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Who Will Teach When There Aren't Enough Teachers?

A seminar at the Mandel Leadership Institute brings together scholars and teachers to discuss teacher shortage in Israel and in Jewish communities around the world

Alternative teacher-training programs, distance learning for pupils and for teachers in training, and attempts to increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession – these were some of the suggested responses to the perceived shortage of high-caliber teachers proposed at the all-day seminar titled "Who Will Teach When There Aren't Enough Teachers?," hosted at the Mandel Foundation-Israel's Leadership Institute.

The seminar, which brought together scholars and educators from Israel and the US, was convened by the Initiative for Applied Research in Education, at the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities (The Initiative). The backdrop to the seminar was our concern that in this period of economic retrenchment, teacher training programs were being cut back, exacerbating the shortage of well trained educators.

In preparation for the event, a team of experts headed by Prof. Ruhama Even of the Weizmann Institute researched the situation. The team also included Dr. Analia Schlosser from Tel Aviv University and Dr. Jennifer Lewis from the University of Michigan.



Annette Hochstein: Public discourse needs analytical and factual input

“We know that the public discourse and the discussion among decision-makers lack sufficient analytical and factual input,” stated Annette



Hochstein, president of Mandel Foundation-Israel, in her opening remarks. “We therefore approached the Initiative for Applied Research in Education, headed by Mandel graduate Dr. Avital Darmon, and asked if they would provide a background picture about alternative routes into education, both in the Israeli educational system and Jewish education abroad, and thus point to possible options for addressing the shortage at this time. Such alternative routes are increasingly in use”.

Several panels and workshops were held during the day:

Accelerated training programs

Accelerated teacher-training programs designed to attract high-caliber personnel to intensive short-term training opportunities, were discussed at the panel on Different Paths For Entering the Teaching Profession. Caution was raised to the effect that such programs work best when developed in response to specific needs and specific target audiences. Some participants expressed concern that, while the shorter and more intensive training period could bring talented young people into the field for at least a few years, there was danger of a “de-academization” of teacher-training resulting from the shortened training period. It was felt that this could detract from the knowledge of teachers and the status of the teaching profession.

Harnessing technology: distance learning

Distance learning was put forward as an emerging alternative - giving pupils, as well as teachers-in-training, access to top teachers and academics while allowing flexibility in terms of time and location. The possibility of tailoring online courses to the individual’s interests, pace, and level, provides an added advantage. However, several participants were quick to point out that the absence of interaction between teachers and pupil/teacher-in-training is a critical drawback. Interesting examples were offered of experimental and pilot programs, both in Israel and in Jewish education



around the world. However, the sense was that this field is still in its infancy, is highly decentralized and, at this time, lacks standardization. More time and experience will be required to learn about the opportunity.

Is there a shortage of new teachers in the system?

It was noted that in North America, Jewish schools with a credo, a clear vision, and a distinct organizational identity attract and keep high-caliber teachers, indicating that the challenge of teacher shortage may be linked to work conditions and incentives rather than to the profession. Continuing education for Jewish educators and the creation of communities of "learning teachers" can and do enhance initial training.

The effectiveness of alternative teacher programs was challenged by Adam Gamoran, professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin at Madison and a member of the international advisory committee of the Mandel Foundation, who noted that their added value is likely a function of their initial selectivity compared to the standard teacher training programs.



Prof. Adam Gamoran:
The focus should be on
the professional
development

According to Gamoran, the teacher shortage is the result of a 'revolving door,' where a large number of people are entering the profession and a large number of people are leaving in the same short period of time. He therefore suggests that the focus should be on the professional development of those already in the educational system and less on the recruitment of new teachers.

“The systemic challenge for education in Israel and for Jewish education is how to stop the ‘revolving door’ and to keep good people in the system,” he concluded.



Creating a social entrepreneurship network to promote urban and community development

First time in Israel –intensive local leadership development program for residents who are not government employees.

Twenty residents of Eilat and the environs - educators, businesspeople, media figures, army officers, and social entrepreneurs - recently completed the two-year Mandel Community Leadership Development Program in Eilat, a joint initiative of the Eilat municipality and the Mandel Center for Leadership in the Negev.



Participants, who were chosen in part on the basis of their involvement in the region - in social affairs, education, economics, the environment, social services, culture, the media, etc. - undertook to contribute to the Eilat area for three years after the end of the program. “We have to encourage initiatives and partnerships with social entrepreneurs,” stated Mayor Meir Yitzhak Halevy at the graduation ceremony. “This is the only way we can move Eilat forward.”

Designed to training a community of high-caliber leaders capable of working together and separately to spearhead change and help upgrade the city, the program dealt with diverse issues relating to Israel in general, but specifically to Eilat. These included local government and civil society, multiculturalism, socioeconomic gaps and their impact on educational indicators, social services, immigrant absorption, and resort towns. The group also examined issues of social planning and leadership and learned how to effect change.



This is the first time that a local leadership development program in Israel has targeted residents who are not local government employees. "The idea behind the program was to promote the city's development by encouraging the active involvement of local residents," says Dr. Itzhak (Kiki) Aharonovich, program director, "and to stimulate new ideas that have breadth of vision, to give them a platform, and to provide the tools needed to actualize them."

"Until I took part in the program, I thought mainly on the micro level and worked alone," says Aviva Dekel, who started the Neve Tom project. "The program made me think on the macro level and proved the importance and effectiveness of teamwork." The project, named for her son Tom, who fell while serving in the army, helps lone soldiers in Eilat without family in Israel, among others.

The impact of the Mandel program was confirmed by Alfred Michaelovich, director of Youth Advancement in Eilat: "We came out with lots of motivation to change things. Not to wait for things to happen on their own, but to strive to promote new initiatives."

"The program provided the tools to work toward a vision based on a long-range perspective, the principles of justice and equality, the elimination of barriers, and a better quality of life in the city as a right, instead of shooting from the hip," explains Jacob Steinberg, director of the Mandel Center for Leadership in the Negev.

Noting that a city's strength depends in large measure on community leadership, together with cooperation between the municipality and the community, the Mayor stressed his commitment to the Mandel program and his desire to initiate additional programs of this sort.

To read more about the Mandel Center for Leadership in the Negev see: www.mlc-negev.org.il



Education and Employment in Multi-Cultural Environments

A group of Mandel Graduates attended, in Brussels, a course on "managing diversity" in multi-cultural environments

The Mandel Foundation–Israel, in conjunction with The European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), organized a course for 20 Mandel Leadership Institute graduates —school principals and educational and social leaders—on “Managing Diversity.” The focus was on managing diversity in educational systems and employment in a society with multiple cultures and ethnic groups.



The course introduced the participants to methods for managing diversity in different contexts and covered the role of principals and other professionals who work in settings that are culturally, ethnically, and educationally diverse. It included in-depth analyses of topics such as managing diversity in preschool, elementary school, and higher education and inside organizations and in the labor market.

These topics were chosen because they accurately represent the challenges that Mandel graduates who are principals and educational leaders grapple with in the course of their jobs as educators, policymakers, administrators, and teachers.



Social and cultural diversity within schools, particularly in Israeli society, raises questions concerning policies, resources, group identity, and curricular differences. “Although Israel has been wrestling with diversity in education



for the past 60 years, the participants were sent to Europe because there are additional [aspects] worth being exposed to,” explains Granit Almog Bareket, one of the organizers of the course. According to her, the aim is to encourage educational administrators to develop a different vision, one that strives to realize the potential benefits of diversity.

Mendy Rabinowitz, the outgoing principal of Hadassah Neurim, describes the challenge in the Israeli context. In his words, “In Israel, there is insufficient acceptance of diversity, of otherness, and there is much debate on the subject.” According to him, the course offered a broader perspective. “We learned how they conduct planning and thinking processes in



Europe—the minute they identify a problem they address the challenge seriously, building creative solutions and ways of thinking.. We in Israel could learn from this.” The question of how to translate and implement the management of diversity in the Israeli setting was part of the participants’ agenda. “In the European Union the issue of diversity is a top priority,” notes Yehuda Maimran, the founder of the Morasha network. “The question is how to import this to Israel. The discussions in Brussels granted a kind of professional legitimacy to the issue, a sense that this is indeed an important issue that many people are struggling with all over the world.”

Many resources were invested in the seminar. The lecturers—experts from leading universities around the world, such as INSEAD and Oxford—came specially to Brussels to teach the Israelis.

"In my work as a principal I deal with a lot of diversity among pupils, teachers, and parents,” says Orly Fruchter-Yagodovsky, principal of the Kesem school. “The Mandel course in Brussels stimulated me to change my ideas. This year I intend to invest a lot in the issue of diversity in the



classroom, as a subject to be taught and in work with pupils from heterogeneous groups.”

“There are 1,400 pupils in my school, and there is great diversity among them,” says Hezi Sagiv. “The Mandel course in Brussels was very helpful in getting us to reflect on the subject of diversity. In the coming year I will do a better job of mapping diversity in my school. We will identify pupils who need different treatment. We will emphasize patience, tolerance, and openness. I thank the Graduates Unit for this opportunity. This was a special opportunity to participate in the program and to spend time in an academic institution in Brussels.”

The Mandel Graduates Unit works to further the professional level of Mandel graduates so that they can go on to develop educational and social initiatives. One of the Unit’s objectives is to build a community of graduates that will serve as a network and an impetus for collaboration and learning among the graduates. The Brussels course was another stage in the community’s development: “The encounter between graduates of different years and in diverse fields makes it possible for the participants to forge significant new ties among themselves,” relates Michal Shavit, principal of Hayovel junior high school in Mevasseret Ziyon. “There were wonderful conditions in the seminar for thought-oriented learning.”



How Does One Translate International Ideas for the Local Israeli Context?

Throughout the course in Brussels the organizers, lecturers, and graduates dealt with the question of how to translate a European approach to administration or education for use in the Israeli environment and Israeli society. One of the conclusions reached in other courses of the Graduates Unit (such as graduate courses that took place at the Sorbonne) is that the way to contextualize different approaches is to study them as a team, as a community that includes professionals from a variety of educational enterprises in Israel and constitute a sort of microcosm of Israeli society.

The great diversity and learning together in a workshop format throughout the course provided a new perspective on the implementation and translation of foreign ideas. The last day of the Brussels course was devoted to a workshop with international experts who discussed the difficulties, challenges, and characteristics of Israel society, and how European approaches and methods of managing diversity can be applied in various ways in Israel.

“The diverse fields and professional backgrounds of the members of the graduates group, not to mention of the instructors and international experts who lectured to us, expand the basis of our knowledge as graduates and leverage our ability to make progress on issues that are at the core of our educational and social endeavors,” summed up Nasser Abu Safi, an Education Ministry inspector for the Arab sector.

To read more about the Mandel Graduate Unit see:
<http://mandel.mli.org.il/MandelCMS/English/GraduateUnit>



Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland Leader, Cleveland International Film Festival Received Nonprofit Awards from Mandel Center for Nonprofit Organizations

Recipients of the 2009 Leadership in Nonprofit Management Award and Organization Innovation Award, presented by the Mandel Center for Nonprofit Organizations at Case Western Reserve University, fill special niches in social services and cultural arts in the Cleveland nonprofit scene.

This year's recipient of the Leadership Award is Stephen H. Hoffman, President of the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland, for his contributions and service as a leader of Cleveland's prestigious philanthropic and social service organization.



The Award winners
Photo by: [Joseph W. Darwal](#)
[Photography](#)

The Organization Award went to the Cleveland International Film Festival (CIFF) for its innovative work as a community organization, including notable achievements in audience participation and drawing national attention. Hoffman and CIFF received the honors at the Mandel Center's annual Nonprofit Awards event on Tuesday, September 29, at the Ballroom at Park Lane Villa in Cleveland. Members of the community were invited to attend the reception, which featured keynote speaker Diana Aviv, president and CEO of Independent Sector—a national leadership forum for America's nonprofit and philanthropic organizations.

During her talk, Aviv explored the cascading effects of the recession on the nonprofit community at the local, regional and national levels. Hear about ways to transform the nonprofit sector's difficulties into an opportunity for the sector to reinvent itself.



Stephen H. Hoffman

"Steve leads by example, modeling values that have come to define the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland," notes Harley Gross, the Federation's Board Chair.

Hoffman is a leader in the local Jewish community, as well as the wider Cleveland community and elsewhere. His leadership and innovative initiatives as president of the Jewish Federation over the past 25 years have earned him national recognition as the "dean" of Federation directors in North America. He is considered one of the most respected Jewish community professionals worldwide.

His service reaches beyond Cleveland. He has served as president of the United Jewish Communities (150 Federations and 400 communities) and was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve on the United States delegation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Conference on Anti-Semitism in Berlin.

Locally, Hoffman is involved as a member of the Mandel School of Applied Social Science's Visiting Committee at Case Western Reserve University, the Greater Cleveland Roundtable, United Way Services and the Musical Arts Association (Cleveland Orchestra).

His innovative spirit has led the Federation in new directions in the areas of leadership development, volunteerism, education, next generation outreach and overseas connections. "With Steve's guidance, the Federation has grown its annual fund, resulting in a dramatic increase in funds granted for charitable purposes," says Gross. The Federation gives approximately \$100 million annually to support a variety of activities locally and around the world.

To read more about the Mandel Center for Nonprofit Organizations see: www.case.edu/mandelcenter/

Mandel School Assistant Professor Testifies on Public Housing Research

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity heard about "impressive successes" and "deep challenges" faced by Chicago residents as they move from massive low-income housing projects to mixed-income housing developments.

Mark Joseph, assistant professor at the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, received a special invitation from Maxine Waters, the subcommittee's chair, to inform members about what academic research suggests for the future of the nation's approach to public housing. The Obama administration is beginning its design of the Choice Neighborhoods urban revitalization initiative.



Prof.. Mark Joseph

"I believe the timing is excellent for this hearing on this topic," Joseph told committee members. He has studied the transition during the past five years. Joseph testified that nearly all relocated public housing residents are satisfied with their new housing and have received psychological benefits such as decreased stress from safety concerns and increased aspirations. But, nearly half also experience stress from adhering to strict rules that govern developments: from garbage removal to limiting noise levels for children playing outdoors, he said. Relocated public housing residents have also reported feeling isolated, stigmatized and confronting "us" and "them" attitudes.

Through research with his co-investigators from the University of Chicago, where Joseph did his postdoctoral work before joining the Case Western Reserve University faculty, he found that adjustment to mixed income housing is complex.



Joseph told the committee that success could be measured at five levels:

- Lease and sell all units and sustain a low turnover
- Achieve high resident satisfaction with the physical environment
- Promote interactions and connections among neighbors of all races and incomes
- Advance social and economic mobility among low-income residents
- Generate neighborhood-wide revitalization in the areas surrounding the housing development

Joseph continues to track the transition of relocated public housing residents from Chicago's Henry Horner Homes (public housing) as they make new homes in the federally funded HOPE VI program. These are mixed income developments that Chicago is building in prime neighborhood locations with access to public parks along Lake Michigan.

While the new housing adds value to the city, Joseph raised concerns about the sustainability of the new mixed-income communities. He also talked about how the current housing crisis impacts these new developments.

Joseph noted a few examples such as a freeze in building for-sale units, more investor-owned instead of resident-owned properties, delays in developing neighborhood stores and businesses, and increased evictions due to rent delinquencies.

To read more about the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences see:
<http://msass.case.edu>



Researcher from the Mandel Center at Brandeis Wins Glatzer Prize

'Havruta' in Torah study: How do pairs study a shared text? What are their learning practices

Dr. Orit Kent is awarded Prize for her Dissertation work

WALTHAM, Mass. – The Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education, at Brandeis University, congratulates Senior Research Associate Orit Kent on receiving the 2009 Glatzer Prize for her exceptional dissertation.

The award, presented to Dr. Kent in May by the Near Eastern and Judaic Studies Department at Brandeis, recognizes Dr. Kent's dissertation: "Interactive Text Study and the Co-construction of Meaning: Havruta in the DeLeT Beit Midrash." Dr. Kent's work responds to the problem that, while hevruta is being used in a wide range of educational settings in the United States, it has not been systematically studied to understand how learners work together, how they interpret the text, and how their learning is supported or constrained.



Dr. Kent's research demonstrates the complexity of havruta learning

Dr. Kent's research demonstrates the complexity of havruta and provides a theory of havruta learning, highlighting six central practices - listening, articulating, wondering, focusing, supporting and challenging - and their interplay. Dr. Kent probes some of the ways in which havruta as practiced by adult learners has the potential to engage students in generative, textually grounded interpretations of classical Jewish texts, as well as missed opportunities.



Her ideas can help educators identify for students what good havruta learning looks like and help students better achieve constructive havruta conversations. It also provides other researchers with a framework for further study of this complex and rich phenomena. The dissertation situates her theory of havruta learning in scholarly ideas about learning, text study and progressive education.

Dr. Kent based her research on data she gathered in the Beit Midrash for Teachers at the Mandel Center, which she co-designed and has taught since 2003.

“Her work is highly original and made a significant contribution to the field,” says Jon A. Levisohn, acting director of the Mandel Center and a member of Dr. Kent’s committee of examiners. “The dissertation brings to bear theoretical literature from disparate fields in order to understand a central Jewish educational phenomenon. Dr. Kent’s extremely close and careful analysis of empirical data generates a nuanced theory of hevruta that has immediate implications for practice.” The Mandel Center also awarded Dr. Kent with a writing fellowship to support the development of this dissertation.



The Glatzer Prize is awarded each year to the most exceptional doctoral dissertation in the Near Eastern and Judaic Studies (NEJS) Department that year. Dr. Kent shares the 2009 prize with Karen Auerbach. The prize is named for Nahum Glatzer, who served as the Philip W. Lown Professor of Jewish Thought and as Chairman of the Near Eastern and Judaic Studies Department at Brandeis from 1957 to 1969. Glatzer played a vital role in the shaping and development of the department. The prize has been awarded each May for more than 10 years.



About the Mandel Center at Brandeis - Founded in 2002, at Brandeis University, as the first academic center of its kind, the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education is dedicated to transforming the quality of teaching and learning in Jewish education by supporting practice-centered research, pioneering new models of professional development, and shaping discourse in the study and practice of Jewish education.

To read more about The Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education, at Brandeis University see: www.brandeis.edu/mandel/



Connecting texts and ideas to sites, relics and the ancient past

Annual Mandel Scholion research field trip invites dialogue between interdisciplinary research groups

Thirty researchers, junior and senior, and staff of the Scholion Interdisciplinary Research Center in Jewish Studies of the Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University went on a two day research field trip in the Carmel region.

This year's trip focused on the cultural and economic aspects of life in cities and villages during the Roman and Byzantine periods. The first day included visits to the remains of the ancient city of Caesarea, the Shuni archeological site, and the excavations in the Ramat Hanadiv nature park - agricultural installations at Horvat 'Eleq and a fortified estate manor at Horvat 'Aqav. The second day was spent visiting the remains of the ancient village of Rakit, as well as the ancient Jewish cemetery of Beit Shearim.



Prof. Ze'ev Weiss from the Department of Archaeology, a member of the Scholion research group "On Religions of Place and Religions of Community," who led the trip, along with Dr. Uzi Leibner, a post doctoral fellow at Scholion, explains that it was intended "not just for the sake of visiting archaeological sites, but rather, as an intellectual experience during which texts relating to the sites would be studied."

The subsequent discussions gave participants from diverse disciplines the opportunity to introduce each other to different methods of thought. He notes that "going out into the field with a diverse group of people created a very special dialogue among the researchers. Each one brought a different view into the discussions and came away with something new. Studying the



texts on-site and then discussing those exposed participants to new ways of looking at and understanding texts.”

Prof. Weiss cites, as an example, texts that the group studied in Caesarea about incidents that occurred there thousands of years earlier. While he presented the texts as historical records about the local culture, Prof. Galit Hasan-Rokem from the field of Hebrew Literature presented the same texts as stories rather than actual events that occurred. The ensuing dialogue about the differences between reality and literature enabled the scholars to understand the texts “in a new and different way.” Prof. Hasan-Rokem noted that she “was able to see the historical aspects of the text for the first time.”



“The entire experience,” notes Prof. Weiss, “is what Scholion is all about. The interdisciplinary approach of the research center, which brings scholars from various fields together in order to study and deliberate, exposes them to new ways of thinking and provides for a very special dialogue amongst diverse thinkers.”

For more information about the Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies see: www.scholion.huji.ac.il/eng/

Camp Wise University: More than an Oxymoron

By Dr. Jeffrey Schein, Siegal College of Judaic Studies, Cleveland, Ohio

Camp Wise University – this was the moniker fondly bestowed on a pioneering new program that was initiated this summer - the product of a unique collaboration between Camp Wise - the residential camp of the Mandel Jewish Community Center in Cleveland, the Melton Center for Jewish Studies and education department of Ohio State University, and Siegal College of Judaic Studies.

In a seamless interface between formal Jewish learning, informal Jewish studies, and secular education, twelve college students were given the opportunity to serve as counselors and specialty staff at Camp Wise, while simultaneously exploring their Jewish identity and studying Jewish texts pertaining to such camp experiences through programming on topics relating to Judaism and Israel.



Camp Wise advocated for the program as part of its effort to strengthen the Jewish focus of the camp. “Our best camp staff are often pulled away from camp because of the need to take classes in the summer,” says director Jodi Sperling, “and partnering with Siegal College and Ohio State made it possible to offer a course for credit. This course [enabled] them to do both. We create opportunities for them to grow Jewishly while they're with us.”

The Camp is driven by many of the same basic beliefs that are fundamental to the Mandel Foundation - developing educational leadership and strengthening agents of Jewish education, while stressing the importance of vision in guiding an educational institution. The Mandel Foundation’s investment in the JCCA Mandel Center for Jewish Education and professional development throughout the Cleveland Jewish community were critical ingredients in the success of Camp Wise University.



The Mandel Center at JCCA, actually served as a catalyst for the project through its highly successful Lekhu Lakhem fellows initiative - an intensive two year program of retreats, mentoring, and an Israel seminar devoted to Jewish learning and the development of a Jewish lens for camp life for day camp directors. Jodi Sperling Director of Camp Wise and Dr. Jeffrey Schein, respectively participant and senior consultant in the Lekhu Lakhem programs sought to replicate this experience for camp counselors who have daily contact with Jewish children and to drive Judaic learning down to the grass roots level.

Through its 'Mahar' project for Jewish professional development, the Siegal College of Jewish Studies, the convener of the project and the primary designer of its educational and Jewish content, provided academic scholarships for the project participants.

Six of the participants were from Ohio State University; the others were from schools in Florida and Michigan. They earned three academic credits for the program.

Camping through a Jewish lens

“The course allowed the students to see Jewish camping through a completely new lens, and gave them the language to express the impact camp has had on their own Jewish journey,” adds Sperling. “It helped them to reflect thoughtfully on the creation of an immersive Jewish space, and their role in creating that for their campers. It made camp more than just "camp"; it validated ... that Jewish overnight camp is a crucial component of the Jewish identity development of their campers.”

In addition to talking about community building and Jewish identity, the counselors at Camp Wise University lived these issues, using Jewish texts to build their skills and to enhance their own sense of Jewish identity and that of their campers. The application of the Jewish learning to everyday life



created a powerful learning experience. “This was my first time studying Talmud,” noted one of the counselors, “It was really cool, especially when it related to real camp dilemmas.”

Dr. David Stein, professor of education and human ecology at Ohio State University summarizes: “Living, learning, and reflecting on Jewish texts, coupled with experiential learning, enabled the counselors to understand Jewish informal learning in ways that could not be accomplished in the classroom.”

To read more about Mandel Jewish Community Center in Cleveland see www.mandeljcc.org

To read more about Siegal College of Judaic Studies see: www.siegalcollege.edu

To read more about the Melton Center for Jewish Studies at Ohio State University see: www.meltoncenter.osu.edu

To read more about Camp Wise see: www.campwise.org/about/mission.html

Mandel Leadership Institute Seminar grapples with role of the Holy Hebrew versus spoken Hebrew

“There is a God!” shout soccer fans as their team scores a goal. A commonplace phenomenon in Israel, such exclamations present a conundrum for scholars of Hebrew. Is this holy or secular language? “Hebrew is one language with many uses,” concludes writer Avi Katzman.

Katzman was responding to a film entitled *Language sacre, language parle* by Nurith Aviv, in which prominent cultural figures present their views on the sacred and the secular in Hebrew - as part of a one-day seminar at the Mandel Leadership Institute focusing on the role of *lashon ha-kodesh* ["the holy tongue"] versus the secular Hebrew spoken in modern day Israel.



The seminar, “Holy Language-Secular Language” – whose name was inspired by the title of the film – brought together Mandel Leadership Institute fellows from various frameworks: the School for Educational Leadership, Jerusalem Fellows, and the IDF Educational Leadership program. They, together with Mandel faculty members, were asked to address various questions about the role of *lashon ha-kodesh* (Should it have a place? What does it sound like? How should it be learned and taught?) Based on personal reflection as well as professional and learning experiences that introduced them to a Hebrew that combines both the sacred and the secular.



Dr. Eli Gottlieb:
Illuminating the latent,
hidden aspects of daily life.

Acknowledging that was a particularly challenging task, requiring participants to find an alternative to language in the same language that they were speaking, Dr. Eli Gottlieb, director of the Mandel Leadership



Institute, explained: “This is a kind of studying is meant to illuminate the latent, hidden aspects of daily life, to challenge the obvious, and to think deeply about seemingly trivial phenomena.”

The Hebrew we speak is one of many

Prof. Ariel Hirschfeld of the Hebrew University started the seminar by teaching the story “Three Sisters” by Agnon, whose use of the Hebrew language connects elements of the sacred and the secular.



Prof. Hirschfeld:
Hebrew combines
sacred and secular
elements

Dr. Daniel Marom, director of Mandel’s Visions Unit which organized the seminar, focused on the “language war” in the early years of Zionism. Discussions sometimes ignored the fact that a debate raged not only between proponents of Hebrew as opposed to other languages, he noted, but also among the champions of Hebrew regarding the nature of the language they were proposing.

This debate dealt with philosophical issues regarding the role of language in the lives of individuals, society, and the nation; the place of language in the educational priorities of the “new Jew”; the uniqueness of Hebrew; and the challenges of life in Hebrew in the modern world.



Dr. Daniel Marom:
Language creates
meaning

The conception of Hebrew that won out was goal-oriented, economical, practical, and easy - a working tool that facilitated the efficient accomplishment of the tasks at hand, a language needed to lay the foundations for a sustainable, sovereign Jewish state. Nonetheless said Marom, the significant achievements of this type of Hebrew came at the expense of elements that are rooted in lashon ha-kodesh: a spiritual-cultural approach to life,



encouragement of discourse with “the other,” and an Israeli identity based on interaction with the classical Jewish texts.

Hebrew as a Practical Language

Participants broke into small groups to hear presentations about efforts to promote the integration of the sacred and the secular in Hebrew. The “Lexicon of Life” project - a dictionary of various kinds of Hebrew - was presented by linguist Ruvik Rosenthal. The “Jerusalem Babylonian” project – a program that enables American and Israeli Jews to study together despite their different languages - was presented by Naama Shaked and Moshe Lorberbaum. Daniel Marom and Dafna Yizrael presented the “Word of the Week” project, a curriculum unit developed by the Visions Unit to teach small children lashon ha-kodesh.

In a special session devoted to Arabic – in recognition of the fact that Israelis from diverse linguistic and religious backgrounds can cooperate in promoting language education in all sectors - Dr. Michal Schleifer and Hawala Sa’adi presented “A Dictionary of Written and Spoken Words in Arabic,” a project developed at the Center for Educational Technology.

The seminar concluded with segments from the Ha-mevin Yavin [Those who understand will understand], a performance featuring Jerusalem Fellow Amichai Lau-Lavie and the members of the Israeli Storahtelling troupe. Linking modern language and sacred text, the play exemplified the fruitful symbiosis between lashon hakodesh and Modern Hebrew.

To read more about the Mandel Leadership Institute see: www.mli.org.il