

Administrators' Perceptions of Curriculum Integration  
within Jewish Community Day Schools

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## APPROVAL SHEET

Title of Dissertation: Administrators' Perceptions of Curriculum Integration  
within Jewish Community Day Schools

Brad Tomsy Doctor of Education, 2007

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- Conducted community-wide *Shabbatonim*

References are provided upon request

## Abstract

Title of Dissertation: Administrators' Perceptions of Curriculum  
Integration within Jewish Community Day Schools

Brad Tomsy Doctor of Education, 2007

Dissertation Directed By: Donn Weinholtz  
Professor  
College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions  
Department of Education Leadership  
University of Hartford, Connecticut

This in-depth study investigated administrators' perceptions regarding the extent of curriculum integration implementation within Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. This study was the largest study of its type to date, investigating curriculum integration practices of nine of ten Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. The study involved intensive interviews with directors of general and Judaic studies and their principals. The major conclusions in this study were:

1. While principals varied across schools in their perceptions of the degree of curriculum integration within their schools, there were also variations among administrator perceptions within schools that had directors of Judaic and/or general studies.

2. The most complete models of curriculum integration as reported by Jacobs (1989), the integrated day model and the complete program design model, were beyond the capacity of the schools' within this study abilities to implement.
3. Although the extent of curriculum integration varied among schools, almost all administrators reported distinct advantages for such implementation within their schools. These advantages included: greater appreciation of ones religion, increase of relevance in subject matter, breaks down barriers between the curriculum, more beneficial and meaningful to the students, and improves communication and teamwork among the staff.
4. Although administrators in this study cited numerous advantages to curriculum integration, a subset cited several potential disadvantages. These included: integrating when seemingly inappropriate, integrating at the expense of covering the curriculum and the potential trivialization of the Judaic studies curriculum.
5. Twelve of fourteen administrators cited numerous obstacles in implementing curriculum integration within schools. These included: a lack of planning time or a limitation of time for teachers to meet collaboratively, an increased cost to properly implement the curriculum and a lack of qualified staff that can cross the curricula.

Administrators' Perceptions of Curriculum Integration  
within Jewish Community Day Schools

by

Brad Tomsy

Dissertation submitted too the Doctoral Examining Committee, college of Education,

Nursing and health Professionals at the University of Hartford

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

2007

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation was defended on April 16, 2007, the same day as the Virginia Tech massacre, the deadliest of its kind in U.S. history. A day in which 32 innocent civilians, who had their sights and dreams set toward obtaining a degree in higher education, were brutally shot on the same day that my dreams were realized. To the brave and courageous professor and Holocaust survivor, Liviu Librescu who made the ultimate sacrifice on that day for the sake of saving the lives of his students. He teaches us all that heroes can still exist in our world.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my children and especially to my oldest daughter Malka. Although at nine you couldn't understand why I spent so much time writing, just know that it is all about realizing your dreams. Don't let anyone tell you that it is out of reach. You can do anything you set your mind out to do. Make your dreams come true.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The most memorable day of my life was January 22, 1996. That was the day I regained my self confidence. After accepting the ill advice to not study for my GMAT which resulted in a low score, I realized that nothing comes quite so easy. After many hours of diligent study, I took the test again with a much more favorable outcome. It was on January 22<sup>nd</sup> that I realized that I could do it.

It was this drive that led me to the doors of University of Hartford in the year 2001. After a long journey, I also learned that success can not be realized without the numerous individuals who supported me along the way. I would like to thank Dr. Donn Weinholtz, who guided me through my dissertation, from beginning to end. As I moved to New York in the middle of my writing, Dr. Weinholtz was always so very accommodating, flexible and patient throughout the whole process.

I would also like to thank the rest of my committee members: Dr. Barbara Intriligator, Dr. Diana LaRocco and Dr. Regina Miller. I appreciate all of the time you dedicated to read my dissertation and the input and support you provided to improve the study.

Thank you also to Rabbi Ira Bader who tirelessly worked with me, transcribing and coding all of the data from the interviews. I thank my wife's parents, Rennie and Margie Brown, for always expressing a genuine interest and concern in my progress every time we spoke. I thank my parents, Wayne and Sylvia, for instilling within me a strong work ethic and drive to never give up. They are always right there, supportive of everything I say and do. They are more than just parents, they are my dearest friends.

Most importantly, I thank my wife Chana who was extremely supportive and encouraging for me to finish my dissertation. She made great sacrifices throughout the years, caring for our four children, Malka, Shira, Sara and Avi, as I typed away. Our children couldn't have asked for a better mother. We made a deal that as soon as I finished my doctorate, you would be able to go back to grad school. Chana, I finished. Now it's your turn!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### **Chapter One: Introduction to the Study**

Introduction.....	16
Statement of the Problem.....	18
Research Questions.....	19
Definition of Terms.....	21
Conceptual Framework.....	23
Significance of the Study.....	28
Organization of the Dissertation.....	29

### **Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature**

Introduction.....	32
Approaches to Curriculum Integration	
Within Middle School Settings.....	33
Early Adolescent Teaching and Learning Issues	
within Jewish Community Day Schools.....	43
Articles Addressing Jewish Community Day Schools.....	50
Conclusion.....	83

### **Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology**

Introduction.....	85
Statement of the Problem.....	85

Research Questions.....	87
Definition of the Terms.....	89
Design of the Study.....	91
Population.....	93
Sources of Data and Data Collection.....	94
Pilot Testing.....	96
Data Collection Procedure.....	96
Data Analysis Procedures.....	97
Ethical Considerations.....	99
Limitations of the Study.....	100
Summary.....	101

#### **Chapter Four: Discussion of the Findings**

Introduction.....	103
Findings Related to Research Question One.....	108
Findings Related to Research Question Two.....	116
Findings Related to Research Question Three.....	124
Findings Related to Research Question Four.....	154
Chapter Summary.....	157

#### **Chapter Five: Summary of Study, Conclusions and Recommendations**

Introduction.....	162
Overview of the Problem.....	162

Research Questions.....	163
Conceptual Framework.....	166
Design of the Study.....	171
Summary of Key Findings.....	171
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	175
Closing Statement.....	187

<b>References.....</b>	<b>189</b>
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### **List of Appendices:**

Appendix A: Pre-interview Terms and Definitions.....	196
Appendix B: Focused Interview Questions.....	200
Appendix C: Informed Consent Form.....	203

### **Tables:**

Table 1: Data Source Sheet.....	95
Table 2: Demographic Information.....	104
Table 3: Extent of discussion of Curriculum Integration.....	106
Table 4: Administrators Perceptions Regarding Their Schools' Placement on the Continuum of options for content design.....	110
Table 5: Advantages in the Implementation of Curriculum Integration.....	117
Table 6: Disadvantages in the Implementation of Curriculum Integration.....	126
Table 7: Obstacles in the Implementation of Curriculum Integration.....	133

Table 8: Trends of Curriculum Integration.....	140
Table 9: Teachers Currently Involved in Curriculum Integration.....	145
Table 10: Teachers Who Would Embrace Change in Curriculum Integration.....	148
Table 11: How Administration Envision Curriculum Integration within their schools...	151
Table 12: Curriculum Documents.....	155

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### Introduction to the Chapter

Jewish community day schools feature a dual curriculum. These kindergarten through eighth grade schools address this curriculum in each grade, focusing one track specifically on Judaic studies and the second track on general studies classes reflecting subject matter similar to that found within a Northeastern state's public schools. Since Jewish community day schools include a Judaic studies curriculum, the number of subjects a child experiences during a typical day is greater than those encountered by a student attending a public school, offering only general studies. This large amount of subject matter is a burden for young children to handle, and some students may have difficulty seeing the relevance in studying so many widely varying subjects. Indeed, even within the more narrowly focused public schools, the subject areas are often isolated with little relationship to one another. (Jacobs, 1989).

Due to the dual nature of their curricula, community day schools are compelled to hire Judaic studies educators who exhibit expertise in their specific fields of pedagogy such as Talmud or Hebrew language. Many of these teachers are trained in Jewish colleges or universities called Yeshivot where the methodologies and format of teaching differs from the methodologies of other universities. This difference is in part due to the selection of texts in such schools. The texts are written in Hebrew and often reflect Biblical literature, not the conventional subject matter utilized in other universities. Typically, Jewish colleges train their students without the more modern educational techniques and methodologies. Furthermore, many of the community day school educators in Judaic studies departments are recruited from foreign countries, such as



Israel, specifically to teach Hebrew language and other related subject matter. Resulting language barriers and cultural differences may lead to disconnects between these instructors and their peers teaching in the general studies departments. Also, lack of communication among the staff may directly affect the ability of these teachers to constructively integrate Judaic and general studies curricula in order to enhance student interest and learning. This, in turn, may cause many students from more secular families to complain of the irrelevance of the Judaic subjects they study. (Saks 2001). On the other hand, students from more religious families may similarly question the value of some of their general studies courses.

The literature investigating middle school Judaic studies curricula is disparate and based more on reflections than on systematic research. However, two recent empirical studies have dealt specifically with curriculum integration within Jewish community day schools. Pomson (2001) investigated curriculum integration in a Jewish High School in England. Malkus (2002) investigated curriculum integration in one Jewish community day school in the United States. Yacobi (2000) argues that Jewish schools need to examine the current research in the social sciences in order to understand the trends in Jewish life and become aware of the various new modes of teaching and learning. Although there is a paucity of available empirical research, the available studies do indicate that more scholarly research is being conducted than in the past.

This study will add to the nascent body of empirical literature by surveying the largest sample of community day schools to date. It will also address the gap in the research literature regarding the current status of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies curricula.

### Statement of the Problem

This study examined the implementation of curriculum integration within all Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. It explored the extent to which such schools are integrating topics and skills from their general studies curricula into their Judaic studies classes and vice versa. Such curriculum integration is of great importance as it enhances the value and relevance of the curriculum to the student. (Jacobs, 1989).

Grade six can be exceedingly difficult and stressful for many students. As children enter puberty, they move from an attachment and dependency on their parents and teachers to independently seeking more objective knowledge. (Fisherman, 2002). Within Jewish community day schools the shift is first apparent within the secular studies because they are often considered more relevant than religious studies, which may be discounted because they are sometimes simplified within community day schools. (Jewish Adolescent Study, 2001). In fact, since Judaic studies subject matter is often taught on a superficial level throughout a child's tenure at a given community day school, by the time these students reach adolescence, they may lose all excitement for Judaic studies classes.

There has been a growing need for interdisciplinary content in modern schools. Jacobs (1989) argued that although children are learning many subjects, they are not taught how subjects are related to one another. Since then, curriculum integration has been increasingly implemented throughout the United States and abroad. (Beane, 1997). However, other than the case studies by Pomson (2001) and Malkus (2002) curriculum integration within Jewish community day schools has not been investigated.

## Research Questions

The primary research question that guided this study was:

*How is curriculum integration of Judaic studies with general studies described by administrators within Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state?*

To answer this question, each of the following sub-questions was addressed:

Question 1a: *Based on the continuum of options for content design (Jacobs, 1989) where do heads of schools report that Jewish community day schools best fit regarding the integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools?*

Question 1b: *Based on the continuum of options for content design (Jacobs, 1989) where do directors of general studies report that Jewish community day schools best fit regarding the integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools?*

Question 1c: *Based on the continuum of options for content design (Jacobs, 1989) where do directors of Judaic studies report that Jewish community day schools best fit regarding the integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools?*

Question 2a: *Do heads of schools perceive there to be advantages to implementing curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 2b: *Do directors of general studies perceive there to be advantages to implementing curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 2c: *Do directors of Judaic studies perceive there to be advantages to implementing curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 3a: *Do heads of schools perceive there to be disadvantages and/or obstacles preventing implementation of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 3b: *Do directors of general studies perceive there to be disadvantages and/or obstacles preventing implementation of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 3c: *Do directors of Judaic studies perceive there to be disadvantages and/or obstacles preventing implementation of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 4: *To what extent does evidence of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies appear within school curricula documents?*

This study did not focus on curriculum integration within separate disciplines, but rather on crossover between curriculums. In other words, the study didn't focus on whether curriculum integration is apparent among disciplines within the general studies curricula within Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. Rather, the focus was solely on whether such integration occurs between the Judaic and general studies academic programs.

#### Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this current study, the following definitions of key terms were used:

Bar mitzvah: meaning son of commandments, this is when a Jewish boy reaches thirteen years of age.

Bat mitzvah: meaning daughter of commandments, this is when a Jewish girl reaches twelve or thirteen years of age, depending on the tradition of ones synagogue.

B'nai mitzvah: the age in which a child reaches the status of Jewish majority enabling him or her to partake in specific communal rituals in the synagogue and within the Jewish community.

Curriculum integration: a knowledge view and curriculum approach that consciously applies methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, issue, problem, topic, or experience. (Jacobs, 1989)

Director of General studies: the person who is in charge of the operation of the general studies department and its curriculum.

Director of Judaic studies: the person who is charge of the operation of the Judaic studies department and its curriculum.

Discipline field: A specific body of teachable knowledge with its own background of education, training, procedures, methods, and content areas. (Piaget, 1972).

Dual curriculum: a term referring to Judaic and general studies, offered within Jewish community day schools.

Interview: a process where researchers ask one or more participants in a study, mostly general, open-ended questions and record their answers. (Creswell, 2002).

Ivrit Bivrit: literally meaning “Hebrew in Hebrew”, this pedagogical methodology requires the teacher and student to speak, throughout the entire lesson, in the Hebrew language.

Jewish community day school: a school that provides children with a Jewish education in addition to a general studies education. This school operates during comparable hours as public schools and ranges from kindergarten through eighth grade.

Population: a group of individuals that comprise the same characteristics that distinguishes them from other groups. (Creswell, 2002).

Principal/Headmaster: person who is charge of an entire school.

Qualitative study: an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. (Creswell, 1994).

Unstructured interview: open-ended questions that permit the participant to create response possibilities. (Creswell, 2002).

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that guided this study was based primarily on the curriculum integration model proposed by Jacobs (1989). The study drew upon key findings from empirical research of Pomson (2001) and Malkus (2002) as they specifically addressed curriculum integration within Jewish community day schools.

Jacobs (1989) described the various advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of curriculum integration based on her continuum of options for content design. This continuum refers to the levels or stages of curriculum integration within a particular school. Jacobs cited six levels: discipline based, parallel disciplines, multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary units/courses, integrated day, and a complete program.

Within the discipline based option, there is no attempt to integrate any of the curriculum. Students move from one class to the next without seeing the interconnection between the disciplines. This leaves students with the perception that each subject should remain in isolation and are not relevant one to the other. (Jacobs, 1989).

Parallel discipline designs occur when teachers coordinate and sequence their lessons to correspond to lessons in the same area in other disciplines. These teachers merely organize their lessons at a specific time in the year to resemble similar material in

other disciplines. This does not require much from veteran instructors as they only need to switch around what they would normally be teaching at a different time in the academic school year to fit in with what is being taught in other classes. However, since there remains a lack of team teaching, there still may remain isolation among students. (Jacobs, 1989).

The complementary or multi-disciplinary design involves that some related classes or disciplines being brought together in a single formal unit or theme. At this level, students begin to relate to the interconnection of the disciplines. On the other hand, some teachers, who are used to instructing with their own unique methodologies, may resist this new pedagogical approach. In addition, this may require some degree of staff development in which the school may have limited resources to fund such an approach. (Jacobs, 1989).

Within the interdisciplinary units design, most or all courses of study are being deliberately brought together. All of the units are for a specified amount of time in which each class focuses directly on a specific area, supporting each of the instructor's lessons. This design motivates the student body as they directly experience the interrelationship of each of their classes. The disadvantage is that such a method requires more effort on the teachers of the school to integrate their curriculum so as to complement and support what is being taught in each of the disciplines. This option requires even more funding and staff preparation for the method to work effectively. In addition, parents who have not experienced this method of learning for themselves may have difficulty understanding the ultimate benefit or purpose of such a design. As such, in order to receive validation or support from the parent body, there needs to be an understanding and commitment from



everyone involved to effectively implement interdisciplinary units design within ones school. (Jacobs, 1989).

The integrated-day model focuses on themes which stem directly from a child's interest or question rather than from a set curriculum by the teacher or school. This program originated in the British Infant School movement in the 1960's. It is most commonly found in the younger grades and is scarcely utilized on the primary or middle school grade levels. Such programs have highly motivated students as the curriculum is based on their interests. This accounts for the relevance issue as every aspect of the curriculum is based around the interest level of the individual child. On the other hand, many teachers oppose this methodology of teaching, making this design a difficult one to enforce within schools. In addition, this method of teaching takes tremendous expertise in many fields to properly address the need of the students in a timely fashion. As such, this methodology is generally not practiced in most schools. (Jacobs, 1989).

Finally, the complete program design is the most extensive method in terms of curriculum integration. This approach ties the life of students to the subject matter taught. For example, students who misbehave will be taught about government law. Children with an interest in buildings will learn the architecture of their school or homes. This design empowers the student. They develop a full understanding that school and education directly relates to their very lives. However, this approach is considered as radical for many administrators. These administrators do not consider this to be a realistic option in educating children. (Jacobs, 1989).

Jacobs (1989) concluded that schools should base their decisions as to which level of curriculum integration they should utilize, on the following three factors:

1. The flexibility of the school's schedule. Is there adequate time for the staff to prepare for a specific design or level of curriculum integration?
2. The support of the staff. Is there an interest level among your staff to be engaged in curriculum integration and if so, to what degree?
3. The nature of curriculum requirements. Based on the level of knowledge and standard requirements of the school district, does the school have the ability to be engaged in curriculum integration?

Jacobs further contended that a school may elect to combine these designs as well, perhaps a more feasible approach than focusing solely on one specific design.

In spite of Jacob's (1989) design options and the substantial increase in curriculum integration within secular schools over the last decade (Beane, 1997), research within Jewish community day schools is lacking. This gap in the literature requires further investigation to examine how curriculum integration is being utilized within Jewish community day schools. The relevance of Jacobs (1989) framework for this investigation can be illustrated by examining its application to the existing empirical research within Jewish community day schools.

Pomson (2001) investigated the impact of curriculum integration in the general and Judaic studies curricula of a single school in London. King Solomon High School utilized a working model of curriculum integration for two months based on the study of the biblical book of Ruth. This model resembled the complementary or multi-disciplinary design, as cited by Jacobs (1989). Specifically, within Judaic studies, children learned about a particular era in Jewish history, while learning lessons about how to treat strangers. In English class, the students compared the biblical literature to comparable

stories of Shakespeare. In art class, they learned how to paint the backgrounds for their school performance, based on the story of the book of Ruth. Pomson's (2001) findings demonstrated that the use of curriculum integration for both general and Judaic studies increased the relevance of all of the classes and enhanced the dual curriculum taught in their community day school.

Malkus (2002) investigated how a single Jewish day school in the United States integrated its curriculum. This school, located in the Northeast, consists of seventy-six students with diverse religious backgrounds. The headmaster emphasized that in her school and abroad, curriculum integration can have numerous meanings. At her school, the Overton Jewish day school, depending on the instructor or a particular lesson, the intensity of curriculum integration varies. Sometimes, teachers would co-teach and assist one another in the classroom. This most resembles the complementary or multi-disciplinary design as composed by Jacobs (1989). On the other hand, there are times in which there is little integration occurring in the classroom altogether. Such a classroom would most likely resemble the discipline based option as cited by Jacobs. (1989). Among Malkus' findings, he discovered that curriculum integration helps build Jewish identity within the school and increases the overall relevance of the subject matter being taught.

Thus, Pomson and Malkus provided examples of curriculum integration within schools in the United States and abroad. This study addressed Jacobs (1989) continuum model and surveyed the largest sample of community day schools to date. It addressed the gap in the research literature regarding the current status of curriculum integration of

Judaic and general studies curricula within all of Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state.

### Significance of the Study

This study involved a significant area for investigation because the middle school years are the time in which children within Jewish day schools must develop the necessary building blocks and tools to move forward successfully to Jewish high schools. These students must acquire an essential knowledge base to adapt to the heightened demands of high school. An engaging Judaic studies program may have a serious impact as to which school a particular child can attend. In addition, there are a large number of children that elect to discontinue on a formal basis their Judaic studies. This weighty decision is often due to their dismissive attitudes about their religion during their adolescent school years. (Jewish Adolescent Study, 2001). A study of current approaches used to incorporate early adolescent Judaic studies within the Jewish day school will address an important gap in the existing literature on Jewish education, as no previous studies have expansively addressed this area. Consequently, practitioners have not benefited from a systematic review of present curriculum and instruction practices. Yacobi (2000) asserted that research in the social sciences, specifically for Jewish community day schools, is essential to address, in an unbiased manner, the issues that pertain to such schools. This study addressed this call by adding to the body of empirical literature by surveying the largest sample of community day schools to date in order to address the gap in the research literature, regarding the current status of Judaic studies curricula and the curricular goals of such schools.

An additional reason this study was conducted was to identify optimal practices for the delivery of Judaic studies to students who do not continue on to Jewish high schools. Many children, for various reasons, are going to discontinue their Jewish education upon graduation from the eighth grade. These children must develop a certain degree of knowledge of the customs and ritual practices at synagogue and in their homes. Adults with a day school education should have the ability to be an active participant and lay leader in their communities. This is only accomplished when the needs of the student are properly addressed.

Finally, this study necessarily explored strategies for pursuing the primary goals and functions of a Jewish community day school, including instilling among students, a sense of pride in their Jewish heritage. For Judaism to thrive, these students should graduate with the positive attitudes about their religion necessary to foster a love and passion for Judaism, a goal of all Jewish schools and organizations. This is of extreme importance as the success and mission of a community day school is often defined and measured by the overall attitude of the student body and alumni. Enhancing the learning environment and morale of the school is one of the necessary tasks for reaching these lofty goals. (Jacobs, 1989). For these aforementioned reasons, it was important to determine more clearly how curriculum and instruction serve as motivational tools within community day school settings.

### Organization of the Proposal

This proposal was organized in the following manner. The function of chapter one is an introduction to the study, including a statement of the problem of the issues of

curriculum integration within Jewish community day schools. The conceptual framework directly relates to the general issues of curriculum integration as cited by Jacobs (1989). In addition, Pomson (2001) and Malkus (2002) examined the issues of curriculum integration with a more specific emphasize on Jewish schools. Finally, chapter one concluded with the definition of terms, research questions and the significance of this study.

Chapter two is a review of the related literature that pertains to this study. This review of literature is organized by three primary sections. This includes: recent studies of curriculum integration within a middle school settings; early adolescent teaching and learning issues within Jewish community day schools; and the literature examining the history and purpose of Jewish community day schools and their curricula.

Chapter three discusses the selected research design and methodologies. This includes: the design of the study, the population and sample, the sources of data and the instrument used to collect such data, a data source chart, data collection activities, various data analysis procedures, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study.

Chapter four presents and analyzes the findings of the study. A separate table is provided to correspond to the administrators' responses from the study's research questions. For each research question, a brief summary of the findings is given. At the conclusion of chapter four, a summary of the chapter is provided.

Chapter five summaries the conclusions of the study and proposes recommendations for practice and further research. This is divided into three primary sections: a summary of the study with an overview of the problem, purpose, research questions, conceptual framework, design and methodology of the study. The second

section includes the summaries of the findings, conclusions and research recommendations organized according to the research questions. The third section contains the implications, recommendations for educational practices and concluding remarks.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Introduction to the Chapter

This literature review begins by examining studies pertaining to middle schools implementing curriculum integration. Included are recent studies discussing various issues in such schools. After presenting this study's conceptual framework (Jacobs, 1989), additional recent articles presenting findings on the current issues of curriculum integration are examined. Then the potential adverse impact of the No Child Left Behind legislation on the implementation of curriculum integration within public school settings is discussed.

The remainder of the chapter reviews literature pertaining to Jewish community day school's, which are not mandated to adhere to the standardized tests administered throughout the public schools and therefore have more flexibility to implement curriculum integration. Studies of early adolescent teaching and learning within Jewish community day schools are presented.



## Review of the Literature

### *Approaches to Curriculum Integration within Middle School Settings*

One of the most frequently cited authors on the topic of curriculum integration is Jacobs (1989) who described the various advantages and disadvantages of the implementing curriculum integration based on her continuum of options for content design. This continuum refers to the levels or stages of curriculum integration within a particular school. Jacobs cited six levels: discipline based, parallel disciplines, multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary units/courses, integrated day, and a complete program.

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The complementary or multi-disciplinary design involves that some related classes or disciplines being brought together in a single formal unit or theme. At this level, students begin to relate to the interconnection of the disciplines. On the other hand,

some teachers, who are used to instructing with their own unique methodologies, may resist this new pedagogical approach. In addition, this may require some degree of staff development in which the school may have limited resources to fund such an approach. (Jacobs, 1989).

Within the interdisciplinary units design, most or all courses of study are being deliberately brought together. All of the units are for a specified amount of time in which each class focuses directly on a specific area, supporting each of the instructor's lessons. This design motivates the student body as they directly experience the interrelationship of each of their classes. The disadvantage is that such a method requires more effort on the teachers of the school to integrate their curriculum so as to complement and support what is being taught in each of the disciplines. This option requires even more funding and staff preparation for the method to work effectively. In addition, parents who have not experienced this method of learning for themselves may have difficulty understanding the ultimate benefit or purpose of such a design. As such, in order to receive validation or support from the parent body, there needs to be an understanding and commitment from everyone involved to effectively implement interdisciplinary units design within ones school. (Jacobs, 1989).

The integrated-day model focuses on themes which stem directly from a child's interest or question rather than from a set curriculum by the teacher or school. This program originated in the British Infant School movement in the 1960's. It is most commonly found in the younger grades and is scarcely utilized on the primary or middle school grade levels. Such programs have highly motivated students as the curriculum is based on their interests. This accounts for the relevance issue as every aspect of the

curriculum is based around the interest level of the individual child. On the other hand, many teachers oppose this methodology of teaching, making this design a difficult one to enforce within schools. In addition, this method of teaching takes tremendous expertise in many fields to properly address the need of the students in a timely fashion. As such, this methodology is generally not practiced in most schools. (Jacobs, 1989).

Finally, the complete program design is the most extensive method in terms of curriculum integration. This approach ties the life of students to the subject matter taught. For example, students who misbehave will be taught about government law. Children with an interest in buildings will learn the architecture of their school or homes. This design empowers the student. They develop a full understanding that school and education directly relates to their very lives. However, this approach is considered as radical for many administrators. These administrators do not consider this to be a realistic option in educating children. (Jacobs, 1989).

Jacobs (1989) concluded that schools should base their decisions as to which level of curriculum integration they should utilize, on the following three factors:

1. The flexibility of the school's schedule. Is there adequate time for the staff to prepare for a specific design or level of curriculum integration?
2. The support of the staff. Is there an interest level among your staff to be engaged in curriculum integration and if so, to what degree?
3. The nature of curriculum requirements. Based on the level of knowledge and standard requirements or the school district, does the school have the ability to be engaged in curriculum integration?

Jacobs further contended that a school may elect to combine these designs as well, perhaps a more feasible approach than focusing solely on one specific design. Since Jacobs presented her seminal work, others have investigated the nature and extent of curriculum integration within public schools. Due the straightforward nature of the continuum as cited by Jacobs (1989) the researcher chose this model as the conceptual framework in this study.

Fogarty (1991) described ten curricular approaches within three distinct forms, which can occur when schools integrate their curricula. The three forms include a single discipline, across the disciplines, and within and across learners.

Fogarty's first form, within a single discipline, includes the following three approaches:

1. **Fragmented:** A design that separates courses into distinct disciplines. Each area is defined as an independent course of study. As students reach the middle school level, these classes are taught by different instructors and students move from classroom to classroom throughout the day.
2. **Connected:** The most basic form of curriculum integration. This model represents a school that makes specific connections across the disciplines, beginning to demonstrate to the student the interconnection between each of their classes.
3. **Nested:** This methodology stresses more strongly on obvious connections and correlation between the various curricula.

Fogarty's second form, across the disciplines, includes the following five approaches:

1. Sequenced: Topics and units are taught independently, but are sequenced to demonstrate related concepts between the two subjects. This form of curriculum integration is not extremely cumbersome on the teachers as they merely adjust their lesson plans to teach specific material to coincide with other classes during specific times of the year.
2. Shared: Brings two different curricula together with a single purpose or focus. This method is more time consuming and requires the instructors to coordinate and communicate with each other as to how to bring their distinct subject matter together in an organized fashion.
3. Webbed: Uses a thematic approach to integrate subject matter. Typically, the themes presented are broad in nature, thereby enabling teachers to connect and relate their specific subject matter together with their peer's courses.
4. Threaded: Focuses on thinking skills, technology, and other methodologies to link the various curricula components together. This is accomplished with probing questions to the student such as, "What do you think about that?" This form of questioning differs from the previous forms of curriculum integration as it forces the students to think critically of the subject matter they are studying and its direct relevance in their lives. This form of pedagogical thinking enables the student to bridge the gap and utilize his or her reasoning skills throughout the day in all classes.
5. Integrated: Multiple disciplines overlap one another. This integrated design represents a cross-disciplinary approach similar to the shared model approach.

Fogarty's third area, within and across learners, includes the following two approaches:

1. Immersed: Occurs among the learners themselves, without any outside intervention or influences. This approach enables the learners to be engaged in subject matter which they feel most drawn to and passionate about. This pedagogical approach enables the student to guide their own learning, thereby discovering the interconnections of the curricula in a natural setting in which they can find relevance for such subject matter.
2. Networked: This approach makes is totally centered around the student and their inquiries. The student directs the curriculum integration process through a network of resources in a related field that is an ongoing external source of input, providing new concepts and ideas.

Ross and Olsen (1993) presented five models of implementation for middle schools and high schools. Similar to Jacobs (1989) each of these five approaches of curriculum integration get progressively more intense and thereby more challenging to implement.

1. Single subject integration: This methodology focuses on one subject and stresses how the material in such a class can relate to a students life.
2. Coordinated model: In this approach, two or more instructors teach their subject matter to the same group off students at separate times but complement the material being presented by their peers.
3. Integrated core model: In this approach, a single teacher remains with their class for a significant duration of the school day. During this time, the instructor

focuses on one general area of instruction and interrelates different subjects together to demonstrate to their student's their interconnection from one subject to the other.

4. Integrated double core model: In this approach two teachers instruct the same group of students within two integrated cores.
5. Self-contained core model: In this model, the same teacher remains with his or her class throughout the entire day, teaching all of the relevant skills and content to their students. Although this approach requires a teacher with wide range of knowledge, it is easier to the extent that it is not necessary for the instructor to coordinate their lesson plans with another instructor. This also gives the teacher the flexibility to conduct their class in a manner that best fits the individual needs of the class.

Beane (1997) investigated the importance of curriculum integration based on the following three concepts.

1. Middle schools should gear their curricula around the concerns of early adolescents' ability to connect the separate subject matter into one a more interrelated educational experience.
2. The primary focus of the curricula should be geared toward the students enrolled in the school, to best suit their specific needs or interests.
3. Adolescents should be treated in a respectful manner. By building their self esteem, they realize their opinions and feelings matter and can make a valuable impact in the world.

Based on these concepts, Beane (1997) contended that the implementation of curriculum integration could address these aforementioned concepts. Beane proceeded to describe a single school and its success in the implementation of curriculum integration. In the Marquette Middle School in Wisconsin, a group of teachers created a unit that followed this new vision. The students were to contemplate on how life might be like in the future. This included all of the changes in area such as transportation, currency, and education. This was a springboard for addressing present day questions and issues, all emerging from the inquisitiveness of the student.

Beane presented five findings based on this new pedagogical approach utilized within this single school. This approach:

1. Required instructors to work with students in ways that made the students part of the curriculum planning process. Since the lesson was based on the concerns of the students rather than the teachers, the students were more motivated and interested in this new pedagogical approach.
2. Changed the manner in how students perceive is the purpose of learning. Instead of simply studying to pass a test, students are engaged in their own research to discovering the questions that they find to be most relevant to them in their own lives.
3. Removed knowledge from abstract subject categories to the context of thematic units where students discover their interrelationship and individual importance.
4. Enabled the student through the implementation of curriculum integration to relate to the subject matter not only on an intellectual level but on an emotion level as well.



Since they understand the relevance of their subject matter, curriculum integration can affect the student in their every day decisions.

5. Demonstrated that instead of learning many subjects in isolation, curriculum integration is an approach that each of the classes is interconnected one to another. This enabled the school to have a student-centered approach where the child is able to see the relevance in all of his or her classes.

Hammond (2004) stated that the momentum of public school curriculum integration witnessed during the 1990's may well be halted by the federal No Child Left Behind act. NCLB requires schools to reach an Adequate Yearly Progress in order to remain a non-failing school. Due to these pressures, many schools require their faculty to teach to their state's standardized test. In other words, instead of school being an exploratory environment for the children, instructors are compelled to focus their attention and class time on these standardized tests to avoid being called a failing school. For these reasons, curriculum integration will be more difficult to implement within such schools. According to Jacobs (1989) one of the crucial elements that must be factored into whether a school can implement curriculum integration is time. There needs to be adequate time in the school day to implement curriculum integration. Furthermore, based on the level of standard requirements in these schools it is plausible that these schools do not have the ability to be engaged in curriculum integration. (Jacobs, 1989).

This mandate for standardized testing and the policies of No Child Left Behind is only applicable to public schools. Jewish community day schools are not required to adhere to these policies. Therefore, such schools have more flexibility in their school day

to implement curriculum integration within their respective schools. It is the goal of this research to determine to what extent curriculum integration is being implemented within these Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. The purpose of the second section of this chapter will be to expound upon the existing body of literature, examining early adolescent teaching and learning within Jewish community day schools.

### *Early Adolescent Teaching and Learning Issues within Jewish Community Day Schools*

The second area examined in this chapter is the literature examining early adolescent teaching and learning within Jewish community day schools. Early adolescent teaching and learning is an area necessary for the researcher to obtain a breadth of knowledge about the literature relating to children of this age to further understand this topic. Many of the problems of disconnect and a lack of motivation may stem from the issues that children face during their adolescent years. By analyzing these areas, we are more capable of understanding how to impact the performance of students in the classroom.

Due to the vast amounts of literature addressing early adolescent issues, we narrowed the review, for this study, by focusing primarily on the various articles which relate to early adolescence of Jewish youth. There are no integrative literature reviews addressing early adolescent issues. The articles that follow reflect the overall state of the literature and fall into two categories: 1) empirical research studies and 2) reflective pieces based on single institution experiences. These latter articles differ from empirical case studies in that they do not demonstrate the rigor of research investigation. Throughout, all articles are presented in chronological order from past to present.

#### *Empirical Research*

The Jewish Adolescent Study (2001) was a large survey about Jewish adolescents and their overall attitude and connection to their religion. This comprehensive survey was conducted by the CMJS/IJE at Brandeis University. Nearly 1,300 b'nai mitzvah, ages 13 to 17 from Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and independent

congregations were surveyed. One parent of each child was also interviewed. The respondents came from three regions of Eastern Massachusetts of varying Jewish population densities. The study indicated a decline in involvement in various Jewish activities from after b'nai mitzvah age. Children become b'nai mitzvah at twelve years old for girls and thirteen years old for boys. The study indicated that there remained a strong value placed on general studies by both the parents and their children. This trend, however, was not the case for Judaic studies. Adolescents considered Hebrew school to be a negative experience. Weekly participation in services took a dramatic drop from 60% in 7th grade to 22% in 10th grade. Some suggestions to further involve this age group included offering teaching or tutoring positions in Hebrew school so these adolescents would retain their connection to Judaism and remain actively involved.

The Jewish Adolescent Study concluded that by creating a more interactive, involved Judaic studies program, adolescents have a greater opportunity and interest in becoming more involved later on in their life in such programs such as tutoring. This is why, based on this study, it is necessary to deal directly with these pressing issues and not lose these children who are in their early teens to the external influences around them. The study concluded that we must continue to discover methods for adolescents to remain involved and engaged as they were in their younger years.

Based on the findings of a study of Israeli adolescents, Fisherman (2002) presented a Jewish adolescent development model specifically focusing on Jewish identity. He stressed the importance of instilling a sense of Jewish identity to children during their adolescence. This piece, also offered some practical recommendations as to how to approach the issues relating to Jewish identity. Fisherman conducted over three

hundred interviews with a diverse group of adolescents who were raised and educated in a religious environment, but who later rebelled from their Jewish heritage.

Fisherman's model posited that religious identity can be subdivided into three levels: healthy, unhealthy, and dangerous. Fisherman based this model on Herbert's (1987) theory of ego identity development, which is an expansion of Marcia's (1980) theory of ego development. Fisherman, quoted Marcia.

“Adolescents who have consolidated their identities in a healthy manner do not guarantee themselves permanent identity contents, but are ensured an effective process of dealing with later questions of identity.” (pg. 61)

According to Fisherman, there is a correlation between an adolescent's religious identity and his or her total ego identity. Within his study, children who were instilled with a greater sense of Jewish identity were more capable of making independent, rational decisions and not be influenced by peer pressure.

During adolescence, according to Fisherman, there occurs a natural shift in focus from parent to peers. Adolescents often are prone to experiment during these fragile years to see where they fit. This is a time where many children question their faith. In order to strengthen their ego and, in turn, their religious identity, Fisherman encouraged educators to address these concerns in their classrooms, arguing that students should be encouraged to ask and probe based on their concerns about their Jewish faith. Otherwise, students may at best adhere to their heritage just out of rote and routine without any real meaning behind it.

Fisherman concluded, citing Rogers (1951) that these children can easily become alienated from their communities and heritage, because of their untreated anger and

feeling of disconnect to their religion. Such adolescents become insecure and cynical adults. It is therefore incumbent upon Jewish leaders and educators to employ these ideals to enable adolescents to be educated in an insightful and appropriate manner.

### *Reflective Pieces*

Most of the articles published regarding Jewish day school adolescence, fall under the category of reflective pieces, based on educators' personal experiences and observations. While providing many interesting insights, the anecdotal nature of this literature indicates the need for more systematic empirical investigation in this virtually unexplored research topic.

Reimer (1999) wrote a reflectional piece, based on the findings of Erik H. Erikson, whose research focused on identity development and yielded Erikson's famous theory of psychological development. Reimer, based on his experiences as director of Innovation for Jewish Youth and, more recently, as associate professor in the Hornstein Program in Jewish Community Services at Brandeis University, observed Judaic studies teachers who had become sensitive to questions of difference and similarity among early adolescent Jewish youth. Although Reimer indicated the desire, among the Judaic staff, to have clear distinctions between Jewish practice and other religious practices, he also suggested a more inclusive, pluralistic curriculum. Since many Jewish community day school children are confronted with the issue of Jewish identity outside of school, they often have difficulty understanding and articulating their differences from that of their non-Jewish friends. Reimer therefore suggested that a more pluralistic approach would be more beneficial by instilling a stronger Jewish identity among adolescence.

Reimer supported this recommendation based on the work of previously grounded findings. In addition to Erikson, Reimer cited Waterman (1985) “We identify adolescence as a period of special consequence for identity formation.”

Within the studies of Erikson, Reimer commented that Erikson’s definition of youth was not the typical definition. He included those students in their twenties. Erikson, in recognition of the issues that adolescents often face, said, “This often desperate need for recognition can open youth to tyrannical forms of misdirection.”

Reimer commented that the age of adolescence was too young to be involved in adolescent ideology. Also, Reimer commented that educators need to help their students develop a more inclusive connection to their Jewish identity. Reimer struggled with how to promote pluralism and at the same time, to instill the unique richness of the Jewish heritage to adolescents in a Jewish community day school setting. Reimer concluded by suggesting that Jewish community day schools must redefine their goals from simply instilling a “strong Jewish identity”. He considered this statement as too narrow; arguing instead, the Jewish community day school should redefine its mission statement as promoting, “strong, but broadly inclusive Jewish identity”. Reimer also suggested that educators need to look beyond the adolescent years to seek the active support of other institutions that educate, based on a pluralistic model.

Reimer’s article is significant because it demonstrates the need to focus on tools that will foster a heightened sense of Jewish identity, especially during the teenage years. By instilling within Jewish students the importance of their own rich heritage and Jewish identity, adolescents will be more able to remain connected to their religion even during these volatile years of their life.

Scheindlin (1999) discussed specific issues pertaining to Sinai Akiba Academy, a Jewish community day school in Los Angeles. Scheindlin, the school headmaster, presented four points to develop and enhance a student's sensitivities toward Judaism.

1. Helping children value their inner lives. Spirituality entails reaching into ones inner being to truly connect to ones spiritual self. An inner emotional experience is a crucial piece in a child's spiritual development. We must teach our students how to connect to their emotions and act appropriately with those feelings.
2. Building on a child's curiosity and their experiences of wonder. Teachers should nurture the curious and inquisitive nature of his or her students. Educators must encourage their students to explore their curiosity by feeling comfortable enough to ask probing and inquisitive questions. This entails an educator with the open-mindedness to understand that students who have strong emotional feelings must be heard so as to address such feelings. Also, educators should create learning experiences so that students can experience the powerful spiritual emotions such as curiosity, amazement, and wonder integrated into their lessons.
3. Helping children develop a language for articulating their feelings. Children need to hear a vocabulary that describes emotional experience. This will help to enable them to describe their own emotional experiences. Through stories and lessons with an emotional side, students can discuss how that lesson or story made them feel and why they feel that particular way. This shift from



intellectual content to emotional analysis can foster powerful dialogue among the students and becoming a very powerful and meaningful lesson.

4. Developing children's aesthetic and interpersonal sensitivity. A teacher needs To adapt to the individual need of the student, to enable them to achieve a higher degree of sensitivity and spiritual connection to their religion.

Scheindlin contended that children tend to be more apt to comprehend material when it is attached to some form of an emotional content. This makes the material relevant. They can feel what it is like, based on their own emotional experiences. They will be able to take these emotional experiences and apply them to their world and their own experiences; all the while, strengthening their sense of Jewish identity by applying the Judaic subject matter to something that is relevant and tangible, their spirituality.

### *Articles Addressing Jewish Community Day Schools*

The third section of this review examines the literature on Jewish community day schools including, historical perspectives, curriculum studies, and articles addressing various related topics. Currently, there are no integrative reviews addressing this literature. The articles that follow fall into two categories; 1) reflective pieces based on single institution experiences and 2) empirical research studies. The former articles differ from empirical case studies in that they do not demonstrate the rigor of scholarly research.

This sizable number of reflective pieces by Jewish day school educators offers recommendations based on their personal experiences. These articles are highly subjective, yet useful at raising various important issues and illustrating the existing state of most of the literature. The small number of studies reflecting true research investigations is the set of studies that the current investigation will build upon in order to expand the empirical literature on Jewish community day schools. Throughout, all articles are presented in chronological order from past to present with the exception of two articles at the conclusion of the reflection section which not directly discusses Jewish community day schools but are pertinent to the discussion here.

### *Reflective Pieces*

Most of the articles published regarding Jewish day schools and their curricula, fall under the category of reflective pieces, based on educators' personal experiences and observations. While providing many interesting insights, the anecdotal nature of this

literature indicates the need for more systematic empirical investigation in this virtually unexplored research topic.

Bieler (1986) discussed the concept of integrating general and Judaic subject matter in the classroom based on his experience as teacher and chairman of the Talmudic department in the Ramaz Upper School in New York. Bieler observed these schools to see when and how compartmentalization is implemented and its overall effectiveness. Bieler quoted Harold Himmelfarb, (1980) “Recent observers have commented on the tendency of modern orthodox Jews to compartmentalize the religious and secular components in their lives.” He then analyzed whether there were substantial advantages in compartmentalization, specifically regarding the concept of engaging a class of students. Bieler also examined the possible implications of Himmelfarb’s insights for the development of a philosophy of education for the modern orthodox day school.

Bieler’s conclusions included the notion that general studies subject matter which is inimical to Torah will naturally create dissonances among the students. He contended that the appropriate curriculum is not universal, but dependent on other factors within the school. Some of these factors, when defining the philosophies and goals of the school, mandate that administrators answer the following questions:

1. Is the ideal graduate one who continues to study Torah in a religious institution, or one who enrolls in a prestigious public school?
2. How many classroom hours are designated per week for Judaic and general studies?
3. Which classes, Judaic or general studies, are regularly canceled for assemblies?

4. Is the professional preparation in the Judaic studies classes comparable to the preparation in general studies classes?
5. Do teachers demonstrate proper respect for the other disciplines taught in the school?
6. Are the rewards and recognitions in the Judaic studies classes, comparable to the rewards offered for general studies?
7. Are Jewish customs and rituals overlooked in order to conform with various secular activities?

Bieler further argued, that based on such analysis, the administration must assess the needs of their school and its overall purpose. Since community day schools are separated into two major areas of study, many children feel the subjects are unrelated to one another. In particular, within Judaic subjects, students don't see the connection to the general studies subjects, creating a perception that the Judaic studies are unimportant and irrelevant. This perception makes religion appear separate and unrelated to every day life. He suggested that each school must calculate the potential advantage in integration of their subjects so as to remove this negative perception from within their school.

Bieler, quoted Spiro (1988),

“The modern orthodox see it as a Torah obligation to penetrate all of experience, intellectually, and emotionally; to learn all there is to know about man, about nature, to exercise one's mind in the development of science and to express one's talents in the area of the arts. All of this is at once a supplement to the Torah and the extended area in which Torah is to be applied.” (Pg. 18)

Bieler concluded his article stating that the act of integration is indeed consistent with the philosophies presented by Spiro. However, it must be presented in a sensitive manner so as to address the specific needs and philosophies of the individual school.

Cohen (1986) provided insight into how to balance the general studies with the Judaic studies. Michael Cohen, a director of education at the London Board of Jewish Religious Education, offered three key points in his article:

1. There is a need for professional development in the Judaic studies due to the huge professional gap between the instructors of the two educational departments, general and Judaic studies. Based on Cohen's experiences, professional development is an area that is grossly lacking within Jewish community day schools; and professional development, specifically among the Judaic studies staff, will increase the importance of Judaic studies curriculum and create a balance within this dual curriculum.
2. The importance of Ivrit Bivrit , where only Hebrew is spoken in the classroom, and the connection to Israel, similar to the recommendations of Sarna (1998), has been beneficial in creating the seriousness within Judaic studies curriculum. Curricula, focused on Israel, can create a sense of connection and relevance for the other Judaic studies subject matter.
3. The need to devote more hours of the day to Judaic studies. Judaic subject matter often takes a distant second in the time allotment in the typical community day school. In order to comply with state requirements and regulations, Judaic studies only consists of approximately 25% of the day. Cohen suggested, to create a balance in the dual curriculum, it is necessary to allot more time and resources in

Judaic studies. Specifically, Cohen recommended increasing the school day by an hour or two, to shift the current imbalance between the time allotted to the Judaic studies curriculum of such schools.

In another article, Schiff (1992), drawing upon his experiences as Executive Vice-President of the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York, discussed the history of the American Jewish day school's rapid growth which occurred in the 1940's, and how, due to the increased cost, many modern day schools are hampered by financial constraints. This results in a lack of qualified teachers and administrators. Schiff commented that "The largest proportion of Jewish day schools (472, or 80.5% of the total) and the overwhelming majority of pupils (104,000, or 80% of the enrollment) are under orthodox auspices." However, the trend, as indicated by Schiff, is a steady increase in day schools in the Conservative and Reform movements. He further commented that "Jewish education must be continuous at least through the high school years and is basic for adolescents in the formation of Jewish identity, attitudes and practices in adult life." Schiff concluded by encouraging, similar to Yacobi (2000), for more empirical research to further investigate effective methods of instruction in such schools.

Shkedi (1993), a faculty member for the Center for Jewish Education of the Hebrew University, addressed the increased difficulty in teaching Judaic subject matter in this day and age, when people are more critical and less accepting of the authenticity of the traditional texts. Shkedi raised one of the key issues by noting Ackerman's (1969) assumption that parents often don't take Judaic subject matter seriously enough. He claimed this has a direct effect on the overall attitude of the student's efforts as well as their involvement in class.

Among Shkedi's conclusions were the four components that teachers need to relate to and create a balance with, referring to these as the four categories of pedagogical content knowledge. These four categories include:

1. Teachers addressing themselves. Based on a teacher's pedagogical content knowledge, instructors must develop plans to make their knowledge of the subject matter teachable and understandable.
2. Teaching addressing their students. This includes evaluating who are the average students and understanding their overall attitude toward the material being studied.
3. Teachers addressing the milieu. Children are influenced by numerous people. Their family, the community and the nation all mold the student into who they are. Their school is but one of these many influences. This makes teaching and instilling specific values and morals a difficult task for educators.
4. Teachers addressing the subject matter. Teachers must accept the responsibility of being the authority for interpreting the curriculum based on the questions and comments posed in the classroom.

Given the need to address these categories, Shkedi suggested a modified Jewish day school curriculum to make the material more age and time appropriate for the classroom and encouraged teachers to discover the balance between parental and community expectations and the motivations and needs of specific learners based on the aforementioned categories. Shkedi also encouraged Jewish day school teachers to adapt the current curriculum to the knowledge of their individual classes, all the while,

continuing to monitor the material so it remains relevant and appropriate for their students needs. This might include a lesser focus on Hebrew comprehension. Also, by offering more English, Shkedi suggested that children may feel less frustrated in the comprehension of the subject mater when the language barrier is removed. Shkedi concluded with an additional educational insight in motivating one's class. Instead of focusing attention on the unique holiness of the Judaic literature, offer the material to the class and allow them to reach that conclusion on their own volition.

Resnick (1996), a lecturer in the School of Education at Bar Ilan University and representative for the Jewish Education Service of North America, discussed the sociological and theological reasons why Jewish community day schools should emphasize ethnic differences. Sociologically speaking, unlike in previous generations, Jews are harder to recognize in today's world. Resnick stated that children need to be taught that they are different from the children in American society. Jewish children must realize they are minorities. Theologically speaking, Judaic literature suggests the concept of separation or segregation of the Jewish nation specifically with regard to food, fashion, festivals, and family. Resnick suggested that such an approach would also minimize issues of intermarriage and assimilation in the Jewish community. He concluded, "Intensifying ethnic behavior is likely to intensify religious identity."

In a later article, Schiff (1997), the Executive Vice-President of the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York, described how Jewish education can be effective for years to come. Jewish identity reinforcement, as addressed by Schiff must be cognitively challenging, yet interesting and relevant to the students. Schiff listed five things a community day school should focus on for the future in Jewish education:



family, affective domains, Hebrew teaching, teach Jewish values, and methods of instruction. He explored each of these five areas and explained why the continuity of Jewish education is dependent on each. Schiff's observations also support the idea that children who continue in a Jewish high school are much less likely to intermarry. Their overall Jewish identity is stronger and has a direct correlation to the amount of years a child is involved in some form of a Jewish education. Finally, Schiff argued that the middle school years are the most crucial time for children to feel a desire to further their education into their high school years, and that by employing these five concepts of Schiff, adolescents are capable of remaining more connected to their Jewish identity for years to come. According to Schiff, this will help ensure the future and continuity of community day schools and Judaism as a whole.

Blumberg (1998), an associate professor in Jewish Education at Hebrew Union College, supported the justification for introducing a learner-centered curriculum design in community day schools, contending that schools do not usually have such a curriculum in place. Based on the work of Ja Kun Kim (1985), Blumberg presented a curriculum that is built around the experiences, needs, and interests of the students. This is considered an open education model of learning in which teaching engages the student in their studies. Blumberg stated that typically, children become disengaged, which drives them away from retaining a strong Jewish identity. Blumberg stated, within her conclusions, that there are a series of curricular variables that are directly affected by a learning-centered approach. These variables include:

1. The goals and objectives of the school.

2. The materials offered to the student. These materials, such as text books must be more readily available, in utilizing this approach so as to allow the child to explore and discover by themselves.
3. The learning activities in the classroom. These activities are geared more toward life experiences and not limited to experiences within the classroom.
4. The teaching strategies differ in that educators must retrain their previous pedagogical approaches and view themselves as co-learners.
5. The evaluation and assessment must be calculated and assessed more rapidly in a learning-centered school.
6. Learning in groups or individually requires more flexibility so each student can decide what method is best for him or her as an individual.
7. Time is also more flexible within this model since it is the student who decides which areas require more time and energy than others.
8. Space is also more flexible. Some students may need to study out of the classroom, in a quieter atmosphere. Others may work more effectively by their desk.
9. The content is important in this design as the child has the opportunity to explore and discover the areas which best suit their individual interests. By choosing the content on their own, they are more motivated to study and succeed in mastering the material which they can best relate to.

The mission of many community-based day schools is to ensure children retain their appreciation and love for their Jewish heritage. As Blumberg indicated, since this form of curriculum allows the student to choose his or her subject matter, it tends to

foster a sense of responsibility and ownership in the child. Of course, there needs to be relevant material for the child to find meaning and value in the studies. Instead of trying to anticipate and speculate what is best for the child, Blumberg suggests that students should be encouraged to explore and decide what they themselves consider to be meaningful. This can be accomplished by allowing the student to discover the sources, from within Judaic texts, which they have a specific interest in. With the use of the internet and other technological tools, students' are more capable of learning subject matter that suit their specific needs and interests. The teachers then take upon themselves the role of co-learners. Although Blumberg does express the potential problems and issues within this approach, a learner-centered curriculum could potentially address the disconnect that many adolescents begin to experience in the middle school years specifically with regard to Judaic studies curriculum.

Weiss and Cutter (1998) described the reasons why certain curricula were retained by Judaic community day schools. Weiss, at the time of the article, was a Ph.D. student in the Department of Asian and Middle Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Cutter is a professor of Education and Hebrew Literature at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles, California. The authors offered four functions and benefits of canonical literature.

1. Canonical literature support the history and traditions of the Jewish faith.
2. Acquiring knowledge of certain canonical literature enables the learner to be more capable of comprehending other Judaic literature.
3. Canonical material has the tendency to tie the learner back to a community.

4. Canonical literature serves as a statement about the functions and tastes of a specific community.

However, Weiss and Cutter (1998) challenged the Judaic canon and offered their own suggestions for the modern day student. They argued that the study of Talmudic literature is primarily for canon preservation and community memory. This and other canons tell the student what is important and what deserves to be considered classical literature. They continued stating the motivation in retaining the traditional subject matter as the set curriculum in community day schools is because administrators “are afraid that American Judaism is losing its foothold on what is good and right when it comes to literature selection.” (pg. 13-14) This is why some schools elect to not challenge the canon.

Weiss and Cutter concluded that, within Judaic studies, instructors have the task to teach a curriculum, based on the original canon, however many students have difficulty comprehending this literature. Therefore, each community day school should examine what is being taught and its overall effectiveness in their school. By engaging in this process, they guarantee some continuity and positive results. This process can be accomplished through an open dialogue between the administrator and the teachers or students. The results may entail, making certain adjustments in the original canon as the needs of the school are revealed. Weiss and Cutter therefore recommended, incorporating into the curriculum, both elements of conservation and change. This way, relevance of the material is addressed without having to remove completely from the tradition and preservation of the canonical literature. This recommendation of a modified curriculum addresses the relevance issue while not completely forsaking the canon and its rich

history and traditions. However, Weiss and Cutter did add that this analysis can only be accomplished with a competent and sensitive Judaic studies staff, a staff that is aware of the needs of the typical community day school sixth grade student.

Finally, Weiss and Cutter suggested, similar to other articles previously cited, that more research should be pursued on the topic of appropriate Judaic studies curriculum for engaging students. But they contended that a modified curriculum will foster a better learning environment among the students to help them be more engaged and motivated learners.

Sarna (1998), a professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University, indicated, within this article, how much the Jewish day school has evolved and expanded in a relatively short span of time. In the past twenty years, there has been incredible growth among community day schools in the United States. Sarna also observed that the history of community day schools fell into two unstated paradigms. Initially, Judaic subjects were viewed as secondary to the more important general studies. Due to other urgent concerns, such as immigration and anti-Semitism, Judaic subject-matter became neglected. Then, as Jewish schools in America improved, the Judaic education therein declined. As advances occurred in Jewish education, such as facilities, teachers, and textbooks, the clientele became less interested and less knowledgeable in the Jewish studies component.

Sarna stated that each community day school, in order to effectively adhere to the needs of the community, should ask: What is Jewish education all about? What is its purpose? He contended that the ultimate purpose of a day school is to serve as the vehicle

to educate and prepare the future generation about living a Jewish life in the American arena.

Sarna continued to cite selected sections, based on his experiences as an educator, to stress three distinct areas:

1. Themes that have a strong correlation between American Jewish education and Jewish life.
2. Themes which directly relate to issues of relevance. Sarna observed that students don't always understand or are provided the knowledge of why they are studying various selected Judaic literature and its relevance in their leading a Jewish life.
3. Themes which emphasize the need for empirical research within this topic. Sarna recognized, the lack of existing empirical studies for community day schools. He, thereby, addressed the need to engage in further scholarly research.

Sarna concluded with five insights with regard to current community day schools.

1. Curriculum of Jewish education dedicates much of its time and resources to the Hebrew language.
2. Community day schools directly rate their success based on the student's mastery of the Hebrew language.
3. Day schools are designed for the gifted child. To be able to balance a dual curriculum demands the student to be among the elite.
4. Some day schools teach Ivrit Bivrit. This movement, where only Hebrew is spoken in the classroom, demands professionalism and seriousness for the Judaic studies curriculum.

5. Similar to the recommendations of Cohen (1986), Ivrit Bivrit has raised the self-esteem of the Judaic staff, creating a divine mission and passion among the Judaic staff.

The next reflective piece provided insight into how to make curriculum offered to students relevant and meaningful. Based on his experiences as a teacher for eighteen years in the New York public school system and as lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, Block (1999) claimed that, through the Haggadah, one is able to discover important teaching techniques. The Hagaddah, a text which discusses the history of the Jewish nation in Egypt and their subsequent freedom from slavery, is studied primarily during the Jewish holiday of Passover. Block claimed that the Haggadah is an instrument that could be utilized for implementing important educational concepts. For example, the Passover story, found in the Hagaddah, mandates that parents be engaged in a dialogue with their child. This teaches educators to answer their students questions, as a means for further discussion and to enable the students to probe further into the topic at hand.

Block further stated that no question should be left unanswered. Although the same question can be asked by two students, it is necessary to know the whole student to answer in the manner that he or she, as an individual, can best comprehend and accept. Block added, "We are challenged in our answer to know the one who questions us." This is a significant article since the methodology and approach of teaching could be the determining factor in a child's connecting or disconnecting with the Judaic subject matter. Teachers need to learn how to engage their students in discussions so they can think of and offer their insights, their uniqueness to the classroom. This might foster a

sense of self-confidence in the student and in turn, a stronger connection to their Jewish heritage.

Yacobi (2000) offered a new vision for community day schools in the twenty-first century based on her observations and experiences as Educational Director of the Jewish Community Center of Fort Lee, New Jersey. She suggested that schools analyze and investigate three specific areas. First, the schools must examine their cultural contexts. This includes looking into the trends that are currently affecting American youth, which will enable the faculty to be more aware of the areas which should be stressed with regard to Judaic studies curricula. Second, schools need to examine the current research in the social sciences in order to understand the trends in Jewish life and become aware of the various new modes of teaching and learning. Third, schools should focus on the various forms of professional academic preparation. This includes being aware of the programs available to train staff to be prepared to address the issues facing students within community day schools. Yacobi argued that professional development for teachers should include “awareness of early adolescent development; middle school principles and practices.”

Finally, Yacobi suggested that middle school students should be distinctly separate from elementary school children and schools should address the need for adolescents to feel different and more mature than the elementary school aged children. According to Yacobi, schools should ask themselves: Are all of our students in the same structure with little differentiation? Is this beneficial to the development and maturity of the child?



Recently, Bieler (2001), a faculty member at the Melvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy in Silver Spring, Maryland, focused on the visions and goals of Jewish day schools. He observed that a day school is often the defining factor in a local Jewish community's future and ultimate survival. Bieler offered three ideas, based on his experiences, as educator at the Melvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy in Silver Spring, Maryland, that should be addressed in a community day school. First, Jewish education should not be limited to the children. Instead, a more broad-based approach should be considered. This includes informal programming and for parents and the community at large. Based on Bieler's experiences, creating an environment of community learners is an effective approach in ensuring the continuity of Jewish education for a Jewish community day school. Second, schools should not be isolated, separate entities but they should be interconnected with the other Jewish organizations in the community. This increases the function and purpose of the school and builds credence that the school is really the center for learning for the community at large. Third, educators within community day schools should remain connected with the children that have graduated to perpetuate the school with the next generation of parents who show their commitment and loyalty by sending their children to the school to receive a Jewish education.

Ben-Peretz (2001), professor of Education at the University of Haifa and formerly Dean of the Faculty of Education, addressed the issues and concerns with regard to intervention programs and research within Jewish education. This included the focus on how to insure Jewish continuity. Ben-Peretz, stated, that many organizations have a lax approach in creating new mechanisms to stimulate children. This is an area that requires much deliberation and thought. Ben-Peretz argued that, for the Jewish educational

establishment to meet this challenge, it must embark on a many-sided program of research and development. She cited a matrix of 11 parameters for research in Jewish educational programs, formulated by Katz and Ruth (1990). These 11 key parameters are: goals, content, methods, time, ethos, learners, educators, resources, evaluation practices in the program, impact, and milieus. The purpose of this matrix is to stimulate further research questions that could address the goals and missions of Jewish community day schools. In addition, this matrix could help define and understand the various practices of the school, and enable community day schools to introduce various intervention programs to help realize their goals and objectives.

Kaplowitz (2002) stressed the importance of community when it comes to the continuity and success of children in a Jewish community day school. In addition, Kaplowitz focused on the mission statement and vision of three day schools, two elementary through high school and one elementary through eighth grade. Each of these mission statements reflected an interest and the importance of community building to uphold themselves as a community day school. Kaplowitz offered four key recommendations in building a sense of community within Jewish community day schools, based on her reflections of these three day schools.

1. Women are more likely to become active participants and volunteers than men; therefore, communities should gear their programming toward the interests of women so as to increase their interest levels in the day school and the community at large.
2. Those individuals who utilize more than one service in the institution become more committed to the community than those who only use one service. By

increasing the amount of services offered within a Jewish community day school, the overall involvement among the members of the community is more likely to increase as well.

3. Long term membership should be encouraged within a Jewish community day school. The longer duration in an institution, the greater sense of commitment and loyalty for the community is fostered for the school. .

4. Day schools must emphasize the importance of employing competent personnel who are aware of the unique needs of that specific school and community. This too, according to Kaplowitz, will increase building within the community.

She concluded that, based on her experiences, there is not one universal correct way of creating a sense of community at any given day school. Rather, “Each school must carefully analyze its constituency and provide for its unique communal needs.”

While the final articles in this section do not specifically address Jewish community day school curricula, each article addresses issues potentially pertinent to teaching and learning in such schools.

Weiner (1985) quoted by Eccles & Midgley, dismissed this theory and offered various tools to effectively engage and motivate Middle School students. They contended that students’ perceptions of their experiences in education have a large influence on how motivated they feel in school. Students’ who believe they lack of academic success is attributed to their own imperfections will have difficulty succeeding in their future studies. However, students’ who attribute these failures on external factors have the potential to improve. It is therefore necessary for Middle School instructors to be trained in understanding and determining the reasons for their students’ performances.

Eccles & Midgley (1989) discussed the issues of motivating adolescents. Based on their experiences, there is a decline in motivation and performance for many children as they make the transition from an elementary school setting to a Middle School setting. This has been attributed to physiological and psychological changes associated primarily to puberty. This article implies that there is little to nothing that can be done to motivate children as puberty is a reality and is inevitable.

Barbara Smith (1996), a religious studies teacher at Mercy High School in Farmington Hills, Michigan, wrote about her experiences at the Catholic-Jewish Colloquium, a major educational resource center that directly relates to Catholicism. Smith stressed the importance of having a highly qualified educational staff, commenting, "I had often heard Thomas Groome remark that an effective educator will be more concerned about what questions she'll ask her students rather than what she'll say to them." Educating for religious identity and respect is of extreme importance and should be a priority among the goals of an educator. This includes approaching the topic of world religions in a manner that will enlighten and educate your students. This way the students will be capable of making mature decisions about their faith without being talked down to. Smith contended that, "Educational integrity should motivate one to teach in such a way that individuals are encouraged to embrace their home tradition and to grow in understanding and respect for those whose history, viewpoint, and choices are different from their own." (Smith, 1996). This approach might provide adolescence with the tools necessary to make sound decisions about their heritage and give them a sense of ownership over the curriculum. Clearly, such practices and philosophies can and should be integrated into the religious and secular studies in a Jewish community day school.

Arigo and Garland (1996) demonstrated that an economically impoverished school can be successful when appropriate methodologies for its school are employed. Such changes were introduced within a school in Rochester, New Hampshire. Arigo, a principal and teacher in the school and Garlan, director of education and supervision and associate professor of education in the University of New Hampshire, utilized their experiences to articulate a vision for the Rochester school. This vision included the necessity in creating an appropriate vision for each child's individual needs. Arigo and Garland realizing this fact, quoted George and Anderson (1989), "A national survey has found that exemplary middle school programs have clearly articulated visions of meeting the early adolescent's personal and educational needs."

There were four key decisions within the Rochester Middle School that enabled this positive change within their school.

1. The Rochester school subdivided the faculty and students into teams. This was determined through the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) that subdivision into teams is an effective organizational framework. Also, classroom discipline problems can be drastically reduced through the method of teaming.
2. Then the school instituted block scheduling. This included intimate groups of ten students to discuss the issues they may be having during their transitional period into middle school. Arigo and Garland, quoted Hertzog (1992) "this method is beneficial in that it eases a child into their new surrounding in a non-threatening manner."

3. Tracking students by their level of ability were eliminated in order to ensure that there will remain the same opportunities for the students, regardless of their educational experiences and background.
4. The school created a computerized program to track student who have various behavioral issues.

Also, incorporated in the Rochester school, was a statement of beliefs, specifically geared toward educating children during the years of adolescence. Included, was the following philosophy: “We must recognize and work with the unique social and emotional needs of early adolescents. The middle school should be an exciting and rewarding environment, offering a wide range of enriching activities.”

Many Jewish community day schools however, fail to accompany the middle school age children with any incentives or rewards for remaining in the school during these final years. It is necessary to incorporate special programs, activities, and incentives specifically for this age bracket to ensure that they will remain excited and connected to their school.

Since many Jewish community day school students continue in the same building from kindergarten through eight grade, it is important to recognize that they are more mature. They should be treated with this special degree of seniority. This can only be realized in an environment that understands and is sensitive to the needs of the typical adolescent child. Based on the success of Rochester, community day school’s only stand to prosper in following their model of success.

This article is important in that many Jewish community day schools should model these aforementioned methodologies. Instead, many Jewish community day

schools don't articulate the missions and goals of their institution. This demonstrates a lack of vision among the staff, student body, and community. This issue is important especially among Jewish community day schools. Many schools don't have articulated the mission and goal of their institution. This is clearly a mistake in that a lack of vision among the staff, student body, and community at large is created.

Miller and Meece (1997) focused on the motivation of elementary students in reading and writing. This is relevant to the topic of motivation of adolescents since many of the philosophies and concepts introduced in this study can be highly effective in a middle school setting for adolescents. During the past decade, there has been an increase in the study of motivational research. This is largely due to the rapid decline in the interest in reading as children enter into their adolescent years. Miller and Meece quoted Langer, Applebee, Mullis, & Foertsch (1990) that students are more interested in doing longer term papers when they were allowed to work and collaborate with their friends. Judaic studies instructors also need to be cognizant of the fact that motivation plays a major role in a child's connection to the subject matter. Teachers need to instill different motivational approaches to ensure that their students will remain engaged throughout their adolescence.

Gallavan and Davis (1999) analyzed the success of a seventh grade classroom in North Las Vegas, Nevada. Galavan, an assistant professor in the college of education at the University of Nevada and Davis, a director of the Barbara Schick Center for Economic Education at the University of Nevada and executive director of the Nevada Council on Economic education, presented key issues based on their prior and current

experience. There were four key decisions within the school that enabled this positive change among the students.

1. The school employed different grounded educational philosophies that taught the students the importance of decision making.
2. The students were challenged with the responsibility of certain financial aspects of the school. This gave the students a feeling of ownership in their school. Their pride translated into a school that embodied responsibility and accountability.
3. The children during the age of adolescence were taught to learn real life situations and how to react to them appropriately.
4. The curricula are presented in a clear manner which displayed relevance to the students. Middle School students are constantly interested to know why they are required to learn a certain subject or topic. Without providing a valid answer to this question, they will consider the material useless and disengaging.

Lehman (2002), an assistant professor of Talmud and Rabbinics at the Jewish Theological Seminary, focused on how to approach the teaching of Talmud to college students. The goals of teaching Talmud, as stipulated by Lehman, are to improve translation skills and to provide the foundation of Talmudic knowledge so the learners may apply this knowledge in their future learning or life experiences. Lehman stated that the methodology in teaching Talmud is the key to its acceptance and comprehension. She created a systematic process for students to help foster an understanding and appreciation for the Talmudic literature they are studying. This intentional or planned method of teaching provides a clear demonstration of how and why the Talmud structures itself. She provided a six-step process to teach Talmud effectively:



1. Beginning to teach the Talmud from outside the text. Lehman began her lessons with the discussion about contemporary issues that effect and apply to her students' in their daily lives. This overview is an effective motivational tool since it demonstrates the relevance in their Talmudic lessons and makes the material something then can relate to.
2. Making Talmudic inquiry depends upon the Biblical text. Since the Talmud is primarily an explanation of the Bible or Torah, Lehman introduces to her students, the verses that directly relate to the Talmudic literature they are studying. This process provides the student a knowledge base of the cases explicitly discussed in the Torah, and the gaps or missing information that need further investigation and clarification.
3. Focusing on the Talmud and its sources. The Mishna was written by the Tannaim, a group of sages between the years 70-200 CE. Its primary function was to explain the cryptic words of the written Torah. The Gemara or Talmud was written afterwards by the Amoraim, a later group of sages, to further elaborate on the Mishna. Lehman would study the Mishna with her class and expound on what seemed unclear or problematic. She presented the material in a manner that demonstrated to her class that the Talmudic literature would address those very issues.
4. Answering the “what” question as a setup for answering the “why” question. The Talmud is written without any punctuation marks. This makes it difficult to identify the purpose of each line. The Talmud might be presenting a quote, an argument, a challenge, a refutation, a clarification, a question, an answer, a

- resolution, or a story. Therefore, it is beneficial to identify and outline the structure of the Talmudic piece being studied.
5. Asking the “why” question. By labeling each step of the Talmud, one is able to see the overall structure of the entire Talmudic piece. This heightened level of understanding, enables the student to question why these particular steps were necessary to arrive to the conclusions presented in the Talmud.
  6. Training to be an analytical thinker. This final stage allows the student to inquire into the mindset of the Talmud with a more critical and analytical lens. This final stage is geared toward challenging the conclusions, proofs, and refutations presented in the Talmud.

Lehmans’ article was influenced by the earlier work of Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990). They stated,

“By systematic we refer primarily to the ways of gathering information, documenting experiences inside and outside of classrooms, and making some kind of written record. By intentional we signal that teacher research is an activity that is planned rather than spontaneous. And by inquiry we suggest that each teacher research stems from or generates questions and reflects teachers’ desires to make sense of their experiences-to adopt a learning stance or openness toward classroom life.” (Pg. 88)

According to Lehman, the benefit of having an approach such as the above in place is that it permits students to understand the thought processes and the flow of the Talmud. By building a format that students can rely on, they develop a heightened sense

of self-confidence and knowledge of the study of Talmud. They can then become more engaged as they develop the ability to anticipate the questions and answers of the Talmud based on this format. This article is significant in approaching the issue of disconnect among adolescence in a Jewish day school setting because it creates a systemic procedure that the students might more easily relate to. The Talmud is a very systematic text for those who are knowledgeable and comfortable with the flow of its thought processes. This system, offered by Lehman, might be an invaluable resource to help foster a classroom with students who are more attuned and aware of the process of the Talmud.

Although Lehman applied her studies in a college environment, perhaps one could find common ground with regard to the goals and objectives for the study of Talmud in a middle school. Through the concept of curriculum mapping, by studying a successful method of Talmud study in future years, we may better understand how Talmud should be introduced as well. Conceivably, one could even determine based on this piece, that the subject of Talmud is too advanced for middle school students and that it is inappropriate to reach the goals of a typical community day school.

### *Empirical Studies*

Within this section, the five available articles are broken into two categories: 1) one article presents findings from a multiple institution interview survey and 2) four articles are single institution case studies, some of which incorporated survey instruments.

Pomson (2001), an associate professor of Jewish Education at York University in Toronto, Canada, investigated the impact of curriculum integration in the general and

Judaic studies curricula of a single school. The study was a two month case study of King Solomon High School, an orthodox school in London. King Solomon High School utilized a working model of curriculum integration within the school. The center focus during these two months was based on the study of the biblical book of Ruth. This was intended to cause the students to be more motivated to learn the integrated material surrounding the theme of the book of Ruth. In Judaic studies, the children learned about that particular era in Jewish history, while learning the messages of how to treat strangers. In English class, the students compared the biblical literature to comparable stories of Shakespeare. In art class, they learned how to paint the backgrounds for their performance. In short, each class focused its study to reach a common goal, the biblical book of Ruth.

There were three key findings in this study. First, integrating curriculum changed the teacher from a subject expert to a student-facilitator. Although this sort of role was a difficult method of teaching for many educators, the increase of motivation and cognitive levels among the students made curriculum integration an appealing educational approach. Second, curriculum integration fosters valuable analytic skills for children to develop and adopt into their adulthood because most life issues or problems include a mixture of the disciplines. They are not kept in isolation in the real world as they are in many classrooms. Third, through the use of curriculum integration for both general and Judaic studies, children understood the relevance of all of their classes. They are then more capable of appreciating the dual curriculum taught in community day schools.

Pomson concluded, that the literature of day schools in the United States, indicates an interest in integrating curriculum in modern orthodox Yeshivot and in

community day schools. Pomson supported his own findings by incorporating the findings of researchers in general education, not limited to Jewish day schools. Schon (1983) explained that integration gives students the ability to see the curriculum and knowledge in a completely different way. Grumet (1988) added that new knowledge is the creation of responsible knowers who draw together the multiple parts of their experience. This made the Judaic subject matter come to life and not appear to be unimportant or irrelevant. Ultimately, this could be a key ingredient in ensuring that middle school children remain connected to and interested in their Jewish history and heritage.

Saks' (2002) case study focused on the visions and practices found in orthodox Yeshiva education. Saks is currently the Director of the Academy for Torah Initiatives and Directions in Jerusalem. The researcher examined the educational goals and methods of community day schools with the assistance of the Academy for Torah Initiatives and Directions. This organization, ATID, is a Jerusalem-based in-service fellowship for orthodox educators and future leaders focused on the betterment of education in their community. The study was based on a sample of eighteen Judaic studies educators from multiple schools. The sample was subdivided into three distinct groups: those who teach in Israeli classrooms', those who teach American students', and teachers and administrators involved in Jewish education. The study analyzed the reported successes and failures of the sample group specifically with regard to Judaic studies education.

The study asked whether Talmud is an appropriate subject to be taught to students while they are still in day school, or whether such complex material should be reserved for the high school years when students' breadth of knowledge and overall

maturity has increased and they will be more capable of appreciating the complexity of the Talmudic literature. This questions if the limited time of Judaic studies teaching could be utilized in a more constructive manner.

There were three key findings. First, the respondents stressed the issue of relevance in the Judaic studies curriculum especially within the study of Talmudic literature. They indicated that it is necessary to present the Talmudic literature in a manner that shows its significance and present day relevance. Second, they indicated that the inclusion of technology and the use of the Internet could help stimulate and motivate the modern day child. Third, they believed the community day school must be aware of its mission so as to ensure that the curriculum fits the goals accordingly. This often requires a change in the curriculum regarding the way Judaic subjects are presented. Although this seems simple enough, within orthodoxy, change is a difficult concept for many to embrace.

Malkus (2002), an Education Director of the Rabbi Jacob Pressman Academy of Temple Beth Am in Los Angeles, California, focused on how one Jewish day school integrated its curriculum and determined its overall success regarding students being engaged and involved in the Judaic studies curriculum. Similar to Pomson (2002) this study focused on curriculum integration. This study was in response to the lack of empirical studies to enable day schools to actualize and implement curriculum integration in their classrooms.

The data collected included interviews with approximately fifty academicians, school practitioners, policy makers, and directors of Jewish educational institutions. In

addition, data was collected through classroom observations and reviewing various documents which pertain directly to the area of curriculum integration.

Malkus studied the concept of having a single, unified program. Integration is an area, which is not well defined. Although parents often favor this approach, there is much controversy as to how curriculum integration is actually accomplished. Within this study, Jacobs (1989) was quoted by Malkus to define curriculum integration as, “a knowledge view and curriculum approach that consciously applies methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, issue, problem, topic, or experience.” How exactly this is applied during the middle school years is a question in need of further investigation and research. Malkus concluded with five findings with regard to curriculum integration:

1. Integration is a process of how teachers and students work and think.
2. Integration is fostered through the development of specific school infrastructures.
3. Integrated curriculum is characterized by interdisciplinary units organized around central themes.
4. Curriculum integration is a philosophical/ideological approach to building Jewish identity.
5. Using Hebrew throughout the curriculum represents a unique area of curriculum integration. (p. 55-56).

These methods, when properly employed, could serve as a valuable resource to keep adolescent children engaged and connected to their Jewish heritage. Curriculum integration shows the relevance and significance in studying their Judaic curriculum. This might potentially foster a love for their Jewish heritage, which will remain with

them throughout their adolescence and adulthood. In addition, Malkus utilized the data collected from this single Jewish day school, to compare and contrast his findings with two other Jewish day schools. This larger study was designed to support the findings of the advantages of incorporating curriculum integration into community Jewish day schools.

Cohen, Kress, and Elias (2002) examined the various factors that contribute to a positive climate in a Jewish community day school classroom. Cohen, a graduate student in the School Psychology Doctoral Program at Temple University; Kress, an assistant professor of Jewish Education and Senior research Associate at the William Davidson Graduate School at the Jewish theological Seminary; and Elias, a professor in the Psychological department at Rutgers University investigated how to make classroom time more appealing and interesting by creating survey instruments for data collection. The surveys were completed by 213 students attending an orthodox k-8 day school. Among the total, 109 were male, 92 female, and 12 did not indicate their gender. The majority of these children were of middle school age, grades six through eight. The day school consisted of a diverse group of students, whose parents were affiliated with different community synagogues and temples. There were two instruments used in this study, My Class Inventory and the Emotional Quotient Inventory. The classroom climate was explored in terms of age, gender, the interaction between age and gender, and social and emotional competence with the assistance of these aforementioned instruments.

There were five key findings from this study. First, based on t-test results, there was a significant difference in the perception, among the students, in the climate of the classroom based on the age of the student. Students in the lower grades expressed greater



satisfaction with both the general and Judaic studies classes than did the older students. Also, the older children expressed greater difficulty in comprehending the general studies classes than did the students in the younger grades. Second, there was no significant difference in perception of Judaic studies based solely on gender. However, girls did indicate greater levels of concern for the difficulty in the general studies than did the boys. Third, female students in the lower levels in each grade, expressed the most friction and conflict between their Judaic and general studies. Those students in the more advanced classes expressed little friction due to their dual curriculum. Cohen, Kress, and Elias defined friction as the negative perceptions created toward the Judaic studies curriculum due to the impressions of the students of the curriculum in the general studies program. Cohen, Kress, and Elias noted that, in this particular day school, the lower levels in each grade are co-educational whereas the upper levels are single-sex classrooms. Further empirical research may suggest a correlation between co-educational classes and the friction sensed among the students between the general and Judaic studies classes.

The fourth key finding in this study pertained to the differences students perceived within the climates of the Judaic studies classrooms as opposed to within the general studies classrooms. Marginally higher levels of friction were perceived in Judaic studies classes than in general studies classes. This finding differs from the prior finding in that the third finding focused on the classroom climate, based on gender and age group interaction. The fourth finding focused on the difference in the classroom climates between Judaic and general studies, without the emphasis on gender or age. Fifth,

perceptions of cohesion or integration of the dual curriculum were positively related to a student's interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, and their flexibility and adaptability.

Cohen, Kress, and Elias concluded that these findings indicated that students have unfavorable views about their Jewish education. Adolescents don't have a "good feeling" about their Jewish heritage. A more negative attitude becomes the norm. The study recommended that these negative issues must be dealt with in a child's younger years so as not to create another generation of disengaged children. More personal interaction and dialogue is necessary. There should be a greater focus on "school climate". Cohen, Kress, and Elias suggest that the integration of curriculum could also potentially be beneficial at this time. This could potentially make the Judaic and general studies material more relevant for the class.

Finally Hammer-Kossoy (2003), a Mishna and Talmud teacher at Machon Pardes and Ph.D. candidate in Talmud at NYU, analyzed the study of Talmud among community day schools. Although Talmudic study consists of a significant number of hours in day schools, the question posed was why indeed, is this the case. Hammer-Kossoy's findings suggest that there are significant advantages in incorporating the study of Talmud within the Judaic studies curriculum within community day schools.

The data collected was via three case studies taken from teachers who were concerned with the issue of appropriate Talmud instruction at each school. It included the issue of how many students are bothered with the relevance in studying the Talmud. Through interviews and class observations, the researcher was able to determine that each of the instructors presented the same material with a different approach. Their

methodologies differed as each of the teachers stressed different goals and objectives for their particular class.

The three key findings in this study were:

1. Focusing on the mere content of the Talmudic discussions is a motivational tool for engaging students in Jewish topics.
2. Talmudic study creates a positive impact on the human psyche.
3. The in-depth studying of Talmud becomes a fulfilling religious and spiritual experience.

Although Talmud is a subject which is presented in depth in many community day schools, Hammer-Kossoy reported a disconnect regarding the relevance of the material among the students, even though the findings indicated ongoing professional training among teachers to teach the relevance of Talmudic study is a conscious goal. By incorporating these three findings into the Talmudic curriculum, students were able to view the study of Talmud as a rewarding and meaningful experience.

### Conclusion

As shown in these sections, the history and goals of community day schools and the literature for middle school Judaic studies curricula is disparate and based more on reflections than on systematic research. As cited by Yacobi (2000), schools need to examine the current research in the social sciences in order to understand the trends in Jewish life and become aware of the various new modes of teaching and learning. Even within the Lookstein center (2005) which heavily stresses the importance of curriculum

integration in Jewish community day schools, the literature found therein mainly represents reflective pieces and not empirical research.

Although there is a paucity of available empirical research, the available studies do reflect, more scholarly research is being conducted than in the past. This supports Yacobi's (2000) assertion that research in the social sciences, specifically for Jewish community day schools, is essential to address, in an unbiased manner, the issues that pertain to such schools. This study will add to the body of empirical literature by surveying the largest sample of community day schools to date in order to address the gap in the research literature, regarding the current status of Judaic studies curricula and the curricular goals of such schools.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter provides the research design and methodologies of this study of the implementation of curriculum integration within Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. It includes the statement of the problem, the research questions, the definitions of terms utilized in this study, the design of the study, data sources and the limitations of the study.

This proposal called for a qualitative study investigating the application of its conceptual framework (Jacobs, 1989) to Jewish community day schools. The primary methodology of this study involved focused interviews with administrators within Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. These interviews included the director of Judaic studies, the director of general studies, and the headmaster of the school. The interviews determined the extent of curriculum integration in such schools by utilizing the continuum of options for content design as cited by Jacobs. (1989). The study also examined the reported advantages and disadvantages of the levels of curriculum integration within these Jewish community day schools. Finally, curriculum documents from each school was collected and analyzed to assess the extent to which they reflect curriculum integration of Judaic studies and general studies.

### Statement of the Problem

This study examined the implementation of curriculum integration within all Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. It explored the extent to which such schools are integrating topics and skills from their general studies curricula into

their Judaic studies classes and vice versa. Such curriculum integration is of great importance as it enhances the value and relevance of the curriculum to the student. (Jacobs, 1989).

Grade six can be exceedingly difficult and stressful for many students. As children enter puberty, they move from an attachment and dependency on their parents and teachers to independently seeking more objective knowledge. (Fisherman, 2002). Within Jewish community day schools the shift is first apparent within the secular studies because they are often considered more relevant than religious studies, which may be discounted because they are sometimes simplified within community day schools. (Jewish Adolescent Study, 2001). In fact, since Judaic studies subject matter is often taught on a superficial level throughout a child's tenure at a given community day school, by the time these students reach adolescence, they may lose all excitement for Judaic studies classes.

There has been a growing need for interdisciplinary content in modern schools. Jacobs (1989) argued that although children are learning many subjects, they are not taught how subjects are related to one another. Since then, curriculum integration has been increasingly implemented throughout the United States and abroad. (Beane, 1997). However, other than the case studies by Pomson (2001) and Malkus (2002) curriculum integration within Jewish community day schools has not been investigated.

## Research Questions

The primary research question that guided the study was:

*How is curriculum integration of Judaic studies with general studies described by administrators within Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state?*

To answer this question, each of the following sub-questions was addressed:

Question 1a: *Based on the continuum of options for content design (Jacobs, 1989) where do heads of schools report that Jewish community day schools best fit regarding the integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools?*

Question 1b: *Based on the continuum of options for content design (Jacobs, 1989) where do directors of general studies report that Jewish community day schools best fit regarding the integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools?*

Question 1c: *Based on the continuum of options for content design (Jacobs, 1989) where do directors of Judaic studies report that Jewish community day schools best fit regarding the integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools?*

Question 2a: *Do heads of schools perceive there to be advantages to implementing curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 2b: *Do directors of general studies perceive there to be advantages to implementing curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 2c: *Do directors of Judaic studies perceive there to be advantages to implementing curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 3a: *Do heads of schools perceive there to be disadvantages and/or obstacles preventing implementation of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 3b: *Do directors of general studies perceive there to be disadvantages and/or obstacles preventing implementation of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 3c: *Do directors of Judaic studies perceive there to be disadvantages and/or obstacles preventing implementation of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*



Question 4: *To what extent does evidence of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies appear within school curricula documents?*

This study did not focus on curriculum integration within separate disciplines, but rather on crossover between curriculums. In other words, the study didn't focus on whether curriculum integration is apparent among disciplines within the general studies curricula within Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. Rather, the focus was solely on whether such integration occurs between the Judaic and general studies academic programs.

#### Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this current study, the following definitions of key terms were used:

Bar mitzvah: meaning son of commandments, this is when a Jewish boy reaches thirteen years of age.

Bat mitzvah: meaning daughter of commandments, this is when a Jewish girl reaches twelve or thirteen years of age, depending on the tradition of ones synagogue.

B'nai mitzvah: the age in which a child reaches the status of Jewish majority enabling him or her to partake in specific communal rituals in the synagogue and within the Jewish community.

Curriculum integration: a knowledge view and curriculum approach that consciously applies methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, issue, problem, topic, or experience. (Jacobs, 1989)

Director of General studies: the person who is in charge of the operation of the general studies department and its curriculum.

Director of Judaic studies: the person who is charge of the operation of the Judaic studies department and its curriculum.

Discipline field: A specific body of teachable knowledge with its own background of education, training, procedures, methods, and content areas. (Piaget, 1972).

Dual curriculum: a term referring to Judaic and general studies, offered within Jewish community day schools.

Interview: a process where researchers ask one or more participants in a study, mostly general, open-ended questions and record their answers. (Creswell, 2002).

Ivrit Bivrit: literally meaning “Hebrew in Hebrew”, this pedagogical methodology requires the teacher and student to speak, throughout the entire lesson, in the Hebrew language.

Jewish community day school: a school that provides children with a Jewish education in addition to a general studies education. This school operates during comparable hours as public schools and ranges from kindergarten through eighth grade.

Population: a group of individuals that comprise the same characteristics that distinguishes them from other groups. (Creswell, 2002).

Principal/Headmaster: person who is charge of an entire school.

Qualitative study: an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. (Creswell, 1994).

Unstructured interview: open-ended questions that permit the participant to create response possibilities. (Creswell, 2002).

### Design of the Study

Creswell (1994) defines a qualitative study as “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting.” (p. 1-2). A qualitative approach is an appropriate research design for this study as this will enable the researcher to better understand a previously unresearched area, the current perceptions of curriculum integration among administrators within Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. An interview survey was utilized to make these determinations of the perceptions in such schools. Creswell (2002) defines an interview as “a process where researchers ask one or more participants in a study, mostly general, open-ended questions and record their answers.” (p. 203).

Such a data collection approach is more effective than written surveys when sensitive questions are being addressed. The methodology also enabled the researcher to ask follow-up questions seeking further comments that go beyond the responses to the initial questions. Also, interviews have a higher response rate than surveys (Creswell, 2002). This is because interviews are frequently scheduled in advance and the interviewee generally feels compelled to complete the questions posed by the interviewer.

Researchers must consider the issues of reliability and the internal and external validity of their work. The following is a description of the reliability and validity issues within the realm of the present design of the study, most of which involve instrumentation issues.

Creswell (2002) states that the requisite for reliability includes having measures or observations that are consistent. Such instruments should be free of sources of measurement error in that repeated individual responses should remain stable across multiple uses.

The researcher remained cognizant that the questions of the instrument were written in a clear, non ambiguous manner. (Creswell, 2002). Also, the reliability of the study can be altered if the active participants are either nervous, fatigued, misinterpret or guess on the questions. (Rudner, 1993).

Another issue in the process of the design of the study is the issue of validity. Creswell (2002) describes the benefit of validity. "Validity means that researchers can draw meaningful and justifiable inferences from scores about a sample or population". (p. 183). In the case of open-ended interviews, scores are not obtained, but the basic concepts of reliability and validity remain the same. The researcher addressed these above concerns by designing an instrument that will be reviewed by a dissertation advisor. Afterwards, the instrument was presented to the dissertation committee to review and finally pilot tested to further assess the validity of the instrument.

As recommended of McMillan and Schumacher (1994), during all of the interviews, a tape recorder was utilized, to ensure a reliable account of the data received. Also, the researcher used low-inferences descriptors for explaining data and incorporated

direct quotations where possible. Finally, the researcher was cognizant of the possible negative cases or discrepant data that could have an adverse impact on the reliability and validity of such data.

### Population

Creswell (2002) defines a population of a study as “a group of individuals that comprise the same characteristics that distinguishes them from other groups.” (p. 163). The unit of analysis for this study of curricular practices is individual Jewish community day school. The researcher interviewed designated administrators from all of the current Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. This entire population consists of ten community day schools, ranging greatly in student population and percentage of observant families. Due to the significant difference in enrollment in such schools, there were some Jewish community day schools that had more administrators than others. But generally, the process involved the researcher interviewing the school’s director of Judaic studies, director of general studies, and the school’s headmaster or principal, whenever all three such positions exist.

The school population of this study might be considered to be a “sample” of the large population of Jewish community day schools in the United States and abroad. However, for purposes of this study, this assumption was not made, as the schools in a Northeastern state are not viewed as representative due to socioeconomic and cultural factors. Thus, there is no “sample” in this study. The entire population, excluding one Jewish community day school, was surveyed. Generalizability beyond this northeastern

state can only be inferred by future researchers who observe similarities between the schools examined here and those investigated in their own studies.

## Sources of Data and Data Collection

### *Instrument*

The primary source of data in this study was focused interviews of three designated administrators in all of the Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions. An interview guide (see appendix B), designed by the researcher, was followed to ask the extent to which curriculum integration as described by Jacobs (1989) is being implemented. The interviewed administrators were also asked their perceptions of the advantages, disadvantages, and obstacles in incorporating curriculum integration in their schools. Finally, the researcher inquired as to whether or not each school publishes curriculum documents reflecting their level of curriculum integration. If such documents exist, the researcher requested copies.

Prior to the interviews, the administrators were given a handout containing a definition of curriculum integration plus a description of Jacobs (1989) curriculum integration options with accompanying examples. They were asked to review these handouts prior to the interviews.

The data sources chart illustrated in Table 1 connects each of the research questions to the corresponding questions in the interview guide. In addition to these interview guide questions, a few demographic questions, not appearing in Table 1, were included to collect background data on the administrators.

Table 1: Data Source Chart

Primary Research Question: How is curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies described by administrators within Jewish community day schools in a single state?

Research sub-questions

Based on the continuum of options for content design (Jacobs, 1989) where do administrators report that their Jewish community day schools best fit?

Interview Guide Questions

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do administrators perceive there to be advantages to implementing curriculum integration within their schools?</li> <br/> <li>2. Do administrators perceive there to be obstacles preventing further implementation of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools?</li> <br/> <li>3. To what extent does evidence of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies appear within school curricula documents?</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Based on the continuum of options provided by Jacobs, which option(s) best describes the level(s) of curriculum integration between Judaic and general studies within your school?</li> <li>❖ Cite practical examples of how curriculum integration is occurring between the Judaic and general studies curricula in your school.</li> <li>❖ Is curriculum integration between the Judaic and general studies more prevalent in a particular grade or cluster of subjects?</li> <li>❖ If applicable, describe why this difference exists.</li> <li>❖ What do you perceive to be the advantages of the implementation of curriculum integration between Judaic and general studies classes within your school?</li> <li>❖ Has there been an increased interest in the implementation of curriculum integration since your arrival at your current workplace?</li> <li>❖ What do you perceive to be the greatest disadvantages of the implementation of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within your school?</li> <li>❖ Are there specific obstacles preventing curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within your school?</li> <li>❖ Does your school publish any documents that reflect curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within your school?</li> <li>❖ If so, how familiar are the administrators and staff with these</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

curricula documents?

### *Pilot Testing*

Before the instrument was used within the study, the researcher conducted a pilot test to assess its' face validity and appropriateness for data collection. The pilot test involved an interview with an individual who previously spent three years as an administrator at a Jewish community day school in a Northeastern state following many years as an administrator in public schools and another private school.

### *Data Collection Procedure*

Once actual data collection began, the researcher provided adequate time for each interviewee by requesting an appointment at least two weeks prior to the interview. Baring schedule changes or difficulties in coordinating a mutually convenient time, the researcher met with three administrators a week for a period of approximately ten weeks, depending on cooperation and their willingness to participate in the study. Prior to the interviews, the administrators were given a handout containing a definition of curriculum integration plus a description of Jacobs (1989) curriculum integration options with accompanying examples.

The researcher requested from the interviewee, the curricula documents for each school. At the commencement of the interview, the definition of curriculum integration and examples of the continuum as cited by Jacobs (1989) were reviewed. In addition to note taking, the interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed and coded to ensure the validity of this study. The researcher also asked additional probing questions emerging spontaneously based on responses not necessarily specified by the interview



guide. Finally, the researcher requested curricula documents that will provide evidence of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies appear within their schools.

### Data Analysis Procedures

Within qualitative research, the researcher did not obtain the data with a set, scored instrument to measure specific, distinct variables. Instead, expansive data was gathered from participants of the study and was then analyzed by the researcher. (Creswell, 2002). The data analysis of a qualitative study generally consists of text analysis, it involves describing the information and developing themes, and the interpretation situates the findings within larger, more abstract meanings. The researcher analyzes the pictures or words to describe the specific phenomenon being studied. The researcher then makes an interpretation of the meaning of the data collected by reflecting on how the findings correlate to the existing empirical research and by relaying a personal reflection on the lessons that can be gleaned from the findings of such a study. Thus, although initially the data analysis consists of subdividing the provided data, the final goal is to generate a larger, consolidated picture. (Tesch, 1990).

Qualitative research differs greatly from quantitative research. Within the realm of data analysis, researchers immerse themselves in the data continuously before reaching a conclusive analysis. Due to this procedure of analysis, such results may differ greatly from one researcher to the next. (Creswell, 2002). Furthermore, data collection and analysis occur simultaneously, a phenomenon unique within a qualitative research study. For example, within this study, the interviews from some schools were under analysis while data from other schools was yet to be collected.

Within qualitative research, the researcher may elect hand-analysis of qualitative data or computer-analysis of qualitative data. Creswell (2002) defines hand-analysis of qualitative data as researchers reading the data, marking it by hand, and dividing it into parts according to topical, assigned codes. A computer-analysis of qualitative data consists of the researcher using a qualitative computer program to facilitate the process of sorting and analyzing the data. For the purpose of the study, the researcher engaged in hand-analysis of qualitative data.

After the interviews are transcribed, the coding procedure of the data is then employed. The coding procedure consists of creating labels describing a single segment of text. Codes may address different topics, ranging from the setting and context, perspectives held by participants, the participants' way of thinking about people and objects, processes, activities, strategies, and relationships and social structures. (Bogman & Biklen, 1992). Some pre-existing codes will exist as such codes will be provided in advance by Jacobs (1989) continuum of curriculum integration options. The codes will then be reduced to a limited number of themes. These themes will be formed to create a major idea in the database. By reducing the themes, the data will be in a more manageable format, which will be easier for the researcher to interpret and to analyze.

Curriculum documents were also analyzed to determine the extent in which curriculum integration is being employed within the Judaic and general studies programs in such schools. For example, within these documents, existing curriculum maps were analyzed to determine whether some instructors are implementing curriculum integration in their classrooms, perhaps even without the knowledge or guidance of the administration. Furthermore, Jewish community day schools with websites that articulate

the structure of their curricula also were examined to determine the extent of curriculum integration.

The final process in the analysis of the data is through the means of verifying and drawing conclusions from the collected data. This includes noting any regularities and the formulation of explanations and themes. The researcher re-examined each of the themes in a critical manner, looking for any possible inconsistencies or counter evidence within the data. (Creswell, 2002).

### Ethical Considerations

In order to properly obtain accurate information in the data collection process, the researcher asked probing follow-up questions, which may be personal in nature. (Creswell, 2002). Therefore, the researcher remained cognizant of certain ethical considerations within the data collection process.

The actual names of schools are not provided and in order to protect the anonymity of the interviewees, the researcher assigned aliases so that these individuals' opinions and personal feelings can not be easily traced back to them. (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The researcher fully informed the interviewees of the purpose of the study and that their opinions formed the primary data sources within this study. Also, each participating interviewee was asked to sign a release form to ensure that they understand the nature of the interview. A signed release form also protects the researcher from any possible future liabilities in the event that the participating administrators protest to the publication of the data collected during the interviewing process. Prior to the defense of the dissertation, participating individuals were given an opportunity to review chapter 4, the study's

results, as a validity check and to ensure that they are not portrayed in a harmful manner. Finally, the study was reviewed by the Human Subjects Committee at the University of Hartford to ensure that it meets the University's guidelines.

### Limitations of the Study

This study has specific limitations. It focuses solely on Jewish community day schools in a northeastern state. Although representing the largest sampling to date of Jewish community day schools, this group is not necessarily representative of the large majority of Jewish community day schools throughout the United States and abroad. In addition, there is the potential that the researcher displayed certain biases due to the fact that the researcher has been a Judaic studies instructor in such schools for numerous years.

While the study population consists of all Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state, the size of this population is small in number, this limits the scope of the findings. Nonetheless, Merriam (1998) stated "the crucial factor is not the number of respondents but the potential of each person to contribute to the development of insight and understanding of the phenomenon." (p. 83).

Another limitation of the study is that curriculum integration may occur within these Jewish community day schools on a personal level among certain members of the staff. However, this level of implementation of curriculum integration may be occurring either by coincidence or without the guidance and knowledge of the principal or fellow administrators within such schools.

Finally, the methodological design for this study involves focused interviews. This methodology has the disadvantage that the interviewer may prejudice the answers of the participants. Merriam (1998) considers such a method of data collection a situation in which “both parties bring biases, predispositions, attitudes, and physical characteristics that color the interaction and the data elicited.” (p. 87). An additional limitation with focused interviews was that the instrument required the participants to pigeonhole their school’s participation in the implementation of curriculum integration. Therefore, their varied responses may not truly reflect the level of curriculum integration within their schools. Also this methodology does not fully ensure the anonymity of the interviewees. This may directly affect their willingness to respond in a manner which will truly reflect their perspectives of curriculum integration within their particular Jewish community day schools. (Creswell, 1994).

### Summary

This chapter outlined the methodologies and procedures that will be used in conducting the study of curriculum integration within Jewish community day schools. Information about curriculum integration will be obtained through interviews conducted by the researcher. This information will be used to illustrate the extent of the implementation of curriculum integration according to the continuum of options for content design as cited by Jacobs (1989). The researcher received a 100% response rate from all of the Jewish community day schools involved in this study. A series of interviews were conducted, a process which involved the interviewer utilizing the questions as found in Appendix B.

This study is a population study of Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. The conceptual framework and its methodologies have value for future research regarding curriculum integration within schools beyond the scope of this study. This study is of critical importance to others in the field of education within Jewish community day schools. By examining the extent of curriculum integration between Judaic and general studies, the study may help inform others as they seek to enhance the role of curriculum integration within their schools.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

### Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter reports and discusses the findings of this study which examined Jewish community day school administrator's perceptions of the extent of curriculum integration within their schools. It also addressed the administrator's perceived advantages and disadvantages regarding integrating the Judaic and general studies curricula. The data gathered from these administrators are organized by the study's research questions, summarized and discussed. Charts and tables are included to facilitate the data summaries. A selection of quotes from some of the participants, follow the tables in order to illustrate the study's key findings.

Table 2 presents the demographic information of the study. Specifically, the chart presents the positions held by each of the fourteen administrators and their years of employment in those positions at the time of the study. Some heads of schools had the title "headmaster" and others had the title "principal". For purposes of this study, all nine of these individuals are identified as "principals". In addition, four of the schools had created the position "director of Judaic studies" while only two schools had created the position "director of general studies". Presumably, smaller schools did not have sufficient personnel to warrant a director of Judaic studies or a director of general studies. In addition, one director of Judaic studies refused to participate in the study.

Table 2

Demographic Information

<b>Principals</b>	<b>Years in Current Position</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Grade Levels</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>
School #1	16 years	male	N-8	175
School #2	9 years	male	N-8	225
School #3	11 years	female	K-8	207
School #4	3 years	female	K-8	130
School #5	1 year	male	N-8	140
School #6	2 years	male	N-8	45
School #7	27 years	female	N-8	40
School #8	16 years	female	K-6	48
School #9	3 years	male	N-6	140
<b>Directors of Judaic studies</b>				
School #1	15 years	female		
School #2	8 years	female		
School #3	6 years	female		
<b>Directors of general studies</b>				
School #1	2 years	female		
School #5	1 year	female		

As shown in Table 2, nine of the fourteen administrators, from nine Jewish community day schools were female while only five, all principals, were male. Also, the administrators had varying degrees of experience in their current schools. (The above



chart does not necessarily reflect the participants' total years of administrative experience.) Although some of the administrators were only in their current positions for a short duration of time, their tenure at the school at a different capacity may have been extensive. For example, the director of general studies at school #5 only held her position for a year. However, she was employed at the same Jewish community day school for a total of twenty-one years. In addition, the nine principals within this study had varied experience in their current positions. For example, principal #9 was relatively inexperienced as an administrator, whereas other principals had extensive experience leading schools. Furthermore seven of the nine schools within this study go until the eighth grade with the exceptions of schools #8 and #9 that go only until grade six. These schools varied in size, ranging from 40 students in school #7 to as many as 225 students in school #2.

To gather background information for this study, each of the fourteen participants were asked about the extent of the discussion of curriculum integration between the Judaic studies and general studies faculty within their schools. This was done to obtain an indicator of the extent of the ongoing concern about Judaic and general studies curriculum integration, the degree of variation across schools, and the extent of agreement among principals, directors of Judaic studies and directors of general studies within schools.

Table #3 displays additional qualitative data:

Table 3

Extent of discussion of Curriculum Integration

School/ Position	Never	Infrequently	Sometimes	Continuously
Principal #1				X
Principal #2			X	
Principal #3				X
Principal #4				X
Principal #5				X
Principal #6				X
Principal #7	X			
Principal #8				X
Principal #9		X		
Director of Judaic Studies #1				X
Director of Judaic studies #2			X	
Director of Judaic Studies #3				X
Director of general studies #1			X	
Director of general studies #5				X

The principal's responses indicated that curriculum integration is discussed continuously in six of the nine Jewish community day schools. Only one of the principals (#7) stated that curriculum integration is never discussed in her school while one (#9) indicated that it is only discussed infrequently and one (#2) indicated "sometimes". There was substantial consistency between the perceptions of the degree of discussion of curriculum integration between the principals and the directors of Judaic studies and

general studies within their schools. Both principal #2 and Judaic studies director #2 agreed that in their school curriculum integration is discussed “sometimes”. The principal from school #3 and the director of Judaic studies agreed that in their school curriculum integration is discussed “continuously”. In addition, both principal #5 and director of general studies agreed that in their school curriculum integration is discussed “continuously”. Only the general studies director of school #1 differed slightly with her principal over the amount of discussion. She indicated that it occurred “sometimes” while he reported that it occurred “frequently”. The director of general studies in school #1 stated,

*I think there are certain topics, when we have faculty meetings, that we will try and integrate, like this holiday coming up. You know you may want to include some things for some secular studies teacher. In English you might want to focus on a writing assignment on Chanukah, like what my favorite Chanukah memory was and that kind of thing.*

Despite the disparities among some of the participants, the majority of administrators responded that their staff discusses the implementation of curriculum integration on a continual basis. The next largest group stated that such discussion at least occurs some of the time. At seven of the schools, curriculum integration was reportedly a matter of substantial importance. Illustrating this view, the principal from school #4 strongly stressed the significance of curriculum integration within her school.

*Our school is based on integration. Our school opened because of integration. We go for integration from the curriculum point of view. We go for integration in the*

*context of our staffing. So for us integration is at the core of our mission statement. Integration is the name of the game in our school.*

At these schools, discussions of curriculum integration were not only taking place in a single forum. As cited by the principal at school #5,

*It's done during official meetings. It's done during informal conversations it's done through teacher evaluations. It's always on our mind.*

On the other hand, two principals, from schools #7 and #9, responded that curriculum integration is either infrequently or never discussed within their Jewish community day schools. The principal from school #9 stated,

*It has been discussed at a couple of meetings, but it has never been fully implemented, more of just a discussion.*

However, it was not possible to compare the perceptions of these principals with those of other administrators, as neither school had a director of Judaic or director of general studies.

### Findings Related to Research Question 1

*Research Question 1a: Based on the continuum of options for content design (Jacobs, 1989), where do heads of schools report that Jewish community day schools best fit regarding the integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools?*

*Research Question 1b: Based on the continuum of options for content design (Jacobs, 1989), where do directors of general studies report that Jewish community day schools best fit regarding the integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools?*

*Research Question 1c: Based on the continuum of options for content design (Jacobs, 1989), where do directors of Judaic studies report that Jewish community day schools best fit regarding the integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools?*

The qualitative data related to these research questions are displayed in Table #4.

Table 4

Administrators Perceptions Regarding Their Schools' Placement on theContinuum of options for content design

School/ Position	Discipline based option	Parallel discipline designs	Multi- disciplinary design	Inter- disciplinary units design	Integrated- day model	Complete program design
Principal #1		X	X			
Principal #2			X			
Principal #3			X			
Principal #4				X		
Principal #5			X			
Principal #6		X	X			
Principal #7	X					
Principal #8			X	X		
Principal #9	X					
Director of Judaic studies #1		X				
Director of Judaic studies #2	X	X				
Director of Judaic studies #3			X			
Director of General Studies #1	X	X				
Director of general studies #5	X	X				

\*Two categories are marked to indicate a reported mix of curriculum types

There were widely varying responses by the administrators regarding where they perceived their schools fell on Jacobs' (1989) continuum of integration design options, with principals generally reporting more ambitious designs than either their Judaic or general studies directors. However, no one indicated the practice of the most advanced models of curriculum integration, the integrated-day model or the complete program

design. The pattern that emerged from Table 4 was that two of the principals perceived that their schools fall on the discipline based option, two on the parallel design option, six on the multi-disciplinary design and only two principals placed their schools on the interdisciplinary units design. Of the nine principals in this study, three indicated a reported mix of curriculum types. As indicated in Table 4, principals from schools #1, #6 and #8 all reported that their school represents a mix on the continuum of options for content design.

At the minimal extreme, one principal (#9) who placed his school on the discipline based option design stated,

*We're more into just the concept, and we really have not implemented it. If the teacher has a certain concept, he teaches it. Sometimes he wants to do something in Judaism and then teaches about slavery. I don't even think we would even go that far. We don't really do parallel discipline design yet.*

Both principals that placed their schools on the parallel discipline design stated that their schools were also involved in a higher degree of curriculum integration as well, namely multi-disciplinary design. The principal from school #6 stated,

*We do a bit of the parallel content and multi-discipline design. During the social studies lesson there are parallels brought in even though the teacher is not Jewish. The parallels give the Jewish perspective. That you can compare some of the Judaic ideas to what the constitution would say and how the Torah, and how the Jewish law differs from the secular laws.*

According to principal #5, his school was one of six schools that fell under the multi-disciplinary design.

*Our school follows the multi-disciplinary design. We took our eighth grade class to Israel for two weeks. We create an integrated program in which the children first learn Jewish history about the entire State of Israel. The Language Arts teacher requires that they keep a journal which is graded. The science teacher would give experimentation that they have to do when they are in Israel. There may be math problems that they are required by their teacher to do.*

The greatest level of curriculum integration reported in the study, the interdisciplinary units design, was reported in school #4 and in school #8. The principal from school #8 indicated,

*In social studies, their secular history intertwines with Judaic history. When we discuss Chanukah it's not just from the view of Judaic history, but also of secular history combined. We aim for interdisciplinary, specifically in social studies because we feel that is a really important area for American Jewish children. They understand secular history better than other children in this area do in general because of their understanding of Jewish history. We plan it that way that they are interweaving history all the time. We also have a lot of writing as well so that in their secular class when they are writing, the topic will have been introduced in Judaic and brought back into secular writing. We absolutely provide the parallel. We work towards the multidisciplinary. We sometimes do in the other grades interdisciplinary whole units, where they are doing science and math and social studies and Hebrew and text work all at the same time in a joint project.*



There was agreement between the director of Judaic studies and the director of general studies in school #1, both indicating that their school represents the parallel discipline designs. The director of Judaic studies from school #2 and the director of general studies from school #5 also stated that their schools best fall under the parallel discipline design. The director of Judaic studies in school #3 differed from her two Judaic studies counterparts, agreeing with her principal and stating that her school best falls under the multi-discipline design model.

All three directors of Judaic studies responded that a significant amount of curriculum integration is currently being implemented within their schools. Nonetheless, Judaic studies director #1 and Judaic studies director #2 did indicate that less curriculum integration was being implemented than what their principals' claimed. Also, both directors of general studies (#1 and #5) responded that the level of curriculum integration was a hybrid of discipline design and parallel discipline designs; whereas principal #1 claimed his school embraced the parallel discipline and multi-disciplinary design and principal #2 indicated that his school was involved in multi-disciplinary units design.

There was yet another disagreement between a principal and a director of Judaic or general studies. The principal from school #5 responded that his school falls under the multi-disciplinary design on the continuum. Whereas the director of general studies, only placed her school between the discipline based and parallel based designs.

These three schools (#1, #2 and #5) where responses differed between the principals and their directors of Judaic or general studies had the same pattern of disagreement. All three directors of Judaic and general studies placed their schools as a combination of the disciplinary based option and the parallel discipline options design

and all three principals from these schools responded that their schools were mostly engaged in the multi-disciplinary design.

Based on the data gathered on Table 4, three out of the five directors of Judaic and general studies presented different responses than their heads of school as to their perception of where their schools fall on Jacobs' continuum of options design. All of the principals with schools that have at least a director of Judaic studies or general studies responded that their schools' curriculum integration most closely represented the multi-disciplinary design model. The directors of Judaic studies and the directors of general studies responded that curriculum integration was occurring either to the same degree as their principal (such as in school #3) or to a lesser degree than their principal (such as in schools #1, #2 and #5). In no instances did the director of Judaic or general studies claim a higher degree of curriculum integration than their principal.

As indicated in Table 4, six out of the nine principals stated that the level of curriculum integration is being implemented on at least a multi-disciplinary design or higher. Only two principals responded that their school is strictly discipline based option where little to no curriculum integration is being implemented within their schools.

Some of the participants, including the director of Judaic studies in school #2, had difficulty specifying one level of curriculum integration within their school. This in part was due to varying degrees of curriculum integration within specific grades. For example, the director of general studies in school #5 reported,

*I would say it falls between discipline-based option and the parallel discipline design. In the younger grades there is more of an attempt to integrate than in the*

*upper grades. In pre-school through grade two really you would have to work together. Beyond that I would say, each one their curriculum independently.*

A similar phenomenon was reported by the director of general studies in school #1, who stated,

*I think it's kind of difficult the higher up we go. Our pre-school does it beautifully and I think it's one of those parallel designs. I think because they have a smaller department, it's not as segregated. I think they can do more of the parallel design, but actually as they grow older there are more discipline-based options than the parallel design.*

This response demonstrated that curriculum integration did not occur as often in all grade levels within the same school. Higher grades, as indicated above, likely had greater difficulty implementing curriculum integration than lower grades.

#### *Summary of Findings (research questions 1a-c)*

Administrators' from Jewish community day schools varied somewhat in their identification of levels of curriculum integration within their schools. As indicated in Table 4, most of the schools reportedly fell on the first three levels of Jacobs' (1989) continuum of options for content design; discipline based design, parallel discipline designs and multi-disciplinary designs. Only two administrators claimed that their school was closest to the interdisciplinary units design. No Jewish community day schools within the study, reported implementing curriculum using the integrated-day model or the complete program design. What is most noteworthy is the fact that four out of five directors of Judaic or general studies presented a different interpretation of the extent of

curriculum integration than their principals. It is clear, based on these findings, that when it comes to curricular matters, principals generally reported a more sophisticated design than their curriculum directors.

#### Findings Related to Research Question 2

*Research Question 2a: Do heads of schools perceive there to be advantages to implementing curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

*Research Question 2b: Do directors of general studies perceive there to be advantages to implementing curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

*Research Question 2c: Do directors of Judaic studies perceive there to be advantages to implementing curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

The qualitative data related to these research questions are displayed in Table #5.

Table 5

Advantages in the Implementation of Curriculum Integration

School/ Position	Appreciate their religion better	Increase of relevance in subject matter	Breaks down barriers between curriculum	More beneficial and meaningful to students	Improved Communication and teamwork among staff	None
Principal #1	X	X	X	X		
Principal #2			X	X	X	
Principal #3	X	X	X	X		
Principal #4		X	X	X		
Principal #5	X	X	X	X		
Principal #6	X	X	X	X		
Principal #7						X
Principal #8	X	X	X	X	X	
Principal #9		X	X			
Director of Judaic studies #1	X	X	X	X		
Director of Judaic studies #2		X	X	X		
Director of Judaic studies #3	X	X	X	X		
Director of General Studies #1		X	X	X		
Director of general studies #5				X		

Nearly all of the participants in the study responded that there were advantages in the implementation of curriculum integration within their schools. Only principal #7 responded that there was no advantage to curriculum integration. Seven of the nine principals in this study responded that curriculum integration increased the relevance of the subject matter for their students, indicating that children are able to see the

connections between the Judaic and general studies and in turn, increase their appreciation for all subject matter being taught. Illustrating this view, the principal from school #3 stated,

*I think it's also important to see the world...through a Jewish lens...Something that Judaism keeps, whether its values, or history or ethics commandments, it relates to their life.*

Four of the five directors of Judaic or general studies agreed with their principal that curriculum integration increased the relevance of the subject matter among the students. Only the director of general studies from school #5 disagreed with her principal by not indicating the increase of relevance as one of the advantages of curriculum integration.

Five out of nine principals indicated that curriculum integration enables children to appreciate their religion better as they see the connection between the Judaic and general studies curriculum. The principal from school #6 reported,

*The advantages are when the kids think from a broader spectrum...The overall advantage is that you can be a Jew and live in a secular world and that's underscored by integration of the curriculum.*

Two of the five directors of Judaic or general studies cited an increase in appreciating their religion better as an advantage for curriculum integration. Interestingly, both directors of general studies did not indicate appreciating religion better to be an advantage of curriculum integration. Three out of five directors of Judaic and general studies were in agreement with their principals as cited on Table 5. The director of Judaic studies for school #2 and her principal agreed that the increase of religious relevance was

not an advantage of curriculum integration within their school. The director of Judaic studies for school #3 and her principal agreed that the increase of religious relevance was an advantage of curriculum integration within their school.

There was a disagreement between the director of general studies from school #5 and her principal. The principal indicated that an increase of appreciation of ones religion was an advantage. The director of general studies however, did not respond that appreciation of ones religion was an advantage to curriculum integration.

In addition, there was a disagreement between the director of general studies from school #1 and the principal and director of Judaic studies regarding children appreciating their religion more with the implementation of curriculum integration. The principal and the director of Judaic studies cited this as an advantage whereas the director of general studies did not perceive this to be an advantage. The principal from school #1 responded,

*The advantage is that it brings the learning home. It teaches the child that what he learned in Jewish history is not something that has no practical application. On the contrary whatever we do we can bring home a real day to day modern lesson. You could take something which inherently doesn't have religious sufficient ties or value and you can change them so that their purpose in the world becomes fulfilled by being an aid to Torah studies. That's taking a world which is pareve (neutral) so to speak which could be used for kedushah (holiness) or the opposite of kedushah. When we use it out for kedushah, we're fulfilling the purpose and the reason for that particular revelation of modern technology and modern science in the world today... It brings the message that Torah is alive and well in 2006. It does a lot for the children. It's something we have to do as*

*educators. It's bringing Torah alive to every student. To do that the more we are elevating the level of the secular. When we teach it at the same time, it becomes a vehicle through which we can understand Torah more as well as increase practical example on how the secular way things work.*

The director of Judaic studies from school #1 agreed that this was an advantage in the implementation of curriculum integration,

*It unites some of these themes that they are working on and they see very much that the Torah concepts very much apply to that which they learn in the secular department.*

Eight out of nine principals in this study indicated that curriculum integration breaks down the barriers between the curriculums. Instead of children perceiving that each class and subject is separate and disconnected, curriculum integration shows how these subjects compliment one another. Illustrating this view, the principal from school #4 responded,

*Our children make connections between what they're learning, whether it is Judaic studies, math, science all the areas are connected and they make sense. Learning takes place in a much more authentic way. It actually provides for an opportunity for the kids to apply authentic learning.*

Four out of five directors of Judaic or general studies agreed that curriculum integration breaks down the barriers of the subject matter being taught throughout the day.

The director of Judaic studies from school #2 noted,



*It means more to the students...Things aren't so compartmentalized. Their learning becomes more holistic.*

The director of Judaic studies from school #3 explained that curriculum integration better prepares children to understand the incorporation of their studies into every day life.

*The big advantage in my mind is that kids get the sense that their lives are not split...It's not a Judaic experience or a secular experience. It's an experience, a life experience. In the 6<sup>th</sup> grade they did a whole thing in science about creationism, Darwinism and intelligent design...they are studying Bereishit (Genesis)...The science teacher is not saying we're not studying Bereishit now because we're in science class. Because that's not really how the world works...we don't compartmentalize our lives. Our lives are just our lives.*

The director of general studies from school #1 also reported this as one of the advantages in integrating the curriculum.

*The advantage is that the kids get to see the whole picture. Not separating the Judaic curriculum from the secular curriculum. It's all entwined...You're integrating it from all aspects of the person's life.*

There was a disagreement between the director of general studies from school #5 and her principal. The principal indicated that curriculum integration does break down the barriers between the subject matter and children do not see the classes being taught in isolation. The director of general studies however, did not respond that this was an advantage to the implementation of curriculum integration.

Seven out of the nine principals responded that curriculum integration makes

learning more meaningful and beneficial for the students. Only principals #7 and #9 did not consider this as an advantage for their students. In fact, the principal from school #7 did not report any advantage in the implementation of curriculum integration. For this reason, the principal from school #7 stated that she conscientiously does not implement any form of curriculum integration within their school.

All five directors of Judaic and general studies responded that this was an advantage to the implementation of curriculum integration. This was the only area where there was total agreement between the directors of Judaic and general studies and their principals regarding the value of curriculum integration.

Only two out of the nine principals (#2 and #8) cited improved communication and teamwork among staff as an advantage in the implementation of curriculum integration.

*I think that it is just as important for teams to work together, just like we like kids to work together in a cooperative sense. I think it's important for the staff to develop the same pattern. So it reinforces...overall working together.*

Somewhat surprisingly, none of the directors of Judaic or general studies cited an improvement in communication among the staff as one of the benefits to the implementation of curriculum integration.

There was a disagreement between the director of Judaic studies from school #2 and her principal. The principal indicated that curriculum integration does increase the level of communication and teamwork among the staff. The director of Judaic studies however, did not respond that this was an advantage to the implementation of curriculum integration.

In a school with a dual curriculum such as a Jewish community day school, time is often a factor. There isn't enough time in the day to experiment with different teaching methodologies, potentially making curriculum integration less beneficial for the academic success of students. Although this issue was cited by some administrators as an obstacle (as indicated below on Table 7), the utilization of time was also viewed by some as an advantage in a school with a dual curriculum. The principal in school #2 indicated that curriculum integration was often beneficial for students, especially in schools with time constraints such as in Jewish community day schools. Since the subjects are being taught in an overlapping unit or theme, both disciplines are taught simultaneously, thus covering the curriculum of both Judaic studies and general studies more effectively in the face of such time constraints.

*Later on, it became evident that in a school that has a dual curriculum, they have less time to complete what they want to and there is never enough time, on each side, the general studies and in the Judaic studies. So the extent to which they are supposed to be learning the various concepts etc., as well as learning skills is by having an integrated curriculum. For example, we are teaching the concept of human rights, while we were dealing with slavery in Egypt. The concept would be taught in both general and Judaic, as well as certain skills. For example, if we are working on writing skills at that certain grade level, they could do the persuasive writing on the same topic in both English and Hebrew. It reinforces extra time to be taught*

What is most noteworthy is that this principal perceived curriculum integration beneficial to students in regard to time. In contrast, the principal in school #5 expressed

that the disadvantage of implementing curriculum integration was that it may be implemented at the expense of covering the curriculum, a matter discussed further below in regard to research question #3.

*Summary of Findings (research questions 2a-c)*

Most administrators reported that there are great advantages in curriculum integration within Jewish community day schools. As indicated on Table 5, curriculum integration reportedly increases the relevance of the subject matter taught, breaks down barriers in learning, increases the communication among the staff and enables students to appreciate their religion better.

An additional advantage was reported which is unique to a school with a dual curriculum such as a Jewish community day school. Many administrators stressed the importance of curriculum integration so that children would better appreciate their Jewish heritage. By integrating the curriculum, students reportedly sense the interconnection of the disciplines and see the added value of studying both the Judaic and general curricula.

Findings Related to Research Question 3

*Research Question 3a: Do heads of schools perceive there to be disadvantages and/or obstacles preventing implementation of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

*Research Question 3b: Do directors of general studies perceive there to be disadvantages and/or obstacles preventing implementation of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

*Research Question 3c: Do directors of Judaic studies perceive there to be disadvantages and/or obstacles preventing implementation of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

The qualitative data related to these research questions are displayed in Table #6.

Table 6

Disadvantages in the Implementation of Curriculum Integration

School/ Position	None	Integrating when seemingly inappropriate	Integrating at the expense of covering curriculum	Potential trivialization of Judaic studies
Principal #1				X
Principal #2	X			
Principal #3		X		
Principal #4		X		
Principal #5			X	
Principal #6				X
Principal #7				X
Principal #8	X			
Principal #9				X
Director of Judaic studies #1				X
Director of Judaic studies #2	X			
Director of Judaic studies #3		X		
Director of general studies #1	X			
Director of General Studies #5	X			

Seven out of nine principals indicated that there were potential disadvantages in the implementation of curriculum integration. Only two principals (#2 and #8) cited that there were no disadvantages in curriculum integration within their schools. As indicated on Table 6, three of the five directors of Judaic and general studies responded that there were no disadvantages in curriculum integration within their school, while two directors

of Judaic studies indicated disadvantages. There was agreement among the principal of school #2 and his director of Judaic studies that there were no disadvantages in incorporating curriculum integration. On the other hand, in school #1 the director of general studies and her principal reported a different disadvantage than did the director of Judaic studies. The director of general studies cited no potential disadvantages whereas her principal and director of Judaic studies did cite the potential disadvantage of trivializing the Judaic studies.

Two of the nine principals stated that sometimes their school may be so focused on trying to integrate their curriculum that they lose focus on the content and appropriate academic levels of their classes. In addition, they cited that some units or subjects are less adaptable to sufficiently implementing an integrated curriculum, arguing that being engaged in curriculum integration when not appropriate or suitable can cause that the subject matter to be learned on a superficial level.

The principal in school #3 further stated,

*One of the reasons we don't do it all the time is that we won't do it where the kids or the educators feel it would appear contrived...like we're stretching to make a point...just for the sake of saying that it's integrated. You know you have to have substance, and not everything is... Not every one of them is willing to go to a Judaic content area.*

The principal from school #4 reported a similar potential disadvantage in curriculum integration.

*Not every unit can be integrated. Sometimes we say everything needs to be integrated and it's not authentic. It's just made up. If you try to integrate every*

*topic, sometimes you'll find that not every topic can be integrated. You need to be very cognizant ahead of time of what you're integrating and whether or not it makes sense to do the integration. We integrate as many units as we possibly can, where it makes sense to the children.*

Only one of five directors of Judaic and general studies (school #3) considered integrating when seemingly inappropriate as a viable disadvantage. The director of Judaic studies from school #3 suggested a similar potential disadvantage in the implementation of curriculum integration.

*If you tried too hard then the curriculum is not really authentic...it doesn't fit in that well, until you kind of forced it. Sometimes you end up with activities that were sort of superficial.*

None of the directors of Judaic or general studies considered that integrating at the expense of covering the curriculum was a disadvantage in their school. Only one of the nine principals (school #5) responded that integrating at the expense of covering the curriculum was a disadvantage in his school. He reported,

*Sometimes when you integrate a program, you water down the program as well. You are focusing on the integration more so than the actual learning content. You could fall into the situation where the kids are not really learning or studying the way you want to because the textual learning and the content learning are not what you want them to be because you are more concerned about the integration process with the general studies...It becomes much more difficult also to schedule for the older grades to work out an integrative program. It is just physically much more difficult.*



Four of the nine principals responded that certain Judaic studies subject matter may be insufficiently incorporated while integrating the curriculum. Some participants explained that Judaic studies primarily consist of literature and texts that were given to the Jewish people by God, and general studies, although important, do not bear any direct religious significance. Thereby, these principals were concerned that an insufficient approach of curriculum integration may detract from the sanctity of the Judaic subject matter. Illustrating this view, the principal from school #1 commented,

*When you take a Judaic subject and you lower it, you take away the holiness...if you do it as a subject rather than as a holy thing. The problem is if we're going to equate the slaves in Africa and the Jews in Egypt. I have much more of a problem with that. Unless you make it very clear that we're just discussing the parallel of the slaves and freedom...There's a tremendous advantage as long as it's used sufficiently so that the Torah perspective and values are not skewed to the point where they can be totally the same as the secular values.*

In addition, the principal of school #6 reported,

*...how much you put into it, you have to be careful, so the focus should be on the program of learning Torah...to enhance the Torah learning, not to displace it.*

The principal of school #7 expressed a similar concern for the implementation of curriculum integration,

*Curriculum to us is a holy quest. There is no parallel... Someone who is not looking at it within the rubric of a God given Torah from Sinai, could see many parallels...when you're looking at the curriculum from a religious or what I would call a holy point of view then it's an irrelevancy...The Judaic studies*

*emanates from the Almighty...Our allegiance to the ultimate value of what we learn there doesn't hold a candle to our allegiance to what we learn in the morning...that's why I do not believe it to be advantageous to make the crossover of the curriculums...setting on the same plane what one studies in the morning and what one studies in the afternoon. I do not find that admissible in an orthodox Jewish school.*

The principal from school #9 also expressed his concerns of the potential trivialization of the Judaic studies when the curriculum is not sufficiently integrated.

*In some closed societies...they want to keep the Judaic separate and secular separate to show the importance of how in Judaism we preserve a certain identity and when it gets integrated it loses that.*

Only one of the five directors of Judaic and general studies considered the potential trivialization of Judaic studies as a disadvantage for the implementation of curriculum integration within their schools. This sentiment was expressed by the director of Judaic studies from school #1,

*The disadvantages would be only if it would tend to trivialize that which they would be learning in their Torah studies...In other words to make it fit into secular studies to the degree that the secular studies would overshadow the concept and the perspective of the Torah perspective that we would like to represent to the children.*

What is also noteworthy is that there was agreement in only two of the four schools that had a director of Judaic or general studies. Also, these two administrators agreed that the potential trivialization of Judaic studies was a potential disadvantage. The

principal and director of Judaic studies from school #2 were in agreement that there was no disadvantage to curriculum integration within their school. However, both of these administrators disagreed with the school's director of general studies who reported no disadvantages to curriculum integration. In school #3 the principal and the director of Judaic studies agreed that integrating when seemingly inappropriate was the disadvantage within their school.

The principal and director of general studies from school #5 were in disagreement about the disadvantages of curriculum integration within their school. The principal responded that a potential disadvantage of curriculum integration was integrating at the expense of covering curriculum. However, the director of general studies contended there were no disadvantages in integrating the curriculum whatsoever.

*Summary of Findings (research questions 3a-c)*

Five of the fourteen participants in this study stated that there were no disadvantages in the implementation of curriculum integration within their schools. The remaining nine did express concerns that curriculum integration can be over utilized, which may cause a direct negative impact on the authenticity of the curriculum.

An interesting finding that emerged is unique to Jewish community day schools when they adopt a dual curriculum. Five administrators stated that curriculum integration could potentially devalue or trivialize the Judaic studies curriculum. They related that Judaic studies stems from their religion, and that by putting the dual curriculum on the same level, the sanctity of these texts potentially becomes mundane. These administrators further explained that sufficient staff development could help defuse this potential

disadvantage in curriculum integration. Of the remaining four concerns regarding curriculum integration, three dealt with inappropriate forcing together of concepts and one expressed concern about not obtaining sufficient coverage.

The qualitative data related to the “obstacles” aspect of research questions #3a-c are displayed in Table #7.

Table 7

Obstacles in the Implementation of Curriculum Integration

School/ Position	Not enough planning time for individual teacher	Limited time for teachers to meet collaboratively	Increased cost to sufficiently implement	Qualified staff that can cross the curriculum s	None	Question is not applicable
Principal #1		X				
Principal #2	X					
Principal #3	X	X	X	X		
Principal #4	X	X				
Principal #5	X	X				
Principal #6				X		
Principal #7						X
Principal #8	X	X				
Principal #9	X		X			
Director of Judaic studies #1					X	
Director of Judaic studies #2		X				
Director of Judaic studies #3		X				
Director of general studies #1				X		
Director of general studies #5	X	X				

There were numerous obstacles cited in the implementation of curriculum integration within Jewish community day schools. Eight of the nine principals cited at least one or more potential obstacles in sufficiently implementing curriculum integration within their schools. Only the principal from school #7 did not provide any obstacles for curriculum integration. This was not because curriculum integration had no potential

obstacles. Rather the participant was adamantly against any utilization of curriculum integration within her school. She stated,

*I can't answer that because it doesn't apply to us. I would only encounter an obstacle if I attempted to do something. I'm not attempting to do it, so I have not encountered any obstacles.*

Among the directors of Judaic and general studies, only the director of Judaic studies from school #1 responded that there were no obstacles in the implementation of curriculum integration within her school. This response was in disagreement with her principal (“time”) and the director of general studies (“qualified staff”) who responded that there were clear potential obstacles to the implementation of curriculum integration within their school.

Six of the nine principals within this study responded that there was not always sufficient planning time for the individual teachers to sufficiently integrate their curriculum. Some Jewish community day schools hire part time instructors that are only in school during a specified period of time. As such, it is difficult for these teachers to meet one another as they are not in the school during the same times during the day. As cited by the principal from school #4,

*In order for the teachers to plan this way you have to give them a lot of planning time, a lot of common planning time and sometimes it's not that simple.*

In addition, Jewish community day schools, which offer a dual curriculum, are short on time to sufficiently implement the curriculum. The principal in school #3 indicated,

*I don't think they have time. It takes a lot of time and a lot of planning and a lot of joint time and planning and day schools are short on time.*

Among the directors of Judaic and general studies, only the director of general studies from school #5 responded that a lack of sufficient planning time for her teachers was an obstacle in her school.

*Most of our staff is half day, teaching either secular or Jewish studies. One is coming in and the other is going out.*

Five out of nine principals responded that a limited time for teachers to meet collaboratively was an obstacle in effectively integrating the curriculum within their school. As cited by the principal from school #1,

*Some of it is the lack of time for all the teachers to get together...Sometimes the logistics are hard to coordinate.*

To address the issue of a lack of time for teachers to work collaboratively, school #4 decided to hire their Judaic studies and general studies instructors on a full time basis.

*We have now two teachers in every elementary school class K-4. That's a very expensive model because you don't have one teacher teaching two grade levels or teaching class A in the morning and class B in the afternoon. We have one teacher teaching class A in secular studies and one teacher teaching class A in the counterpart. It's a very expensive model. We have to allow a great deal of time for planning, common planning time is built into our week. The teachers have time for planning. The teachers have time for working together, otherwise you can't integrate.*

Three of the five directors of Judaic and general studies responded that a limited time for teachers to meet collaboratively was an obstacle in their schools. The director of Judaic studies from school #3 reported,

*Having teachers have enough time across the grades to talk to one another is an issue...you have to have a lot of time for that...they have to have enough time to sit and mull these things over. It's not an hour long conversation. It's more like a two hour conversation to just even begin.*

None of the directors of Judaic and general studies and only two principals (#3 and #9) responded that an obstacle of curriculum integration is the increase in cost for it to be sufficiently implemented. What is most noteworthy is that school #4 (though not having directors of Judaic and general studies) increased their budget significantly by hiring full time staff to ensure that curriculum integration is sufficiently implemented. In other words, school #4 considered the increase in cost a necessity to ensure that every one of their members on staff were on board with the school philosophy of curriculum integration.

An additional reported obstacle was finding qualified staff to cross the curriculums. Two of the nine principals responded that this was an obstacle within their school. As reported by the principal in school #6,

*It's hard to find a teacher that can cross the curriculums. It's very difficult...to find a secular studies teacher that's very comfortable in the Judaic disciplines. The biggest challenge would be the lack of knowledge spanning the spectrum.*

Among the directors of Judaic and general studies, only the director of general



studies from school #1 responded that finding qualified staff to cross the curriculums was an obstacle in the implementation of curriculum integration within her school.

*We have a lot of secular studies teachers that are not Jewish, that are teaching the secular classes. We have to do some kind of indoctrination into Judaism for them to become acclimated to the school. That is a huge learning curve for someone who never had any exposure to Judaism and bringing them in as a secular teacher to incorporate Judaic studies into your curriculum. A teacher who is Jewish and who has taught for twenty-five years or has some experience in teaching general studies is hard to find.*

Five out of nine principals cited more than one potential obstacle in the sufficient implementation of curriculum integration. On the other hand, only one of the five directors of Judaic and general studies cited more than one obstacle for her school. There was agreement between this director of general studies and her principal. They both responded that the two obstacles of curriculum integration in their school were not having enough planning time for their individual teachers and the limited time for teachers to meet collaboratively. The director of Judaic studies did agree with her principal that a limited time for teachers to meet collaboratively was an obstacle in her school. The principal, however, also cited not enough planning time for the individual teachers, an increased cost and a lack of qualified staff that can cross the curriculums as addition obstacles within his school.

There was a slight disagreement between the director of Judaic studies and her principal in school #2. According to the director of Judaic studies, her concern was for the limited time for teachers to meet collaboratively whereas the principal responded that

the obstacle was that the staff may not have sufficient planning time to implement the curriculum.

There was substantial disagreement between the principal, the director of Judaic studies and the director of general studies from school #1 regarding the issue of potential obstacles in integrating the curriculum within their school. The principal stated that the obstacle in his school was the limited time for teachers to meet collaboratively. The director of general studies cited that a lack of qualified staff that can cross the curriculums was the schools' greatest obstacle and the director of Judaic studies responded that her school had no obstacles in sufficiently implementing curriculum integration whatsoever.

*Summary of Findings (research questions 3a-c)*

Many administrators within Jewish community day schools stated that there were obstacles preventing the sufficient implementation of curriculum integration within their schools. The lack of sufficient time was a major concern for many schools. The individual teachers often don't have an adequate amount of time to sufficiently integrate the curriculum. In addition, in some schools, teachers have little free time to work collaboratively on a specific theme or unit. This was due in part because many instructors are part time and not in school with the rest of the staff to formulate a plan to integrate across the curriculums. Since extra time is needed to sufficiently integrate the curriculum, Jewish community day schools, which are privately funded organizations, are often limited in available resources to compensate their staff for their time. This restricts some Jewish community day schools in their ability to implement curriculum integration within

their schools. Finally, administrators expressed the obstacle of not having qualified staff to cross the curriculums. Since Jewish community day schools have a dual curriculum of Judaic and general studies, teachers need to have a broad knowledge of Judaism to effectively complement the other disciplines and cross the curriculums.

### *Curriculum Trends*

In addition to the primary items focusing specifically on research questions 3a-c, the administrators were asked to respond to a few additional pertinent matters.

Table 8

Trends of Curriculum Integration

School/ Position	Increasing Trend	Same degree of Curriculum Integration	Decreasing Trend	Curriculum Integration never was Implemented
Principal #1	X			
Principal #2	X			
Principal #3	X			
Principal #4		X		
Principal #5	X			
Principal #6		X		
Principal #7				X
Principal #8	X			
Principal #9		X		
Director of Judaic studies #1	X			
Director of Judaic studies #2		X		
Director of Judaic studies #3		X		
Director of general studies #1	X			
Director of general studies #5		X		

Table 8 describes the perception among the participants as to whether they were witness to a growth in the level of curriculum integration within their schools in recent years. None of the administrators reported a decreasing trend within their school and only the principal from school #7 chose not to respond due to the fact that her school never implemented curriculum integration in the first place. Five of the nine principals in the

study responded that their school has shown an increasing trend in the implementation of curriculum integration within recent years. The principal from school #3 stated that there was a clear increase in the implementation of curriculum integration.

*We were following the parallel discipline design and now we follow the multi-disciplinary design.*

The principal from school #8, with her extensive experience in the same Jewish community day school, noticed a significant change in the implementation of curriculum integration throughout her years in her school.

*When I first came in as a teacher, there was no connection between secular and Judaic studies. As a classroom secular teacher I brought Judaic studies in all the time by myself. I wasn't working with somebody else. The first thing I did when I became principal was reform communications between secular and Judaic staff. I wasn't even working for curriculum integration. I was just working for integration of staff, so they could work together and see themselves as all part of the same process. And then we slowly began to look for places where we could do parallel integration and we could also begin to have my teachers wear different hats. Particularly my Judaic teachers could do secular. They sat on both staffs. I would say that that's how it came about. They want to see these things begun, the integration and the communication between staff. They are so supportive of this kind of integration.*

Only three of the nine principals stated that there has been the same degree of curriculum integration within their school in recent years. The principal of school #4 reported that there has been no increasing trend in her school regarding curriculum

integration. The reason however was not due to their lack of interest in its implementation. Rather, curriculum integration has always been on the forefront of the school's philosophy.

*It's not a matter of a trend. You need to understand; the school is already seven years old. The school was founded, the mission statement of the school talks about integration. It's not a trend, for us it's really why the school was founded. It hasn't been a matter of all of a sudden you wake up in the morning five years into the school; let's do integration because that's what the rest of the world is doing.*

Two of the five directors of Judaic and general studies reported an increased trend of curriculum integration within their schools. The director of Judaic studies in school #1 has seen a continuous trend in implementing curriculum integration within her school. She did note that this trend was growing at a faster rate in the preschool and her first and second grades.

*There definitely has been a growing trend in the pre-schools, in the first and second grades. I see that more in that department than I do in the Middle School department. In the lower grades this has become a weekly procedure with the teachers working as a team, integrating the lessons.*

Three of the five directors of Judaic and general studies reported that there has not been any increasing trend of curriculum integration within their schools. The director of Judaic studies from school #2 noted that there was no increased trend to integrate the curriculum within her school as a whole.

*It probably depends on the teacher. We've got some stronger teams where the general studies teacher either knows more Judically and can help make those*

*connections, or the Judaic studies teacher is just a good all-around teacher and can help do that...In some grades yes and in some grades no. Overall in the school I'd say no.*

The director of general studies from school #5 also stated that there has not been an increase in recent years in curriculum integration,

*I don't feel that there is an increasing, let's say mandate, to integrate the curriculum. It is always brought up and mentioned that teachers should try to do it wherever possible. I just think that it doesn't in reality happen as often as we would like it to.*

There was agreement among the principal from school #1 and the director of Judaic and general studies. All three administrators reported to an increasing trend of curriculum integration within their school. The other three directors of Judaic or general studies from school #2, #3 and #5 all were in disagreement with their principal. In all three schools, the principals stated that there was an increasing trend of curriculum integration whereas their directors of Judaic or general studies reported that there was no such trend within their schools. What is most noteworthy is that in all schools which have a director of Judaic or general studies, the principal reported an increased trend in curriculum integration.

### *Summary of Findings*

The participants in this study responded that their schools either increased the level of curriculum integration or continue with the same level of curriculum integration

within their Jewish community day schools. In no instances did an administrator claim that there was a decreasing trend of curriculum integration within their schools.

What is most noteworthy is the fact that three out of five directors of Judaic or general studies presented different responses to the trends of curriculum integration within their schools than their principals. It is clear, based on these findings, that when it comes to curricular matters, principals generally (three out of four schools) reported greater emphasis of the utilization of curriculum integration and its increasing trends than their curriculum directors.

#### *Level of Teacher Participation*

The participants also responded to a question regarding the percentage of teachers involved, to some degree, in curriculum integration. The results are presented in Table 9.



Table 9

Teachers Currently Involved in Curriculum Integration

School/ Position	All (100%)	High Majority (76%-99%)	Small Majority (51-75%)	High Minority (26%-50%)	Low Minority (1%-25%)	None
Principal #1			X			
Principal #2			X			
Principal #3	X					
Principal #4	X					
Principal #5	X					
Principal #6					X	
Principal #7						X
Principal #8	X					
Principal #9					X	
Director of Judaic studies #1				X		
Director of Judaic studies #2				X		
Director of Judaic studies #3		X				
Director of General Studies #1				X		
Director of general studies #5					X	

All of the principals, except for the principal from school #7, reported some teacher involvement in curriculum integration. Four of the nine principals reported 100% participation by all of their members of their staff. The principal from school #3 stated,

*Everyone is involved in team meetings with the grade level between, secular and general studies teachers weekly. They talk about what they're doing, and where they could connect and what the theme will for the year in the school. The theme*

*always has some integrated Judaic and general content. This year's theme was praying with our feet, standing up for what we believe in. I talk with the faculty about how to implement that theme.*

None of the principals reported a high majority (76%-99%) or a high minority (26%-50%) of staff involvement of curriculum integration within their schools. Two of the nine principals reported a small majority (51%-75%) and another two principals reported a low minority (1%-25%) of their staff was engaged in integrating their schools' curricula.

Among the directors of Judaic and general studies, no one responded that there was 100% participation of curriculum integration within their schools. In addition, only the director of Judaic studies from school #3 responded that there was a high majority (76%-99%) of participation among the staff in integrating the curriculum. None of the directors of Judaic or general studies claimed that there a small majority (51%-75%) of curriculum integration. Three of the five directors of Judaic or general studies responded that only a high minority (26%-50%) of the staff were involved in any sort of curriculum integration and the director of general studies from school #5 claimed only a low minority (1%-25%) were involved in curriculum integration.

What is most noteworthy is that none of the directors of Judaic or general studies agreed with their principals as to the percentage of staff involved in curriculum integration within their schools. In all situations, the principals perceived that more of their staff was engaged in some sort of curriculum integration than stated by their directors of Judaic or general studies. In three of the schools (#1, #2 and #3) the principal's response was in slight disagreement with their directors of Judaic and general

studies. In school #1 and #2 the principal's response was a small majority (51%-75%) and their director of Judaic or general studies responded to a high minority (26%-50%). In school #3, the principal claimed 100% participation while the director of Judaic studies claimed a high majority (76%-99%).

There was extreme disagreement between the director of general studies from school #5 and her principal. The principal reported that every teacher in his school was involved in some degree of curriculum integration. The director of general studies on the other hand claimed that only her pre-school, kindergarten, first and second grade teachers or twenty percent of her staff was involved in curriculum integration. This, as stated on Table 9 represents a low minority (1%-25%) of staff implementing of curriculum integration in her school.

The administrators from all schools were also asked for their impressions regarding the percentages of teachers who would embrace further curriculum integration. The results from this question are presented on Table #10.

Table 10

Teachers Who Would Embrace Change in Curriculum Integration

School/ Position	All (100%)	High Majority (76%-99%)	Small Majority (51-75%)	High Minority (26%-50%)	Low Minority (1%-25%)	None
Principal #1		X				
Principal #2		X				
Principal #3	X					
Principal #4	X					
Principal #5						X
Principal #6					X	
Principal #7						X
Principal #8	X					
Principal #9					X	
Director of Judaic studies #1	X					
Director of Judaic studies #2			X			
Director of Judaic studies #3					X	
Director of general studies #1	X					
Director of general studies #5					X	

Among the nine principals within this study, only three stated that all of their staff would embrace further curriculum integration. Two principals responded that a high majority (76%-99%) of their staff would embrace such change. There was a gap in the response among the principals as no one claimed that a small majority (51%-75%) or a high minority (26%-50%) of staff would embrace such change. Instead, two principals stated that only a small minority (1%-25%) would embrace change and two other

principals responded that none of their staff would embrace an increase of curriculum integration within their school.

Two of the directors of Judaic and general studies responded that all of their teachers would embrace the increase of curriculum integration within their school. Two directors of Judaic and general studies claimed that only a low minority (1%-25%) would embrace change and only the director of Judaic studies from school #2 stated that in her school a small majority (51%-75%) would embrace such change.

As was often the case, there was a pattern of disagreement between the directors of Judaic and general studies and their principals. There was only a slight disagreement among four of the five directors of Judaic and general studies and their principals. The director of Judaic studies and the director of general studies from school #1 responded that all teachers in their school would embrace change. The principal from the same school responded that such change would be embraced by a high majority (76%-99%) of his staff. The director of Judaic studies from school #2 stated that a small majority (51%-75%) of staff would embrace change whereas her principal responded that a high majority of staff would embrace change.

The director of general studies from school #5 stated that a low minority (1%-25%) would embrace change and her principal claimed that nobody would embrace change. Nonetheless, despite the pattern of disagreement, there was only a slight difference between the response of the principal and their director of Judaic and general studies.

On the other hand, there was a significant difference in the response between the director of Judaic studies from school #3 and her principal. According to the director of

Judaic studies, only a low minority (1%-25%) of staff would embrace change in the increase of the implementation of curriculum integration. The principal however, stated that all of his staff would embrace such change.

What is also noteworthy is that in school #1 and #5, their director of Judaic or general studies claimed a higher percentage of staff would embrace change than did their principals. This is despite Table 9 that demonstrates that the principals from these same schools (#1 and #5) responded that a higher percentage of staff were currently involved in curriculum integration than the claim of their directors of Judaic and general studies.

Furthermore, although some of the Jewish community day schools had a low percentage of staff currently integrating the curriculum, nonetheless, such schools could potentially embrace change. For example, the director of Judaic studies in school #1 stated that only thirty-three percent of her staff is currently involved in any degree of curriculum integration. Nonetheless, she contended that all of her staff would embrace change to increase curriculum integration within their school.

*To a certain extent I think they would all work along with it...definitely I think that would work for them...I would say everyone.*

### *Vision for the Future*

The administrators were also asked for their visions regarding the future of curriculum integration in their schools. Table #11 presents these results.

Table 11

How Administration Envision Curriculum Integration within their schools

School/ Position	More Curriculum Integration	Same degree of Curriculum Integration	Less Curriculum Integration	Question is not Applicable
Principal #1	X			
Principal #2	X			
Principal #3	X			
Principal #4	X			
Principal #5		X		
Principal #6		X		
Principal #7				X
Principal #8	X			
Principal #9	X			
Director of Judaic studies #1	X			
Director of Judaic studies #2		X		
Director of Judaic studies #3	X			
Director of general studies #1		X		
Director of general studies #5	X			

Six of the eight principals that responded, indicated that they envision a greater degree of curriculum integration being implemented in their schools in the foreseeable future. Only the principal from school #7 that never had any form of curriculum integration claimed that the question was not applicable. The principal from school #1 stated,

*I feel that we're on a rise. We're moving towards more of it. We view it as a very practical and positive application and tremendous vehicle to increase the study experience for a child.*

The principal from school #2 also responded that he envisioned a steady increase in curriculum integration within his school,

*I see it just continuing to build in the way we're doing it now. I would like to see both the Judaic and general studies teams at each grade level sharing how those apply in their own classrooms.*

In addition, the principal from school #4 stated that curriculum integration will continue to grow within her school,

*It's going to be continuing. We'll continue building it. We're continuing to write about it and publish it. What we're going to do is publish a curriculum that's integrated.*

The principal from school #9, a Jewish community day school with minimal involvement in curriculum integration, expressed his desire to increase its implementation within his school.

*My goal is down the road to train the teachers more to show them that it's not that difficult. I'm looking for a gradual change so that in the next few years every class should have some type of integration.*

Only two of the nine principals responded that there would be no foreseeable increase of curriculum integration and no principal envisioned a decrease in curriculum integration.



Three of the five directors of Judaic and general studies responded that they envision an increase of curriculum integration within their schools. The director of Judaic studies from school #1 stated,

*I can see an increase in it as we go on...seeing how it works and seeing that this definitely has value to it, then as it can increase, more and more teachers would pick up on it and it would just spread across the curriculum at that point.*

The director of Judaic studies from school #3 also stated that her staff will continue to increase in its implementation of curriculum integration. However, her school will remain the same in regard to the continuum of option design of Jacobs. (1989).

*As time goes on, I anticipate a greater percentage of curriculum integration among my staff. Our school pretty much will stay the same on the continuum. I think people are comfortable with that.*

In contrast with their principals, two of the five directors of Judaic and general studies responded that they envision no change in the implementation of curriculum integration within their schools in the foreseeable future. The director of general studies from school #1 stated,

*I think it's going to continue as is. I think because of all the obstacles that we have with our staff, there is a limit to what we can do. We do try to integrate the curriculum but it's on a limited basis.*

The director of Judaic studies from school #2 also stated that an increase in curriculum integration was not imminent,

*It's not something that we have a major push to do right now. We're working on some other things and I don't foresee any changes in the near future.*

Only two of the five directors of Judaic and general studies agreed with their principals regarding how they envision their school regarding curriculum integration. While the director of Judaic studies from school #1 did agree with her principal that she forecasts an increase in curriculum integration, the director of general studies anticipated such implementation will remain about the same for the foreseeable future. In addition, the director of Judaic studies from school #2 claimed that there will not be any increase in curriculum integration. Her principals on the other hand anticipated that there would be an increase in the implementation of curriculum integration in the foreseeable future.

What is most noteworthy are the findings from school #5. All other schools where there was disagreement between the director of Judaic or general studies and their principal, the principals claimed an increase in curriculum integration and their directors of Judaic or general studies responded that there would not be such change. In school #5 however, the director of general studies anticipated an increase in curriculum integration, whereas the principal did not envision such change.

#### Findings Related to Research Question 4

*Research Question 4: To what extent does evidence of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies appear within school curriculum documents?*

The findings related to this research question is summarized in Table 12.

Table 12

Curriculum Documents

School/ Position	School has documents	School has documents but unavailable	School does not have curriculum documents
Principal #1			X
Principal #2	X		
Principal #3			X
Principal #4		X	
Principal #5	X		
Principal #6			X
Principal #7			X
Principal #8	X		
Principal #9			X
Director of Judaic studies #1			X
Director of Judaic studies #2	X		
Director of Judaic studies #3			X
Director of general studies #1			X
Director of general studies #5	X		

According to their administrator's reports, only four of the nine Jewish community day schools in this study were involved in curriculum mapping or producing other curriculum documents relevant for this study. The principal from school #8 stated that although her school does have curriculum maps, they must be viewed on her school grounds using copies made from her existing documents. Not being able to simply acquire her entire file of curriculum maps to examine in a more suitable environment hindered the researcher from properly analyzing the data. The principal from school #4

also stated that her school does have curriculum documents, but she further stated that these documents are not available for the general public to analyze.

*I'll tell you right now at this point we're not able to give you that. It's all proprietary to the school and they're in draft form. At this point I can't offer you that.*

Many administrators responded that it was their school's goal to have curriculum mapping within their school, but not at the present time. The director of Judaic studies from school #3 reported,

*Curriculum maps are something we would like to work on this year.*

Only the principal from school #7 was against the notion of incorporating curriculum documents within her school. Her response was,

*Heavens no. No curriculum mapping.*

The director of Judaic studies from school #2 stated that her school was currently working on creating curriculum documents for their Judaic studies department.

*We have a curriculum map for the general studies and we have one in progress for the Judaic studies. It's in draft but it hasn't been perfected or completed.*

The director of general studies from school #5 indicated that her school does have curriculum maps. However, it is only for the general studies teachers and part of the Judaic studies staff are currently involved in curriculum mapping.

*Secular studies staff does curriculum mapping...and the Jewish studies teachers have not mapped the curriculum from fifth grade and up. It's a pretty new curriculum for them this year and they did not map it.*

Out of the nine Jewish community day schools within study, five of these schools did not have any curriculum documents. Two of the remaining four Jewish community day schools stated that they had documents which are either not suitable for this study or unavailable for the researcher to analyze its data. According to the principal #4, they responded that they will not give the researcher access to their curriculum documents. School #2 only had curriculum documents for their general studies program. The only schools that claimed to have some curriculum documents for both the Judaic and general studies were in schools #5 and #8. School #5 had a limited amount of curriculum maps for their Judaic studies department and the principal for school #8 stated that her school does have curriculum maps but it must be viewed on her school grounds. Not being able to simply acquire her entire file of curriculum maps to examine in a more suitable environment hindered the researcher from properly analyzing the data. Thus, it was concluded that most Jewish community day schools, although heavily emphasis the implementation of curriculum integration, do not have public curriculum documents to illustrate their curriculum.

#### Summary of Key Findings Presented in Chapter 4

Administrators' from Jewish community day schools responses varied substantially regarding in the degree of implementing curriculum integration within their schools. Twelve of the fourteen participants in this study placed their school schools on the first three levels of Jacobs' (1989) continuum of options for content design, namely: discipline based design, parallel discipline designs and multi-disciplinary designs. The other two administrators claimed that their school was closest to the interdisciplinary

units design. No Jewish community day schools within the study, reported implementing curriculum using the integrated-day model or the complete program design.

Thirteen of the fourteen participants within this study reported that there were significant advantages in curriculum integration within their schools. The varied responses regarding the advantages of curriculum integration included: curriculum integration increases the relevance of the subject matter taught, it breaks down barriers and is a more meaningful and authentic way of learning.

An additional advantage was discovered which is unique to a school with a dual curriculum such as a Jewish community day school. Many administrator's stressed the importance of curriculum integration so that children would better appreciate their Jewish heritage. By integrating the curriculum, administrators reported that students sense the interconnection of the disciplines and understand the value of studying both the Judaic and general studies.

Five of the fourteen participants in this study stated that there were no disadvantages in the implementation of curriculum integration within their schools. The remaining nine did express concerns that curriculum integration can be over utilized, which may cause a direct negative impact on the authenticity of the curriculum. The varied responses regarding the disadvantages of curriculum integration included: integrating when seemingly inappropriate and integrating at the expense of covering the curriculum.

An additional disadvantage was discovered which is unique to a school with a dual curriculum such as a Jewish community day school. Five administrators stated that

curriculum integration could potentially devalue or trivialize the Judaic studies curriculum. They related that Judaic studies stems from their religion, and that by putting the dual curriculum on the same level, the sanctity of these texts potentially becomes mundane. These administrators further explained that proper staff development could help defuse this potential disadvantage in curriculum integration.

Twelve of the fourteen administrator's also reported the presence of obstacles preventing the proper implementation of curriculum integration within their schools. The lack of sufficient time was a major concern for many schools. The individual teachers reportedly often don't have an adequate amount of time to properly integrate the curriculum. Also, teachers reportedly have little free time to work collaboratively on a specific theme or unit, as many instructors are part time and not in school with the rest of the staff to formulate a plan to integrate across the curriculums. Since extra time is needed to properly integrate the curriculum, Jewish community day schools which are privately funded organizations, are often limited in available resources to compensate their staff for their time. This restricts some Jewish community day schools the ability to implement curriculum integration. Lastly, administrators expressed the obstacle of not having qualified staff to cross the curriculums. Since Jewish community day schools have the dual curriculum of Judaic and general studies, teachers need to have a broad knowledge of Judaism to effectively complement the other disciplines and cross the curriculums.

None of the administrators reported a decreasing trend within their school and only the principal from school #7 chose not to respond due to the fact that her school never implemented curriculum integration in the first place. Of the remaining thirteen

administrators in this study, seven responded that their school has shown an increasing trend and the remaining six administrators stated that there has been the same degree of curriculum integration within their school in recent years.

Four of the fourteen administrators in this study stated that their school has 100% participation by all their members of their staff. On the other hand, the principal from school #7 reported no teacher involvement in curriculum integration. The other nine administrators did report that some teachers within their school were currently involved in curriculum integration.

Seven of the fourteen administrators in this study responded that all or at least a high majority of their staff would embrace change specifically in regard to curriculum integration. On the other hand, six administrators cited that either none of their staff or a low minority of their staff would embrace such change. Only one participant (the director of Judaic studies from school #2) responded that a small majority or 51%-75% would embrace change in the implementation of curriculum integration within her school.

Nine of the fourteen administrators indicated that they envisioned a greater degree of curriculum integration being implemented in their schools in the foreseeable future. Only the principal from school #7 that never had any form of curriculum integration claimed that the question was not applicable. The four remaining administrators responded that there would be no foreseeable increase of curriculum integration and no one envisioned a decrease in curriculum integration.

Five of the nine Jewish community day schools within study did not have any curriculum documents. Among the remaining four Jewish community day schools



documents were either not suitable for this study or unavailable for analysis by the researcher.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter begins with the summary of the research problem, the conceptual framework, the research questions, the design and methodology and the study findings. It then synthesizes the data from administrators' responses on the extent of the implementation of curriculum integration within Jewish community day schools with conclusions and recommendations.

### Summary of the Study

#### *Overview of the Problem*

This study examined the implementation of curriculum integration within Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. It explored the extent to which such schools are integrating topics and skills from their general studies curricula into their Judaic studies classes and vice versa. Such curriculum integration is potentially of great importance as it may enhance the value and relevance of the curriculum to the student. (Jacobs, 1989).

Grade six can be exceedingly difficult and stressful for many students. As children enter puberty, they move from an attachment and dependency on their parents and teachers to independently seeking more objective knowledge. (Fisherman, 2002). Within Jewish community day schools, the shift is first apparent within the secular studies because they are often considered more relevant than religious studies, which may be discounted because they are sometimes simplified within community day schools. (Jewish Adolescent Study, 2001). In fact, since Judaic studies subject matter is often

taught on a superficial level throughout a child's tenure at a given community day school, by the time these students reach adolescence, they may lose all excitement for Judaic studies classes.

There has been a growing need for interdisciplinary content in modern schools. Jacobs (1989) argued that although children are learning many subjects, they are not taught how subjects are related to one another. Since then, curriculum integration has been increasingly implemented throughout the United States and abroad. (Beane, 1997). However, other than the case studies by Pomson (2001) and Malkus (2002), curriculum integration within Jewish community day schools has not been investigated.

### Research Questions

The primary research question that guided this study was:

*How is curriculum integration of Judaic studies with general studies described by administrators within Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state?*

To answer this question, each of the following sub-questions was addressed:

Question 1a: *Based on the continuum of options for content design (Jacobs, 1989), where do heads of schools report that Jewish community day schools best fit regarding the integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools?*

Question 1b: *Based on the continuum of options for content design (Jacobs, 1989), where do directors of general studies report that Jewish community day schools best fit regarding the integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools?*

Question 1c: *Based on the continuum of options for content design (Jacobs, 1989), where do directors of Judaic studies report that Jewish community day schools best fit regarding the integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools?*

Question 2a: *Do heads of schools perceive there to be advantages to implementing curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 2b: *Do directors of general studies perceive there to be advantages to implementing curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 2c: *Do directors of Judaic studies perceive there to be advantages to implementing curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 3a: *Do heads of schools perceive there to be disadvantages and/or obstacles preventing implementation of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 3b: *Do directors of general studies perceive there to be disadvantages and/or obstacles preventing implementation of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 3c: *Do directors of Judaic studies perceive there to be disadvantages and/or obstacles preventing implementation of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies within their schools? If so, what are they?*

Question 4: *To what extent does evidence of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies appear within school curricula documents?*

This study did not focus on curriculum integration within separate disciplines, but rather on crossover between curricula. In other words, the study didn't focus on whether curriculum integration is apparent among disciplines within the general studies curricula within Jewish community day schools. Rather, the focus was solely on whether such integration occurs between the Judaic and general studies academic programs.

## Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that guided this study was based primarily on the curriculum integration model proposed by Jacobs (1989). The study drew upon key findings from empirical research conducted by Pomson (2001) and Malkus (2002) as they specifically addressed curriculum integration within Jewish community day schools.

Jacobs (1989) described the various advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of curriculum integration based on her continuum of options for content design. This continuum refers to the levels or stages of curriculum integration within a particular school. Jacobs cited six levels: discipline based, parallel disciplines, multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary units/courses, integrated day, and a complete program.

Within the discipline based option, there is no attempt to integrate any of the curriculum. Students move from one class to the next without seeing the interconnection between the disciplines. This leaves students with the perception that each subject should remain in isolation and are not relevant one to the other. (Jacobs, 1989).

Parallel discipline designs occur when teachers coordinate and sequence their lessons to correspond to lessons in the same area in other disciplines. These teachers merely organize their lessons at a specific time in the year to resemble similar material in other disciplines. This does not require much from veteran instructors as they only need to switch around what they would normally be teaching at a different time in the academic school year to fit in with what is being taught in other classes. However, since there remains a lack of team teaching, there still may remain isolation among students. (Jacobs, 1989).

The complementary or multi-disciplinary design involves that some related classes or disciplines being brought together in a single formal unit or theme. At this level, students begin to relate to the interconnection of the disciplines. On the other hand, some teachers, who are used to instructing with their own unique methodologies, may resist this new pedagogical approach. In addition, this may require some degree of staff development in which the school may have limited resources to fund such an approach. (Jacobs, 1989).

Within the interdisciplinary units design, most or all courses of study are being deliberately brought together. All of the units are for a specified amount of time in which each class focuses directly on a specific area, supporting each of the instructor's lessons. This design motivates the student body as they directly experience the interrelationship of each of their classes. The disadvantage is that such a method requires more effort on the teachers of the school to integrate their curriculum so as to complement and support what is being taught in each of the disciplines. This option requires even more funding and staff preparation for the method to work effectively. In addition, parents who have not experienced this method of learning for themselves may have difficulty understanding the ultimate benefit or purpose of such a design. As such, in order to receive validation or support from the parent body, there needs to be an understanding and commitment from everyone involved to effectively implement interdisciplinary units design within ones school. (Jacobs, 1989).

The integrated-day model focuses on themes which stem directly from a child's interest or question rather than from a set curriculum by the teacher or school. This program originated in the British Infant School movement in the 1960's. It is most

commonly found in the younger grades and is scarcely utilized on the primary or middle school grade levels. Such programs have highly motivated students as the curriculum is based on their interests. This accounts for the relevance issue as every aspect of the curriculum is based around the interest level of the individual child. On the other hand, many teachers oppose this methodology of teaching, making this design a difficult one to enforce within schools. In addition, this method of teaching takes tremendous expertise in many fields to sufficiently address the need of the students in a timely fashion. As such, this methodology is generally not practiced in most schools. (Jacobs, 1989).

Finally, the complete program design is the most extensive method in terms of curriculum integration. This approach ties the life of students to the subject matter taught. For example, students who misbehave will be taught about government law. Children with an interest in buildings will learn the architecture of their school or homes. This design empowers the student. They develop a full understanding that school and education directly relates to their very lives. However, this approach is considered as radical for many administrators. These administrators do not consider this to be a realistic option in educating children. (Jacobs, 1989).

Jacobs (1989) concluded that schools should base their decisions as to which level of curriculum integration they should utilize, on the following three factors:

4. The flexibility of the school's schedule. Is there adequate time for the staff to prepare for a specific design or level of curriculum integration?
5. The support of the staff. Is there an interest level among your staff to be engaged in curriculum integration and if so, to what degree?



6. The nature of curriculum requirements. Based on the level of knowledge and standard requirements of the school district, does the school have the ability to be engaged in curriculum integration?

Jacobs further contended that a school may elect to combine these designs as well, perhaps a more feasible approach than focusing solely on one specific design.

In spite of Jacob's (1989) design options and the substantial increase in curriculum integration within secular schools over the last decade (Beane, 1997), research within Jewish community day schools is lacking. This gap in the literature requires further investigation to examine how curriculum integration is being utilized within Jewish community day schools. The relevance of Jacobs (1989) framework for this investigation can be illustrated by examining its application to the existing empirical research within Jewish community day schools.

Pomson (2001) investigated the impact of curriculum integration in the general and Judaic studies curricula of a single school in London. King Solomon High School utilized a working model of curriculum integration for two months based on the study of the biblical book of Ruth. This model resembled the complementary or multi-disciplinary design, as cited by Jacobs (1989). Specifically, within Judaic studies, children learned about a particular era in Jewish history, while learning lessons about how to treat strangers. In English class, the students compared the biblical literature to comparable stories of Shakespeare. In art class, they learned how to paint the backgrounds for their school performance, based on the story of the book of Ruth. Pomson's (2001) findings demonstrated that the use of curriculum integration for both general and Judaic studies

increased the relevance of all of the classes and enhanced the dual curriculum taught in their community day school.

Malkus (2002) investigated how a single Jewish day school in the United States integrated its curriculum. This school, located in the Northeast, consisted of seventy-six students with diverse religious backgrounds. The headmaster emphasized that in her school and abroad, curriculum integration can have numerous meanings. At her school, the Overton Jewish day school, depending on the instructor or a particular lesson, the intensity of curriculum integration varies. Sometimes, teachers would co-teach and assist one another in the classroom. This most resembles the complementary or multi-disciplinary design as composed by Jacobs (1989). On the other hand, there are times in which there is little integration occurring in the classroom altogether. Such a classroom would most likely resemble the discipline based option as cited by Jacobs. (1989). Among Malkus' findings, he discovered that curriculum integration helps build Jewish identity within the school and increases the overall relevance of the subject matter being taught.

Thus, Pomson and Malkus provided examples of curriculum integration within schools in the United States and abroad. This study addressed Jacobs (1989) continuum model and surveyed the largest sample of community day schools to date. It addressed the gap in the research literature regarding the current status of curriculum integration of Judaic and general studies curricula within nine of ten Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state.

### Design of the Study

A qualitative approach was an appropriate research design for this study as this enabled the researcher to better understand a previously unresearched area, the current perceptions of curriculum integration among administrators within Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. An interview survey, with open ended questions, was utilized to make these determinations of the perceptions in such schools. This methodology also enabled the researcher to ask follow-up questions seeking further comments that went beyond the responses to the initial questions. The researcher remained cognizant that the questions of the instrument were written in a clear, non ambiguous manner.

The researcher addressed these above concerns by designing an instrument that was reviewed by the dissertation advisor and the dissertation committee. It was then pilot tested to further assess its validity.

As recommended by McMillan and Schumacher (1994), during all of the interviews, a tape recorder was utilized, to ensure a reliable account of the data received. Also, the researcher used low-inferences descriptors for explaining data and incorporated direct quotations where possible. Finally, the researcher was cognizant of the possible negative cases or discrepant data that could have an adverse impact on the reliability and validity of such data.

### Summary of Key Findings

The in-depth interviews revealed that administrators' from Jewish community day schools varied substantially regarding in the degree of implementing curriculum

integration within their schools. Twelve of the fourteen participants in this study placed their schools on the first three levels of Jacobs' (1989) continuum of options for content design, namely: discipline based design, parallel discipline designs and multi-disciplinary designs. The other two administrators claimed that their school was closest to the interdisciplinary units design. No Jewish community day schools within the study, reported implementing curriculum using the integrated-day model or the complete program design. (Derived from findings from research questions 1a-c)

Thirteen of the fourteen participants within this study reported that there were significant advantages in curriculum integration within their schools. The varied responses regarding the advantages of curriculum integration included: curriculum integration increases the relevance of the subject matter taught, it breaks down barriers and is a more meaningful and authentic way of learning. (Derived from findings from research questions 2a-c).

An additional advantage was discovered which is unique to a school with a dual curriculum such as a Jewish community day school. Many administrator's stressed the importance of curriculum integration so that children would better appreciate their Jewish heritage. By integrating the curriculum, administrators reported that students sense the interconnection of the disciplines and understand the value of studying both the Judaic and general studies. (Derived from findings from research questions 2a-c).

Five of the fourteen participants in this study stated that there were no disadvantages in the implementation of curriculum integration within their schools. The remaining nine did express concerns that curriculum integration can be over utilized,

which may cause a direct negative impact on the authenticity of the curriculum. The varied responses regarding the disadvantages of curriculum integration included: integrating when seemingly inappropriate and integrating at the expense of covering the curriculum. (Derived from findings from research questions 3a-c).

An additional disadvantage was discovered which is unique to a school with a dual curriculum such as a Jewish community day school. Five administrators stated that curriculum integration could potentially devalue or trivialize the Judaic studies curriculum. They related that Judaic studies stems from their religion, and that by putting the dual curriculum on the same level, the sanctity of these texts potentially becomes mundane. These administrators further explained that sufficient staff development could help defuse this potential disadvantage in curriculum integration. (Derived from findings from research questions 3a-c).

Twelve of the fourteen administrator's also reported the presence of obstacles preventing the sufficient implementation of curriculum integration within their schools. The lack of sufficient time was a major concern for many schools. The individual teachers reportedly often don't have an adequate amount of time to sufficiently integrate the curriculum. Also, teachers reportedly have little free time to work collaboratively on a specific theme or unit, as many instructors are part time and not in school with the rest of the staff to formulate a plan to integrate across the curriculums. Since extra time is needed to sufficiently integrate the curriculum, Jewish community day schools which are privately funded organizations, are often limited in available resources to compensate their staff for their time. This restricts some Jewish community day schools' ability to

implement curriculum integration. Lastly, administrators expressed the obstacle of not having qualified staff to cross the curriculums. Since Jewish community day schools have the dual curriculum of Judaic and general studies, teachers need to have a broad knowledge of Judaism to effectively complement the other disciplines and cross the curriculums. (Derived from findings from research questions 3a-c).

None of the administrators reported a decreasing trend in curriculum integration within their schools, and only the principal from school #7 chose not to respond due to the fact that her school never implemented curriculum integration in the first place. Of the remaining thirteen administrators in this study, seven responded that their school has shown an increasing trend and the remaining six administrators stated that there has been the same degree of curriculum integration within their school in recent years.

Four of the fourteen administrators in this study stated that their school has 100% participation by all the members of their staff. On the other hand, the principal from school #7 reported no teacher involvement in curriculum integration. The other nine administrators did report that some teachers within their school were currently involved in curriculum integration.

Seven of the fourteen administrators in this study responded that all or at least a high majority of their staff would embrace change specifically in regard to curriculum integration. On the other hand, six administrators cited that either none of their staff or a low minority of their staff would embrace such change. Only one participant (the director of Judaic studies from school #2) responded that a small majority or 51%-75% would embrace change in the implementation of curriculum integration within her school.

Nine of the fourteen administrators indicated that they envisioned a greater degree of curriculum integration being implemented in their schools in the foreseeable future. Only the principal from school #7 that never had any form of curriculum integration claimed that the question was not applicable. The four remaining administrators responded that there would be no foreseeable increase of curriculum integration and no one envisioned a decrease in curriculum integration.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings from the in-depth interviews, conclusions were drawn related to the administrator's perceptions regarding in the degree of implementing curriculum integration within their schools. The conclusions presented below are followed by recommendations for practice and for future research.

*Conclusion 1: While principals varied across schools in their perceptions of the degree of curriculum integration within their schools, there were also variations among administrator perceptions within schools that had directors of Judaic and/or general studies. (Derived from findings from research questions 1a-c).*

Based on principals' reports, curriculum integration exists in all but one of the schools participating in the study. However, the exact degree of curriculum integration was difficult to assess as the varied responses between the principal and the directors of Judaic and general studies at certain schools reflected as much difference in perception as did the differences among the principals at all of the schools. Varied responses between the principals and their directors of Judaic and general studies may be due to their

specific, unique roles and responsibilities within their schools. The perspective of the principals may be such that they anticipate a certain degree of discussion of curriculum integration among their staff, but the directors of Judaic and general studies may see otherwise.

This conclusion differs from those offered in the studies by Pomson (2001) and Malkus (2002). Both of these empirical studies, while focusing on the impact of curriculum integration in the Judaic and general studies curricula occurred in only a single school. This study, on the other hand, addressed the degree of curriculum integration in nine Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state, thereby allowing both across and within school comparisons. Furthermore, Pomson did not research the potential variations among administrator perceptions within schools and their directors of Judaic and/or general studies. Finally, neither Pomson nor Malkus placed their schools on Jacobs (1989) continuum of content design.

*Recommendation 1a: Principals and directors of Judaic and general studies will benefit from increased communication regarding the degree of curriculum integration within their schools. These administrators should share a common vision of the degree of curriculum integration in order to ensure that a consistent view of their curricula exists within their schools as well as for communication to their stakeholders.*

As indicated on Table 4, there were varying responses by the principals and their directors of Judaic and general studies. Since each administrator has unique roles and responsibilities, it is feasible that each administrator best understand his or her specific role in the school without necessarily having an accurate view of the overall degree of



curriculum integration. Increased and more effective communication should result in a more consistent curricular vision among administrators within schools.

*Recommendation 1b: Additional research should be done, assessing other states and regions to further analyze the perceived levels of curriculum integration within other Jewish community day schools.*

Although, this study included the largest sample of community day schools to date, analyzing the practices of the implementation of curriculum integration in nine of ten schools in a Northeastern state such data may not necessarily reflect the practices of Jewish community day schools in other geographic locations. Consequently, parallel studies conducted in other parts of the country are warranted. Furthermore, in addition to triangulating reports of principals with those of other administrators such as directors of Judaic and general studies, further triangulation might be introduced by examining the perceptions of additional stakeholders such as teachers, students and parents.

*Conclusion 2: The most complete models of curriculum integration as reported by Jacobs, the integrated day model and the complete program design model, were beyond the capacity of the schools' within this study abilities to implement. (Derived from findings from research questions 1a-c).*

The in-depth interviews revealed that twelve of the fourteen participants in this study placed their school schools on the first three levels of Jacobs' (1989) continuum of options for content design, namely: discipline based design, parallel discipline designs and multi-disciplinary designs. The other two administrators claimed that their school

was closest to the interdisciplinary units design. Even the schools within the study that identified itself as having engaged in curriculum integration since its founding, fell substantially short of the more complete models identified by Jacobs.

As indicated in Table 7, administrators within this study reported the obstacles of implementing a more sophisticated level of curriculum integration were due to time constraints, lack of available resources and the concern of the potential trivialization of the Judaic aspects of the curriculum. This conclusion from this study adds to the insights within the literature regarding curriculum integration in Judaic studies by supplementing findings by Malkus (2002) and Pomson (2001). Although Malkus and Pomson did not utilize Jacobs' continuum, each of their schools resembled most closely the multi-disciplinary design. Adding to this body of literature are nine Jewish community day schools that are also not incorporating the more sophisticated integrated day model or complete program design model. These results may indicate an inherent limitation to the amount of curriculum integration likely to occur at other religiously oriented private schools, a factor not addressed in the broader literature on curriculum integration.

*Recommendation 2a: Although implementation of the highest level of curriculum integration may be unrealistic or undesirable at Jewish community day schools, achievement of inter-disciplinary units design appears to be feasible for most schools. Since most administrators within this study indicated an openness to expanding curriculum integration efforts, such a target seems a reasonable goal.*

The principal from school #4 reported that her school was founded on the premise of curriculum integration and that her school falls under the inter-disciplinary design.

Seven of the remaining eight schools embraced some degree of curriculum integration, including school #8 which also reportedly achieved the inter-disciplinary units design. However, school #8 was not founded with curriculum integration in mind, nor was it as fully integrated as school #4.

These schools could potentially increase their level of sophistication of the implementation of curriculum integration by following the example of school #4. By improving their communication, hiring qualified staff and/or securing the services of a staff member with the experience and expertise obtained from implementing a more sophisticated model of curriculum integration, Jewish community day schools may develop greater degrees of curriculum integration. However, the resources found in school #4 may not be available to all Jewish community day schools. The principal from school #4 indicated that each grade has two full time staff members, allotting half of the school day to facilitate the implementation of curriculum integration. This significant budget level may only exist in more affluent schools. Schools with a more restrictive budget will need to employ more creative options to ensure that the staff has the time and staff development to sufficiently implement the curriculum using the inter-disciplinary design model.

*Recommendation 2b: Further research should be conducted to identify Jewish community day schools that have managed to implement higher levels of curriculum integration and to explore the strategies that were used to permit such integration. Such follow up research studies will necessarily involve in-depth explorations of individual schools to verify that such intensive curriculum integration exists and to obtain the insights of*

*multiple stakeholders at each school regarding how the degree of curriculum integration was achieved.*

According to Pomson (2001) and Malkus (2002), the schools they investigated best fit under the multi-disciplinary design. Within this study, two of the nine Jewish community day schools placed their school on a more sophisticated level of curriculum integration, the inter-disciplinary design. It is possible that further research will reveal other Jewish community day schools modeling the inter-disciplinary design or perhaps an even more sophisticated model of curriculum integration. Only school #4 reported that this level of curriculum integration was always in place. School #8 however, indicated that this level of integration evolved and increased over time. Further investigation and research within such schools will be beneficial to understanding how this level of curriculum integration was achieved.

*Conclusion 3: Although the extent of curriculum integration varied among schools, almost all administrators reported distinct advantages for such implementation within their schools. These advantages included: greater appreciation of ones religion, increasing relevance in subject matter, breaking down barriers between the curricula, more beneficial and meaningful to the students, and improving communication and teamwork among the staff. (Derived from findings from research questions 2a-c).*

The in-depth interviews revealed that thirteen of the fourteen participants cited various advantages for the implementation of curriculum integration. Such advantages of the implementation of curriculum integration included: greater appreciation of ones religion, increase of relevance in subject matter, breaks down barriers between the

curriculum, more beneficial and meaningful to the students, and improves communication and teamwork among the staff. Only the principal from school #7, who consciously does not implement curriculum integration within her school, cited no advantages.

These findings resemble those presented by Pomson (2001) who claimed that the implementation of curriculum integration within schools causes the subject matter to become more relevant to students. Furthermore, both Pomson and Malkus (2002) reported that curriculum integration benefits Jewish community day schools, because as the connection between the Judaic and general studies curricula is displayed, student overall appreciation for their Jewish heritage and its relevance in their lives increases as well.

An additional advantage reported in this study was that two of the nine principals cited improvement in the communication and teamwork among their staff as an advantage for curriculum integration. Neither Malkus nor Pomson cited an increase of communication and teamwork as an advantage in curriculum integration.

*Recommendation 3a: Based on the numerous advantages reported regarding implementing curriculum integration within schools, administrators should seriously consider adopting the inter-disciplinary units design. This advanced design was implemented by school #4 and school #8, whose administrators cited the most advantages in its implementation.*

Most administrators reported that there are great advantages in curriculum integration within Jewish community day schools. As indicated on Table 5, curriculum

integration reportedly increases the relevance of the subject matter taught, breaks down barriers in learning, increases the communication among the staff and enables students to appreciate their religion better. These advantages support the findings of Kain (1993) who contended that curriculum integration is more similar to real world problems that are multidisciplinary in nature and that a discipline based curriculum is unable to sufficiently prepare students for real world situations.

These findings also support those reported by Beane (1997) who stated that curriculum integration changed how students perceived the purpose of learning. According to Beane, students experiencing curriculum integration understand the relevance of their subject matter more, which positively affects the students' ability to make every day decisions.

Within this study, an additional advantage was reported which is unique to a school with a dual curriculum such as a Jewish community day school. Many administrators stressed the importance of curriculum integration so that children would better appreciate their Jewish heritage. By integrating the curriculum, students reportedly sense the interconnection of the disciplines and see the added value of studying both the Judaic and general curricula. According to the Jewish Adolescent Study (2001), there was a strong value placed on the general studies by parents and children alike. This same emphasis was not placed on the Judaic studies. There was a dramatic drop in religious participation from 60% in 7<sup>th</sup> grade to 22% in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. It is possible that by sufficiently implementing an integrated curriculum, parents and children will more likely see the

value of Judaic studies and, in turn, continue to stress its relevance for their children well into their teens.

*Recommendation 3b: Further research should be conducted to identify additional advantages in curriculum integration at Jewish community day schools by soliciting perceptions from additional stakeholders such as teachers, students and parents.*

Although Pomson (2001) and Malkus (2002) did not cite as many advantages as identified in this study in implementing curriculum integration, it is plausible that this was due to the single school nature of their case studies. Although this study is the largest study to date for Jewish community day schools, there may well be additional advantages to implementing curriculum integration not yet identified. Further empirical research is warranted to determine whether there are more advantages and whether there is a correlation between the level of curriculum integration and its advantages. Furthermore, additional discussion with the additional shareholders within schools can provide additional insight as to whether they perceive such advantages in the implementation of curriculum integration within their schools.

*Conclusion 4: Although administrators in this study cited numerous advantages to curriculum integration, a subset cited several potential disadvantages. These included: integrating when seemingly inappropriate, integrating at the expense of covering the curriculum and the potential trivialization of the Judaic studies curriculum. (Derived from findings from research questions 3a-c).*

According to Jacobs (1989), the flexibility of the school's schedule is an integral component in curriculum integration. This includes the potential of implementing

curriculum integration at the expense of covering the curriculum. This may be of greater concern for Jewish community day schools which designate as much as half of their school day, engaged in Judaic studies curriculum.

A unique disadvantage, specifically found among Jewish community day schools were cited by five administrators; the concern about potentially diminishing or trivializing the Judaic studies curriculum with an intensive degree of curriculum integration. This disadvantage, not found in the broader literature, was clearly due to the religious nature of such schools.

*Recommendation 4a: School administrators fearing the potential trivialization of Judaic studies curricula might avoid such problems by following the practices of schools that have implemented curriculum integration without such concerns. In addition, all administrators within schools should communicate all potential disadvantages to better understand how these concerns may be dispelled.*

Both schools #4 and #8, who best fall under the inter-disciplinary units design, the highest level of curriculum integration within this study's Jewish community day schools, did not cite the potential trivialization of Judaic studies as a disadvantage. By following their success in sufficiently implementing the curriculum to this more sophisticated level, the issues of potential trivialization may be dispelled. Furthermore, increased professional development in how to implement curriculum integration more effectively may benefit these other schools in maximizing their school day while integrating the curriculum. In addition, professional development can help address the concern about trivialization of the Judaic studies curriculum.



*Recommendation 4b: Further research should be conducted identifying and examining Jewish community day schools whose administrators expressed concern about the trivialization of Judaic studies curricula as a disadvantage of curriculum integration, as well as their schools' levels of curriculum integration on Jacobs' continuum.*

Dismissing curriculum integration due to concerns about trivialization of Judaic studies may be one of the biggest obstacles confronting curriculum integration efforts within Jewish community day schools. Within this study administrators at four schools expressed this concern. Furthermore, only two of nine schools within this study placed their school on the inter-disciplinary units design. No school had a more sophisticated level of curriculum integration. It is plausible that concerns about the potential trivialization of Judaic studies curricula may hinder schools in any efforts to develop a more sophisticated model of curriculum integration. Further studies of Jewish community day schools are warranted to determine the extent and impact of this concern as well as its validity.

This study examined the perceptions of administrators from a Northeastern state. Nationwide, Jewish community day schools may be affiliated with particular religious movements: either Orthodox, Conservative, Reform or Reconstructionist. Within this study, both schools #4 and #8 were affiliated with the Conservative movement, who by nature of their movement and religious affiliation, may be less concerned with the issue of the potential trivialization of the Judaic studies curriculum. There may be many more religious school administrators concerned about trivialization, and a larger study of Jewish community day schools may determine whether religious affiliation is related to this concern and has a role in the level of curriculum integration within such schools.

*Conclusion 5: Logistical problems constituted major reported obstacles to implementing curriculum integration within the Jewish community day schools. These included: a lack of planning time for teachers to meet collaboratively, the increased cost of sufficiently implementing the curriculum and a lack of qualified staff that can cross the curriculums. (Derived from findings from research questions 3a-c).*

Twelve of fourteen administrators cited logistical problem as serious obstacles to curriculum integration. According to Jacobs (1989), schools base their decisions as to which level of curriculum integration they should utilize, on the following three factors: the flexibility of the school's schedule, the support of the staff and the nature of curriculum requirements. The findings from this study are consistent with Jacobs' assertion while shedding addition light on the flexibility and support aspects. The issue of cost may be a greater obstacle among privately funded schools such as Jewish community day schools, few of which have extensive financial resources to draw upon. On the other hand, as private schools are not mandated to the same protocols of standardized testing as are public schools, Jewish community day schools have greater flexibility to integrate their curricula.

*Recommendation 5: Although time was a limitation to curriculum integration cited at many Jewish community day schools, this obstacle may be less of an issue than in public schools. Therefore, further research might identify strategies used by Jewish community day schools successful at implementing curriculum integration, in particular strategies for making planning time available.*

Time is one resource that even the poorest Jewish community day schools would seem to possess in comparison to public schools now driven by stringent testing mandates. Additional qualitative studies are warranted to explore how Jewish community day schools with well integrated curricula have freed up time for curricular planning.

### Closing Statement

This study of curriculum integration among Jewish community day schools yielded new insights regarding such schools. As Jewish community day schools must offer a dual curriculum, most administrators in this study embraced curriculum integration as a mechanism for meeting the goals for both Judaic and general studies.

As cited by Jacobs (1989), a discipline-based curriculum causes students to learn subjects in isolation, hence they are often not made aware the relevance and interplay of matters across subjects. Within Jewish community day schools, this issue is even more disconcerting. The primary function of a Jewish community day school is to promote a love and appreciation of ones Jewish heritage. Children with the misconception that the Judaic studies curriculum is irrelevant in their lives, may be less likely to retain their Jewish heritage. It is therefore of the utmost importance to implement the most sophisticated models of curriculum integration within Jewish community day schools so that these students will understand and appreciate the richness and beauty of their Jewish heritage and its relevance to their daily experiences.

The Jewish Adolescent Study (2001) concluded that by creating a more interactive, involved Judaic studies program, adolescents will have a greater opportunity and interest in becoming more involved later in their life in Jewish programs and

affiliations. This is a matter of urgency as the Jewish Adolescent Study indicated that Jewish adolescents consider Hebrew school to be a negative experience. It is plausible that by creating a more interactive, involved Judaic studies program, adolescents will have a greater opportunity and interest in becoming more involved later on in their life in their Jewish heritage. This is the reason the Jewish Adolescent Study deemed it necessary to deal directly with these issues and not lose these student's interests due to potential negative perceptions. A key to address these concerns is educating Jewish youth of the value and relevance in the Judaic studies curriculum. With the data gathered from this study, which highlighted significant advantages in curriculum integration, it is apparent that such implementation is a means to reach this lofty goal.

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## Appendix A

## Pre-interview Terms and Definitions

Please read the following definition of curriculum integration and the brief definitions for the continuum of options for content design of curriculum integration (Jacobs, 1989) in order to accurately address the interview questions:

### Definition

Curriculum integration: a knowledge view and curriculum approach that consciously applies methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, issue, problem, topic, or experience. (Jacobs, 1989).

### Continuum of options for content design of curriculum integration

Discipline based option: There is no attempt to integrate any of the curriculum. Students move from one class to the next without seeing the interconnection between the disciplines. (Example: The Judaic studies instructors and the general studies teachers go throughout their academic school year with no attempt to integrate their curricula.)

Parallel discipline designs: This occurs when teachers coordinate and sequence their lessons to correspond to lessons in the same area in other disciplines. These teachers organize their lessons at a specific time in the year to resemble similar material in other disciplines. Instructors only need to switch around what they would normally be teaching at a different time in the academic school year to fit in with what is being taught in other classes. (Example: An American history teacher waits until Passover season to discuss the emancipation proclamation. These lessons of freedom would coincide with the Judaic

studies instructor's lesson plan, who will teach of the exodus from Egypt. These teachers subsequently are integrating their curriculum by waiting until a specific time in the academic school year to teach their lesson.)

Multi-disciplinary design: Some related disciplines are brought together in a single formal unit or theme. At this level, students begin to relate to the interconnection of the disciplines. (Example: Similar to a color wheel and the notion of complementary colors, the Judaic studies instructor would not only be teaching about freedom during the same time as the history teacher, each instructor would draw comparisons between the differences between the enslavement of African-Americans and that of the ancient Israelites. Thus, each of the classes will shed light and complement one another. This would occur in two or more of each of the Judaic studies and general studies classes.)

Interdisciplinary units design: Most or all courses of study are being deliberately brought together. All of the units are for a specified amount of time in which each class focuses directly on a specific area, supporting each of the instructor's lessons. This design motivates the student body as they directly experience the interrelationship of each of their classes. (Example: In addition to the theme of freedom being taught in some or most of the Judaic and general studies classes as is the case in a multi-disciplinary design, this theme is echoed throughout the disciplines. Students will act out a play in drama class about slavery. They will paint pictures and study art that was created during that era in American history. In other Judaic studies classes, the instructor will discuss the ethical issues in slavery and teach the value of treating one another in a respectful manner.)

Integrated-day model: This involves the interdisciplinary design while also incorporating themes that stem directly from a child's interest or questions rather than from a set

curriculum by the teacher or school. Such programs have highly motivated students as the curriculum is based on their interests. (Example: As an extension to the interdisciplinary approach which includes all of the classes, both Judaic and general studies, students will guide the lesson by asking probing questions about their perception of slavery and freedom. In turn, both the Judaic and general studies teachers will teach this theme, stemming directly from the inquiries of the student.)

Complete program design: This approach ties the lives of students to the subject matter taught. This approach is the most extensive method in terms of curriculum integration. For example, students who misbehave will be taught about government law. Children with an interest in buildings will learn the architecture of their school or homes. This design empowers the student. They develop a full understanding that school and education directly relates to their very lives. (Example: This program is in addition to the integrated-day model in that this design may require students to reenact the experiences of being enslaved throughout their school day. The bus drivers may require certain “slaves” to sit in the back of the bus. In addition, this hands-on learning experience will guide the student throughout the entire day, providing a stark lesson that slavery is cruel and unfair, whether it be to African Americans, ancient Israelites, or anyone else, being judged solely based on their religion, race, or ethnicity.)

## Appendix B



## Focused Interview Questions

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years at this school \_\_\_\_\_

Official title \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions providing as much detail as possible.

- 1) How long have you been in your current position at your school?
- 2) Has there ever been any discussion of the implementation of curriculum integration between the Judaic studies and general studies departments within your school?
- 3) Based on the continuum of options for content design, that you have reviewed, which option best describes the extent of curriculum integration between the Judaic studies and general studies departments in your school?
- 4) Provide some specific examples of curriculum in integration between the Judaic studies and general studies departments within your school.
- 5) What do you perceive to be the advantages and disadvantages of implementing curriculum integration between the Judaic studies and general studies departments within your school?
- 6) What do you perceive to be the obstacles of implementing curriculum integration between the Judaic studies and general studies departments within your school?

- 7) Has there been an increasing trend within your school to encourage curriculum integration between the Judaic studies and general studies departments? If so, to what extent?
- 8) How many teachers in your school are involved in any degree of curriculum integration between the Judaic studies and general studies departments?
- 9) How many teachers in your school would embrace change, specifically in regard to the increase of curriculum integration between the Judaic studies and general studies departments within their classrooms?
- 10) How do you envision the utilization of curriculum integration methodologies being incorporated between the Judaic studies and general studies departments within your school?
- 11) Does your school have any curriculum documents (e.g. curriculum maps, outlines or reports) that illustrate the curriculum?

Appendix C

### Informed Consent Form

Title: "A study of Curriculum Integration within Jewish Community Day Schools in a Northeastern state"

The following information is provided to help you decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with anyone affiliated with this study.

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which the implementation of curriculum integration is occurring within Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state.

Data will be collected by conducting a focused interview with administrators within Jewish community day schools in a Northeastern state. In addition, documents which indicate the implementation of curriculum integration will be obtained for further examination by the researcher. These will be the only forms of data collected in this study.

Do not hesitate to ask questions about the study before participating or during the study. I would be happy to share the findings with you after the research is completed. Your name will not be associated with the research findings in any way, and only the researchers will know your identity.

There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study. The expected benefits associated with your participation are the information about the experiences in learning research methods. If this study is later submitted for publication, a by-line will indicate the participation of all administrators in this Northeastern state.

Please sign this consent form. You are signing it with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedures. A copy of this form will be given to you to keep.

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Signature

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Date

Bradford J. Tomsy, doctoral student, University of Hartford (203-397-5370)