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Leaving Home Together: The Impact of Travel in Jewish Peoplehood Education for Israeli and American Teens

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Abstract
The connection between Jews in Israel and the United States is being reshaped by unprecedented global population movement concomitant with almost universal access to transnational communications. An emerging educational paradigm focuses on transnational Jewish peoplehood and the development of mutual understanding and appreciation of the unique contours of Jewish identity and life in Israel and the Diaspora. This paper utilizes data from a multi-year study of a secondary-level school twinning initiative to explore the impact of the program component of travel on student outcomes such as connections to peers, attachment to Israel or American Jewry, and feelings of Jewish peoplehood. The paper discusses dynamic tensions put in motion through travel within a peoplehood intervention. These include the balance between comfort and discomfort as teens navigate the disruption inherent in international travel, the juxtaposition of common heritage and significant cultural differences, and the exploration of multiple attachments to homeland, diaspora and peoplehood.

Introduction
Contemporary life is characterized by unprecedented global population movement concomitant with almost universal access to transnational communications, phenomena that are reshaping the relationship between homeland and diaspora communities. In just one decade the global rate of migration rose from 120 million in 1990 to 175 million in 2000 (Ueda, 2007). One in every 35 persons worldwide is an international migrant and in 2002, 175 million people lived outside the country, in

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which they were born (Waters, Ueda, & Marrow, 2007). This rapid proliferation of multiple diaspora communities combined with the increasing availability of global mass media and communications has changed the significance of place itself and with it the role and centrality of homeland in diaspora identity. In contemporary globalized society co-religionists or co-ethnics in multiple parts of the world can have direct and immediate transactions allowing them to share the same “lived time” independent of the places where they are situated (Giddens, 1991). The connection between Jews in Israel and the United States can no longer be understood without an appreciation of the implications of these trends of global migration and communication for individual and collective experiences of connection and belonging.

The classic model of diaspora is one centered and dependent on connection to homeland; the diasporic population derives its identity and purpose from the homeland regardless of distance in terms of space or time (Safran, 1991). The biblical Jewish exile to Babylon following the destruction of the First Temple is often cited as the “prototypic diaspora experience” signified by an ambivalent relationship with the host country (Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk, 2007; Cohen, 1997). The metaphor of the solar system has been used to describe the idea that satellite diaspora communities revolve around the homeland as the center and source of their identity (Levy, 2001). The author Salman Rushdie captures this understanding of diaspora identity in relation to homeland when writing of his life as an Indian in London: “It’s my present that is foreign, and that the past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time” (Rushdie, 1991, p. 9). In marked contrast, growing access to transnational communications has fostered the emergence of diasporic public spheres in which hybrid forms of intellectual and cultural production, informed by material from the homeland, but not wholly dependent on it are created (Appadurai, 1996). Flows of media, culture, resources and influence are shifting from unidirectional to multidirectional between homelands and diaspora communities and between multiple diasporic communities of the same homeland (cf. de Leeuw & Rydin, 2007; Wuthnow & Offutt, 2008).

The changing relationship between the Israeli homeland for Jewish identity is also undergoing revision. Global migration within the Jewish community has led to the advent of multiple Diasporas and to attachments to multiple Jewish “homelands.” Moroccan and Ethiopian Jews living in Israel simultaneously experience their current residence as both homeland and Diaspora and still conceive of their former communities as symbolic centers of identity (Levy, 2001; Weingrod & Levy, 2006). Jewish immigrants to Israel from the Former Soviet Union continue to maintain strong transnational connections with Russian Jews outside of Israel and constitute a sub-cultural group within their new “homeland” cultivating Russian language and patterns of association and living (Remennick, 2002). The American Jewish community has explicitly articulated the understanding that American Jews “do not live ‘in exile’ and that America is home for them” (AJYB, 1952 as cited in Sarna, 2004).

The changing relationship between Israel and the American Jewish community is evident in the evolution of educational efforts to foster connections between American Jewish youth and their Israeli counterparts. The Jewish communal paradigm has traditionally reflected a homeland-centric approach that emphasized Israel education in Diaspora day and supplementary schools culminating in heritage tourism to Israel (Lev Ari & Mittelberg, 2008; Powers, 2011). Although these efforts may include encounters with Israeli peers, the focus is almost exclusively on fostering the
connection of American Jews to Israel with little attention paid to educating Israeli youth about Diaspora communities or the lives of their American peers. A new paradigm is emerging which focuses on developing a sense of transnational Jewish peoplehood. Introduced by Mordechai Kaplan (1948), the term “Jewish peoplehood” describes a sense of belonging and connection among Jews that transcends national, political or religious belief differences. One of the unique features of programs within a peoplehood paradigm is their explicit focus on the development of mutual understanding and appreciation of the unique contours of Jewish identity and life in Israel and the Diaspora (Ehrenkrantz, 2008; Mittelberg, 2011). The goals of peoplehood interventions are to enhance the identity and connections of both diaspora and homeland youth. For example, among American Jewish educators the goal is to translate the personal sense of Jewish identity that many students already have into a more global sense of connection and responsibility for Israel and the worldwide Jewish community. Within Israeli society peoplehood interventions are seen as a response to growing concern that Israeli students lack personal Jewish identity (Shenhar Commission, 1994; Corb et al., 2011).

This paper explores the impact of a peoplehood educational intervention with Israeli and American high school students. The research is based on data from a multi-year study of a secondary-level school twinning initiative developed by the Boston-Haifa Connection, a nearly two decades old partnership between the Boston Jewish community and the City of Haifa. School-to-school twinning programs bring together educational institutions, typically from sister cities in the United States and Israel. The Jewish Agency for Israel currently lists over 200 such partnerships as part of its International School Twinning Network and the vast majority include a North American school (JAFI, 2012). The current research included two pairs of twinned schools: a supplementary school and a private high school in one pair and a day school and a public high school in the other pair. Both partnerships employed the same basic strategies of encounter—short trips to each other’s schools by relatively small groups of students and virtual exchanges through video conferencing and Skype. The goals of this initiative for students were to encourage personal connections to Jewish peers at the partner school, expand the exploration of personal Jewish identity, and enhance a sense of Jewish peoplehood extending beyond national borders.

The in-depth study of this school twinning initiative provides a window into the potential and challenges of peoplehood interventions for both American and Israeli teens. In particular the research examines the connection between the program component of travel and participant outcomes such as connections to peers, attachment to Israel or American Jewry, and feelings of Jewish peoplehood. The paper begins with description of the research strategies employed in this study followed by an overview of findings. This is followed by discussion of several dynamic tensions that emerge in peoplehood encounters between Israeli and American participants including the juxtaposition of perceived similarity based on common Jewish heritage and the reality of significant cultural differences between the meaning of Jewish identity in American and Israeli Jewish communities.

**Methodology**

The findings reported in this paper are drawn from student survey data from the second year of the study. Students at each school were invited to complete start and end of year surveys. In those cases where students had already completed an end of
Year 1 survey, this served as their Year 2 start of year survey. The start of year survey collected information about students’ understanding of their Jewish identities, connections to Israel/American Jewry, sense of Jewish peoplehood, and expectations for the program. End of year surveys asked about involvement in and reactions to program elements, attitudes toward and connections to peers from their partner school, and current thinking about Jewish identity and peoplehood.

At the two American schools, all students for whom parental consent was obtained were invited to complete surveys. In Israel surveys were reviewed and authorized by the Chief Scientist office of the Ministry of Education, which in the case of anonymous surveys does not require parent permission. Students at the four schools completed paper and pencil start and end of year surveys during the regular school day. Multiple attempts were made at each school to account for students who might not be available on any particular date scheduled for data collection. Response rates, calculated as the portion of students for whom parental consent was obtained, are very good to excellent ranging from 68% for American students (final sample of 348) to 95% for Israeli students (final sample of 417).

In each of the four schools studied, travel opportunities were available to the students in only one grade. In two schools juniors were eligible to travel; in one school this opportunity was open to ninth graders, and in the fourth school to tenth grade students. Logistical limitations to the number of students that could take part in a travel delegation meant that some students in the designated grade for each school did not travel, although they participated in online and Skype exchanges, classes, or encounters with students traveling from the partner school to their community. The analyses presented in this paper focus on the Year 2 students in the grades that were eligible for travel. Based on the findings of the first year of the study, these participants were further divided into two categories; those that were involved but did not travel to the partner school (Involved Non-Travelers) and those that took part in a travel delegation (Travelers). Table 1 provides the number of students in each category for whom survey data is available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Type of Participation</th>
<th>Participants with Survey Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Americans</td>
<td>Travelers</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involved Non-Travelers</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israelis</td>
<td>Travelers</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involved Non-Travelers</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

Comprised of educational and experiential elements, peoplehood interventions, such as the school twinning initiative studied, have the potential to affect many aspects of student understanding and identity. We begin by looking at the impact of the program on participants exploration of their Jewish identity and then consider the impact of the program on widening spheres of attachment starting with connections to peers from the partner school and moving to attachment to the partner community as a whole and then transnational Jewish peoplehood. As will be demonstrated, a major determinant of each of these outcomes was the manner in which students participated and specifically whether or not they traveled outside of their home country as part of the program. It is important to note that the findings to be discussed cannot be explained by differences in the travel histories of the two groups. For example, the portion of Travelers and Involved Non-Travelers that report prior international travel or even visits to their partner country is not significantly different. In other words, the findings of this study do not simply reflect the impact of leaving one’s home country for the first time or even of an inaugural visit to the partner country.

Exploring Jewish Identity

One of the goals of this school twinning initiative, especially salient among the two Israeli schools, was to encourage their students to think about their Jewish identity and to expand their awareness of a variety of ways to enact this identity. For the Israeli students there is a clear effect for traveling on perceptions of how much the program fostered thought about their Jewish identity and observance (Figure 1). Israeli Travelers were significantly more positive in their ratings of the extent to which the experience encouraged them to think about their Jewish identity, helped them explore new ways of acting on their Jewish identity, and expanded their understanding of Jewish observance in their partner country as compared with Involved Non-Travelers. In their responses to open ended questions, Israeli Travelers commonly noted that they found it very meaningful to experience first-hand the diversity of ways in which Judaism is practiced in the United States.

Equivalent impact was not seen for exploration of Jewish identity among American students regardless of whether or not they travelled. This should not be surprising given that both of the American schools, a day school and a supplementary school, already had an explicit focus on Jewish education and identity development. Their students were already exposed to ongoing programming to enhance their Jewish identity. By contrast, for Israeli students re-examination of Jewish identity is difficult to accomplish within the bounds of their school experience. Both of the Israeli schools belong to the secular sector of the Israeli education system and engage “Jewishness” primarily from the cultural and national perspective rather than from a religious or personal identity perspective. The revelatory experience for these students takes place in the settings for Jewish religious and communal life that they encounter in their American partner community and in their observations of the diversity of ways in which their American peers think about and act on their Jewish identity.
Figure 1: Exploration of Jewish Identity: Israeli Students

Another central goal of the program especially for the Israeli schools was to bring discourse on Jewish identity to the forefront and to establish Jewish peoplehood language as an alternative to the prevailing ethos of nationalism and Israeli Zionism and to the contested language of religious identity. Both American and Israeli Travelers as compared with peers that did not travel indicate more frequent inclusion of Jewish identity as a part of their dialogue with peers and family (Figure 2).
Developing Understanding and Connections

At the heart of many school twinning experiences is an authentic encounter with the “other” that has the potential to lead to the kind of deep understanding that Israeli author David Grossman (2008) describes as “the desire to know the other from within him. To feel what it means to be another person.” Whether they take place in person in Israel or Boston, or through videoconference or on-line conversations, facilitated educational encounters are an essential ingredient of school twinning programs and are intended to develop mutual understanding of their similarities and differences and to create lines of personal connection between students in the two communities. As shown in Figure 3, students who travelled as part of the program were significantly more positive about the extent to which their experience educated them about the lives of their peers and gave them the opportunity to develop personal connections with these fellow students, as compared with Involved Non-Travelers.
In start and end of year surveys students were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about the similarities and differences between American and Israeli Jewish youth. From start to end of the program both Travelers and Involved Non-Travelers increased their endorsement of a statement relating to the differences between Israeli and American teens (Figure 4). At the end of the year Travelers also indicated significantly stronger agreement as compared with Involved Non-Travelers. However, when we consider perceptions of similarity, the picture is quite different. From start to end of year, Travelers come to see significantly greater commonality between teens from the two communities while Involved Non-Travelers show significant declines in this assessment. The combination of increases in both perceived similarities and differences observed among Travelers might seem contradictory but can also be interpreted as evidence that these students have developed a more realistic and nuanced understanding of what they do and do not have in common with peers from the partner country.
Perhaps the best measure of the strength of connections made between students is whether they continue to have contact outside of the formal program. In end of year surveys students were asked to indicate how often they had different forms of contact with peers from their partner school. The impact of traveling is seen clearly on this behavioral measure of connection. Travelers, as compared with Involved Non-Travelers were significantly more likely in the prior three months to talk outside of class, look at or post messages to the Facebook™ or other social networking pages of peers from their partner school, or post to or read posts in chat rooms or blogs of their peers (Figure 5).
Figure 5: Continued Contact between Students

When we look at students’ connections to the more abstract referent of Israeli or American peers the pattern of findings again reflects the impact of travel experiences. Students were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about how comfortable and connected they feel to peers from their partner country. As indicated in Figure 6, students who traveled to the partner country indicated significantly stronger endorsement of these statements as compared with program participants who did not travel.
Figure 6: Connection to Peers from Israel/US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable interacting</td>
<td>4.3***</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with peers from Israel/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the US</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected to peers from</td>
<td>3.6***</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel/the US</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Attachment to Partner Community/Country**

School twinning programs intend for their students to develop a sense of attachment to their partner community or country (Israel and American Jewry). Students who traveled ended the year with significant increases in their emotional attachment to the partner country while Involved Non-Travelers showed almost no change on this important outcome (Figure 7).
Jewish Peoplehood

One of the overarching goals of this school twinning initiative was to foster students’ understanding that they are part of a larger Jewish people. In order to measure changes in participants’ sense of Jewish peoplehood, a set of assessment scales were developed specifically for this research (Chertok, Mittelberg, Laron, & Koren, 2012). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis identified four robust components of Jewish peoplehood: Belonging to the Jewish People, Connection to Other Jews, Personal Responsibility, and Jewish Capital (Table 2). Each of the resulting Peoplehood Scales showed a very good level of internal consistency ($\alpha=.72-.93$).
Table 2: Jewish Peoplehood Scales and Items

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

With regard to peoplehood, the only significant changes from start to end of year were for the Connection to other Jews scale and this finding was observed only among Travelers (Figure 8). Findings of this study also indicate that neither encounters with peers alone nor combined with travel resulted in substantial enhancement of the other aspects of students’ sense of Jewish peoplehood. This data suggest that several important aspects of peoplehood, sense of belonging to or responsibility for the transnational Jewish people, do not directly follow from interpersonal encounters or from learning about a specific Diaspora or Israeli community. In other words, there is a qualitative difference between the “living bridges” that school twinning programs seek to build between students in the two communities, and the sense that one belongs to and bears responsibility for Jews worldwide.
Leaving Home Together: The Dynamic Tensions of Educational Travel

The findings of our research support the potential of peoplehood interventions for both Israeli and American teens but also indicate that travel may be a critical ingredient. Students who traveled to the partner country, as compared with schoolmates who were involved but did not travel, were more positive about how much the program contributed to their understanding of the lives of peers, and their thoughts about their own Jewish identity and observance. Travelers were also more likely to stay in contact with peers from their partner school. Beyond connections to individual peers, Travelers ended the program with increased emotional attachment to the partner country while Involved Non-Travelers showed almost no change on this dimension.

How then do we understand the importance of travel in the experience and outcomes for these students? Unlike the Israel experience of individual tourists the students we studied travelled in a particular context. Specifically, students in school twinning programs do not “leave home” by themselves but instead experience travel in the company of a group composed of students from one’s own country as well as peers from the partner country. The setting for this travel experience is one that may be ideally suited to put into motion a set of dynamic tensions that comprise important causal mechanisms in homeland/Diaspora tourism and that may also distinguish this form of travel from other trips that teens may have experienced. It is important to note that the importance of these tensions is not in their resolution but in their role as sources of motivation and energy that can be leveraged toward the goals of peoplehood education.
Comfort in the Midst of Discomfort

The power of international travel as an agency of educational intervention particularly within the Israel experience has long been recognized (Mittelberg, 1988). Traveling to a foreign country is a disruption of one’s day to day context and casts habits of thought and behavior into a new light (Verplanken et al., 2008). Travelers confront the existential challenge of constructing familiarity out of strangeness along cognitive, normative, and social dimensions. Separated from their own culture and the behavioral and relational anchors of identity, there is the potential for travelers to enter a liminal “space” where boundaries, norms, and role relationships are loosened and open to re-examination (Szakolczai, 2009). The impetus to explore new perspectives and attitudes and to learn new behaviors always begins with this type of confrontation with information that disconfirms assumptions, expectations, or self-appraisal (Lewin, 1951; Schein, 1995). While critically important, however, the presence of disconfirming information is not sufficient to induce most individuals or groups to undergo the process of change. Indeed tourists often chose to travel and experience the host country from within a constructed “environmental bubble” that serves to assuage the threatening aspects of the unfamiliar and disconfirming (Mittelberg, 1988). The prospect of restructuring attitudes, expectations and behaviors often engenders anxiety about the potential for exposure of incompetence and challenges to self-esteem and self-efficacy. Many change theorists (Schein, 1995, Prochaska & DiClemente, 1984) suggest that managing this anxiety and establishing a sense of “psychological safety” within the learning process is critical to its success.

Travel outside of one’s homeland but in the company of a mixed (guest and host) peer group may provide the ideal setting for the juxtaposition of comfort and discomfort as teens explore radically different perspectives in the company of a supportive group. Wang (1999) describes the need for an ‘emotional community’ and reminds us that tourists “search for the authenticity of, and between, themselves” (p. 364, emphasis in the original). The safety net of the tourist group may help students in peoplehood programs to navigate rather than avoid the disruption inherent in international travel. The presence of peers from the host country provides visitors with an insider’s view, making the unfamiliar more accessible and less threatening.

Confronting Commonality and Difference

School twinning initiatives bring together groups of students that see themselves as belonging to the same Jewish people, but at the same time face inherent, but not always obvious differences in culture and experience. Cultural groups differ along multiple dimensions including language, worldview, values, normative patterns of relationship, and in the ways that they perceive and weight information (Triandis, 2006). The goal of peoplehood interventions might be described as developing “intercultural bridging” the process of granting legitimacy to differences, displaying mutual respect and openness and raising self-awareness of assumptions and beliefs (Banks & McGee Banks, 2001). Participation in a travel delegation confronts students with the juxtaposition between their common history and heritage and the differences between the groups in terms of culture, understandings, and forms of Jewish identity. Recent research on the encounter between Diaspora and Israeli participants on Taglit-Birthright Israel programs highlights the critical role of shared activities, informal interaction and the opportunity to explore commonalities such as youth culture and familiarity with Jewish holidays, as well as differences in political viewpoint or daily activities (Sasson, Mittelberg, Hecht & Saxe, 2011).
The literature on intergroup relations suggests several social psychological mechanisms that may be invoked in mixed travel groups. Contact is considered one of the most effective strategies for improving intergroup relations and understanding (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 2003). Specifically productive are situations that allow participants to develop personal relationships (Brewer & Miller, 1984). In the case of peoplehood programs, getting to know peers from the partner community as individuals personalizes the experience and the trust developed can be leveraged to disconfirm stereotypes and break down social categories (Miller, 2002). As a result, students from each community can better see the points of commonality with their peers. The process of beginning to understand “the other” paves the way for the realization that American and Israeli Jews share a common Jewish cultural language and in the process enhances each other's stock of Jewish capital.

However, the goal of peoplehood education is not to eliminate awareness of the differences that exist in different Jewish communities but instead to simultaneously affirm both similarities and differences. A balance needs to be struck between personalizing interchanges between participants and maintaining the positive distinctiveness and interdependence of both groups (Hewstone & Brown, 1986). Travel to the partner community and experiencing the distinctive elements of its Jewish life in the company of hosting peers has great potential for maintaining this productive tension. Our findings suggest that both American andIsraeliTravelers get to know the places, activities, and people that comprise the lives of their peers and this experience concretizes both the similarities and differences between Israeli and American peers.

**Connections to Home-land, Homeland and Peoplehood**

Younger Americans have lower levels of attachment to Israel and their Israeli peers have less sense of connection to the Diaspora than their elders. Although the majority of Israeli Jewish adults believe that Jews in Israel and the Diaspora share a common fate (Levy, Levinsohn & Katz, 2000) over half of secular Israeli high school students reject this idea (Cohen, 2008). Less than one third of American Jewish adolescents feel that being Jewish for them is strongly related to caring for Israel (Kadushin, Kelner & Saxe, 2000). In addition, recent research on the service commitments and intentions of Jewish young adults found that only a small portion indicated support of Israel as a cause about which they care deeply (Chertok, Gerstein, Tobias, Rosin & Boxer, 2011).

The goal of peoplehood interventions is to build multiple and synergistic connections between students and the Jewish homeland, their own home-land and the transnational Jewish people. The current research with high school students suggests that the dialogue engendered in these programs may help students from both Israeli and American communities understand and deal with the complexity of individual and communal Jewish identity—an identity that embodies cultural, national, and religious components and affiliations. Research on Taglit-Birthright Israel suggests that the experience of traveling to Israel encourages participants to reflect on their feelings about the Jewish people and to reconsider how their personal story fits into the larger Jewish narrative (Saxe & Chazan, 2008; Kelner, 2010). Heritage tours to the home country serve to reinforce the ethnic identity of travelers. Indeed Hollingshead (1998) argues that "travel and tourism have crucial roles to play reflexively in the process of learning and self-discovery that define the fluid, constantly unfolding nature of
diaspora identities" (cited by Coles and Timothy 2004, p13). We would add that these effects can be seen for both homeland and diaspora identities.

However, it is also clear from the current research that interventions such as the one studied are not sufficient for “moving the needle” on peoplehood. Belonging to and responsibility for the larger, transnational Jewish people is an abstract concept and one that may take more explicit intervention to achieve. The educational theorist Lee Shulman (1987) draws a distinction between content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge that is germane to the development of peoplehood as an area of teaching. For Shulman, content knowledge – a mastery of the facts, concepts, and paradigms within a subject area – is the foundation for teaching, but is not, in itself, sufficient. In addition teachers need to have pedagogical content knowledge which refers to their repertoire of strategies to make a subject, especially its more abstract content, accessible to learners (Shulman, 1987). Work needs to be done to develop the pedagogical content knowledge related to peoplehood and to articulate the scaffolding techniques, strategies, and tools that teachers can employ to directly transmit the concepts of peoplehood.

**Concluding Thoughts**

Jewish peoplehood programs stand at the interface between the private and the public, the religious and the secular, the particular and universalistic aspects of Jewishness and perhaps most importantly between Israel and its Diasporas. Although Israel and Diaspora Jewry have different challenges with regard to Jewish continuity, modern Jewish identity is incomplete without the contribution of both communities and peoplehood interventions may represent a common and shared solution. Israel represents a partner for enriching Diaspora Jewish consciousness and provides a manifestation of Jewish sovereignty which is nonreplicable beyond Israel’s borders. Peoplehood interventions also hold great promise for Israeli society. A significant part of the Jewish identity crisis in Israel resides in the absence of a sense of belonging, both to the global Jewish people and to one’s local Jewish community. Any serious grappling among Israelis with the issue of their own Jewish identity and culture benefits from dialogue with Jewish peers from the Diaspora.

The current research suggests that school twinning and in particular travel to both homeland and Diaspora in the company of peers from the partner community holds great promise for furthering the peoplehood education agenda. The productive tensions fostered within this type of educational travel allow students to navigate the discomfort of encountering a different culture and different ways of being Jewish. The dynamic interplay of similarities and differences between American and Israeli teens provides the backdrop for positive intergroup encounters and appreciation of what each community has to offer in the authentic expression of Jewish identity.

**References**


