



From In-Service Training to Professional Development: *Alternative Paradigms in Israel for Diaspora Educators*

Lisa D. Grant and
Alex D. M. Pomson

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SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) invests significant resources in a wide variety of Israel-based teacher education programs. These programs fall into two broad categories:

1. Those in which JAFI acts as a direct service provider, working closely with Diaspora sponsors to plan and deliver a full program in Israel; and
2. Those in which JAFI provides funding to schools, Boards of Jewish Education, or independent organizations to support programs designed without extensive guidance or involvement from educational staff at the Jewish Agency.

There is no typical JAFI program, either in terms of the planning and delivery of experiences in Israel or in the expectations of participants before and after their experience in Israel. Some programs are integrated with teachers' ongoing work in schools and result in expectations that, on their return, participants will prepare educational activities or curricular units based on their Israel experiences. In other cases, few demands are made of participants other than that they participate as Jewish educators in an Israel experience.

1.1 The goals of this research

Little research has been conducted to help understand what different kinds of programs accomplish in terms of their impact on the personal and professional lives of participants. More fundamentally, no attempt has yet been made to build a conceptual framework that can help define JAFI's role in providing Israel-based professional development for North American Jewish educators.

This paper attempts to fill in these gaps. Through an investigation of two different programs, we ask what should be the key characteristics of professional development for Diaspora educators in Israel. We explore what are the benefits of doing such a training program in Israel, and, we consider how time should be spent in order to maximize Israel as a resource for Jewish teacher education.

1.2 *The researchers*

This report is the product of a collaborative inquiry conducted by two researchers, Professors Lisa D. Grant and Alex Pomson. Each has a strong familiarity with the North American and Israeli Jewish educational scenes. Grant is Assistant Professor of Jewish Education at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, in New York. She has published studies of adult trips to Israel (2001a, 2001b), of Israeli educators on a study tour of the United States (Grant, Kelman, and Regev, 2001), and of American educators traveling to Israel (Grant and Robins, 2001). Pomson is Associate Professor of Jewish Teacher Education at York University in Toronto and has studied the teaching and learning of North American Jewish educators inside and outside the classroom (Pomson, 2000, 2002, in press).

SECTION 2. FRAMING OUR INQUIRY

The work of Israel-based professional development for Diaspora Jewish educators sits at the intersection of a variety of research fields. In this section, we review some of the research that provides a context for our exploration of the professional development programs developed and/or sponsored by the Jewish Agency.

2.1 *Professional development in general education:*

The richest context for thinking about JAFI's work in Israel-based teacher education is that provided by research into paradigms and practices of professional development for teachers.

“Professional development” (PD) refers to “work-related learning opportunities for practicing teachers”. This term possesses dual connotations. It refers to:

1. The actual learning opportunities in which teachers engage (the content and context, pedagogy and purpose of specific activities); and
2. The learning that may occur when teachers participate in these activities (the transformations in their knowledge, understandings, skills and commitments).

The form and content of professional development is predicated on a vision of teaching. In other words, what and how we want teachers to teach determines what and how we expect teachers to learn.

2.1.1 Purposes of professional development

In recent years, as conceptions of teaching and learning have moved away from a view of teachers transmitting information and children listening and remembering, a consensus has emerged as to the *purposes* and *practices* of the professional development needed if teachers are to teach in new and more effective ways.

Feinman-Nemser (2001) identifies four central tasks or purposes of professional development:

1. Deepening and extending teachers' subject matter knowledge for teaching.
2. Extending and refining teachers' repertoires so that they can connect ever more effectively with students' needs and interests.
3. Strengthening the dispositions and skills of teachers to study (and improve) their own teaching.
4. Expanding responsibilities for leadership development so that teachers can participate (as leaders) in the larger life of schools and the profession.

Hamachek (1999) argues that the purposes of *professional* development are connected to the goals of *personal* development. The development of teachers' knowledge, understanding and skill is nourished by personal and personality growth. Professional development, he suggests, must aim also to:

5. Nurture the teacher's personal self.

2.1.2 Characteristics of professional development

Guskey (1995) cautions that it is impossible to make precise statements about the elements of an effective professional development program because of enormous variations in educational contexts. He, and others, therefore offer procedural guidelines

that form a framework for developing an *optimal mix* of processes and technologies that will work best in specific contexts at particular points in time.

For Feinman Nemser (2001) this mix can be described in the following terms:

1. In place of superficial, episodic sessions, teachers need *sustained and substantive learning opportunities*.
2. Instead of discrete, external events provided for teachers, professional development should be *built into the ongoing work of teaching and relate to teachers' questions and concerns*.
3. Although teachers need access to knowledgeable sources outside their immediate circle, professional development should also *tap local expertise* and the *collective wisdom* that thoughtful teachers generate by working together.

2.2 Professional development in Jewish educational settings

There is a limited body of research that explores the extent to which this mix of processes is employed in Jewish educational settings. In a number of studies, however, Dorph and Holtz have found that the great majority of professional development initiatives in Jewish education display few, if any, of the four qualities they identify as being characteristic of what they call the new paradigm in professional development (Holtz et al., 2000; Dorph and Holtz, 2000). Instead, they conclude, professional development in Jewish educational settings is, invariably, weak on Jewish content; geared to a broad rather than specific audience; and short-term and episodic in nature, rather than systematic and a regular part of life in the school (Woocher, 1997; Gamoran et al., 1998; Flexner and Gold, 2003).

Jewish educational leaders are just beginning to realize the importance of investing in establishing and sustaining ongoing professional development activities. In the last several years, a number of exciting national and local programs have attempted to create a more sustained and integrated approach to professional development. Some of these programs, funded by grants, have already come and gone. Others are still in the formative stages. Overall, though, we may be seeing a shift in communal attitudes towards professional development in Jewish education. National initiatives such as the

Mandel Foundation's Teacher Educator Institute and JESNA's Task Force on Professional Recruitment, Development, Retention, and Placement, have brought the issue to the fore and are pushing educational and Jewish communal leaders to be more thoughtful and to invest more resources in professional development.

It remains unclear, however, where Israel trips for teachers fit into this changing landscape. Relatively few Jewish schools afford their faculty the opportunity to participate in a professional development seminar in Israel. And among those who do, it is not clear whether such trips are viewed more as elaborate one-time workshops designed to instill a stronger sense of connection to Israel, or whether these programs are seen as an integral part of an overall vision of professional development for the school.

2.3 Israel in the professional development of Jewish educators

The literature on the role of an Israel trip in furthering the professional development goals of individual teachers and their schools is severely limited. Almost all of the research on Israel trips focuses on personal experiences in Israel, with most studies concentrating on the Israel experience programs for teens and young adults (e.g., Chazan, E. Cohen, S. Cohen, Heilman, Goldberg, Herman, Mittleberg, Saxe et al).

2.3.1 Research on adult learners visiting Israel

A few scholars have explored the question of the potential for a trip to Israel to stimulate reflection and/or change in an adult's life (Klein-Katz, 1990; Reisman, 1993; Grant, 2000). We know from this research that an Israel trip can have a profound impact in strengthening participants' Jewish identity and commitment to the Jewish people. Well-programmed experiences create and solidify intense bonds of community both among the group participants, and in their sense of connection to the community of Israel and the Jewish people as a whole. Most programs, however, are less effective at providing opportunities to explore Jewish values and religious practice (Cohen, 1995; Breakstone, 1998), issues that arguably should be at the heart of any Jewish school's mission.

2.3.2 Research on North American Jewish educators visiting Israel

The small body of research about what happens to North American Jewish educators when they participate in a professional development seminar in Israel indicates that a carefully crafted experience can influence the personal and professional lives of Jewish educators. In a study of the Cleveland Israel Educators Seminar, Abrams, Klein-Katz, and Schachter (1996) found that the components of the trip that contributed to its success were: clear goals that are articulated in advance and addressed throughout the program; follow-through – strong leadership and a willingness to push the agenda; and time for reflection – translating personal experience into teacher thinking.

Another study showed how important strong leadership is to sustaining the professional development initiative (Grant and Robins, 2001). A study of two Jewish preschools who participated in a two-year program of Judaic studies that culminated in a two-week Israel trip, discovered that while the teachers from both schools had highly positive views about their learning experiences and Israel trip, only one school continued serious study after the trip and showed significant enrichment of its Jewish studies curriculum. The key difference between the two preschools was in the commitment of the principal and congregational rabbi to continue the learning process and to promote organizational change. Without this commitment to ongoing, integrated learning, the experiences quickly faded into pleasant memories without effecting any meaningful change in the classroom.

2.4 Questions raised by the literature review

Our review of research literature demonstrates how the field of general education defines the mix of processes in high quality professional development. We see that these processes are not consistently present in most Jewish educational settings. We note also that, while professional development at the local level is frequently characterized by one-time workshops that are not closely linked to an overall strategy, it is not clear how an Israel trip for teachers is viewed even when programmed over a number of weeks.

Encouragingly, our minimal data suggest that a well-organized, well-led trip that affords participants the opportunity to translate their personal experiences into educational practice can make a difference in the quality of teaching. We also see how strong leadership support for sustaining a trip's inspiration is essential for ongoing school improvement.

FRAMING QUESTIONS

The few studies reviewed here leave many questions unanswered:

- How important is it for an Israel trip for teachers to be part of an overall professional development strategy?
- How important is it for schools to send teams of teachers to Israel rather than just individuals?
- How much support and direction should program leaders provide in helping participants make meaning from their experiences, as individuals and as teachers? Correspondingly, how much time should be set aside for formal reflection sessions and 'teacher talk' while on the trip?
- Should such trips have the same goals in mind as the more personal "Israel experience" programs?
- Should Israel trips promote deeper thinking about what it means to be a Jewish educator and how Israel fits within the overall goals for their educational setting?

We believe that answers to these questions can provide a substantive framework for quality professional development experiences in Israel.

SECTION 3. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH

3.1 The programs studied

The questions reviewed here were at the heart of an in-depth examination of two different teacher-training seminars that took place during the summer of 2003. Both programs received JAFI funding; however, only one was developed in close collaboration with

JAFI education professionals. Each program articulated distinct goals, composition, and approaches.

3.1.1 KIVUNIM

Kivunim, the Eugene Weiner Israel Summer Institute is a multi-school trip created and directed by Peter Geffen¹, founder of the Abraham Joshua Heschel School in New York City, and consultant to many Jewish day schools across the United States. *Kivunim* was established in 1999 and yearly runs a two-week program in Israel “aimed at dramatically enhancing the intellectual, aesthetic, and creative discourse in Jewish day schools across North America” (Contact, Winter 2002). In personal conversation, Geffen noted that the unspoken goal of the experience is to help participants understand that Israel is at the core of the Jewish people (6/5/03).

Kivunim consists of two different tracks – one for first timers and a second “advanced” track for teachers who have already participated in at least one *Kivunim* experience. The 59 participants in the 2003 *Kivunim* group included seventeen recipients of the Grinspoon-Steinhardt prize for excellence in congregational education. In 2003, *Kivunim* Alef was based in and around Jerusalem for the entire trip, while *Kivunim* Bet-Gimel-Dalet, the “advanced” group, spent several days in the south, exploring the desert in greater depth. Participants on the “advanced” *Kivunim* track typically come from schools that have a close connection with Geffen, who helped establish many of them, and for whom he serves as a consultant on an ongoing basis. Thus, these participants know Geffen well and are attuned to his approaches to teaching Israel and to professional development in general. The two groups spent several days together before the “advanced” participants split off. In this way, they helped reinforce the philosophy of the experience and generated enthusiasm for return trips among the first-timers.

While *Kivunim* receives substantial funding support from JAFI, the program is planned and run independently, without significant day-to-day involvement of Jewish Agency

¹ Peter Geffen was recently appointed Executive Director of the Center for Jewish History in New York. He plans to continue to run the *Kivunim* program after the assumption of these new duties.

educational staff. The program is unusual in not being shaped by a coalition of funders or stakeholders. There is no Israeli tour guide or tour educator per se on the trip. Instead, each presentation and site visit is lead by experts in the particular area of focus. The goal is to model an intellectual approach to curricular integration. Geffen describes the trip as a “discontinuous experience” that is designed to provoke thinking about a multitude of issues relating to Israeli culture, politics, society, religion, and history. There is no expectation of ‘finishing’ or producing anything, in terms of classroom materials or curriculum, but rather of exposing teachers to multiple and complex dimensions of Israel in order to inspire their own teaching of Israel and of Judaism.

3.1.2 AMEINU

The second program, entitled *Ameinu*, was organized by Dr. Shimshon Hammerman, principal of the Solomon Schechter Academy of Montreal. This was a much smaller group of thirteen participants, including Hammerman and nine teachers from the Solomon Schechter Academy, as well as three teachers from another Jewish day school in Montreal. The trip in 2003 was the third occasion that Hammerman had organized a school-based trip for his faculty, and at this point in time, close to half of the faculty in his school has been on at least one of these three trips.

The two principal visionaries for the trip were Shimshon Hammerman and Gaby Kleiman at the Jewish Agency. Both indicated that they collaborated closely to design the program theme and itinerary. Like many groups, *Ameinu* sought and received funding from three major sources, the Jewish Agency, Partnership 2000, and the Jewish National Fund. Each organization supported different aspects of the program. As a result of this funding formula, the group had two different tour educators/scholars, one from the Jewish Agency who led the first part of the program in Israel, and

The participants

Eight of the nine teachers from the Solomon Schechter Academy were from the Hebrew faculty. Most were Israeli born, but had been living in Montreal for many years. The ninth was a non-Jewish French teacher, who had participated on all three of the school’s Israel seminars.

Most of the lectures and discussions during the trip were in Hebrew since the only participant who was not fluent in Hebrew was the French teacher. Dr. Hammerman or a fellow teacher provided simultaneous translation for her at these times.

The *Kivunim* group included a varied mix of Jewish and general studies teachers from both day and congregational schools. There were nine non-Jews in the group and fourteen of the fifty-nine participants were Israeli-born or had lived in Israel for a significant period of time. The entire program was conducted in English.

a second one from the Jewish National Fund, who led the second part after the completion of the JAFI program.

The Solomon Schechter Academy's seminars in Israel are designed around a particular theme that becomes a major interdisciplinary curricular focus for the school in the year following the trip. In 2003, the theme selected was "Majority and Minority: The World Village." The program itinerary included a series of presentations, visits, and conversations to explore contemporary and historical issues affecting different types of minority communities in Israel. For example, the group visited a Druze village, met with an early member of a kibbutz in the Galilee and with new immigrants from the former Soviet Union. They also heard a lecture on how Israeli society viewed survivors of the Shoah during the early years of the State.

Before arriving in Israel, the *Ameinu* group spent four days in Poland, visiting Shoah memorial sites in Warsaw, Crakow, and Auschwitz. The principal and several teachers from their Partnership 2000 sister school, Afik, in Beer Sheva, joined them in Poland. When they arrived in Israel, several more Afik teachers joined the group for four days of touring and collaboration. Time was allocated during these four days for the two faculties to work on curriculum planning around their shared theme.

3.2 Research Methodology

Our research employed a case study approach, and was organized into three phases:

1. We gathered preliminary data about the goals and expectations of the respective programs by interviewing the program planners and leaders, as well as three participants from each of the two trips.
2. We spent a total of three days as participant observers on each trip while the groups were in Israel. This fieldwork included participation in the life of the program and on-site interviews with the participants, planners and deliverers.
3. After the trips, once the school year resumed, we conducted post-trip site visits at the Solomon Schechter Academy in Montreal, and at two of the participating *Kivunim* schools, the Rodeph Sholom Day School and the Abraham Joshua

Heschel School in New York City. These latter two schools represent opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of their relationship with *Kivunim*. Faculty from the Heschel School has participated in all of the trips *Kivunim* has run to Israel since 1999, and the school has a long-standing commitment to sending faculty to Israel for professional development. In contrast, this was the first organized Israel trip of any sort for faculty at Rodeph Sholom.

The program leaders from both trips shared written materials with us including program evaluations, literature about their school or program, newsletters, and at the Solomon Schechter school, curriculum-planning documents. We visited classrooms and interviewed three teachers at the Solomon Schechter Academy in Montreal, two teachers from the Heschel School, and two teachers and the upper elementary school principal from Rodeph Sholom Day School to assess the impact of the Israel experience on their personal and professional lives.

SECTION 4. FINDINGS

4.1 *Impact on participants*

The two programs studied have multiple levels of impact on participants. Without question, individuals are personally enriched. They strengthen and/or renew their bond with the land and people of Israel. Beyond that, they bring home resources, approaches, ideas, and questions that shape their teaching, regardless of subject matter. At the deepest level, they rethink not only the content of their teaching, but also actually *how* they teach. It is at this last level where the potential lies for significant institutional improvement and change.

A caution about impact

Both programs effectively communicate their goals to participants, who seem to have understood them and embraced them. In the case of *Kivunim*, these goals are focused on the existential (the promise of personal transformation), while in *Ameinu's* case these emphasize the utilitarian (building connections with colleagues in Israel, enriching the school's cross-curricular theme).

The participants' evident embrace of the programs' goals may have some unintended consequences.

- i) Participants may not be receptive to experiences whose potential impact falls outside a program's stated goals.
- ii) Reports of a program's impact may be colored by a self-fulfilling rhetoric in which a program is said to have had a certain affect because it was expected to have had that affect.

4.1.1 *Impact on the teacher as person*

The follow-up interviews with participants, while subject to the methodological vagaries of informants' self-reports, show that, for Jews and non-Jews alike, the trips had a profound impact on participants' personal and professional identities.

A number of *Kivunim* participants reflected on how the program changed the way they think of themselves as Jews. One, for example, described her post-*Kivunim* trip to Greece and Turkey:

I was so homesick for Israel in Greece. I felt like a stranger. It made me feel so much more Jewish! I felt it was my mission to seek out all the Jewish places and people I could find after having been on *Kivunim*. I never would have done that before. (10/2/03)

For another:

This trip came at the right time for me. I've really begun to reconnect to Judaism. Right before the trip, I separated from my non-Jewish husband. I also started going to services more often. I'm planning to take a class at the JCC this fall. (9/17/03).

For some *Ameinu* participants, the program changed how they thought of themselves, although this was as much about their professional as personal identities.

The program was very important. It taught us and inspired us. It reminded us of the importance of being Zionist emissaries in the Diaspora, for our students, our colleagues, the parents, and the community at large.

Reviewing our data, it seems that the trips had a significant impact on the personal identities of two large sub-populations of participants: Diaspora educators of Israeli background, and non-Jewish educators working in Jewish schools.

4.1.1(a) "Israeli" participants

Although "Israeli" participants struggle to articulate exactly how the trip affected them (perhaps because their reflections are often composed in a second language), they signal that it engaged an aspect of their personal identities which is often problematic, and which in this context is confusing. (It is not clear, for example, who is an Israeli and who isn't, when Diaspora Jewish educators, who are themselves Israeli, "visit" Israel on a program frequently delivered by Anglo-Saxon *olim*.)

These complexities are captured by the following reflections from *Kivunim* participants:

It might seem weird. “You are an Israeli” my Israeli friends said. “Why should you waste your time traveling with American educators? Are you their tour guide?” they asked. After one or two examples I gave about the experiences I had during *Kivunim*, everybody wanted to join the program the following year.... *Kivunim* is a program that helped me to strengthen my identity as a Jew, an Israeli, an Educator and a *Shaliach*. (written comments)

We have some wonderful spiritual moments. We sit in Eilat and have Kabbalat Shabbat at Yam Suf – it’s unbelievable. The spirituality that Peter brings is wonderful. I never thought that I could teach tefilah as a secular Israeli, but he empowered me. (Interview 6/19/03)

4.1.1(b) *Non-Jewish participants*

For the non-Jewish participants in these trips the benefits are much less complicated, though no less significant. Trips like these transform their understanding of their students, their colleagues and the community in which they work.

The one non-Jewish participant in the *Ameinu* program explained that this was why she was taking a third trip to Israel with her school:

Each time I go to Israel, it helps me feel more a part of the community where I work. Even though I’m not Jewish, it’s important for me to support the school, the children and my colleagues as much as I am able.

These sentiments were shared by all of the non-Jewish participants in *Kivunim*. One of these elaborated on what this meant in both personal and professional terms:

The trip was perfect timing for me. As a non-Jew working in a Jewish school, I felt it was essential for me to become familiar with Jewish culture, history, and religion as soon as possible. What better way to do that than to go to Israel! ... This trip boosted my confidence in working with the Jewish Studies department. I now have a much better understanding of the complexity of Israel and the variety of viewpoints held by Jews... Now I can talk with the Jewish studies teachers about the

What Israel to teach?

Given the diversity of participants, it is not surprising that the programmatic content of these trips eschewed many contemporary Israeli controversies. While *Kivunim* strives to present a more complex picture of Israeli society (and especially the relationship between Arabs and Jews), on occasion there is a tendency to idealize some aspects of the Israel experience. Thus, *Kivunim*’s visit to a Bedouin camp was constructed as an opportunity to reach across time to Abrahamic society rather than to raise questions about more controversial issues concerning the relationships between Bedouin and Jewish Israelis. This tendency was more apparent with *Ameinu*. For example, when visiting the Israeli Supreme Court in Jerusalem, the group’s walk back to the bus was used as an opportunity to admire the splendor of the Keneset Rose Garden but not to discuss the campaign being waged by single parent families whose leaders were encamped within earshot. For all its richness, the program perpetuated idealized images of Israel that were viewed from within the kind of protective bubble that invariably envelops “Israel Experience” participants.

bigger issues. For instance, teaching Hanukkah goes beyond learning in what direction you light the candles.

4.1.2 Impact on the teacher's practice

The participants found it easiest to talk about the trips' impact on their teaching practice, or, to be precise, about the ideas, resources and techniques they'd encountered in Israel that they *intended* to introduce into their classrooms. In these terms, the program brought to their attention themes and techniques which they, in turn, planned to bring to own their students.

Thus, participants from both *Ameinu* and *Kivunim* cited a number of discoveries – paper cutting, making an artifact box, using photographs to personalize teaching, sending videos of life in Canada to a sister school in Israel – all of which they intended to use on their return. Certain returning *Kivunim* participants also talked about how they'd applied ideas and resources from previous trips in their classrooms.

A quotation from a teacher on her fourth *Kivunim* trip conveys how this kind of impact can work in the best of cases:

Each year, our school sends a team of teachers. Back at school, we work together on projects that come out of moments with Peter. Here are some examples: On one trip, we studied the laws of what makes a kosher Sukkah, at Neot Kedumin. We took that idea and adapted it for our kids. Another time, we went to the Ghetto Fighters' Museum and learned about Janus Korzcak and kites. Now, every year we celebrate Sukkot with kites and teach the students about Korzcak in a very age-appropriate way. The first year Peter took us to see the Sheba choir (of Ethiopian Jews). Then I did a whole unit around Passover around the exodus of the Jews from Ethiopia. Then the choir was in Dayton and we took our kids. More recently, we had the Ethiopian dance troupe, Eskesta, visit our community and our kids felt so comfortable because they had been exposed to Ethiopians.

Juxtaposed with the literature reviewed earlier, these reflections require careful reading. As was seen previously, most scholars caution against anticipating any lasting pedagogical impact from “one-off” encounters/workshops, no matter how powerfully experienced. If, in *Kivunim*'s case, returnees report integrating lessons from their Israel experience into their teaching, then special factors may be at work. First, as indicated in

the above quote, Peter Geffen's ongoing involvement in the schools to which participants return may foster a connection between peak experiences in Israel and the process of curriculum building in the classroom. Indeed, Geffen's description of the type of professional development experiences he designs during the school year closely mirror the *Kivunim* philosophy of high quality creative and intellectual experiences (6/5/03). Secondly, the overall organization of the *Kivunim* trip may ensure that powerful programmatic components are not felt discretely but as part of a larger experience. This is certainly the case for the fifteen participants who have now been on three different *Kivunim* experiences and who, according to Geffen and the participants themselves, have developed a bond that extends well beyond the time spent in Israel. But it may even be true for first time participants who seem to have embraced Geffen's holistic viewpoint, as suggested by the following comments:

Sitting back and recalling it all now, it seems that, in truth, everything worked to great effect. It was not simply the quality of the guides, lecturers and teachers, nor the outstanding programming and unparalleled sites and institutions that were availed to us, but the fact that it was done in such a natural way that we were not simply allowed access into the cultural, historic and anthropological wealth of Jerusalem and Israel, but rather that it was made accessible, [and we were] afforded ways to let it seep into our consciousness: not neatly encapsulated like a bland tourist experience, but growing, overflowing beyond the confines of memory, and very much alive.

4.1.3 Impact on teacher thinking

Participants spoke most frequently about changes in teaching practice relating to the tools and techniques of teaching. They described how experiences on the trip gave them more resources and ideas for teaching activities. These kinds of impacts may enrich existing curriculum and may also make learning more meaningful, but they neither attend to the deep structure of teaching and learning, nor do they enable teachers to reflect on their own learning to build compelling educational experiences for students.

There is evidence that this kind of deeper teacher learning *did* take place on both trips, though more seemed to occur with the *Kivunim* participants. This may be due, in part, to the open-ended nature of the *Kivunim* experience as suggested above. In contrast, the *Ameinu* trip had a particular curricular focus, which may have directed participants into

more concrete thinking about methods rather than into ways of knowing themselves as teachers and learners.

For the Solomon Schechter participants in the *Ameinu* program, the trip to Poland cast a giant shadow over their entire Israel experience. All of those interviewed after returning to Canada, referred to the Poland trip and the related experiences in Israel at Masu'ah and Yad Va'shem as the most powerful aspects of their program. This is the domain in which the more serious thinking about how to teach also occurred. Interviewees particularly noted Rachel Korazim's session at Yad V'Shem and Professor Hannah Yablonka's lecture as ones that "opened new doors" for thinking about how to teach the Shoah to young children. One said: "I need to think about how to really personalize history and help the kids connect on a more personal level". Another spoke about how Korazim's presentation made her think about starting Holocaust education with the Righteous Gentiles, the good, rather than the evil that exists in the world.

Rachel Korazim was a part of the *Kivunim* experience as well. Her sessions were the highlight of the trip for a number of participants. One explained:

When we went down the Avenue of the Righteous Gentiles, Rachel told us that Yad Va'Shem is designed so that the path is the lead in to the museum, but that most people end their visit there rather than begin it. She asked us to think about what happens if you started at the end with the hope in humanity that this avenue conveys, rather than the despair of destruction that is the message most of us take away? It was like an amazing light bulb went off in my head. Now, I'm re-writing my whole curriculum. I'm going to start with Jewish life in Europe before the war, rather than death.

When asked to elaborate on how she planned to re-write her curriculum, this first-time *Kivunim* participant spoke about how the whole idea behind the program had influenced her thinking.

I used to compartmentalize my teaching. The first half of the year we did civil rights, tolerance, and so on, leading up to our annual presentation on Martin Luther

Why were Rachel Korazim's sessions at Yad Vashem a highlight for participants in both programs?

Korazim is an exceptional educator who engages students with great skill, but the popularity of her sessions might be attributed to factors of relevance in the delivery of other sessions:

- * She addressed something that challenges many teachers: how to teach Holocaust to children (the sessions thus related to teachers' questions and concerns)
- * She was not just teaching technique, she challenged fundamental educational assumptions about how to approach this topic (this was substantial and not superficial)
- * She brought together the emotional and intellectual, the personal and professional, viewing a site of educational importance through an educational lens.

King Day, which is a big thing at our school. Then, in the second half of the year, I would do the Jewish stuff. Now I know that I *must* integrate more. I need to move from discrete units to a more thematic approach. *Kivinum* made me look at the big picture and see how seemingly disparate parts can be related and made more profound. So if I do a lesson on the First Amendment one day and a story of the Warsaw Ghetto on the next, I can make that work. Because personal freedom is exactly what they didn't have in the Warsaw Ghetto! That just makes both subjects so much more alive.

4.2 Impact on schools

The unit of analysis we employed in Section 4.1 for exploring the trips' impacts was the individual teacher. This focus corresponds to the emphasis employed by programmers when collecting feedback from participants. We want to suggest, however, that when evaluating the impact of programs it may be more useful to adopt a different analytical frame.

As is widely confirmed by research literature, educational change is both an individual and an organizational process. To be meaningful, professional development must engage the individual. To be effective, it must operate on an institutional plane. In this section, we want to examine the impact of these programs on the institutions from which the participants came.

The two trips we studied work with a variety of institutional purposes. This led to different program foci and different impacts. *Ameinu* was a school-based trip that had a particular curricular focus embodied in the theme "Majority and Minority." Even though there were three participants from another school in Montreal, the program was designed around the Solomon Schechter Academy's curricular philosophy and goals. In contrast, *Kivunim* had a different focus, which was about inspiring individuals intellectually and emotionally in order to inspire creativity and passion about Israel but also about teaching. Though *Kivinum* had a singular purpose, it addressed multiple audiences, including first-timers and multi-year participants, day school and congregational school educators, teachers from schools that have a long-term relationship with Geffen and those who did not.

Each of these individuals and groups may have experienced the trip at a different level. It is useful to examine these purposes more carefully, and, where possible, to reflect on the programs' anticipated and actual institutional impact.

4.2.1 *A basis for ongoing curriculum development*

For the Solomon Schechter Academy in Montreal (SSA) – the primary audience and partner in the *Ameinu* program - the Israel program was designed as a key component of the school's ongoing curriculum development work.

At SSA, Israel education is central to the school's mission, and is integral to the teaching of Judaism. Israel provides a common denominator for the religiously diverse population at the school. As Hammerman put it, without any trace of irony: "that's one area where we cross paths without any theological conflict or problem with observance" (Interview 10/9/03). Israel pervades the Jewish studies curriculum and is linked to the general studies curriculum through the development of an annual cross-curricular theme.

At SSA, the trip to Israel is seen as initiating a process of curriculum development that is expected to continue during the following year. In 2002, the trip focused on water. In 2003, the trip was conceived around a more abstract theme of Majority and Minority. However, a variety of factors (financial, ideological, and political) meant that other emphases were incorporated into the program, which may have diluted the theme's overall impact. Thus, the trip began with a visit to Poland that (perhaps unintentionally) had a significant impact on how participants experienced Israel once the program started. In conceptual terms, then, the theme provided the program with its most explicit *raison d'être*, but, in practice, circumstantial factors (above all, the need to work with a coalition of funders and stakeholders) and the abstract nature of the theme itself made it difficult to induce the programmatic core from its various components.

While the theme did not stand out as the central feature of the trip for many of the teachers, it was brought back into focus once they returned to school. At the end of the

2002-03 school year, Hammerman introduced the cross-curricular theme, “Majority and Minority: The World Village” at an all-day professional development seminar where he spoke about particularism, pluralism, and multiculturalism in preparation for the Israel seminar (email correspondence 6/25/03). The thematic emphasis was further embellished and reinforced at a special planning day for all teachers held before the start of the school year in September. This planning day included a screening of a 56-minute video shown to all faculty of the group’s Israel trip that was intended to share and inspire. The day’s main business was, however, to develop an outline for the theme’s application to different year groups. In this process, the nine teachers who participated in the Israel trip drew on their experiences in Israel while negotiating with their colleagues who did not go on the trip. Their discussions resulted in the adoption of grade-by-grade plans for curricular integration of the broader theme.

The Israel trip also led to some other specific outcomes. It enabled SSA teachers to meet and begin work with colleagues in their sister school, the Afik School in Beer Sheva. Some Afik teachers accompanied them to Poland, while a larger group joined them for four days in Israel. This interaction was intended to lead to joint curriculum planning, which occurred in a great flurry of activity on the bus as the group traveled from site to site. Certain further programs in Israel – a visit to a Dead Sea Scroll exhibit at the Israel Museum, and a workshop with a Jewish paper cutter – resulted in programmatic follow-up in Montreal, with a week long visit from the paper cutter to the school, and an excursion by students to a Scroll exhibit at a Montreal museum.

4.2.2 A basis for ongoing professional development

Kivunim seems to play a central role in cultivating a shared sense of purpose for participants regardless of their position or place of work, without directing them to specific curricular outcomes. This is consonant with Peter Geffen’s philosophy of teacher development that is rooted in his assumption that professional development must be first and foremost an intellectual experience. As he said, “the last thing that takes place in most schools is conversation about big ideas. People are consumed with methods and tools. There is no time to talk. *Kivunim* is all about creating intellectual excitement –

both in Jewish and general studies” (6/5/03). This philosophy appears to extend to his thinking about on-site professional development in the schools where he serves as a consultant. The programs he described all had a creative, experiential focus where he gets “big names to work with teachers to apply very high quality thinking and practical creation in the classroom” (6/5/03).

Understandably, Geffen’s thinking has had a greater impact on those schools where he has an ongoing relationship. In our study, we looked at two schools at different ends of the spectrum in this regard – the Heschel School, which Geffen founded and where he has had a continual relationship, and the Rodeph Sholom Day School, which was a new participant in *Kivunim* and where Geffen has not been involved. While many other factors shape a school’s orientation both to teaching Israel and professional development, Geffen’s influence clearly can be seen in the schools’ differing positions.

For the Heschel School the program in Israel promises a yearly experience of great intensity for large numbers of teachers and staff, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Over time, it has helped to cultivate a set of shared values and concerns for all who work in the school.

The Heschel School has a long-established connection with the *Kivunim* program, which derives from Geffen’s central role in both endeavors. The school’s approach to teaching Israel resonates with the approach he has taken in shaping the program in Israel. In the school’s mission statement, Israel is seen as presenting ongoing challenges and opportunities, as well as being central to Jewish self-understanding and spirituality. These are themes which echo through the *Kivunim* program and which seem to inform the sensibilities of participants who come from the school. Thus, as one *Kivunim* participant from Heschel put it when asked to describe the school’s mission to teaching Israel:

We recognize the importance, vitality, and struggle that occurs in a vibrant, changing, and growing country. We also tell our students that how they view Israel will have a direct impact on what happens there. In other words, their actions matter. We want to convey the sense that they are active participants in the evolution of Israel and that they should take that responsibility seriously

4.2.3 A basis for re-visioning the school's purposes

For the Rodeph Sholom School – a first-time participant in the 2003 *Kivunim* program – the trip is neither integrated with ongoing curriculum concerns nor is it connected to a systematic approach to professional development. Nevertheless, by virtue of the presence of eight of the school's teachers in this year's program, there is the (as yet unrealized) possibility that's the trip's impact can be greater than the sum of its influences on the individuals concerned.

The 2003 trip occurred at a transitional moment for the school, when it appears to be in the process of redefining its mission as a Jewish school, particularly with regards to the relationship between the school's general studies and Jewish studies curriculum. In this context, the trip helped individual teachers and administrators to imagine ways of introducing Israel education into the school, and it also pushed them to conceive of themselves (sometimes for the first time) as Jewish educators. As one participant put it:

I came to Rodeph from the public sector. This is my opportunity to see if we can excel in both general and Jewish studies. My commitment to curricular integration is very high. I'm just not sure yet how to go about doing it. Going on *Kivunim* was really helpful for me because it gave me contacts with many other day schools. Now I have a network for sharing ideas.

For all their power, the impact of these experiences remained uncertain at the institutional level without a framework of ongoing institutional support. Indeed this uncertainty may even have been intensified by the time spent in Israel. Before departure, one Rodeph Sholom participant explained that, "It's sort of an unresolved question of how Jewish the school wants to be". In conversation, a couple months after her return, this question seemed only more complicated:

The trip left me with lots of questions about the Jewish mission of our school. I would like to know more about what Rodeph Sholom wants in terms of Jewish education. I sense that the school wants more integration but I'm really not at all sure where Israel fits.

Without an institutional context that can give shape and significance to these experiences, it is possible that their impact will dissipate. The participants in the trip see themselves as champions of a new vision – and it is encouraging that as a consequence of their positive

evaluation, the school has asked to reserve twenty places on the next *Kivunim* trip – but the viability of their vision remains moot without consideration of how this Israel experience will fit into an overall vision for Jewish education at the school.

4.2.4 *A special experience for individual teachers*

A significant minority of participants in both programs came with no or few colleagues from their schools. In *Kivunim* most of these individuals were Grinspoon - Steinhardt fellows who were participating in the program for the first time, and in *Ameinu*, there was a group of three teachers from another Montreal day school. In both cases, the teachers themselves indicated an interest in Israel education, not the least by virtue of their willingness to participate. However, there was little evidence that the program in Israel was in any way connected to their schools' on-going concerns. Indeed, it would not be too cynical to suggest that in the case of *Ameinu*, their participation was driven by financial concerns. Their presence made the trips more cost effective.

Because of limitations on our research funding we did not attempt to follow-up with these individuals, many of who came from schools scattered across North America. Given all that was said above about the challenges of sustaining a program's impact without its integration into a larger institutional vision, we do not expect long-term outcomes of consequence for most of these participants, no matter how positively they may have felt in the immediate aftermath of the program.

SECTION 5. REFLECTIONS/DISCUSSION

5.1 *Competing paradigms*

As will be evident by now, there is no obvious single paradigm for thinking about the goals and impact of short-term programs in Israel for Diaspora educators. Different institutions and communities have different purposes when sending teachers to Israel. Some see these trips as a way to strengthen and/or renew commitment, others see them as a reward, and yet others see them as an integral part of a larger vision of professional

development. As will be seen below, each of these conceptions generates a different kind of experience, none of which is necessarily wrong, but all of which elicit distinct impacts. From our perspective, the central question here is what role the Jewish Agency plays in shaping these conceptions and to what extent these conceptions enable professional development.

5.1.1 Political

For some, the central concern in thinking about these programs is political, that is, in terms of how well they place Israel at the center of the Jewish world. This means measuring the success of programs in relation to the numbers of teachers they attract to Israel each year, for this signals in the most visible way a connection between Diaspora Jewish educators and the State of Israel.

If this seems like a shallow set of concerns, its power should not be underestimated. First, it resonates with a powerful thrust in all Israel programs – the fundamental challenge of getting Jews to Israel. Secondly, as far as trips for teachers are concerned, this paradigm intersects with an assumption that teachers are role models for their students, and that their visits to Israel will inspire greater numbers of Jews to visit or to take more seriously their attempts as educators to teach about Israel. Finally, this paradigm possesses great appeal because professionals and laypeople alike can easily evaluate its success: one just has to count the number of teachers who come to Israel each year.

5.1.2 Personal

For some, the central concerns here are more personal, that is, in the extent to which programs change the identities of participants as Jews, as adults, and as human beings. The success of programs is measured, therefore, in terms of whether they enable individuals to develop a personal connection with Israel and with the other (Jewish) educators with whom their Israel experience is shared.

Although this orientation probably constitutes the preeminent approach to thinking about the “Israel Experience” for adult lay-people and for adolescents, it has special resonance

for educators too. For, if one holds that the most important factor in the classroom dynamic is who the teacher is as a person, then if the teacher's persona or personality is changed so will be her teaching. It is surely not surprising that this was the most frequently offered rationale for the programs that we heard from participants. In their words: "How can you expect teachers to be inspiring, if they themselves are not inspired?"... "The trip makes you a fuller person and therefore a better teacher."

5.1.3 Professional

In this paper, the paradigm we have explored is that of professional development. In other words, we have been interested in examining the extent to which Israel programs affect the knowledge, understandings, skills and commitments of teachers with consequence for the institutions in which they work. As will be evident, these are not the most obvious terms for discussing these programs, especially when one considers the geographical and cultural gap between the programs' location and the sites of teachers' everyday lives. The professional development perspective can be a challenging one. First, it requires thinking about Israel as much as a medium (a laboratory for professional development) as a message (a set of topics or values to be taught). Second, this perspective, by going beyond an interest in "personal change," calls for thinking of a program's clientele in institutional and not only individual terms.

These paradigms are often in conflict with one another. Most obviously, the aspiration to bring as many teachers as possible to Israel (from whatever institution) can clash with the goal of creating a powerful Israel experience that engages the person as an individual and as a member of a group which possesses personal significance. Less obviously, a focus on the personal – creating powerful Israel experiences for individuals in evocative settings – can clash with the attempt to support teachers in reflecting systematically on their teaching (an outcome often achieved more effectively in a classroom than on a hike). More problematically, creating powerful experiences for individuals often requires taking them out of familiar contexts, and enabling them to encounter moments of magic far-removed from their mundane lives. In contrast, powerful professional development

usually needs, as we have seen, to be close to and continuous with teachers' immediate concerns.

SECTION 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

There are multiple audiences and purposes to be served through professional development experiences in Israel. Our observations and analysis of two different programs can provide a framework to guide thinking about program design, content, and delivery. In this concluding section we offer two sets of recommendations. First, we present a continuum of program types that may yield very different sorts of impacts for individual teachers and their schools. Second, we offer a series of specific guidelines to aid in conceptualizing programs. And finally, we raise lingering questions that merit further study and deliberation.

6.1 A continuum of Israel programs as professional development

There are at least three dimensions of impact that might occur for teachers who participate on an Israel seminar. On the personal level, their experiences can reinforce and/or change how they understand themselves as Jews or non-Jews working in a Jewish school. At the professional level, their experiences can shape and strengthen their practice with regard to teaching Israel. Thirdly, their experiences can transform how they think about their roles as Jewish educators or teachers in a Jewish school. The potential for these impacts can be considered along a cumulative continuum whereby a short-term program in Israel for Diaspora educators may be conceived as:

1. A trip that focuses on building powerful personal connections to Israel.
2. A trip that focuses on creating powerful experiences in Israel with fellow teachers.
3. A trip that focuses on building and modeling exciting educational ideas for teaching the multi-layered dimensions of historical, sacred, contemporary, and changing Israel.

4. A trip that uses the multi-layered dimensions of historical, sacred, contemporary, and changing Israel as a learning laboratory to develop and strengthen teacher thinking – to change not just how teachers teach, but how they “know.”

At the first level, the trip is most similar to an “Israel Experience” with a well-constructed itinerary and a range of experiential programs. We would argue that such a trip is about personal, not professional, development and the focus is exclusively on building or strengthening individual Jewish identity and one’s relationship to Israel.

At the second level, there is a greater consciousness of the fact that the group is made up of educators, and this has an impact on the itinerary and on the nature of the planned experiences. For example, there might be workshops and *mifgashim* with fellow educators or visits to schools and other model educational programs. Here, the primary focus remains on identity building, but the program potentially addresses issues of practice depending on the context of the trip, especially if some sort of curricular unit or other work product is expected to grow out of the Israel experience. Such an approach may be well suited to programs that have particular curricular goals in mind for development and implementation upon return to the home institution.

Typically, these first two levels aim at promoting a strong personal sense of connection to the state of Israel and the Israeli people. Some might argue that this is sufficient since personal growth is a key component of any good professional development program. However, additional layers of complexity are essential to inspiring educators to move beyond enhancing their tools and techniques of practice to think more deeply about how and why to teach Israel.

Research repeatedly shows that Israel is rarely taught as integral to North American Jewish life (Chazan, 1979; 1995). When taught at all, it is most often experienced as a form of “symbolic ethnicity” (Gans, 1979) that allows for episodic expression and minimal commitment. North American Jewish educators are much more likely to teach

Israel as an historical museum or sacred symbol than as a complicated, vibrant and dynamic social reality. This keeps Israel remote and disconnected and perhaps even irrelevant to Jewish identity outside of the land of Israel (Evron, 1995; Eisen and Rosenak, 1997).

The third level of the continuum addresses this problematic situation. Through its program content and delivery, this level focuses on changing teacher thinking and the practice of how Israel is taught. The *tiyulim*, presentations, lectures and study are designed to engage participants in intellectual, emotional, and spiritual experiences that explore the multiple dimensions of Israel that cut across time and space, and that explore myth and reality, art and culture, politics and society, the holy and the profane. Such a program can compel participants to grapple with Israel as a living and dynamic community and as a sacred symbol. This is accomplished both through direct experience and by “unpacking” those experiences through formal reflection and group discussion.

The fourth level of the continuum addresses the final dimension of impact, namely how teachers think about the deep structure of their profession and how they shape their teaching, whether as Jewish educators or as educators in a Jewish school. This level builds on the third, but expands the focus beyond Israel as a separate and independent entity to Israel as an integral part of Judaism wherever it is lived. Such an approach is likely to raise more questions than it can provide answers. But, it also creates ample opportunities for participants to see how Israel is relevant to their lives as Jews and Jewish educators or as non-Jews teaching in Jewish schools.

6.2 Essential Ingredients and Lingering Questions

This continuum helps to organize our thinking about the potential impacts of various designs of Israel trips for Jewish educators. For anything beyond the first point along the continuum, there are several components that seem essential for any program that seeks to strengthen Jewish educators and Jewish teaching through an Israel seminar.

1. Professional development seminars in Israel should support the enhancement and enrichment of teaching.

2. School and/or program leadership must articulate a clear vision for the Israel experience and demonstrate how that vision will be sustained through ongoing work to develop the ideas that were generated by the trip.
3. Ideally, trips should include teams of teachers from the same school in order to promote institutional and not just personal change.
4. The trip program should provide time for reflection on both the content and process of the experiences.

An excellent Israel program must inspire and provoke thinking in equal measure. A professional development program in Israel must also support the ongoing processes of teaching and learning. Both programs we studied accomplished this in very different ways. *Ameinu* had a particular curricular emphasis that shaped the program design. *Kivunim* demonstrates that support of teacher learning rather than teacher-training may have even greater impacts on how teachers think and, ultimately, on how they act. However, it is evident that *Kivunim*'s impact grows over time, especially for multi-year participants, and for participants from schools that have an ongoing relationship with Peter Geffen. In these cases, the *Kivunim* experience fits within an overall vision of professional development that is sustained and intellectually substantive.

This leads to our next point which reminds us that even the most intellectually challenging experience must be supported by a strong leadership with a well articulated vision that encourages ongoing work to develop the ideas that were generated and stimulated by the trip. This must extend well beyond scheduling one or two orientation meetings prior to the trip and a few follow-up sessions. Instead, schools need to create the time and space for teachers to continually reflect and build upon their experiences.

It is well documented how participants develop a deep bond with one another during short-term intensive trips that break away from routine roles and schedules. When participants come from diverse communities or schools, this bond quickly fades into a wistful memory as the press of daily life resumes. Sending teams of teachers together on Israel trips greatly enhances the potential that the bond will endure and grow through

ongoing interactions at school, particularly when school leadership actively promotes such interactions. This process can promote significant institutional change. Almost half of the Solomon Schechter Academy faculty has participated in one of the school's three Israel seminars. As both the teachers and the principal reported, this has enhanced curricular integration within the school, and has enabled a strong working relationships with faculty from their sister school in Beer Sheva. We also saw from the different mix of groups and individuals on *Kivunim* how much greater the trip's impact was for those who came with colleagues and returned to a school with a strong commitment both to professional development and to keeping Israel at the center of their school's mission.

Our fourth point above concerns the tricky issue of negotiating between direct experiences and time to reflect on those experiences. Most Israel program planners tend to pack the itinerary in order to expose participants to as many powerful experiences as they can. Yet, *having* experiences does not necessarily translate into *learning* from them. There is broad consensus in the literature that good professional development gives teachers time to reflect, analyze, and work on their practice (Dorph and Holtz, 2000: 68). The question remains, however, as to how much time should be allocated for this while on the trip? While *Ameinu* provided some time for reflection on experiences and for curriculum planning, the outcomes translated into enhanced methods and resources, rather than substantive thought on changing the practice of teaching. In contrast, virtually no time was organized for reflection on *Kivunim*, nor were there opportunities for teachers to formally work on translating their experiences into instructional strategies. Yet, upon returning home, it appears that many of the *Kivunim* participants engaged in rich reflection that led to significant changes in how they select content, and how they organize and structure their teaching. We would argue that this type of rich reflection occurred much more frequently and consistently among teachers in schools that have a coherent and sustained philosophy of professional development.

Another question that has yet to be explored concerns the role of participants in shaping the program. Both of the programs we studied were largely top-down processes where experts delivered information and created experiences for the participants. As Feinman-

Nemser (2001) noted, an optimal mix of professional development processes should include more collaborative models that draw upon the expertise of the participants themselves in coordinating certain aspects of the program. This might entail formalized sharing of participants' own stories and connections to Israel, *hevrutah* study, sharing ideas, as well as time to reflect on their experiences relative to their own practice.

Finally, we raise the questions about what Israel to teach and how to teach it. How should Israel be represented? To what extent should professional development programs aim to paint an idealized portrait of the best of Israel? How should they engage participants in discussion and reflection on the complex and dynamic issues confronting a contemporary state? How should they help participants connect to a rich history, both sacred and secular, that continues to have repercussions for today? In what ways and to what extent should the program content push participants to confront their own values, beliefs, and practices as Jews? Should the program focus solely on Israel, or should it promote thinking and teaching about Israel as a central and integral dimension of Judaism wherever it is lived? Answers to these questions must certainly be shaped by the ideologies and visions of program leaders and planners. They must be addressed, for it is through the answers to these questions that participants will be touched intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually while on the trip and will take home with them ideas, concerns, and questions that ultimately will shape and strengthen how they teach Israel in their classrooms and in their schools.

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