


Some of the newer models share characteristics with camping — a place where people live Judaism 24/7: They live in Jewish time; the learning is experiential in nature; and the children are enmeshed in a community, which is central to the learning. The learning is seamlessly integrated with the living — centered on the life that people are experiencing at the time. It's essential that our learning be, at least some of the time, situated in a real life community of people of all ages who are practicing and finding meaning in Jewish life. Learning should not be divorced from living.

**Cyd Weissman:** *Finally, let's speak about bar and bat mitzvah: Does preparing for this milestone shape the agenda of Jewish learning environments?*

**Rob Weinberg:** One of the well-intentioned mistakes we've made over the years was to link learning requirements to bar and bat mitzvah. The result is that people feel — once they reach that milestone — that they have fulfilled their requirements and they're done. Bar and bat mitzvah should not shape our learning models, and yet they play an important role as milestones. Our mental model should be that bar mitzvah is an entry way, not an exit — an entry way to a life of learning and a sense of self as responsible for making Jewish choices.

**Joy Levitt:** I think bar and bat mitzvah should entirely shape the Jewish learning model. This would require us to radically rethink what we ask children to do in order to become bar or bat mitzvah. It is interesting that non-Orthodox communities have intensified requirements around bar and bat mitzvah. In order to grasp and utilize the power of the milestone for families and to maximize the opportunities, we ought to ask how the learning that leads up to bar and bat mitzvah will create engaged citizens in Jewish life. What are the skills and assets that we want this child to achieve in order to contribute in a robust way to our thriving Jewish community? It's not an individual experience of leadership; it's an experience of joining one's community. The psychodynamic function for the child and family might be minimized, but the sense of joining and belonging to a community would be increased.

**Rob Weinberg:** Children are not just adults in training; we err if we conceive of their education solely as preparatory.

**Maxine Alloway:** What shapes the agenda, then, is the question of how to become a true member of a community. We then must ask: What does it mean to be an adult in this community? And then we must connect that to the preparation and experience of bar and bat mitzvah. 

## Educating for Global Citizenship

JENNIFER GLASER

What does it mean today to be a good world citizen? Should such citizenship be a goal of Jewish education? Normally, we think of Jewish education in particularist terms — to provide our children with Jewish literacy and a strong sense of Jewish identity such that they are able to take their place as responsible members of the Jewish community. But this goal is only part of the story. We live in multiple overlapping communities, locally to globally. Whereas the term “peoplehood” captures the broader sense of a global Jewish community — that is, a sense of transnational Jewish belonging and responsibility — global citizenship captures a sense of shared participation with all others with whom we share this planet.

If we seek to educate the next generation to take responsibility for the flourishing of Jewish life while also being cognizant of their

responsibility as citizens of the world, how do we do it? Here, I share three dimensions of citizenship that ought to lie at the heart of our task as Jewish educators: educating toward a relational view of personal identity, developing a social imagination, and educating for responsible participation.

### Educating Toward Interdependence:

#### A Relational View of Persons

Educating for peoplehood and global citizenship rests on a relational understanding of human flourishing in which we acknowledge the fundamental interdependency of the human condition. This counters the individualism of modernity by educating toward a self-understanding in which we recognize that we become most fully ourselves through our participation in the multiple communities of which we are a part. Educating toward such

Jennifer Glaser, PhD, is a member of the senior faculty at the Mandel Leadership Institute in Jerusalem and founder and co-director of the Israeli Center for Philosophy in Education — ‘Philosophy for Life.’ Currently a visiting scholar at both Columbia University’s Teachers College and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, she focuses her research on children’s philosophical thinking, the philosophy of education, and citizenship education.

interdependency requires helping students not only to see that their independence is itself a product of being nurtured within a community of others, but to see themselves as participants in the ongoing conversations (or traditions) that give them a language through which to make sense of their own experience in the world.

### Educating Toward Social Imagination and a Vision of Good


Being an active citizen does not determine the worthiness of what we act for. As citizens, we must consider whether we are merely promoting our own interests or acting for the good of others in the community. Global citizenship (as members of the Jewish people, as a Jewish nation among other nations, and as members of the broader human community with whom we share this planet), calls for us to place our own interests in the context of the flourishing of a larger whole. This requires that we make space for our students to imagine and dream — space for our students to develop a vision of the common good that speaks to our mutual flourishing in a shared and diverse world. This, in turn, requires us to engage with our students around issues of justice and inclusion as we help them to develop a vision of Jewish and general society that includes the flourishing of diverse communities.

### Educating for Responsible Participation

Both interdependence and social imagination are cognitive orientations. But educating for global citizenship and Jewish peoplehood is not only a cognitive phenomenon. Without

participation — action in the polis — such citizenship falls flat. As educational philosopher and social activist Maxine Greene so readily reminds us:

“Imagination, intention: Neither is sufficient. There must be a transmutation of good will, of what I call *wide-awakeness* into action.... [This demands] reflection and praxis, which are inseparable from each other.... not only [to] imagine things as if they could be otherwise, but [to] move persons to begin on their own initiatives, to begin to make them so.”<sup>1</sup>

If educating for global citizenship is to move from the cognitive sphere to the world of action, we need to educate our students toward empowerment and responsibility. Empowerment enables students to recognize their own agency and their capacity to take the initiative and to recognize their responsibility for the flourishing of the Jewish people, Israel, and the world. For many Jews, the concept of *tikkun olam* has expanded its meaning: it has become a catchphrase that inspires us as global citizens in the generative task of perfecting the world and contributing to the broader issues of justice and ecological flourishing. The challenge is to see this work, fundamentally, as an ethical vision for Jewish life as we strive to respond to what it means to live as Jews in the world. This places on us as educators the responsibility of educating our children to draw upon and use the resources provided by our tradition as they seek to address contemporary and future challenges. 



<sup>1</sup> Maxine Greene: “Prologue to Art, Social Imagination and Action,” *Journal of Educational Controversy* (Western Washington University), 5:1, Winter 2010.



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*Sh'ma* is **published** by the Sh'ma Institute, an independent nonprofit established by Lippman Kanfer Family Foundation.

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ISSN: 0049-0385 FEBRUARY 2011. WITH ALL SPONSORSHIPS, *SH'MA* RESERVES COMPLETE EDITORIAL CONTROL OF CONTENT.



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