Taglit-Birthright Israel: An Academic Symposium

Guidelines for Chairs, Presenters and Discussants

The goal of the conference is to engage a multi-disciplinary group of scholars and educators in an examination of Taglit-Birthright Israel and the broader issues of Jewish identity development, Israel education and homeland tourism. The conference is an opportunity for researchers and educators, some of whom have been involved in Taglit but most who have not, to assess what we have learned from this large-scale educational experiment and to put it into a larger intellectual context.

Participants are a diverse group of academics, social and educational researchers, and educational practitioners from Israel, North America and other countries. To ensure that we maximize the potential of the meeting we would like to build on the success of the model used at the 2012 Taglit conference. The conference will be organized around a set of sessions with three or four presenters each, a chair and discussant. Several of the sessions will be plenary sessions and some will run concurrently. We want to engage participants in dialogue and use our limited time together to promote an exchange of ideas. Presentations should focus on provoking a discussion rather than on information-sharing. Presenters are asked to share lengthy or dense materials on-line (via the conference website). There will be three “keynote” addresses, given at dinner and lunch, which will be longer talks with limited discussion. In addition, there will be a concluding plenary.

Arrangements are being made to develop a post-conference publication. Papers will be solicited for an edited/peer-reviewed publication (most likely, a special issue of a journal). Further details will be forthcoming.

General Guidelines:

Time: Sessions will start and end as scheduled. Although we don’t want to rush discussion and limit schmoozing, it’s unfair to other participants if the schedule isn’t followed. As well, many are on tight travel schedules. Hebrew University and Cohen Center staff will be available to ensure that sessions start and end as scheduled.

Background materials: The key to fostering dialogue, and limiting the amount of simple information sharing, is for presenters to provide materials which can be hyper-linked to the presenter’s session in the online program. Along with biographical information, presenters are welcome to include relevant papers or reports (up to 3) to be posted on the website. What is appropriate will depend on the presenter.

Mechanics: Each session will have an assigned “techie” and a time-keeper (both of whom will be conference staff). The techie will help presenters who want to use PowerPoint (PPT) slides and will facilitate use of biographical slides (see details below) that will substitute for lengthy introductions. The time-keeper will help to make sure that the sessions start/end on time and will also let the chair/presenter know when speakers go over time.
**Chair Guidelines:**

*Role:* Chairs should view themselves as facilitators of the discussion. They may want to make a short framing comment at the beginning of a session and, later actively facilitate discussion. The role involves offering comments, managing the discussion and determining when/how to engage the audience.

*Preparation:* In advance of the conference, staff at the Cohen Center or at Hebrew University will help arrange a conference call among the chair, presenters and discussant. During the call, you should review the order of presentation, the general focus of each presentation, and the kind of issues that should be addressed. A discussion should be held with respect to time limits. As described below (presenter guidelines), it is suggested that no single presentation comment be longer than 10-15 minutes. Any changes to the time frame should be discussed beforehand.

*Mechanics:* Chairs should email, biographical details that will be included in a PPT slide during his/her presentation. Emails should be sent to: cmjs@brandeis.edu. Information should be organized as follows (all categories not required): Name, Title/Institutional Affiliation, Previous Research, Recent Publications/Selected Publications, Research Interests/Current Research. In addition, chairs are welcome to submit in advance any papers that are directly relevant to the session theme. These papers will be posted on the session webpage. Regarding the session itself, although the staff will assist in managing the technology and timing, particularly timing, the chair will have to make sure that no single presenter takes time away from other presenters or those in the audience who wish to make comments.

**Presenter Guidelines:**

*General:* Each presenter should make initial remarks of no more than 10-15 minutes (approximately 5-10 PPT slides), with one to three rounds of additional comments of 3-5 minutes each (to react to other presenters/questions). Along with providing detailed information in preconference posted materials, presenters can maximize how they use their time by avoiding: (a) discussion of the time limits and its effect on what you can present, (b) extensive references (either to your own work or others), and (c) elaborate discussion of data (which can be better presented in written materials).

*Substance:* The initial presentation should focus on summarizing key ideas and challenges. Later, in response to other presenters and questions from the audience, presenters should focus on how their ideas/conclusions relate to others on the panel and to the overall conference themes. Disagreement is fine, disagreeableness is not ok. The focus of each session should be for the presenter to help others at the conference better understand their ideas/perspective and, at the end, for each of us to have learned and understood things that we didn’t before.

*Mechanics:* Presenters should email biographical details that will be included in a PPT slide during his/her presentation. Information should be organized as follows (all categories not required): Name, Title/Institutional Affiliation, Previous Research, Recent Publications/Selected Publications, Research Interests/Current Research. In addition, presenters are free to submit in advance any papers that are directly relevant to the session theme. These papers will be posted on the session webpage. If presenters will be using PPT during the presentation, they are asked to provide slides by 7 June (PPT slides should be emailed to cmjs@brandeis.edu). To save time and avoid technical pauses, we will
upload materials in advance. If it’s impossible to provide the slides before arriving in Israel, please send us a draft version (to enable us to test your format) as soon as possible. In regard to timing, please be respectful of the moderator and other panelists. If you think you need help, check with the time-keeper ahead of time; by request, he/she will be prepared to signal you at regular intervals.

**Discussant Guidelines:**

**General:** The role of the discussant is to react to the presentations and stimulate discussion among the audience and participants. It’s not necessary to summarize the comments of each presentation. Key is pointing out areas of agreement/disagreement and raising questions for further discussion. The discussant’s initial comments should be kept to 10 minutes.

**Preparation:** In advance of the conference, the discussant should review the papers/comments that presenters will share and participate in the conference call arranged by the chair. Discussants should prepare in advance their comments/thoughts/questions for the presenters.

**Mechanics:** Discussants should email biographical details that will be included in a PPT slide during the session. Information should be organized as follows (all categories not required): Name, Title/Institutional Affiliation, Previous Research, Recent Publications/Selected Publications, Research Interests/Current Research.