AUTHOR _Charles Cytron-Walker_

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Jewish Service-Learning:
Integrating *Talmud Torah* and *Ma'aseh*

Charles L. Cytron-Walker

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Ordination
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Referee, Professor Samuel Joseph
Referee, Professor Jonathan Cohen

Digest

The 1999 Statement of Principles of Reform Judaism reflects the call that is made
time and again throughout our biblical and rabbinical teachings when it affirms that, "We
are obligated to pursue *tzedek*, justice and righteousness, and to narrow the gap between
the affluent and the poor, to act against discrimination and oppression, to pursue peace, to
welcome the stranger, to protect the earth's biodiversity and natural resources, and to
redeem those in physical, economic and spiritual bondage." And whether one is seeking
to instill these Jewish values, to teach Jewish activism, or to enhance Jewish identity,
service-learning is an effective pedagogy by which to do so.

Service-learning is an experience-based educational model that combines helping
out or, "service," in one's community with structured learning, in addition to reflection
that integrates the two. While it has been developing over the past forty years in the
secular world, service-learning is just beginning to expand in the Jewish world. The aim
of this thesis is to help advance this pedagogy by creating a practical model for effective
Jewish service-learning based on secular research and Jewish teachings.

Chapter 1 provides the origins and definitions for service-learning, along with
presenting the secular research that describes its potential for positive outcomes.
summary of sixteen Jewish service-learning programs is found in Chapter 2 and Chapter
3 is an exploration of how to transform service-learning into a Jewish activity, including
an evaluation of the Jewish learning component of Jewish service-learning programs.
Based on the best practices for service-learning as defined by secular research and the
experience of practitioners in the field, the final chapter presents nine principles that can
serve as a guideline for Jewish service-learning programs in the future.

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Chapter 1: What is Service-Learning?

Origins and Definitions

Researchers generally ascribe the origins of service-learning[1] to several different philosophies that were developed at the beginning of the twentieth century. Extension education programs,[2] based on the theories of "The Wisconsin Idea," made university resources more responsive to community needs.[3] Many within the field also credit Dewey's progressive educational notion that public schools should build community,[4] and some include the ideas of Jean Piaget and Alexis DeTocqueville.[5]

While these concepts of education reform laid the groundwork, it was not uncommon for those who developed the field of service-learning in the second half of the twentieth century to have been influenced by their own intensive service experiences, such as the Peace Corps, VISTA, or the Civil Rights Movement.[6] As debates raged in the fifties and sixties about the role of education in society and the role of service in education, the pioneers of service-learning struggled with one or more of the following three questions[7]:

- How does education serve society?
- What is the purpose of education in a democracy?
- What is the relationship between service and social change?

Their struggles led to innovative concepts of both "service" and "learning" that challenged traditional notions of volunteerism and education. Instead of setting up a

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[1] Service-learning will defined later in this chapter.
[2] Stanton, Giles, and Cruz, *Service-Learning: A Movement's Pioneers*, 2.
[3] Trechter, *The Wisconsin Idea*, 2-3.
[4] Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*, 7-8; Kraft, "Service Learning: An Introduction," 134-135; Schensul, Berg, and Brase, "Theories Guiding Outcomes," 126; Stanton, Giles, and Cruz, *Service-Learning: A Movement's Pioneers*, 2; Trechter, *The Wisconsin Idea*, 2-3.
[5] Billig; "Research on K-12."
[6] Stanton, Giles, and Cruz, *Service-Learning: A Movement's Pioneers*, 2, 54, 160, 161, 241.
[7] Ibid., 19.

situation where one person comes in from the outside to give charity, volunteering their time to serve the "less fortunate," these pioneers believed that the self-identified needs of the community, should dictate the type of service that is provided.[8] Thus, the "less fortunate" might have an opinion about what their community should look like and how to get there. Critical reflection was employed as a method of getting students to learn meaningful, enduring lessons from service as a form of experiential education.[9] In their work on the origins of the service-learning movement, Stanton, Giles, and Cruz (1999) explain that, "They [service-learning pioneers] invoked theories of Bandura (1977), Coleman (1977), Dewey (1963), Friere (1970, 1973), Kolb (1984), Argyris and Schön (1978), Resnick (1987), Schön (1983, 1987), and others to explain the pedagogical foundations of their practice."[10]

These ideas did not win immediate approval and some of the service-learning pioneers lost their jobs over these new innovations.[11] Despite many obstacles to overcome, in the past twenty years, service-learning practitioners and researchers have continued to expand what has become an increasingly popular pedagogic philosophy and tool. Thanks to a growing infrastructure that developed in the mid-eighties and early nineties in primary, secondary, and higher education (including university partnerships like the creation of Campus Compact and government efforts like The Corporation for National Service), service-learning moved from the periphery into the mainstream.[12] The State of Maryland went as far as to making service-learning a requirement for high school

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[8] Ibid., 3.
[9] Ibid., 4.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid., 144.
[12] Ibid., 5; Titlebaum et al., Annotated History.

graduation in 1992. The following research illustrates the impact that these and other supports have had on the service-learning field.

In 1984, Newmann and Rutter[13] sampled 204 high schools and found that 27% of them offered students some form of community service, with 9% offering service integrated into the curriculum. Fifteen years later, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) found that 64% of all public schools and 83% of all public high schools offered some form of school-sponsored community service. Additionally, nearly one-third of all public primary and secondary schools and almost half of all public high schools offered some form of curriculum-based service-learning.[14]

While the growth in the number of schools offering service and service-learning programs is striking, the terminology used in the two surveys helps to illustrate the weakness in comparing these two surveys and introduces a problem with definitions. The Newmann/Rutter survey uses the phrases, "service integrated into the curriculum," while the NCES actually uses the phrase "service-learning." Unfortunately, we cannot assume that both of these studies refer to the same educational method. "Service integrated into the curriculum" could refer to a curricular requirement where a student completes forty hours of service over the course of the semester or it could refer to a comprehensive service-learning program that incorporates structured classroom learning and critical reflection into the service experience. The difficulty with definitions occurs when "service integrated into the curriculum" is considered identical to service-learning.[15] Skinner and Chapman define service-learning with the understanding that teachers will, "assist students in drawing lessons from the service through regularly scheduled,

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[13] "A Profile of High School."
[14] Skinner and Chapman, "Service-Learning and Community Service," 1.
[15] Shumer and Cook, "The Status of Service-Learning."

organized reflection or critical analysis activities, such as classroom discussions, presentations, or directed writing."[16] This is a far cry from a requirement to simply complete a specified number of service hours.

The complexity involved with defining service-learning is only understood with the realization that as of 1990, there were no less than 147 different definitions for service-learning.[17] This is partially due to those who equate any type of service in the community as service-learning, but most of the disagreements amongst researchers and practitioners revolve around understanding the purpose of service-learning. For example, practitioners in the late 1960's viewed service-learning as values education.[18] Recalling that the service-learning pioneers struggled with three major questions, these practitioners focused on the relationship between service and social change.

One of the earliest definition in the literature, the 1969 Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) defined service-learning as "the accomplishment of tasks that meet genuine human needs in combination with conscious educational growth."[19] They wanted their students to feed hungry people, and by encouraging "conscious educational growth," they also wanted students to think about why so many people were hungry. They wanted students who were teaching adults or children how to read to reflect on why, in such an advanced nation, so many people are illiterate.[20] In essence, they wanted their students to see the inequality in the world and to motivate them to make a difference; social justice was the the "values" they were teaching.

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[16] Skinner and Chapman, "Service-Learning and Community Service," 3.
[17] Kendall, *Combining Service and Learning.*
[18] Stanton, Giles, and Cruz, *Service-Learning: A Movement's Pioneers*, 2-3.
[19] Ibid., 2.
[20] Ibid., 3.

Over twenty years later, the Corporation for National and Community Service utilized a different definition of service-learning, which reflected a different focus. Founded after the passage of the Community Service Trust Act of 1993, according to its mission, "...the Corporation fosters civic responsibility, strengthens the ties that bind us together as a nation, and provides educational opportunities for those who make a substantial commitment to service."[21] The Corporation was therefore focused on the other two questions that the early pioneers struggled with: the purpose of education in a democracy and how education serves society. And their definition for service-learning reflects that concern:

> "Service-learning means a method under which students or participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that: is conducted in and meets the needs of a community and is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, [and] or community service program, and with the community; helps foster civic responsibility; is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students or the educational components of the community service program in which the participants are enrolled; and includes structured time for the students and participants to reflect on the service experience."[22]

Meeting the needs of the community, teaching civic responsibility, and an opportunity to reflect their experiences are not contrary to the values education of SREB, but the differences of purpose leave us with their two distinct definitions of service-learning. The overlap between them is clear, as they both include participant growth or development by integrating service that meets the needs of others with education. In spite of the differences in definition, overall, there is a great deal of agreement about what constitutes service-learning.

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[21] Corporation for National and Community Service, Our Mission and Guiding Principles.
[22] *National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993.*

While there are times when service-learning will be used as a curricular tool, used to teach civic responsibility, or used to promote caring or values,[23] at a basic level, service learning includes three primary components. Service-learning involves some form of academic or structured learning, some form of service experience, and it involves a process of reflection about both, represented by the hyphen, that links and integrates one with the other.[24] For the purposes of this thesis, this will serve as the definition of service learning since allows for the diversity of ways in which service-learning is utilized, while maintaining a concrete standard.

This is a useful definition in that it makes a clear distinction between service-learning and community service or volunteerism. For example, many bar or bat mitzvah students are required to do some form of mitzvah project where they help out in the community. Most organize projects that are more than adequate to fulfill their requirement and every now and then they impress the congregation with their level of caring, compassion, or accomplishment. But these projects cannot be considered service-learning without some form of structured learning that relates to their mitzvah project or any kind of reflection component. The same is true for most youth group or congregational Mitzvah Days. A large group may come together to do a little text study in the morning before going and helping out in the community for a few hours, but it would be considered service-learning only if they reflect on their various experiences in large or small groups, integrating the learning they did in the morning with their service.

This definition is also broad enough to incorporate the variety of ways that service-learning can manifest itself, including a congregational religious school

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[23] Billig, "Research on K-12."
[24] Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*, 4.

curriculum, an adult mitzvah corps, or an ongoing youth group project. By incorporating all three components: service, learning, and reflection, service-learning in a Jewish context could be used to encourage a sense of Jewish peoplehood, it could be used to teach general Jewish principles, or it could be used to promote Jewish values. All or more of these factors could play a role in the different forms of Jewish service-learning. But regardless of its pedagogic purpose, growing secular research seems to indicate that quality service-learning that incorporates all three components is a great way to help students of all ages learn and grow on many different levels.

Regardless of the form of the program, there are many additional factors that determine whether or not service-learning will be effective at achieving its design goals. Fortunately, as opposed to the definitions for service-learning, relative consensus has been achieved regarding standards for how to create quality service-learning.[25] In 1998, a group of thirteen different service-learning organizations (National Service-Learning Cooperative) came together and published the "Essential Elements of Service-Learning," updating standards that were set in 1995. These "essential elements" have helped to further define what service-learning is, in addition to describing successful practices. They are listed in Chapter 4 and will be explored in greater depth there.

Service-Learning Research: Strengths and Limitations

Service-learning research has kept pace with the growth in service-learning. Three recent research reviews[26] highlighted more than two hundred different studies that explored various aspects of service-learning from the past fifteen years. Even as the body

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[25] Billig, "Research on K-12."
[26] Billig, "Research on K-12;" Billig, "Impacts of Service-Learning;" and Eyler, et al., "At a Glance."

of research continues to increase, many researchers have noted that additional research is still needed.[27] Some call for studies to fill a void in the field, such as Eugene Roehlkepartain, who points out the lack of data relating to the scope, quality, or amount of service-learning in religious congregations or faith based communities.[28] This problem relates specifically to this thesis, which serves as an introduction to many of these issues. Others, such as Shelley Billig, one of the most prolific researchers in the field of K-12 service-learning, draw attention to the various limitations of the current body of research.[29] She points out that much of the service-learning data for K-12 studies comes from program evaluations, few studies use control groups for comparison and even less follow up with students after a year or two to determine the lasting impact of service-learning. To better illustrate these issues, a brief analysis of one such study will show some of the strengths and limitations of the research in general.

In 1999, Alan Melchior and his staff at Brandeis University published a "National Evaluation of Learn and Serve America." Out of two thousand programs, they chose seventeen middle and high school service-learning programs that received grants and support from Learn and Serve America in order to study the individual, institutional, and communal impacts of these programs. It was not a research study designed to test a specific hypothesis, but rather a program evaluation to measure the success of an established program and determine how it should be improved. While the program evaluation was prepared for a funder whose interests dictate what was and was not

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[27] For example: Kraft, "Service Learning: An Introduction;" Pritchard, "Community Service and Service-Learning;" and Roehlkepartain, "Faith Communities: Untapped Allies."
[28] Roehlkepartain, "Faith Communities: Untapped Allies," 20.
[29] Billig, "Research on K-12."

studied, rendering it scientifically suspect, the Brandeis team reports that rigorous controls were used.

In choosing the seventeen program sites, Melchior made an effort to control for quality by selecting well-established, "fully implemented" programs that would be considered the "upper tier" of Learn and Serve programs. Each program had been in place for more than a year, reported above average service hours, incorporated both written and oral reflection on a regular basis, and were linked to a formal curriculum within a school. Melchior also utilized a variety of quantitative and qualitative data sources when collecting data, including interviews with teachers, staff at the community agencies where the service was performed, along with direct observation of program activities. They surveyed a large sample size, approximately 1000 students, and they had a control group for purposes of comparison. The bulk of the evaluation took place during the 1995-96 school year, but they also followed up with students and teachers during the spring of 1997, providing longitudinal data. This strong research methodology lends credibility to the study. But even with these strong controls in place, program implementation and the participants' individual experiences varied substantially.

Melchior reports that there was considerable variance in the number of service hours for individual programs and nearly forty percent did not feel that they were given real responsibility, independent tasks, or a chance to do a variety of activities. Almost a quarter of the participants did not have direct contact with service recipients and the same amount did not reflect on the service in class, which means that according to the definition of service-learning used by this thesis, those participants may not have participated in a service-learning experience. All of these factors impact the quality of

the service-learning program and raise questions about whether the data can be validated. As a result, the study may provide a general impression of the impacts of service-learning, but due to the variance in program implementation, it is not possible to draw more rigorous conclusions.

Whether the issue is the lack of a control group, variance in program quality, or other limitations, the current body of service-learning research is not perfect and more work is needed. In spite of this, there are two substantial reasons for giving weight to the data pool that has been established. First, over the past thirty to forty years, an overwhelming number of studies have suggested that service and service-learning experiences result in positive outcomes for students. During the seventies and eighties dozens of studies that sought to measure the impact of service and service-learning have consistently resulted in positive outcomes.[30] The extensive research in more recent years, including comprehensive studies, program evaluations, and case studies validate the earlier data and have moved the field far beyond the earlier knowledge base. The research is limited, but for the past few decades study after study continues to suggest that there are a number of beneficial learning outcomes to service-learning.

Second, just as the quantity of research is increasing rapidly, so is the quality. Researchers are developing stronger methodologies, studies are meeting higher standards, and the body of quality research now measures student outcomes with much tighter controls. Additionally, in the past few years, studies are becoming more complex.[31] They are examining which elements of a service-learning program will predict specific outcomes, working to determine the best way to implement service-learning programs,

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[30] Kraft, "Service Learning: An Introduction."
[31] Billig and Eyler, *Deconstructing Service-Learning*, ix-xiii.

refining teacher/facilitator training, and taking a more detailed look at partnerships with community organizations. Studies like, *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?*[32] and resources such as, the *Advances in Service-Learning Research* series[33] are examples of the kind of work that is contributing to these improvements.

The following section summarizes the research from the past ten years, detailing the numerous impacts associated with service-learning programs. The outcomes fall under three broad categories: academic learning, personal/social learning, and communal outcomes. Connections will be made between the positive impacts on students and their relevance when administering service-learning within a Jewish context. The vast majority of the research comes from service-learning programs that have been instituted in K-12 public or private schools, colleges, and universities.[34]

Service-Learning Research: Academic Learning

Within the context of academic learning, studies have documented a variety of positive outcomes associated with service-learning, including significant increases in grades and standardized test scores[35] and classroom attendance.[36] Possibly tied to these very concrete outcomes is an increased engagement in school or motivation to learn. In a study of over fifteen hundred college students that included surveys and interviews, Eyler and Giles found that "students are likely to work harder on courses they find interesting,

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[32] Eyler and Giles.

[33] A four-volume set published 2002-2004. Each work is co-edited by Shelley H. Billig and another researcher in the field.

[34] When examples of studies are listed, there will be examples of both college and K-12 research unless otherwise noted.

[35] For example: Laird & Black, "Service-Learning Evaluation Project;" Melchior, "Summary Report: National Evaluation;" Meyer & Billig, *Evaluation of Need in Deed*; Roldan, Strage, and David, "A Framework for Assessing."

[36] For example: Follman, "Florida Learn & Serve;" Morgan, "Evaluation of School-Based;" and Supik, "Valued Youth Partnerships."

and 68 percent of our service-learning students found the work they did in the community to be interesting at least fairly often."[37] It follows that more than half of their respondents "felt motivated to work harder in service-learning," while less than one in seven felt they worked less.[38] Referencing Fischer and Bidell,[39] they argue, "passion is personal and learning begins with passionate interest."[40] When Jewish educators are looking for ways to engage their students,[41] these results seem promising, especially when they are echoed in the K-12 arena.

At Waianae High School on the island of Oahu, approximately one hundred students participate in a service-learning program that is designed to connect them to their Hawaiian or Samoan cultural heritage. Two recent studies[42] compared the participants in the program to a control group of peers from the same schools and found that at a statistically significant level, service-learning participants were more likely to find their schooling to be stimulating. These students also were more likely than the control group at the trend level to think that school was fun and interesting. The promising results from these two studies are supported by additional research from the field suggesting that for even younger students, service-learning can help program participants pay more attention to their schoolwork and put forth more effort in class.[43]

One more finding of academic learning from the Waianae studies that is relevant to service-learning in a Jewish context came from focus groups of service-learning

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[37] Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*, 60.
[38] Ibid.
[39] "Dynamic Development of Psychological Structures."
[40] Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*, 15.
[41] Wolfson, "Creating Community in the Classroom," 1.
[42] Billig & Meyer, *Evaluation of the Hawaiian Studies Program*; and Billig, Meyer, & Hofschire, *Evaluation of Center for Research*.
[43] For example: Astin, et al., *How Service Learning Affects Students*; Billig and Klute, "The Impact of Service-Learning on MEAP;" Melchior, "Summary Report: National Evaluation."

participants. Participants responded most often that while they learned practical knowledge and skills, they also learned a great deal about the more abstract concept of Hawaiian culture. With regard to teaching Judaism, Jewish educators are generally interested in teaching both practical matters, such as rituals or mitzvot, in addition to more conceptual notions, such as Jewish peoplehood. While teaching culture is not the same as teaching Judaism, they are pedagogically related.

Along with teaching practical and abstract concepts, there is also evidence that service-learning helps students with critical thinking and synthesizing information. Eyler and Giles explain the educational philosophy as follows, "Understanding cannot be severed from active use of information; reflective instruction that encourages students to question preconceptions and adjust the way they think about the subject should facilitate more complex understanding. The purpose of learning is to use what is learned."[44] Their research supports this hypothesis, as does that of Strage.[45] Strage studied 477 students over five semesters who took a college introductory child development course. For the first three semesters, students were required to perform structured observations, but for the last two semesters, the class performed service-learning that was thematically and structurally connected to the course. She reported that the students who participated in the service-learning course had better grades that those who did observations. She observed that the service-learning students scored higher on the essay portion of the exams, where critical thinking and synthesizing information was required, but there was

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[44] *Where is the Learning*, 16.
[45] "Service-Learning: Enhancing Student."

no difference between the groups on multiple-choice questions. Other studies reflect similar findings.[46]

For Jewish education that aims to help form reflective, knowledgeable Jews, the academic learning outcomes of service-learning appear to be quite promising.

Personal/Social Learning

In this context, personal/social learning relates to service-learning outcomes that generally impact one's sense of self and how one relates to other individuals. The types of outcomes described in this section have not traditionally been the focus of service-learning researchers. However, they have found that service placements tend to put students in challenging situations that require a higher degree of interpersonal interaction, which provides the opportunity for personal/social growth.[47] For example, several studies suggest that service-learning participants show an increase in leadership skills, self-awareness, and self-confidence.[48]

Several programs indicate that the increase in awareness and confidence may be correlated with positive interactions between students. From 1990 to 2000, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation funded eighteen programs with the goal of increasing the quantity and quality of service-learning.[49] While there was great variety in the scope and focus of those studied, out of the fifteen that directly administered service-learning programs, nine reported that students developed stronger interpersonal skills, including working as a

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[46] For example: Billig, Meyer, & Hofschire, *Evaluation of Center for Research*; Astin, et al., *How Service Learning Affects Students*; and Roldan, Strage, and David, "A Framework for Assessing."

[47] Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*, 23-24.

[48] For example: Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*; Morgan and Streb, "Building citizenship: How student voice;" and Billig and Klute, *W. K. Kellogg Foundation Retrospective*.

[49] Billig and Klute, *W. K. Kellogg Foundation Retrospective*.

team, getting along well with others, and showing concern for others. Several other studies reflect similar results, demonstrating that service-learning helps students work well with others, build cohesion and make connections.[50] In a recent study, Andrew Furco quotes a teacher who expresses surprise at this outcome: "Students who I never thought would work together are now buddying up on a service project. When I asked them about this, they said they both care enough about the issue at hand to put their differences aside..."[51] These findings are encouraging for any educational program that values positive peer interactions.

Connected to the more universal aspects of Jewish teaching, the research indicates that service-learning helps to reduce stereotypes and increase tolerance and acceptance of diversity.[52] The findings seem to suggest that stereotypes are reduced across several different social identities. Some studies pointed towards acceptance of racial differences, some included a greater acceptance of the elderly, and some demonstrated reduced stereotypes against people with mental disabilities. Eyler and Giles[53] document how over the course of their service-learning experience, students increasingly felt that were many more similarities than differences between them and the people they encountered during their service placements. Studies reported these findings not only in structured service-

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[50] For example: Morgan and Streb, *How Quality Service-Learning Develops*; Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*; and Weiler, et al., "An Evaluation of K-12 Service-Learning."
[51] Furco, "Is Service-Learning Really Better," 44-45.
[52] For example: Myers-Lipton, "Effect of a Comprehensive Service-Learning;" Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*; and Morgan and Streb, "Building citizenship: How student voice."
[53] *Where's the Learning.*

learning programs where the service is tied to the course curriculum,[54] but also in more informal settings, such as alternative spring break experiences.[55]

Another aspect of personal learning that may be of primary importance to those interested in utilizing service-learning in a religious setting would be the outcomes related to morals and ethics. While other studies find service-learning to have a positive impact on moral or ethical development,[56] the most practical and comprehensive seems to have come from James Leming.[57] Leming assessed 476 high school students, some who participated in service-learning with an ethical reflection component, some who participated in service with general service-learning reflection, and a control group who did not participate in service. He found that after one semester, not only had the students with the ethical reflection component made greater advances in adolescent identity development, "they became more systematic in their ethical reasoning and more likely to consider situations and issues from an ethical point of view."[58] This study suggests that when service-learning is designed to incorporate ethical teachings, it may serve as an effective way of teaching Jewish values. While ethical development does not necessarily derive from service-learning experiences, by incorporating an intentional, well thought out reflection program, service-learning may indeed foster religious-ethical development.

One more personal outcome to note relates to the spiritual impact of service-learning. When asked about the most important thing they learned, Eyler and Giles found

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[54] For example: Melchior and Bailis, "Impact of Service-Learning on Civic;" and Astin, et al., *How Service Learning Affects Students.*

[55] McElhaney, Student Outcomes of Community Service Learning. An alternative spring break program combines formal or informal learning with a weeklong service experience during a college or high school spring break. Daily reflection during the spring break experience is common.

[56] Furco, "Is Service-Learning Really Better;" and Gorman, "Service Experience and the Moral Development."

[57] "Integrating a Structural Ethical Reflection."

[58] Ibid., 141.

that forty-six percent of the survey respondents felt that spiritual growth was "most important" or "very important."[59] Some felt that service helped them fulfill their religious commitment and others spoke of giving back to one's community in spiritual terms. The college students who participated in the surveys and interviews were not necessarily participating in service-learning within a religious context and these findings were either not studied or not supported in the K-12 research. Eyler and Giles' results pertaining to spiritual growth demonstrate another possible outcome for service-learning that would certainly relate to a Jewish setting, but additional research is clearly needed.

These studies seem to suggest that service-learning can help to foster the personal and social growth that Jewish education strives to instill in our youth and adults.

Civic/Community Outcomes

Debates surrounding the purpose of service-learning seem to converge when examining the research relating to civic responsibility. This is due in large part to one's understanding of civic responsibility, which in many ways is related to one's political ideology, notions of government, or assumptions about the duties of the citizen. Joseph Kahne and Joel Westheimer have written thoughtfully about how these topics interact with service-learning[60] and the answers to this debate cannot be solved here. It is mentioned in order to acknowledge the disagreement that exists in the field and to explain that when discussing the outcomes of service-learning, the definition or standard of measuring civics or civic responsibility may be unique to each researcher.

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[59] *Where's the Learning*, 36-37.
[60] For example, "In the Service of What?;" and "Social Justice, Service Learning."

With this in mind, the findings demonstrate that service-learning can have a variety of positive outcomes relating to communal or civic outcomes. In a Jewish context these results could be connected to the values that are generally associated with helping others: *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), *b'tzelem elohim* (all were created in God's image), and *v'ahavta l're-acha kamocha* (love your fellow as yourself), along with communal notions of Jewish peoplehood. For example, several studies found that after participating in a service-learning program, students showed more concern for the welfare of others[61] and they felt more connected to their community.[62]

In addition to this emotional connection, the research shows that service-learning participants begin thinking more deeply and systemically about social issues. For example, in Shelley Billig's 2005 service-learning research review,[63] she summarizes three studies performed in different cities: Philadelphia, Denver, and Waianae, Hawaii, all of which showed the same results. They demonstrated that instead of viewing a social or community problems a personal deficiency, the students gained a more systemic understanding of social issues. For example, one may serve in a soup kitchen in order to "help the less fortunate" and leave wondering why these individuals don't just get a job. A service-learning program, however, may help to teach participants about how the economy, health care costs, minimum wage, government policy, etc. impact an individual's ability to be self-sufficient. It may also help participants reflect on the differences between social services that place band-aids on large social problems and those that work towards more long term solutions. And by learning about issues in this

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[61] For example: Scales, et al., "The Effects of Service-Learning;" Billig, Meyer, & Hofschire, *Evaluation of Center for Research*; Meyer & Billig, *Evaluation of Need in Deed.* No college studies listed.

[62] For example: Kim & Billig, *Colorado Learn and Serve Evaluation*; Billig, *Philadelphia Freedom Schools*; and Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning.*

[63] "Impacts of Service-Learning."

way, these studies and others[64] suggest that students offered more realistic and action oriented solutions than their peers. For Jewish educators who want their students to work towards repairing their communities and the world, critical thinking and gaining a deeper understanding of complex social problems would be desirable teaching goals.

Participants of service-learning in a Jewish context would then gain a complex understanding of social issues for the purpose of becoming more active in the community in order to make change. As was mentioned earlier, many of the movement's pioneers had the same goal, and the research suggests that community involvement and life-long service are positive outcomes of service-learning. Studies show that service-learning can increase one's desire to impact the community and to make one more committed to future service and activism.[65] Eyler and Giles dedicate an entire chapter to the potential transformative impact of service- learning on students' perspectives and worldview.[66] Other findings indicate that service-learning participants are more likely to take actions to create change in their communities.[67] Additionally, two studies measuring the long-term impact of service-learning reported that service-learning experiences in college could impact both career direction and a life-long commitment to service.[68]

It seems logical that greater involvement in the community would relate to a greater sense of civic responsibility, but on this issue, the research appears to be more mixed. It seems that for every study that shows civic responsibility is a positive outcome

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[64] "Impacts of Service-Learning," 4.

[65] For example: Billig and Salazar, "Earth Walk Environmental Service-Learning;" McElhaney, Student Outcomes of Community Service Learning; Vogelgesang and Astin, "Comparing the Effects of Service-Learning."

[66] Eyler and Giles, Where's the Learning, Chapter 6.

[67] Billig, Philadelphia Freedom Schools; and Billig, Meyer, & Hofschire, Evaluation of Center for Research.

[68] Smedick, A Study of the Effect; and Warchal and Ruiz, "The Long-Term Effects of Undergraduate."

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of service-learning,[69] there is another study suggesting that the two are not significantly

or as significantly correlated.[70] For example, Perry and Katula reviewed thirty-seven

empirical studies that examined the relationship between service and citizenship[71]. They

found that service impacted civic characteristics, including individual motivations and

ethics, philanthropic and political behaviors, and community attachment and the most

consistent positive results came from service-learning. Contrasting those results, Kahne,

Chi, and Middaugh evaluated the City Works curriculum[72], whose goal was to promote

civic engagement, and found that meeting with both people and groups who work to

make society better, as well as simulations and role playing, had a greater impact on

students than service-learning.

There are three reasons for the discrepancies in research pertaining to civic

involvement. The first is a matter of definitions. Kahne, Chi, and Middaugh were

measuring a curriculum against specific outcomes, including identifying sources of local

government revenue and the form of city government, whereas Perry and Katula used the

more amorphous "philanthropic and political behaviors." Civic engagement or

responsibility, as mentioned above, has many different definitions and it seems apparent

that service-learning is more effective at producing some civic responsibility than other

outcomes. The second is that it is hard to find differences between service-learning

students and control groups when most young people start out with positive attitudes

regarding civic responsibility. Melchior and Bailis' findings support this claim and they

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[69] For example: Kim & Billig, *Colorado Learn and Serve Evaluation*; Myers-Lipton, "Effect of a Comprehensive Service-Learning;" and Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*, 1999.
[70] For example: Billig, Root, & Jesse, "The Impact of Participation in Service-Learning;" Kollross, Service Learning and Citizenship; and Melchior and Bailis, "Impact of Service-Learning."
[71] "Does Service Affect Citizenship?."
[72] "City Works Evaluation Summary."

suggest that instead of creating a positive civic ethic, service-learning should be understood as strengthening or reinforcing that sense of responsibility.[73] Finally, regardless of the outcomes of their studies, many of the researchers in the field indicate that for service-learning to yield positive outcomes for civic responsibility, the program needs to meet certain quality standards. For example, Billig, Root, and Jesse find that students' civic outcomes improve when the service project relates to political or civic action or the teacher has had more experience using service-learning as an educational tool.[74] Similarly, Morgan and Streb report that the more students were empowered throughout the service-learning process, the greater the outcomes.[75] This discussion illustrates that based on the definition of civic responsibility and the quality of the program, service-learning can strengthen a student's sense of civic responsibility. Taken together, these results are promising for Jewish service-learning because in a Jewish context, educators are more interested in helping students connect to Jewish peoplehood or develop philanthropic behaviors rather than identifying such specifics as different forms of city government.

While much of the research focuses on how service-learning affects students, several studies indicate a broader communal impact. Research suggests that service-learning can have an impact on the school community.[76] For example, Toole found that at seven different schools, more than three-quarters of the teachers claimed that service-learning had helped to increase their level of collaboration with other teachers.[77] And

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[73] "Impact of Service-Learning."
[74] "The Impact of Participation in Service-Learning."
[75] "Building citizenship: How Student Voice."

[76] For example: Furco, "Is Service-Learning Really Better;" Melchior, "Summary Report: National Evaluation;" and Gelmon, Holland, & Shinnamon, *Health Professions Schools in Service.*
[77] "Civil Society, Social Trust."

Wieler, et al, found that service-learning "fostered greater mutual respect between students and teachers, who often began to view one another as colleagues in the pursuit of learning."[78] Other studies showed that students felt a greater connection with their school.[79] While creating a sense of school community is not an explicit goal of most service-learning programs, and most likely would not be the goal of a service-learning program in a Jewish context, creating a greater sense of school community would certainly be a welcomed by product.

The research also demonstrates that service-learning has a positive impact on the community[80] and has the potential to help build partnerships between teaching institutions and community organizations.[81] An example of both is the East Saint Louis Action Research Project, which is a collaborative effort between the community of East Saint Louis and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.[82] Through a process of mutual learning and assistance, the community and the University have worked together to build neighborhood organizations, create affordable housing, and provide GED and job training for high school dropouts over the past fifteen years. Service-learning programs have been at the core of their ongoing work. Every service-learning project will not create this level of transformative collaboration, but, when increased communication between teachers and community organizations is required, partnerships would be possible for congregations, youth groups, or other Jewish institutions.

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[78] Weiler, et al., "An Evaluation of K-12 Service-Learning."

[79] For example: Kim & Billig, *Colorado Learn and Serve Evaluation*; Billig and Klute, *W. K. Kellogg Foundation Retrospective*; and Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*.

[80] For example: Melchior, "Summary Report: National Evaluation;" Billig and Klute, *W. K. Kellogg Foundation Retrospective*; and Gray, et al, *Coupling Service and Learning*.

[81] For example: Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*; Gelmon, Holland, & Shinnamon, *Health Professions Schools in Service*; and Furco, "Is Service-Learning Really Better."

[82] For more information, see: http://www.eslarp.uiuc.edu/

While there is considerable research relating to the positive outcomes of service-learning for the community, the educational institution, and for the student, as mentioned earlier, there is very little research relating to service-learning in a religious setting. There is anecdotal evidence that service has a variety of impacts in a religious setting, such as helping students stay involved with congregational life through high school.[83] Unfortunately, there is not much more than anecdotal evidence. And in a Jewish context, there is even less research.

Despite the fact that the religious research does not exist, the secular research does indicate the potential for Jewish service-learning. The diverse positive outcomes relate to many aspects of Jewish education. Based on the outcomes from these secular studies, it is possible to imagine a Jewish service-learning program that teaches Judaism and Jewish values, increases one's sense of Jewish identity, and connects one to the Jewish people, all while impacting the community in a way that meets its needs. In spite of its limitations, the research in the field suggests that this pedagogy could attain some, if not all of these very real benefits in the Jewish world. Service-learning seems to be a powerful learning tool and there are many programs currently trying to determine how much of an impact Jewish service-learning can make.

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[83] Benson and Roehlkepartain, *Beyond Leaf Raking*, 26.

Chapter 2: Survey of Current Jewish Service-Learning Programs

The idea of Jewish service-learning is rooted in the Jewish values of study and action. These Jewish values complement and complete each other and though rabbis disagree about which takes precedence, the ultimate goal is to integrate Torah study with good deeds and the performance of mitzvot into one's daily life. The combination of service, learning, and reflection in service-learning enables one program to incorporate both of these Jewish values, making the pairing of Jewish education and service-learning a natural fit. Within the context of Jewish service-learning, study tends to be transformed into the values of Jewish education, development, and identity, while action and good deeds become the values of social awareness, justice, and change.

Maggi Gaines, the executive director of SPARK: Partnership for Service, explains the emphasis on Jewish development: "Jewish service learning is well-suited to teens, who are actively searching out their own identities, group affiliations/affinities, etc.... It gives teens a stake in their own religion, spirituality, identity and community. In pursuing their own knowledge, teens involved in Jewish service learning are actually pursuing their own destiny."[1] Addressing social change, Joel Westheimer writes, "*Tikkun Olam* means to repair the world not simply by being nice to your neighbor but also through a progressive message of change: we were slaves and we overcame our oppression; we know that it is possible to change the world, and we must act in the world to change it on behalf of those who are less powerful."[2] Similar to the rabbinic debate, while some programs give more weight to Jewish development and others concentrate

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[1] "Jewish Service as Teen Empowerment," 4.
[2] "Community Service Learning," 12.

more on social change, both ideals are a part of Jewish service-learning and all programs attempt to integrate them to some degree.

The research presented in the first chapter has illustrated the great potential that service-learning has to offer and the distinction illustrated by the comments of Gaines and Westheimer is only one of the many issues with which the relatively new field of Jewish service-learning has started to grapple. And while a few established programs have been thriving for over ten years, almost half of the current programs been developed within the past five years. It is clear that Jewish service-learning is in its infancy. These congregations and schools, youth groups, independent organizations, and community endeavors are the pioneers of Jewish service-learning and their experimentation provides a number of different models from which to learn. Some programs inadvertently fall into the category of service-learning, while others have been carefully structured around this pedagogy, but all of them include some form of structured learning, service in the community, and reflection.

The sixteen programs described in this chapter represent the diversity of the Jewish service-learning that exists today. Each program or organization will be summarized and then discussed in relation to the definition of service-learning and the potential outcomes that were presented in chapter 1. There is a great deal of diversity in the way that Jewish language is used in each of these programs. They have therefore been described using the Jewish terminology found either in their literature or in conversations with program organizers. To clarify the similarities and differences between programs, the programs and organizations have been broken down into six categories:

- Institutions that support service-learning
- Congregation based service-learning
- Community based service-learning
- School based service-learning
- Long term intensive service-learning programs (more than two weeks)[3]
- Short term intensive service-learning programs (less than two weeks)

Institutions that Support Service-Learning

1. SPARK: Partnership for Service was only founded in 2001, but in talking to different groups about Jewish service-learning, it became clear that the new organization was already making a substantial impact. Its mission is to "inspire a commitment to service as an ongoing part of each person's life and an important expression of Jewish identity."[4] SPARK has been fulfilling this mission primarily through curriculum development and support, an alternative summer break program created in partnership with B'nai B'rith Youth Organization (BBYO), and service-learning consultation and training.

For the past three years, different organizations have been using SPARK's HeartAction curriculum to bring middle and high school students together with seniors in a reciprocal service relationship. Currently fifty sites totaling approximately 1000 students around the country including congregations, Jewish day schools and Hebrew high schools are using this curriculum that attempts to "integrate community service, volunteer skill development, Jewish text study, opportunities for reflection, and exploration of public policy and activism."[5] After an opening session, the curriculum details nine 45-minute learning/reflection sessions that complement the recommended 45-minute encounters with seniors. In addition to the Resource Manual, which helps

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[3] The two-week distinction is a useful, but arbitrary designation.
[4] SPARK, "SPARK's Mission."
[5] *HeartAction Resource Manual*, 6.

educators troubleshoot logistical difficulties such as recruitment and assessing the needs of the community, SPARK provides initial and ongoing training for program coordinators and facilitators who are administering the curriculum.

In partnership with BBYO, SPARK has provided teenagers another opportunity to encounter Jewish service-learning. The summer break program is a direct service-learning opportunity and will be discussed in the short-term intensive section of this chapter. SPARK has also benefited the Jewish service-learning community through consultation and training programs. From organizing a Kallah for the National Association of Temple Educators (NATE) on service-learning in 2003 to working with the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of Boston to write a curriculum dealing with literacy issues, SPARK has introduced Jewish service-learning to a widening audience. And SPARK, with Sulam, The Center for Jewish Service Learning,[6] is planning the first annual Jewish service-learning conference for the fall of 2006.

> According to SPARK:
>
> Jewish service learning is an innovative educational model that promotes critical reflection on direct community service through the study of Jewish and secular texts. This combination of community service/volunteering with structured study and reflection leads to an ongoing commitment to service and social action, connections with Jewish peers and a deeper understanding of service as a part of Jewish life and tradition.[7]

This description meets the criteria for service-learning as defined in this thesis. It also reflects the interest of the organization on the personal/social and communal outcomes of service-learning as opposed to the academic. The HeartAction curriculum combines the study of Jewish and secular texts with reflection, but leaves little time for more thorough academic study. As a whole, SPARK seems to use service-learning most explicitly in an

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[6] See next entry.
[7] *HeartAction Resource Manual*, 6.

attempt to connect Jews with their tradition through combined study/reflection sessions, connect Jews with their community and peers, and build community partnerships between educational facilities and senior centers. The HeartAction curriculum in particular seems to foster a commitment to taking action in the community and one's civic responsibility through sessions on public policy issues facing seniors and making service a part of life, acceptance of diversity by exposing teens through the service experience with seniors, and greater self confidence by teaching participants skills such as active listening. Due to the aspects of the elder experience that the curriculum provides, including the wisdom of the elderly and death and loss, it seems to encourage students to think critically and systemically about issues facing the elderly.

2. Sulam, The Center for Jewish Service Learning has not officially opened as of this writing, but Sulam is already consulting with five day-schools and six or more congregations in the Los Angeles area to build or strengthen their service-learning programs. Sulam, which is a branch of the LA Bureau of Jewish Education, has also established a resource library of over two hundred books and videos dealing with Jewish sources on social issues, as well as practical guides to service-learning, including how to create a quality service experience and guides for leading reflection. As was mentioned above, Sulam is working in partnership with SPARK: Partnership for Service to sponsor an annual service-learning conference. These efforts fit with Sulam's goal of increasing "...the usage of service-learning as a methodology for enhancing Jewish identity through community service projects."[8]

At the same time, Sulam also focuses on quality service with a website that will include an interactive database to find high quality service opportunities in the LA area

[8] "Center for Jewish Service Learning Summary," internal document.

and will provide a space for middle and high school students to share their experiences. Similarly, the Service Learning Council that it has established provides support, networking, and exposure to service-learning for professional educators and youth workers who engage their students or participants in community service work. While these efforts concentrate on service, Sulam hopes that through consultation and by establishing a greater awareness and access to service-learning, groups will become more interested in participating in such programs.

Sulam describes service learning as "an educational model that integrates actual service, relevant learning and critical reflection facilitating personal growth,"[9] which matches the definition of this thesis. The Center looks to use service-learning as a way to strengthen Jewish identity and create a community where Jewish teens do service to others as an expression of their Jewish identity. With the support that Sulam provides to other educational organizations, its goals seem to relate mostly to the service-learning studies that show a greater connection to one's Judaism and an ongoing commitment to service.

3. The third and final organization in this section, Panim: The Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values, runs a number of programs designed to renew "American Jewish life through the integration of Jewish learning, values, and social responsibility."[10] Unlike the prior two organizations, Panim only provides support for Jewish service-learning through one of its programs, the Jewish Civics Initiative (JCI).[11] In partnership with the Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA), JCI began in 1994 with the goals to increase the civic awareness of Jewish teenagers, to make Jewish texts

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[9] "Center for Jewish Service Learning Summary," internal document.
[10] http://www.panim.org/
[11] Panim also directly administers a service-learning program, which will be discussed below.

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relevant to students as they examine their relationship with contemporary social and political issues, and to foster a commitment to service. JCI strives to accomplishes these goals through a three-part program for 10th – 12th graders that includes: Panim's *Jewish Civics* curriculum, a seminar in Washington, D.C., and service-learning projects that take place in one's own community.

The *Jewish Civics* curriculum teaches Jewish values by first informing participants about political and social issues and then by setting up scenarios where students have to decide how to act when different values are in conflict with one another. The second component of the program is a seminar in Washington, D.C. where the participants learn about Jewish service opportunities and participate on a service project that incorporates reflection. They build on this experience by learning about issues related to the service project, how they connect with Jewish values, and finally lobbying senators and representatives about these issues. The JCI program culminates with the students organizing a service-learning program in their home community.

Approximately twenty congregations or organizations participate in the program each year with approximately 500 students taking part. According to Panim, only about half fulfill all three aspects of the program, however, it is working to develop ways of increasing compliance with all program components. Panim provides support to these organizations by offering an initial training session to educators, scheduled conference calls during the year that provide support and additional training, the *Jewish Civics* curriculum itself, and a teacher handbook with numerous resources. JCI meets the definition for service-learning by fulfilling all three components through the D.C. seminar and through the projects at home, which seem to range from ongoing projects to

one day events. The structured learning comes from the *Jewish Civics* curriculum and reflection is strongly encouraged in the teacher handbook.

Based on the goals and the design of the program, JCI strives to reach a number of service-learning outcomes. Through its connection between service, learning, and the opportunity to lobby one's congressional leaders, civic responsibility seems to be a primary focus. This is also reflected in the home projects, which involve a broader understanding of "service," including political action. The curriculum's focus on Jewish values relates to the studies that show positive results for service-learning in teaching morals and ethics. Since the teacher's handbook encourages students to play a prominent role in developing the service project in their home community, the secular research indicates that JCI may help to create a greater sense of self-efficacy, leadership, and connection to their peers. JCI is currently undergoing a comprehensive review, the results of which should indicate the effectiveness of the program and help others learn from their Jewish service-learning experience.

Congregation Based Service-Learning

1. Congregation Beth Israel in Charlottesville, VA began its Jewish service-learning program, "Mitzvah Corps," in the fall of 2000. The congregation's educator, a member of the Religious School Committee and two teachers developed the program for the 8th grade year. It was designed as a way to give students a hands on approach to exploring mitzvot by linking Jewish education and Jewish practice, by providing a less intense study program compared to the bar/bat mitzvah year, and by encouraging more students to continue their Jewish education beyond bar/bat mitzvah. About ten to fifteen

students participate each year. The program is organized into four to five week modules with a session or two to learn about the issue, including Jewish sources relating to the issue[12] and the organization where the service project will take place, another session to do the mitzvah project, and a final session where students reflect on the project and learn about a "mitzvah hero." The congregation was generally able to schedule the service and educational sessions around their standard 90-minute evening education hours.

Each module represents a complete service-learning project as defined by this thesis, with separate sessions for structured learning, service, and reflection. The Mitzvah Corps curriculum targets a number of potential service-learning outcomes, most specifically the connection with one's Judaism. The program seems to encourage self-efficacy and leadership by allowing the students to participate in choosing the mitzvah project. Additionally some of the program characteristics seem to address several community outcomes, including connectedness to the community and the impact on the school and congregation. These community outcomes are fostered by having the 8th graders share their projects with the 7th graders at the end of the year, the creation of partnerships between teachers and parents in order to teach the material while managing logistics, and ensuring that at least one project a semester is synagogue. One final outcome relates to one of the program's primary goals: according to the former educator, participation in the 8th grade program increased from approximately 50 percent to 75 percent of possible students a year or two after instituting the Mitzvah Corps program.

2. Congregation Beth Tikvah in Worthington, OH is in its second year of a service-learning program for its 9th graders. The program was developed for several

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[12] Using the following resources: *1+1=3; It's a Mitzvah! Step by Step to Jewish Living; Teaching Mitzvot; Making a Difference: Putting Jewish Spirituality Into Action One Mitzvah at a Time; The Ziv Giraffe Program – A Curriculum for Tikun Olam; Munbaz II and Other Mitzvah Heroes.*

reasons. From a Jewish standpoint, the educator wanted to link service and Jewish values, help students confront ethical dilemmas, and teach students that tzedakah means more than giving money. From a practical standpoint, the educator felt that active learning as opposed to "talking at" students would help keep students enrolled past bar/bat mitzvah. The seventeen students who participated in the first year of the program spent half of the Sunday afternoon sessions in class learning a Jewish Values curriculum[13] and alternating sessions at a local hospital providing both direct and indirect service as volunteers. The instructor helped students reflect informally when there was time at the hospital, although this year, they are planning to incorporate written reflection at the end of each semester.

Beth Tikvah's program meets the definition of service-learning and the adjustment to include written reflection this year aids in that distinction, although more structured, ongoing reflection could help to strengthen the program. The primary outcomes that the program seeks to attain seem tied to teaching moral behavior and connecting students to their Judaism. It is noteworthy that three of the seventeen students made an ongoing commitment to serve at the hospital, which speaks to the potential of an ongoing commitment to service and connectedness to one's community. The teacher also reported closer relationships with students, another potential outcome discussed in Chapter 1.

3. Washington Hebrew Congregation in Washington, D.C. implemented the beginnings of a service-learning program in the fall of 2005. They hired a service-learning consultant who has developed the program for more than one hundred 7th graders at the congregation. Prior to implementation, the consultant provided service-

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[13] *Making a Difference* by Artson and Gevirtz.

learning training for the board, the educator, the staff and the teachers to make sure all stakeholders had an understanding of the service-learning process. After everyone was committed to the pedagogy, the consultant helped the teachers implement one service-learning program.

In order to prevent making changes too quickly, the program was tied to the current 7th grade curriculum that teaches the timeline of Jewish history. The project was for the students to create an interactive "wax museum" of figures in Jewish history. The students would research a figure in Jewish history and write a thirty-second presentation in the first person. On the day of the wax museum, after a presentation on the history of the Jewish people, the students would dress up as their character and when a visitor to the museum pushed a "button" they had created, the students would deliver their presentation. The service aspect involved 4th graders at the congregation as well as seniors in the community who were invited to visit the museum. After the museum experience, the 4th graders evaluated what they had learned and the 7th graders spent time visiting with the seniors prior to reflecting on their experience.

The structured learning related to the students' research and their service was the combination of teaching the 4th graders while performing for and visiting with the seniors in the community. Combined with the planned reflection after the program, this project fulfilled this thesis' definition of service-learning. The two main outcomes that the service-learning project attempted to address were academic learning and the communal outcomes of strengthening the school and the community.

Community Based Service-Learning

1. In the fall of 2005, after almost a year of planning, building partnerships, and curriculum development, the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of Boston piloted TELEM (Movement), which stands for *Tenuah Letzi'irim Mitnadvim* (Movement of Youth Volunteers). TELEM's goals are to provide a transformative service-learning "rite of passage" for Jewish youth. "Ultimately, this experience will foster a lifelong understanding of the importance of volunteerism and activism that will always be integrally connected with each participant's Jewish identity."[14] TELEM is seeking to accomplish these goals through a community-wide service-learning program that is supplemented by one-time service projects for all participants, opportunities for intensive service immersion programs, and an alternative spring break trip organized by American Jewish World Service (AJWS).[15]

In its first semester, approximately one hundred and sixty students from nine different educational institutions including congregations, a supplemental Jewish school, and the JCC, participated in TELEM. Every site begins the program with four introductory sessions teaching different Jewish responses to injustice. There are then four different service-learning tracks to choose from: elder care,[16] literacy,[17] special needs/disabilities, and hunger and homelessness.[18] The JCRC provides the curricula, along with resources and training to each site, which then offers one or more of the service-learning tracks to its students for a semester or a year.

Program implementation varies from site to site, but the program requires at least two or four hours of learning and reflection and four or eight hours of service each

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[14] TELEM, "Owner's Manual," 1.
[15] AJWS programs are listed below.
[16] Using SPARK *'s* HeartAction.
[17] Developed in consultation with SPARK.
[18] Adapted from the Jewish Fund for Justice's *tzedek* curriculum.

month, which places it within this thesis' definition of service-learning. Based on the stated goals of the program, the potential service-learning outcomes that TELEM hopes to achieve relate most directly to a lifelong commitment to service and a connection to one's heritage. The program speaks of service-learning as transformative, which addresses the research that suggests service-learning can transform one's perspective. TELEM also seems to offer many opportunities for communal outcomes such as connecting peers to each other through community wide events and experiences, building partnerships between the more than thirty organizations that are taking part in or supporting the program, and having an impact in the community through ongoing service and sustaining relationships with community organizations. At this point, the community-wide model that TELEM has developed appears to be unique. The lessons learned from Boston's JCRC should be very instructive for what might work other communities.

Intensive Service-Learning Programs:

Whereas most of the service-learning programs mentioned to this point utilize service-learning primarily for Jewish education and identity development, intensive programs tend to focus more on social change. The short-term and long-term programs share several common characteristics, such as a communal living situation. Days are generally spent doing service in the community, evenings provide opportunities for education and reflection, and Shabbat is generally a special time to pray, rest, and gain perspective. Since participants usually have to apply to these programs to participate, their motivation and commitment to service or activism generally begins at a high level.

Most intensive programs do not usually take place in the same city or region where the participants live. The long-term programs range in length from three weeks to two months, whereas the short-term projects last one to two weeks.

Long Term Intensive Service-Learning Programs:

1. The North America Federation Temple Youth (NFTY) Mitzvah Corps program in New Brunswick, New Jersey has been running for the past thirty-six summers, making it the longest running Jewish service-learning program. In 2004, NFTY also started a program in San Francisco and in 2005 piloted a curriculum that focuses on a number of Jewish and social issues. Both programs attract participants from the NFTY region where the Mitzvah Corps is located and offer opportunities to serve in organizations that confront issues such as hunger and homelessness, elder care, and various problems facing youth today.

The two programs differ in that New Jersey is six weeks long, has twenty-five to thirty-five participants, is open to 11th and 12th graders, and spends a weekend with the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism where they have the opportunity to lobby their congressional leaders. San Francisco's program is four weeks long, has fourteen to twenty-two participants, is open to 10th-12th graders, and they lobby state representatives in Sacramento. However, both programs have the same goals and a similar structure so that they can be addressed together.

Mitzvah Corps' goals are to create an organic Jewish community, provide an understanding of *tikkun olam* in a Reform Jewish context, and for participants to leave with the commitment and the skills to become social action leaders in their Jewish and

non-Jewish communities. The educational curriculum is made up of a variety of programs and guest speakers that address diverse social, theological, and Jewish issues. Depending on the speaker or the program, the learning sessions may provide opportunities for reflection. In addition, approximately once a week time and space are provided to deal with group issues and reflect upon the service experience. The participants also tend to keep a group journal, which is another outlet for reflection.

Even though the reflection component is not tightly woven into the overall Mitzvah Corps experience, the program does seem to provide reflection opportunities, which helps NFTY's Mitzvah Corps meet the definition of service-learning. More structured, ongoing reflection could help to strengthen the program and could be integrated into the curriculum. Based on the goals and the structure of the program, Mitzvah Corps strives to meet several potential service-learning outcomes. Beyond an interest in a commitment to service, the program seeks to teach leadership skills, which is reflected in part by the commitment that New Brunswick Mitzvah Corp participants make to fundraise and recruit for the following year's program. This is also tied to a potential for increasing self-efficacy among the participants. The outcomes of connecting to peers and community partnerships are illustrated by the commitment to building a sense of community within the group and the fact that the community organizations and the local congregation in New Brunswick look forward to and count on the Mitzvah Corps program year after year. And as stated in the goals and reflected in the curriculum, the program seeks to foster a connection to one's Judaism by strengthening religious identity.

2. Panim's Summer JAM (Judaism, Activism, Mitzvah work) is the other high school program that falls into this category. Beginning in 2003, 10th-12th grade

participants from all Jewish denominations have traveled to Washington, D.C. to participate in the program. Participants spend three hours, four days a week serving on projects related to issues such as economic justice, the environment, and issues of war and refugees. The service is complimented by courses that relate directly to the service project and include meetings with policy experts about the topic and Jewish study related to the issue. Participants go through two courses during the three-week program and each one culminates with an opportunity to lobby their congressional leaders on Capital Hill. It varies by instructor, but each course provides some opportunities for reflection and there are opportunities to reflect in large and small group settings outside of the courses.

Summer JAM was designed to provide "form and meaning to a positive Jewish identity"[19] while helping participants make connections between Jewish values, political activism, and civic engagement. It strives to "strengthen Jewish leaders by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to apply their Jewish legacy of learning, service, and *tikkun olam* in communal and civic contexts."[20] The structure and content of Summer JAM reflects those goals, and the program components meet the definition of service-learning. The program tries to address a number of potential service-learning outcomes in a variety of ways. One focus is communal and social outcomes, such as building community, connecting peers to each other, and respecting diversity as the program brings teens from different Jewish backgrounds to live and serve together. Another focus is looking at problems at a systemic level to help participants transform their perspective based on the education and experiences that the participants encounter.

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[19] See http://www.panim.org/programs/.
[20] See http://www.panim.org/about/index.html.

The goals of the organization reflect an attempt to increase leadership skills, self-efficacy, and activism, while connecting participants to their Judaism.

3. American Jewish World Service (AJWS) is an expanding organization that founded the International Jewish College Corps in 1995. Now called AJWS Volunteer Summer, the year-long program revolves around seven weeks where participants, ages sixteen to twenty-five, live and work in a community in a developing country, such as Ghana or Honduras. Four groups of fifteen Jews from different Jewish backgrounds work with non-governmental organizations to assist local communities in achieving their developmental goals. In addition to the work they do in the community, the program provides several opportunities each week to integrate their experiences with Jewish study, critical reflection, and education about the issues affecting the local community. Cultural exchanges between the participants and the community are encouraged.

Prior to the seven weeks of service, participants attend a two-day orientation session to learn both cross-cultural training and the Jewish values associated with international development. They learn about the country where they will be serving, the work AJWS does, and they begin the process of group formation. Participants also receive a comprehensive program handbook that is used on site, and provides a wealth of knowledge about issues such as the history and political issues facing the country where they will be serving, inspirational readings and poetry, discussions of Jewish responses to world problems, information about grassroots sustainable international development, globalization, etc.

After participants return home, they can take part in an active listserve and online community. They participate in a series of three educational retreats that provide

opportunities for additional reflection, reestablishing connections, and learning additional skills, such as advocacy, education, and community organizing. Participants are also expected to make public presentations about their experiences, write articles in campus or community newspapers, continue with service activities in their home community, and help recruit for the following year's program.

AJWS Volunteer Summer is an example of service-learning that from a structural point of view seems to address almost all of the potential academic, personal/social, and communal outcomes that were discussed in Chapter 1.

4. The Jewish Council on Urban Affairs (JCUA) piloted the Rabbinical Student Fellowship in the summer of 2005. The program brought five rabbinical students from different rabbinical schools to Chicago to participate in a service-learning program that is designed to help the students incorporate social justice work into their rabbinates. The participants spent two days a week studying the relationship between Jewish texts and social justice, while discussing how social justice can be integrated into their careers. They then spent two days working in the field doing direct and indirect service, including advocacy work with one of JCUA's community partners. On Fridays the group spent half the day reflecting on the week's experiences utilizing the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) model.

These experiences constitute the basics of a complete service-learning program, but additional components of the program further enhance the experience. Each participant is paired with a rabbinic mentor from the Chicago area who the student meets with and shadows periodically throughout the summer. At the end of the program, every student organized and presented a cumulative workshop or religious service to be

presented in their mentor's community or some other forum. And once back on campus, the participants are required to make a presentation at their rabbinical institution related to social justice or some other aspect of their experience.

While the Rabbinical Student Fellowship need not be concerned about its participants' Jewish identities or education, academic learning is a major focus of the program. If students live up to the goals of the program and complete the fellowship with a greater understanding and repertoire of Jewish teachings relating to social justice, they will utilize those teachings in the future. Combined with the mentorship opportunities, these professional development opportunities are a potential service-learning outcome not discussed in Chapter 1.

The communal setting and interactions with rabbinical students from different denominations address outcomes relating to diversity and connection to one's peers. Based on the stated goals of the program, another potential outcome relates to a lifelong commitment to service. The CPE reflection model, which is a very intensive and personal form of reflection, suggests the potential for transformation of ideals and beliefs. Though the program is small and focused, the way it is designed gives more equal weight to each of the service-learning components: service, structured learning, and reflection.

Short Term Intensive Service-Learning Programs:

1. The *Tzevet Mitzvot* (Adult Mitzvah Corps) program of the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) that officially began in 2003 has its roots in a congregational program that was started by Temple Shalom in Succasunna, New Jersey in 1998. Temple Shalom

continues to participate in the URJ Mitzvah Corps in addition to organizing it's own program. Due to the overlap between the programs, they will be discussed together.

Tzevet Mitzvot is open to participants ages sixteen and older and twenty to thirty-five people participate in the annual one week service-learning programs. Each year, a different city is chosen as the site for the program and participants come from all over the country. Using the Talmudic dictum *Al Sh'losha D'varim HaOlam Omed: Al HaTorah, Al HaAvodah, V'Al G'milut Chasadim* (The World Stands Upon Three Things: Learning, Prayer and Righteous Deeds) as an organizing principle, the week is made up of daily prayer, daily Jewish study, and seven to eight hours of service each day. The service and study has commonly related to issues of housing and poverty. Reflection is not structured, but according to Rabbi Joel Soffin of Temple Shalom, reflecting on the experience is an ongoing aspect of daily conversation that is linked to the study sessions. *Tzevet Mitzvot* meets this thesis' definition of service-learning, but more structured reflection may enhance the program.

Based on communications with organizers and program evaluations, the program seems to strive for potential outcomes relating to a connection with one's Judaism, to a commitment to ongoing service, and to a sense of self-efficacy and leadership skills that would enable participants to help engage others in social justice work. It is also one of the only programs that is geared towards an adult population and according to program organizers, the service-learning structure is effective in providing a meaningful experience for all participants, regardless of age.

2. The AJWS organizes three related programs that fall into this category. They organize Alternative Break trips in partnership with Hillel for college students, they run

delegation programs and study tours in partnership with Jewish organizations such as synagogues, JCCs, and Jewish summer camps, and they also organize a delegation specifically for rabbinical students. Each program follows the one-week long alternative break model and takes place somewhere in the developing world. All three programs provide educational materials similar to the AJWS Volunteer Summer program handbook and the education and service are fully integrated through daily critical reflection. The work that is based on the needs of the host organization and cultural exchange is encouraged with the local community and with peers from different Jewish backgrounds.

Each program requires the groups to meet two times following the week of service. There is no formal curriculum, but individuals and the group as a whole are asked to do a follow up project that ranges from reflective activities to campaigns for an international cause. The major difference between the programs is that the rabbinical delegation includes a scholar in residence and an additional focus on professional development, which has been untested in the research so far, as was mentioned earlier.

Despite the shorter timeframe, AJWS's delegation and alternative break programs are comparable in their goals and structure to the Volunteer Summer program. All three are comprehensive examples of service-learning and they address almost all of the potential academic, personal/social, and communal outcomes that were discussed in chapter 1.

3. Hillel has been providing support for colleges that organize one-week alternative spring break (ASB) trips for the past five years. During the 2004-2005 school year, Hillel Tzedek assisted with forty alternative break sites with eight to eighteen participants, several which were organized through the AJWS Alternative Break program

mentioned above. The structure varies from trip to trip, but on most sites participants work during the day and spend some time reflecting in the evening. Hillel Tzedek was quick to point out AJWS's expertise in the area of reflection. Jewish study and learning related to the social issue that the group addresses is incorporated either prior to the trip or during the week, depending on the program.

Most ASB trips therefore meet the definition of service-learning but since there is such diversity between trips, it is difficult to discuss the potential outcomes that are being addressed by the program. "Hillel's mission is to enrich the lives of Jewish undergraduate and graduate students so that they may enrich the Jewish people and the world,"[21] which relates to the potential outcome of connection to one's Judaism. Other possible outcomes include a connection to one's peers due to the nature of the program, leadership development since most programs are student led, and a continued commitment to social justice. Hillel is currently working to develop a more structured program for their alternative break experiences as well as other service opportunities.

4. *Nitzotz* (Sparks) is a two-week summer program organized by BBYO (Bnai Brith Youth Organization) and SPARK*s*: Partnership for Service that first launched in 2004. High school participants travel to the Baltimore/Washinton, D.C. area or Chicago where they serve in organizations that confront such issues as poverty, community revitalization, at risk youth, and urban environmentalism. Those in the D.C. area also have the opportunity to lobby on Capital Hill. SPARK combines daily service with a structured curriculum that integrates Jewish learning and reflection. The goals of *Nitzotz* include connecting Jewish sources to issues, processing experiences in a way that

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[21] Hillel, "What is Hillel's Mission?."

deepens social, spiritual, and political connections to service work, building community, and teaching organizing skills participants can utilize in their home BBYO chapter.

This service-learning program tries to achieve a number of potential service-learning outcomes. Connection to one's peers and building community is a focus of the communal living situation and the service projects seek to meet the needs of the community. Self-efficacy and leadership skills are potential outcomes based on the skills training participants receive, as is a connection to one's Judaism. Based on its design and goals, *Nitzotz* seems to concentrate on the potential outcomes relating to an ongoing commitment to service and a systemic understanding of social issues that may lead to perspective transformation.

5. In January 2005, the JCUA started running its second incarnation of the Urban Mitzvah Corps program after an eight-year hiatus due to funding constraints. The Urban Mitzvah Corps brings ten to fifteen college students from around the country to Chicago for what is essentially a one-week alternative winter break. The aim of the program is for "the students [to] develop a deeper understanding of Jewish approaches to social justice and of the issues facing low income communities."[22] They fulfill these goals through daily Jewish study on the issue theme of the day and then by serving in a community organization that addresses the issue. Participants are encouraged to bring journals and there is time at the end of each day for structured reflection. At the end of the week, students participate in a creative writing workshop with a local writer who helps them process their experiences and they also participate in a structured program about how to bring their experiences back to their campus during the final evening.

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[22] "UMC Description," internal document.

The learning, service, and comprehensive reflection program meet the definition of service-learning. With Jews participating on the program from all different backgrounds, embracing diversity and connecting with one's peers are among the potential outcomes the program seeks to attain for its participants. The JCUA's Urban Mitzvah Corps also tries to connect students to their heritage, help students develop a systemic understanding of poverty and an ongoing commitment to service based on the program goals. And by helping students bring their experience back to campus with them, other potential outcomes include self-efficacy and leadership skills.

Conclusion:

These sixteen service-learning programs represent a large cross section of the service-learning that exist today in the Jewish community. They are all unique, each having developed in a variety of ways for a variety of reasons. They each have their own focus, yet they share a pedagogy that has shown great potential in the research. Those programs that have program evaluations have generally received very positive results and give others good reason to be optimistic about the future of Jewish service-learning. It is important to examine how these programs and others can consistently achieve the most effective results and to do so, an examination of the Jewish learning is required. This will be the discussion in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: **Jewish** Service-Learning

The sixteen programs described in the previous chapter represent several different examples of how to put service-learning into practice in a Jewish environment. As was described in Chapter 1, service-learning was developed in the 1960s and 70s based on the liberal philosophies of Dewey and others. While the pedagogy is not contrary to Jewish tradition and teaching, service-learning itself is not inherently Jewish. However, based on their foci of increasing Jewish knowledge, Jewish activism, and Jewish identity, Judaism is clearly at the heart of each of these programs. In striving to achieve these objectives, the role of Judaism within a service-learning program takes on primary importance. While a group of Jews engaging in service-learning may result in some positive outcomes, if the endeavor can become a uniquely Jewish experience, it greatly increases the potential for a program to fulfill its Jewish goals. Therefore, regardless of the ideology of the Jewish service-learning program, the challenge for curriculum developers, congregations, and organizations is to transform service-learning into an explicitly Jewish activity.

The aim of this chapter is to assess the ways in which Jewish service-learning programs are or are not currently meeting that challenge. After a discussion of how to create a specifically Jewish form of service-learning, standards will be established by which to evaluate these programs. These criteria will be useful in examining both macro issues, such as program structure, as well as micro issues, such as specific lesson plans. Due to the multitude of lesson plans that incorporate Jewish learning, only a small sample will be discussed, based on the frequency that a specific text appears in different programs or the instructive nature of the lesson plan.

Study and Action in the Jewish Tradition

In order to address the challenge of transforming service-learning into a specifically Jewish endeavor, we turn to the teachings of our tradition. The *mishna* in *Kiddushin* 1:10 deals with the importance of performing mitzvot and having Jewish knowledge, specifically knowledge of Tanakh and Mishna. These issues are juxtaposed, but the relationship between them is not specified. The Gemara, however, does elaborate, discussing which is more important, *talmud* or *ma'aseh*:

> This was already [addressed] when R. Tarfon and the Elders were reclining in the upper chamber of Nitzah's house in Lod. This question was raised before them: Is study (*talmud*) or action (*ma'aseh*) more important? R. Tarfon answered by saying, "Action is more important." R. Akiva answered by saying, "Study [of Torah] is more important." Then everyone answered, saying, "Study [of Torah] is more important because study leads to action."[1]

In this passage, *talmud* refers to the mitzvah of *Talmud Torah*, which is distinguished from *ma'aseh*. *Ma'aseh* here has generally referred to either the performance of *mitzvot* or action. Expanding upon the Mishna, the rabbis at the gathering set *Talmud Torah* aside from all of the other mitzvot and give it primary importance due to its unique nature, leading those who study to the performance of other mitzvot. Jewish study and Jewish action are both highly valued, but in determining the relationship between the two, study is given priority.

Service-learning includes service in the community, structured learning, and reflection that integrates the two. In the creation of a service-learning program that is explicitly Jewish, a Jewish service-learning program should seek to apply this Talmudic teaching to a program's structure. In that case, it seems that on a basic level, the central component of the structured learning should be Jewish learning that informs the type of

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[1] Kiddushin 40b.

service that will be performed. Both are integral to the process, but again, Jewish learning is given priority.

This text gives approval to and suggests a structure for the notion of Jewish service-learning. While it does not explain how to incorporate reflection into a Jewish service-learning model or what the content of Jewish learning should be, the very next passage in TB Kiddushin 40b helps to clarify these issues. This teaching is very instructive for it addresses the content, the quality, and the overall outcome of a Jewish service-learning program. In order to deal with each issue individually, the text has been broken down into three discrete units. The passage begins:

> It was taught in a *baraita*: R. Yose says "study (*talmud*) is more important [than action], for [the giving of the Torah] preceded [the mitzvah of] Challah[2] by forty [years, the mitzvah of] Terumah[3] and tithes by fifty-four [years, the mitzvah of] the Sabbatical year[4] by sixty-one [years, and the mitzvah of] the Jubilee year[5] by one hundred and three [years]...

This unit specifies the initial focus of the Jewish content of a Jewish service-learning program. The opening of R. Yose's argument is that God gave the Israelites the Torah long before the Israelites entered into the Land of Israel and therefore before they were required to observe mitzvot such as the Sabbatical and Jubilee years. The underlying assumption is that the Israelites needed time to study in order to delineate the mitzvot and how to perform them. This teaches that *Talmud Torah* is what makes us aware that there is a mitzvah to do and informs us how to do it. For example, a person might take it easy from Friday night to Saturday night, eating well and napping often because it's the end of the workweek, but that does not mean that she is celebrating

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[2] Dedicating a portion of one's dough to the priesthood.
[3] Levitical tithes.
[4] Every seventh year.
[5] Every fiftieth year.

Shabbat. She first needs the Jewish knowledge to know how to light candles, how to say *Kiddush*, how to bless her children, etc. in order to truly welcome Shabbat and sanctify the day. Therefore the content of Jewish learning needs to begin with the basics: knowledge of what Shabbat is, the rituals that are practiced, and how to perform each ritual. Otherwise, people's actions do not carry the same Jewish significance.

Regarding service-learning, a group may visit people in the hospital as their service in the community because it is a nice thing to do. But in a Jewish service-learning program, the group would begin by learning about the mitzvah of *bikur cholim* (visiting the sick). They may learn that according to Jewish tradition, *bikur cholim* is seen as emulating God, who visited Abraham when he was recuperating after circumcision, or that visiting the sick can actually help relieve one-sixtieth of a person's suffering. They may also study that even though it is a mitzvah, one cannot say a blessing over *bikur cholim* because one never knows if the patient is able to receive visitors. There is a great deal of content in Jewish tradition that provides perspective and instruction relating to *bikur cholim*, and the combination of study and then performing the mitzvah help to transform a "nice thing to do" into an action that is inherently Jewish. In that respect, it may be more aptly referred to as Jewish learning-service.

The next section from TB Kiddushin 40b concludes R. Yose's *baraita*:

> And just as study [of Torah] precedes the performance [of mitzvot], the
> judgment for one's study [of Torah] precedes [the judgment for one's]
> performance [of mitzvot]...And just as judgment for [one's study of
> Torah] precedes [the judgment for one's] performance [of mitzvot], the
> reward for [one's study of Torah] precedes [the reward for one's]
> performance [of mitzvot], as it is said [in Scripture], "And God gave them
> the lands of nations, and they inherited the toil of the nations so that they
> might keep[6] God's statutes and observe[7] God's teachings (Psalm 105:44-
> 45).

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[6] Interpreted by R. Yose as referring to *Talmud Torah*.

This section addresses the quality of Jewish learning and action in a Jewish service-learning program. In the text, judgment relates to how a person will be judged after death and according to this rabbinic tradition, the greater the amount of Torah study and mitzvot one has performed, the better the judgment will be. In this context, judgment combined with the notion of reward pertains to the idea that a person derives a benefit from study and performing mitzvot. Maintaining consistency, R. Yose teaches that the benefit derived from Talmud Torah will precede the benefit of performing mitzvot. And based on the examples below, the benefit will manifest itself in many different layers of meaning.

On the most basic level, the practical side of any education is learning in order to act. Therefore, the benefit that is derived from studying how to welcome Shabbat is the gaining of knowledge and hopefully confidence, empowering someone to be able to say the prayer over lighting the candles or chanting the words of *Kiddush*. In addition to simply learning how to act, Talmud Torah can provide a spiritual benefit as well. One may know the basics for how to observe Shabbat, but studying ancient or modern sources about the meaning of Shabbat can enhance one's *kavannah* and provide additional significance. On a different level, if one studies Shabbat from a variety of sources, drawing from texts such as Tanakh, Midrash, Talmud, and later works, an individual can start to understand in a concrete way that defining and experiencing Shabbat has been a part of Jewish tradition for thousands of years. This type of understanding can provide a variety of benefits, such as increased knowledge, greater meaning and a deeper connection to one's Judaism.

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[7] Interpreted by R. Yose as referring to the performance of mitzvot.

In a Jewish service-learning program, the benefit derived relates to quality in that the higher the quality of the Jewish learning, the greater the potential benefit. Therefore, when studying *bikur cholim*, practical teachings may benefit a nervous participant's frame of mind after learning that in the Midrashim, no words were spoken when God visited Abraham after his circumcision, highlighting the importance of one's presence during a visit, as opposed to exactly what one says. Studying *bikur cholim* as the emulation of God or as a healing presence could provide spiritual benefit. Additionally, depending on the focus of the program, the intended benefit will be impacted by the sources that are chosen. If a program's goal is to create a stronger Jewish identity, a group may select texts that discuss *bikur cholim* in terms of a communal obligation, such as TB Nedarim 40a. Or if a program hopes to encourage Jewish activists to thoughtfully consider controversial issues related to *bikur cholim*, such as a patient's "right to die," various texts advocating for the many divergent Jewish views on the topic would need to be studied. From practical to theoretical to spiritual, there are many different opportunities for an individual to derive benefit from a Jewish service-learning program when it has been prepared Talmud Torah at a high level. Studying the content of the mitzvah helps to make service-learning a Jewish activity, but enhancing the Jewish learning increases the benefit one derives, in addition to the quality of the program as a whole.

The third section from TB Kiddushin 40b begins by quoting the initial passage from Mishna Kiddushin 1:10, followed by an interpretation in the Gemara:

> **Anyone who has no [knowledge of] Scripture or Mishna [or right conduct is outside of the community]...** R. Yochanan said, "And he is disqualified from being a witness."

By understanding this passage as a positive statement instead of in its negative formulation, the intention of the text addresses the overall outcome of Jewish service-learning, including the role that reflection should play. The Mishna argues that becoming a fully functioning member of the Jewish community requires Jewish learning. R. Yochanan then provides one significant example of what it means to be a full member of the community, specifically the ability to be a witness.

R. Yochanan's intention here is to say that someone without learning is not fit to serve as a witness in court, however, there are many other ways that we bear witness in life that require Jewish learning. We bear witness to Shabbat each week when we sanctify the day, setting aside sacred time. We testify to another's pain and suffering, hope and healing, when we perform the mitzvah of *bikur cholim*. Almost every Jewish act is an act of bearing witness, from blessing the food we eat to rejoicing with family, friends, and the community during life cycle events. Even when we perform the mitzvah of Talmud Torah, we testify to the history and teachings of our people. We are able to bear witness when we have Jewish knowledge and the willingness to perform the mitzvot, but the ability to testify and serve as a more fully functioning member of the Jewish community goes beyond any individual action. Being competent to testify implies an ongoing commitment; bearing witness is a part of one's Jewish identity.

This teaching speaks to the overarching goal of any Jewish service-learning program: a transformative Jewish experience where the participants will have greatly increased their connection to Judaism. It is a progression that for example, begins by teaching participants about the mitzvah of *bikur cholim*, after which they begin their visits in the hospital. As the semester continues, participants have started to encounter a

variety of Jewish sources that present a different issue related to *bikur cholim*, including

passages from the Talmud, Midrashim, and various commentators. As they learn about

the context of each text, they start to realize that Jews have been grappling with these

issues for over fifteen hundred years.

The transformation itself slowly comes about through structured reflection

sessions, where participants have the opportunity to thoughtfully and critically reflect on

all of the issues with which they are confronted. In addition to processing specific

encounters, reflection sessions focus more on one's sense of Jewish obligation, a greater

connection to Jewish teachings, and an increased commitment to caring for the sick. By

the end, the group has spent a lot of time talking about how they can integrate the lessons

learned into their Jewish lives and how they have the tools and the desire to continue this

work. This is an outcome that enables the participants to bear witness in the Jewish

community long after the program ends.

Standards for Jewish Content

There are many differences between the various Jewish service-learning

programs, such as differences in purpose, structure, age of participants, etc. However,

they have two important characteristics in common: they are service-learning programs

and they are Jewish programs. In chapter 2, they were each evaluated according to the

definition of service-learning. Here, the Jewish content of the programs will be assessed.

The previous section detailed the argument that Jewish service-learning has the

potential to be an explicitly Jewish activity with explicitly Jewish goals. This argument

was based on three principles derived from one passage in TB Kiddushin 40b that

addressed the relationship between Talmud Torah and the performance of mitzvot. Since these principles helped to define the Jewish nature of Jewish service-learning, they should provide solid criteria upon which to assess the Jewish nature of Jewish service-learning programs. The three principles have been summarized by the following three questions:

- How does the Jewish learning inform participants about the mitzvah they will be doing?

- How does the Jewish learning provide a benefit for participants?

- How does the Jewish content connect participants to their Jewish identity?

The evaluation will first focus on program structure as it relates to Jewish content. Depending on the program, all three questions may not be relevant or assessable. Intensive and non-intensive programs will again be treated separately and due to the vast differences in structure most of the programs will be discussed briefly. This will be followed by a detailed assessment of the Jewish content of three lesson plans from different programs.

Structural Impact on Jewish Content: Non-Intensive Programs

Even though all of the non-intensive Jewish service-learning programs are based in schools or congregations, there is a great deal of diversity between them. Some are based on ideology, but one of the main reasons for these differences is that every program has had to come up with creative solutions to the issue of time. They all strive to provide quality Jewish learning, quality learning about the social issue, a quality service experience, and quality reflection. Yet, they attempt to do so under difficult time

constraints, which are further complicated due to the competition with extra-curricular athletic and academic programs. At the same time, they have all found ways to cope.

The program at Washington Hebrew Congregation stands out ideologically because it its Jewish learning does not concentrate on Jewish values or Jewish activism. Instead, the service-learning program that was created completely revolved around their current curriculum of Jewish history, where each student focused on one particular historical figure in order to become that person in their mock wax museum. Performing the wax museum for seniors in the community and the 4th graders at their school was designed to both enhance Jewish knowledge and provide a service to the community. So by keeping the service-learning program completely within the standard curriculum and timeframe, they were able to possibly enhance the Jewish learning through the service-learning program. However, while the program does reflect a Jewish learning component, there is no indication of a mitzvah to which the Jewish learning was paired.

Other programs, such as Congregation Beth Israel's Mitzvah Corps and Congregation Beth Tikvah base their curriculum on one or more textbooks[8] that teach Jewish values or community involvement. These textbooks provide structure and a level of integrity to the Jewish learning, even though they were not designed to support a service-learning program. There are also considerable structural differences between these programs. Beth Tikvah's program is balanced, switching between service and learning each week, but while Beth Tikvah's participants help out in a hospital, they use a general Jewish values textbook, which means that the learning does not necessarily inform the participants about the mitzvah that they are performing. The Mitzvah Corps program provides more time for Jewish learning, dedicating three out of four weeks to

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[8] The textbooks are listed in the footnotes on page 32 and 33.

learning and reflection, switching mitzvot every fourth or fifth week. In each module, the learning does inform the mitzvah being performed. This enables the participants to learn about and experience many different mitzvot, but it also means that they will not fully explore the nuances of any one mitzvah.

Panim's Jewish Civic Initiative (JCI) program uses the *Jewish Civics* curriculum, which utilizes a variety of learning opportunities, from essays to discussing Jewish sources to activities such as a "values conflict." The essays provide both Jewish responses to issues as well as secular issue information. They serve as a useful tool for programs that are looking to increase knowledge when pressed for time. The values conflict is a unique activity that focuses on Jewish values by introducing a real life situation where the participants have to make a difficult choice. They are guided by a "Jewish values matrix," which lists approximately a dozen Jewish values that are described and then supported by references to Jewish sources. For example, the value of *tzelem elohim*, that every person was created in the image of God, is described and then Genesis 1:27 and Genesis Rabbah 24 are referenced. The text of the sources are not printed out, only the reference to the source is provided to the participants. Since each congregation that participates in the JCI program chooses their own service project, it is difficult to know whether the Jewish learning informs the mitzvah being performed. While that link is suspect, one of the strengths of the program is the connection between Jewish sources and real-life political issues. That helps to make Jewish learning relevant to participants, which is a true benefit.

The most common structure for Jewish learning is to utilize Jewish texts or quotes from Jewish authors as a way to generate discussion. For example, SPARK's

HeartAction curriculum provides up to seven different options of texts for each learning section. The Resource Manual makes it clear that rather then a formal curriculum, HeartAction can be thought of as a collection of resources, enabling facilitators to combine texts and create their own lesson plans. While the majority of options are Jewish sources, there is usually at least one lesson that does not use a Jewish sources, making it possible for a facilitator to incorporate little if any Jewish learning over the course of the program. For each text or group of texts that is discussed, the curriculum provides questions that help participants struggle with both the meaning of the text and how the texts relate to their experiences. The result is that study sessions are actually reflection sessions that incorporate text study. While more time could be dedicated to Jewish learning, and some facilitators who are administering the program may have that flexibility, the Jewish sources clearly inform the participants about the mitzvot they are performing. Lessons also include Jewish study relating to skill acquisition, such as active listening, which is helpful while visiting with the elderly, as well as a beneficial life skill. The TELEM program follows a similar structure.

It seems that in spite of the time constraints, most of these programs are able to provide ample time for Jewish learning. While it has been easy enough to determine whether the Jewish learning informed the mitzvot being performed, it has been more difficult on a macro level to determine some of the benefits, or whether or not the programs are able to help participants increase their connection to their Jewish identity. These issues will be examined further when individual lesson plans are assessed.

Structural Impact on Jewish Content: Intensive Programs

In terms of the Jewish content that a program can provide, there is a considerable distinction between intensive and non-intensive service-learning programs. Intensive programs, whether they last for one week or three months have the potential for groups to spend fifteen to sixteen hours a day with each other. That allows for a much greater degree of time and flexibility when planning Jewish learning sessions. Discussions or study sessions are not required to end once the bell rings, they can be continued during meals or on the work site, depending on the type of mitzvot being performed.

In addition to studying Jewish texts, intensive programs have the opportunity to help their participants experience Jewish living in a different way than they are used to. Some may incorporate daily communal prayer; others may involve discussions about *kashrut* or when *birkat hamazon* will be said as a community. Almost every one incorporates special plans for Shabbat. Programs that bring Jews from different streams together also provide the opportunity for participants to learn more about the practices and philosophies of their colleagues during their time together. All of these experiences contain great potential for informal Jewish education and in many cases the informal learning alone could help to enhance one's sense of Jewish identity. And different people may gather different benefits, but the benefits that come from living with Jews, studying with Jews, and doing mitzvot with Jews day in and day out are numerous indeed. Complementing the informal education, these programs still contain structured Jewish learning in a variety of forms.

The Jewish Council on Urban Affairs Rabbinical Student Fellowship program provides a structure that dedicates two full mornings a week to text study, along with one or two afternoons a week focused on contemporary Jewish issues. The formal study is

complemented by informal opportunities for Jewish learning and professional growth

with rabbinic mentors and by interacting with colleagues from different streams of

Judaism. The study relates to various aspects of poverty, which informs the mitzvot that

are being performed and the numerous opportunities for study, action, and professional

development provide many benefits, such as skills training and a greater awareness of

poverty issues from a Jewish perspective.

One might think that an intensive study program would only be for rabbinical

students, but Panim's Summer JAM incorporates similar opportunities. It includes a

class that meets twice a week where participants study Jewish texts relating to the mitzvot

they are performing. These are complemented by political information sessions that

sometimes relate to Jewish issues. And this program also brings together participants

from different streams of Judaism. While it is not intense as the Rabbinical Fellowship, it

provides some of the same opportunities and some of the same benefits. Both of these

programs provide less time was spent on site doing service, but they seem to provide

greater opportunities for Jewish learning.

The Union of Reform Judaism's (URJ) *Tzevet Mitzvot* program sets aside some

time each morning for prayer and each evening for text study that is organized by the

rabbis who lead the group. While there may be structured time for Jewish learning, it

was reported that during the course of the day, they never knew when an opportunity for

Jewish learning would arise. During lunch someone could ask about a text and that

would lead to an impromptu group study session. The structured learning does relate to

the mitzvot that are being performed and it is likely that the informal discussions do as

well.

In a similar way, while dedicating time to Jewish learning, American Jewish

World Service (AJWS) programs also have the flexibility of studying text at meals or

other informal times. These discussions may be enhanced by the diversity of participants

from different streams of Judaism. But instead of relying on a random question to begin

the discussion, their professionally trained facilitators can turn to the approximately two

hundred page handbook. It provides a number of resources including Jewish essays on

service and activism and information about various social justice topics that are followed

by related Jewish writings or commentaries, with questions for discussion. The texts

relate to Jewish views of poverty and tzedakah, which inform the mitzvot that are

performed, but compared to the amount of information on globalization, grassroots

sustainable international development, and information relating to the country where the

service will be performed, there seems to be relatively little Jewish content.

The structured learning in NFTY's Urban Mitzvah Corps (UMC) program is a set

curriculum of evening sessions focusing on Jewish values that is supplemented by guest

speakers and presentations. The Jewish learning, however, does not necessarily inform

the participants about the mitzvot they are performing. The San Francisco program is

new, but the strength of the New Jersey program lies in its informal Jewish education

where for the first time in their lives, the participants decide upon the rules of the house,

including issues of kashrut and Shabbat observance.

Again, while there was little difficulty in determining whether or not a program's

Jewish learning informed the mitzvot that were performed, determining the benefit from

a macro level was not as simple. Due to the considerable overlap between formal and

informal Jewish education and Jewish experience, along with the aims of the programs, it

is easy to say that each of the programs have the potential to increase one's connection

with their Judaism. However, a closer examination of some of the lesson plans may

provide a more detailed assessment.

Assessment of Text Study

Text study, combined with discussion questions, is the most common method of

Jewish learning amongst the Jewish service-learning programs and a quick glance

through a sample of the Jewish service-learning curricula includes texts from a wide

breadth of Jewish sources. As one might expect, many of the texts come from the

Tanakh, the Mishna, and the Gemara. These curricula also use a variety of Midrashic

texts including Sifrei, Midrash Tanchuma, Exodus Rabbah, and others. Additionally,

they draw on sources such as the Mishna Torah and the Shulchan Aruch, various

commentaries, and modern writings by Abraham Joshua Heschel and others. There are

far too many texts and far too many lesson plans contained in these Jewish service-

learning programs to analyze here.

In an effort to narrow down the number of texts, the decision was made to use

texts that were only found in more than one curricula. It turned out that in the sample of

curricula and workbooks that were studied, the same source was rarely found in more

than one curriculum. This was not too surprising when considering that each curriculum

would want to target the specific goals of each individual program. For example,

SPARK's HeartAction focuses on the elderly and issues relating to elder care and

therefore utilizes Jewish texts that address those issues. In contrast, American Jewish

World Service (AJWS) programs study different sources due to their focus on developing countries, globalization, and poverty.

It turned out that only two actual sources appeared in more than one curriculum:

- Deuteronomy 16:20: Justice, justice shall you pursue that you may thrive and occupy the land that Adonai your God is giving you.

- The eight levels of *tzedakah* described in Maimonides' Mishna Torah, *Hilchot Matanot Aniyim* 10:7-14.

Both of these well known texts were being utilized in a similar way. It was decided to focus on one of those texts, Deuteronomy 16:20, which was used by two different programs and to add an additional lesson plan from a third program that could be used for purposes of contrast. Therefore a small sample of three lesson plans were selected for assessment in order to determine if Jewish service-learning programs are meeting the challenge of transforming service-learning into an explicitly Jewish activity.

Deuteronomy 16:20 is used by both NFTY's UMC program and AJWS trips to address the topic of *tzedek* or justice. In the UMC curriculum,[9] participants begin first by trying to answer the question, "what are we doing here?" They continue with *havruta*[10] study focusing on Genesis 18:19, when God ponders hiding the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah from Abraham, noting that Abraham will instruct his descendents to be just and righteous. The facilitators then guide the *havruta* pairs to understand that being Jewish includes an obligation to be just and righteous and then they encourage the participants to look for examples of justice in the passage from Genesis 18:17-33, specifically Abraham speaking out about perceived injustice. At this point,

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[9] NFTY Urban Mitzvah Corps, "*Tzedek.*"
[10] One on one study with a peer.

Deuteronomy 16:20 is introduced and the participants are asked whether the verse adds anything to their understanding of *tzedek*. After time for discussion, the facilitators share two commentaries on Deuteronomy 16:20 that are quoted from the lesson plan: Simchah Bunem, who taught, "this command means 'to pursue justice justly,'" and Reb Manachem Mendel of Kotsk, who taught, "the doubling of *tzedek* teaches that both means and ends must be honest and fair." The session concludes by asking the participants how they are impacted by the text, how it informs their lives, and then try to answer once again, "what are we doing here?"

Several texts are used in this lesson: Deuteronomy 16:20, Genesis 18:17-33, specifically Genesis 18:19, and the commentaries of Simchah Bunem and Reb Manachem Mendel. Since the texts focus on tzedek, which is a Jewish value, there does not seem to be a mitzvah that is informed by it. Unfortunately, these texts also do not inform the participants how to apply tzedek, other than through the words of our commentators to "pursue justice justly," and to be "honest and fair." In asking, "does the teaching inform a mitzvah?" there does not seem to be a mitzvah to perform or even an application for the value. It leaves the participants with three rather generic, universal statements to which almost anyone would agree. Genesis 18:17-33 is also universal in that very few would argued that if forty-five good people would have been found, God should have still destroyed the town. The heart of the teaching, therefore, relates to Genesis 18:19 and the notion that Abraham's descendents will be just and righteous. There is particularism in that Jews are the ones who are obligated, but being told to be just and righteous is simply more generic language that offers little content.

The primary Jewish learning from this session therefore appears to be an association of Jewish texts with the participants' views of justice. The texts are presented in both Hebrew and English, which may implicitly stress the importance of the Hebrew language. Aside from the particularism of Genesis 18:19, the Biblical texts and the commentaries are universal statements that most ethical people would readily agree with or ascribe to without having to think too hard. Since the participants would agree as well, the session may therefore be affirming to the participants' sense of Jewish identity. While this is not an insignificant outcome, the use of *havruta* seems curious since there does not appear to be a great deal to discuss or debate. Additional educational opportunities, such as teaching some of the content behind Jewish concepts of *tzedek* or why Reb Manachem Mendel of Kotsk would address his commentary to the duplication of the word *"tzedek"* are not included. There is also no context for who these two commentators are and why they would have authority. It is possible that the session could lead to a discussion of participants' notions of particularism, specifically that Jews have a special responsibility to be just, but depending on the responses from the participants, that issue may or may not be addressed. The lesson is not instructive, it appears to offer the possibility of little benefit, and with the exception of having participants associate their views of justice with these texts, the lesson does not seem to be one that will increase a participant's connection to Judaism.

The AJWS uses a different format for its section on "Justice, Justice, Shall You Pursue,"[11] using Deuteronomy 16:20 as the title for a section that includes discussion questions and Jewish sources. The section begins with questions relating to the participants' personal concept of justice and from where that individual notion was

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[11] AJWS, "Living with the Questions: Short Term Service Programs Handbook: El Salvador," 87-88.

derived, followed by Deuteronomy 16:20, which serves as an introduction to several additional texts and writings about justice. Leviticus 24:17-22 describes *lex talionis*[12] and notes, "you shall have one standard for stranger and citizen alike...." An excerpt from the writings of Rabbi Emanuel Rackman describes "empathic justice," relating to Jews' ability to identify with others who suffer and champion their cause. This is followed by a selection from Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's "The Nineteen Letters," which can be summed up with the final sentence of the passage: "Judaism, if properly understood and properly presented, unites all living things with a bond of love and justice." The last text reflects a similar theme with Rabbi Bob Carroll quoting Abbie Hoffman, who said that in order to fix the world's problems, justice was needed because love was not enough.

Discussion questions after the texts ask participants compare their personal definition of justice with those presented by the modern commentators. They direct participants to define justice not only for themselfs, but also for the Jewish community. There are questions relating to love and justice and whether justice is connected to the notion that we are all made in God's image. It is important to note that the way these texts would be used and which questions are asked would depend largely on the facilitator. These texts and discussion questions are not a part of an actual lesson plan like the NFTY UMC curriculum; rather they seem to serve as resources for the facilitators to generate discussion.

It is unclear why Leviticus 24:17-22 was included in this section. It is not addressed in the discussion questions, so it is not clear if the participants should focus on the notion of *tzedek* being an eye for an eye or if they should concentrate on the idea that

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[12] "An eye for an eye..."

everyone has the same standard of justice, or both. Since the passage is presented on its own, without commentaries, it presents a harsher view of justice than the rabbinic understanding of *lex talionis*. The Talmudic discussion in TB Bava Kamma beginning on *daf* 83b makes it clear that an eye for an eye should not be taken literally and later *poskim* affirm that interpretation. It therefore seems out of place.

The other modern texts seem to have been selected because they present different ways to put justice into practice. Rabbi Rackham's "empathic justice" could be seen as proscribing one to act on behalf of others. This seems to be a post-Holocaust perspective that could add new meaning to one's Jewish understanding of justice. Rabbi Hirsch's statement informs one to show respect, love, and justice to the earth and every living thing. This statement may be too broad to be truly instructive. Rabbi Bob Carroll called Abbie Hoffman's words, "the most Jewish thing I had ever heard him say, " and he is correct. The notion that the world needs love or compassion and justice or judgment, is very much a part of Jewish tradition. However, since there is no explanation of why this was a Jewish thing to say, participants are left without access to a relevant teaching and Jewish lens through which one could see the world. But on its own, the world needing love and justice does not inform participants regarding any kind of application. It seems that in terms of Jewish benefit, Rabbi Rackham's statement provides the most, but while there was potential for additional Jewish learning, the selection of texts did not provide for it.

The Jewish learning in this section is thus found largely through studying some of the nuances related to Jewish perspectives on justice and making connections between those perspectives and one's own. Depending on the connections made by the facilitator

and the participants' concept of justice, this session also has the potential to affirm one's sense of Jewish identity. For participants who have chosen to participate on an AJWS trip, it seems that Rabbi Rackham's statement may really resonate. Based on the way the texts are presented, they do not all speak with one voice, possibly allowing the facilitators to help the participants discuss diversity within Jewish thought.

These examples illustrate some of the ways in which text can be used to introduce participants to large, intangible Jewish values such as tzedek. The final lesson plan was chosen in order to provide contrast to the two previous lesson plans because Jewish service-learning programs also use text to teach more concrete ideas as well. The final lesson plan comes from the section on *hiddur p'nei zaken* (valuing the elderly) in SPARK's HeartAction curriculum. This section includes five separate text studies on the issue. As was mentioned above, facilitators are encouraged to use the study sessions as resources instead of a rigid curriculum, similar to the AJWS trips, so it is difficult to know exactly how these resources have been used.

Text study A presents the translation of Leviticus 19:32 as follows, "You shall rise before the aged and show *hiddur (v'hadarta)* to the old (*p'nai zaken*); you shall fear your God; I am the Lord." An option for how to translate *hiddur* is provided, but the second text, an excerpt from the writings of Danny Siegel, offers a creative translation of *hiddur*. Some contextual information is provided about both the book of Leviticus and Danny Siegel. The questions are divided into two sections. The first set relates to what the texts mean. They encourage participants to give their interpretation of the biblical verse, of why God is mentioned in the verse, and of Danny Siegel's comments. In the questions that relate to the participants' own experiences, they are asked to brainstorm

concrete ways that they and their community show respect for their elders and how they can then show *hiddur* in their service experiences.

The two texts inform participants how to perform the mitzvah that they are being asked to do and provide opportunities for benefit. If the session is facilitated as presented, the Jewish learning focuses primarily on associating Jewish texts with the value of giving honor, respect, and *hiddur* to seniors. An important connection is made between the Jewish text and the service that is being done, stressing that the values described in our sources can be lived through concrete action. Additional benefit is derived from brainstorming about how to "bring out the beauty" of the seniors they visit, applying the Jewish teaching to the mitzvah they are performing. The passage from Danny Siegel's book also explains that translating *hiddur* is not an easy task, so it is possible that the facilitators would help to explain the difficulty of translation.

While this lesson provides some positive Jewish learning, it might only last thirty minutes or less and it only presents a small portion of the whole. Based on questions relating to whether one should treat all seniors with *hiddur*, or what it means to "rise before the aged," this lesson could be further enhanced by combining it with the third study session in this section, which uses the following two texts:

- "Our Rabbis taught: I might have thought that, 'You shall rise before the aged' meant even before an aged sinner. Therefore, the Torah goes on to say: and show *hiddur* to the *zaken*, and *zaken* means wise person. *Zaken* means only s/he who has acquired wisdom," from TB Kiddushin 32b.

- "One stands in the presence of a very old person, even if that person is not a sage," from Maimonides' Mishna Torah, Hilchot Talmud Torah 6:9.

These texts deal directly with the questions asked above. Should we treat all older people with *hiddur*? Maimonides and the Talmud appear to disagree, but in the third session, the participants are asked to weigh in on the debate. What does it mean to "rise before the aged?" According to Maimonides, it seems that we should understand this literally, but again, in the third session, participants are again given the opportunity to interpret the text. The texts in the third session begin with Leviticus 19:32 and illustrate two ways that Jewish tradition has expanded upon the biblical teaching suggesting that if these two sessions were combined together, it would create even more Jewish learning opportunities.

To follow the progression from the Bible to the Talmud to Maimonides to Danny Siegel leads the participants through over two thousand years of history, and a discussion about it could create additional connections between the participants and their Jewish identity. The potential seems even greater if the rest of the study sessions in this unit were combined. If three or four sessions were set aside specifically to learn about Jewish teachings relating to the treatment of seniors, participants would walk away with a more comprehensive understanding of Jewish tradition on this issue. However, while facilitators have flexibility regarding how the curriculum will be formulated, it is unlikely that many facilitators would be able to teach even two of the sessions at a time, due to time constraints. So while the first lesson stands on its own, informs participants about the mitzvah, and provides various forms of benefit, it could be further enhanced if there was additional time.

These three lesson plans, which make up a very small sample of the Jewish teachings within these programs, incorporate Jewish learning to varying degrees. There

is a range, and some do more to promote the Jewish nature of Jewish service-learning than others based on the assessment tool used in this thesis. It is important to point out that the assessment tool, while instructive, is based on an interpretation of a Talmudic passage as opposed to data. A brief look at program evaluations may help to better assess the effectiveness of the Jewish learning that takes place in these programs.

In 2005, the fourteen participants of NFTY's UMC program in San Francisco filled out an evaluation of the program. The following data comes from the tabulations of those evaluation forms and was gathered so the UMC program could look for ways to improve its program. The sample size is small due to the number of program participants, so the results are far from scientific. That being said, it does appear that the program participants felt that improvements could be made to UMC's curriculum. An internal report compiling those evaluations showed that when asked to rate the learning sessions on a five point scale ranging from "very weak: needs a lot of improvement" to "awesome," zero participants felt they were "awesome," three participants felt they were "good," six felt they were "adequate," four felt that "improvements could be made" and one person felt that "a lot of improvements were needed."

More comprehensive studies have been performed recently to evaluate the AJWS and SPARK programs. In the study[13] that incorporated AJWS's Alternative Breaks and Volunteer Summer[14] along with AVODAH,[15] past participants from 1999-2004 responded to a number of items. Regarding Jewish identity, the most common response

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[13] Gottesman, "An Evaluation."

[14] Formally known as the International Jewish College Corps and was referred to that way in the study.

[15] AVODAH is a pluralistic, intensive, yearlong Jewish service program that incorporates many aspects of service-learning pedagogy. The study indicated that largely due to the longevity of the program, AVODAH participants indicated higher levels of Jewish activism and Jewish identity when compared with AJWS.

from all three programs was, "I feel an increased and deeper connection between Judaism and social justice."[16] Participants reported that the AJWS programs impacted their Jewish identities and helped them experience a pluralistic Jewish environment. Dramatically, almost half of the Volunteer Summer and a quarter of the Alternative Break respondents actually changed their Jewish practice after the program had ended. The evaluation, however, did not report on the amount of Jewish knowledge gained, the quality of Jewish learning, or any other similar category. This is most likely a reflection on the focus of AJWS. It indicates that just because a group is interested in Jewish identity, does not mean that it is interested in Jewish learning. Since the category is so vague, it is impossible to know if the positive results occurred because of the structured Jewish learning, the informal Jewish learning opportunities such as interacting with Jews of different backgrounds, or some other reason entirely.

Finally, a recent evaluation[17] was done of those who had participated in SPARK's HeartAction program in 2003-2004. The evaluation included questions that focused specifically on Jewish learning. More than half of the respondents found the Jewish texts they studied to be interesting and connected to their service experience. Almost half of the participants also reported that the program had had an impact on their Judaism. The evaluation suggests this impact may relate to their sense of Jewish identity, although that is not clear. These findings indicate that while some students have responded positively to the Jewish learning component of the program, there is still room for improvement.

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[16] Gottesman, "An Evaluation," 18.
[17] Goldsmith, "SPARK HeartAction: Summary."

Jewish learning is the primary link between teaching Jewish values and putting those Jewish values into action through service. These program evaluations show mixed results in terms of Jewish identity, similar to the earlier analysis of the actual lesson plans. They suggest that the Jewish learning component of Jewish service-learning programs could be improved. The following recommendations are derived from the same principles that were used to assess the Jewish learning above. As was mentioned before, these principles are not scientific; they are rooted in Jewish tradition and based on an interpretation of TB Kiddushin 40b. At the same time, they appear to be logical and agree with many of the findings presented in the next chapter.

Based on the following questions:

- How does the Jewish learning inform participants about the mitzvah they will be doing?

- How does the Jewish learning provide a benefit for participants?

- How does the Jewish content connect participants to their Jewish identity?

The following should be considered:

1. Jewish learning transforms service-learning into an explicitly Jewish act.

2. Jewish learning should inform the service experience and the service experience should relate to the Jewish learning. SPARK's HeartAction does this well by asking participants how they can show *hiddur* to the seniors that they visit. It is primarily the role of reflection to integrate the service and the learning, but by making these links explicit during the text study, it teaches participants about the mitzvah they are going to perform and it makes connections between them while the material is fresh in their minds.

3. In order to provide the most benefit, Jewish learning should be as comprehensive as possible. NFTY's UMC and AJWS both focused on the notion of *tzedek* and two of the AJWS texts relate to *tzedek* and love. But it would have also been possible to introduce additional texts that would have provided background and the Jewish understanding that *tzedek* needs to be balanced with other values. For example, TB Sanhedrin 32b pairs justice with compromise, explaining that two boats that both think that they have the right of way in a narrow channel will end up crashing into each other without compromise. It is more common, however, to find compassion or mercy (*rachamim/chesed*) paired with justice (*din/tzedek*). Texts such as Genesis Rabbah 12:15 teach that God needed both justice and mercy in order to create the world. Then, in order to better understand the relationship between justice and mercy, participants could study texts like Leviticus 19:15, TB Shevuot 30a, and Rashi's commentary to Leviticus 19:15, which illustrate how these concepts can be applied: one should not favor the poor or show deference to the rich, but if one only judges with justice, one may have concluded that mitigating circumstances could not be taken into consideration, etc. These texts help to better demonstrate the complexity of our tradition and can help participants think more deeply about these issues, thereby deriving more benefit. Then, when issues of justice and mercy are applied to real world situations, such as debt relief for developing countries or reducing poverty, participants will be better prepared to make connections between their Judaism and taking action.

4. In order to make sure that Jewish learning informs participants about the mitzvah and provides as much benefit as possible, care should be taken in choosing Jewish texts. To attempt to teach all of the texts that could be used for any one topic would simply be unrealistic. Some basic guidelines include: choosing texts that can be taught with integrity, choosing texts that provide something beyond a generic statement unless it serves as an introduction or conclusion to an issue, choosing texts from different sources that interact with each other, and choosing texts that relate to the mitzvah that is being performed. Keep in mind that there are likely several texts that would work well for any given situation.

5. To ensure that participants and facilitators can derive the most benefit from the learning experience, facilitators need to receive appropriate training so they feel comfortable teach texts that could include Bible, Talmud, commentaries, Midrash, and numerous halakhic sources.

6. In order to provide the most benefit and help participants connect to their Judaism, Jewish service-learning programs have an opportunity to teach what these sources are and how they relate to one another, due to the variety of Jewish sources that are utilized. This could be done minimally by providing a small booklet with a couple paragraphs about each source or author and their historical context, along with a chart listing the different sources and when they were written. Maximally, class time could be used for discussion about these topics. This form of Jewish learning could help participants find a real connection to their tradition. A Biblical text is introduced (well over two thousand years ago), which is then interpreted by the Talmud (over fifteen hundred years ago), which is then

interpreted by later commentators all the way up to modern times. Then these children, teenagers, college students, or adults have the opportunity to then take part in the process of over two thousand years of interpretation. When participants are made aware of the Jewish tradition that they are taking part in, it has the potential to impact their Jewish identity.

These issues will need to be studied to find out exactly how the Jewish learning component can be made to be more effective. Therefore, to reiterate once again, the most important point for Jewish service-learning practitioners to keep in mind is the centrality of Jewish learning in the service-learning process. That is what makes this endeavor a Jewish one. For all other aspects of service-learning, however, a considerable amount of research has been done that point to a number of best practices.

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Chapter 4: Best Practices – Lessons from the Research

As the previous chapters have illustrated, service-learning has the potential to be an effective pedagogy that provides benefits to students, schools, communities, and possibly even the Jewish people as a whole. Based on this potential, a number of Jewish congregations and organizations utilize service-learning as a way to achieve their educational goals. The research, however, shows that reaching that potential is not a necessary outcome. Study after study note that quality matters and only high quality service-learning programs that are fully implemented consistently achieve the desired results.[18]

The previous chapter addressed the importance of quality Jewish learning in Jewish service-learning programs, but that is only one component of a program. In order to understand how to create service-learning programs that can consistently achieve desirable results, secular research over the past few years has started to identify how specific program characteristics can lead to specific outcomes and enhance the overall experience. Most of this chapter will focus on this research, introducing the best service-learning practices that lead to high quality programs. But first, it is important to see that just as high quality service-learning can have a positive impact on participants, empowering them, getting them involved in the community, and teaching Jewish texts and values, poorly administered service-learning can have the opposite effect. It is therefore instructive to gain a more complete understanding of the potential negative impacts of service-learning and how they come about in order to frame and illustrate the importance of the best practices.

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[18] For example: Melchior and Bailis, "Impact of Service-Learning;" Billig, Root, and Jesse, "The Impact of Participation in Service-Learning;" and Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*.

Service-Learning Can be Harmful

Service-learning can lead to negative outcomes primarily for three groups: the community agencies, the participants, and if either of those groups experience a negative impact, the organizers would generally not be pleased with the outcome. Regarding our community partners, problems can begin when the agency is not a part of the initial planning or structuring of the service-learning program. In his essay titled, "Why Service-Learning is Bad," John Eby of Messiah College, explains, "Often service-learning is organized to respond to the needs of an academic institution which sponsors it, the needs of students, the needs of an instructor, or the needs of a course. The needs of the agency and the community often come last."[19] It is easy for a congregation to assume that a community organization is grateful to receive volunteers regardless of how many or what time of day, but that does not always reflect the reality of the situation. When the needs, as well as the strengths of the community are not known, not taken into consideration, or only receive superficial attention, there are many possible results, all of which are undesirable.

Potential outcomes include mix-ups due to a lack of communication or the service not meeting the needs of the students or the community. With little or no knowledge, the service-learning group could end up making judgments about the organization, telling the community partners what their needs should be or how their organization should be running. These outcomes could lead to a disorganized, unfulfilling service experience, bad feelings, or even a hostile relationship. The worst-case scenario is when the service provided, while good intentioned, actually causes harm to the agency or the service recipients. For example, service-learning students might serve by tutoring children at an

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[19] Eby, "Why Service-Learning is Bad."

after-school program for one semester. The students rotate each semester, so the relationships that are forged are continuously cut short. For the service-learning student, the relationship may be casual, but the child might become more personally attached. Without a well planned service-learning program, at the end of the semester the child looses that potentially significant relationship, creating trauma and fragmentation with which the community then has to cope. Additionally, due to the pain of the experience, the child may not seek much needed tutoring during the next semester, or may not respond appropriately when another tutor offers assistance. So while helping in one way, poorly implemented service-learning can have the opposite effect.

To create a service-learning program that respects the needs of all its stakeholders, a partnership is required; a partnership that embodies the ideal of community voice. Community voice begins with the understanding that the community organization is more aware of its assets and needs than any of the service-learning coordinators or participants. It provides an opportunity for the organization to point out that it's children need stability, allowing all partners to realize that short-term tutoring may not be the best option. The agency can then have its voice heard as a part of ongoing communications that include learning about and getting to know each other, the sharing of pedagogic and organizational goals, needs, assets, limitations, etc. Understanding community voice helps to break down assumptions and build up a relationship that is mutually beneficial.[20]

In addition to the potentially negative impact in the community, when service-learning is done poorly, it can also create undesired results for the service-learning

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[20] Kraft, "Service Learning: An Introduction;" Eby, "Why Service-Learning is Bad;" and Warter and Grossman, "An Application of Deveopmental-Contextualism."

student. To begin with, scholars point out that when service is imposed upon students without their input or without adequate structure or support, they can become disinterested or antagonistic towards the program or service itself.[21] One study shows that even though youth service is increasing, an ongoing commitment to building community and service is declining.[22] This suggests that poor quality service programs may be widespread and they actually decrease participants' commitment to the community.

Many of the problems seem to be connected to how a program is structured. Part of that structure is ensuring that service-learning students receive the proper orientation and training to the work they will be doing.[23] It does not help the student or the agency when a student is unprepared or unable to perform the work that is required. Another aspect of program structure is cohesion.

When a program is not structured in a coherent fashion, it is not likely to provide consistent success.[24] For example, when students serve by visiting the sick, debate Jewish ethical dilemmas in class, and are assessed based on their understanding of *tikkun olam*, then students are being asked to do one thing, learn about an unrelated topic, and get tested on something different. Service-learning programs that make few connections between the classroom learning and the service may not produce the desired results. In a recent study that tested three groups of students on civic responsibility measures, the section with no service-learning showed slight gains, the section with well-integrated service-learning showed stronger gains, but the service-learning group where there was

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[21] Fredericks, Kaplan, & Zeisler, "Integrating Youth Voice;" and Rowe and Chapman, "Faculty and Student Participation."
[22] Arnold Communications, "Research from a Study."
[23] Eby, "Why Service-Learning is Bad."
[24] Pritchard, Community Service and Service-Learning."

little discussion or reflection actually showed negative gains.[25] The authors explain that,

"when students cannot form a link between course goals and the service-learning experience and/or have not been motivated appropriately as to the civic engagement aspects of the experience, they may become frustrated with the activity, find it useless, and subsequently build negative perceptions regarding the value of supporting their communities."[26]

Reflection, as well as program cohesion, is an integral part of a program's structure. But despite the stress placed on reflection in the literature, Eyler and Giles found that thirty percent of service-learning instructors surveyed did not engage in reflection and only fifteen percent devoted ten percent or more of class time, to discussion that integrated service and learning.[27] This is disappointing when the research shows that a lack of reflection can lead to missed opportunities for learning in the classroom and misunderstandings about service, the community organization, and social issues in general.[28] These issues can also be illustrated by the relationship between a service-learning student who tutors a child.

The tutor comes in from the outside and gets to know one child who seems bright and shares affection, so the tutor wants to be able to do more for the child than just tutor. The tutor is frustrated, however, because hugging or gift giving is not permitted by the community organization. As each week passes, the tutor notices that she is getting angrier at the child's family and community organization because the community "should be" doing more to care for and educate their children. The tutor does feel that she is

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[25] Roldan, Strage, and David, "A Framework for Assessing."
[26] Ibid., 51.
[27] *Where's the Learning*, 177.
[28] Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*; Warter and Grossman, "An Application of Developmental-Contextualism;" and Eby, "Why Service-Learning is Bad."

really making a difference, she feels good about it, and she may even start to feel responsible for the child's well-being, but wonders what her tutoring experiences have to do with the Jewish values that are being taught on Sunday mornings.

Without quality reflection to challenge the service-learning participant's thinking, the tutor might not realize that well-intentioned hugs and small gifts help to create a stronger attachment for the child. When the connection is broken after the tutor's semester of service is completed, she will never have to see or think about how "her student" has to cope after she is gone. Without quality reflection, the tutor may not look beyond her individualistic focus on the one student with whom she is working.[29] She may not be aware that the tutoring program that she is a part of is one of the first steps of a community revitalization project that is hoping to address the systemic issues that have plagued the area. Instead, she blames the community for their apparent deficiencies, increases or confirms her negative stereotypes of the community and does not understand how large social structures, such as plant closings or cuts in government aid programs can impact poverty and inequality. And without reflection to connect her tutoring experience to the Jewish values she is learning in class, she may not understand what teaching others has to do with Jewish values and why she might want to support literacy programs or continue tutoring in the future as a part of the Jewish community. Reflection provides the opportunity to ask questions about an organization's policies, a broader social context to better understand an issue, and challenges stereotype, in addition to making connections between classroom learning and service.

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[29] Eby, "Why Service-Learning is Bad;" Warter and Grossman, "An Application of Developmental-Contextualism."

Community voice, program cohesion, and reflection are components of service-learning that make sense. It is reasonable to assume that all stakeholders will probably have a relevant opinion and those opinions should be heard and respected, especially when forming partnerships. Logic also dictates, as does the research, that an institution will have a better chance of achieving its pedagogic goals by implementing all aspects of a curriculum, particularly those designed with a cohesive structure. These issues are important for any type of educational program, but they take on greater importance due to the nature of service-learning. The trust in the classroom is not confined to the institution, the teacher, and the student. By serving in the community, the community becomes a part of that trust, and like any trust, the relationship is reciprocal. Students benefit the community, but the community is also greatly benefiting the students and it is not uncommon for students to feel that they are getting more out of the experience than they are giving.[30] And while the exposure to new and challenging experiences generally facilitates learning, it also requires processing so that a student can better understand how those experiences relate to his life and his Judaism.

It is important to understand all of the possible outcomes of service-learning, and when it is not done well, service-learning can be harmful to the community and ineffectual as a pedagogy. When a service-learning program is planned carefully and fully implemented, however, it is much more likely that the results will be positive. Quality programs have produced the potential outcomes described in chapter 1 and the field has been documenting the "essential elements" of how to produce those positive outcomes.

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[30] http://currents.ucsc.edu/03-04/03-29/mexico.html and http://www.bgu.ac.il/osp/1999/programs/2e.htm provide anecdotal evidence that is replicated in many different program evaluations.

Essential Elements of Quality Service

In order to teach others about how to achieve positive service-learning outcomes

and help standardize the field, practitioners have attempted to identify the "essential

elements" or "principles" of service-learning. As was mentioned to in chapter 1, in April

1998 the thirteen member National Service-Learning Cooperative (NSLC) published the

"Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning Practice." This was a revision of the

"Standards of Quality for School-Based and Community-Based Service-Learning" that

the Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform published in March 1995. The

"Essential Elements" are listed below. The bolded and underlined comment after each

element is the way that the elements will be referred to throughout the rest of this thesis:

Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning Practice[31]

1. Effective service-learning establishes clear educational goals that require the application of concepts, content and skills from the academic disciplines and involves students in the construction of their own knowledge. (**Educational Goals**)
2. In effective service-learning, students are engaged in tasks that challenge and stretch them cognitively and developmentally. (**Challenging**)
3. In effective service-learning, assessment is used as a way to enhance student learning as well as to document and evaluate how well students have met content and skills standards. (**Assessment**)
4. Students are engaged in service tasks that have clear goals, meet genuine needs in the school or community and have significant consequences for themselves and others. (**Quality Service**)
5. Effective service-learning employs formative and summative evaluation in a systematic evaluation of the service effort and its outcomes. (**Program Evaluation**)
6. Effective service-learning seeks to maximize student voice in selecting, designing, implementing, and evaluating the service project. (**Participant Voice**)
7. Effective service-learning values diversity through its participants, its practice and its outcomes. (**Diversity**)
8. Effective service-learning promotes communication and interaction with the community and encourages partnerships and collaboration. (**Community Voice**)
9. Students are prepared for all aspects of their service work including a clear understanding of task and role, the skills and information required by the task,

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[31] National Service-Learning Cooperative.

awareness of safety precautions, as well as knowledge about and sensitivity to the people with whom they will be working. (**Orientation & Training**)

10. Student reflection takes place before, during and after service, uses multiple methods that encourage critical thinking, and is a central force in the design and fulfillment of curricular objectives. (**Reflection**)

11. Multiple methods are designed to acknowledge, celebrate and further validate students' service work. (**Recognition**)

The NSLC's "Essential Elements," while agreed upon by many in the field, is not the only list of criteria or standards for effective or quality service-learning. They provide a solid foundation for understanding the different elements that make up a service-learning program, but examining other lists of standards can enhance these eleven elements. For example, Campus Compact[32] lists four "Program Characteristics of Effective Service-Learning" that includes elements that are comparable to the NSLC's quality service, reflection, and community voice. The fourth item is "application," which does not have an equivalent in the "Essential Elements." Application relates to whether a student is able to link the learning in the classroom to the service experience, and vice versa.

Similarly, the Service Learning 2000 Center incorporates "integrated learning" among its Seven Elements of High Quality Service. Integrated learning refers to the linking of the service experience and the learning content, making it comparable to "application." Integrated learning also implies that the goals of the program are linked to the mission of the educational institution. Another aspect of these seven elements that does not match the NSLC's list is civic responsibility. In the context of the seven elements, the Service Learning 2000 Center seems to be advocating that civic responsibility should be an essential program goal for service-learning. This seems to relate more to ideology, however, than to being a necessary component of service-

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[32] "Essential Service-Learning Resources Brochure."

learning. The remaining five all overlap with criteria that parallel NSLC's Essential Elements: quality service, reflection, community voice, participant voice, and evaluation.

In January 2004, the State of Maryland published their Seven Best Practices for school-based service-learning[33] with the assistance of eighty teachers. Most of the best practices are comparable to elements from the NSLC, including aspects of community voice, participant voice, educational goals, orientation and training, and reflection. Additionally, the State of Maryland includes a practical word of advice: plan ahead for service-learning. Acknowledging that whether organizing a project on one's own, or in collaboration with colleagues, students, or others, service-learning requires planning and time to work through all of the details. While this best practice seems like it is simply common sense, it is important enough to be published based on the practical experience of eighty teachers.

Other individuals, organizations, and institutions have developed their own version of best practices, but the eleven "Essential Elements," along with application and planning ahead, incorporate almost all of the best practices that are recorded in these lists of criteria. Many of these lists are based on experience in the field, like the State of Maryland's Best Practices. Some are based on research as well, such as Campus Compact, but Campus Compact is based solely on information from one source. So while these lists may provide insight into a better understanding of service-learning, it is prudent to look more closely at a broader spectrum of research to derive more thorough criteria.

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[33] Maryland Student Service Alliance, *Maryland's Best Practices.*

This next section will be divided into several "lessons from the research" that will help to inform practitioners who are interested in creating or improving service-learning programs. As each lesson is discussed, examples will be provided of Jewish service-learning programs that already have integrated that pedagogical component into their program. There is considerable overlap between the lessons from the research and the thirteen elements listed above, but the research in the field is not organized based on those elements. Therefore at the conclusion of this section, there will be a comparison between the two that will inform the best practices for Jewish service-learning.

Lessons from the Research: Integrating Stakeholders

The first set of lessons from the research relates to an educational institution's relationship with its service-learning stakeholders. In addition to the institution itself, shareholders include the community, students, and teachers. The way in which they are incorporated into the service-learning process has a considerable impact on issues such as the quality of the service experience and a participant's interest level. Eby stresses their importance when he states, "One of the major challenges of service-learning at this stage of its development is to bring together with integrity the interests and cultures of all stakeholders."[34] It is no coincidence that six out of the eleven "Essential Elements of Effective Service-Learning Practice" relate to incorporating shareholders.[35] Taken together, they reflect an understanding that service-learning requires coordination, cooperation, and mutual respect. Every shareholder's assets and limitations should be recognized by all and no one's opinion should be taken for granted.

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[34] Eby, "Why Service-Learning is Bad," 6
[35] Challenging, Quality Service, Participant Voice, Diversity, Community Voice, and Orientation and Training.

The community includes a variety of ways of interacting with the community or community organization where the service will take place. At the very least, community voice relates to learning about an agency, the work it does in the community, and the agency's strengths and needs. This ensures that the service will meet the needs of the organization. In its most cooperative form, community organizations take part in planning the service-learning program from its initial stages. The agency is a full partner throughout the process; stress is placed on trust, communication and collaboration; and long-term relationships are sustained. When possible, the community should also take into consideration the views of the clients of the community organization and particularly with respect to advocacy, the other views within one's own community. For example, a service-learning class in a congregation that is seeking to do advocacy should first consult with the educator, the rabbi, and the congregation's board in order to avoid a rift within the congregation, as well as service organizations that can confirm whether the policy that is being advocated will meet their needs.

As was discussed at the beginning of the chapter, not valuing the community can lead to undesirable results for both the community organization and the educational institution. Researchers argue that incorporating the community is a defining feature of service-learning[36] and their research shows that it leads to positive results. For example, collaboration with the community encourages mutual empowerment and can provide students with a more systemic understanding of social issues.[37] Community voice also

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[36] Billig, "Research on K-12;" and Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning.*
[37] Warter and Grossman, "An Application of Developmental-Contextualism."

consistently predicted personal growth outcomes for students, such as creating

connections to the community and tolerance for others.[38]

The research, however, also found a potential negative impact to community

voice. Eyler and Giles found that when students' service experience met the needs of the

community, they were less likely to find the class intellectually stimulating.[39] Another

possibility is that the work needed by the community is not engaging for the service-

learning participants. For example, Furco found that "when students indicated that they

performed service that they described as 'useless,' 'meaningless,' 'boring,' or 'pointless,'

the level of empowerment for these students was very low."[40] Eyler and Giles suggest

that this phenomenon may be due to a situation where stuffing envelopes or sweeping the

floor may meet a need in the community organization, but if that is the majority of what a

student is asked to do, he may not find that activity interesting or engaging. An

awareness of this issue helps to highlight the importance of positive communication with

the agency. When a solid relationship exists with the community partner, service-

learning practitioners and community organizers can work to create service projects that

meet the needs of the community, the service-learning participants, and the educational

objectives of the learning institution. All of these issues help to stress the importance of

incorporating the community's voice in service-learning.

Several Jewish service-learning programs demonstrate different positive aspects

of working with the community that can be instructive. NFTY's Urban Mitzvah Corps

(UMC) program in New Jersey is an example of an ongoing reciprocal partnership. Year

after year the community organizations rely on the UMC participants to help out during

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[38] Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning.*
[39] Ibid.
[40] "Is Service-Learning Really Better," 43.

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the summer and in some cases, they even make up the majority of a camp's counseling staff. In return, the agencies consistently provide quality service opportunities for the participants. The Jewish Council on Urban Affairs' (JCUA) service opportunities take place in community organizations where long-term relationships with good communication have already been established. American Jewish World Service (AJWS) also takes great care to assist with projects that have been designed by communities and non-governmental organizations to meet the needs of that area.

The student or participant is another stakeholder whose voice is integral to a successful service-learning program. There tends to be three primary ways to incorporate participants in the service-learning process and enhance their service-learning experience. The first ensures that participants receive orientation to the agency with whom they will be working and training to make sure they know what to do on site. The second relates to the empowerment of participants, including having real responsibilities, challenging tasks, and the opportunity to make important decisions throughout the service-learning experience. And finally, when possible, participants should be involved in planning the service, from selecting the issue to choosing the community partner, and even working with the community partner to find a service project that meets the needs of the community and the service-learning participants. This aspect of participant interaction is not as relevant for voluntary service-learning programs, such as AJWS trips, JCUA programs, NFTY and Union of Reform Judaism's Mitzvah Corps, etc., since the participants generally know what they will be experiencing when they choose to participate.

Some of the negative outcomes relating to a lack of engaging participants were mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, however, there seems to be a number of ways that participant voice contributes to positive service-learning outcomes. For example, when students feel connected to the issues that are addressed by the service they are performing they are more likely to have positive service experiences.[41] The amount of pre-service training that a student receives can correlate to whether the structured learning enhances the service experience.[42] Another study indicated that participant voice in the form of student empowerment or student leadership increased the level of political engagement, commitment to social activism, and respect or tolerance for others.[43]

Whereas these studies point to a specific benefit, most of the K-12 research supports the notion that the greater the incorporation of participant voice, the greater the positive impact on the overall educational outcomes.[44] In her 2000 survey of service-learning research, Billig points out:

> "While service-learning increases student engagement in the learning task, this in and of itself is apparently not sufficient to produce robust student outcomes. Rather, a whole variety of program design characteristics appear to be necessary to shape impact. As indicated in the model, these include a high degree of student responsibility for the service, a high degree of student autonomy (students empowered to make decisions, solve problems, and so forth), a high degree of student choice (both in the selection of service to be performed but also in the planning and the evaluation of their activity)..."[45]

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[41] Furco, "Is Service-Learning Really Better."

[42] Astin, et al., *How Service Learning Affects Students.*

[43] Morgan & Streb, "Building Citizenship: How Student Voice."

[44] For example: Fredericks, Kaplan, & Zeisler, Integrating Youth Voice;" Furco, "Is Service-Learning Really Better;" and Weiler, et al., "An Evaluation of K-12 Service-Learning."

[45] "Research on K-12," 663.

Billig continues by pointing out five additional program design characteristics. Out of the eight that she lists, it is significant that almost half of them relate to how a program incorporates its participants. Taken together, these studies strongly indicate the centrality of participant voice in an effective service-learning program.

The Jewish service-learning programs engage participants in many different ways. Congregation Beth Israel's Mitzvah Corps program provides students the opportunity to give input about what issues they would like to address. In a similar way, Panim's JCI program encourages its classes to survey both what is happening in the community and where their service might have the most impact before deciding on a service project. The AJWS's required orientation provides participants the opportunity to learn about the country and the community where they will serve while providing any needed training. SPARK's HeartAction curriculum also includes an opening session that provides training and an introduction that helps prepare students for working with the elderly in their community. Several of the TELEM sites offer more than one service-learning track, giving students the opportunity to choose the issue in which they are most interested. And in a model that exemplifies the leadership and responsibility components of a participant's experience, NFTY's New Jersey UMC participants elect coordinators that are responsible for ensuring the viability of the following year's program. Every participant then assists with fundraising during the year, taking personal responsibility for the financial sustainability of the program.

The third stakeholder connected to providing effective service-learning is the teaching staff and the importance of teacher voice cannot be underestimated. A service-learning program can be well designed, but if the professor, teacher, or facilitator has

either not committed to the pedagogy or has not received enough training to properly administer the curriculum, the program is likely to encounter difficulties. In chapter 1, it was mentioned that one of the problems with service-learning research was the differences in program implementation. And earlier in this chapter the inconsistencies relating to the amount of reflection in service-learning classes was also noted. The research below indicates that these difficulties could be greatly reduced when teachers understand what service-learning is, commit to using the pedagogy, have received training in how to administer the pedagogy, and feel a sense of ownership of the service-learning program at the institution.

Research indicates that in order to implement a service-learning program, it helps for teachers to understand the pedagogy and to be inclined to service-learning. One study focusing on eleven K-12 schools in New Hampshire found that one of the two primary factors that led to the adoption of service-learning was "a belief system by teachers that contextual and authentic learning was valuable."[46] These values are related to the pedagogy of service-learning, but being philosophically inclined towards service-learning is not the only issue.

The literature also shows that one of the primary reasons that faculty do not teach service-learning is because they do not understand the service-learning process.[47] This is supported by a recent study of college faculty at fifteen institutions where service-learning was present. It indicated that the faculty members who refused to offer service-learning were not familiar with the philosophy of service-learning, its positive outcomes, or service-learning teaching strategies, including how to implement service-learning into

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[46] Billig, "Adoption, Implementation, and Sustainability," 253.
[47] Rowe and Chapman, "Faculty and Student Participation."

a class.[48] On the other hand, faculty who were familiar with and had positive perceptions of service-learning were three and a half times more likely to offer a service-learning course. These studies seem to imply that a willingness to implement service-learning is related to knowledge about the pedagogy or at least an interest in learning that is authentic.

Many of the congregational-based service-learning programs seem to have embraced service-learning for purposes of Jewish identity or keeping students in religious school beyond bnai mitzvah. As a result, teacher education about service-learning may not seem relevant. However, the notion that teachers should fully understand service-learning remains important due to misconceptions about service-learning and the potential for harmful outcomes related to poor implementation. It is therefore helpful to point out that Washington Hebrew Congregation provides a good model for educating the teachers and the administration about service-learning. The congregation took time to make the program a cooperative effort, ensuring that all congregational stakeholders were fully aware of and had bought in to the service-learning process. The program started off slowly, beginning with one service-learning lesson plan that could serve as a common experience for everyone involved. From that point the congregation, and particularly the teachers, can evaluate the process, can become more committed to the pedagogy, and can then slowly expand the program.

Once service-learning is implemented, the research indicates that the more training and experience with using service-learning a teacher has, the stronger the outcomes for the students. One study found that the number of years a teacher had used service-learning was positively correlated with student outcomes such as civic

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[48] Mundy, "Faculty Engagement in Service-Learning."

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knowledge, civic disposition, and efficacy.[49] Additional research points to various

aspects of the quality of teachers or teacher training as a major factor in student outcomes

and program integration.[50] For example, studies indicate that professional development

is a key factor in strengthening civic engagement outcomes.[51] The literature also notes

the areas of training that would be beneficial for service-learning instructors including:

- Integrating the voice of participants and the community into the service-learning process and the classroom
- Being knowledgeable about both the course content and the issue that the service addresses
- Developing appropriate service activities
- Developing reflection activities that go beyond a summary of the experiences
- Balancing the required curriculum with experiential learning
- Developing guidelines for appropriate service hours, assessment, and course requirements.[52]

Not all of these areas of training are relevant to every teacher or facilitator of

Jewish service-learning, depending on the program. However, they can serve as an

appropriate guide for those who are thinking of starting up a service-learning program or

those who do not currently incorporate teacher training. AJWS seems to be the Jewish

service-learning group that has taken facilitator training to its most intensive level,

employing professionally trained facilitators to lead their trips overseas. Other programs

provide positive examples of teacher training, such as SPARK, which offers an

introductory teaching session for program facilitators, along with trainings via conference

call several times during the year. Some positive first steps for service-learning training

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[49] Billig, Root, & Jesse, "The Impact of Participation in Service-Learning."

[50] For example: Billig, "Research on K-12;" Melchior, "Summary Report: National Evaluation;" and Rowe and Chapman, "Faculty and Student Participation."

[51] Billig and Welch, "Service-Learning as Civically Engaged."

[52] For example: Rowe and Chapman, "Faculty and Student Participation;" Billig, "Adoption, Implementation, and Sustainability;" and Fredericks, Kaplan, & Zeisler, "Integrating Youth Voice."

on the national level include the NATE Kallah from 2003 and an annual Jewish service-learning conference sponsored by SPARK and Sulam scheduled for the fall of 2006.

A final component of teacher involvement relates to the actual service-learning process on both a classroom level and an institutional level. Classroom issues will be discussed in detail following this current section on integrating stakeholders. Educational institutions and their supporters make up another group of stakeholders that teachers rely on for support, such as teacher training and funding. The research indicates that in order to implement and sustain a service-learning program, a number of common sense factors greatly enhance success. These factors include slow growth, adequate funding, strong leadership, consensus building, honest communication on all levels, professional development, visibility or a general awareness about service-learning, and collaboration between institutions, teachers or facilitators, and students.[53]

The fourth aspect of integrating stakeholders that leads to effective service-learning based on the research is placement quality. The quality of the service experience is the intersection between the community, the participant, and the teacher, which is why it has been placed in this section. A quality service placement is most often defined in relation to the participant where they are engaged and feel that they are making contributions, are challenged and have some responsibility, and receive input and appreciation from their community supervisor.[54] As the discussions above and the research that will be presented in the next section indicate, quality service should also be developed in cooperation with the community or community agency and meet the requirements of the course goals presented by the teacher.

[53] Billig, "Adoption, Implementation, and Sustainability;" Billig and Klute, *W. K. Kellogg Foundation Retrospective.*

[54] Furco, "Is Service-Learning Really Better;" and Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning.*

Several studies find that placement quality produces stronger outcomes when it involves direct contact with service recipients.[55] These studies all focused on K-12 students, which may suggest that younger students require more concrete experiences in order to integrate the service into their learning. Another study that focused only on high-school students found that the type of service project impacted the type of outcomes for the students.[56] It found that students who had direct contact with service recipients through activities, like tutoring or visiting seniors, had the greatest attachment to their communities; students who helped with fundraising, research, or other indirect service opportunities demonstrated higher levels of academic engagement; and students who were involved with political or civic activism, such as circulating petitions, showed the highest levels of civic knowledge and civic dispositions. This indicates that it may be more beneficial to provide K-12 students with service placements that provide the opportunity for direct personal contact, but it also seems that as long as the service is an engaging, quality placement, positive outcomes are likely. This notion is supported by the results of a college level study.[57]

Regardless of the type of service, the research seems to indicate that quality service placements lead to stronger service-learning outcomes.[58] Specifically, Eyler and Giles found that quality placements that included real responsibilities and interesting and challenging experiences had a positive impact on student reports of increased learning and learning specific skills.[59] They reported that "it was a positive predictor of virtually

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[55] For example: Melchior, "Summary Report: National Evaluation;" Billig and Klute, "The Impact of Service-Learning on MEAP;" and Meyer, Billig, and Hofschire, "The Impact of K-12 School-Based."
[56] Billig, Root, & Jesse, "The Impact of Participation in Service-Learning."
[57] Roldan, Strage, & David, "A Framework for Assessing."
[58] For example: Furco, "Is Service-Learning Really Better;" Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*; and Mabry, "Pedagogical Variations in Service-Learning."
[59] *Where's the Learning.*

all of our measures of tolerance and stereotyping - such personal development as knowing the self better, spiritual growth, and reward in helping others, and interpersonal outcomes, such as leadership and communication skill and ability to work with others."[60] They also found that the quality of the service placement has the potential to increase the connection between students and faculty, possibly due to increased levels of faculty involvement.[61] Additionally, Furco reports that placement quality helped students feel more connected to the issue they were working on and were empowered when given the opportunity to take on adult like roles.[62] Participants were eager to show their teachers, service partners, peers, and themselves that they could live up to the responsibility. The results also suggested that the growth in empowerment had a positive impact on participants' personal development, helping them connect more with their school and community, and increasing their leadership abilities.

Most of the Jewish service-learning programs provide an opportunity for participants to engage in challenging service experiences, providing them with real responsibilities. One extreme is the JCUA's rabbinical student program that provides participants with a great deal of responsibilities since they serve as staff members at the agencies where they are assigned. Another noteworthy program is the AJWS trips that provide opportunities for multicultural interactions, thereby incorporating direct contact with the community and increasing participant engagement when the service project might relate to putting in a water system.

The final lesson from the research that relates to shareholders is diversity, which is an aspect of quality placement. Diversity is a part of the NSLC's "Essential Elements"

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[60] Ibid., 170.
[61] Ibid., 51.
[62] "Is Service Learning Really Better."

and it can relate to diversity amongst the group as well as diversity between the service group and the community. While an acceptance of diversity was listed as a potential outcome for service-learning in chapter 1, research at the college level also indicates that interacting with peoples who are different (religiously, culturally, ethnicity, etc.[63]) can produce positive results. Several studies found that interacting with diverse peoples helped to increase personal outcomes such as identity development and cultural understanding.[64]

Eyler and Giles found that diversity was a significant predictor of most of the categories relating to stereotype reduction, personal development, problem solving, critical thinking, and perspective transformation.[65] They reported that interacting with diverse peoples led to outcomes including self knowledge, spiritual growth, openness to new ideas, the ability to look at social issues from a different perspective, an increased commitment to social justice, and an understanding that community members were "like me." However, similar to community voice, they also found that diversity could also have negative impacts on a student's ability to apply material that was learned and the level of intellectual stimulation of the class. Eyler and Giles again suggest that these potential negative outcomes can be avoided by stressing communication with the community or community agency in order to create a quality placement. These issues could also be addressed in class, discussing cultural or religious differences as a part of reflection. This could lead to a greater understanding of the differences participants encounter and reduce the chance of misunderstandings.

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[63] Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning.*
[64] For example: Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*; Gray, et al., *Coupling Service and Learning*; Pickron-Davis, "Black Students in Community Service-Learning."
[65] *Where's the Learning.*

Diversity is found throughout the Jewish service-learning programs, from the variety of issues that programs like TELEM or NFTY's Mitzvah Corps addresses, to the cultural interactions of an AJWS trip. Programs like AJWS, Panim's Summer JAM, Hillel's ASB trips and the JCUA programs all reflect a unique component of diversity in that they incorporate Jews from all different backgrounds. While no specific research has been done on these types of programs, anecdotal evidence suggests that the inter-religious dialogue that takes place has the potential to enhance both the experience and the participants' appreciation for other forms of Judaism.

Service-Learning in the "Classroom"[66]

While the service experience provides experiential learning opportunities, the classroom is where participants gain context for their experience by learning about the subject matter and how to apply both the classroom and experiential learning to their lives. Chapter 3 discussed the importance of quality Jewish learning, and while central, is only one aspect of the classroom experience. Lessons from the research indicate that two related factors that take place in the service-learning classroom have dramatic impacts on student outcomes: integrated learning and reflection.

Integrated learning, which is similar to application, is more structural in nature as it refers to the level of connectivity between the service experience and the classroom learning. For example, in a course that deals with Jewish values and where the service experience involves helping out at a homeless shelter, the Jewish values that are being taught should always relate back to the experiences from the homeless shelter. Even if

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[66] Classroom here is a broad term that refers to wherever structured learning and reflection might take place.

the Jewish value seems unrelated, like visiting the sick, it can be integrated by discussing who visits people who are homeless when they are sick[67] or studying the ways in which people with little or no money are able or not able to receive adequate health care. Some of the potential negative impacts from not integrating the learning in a cohesive manner are mentioned earlier in this chapter, but when the learning is integrated, the research indicates substantial positive results.

Regarding general outcomes, Melchior and Bailis[68] found that service-learning programs are not likely to have an impact on broad social values. Rather they tend to have an impact, and a substantial impact on the attitudes and behaviors that are explicitly related to the service-learning program. Their data suggests that the greater the integration of structured learning and the service experience, the more likely the program will achieve its goals. These results are supported by additional qualitative and quantitative findings that consistently suggest that service-learning courses should be designed in a way that makes it easy for students to see the connections between the service and the academic coursework.[69]

Providing support for these findings, Billig summarizes the most recent service-learning research relating to civic outcomes for K-12 students,

> "when service-learning is intentionally oriented to a civic outcome, it appears to produce that outcome most of the time, especially for high school students. However, for many programs, civic engagement is not an intentional goal, and in those cases, it appears that service-learning may not accomplish civic outcomes as well as some other deliberate interventions."[70]

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[67] Hopefully participants would be able to respond that the individual's family and friends would visit. If not, it provides another opportunity to break down stereotypes.

[68] "Impact of Service-Learning."

[69] For example: Astin, et al., *How Service Learning Affects Students*; Eyler and Giles, "Beyond Surveys;" and Billig and Klute, "Impact of Service-Learning on MEAP."

[70] Billig, Root, and Jesse, "The Impact of Participation in Service-Learning."

The civic responsibility outcomes that were discussed in Chapter 1 showed mixed results, but Billig's conclusions suggest that integrating service and learning with the desired civic outcome greatly increases the chances of producing the desired result.

In addition to civic outcomes, Eyler and Giles found that application "was often the strongest predictor of learning outcomes, problem solving and critical thinking, and perspective transformation."[71] Integrating service and learning led to positive outcomes, including an increased level of intellectual stimulation, a deeper and more complex understanding of the issue, and a stronger commitment to achieving social justice through public policy. These findings highlight the importance of integrated learning in the service-learning classroom.

It is significant to point out that the literature seems to suggest that one of the best ways to achieve integrated learning is to develop clear programmatic goals.[72] Pritchard argues that to develop a cohesive program, practitioners should ask and answer the following questions together, "What are the students supposed to learn? What field experience will give them a chance to learn it? What classroom lessons focus on the content of the field experience?"[73] This way, integration is present in the minds of those developing the program from the very beginning.

Among the Jewish service-learning programs, most of the programs seem to integrate service and learning. Each of Congregation Beth Israel's four to five week modules specifically relate the classroom learning to the service project that will be performed. TELEM employs four different curricula, including SPARK's HeartAction,

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[71] *Where's the Learning*, 170.
[72] Ammon, et al., "A Profile of California's CalServe;" Melchior and Bailis, "Impact of Service-Learning."
[73] "Community Service and Service-Learning," 18.

to address the unique learning needs of each of the four service-learning tracks. Another good example comes from Panim's Summer JAM, which provides a separate curriculum for each of its summer courses that specifically connects to the service being performed.

Reflection is a lesson from the research that might appear unnecessary considering it is included in the definition of service-learning. It is important to mention, however, because in practice, reflection is not always incorporated into the classroom learning even though quality reflection is a significant predictor of many different positive outcomes. Through written journals, discussion, or other creative methods, reflecting on the service-learning experience is the primary way that connections are made between the community placement and the classroom learning.[74] And the research indicates that those connections are indeed made though a variety of reflective activities.[75]

Through structured, intentional reflection, participants reflect on their experiences and become more thoughtful about the issues. Many studies indicate that there are a number of positive outcomes from reflection, including increased efficacy, openness to new ideas, intellectual stimulation, critical thinking, and the ability to apply what's been learned in the real world.[76] Additionally, according to much of the research, reflection seems to have the greatest impact on academic learning outcomes, including a better understanding of the subject matter and an increased complexity of problem and solution analysis.[77] Students reported that they learned more and were motivated to work harder

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[74] Ikeda, "How Reflection Enhances Learning;" and Ikeda, "How Does Service Enhance Learning?."
[75] For example: Astin, et al., *How Service Learning Affects Students*; Roehlkepartain, Bright, and Margolis-Rupp, An *Asset Builder's Guide*; Morgan and Streb, "How Quality Service-Learning Develops."
[76] For example: Roldan, Strage, & David, "A Framework for Assessing;" Scales, et al., "The Effects of Service-Learning;" and Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning.*
[77] For example: Ammon, et al., *A Profile of California's CalServe*; Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning*; Mabry, "Pedagogical Variations in Service-Learning."

in classes that incorporated reflection. In stressing the importance of reflection based on their research, Eyler and Giles state, "reflection is a useful tool for most service-learning goals, but it is central to a question for improved academic outcomes."[78]

Due to the potential for such strong impacts and the lack of research dealing with religious service-learning, two studies are of particular interest for Jewish service-learning practitioners. The first is of a study at a parochial college where Fenzel and Leary[79] found that significant reflection could help students develop their thinking about issues such as justice and faith. In the second, as was mentioned in chapter 1, Leming[80] reported that when an ethical component was incorporated into reflection sections, high school students scored significantly higher on an ethical awareness index than the control service-learning group after one-semester. Taken together, these studies suggest that abstract notions, such as faith and ethics can be incorporated successfully into thoughtful reflection. These findings are encouraging for those interested in targeting reflection to different aspects of Jewish identity.

Additional materials relating to reflection techniques will be included in the resources section, but some research has also been done relating to the efficacy of certain reflection techniques. For example, Greene and Diehm[81] found that when students were asked to turn in reflection journals, there was a significant impact on the students' learning when the instructor provided written feedback and comments, as opposed to just a checkmark. Eyler and Giles[82] also reported that based on their research there were five reflection principles that helped to facilitate effective reflection. They include (1) helping

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[78] *Where's the Learning*, 173.
[79] "Evaluating Outcomes of Service-Learning."
[80] "Integrating a Structural Ethical Reflection."
[81] "Educational and Service Outcomes."
[82] *Where's the Learning*.

to place the service and learning in context; (2) challenging participants' assumptions and encouraging critical thinking about an issue, while not overwhelming them; (3) helping participants see the connections between self and community, experience and analysis, the immediate situation and the big picture, etc.; (4) developing a safe space and providing support so participants are able to share openly and honestly; and (5) helping participants understand that reflection is a lifelong process that plays a significant role in our growth and development.

Among the Jewish service-learning programs, it is noteworthy that several programs other than the AJWS pointed to the quality of reflection in AJWS experiences. In utilizing the clinical pastoral education reflection model, the JCUA's Rabbinical Student Fellowship employs the most intensive reflection model. And SPARK's HeartAction curriculum not only provides quality reflection opportunities, it also takes into consideration differences in the developmental levels of 7th and 8th graders compared to high school students.

Additional Lessons and Advice from the Research and the Literature

The lessons from the research dealing with stakeholders and the classroom incorporate the majority of the research relating to achieving positive service-learning outcomes. In addition, there are several components or factors that are either a part of the "Essential Elements" or are mentioned in the literature that also impact the quality of a service-learning program. Some of these program characteristics are supported by research and others come in the form of advice based on experience in the field, and are therefore at least worthy of consideration.

The research indicates that both the duration of the service-learning program and the number of service hours has an impact on participant outcomes. For instance, studies have shown that one-time or short-term service-learning projects are unlikely to generate lasting impacts on participants.[83] While the research has not studied how much exposure is required, the literature does seem to indicate that the more exposure to service-learning, the more lasting the effect.[84] Findings suggest that these experiences, especially when common in one's childhood, continue to stay with the individual and remain a part of their adult life.[85] One study also found that undergraduate service-learning experiences are a significant factor in determining one's post college employment.[86]

Stressing the importance of ongoing service-learning, Melchior and Bailis[87] found that a year following participation in a year long service-learning program, those who had spent that additional year in another service-learning program maintained the positive impacts that were present after the first program. However, they found that almost all of the positive impacts from the initial program were rarely sustained a year later for those who did not participate in a second program. In this same study, which involved three different service-learning programs, Melchior and Bailis found that the program with the fewest number of service hours (10 hours in six months) had very few significant impacts. They also found that in the two programs with the highest number of service hours, the high school participants showed many significant positive impacts while the

[83] Melchior and Bailis, "Impact of Service-Learning;" and Melchior, "Summary Report, National Evaluation."
[84] For example: Melchior and Bailis, "Impact of Service-Learning;" Weiler, et al., "An Evaluation of K-12 Service-Learning;" Scales, et al., "The Effects of Service-Learning."
[85] For example: Fredricks, Kaplan, and Zeisler, "Integrating Youth Voice;" Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, "What we Know About Engendering;" and Benson, and Roehlkepartain, "Beyond Leaf Raking."
[86] Warchal and Ruiz, "The Long-Term Effects"
[87] "Impact of Service-Learning."

middle school students exhibited very few. The researchers argue that the differences may related to the number of service hours since the high school participants served for sixty and sixty four hours over a six month period, compared to thirty-five or thirty-six hours for the middle school students. They also acknowledge the possibility that the results could be due to a lack of integrated learning, placement quality, or reflection in the middle school program. It very well could indicate a problem with both program quality and the difference in service hours, highlighting the importance of both.

The research does not indicate the amount of service hours per week or month that would be optimal for a school based service-learning program. It only finds that programs are more likely to achieve more positive results when there are increased service hours. The findings are therefore limited in what they proscribe. However, within the current time constraints of supplemental religious school education, it appears that the greater the number of service hours, the greater potential for positive impacts. The research also seems to indicate that positive impacts can be sustained by instituting a service-learning program that lasts for more than one year.

Regarding Jewish service-learning programs, the research seems to indicate that it may be beneficial for a program like TELEM, which requires four or eight service hours a month, to encourage its sites to lean towards eight hours of service a month. And since TELEM offers four different service-learning tracks, it also appears that it would be beneficial to have students participate in two, three, or all four tracks in consecutive years. The research also seems to support the notion that greater service-learning opportunities lead to a stronger and longer lasting impact, so incorporating programs,

such as a kickoff service event and an AJWS trip may increase the potential for positive outcomes.

Much of the service-learning literature suggests and assumes that service-learning programs will include an evaluation. It is advice that is based on common sense and common practice within the field. Despite the frequent mention and reference to evaluation, there is a very limited amount of actual research on the subject. While one study confirms that program evaluation is unrelated to student outcomes,[88] another shows that a healthy sign of a sustainable program is when evaluation data is used to help improve a program.[89] These studies indicate that since performing an evaluation in and of itself has no impact on student outcomes, evaluations should not be done for their own sake. They should be designed in a way that helps to identify the successful components of the program, those that need improvement, and how they could be improved. When the information is then gathered, examined, and used to make improvements, the program has a greater likelihood of sustaining itself. However, these studies also suggest that if the results from the evaluations are not going to be utilized to advance the program, there is no apparent benefit to performing evaluation.

Another piece of advice that comes from the literature is to tailor the service-learning program to the appropriate developmental level of the participants.[90] There appears to be even less research on this topic, possibly due to the logical nature of the recommendation. However, Fredricks, Kaplan, and Zeisler make this point explicit and provide several recommendations based on experience from the field for how to design

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[88] Billig, Jesse, & Root, "The Impact of Participation in Service-Learning."
[89] Billig, "Adoption, Implementation, and Sustainability."
[90] Fredricks, Kaplan, and Zeisler, "Integrating Youth Voice;" and Yates and Youniss, "Community Service and Political Identity."

successful service-learning programs for elementary and middle school students.[91] They include taking into consideration participants' skill and developmental level in all aspects of the service-learning program and modifying a program as needed, providing opportunities for younger children to learn through role modeling, and integrating youth participation in as many aspects of the planning as possible.

There are two noteworthy examples among the Jewish service-learning programs that illustrate how some of these ideas can be incorporated. Even though Washington Hebrew Congregation's service-learning program was designed for the 7th grade, the 4th grade class was invited to participate. After learning about Jewish historical figures, the 7th graders served as wax figures in a mock wax museum that the 4th grade classes visited. Not only were the older students able to teach the 4th graders about Jewish history, they were also able to serve as role models for their younger counterparts. And as was mentioned above, SPARK's HeartAction curriculum includes different reflection activities for high school students and middle school students in an effort to address different developmental levels.

It is important to note that the vast majority of the research that has been presented in this thesis to this point refers to K-12 school and college service-learning courses. There has been very little support provided for intensive service-learning programs, which are inherently distinct from school-based models. It is therefore helpful to point out that at least one dissertation shows that intensive service-learning can result in similar positive outcomes.

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[91] "Integrating Youth Voice."

McElhaney[92] compared a curriculum-based alternative spring break (ASB) program with a non-curriculum based ASB and found that both generated positive outcomes. The non-curriculum based ASB was less structured, included less learning and reflection, and though positive, the results were mixed. The curriculum-based program had stronger and more lasting participant outcomes, including connecting theoretical knowledge with hands on experience, developing new skills, reducing stereotypes, and perspective transformation. The participants were also more likely to commit to continuing social justice work and were more aware of issues of power and privilege. The curriculum-based program included more structure, a greater degree of learning that related to the service placement, and opportunities to continually reflect on and connect the service experience with the learning long after the service had been completed, all of which contributed to the increased impact.

This research illustrates the primary difficulty of intensive service-learning programs. The service experience lasts for one week or longer, but without a solid structure and ongoing opportunities to reflect and learn, the results may be positive, but they may quickly fade, similar to the results from Melchior and Bailis' research relating to program length and ongoing service. However, more structure, increased learning, and opportunities for participants to make connections beyond the intensive experience seem to provide greater and more lasting impacts.

Several of the intensive Jewish service-learning programs provide a considerable amount of structure along with learning opportunities that are well integrated with the service placements. Opportunities to learn and reflect beyond the service experience are not as common, however. NFTY's UMC programs may set up email list serves after the

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[92] "Student Outcomes of Community Service Learning."

experience, but they are generally used to maintain friendships, as opposed to providing an ongoing connection to service. The JCUA Rabbinical Fellowship program requires a project that is geared towards informing the participants' campuses about their summer, possibly helping to synthesize the experience. The most in depth program on this issue seems to be the AJWS trips, particularly the AJWS Volunteer Summer which includes a pre-trip orientation and then three educational retreats that take place following the trip along with a list serve. The focus of the retreats is to recall lessons learned from the service experience, learn more about the issues, and develop a stronger set of advocacy skills, in addition to renewing connections.

Conclusions:

The research demonstrates that service-learning can produce many positive outcomes, but only when a number of quality measures are in place. Without attention to such measures, service-learning can be potentially harmful to both the community and the learning development of the participants. The NCSL's "Essential Elements," provided a strong starting point as the research showed that seven out of the eleven led to positive participant outcomes. It showed that participants should receive **orientation and training** in order to perform **challenging, quality service**, service-learning should incorporate both **community voice** and **participant voice**, and **reflection** should be an integral part of the program. Valuing **diversity** also related to positive service-learning impacts. The research presented did not specifically address **assessment, educational goals** or **recognition**, although assessment and educational goals could be understood as being components of integrated learning. And though the research agreed with the

importance of **program evaluation**, the research stressed that in order to have an impact, service-learning coordinators needed to actually use the data from the evaluations in order to make improvements to the program.

There were several service-learning components that helped to generate positive outcomes according to the research that were not included in the "Essential Elements." The most significant seems to be integrated learning, which greatly impacted a number of potential outcomes. And while the "Essential Elements" incorporated community voice and student voice along with training for students, it did not address the integration and training of all stakeholders, specifically teachers. The research also pointed out the benefits of program length and the importance of ensuring that all aspects of the service-learning program are geared to the appropriate developmental level of the participants. One final piece of advice that came from the State of Maryland was not incorporated into the "Essential Elements," nor was addressed in the research specifically, but comes instead from practical experience. Eighty teachers recommended that service-learning practitioners plan ahead. Based on their recommendation along with the number of stakeholders that are involved in planning and implementing a program, issues of transportation and safety, and the importance of program cohesion, it seems that organization takes on even greater significance in a service-learning setting.

There is a very high correlation between the best practices for service-learning that were based on experience and the lessons from the research. Results such as these are some of the main reasons why service-learning practitioners have continued to push ahead with service-learning programs while calling for more research at the same time. Yet it is important to point out that almost all of the research that has been presented in

this thesis has related to secular service-learning that has taken place in K-12 schools or at colleges and universities. The research from these service-learning activities was presented as a way to demonstrate the potential positive outcomes of service-learning and how a program's design impacts its ability to achieve those outcomes. This thesis has also presented sixteen different Jewish service-learning programs, examining their structure as well as the way some Jewish texts have been or have not been taught by these programs. The purpose of this thesis is to synthesize these two ideas, illustrating how the best practices of the service-learning field based on research and field experience can be integrated into Jewish service-learning programs.

A Model for Jewish Service-Learning

While there are many parallels between secular service-learning and Jewish service-learning, there are three significant differences. The first relates to the fact that the service-learning research that has been presented has assumed a subject matter and a level of quality classroom instruction. When a secular program helps out by serving in a soup kitchen, in order to integrate the learning, the classroom learning will most likely have something to do with the root causes of poverty as it manifests itself within this society. In Jewish service-learning, however, the primary learning would come from the Tanakh, the Talmud, and some of the other Jewish sources listed in Chapter 3. The primary focus is to teach Jewish perspectives on these issues in order to help participants integrate these teachings into their identity. However, it is difficult to address an issue such as poverty in the United States without learning something about the current welfare system, the minimum wage, the rising cost of health care, etc. Therefore Jewish service-

learning has the added responsibility of not only integrating the service experience with the Jewish learning, but also integrating Jewish learning with what is taking place within the society in which we live. This requires more work, but it also provides the opportunity to deepen participants' understandings about the complexity of Jewish thought on social issues, such as comparing what Jewish tradition has to say about a poverty line or a minimum wage with the response from the local, state, or federal government.

These issues highlight another major difference between secular and Jewish service-learning. In secular classrooms, teachers and professors are already experts in their field and only need to learn how to integrate the service and reflection component into a service-learning class. Jewish service-learning, however, appears to expect more from our teachers/facilitators. A Jewish service-learning program expects teachers/facilitators to have sufficient Jewish knowledge, sufficient political and social knowledge, the ability to help participants integrate this knowledge through reflection so they can apply it to their lives, and the ability and resources to help facilitate a long-term service project. Whether a program is intensive or non-intensive, these expectations will require improved curricular resources and skills training that are not yet available. Programs such as SPARK, TELEM, Panim, and others that provide a set curriculum and trainings are leading the way in these endeavors, but they will need to be greatly expanded in order to increase the quality and availability of Jewish service-learning. Additionally, the level of institutional support that will be needed by teachers/facilitators cannot be underestimated.

The final issue relates primarily to school-based Jewish service-learning, and that is the issue of attendance. When Jewish education is easily pushed aside for soccer practice, or other activities, it is difficult to establish trusting relationships with community partners. Both students and their parents, another stakeholder, should understand the responsibility that is associated with this undertaking. The community organizations should be able to come to depend upon their partners in this endeavor, but unless attendance is taken more seriously, they may not be able to do so.

Taking those issues into consideration, along with the experience and research that has been presented in this thesis, the following is a list of nine elements that provide the basic structure for an effective Jewish service-learning program:

1. **Jewish Learning**: There is a difference between Jews performing service-learning and Jewish service-learning. Whether one's intention is to teach Jewish advocacy, Jewish values, or Jewish identity, Jewish learning and experience is the heart of a Jewish service-learning program. Jewish learning can include the study of ancient and/or modern sources, but the learning should be done with integrity, striving to accurately reflect the complexity of Jewish tradition.

2. **Social/Global Issue Education**: Jewish service-learning programs will almost always move beyond the realm of strictly Jewish learning and incorporate various social/global issues, such as the modern reality of hunger, illiteracy, elder care, etc. Therefore, learning about the social/global issues as they exist in and are maintained by our society or our world becomes integral in order to provide participants with a more complex understanding of these issues as they are manifested in modern times.

In order to increase opportunities for critical and systemic thinking and prevent harmful misunderstandings, social/global issue education should be combined with Jewish learning in a way that is appropriate to the participant's age level.

3. **Integrated Learning**: A Jewish service-learning program should form a cohesive whole. A high degree of connectivity between the service experience, Jewish learning, social/global issue education, and reflection is necessary for participants to easily understand the relationships between each part of the program. Integrated learning begins with careful planning in the development stage of a service-learning program and can be assisted by having clear educational goals.

4. **Structured, Critical Reflection**: Reflection should provide opportunities to share and learn from service experiences, help connect the service and the learning, and challenge participants to think critically about the issues and how they relate to their Judaism. Several different forms of age appropriate reflection can be used including discussion, focused journal writing, small group activities, or other creative methods. Regardless of how it is administered, reflection should be structured to ensure that adequate time can be dedicated to reflection. In order to create an environment of open and honest sharing, facilitators are encouraged to create a safe space for such dialogue. Reflection can also help to raise or address issues of diversity, whether they exist within the group or externally.

5. **Stakeholder Integration**: The voice of every stakeholder should be carefully considered when planning and implementing a Jewish service-learning program. All stakeholders, particularly facilitators, should receive the necessary training to competently fulfill their responsibilities and have a complete understanding of their

roles and where they fit into the process. The more that stakeholders understand each other's strengths, limitations, and needs, and organize the program with those considerations in mind, the greater likelihood for success. Scheduled and informal opportunities for feedback help to troubleshoot problems as they arise and communication should flow in all directions. Programs are more easily sustained when ongoing relationships are established and the necessary resources are committed to the program. Stakeholders include: the community, the participants, the teachers or facilitators, and the educational institution. The community can refer to community agencies, their recipients, and various other groupings that make up community.

6. **Quality Service Placements**: Quality service placements provide challenging situations where participants can feel like they are making positive contributions, while receiving feedback and appreciation from their community supervisors. While they often include direct contact with service recipients, quality placements are most successful when they are engaging for the participant, regardless of the form the service takes. In addition to engaging and challenging the student, quality service placements should meet the needs of each of the stakeholders.

7. **Adequate Exposure**: Jewish service-learning programs should attempt to incorporate as much exposure to quality service placements as possible, while still leaving adequate time for structured learning and reflection. School-based programs should offer service-learning programs for at least two consecutive years, while intensive Jewish service-learning programs should provide several different

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opportunities for further reflection and learning after the intensive service component has ended.

8. **Make Improvements**: Program evaluations should take place on a regular basis in a way that enables the data to be used to help improve the Jewish service-learning program.

9. **Organization**: Due to the level of planning and coordination that a Jewish service-learning program takes, the greater the level of organization that has taken the other eight elements into consideration, the greater the opportunities for success.

The research presented seems to indicate that for an effective Jewish service-learning program, all of these components should be incorporated to some degree. However, each of the sixteen Jewish service-learning programs that were discussed were implemented for different reasons and based on specific desired outcomes. Therefore, one might think that certain program components may be given more weight while ignoring others in order to achieve those outcomes. For example, a program that is focused primarily on keeping students in religious school might spend more time on working with a community agency in order to create engaging placement opportunities, which would be more interesting for the students. They may also try to give their students more of a voice throughout the service-learning process in order to provide them with more ownership over the process and therefore feel better about the work they are doing.

While the research indicates that focusing on these measures may indeed make the program more interesting for the participants, it also notes the harm that can be

created when the program is not balanced with quality learning and reflection. Fully developed Jewish and issue education would still need to be integrated with the service through structured reflection opportunities. In this respect, the nine components are to be seen as providing a foundation upon which to build. To accomplish specific goals such as increasing Jewish identity or molding the next generation of Jewish activists, begin with a comprehensive Jewish service-learning program that incorporates all nine components. Then, by focusing on areas that address targeted programmatic goals, organizers can provide a quality program while accomplishing their aims. The same holds true for any targeted programmatic goals.

Beyond social/global issues, the basic building blocks of service-learning: service, structured learning, and reflection, allow for a great deal of creativity in seeking out new and interesting applications. For example, if one expands the notion of service to include service to God or service to one's self, it is possible to image a service-learning program tied to Jewish ritual, such as a service-learning Shabbat.

A service-learning Shabbat would involve a collaborative team from a congregation or a Jewish community that would include clergy, educators, board members, staff, and possibly others who would help plan the events. Several sessions of learning dealing with the *Erev Shabbat* home ritual and Shabbat practice would precede a congregational Shabbaton. Families or groups of people would then demonstrate their new knowledge by doing their home ritual at home before or after attending services with the congregation. Services in the morning would be followed by a luncheon, singing, games and study sessions all afternoon, with a little down time before the third meal. After ending Shabbat with Havdalah, small group reflection sessions would be held to

help integrate the learning and experience, encouraging participants to explore whether any aspect of the service-learning Shabbat could be incorporated into their regular practice.

A service-learning Shabbat is only one more way to utilize a pedagogy that seems well suited for many aspects of Jewish education. Additional applications will most likely come as Jewish service-learning continues to expand. However, based on the programs that currently exist, Jewish service-learning at this time seems best suited for helping participants make a difference in their community while learning how to live Jewishly. And based on the dual focus of social justice and increased Jewish knowledge within so many aspects of the Jewish community, particularly in the Reform movement, this pedagogy has the potential to transform Jewish education. It is no coincidence that within three years, SPARK's HeartAction curriculum is already being administered at over fifty sites, because Jewish service-learning has the potential to provide two important components that are currently missing from many aspects of Jewish education: relevance and passion.

In the United States, when it often seems as if Judaism is being overwhelmed by American culture, Jewish service-learning can help to make Jewish connections for students in religious school, participants of intensive programs, and adults within the community. It starts with people with a basic interest about what is happening in their community and in the world, whether one's focus is poverty, the environment, elder care, protecting battered women, etc. They may give to local or national causes, or they may have volunteered with an organization that deals with one of these issues through their school. They are not deeply involved and other than a few blanket statements like,

"Judaism says you're supposed to care for the poor," they do not know that Jewish tradition might have something substantial to say about these issues.

Jewish service-learning has the potential to enlighten this group, showing them that Judaism not only has something to say, Jewish tradition has probably thought through these issues in very detailed ways. Going far beyond general ethical statements like, "feed the hungry" or "clothe the naked," Jewish thinkers have thought a great deal about both the obligations of the community and the obligations of the individual in financial need. These teachings and rulings provide a great deal of insight about modern issues such as a poverty line, a minimum wage, and other related topics. Studying these texts helps provide a connection to Judaism for Jews of all ages. That connection comes from the understanding that Jews have been grappling with these issues for almost two thousand years and the realization that these ancient texts continue to be relevant today.

On the topic of elder care, there are many opportunities for learning. For example, a group of adults studying about caring for the elderly as a part of an adult mitzvah corps may not have realized that the rabbis understood the commandment to honor one's parents primarily as relating to providing for one's parents when they are no longer self sufficient. They may also not realize that Maimonides and then Joseph Caro in the *Shulchan Aruch* allows a child to find others to care for his parents when the child is unable for various reasons.[93] Their discussion and reflections may relate to their own sense of personal obligation or it could relate to national demographics and the way Jews should respond to aging baby boomers. They may discuss the texts in terms of the moving conversation they had with a patient at the nursing home earlier that day. These experiences may motivate individuals to rededicate themselves to caring for their parents

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[93] Mishneh Torah, *Hilchot Mamrim* 6:10; *Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah* 240:10.

or the group may decide to provide better communal support for the elderly at their congregation. At the very least, by studying these and related texts in combination with service and reflection, participants can realize just how relevant Jewish teachings can be, thereby providing a connection with Judaism that was not present before.

In addition to making Judaism relevant, Jewish service-learning can also awaken a passion for the social justice issue that is the focus of the service-learning program. Relating to poverty issues, one's passion might start with one's personal interest to help people who are poor, which is one issue with which many middle and high school students seem to be concerned. The interest of these students grow stronger after an experience at the soup kitchen where they meet some of the clients and hear their stories. Even though only two or three of the participants actually talked with the clients, during reflection, the entire group was able to hear about their experiences. They may have met a woman who works full time making minimum wage, but since all of the money has to go to rent and childcare, she brings her children to the soup kitchen so they can have a hot meal. They could have met any number of people, each with their own tale to tell.

Hearing such stories may create more of an emotional attachment as the students now have faces and individual circumstances upon which to reflect, instead of just thinking about "the poor" as an amorphous group. At the same time, in class they are studying Jewish sources relating to the *tamchui*,[94] which seems to be the talmudic precursor to a soup kitchen. As the students begin to synthesize their service and classroom experiences, they start to better understand the difference between emergency relief, such as meals in a soup kitchen, and more long-term assistance. After seeing the same people at the soup kitchen each and every week, their relationships with the clients

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[94] Such as Mishna Peah 8:7 and TB Bava Batra 8b

combined with their learning motivate the students to think more deeply about feasible solutions. Maimonides' highest level of *tzedakah*,[95] where an individual becomes self-sufficient through an act of *tzedakah*, may become the ideal that they strive to attain for others. And when they reflect on the meaning of their Jewish service-learning experience as a whole, what began as a passive interest could be transformed into a passion that is wrapped up in their Jewish identity. It would be a passion that will drive them to continue to look for more substantial ways to address issues associated with poverty. It will be a passion that could put them on the path for a lifetime of Jewish service.

When participants discover that Judaism is relevant in their lives today, it enables them to make connections that can open the door to a more enriched Jewish life. When the result of participants' service, learning, and reflective experiences foster a passion to make a difference in their community and their world, it will be rooted in their Judaism. Jewish service-learning offers its participants, its teachers, and its communities outcomes that have the potential to last far beyond the semester or the year program. It offers a challenging, engaging Jewish educational format, numerous opportunities for participants and facilitators to learn practical new skills, and it can help to create or strengthen long lasting partnerships between Jewish institutions and the community. Participants not only make a difference in the community, they are motivated to seek out additional ways to contribute. Participants not only gain Jewish knowledge, they learn how to apply Jewish teachings to their lives, deepening their connection with their Judaism.

The field of Jewish service-learning is still in its infancy and over the next few years it seems likely that it will continue to expand. As more and more programs develop and learn from one another and as more comprehensive research is done in both the

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[95] Mishneh Torah, *Hilchot Matanot Aniyyim* 10:7

secular and the Jewish worlds, practices will continue to be refined and improved. There is much room for growth and creativity; the possibilities are vast. At this point, Jewish service-learning has a solid foundation upon which to build and it will be an exciting journey to see where it goes from here.

Appendix
Service-Learning Web Resources

The following sites are only some of the many excellent service-learning resources that can be found online:

Jewish Organizations:

SPARK: Partnership for Service
http://www.sparkpfs.org/

Sulam: The Center for Jewish Service Learning
http://www.sulamcenter.org/

Panim: The Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values
http://www.panim.org/

American Jewish World Service
http://www.ajws.org/

Jewish Council on Urban Affairs
http://www.jcua.org/

NFTY Mitzvah Corps
http://www.nftymitzvahcorps.org/

URJ Tzevet Mitzvot
http://urj.org/csa/mitzvahcorps/

TELEM
http://www.telemyouth.org/

Jewish Coalition for Service
http://www.jewishservice.org/

Avodah
http://www.avodah.net/

General Service-Learning Resources

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse
http://www.servicelearning.org/

Learn and Serve America
http://www.learnandserve.org/

Campus Compact Resource Page
http://www.compact.org/resources/index.php

Reflection Toolkit: Northwest Service Academy, Metro Center, Portland, OR
http://nationalserviceresources.org/filemanager/download/615/nwtoolkit.pdf

Service Learning Web Resources
http://www.goodcharacter.com/SERVICE/webresources.html

BreakAway: The Alternative Breaks Connection
http://www.alternativebreaks.com/

National Youth Leadership Council – Service-Learning Resources
http://www.nylc.org/resource_center.cfm

Corporation for National Service
http://www.nationalservice.org/

Learning In Deed
http://learningindeed.org/index.html

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