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Aron, Isa. "Toward the Professionalization of Jewish Teaching."  
Includes background studies, February 1990.

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*Isa's outline  
for paper on  
the profession*

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE—JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION  
Cincinnati • New York • Los Angeles • Jerusalem

RHEA HINSCH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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July 20, 1989

Dr. Annette Hochstein  
Nativ Policy and Planning Consultants  
P.O.B. 4497  
Jerusalem 91044  
ISRAEL

Dear Annette,

Enclosed is a preliminary outline of my paper on professionalism in teaching. I think that the research and writing of a report of this scope could be done in 10 working days. However, I want to be clear about what is not included in this outline:

*clerk  
arg*

1) the area of training, both pre-service and in-service. I go back and forth in my mind on how relevant this is to the issue of professionalism in Jewish education. In secular education there are endless debates, and some fascinating research about when and how teachers should be trained. Yet we know that very few American-born Jewish teachers have formal training; the graduates of programs like HUC, UJ, JTS, and Brandeis tend to go into administration. Some questions about this should probably go into the information-gathering project.

2) details about how career ladders actually work, and the problems various school districts are having in trying to implement them. Some interesting research is currently underway throughout the U.S. However, I think that the organization of Jewish schooling is so different from that of public schools as to make much of this material irrelevant.

3) a discussion of recruitment, and how salary and status affect recruitment. I have only a passing familiarity with the literature in this area, and don't know whether or not it would be germane to the issue of professionalism.

4) issues of accreditation, and the status of accreditation in Jewish education. If this is important it too might become part of the information-gathering.

5) Depending on how you feel about the paper's advocating differentiated staffing, it might be nice to include a number of models of differentiated staffing in various settings. I could probably create some sketchy models off the top of my head, but

we should possibly consider offering a number of scenarios that are more elaborate.

If, in our discussions at CAJE it turns out that one or more of these items should be included, we would then have to discuss the context for their inclusion, and how much time it would take me to research each area.

I hope that my sending in this outline now will give you and Seymour ample opportunity to get feedback from a variety of colleagues and consultants. I look forward to discussing this in depth when we meet in August.

B'Shalom,

*Isa*

Isa





Isa Aron  
July 26, 1989

NARRATIVE OUTLINE OF PAPER ON PROFESSIONALISM IN TEACHING --  
DRAFT #1

I: Review of Current Discussions in Secular Education----

1) Before entering into a discussion of professionalism in teaching, it is necessary to define what we mean by the term "professional." The term is used very loosely, in exhortative fashion, as the equivalent of serious, worthy of respect, and/or worthy of more pay. But teaching might be seen as being serious, worthy of more respect, and more pay without necessarily being seen as a profession.

2) Philosophers and sociologists have arrived at consensus on two criteria which differentiate professions from other occupations:

legitimacy: a job is a profession if it requires a special body of knowledge and expertise

autonomy: a professional is one who exerts control over the circumstances under which his/her service is rendered

Doctors and lawyers clearly meet both criteria; nurses have legitimacy, but much less autonomy than doctors; businessmen, conversely, have a good deal of autonomy, but there are questions as to their legitimacy (in fact, the rise of graduate schools of business can be seen as an attempt to gain legitimacy).

3) Measured against these criteria, teaching does not fare well. The prevailing assumption among most Americans is that teaching requires little or no special knowledge; in fact, most teacher certification exams focus on knowledge of subject matter, rather than pedagogy. Moreover, in response to dissatisfaction with schools, school boards have tended to reduce teachers' autonomy even further, requiring greater accountability through exams and record-keeping.

4) Attempts to upgrade the professional standing of teachers, therefore, have centered on establishing their legitimacy, on the one hand, and arguing for more autonomy, on the other. These attempts can be divided into the following categories:

- attempts to codify teacher knowledge. Research on teaching "knowledge base of teaching" has yet to be firmly established. The predominant research paradigm has been "process-product" research; many argue that this type of research has yielded only low level generalizations, that do



not go much beyond common sense. A new research paradigm, advocated by Lee Shulman, focuses more on the interplay of knowledge. This paradigm is still in its infancy and does not fully satisfy the criterion of legitimacy.

- attempts to create procedures for teacher evaluation that are both more valid and more stringent. Teachers are most commonly evaluated in two ways: a) pencil and paper tests, which focus primarily on subject matter knowledge; b) observation by either principals or outside observers, which tend to be subjective and open to the charge of bias. Lee Shulman and others are currently engaged in creating a National Teaching Examination which might include analysis of cases and submission of items for a teaching portfolio as well.
- attempts to create career ladders and other mechanisms for rewarding teachers who excel. Many experiments of this sort are currently underway, but the results thus far have been mixed, at best.
- attempts to gain more autonomy for teachers by giving them a greater say in school governance. Changes in this area will be hardest to achieve, because of the prevailing trend towards bureaucratic mechanisms for accountability.

5) A small, but growing group of scholars has begun to raise questions about whether the professionalization of teachers should be our dominant concern. They point out that good teachers, teachers who make a difference in their students' lives, have qualities that go beyond knowledge and autonomy. Phillip Jackson calls this the "transformative" aspect of teaching; Nel Noddings has written about "caring." An all-inclusive term for this dimension of teaching is Dwayne Huebner's notion of teaching as a vocation.

## II: How Applicable is All of this to Jewish Teachers and Jewish Teaching?

1) In thinking about applying the insights of secular educational research and scholarship to the field of Jewish education, one encounters a number of problems:

The large majority of Jewish teachers work very part-time. Even day schools do not necessarily offer their teachers full-time employment. It may be both unreasonable and inappropriate to expect part-time teachers to have professional legitimacy and to be given professional autonomy.

- Who is responsible for Jewish education, and to whom should Jewish teachers be accountable? Samson Benderly believed that education should be a communal responsibility,



supported by and accountable to the community at large. Over time, however, education became the province of synagogues. Jewish education is a "system" in only a loose and ephemeral sense. The pendulum may have begun to swing the other direction, but it is difficult to conceive of a time when central agencies will have actual power, rather than merely influence. In the meantime, licensing and standards are ignored or circumvented when it becomes convenient to do so. A voluntary National Jewish Teacher Exam might, by power of suggestion, be able to establish higher standards among full-time teachers; but this would take time, and entail considerable research, as can be seen in the next point.

- with the exception of two doctoral dissertations currently in process, there is no research at all on the knowledge base which might establish the legitimacy of Jewish teaching. If we accept Lee Shulman's paradigm, which places teacher knowledge in the context of particular subject matters, it becomes clear that teacher knowledge in secular education is not the same as teacher knowledge in Jewish education. In fact, there is every reason to believe that researching and testing for Judaic teacher-knowledge will be considerably more difficult, because of the central role of belief and values in the decision-making required for Jewish teaching.

2) Some encouragement, however, may be derived from the fact that Jewish education seems to attract teachers for whom teaching is a vocation:

- preliminary results of the LA Jewish Teacher Census show that Jewish teachers are, in general, more satisfied with their work than secular teachers are. They also come out relatively high on a number of other indices of "vocation."
- in her pilot study, Gail Dorph found that all of the teachers she interviewed saw their teaching as a "mission."
- it would be interesting to speculate on the policy implications of this. For example, instead of focusing exclusively of in-service training, we need to think a lot more about in-service nurturing. I have a lot of things to say about this, if anyone wants to hear them.

### III: THE NEED FOR DIFFERENTIATED STAFFING

The degree of professionalism required to teach full-time in a day school may be very different from that required to teach 2-6 hours in an afternoon school. Given the financial limitations of the Jewish community, we need to think very seriously about promoting a number of models in which highly skilled and very well remunerated teachers work with part-time, less educated, and less experienced "trainees" and/or avocationalists.



HERREW UNION COLLEGE — JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION  
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Isa's four  
proposals

RHEA HIRSCH SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

July 11, 1989

3077 UNIVERSITY AVENUE - LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90087-5751  
(213) 768-2424

Dr. Annette Hochstein  
Nativ Policy and Planning Consultants  
P.O.B. 4497  
Jerusalem 91044  
ISRAEL

Dear Annette,

Since we met in Jerusalem just a week and a half ago I have given long and careful thought to Seymour's and your request that I participate in the research effort of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America. Needless to say, I have also spent many hours discussing the pros and cons of my taking on such an assignment with my colleagues and superiors at HUC. The brief answer to your offer is that I would very much like to serve as the researcher and/or coordinator of some of the studies we discussed, assuming that we can come to agreement on certain terms and arrangements. In the pages that follow I will attempt to explain both the pre conditions that obtain and the procedures which strike me as most feasible in order to get research of the highest possible quality in the limited amount of time available. I hope that you and Seymour will have sufficient time to read and discuss my proposals prior to our Thursday phone conversation..

The most serious pre-condition to my taking on this project is one of time. As I mentioned when we met in Jerusalem, the faculty members of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education work very closely together, and are already over-extended. Each of us carries a full teaching and supervision role; collectively, we have just taken on an exciting and demanding new project which is funded by the Maxner Foundation. Our already precarious ecological balance will be seriously taxed by my taking on a large project such as this, especially on such short notice. Nonetheless, we view this as a unique opportunity to make an important contribution at a particularly opportune moment in the history of Jewish education. Thus, the RHSOE is willing to endorse my participation in the work of the Commission, provided that we can very clearly delineate the boundaries and limitations of this participation. For example, once we agreed on the parameters of my work, I would not be able to take on any additional assignments. In terms of travel, I would be able to commit to three trips between September and February, two for the Commission meetings (if my presence is required) and one for the consultation outlined in proposal III. Neither my teaching schedule nor my family life will allow for any travel beyond that.



As you can probably guess from my use of the first person plural. ~~As you can probably guess from my use of the first person plural.~~  
~~agreement between us were made between the Commission and the~~  
 RHSOE, with my role being that of principal investigator. Since  
 my participation in the project would require certain sacrifices  
 on the part of both the RHSOE and HUC, it would be important that  
 those institutions be given some recognition, in some way that we  
 could discuss further. In addition, both I and the RHSOE would  
 like the opportunity to comment on your and Seymour's summary of  
 the findings prior to their appearance in the final report.  
 Finally, we would have to establish in advance a mutually agreed  
 upon date after which I would be free to submit my own account of  
 this work for publication in various journals.

The third and final issue to be discussed up front is that of  
 short-term information-gathering vs. long-term research. I'm sure  
 you'll recall my rather vehement (and perhaps impertinent)  
 response to Joe Lukinsky at our luncheon meeting, and I guess  
 you've figured out that I feel very strongly about this issue.  
 Under the circumstances, I am in full agreement that the  
 Commission needs to be given as much information as possible, and  
 that this information must be gathered as efficiently as  
 possible. Given my past experience with a number of foundations  
 and communal organizations, however, I have a well-founded fear  
 that the studies I would conduct might be used to absolve the  
 Commission from the need to do serious research in the future. I  
 realize that this is far from your intent, and not entirely  
 within your power to prevent. Nonetheless, I would very much like  
 some statement regarding the severe limitations of this type of  
 data-gathering, and the fact that the Commission sees this as  
 only a preliminary step in a much-needed research effort, to  
 appear in my contract or letter of agreement.

With that preamble aside, I propose four different types of  
 studies, which range from a very discrete one, which I could do  
 myself, to a very complicated one, in which my primary function  
 would be that of conceptualization and coordination. I am  
 prepared to take on any of these studies, and possibly all four,  
 assuming the Commission's budget would allow for the necessary  
 staffing arrangements, including compensation to HUC for the cost  
 of hiring a replacement to teach one of my courses this fall. To  
 simplify matters, I will discuss each of these studies on a  
 separate page.

I hope that you and Seymour will have time to discuss both the  
 proposals and my concerns before our Thursday phone conversation.  
 If you need more time, perhaps we can talk on Friday 7/14, Sunday



7/16, or the following Tuesday.

Concurrent with FAXing this letter I am sending off a selection of my articles. I look forward to talking with you and, hopefully, working together in the coming months.

B'Shalom,

*Issa Aron*

Issa Aron

AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES



## PROPOSAL I: BACKGROUND PAPER ON TEACHING AS A PROFESSION

A review and synthesis of the literature on the professionalization of teaching in secular education; a discussion of the relevance/problematics of this literature for Jewish education

Product: A report with extensive bibliography, and an executive summary

Staff: Isa Aron

Timetable:

September, 1988: set parameters of the report (e.g.: how to focus primarily on the issue of professionalization, or attempt to include issues of recruitment, training, and retention as well?) I would begin by sending you an outline of the topics I thought should be covered, to which you, Seymour, and whoever else you choose to include could react.

November, 1989: preliminary report available for feedback and suggested revision

Depending upon the extent of revision, final report available immediately, or in January.

Budget: from \$3500 on up, depending on how broad a focus is desired. A more limited report would take approximately 10 working days (at \$350/day); an expanded report would, obviously, take longer. Requests for extensive revisions would also require additional time and compensation.



*agrees with results*

## PROPOSAL II: ANALYSIS OF TEACHER CENSUS DATA

Step One: Analysis of the findings of the Los Angeles Jewish Teacher Census, including the following:

- demographic information on the entire teaching population (including educational background, personal Jewishness, salary, and benefits, past experience, other work, and future plans)
- data on how teachers view themselves (why they teach, how they rate themselves, what their satisfactions and dissatisfactions are, what in-service training they would like, and how they assess the in-service training they have received)
- school specific analysis (for example, how teachers feel about the specific school in which they teach, and how different types of schools vary in terms of the teachers they attract)

Step Two: Comparative analysis of the data generated by comparable surveys in Miami and Philadelphia, assuming these communities agree to release the data, and assuming the response rate in Philadelphia is high enough to warrant analysis.

Step Three: (I don't think this can be done by February; if for some reason the deadline is extended, it might be done by June) Administration and analysis of the same survey instrument in additional communities.

Product: A report with extensive tables

Staff: Bruce Phillips, the demographer who has begun the analysis of the L.A. data, with some consultative input from Isa Aron and Ron Reynolds of the LABJE.

Timetables:

November: report for Step One completed; available for feedback

February: Step Two Completed

Budget:

for Step One, \$10,100

- \$8,000 for Bruce Phillips (20 days at the rate of \$400/day)
- \$1,050 each for Ron Reynolds and Isa Aron (3 days each at \$350/day).

The budget for Step Two cannot be developed without more information from Miami and Philadelphia. In addition to compensation for Bruce Phillips, it would include payment to a graduate student in statistics to merge the data bases.

*see LA data*

*Profile gathering  
How useful  
alone?*



SENT BY AERIAL 10/20/71 11:08 AM  
*Bergman data*

PROPOSAL III  
INFORMATION-GATHERING IN THE AREA OF PERSONNEL

As we discussed in Jerusalem, the study questions and parameters would be developed jointly by you, Seymour and myself, in consultation with a group of experts in both Jewish and secular education. The study would be conducted partly by mail and mostly by telephone.

Needs: - report with tables and other pertinent documentation  
Staff:

1) One researcher, working full-time for the duration of the study. The person I have in mind is Debra Markovic, who holds an MAJE from the UJ and served as the administrative coordinator for the recent Conference on Research in Jewish Education in Oconomowoc. Debra is, as far as I can tell, perfect for the job: she is intelligent, personable, efficient, and already familiar with the current scene. In very tentative, and she is definitely interested in the job, though she has at least one other job possibility. If we want her we would have to act quickly. If Debra is unavailable, we could possibly find several part-time people, a situation which would be more difficult.

2) Consultants -- somewhere between five and ten. We had talked originally of trying to hold a conference, now strikes me as wildly unrealistic, both in terms of the short deadline and in terms of impossibility of coordinating people's schedules, given their other functions at the conference. I would suggest, alternately, that we hold such a consultation in Los Angeles in early September. There are a number of Stanford people who's input would be really valuable (I have in mind Milbrey McLaughlin and Larry Cuban, and, of course, Lee Shulman, if he's still in town). If Sharon Nemser and/or David Cohen would be able to come in that would be great; otherwise, we might have to settle for telephone conversation. From among the Jewish educators, I would like to invite: Susan Shevitz, Elaine Cohen, Gail Norph, Hanan Alexander, Yoni Schultz (the head of personnel at the LABJE), Paul Flexner, and possibly Bob Abrahamson.

An alternate proposal: that this consultation be held in two shifts: first in L.A. and second at Michigan State.

3) Isa Aron, to coordinate and oversee the collection of data and the writing of the report

4) Some secretarial help, mostly for producing the final report, and making arrangements with the consultants

Timetable:

3500



Of all the studies, this is the trickiest to project a timetable for, since we don't know what questions would be asked or exactly how long it would take to collect the data. My suggestion would be to work backwards: to prioritize the questions and assume January as a final deadline; all the questions won't be answered, but the highest priority ones would be assured. If this procedure is acceptable, it might be important to have some Commissioners and federation-types participate in the process of setting the priorities.

Budget:

1) researcher: \$16,000 full-time for six months

2) coordinator: 1/6 time, or \$7,000

3) consultants:

5 @ \$350/day = \$1,750

5 @ \$550/day = \$2,750

plus travel costs and possibly hotel

4) secretary: anywhere from \$5,000 - \$10,000

5) equipment:

-- two telephone lines (plus enormous bills, or, better, yet, a WATTS line)

-- answering machine

-- fax machine

-- xerox machine, or compensation to HUC for use of its xerox machine

-- at least one computer and possibly a printer

The equipment would belong to the Commission after the research is over. Perhaps there is comparable equipment left over from an earlier phase of the Commission's work.

6) cost of hiring a replacement to teach one of my courses: \$3600

16000  
7000  
1750  
2750  
10000  
0000

47800  
50,000

*app her*

3500  
8000  
7000  
3600

+ Expense

22,100  
30,000

How does

2 in the  
art of history  
mountain

"SNAPSHOTS" REFORMATIVE PRACTICE

I'm not sure you really wanted me to coordinate such an effort, but the idea is an intriguing one, and would serve as a good complement to Proposal III, which is likely to be entirely quantitative and somewhat depressing. In my experience, anecdotes and cases are quite powerful in helping to concretize issues and visions.

Strictly speaking, this proposal would fall into the category of journalism rather than research, since the data gathering phase could only be 2-3 days, as opposed to a full year (for classic ethnography) or even 2 weeks (the time spent by Sara Lawrence Lightfoot at each school she studied). Taking off on Lightfoot's use of the term "portraits," I would call these "snapshots". Assuming some responsible standardization of the procedures for data-gathering and some research experience on the part of the staff, and with the proper disclaimers that this procedure does not uncover the whole truth, and that until we understand what we mean by exemplary, we can only suggest that these might be exemplary situations (excuse the terrible run-on sentence), we could put together some interesting and inspiring case studies.

My assumption is that each "snapshot" would take 8 days from beginning to end. This would include up-front conceptualization, making all the appropriate arrangements, travel time, 2-3 days for data-gathering, and 2-3 days to write up the case.

I would suggest that we start with two such "snapshots," both taken by an educational ethnographer. The person I mentioned to you, Richard Cohen, is probably unavailable, but there is a good chance that Adrienne Bank, or someone else for the Center for the Study of Evaluation at UCLA can be. With consultation from myself, you, Seymour, and others, the ethnographer would prepare these cases for presentation in November. If the Commissioners like what they see and want to develop a larger portfolio of these pictures, I would suggest that a number of academics (at both Jewish and secular universities) who have been trained in research be invited to participate in the process. I have in mind people such as Susan Shevitz, David Schoem, Stuart Schoenfeld (from York University), Aryeh Davidson, and you can easily think of others. I don't think it would be hard to find 12 or 15 such people, and ask each to do one case. They would all have to come together for a one or two-day orientation, and a procedure would have to be set for selecting the sites, but, budget permitting, it would all be quite feasible and quite exciting.

Product: between 2 and 20 "snapshots" of "exemplary practice," depending on the size of the budget.

Staff:

- phase 1: the ethnographer, and Isa Aron as liaison to Commission
- phase 2:
  - researchers at Jewish and secular universities (see above)
  - a coordinator (Isa Aron)

Try one?  
Suggest e.g.'s?



-- secretary for arrangements, compilation of final document

Timetable:

September - October: ethnographer develops first two cases

November: review of the first two cases; if green light is given, selection of additional "photographers" (i.e. case writers)

end of November: orientation and training for "photographers;" selection of sites

December and January: each "photographer" works individually to produce his/her "snapshot(s)"

2. Get: (you said think big, but is this too grandiose?)

Per Snapshot

- one "photographer" @ \$350/day x 8 days = \$2,800
- travel costs, plus hotel for 2 nights, meals for 3 days

Project-Wide Costs, if Many Cases are Developed

- coordinator @ 1/6 time = \$7,000
- secretary: half-time from November through February
- orientation/training for "photographers" (might be done in 2 sites to save on travel -- costs would include travel, meals, perhaps lodging, fees for participants)
- costs that would be covered under the budget of Project III:
  - telephone
  - fax
  - xeroxing
  - computer
  - compensation to HUC for replacement for teaching one of my courses

7000  
7000

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## Section 4

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### **The Prospects for Professionalizing Jewish Teachers**

Let us imagine that our goal is the professionalization of the entire Jewish teaching force. Is this goal attainable? If so, at what cost? If not, what goals are more realistic? And what steps ought the Jewish community to be taking to encourage this professionalization?

Three sets of obstacles stand in the way of professionalizing the entire force of Jewish teachers: The first set concerns the inherent limitations of teaching with regard to the criteria of professionalism discussed in this paper. The second set of obstacles derives from certain sociological realities; it includes all those factors which make teaching in general undesirable to potential recruits. The third set of obstacles is specific to Jewish education, encompassing the conditions that make the professionalization of Jewish teaching particularly difficult.

In this section I explore each set of obstacles in turn, summarizing the conclusions of the previous chapters, and adding new information, where relevant. In each case the discussion focuses on what it will take to overcome the obstacles in question. Because the obstacles are inter-related, the suggestions for research and experimentation offered in this section should be considered in concert. Any one, standing alone, can have only limited impact; taken together, they constitute a coordinated plan for upgrading the profession of Jewish teaching.

#### **4.1 Translating the Criteria of Legitimacy and Autonomy into Practical Standards for the Teaching Profession**

The discussion of legitimacy and autonomy in Section 1 revealed some of the problems which arise when these criteria are used as standards for improving teaching. To begin with, research on teacher knowledge in the secular field is fraught with controversies over methodology (Gage, 1989). Whether or not this research will yield reliable applications to both training and evaluation is still an open question. Moreover, only some of the research findings, those which deal with generic teaching skills in secular education, are directly transferable to Jewish education; identifying pedagogic content knowledge in subjects such as Hebrew, Bible, and Jewish history will require a good deal of new research.



Despite these problems, accepted standards for both training and evaluation are a necessary step in both legitimizing a profession and differentiating between poor, competent, and excellent practitioners. If Jewish teaching is to become a profession, the Jewish community has no choice but to invest in both research and experimentation in this area. The methodologies for this research have been honed at a number of major research centers, notably the Teacher Assessment Project at Stanford University, and by the National Center for Research on Teacher Education, at Michigan State University. Key figures at each of these centers have been involved with Jewish education in a variety of ways; it would make sense for any future research on Jewish teaching knowledge and evaluation to be conducted in coordination with one or both of these centers.

Concurrent with this research, a way must be found to adapt the findings of both past and future studies to training and evaluation, on an experimental basis. One possibility might be the creation of a national committee on teacher training and evaluation, which would act as a clearinghouse for research and instigate experimental projects, together with the AIHLJE (Association of Institutions of Higher Learning in Jewish Education) and central agencies.

With regard to teacher autonomy, it seems unlikely that teachers can achieve the degree of autonomy of some other professionals; but, as I argued in Section 3.4, this type of individualistic autonomy may not be desirable. Though the degree of autonomy most appropriate for teachers at varying levels of legitimacy may be open to question, the fact that teachers who have demonstrated their legitimacy deserve a good deal more autonomy is not. Since autonomy is intimately connected with the culture of the particular school, it cannot be mandated from above. Nonetheless, policy makers at the local and national level can contribute to the creation of a climate in which autonomy is encouraged. Autonomy does not mean free reign, but rather the creation of a culture of shared leadership in schools. Clearly there is much work to be done analyzing and experimenting with various levels of teacher autonomy. And, of course, the granting of autonomy to teachers must be linked to the creation of sophisticated, reliable evaluation techniques, as discussed above.

Too often a teacher's commitment is simply taken for granted, as though it is too obvious to mention. My own belief (and the belief of many of the early readers of this paper) is that commitment ought to be regarded as a necessary requirement for all teachers of Judaica, regardless of their legitimacy. The commitment of a teacher cannot be easily measured, nor can it be imparted by training, in the narrow, technical sense. Nonetheless, the expectation of commitment ought to be openly stated. More importantly, the teacher's initial sense of commitment, which probably lead to his or her choice of teaching in the first place, can be nurtured in the course of training, at both the pre-service (see Feiman- Nemser, 1989) and in-service levels. The development of commitment—to the tradition, the community, and to the students—should be one of the goals of all training programs. As discussed in Section 3.3, different schools may be interested in different types of religious commitment; this kind of pluralism is to be encouraged.

## 4.2 Making Teaching Attractive as a Profession

The second set of obstacles to upgrading the teaching profession arises out of the historical conditions in which teaching has been mired. The American public has always viewed its teachers with a mixture of admiration and disdain, acceptance and suspicion (Waller, 1932/1967; Sykes, 1983b). Low teacher salaries over the years indicate that disdain probably outweighed the other sentiments. For years American schools were granted a "hidden subsidy" from women who accepted, because they had little choice, their low pay and low status. With the rise of teachers' unions in the 1960s and early '70s, salaries rose, and began to compare favorably with those of many other occupations. Salaries have not, however, kept pace with inflation (Feistritzer, 1983), and this has contributed to a further decline of the status of teachers. Teaching is regarded as a less desirable career option than ever before. Surveyed in a nation-wide Gallup Poll in 1969, 75% of the responding teachers said they would like to have a child take up teaching in a public school as a career; in 1972 the percentage fell to 67%, and, in 1980, to 48% (Sykes, 1983b, p. 111). The "first wave" of Commission reports (e.g., *A Nation at Risk* [National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983]) did nothing to raise the status of teachers; if anything, it contributed to their denigration (McDonald, 1986, pp. 356-357). The "second wave" of reform, exemplified by Carnegie (1986) and Holmes (1986) Commission reports, has focused attention on teacher professionalism, teacher status, and teacher salaries. It is too soon to tell if the efforts of these groups will, over the long run, entice a higher caliber of recruits to the field.

Though teachers in Jewish schools are not subject to the political vagaries of public school reform, their status and self-image are inextricably intertwined with that of public school teachers. Since efforts are currently underway to raise the salaries and status of public school teachers, this would be an opportune moment for the Jewish community to swim with the tide, linking its own efforts at recruitment to those of the society at large.

Both status and recruitment are influenced by salaries. However, raising teacher salaries is not a simple matter, even if it is assumed that the money can be found to do so. Which salaries should be raised, those of entry-level teachers (as a recruitment device) or those teachers already in the system (as a retention device)? It stands to reason that salary increases for those currently teaching should be linked, in some way, to merit. However, the instruments currently available for assessing teachers are either too subjective or too limited (Shulman, 1988), and await the results of the research discussed above. Moreover, various merit pay schemes instituted on an experimental basis have been found to be problematic (Murnane and Cohen, 1986; Bachrach and Conley, 1986; Johnson, 1984). Finally, there is the question of how large a salary increase would be required in order to make a significant difference in recruitment. One study found that it would take an annual salary increase of \$10,000 to make teaching more competitive with other jobs that require equivalent training, such as engineering and accounting (Feistritzer, 1983, p. 16). An assessment of various



mechanisms for upgrading teacher salaries is essential; such an assessment would require some complicated economic modeling and projections. Since fewer than a third of Jewish teaching elts carry medical, pension, and other benefits (Aron and Phillips, 1990), the issue of the Jewish community's obligation to provide benefits for its teachers should be considered concurrently. Providing higher salaries and benefits to teachers might well require the establishment of an educational endowment, at either a national or regional level.

Assuming that teachers' salaries could be increased significantly, an extensive, multi-faceted recruitment campaign would have to be undertaken. This should include: a) the recruitment of college students to training institutions through the use of scholarships and other incentives, and their placement in viable settings upon graduation; b) the recruitment and training of part-time teachers, for whom teaching might be either an avocation or a secondary occupation (Aron, 1988; Davidson, 1990).

#### 4.3 Considering the Possibilities of Differentiated Staffing

The final set of obstacles to the professionalization of Jewish teachers derives from the part-time nature of much of Jewish teaching (see Section 2.3). Because the number of part-time positions is large, relative to full-time positions, Jewish teaching attracts individuals with a wide range of backgrounds and aspirations. There are three ways in which a teacher might think of his or her work: a) as a career; b) as a way of supplementing his or her household's income, either temporarily (while waiting to get married or have children) or on an ongoing basis; and c) as an avocation, an activity engaged in purely for a sense of service or satisfaction. Though I know of no study that has asked public school teachers this question, one can imagine that a majority see teaching as a career. In Jewish education the situation is very different. A recent study in Los Angeles (Aron and Phillips, 1990) found that only 35% of the teachers fell into the "career teacher" category; another 36% saw teaching as a way of earning supplementary income; the remaining 25% saw teaching as an avocation. These differences among teachers were related, though not entirely, to the number of hours in which they taught, and to their other occupations, as can be seen in Tables 4A and 4B.

Understanding the diversity among Jewish teachers, with regard to their self-perception as well as their educational background (referring back to Tables 2E and 2F) makes one question whether full professionalization ought to be our ultimate goal. Given that over two-thirds of all Judaica teachers teach in supplementary schools (See Table 4C), and given that supplementary schools may require a different type of teaching than day schools (Aron, 1987 and 1989), it may be necessary to have some supplementary school teachers who do not have the legitimacy and autonomy that one might expect in a day school.

**Table 4A**  
**HOW LOS ANGELES TEACHERS SEE TEACHING, BY NUMBER OF HOURS TAUGHT (% IN EACH CATEGORY)**

	<i>"A Career"</i> (N = 230)	<i>"A Way of Earning Supplementary Income"</i> (N = 203)	<i>"Something I Do for the Satisfaction"</i> (N = 142)	<i>Total</i>
1-3 Hours (N = 141)	8	47	45	100%
4-9 Hours (N = 171)	21	47	32	100%
10-20 Hours (N = 152)	56	34	10	101%
21+ Hours (N = 575)	88	4	8	100%

**Table 4B**  
**HOW LOS ANGELES TEACHERS SEE TEACHING, BY OTHER OCCUPATIONS (% IN EACH CATEGORY)**

	<i>"As a Career"</i> (N = 238)	<i>"As a Way of Earning Supplementary Income"</i> (N = 223)	<i>"Something I Do for the Satisfaction"</i> (N = 156)	<i>Total</i>
Full-time in Jewish education (N = 181)	77	13	10	100%
Homemaker (N = 99)	40	32	27	100%
Full-time student (N = 65)	18	65	17	100%
Other part-time employment (N = 149)	24	44	32	100%
Other full-time employment (N = 123)	8	50	52	100%

(N = 617); Source: Los Angeles: Aron and Phillips, 1990. Totals of 99 or 101% are due to rounding.



Table 4C

**PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS TEACHING IN DAY VS. SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN  
SELECTED CITIES**

	<i>Day School</i>	<i>Supplementary School</i>
Los Angeles	33	67
Miami	37	63
Philadelphia	11	89
Pittsburgh	25	75

*Sources:* Los Angeles: Aron and Phillips, 1990; Miami: Sheskin, 1988; Philadelphia: Federation of Jewish Agencies of Greater Philadelphia, 1989; Pittsburgh: United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, 1986.

I believe that we have a good deal to learn, in this regard, from the reports of the Holmes (1986) and Carnegie (1986) commissions, both of which advocated differentiated staffing, as explained in Section 1.4. A differentiated staffing arrangement in a Jewish school would be more complicated than in a public school, because it would have to accommodate differences in the number of hours teachers teach, and how they perceive their work, as well as different levels of legitimacy and autonomy. A range of different staffing arrangements can be imagined, from a day school staff consisting entirely of full-time aspiring and/or accomplished professionals, to a supplementary school staff with mostly avocational teachers. The following hypothetical models are offered for illustrative purposes:

*Aleph School: A "Professional Development" Day School*

Following the model of the "professional development" school in public education (Darling-Hammond, 1989), the Aleph School aspires to support and nurture beginning teachers, most of whom will go on to other schools after three to five years. All of the schools' 20 Judaica teachers are employed full-time, though none of them teach full-time. Each of the school's 14 classes is co-taught by a Judaica and general studies teacher; the Judaica teachers are all graduates of a local Jewish teacher training institute, and range in experience from 0-5 years. The newest of the teachers teach

only 2/3 time; the remainder of their week is spent developing materials, observing other teachers, and conferring with their mentor-teachers. With each year of experience, the teachers spend more time in the classroom, though even those who have five years of experience spend a few hours a week on the other tasks. The remaining six teachers are an outstanding group of veteran teachers, who serve as mentors for the remaining 14, and for student teachers at the training institution mentioned above. The mentor teachers form the administrative core of the school, working closely with the principal to set policy. Each mentor teacher also spends at least ten hours per week in the classroom, either covering for the other teachers or working on special projects.

### *Bet School: A K-12 Day School*

Bet School is a day school organized on more conventional (and fiscally conservative) lines, with half a day allotted to Judaica, and half to general studies. With 26 classes, the school has 26 half-time Judaica slots. Since the high school program is departmentalized, the school is able to arrange the schedule so that some of the high school Judaica teachers have full-time jobs. Four of the upper division teachers have chosen this full-time option, while two others work 3/4 time. This leaves a total of 15 teachers who teach at the school half-time. In cooperation with the local bureau of Jewish education, the school has sought to create as many full-time, or nearly full-time, "packages" as possible. Three teachers serve as mentors and curriculum developers, under a grant from the Bureau. An additional four teach and/or do programming in the supplementary school of a nearby synagogue; the two schools, with financial assistance from the Bureau, offer these teachers full-time salaries and benefits. Three other teachers have hybrid teaching arrangements; one works as the school librarian; two others work half-time at Jewish Family Service. Of the five remaining teachers, three prefer to work half-time; two would like to be working full-time, and the director is trying to work out some arrangement for them.

The educational background of the teachers varies. About half are graduates of Jewish teacher training programs, in either the U.S. or in Israel. The school encourages all its teachers, and requires those who are not graduates of a training program, to be working towards the fulfillment of a plan for professional development. Each teacher's plan has been worked out individually with one of the school's supervisory personnel, with an eye to those areas in which he or she either needs or desires more knowledge or skill. Teachers meet these requirements by taking courses at the Bureau or at local colleges (their tuition is subsidized by the Bureau), or by pursuing an independent study arrangement with a designated mentor. Each teacher also has a supervisor, who observes and confers with him or her on a regular basis.

### *Gimel School: A Large Congregational Supplementary School*

Gimel School has a student population of 750, and a teaching staff of 20. The school has an integrated Hebrew and Judaica curriculum, which means that each teacher stays with his or her class six hours a week, with the exception of a few high school



teachers, whose classes are of shorter duration. Since the maximum number of hours that a teacher can teach in the supplementary school is 16, no teachers have full-time teaching positions. Five of the teachers fall into the avocational category; they include two housewives, one aspiring actor, and two full-time graduate students, who teach only six hours each. None of these teachers has a degree in Jewish education, though the graduate students have extensive Judaica and camping experience, and the housewives are both former public school teachers. For each of these teachers the principal has created an individualized professional growth plan which focuses on workshops, conferences and independent projects, rather than formal courses.

At the other end of the spectrum are ten teachers who are in the "professional track," and have full-time positions either in the synagogue, or through a hybrid-teaching arrangement: Three are employed by the school as mentors, curriculum writers and program developers; these are the most fully professional, and are enrolled in a part-time graduate program in education at a local college. Four others teach twelve hours each, and are employed elsewhere in the synagogue, as pre-school teachers, a *havurah* coordinator, and an administrative assistant. The last three teach half-time at a local day school; the day and supplementary school, together with the Bureau, pay them a full-time salary plus benefits. The professional development plan for each of these teachers is also individualized, but is more rigorous. It consists of a sequence of courses and requirements the teachers are expected to have taken in the past, or be accumulating, gradually, on a part-time basis.

The remaining five teachers might be considered more than avocational but less than professional. All teach twelve hours, and most would like to enter into some sort of full-time arrangement. This group has the most rigorous professional development schedule, with the promise that when the requirements are completed, every effort will be made to secure them full-time positions. Since their current positions are only part-time, these teachers are paid for time spent in courses and workshops.

#### *Dalet School: A Medium-sized Supplementary School with Avocational Teachers*

The Dalet School is located at a Jewish community center. It was founded fifteen years ago by parents looking to become more involved in their children's Jewish education. At the outset, the school had under 100 students, and all positions, whether teaching, administrative, secretarial, or janitorial, were volunteer. As the school grew, it hired a full-time education director and some mentor teachers, and began paying its other teachers an "honorarium" of \$750 a year, but its participatory philosophy remained the same. Currently, the school has 350 students and a teaching staff of 40. Three of the teachers are highly-paid professionals, whose primary responsibilities are teaching training, mentoring and curriculum development. The remaining 37 teachers are all avocational, and range in age from 17 to 70. Most teach three to six hours a week, but a few teach only two.

All of the avocational teachers were trained in-house, in a program of two years' duration, prior to entering the classroom. This training program is on-going, with a new cycle beginning every two years, and each cohort numbering from two to six teachers-in-training. The low student-teacher ratio gives the school a good deal of flexibility. All classes are co-taught by at least two teachers, and there is a Hebrew language lab which is staffed by at least three teachers at all times. In addition, special projects, requiring special staff members, take place throughout the year.

The typical avocational teacher stays with the school from five to eight years, and the school has worked hard to put together a challenging program of in-service education. The school is particularly proud of three of its former teachers, who have gone on to enroll in full-time graduate programs in Jewish education.

In portraying four hypothetical schools, I have tried to show the different dimensions along which staffing arrangements can vary. The first dimension is setting: day vs. supplementary school is the most important difference; but the size of a school, and its location in or dependence on a larger institution can also be important. A second way in which schools differ is in their ideology: the Dalet School's emphasis on community participation lead to one staffing arrangement; the Gimel School's preference for an integrated Hebrew/Judaica curriculum has staffing limitations as well. The four schools vary in their institutional affiliations, as well: the Aleph School is closely linked to a Jewish teacher training institution; the Bet School has strong links to both the Bureau and another supplementary school; the Gimel School derives some of its flexibility in staffing from its location within a large congregation; the Dalet School is virtually independent of other institutions. Finally, the gap in per pupil expenditure between Aleph and Bet, on the one hand, and Gimel and Dalet, on the other, is quite large.

Despite these differences, the schools share certain commonalities, which distinguish them from the typical Jewish school:

- 1) The educational directors of all four schools see their role as extending beyond administration to include both training and staff development.

- 2) Each school has at least a few teachers who are compensated for tasks other than teaching, such as mentoring, supervision, and curriculum development. This policy allows the most professional teachers in the school an opportunity to expand their horizons and share their expertise with others.

- 3) It is unlikely that any of the schools, with the possible exception of the fourth, can raise sufficient funds to meet its payroll. Most schools with a number of fully professional teachers will require subsidies, possibly from an endowment fund.

- 4) All of the schools (including the fourth, if it requires external funds) have succeeded in upgrading the professional level of their faculties through forging links with other



institutions, including other schools, colleges, bureaus of Jewish education, and local social service agencies. As discussed in Section 2, this type of cooperation cannot be mandated; but it does seem to be a necessary ingredient for the professionalization of teachers.

One can imagine any number of other differentiated staffing configurations, each responding to a different set of circumstances and each reflecting a different ideological perspective. However, it would be difficult for a school or a community to decide on a particular staffing arrangement (or whether, in fact, a differentiated staffing structure would be feasible at all, unless it could see a reasonably accurate projection of the costs involved. Research into the economics of differentiated staffing arrangements needs to be conducted. Concurrently, a series of feasibility studies exploring ways to increase school budgets through endowments, communal allocations, and other means should be embarked upon, to see how highly professional a staff various schools and communities can afford.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

I have tried to delineate (as simply as possible, given the complexity of the issues), what professionalism in teaching, as a concrete reality rather than an honorific slogan, entails. Since the body of research on Jewish teachers is so limited, we have only a rudimentary sense of what level of professionalism the current pool of Jewish teachers has attained. Thus, a number of important questions remain: What percentage of our current pool of teachers can be considered professional, potentially professional, or unlikely to become professional? What would it take, in terms of training, supervision, and support, to move the potential professionals up the ladder? How professional a teaching staff can different Jewish communities afford? How professional a staff do they desire? These questions can only be answered once the research, experimentation and consciousness-raising outlined in the above proposals has begun. As I indicated above, I do not see these proposals as independent of one another; each is a necessary step towards the solution of a complicated, interlocking puzzle.

Writing in 1983 about public school teachers, Donna Kerr observed that it was time for Americans to acknowledge collective responsibility for the quality of teachers.

There is a disturbing duplicity in a society that itself fails to create the conditions that would foster teacher competence, and then complains of incompetent teachers. Our teaching corps can be no more competent than we make it.

[1983b, p. 131]

Today, in 1990, the same can be said for the Jewish community's responsibility to take ownership of the problems of Jewish teachers. Let us hope that the community will rise to accept the challenge.

# **COMMISSION ON JEWISH EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA**

## **Toward the Professionalization of Jewish Teaching**

Isa Aron, Ph.D.

February 1990



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**A Report Submitted to  
The Commission for Jewish Education in North America**

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# The Call for Professionalism in Teaching

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## Introduction

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If one unifying theme could be found for the vast and ever-expanding literature on public school teachers, that theme would be professionalization. Study after study has analyzed the professional shortcomings of teachers, and the societal factors which contribute to their low professional status. Proposals abound for revamping teacher education and, more radically, re-structuring of the profession itself.

In the field of Jewish education as well, discussions of the "Jewish teaching profession" have begun to gather momentum. For example, the proceedings of a national conference on the status of Jewish teachers, held at Brandeis University in 1986, were published under the title *To Build a Profession* (Reimer, 1987). In 1987 a special issue of *Jewish Education* featured a symposium on Jewish teachers. Federations throughout North America have begun to deal with the issue of personnel in Jewish education; a dominant theme in their deliberations has been the need to upgrade the professional status of teachers (Rosenbaum, 1983; CJP of Greater Boston, 1986; Ratner and Reich, 1988).

The notion of the teacher as a well-trained and well-respected professional has long been one of the cherished ideals of all those concerned with Jewish education (Edelstein, 1956; Janowsky, 1967; Dushkin, 1970). The purpose of this paper is to examine this idea more closely: What are the hallmarks of a professional? Are teachers professionals? What are some of the barriers to upgrading the teaching profession in secular education? Is professionalism more difficult to attain in Jewish teaching, and why? Finally, what can be done to increase the professionalism of teachers in Jewish schools?

The structure of the paper centers on three commonly accepted criteria for a profession: legitimacy, autonomy and commitment. Section 1 focuses on two of the criteria, legitimacy and autonomy, and the extent to which teaching as an occupation group meets these criteria. Section 2 concerns the differences between Jewish and secular education, and the implications of these differences for the legitimacy and autonomy of Jewish teachers. Section 3 deals with the third criterion of professionalism, commitment; in it, several dimensions of commitment which are particularly relevant to Jewish teaching are discussed in details. Section 4 returns to the larger question: how professional are Jewish teachers, and how can we increase their professionalism? In this section I argue that policy-makers in Jewish education ought to think in terms of a differentiated staffing structure for Jewish schools.

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## Section 1

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### Legitimacy and Authority as Criteria of Professionalism

Most American educators would agree that teaching is, or at least ought to be, a profession. Few, however, attempt to define this term; those who do find that the concept is, to quote Morris Cogan (1953), "shrouded in confusion." The most common way around a definition is to contrast a profession with other, presumably inferior, endeavors. Thus, "professional" is held to be the opposite of "amateur," one who is either untrained or unsalaried. Alternately, "professional" is taken to be the opposite of "crafts-person," whose practice is not grounded in theory or science (Broudy, 1956). Finally, the term "professional," used as an adjective, sometimes connotes altruism or a higher calling, in contrast to "commercial."

Cogan suggests that the ambiguity and imprecision surrounding the term is not accidental, and may be quite functional, for the title "professional" often serves an exhortative, laudatory function. As he puts it, "One reason for the undifferentiated use of 'profession' may be found in the efforts of many persons and groups to secure to themselves the values clustering around it by simply preempting the title" (p. 47).

Since Cogan's article was written the literature on professionalism has grown exponentially, and the "sociology of the professions" has become a sub-field of its own, creating a "scholarly *tsunami*" (Kimball, 1988). Though different scholars offer different taxonomies and use different terms, there seems to be a general scholarly consensus that professionalism is distinguished by at least three criteria: legitimacy, autonomy, and commitment. Legitimacy refers to the special knowledge and expertise to which professionals lay claim; autonomy refers to the control which professionals exert over the ways in which their services are rendered; commitment refers to the special social and moral responsibilities taken on by professionals.

To be considered a profession members of an occupation group must meet all three of these criteria: 1) they must possess a specialized body of knowledge that distinguishes them from the "non-professionals" in the field; 2) they must, as a group or a guild, have the power to shape the conditions under which their work is done; 3) they must view their work as a calling to serve society or some larger cause.

Some examples may help clarify these criteria. At one extreme, medical doctors are clearly professionals, having specialized academic training, a good deal of control over how medicine is practiced (if not individually, then collectively, through their professional organizations), and an obligation to cure sick people. In contrast, workers on an assembly line may have a certain expertise, but this expertise is not based on a theoretical body of knowledge; they have little control over the circumstances under which they work; nor does their work serve a moral purpose.



In between the two extremes lies a vast array of occupation groups which meet one criterion better than the other, and whose professional status is unclear. Nurses, for example, like doctors, have a commitment to serve, and derive their expertise from medical science. Unlike doctors, however, nurses have very little control over the way hospitals are organized; their lower professional status is indicative of their weaker authority. In contrast, those engaged in business meet the criterion of autonomy very well. In their effort to meet the criterion of legitimacy, leaders of the business community have attempted to link entry into the field to the mastery of the “sciences” of management, marketing, and administration, as taught in university courses and tested by examinations. In their effort to meet the criterion of commitment, these same leaders have sponsored courses and programs in business ethics.

Do teachers meet these criteria well enough to be considered *bona fide* professionals? Most of the recent discussion of professionalism in teaching has centered on the first two criteria, legitimacy and autonomy, which, as we shall see, are closely related. The remainder of this section will deal with the question of how much legitimacy and autonomy teaching as an occupation can claim.

### 1.1 The Legitimacy of Teachers

“Those who can’t do, teach, and those who can’t teach, teach education.” At the root of this old saying lies an assumption, shared by many, that **anyone** can teach. After all, everyone has spent hours and hours in classrooms of all sorts, and been exposed to a variety of models of teaching. If one knows a certain subject, surely one can teach it. And, if anyone can teach, why should teachers be considered professionals?

The widespread perception that good teaching may require some innate talent and, perhaps, some experience, but not any codifiable knowledge, is seen by many as the most serious challenge to the professional standing of teachers (for a review of this literature, see Feiman-Nemser and Floden, 1986, pp. 512- 515). To counter this perception educational researchers and policy-makers have sought to demonstrate that good teachers operate from a firm knowledge base. Lee Shulman, perhaps the foremost proponent of this view summarizes this position in the following way:

The claim that teaching deserves professional status . . . is based on a . . . fundamental premise: that the standards by which the education and performance of teachers must be judged can be raised and more clearly articulated. The advocates of professional reform base their arguments on the belief that there exists a “knowledge base for teaching” – a codified or codifiable aggregation of knowledge, skill, understanding, and technology, of ethics and disposition, of collective responsibility – as well as a means for representing and communicating it. The reports of the Holmes Group and the Carnegie Task Force rest on this belief and, furthermore, claim that the knowledge base is growing. They argue that it should frame teacher education and directly inform teaching practice.

[Shulman 1987, pp. 3-4]

Under a grant from the Carnegie Foundation, Shulman and his colleagues have been working on the creation of a national teachers' exam, akin to the National Board of Medical Examiners. This exam would assess a teachers' knowledge in the following seven categories:

- content knowledge
- general pedagogic knowledge
- curriculum knowledge
- pedagogical content knowledge
- knowledge of learners and their characteristics
- knowledge of educational contexts
- knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values

[*Ibid.*, p. 8]

The view that the teaching profession is firmly grounded in a body of specialized knowledge has a number of profound and far-reaching implications:

1) Teachers ought to receive specialized training, preferably at the graduate level (Sedlak, 1987, pp. 321-323). Just as a hospital would never think of employing a doctor who did not possess an M.D., a school ought not hire teachers who do not have "state of the art" training.

2) The training teachers receive ought to be, to some extent, standardized. Though a certain amount of variation might be tolerable, and even beneficial, the knowledge base of teaching would dictate that certain guidelines be followed. On the basis of this standardization, training programs may be accredited and their graduates credentialed.

3) Teachers ought to be evaluated at periodic intervals, in some standardized way. Not only must a teacher's knowledge be assessed, but also his or her skill in applying that knowledge in specific situations. Procedures for this type of evaluation must be standardized, to reduce, as much as possible, the subjective element which inheres in all evaluation of performance.

4) Different levels of expertise ought to be delineated, and the status and remuneration of teachers ought to be linked to these stages. The relatively flat career pattern of the teaching profession, wherein novices and veterans, the mediocre and the superb, do essentially the same work and are rewarded according to the same scale (Lortie, 1975) has long been a source of concern among the advocates of educational reform (Sykes, 1983b). The availability of reliable evaluative techniques by which school systems could test teachers' proficiency could serve as the basis for career ladders and differentiated staffing.

5) Finally, teachers ought to be required to keep pace with new developments in their field. The knowledge base of teaching has grown and changed in dramatic ways in the past two decades; the rate of new knowledge production can only quicken. Therefore, it would be imperative for veteran teachers to have mastery of this new body of information, skills and techniques as well.

Without denying the importance of research on teacher knowledge, a number of prominent researchers and scholars have cautioned that this type of research, at least in its current state, cannot serve as a basis for legitimizing the teaching profession. They argue that the "scientific basis" of teaching (Gage, 1978) amounts to little more than a number of low-level generalizations which do not add much to our common-sense notions of what makes for good teaching (Jackson, 1987; Zumwalt, 1982). While Shulman, who employs a different research paradigm, hopes to overcome the narrow technological bias of previous researchers, his work is too preliminary to serve as the sole basis for professional legitimation.

Even were the components of "teacher knowledge" more clearly delineated, developed, and corroborated, would good teaching be directly related to knowledge acquisition? Noting the special way in which personality enters into teaching, some researchers caution against an undue emphasis on knowledge alone.

It is difficult . . . to disentangle teacher character from teacher competence. The teacher is deeply engaged in his work as a whole person because an effect is required on the student as a whole person.

[Lightfoot, 1983, p. 250]

Education . . . possesses neither a codified body of technical knowledge nor a clear technology nor a small set of measurable outcomes. Rather, special and ordinary knowledge are freely mixed, teaching styles and the solution of core problems are heavily dependent on personality and consequently are idiosyncratic, and outcomes are multiple, protean, and intangible.

[Sykes, 1983a, p. 581]

## 1.2 The Autonomy of Teachers

The second hallmark of a profession is autonomy, the ability of practitioners to control the circumstances and terms under which their service is rendered. Once again, a comparison with doctors, who have a great deal of autonomy, may be helpful. Individual doctors may establish their own office procedures and fee schedules; collectively, they set policies for hospitals, medical schools, and various public health organizations. Of course, in a complex technological society such as our own, most professions are subject to some regulation; a variety of laws and conventions set the parameters within which medical practitioners must operate. Of late, insurance regulations and legal precedents have set further restraints on medical practice.



One might, at first glance, assume that teachers too have a good deal of autonomy. Teachers teach behind closed doors; within certain limits, they can establish their own set of classroom procedures and rules. Though they may be given a curriculum and/or a textbook, they can decide themselves just how the subject at hand ought to be taught.

A closer look, however, reveals that the situation is more complicated, and that most teachers operate under constraints more onerous than those of other professions: Unlike the clients of the doctor in private practice, students do not come to school voluntarily; conversely, teachers have relatively little choice as to who their students will be. Most other professions seek to regulate themselves through independent associations; in teaching it is the society at large which dictates its expectations, either through elected school boards or parental pressure (Darling-Hammond, 1989, p. 73). At the school level, policies are usually set by the principal or administrators, few of whom act in consultation with teachers (Goodlad, 1984, pp. 188-191).

Over the past two decades the authority of teachers in public schools has eroded further. Federal and state funding of schools has increased, and has brought with it increased demands for regulating teachers and holding them accountable for student achievement.

Policy makers do not trust teachers to make responsible, educationally appropriate judgments. They do not view teachers as uniformly capable, and they are suspicious about the adequacy of preparation and supervision. These doubts are a measure of the weakness of the professional structure in education and its ability to offer alternative means for guaranteeing quality.

[Darling-Hammond, 1988, pp. 63-64]

Many have argued against this type of bureaucratic control of teachers, claiming that while such control can weed out incompetence, it cannot promote excellence (Green, 1983, pp. 322-323). The complexity of American society, the problems of our student population, and the rising expectations of what schools ought to accomplish, it is argued, demand excellence, not merely competence, autonomous professional teachers, not merely programmed technicians (Devaney and Sykes, 1988).

Teacher excellence and teacher autonomy, in this view, go hand in hand. To attract and retain a cadre of truly professional teachers, one must assure that they will have a hand in shaping the environments in which they work.

A second argument for increasing the autonomy of teachers derives from research on teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction, the factors which lead to teacher retention, on the one hand, and burnout, on the other. There is mounting evidence that teachers find intrinsic rewards, such as their ability to reach students, more important than the

extrinsic ones of salary and status (Lortie, 1975; McLaughlin and Yee, 1988; Mitchell, Ortiz and Mitchell, 1987). Among the intrinsic rewards mentioned by teachers as key to their level of satisfaction is what some researchers call *capacity*: “the teachers’ access to resources and the ability to mobilize them, the availability of tools to do their job, and the capability to influence the goals and direction of their institution” (McLaughlin and Yee, 1988, p. 28).

Teachers with a sense of capacity tend to pursue effectiveness in the classroom, express commitment to organization and career, and report a high level of professional satisfaction. Lacking a sense of power, teachers who care often end up acting in ways that are educationally counterproductive by “coping” — lowering their aspirations, disengaging from the setting, and framing their goals only in terms of getting through the day. Teaching is apt to become just a job, not a career.

[*Ibid.*, p. 29]

What can be done to promote teachers’ autonomy? How, despite the inherent constraints in the work situation of teachers, can this aspect of professionalism be enhanced? McLaughlin and Yee (*Ibid.*) found that some schools promote teacher autonomy more than others, and that these schools tend to share five common attributes:

- 1) They have adequate resources, i.e., sufficient number of textbooks and materials, as well as reasonably hospitable facilities.
- 2) They exhibit a “unity of purpose, clear organizational guidelines and goals, and a collective sense of responsibility” (p. 31). The principal is key to establishing this productive and cohesive atmosphere.
- 3) They promote a sense of collegiality among teachers, who are given both opportunity and encouragement to work collaboratively.
- 4) The orientation of the school is problem-solving, rather than problem-hiding.

A problem-solving . . . environment encourages teachers to reflect on their practice, and explore ways to improve it in an ongoing, rather than episodic, basis. It is an environment in which it is safe to be candid and to take the risks inherent in trying out new ideas or unfamiliar practices. . . . Conversely, in problem-hiding environments, teachers hide their problems and then hide the fact that they are hiding their problems. “Everything’s fine” becomes the standard response to administrative or collegial inquiry about classroom activity.

(p. 36)

- 5) The school “rewards teachers for growth, risk taking and change rather than only for successful past practice.”

(p. 37)

These five factors tend to reinforce one another. Thus, a school which is problem-solving is likely to reward teachers for risk taking; likewise, a school with a well-defined sense of purpose tends to promote collegiality. Together, they contribute to the creation of an environment which promotes professionalization.

As studies such as the one by McLaughlin and Yee accumulate, educational reformers have focused more and more on that intangible but altogether critical factor, the "culture" of a school (Sarason, 1971). Why do some schools seem to exude a sense of harmony and collegiability, while others appear to be bogged down in apathy or conflict? Why do some schools foster teacher autonomy while others, with equally competent teachers, render them powerless? Why do some schools easily accommodate themselves to innovation and experimentation, while others appear impervious to change of any sort? After years of trying to account for the differences by enumerating discrete factors which would serve as "independent variables," researchers have begun to take a more holistic, anthropological look at schools (Erickson, 1986). They argue that many elements combine to create that unique configuration of shared beliefs and practices which is a school's culture. This culture serves as a filter for all attempts at innovation (Cooper, 1988).

The challenge facing the advocates of professionalization through greater autonomy is that this cultural "screen" makes it difficult to isolate the ingredients which are key to transforming a hierarchical and bureaucratic staff structure into what Roland Barth calls "a community of leaders" (1988). Throughout the United States, a number of experiments have been undertaken whose purpose is to grant teachers more autonomy, either as individuals, or on a school-wide basis. Concurrently, the experiments are being studied, in an effort to glean some insights into the common characteristics of those programs which are most successful (Lieberman, 1988, chpts. 8-10). As these experiments progress, we will obtain a better picture of both the conditions and benefits of expanded authority for teachers.

### **1.3 The Prospects for Professionalizing Teachers**

If the term "professional" is to function as more than a fancy synonym for "respected," its use must be predicated on two assumptions: First, that the teacher's skill derives from a special branch of knowledge, knowledge which can be codified, transmitted, and used as a yardstick for evaluation. Second, teachers must be granted a certain degree of control over their working environments.

Though these two hallmarks of professionalism—legitimacy and autonomy—have been discussed independently, it is clear that they are closely related. Legitimacy serves as the justification for autonomy: the members of a profession are granted control over their practice on the assumption that they, having sole possession of the special knowledge in their field, would know best how their practice should be con-



ducted. Autonomy, in turn, allows professionals to establish standards of legitimacy. A true profession should be self-regulating, with requirements for membership and methods of evaluation set by the members themselves.

This is, in essence, the bargain that all professionals make with society: for occupations that require discretion and judgment in meeting the unique needs of clients, the profession guarantees the competence of members in exchange for the privilege of professional control and standards of practice.

[Darling-Hammond, 1988, p. 59]

Does teaching meet the two criteria of professionalism? In light of the literature reviewed above, it would be hard to offer an unequivocal answer to this question. Clearly good teachers know something about teaching (over and above their knowledge of the subject matter) that ordinary people usually don't know. But just what it is that teachers know is difficult, at the present time, to articulate. Sykes' assessment of the situation in 1983 still holds true today:

Despite the assertions of some teacher educators, we do not yet possess the knowledge on which to stake a claim to professional status in teaching. . . . The leads research is providing can help strengthen the curriculum for teacher preparation, but cannot fully define it nor significantly reduce the endemic uncertainties of practice nor the reliance on ordinary knowledge and the use of personality as a primary source in teaching.

[Sykes, 1983a, p. 582]

Teachers could probably never be fully autonomous, because their students come involuntarily, and because many of the structural features of the school are mandated from above. On the other hand, teachers might certainly be granted much greater autonomy, either collectively, through the governance of the school, or individually, by the creation of special leadership positions. Any attempt to grant greater autonomy to teachers will face a number of obstacles. Many principals would certainly prefer to maintain a tight control over the school, rather than sharing their power with others; school boards, as well, may be resistant to the notion that teachers be allowed to make policy decisions.

A second barrier to granting any profession autonomy is related to the quality of people the profession attracts. Public school teaching does attract a portion (approximately 7%) of the most able college graduates in the United States. However, the sheer size of the teaching force and the relative ease of entry into the field, make teaching attractive to a very high proportion (38%) of the least able as well (Lanier and Little, 1986, pp. 539-540). In previous decades women often chose teaching because they were barred, or at least discouraged, from entering more lucrative and more highly regarded professions. Today, the situation is quite different.

The women's movement and the drive for equal rights coupled with economic pressures on women to work are changing all this. . . . In the future the best and the brightest women are likely to join their male counterparts in such fields as business, law, medicine, research and government, with teaching a significant loser in the competition for talent.

[Sykes, 1983b, p. 113]

In theory the legitimacy of a profession should have nothing to do with the characteristics of the people it attracts; in practice, however, perceptions of the teaching profession, and the extent to which the public is willing to grant teachers greater autonomy are greatly influenced by the qualities of its members (Kerr, 1983a; Metzger and Fox, 1986).

Those who are concerned with upgrading the teaching profession are caught in a vicious cycle. Low status, low salaries, and a lack of autonomy make the field unattractive to potential candidates; at the same time, the mediocrity of its practitioners make it harder to argue for greater autonomy, higher status, and, perhaps most importantly, considerably higher pay. Some scholars, perceiving these obstacles to be insurmountable, refer to teaching as a quasi-profession (Spencer, 1986, pp. 3-5). Many others have called for the restructuring of the entire field, as a way of achieving the ideal of professionalization, within the confines of economic and social realities.

Three influential groups of stakeholders, the Carnegie Commission on Education, the Holmes Group (a consortium of deans of education from the major research universities), and the American Federation of Teachers, have argued that the notoriously flat career pattern of public school teachers should be replaced by a pyramidal structure which they term "differentiated staffing." At the base of the pyramid would be a large number of entry level teachers, who would make only a short-term (three to five year) commitment to teaching. These individuals would have relatively little training and be granted relatively little autonomy. Many from this group might decide to leave teaching after their initial period of commitment ended. Some, however, might decide to pursue teaching as a profession, and would begin a program of more intensive training. As these individuals became more knowledgeable and more skilled, their authority would increase, along with their salaries. At the top of the pyramid would be a small cadre of those teachers able to pass the rigorous requirements for becoming mentor teachers, curriculum specialists, and other positions of increased responsibility (Sedlak, 1987). Though the concept of differentiated staffing has been criticized by some as either misguided or unrealistic (see essays in response to Sedlak, 1987), some school districts have embraced this notion of reconfiguration as one of the only ways out of the current conundrum (Urbanski, 1988). I believe that the concept of differentiated staffing holds great promise for Jewish schools as well, as we shall see in Section 4. First, however, I will deal with the issue of the difference between Jewish and secular schools, and the extent to which legitimacy and autonomy are characteristic of Jewish teaching.

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## Section 2

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### Legitimacy and Autonomy in Jewish Teaching

Writing about the problems of Jewish teachers (or, more precisely, teachers of Judaica in Jewish schools), many have followed the lead of scholars in secular education, advocating a variety of mechanisms aimed at establishing teacher legitimacy, and, to a lesser extent, granting teachers greater autonomy (Schiff, 1987 and 1989; Woocher, 1987; Ratner and Reich, 1988). Several central agencies of Jewish education have instituted some of these mechanisms, such as career ladders and new training opportunities, and have been encouraged by the outcome (JESNA, 1984).

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that all the innovations of public education can or should be transferred, in wholesale fashion, to Jewish education. Although Jewish schools resemble their public counterparts in some respects, there are a number of important differences between the two sectors. In this section I will discuss the differences that are most relevant to the issue of legitimacy and autonomy in teaching.

Many structural similarities exist between Jewish and public schools. Their physical plants tend to resemble each other rather closely, as do their organizational patterns. (Most) Jewish schools have followed (most) public schools in having age-graded classes, taught by individual teachers. Teachers are supervised by a principal, and may be assisted by a number of specialists, such as a librarian, music teacher, school psychologist, etc. If one were to look inside both types of classrooms at the materials, modalities and techniques teachers employ, one would find many additional resemblances. Nonetheless, Jewish and secular education are different in significant ways:

#### 2.1 Voluntarism

Jewish schooling in the United States is an entirely voluntary, privately funded enterprise. With the exception of secular subjects in day schools, Jewish schools are not subject to governmental regulation with respect to their educational program. Despite the existence of various associations (e.g., Solomon Shechter and Torah U'Mesorah), individual Jewish schools operate independently of one another.

Jewish schools are typically governed by a group of individuals who serve as the school or synagogue board. The degree to which these individuals represent the school's multiple constituencies varies. While members of these governing bodies may be

elected to their position, these elections are mostly *pro forma*; inclusion in school governance tends to be based on the members' interest, expertise, personal connections, and status in the community.

Within the rather loose governance structure of most Jewish schools principals have a good deal of autonomy, and work under far fewer restrictions and regulations than their counterparts in public education. They could, theoretically, grant comparable autonomy to their teachers, and to some extent they do. A recent study of Judaica teachers in Los Angeles (Aron and Phillips, 1990) found that most teachers have a good deal of latitude in setting the curriculum (Table 2A), though little or no role in establishing school policy (Table 2B).

## **2.2 Unclear Lines of Communal Authority and Responsibility**

Given the voluntaristic nature of Jewish education, it is not surprising that Jewish education in the United States is a "system" in only a loose and ephemeral sense. Change in public education can be mandated by the local school board or a state legislature, which is legally responsible for the school system. In contrast, Jewish schools are not subject to any authority higher than that of their sponsoring synagogue or governing body. Those who seek change in Jewish education have no recourse to coercive measures; they must rely on either persuasion or financial incentives. Given that the American Jewish community is smaller, more homogeneous, and (at least among active members) more interdependent than the nation as a whole, persuasion and financial incentives have a much better chance of success than they might have in the public arena. Nonetheless, even if the aims of reform were similar, the process by which these aims could be achieved would be very different in Jewish, rather than public, education.

If, for example, a central agency for Jewish education were to attempt to establish a career ladder for teachers, it would not only have to provide the money for higher salaries; it would have to persuade individual schools that increased responsibility for one or more of their teachers would be a good idea; it would have to develop guidelines for the selection and evaluation of those on the higher rungs; and it would have to continually urge schools to adhere to these guidelines.

The absence of systemic responsibility and accountability has important implications for teacher standards and salaries. Both the National Board of License and a number of local Bureaus offer credentials to teachers; some central agencies publish salary scales, which link credentialing to earning power. While little systematic data has been collected on the effects of credentialing, interviews with knowledgeable BJE personnel directors reveal a number of problems: First, only a small percentage of teachers in Jewish schools meet the standards of the National Board of License. The standards



**Table 2A****LEVEL OF CURRICULAR GUIDANCE GIVEN TO LOS ANGELES TEACHERS, % IN EACH CATEGORY, BY TYPE OF SCHOOL**

	<i>Day School (N = 230)</i>	<i>Supplementary School (N = 461)</i>
Given Curriculum w/Lesson Plans	6	15
Given Curriculum w/out Lesson Plans	43	39
Given Textbook Only	15	19
Guidance from Principal Only	15	19
Given None of the Above	16	10
Didn't Answer Question	8	5
Total	101%	101%

**Table 2B****LEVEL OF INPUT INTO SCHOOL POLICY OF LOS ANGELES TEACHERS, % IN EACH SCHOOL, BY TYPE OF SCHOOL**

	<i>Day School (N = 230)</i>	<i>Supplementary School (N = 461)</i>
"A lot of input"	14	12
"Some input"	42	38
"Little or no input"	39	48
Didn't answer question	4	2
Total	99%	100%

Source: Aron & Phillips, 1990  
 By Teacher Slot (N = 691)  
 Totals of 99 or 101% are due to rounding.

of local BJE's are considerably lower; in some cases, the lowest rungs of these credentialing systems require little training in either Judaica or education. Second, it is not at all clear to what extent salary scales are followed by schools. Los Angeles, which links adherence to the salary scale to the receipt of funds from the BJE, is probably in the best position to enforce the scale. Even in Los Angeles, however, one hears a good deal of talk among principals about ways they have found to pay their teachers either more or less than the scale would require.

### **2.3 The Part-Time Nature of Jewish Teaching**

The teaching of Judaica is, even in a day school, often a part-time occupation. In Los Angeles, the average number of hours available in each day school teaching slot is 20.5 hours per week (Aron and Phillips, 1990); in Miami it is 22.3 hours per week (Sheskin, 1988). Only 58% of the day school teachers in Los Angeles teach over 16 hours/week; in Miami, only 43% teach more than 20 hours.

Teachers in supplementary schools teach far fewer hours per school, an average of 5.2 hours in Los Angeles, and 4.8 hours in Miami. Tables 2C and 2D give the breakdown, by setting, of the hours teachers teach in Los Angeles, Miami and Pittsburgh.

If the teaching of Judaica in a Jewish school is, for so many, a part-time occupation, can it still be considered a profession? In theory the number of hours a professional works should make no difference, if s/he has legitimacy and is granted autonomy. In practice, however, the part-time nature of Jewish teaching sets off a kind of chain reaction, influencing recruitment, training and retention, and undercutting professionalism at every turn: A part-time teacher can only earn a part-time salary; low salaries in a field translate, in most people's minds, to low status. How many talented young people can afford (either financially or in terms of their self-image) to view part-time work as an ultimate career choice? How many, given a projection of their future earning potential, would be willing to undergo rigorous training? Once in the job, how many can afford to stay for the long term? Several decades ago, part-time teaching in a Jewish school was seen by some women as a promising avenue for professional development, which fit well with their desire to be primary care-givers to their children. They were willing to enroll in a teacher training program of several years duration, despite the fact (actually, because of the fact) that most teaching positions were part-time. Today, the opening of a much broader spectrum of career opportunities for women, and the economic pressures on middle class families make part-time teaching much less desirable.

**Table 2C**

**HOURS TAUGHT (% IN EACH CATEGORY), IN SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL**

	<i>Los Angeles</i>	<i>Miami</i>	<i>Pittsburgh</i>
1-4	38.8	56.3	67
5-9	30.6	32.3	23
10-14	20.2	3.6	8
15-19	3.3	—	—
20-24	2.7	1.8	2
25-29	1.1	—	—
30-34	.9	.6	—
35-39	1.3	—	—
40 +	1.1	5.4	—
Total	100%	100%	100%

**Table 2D**

**HOURS TAUGHT (% IN EACH CATEGORY), IN DAY SCHOOL**

	<i>Los Angeles</i>	<i>Miami</i>	<i>Pittsburgh</i>
1-4	2.7	1	3
5-9	6.6	6.5	23
10-14	11.5	6.5	5
15-19	17.3	10.9	—
20-24	16.8	16.3	52
25-29	7.5	5.4	—
30-34	15.0	7.5	42
35-39	13.3	15.2	—
40 +	9.3	30.4	7
Total	100%	100%	100%

*Sources:* Los Angeles: Aron and Phillips, 1990; Miami: Sheskin, 1988; Pittsburgh: United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, 1986

Viewed in this light, the chronic shortage of teachers of Judaica in the United States, a shortage which has persisted for over half-a-century (Shevitz, 1988; Aron and Bank, 1987), is perfectly understandable. Unfortunately, the persistence of a teacher shortage serves as another barrier to professionalism: if people who are only minimally qualified can find jobs so easily, why bother to enroll in a teacher training program?

Any effort to improve the professional standing of Jewish teachers must begin with the problem of the overwhelming part-time nature of the task as it is currently configured. One promising solution is the creation, by an external agency such as a Bureau or Federation, of a number of full-time slots for "community teachers." This model has been used successfully in Omaha for nearly a decade (Rosenbaum, 1983), and is currently being attempted in Cleveland, Des Moines and Boston. To create the position of community teacher, the central agency acts as a broker between a number of schools, typically a day school and one or two supplementary schools. The result is a full-time position which includes some combination of teaching, lesson planning, mentoring and curriculum development. The income which the teacher would earn from each of the individual schools is supplemented by the agency, so that an attractive salary and benefits package can be offered. In Omaha the position of community teacher carries with it a number of other "perks," such as free membership in the Jewish Community Center. The creation of these full-time positions has enabled the Jewish community of Omaha to attract outstanding teachers from around the country; the arrival of each new teacher is greeted by the community with considerable fanfare, comparable to the arrival of other new Jewish professionals.

The community teacher concept is so simple and appealing that one wonders why it hasn't been implemented in many more Jewish communities. Interviews with a number of people who have been involved in the implementation of this model (including several key figures in one community which failed to come to agreement on the terms for a community teacher) provide an answer to this question. Because individual Jewish schools have so much autonomy, and because larger communal structures have so little authority over them, some schools are resistant to "sharing" a teacher with other schools, and unwilling to compromise when scheduling conflicts arise. The success or failure of the model seems to depend upon the negotiating skills of the person responsible for its implementation and the personalities of the participating education directors. Nonetheless, the prospects for the creation of a growing number of community teacher positions throughout the country seems promising.

Another idea which is closely related to that of the community teacher is that of the hybrid teaching position, in which part-time work as a Jewish teacher is combined with part-time work as a social worker, librarian, communal worker, etc. This idea has been tried, with great success in public schools in Arizona, where science teachers are given summer jobs in various industries as a way of supplementing their income (Babbitt, 1986). Though this solution would require the teacher to develop expertise in a related field, it is certainly an avenue worthy of exploration.



Would it be possible to radically re-configure Jewish education in the United States, so that all teaching positions would carry with them full-time salaries and benefits? At the present moment we do not have sufficient information to answer this critically important question. Research on the economics of Jewish education, and some modeling of coordinated staffing arrangements for communities of various sizes would be required before an informed deliberation on this issue could take place.

## **2.4 Establishing the Professional Legitimacy of Jewish Teaching**

As mentioned at the end of Section 1, one of the unresolved questions in secular education is the extent to which skill in teaching is derived from a special theoretical domain, and the extent to which mastery of this domain is what distinguishes good teachers from bad ones. As complicated as this issue is in secular education, it is more so in Jewish education. With the exception of two doctoral dissertations currently in process (Chervin, n.d.; Schoenberg, 1987), no research has been conducted in the areas of Jewish pedagogic content knowledge. Moreover, there is every reason to expect that the assessment of a teacher's Jewish pedagogic content knowledge would be considerably more difficult than the assessment of secular pedagogic content knowledge, since Judaic subject matters are replete with questions of values, ideology and faith. It would be inconceivable, for example, that a good Bible teacher would not have grappled with a myriad of issues concerning the origins and veracity of the text, and how bound by its commandments s/he should feel. Whereas a good mathematics teacher would probably have to have faith that mathematics is a necessary intellectual tool, this type of faith pales in comparison to that required of a teacher of Bible or liturgy. Steven Chervin, one of the first to undertake research in this area, notes:

When multiple levels of understanding are intrinsic to the subject matter, as in the case of Torah, the teacher's active process of comprehension becomes an even more salient feature of teaching.

[Chervin, n.d., p. 8]

However, Chervin continues, "teacher knowledge research has only begun to explore teacher beliefs."

As noted in Section 1, reformers who hope to establish the professional legitimacy of teachers in secular education look to research on teacher knowledge as a means of assessing this legitimacy. Shulman and his colleagues, whose research has been generously funded by the Carnegie Corporation and others, see the development of a National Teacher Exam in the not-too-distant future. In light of both the complexity of the issues and the paucity of research in this area, the prospects for a Jewish Teacher Exam seem considerably more prolonged. Certainly some items on the secular examination, i.e., those dealing with pedagogical issues in the abstract, might be incorporated into a comparable Jewish exam. But, to the extent that the most sophisticated assessments of a teacher's skills concern pedagogy applied to subject matter (a claim

made by Shulman and his colleagues), a good deal of work remains before a Jewish Teacher Exam can be created.

Without a method for assessing teacher knowledge, the legitimacy of teachers will have to rest on purely formalistic criteria, such as a degree from an accredited program of teacher education or the number of college or graduate courses taken in both pedagogy and Judaica. Results of teacher surveys vary widely in this regard (see Tables 2E and 2F). Research currently being conducted by Aryeh Davidson indicates that relatively few students are enrolled in teacher-training programs for Jewish teachers, and that some of the graduates of these programs bypass teaching in favor of more lucrative administrative jobs (Davidson, 1990).

Most schools and central agencies sponsor various forms of in-service training. Too often, however, these training opportunities are in the form of one-shot, non-accumulating workshops (Flexner, 1989). One recent innovation in secular education may be particularly relevant in this regard—the growth, in a number of states, of programs providing alternative paths to certification, through summer programs or a carefully monitored in-service sequence of courses (Cooperman and Klagholtz, 1985). This would be an important model to explore.

**Table 2E**

**PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGE LEVEL JUDAICA COURSES TAKEN BY TEACHERS IN THREE CITIES**

	<i>None</i>	<i>1-3</i>	<i>3-7</i>	<i>7+</i>	<i>Total</i>
Los Angeles Day School	26	8	11	55	100%
Los Angeles Supplementary School	30	20	14	36	100%
	<i>None</i>	<i>1-4</i>	<i>5-9</i>	<i>Major or Degree From Jewish College</i>	<i>Total</i>
Miami Day School	11	16	4	69	100%
Miami Supplementary School	45	17	11	27	100%

	<i>Holds Jewish Educational License</i>	<i>Holds Degree in Jewish Studies</i>
Philadelphia Day School	57%	73%
Philadelphia Supplementary School	33%	34%

*Sources:* Los Angeles: Aron and Phillips, 1990; Miami: Sheskin, 1988; Philadelphia: Federation of Jewish Agencies of Greater Philadelphia, 1989.

Table 2F

NUMBER OF COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSES (% IN EACH CATEGORY) IN HEBREW AND  
EDUCATION TAKEN BY LOS ANGELES TEACHERS

	<i>Hebrew</i>	<i>Education</i>
0	43	29
1-3	17	14
3-7	14	11
Over 7	26	47
Total	<u>100%</u>	<u>101%</u>

N = 649

Totals of 99% or 101% are due to rounding.

Source: Aron and Phillips, 1990.



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### Section 3

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#### Commitment as a Criterion of Professionalism

The term “professional” derives from the verb “profess,” which, originally, meant the espousal or confession of a religious belief or conviction. Though the context for most “callings” has changed from religious to secular, the essence of this original meaning resides in the third criterion of professionalism—commitment. Beyond expertise and authority, what we expect from a professional is devotion, altruism, and service.

In medieval and early modern times, the professional dealt in a kind of knowledge and dedication that were not for sale at any price. The three vows of the religious order—poverty, obedience and chastity—were the extreme embodiment of the ideal, but physician, lawyer, soldier or statesman were supposed to live according to the same essential code. To be professional meant: 1) readiness to live in poverty, 2) obedience to the life and goodwill of the community, and 3) availability for what has to be done, when it has to be done.

[Moran, 1988, p. 202]

My own reading of the literature on professionalism leads me to the conclusion that the importance attributed to this third criterion has receded over time. Whereas in 1915 Abraham Flexner (author of the report that revolutionized medical education) spoke of “unselfish devotion” as criterion which overrode all others (cited in Becker, 1962), more recent essays on the subject have either reduced this “service orientation” to one criterion among several (Moore, 1970) or left it out entirely (Kimball, 1988).

In teaching, as well, the issue of commitment has received much less attention than those of legitimacy and autonomy. In seeking parity with other professions, educational researchers and reformers have focused on the areas in which teaching seems at a disadvantage, namely legitimacy and autonomy. The result has been an overemphasis of the intellectual and an underemphasis of the moral and social dimensions of teaching (Jackson, 1986; Sykes, 1989). It is as though some scholars have forgotten, at least temporarily, that good teachers “are shapers not only of their students’ knowledge, but also of their students’ lives” (Martin, 1987, p. 408).

Dwayne Huebner (1988) uses the term “vocation” as an overarching metaphor for this aspect of teaching.

The Latin root of *vocation* refers to a call or summons. . . . To have the vocation of teacher is to permit oneself to be called by children and young people. . . . [It] is to participate intentionally in the unfolding, or perhaps collapse, of this social world.

[pp. 17-21]

Different teachers are “called” to teaching for different reasons. For some, it is a desire to work with children, to nurture and care for developing minds and hearts. For others, the continuation of a community or a tradition is the ultimate goal; they teach in order to bring a new generation “into the fold.” In religious education, one finds a third group of teachers, “called” to teach in the sense implied by the original meaning of the term profession — by strong religious feelings.

Each of these motivations suggests a different characteristic of the ideal teacher: First, the teacher should be a caring person. Second, the teacher should be an integral member of the community into which the student is being brought. Third, the teacher should be a spiritual role model.

### 3.1 The Teacher as a Caring Person

Given that the extrinsic rewards of teaching are rather limited, it is not surprising to find that most teachers focus on its intrinsic rewards instead. High on the list of intrinsic rewards is the teacher’s perception of having “reached” students, of having made a difference in their lives (Feinman- Nemser and Floden, 1986, p. 510). The following excerpt from the letter of an experienced teacher to her former student exemplifies this feeling:

Ultimately, teaching is nurturing. The teacher enters a giving relationship with strangers, and then the teacher’s needs must give way to the students’ needs. . . . My days are spent encouraging young people’s growth.

[Metzger and Fox, 1986, p. 352]

Some teachers are outstanding in their ability to care about students in a special way, to relate to their students as people, not just as learners. In her book, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, Nel Noddings describes this quality:

When a teacher asks a question in class and a student responds, she receives not just the “response” but the student. What he says matters, whether it is right or wrong, and she probes gently for clarification, interpretation, contribution. She is not seeking the answer but the involvement of the cared-for. For the brief interval of dialogue that grows around the question, the cared-for indeed “fills the firmament.” The student is infinitely more important than the subject matter.

[Noddings, 1984, p. 176]

The phrase “fills the firmament” is borrowed from Martin Buber, and echoes Buber’s concern with relationships in which there is genuine encounter and dialogue, relationships in which people meet one another as “Thou”s, rather than “It”s.

Noddings argues that the over-riding and over-arching purpose of all schools ought to be the developing in young people of the ability to care for each other, and for the world around them. "Teaching is a constitutively ethical activity. It is a 'moral type of friendship' in which teachers and students work together to achieve common ends (Noddings, 1986, p. 505." This is not to say that the learning of subject matter is not important but that subject matter must be taught in such a way that enhances, rather than diminishes, care.

Is it possible for a teacher to care for an entire class of students? How can a teacher meet all these students as "Thou"s, rather than "It"s? Noddings' reply is that it is, of course, impossible to care for every student every minute, but that this type of caring is neither necessary nor appropriate. A large part of the student's day is rightfully taken up by his or her interaction with materials or with other students. When the student does interact with the teacher, however, that encounter must be characterized by caring:

[The teacher must] be totally and nonselectively present to the student—to each student—as he addresses me. The time interval may be brief but the encounter is total.

[Noddings, 1984, p. 180]

If we value caring as a quality, and if it is important to us that teachers be caring individuals, at least three things must happen. First, we must begin talking about caring a great deal more than we have. We must state quite explicitly that caring for children is one of the most important qualifications for a teacher to have. We must validate the superior social commitment of teachers in general, as well as individual instances of caring in teaching. Second, we must take a close look at how schools are structured, and the ways in which these structures promote or inhibit caring (Aron, 1982). Is there time in the schedule for teachers to interact with students more informally? Is it feasible for a teacher to stay with a group of students for more than one year? Third, and most important, we must care for and about teachers. School boards, principals, parents and members of the community at large must extend themselves to teachers, to encounter them in the way we would like them to encounter students.

### **3.2 The Teacher as an Integral Member of a Community**

The ideal environment for the education of children would be a homogeneous and well-integrated society, a society in which family, school, and a web of civic and religious organizations were interwoven, each reinforcing the values and norms of the other. Historians and anthropologists have spent a great deal of time debating whether or not such harmonious societies have ever existed, in another time or place. Clearly, however, few communities of this sort have survived industrialization, modernization, and the other forces that have shaped contemporary American life.

In our own time, the institutions most naturally suited to education are embattled. Social mobility has all but eliminated the extended family. The high rate of divorce, along with the entry of an unprecedented number of women into the workforce, have sapped the strength of the nuclear family. Social and religious organizations of all kinds face stiff competition from both work and leisure-time activities. With the advent of mass media and mass marketing, America as a whole has become more homogeneous than ever before; but this surface homogeneity has come at the expense of the integrity and vitality of local communities.

Against this background, many of the innovations in public schools over the past three or four decades can be seen as attempts to have the school assume functions which were traditionally fulfilled by the family, church, or other local organizations. Head Start, drivers' education, moral education and sex education are but some of the programs introduced into schools in an effort to compensate for the waning influence of other institutions.

Thus, the school, whose original mandate was limited to formal instruction, has increasingly been asked to take on a larger, less formal, and more elusive educational function, which might be called enculturation (Westerhoff, 1976). However, the typical school, which is organized according to age-graded and self-contained classrooms and adheres to a subject-oriented curriculum, may not be the appropriate vehicle for teaching students values and attitudes in more than a superficial way (Aron, 1987, 1989). With the exception of a small number of exemplary programs, schools have not been particularly successful at enculturating students (Debenham and Parsons, 1978).

The expectation that the school will somehow cure societal ills has filtered into the Jewish community as well, where education is seen as "the key to Jewish survival." Indeed, the need to have Jewish schools perform functions which relate more closely to enculturation than to instruction is even more urgent in the Jewish community. From the outset, Jews in America were deeply ambivalent about the extent to which they wished to identify as Jews, and practice the rituals and traditions of "the old country" (Liebman, 1973). The immigrant generation had the luxury of choosing if and when to activate rituals and customs which lay dormant within them. Succeeding generations, not having been steeped in these traditions from childhood, have had fewer resources to draw upon. To make matters worse, social mobility has largely eliminated the ancillary agents of Jewish enculturation, the extended family and the Jewish neighborhood.

The children currently enrolled in Jewish schools, who are predominantly fourth and fifth generation Americans, receive little Jewish enculturation at home. In a recent study of supplementary school students conducted by the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York (1988) only 18% of the respondents indicated that either they or their parents attend synagogue services regularly on Shabbat and holidays. Sixteen percent of the students light Shabbat candles "every Friday evening," an additional 45% doing so "occasionally" (p. 93). While one might expect students enrolled in day schools to come from homes with a richer Jewish environment, the impressionistic

data collected by many educators suggests that this is not always the case, especially in non-Orthodox day schools (Cohen, 1982, p. 24).

If Jewish education has any chance for success, we must consider very seriously the differences between instruction and enculturation. We must acknowledge that instruction in a subject matter (be it mathematics and literature or Hebrew and Bible) is predicated on some prior enculturation, which provides both the motivation for learning, and opportunities for its consolidation. Students in public schools, for example, have daily opportunities to see adults reading, adding and subtracting; in addition, even the youngest have some conception that success in school is connected to success in adult life. In contrast, Jewish students rarely see adults praying, speaking Hebrew, or reading the Bible; nor is competence in these areas linked to future success in the secular world.

If Jewish education is to be taken seriously, if the survival for which it is the supposed key is to be cultural and spiritual, rather than merely demographic, Jewish schools must be re-structured and reconfigured to become agents of enculturation. They must become places which model for young people what it means to be Jewish. In short, they must become communities.

What would it take to turn the Jewish school into a community, to change its orientation from instruction to enculturation? Elsewhere I have outlined five steps which such a transformation would require (Aron, 1987, 1989), including the involvement of parents at all levels of the school's operation and the inclusion of many more opportunities for informal learning. Of these five, the most important to us in this context is that a school which wants to be the core of a community must have teachers who are deeply involved in that community.

### **3.3 The Teacher as a Religious Role Model**

It would be difficult to find anyone who would argue that teachers in Jewish schools ought not to be religious role models. But what do we mean by religious? And what is a role model? These are questions which must be answered before we can discuss how important it is that our teachers have this quality, and how this quality can best be supported in the school.

Contemporary writers on religion have pointed out that the phenomena which most people call "religious" are so varied as to elude straightforward, stipulative definition (see Rosenak, 1987, chapter 5). They offer, in place of a definition, a view of religion as the confluence of a number of "religion-making characteristics"; any particular religion would have some, but not necessary all, of these characteristics. Clive Beck offers this type of definition, but focuses on the religious person, rather than the religious tradition. A religious person, according to Beck, is one who "typically":



- a) has a system of supernatural beliefs
- b) engages in rituals and other practices related to those beliefs
- c) is associated with a tradition of such belief and practice
- d) participates in a community committed to this tradition
- e) derives from the tradition a world view, and
- f) a relatively complete way of life.

[Beck, 1986]

The virtue of this definition is that it accommodates the variety of ways in which people can be said to be religious. One person, for example, may not believe in God, but may still practice the rituals associated with a certain religious tradition. A second person might believe in God, but might practice the rituals of several religious traditions, and might not participate in any community committed to any of these traditions; by Beck's definition both of these individuals would be considered religious. Of course, not all of these ways of being religious will be acceptable to all Jews, a point to which I will return, after a discussion of religious role models.

"Role model" is a sociological term, which has rapidly become part of everyday vocabulary, because it points to a factor in contemporary life which had no parallel in more traditional societies. In the hypothetical homogeneous society alluded to in the previous section, children would form their notions of what makes a successful adult from observing their relatives and neighbors. In such a society the number of potential "roles" to which one could aspire would be quite limited; the roles assumed by one generation would probably be attractive to the next. Changes in contemporary society, however, have eroded the viability of certain traditional roles, such as housewife and shopkeeper, and contributed to the creation of new roles, such as working mother and manager. A young person growing up today faces a confusing array of possible futures—some traditional, some current, some which are as yet unknown. In this context, the child's potential role models go far beyond family and neighbors to include authorities and public figures of all sorts.

In contemporary Jewish life, the role of the teacher is critical, because teachers, along with rabbis, youth group leaders and camp counselors, are often the only Jewish role models available. Demographers have found that a large majority of American Jews engage in relatively few specifically Jewish activities. While roughly 75% of American Jews celebrate Hanukkah, Passover, and the High Holidays in some fashion (Cohen, 1985), and while as many as 85% affiliate with some Jewish organization at some point in their lives (Feldstein and Shrager, 1987, p. 98), a much smaller percentage live a life that might be considered religious, by any of Beck's criteria (Cohen, 1988).

If Jewish education for the children of the marginally affiliated is to be anything other than an exercise in futility and hypocrisy, Jewish teachers must serve as models for how one can lead an involved and attractive Jewish life.

In the words of Jonathan Omer-Man,

A religious person today is a person who has made certain choices; and a teacher of religion is a person who has made certain choices and whose task is to educate young people who face an even wider range of choices. . . . [T]he student has to be taught to make certain profound existential choices as an individual, and to live with these decisions in circumstances that are not always easy. In order to do this, the teacher has to present himself as a role model, as a person who has made such choices, and with whom the student can identify.

[Omer-Man, 1982, p. 22]

It is important to note that not all of the role models for living a full and committed Jewish life need be religious. Some may be more oriented towards the cultural, ethnic, or secular Zionist aspects of Jewish life. However, since most Jewish schools are synagogue-based, and even those that are independent include religious subjects in their curriculum, one would expect a large number of teachers to serve as religious role models.

What kind of religious role models do we expect Jewish teachers to be? Do we expect them to believe in God? To observe a minimum set of rituals? To have a particular worldview? These questions cannot be answered without reference to the particular school. Some schools, especially those affiliated with the Orthodox movement, may expect their teachers to adhere closely to a set of beliefs and a code of practices. Others of a more liberal persuasion may allow, and even value, a plurality of belief and practice, hoping to model for their students a variety of ways of being a committed religious Jew. All schools ought to at least consider these questions seriously, and attempt to articulate the types of religious commitment they will expect from their teachers. And all ought to think seriously about the way in which the structure and policies of the school promote or inhibit the teacher's religiosity.

### 3.4 Balancing Commitment with Legitimacy and Autonomy

Truly exemplary teachers, the teachers imprinted in our memories or featured in movies, exude a sense of professionalism which meets all three criteria—legitimacy, autonomy, and commitment. Like Jaime Escalante, the hero of the movie *Stand and Deliver*, they defy convention (and the expectations of their supervisors), using their evenings and vacations to demonstrate that, with the proper techniques, even disadvantaged students can excel in calculus. Like Eliot Wigginton, the originator of the Foxfire Project, their involvement with students and commitment to new methods knows no bounds (Wigginton, 1985). Like my children's Hebrew teacher, Amy Wallk, they are relentless in their search for the best textbook, the most involving game, the perfect class outing, and the cutest Hanukkah presents.

How reasonable is it to expect all teachers to be professional in this very full sense? Or, to ask the question differently, what factors prevent us from obtaining a teaching force which meets all three criteria? In Section 1, I considered some of the problems with establishing legitimacy and encouraging autonomy, including that of the vicious cycle, in which low salaries and the lack of professionalism among the current pool of teachers make the field as a whole undesirable to talented potential recruits. The criterion of commitment, discussed in this section, raises an additional issue: the possibility that the push for legitimacy and autonomy may actually undermine commitment.

Embedded in the criteria of legitimacy and autonomy are a set of values which are intellectual and individualistic; commitment, on the other hand, is based on a configuration of values centered on empathy and community. As the examples of the three outstanding teachers indicates, the ideal professional strikes a balance between these two sets of values. It is easy to see, however, that an over-emphasis on one set of values might lead to the neglect of the other. The profession of medicine, for example, has been accused of promoting autonomy at the expense of the social good, and scientific rigor at the expense of compassion.

At the beginning of this section, I cited a passage from Gabriel Moran (1989, p. 202) which enumerated three principles embedded in the original meaning of the term "professional": 1) taking on a life of poverty; 2) maintaining obedience to the community; and 3) being available at any time and at any place. Over time, Moran argues, the notion of the professional as one who has access to special knowledge grew in importance, to the point that it overshadowed, and even undermined, these principles.

To be a professional now came to mean: 1) the possibility of earning big money, 2) independence from any and every community, and 3) control of time, place and conditions for the exercise of one's highly specialized knowledge.

[p. 203]

It is time, writes Moran, to bring the pendulum back to center, to find a balance between legitimacy and autonomy, on the one hand, and commitment, on the other.

Thus, one can imagine a professional ideal in which: 1) The individual is able to support a family, but has chosen work worth doing over the biggest paycheck possible. 2) The individual is capable of acting like an entrepreneur but chooses to work in a community or team of peers. 3) The individual's technical skills are highly trained, but are set within an attitude of reverence for living things and a recognition of human finitude.

[p. 204]

This is the professional idea towards which we ought to aspire. The extent to which such a balance can be achieved in the field of Jewish teaching will be the topic of the fourth, and final section of this paper.

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## Section 4

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### **The Prospects for Professionalizing Jewish Teachers**

Let us imagine that our goal is the professionalization of the entire Jewish teaching force. Is this goal attainable? If so, at what cost? If not, what goals are more realistic? And what steps ought the Jewish community to be taking to encourage this professionalization?

Three sets of obstacles stand in the way of professionalizing the entire force of Jewish teachers: The first set concerns the inherent limitations of teaching with regard to the criteria of professionalism discussed in this paper. The second set of obstacles derives from certain sociological realities; it includes all those factors which make teaching in general undesirable to potential recruits. The third set of obstacles is specific to Jewish education, encompassing the conditions that make the professionalization of Jewish teaching particularly difficult.

In this section I explore each set of obstacles in turn, summarizing the conclusions of the previous chapters, and adding new information, where relevant. In each case the discussion focuses on what it will take to overcome the obstacles in question. Because the obstacles are inter-related, the suggestions for research and experimentation offered in this section should be considered in concert. Any one, standing alone, can have only limited impact; taken together, they constitute a coordinated plan for upgrading the profession of Jewish teaching.

#### **4.1 Translating the Criteria of Legitimacy and Autonomy into Practical Standards for the Teaching Profession**

The discussion of legitimacy and autonomy in Section 1 revealed some of the problems which arise when these criteria are used as standards for improving teaching. To begin with, research on teacher knowledge in the secular field is fraught with controversies over methodology (Gage, 1989). Whether or not this research will yield reliable applications to both training and evaluation is still an open question. Moreover, only some of the research findings, those which deal with generic teaching skills in secular education, are directly transferable to Jewish education; identifying pedagogic content knowledge in subjects such as Hebrew, Bible, and Jewish history will require a good deal of new research.

Despite these problems, accepted standards for both training and evaluation are a necessary step in both legitimizing a profession and differentiating between poor, competent, and excellent practitioners. If Jewish teaching is to become a profession, the Jewish community has no choice but to invest in both research and experimentation in this area. The methodologies for this research have been honed at a number of major research centers, notably the Teacher Assessment Project at Stanford University, and by the National Center for Research on Teacher Education, at Michigan State University. Key figures at each of these centers have been involved with Jewish education in a variety of ways; it would make sense for any future research on Jewish teaching knowledge and evaluation to be conducted in coordination with one or both of these centers.

Concurrent with this research, a way must be found to adapt the findings of both past and future studies to training and evaluation, on an experimental basis. One possibility might be the creation of a national committee on teacher training and evaluation, which would act as a clearinghouse for research and instigate experimental projects, together with the AIHLE (Association of Institutions of Higher Learning in Jewish Education) and central agencies.

With regard to teacher autonomy, it seems unlikely that teachers can achieve the degree of autonomy of some other professionals; but, as I argued in Section 3.4, this type of individualistic autonomy may not be desirable. Though the degree of autonomy most appropriate for teachers at varying levels of legitimacy may be open to question, the fact that teachers who have demonstrated their legitimacy deserve a good deal more autonomy is not. Since autonomy is intimately connected with the culture of the particular school, it cannot be mandated from above. Nonetheless, policy makers at the local and national level can contribute to the creation of a climate in which autonomy is encouraged. Autonomy does not mean free reign, but rather the creation of a culture of shared leadership in schools. Clearly there is much work to be done analyzing and experimenting with various levels of teacher autonomy. And, of course, the granting of autonomy to teachers must be linked to the creation of sophisticated, reliable evaluation techniques, as discussed above.

Too often a teacher's commitment is simply taken for granted, as though it is too obvious to mention. My own belief (and the belief of many of the early readers of this paper) is that commitment ought to be regarded as a necessary requirement for all teachers of Judaica, regardless of their legitimacy. The commitment of a teacher cannot be easily measured, nor can it be imparted by training, in the narrow, technical sense. Nonetheless, the expectation of commitment ought to be openly stated. More importantly, the teacher's initial sense of commitment, which probably lead to his or her choice of teaching in the first place, can be nurtured in the course of training, at both the pre-service (see Feiman- Nemser, 1989) and in-service levels. The development of commitment—to the tradition, the community, and to the students—should be one of the goals of all training programs. As discussed in Section 3.3, different schools may be interested in different types of religious commitment; this kind of pluralism is to be encouraged.



## 4.2 Making Teaching Attractive as a Profession

The second set of obstacles to upgrading the teaching profession arises out of the historical conditions in which teaching has been mired. The American public has always viewed its teachers with a mixture of admiration and disdain, acceptance and suspicion (Waller, 1932/1967; Sykes, 1983b). Low teacher salaries over the years indicate that disdain probably outweighed the other sentiments. For years American schools were granted a "hidden subsidy" from women who accepted, because they had little choice, their low pay and low status. With the rise of teachers' unions in the 1960s and early '70s, salaries rose, and began to compare favorably with those of many other occupations. Salaries have not, however, kept pace with inflation (Feistritz, 1983), and this has contributed to a further decline of the status of teachers. Teaching is regarded as a less desirable career option than ever before. Surveyed in a nation-wide Gallup Poll in 1969, 75% of the responding teachers said they would like to have a child take up teaching in a public school as a career; in 1972 the percentage fell to 67%, and, in 1980, to 48% (Sykes, 1983b, p. 111). The "first wave" of Commission reports (e.g., *A Nation at Risk* [National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983]) did nothing to raise the status of teachers; if anything, it contributed to their denigration (McDonald, 1986, pp. 356-357). The "second wave" of reform, exemplified by Carnegie (1986) and Holmes (1986) Commission reports, has focused attention on teacher professionalism, teacher status, and teacher salaries. It is too soon to tell if the efforts of these groups will, over the long run, entice a higher caliber of recruits to the field.

Though teachers in Jewish schools are not subject to the political vagaries of public school reform, their status and self-image are inextricably intertwined with that of public school teachers. Since efforts are currently underway to raise the salaries and status of public school teachers, this would be an opportune moment for the Jewish community to swim with the tide, linking its own efforts at recruitment to those of the society at large.

Both status and recruitment are influenced by salaries. However, raising teacher salaries is not a simple matter, even if it is assumed that the money can be found to do so. Which salaries should be raised, those of entry-level teachers (as a recruitment device) or those teachers already in the system (as a retention device)? It stands to reason that salary increases for those currently teaching should be linked, in some way, to merit. However, the instruments currently available for assessing teachers are either too subjective or too limited (Shulman, 1988), and await the results of the research discussed above. Moreover, various merit pay schemes instituted on an experimental basis have been found to be problematic (Murnane and Cohen, 1986; Bachrach and Conley, 1986; Johnson, 1984). Finally, there is the question of how large a salary increase would be required in order to make a significant difference in recruitment. One study found that it would take an annual salary increase of \$10,000 to make teaching more competitive with other jobs that require equivalent training, such as engineering and accounting (Feistritz, 1983, p. 16). An assessment of various

mechanisms for upgrading teacher salaries is essential; such an assessment would require some complicated economic modeling and projections. Since fewer than a third of Jewish teaching slots carry medical, pension, and other benefits (Aron and Phillips, 1990), the issue of the Jewish community's obligation to provide benefits for its teachers should be considered concurrently. Providing higher salaries and benefits to teachers might well require the establishment of an educational endowment, at either a national or regional level.

Assuming that teachers' salaries could be increased significantly, an extensive, multifaceted recruitment campaign would have to be undertaken. This should include: a) the recruitment of college students to training institutions through the use of scholarships and other incentives, and their placement in viable settings upon graduation; b) the recruitment and training of part-time teachers, for whom teaching might be either an avocation or a secondary occupation (Aron, 1988; Davidson, 1990).

### **4.3 Considering the Possibilities of Differentiated Staffing**

The final set of obstacles to the professionalization of Jewish teachers derives from the part-time nature of much of Jewish teaching (see Section 2.3). Because the number of part-time positions is large, relative to full-time positions, Jewish teaching attracts individuals with a wide range of backgrounds and aspirations. There are three ways in which a teacher might think of his or her work: a) as a career; b) as a way of supplementing his or her household's income, either temporarily (while waiting to get married or have children) or on an ongoing basis; and c) as an avocation, an activity engaged in purely for a sense of service or satisfaction. Though I know of no study that has asked public school teachers this question, one can imagine that a majority see teaching as a career. In Jewish education the situation is very different. A recent study in Los Angeles (Aron and Phillips, 1990) found that only 39% of the teachers fell into the "career teacher" category; another 36% saw teaching as a way of earning supplementary income; the remaining 25% saw teaching as an avocation. These differences among teachers were related, though not entirely, to the number of hours in which they taught, and to their other occupations, as can be seen in Tables 4A and 4B.

Understanding the diversity among Jewish teachers, with regard to their self-perception as well as their educational background (referring back to Tables 2E and 2F) makes one question whether full professionalization ought to be our ultimate goal. Given that over two-thirds of all Judaica teachers teach in supplementary schools (See Table 4C), and given that supplementary schools may require a different type of teaching than day schools (Aron, 1987 and 1989), it may be necessary to have some supplementary school teachers who do not have the legitimacy and autonomy that one might expect in a day school.

**Table 4A**  
**HOW LOS ANGELES TEACHERS SEE TEACHING, BY NUMBER OF HOURS TAUGHT (% IN EACH CATEGORY)**

	<i>"A Career"</i> (N = 230)	<i>"A Way of Earning Supplementary Income"</i> (N = 203)	<i>"Something I Do for the Satisfaction"</i> (N = 142)	<i>Total</i>
1-3 Hours (N = 141)	8	47	45	100%
4-9 Hours (N = 171)	21	47	32	100%
10-20 Hours (N = 152)	56	34	10	101%
21 + Hours (N = 575)	88	4	8	100%

**Table 4B**  
**HOW LOS ANGELES TEACHERS SEE TEACHING, BY OTHER OCCUPATIONS (% IN EACH CATEGORY)**

	<i>"As a Career"</i> (N = 238)	<i>"As a Way of Earning Supplementary Income"</i> (N = 223)	<i>"Something I Do for the Satisfaction"</i> (N = 156)	<i>Total</i>
Full-time in Jewish education (N = 181)	77	13	10	100%
Homemaker (N = 99)	40	32	27	100%
Full-time student (N = 65)	18	65	17	100%
Other part-time employment (N = 149)	24	44	32	100%
Other full-time employment (N = 123)	8	50	52	100%

(N = 617); Source: Los Angeles: Aron and Phillips, 1990. Totals of 99 or 101% are due to rounding.

**Table 4C**

**PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS TEACHING IN DAY VS. SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN  
SELECTED CITIES**

	<i>Day School</i>	<i>Supplementary School</i>
Los Angeles	33	67
Miami	37	63
Philadelphia	11	89
Pittsburgh	25	75

*Sources:* Los Angeles: Aron and Phillips, 1990; Miami: Sheskin, 1988; Philadelphia: Federation of Jewish Agencies of Greater Philadelphia, 1989; Pittsburgh: United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, 1986.

I believe that we have a good deal to learn, in this regard, from the reports of the Holmes (1986) and Carnegie (1986) commissions, both of which advocated differentiated staffing, as explained in Section 1.4. A differentiated staffing arrangement in a Jewish school would be more complicated than in a public school, because it would have to accommodate differences in the number of hours teachers teach, and how they perceive their work, as well as different levels of legitimacy and autonomy. A range of different staffing arrangements can be imagined, from a day school staff consisting entirely of full-time aspiring and/or accomplished professionals, to a supplementary school staff with mostly avocational teachers. The following hypothetical models are offered for illustrative purposes:

*Aleph School: A "Professional Development" Day School*

Following the model of the "professional development" school in public education (Darling-Hammond, 1989), the Aleph School aspires to support and nurture beginning teachers, most of whom will go on to other schools after three to five years. All of the schools' 20 Judaica teachers are employed full-time, though none of them teach full-time. Each of the school's 14 classes is co-taught by a Judaica and general studies teacher; the Judaica teachers are all graduates of a local Jewish teacher training institute, and range in experience from 0-5 years. The newest of the teachers teach

only 2/3 time; the remainder of their week is spent developing materials, observing other teachers, and conferring with their mentor-teachers. With each year of experience, the teachers spend more time in the classroom, though even those who have five years of experience spend a few hours a week on the other tasks. The remaining six teachers are an outstanding group of veteran teachers, who serve as mentors for the remaining 14, and for student teachers at the training institution mentioned above. The mentor teachers form the administrative core of the school, working closely with the principal to set policy. Each mentor teacher also spends at least ten hours per week in the classroom, either covering for the other teachers or working on special projects.

#### *Bet School: A K-12 Day School*

Bet School is a day school organized on more conventional (and fiscally conservative) lines, with half a day allotted to Judaica, and half to general studies. With 26 classes, the school has 26 half-time Judaica slots. Since the high school program is departmentalized, the school is able to arrange the schedule so that some of the high school Judaica teachers have full-time jobs. Four of the upper division teachers have chosen this full-time option, while two others work 3/4 time. This leaves a total of 15 teachers who teach at the school half-time. In cooperation with the local bureau of Jewish education, the school has sought to create as many full-time, or nearly full-time, "packages" as possible. Three teachers serve as mentors and curriculum developers, under a grant from the Bureau. An additional four teach and/or do programming in the supplementary school of a nearby synagogue; the two schools, with financial assistance from the Bureau, offer these teachers full-time salaries and benefits. Three other teachers have hybrid teaching arrangements; one works as the school librarian; two others work half-time at Jewish Family Service. Of the five remaining teachers, three prefer to work half-time; two would like to be working full-time, and the director is trying to work out some arrangement for them.

The educational background of the teachers varies. About half are graduates of Jewish teacher training programs, in either the U.S. or in Israel. The school encourages all its teachers, and requires those who are not graduates of a training program, to be working towards the fulfillment of a plan for professional development. Each teacher's plan has been worked out individually with one of the school's supervisory personnel, with an eye to those areas in which he or she either needs or desires more knowledge or skill. Teachers meet these requirements by taking courses at the Bureau or at local colleges (their tuition is subsidized by the Bureau), or by pursuing an independent study arrangement with a designated mentor. Each teacher also has a supervisor, who observes and confers with him or her on a regular basis.

#### *Gimel School: A Large Congregational Supplementary School*

Gimel School has a student population of 750, and a teaching staff of 20. The school has an integrated Hebrew and Judaica curriculum, which means that each teacher stays with his or her class six hours a week, with the exception of a few high school



teachers, whose classes are of shorter duration. Since the maximum number of hours that a teacher can teach in the supplementary school is 16, no teachers have full-time teaching positions. Five of the teachers fall into the avocational category; they include two housewives, one aspiring actor, and two full-time graduate students, who teach only six hours each. None of these teachers has a degree in Jewish education, though the graduate students have extensive Judaica and camping experience, and the housewives are both former public school teachers. For each of these teachers the principal has created an individualized professional growth plan which focuses on workshops, conferences and independent projects, rather than formal courses.

At the other end of the spectrum are ten teachers who are in the "professional track," and have full-time positions either in the synagogue, or through a hybrid-teaching arrangement: Three are employed by the school as mentors, curriculum writers and program developers; these are the most fully professional, and are enrolled in a part-time graduate program in education at a local college. Four others teach twelve hours each, and are employed elsewhere in the synagogue, as pre-school teachers, a *havurah* coordinator, and an administrative assistant. The last three teach half-time at a local day school; the day and supplementary school, together with the Bureau, pay them a full-time salary plus benefits. The professional development plan for each of these teachers is also individualized, but is more rigorous. It consists of a sequence of courses and requirements the teachers are expected to have taken in the past, or be accumulating, gradually, on a part-time basis.

The remaining five teachers might be considered more than avocational but less than professional. All teach twelve hours, and most would like to enter into some sort of full-time arrangement. This group has the most rigorous professional development schedule, with the promise that when the requirements are completed, every effort will be made to secure them full-time positions. Since their current positions are only part-time, these teachers are paid for time spent in courses and workshops.

#### *Dalet School: A Medium-sized Supplementary School with Avocational Teachers*

The Dalet School is located at a Jewish community center. It was founded fifteen years ago by parents looking to become more involved in their children's Jewish education. At the outset, the school had under 100 students, and all positions, whether teaching, administrative, secretarial, or janitorial, were volunteer. As the school grew, it hired a full-time education director and some mentor teachers, and began paying its other teachers an "honorarium" of \$750 a year, but its participatory philosophy remained the same. Currently, the school has 350 students and a teaching staff of 40. Three of the teachers are highly-paid professionals, whose primary responsibilities are teaching training, mentoring and curriculum development. The remaining 37 teachers are all avocational, and range in age from 17 to 70. Most teach three to six hours a week, but a few teach only two.

All of the avocational teachers were trained in-house, in a program of two years' duration, prior to entering the classroom. This training program is on-going, with a new cycle beginning every two years, and each cohort numbering from two to six teachers-in-training. The low student-teacher ratio gives the school a good deal of flexibility. All classes are co-taught by at least two teachers, and there is a Hebrew language lab which is staffed by at least three teachers at all times. In addition, special projects, requiring special staff members, take place throughout the year.

The typical avocational teacher stays with the school from five to eight years, and the school has worked hard to put together a challenging program of in-service education. The school is particularly proud of three of its former teachers, who have gone on to enroll in full-time graduate programs in Jewish education.

In portraying four hypothetical schools, I have tried to show the different dimensions along which staffing arrangements can vary. The first dimension is setting: day vs. supplementary school is the most important difference; but the size of a school, and its location in or dependence on a larger institution can also be important. A second way in which schools differ is in their ideology: the Dalet School's emphasis on community participation lead to one staffing arrangement; the Gimel School's preference for an integrated Hebrew/Judaica curriculum has staffing limitations as well. The four schools vary in their institutional affiliations, as well: the Aleph School is closely linked to a Jewish teacher training institution; the Bet School has strong links to both the Bureau and another supplementary school; the Gimel School derives some of its flexibility in staffing from its location within a large congregation; the Dalet School is virtually independent of other institutions. Finally, the gap in per pupil expenditure between Aleph and Bet, on the one hand, and Gimel and Dalet, on the other, is quite large.

Despite these differences, the schools share certain commonalties, which distinguish them from the typical Jewish school:

- 1) The educational directors of all four schools see their role as extending beyond administration to include both training and staff development.
- 2) Each school has at least a few teachers who are compensated for tasks other than teaching, such as mentoring, supervision, and curriculum development. This policy allows the most professional teachers in the school an opportunity to expand their horizons and share their expertise with others.
- 3) It is unlikely that any of the schools, with the possible exception of the fourth, can raise sufficient funds to meet its payroll. Most schools with a number of fully professional teachers will require subsidies, possibly from an endowment fund.
- 4) All of the schools (including the fourth, if it requires external funds) have succeeded in upgrading the professional level of their faculties through forging links with other

institutions, including other schools, colleges, bureaus of Jewish education, and local social service agencies. As discussed in Section 2, this type of cooperation cannot be mandated; but it does seem to be a necessary ingredient for the professionalization of teachers.

One can imagine any number of other differentiated staffing configurations, each responding to a different set of circumstances and each reflecting a different ideological perspective. However, it would be difficult for a school or a community to decide on a particular staffing arrangement (or whether, in fact, a differentiated staffing structure would be feasible at all, unless it could see a reasonably accurate projection of the costs involved. Research into the economics of differentiated staffing arrangements needs to be conducted. Concurrently, a series of feasibility studies exploring ways to increase school budgets through endowments, communal allocations, and other means should be embarked upon, to see how highly professional a staff various schools and communities can afford.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

I have tried to delineate (as simply as possible, given the complexity of the issues), what professionalism in teaching, as a concrete reality rather than an honorific slogan, entails. Since the body of research on Jewish teachers is so limited, we have only a rudimentary sense of what level of professionalism the current pool of Jewish teachers has attained. Thus, a number of important questions remain: What percentage of our current pool of teachers can be considered professional, potentially professional, or unlikely to become professional? What would it take, in terms of training, supervision, and support, to move the potential professionals up the ladder? How professional a teaching staff can different Jewish communities afford? How professional a staff do they desire? These questions can only be answered once the research, experimentation and consciousness-raising outlined in the above proposals has begun. As I indicated above, I do not see these proposals as independent of one another; each is a necessary step towards the solution of a complicated, interlocking puzzle.

Writing in 1983 about public school teachers, Donna Kerr observed that it was time for Americans to acknowledge collective responsibility for the quality of teachers.

There is a disturbing duplicity in a society that itself fails to create the conditions that would foster teacher competence, and then complains of incompetent teachers. Our teaching corps can be no more competent than we make it.

[1983b, p. 131]

Today, in 1990, the same can be said for the Jewish community's responsibility to take ownership of the problems of Jewish teachers. Let us hope that the community will rise to accept the challenge.

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TOWARDS THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF JEWISH TEACHING

A Report Submitted to  
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education? Is professionalism more difficult to attain in Jewish teaching, and why? Finally, what can be done to increase the professionalism of teachers in Jewish schools?

The structure of the paper centers on three commonly accepted criteria for a profession: legitimacy, autonomy and commitment. Section 1 focuses on two of criteria, legitimacy and autonomy, and the extent to which teaching as an occupation group meets these criteria. Section 2 concerns the differences between Jewish and secular education, and the implications of these differences for the legitimacy and autonomy of Jewish teachers. Section 3 deals with the third criterion of professionalism, commitment; in it, several dimensions of commitment which are particularly relevant to Jewish teaching are discussed in detail. Section 4 returns to the larger question: how professional are Jewish teachers, and how can we increase their professionalism? In this section I argue that policy-makers in Jewish education ought to think in terms of a differentiated staffing structure for Jewish schools.

## SECTION 1

### LEGITIMACY AND AUTHORITY AS CRITERIA OF PROFESSIONALISM

Most American educators would agree that teaching is, or at least ought to be, a profession. Few, however, attempt to define this term; those who do find that the concept is, to quote Morris Cogan (1953), "shrouded in confusion." The most common way around a definition is to contrast a profession with other, presumably inferior, endeavors. Thus, "professional" is held to be the opposite of "amateur," one who is either untrained or unsalaried. Alternately, "professional" is taken to be the opposite of "crafts-person," a person whose practice is not grounded in theory or science (Broudy, 1956). Finally, the term "professional," used as an adjective, sometimes connotes altruism or a higher calling, in contrast to "commercial."

Cogan suggests that the ambiguity and imprecision surrounding the term is not accidental, and may be quite functional, for the title "professional" often serves an exhortative, laudatory function. As he puts it, "One reason for the undifferentiated use of 'profession' may be found in the efforts of many persons and groups to secure to themselves the values clustering around it by simply preempting the title" (p.47).

Since Cogan's article was written the literature on professionalism has grown exponentially, and the "sociology of the professions" has become a sub-field of its own, creating a "scholarly tsunami " (Kimball 1988). Though different scholars

offer different taxonomies and use different terms, there seems to be a general scholarly consensus that professionalism is distinguished by at least three criteria: legitimacy, autonomy, and commitment. Legitimacy refers to the special knowledge and expertise to which professionals lay claim; autonomy refers to the control which professionals exert over the ways in which their services are rendered; commitment refers to the special social and moral responsibilities taken on by professionals.

To be considered a profession members of an occupation group must meet all three of these criteria: 1) they must possess a specialized body of knowledge that distinguishes them from the "non-professionals" in the field; 2) they must, as a group or a guild, have the power to shape the conditions under which their work is done; 3) they must view their work as a calling to serve society or some larger cause.

Some examples may help clarify these criteria. At one extreme, medical doctors are clearly professionals, having specialized academic training, a good deal of control over how medicine is practiced (if not individually, then collectively, through their professional organizations), and an obligation to cure sick people. In contrast, workers on an assembly line may have a certain expertise, but this expertise is not based on a theoretical body of knowledge; they have little control over the circumstances under which they work; nor does their work serve a moral purpose.

In between the two extremes lie a vast array of occupation groups which meet one criterion better than the other, and whose

professional status is unclear. Nurses, for example, like doctors, have a commitment to serve, and derive their expertise from medical science. Unlike doctors, however, nurses have very little control over the way hospitals are organized; their lower professional status is indicative of their weaker authority. In contrast, those engaged in business meet the criterion of autonomy very well. In their effort to meet the criterion of legitimacy, leaders of the business community have attempted to link entry into the field to the mastery of the "sciences" of management, marketing, and administration, as taught in university courses and tested by examinations. In their effort to meet the criterion of commitment, these same leaders have sponsored courses and programs in business ethics.

Do teachers meet these criteria well enough to be considered bona fide professionals? Most of the recent discussion of professionalism in teaching has centered on the first two criteria, legitimacy and autonomy, which, as we shall see, are closely related. The remainder of this section will deal with the question of how much legitimacy and autonomy teaching as an occupation can claim.

### 1.1 The Legitimacy of Teachers

"Those who can't do, teach, and those who can't teach, teach education." At the root of this old saying lies an assumption, shared by many, that anyone can teach. After all, everyone has spent hours and hours in classrooms of all sorts, and been



exposed to a variety of models of teaching. If one knows a certain subject, surely one can teach it. And, if anyone can teach, why should teachers be considered professionals?

The widespread perception that good teaching may require some innate talent and, perhaps, some experience, but not any codifiable knowledge, is seen by many as the most serious challenge to the professional standing of teachers (for a review of this literature, see Feiman-Nemser and Floden 1986, pp.512-515). To counter this perception educational researchers and policy-makers have sought to demonstrate that good teachers operate from a firm knowledge base. Lee Shulman, perhaps the foremost proponent of this view, summarizes this position in the following way:

The claim that teaching deserves professional status ... is based on a ... fundamental premise: that the standards by which the education and performance of teachers must be judged can be raised and more clearly articulated. The advocates of professional reform base their arguments on the belief that there exists a "knowledge base for teaching" -- a codified or codifiable aggregation of knowledge, skill, understanding, and technology, of ethics and disposition, of collective responsibility -- as well as a means for representing and communicating it. The reports of the Holmes Group and the Carnegie Task Force rest on this belief and, furthermore, claim that the knowledge base is growing. They argue that it should frame teacher education and directly inform teaching practice. [Shulman 1987, pp.3-4]

Under a grant from the Carnegie Foundation, Shulman and his colleagues have been working on the creation of a national teachers' exam, akin to the National Board of Medical Examiners. This exam would assess a teachers' knowledge in the following seven categories:

-- content knowledge

- general pedagogic knowledge
- curriculum knowledge
- pedagogical content knowledge
- knowledge of learners and their characteristics
- knowledge of educational contexts
- knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values

[ Ibid., p. 8]

The view that the teaching profession is firmly grounded in a body of specialized knowledge has a number of profound and far-reaching implications:

1) Teachers ought to receive specialized training, preferably at the graduate level (Sedlak, 1987, pp.321-323). Just as a hospital would never think of employing a doctor who did not possess an M.D., a school ought not hire teachers who do not have "state of the art" training.

2) The training teachers receive ought to be, to some extent, standardized. Though a certain amount of variation might be tolerable, and even beneficial, the knowledge base of teaching would dictate that certain guidelines be followed. On the basis of this standardization, training programs may be accredited and their graduates credentialed.

3) Teachers ought to be evaluated at periodic intervals, in some standardized way. Not only must a teacher's knowledge be assessed, but also his or her skill in applying that knowledge in specific situations. Procedures for this type of evaluation must be standardized, to reduce, as much as possible, the subjective element which inheres in all evaluation of performance.

4) Different levels of expertise ought to be delineated, and the status and remuneration of teachers ought to be linked to these stages. The relatively flat career pattern of the teaching

profession, wherein novices and veterans, the mediocre and the superb, do essentially the same work and are rewarded according to the same scale (Lortie, 1975) has long been a source of concern among the advocates of educational reform (Sykes, 1983b). The availability of reliable evaluative techniques by which school systems could test teachers' proficiency could serve as the basis for career ladders and differentiated staffing.

5) Finally, teachers ought to be required to keep pace with new developments in their field. The knowledge base of teaching has grown and changed in dramatic ways in the past two decades; the rate of new knowledge production can only quicken. Therefore, it would be imperative for veteran teachers to have mastery of this new body of information, skills and techniques as well.

Without denying the importance of research on teacher knowledge, a number of prominent researchers and scholars have cautioned that this type of research, at least in its current state, cannot serve as a basis for legitimizing the teaching profession. They argue that the "scientific basis" of teaching (Gage, 1978) amounts to little more than a number of low-level generalizations which do not add much to our common-sense notions of what makes for good teaching (Jackson, 1987; Zumwalt, 1982). While Shulman, who employs a different research paradigm, hopes to overcome the narrow technological bias of previous researchers, his work is too preliminary to serve as the sole basis for professional legitimation.

Even were the components of "teacher knowledge" more clearly delineated, developed, and corroborated, would good teaching be

directly related to knowledge acquisition? Noting the special way in which personality enters into teaching, some researchers caution against an undue emphasis on knowledge alone.

It is difficult ... to disentangle teacher character from teacher competence. The teacher is deeply engaged in his work as a whole person because an effect is required on the student as a whole person. [Lightfoot, 1983, p.250]

Education ... possesses neither a codified body of technical knowledge nor a clear technology nor a small set of measurable outcomes. Rather, special and ordinary knowledge are freely mixed, teaching styles and the solution of core problems are heavily dependent on personality and consequently are idiosyncratic, and outcomes are multiple, protean, and intangible. [Sykes, 1983a, p.581]

## 1.2 The Autonomy of Teachers

The second hallmark of a profession is autonomy, the ability of practitioners to control the circumstances and terms under which their service is rendered. Once again, a comparison with doctors, who have a great deal of autonomy, may be helpful.

Individual doctors may establish their own office procedures and fee schedules; collectively, they set policies for hospitals, medical schools, and various public health organizations. Of course, in a complex technological society such as our own, most professions are subject to some regulation; a variety of laws and conventions set the parameters within which medical practitioners must operate. Of late, insurance regulations and legal precedents have set further restraints on medical practice.

One might, at first glance, assume that teachers too have a good deal of autonomy. Teachers teach behind closed doors; within certain limits, they can establish their own set of classroom

procedures and rules. Though they may be given a curriculum and/or a textbook, they can decide themselves just how the subject at hand ought to be taught.

A closer look, however, reveals that the situation is more complicated, and that most teachers operate under constraints more onerous than those of other professions: Unlike the clients of the doctor in private practice, students do not come to school voluntarily; conversely, teachers have relatively little choice as to who their students will be. Most other professions seek to regulate themselves through independent associations; in teaching it is the society at large which dictates its expectations, either through elected school boards or parental pressure (Darling-Hammond, 1989, p. 73). At the school level, policies are usually set by the principal or administrators, few of whom act in consultation with teachers (Goodlad, 1984, pp.188-191).

Over the past two decades the authority of teachers in public schools has eroded further. Federal and state funding of schools has increased, and has brought with it increased demands for regulating teachers and holding them accountable for student achievement.

Policy makers do not trust teachers to make responsible, educationally appropriate judgments. They do not view teachers as uniformly capable, and they are suspicious about the adequacy of preparation and supervision. These doubts are a measure of the weakness of the professional structure in education and its ability to offer alternative means for guaranteeing quality. [Darling-Hammond, 1988, pp. 63-64]

Many have argued against this type of bureaucratic control of teachers, claiming that while such control can weed out incompetence, it cannot promote excellence (Green, 1983, pp.

322-323). The complexity of American society, the problems of our student population, and the rising expectations of what schools ought to accomplish, it is argued, demand excellence, not merely competence, autonomous professional teachers, not merely programmed technicians (Devaney and Sykes, 1988).

Teacher excellence and teacher autonomy, in this view, go hand in hand. To attract and retain a cadre of truly professional teachers, one must assure that they will have a hand in shaping the environments in which they work.

A second argument for increasing the autonomy of teachers derives from research on teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction, the factors which lead to teacher retention, on the one hand, and burnout, on the other. There is mounting evidence that teachers find intrinsic rewards, such as their ability to reach students, more important than the extrinsic ones of salary and status (Lortie, 1975; McLaughlin and Yee, 1988; Mitchell, Ortiz and Mitchell, 1987). Among the intrinsic rewards mentioned by teachers as key to their level of satisfaction is what some researchers call capacity: "the teachers' access to resources and the ability to mobilize them, the availability of tools to do their job, and the capability to influence the goals and direction of their institution" (McLaughlin and Yee, 1988, p.28).

Teachers with a sense of capacity tend to pursue effectiveness in the classroom, express commitment to organization and career, and report a high level of professional satisfaction. Lacking a sense of power, teachers who care often end up acting in ways that are educationally counterproductive by "coping" -- lowering their aspirations, disengaging from the setting, and framing their goals only in terms of getting through the day.



Teaching is apt to become just a job, not a career. [ Ibid., p.29]

What can be done to promote teachers' autonomy? How, despite the inherent constraints in the work situation of teachers, can this aspect of professionalism be enhanced? McLaughlin and Yee ( Ibid. ) found that some schools promote teacher autonomy more than others, and that these schools tend to share five common attributes:

- 1) They have an adequate resources, i.e., sufficient number of textbooks and materials, as well as reasonably hospitable facilities.

- 2) They exhibit "a unity of purpose, clear organizational guidelines and goals, and a collective sense of responsibility" (p.31). The principal is key to establishing this productive and cohesive atmosphere.

- 3) They promote a sense of collegiality among teachers, who are given both opportunity and encouragement to work collaboratively.

- 4) The orientation of the school is problem-solving, rather than problem-hiding.

A problem-solving environment ... encourages teachers to reflect on their practice, and explore ways to improve it in an ongoing, rather than episodic, basis. It is an environment in which it is safe to be candid and to take the risks inherent in trying out new ideas or unfamiliar practices. ... Conversely, in problem-hiding environments, teachers hide their problems and then hide the fact that they are hiding their problems. "Everything's fine" becomes the standard response to administrative or collegial inquiry about classroom activity. [p.36]

- 5) The school "rewards teachers for growth, risk taking and change rather than only for successful past practice " (p.37).

These five factors tend to reinforce one another. Thus, a school which is problem-solving is likely to reward teachers for risk taking; likewise, a school with a well-defined sense of purpose tends to promote collegiality. Together, they contribute

to the creation of an environment which promotes professionalization.

As studies such as the one by McLaughlin and Yee accumulate, educational reformers have focused more and more on that intangible but altogether critical factor, the "culture" of a school (Sarason, 1971). Why do some schools seem to exude a sense of harmony and collegiality, while others appear to be bogged down in apathy or conflict? Why do some schools foster teacher autonomy while others, with equally competent teachers, render them powerless? Why do some schools easily accommodate themselves to innovation and experimentation, while others appear impervious to change of any sort? After years of trying to account for the differences by enumerating discrete factors which would serve as "independent variables," researchers have begun to take a more holistic, anthropological look at schools (Erickson, 1986). They argue that many elements combine to create that unique configuration of shared beliefs and practices which is a school's culture. This culture serves as a filter for all attempts at innovation (Cooper, 1988).

The challenge facing the advocates of professionalization through greater autonomy is that this cultural "screen" makes it difficult to isolate the ingredients which are key to transforming a hierarchical and bureaucratic staff structure into what Roland Barth calls "a community of leaders" (1988). Throughout the United States, a number of experiments have been undertaken whose purpose is to grant teachers more autonomy, either as individuals, or on a school-wide basis. Concurrently,

the experiments are being studied, in an effort to glean some insights into the common characteristics of those programs which are most successful (Lieberman, 1988, chpts. 8 - 10). As these experiments progress, we will obtain a better picture of both the conditions and benefits of expanded authority for teachers.

### 1.3 The Prospects for Professionalizing Teachers

If the term "professional" is to function as more than a fancy synonym for "respected," its use must be predicated on two assumptions: First, that the teacher's skill derives from a special branch of knowledge, knowledge which can be codified, transmitted, and used as a yardstick for evaluation. Second, teachers must be granted a certain degree of control over their working environments.

Though these two hallmarks of professionalism -- legitimacy and autonomy -- have been discussed independently, it is clear that they are closely related. Legitimacy serves as the justification for autonomy: the members of a profession are granted control over their practice on the assumption that they, having sole possession of the special knowledge in their field, would know best how their practice should be conducted. Autonomy, in turn, allows professionals to establish standards of legitimacy. A true profession should be self-regulating, with requirements for membership and methods of evaluation set by the members themselves.

This is, in essence, the bargain that all professionals make with society: for occupations that require discretion and

judgment in meeting the unique needs of clients, the profession guarantees the competence of members in exchange for the privilege of professional control and standards of practice. [Darling-Hammond, 1988, p.59]

Does teaching meet the two criteria of professionalism? In light of the literature reviewed above, it would be hard to offer an unequivocal answer to this question. Clearly good teachers know something about teaching (over and above their knowledge of the subject matter) that ordinary people usually don't know. But just what it is that teachers know is difficult, at the present time, to articulate. Sykes' assessment of the situation in 1983 still holds true today:

Despite the assertions of some teacher educators, we do not yet possess the knowledge on which to stake a claim to professional status in teaching. ... The leads research is providing can help strengthen the curriculum for teacher preparation, but cannot fully define it nor significantly reduce the endemic uncertainties of practice nor the reliance on ordinary knowledge and the use of personality as a primary resource in teaching. [Sykes, 1983a, p.582]

Teachers could probably never be fully autonomous, because their students come involuntarily, and because many of the structural features of the school are mandated from above. On the other hand, teachers might certainly be granted much greater autonomy, either collectively, through the governance of the school, or individually, by the creation of special leadership positions. Any attempt to grant greater autonomy to teachers will face a number of obstacles. Many principals would certainly prefer to maintain a tight control over the school, rather than sharing their power with others; school boards, as well, may be resistant to the notion that teachers be allowed to make policy decisions.

A second barrier to granting any profession autonomy is related to the quality of people the profession attracts. Public school teaching does attract a portion (approximately 7%) of the most able college graduates in the United States. However, the sheer size of the teaching force and the relative ease of entry into the field, make teaching attractive to a very high proportion (38%) of the least able as well (Lanier and Little, 1986, pp. S39-S40). In previous decades women often chose teaching because they were barred, or at least discouraged, from entering more lucrative and more highly regarded professions. Today, the situation is quite different.

The women's movement and the drive for equal rights coupled with economic pressures on women to work are changing all this. ... In the future the best and the brightest women are likely to join their male counterparts in such fields as business, law, medicine, research and government, with teaching a significant loser in the competition for talent. [Sykes, 1983b, p.113]

In theory the legitimacy of a profession should have nothing to do with the characteristics of the people it attracts; in practice, however, perceptions of the teaching profession, and the extent to which the public is willing to grant teachers greater autonomy are greatly influenced by the qualities of its members (Kerr, 1983a; Metzger and Fox, 1986).

Those who are concerned with upgrading the teaching profession are caught in a vicious cycle. Low status, low salaries, and a lack of autonomy make the field unattractive to potential candidates; at the same time, the mediocrity of its practitioners make it harder to argue for greater autonomy, higher status, and, perhaps most importantly, considerably higher

pay. Some scholars, perceiving these obstacles to be insurmountable, refer to teaching a quasi-profession (Spencer, 1986, pp. 3-5). Many others have called for the restructuring of the entire field, as a way of achieving the ideal of professionalization, within the confines of economic and social realities.

Three influential groups of stakeholders, the Carnegie Commission on Education, the Holmes Group (a consortium of deans of education from the major research universities), and the American Federation of Teachers, have argued that that the notoriously flat career pattern of public school teachers should be replaced by a pyramidal structure which they term "differentiated staffing." At the base of the pyramid would be a large number of entry level teachers, who would make only a short-term (three to five year) commitment to teaching. These individuals would have relatively little training and be granted relatively little autonomy. Many from this group might decide to leave teaching after their initial period of commitment ended. Some, however, might decide to pursue teaching as a profession, and would begin a program of more intensive training. As these individuals became more knowledgeable and more skilled, their authority would increase, along with their salaries. At the top of the pyramid would be a small cadre of those teachers able to pass the rigorous requirements for becoming mentor teachers, curriculum specialists, and other positions of increased responsibility (Sedlak, 1987). Though the concept of differentiated staffing has been criticized by some as either



misguided or unrealistic (see essays in response to Sedlak, 1987), some school districts have embraced this notion of reconfiguration as one of the only ways out of the current conundrum (Urbanski, 1988). I believe that the concept of differentiated staffing holds great promise for Jewish schools as well, as we shall see in section 4. First, however, I will deal with the issue of the difference between Jewish and secular schools, and the extent to which legitimacy and autonomy are characteristic of Jewish teaching.

## SECTION 2

### LEGITIMACY AND AUTONOMY IN JEWISH TEACHING

Writing about the problems of Jewish teachers (or, more precisely, teachers of Judaica in Jewish schools), many have followed the lead of scholars in secular education, advocating a variety of mechanisms aimed at establishing teacher legitimacy, and, to a lesser extent, granting teachers greater autonomy (Schiff, 1987 and 1989; Woocher, 1987; Ratner and Reich, 1988). Several central agencies of Jewish education have instituted some of these mechanisms, such as career ladders and new training opportunities, and have been encouraged by the outcome (JESNA, 1984).

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that all the innovations of public education can or should be transferred, in wholesale fashion, to Jewish education. Although Jewish schools resemble their public counterparts in some respects, there are a number of important differences between the two sectors. In this section I will discuss the differences that are most relevant to the issue of legitimacy and autonomy in teaching.

Many structural similarities exist between Jewish and public schools. Their physical plants tend to resemble each other rather closely, as do their organizational patterns. (Most) Jewish schools have followed (most) public schools in having age-graded classes, taught by individual teachers. Teachers are supervised by a principal, and may be assisted by a number of specialists, such as a librarian, music teacher, school psychologist, etc. If

one were to look inside both types of classrooms at the materials, modalities and techniques teachers employ, one would find many additional resemblances. Nonetheless, Jewish and secular education are different in significant ways:

## 2.1 Voluntarism

Jewish schooling in the United States is an entirely voluntary, privately funded enterprise. With the exception of secular subjects in day schools, Jewish schools are not subject to governmental regulation with respect to their educational program. Despite the existence of various associations (e.g., Solomon Shechter and Torah U'Mesorah), individual Jewish schools operate independently of one another.

Jewish schools are typically governed by a group of individuals who serve as the school or synagogue board. The degree to which these individuals represent the school's multiple constituencies varies. While members of these governing bodies may be elected to their position, these elections are mostly pro forma; inclusion in school governance tends to be based on the members' interest, expertise, personal connections, and status in the community.

Within the rather loose governance structure of most Jewish schools principals have a good deal of autonomy, and work under far fewer restrictions and regulations than their counterparts in public education. They could, theoretically, grant comparable autonomy to their teachers, and to some extent they do. A recent

study of Judaica teachers in Los Angeles (Aron and Phillips, 1990) found that most teachers have a good deal of latitude in setting the curriculum (Table 2A), though little or no role in establishing school policy (Table 2B).

## 2.2 Unclear Lines of Communal Authority and Responsibility

Given the voluntaristic nature of Jewish education, it is not surprising that Jewish education in the United States is a "system" in only a loose and ephemeral sense. Change in public education can be mandated by the local school board or a state legislature, which is legally responsible for the school system. In contrast, Jewish schools are not subject to any authority higher than that of their sponsoring synagogue or governing body. Those who seek change in Jewish education have no recourse to coercive measures; they must rely on either persuasion or financial incentives. Given that the American Jewish community is smaller, more homogeneous, and (at least among active members) more interdependent than the nation as a whole, persuasion and financial incentives have a much better chance of success than they might have in the public arena. Nonetheless, even if the aims of reform were similar, the process by which these aims could be achieved would be very different in Jewish, rather than public, education.

If, for example, a central agency for Jewish education were to attempt to establish a career ladder for teachers, it would not only have to provide the money for higher salaries; it would

Table 2A:

LEVEL OF CURRICULAR GUIDANCE GIVEN TO LOS ANGELES TEACHERS,  
% IN EACH CATEGORY, BY TYPE OF SCHOOL

	<u>Day School</u> (N=230)	<u>Supple- mentary School</u> (N=461)
Given Curriculum w/ Lesson Plans	6	15
Given Curriculum w/out Lesson Plans	43	39
Given Textbook Only	15	19
Guidance from Principal Only	13	13
Given None of the Above	16	10
Didn't Answer Question	8	5
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL,	101%	101%

Table 2B:

LEVEL OF INPUT INTO SCHOOL POLICY OF LOS ANGELES TEACHERS,  
(% IN EACH CATEGORY), BY TYPE OF SCHOOL

	<u>Day School</u> (N=230)	<u>Supplementary School</u> (N=461)
"A lot of input"	14	12
"Some input"	42	38
"Little or no input"	39	48
Didn't answer question	4	2
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL,	99%	100%

1 Source: Aron & Phillips, 1990

2 By Teacher Slot (N=691)

3 Totals of 99 or 101% are due to rounding.

have to persuade individual schools that increased responsibility for one or more of their teachers would be a good idea; it would have to develop guidelines for the selection and evaluation of those on the higher rungs; and it would have to continually urge schools to adhere to these guidelines.

The absence of systemic responsibility and accountability has important implications for teacher standards and salaries. Both the National Board of License and a number of local Bureaus offer credentials to teachers; some central agencies publish salary scales, which link credentialing to earning power. While little systematic data has been collected on the effects of credentialing, interviews with knowledgeable BJE personnel directors reveal a number of problems: First, only a small percentage of teachers in Jewish schools meet the standards of the National Board of License. The standards of local BJE's are considerably lower; in some cases, the lowest rungs of these credentialing systems require little training in either Judaica or education. Second, it is not at all clear to what extent salary scales are followed by schools. Los Angeles, which links adherence to the salary scale to the receipt of funds from the BJE, is probably in the best position to enforce the scale. Even in Los Angeles, however, one hears a good deal of talk among principals about ways they have found to pay their teachers either more or less than the scale would require.

### 2.3 The Part-time Nature of Jewish Teaching

The teaching of Judaica is, even in a day school, often a part-time occupation. In Los Angeles, the average number of hours available in each day school teaching slot is 20.5 hours per week (Aron and Phillips, 1990); in Miami it is 22.3 hours per week (Sheskin, 1988). Only 58% of the day school teachers in Los Angeles teach over 16 hours/week; in Miami, only 43% teach more than 20 hours.

Teachers in supplementary schools teach far fewer hours per school, an average of 5.2 hours in Los Angeles, and 4.8 hours in Miami. Tables 2C and 2D give the breakdown, by setting, of the hours teachers teach in both Los Angeles, Miami and Pittsburgh.

If the teaching of Judaica in a Jewish school is, for so many, a part-time occupation, can it still be considered a profession? In theory the number of hours a professional works should make no difference, if s/he has legitimacy and is granted autonomy. In practice, however, the part-time nature of Jewish teaching sets off a kind of chain reaction, influencing recruitment, training and retention, and undercutting professionalism at every turn: A part-time teacher can only earn a part-time salary; low salaries in a field translate, in most people's minds, to low status. How many talented young people can afford (either financially or in terms of their self-image) to view part-time work as an ultimate career choice? How many, given a projection of their future earning potential, would be willing to undergo rigorous training? Once in the job, how many can



Table 2C

## HOURS TAUGHT (% IN EACH CATEGORY), IN SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL

	Los Angeles	Miami	Pittsburgh
1-4	38.8	56.3	67
5-9	30.6	32.3	23
10-14	20.2	3.6	8
15-19	3.3	—	—
20-24	2.7	1.8	2
25-29	1.1	—	—
30-34	.9	.6	—
35-39	1.3	—	—
40+	1.1	5.4	—
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

Table 2D

## HOURS TAUGHT (% IN EACH CATEGORY), IN DAY SCHOOL

	Los Angeles	Miami	Pittsburgh
1-4	2.7	1	3
5-9	6.6	6.5	23
10-14	11.5	6.5	5
15-19	17.3	10.9	—
20-24	16.8	16.3	52
25-29	7.5	5.4	—
30-34	15.0	7.6	42
35-39	13.3	15.2	—
40+	9.3	30.4	7
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

## Sources:

Los Angeles: Aron and Phillips, 1990

Miami: Sheskin, 1988

United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, 1986

afford to stay for the long term? Several decades ago, part-time teaching in a Jewish school was seen by some women as a promising avenue for professional development, which fit well with their desire to be primary care-givers to their children. They were willing to enroll in a teacher training program of several years duration, despite the fact (actually, because of the fact) that most teaching positions were part-time. Today, the opening of a much broader spectrum of career opportunities for women, and the economic pressures on middle class families make part-time teaching much less desirable.

Viewed in this light, the chronic shortage of teachers of Judaica in the United States, a shortage which has persisted for over half-a-century (Shevitz, 1988; Aron and Bank, 1987), is perfectly understandable. Unfortunately, the persistence of a teacher shortage serves as another barrier to professionalism: if people who are only minimally qualified can find jobs so easily, why bother to enroll in a teacher training program?

Any effort to improve the professional standing of Jewish teachers must begin with the problem of the overwhelmingly part-time nature of the task as it is currently configured. One promising solution is the creation, by an external agency such as a Bureau or Federation, of a number of full-time slots for "community teachers." This model has been used successfully in Omaha for nearly a decade (Rosenbaum, 1983), and is currently being attempted in Cleveland, Des Moines and Boston. To create the position of community teacher, the central agency acts as a broker between a number of schools, typically a day school and

one or two supplementary schools. The result is a full-time position which includes some combination of teaching, lesson planning, mentoring and curriculum development. The income which the teacher would earn from each of the individual schools is supplemented by the agency, so that an attractive salary and benefits package can be offered. In Omaha the position of community teacher carries with it a number of other "perks," such as free membership in the Jewish Community Center. The creation of these full-time positions has enabled the Jewish community of Omaha to attract outstanding teachers from around the country; the arrival of each new teacher is greeted by the community with considerable fanfare, comparable to the arrival of other new Jewish professionals.

The community teacher concept is so simple and appealing that one wonders why it hasn't been implemented in many more Jewish communities. Interviews with a number of people who have been involved in the implementation of this model (including several key figures in one community which failed to come to agreement on the terms for a community teacher) provide an answer to this question. Because individual Jewish schools have so much autonomy, and because larger communal structures have so little authority over them, some schools are resistant to "sharing" a teacher with other schools, and unwilling to compromise when scheduling conflicts arise. The success or failure of the model seems to depend upon the negotiating skills of the person responsible for its implementation and the personalities of the participating education directors. Nonetheless, the prospects for

the creation of a growing number of community teacher positions throughout the country seems promising.

Another idea which is closely related to that of the community teacher is that of the hybrid teaching position, in which part-time work as a Jewish teacher is combined with part-time work as a social worker, librarian, communal worker, etc. This idea has been tried, with great success in public schools in Arizona, where science teachers are given summer jobs in various industries as a way of supplementing their income (Babbit, 1986). Though this solution would require the teacher to develop expertise in a related field, it is certainly an avenue worthy of exploration.

Would it be possible to radically re-configure Jewish education in the United States, so that all teaching positions would carry with them full-time salaries and benefits? At the present moment we do not have sufficient information to answer this critically important question. Research on the economics of Jewish education, and some modeling of coordinated staffing arrangements for communities of various sizes would be required before an informed deliberation on this issue could take place.

#### 2.4 Establishing the Professional Legitimacy of Jewish Teaching

As mentioned at the end of Section 1, one of the unresolved questions in secular education is the extent to which skill in teaching is derived from a special theoretical domain, and the extent to which mastery of this domain is what distinguishes good

teachers from bad ones. As complicated as this issue is in secular education, it is more so in Jewish education. With the exception of two doctoral dissertations currently in process (Chervin, n.d.; Schoenberg, 1987), no research has been conducted in the area of Jewish pedagogic content knowledge. Moreover, there is every reason to expect that the assessment of a teacher's Jewish pedagogic content knowledge would be considerably more difficult than the assessment of secular pedagogic content knowledge, since Judaic subject matters are replete with questions of values, ideology and faith. It would be inconceivable, for example, that a good Bible teacher would not have grappled with a myriad of issues concerning the origins and veracity of the text, and how bound by its commandments s/he should feel. Whereas a good mathematics teacher would probably have to have faith that mathematics is a necessary intellectual tool, this type of faith pales in comparison to that required of a teacher of Bible or liturgy. Steven Chervin, one of the first to undertake research in this area, notes:

When multiple levels of understanding are intrinsic to the subject matter, as in the case of Torah, the teacher's active process of comprehension becomes an even more salient feature of teaching. [Chervin, n.d., p.8]

However, Chervin continues, "teacher knowledge research has only begun to explore teacher beliefs."

As noted in Section 1, reformers who hope to establish the professional legitimacy of teachers in secular education look to research on teacher knowledge as a means of assessing this legitimacy. Shulman and his colleagues, whose research has been generously funded by the Carnegie Corporation and others, see the

development of a National Teacher Exam in the not-too-distant future. In light of both the complexity of the issues and the paucity of research in this area, the prospects for a Jewish Teacher Exam seem considerably more prolonged. Certainly some items on the secular examination, i.e., those dealing with pedagogical issues in the abstract, might be incorporated into a comparable Jewish exam. But, to the extent that the most sophisticated assessments of a teacher's skills concern pedagogy applied to subject matter (a claim made by Shulman and his colleagues), a good deal of work remains before a Jewish Teacher Exam can be created.

Without a method for assessing teacher knowledge, the legitimacy of teachers will have to rest on purely formalistic criteria, such as a degree from an accredited program of teacher education or the number of college or graduate courses taken in both pedagogy and Judaica. Results of teachers surveys in Los Angeles, Miami and Philadelphia indicate that teachers vary widely in this regard (see Tables 2E and 2F). Research currently being conducted by Aryeh Davidson indicates that relatively few students are enrolled in teacher-training programs for Jewish teachers, and that some of the graduates of these programs bypass teaching in favor of more lucrative administrative jobs (Davidson, 1990).

Most schools and central agencies sponsor various forms of in-service training. Too often, however, these training opportunities are in the form of one-shot, non-accumulating workshops (Flexner, 1989). One recent innovation in secular

Table 2E  
PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGE LEVEL JUDAICA COURSES TAKEN  
BY TEACHERS IN THREE CITIES

	None	1-3	3-7	7+	TOTAL
LOS ANGELES DAY SCHOOL	26	8	11	55	100%
LOS ANGELES SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL	30	20	14	36	100%

	None	1-4	5-9	Major or degree from Jewish College	TOTAL
MIAMI DAY SCHOOL	11	16	4	69	100%
MIAMI SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL	45	17	11	27	100%

	Holds Jewish Educational License	Holds degree in Jewish Studies
PHILADELPHIA DAY SCHOOL	57%	73%
PHILADELPHIA SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL	33%	34%

Sources:

Los Angeles: Aron and Phillips, 1990

Miami: Sheskin, 1988

Federation of Jewish Agencies of Greater Philadelphia, 1989



Table 2F

NUMBER OF COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSES (% IN EACH CATEGORY) IN HEBREW  
AND EDUCATION TAKEN BY LOS ANGELES TEACHERS

	Hebrew	Education
0	43	29
1-3	17	14
3-7	14	11
Over 7	26	47
TOTAL	100%	101%*

N=649

\*Totals of 99% or 101% are due to rounding.

Source: Aron and Phillips, 1990

education may be particularly relevant in this regard -- the growth, in a number of states, of programs providing alternative paths to certification, through summer programs or a carefully monitored in-service sequence of courses (Cooperman and Klagholtz, 1985). This would be an important model to explore.



### SECTION 3

#### COMMITMENT AS A CRITERION OF PROFESSIONALISM

The term "professional" derives from the verb "profess," which, originally, meant the espousal or confession of a religious belief or conviction. Though the context for most "callings" has changed from religious to secular, the essence of this original meaning resides in the third criterion of professionalism -- commitment. Beyond expertise and authority, what we expect from a professional is devotion, altruism, and service.

In medieval and early modern times, the professional dealt in a kind of knowledge and dedication that were not for sale at any price. The three vows of the religious order -- poverty, obedience and chastity -- were the extreme embodiment of the ideal, but physician, lawyer, soldier or statesman were supposed to live according to the same essential code. To be professional meant: 1) readiness to live in poverty, 2) obedience to the life and goodwill of the community, and 3) availability for what has to be done, when it has to be done. [Moran, 1989, p.202]

My own reading of the literature on professionalism leads me to the conclusion that the importance attributed to this third criterion has receded over time. Whereas in 1915 Abraham Flexner (author of the report that revolutionized medical education) spoke of "unselfish devotion" as criterion which overrode all others (cited in Becker, 1962), more recent essays on the subject have either reduced this "service orientation" to one criterion among several (Moore, 1970) or left it out entirely (Kimball, 1988).

In teaching, as well, the issue of commitment has received much less attention than those of legitimacy and autonomy. In

seeking parity with other professions, educational researchers and reformers have focused on the areas in which teaching seems at a disadvantage, namely legitimacy and autonomy. The result has been an overemphasis of the intellectual and an underemphasis of the moral and social dimensions of teaching (Jackson, 1986; Sykes, 1989). It is as though some scholars have forgotten, at least temporarily, that good teachers "are shapers not only of their students' knowledge, but also of their students' lives" (Martin, 1987, p.408).

Dwayne Huebner (1988) uses the term "vocation" as an overarching metaphor for this aspect of teaching.

The Latin root of vocation refers to a call or summons. ... To have the vocation of teacher is to permit oneself to be called by children and young people. ... [It] is to participate intentionally in the unfolding, or perhaps collapse, of this social world. [pp. 17 - 21]

Different teachers are "called" to teaching for different reasons. For some, it is a desire to work with children, to nurture and care for developing minds and hearts. For others, the continuation of a community or a tradition is the ultimate goal; they teach in order to bring a new generation "into the fold." In religious education, one finds a third group of teachers, "called" to teach in the sense implied by the original meaning of the term profession -- by strong religious feelings.

Each of these motivations suggests a different characteristic of the ideal teacher: First, the teacher should be a caring person. Second, the teacher should be an integral member of the community into which the student is being brought. Third, the teacher should be a spiritual role model.

### 3.1 The Teacher as a Caring Person

Given that the extrinsic rewards of teaching are rather limited, it is not surprising to find that most teachers focus on its intrinsic rewards instead. High on the list of intrinsic rewards is the teacher's perception of having "reached" students, of having made a difference in their lives (Feiman-Nemser and Floden, 1986, p. 510). The following excerpt from the letter of an experienced teacher to her former student exemplifies this feeling:

Ultimately, teaching is nurturing. The teacher enters a giving relationship with strangers, and then the teacher's needs must give way to the students' needs. ... My days are spent encouraging young people's growth. [Metzger and Fox, 1986, p.352]

Some teachers are outstanding in their ability to care about students in a special way, to relate to their students as people, not just as learners. In her book, Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education, Nel Noddings describes this quality:

When a teacher asks a question in class and a student responds, she receives not just the "response" but the student. What he says matters, whether it is right or wrong, and she probes gently for clarification, interpretation, contribution. She is not seeking the answer but the involvement of the cared-for. For the brief interval of dialogue that grows around the question, the cared-for indeed "fills the firmament." The student is infinitely more important than the subject matter. [Noddings, 1984, p.176]

The phrase "fills the firmament" is borrowed from Martin Buber, and echoes Buber's concern with relationships in which there is genuine encounter and dialogue, relationships in which people meet one another as "Thou"s, rather than "It"s.

Noddings argues that the over-riding and over-arching purpose of all schools ought to be the development in young people of the ability to care for each other, and for the world around them. "Teaching is a constitutively ethical activity. It is a 'moral type of friendship' in which teachers and students work together to achieve common ends (Noddings, 1986, p.505)." This is not to say that the learning of subject matter is not important, but that subject matter must be taught in such a way that enhances, rather than diminishes, care.

Is it possible for a teacher to care for an entire class of students? How can a teacher meet all these students as "Thou"s, rather than "It"s? Noddings' reply is that it is, of course, impossible to care for every student every minute, but that this type of caring is neither necessary nor appropriate. A large part of the student's day is rightfully taken up by his or her interaction with materials or with other students. When the student does interact with the teacher, however, that encounter must be characterized by caring:

[The teacher must] be totally and nonselectively present to the student -- to each student -- as he addresses me. The time interval may be brief but the encounter is total.  
[Noddings, 1984, p.180]

If we value caring as a quality, and if it is important to us that teachers be caring individuals, at least three things must happen. First, we must begin talking about caring a great deal more than we have. We must state quite explicitly that caring for children is one of the most important qualifications for a teacher to have. We must validate the superior social commitment of teachers in general, as well as individual instances of caring

in teaching. Second, we must take a close look at how schools are structured, and the ways in which these structures promote or inhibit caring (Aron, 1982). Is there time in the schedule for teachers to interact with students more informally? Is it feasible for a teacher to stay with a group of students for more than one year? Third, and most important, we must care for and about teachers. School boards, principals, parents and and members of the community at large must extend themselves to teachers, to encounter them in the way we would like them to encounter students.

### 3.2 The Teacher as an Integral Member of a Community

The ideal environment for the education of children would be a homogeneous and well-integrated society, a society in which family, school, and a web of civic and religious organizations were interwoven, each reinforcing the values and norms of the other. Historians and anthropologists have spent a great deal of time debating whether or not such harmonious societies have ever existed, in another time or place. Clearly, however, few communities of this sort have survived industrialization, modernization, and the other forces that have shaped contemporary American life.

In our own time, the institutions most naturally suited to education are embattled. Social mobility has all-but eliminated the extended family. The high rate of divorce, along with the entry of an unprecedented number of women into the workforce,

have sapped the strength of the nuclear family. Social and religious organizations of all kinds face stiff competition from both work and leisure-time activities. With the advent of mass-media and mass-marketing, America as a whole has become more homogeneous than ever before; but this surface homogeneity has come at the expense of the integrity and vitality of local communities.

Against this background, many of the innovations in public schools over the past three or four decades can be seen as attempts to have the school assume functions which were traditionally fulfilled by the family, church, or other local organizations. Head Start, drivers' education, moral education and sex education are but some of the programs introduced into schools in an effort to compensate for the waning influence of other institutions.

Thus, the school, whose original mandate was limited to formal instruction, has increasingly been asked to take on a larger, less formal, and more elusive educational function, which might be called enculturation (Westerhoff, 1976). However, the typical school, which is organized according to age-graded and self-contained classrooms and adheres to a subject-oriented curriculum, may not be the appropriate vehicle for teaching students values and attitudes in more than a superficial way (Aron, 1987, 1989). With the exception of a small number of exemplary programs, schools have not been particularly successful at enculturating students (Debenham and Parsons, 1978).

The expectation that the school will somehow cure societal



ills has filtered into the Jewish community as well, where education is seen as "the key to Jewish survival." Indeed, the need to have Jewish schools perform functions which relate more closely to enculturation than to instruction is even more urgent in the Jewish community. From the outset, Jews in America were deeply ambivalent about the extent to which they wished to identify as Jews, and practice the rituals and traditions of "the old country" (Liebman, 1973). The immigrant generation had the luxury of choosing if and when to activate rituals and customs which lay dormant within them. Succeeding generations, not having been steeped in these traditions from childhood, have had fewer resources to draw upon. To make matters worse, social mobility has largely eliminated the ancillary agents of Jewish enculturation, the extended family and the Jewish neighborhood.

The children currently enrolled in Jewish schools, who are predominantly fourth and fifth generation Americans, receive little Jewish enculturation at home. In a recent study of supplementary school students conducted by the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York (1988) only 18% of the respondents indicated that either they or their parents attend synagogue services regularly on Shabbat and holidays. Sixteen percent of the students light Shabbat candles "every Friday evening;" an additional 45% doing so "occasionally" (p.93). While one might expect students enrolled in day schools to come from homes with a richer Jewish environment, the impressionistic data collected by many educators suggests that this is not always the case, especially in non-Orthodox day schools (Cohen, 1982, p.24).

If Jewish education has any chance for success, we must consider very seriously the differences between instruction and enculturation. We must acknowledge that instruction in a subject matter (be it mathematics and literature or Hebrew and Bible) is predicated on some prior enculturation, which provides both the motivation for learning, and opportunities for its consolidation. Students in public schools, for example, have daily opportunities to see adults reading, adding and subtracting; in addition, even the youngest have some conception that success in school is connected to success in adult life. In contrast, Jewish students rarely see adults praying, speaking Hebrew, or reading the Bible; nor is competence in these areas linked to future success in the secular world.

If Jewish education is to be taken seriously, if the survival for which it is the supposed key is to be cultural and spiritual, rather than merely demographic, Jewish schools must be re-structured and reconfigured to become agents of enculturation. They must become places which model for young people what it means to be Jewish. In short, they must become communities.

What would it take to turn the Jewish school into a community, to change its orientation from instruction to enculturation? Elsewhere I have outlined five steps which such a transformation would require (Aron, 1987, 1989), including the involvement of parents at all levels of the school's operation and the inclusion of many more opportunities for informal learning. Of these five, the most important to us in this context is that a school which wants to be the core of a community must

have teachers who are deeply involved in that community.

### 3.3 The Teacher as a Religious Role Model

It would be difficult to find anyone who would argue that teachers in Jewish schools ought not to be religious role models. But what do we mean by religious? And what is a role model? These are questions which must be answered before we can discuss how important it is that our teachers have this quality, and how this quality can best be supported in the school.

Contemporary writers on religion have pointed out that the phenomena which most people call "religious" are so varied as to elude straightforward, stipulative definition (see Rosenak, 1987, chapter 5). They offer, in place of a definition, a view of religion as the confluence of a number of "religion-making" characteristics;" any particular religion would have some, but not necessarily all, of these characteristics. Clive Beck offers this type of definition, but focuses on the religious person, rather than the religious tradition. A religious person, according to Beck is one who "typically":

- a) has a system of supernatural beliefs
- b) engages in rituals and other practices related to those beliefs
- c) is associated with a tradition of such belief and practice
- d) participates in a community committed to this tradition
- e) derives from the tradition a worldview, and
- f) a relatively complete way of life [Beck, 1986]

The virtue of this definition is that it accommodates the variety of ways in which people can be said to be religious. One

person, for example, may not believe in God, but may still practice the rituals associated with a certain religious tradition. A second person might believe in God, but might practice the rituals of several religious traditions, and might not participate in any community committed to any of these traditions; by Beck's definition both of these individuals would be considered religious. Of course, not all of these ways of being religious will be acceptable to all Jews, a point to which I will return, after a discussion of religious role models.

"Role model" is a sociological term, which has rapidly become part of everyday vocabulary, because it points to a factor in contemporary life which had no parallel in more traditional societies. In the hypothetical homogeneous society alluded to in the previous section, children would form their notions of what makes a successful adult from observing their relatives and neighbors. In such a society the number of potential "roles" to which one could aspire would be quite limited; the roles assumed by one generation would probably be attractive to the next. Changes in contemporary society, however, have eroded the viability of certain traditional roles, such as housewife and shopkeeper, and contributed to the creation of new roles, such as working mother and manager. A young person growing up today faces a confusing array of possible futures -- some traditional, some current, some which are as yet unknown. In this context, the child's potential role models go far beyond family and neighbors to include authorities and public figures of all sorts.

In contemporary Jewish life, the role of the teacher is

critical, because teachers, along with rabbis, youth group leaders and camp counselors, are often the only Jewish role models available. Demographers have found that a large majority of American Jews engage in relatively few specifically Jewish activities. While roughly 75% of American Jews celebrate Hanukkah, Passover, and the High Holidays in some fashion (Cohen, 1985), and while as many as 85% affiliate with some Jewish organization at some point in their lives (Feldstein and Shrager, 1987, p.98), a much smaller percentage live a life that might be considered religious, by any of Beck's criteria (Cohen, 1988).

If Jewish education for the children of the marginally affiliated is to be anything other than an exercise in futility and hypocrisy, Jewish teachers must serve as models for how one can lead an involved and attractive Jewish life.

In the words of Jonathan Omer-Man,

A religious person today is a person who has made certain choices; and a teacher of religion is a person who has made certain choices and whose task is to educate young people who face an even wider range of choices. ... [T]he student has to be taught to make certain profound existential choices as an individual, and to live with these decisions in circumstances that are not always easy. In order to do this, the teacher has to present himself as a role model, as a person who has made such choices, and with whom the student can identify. [Omer-Man, 1982, p.22]

It is important to note that not all of the role models for living a full and committed Jewish life need be religious. Some may be more oriented towards the cultural, ethnic, or secular Zionist aspects of Jewish life. However, since most Jewish schools are synagogue-based, and even those that are independent include religious subjects in their curriculum, one would expect a large number of teachers to serve as religious role models.

What kind of religious role models do we expect Jewish teachers to be? Do we expect them to believe in God? To observe a minimum set of rituals? To have a particular worldview? These questions cannot be answered without reference to the particular school. Some schools, especially those affiliated with the Orthodox movement, may expect their teachers to adhere closely to a set of beliefs and a code of practices. Others of a more liberal persuasion may allow, and even value, a plurality of belief and practice, hoping to model for their students a variety of ways of being a committed religious Jew. All schools ought to at least consider these questions seriously, and attempt to articulate the types of religious commitment they will expect from their teachers. And all ought to think seriously about the way in which the structure and policies of the school promote or inhibit the teacher's religiosity.

### 3.4 Balancing Commitment with Legitimacy and Autonomy

Truly exemplary teachers, the teachers imprinted in our memories or featured in movies, exude a sense of professionalism which meets all three criteria -- legitimacy, autonomy, and commitment. Like Jaime Escalante, the hero of the movie Stand and Deliver, they defy convention (and the expectations of their supervisors), using their evenings and vacations to demonstrate that, with the proper techniques, even disadvantaged students can excel in calculus. Like Eliot Wigginton, the originator of the Foxfire Project, their involvement with students and commitment

to new methods knows no bounds (Wigginton, 1985). Like my children's Hebrew teacher, Amy Wallk, they are relentless in their search for the best textbook, the most involving game, the perfect class outing, and the cutest Hanukkah presents.

How reasonable is it to expect all teachers to be professional in this very full sense? Or, to ask the question differently, what factors prevent us from obtaining a teaching force which meets all three criteria? In section 1 I considered some of the problems with establishing legitimacy and encouraging autonomy, including that of the vicious cycle, in which low salaries and the lack of professionalism among the current pool of teachers make the field as a whole undesirable to talented potential recruits. The criterion of commitment, discussed in this section, raises an additional issue: the possibility that the push for legitimacy and autonomy may actually undermine commitment.

Embedded in the criteria of legitimacy and autonomy are a set of values which are intellectual and individualistic; commitment, on the other hand, is based on a configuration of values centered on empathy and community. As the examples of the three outstanding teachers indicates, the ideal professional strikes a balance between these two sets of values. It is easy to see, however, that an over-emphasis on one set of values might lead to the neglect of the other. The profession of medicine, for example, has been accused of promoting autonomy at the expense of the social good, and scientific rigor at the expense of compassion.

At the beginning of this section, I cited a passage from Gabriel Moran (1989, p.202) which enumerated three principles embedded in the original meaning of the term "professional:" 1) taking on a life of poverty; 2) maintaining obedience to the community; and 3) being available at any time and at any place. Over time, Moran argues, the notion of the professional as one who has access to special knowledge grew in importance, to the point that it overshadowed, and even undermined, these principles.

To be a professional now came to mean: 1) the possibility of earning big money, 2) independence from any and every community, and 3) control of time, place, and conditions for the exercise of one's highly specialized knowledge. [p.203]

It is time, writes Moran, to bring the pendulum back to center, to find a balance between legitimacy and autonomy, on the one hand, and commitment, on the other.

Thus, one can imagine a professional ideal in which: 1) The individual is able to support a family, but has chosen work worth doing over the biggest paycheck possible. 2) The individual is capable of acting like an entrepreneur but chooses to work in a community or team of peers. 3) The individual's technical skills are highly trained, but are set within an attitude of reverence for living things and a recognition of human finitude. [p.204]

This is the professional ideal towards which we ought to aspire. The extent to which such a balance can be achieved in the field of Jewish teaching will be the topic of the fourth, and final section of this paper.



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