Shoolman Graduate School of Jewish Education  
EDUC 834: Theory & Practice of 21st Century Jewish Education: Navigating & Constructing the Jewish Educational Landscape  
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Course Scheduling:  
Each week of coursework usually begins on Monday 12:01am EST and concludes on Sunday at midnight. In order to provide you with more flexibility, units will be opened in advance of the date of study, although you will not be required to do the coursework until the listed date.

Skype Office Hours:  
Given time zone differences, etc., I am not designating a fixed time for office hours. If you would like to meet virtually via Skype, please email and we can set up a time.

Essential Course Questions (to be explored throughout the semester):  
- As Jewish educators, what is your role in shaping the landscape of Jewish education in the 21st century?  
- How are changes in the field’s understanding of learning processes and how systems function impacting the ways in which we construct learning environments?  
- How is educational theory translated into practice? How does/can this translation process inform the construction of educational landscapes?

Learning Outcomes:  
As we explore the above-stated essential questions throughout the course learners will develop the following core competencies and abilities:  
- Apply constructivist education approach to the Jewish setting  
- Relate theory to practice in their own and others’ educational settings  
- Better understand the nature of teaching and learning and application to Jewish educational settings  
- Apply general educational theories to the Jewish setting  
- Explore the major Jewish educational theories as a means to refine a personal vision of Jewish Education  
- Examine and develop the role of technology for Jewish education  
- Broaden their reading in education theory, practice, and leadership theory and practice, both general and Jewish  
- Demonstrate reflective thinking about practice in Jewish Education  
- Become a reflective practitioner about learning and how to learn  
- Refine their technology skills and broaden range of capabilities  
- Be able to reflect on personal learning style  
- Develop a professional and entrepreneurial persona for working in Jewish Education

Overall Course Structure:  
- On a weekly basis there will be three main components of our learning together:  
  o Readings, both required reading and often optional additional readings  
  o Materials to scaffold the learning: online lectures, background materials, guiding questions, brief texts or book excerpts to frame our discussion, etc.
Core activities: these are activities that will help synthesize the readings, demonstrate understanding of core ideas, engage learners in dialogue, introduce learners to new technologies, link theory to practice, and provide opportunities for reflection.

Coursework: There will be four types of coursework upon which students will be evaluated:

- Posts (35% of grade): These will be the primary form of weekly participation. They include activities, reflections on readings, on-line activities, and general discussions.
- Group Work (10% of grade): Occasionally, instead of individual posts, there will be activities that will require work in a group and collaborative posting as a group.
- Turn-in Assignments (35% of grade): These will be more in-depth assignments than the weekly posts. There will be three main assignments over the course of the semester:
  - Analysis of commonplaces in an educational setting in which you currently work, have worked in the past, or have experience as a learner
  - Development of a lesson plan informed by the framework of Understanding by Design
  - Observation of a learning setting with an analysis based on the framework of How People Learn.
- Final Assignment (20% of grade): Present a redesigned landscape for Jewish education in the 21st century:
  - The assignment should reflect a clear sense of who you are as an educator and bring in your internal landscape as an education to the foreground.
  - The assignments should include elements of a pedagogic creed and a clear sense of what should be taught in a Jewish educational setting.
  - The assignment should reference and refer to some of the educational theories and frameworks encountered over the course of the semester.
  - There will be many options available as to how the final assignment can be developed and presented.

Required Reading:

- The majority of readings for the course will be available on-line or will be posted on Schoology.
- Although you will not be required to purchase other books from the syllabus, the books included on the syllabus are wonderful resources, and it is recommended that you add them to your personal bookshelf.

UNIT 1: ENCOUNTERING THE LANDSCAPE OF JEWISH EDUCATION

Session 1: Defining the Landscape – 1/28

Enduring Understanding: Jewish education in the 21st century is undergoing dramatic transformations and at this pivotal time educators have a unique opportunity to help shape the emerging landscape of Jewish education.

Key Questions:

- What is the landscape of Jewish education in 2012? How does it compare to the landscape of Jewish education when you were a child?
- What does it mean to look at the educational setting as a landscape? In what ways is an educational landscape connected to and impacted by its surrounding environment?
- What is your role in building the Jewish educational landscape of the 21st century?

Readings:


Session 2: Commonplaces as Defining Elements of an Educational Landscape – 2/4

Enduring Understanding: The process of learning is highly dynamic and involves multiple elements that interact with one another. The framework of Schwab’s commonplaces is one lens that can help teachers understand and analyze the complex dynamic of education.
Key Questions:

- As a teacher, what tend to be the commonplace(s) which you feel most comfortable addressing? Which are the ones you find to be most challenging?
- What does it mean to seek coordination among the commonplaces when teaching? What practices can support the achievement of coordination among the commonplaces?
- As a learner, how do you personally interact with each of Schwab’s commonplaces? What is the type of learning environment in which you most thrive? In which you are most challenged?

Readings:


Optional Readings:


UNIT 2: CONSTRUCTING THE 21ST CENTURY LEARNING LANDSCAPE – HOW PEOPLE LEARN

Session 3 – Introduction to How People Learn (HPL) – 2/11 (this is a two week session to take into account public school February vacation and Purim celebrations)

Enduring Understanding: By better understanding the process of learning educators can design more effective and impactful learning experiences for students.

Key Questions:

- How do new advances in the field’s understanding of the brain impact our conception of how we learn?
- How do the following principles influence how educators interact with learners:
  - Engaging learners’ prior understandings
  - The essential role of core knowledge and conceptual frameworks in understanding
  - The importance of self-monitoring?
- How can the framework introduced by the research of *How People Learn* help provide a lens through which you can analyze your work as an educator?

Readings:


Optional Readings:


Session 4: Learner-Centered Learning Environment – Empowering the Learner – 2/25

Enduring Understanding: By empowering learners educators can deepen student engagement, foster meaning-making, and nurture the capacity for life-long learning among their students.

Key Questions:

- In what ways does empowering the learner impact the dynamics of the learning environment? How does it impact each of the commonplaces within the educational landscape?
• How do your values as an educator influence your stance regarding the empowerment of learners?
• How might the value of empowering the learner be enacted in a Jewish setting?

Readings:

Optional Readings:

Session 5: Learner-Centered Learning Environment – Identity Development – 3/4

Enduring Understanding: In order to effectively reach learners it is crucial for educators to directly address learners' identity development, both in terms of how it relates to their prior understandings and with regard to the impact of identity on the process of meaning-making.

Key Questions:
• How does the identity of the learner impact the process of learning?
• What is the role of meaning in both learning and identity development?
• How has the field's understanding of Jewish identity and the role of the learner in Jewish education evolved in the 21st century?
• How do environment and experiences impact an individual's understanding of what it means to be a Jew?

Readings:

Optional Reading:
• Read the scholars you did not read for your group work activity. The specifics of the group project and the required readings will be provided when Week 5 is launched on Schoology.

Session 6: Knowledge-Centered Learning Environment – 3/11

Enduring Understanding: One of the key roles of the teacher is to identify the core conceptual frameworks, define the enduring understandings, and develop the essential questions through which learners can connect with the content of Jewish education.

Key Questions:
• What content knowledge do you want learners to be exposed to in Jewish educational settings? Given limited hours, how do you make choices about which content is introduced into the classroom?
• How can you introduce Jewish content knowledge to learners in a way that leads to deeper understanding and meaning?
• How does content knowledge fit into broader goals and the overall landscape you are aiming to construct when teaching?
Readings:

Optional Readings:

Session 7: Assessment-Centered Learning Environment – 3/18

Enduring Understanding: Assessment is an ongoing process that can be utilized in any learning environment to provide crucial feedback to both teachers and learners as well as focus attention on the development of meaning and understanding.

Key Questions:
- What are the different ways assessment can be built into the educational landscape? How can assessment enrich the educational landscape, both formal and non-formal?
- What are the differences between formative and summative evaluation?
- How can educators assess for understanding?
- How can assessment be utilized as a tool for strengthening learners’ meta-cognition? How do the six facets of understanding within UbD help strengthen meta-cognition?

Readings:

Optional Reading:

PESACH BREAK 3/23-4/7

Session 8: Community-Centered Learning Environment – 4/8

Enduring Understanding: Connecting with community and engaging in a process of socialization is a key component of Jewish education and plays out in a variety of ways in diverse Jewish educational settings.

Key Questions:
- What is the role of the community within the landscape of Jewish education?
- How does the connection to community vary in different educational settings, i.e. congregations, camps, Hillel, etc.?
- How does the process of socialization fit into the Jewish educational experience? How does socialization connect learners to community?

Readings:
- Through two related articles in the Journal of Jewish Education, the topic of informal education and the role of socialization in Jewish education is to be discussed:
Choose one of the following chapters to read as part of the assigned core activities for this week:


Optional Readings:
- Reading any of the chapters not selected as part of the analysis of socialization in a Jewish educational setting.

**Session 9: Observation as a Tool for Reflection and a Gateway to Understanding How People Learn – 4/15**

**Enduring Understanding:** Observing other teachers has tremendous value in that it helps hone educators’ reflective practice and sharpen their ability to see what goes on in their own teaching environments.

**Key Questions:**
- What lenses could be worn when entering an educational setting for observations? How can different lenses impact what and/or how an observer sees?
- Where did you see evidence of the How People Learn (HPL) centers in the settings you observed? Where was such evidence lacking?
- How can the process of observing others impact your own practice as an educator? What are you taking away from this observation exercise that may impact your teaching practice?
- How do your observations impact your evolving understanding of the landscape of Jewish education in the 21st century?

**Readings:**

**Optional Readings:**

**UNIT 3: FEATURES OF THE LANDSCAPE OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

**Session 10: Integrating Technology into the Landscape of Jewish Education – 4/22**

**Enduring Understanding:** Technology is a tool that has tremendous potential to enrich the educational landscape by empowering learners and extending learning beyond the walls (literal or figurative) of a learning environment.

**Key Questions:**
- How can the integration of technology potentially transform the educational landscape?
- How do/can new technologies interact with and impact each of the commonplaces in a learning environment?
- How can technology be utilized as a tool for learner empowerment?
- What opportunities can the integration of technology present to the field of Jewish education?
Readings:

Optional Readings:
- Watch *Mi Ani* project video from JCDS [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9O4Mz1iLDWw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9O4Mz1iLDWw)

Session 11: The Challenge of Changing the Landscape – 4/29

**Enduring Understanding**: The process of educational change is complex and it involves many stakeholders. In order to be effective facilitators of change, educators need to be aware of the various players in any educational change effort and be prepared to face hurdles that may be encountered.

**Key Questions:**
- What are the organizational and structural challenges that may be encountered in the process of trying to transform the Jewish educational landscape?
- Who are the stakeholders in an educational change process?
- Who is needed as partners in an educational change process?

Readings:

Optional Readings:

Week 12: Redrawing Our Landscapes – 5/6

**Enduring Understanding**: One of the central responsibilities of a Jewish educational leader is to help shape the landscape of Jewish education. Theory, vision, experience, and practice all provide building blocks that help shape the landscape in the learning settings in which you work today and will continue to inform your work and the broader landscapes you will impact throughout your career.

**Key Questions:**
- How do the Jewish educational landscapes you strive to build compare with the current landscape?
  - What features of the current landscape need to be changed in order to shift toward your ideal? Which components are currently missing and need to be planted? Which elements are currently overly emphasized and need pruning?
- What educational theories and frameworks inform the Jewish educational landscape you strive to build?
  - How can these theories fertilize the development of new ideas and educational change?
- What concrete steps do you plan to make to advance your vision of an ideal Jewish educational landscape?
  - What changes in your own practice will they require?
  - What additional areas of learning, theory, and/or observation do you feel you need to explore in order to make these changes?
Readings:

Optional Readings:

Final Assignment: Due 5/20
• Present a redesigned landscape for Jewish education in the 21st century:
  o The assignment should reflect a clear sense of who you are as an educator and bring your internal landscape as an educator to the foreground.
  o The assignment should include elements of a pedagogic creed and a clear sense of what should be taught in a Jewish educational setting.
  o The assignment should reference and refer to some of the educational theories and frameworks encountered over the course of the semester.
  o There will be many options available as to how the final assignment can be developed and presented, including but not limited to:
    ▪ A written paper
    ▪ A vignette with theory integrated (that spans the whole educational landscape, not just the experience of a single family like the JESNA report)
    ▪ A Voicethread
      ▪ The connection to theory and learning throughout the semester could be captured in the comments (possibly create different identities to highlight theory, personal insights, practices, etc.)
    ▪ Could use other technologies, including Glogster, Powerpoint, Prezi, etc.
    ▪ Could be an actual landscape – a visual representation accompanied by a written commentary
• If you are unsure about the manner in which you want to present your redesigned landscape, please discuss and run your idea by the instructor.