identifies the needs of the Jewish people and asserts that a Jewish
state should exist in order to provide a safe haven for Jews across the world, many of whose
communities have faced persecution and hatred throughout history (Hertzberg, 1972). We believe that Zionism is generally formulated as a particularistic mode of engagement in that it focuses on the primacy of Jewish identity. The second overarching concept used is that of cosmopolitanism. In contrast to Zionism’s focus on the particular, cosmopolitanism focuses on the universal. It asserts that we are first and foremost citizens of the world and therefore have an obligation to those outside our particular identity group (Appiah, 2006). Zionism and cosmopolitanism, although seemingly on opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of their loyalties to particular versus universal measures of obligation, do in fact have several similar elements. Through exploring these concepts in greater depth and unpacking their similarities and differences, it is possible to arrive at a definition of each of these terms which allows them to co-exist as mutually reinforcing concepts.

Although the religious roots of the Zionism precede the late 19th century, it was not until this time that Zionism became the modern political movement that we understand it to be today. For generations since the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE, Jews have prayed for a return to the land of Israel. It was assumed that this would occur when God brought the Messiah and redeemed the Jewish people (Hertzberg, 1972). Modern Zionism, on the other hand, was founded as a reaction to the anti-Semitism Jews faced in Europe (Sachar, 1958). Theodore Herzl, a young journalist in Paris, after witnessing the Dreyfus Affair in 1894 in which a Jewish officer was wrongly convicted of treason, decided that a Jewish homeland was needed. Anti-Semitism, he asserted, would not go away despite assimilation into the larger society and the only way to put an end to it would be to create a Jewish state so that Jews across the world could be a nation like any other nation (Hertzberg, 1972). According to Herzl’s vision, the new

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1 Bias or discrimination against Jews as a group, also includes anti-Judaism (www.facinghistroy.org, 2009).
Jewish state would be a secular, technologically advanced country which provided equality for all its citizens, including the Arab population (Sachar, 1958).

Zionism, at its outset, was not supported by the majority of the Jewish people, with religious Jews claiming that only God could return the Jewish people to the land of Israel the secular Jewish communities claiming that they were citizens of the countries of Europe in which they lived and therefore did not strive for a return to Israel (Hertzberg, 1972). However, following the events of the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, the vast majority of Jewish communities came to support the country. While this connection to Israel has changed over time and differs according to community, it can be generally said that among Jewish communities around the globe there is support for the State of Israel as a Jewish country.

The primary concern for many Jews in the United States is therefore with the security of Israel’s Jewish citizens, for whom the country was established after the Holocaust.

In more recent years, however, particularly among Israeli academics, there has been a movement towards what is now known as post-Zionism. Post-Zionism developed following the opening of the Israeli historical archives detailing the events surrounding the establishment of the country, including the 1948 War (Hazony, 2001). These documents suggest a very different reality about the establishment of the State from what has been generally accepted as fact among the Israeli public. The archives reveal, for instance, that in some cases Palestinians were forcefully evacuated from their towns and villages during the war, suggesting that Israel’s government actions were in part responsible for the Palestinian refugee problem (Morris, 2001). Revelations such as this one caused hitherto ardent Zionists to begin to question their relationship to the State of Israel. Many

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2 According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency there were an estimated 860,000 Palestinian refugees in May 1951 (www.un.org/unrwa, 2009).
remain loyal to the country, albeit with a criticism to some of the actions of their country’s government (Hazony, 2001). These individuals show how one’s universal concerns for human rights and ethical action can remain integrated into a person’s identity without renouncing one’s particularistic loyalties.

Cosmopolitanism, in contrast to Zionism, does not focus on the plight of a particular people but rather notes that in a globalized world, in which we come into contact with an ever-increasing number of people, we have a moral obligation to care for the well-being of every person (Appiah, 2006). In today’s world, cosmopolitanism, according to Appiah (2006), is not merely something to aspire to as an ideal, but is a necessity and a reality in any community in order to live and coexist with others. Cosmopolitanism, as it is played out in the world today, began to arise after 1945 and can be seen in documents such as the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights (Levy & Sznaider, 2004, as cited in Sznaider, 2007). In the preamble of this document it says, “Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind….” To the framers of the document, this was a clear reference to the events of the Holocaust (Sznaider, 2007, p. 165). In other words, modern cosmopolitanism came about as a reaction to hatred and persecution in the world.

While some might claim that this sense of global responsibility in cosmopolitanism takes away from one’s particular identity, Appiah (2006) suggests that this universal obligation is an “added soul” (p. xvii), whereby one can hold on to both one’s particular as well as universal frame of reference. What Sznaider (2007) terms “realistic cosmopolitanism” allows one to remain loyal to one’s own national group while also caring for and understanding the perspectives of others worldwide. In this sense, it is different from universalism which ignores one’s particular identity.
Several connections can be made between Zionism and cosmopolitanism. First, are the roots of these two modern movements: both are a reaction to the existence of hatred and persecution in the world, particularly the events of the Holocaust. While Zionism responded to these events through the lens of particularity and maintained that a Jewish state was necessary in order to protect Jews, cosmopolitanism responded with a more universal notion of protection, claiming that all of humankind must be saved from such atrocities in the future. It is interesting to note these are parallel reactions to the same events and begs the question as to why this occurred. An answer may be found in the historical memory of the Jewish people as a persecuted minority, as discussed above. As a result of these historical experiences, the Jewish community had a communal identity of victimization. As a result, the genocidal campaign against them was understood to be an attack against them as Jews in particular, rather than attack against all of humanity. They therefore interpreted the events through a lens of particularity rather than universalism. Importantly, however, the European power brokers also viewed the events through a particularistic lens as seen in their decision to support the establishment of the State of Israel.

The second connection between these two theories is each one’s recognition of both the universal as well as the particular. Looking at the roots of Zionism, it does not only claim the particularity of the Jewish people, but also settles on notions of universal equality as seen in the fact that Herzl envisioned a country which embodied equal protection for all. After all, Zionism was a secular movement, seen to address a political rather than a religious problem. The movement was established by secular Jewish leaders who had always seen themselves as members of the societies in which they lived. As such, elements of both particularity and universalism made their way into Zionist ideology. Nonetheless, there is still an inherent tension in the idea of a Jewish state that provides equality to all individuals. Despite this tension, however, the founders of the state tried to
create an ideal society which would provide safety to Jews and non-Jews alike. This support of both the particular and universal is also evidenced in the opinions and beliefs of post-Zionists today, who see both the universal obligation of humanity in addition to their concern for fellow Jews. At the same time, cosmopolitanism does not completely reject the notion of the particular. Rather, it aims to differentiate itself from universalism, claiming that only through particular identities can there be a sense of universal obligation. One need not give up one’s particular identity in order to be a citizen of the world.

By picking up on the particular and universal elements of each of these concepts, Zionism and cosmopolitanism can be seen to be mutually reinforcing rather than opposing. Furthermore, cosmopolitanism’s acceptance of the reality of globalization in today’s world can be applied to Zionism to suggest that it is in the best interest of Israel’s leaders to take into account the universal nature of the world. Every individual, community, and nation is interconnected and it is therefore in everyone’s best interest to ensure that the rights of all are maintained.

While there are some who may claim that religious ideals are the least likely way to bring about notions of universality or cosmopolitanism, there are others who suggest just the opposite. In his book, *In the Name of Identity*, Amin Maalouf (2000) talks about the need for both particular and universal identities, claiming that religion provides an ideal combination of these two seeming contradictions. He writes,

> It seems to me that there is something more than mere reaction in the current rise of religious sentiment: perhaps an attempt at a synthesis between the need for identity and the need for universality. I see the religious communities as global tribes: tribes because of their stress on identity, global because of the way they blithely reach across frontiers. For some people, to subscribe to a faith that transcends national, regional and social affiliations is a way of proclaiming their universality. In a way, belonging to a faith community is the most global and

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3 This ideal versus the reality is still a challenge of Israeli society today, and one which we aim to address.
universal kind of particularism… the sense of belonging to a common ‘Church’ is nowadays the most efficient factor for binding together varieties of nationalism, even those that call themselves secular. (p. 93)

In other words, religion can be a means of both holding onto a particular as well as a universal identity. In redefining Judaism and Zionism in light of this idea, we have the ability to meet the needs of both the cosmopolitan as well as the particularist.

In comparing Zionism and cosmopolitanism, we can better understand how these two seemingly opposing perspectives can be forged into a new understanding of what it means teach about Israel. As suggested above, by focusing on the roots of these movements and the elements of them that ensure both the particular and universal elements of one’s identity, one can achieve a new understanding of Zionism which takes into account the realities of the modern world. These conceptualizations of Zionism and cosmopolitanism will carry themselves throughout the new curriculum, ensuring that Israel is taught in such a way as to ensure that young Jewish Americans will find Israel relevant to their lives, will feel connected to the country, will have a nuanced understanding of its complexities, and will be inspired to work for peace and justice in the region.

D. Limitations and Challenges

Israel education in America has much room to grow. We believe that peace education provides the most effective means of transforming Israel education in America. As in any field, however, there are many challenges and limitations that come with using the peace education orientation. The three main challenges and limitation we believe to encounter are (1), external factors, (2), teacher dependency, and (3) the evaluation process.

While there are not many people in the world who are opposed to peace as a general concept, there are differing views about what peace involves, the means to achieve it, and how to educate people about it. The approach we chose, Israel education with a peace education
orientation, therefore, with all the aforementioned challenges, will be difficult to implement. It will be a process that has undergone and will hopefully continue to undergo many hours, days, and weeks of dialogue and discussion in order to reach a stage where more people become aware of how to transform elements of today’s Israel curriculum. The change we attempt to achieve is a change of outlook and orientation, and a change of many deeply embedded traditions of teaching that have not been questioned or challenged for many years. However, despite these challenges, we believe peace education will provide an invaluable tool to achieve these goals.

**Literature Review: Peace Education Themes Used in the New Model**

The following concepts are the peace education themes which will carry throughout the proposed model of Israel education.

*A. Identity Development*

One of the reasons why “a new concept of identity is needed, and needed urgently” is because of globalization (Maalouf, 2000, p. 35). Many people in the world today cannot identify with the concept of identity that represents one nationality, one language, or one country, yet the concept continues to be taught and discussed through a monolithic lens. As the options of relating and connecting to people in the world grow larger, and more and more possibilities are available to identify with different groups and people around the world, it is important to look at where the notion of Jewish identity finds its place.

One way to accomplish this is to look at the different “threads of affiliation” we all have (Maalouf, 2000, p. 129). Each thread of a person’s identity represents a connection or a bridge to another person, such as a common language, a shared interest, or the same religion. Maalouf (2000) explains that each thread may be “thick or thin, strong or weak, but it is easily recognizable by all those who are sensitive in the subject of identity” (p. 20). As we teach about Israel within the
framework of peace education and social justice, we aim to pull and strengthen the different threads of affiliation within each student. These different threads are the bridge to connect with different people wherever they are in the globe.

If we focus on how our identity is made up of different parts, we find points of connection with all different kinds of people. Sen (2008) explains very clearly why it is vital to explore and discuss identity:

A sense of identity can be a source not merely of pride and joy, but also of strength and confidence... And yet identity can also kill – and kill with abandon. A strong – and exclusive – sense of belonging to one group can in many cases carry with it the perception of distance and divergence from others groups. Within group solidarity can help to feed between-group discord... Violence is fomented by the imposition of singular and belligerent identities on gullible people, championed by proficient artisans of terror... The cultivated violence associated with identity conflicts seems to repeat itself around the world with increasing persistence... It seems to crowd out, often enough, any consideration of other, less confrontational features of the people on the opposite side of the breach, including, among other things, their shared membership of the human race. (pp. 1-3)

In conclusion, identity is a complex and multi-layered subject. Identity differs from person to person, and even in one person identity can be viewed in multiple ways. Identity is culturally and situationally rooted and therefore, depending on the social context and situation, different parts of our identity might prevail. For the new Israel curriculum with a peace education and social justice orientation, it is important to explore those different ‘threads of identity’. Lastly, as language plays a crucial role in shaping identity, the new Israel curriculum will foster not only a sense of importance of the Hebrew and Arabic languages, but also teach them in order to create more bridges of connections.

B. Human Rights

Human rights education provides a useful paradigm through which to educate about Israel. Human rights are most closely associated with positive peace, or the creation and maintenance of
justice in society (Reardon, 1997) and can be defined as the right of every individual to his or her basic needs in order to live a life of dignity (Donnelly, 2007). All forms of violence are seen as an assault on human dignity, including physical and structural violence, structural violence, political violence, and cultural violence (Reardon, 1997). Different types of rights can therefore be discussed, including economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights (Donnelly, 2007).

This wide range of rights would allow Israel education to go beyond talking solely about the political conflict between Israelis and Palestinians which involves overt physical violence. Instead, it would open up the conversation about Israel to include such issues as the cultural and civil rights of minorities (Jewish and non-Jewish) within Israel as well as the structural violence inherent in a society with a wide gap between the rich and the poor. Such educational measures would discuss the possibility for long range change in order to increase social justice and respect for human dignity (Reardon, 1997).

While the philosophical underpinnings of human rights are widely debated, one possible tradition that leads to the assumption of human rights is religion (Donnelly, 2007). Teaching human rights in a Jewish setting therefore provides a solid basis on which students can comprehend and internalize these human rights values. In the Jewish context, human rights can be understood as the concept of *b’telem elohim*, that all people are created in the image of God. As such, they are all entitled to living a life of dignity. However, even with the religious underpinning to human rights, it will be important to place human rights in a larger intercultural and international context. Students will therefore need to understand that each culture, including different religions, may define human rights in a different way (Sen, 1999) and that there are also different models of how human rights should be ensured (Donnelly, 2007).
Importantly, the curriculum will first introduce human rights as a universal religious value and only then move on to look at human rights in the context of international law. In this way, students will relate human rights first to their particularistic Jewish identity, and then also expand that identity to include other religious groups as well as international political bodies, thereby strengthening their universal identities. Combined, these two elements will provide students with an ideal standard of human rights as well as play a part in the process of identity development. Following this ideal, students will learn about the reality of human rights abuses in an international context. By presenting the issue of human rights in Israel within this international framework in which all nations are striving for human rights, students will be able to approach Israel’s situation more critically. This is especially important because of the ongoing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians in which an issue such as human rights abuses could easily become highly politicized to the detriment of achieving the learning outcomes. Students will understand that Israel struggles with issues of human rights just as many other countries do, and they will be motivated to work for change. Understanding Israel within this context will allow Israel and its struggles to be more relevant to their lives and to their values, thus accomplishing the goals set forth for this curriculum.

C. Global Citizenship and Cosmopolitanism

1. Global citizenship

Young people today are faced with many urgent problems that previous young generations were much less aware of. We are faced with: an increasingly polluted planet, gross mal-distribution of wealth, which prevents the overwhelming majority of human beings from realizing their potential and ensures that vast numbers die prematurely; and regrettable patterns of social and political injustice, in which racism, sexism, militarism and other forms of unfairness and oppressions exist. This is only a partial list. Although it seems rather unlikely that human beings
will ever achieve anything that approaches a perfect world, it does seem reasonable to hope – and perhaps even to demand – that we will someday behave far more responsibly and establish a global civil society that is just and sustainable, and not characterized by major outbreaks of conflict and violence. What are the roles of schools and teachers to prepare young people to view themselves as part of a larger sum that stretches beyond their closest surrounding, such as their neighborhood and community (Carlsson-Paige & Lantieri, 2005)?

In order to educate students about world issues and transmit a sense of global awareness and consciousness, research has shown four processes that promote pro-social behavior, responsibility, and activism in young people (Carlsson-Paige et al, 2005). These are: (1) to be in a caring and nurturing environment; (2) provide opportunities for the students to be a part of decision making processes and pro-social actions; (3) have role models who model pro-social behavior; (4), develop skills for conflict resolution and perspective-taking (Carlsson-Paige et al, 2005). These processes will play a vital part in the training seminar we will hold for the Israel educators, who are interested and motivated to adapt to the new framework of Israel education with a peace education orientation.

Furthermore, Delanty (2000) describes the nature and characteristics of global citizens: “The Global Citizen; is one aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a global citizen; two respects and values diversity; three is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place; and four takes responsibility for their actions” (Delanty, 2000, p. 37).

Let us suppose that, for a variety of reasons, more and more people come to see themselves as global citizens. Will it make much difference? It seems that an important shift of perspective might take place and that the strength of this perspective will grow as solidarity increases and more people accept the concept of global citizenship.
One of the overarching goals the global citizen theme in the Israel curriculum with a peace education and social justice orientation is to instill in students a critical awareness of global issues, with an emphasis on Israel and the United States, the interdependence of the countries, the interdependence with the larger community of nations, and an understanding of rights and responsibilities of an American, as well as a global, citizen.

**Cosmopolitanism**

Who is a cosmopolitan and what are the cosmopolitan’s views and thoughts about other citizens of the world? According to Appaiah (2006) there are two different notions of cosmopolitanism which are linked with each other. One refers to universal obligation. In other words we as citizens of the world have an obligation that goes beyond our families, or the people with whom we share citizenship (Appaiah, 2006). The other refers to the obligations to particular citizens and to be open and have an interest to learn about different cultures, practices and beliefs because the cosmopolitan knows that we can learn a great deal from our differences (Appaiah, 2006). Hansen (2008), who also extensively writes about cosmopolitanism, calls Appaiah’s (2006) second definition of a cosmopolitan a “cosmopolitan sensibility.” We believe that the cosmopolitan sensibility is one that can be related to the peace education Israel curriculum. In other words, a cosmopolitan sensibility does not only embody openness and tolerance to new ideas and observances, it also entails a strong desire to learn from other traditions (Hansen, 2008).

A cosmopolitan sensibility is not a possession, not a badge, not a settled accomplishment or achievement. It is an orientation that depends fundamentally upon the ongoing quality of one’s interactions with others, with the world, and with one’s own self. Like education itself it is ever incomplete, ever emergent. (Hansen, 2008, p. 302).

The author gives a great example of the kind of cosmopolitan he refers to. If a classroom was to learn about Flamenco, the Spanish dance, the students should not only be exposed to the music
and the dance but also be asked relevant questions, in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the dance and the culture from which it comes. For example, what kinds of instruments are part of the music? What materials are the instruments made of? Who made the instruments and where were they made? What does the Flamenco represent to the Spanish culture? Through questions such as these, students learn what it means to be a critical thinker rather than a “traditionalistic custodian” (Hansen, 2008, p. 306).

To learn and to ask questions about our own culture, heritage, and traditions are, we believe, a crucial part of cosmopolitanism as well. When we talk about cosmopolitanism, we not only talk about learning about other cultures, but also encouraging a sense of obligation to a worldwide community. It is therefore important to ask the question about where our loyalties and obligations fall. Do we carry a universal obligation towards all human beings? Or are we first obliged towards our own closer circles and the people with whom we are familiar? Nussbaum (1997, as cited in Hansen, 2008) argues that people should conceive of themselves as citizens of the world first and not automatically regard fellow citizens (people they share citizenship with) as more important. However, at the same time, she does claim that people should attend to the local in spirit and in doing so are able to contribute to a more flourishing cosmos. In contrast, Appiah (2006) has criticized Nussbaum’s point of view. He argues for what he calls “rooted cosmopolitanism in which people should recognize the distinctive influence of local tradition and culture on their personhood and in which a higher duty is owed in an array of circumstances for family or community” (p. 292). This relates back to the notion of cosmopolitanism discussed earlier, in which it is important to hold on to both particular and universal identities.

Especially in regard to Israel education in the United States, questions as to where our first obligations lie are important questions to ask and discuss. We do not necessarily believe that one or
the other thread of identity should prevail. On the contrary, it is a topic where students, through provided resources, questions, and discussions, should be able to find answers for themselves. Even if no answer is found, educators are able to move the students’ outlook on the topics discussed in Israel education from a “consumerist, spectator-like, or acquisitive sampling to a participatory inquiry in which meanings and outlooks are explicitly at play” (Hansen, 2008, p. 303). In other words, students should not simply take in knowledge without thinking about it, but rather, should find meaning, understanding, and relevance in what they learn so that they can relate their own lives to the world at large and engage in a process of exploration.

D. Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution falls into the skills-based aspect of peace education in that it teaches students practical skills that they can use to promote peace and justice (Jones, 2006). It emphasizes that while “peacemaking may involve distributive (win-lose) negotiations, peacebuilding requires the use of integrative negotiations, where disputants strive to find a resolution that maximizes the benefits for all parties rather than determining who wins and who loses” (Johnson & Johnson, 2005, p. 280). In other words, through using a curriculum which incorporates elements of conflict resolution, students will learn how to cooperate and resolve conflicts constructively so that the solution is mutually beneficial for all the parties involved. In order to be successful at conflict resolution, students must learn skills and abilities such as emotional awareness, empathy, perspective taking, and strategic expression (Jones, 2006).

Seeing conflict from multiple perspectives is an especially important skill in the process of conflict resolution in that it allows individuals to more fully understand the needs of all the parties involved so that a mutually beneficial agreement can be reached. In order to accomplish such perspective taking, students must learn how to explain their own views clearly, actively listen to
another’s viewpoint, and acknowledge another’s concerns (Smith & Fairman, 2005). This process allows the groups in disagreement to jointly brainstorm options that reflect both of their needs. Perspective taking also allows one to breakdown stereotypes and re-humanize someone otherwise seen as the enemy (Smith & Fairman, 2005). Rather than relying on stereotypes and misperceptions of the other, students, in understanding the perspective of another person, will learn to respect and treat that person as a fellow human being. Listening and communication skills are an important part of this process as well and involve active listening and acknowledgement of the other as mentioned above. Additionally, students must learn how to deal with emotion in an effective manner and not allow it to prevent the resolution of a disagreement. One way to do this is to focus on the needs one is trying to meet within the conflict situation rather than focus solely on one’s positions (Smith & Fairman, 2005). For example, in a discussion on the Arab-Israeli conflict, where each side is focusing on their position of how they have true ownership of a piece of land, it will be important to focus instead on each groups’ needs, and how they each aspire to live in their own national homeland. In this way, they will be able to have a deeper understanding of the other’s perspective in such a way that does not negate their own claims.

International conflict also needs to be considered. In this way students will first learn to build a peaceful community in how they interact with others before they move on to create peace on a larger level. The skills of conflict resolution that they apply in their daily lives will also be beneficial in helping students to better understand international conflict situations. As Smith and Fairman (2005) note,

Traditionally, the conflicts presented in history and current events – between people, states, and social groups – are presented as facts and events, with little effort to examine the complex underlying dynamics. Without an opportunity for structured and critical thinking about intergroup conflict, students often draw their understanding from history’s victors. The lessons they learn include: group identities are fixed, conflict is usually zero-sum, and violence and coercion are not
only common but often effective ways – maybe the only ways – to deal with intergroup conflict. (p. 42)

Such lessons, do not promote a culture of peace. In teaching about Israel, therefore, the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot be avoided. It is a reality of the historical founding of the State and current tensions within Israel and beyond, and needs to be taught in such a way to promote peace and justice within Israel and in the region. Rather than creating a separate course, conflict resolution skills are most effectively imparted to students by integrating them into the overall curriculum and into classroom management (Jones, 2006).

In summary, conflict resolution provides a useful paradigm by which to impart the skills of peacebuilding to students. It is an essential component of the overall peace education curriculum and will allow students learning about Israel to apply the skills of conflict resolution both to their personal lives as well as to their understanding of the Middle East conflict. This will be essential in order to make Israel relevant to their lives and understand the nuances and complexities of the country.

E. Multiculturalism

Banks and McGee (2001) have described multicultural education as,

a transformative movement in education that produces critically thinking, socially active members of society. It is not simply a change of curriculum or the addition of an activity. It is a movement that calls for new attitudes, new approaches, and a new dedication to laying the foundation for the transformation of society. 

(Banks & McGee, 2001, as cited in Meyers & Rhoades, 2006 p. 83)

According to Hernandez (1989, as cited in Sanchez, 1996) there are three steps involved in multicultural education: (1) to teach students the perspectives of the mainstream culture, (2) to teach students the perspectives of other cultures, and (3) to examine similarities and differences between these cultures. This final step, Sanchez (1996) notes, is particularly important so that students can recognize that these differences are equally valid to their own way of life and are
valuable in their own right. Through this process, students are able to turn their negative and stereotypic thinking into a sense of respect and cooperation with others (Cohen, 1986, as cited in Sanchez, 1996). This is particularly important in a world where knowledge and awareness of ethnic and cultural difference is a growing reality (Meyers & Rhoades, 2006).

Multicultural education is essential to Israel education because it allows individuals to understand their Jewish identity in relation to other cultural, ethnic, and religious groups. This will help them to more fully explore their relationship with Israel, understanding both its similarities and differences in relation to their own identities. Since diversity is a reality of young people’s lives today, the lens of multiculturalism will also make Israel more relevant to the experiences of young Jews in the United States. Furthermore, by emphasizing the multicultural nature of Israel, students will be able to understand that in certain ways Israel is a microcosm of a larger multicultural world and as such it grapples with issues of diversity and pluralism as well.

In teaching multiculturalism, as with teaching global citizenship, it is important not to trivialize a culture by teaching only its holidays, foods, and costumes, but rather to impart to students the significant elements of a culture’s traditions and values (Sanchez, 1996). While emphasizing these elements of a culture may be an attempt at multiculturalism, they tend to offer a simplified way of understanding another culture and therefore do not foster true understanding (Meyer & Rhoades, 2006). A more effective means to teach multiculturalism therefore includes elements such as, allowing students continuous opportunities to develop their own sense of self, imparting to students the skills necessary to maintain intercultural relationships, and exploring the conflicts between ideals and realities within a society (Meyer & Rhoades, 2006). Such measures go beyond mere description of difference and allow students to truly explore what it means to live in a multicultural society.
Multicultural education provides a useful paradigm for Israel education both to encourage students to learn about diverse cultures as well as expose them to the diversity within Israel. This will increase the complexity of their understanding about Israel, make it more relevant to their lives, and also encourage them to work towards justice in bringing equality to all marginal groups within Israel and around the world. Throughout the process of introducing students to multiculturalism, however, teachers must keep in mind that each student arrives with a different level of intercultural understanding. He or she must therefore be sensitive to the needs of each student and help them to move towards greater intercultural sensitivity through both knowledge and skills.

F. Pedagogies

In addition to the themes of peace education described above, the new curriculum on Israel education will incorporate several pedagogical tools which will further the goals of peace education and empowering students to work for social justice. Due to the scope of this paper, the pedagogies are only very briefly outlined here. Although in the original study we extensively write about them. The pedagogies firstly include Critical Pedagogy with a focus on (a) The importance of Dialogue (b) Awareness and Responsibility of the Teacher (c) Problem Posing Education. Secondly, Action will be a main pedagogical tool used while teaching about Israel. Thirdly, critical reflection will incorporated in every lesson as well. Lastly creativity and experiential learning will be of great value and emphasis as well.

Conclusion

Jewish educational experiences, whether through full-time Jewish day schools, afternoon religious schools, or informal camp and youth group programs, play a strong role in shaping the next generation of Jewish youth in their attitudes towards Israel. As above research demonstrates, these educational opportunities primarily depict a mythic Israel, one where Israel is the victim,
mostly takes the moral high ground, and is an ideal society based on justice and equality. Israel’s actions are not questioned and the country’s opportunities, challenges, and dilemmas are only understood, if at all, on a surface level. Many youth who grow up on this understanding of Israel, however, upon learning a different reality as young adults, reject their earlier education in its entirety. Rather than integrating their traditional education with their new, more nuanced understandings of Israel and value of justice, as we were fortunate to be able to do, they simply leave behind any connection to Israel, and oftentimes with it Judaism as well. A new model of Israel education is therefore necessary, one which will take into consideration the realities of Jewish youth today and make Israel a real and relevant part of their identities.

Peace education provides an ideal means by which to accomplish this goal because of its ability to speak to the current generation about issues such as multiculturalism, global citizenship, and human rights. By teaching Israel through the lens of these and other peace education concepts, young Jews may be able to acquire a complex connection to Israel and through this begin to change the way that the American Jewish community as a whole relates to Israel.

The new model of Israel education we propose, will take into account the aforementioned concepts of peace education. In order to fit into the Jewish educational context, these themes will be placed within the framework of Jewish values. For instance, rather than simply talking about human rights within the context of international law, students will learn about the Jewish concept of b’zzelem elohim, that all people are created in the image of God. By expressing these themes within this Jewish framework, the concepts will seem less foreign to Jewish educators, who see themselves as first and foremost responsible for educating their students in a Jewish manner. Furthermore, this framework has the ability to connect students to their Jewish roots,
showing them that their Jewish heritage encompasses many of the values that they hold as 21st century citizens of the world. Lastly, if the Jewish commitment to social justice is incorporated throughout all the themes of peace education into Israel education, American Jews will responsible and empowered to work for Israel and stand up to act for peace and justice in Israel and worldwide.
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