



THE DELET ALUMNI SURVEY:

A COMPREHENSIVE REPORT
ON THE JOURNEY OF BEGINNING
JEWISH DAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

ERAN TAMIR
SHARON FEIMAN-NEMSER
REBECCA SILVERA SASSON
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals have contributed to this report. We'd like to thank Yi Zhu for her assistance in compiling the graphs and tables, Sue Fendrick and Janna Rogat Dorfman for reviewing earlier drafts, and the Department of Communications at Brandeis University for producing this report. We greatly appreciate the ongoing support we've received from Michael Zeldin, who reviewed survey items and provided helpful suggestions. Finally, we are grateful to the alumni of the DeLeT program whose participation made the study possible.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research confirms what we know from personal experience—that good teaching matters (Rice, 2003; Rockoff, 2004; Sanders, Saxton & Horn, 1997). In fact, having a good teacher in the classroom is considered the single most important variable in students’ success (Darling-Hammond, 2000). While this finding comes from studies of public school teachers, it is likely that teachers in Jewish day schools also have a strong positive impact on their students’ development and learning.

Finding and keeping good teachers remain persistent challenges for Jewish day schools, challenges that are affected not only by compensation, but also by strong preparation and ongoing support. The Commission on Jewish Education in North America (1990) identified a lack of preparation and support for teachers in Jewish day schools, and this finding has been confirmed by subsequent studies (Gamoran et al, 1998).

DeLeT (Day School Leadership Through Teaching) was launched to help address these challenges. After learning about the shortage of qualified teachers for Jewish day schools, venture philanthropist Laura Lauder imagined a program that would attract a new cadre of young adults and mid-career changers to day school teaching. She invited Michael Zeldin of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles and Sharon Feiman-Nemser of Brandeis University outside Boston to design such a program, and she enlisted a group of philanthropists to support the program during its first five years.

DeLeT, the Hebrew word for “door,” was designed to open the door on a career in day school education. The program formally began in 2002 at two academic sites—HUC-JIR and Brandeis—as a thirteen month post-BA program encompassing two summers of study on campus and a yearlong mentored internship in a local day school. The program took shape during an initial five-year pilot phase and is now an established component of each institution’s educational offerings.

The DeLeT Alumni Survey was designed to follow DeLeT alumni over time. Sponsored by the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education at Brandeis University, the study examines the background, motivations, practice, working conditions and career commitments of a special population of Jewish educators. This report focuses on graduates of the program at both sites between the years 2003-2006. During these early years, the

program was a “work-in-progress” and some findings presented here do not reflect recent program changes. For instance, the Brandeis program was approved as an alternate route to teacher certification from the very beginning, an option that was unavailable for HUC-JIR. As a result, only recently did the HUC-JIR achieve full accreditation, and now both programs meet the requirements for a state teaching license.

Under the leadership of Eran Tamir, senior researcher at the Mandel Center, a survey was sent to all DeLeT alumni from cohorts 1–4 at both academic sites, a total of sixty-five day school teachers. The survey, which was distributed through SurveyMonkey.com, included seventy questions dealing with the following topics: background, choosing to teach, choosing DeLeT, program characteristics, school context, professional development and leadership, retention, and career commitments. Sixty-one surveys were returned, representing a 94 percent response rate. Below we highlight key findings for the main topics addressed by the survey.

BACKGROUNDS OF DELET ALUMNI

Seventy-three percent of respondents entered DeLeT within two years of graduating from college. The other 27 percent include mid-career changers, former lawyers, businesswomen, social workers, and educators who sought a higher degree of training. The gender divide in DeLeT resembles the gender divide among public elementary and Jewish day school teachers in general: 83 percent of DeLeT alumni are female, and 17 percent are male.

The majority of DeLeT alumni grew up either Conservative (42 percent) or Reform (41 percent). Twelve percent of respondents were raised in Modern Orthodox homes and 5 percent in more traditional Orthodox homes. When asked how they would currently describe their affiliation, respondents gave a different set of answers. The largest percentage of respondents continues to identify with the Conservative and Reform movements, 20 percent and 21 percent respectively. Overwhelmingly, however, respondents chose a religious affiliation that defies conventional categories, such as conservadox, post-denominational, non-practicing, and Jewish.

Growing up, many DeLeT alumni were engaged in Jewish learning opportunities in day schools, supplementary schools, and various informal Jewish educational settings such as summer camps. An overwhelming majority attended elite colleges and majored in Jewish studies.

When asked about their beliefs about being Jewish, DeLeT alumni conveyed a strong sense of Jewish pride and identity. Ninety-seven percent very much agree or completely agree with the statement “I am proud to be a Jew”; 93 percent very much agree or completely agree with the statement “I have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people”; and 81 percent very much agree or completely agree with the statement “I have a clear sense of what being Jewish means to me.”

CHOOSING TO TEACH

When asked about their decision to teach in a Jewish day school, most DeLeT alumni cited their joy in working with children (93 percent) and love of their chosen subject matter (91 percent). Many participants attributed their choice to teach in a day school to the opportunity to integrate Judaism with general subjects (78 percent).

CHOOSING DELET

When asked about the factors that influenced their decision to enroll in DeLeT, almost all of the respondents indicated that the yearlong mentored internship—one of the program’s defining characteristics—was their top reason (92 percent). The second factor cited most often by alumni was the chance to pursue a teaching certificate (83 percent). Another feature of the program that ranked high among the reasons for choosing DeLeT was the substantial financial package offered to students (63 percent).

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

When asked about elements in their preparation, DeLeT alumni highlighted many features associated with strong professional teacher education programs, like a strong vision of teaching and learning, well-defined performance standards, practical experience in reform-minded schools, and use of pedagogies that help teachers link theory and practice (Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005).

DAY SCHOOL CONTEXT

The structure and culture of a school, along with the leadership style of the administration, can contribute to a teacher’s sense of satisfaction and success. When asked to evaluate their current school environment, alumni for the most part depicted a partially supportive environment for beginning teachers. Sixty-four percent agreed or strongly agreed that their school administrators support and value teachers’ work. Sixty percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their schools support the teaching practices they learned in DeLeT. Of more concern were teachers’ observations about their

schools' approach to beginning teachers. Only 52 percent agreed or strongly agreed that their school takes the needs of beginning teachers seriously. While these findings are not entirely surprising, they raise concerns about whether Jewish day schools are doing all they should to help new teachers succeed.

RETENTION AND CAREER COMMITMENTS

In general, teaching-force data suggest that young teachers tend to leave the classroom relatively early and in large numbers. On average, almost half of those who start teaching leave by their fifth year (Ingersoll, 2001). Some of the reasons for teacher attrition in Jewish day schools are uniquely related to that context (e.g., low compensation). Yet other factors that contribute to teacher attrition in Jewish day schools are similar to those that affect public school teachers and are related to the lack of support from school leaders and peers; failure to realize one's hopes of becoming an effective teacher; the desire to move into a leadership position (e.g., as a school administrator); and a desire to experience different job environments across one's career (e.g., Johnson et al., 2004; Tamir, 2009a; 2009b; 2010).

DeLeT alumni vary in the number of years they have taught since graduation. Respondents have been in the field for a short time, with a mean ranging from 2.6 years for Cohort 4 graduates to 5.5 years for Cohort 1 graduates. Overall, the findings suggest that, in a relatively short period of time, the DeLeT program's investment in recruitment and professional preparation has resulted in a corps of day school teachers who report feeling well prepared and committed to teaching in Jewish day schools and to becoming teacher leaders.

This report is the first in a series of reports that will track DeLeT graduates over time, documenting how their Jewish upbringing, secular and Jewish education, professional preparation and work experiences relate to their career choices, teaching practices, and leadership roles. One goal is to understand how factors related to teachers' background, preparation, and teaching experience shape these outcomes. A second goal is to provide program leaders with information that can inform ongoing program development. A third goal is to contribute to a critical discussion about the kinds of teachers our day schools need, how well programs like DeLeT prepare such teachers, and how well schools support and sustain them. Data about the experiences and decisions of DeLeT alumni over time can help us understand the opportunities and challenges day school teachers face and the ways in which their professional growth is and can be nurtured over time.

Founded on educational principles derived from a deep understanding of the processes of teacher learning, DeLeT launched a teacher education program that integrates first class academic preparation with extensive student teaching. It was nothing less than a paradigm shift for the field (Kapelowitz, 2008, p. 13).

I. INTRODUCTION

DeLeT prepares professional, certified teachers through a program that integrates Jewish studies, professional studies, and extended clinical experience. Building on best practices in teacher education, the program formally began in 2002 at two academic sites—Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles (HUC-JIR) and Brandeis University, outside of Boston. It flourished through an initial five-year pilot phase and is now an established component of each institution’s educational offerings.

DeLeT set high goals from the outset. This report seeks to gauge progress on some of these goals while providing systematic evidence about who comes to DeLeT; how graduates perceive their careers and evaluate their preparation; and what impact DeLeT has had on their orientation to teaching and learning.

DeLeT aims to elevate the practice of teaching and the status of day school teachers through a distinctive approach to teacher preparation. In designing the program, the leaders intentionally incorporated key features associated with effective teacher education programs: (1) a clear vision of teaching and learning that coheres throughout the program; (2) articulated standards for beginning teaching; (3) close integration of coursework and fieldwork; (4) partnerships with reform-minded schools; and (5) extensive use of pedagogies that help teachers link theory and practice (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). The DeLeT curriculum includes coursework on teaching core secular subjects (e.g., mathematics, reading/language arts) as well as coursework on teaching holidays, *tefillah*, and Torah.

This report summarizes survey data from a longitudinal study of the first four cohorts of the DeLeT program. Some survey items were developed specifically for this study; others were inspired by and borrowed from several sources. In particular, we found the surveys developed by Center X at the University of California, Los Angeles, the Pathways to Teaching Study in New York City, and the School and Staffing Survey and Teacher Follow up Survey team especially helpful. We also incorporated several items on Jewish identity from the work of Bethamie Horowitz (2003) and adopted commonly used demographic items from sociological studies.

The survey consisted of seventy primary questions with 100 subitems, grouped around seven topics. It was distributed online to sixty-five DeLeT graduates through Survey-Monkey.com. After several general and personal inquiries via e-mail and phone, sixty-one surveys were collected, an impressive 94 percent response rate. Participants received \$15 gift certificates in return for filling out the survey. Surveys were collected from all DeLeT alumni regardless of their current occupation/profession.

The findings presented here include descriptive statistics (e.g., frequency and mean for selected variables). Where appropriate, the report compares the data with other relevant surveys of Jewish educators; research from the field of teacher preparation and induction; and DeLeT policies and practices as described in internal program documents. The report is organized around the following topics: alumni background and identity (Section II); decision to teach (Section III); view of the DeLeT program (Section IV); teaching practice (Section V); perceptions of work settings (Section VI); experience with and views about professional development and leadership (Section VII); and career goals and retention issues (Section VIII).

The DeLeT Alumni survey is a comprehensive, ongoing effort to track DeLeT alumni from Brandeis University and from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in order to understand their background, motivations, and commitments to teaching and Jewish education. Some of the findings have been helpful in evaluating the program. We also hope that the report will stimulate thoughtful discussion about the preparation, induction, and retention of day school teachers.

II. BACKGROUND OF DELET ALUMNI

Who chooses to attend the DeLeT program? What leads individuals to seek out a Jewish teacher education program? What Jewish and educational backgrounds do DeLeT candidates bring to their preparation? How do they perceive their own Jewish identities, and how does this compare with their families of origin? Do DeLeT alumni come from families of educators? Is day school teaching a valued career among their friends and family?

Before we can understand the impact of the DeLeT program on its participants, we need to understand who comes to the program. Besides describing the background and motivation of DeLeT alumni, we also compare DeLeT alumni with their Jewish peers and with peers who chose to teach in public schools.

This section focuses on the profile of DeLeT alumni, beginning with their early connections to Judaism. We asked alumni to tell us about their engagement in Jewish life as they were growing up. To understand key aspects of their Jewish upbringing, we asked whether they attended day schools, congregational schools, Jewish camps, and other similar institutions. We also asked about their level of Hebrew knowledge and their engagement with Israel. Finally, we describe how respondents currently identify themselves Jewishly.

GENDER AND AGE

Until recently, most teacher education candidates in the United States were either college students or recent college graduates. With the creation of alternative routes into teaching, including programs for career changers and other non-traditional candidates, the age and background of new teachers have become more diverse. Even so, the majority of teachers are still middle-class, white females.

Almost three quarters of respondents entered DeLeT within two years of graduating from college. The other 27 percent include midcareer changers, primarily former businesswomen, lawyers, and educators seeking more training.

The gender divide in DeLeT resembles the gender divide among public elementary school teachers. Eighty-three percent of DeLeT alumni are female, and 17 percent are

male. This is similar to the gender divide found in the Educators in Jewish School Study (EJSS), where 79 percent of day school respondents were women.¹ Compared to the day school teaching population, the DeLeT population is significantly younger. This should not come as a surprise, but it is still worth mentioning, since age plays a role in the experiences individuals have and the choices they make.² Eighty-eight percent of DeLeT respondents were between the ages of 20 and 29 when they answered the survey, while 5 percent were between the ages of 30–39 and 7 percent were between the ages of 40–49. By comparison, 70 percent of EJSS day school teachers were 40 years of age or older. It will be interesting to see whether DeLeT alumni, who are now mostly in their twenties, will remain in day school education through their thirties.

JEWISH BACKGROUND AND UPBRINGING: DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION

DeLeT alumni have grown up in families spanning the Jewish denominational spectrum. The majority grew up in Conservative (42 percent) and Reform (41 percent) homes. Twelve percent of respondents were raised in Modern Orthodox homes and 5 percent in Orthodox homes. Denominational affiliation changes when we ask respondents how they would currently describe themselves. The largest percentage of respondents continues to identify with the Conservative and Reform movements, 20 percent and 21 percent respectively. Overwhelmingly, however, respondents chose the “other” option and filled in descriptions of their religious affiliation that defy traditional categories, such as conservadox, post-denominational, non-practicing, and Jewish.³

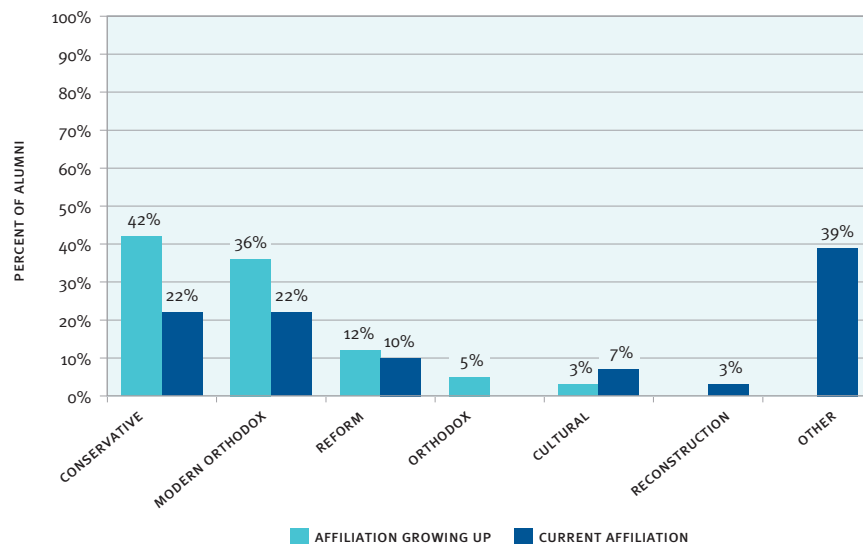
In her study of Jewish identity among young Jewish adults, Horowitz (2003) reports that 30 percent of respondents switched their denominational preference. Moreover, those raised in Conservative homes were most likely to be “switchers” (40 percent). The DeLeT alumni population expresses a similar rate of denominational switching, although to a slightly higher degree. (Close to 50 percent of those who were raised Conservative identify with a different denomination.)

Overall, the DeLeT population differs from their peers in the greater Jewish population in terms of how they affiliate. While National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) 2000–01 findings suggest that Jews ages 18–29 consider themselves Reform more than any other denomination (29 percent for 18–24-year-olds and 38 percent for 25–29-year-olds),⁴ the DeLeT alumni do not favor one denomination. Rather, there is a relatively equal distribution between the Conservative (22 percent), Reform (22 percent), and Modern Orthodox (12 percent) denominations, and a large percentage (39 percent) of those who affiliate themselves outside these denominations.

Currently, the day school field, as reported by EJSS,⁵ comprises a higher percentage of educators who identify as Orthodox (23 percent) and a lower percentage who identify as Reform (14 percent) as compared to the DeLeT sample.⁶ This is not surprising, since a majority of day schools are Orthodox. The DeLeT profile is different. Since DeLeT was created expressly to prepare general and/or Jewish studies teachers for non-Orthodox day schools, the relatively high percentage of self-defining non-Orthodox Jews among the DeLeT population reflects the program’s mission.⁷

Do different subsets of Jewish educators with different denominational affiliations seek out similar or different kinds of teacher preparation? Exploring this question can help us understand more about the role of denominational affiliation in shaping individual paths to teaching.

FIGURE 1: DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION GROWING UP AS COMPARED TO CURRENT AFFILIATION



Respondents were asked to report on their family’s engagement in Jewish life as they were growing up.⁸ Celebrating Jewish holidays was by far the facet of Jewish life most commonly experienced by DeLeT alumni: 80 percent described their families as extremely active in this area. In contrast, the other kinds of Jewish engagement received a rating of extremely active by approximately half of respondents (see Table 1). For example, 54 percent cited going to synagogue as something their families did on a regular basis, and 53 percent indicated that their families were extremely active in giving

tzedakah. A slightly lower percentage of respondents indicated that their families were very active supporters of Israel (47 percent) and actively worked for social justice (46 percent) and Jewish causes (44 percent). Less than half (41 percent) gave “engagement in Jewish learning” a rating of extremely active.

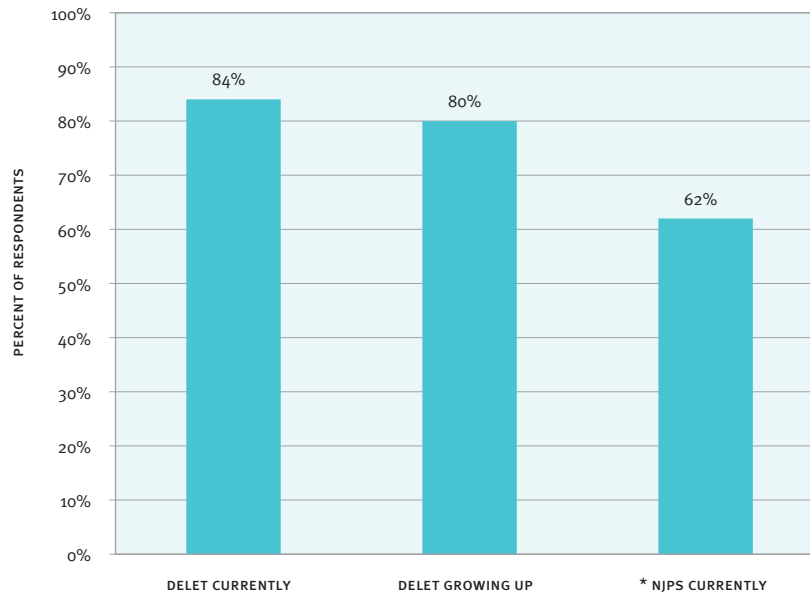
It is interesting to compare the current Jewish engagement of DeLeT alumni with that of their family while they were growing up. We see a slight increase in the celebration of Jewish holidays, from 80 percent to 84 percent. This is a common way of engaging in Judaism among the general Jewish population (NJPS, 2000–01). According to NJPS findings, a majority of young adults ages 18–29 observe a number of important Jewish holiday and rituals such as lighting Chanukah candles, attending a Passover seder, and fasting on Yom Kippur.⁹ Compared to the general population of young Jews, however, individuals who choose to participate in DeLeT have a greater likelihood of celebrating Jewish holidays (see Figure 2).

TABLE 1: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN JEWISH LIFE WHILE GROWING UP

AS YOU WERE GROWING UP, HOW ACTIVE WAS YOUR FAMILY IN...	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY ACTIVITY LEVEL		
		1–2	3	4–5
CELEBRATING JEWISH HOLIDAYS	4.2	7%	14%	80%
ATTENDING SYNAGOGUE	3.5	29%	17%	54%
GIVING TZEDAKAH	3.5	28%	19%	53%
SUPPORTING ISRAEL	3.3	36%	17%	47%
WORKING FOR JEWISH CAUSES	3.2	41%	15%	44%
ENGAGING IN JEWISH LEARNING	3.2	33%	26%	41%
WORKING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE	3.0	41%	14%	46%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = NOT AT ALL ACTIVE AND 5 = EXTREMELY ACTIVE. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

FIGURE 2: CELEBRATING JEWISH HOLIDAYS: A COMPARISON OF DELET ALUMNI AND NJPS* SAMPLE



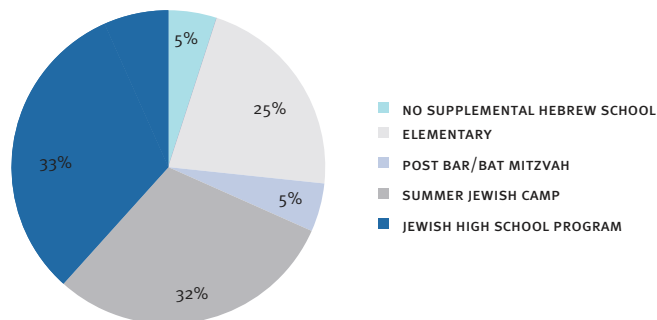
* Based on NJPS data of 18–29-year-olds who hold/attend a Passover Seder.

JEWISH SCHOOLING

How do DeLeT alumni compare with their peers when it comes to Jewish schooling? Thirty-five percent of DeLeT alumni attended Jewish day schools for primary school, and 20 percent attended Jewish day school for secondary school. According to the 2000–01 NJPS, 18 percent of Jewish adults attended Jewish day schools in their youth.¹⁰ DeLeT alumni seem to have been significantly more involved in this kind of Jewish education. One wonders whether and how their experiences as students in day schools affected their decision to become day school teachers.¹¹

Sixty-eight percent of DeLeT alumni had some other kind of Jewish education. As can be seen in Figure 3, 25 percent attended supplementary Hebrew school for the elementary grades, and 33 percent went to supplementary Jewish high school. Only 5 percent reported having had no Jewish schooling, a very small percentage when compared to the NJPS sample, where 31 percent of respondents indicated having no formal Jewish education.

FIGURE 3: SUPPLEMENTAL HEBREW SCHOOL BACKGROUND

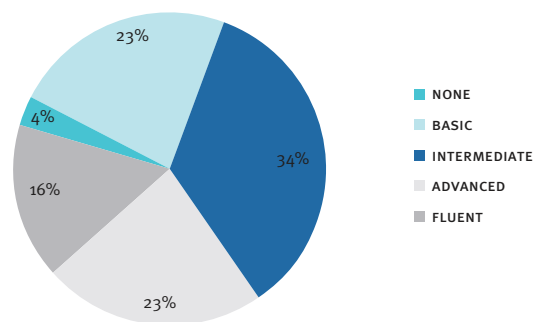


Attending a Jewish summer camp was a major activity for 32 percent, which is similar to their same-age Jewish peers in the NJPS (32 percent). A majority of DeLeT alumni (71 percent) have spent time in Israel, which contrasts starkly with the 15 percent of NJPS

respondents ages 18–34 who traveled to Israel. The nature and length of stays in Israel vary. Fifty-four percent of DeLeT alumni spent time in Israel touring, 20 percent visiting relatives, and 24 percent studying. Another 9 percent grew up there.

Respondents entered DeLeT with a wide range of Hebrew language skills. Thirty-nine percent of respondents indicated that their Hebrew level is either advanced (23 percent) or fluent (16 percent), and 57 percent of respondents indicated that their Hebrew level is either basic (23 percent) or intermediate (34 percent). Only 4 percent of respondents reported having no knowledge of Hebrew. This distribution of Hebrew skills is not surprising, given the variation in Jewish schooling experiences among DeLeT alumni and the fact that DeLeT does not have a Hebrew language requirement for admission or graduation.¹²

FIGURE 4: HEBREW FLUENCY



The NJPS found strong correlations between attending day school, going to summer camp, and spending time in Israel on the one hand and developing an active Jewish life as an adult on the other. Combining those results with the findings above about the Jewish educational experience of DeLeT alumni, we might conclude that a

program like DeLeT is unlikely to attract, recruit, and prepare candidates who are not Jewishly identified and active in significant ways.

HIGHER EDUCATION

When we examine the academic background of DeLeT alumni, we see that 67 percent attended top-ranked colleges and universities such as Brandeis, University of California, Berkeley, Columbia, Emory, Stanford University, and Dartmouth College (see Figure 5).¹³ It is noteworthy that so many students from elite colleges, where graduates presumably have their pick of careers, have chosen to teach in a Jewish day school, especially given the low pay and status.

The choice of academic majors among DeLeT alumni is also another important detail in filling out the profile of those who choose to attend the program (see Figure 6). Most majors studied by alumni fall within the social sciences and humanities. Jewish studies and religion (29 percent) are the most popular majors. Only 9 percent majored in biology or mathematics, and only two DeLeT alumni majored in education. Since most young teachers enter the field through an undergraduate major in education, this is an interesting difference.¹⁴ These findings suggest that many DeLeT alumni have arrived at an interest in day school teaching through a primary interest in Judaism rather than education.

FIGURE 5: RANKING OF UNIVERSITIES ATTENDED

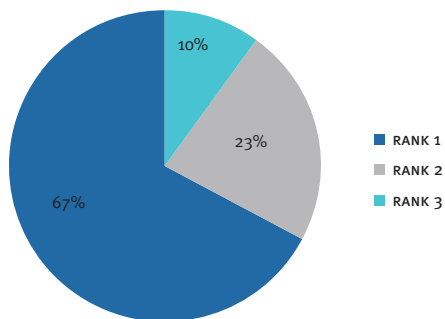
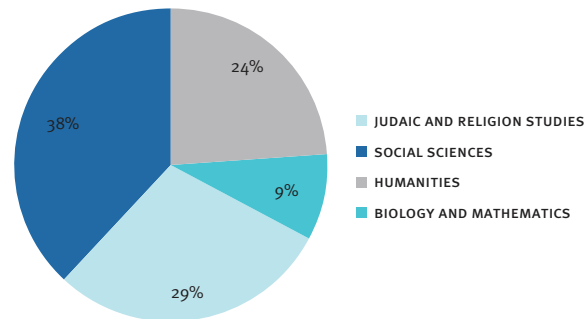


FIGURE 6: ACADEMIC MAJORS



While 73 percent of alumni entered DeLeT within two years of graduating college, 25 percent of DeLeT alumni came after significant work experience. Some alumni held jobs related to education, such as preschool teacher, synagogue youth director, and Hebrew school teacher. Others worked in unrelated fields, including diamond sales, law, social work, and marketing. The age and experience range among alumni makes sense given the program's recruitment efforts, which focus on both post-college and mid-career candidates.

Since completing the DeLeT fellowship, 62 percent of respondents earned graduate degrees. This percentage includes DeLeT fellows who earned a master of arts in teaching (MAT) degree from Brandeis University, as well as those earning graduate degrees

from other institutions and in other fields.¹⁵ In 2007, DeLeT became the Jewish day school concentration in the master of arts in teaching (MAT) program at Brandeis. Thus, all graduates of the Brandeis program now earn an MAT degree, which affects the overall percentage of graduate degrees earned by DeLeT alumni. When compared to the general population of teachers in Jewish day schools, DeLeT alumni are slightly more likely to hold a graduate degree. The EJSS found that 55 percent of educators teaching in Jewish day schools earned a degree beyond a bachelor of arts.¹⁶ This 7 percent difference is expected to grow in the coming years, as all Brandeis fellows will graduate with master's degrees.

Another notable difference between DeLeT teachers and day school teachers in EJSS is their acquisition of a teaching certification. From the start, the DeLeT program at Brandeis has required its graduates to earn a Massachusetts teaching certification in order to graduate. DeLeT at HUC-JIR began requiring its graduates to earn a California teaching certification in 2008. In comparison, 56 percent of day school educators, as reported by EJSS, hold a state teaching certification.¹⁷ In summation, the majority of DeLeT teachers enter the field of Jewish day schools with a teaching certification and a graduate degree, credentials not held by close to half of the day school teachers who participated in the EJSS study.

JEWISH IDENTITY AND BELIEFS

When asked about their Jewish identity, DeLeT alumni convey an overall picture of Jewish pride and engagement. Ninety-seven percent very much agree or completely agree with the statement “I am proud to be a Jew”; 93 percent very much agree or completely agree with the statement “I have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people”; and 81 percent very much agree or completely agree with the statement “I have a clear sense of what being Jewish means to me.” (See Table 2.) In contrast, in the NJPS, 47 percent of 18–29-year-olds strongly agreed that they have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people.¹⁸

It seems that strong Jewish identification and pride are common characteristics of most DeLeT alumni, and this may predispose them to serve the Jewish community. How this relates to the choice of day school teaching is a different, though related, matter. Alumni do draw a connection between their own personal Jewish identification and their professional role. When asked how important being a Jewish role model is to their role as a day school teacher, 91 percent responded that it is very important or extremely important (see Table 11).

TABLE 2: PERSONAL BELIEFS ABOUT BEING JEWISH

PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY RATING LEVEL		
		1-2	3	4-5
I AM PROUD TO BE A JEW.	4.7	0%	3%	97%
I HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE.	4.5	2%	5%	93%
I HAVE A CLEAR SENSE OF WHAT BEING JEWISH MEANS TO ME.	4.3	2%	18%	81%
I HAVE A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE CARE OF JEWS IN NEED AROUND THE WORLD.	4.1	3%	22%	74%
IT'S IMPORTANT FOR ME TO HAVE FRIENDS WHO SHARE MY WAY OF BEING JEWISH.	3.3	23%	32%	46%
WHEN FACED WITH AN IMPORTANT LIFE DECISION, I LOOK TO JUDAISM FOR GUIDANCE.	3.3	24%	31%	45%
OVERALL, THE FACT THAT I AM JEWISH HAS VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH HOW I SEE MYSELF.	1.2	97%	0%	3%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = I DO NOT AGREE AT ALL AND 5 = I COMPLETELY AGREE. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

The significance of Jewish identity in the lives of DeLeT alumni is illustrated by their forms of Jewish engagement. Four out of five respondents indicate that being part of a Jewish community (79 percent), connecting to their family’s heritage (81 percent), celebrating Jewish holidays (84 percent), and living an ethical and moral life (97 percent) are very important or extremely important. A lower percentage find studying Jewish texts (57 percent), ritual practice (54 percent), and believing in God (63 percent) very important or extremely important. (See Table 3.)

TABLE 3: ALUMNI LEVEL OF JEWISH INVOLVEMENT (table continues on next page)

FOR YOU PERSONALLY, HOW MUCH DOES BEING JEWISH INVOLVE THE FOLLOWING?	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY RATING LEVEL		
		1-2	3	4-5
LIVING AN ETHICAL AND MORAL LIFE	4.6	2%	2%	97%
GIVING YOUR CHILDREN A JEWISH EDUCATION	4.5	2%	5%	93%
CELEBRATING JEWISH HOLIDAYS	4.3	2%	14%	84%
LOVE OF LEARNING	4.3	3%	8%	88%
BEING PART OF A JEWISH COMMUNITY	4.2	7%	14%	79%
CONNECTING TO YOUR FAMILY’S HERITAGE	4.2	3%	16%	81%
COMMUNITY	4.1	2%	20%	78%
ZIONISM	4.0	7%	19%	75%

	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY RATING LEVEL		
JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD	4.0	5%	19%	76%
GIVING TO CHARITY	3.9	7%	21%	72%
JEWISH HISTORY	3.9	5%	27%	68%
REMEMBERING THE HOLOCAUST	3.8	12%	24%	64%
HAVING A RICH SPIRITUAL LIFE	3.7	12%	21%	61%
JEWISH CULTURE	3.7	14%	22%	64%
SUPPORTING JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS	3.7	14%	22%	64%
SOCIAL JUSTICE	3.7	12%	22%	66%
STUDYING JEWISH TEXTS	3.6	12%	31%	57%
RITUAL PRACTICE	3.6	10%	36%	54%
BELIEVING IN GOD	3.6	20%	18%	63%
COUNTERING ANTI-SEMITISM	3.6	16%	29%	55%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT AND 5 = EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

We asked DeLeT alumni to rank various personal values and beliefs. Close to 100 percent of respondents ranked family, personal fulfillment, meaningful work, and enjoying life as extremely important. It is interesting to consider the disparity between the rating of meaningful work (98 percent said it was extremely important) and the rating of status, which only 12 percent ranked as extremely important (see Table 4). This wide gap between the priority of meaningful work compared with status might give us some insight into the choice of becoming a day school teacher, an occupational choice that rarely garners high status. Alumni seem to know this only too well. When respondents were asked to describe the extent to which they feel professionally respected, only 33 percent felt that they were extremely respected by the broader society (see Table 15). Personal wealth is another factor that respondents believe is relatively unimportant; only 17 percent described it as extremely important. These findings align with previous research in general education about teachers' motivations and rewards. Lortie (1975) and Cohn and Kottkamp (1993), Johnson and colleagues (2004), and Tamir (2009) all found that teachers do not expect school teaching to bring them status or personal wealth. Rather, they value it because it provides meaningful work for society and a chance to work with and help young people learn and succeed.

Being politically active, a category that involved Jews do not tend to use and may be a higher priority among teachers in other contexts, such as urban settings (e.g., Quartz & TEP Research Group, 2003; Tamir, 2009), is ranked as relatively unimportant among

DeLeT teachers (only 22 percent indicated that being politically active played important part in their life) (see Table 4). Improving the world ranks much higher (76 percent). Looking at these values through a Jewish lens, we recognize that improving the world is an important Jewish value highly prioritized in many Jewish communities, whereas being politically active may reflect the civic value of democratic participation. Following this line of reasoning, DeLeT teachers seem to value political activism, but they adopt a Jewish lens to think about and enact social change.

TABLE 4: PERSONAL VALUES

PLEASE INDICATE THE LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE THAT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING PLAYS IN YOUR LIFE.

	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY RATING LEVEL		
		1-2	3	4-5
FAMILY	4.8	0%	0%	100%
PERSONAL FULFILLMENT	4.7	2%	3%	95%
MEANINGFUL WORK	4.7	0%	2%	98%
ENJOYING LIFE	4.6	2%	0%	98%
FRIENDS	4.4	2%	5%	93%
IMPROVING THE WORLD	4.1	5%	19%	76%
BEING PART OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY	4.0	3%	22%	75%
LIVING A SPIRITUAL LIFE	3.7	4%	34%	63%
PERSONAL WEALTH	2.8	29%	54%	17%
BEING POLITICALLY ACTIVE	2.6	47%	31%	22%
STATUS	2.4	56%	32%	12%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT AND 5 = EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

CONCLUSION

Comparing the background of DeLeT teachers to other populations, we draw several tentative conclusions about who chooses DeLeT. For the most part, DeLeT teachers have attended Jewish schools as children, including a significant number (35 percent) who attended day schools. They have traveled to Israel and have at least a basic knowledge of Hebrew. Growing up, they celebrated Jewish holidays in their homes, and they continue to do so as adults. However, many have switched their denominational affiliation as they moved into adulthood, and a plurality reject denominational affiliation altogether. They have a strong sense of Jewish identification and pride. They prioritize values such as family, meaningful work, and friendship over status and wealth. Most do

not engage in daily Jewish ritual practice and Jewish text study; rather they are Jewishly active by connecting to their family and community and by living an ethical life.

III. CHOOSING TO TEACH

CHOOSING DAY SCHOOLS

Decades of research on teachers' lives and work reveal an extensive list of factors that attract people to teaching. Most notably, Lortie (1975) and others found that teachers are more attracted to the intrinsic rewards (e.g., helping children learn) associated with teaching than to its extrinsic rewards (e.g., salary). Yet teachers were very appreciative of some ancillary rewards like job security and flexible work schedules.

In line with these findings, DeLeT alumni cited intrinsic rewards as the most popular rationale for choosing the career path of a teacher. When asked about their decision to teach in a Jewish day school, almost all DeLeT alumni cited their enjoyment of children (93 percent) and love of their subject matter (91 percent). Findings from EJSS show some of the same trends. For example, the two highest-ranked reasons for teaching in day schools were intrinsic in nature and included the ability “to really impact the lifepaths of young people” and “to work individually with students and get to know them well.”

Given the relatively strong Jewish backgrounds of DeLeT participants, it is not surprising that they would be drawn to teaching in Jewish day schools. Many attributed their career decision to the unique culture of Jewish day schools. Unlike nonsectarian private schools or public schools, Jewish day schools purport to be learning communities where students and faculty can form integrated identities as they teach, study, and experience their dual heritage and responsibilities as Americans and as Jews. Such an experience may depend on teachers who can connect general and Jewish studies in meaningful and appropriate ways, create democratic classrooms infused with Jewish values, and model Jewish learning and living.

Indeed, a large percentage of participants attributed their choice to teach in a day school to the opportunity to integrate Judaism into their teaching of so-called “secular” subjects (78 percent). This aspiration reflects a change that some day schools have been undergoing for some time (Solomon, 1978; Zeldin, 1992). Traditionally, day schools divided the school day into secular studies and Jewish studies, each subject area taught by distinct

faculty (Ellenson, 2008). As more schools move toward an integrated model in which the divide between Jewish and secular studies is less stark, some schools employ one teacher to provide at least some instruction in both secular and Jewish studies. DeLeT alumni seem to value this approach, which is nurtured by the program and which probably plays a role in guiding their school preference as teachers.

A large percentage of DeLeT alumni experience Judaism primarily through community involvement. Therefore, it makes sense that many alumni highlighted the communal aspects of Jewish day schools as important factors in their career choice. Seventy percent reported that they chose to teach in Jewish day schools because this allows them to contribute to the Jewish community. Fifty-two percent of respondents reported choosing day schools because this gives them a sense of living by the Jewish calendar, and 68 percent said that the sense of belonging to the community was an important factor in their decision.

It seems plausible that the desire to contribute to the Jewish community may influence the decision to teach in a Jewish day school. This would allow day school teachers to bring their whole selves to their work and to experience the rewards of teaching on both a professional and a personal level. Conceptually, this argument aligns with Lortie’s finding about the draw of intrinsic and ancillary rewards of teaching and with more recent work on teachers’ sense of vocation (Hansen, 1995).

TABLE 5: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DECISION TO TEACH IN A JEWISH DAY SCHOOL *(table continues on next page)*

FACTORS	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY RATING LEVEL		
		1-2	3	4-5
I ENJOY WORKING WITH CHILDREN.	4.8	5%	2%	93%
I ENJOY THE SUBJECT MATTER(S) I TEACH.	4.4	0%	9%	91%
I HAVE THE PERSONAL QUALITIES TO BE A GOOD TEACHER.	4.4	0%	12%	88%
IT IS FULFILLING TO INCORPORATE JUDAISM INTO THE VARIOUS SUBJECTS I TEACH.	4.1	5%	16%	79%
TEACHING ALLOWS ME TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY.	3.9	11%	20%	70%
IT GIVES ME A SENSE OF BEING PART OF A COMMUNITY.	3.9	4%	28%	68%
TEACHING CAN PROMOTE SOCIAL JUSTICE.	3.8	11%	23%	67%
THERE IS A LOT OF AUTONOMY IN TEACHING.	3.5	14%	42%	44%
IT'S A FLEXIBLE CAREER CONDUCIVE TO PARENTING/FAMILY LIFE.	3.3	28%	21%	51%
IT ALLOWS ME TO LIVE BY THE JEWISH CALENDAR.	3.4	21%	27%	52%
IT PROVIDES JOB SECURITY.	2.9	37%	32%	32%

IT'S A STEPPING STONE TO LEADERSHIP IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY.	2.9	39%	25%	37%
I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A TEACHER.	2.8	46%	26%	28%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT AND 5 = EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

CHOOSING DELET

Some people deliberately choose teaching, while others fall into a teaching career. In the past, teaching was one of the few careers open to women and many considered it a “safe” option. Today, when women can choose any career they desire, the decision to enter a teacher education program invites interpretation. This is especially true for those who wish to teach in Jewish day schools, which often hire teachers without professional preparation or credentials. In this context, understanding what draws candidates into a Jewish preparation program is of particular importance.

When asked about the factors affecting their decision to enroll in DeLeT, almost all of the respondents indicated that the yearlong mentored internship—one of the program’s defining characteristics—was their top reason (92 percent). Unlike many undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation programs that require short periods of student teaching, commonly for 6–10 weeks, DeLeT requires an extended internship. DeLeT candidates spend four days a week in an elementary classroom, working alongside and learning from a mentor teacher. This is a powerful experience because it enables interns to study and practice teaching under guidance before they become official teachers of record.

The second factor cited most often by alumni was the chance to pursue a teaching certificate (83 percent). As noted above, completing a rigorous teacher preparation program and holding a state teaching certificate have generally not been requirements for employment in day schools. The fact that DeLeT graduates are interested in such a preparation may reflect a desire to obtain professional credentials that could serve them later in public or independent schools. At the same time, it may demonstrate a desire to improve and professionalize day school teaching.

Another feature of DeLeT that ranked high among the reasons for choosing the program was the substantial financial package offered to students. Sixty-three percent of respondents ranked the program’s financial assistance as crucial in choosing DeLeT. Providing this support to postbaccalaureate students has been a major expense of the program.¹⁹ In Jewish day schools, where half of the teachers are hired without certifica-

tion, it would be almost unthinkable to expect teachers to pay for their graduate-level, professional preparation.

In general, however, teacher certification brings other challenges and tensions for day schools. On one hand, they might favor teacher certification if they think it promotes teacher professionalism. On the other hand, a cadre of Jewish teachers with state certification and greater sense of belonging to the teaching profession might mean more bargaining power for teachers, who can then negotiate better salaries and benefits, perhaps equal to those paid in the public sector.

In short, financial assistance seems a necessary strategy for encouraging people to undertake professional preparation for day school teaching. Otherwise, the current structural constraints and rewards are unlikely to support this trend toward professionalization.

Other influential factors that respondents cited were the program’s support for job placement (65 percent) and the program’s intellectual challenge (65 percent). On the other side of the scale, respondents indicated the following factors as least important in their decision to join DeLeT: the program’s strong reputation (15 percent), knowing someone who had attended the program (20 percent), and a desire to work in schools served by the program (25 percent). These findings are understandable, given the short time the program has been in existence and the small number of people who have been prepared to date. In the future, assuming the program earns a reputation for preparing high-quality Jewish day school teachers, these factors are likely to become more important for candidates.

TABLE 6: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DECISION TO ENROLL IN THE DELET PROGRAM *(table continues on next page)*

FACTORS	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY RATING LEVEL		
		1-2	3	4-5
YEARLONG MENTORED INTERNSHIP	4.6	0%	8%	92%
CHANCE TO PURSUE TEACHING CERTIFICATE	3.8	10%	7%	83%
THE PROGRAM’S GOOD FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	3.6	23%	13%	63%
THE PROGRAM’S SUPPORT FOR FUTURE JOB PLACEMENT	3.6	18%	17%	65%
CHANCE TO SERVE THE JEWISH COMMUNITY	3.6	22%	17%	62%
THE PROGRAM’S INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE	3.6	23%	12%	65%
THE PROGRAM’S MISSION OR PHILOSOPHY	3.5	18%	28%	53%
THE PROGRAM’S PLURALISTIC APPROACH TO JUDAISM	3.4	22%	32%	47%

CONTINUED HELP FROM PROGRAM AFTER GRADUATION	3.3	27%	22%	52%
REPUTATION OF BRANDEIS/HUC	3.1	33%	27%	40%
A PATH TO EXPLORE JEWISH IDENTITY	3.1	41%	24%	34%
THE DIVERSITY OF FELLOWS	2.9	42%	35%	23%
CHANCE TO PURSUE AN MAT OR MAJE DEGREE	2.8	47%	14%	40%
PROGRAM LOCATION CLOSE TO HOME	2.6	47%	23%	30%
CHANCE TO WORK IN THE SCHOOLS THE PROGRAM SERVES	2.4	57%	18%	25%
THE PROGRAM'S STRONG REPUTATION	2.3	56%	29%	15%
KNOWING SOMEONE WHO ATTENDED THE PROGRAM	2.0	73%	7%	20%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT AND 5 = EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

IV. PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

According to DeLeT handbooks, the program aims to prepare day school teachers for the elementary grades who see themselves as Jewish educators, whether they teach general and/or Jewish subjects; who can promote content-rich, learner-centered teaching; who seek to draw connections between general and Jewish studies; and who see themselves as lifelong learners.²⁰ This survey asked alumni to consider how well these goals and aspirations were implemented or achieved in their preparation.

In asking for feedback on the program, we were interested in how alumni perceived those features that align with research on effective teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). According to the professional literature, such programs have the following elements:

1. A strong vision of teaching and learning that promotes program coherence;
2. Well-defined standards of performance that guide program design and student assessment;
3. Extensive practical experience integrated with coursework and carefully mentored;
4. Strong relationships between the university and reform-minded schools;
5. Widespread use of pedagogies that help teachers connect theory and practice and learn well from experience (e.g., cases, teacher research, performance assessments).

GUIDING VISION FOR A COHERENT PROGRAM

Having a strong vision of good teaching and a set of shared understandings about teaching, learning, and the purposes of day schools contributes to program coherence as guiding ideas are revisited and reinforced across courses and field experiences. This, in turn, strengthens the program’s impact on teachers’ ways of thinking and, hopefully, on their teaching practice.

More than 96 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that DeLeT articulates a clear vision of teaching and learning. A majority of respondents (90 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that the various courses in DeLeT reflect a similar view of teaching. This finding is particularly noteworthy considering the variety of courses and instructors in the program. At Brandeis, for example, DeLeT offers a general course on pedagogy as well as subject-specific courses on the teaching of math, reading/language arts, Bible, Jewish holidays, and prayer—all taught by different instructors.

During the planning phase of DeLeT, the national design team, which included program leaders from both campuses, articulated their beliefs about teaching and learning and the mission of Jewish day schools in order to lay a strong conceptual foundation for the program. These ideas, set forth in program handbooks, continue to provide a common orientation for faculty, mentor teachers, and DeLeT students.

TABLE 7: ALUMNI EVALUATION OF THEIR PREPARATION

THINKING BACK ON YOUR EXPERIENCES AT DELET, DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY RATING LEVEL		
		1-2	3	4-5
DELET ARTICULATES A CLEAR VISION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING.	4.4	2%	2%	97%
THE COURSES IN DELET REFLECT A SIMILAR VIEW OF TEACHING.	4.2	2%	9%	90%
I HAVE GOTTEN TO KNOW WELL THE OTHER STUDENTS.	4.1	7%	10%	83%
I FEEL PART OF A LARGER GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ALL SHARE A COMMON VISION OF DAY SCHOOL EDUCATION.	4.1	5%	12%	82%
THE CRITERIA BY WHICH I WAS EVALUATED AS AN INTERN WERE CONSISTENT WITH WHAT I WAS TAUGHT IN MY COURSES.	4.0	3%	17%	79%
DELET EMPHASIZES STRONG SUBJECT-MATTER PREPARATION.	3.7	17%	16%	67%
WHAT I LEARNED IN MY COURSES REFLECTED WHAT I OBSERVED IN MY INTERNSHIP.	3.7	9%	24%	67%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE AND 5 = STRONGLY AGREE. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

TEACHING STANDARDS/ FRAMEWORKS

Professional teaching standards spell out the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that good teaching entails and serve as a framework for guiding and assessing teacher candidates' learning and performance. The DeLeT program operates with an explicit understanding of what good day school teaching entails. The DeLeT program standards supply major goals for the yearlong internship and its accompanying seminars and a basis for assessing interns' progress and learning.

We asked DeLeT alumni to reflect on the ways in which their DeLeT experience was guided by teaching standards. Modeling was one powerful way that the teaching standards were demonstrated. Eighty percent agreed or strongly agreed that the faculty taught in ways that were consistent with the practices they advocate (see Table 9). Respondents also provided feedback on their assignments and evaluation. Ninety percent of alumni agreed or strongly agreed that faculty gave assignments that connected the internship with the coursework, and 79 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the evaluation criteria for the internship were consistent with what was taught in the courses (see Table 9). It is clear from this feedback that the alumni felt the program promoted a common set of performance standards used to guide and assess their learning.

MENTORED YEARLONG INTERNSHIP

As we discussed in the previous section, many DeLeT alumni chose to participate in DeLeT because of its yearlong mentored internship. The opportunity to observe and assist an experienced teacher in working with a group of students across the school year, to be part of a day school community, and to interact with parents and administrators is strong preparation for beginning teaching. Research on the outcomes of teacher education supports the idea that carefully designed, extended clinical experiences enable new teachers to apply and integrate concepts and practices that they learn about in their courses and construct new knowledge in practice. There is consistent evidence that independent trial and error experience is not nearly as effective as guided practice (Clift & Brady, 2009).

Respondents were asked to determine which aspects of the DeLeT program helped them implement in the classroom what they were learning in their DeLeT courses. The three factors that were rated highest were: program faculty support, mentor teacher support, and cohort support (see Table 8). Other elements, such as students' behavior and parents' involvement, which are variables that the DeLeT program cannot control, were given relatively low ratings. The remaining elements (particularly school culture and support from other teachers), which are partially influenced by DeLeT,²¹ received a mod-

erate rating. Heads of school, who are considered by many to be the most important figure in day schools, but may be relatively remote from teachers, offered the least support to DeLeT interns.

One way that DeLeT promotes alignment between coursework and field experience is through a monthly mentor study group where mentors review DeLeT assignments and readings discussed in the core teaching seminar, analyze emergent problems, and develop their skills as mentors. Field instructors (also called clinical educators), who are members of the DeLeT faculty and the program’s representative in partner day schools, serve as a bridge between the formal learning in university courses and the experiential learning in the day school classroom.

DeLeT alumni were asked to describe the degree of consistency between what they learned in DeLeT courses and what they observed during their internship. Sixty-seven percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “What I learned in my courses reflected what I observed in my internship.” When asked about evaluation, 79 percent of the respondents indicated that the criteria by which their mentors evaluated them as interns were consistent with what faculty taught them in their courses. Learning more about how DeLeT achieves such alignment would be a valuable contribution to the broader field of Jewish teacher education.

TABLE 8: ALUMNI EVALUATION OF THEIR INTERNSHIP

LOOKING BACK AT YOUR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE, HOW MUCH DID EACH ELEMENT CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR ABILITY TO PRACTICE WHAT YOU LEARNED IN DELET?	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY RATING LEVEL		
		1-2	3	4-5
DELET'S SUPPORT	4.3	7%	3%	90%
MENTOR TEACHER'S SUPPORT	4.2	7%	15%	78%
COHORT SUPPORT	4	10%	19%	71%
STUDENTS' BEHAVIOR	3.7	7%	34%	59%
SCHOOL CULTURE	3.6	15%	27%	58%
OTHER TEACHERS' SUPPORT	3.3	24%	31%	45%
PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT	2.7	42%	41%	17%
HEAD OF SCHOOL'S SUPPORT	2.5	56%	15%	29%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = NOT AT ALL CONTRIBUTIVE AND 5 = EXTREMELY CONTRIBUTIVE. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

STRONG RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOLS

From the start, the DeLeT programs at Brandeis and HUC-JIR developed strong relationships with sets of day schools in their respective areas in order to facilitate a strong professional learning community within the program. The close alignment between the university and the schools is reflected in Table 9, where, for example, 90 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that faculty assignments were connected to school practice. The fact that partner schools contribute to interns' living stipend is further evidence of their commitment to this partnership. The ongoing development of mentor teachers and the use of common teaching standards also strengthen the professional learning community among DeLeT interns, mentors, field instructors, program faculty, and day school leaders.

EXTENSIVE USE OF CASES, INQUIRY, AND PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS TO PROMOTE LEARNING IN AND FROM EXPERIENCE

One goal of the DeLeT program, as stated in its handbook, is to develop teachers' capacity to learn well from experience. An overwhelming majority of respondents, 97 percent, agreed or strongly agreed that DeLeT faculty enabled them to reflect on their practice to improve instruction (see Table 9).

TABLE 9: PERSPECTIVES ON DELET FACULTY

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE DELET FACULTY?	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY RATING LEVEL		
		1-2	3	4-5
ARE COMMITTED TO PREPARING TEACHERS	4.7	0%	3%	97%
ENABLED ME TO REFLECT ON MY PRACTICE	4.5	0%	3%	97%
ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT TEACHING	4.5	0%	3%	97%
CARED ABOUT WHETHER TEACHERS WERE LEARNING	4.4	3%	8%	88%
KNEW WHO I WAS	4.3	5%	15%	80%
GAVE ASSIGNMENTS THAT CONNECTED INTERNSHIP WITH COURSEWORK	4.3	0%	10%	90%
ARE EXCELLENT TEACHERS	4.3	3%	10%	88%
OFTEN WERE AVAILABLE TO MEET OUTSIDE OF CLASS	4.1	3%	19%	78%
TAUGHT IN WAYS THAT WERE CONSISTENT WITH THE PRACTICES THEY ADVOCATE	4.1	7%	14%	80%
UNDERSTOOD THE REALITIES OF CONTEMPORARY DAY SCHOOLS AND THEIR STUDENTS	4.0	7%	10%	83%
DEMONSTRATED HOW TO INTEGRATE GENERAL AND JEWISH STUDIES	4.0	5%	19%	76%
PROVIDED DIVERSE JEWISH ROLE MODELS	3.9	12%	14%	74%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT AND 5 = EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

PREPARATION FOR A DUAL CURRICULUM

In general education, teachers certified to teach first through sixth grade, unlike middle-school and high-school teachers, are responsible for teaching a variety of subject areas, including math, reading/language arts, and social studies. The dual curriculum in Jewish day schools means that other subjects must also be taught. In some day schools, the same teacher is responsible for teaching both curricula, especially in the early grades. In other schools, general and Jewish subjects are assigned to different teachers. The DeLeT program aims to prepare teachers who see themselves as Jewish educators whether they teach general and/or Jewish subjects and who identify with, and contribute to, the Jewish mission of the school. Consequently, DeLeT must prepare its graduates for a broader range of subject-matter teaching than general teacher education programs.

We asked respondents to evaluate the subject matter preparation they received at DeLeT. Sixty-seven percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that DeLeT emphasizes strong subject-matter preparation (see Table 7). In retrospect, we realize that this finding is ambiguous, given the program's focus on both general and Judaic content knowledge. Nevertheless, in light of the range of subject-matter knowledge necessary to teach elementary grades, especially in Jewish day schools, it is striking that a significant 67 percent of respondents perceived the program's emphasis on subject matter knowledge for teaching to be satisfactory.

When respondents were asked about preparation in particular subject areas, their responses reflected the relatively low emphasis that the program ascribes to the preparation of some subjects. For example, only 31 percent of respondents reported feeling very prepared or extremely prepared to teach language arts, which is the core of the elementary curriculum. Because of time constraints and the certification exams, DeLeT mainly focuses on the teaching of reading and relies on mentor teachers and schools to introduce interns to the broader field of language arts instruction (e.g., writing and children's literature). Still it is a matter of concern that alumni do not feel adequately prepared to teach this important foundational subject.²² Similarly, 34 percent of respondents said they feel very prepared or extremely prepared to teach *parashat hashavua*. In comparison to their overall feeling of preparedness (81 percent felt very prepared or extremely prepared by the program to become an effective teacher, and 81 percent felt very prepared or extremely prepared to design appropriate and challenging lessons), the fact that many alumni feel inadequately prepared to teach particular subjects merits serious attention by program leaders.

Seventy-six percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that faculty demonstrated how to integrate general and Jewish studies. This response is echoed when alumni reflect on the ways in which the program has prepared them (see Table 10). When asked to what extent DeLeT prepared them to integrate general and Jewish studies, 63 percent responded that they were very prepared or extremely prepared to integrate general and Jewish studies. Slightly more, 70 percent, responded that they were very prepared or extremely prepared to integrate Jewish values into the classroom, which is one of the program standards. These different forms of integration require different kinds of knowledge and skill. In the future, it would be helpful to learn more about what alumni actually do to enact “integration” in their classrooms.

PREPARING TEACHER LEADERS

While DeLeT’s immediate mission is to prepare teachers with a strong beginning practice, one of the program’s long-term goals is to prepare a cadre of teacher leaders who will contribute to school improvement. When alumni were asked to what extent DeLeT prepared them to become a teacher leader, 66 percent responded that they felt very prepared or extremely prepared. Even though it is unlikely that graduates of DeLeT will take on leadership roles in their first year or two of teaching, the majority of graduates feel prepared to position themselves as teacher leaders within their schools. (For more details about DeLeT alumni who assumed leadership positions in their schools, see the Retention and Career portion of this report.)

TABLE 10: IMPACT OF DELET ON RESPONDENTS’ SENSE OF PREPAREDNESS AS TEACHERS

TO WHAT EXTENT DID DELET PREPARE YOU TO...	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY RATING LEVEL		
		1-2	3	4-5
DESIGN APPROPRIATE AND CHALLENGING LESSONS	4.1	3%	15%	81%
BECOME AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER	4.0	3%	16%	81%
BECOME A TEACHER LEADER	3.8	7%	24%	69%
INTEGRATE JEWISH VALUES INTO THE CLASSROOM	3.8	3%	31%	66%
INTEGRATE GENERAL AND JEWISH STUDIES	3.7	5%	32%	63%
IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT	3.6	16%	33%	52%
TEACH LANGUAGE ARTS	3.1	25%	44%	31%
TEACH PARASHAT HASHAVUA	3.0	25%	41%	34%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = NOT AT ALL PREPARED AND 5 = EXTREMELY PREPARED. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

V. TEACHING PRACTICES

When asked to characterize their role as Jewish day school teachers, almost all alumni reported that helping children succeed academically (95 percent), being a Jewish role model for students (91 percent), and developing their practice (96 percent) are very important or extremely important to them. Collaboration with colleagues (80 percent) was also reported by many teachers as an important feature of their role. Only 60 percent of respondents rated being a school leader as very important or extremely important.²³

TABLE 11: PERSPECTIVES OF ALUMNI ON THE TEACHER’S ROLE

IN YOUR ROLE AS A DAY SCHOOL TEACHER, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING?	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY RATING LEVEL		
		1-2	3	4-5
DEVELOPING MY PRACTICE AS A TEACHER	4.6	0%	4%	96%
HELPING CHILDREN TO SUCCEED ACADEMICALLY	4.5	2%	4%	95%
BEING A JEWISH ROLE MODEL FOR STUDENTS	4.4	5%	4%	91%
TRANSMITTING JEWISH VALUES	4.3	4%	7%	89%
PREPARING STUDENTS FOR ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP	4.2	2%	22%	76%
COLLABORATING WITH COLLEAGUES	4.1	4%	16%	80%
INTEGRATING GENERAL AND JEWISH CONTENT	3.9	11%	15%	75%
CONTINUING MY JEWISH LEARNING	3.9	11%	20%	69%
LIVING A JEWISH LIFE	3.9	9%	27%	64%
TEACHING ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE	3.8	11%	23%	66%
BEING A SCHOOL LEADER	3.8	5%	35%	60%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT AND 5 = EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

In order to get some picture of their practice as day school teachers, we asked respondents what an observer would see them doing in the classroom. We found that, in contrast to the popular view of teaching as a lonely, isolated job and schools as organizations that discourage collaboration, sense of community, and exchange of ideas and practices, DeLeT teachers ranked collaborating with a colleague high on their list of dominant practices (84 percent).²⁴

The other four practices that respondents say they most often engage in are directly related to their goals and pedagogy—encouraging risk-taking, asking open-ended questions, facilitating student collaboration, and teaching Jewish values. The emphasis on these teaching practices seems to reflect the respondents’ top two espoused priorities, developing their teaching practice within a professional community and helping children become successful learners who know how to ask their own questions, collaborate with colleagues, and take intellectual risks.

Teaching Jewish values was both an espoused and enacted belief. Eighty-nine percent of respondents believe that transmitting Jewish values is a very important part of their job, and 86 percent claim that an observer would see them teaching Jewish values often or very often in their classroom.

The least-frequent practices among respondents were engaging students in the study of Jewish texts (53 percent) and involving families in children’s education (45 percent). The latter may reflect the fact that many forms of parent involvement occur outside the classroom and may not be readily apparent when observing teaching. The low frequency of Jewish text study could be explained by a variety of factors, including alumni’s teaching assignments (Jewish vs. general studies), age of the children, and background of the teacher.

TABLE 12: ALUMNI PERCEPTION OF THEIR TEACHING PRACTICES

WHEN YOU PICTURE YOURSELF TEACHING, WHAT WOULD AN OBSERVER SEE YOU DOING AND HOW OFTEN WOULD HE BE SEEING YOU DOING IT?	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY FREQUENCY		
		1-2	3	4-5
COLLABORATING WITH A COLLEAGUE	4.4	5%	11%	84%
ENCOURAGING RISK-TAKING	4.3	0%	12%	88%
ASKING OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS	4.3	0%	16%	85%
FACILITATING STUDENTS’ COLLABORATION	4.3	5%	11%	84%
TEACHING JEWISH VALUES	4.2	3%	10%	86%
MAKING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN GENERAL AND JEWISH STUDIES	3.9	2%	30%	68%
INVOLVING FAMILIES IN CHILDREN’S EDUCATION	3.5	9%	47%	45%
ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THE STUDY OF JEWISH TEXTS	3.4	26%	21%	53%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = NEVER AND 5 = VERY OFTEN. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

VI. SCHOOL CONTEXT

The structure and culture of a school, along with the leadership style of the administration, can contribute to a teacher's sense of satisfaction and success. When asked to evaluate their current school environment, for the most part, alumni depicted a partially supportive environment for beginning teachers (see Table 13). Sixty-four percent agreed or strongly agreed that their school administrators support and value teachers' work. Sixty percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their school supports the teaching practices they learned in DeLeT. Of slightly more concern were teachers' observations about their school's approach to beginning teachers. Only 52 percent agreed or strongly agreed that their school takes the needs of beginning teachers seriously.

Tangible factors that can impact teacher satisfaction on a day-to-day basis, such as class size and physical space, also received mixed responses. On the positive side, 67 percent of respondents were very satisfied with their class size. Class size was rated by day school educators in EJSS as one of the top ten factors they considered when deciding whether or not to stay in the field. In contrast, we found that only 26 percent of the respondents very much agreed or completely agreed that teachers are not unduly burdened with paperwork in their current schools. Only 50 percent very much agreed or completely agreed that the school's physical facility adequately supports the instructional program. A slightly lower percentage (46 percent) very much agreed or completely agreed that teachers have adequate curricular resources and materials.

The schools received the lowest ratings in the more elusively defined categories of vision and mission. Only 36 percent very much agreed or completely agreed that teachers in their schools share a vision of good teaching, and only 39 percent very much agreed or strongly agreed that teachers shared an understanding of the school's Jewish mission. These findings might reflect some sense of criticism and dissatisfaction among DeLeT alumni with the overall state of affairs in their schools and particularly with their colleagues. Yet these findings might also reflect the individualistic culture of teaching, where each teacher is expected to figure out what works and manage on his or her own. Thus it is not surprising that teachers describe a reality where teachers do not share a single vision of good teaching. It may also be the case that, given the relative openness and tolerance of religious differences and interpretations in non-Orthodox schools, the fact that most DeLeT teachers do not feel a sense of collective agreement among faculty on the school's Jewish mission is not surprising.

When it comes to professional development and advancement, alumni responses point to another area in need of improvement. Forty-one percent very much agreed or completely agreed that teachers have regular opportunities for professional development, and 32 percent very much agreed or completely agreed that teachers have opportunities for professional advancement. These findings, which are consistent with previous research (Gamoran, et al., 1997; 1998), suggest that neither job-embedded professional development nor opportunities for expanded responsibilities are a significant part of day school teachers' work life.

TABLE 13: ALUMNI EVALUATION OF THEIR SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

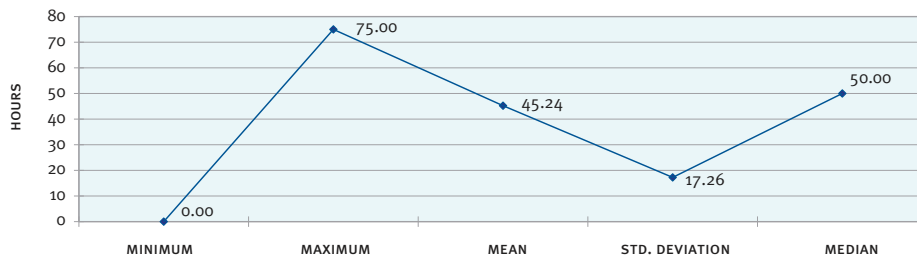
THINKING ABOUT YOUR CURRENT SCHOOL, USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE TO INDICATE TO WHAT EXTENT YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.

	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY RATING LEVEL		
		1-2	3	4-5
I AM SATISFIED WITH MY CLASS SIZE(S).	3.9	10%	22%	67%
MY SCHOOL IS ENGAGED IN SOME POSITIVE-CHANGE INITIATIVES.	3.9	12%	21%	67%
I AM INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGED BY MY DAILY WORK.	3.7	12%	20%	68%
ADMINISTRATORS SUPPORT AND VALUE TEACHERS' WORK.	3.6	19%	17%	64%
THE SCHOOL SUPPORTS THE TEACHING PRACTICES LEARNED IN DELET.	3.5	19%	21%	60%
TEACHERS ARE NOT UNDULY BURDENED WITH PAPERWORK AND NON-INSTRUCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.	3.4	56%	18%	26%
THE SCHOOL'S PHYSICAL FACILITY ADEQUATELY SUPPORTS THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM.	3.3	29%	21%	50%
MY SCHOOL TAKES THE NEEDS OF BEGINNING/EXPERIENCED TEACHERS SERIOUSLY.	3.3	32%	16%	53%
TEACHERS HAVE ADEQUATE CURRICULAR RESOURCES AND MATERIALS.	3.2	25%	29%	46%
TEACHERS HAVE REGULAR OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.	3.2	29%	31%	41%
TEACHERS SHARE A VISION OF GOOD TEACHING AND A LANGUAGE FOR TALKING ABOUT IT.	3.1	29%	36%	36%
TEACHERS SHARE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE SCHOOL'S JEWISH MISSION.	3.1	29%	32%	39%
TEACHERS HAVE REGULAR TIMES TO MEET WITH COLLEAGUES TO WORK ON ISSUES OF TEACHING/LEARNING.	3.1	34%	19%	48%
TEACHERS HAVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT IN THIS SCHOOL.	2.6	51%	17%	32%
THERE IS A GAP BETWEEN WHAT THE SCHOOL STANDS FOR AND WHAT IT DOES.	2.4	23%	21%	56%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = I DO NOT AGREE AT ALL AND 5 = I COMPLETELY AGREE. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

The average number of hours teachers spend on school-related assignments is an important factor that teachers, particularly women, take into consideration when they choose a teaching career (e.g., Lortie, 1975). An EJSS finding reinforces this point. The study found that the most important factor for day school teachers in deciding whether or not to stay in the field is the balance between work life and home life. When asked about the average number of hours they spend on the job, both in and out of school, DeLeT alumni reported an average of 45 hours per week. Compared to the EJSS sample, the DeLeT alumni as a cohort work more hours per week. Sixty-eight percent of teachers in EJSS reported working equal to or less than 40 hours a week: almost 50 percent among these teachers reported working less than 30 hours per week. Only 31 percent reported working more than 40 hours per week.²⁵ While EJSS teachers indicated that their total workload was among the top ten factors they considered in deciding whether or not to stay in day school teaching,²⁶ it is unclear what effect the relatively high workload of DeLeT alumni may have on their long-term commitment to teaching. It is also unclear whether the high workload was linked to their relative inexperience, their young age, the school's expectations, or whether respondents were full-time or part-time teachers.

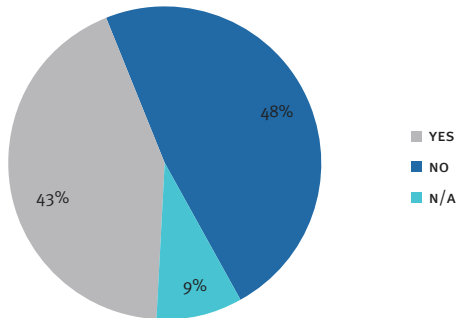
FIGURE 7: WORKING HOURS PER WEEK



Teaching assignments are another important facet of teacher's work life that can affect their satisfaction. Eighty-three percent of DeLeT alumni are satisfied with their teaching assignment. A significant percentage of respondents (43 percent) also report that their teaching assignment changed during the last year. Of those who were reassigned, 37 percent indicated that they initiated the change and 37 percent indicated that the change was mutually agreed upon. The data may suggest that a degree of flexibility in teaching assignments promotes satisfaction among teachers. Another possible reason for such a high level of satisfaction with their teaching assignments could be the high percentage of respondents, 72 percent, teaching subjects they are trained to teach.

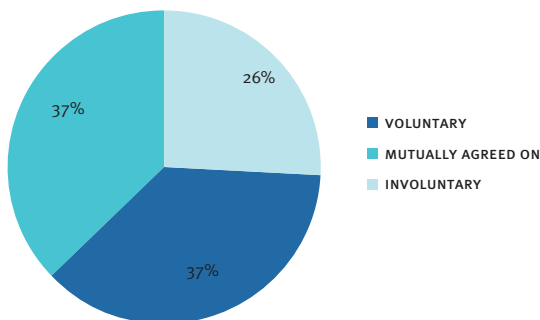
FIGURE 8: PERCENTAGE OF DELET TEACHERS WHO CHANGED TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS SINCE THE PREVIOUS YEAR

HAS YOUR TEACHING ASSIGNMENT CHANGED FROM LAST YEAR?



Nevertheless, studies of teachers' self-perception reveal a more complicated picture. While teachers are aware of how others see them, they do not necessarily accept these viewpoints and sometime assert their professional identity in opposition to these main-stream ideas (Smulyan, 2004; Tamir, 2009).

FIGURE 9: REASONS FOR CHANGING TEACHING ASSIGNMENT



81 percent respectively, feel professionally respected by the school administration and the greater Jewish community. Only one-third of respondents feel very respected or extremely respected by the broader society. What explains the very significant gap between the sense of respect from the Jewish community and sense of respect from the general society? One possibility is that teachers who work in Jewish day schools are part of a tight-knit community where they may enjoy higher status levels because members of the community may appreciate their role in preserving and transmitting the values of that community.

RESPECT

Another factor in the work environment that can affect the lives and professional choices of teachers is how much they feel their work is appreciated and supported. This relates to the concept of occupational status. Large-scale sociological surveys of occupational status usually find that teaching in K-12 schools is an occupation that garners relatively low status.

Furthermore, the perceptions of teachers and teaching might vary depending on the particular school sector. As can be seen, DeLeT alumni feel very respected or extremely respected by many of the constituencies with whom they interact, including fellow teachers (96 percent), parents of students (90 percent), friends (88 percent) and family (87 percent). Slightly lower percentages, 84 percent and

TABLE 14: ALUMNI SENSE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPECT

AS A TEACHER, TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL PROFESSIONALLY RESPECTED BY...	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY RATING LEVEL		
		1-2	3	4-5
YOUR FAMILY AND PARENTS	4.3	5%	7%	87%
PEERS AT SCHOOL	4.0	4%	15%	81%
YOUR FRIENDS	4.0	11%	11%	78%
PARENTS OF YOUR STUDENTS	3.7	7%	25%	67%
PRINCIPAL AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	3.7	13%	18%	69%
THE JEWISH COMMUNITY	3.6	15%	22%	63%
THE BROADER SOCIETY	2.9	35%	33%	33%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = NOT AT ALL RESPECTED AND 5 = EXTREMELY RESPECTED. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

VII. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP

In the previous section on school context, respondents reported that they received moderate to low levels of professional development (PD) and advancement. In this section, alumni were asked to specify which kinds of professional activities they found most important to their professional growth. Research suggests that effective professional development is built into the ongoing work of teaching. As teachers work together to strengthen their subject-matter knowledge and expand their pedagogical repertoire, they develop a sense of shared responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning in their school. More typical forms of professional development—workshops or lectures by outside experts with no follow-up—rarely affect what goes on in classrooms. By contrast, school-embedded professional development directly changes teachers’ knowledge, skills, and commitments, which, in turn, affect student engagement and learning (e.g., Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Hawley and Valli, 1999; Wilson and Berne, 1999).

While these findings emerge from general education, they apply to the Jewish day school environment. After surveying professional development practices in five large Jewish communities, Holtz and colleagues (2000) conclude that “professional development in Jewish education falls short of the best practices being advocated in the general educa-

tional literature today” (p. 173). More specifically, they found that “professional development in Jewish education tend[s] to be one-shot workshops that meet for relatively few hours and are not part of a long-term, coherent plan for teachers’ professional growth. Sixty-three programs (37 percent) met for only one session, and another 49 percent (85 programs) met for between two and five sessions. Only 12 percent of programs met for six or more sessions” (p. 178).

We asked DeLeT alumni to reflect on their professional development experiences and how helpful these experiences were to their professional growth. More than two-thirds (69 percent) of alumni considered regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers on issues of instruction as very important or extremely important. Fifty-nine percent of alumni rated mentoring and/or peer observation as very important or extremely important. These kinds of professional development activities allow for ongoing collaboration among teachers on issues related to student learning and instructional practices.

Respondents still rate more traditional forms of professional development, such as attending workshops, conferences, and short-term trainings, as relatively effective. Fifty-four percent of alumni ranked these opportunities as important or very important, and 64 percent gave a high ranking to university courses as well. This may reflect the alumni’s experiences with courses in DeLeT, which met over time, encouraging reflection on teaching and promoting interactions with colleagues on issues related to content and pedagogy.

Only half of the respondents considered participation in an informal peer network outside of their school setting as important or extremely important to their professional growth. It may be that these beginning teachers prefer collaborating with their own colleagues rather than with teachers from other schools or even their own former peers. A more advanced analysis could help explain why certain teachers in particular environments are more likely to favor specific professional development opportunities over others. For instance, we might discover that teachers value mentoring and collaboration in their schools, where they have positive experiences with these activities. On the other hand, external teacher networks may be more attractive to teachers who are not well supported in their schools.

TABLE 15: PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND THEIR IMPORTANCE TO PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND SATISFACTION

IN THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS, HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO EDUCATION OR TEACHING, AND HOW WOULD YOU RANK THEIR IMPORTANCE TO YOUR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND SATISFACTION?

	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY RATING LEVEL		
		1-2	3	4-5
REGULARLY-SCHEDULED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER TEACHERS ON ISSUES OF INSTRUCTION	3.8	14%	16%	69%
WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES, OR TRAINING	3.6	18%	28%	54%
UNIVERSITY COURSES	3.5	25%	11%	64%
MENTORING AND/OR PEER OBSERVATION AND COACHING	3.5	28%	13%	59%
INDIVIDUAL OR COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH ON A TOPIC OF INTEREST TO YOU PROFESSIONALLY	3.4	25%	23%	52%
OBSERVATIONAL VISITS TO OTHER SCHOOLS	3.1	40%	10%	50%
PARTICIPATING IN AN INFORMAL NETWORK OF PEERS	3.0	35%	19%	47%
PARTICIPATING IN A NETWORK OF TEACHERS	2.8	46%	15%	38%
PRESENTING AT WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES, OR TRAINING	2.2	64%	8%	28%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT AND 5 = EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

Respondents were also asked about how well particular professional development activities and foci could meet their professional needs at this point in their development. Seventy-nine percent of respondents felt that reflecting on their practice is very valuable or extremely valuable at this point in their careers. Seventy-four percent believe that experiencing close relationships with a mentor or mentors is very valuable or extremely valuable. Future analysis should disaggregate these patterns by cohort in order to see whether different professional development opportunities relate to teachers’ experience and growth.

TABLE 16: THE VALUE OF REFLECTION, MENTORING, AND PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

AT THIS POINT IN YOUR DEVELOPMENT AS AN EDUCATOR, HOW VALUABLE ARE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING EMPHASES TO YOUR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH?

	MEAN RATING	PERCENT BY RATING LEVEL		
		1-2	3	4-5
REFLECTING ON YOUR PRACTICE	4.2	7%	14%	79%
EXPERIENCING CLOSE MENTOR RELATIONSHIPS	4.0	16%	10%	74%
CREATING SUPPORTIVE NETWORKS OF PEERS	3.6	16%	15%	69%
ENGAGING IN COMMUNITY-BASED WORK	3.3	21%	37%	42%

RATING IS ON A SCALE OF ONE THROUGH FIVE WHERE 1 = NOT AT ALL VALUABLE AND 5 = EXTREMELY VALUABLE. PERCENTS MAY NOT EQUAL 100 PERCENT DUE TO ROUNDING.

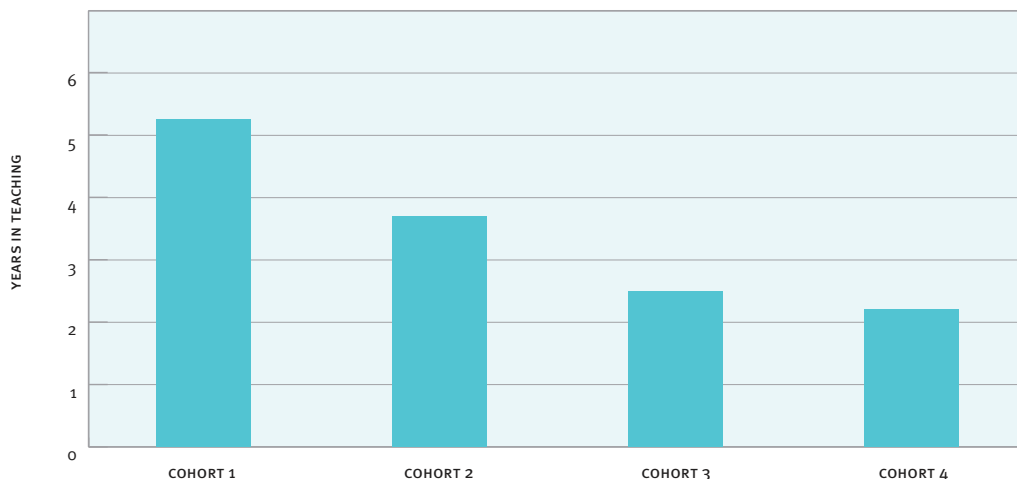
VIII. RETENTION AND CAREER PLANS

Concerns about teacher retention and career commitment have received considerable attention from scholars and policymakers in the last two decades. In general, teaching-force data suggest that young teachers tend to leave the classroom relatively early and in large numbers. On average, almost half of those who start teaching leave by their fifth year (Ingersoll, 2001). Though data on teachers in Jewish day schools is not collected regularly, past studies warn of high attrition rates among beginning teachers (Kelner, Rabkin, Saxe & Sheingold, 2005; Schaap & Goodman, 2002) and point to the “graying” of the Jewish teaching force (Ben-Avie & Kress, 2008). Some of the reasons for teacher attrition are uniquely related to the context of Jewish day school. For example, Jewish day school teachers earn relatively low salaries and often do not enjoy retirement and health benefits that may help retain some of their counterparts in the public school system. Other factors that contribute to teacher attrition are similar to those affecting public school teachers and are related to the lack of support from school leaders and peers, failure to realize one’s hopes about becoming an effective teacher, the draw of leadership positions in school administration, and a desire to explore multiple job environments throughout one’s career (e.g., Johnson et al., 2004; Tamir, 2009a; 2009b; 2010).

DeLeT aims to prepare teacher-leaders, a goal that takes time to achieve. The program expects graduates to stay in teaching for at least two years while recognizing that it takes several years to consolidate a teaching practice and additional years to become an expert teacher (e.g., Huberman, 1989).

DeLeT alumni vary in the number of years they have been teaching since graduation. Overall, respondents have been in the field for a short time, with a mean ranging from 2.6 years for Cohort 4 teachers to 5.5 years for Cohort 1 teachers. These reported means are slightly higher than expected, since a few alumni worked as teachers before entering the program. Overall, however, the findings suggest that most DeLeT teachers accept their role as professional teachers and look forward to developing their teaching practice over time.

FIGURE 10: ALUMNI MEAN YEARS IN TEACHING



Respondents were also asked about their career plans. Did they plan to stay in classroom teaching or education, and for how long?²⁷ Overall, the findings seem to reflect a commitment to Jewish education, and to teaching and education in general. When analyzed by cohort, alumni plans for the next year reveal several trends. Cohort 4 has the largest percentage of individuals planning to stay in Jewish day school teaching (65 percent), while only 30 percent of Cohort 1 plan to teach in Jewish day schools, which is the lowest percentage among the four cohorts. Another interesting difference among the cohorts relates to their plans about working in a non-Jewish setting. Zero percent of Cohort 4 plans to work in a non-Jewish school setting, while each of the other three cohorts includes a small percentage who say they plan to work in either a public or non-Jewish private school (6 percent in Cohort 1, 18 percent in Cohort 2, and 7 percent in Cohort 3). A few teachers in each cohort were unsure of their plans for next year, which might reflect indecision on their part about whether to continue teaching in a Jewish day school or point to the fact that their position for the next year has not yet been secured.

In addition to describing their plans for the upcoming year, respondents were asked what they would be doing over the next five years. While 54 percent plan to teach in a Jewish day school in the next five years, many say they might teach in a public or private school (22 percent and 12 percent, respectively). The percentage of respondents who expect to teach in a public school increased threefold, from 3 percent next year to 22 percent in five years. Similarly, the option of working in Jewish education, but not necessarily in the context of a day school, increased from 7 percent next year to 37 percent in five years. The trend regarding congregational school teaching changed slightly, from 10

percent who anticipate teaching in a congregational school next year to 14 percent who anticipate teaching in a congregational school in five years.²⁸

FIGURE 11: CAREER PLANS FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR BY COHORT

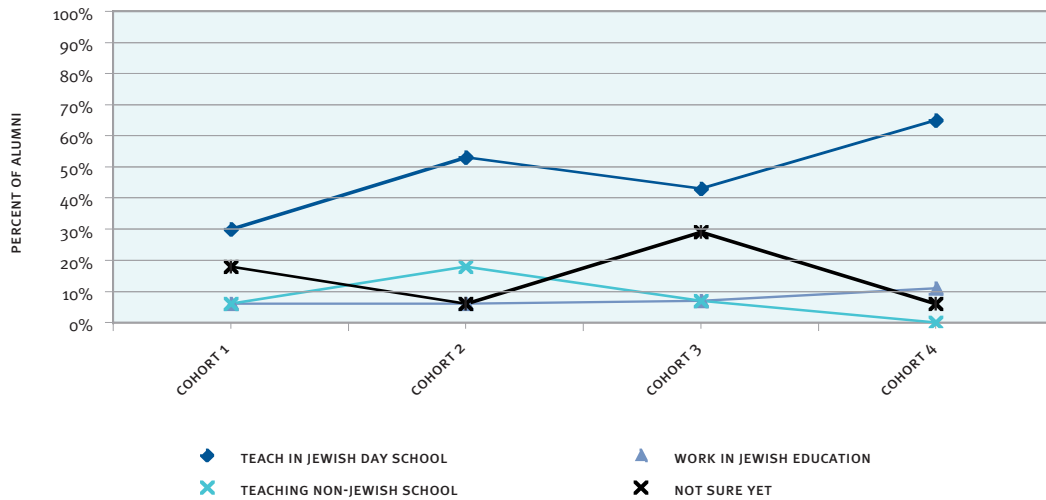
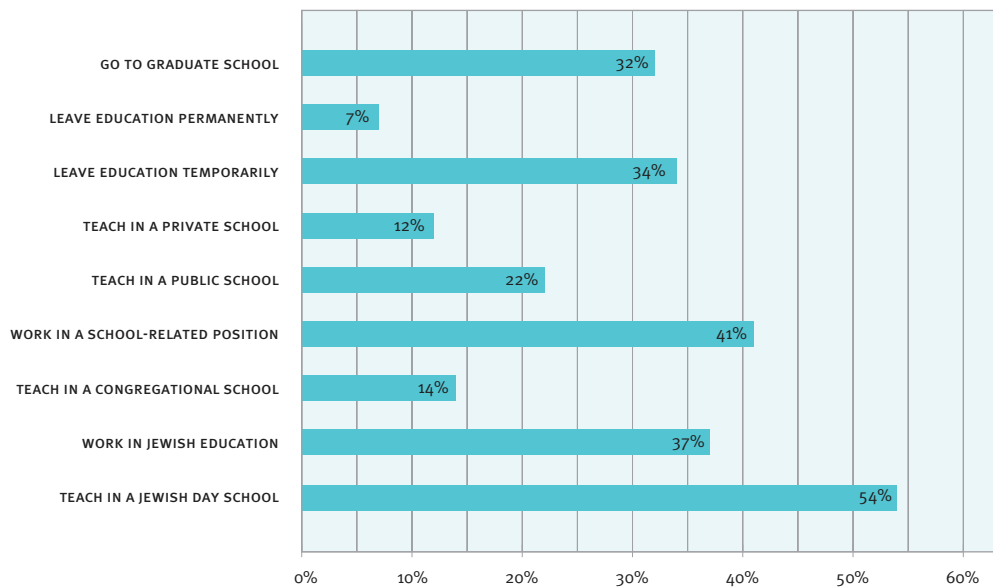


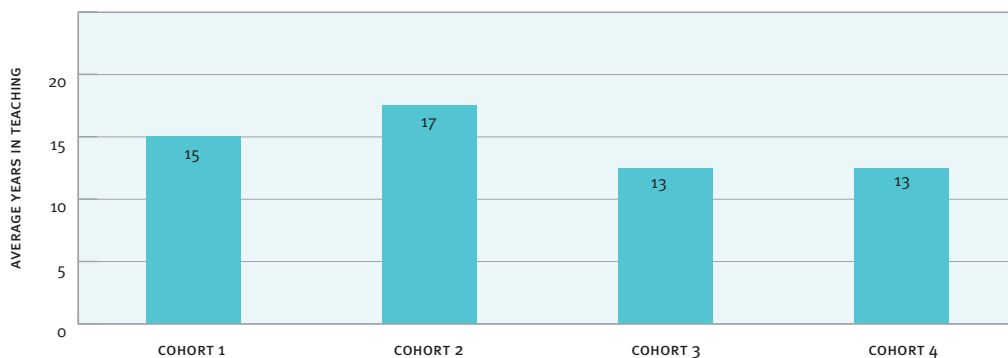
FIGURE 12: ANTICIPATED CAREER CHOICE IN FIVE YEARS



In terms of those who expect to leave education, our findings show that only 7 percent of respondents (five alumni) indicated that they planned to leave education permanently in five years (see Figure 12). In explaining why, they cited three main reasons. Four of the five alumni said that they were not able to secure a job. Four cited pregnancy or child rearing, and two said they were leaving because they did not enjoy teaching. All in all, it seems that both short- and long-term career plans of DeLeT alumni are tied up in concerns about job security and questions about whether working in a Jewish day school can sustain their family. Both reasons could explain why more than a quarter of the respondents said they would consider accepting teaching positions in a private or public school.

Respondents were also asked to indicate how many years they expect to teach. Their responses suggest that most anticipate a career in teaching that will last for a significant period of time, though not their entire career. Since a majority of DeLeT teachers are younger than thirty, their anticipated plans indicate that they would leave teaching in their mid-forties.

FIGURE 13: EXPECTED LONGEVITY IN TEACHING BY COHORT

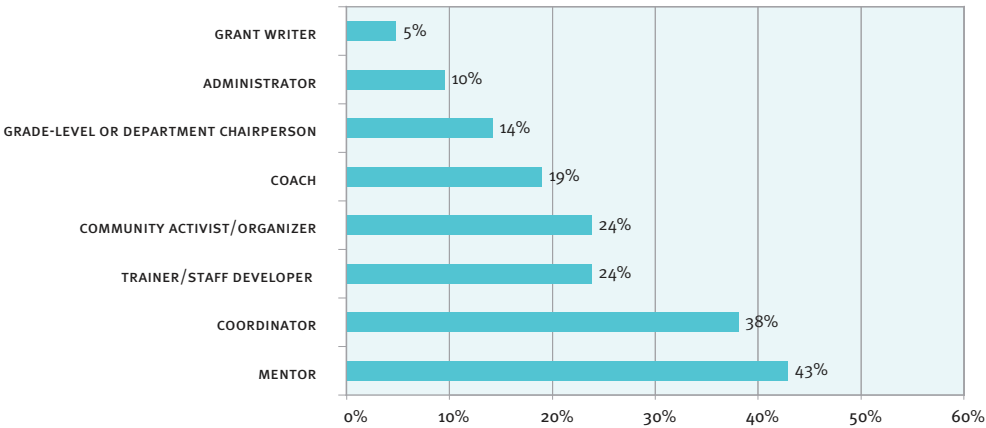


We know from general education that teachers' decisions to stay in their school, move to public or private schools, or leave teaching altogether is closely related to their professional satisfaction (Johnson et al., 2004). Our findings seem to confirm the validity of this assertion for Jewish day school teachers as well. Most respondents, 92 percent, strongly agreed or agreed that teaching allows them to be lifelong learners. When reflecting on their choice of career, 82 percent strongly agreed or agreed that they would still become a teacher again if the choice presented itself. Day school educators in the EJSS responded similarly; 79 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they would choose to be Jewish educators again.

As noted, DeLeT explicitly prepares and expects teachers to become agents of change in their schools by taking on teacher leadership positions early in their careers. Respondents were asked about the leadership roles they assumed over the past twelve months. Thirty-six percent of respondents undertook at least one leadership activity in the past year. As can be expected, when we disaggregated the responses by cohort, the percentage of alumni who have played a leadership role is considerably higher in Cohort 1 (35 percent) and Cohort 2 (47 percent) compared with 21 percent in Cohort 3 and 24 percent in Cohort 4. Indeed, the difference between the first two cohorts and the later two cohorts makes sense, given that more time in the field increases the likelihood and ability to exercise leadership.

Of those who took on leadership roles, a significant number became teachers of other teachers. Forty-two percent served as mentors, and 23.8 percent were trainers or staff developers. Some assumed instructional leadership roles as grade-level or department chairpersons (14.2 percent), coordinators (36.4 percent), and, to a lesser extent, administrators (9.5 percent).

FIGURE 14: PERCENT OF ALUMNI ASSUMING LEADERSHIP ROLES IN PAST YEAR



IX. CONCLUSIONS

The findings in this report draw a detailed portrait of DeLeT graduates who completed the program between 2002–2006. This includes the first four cohorts of alumni from both Brandeis University and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Altogether we surveyed 61 individuals, including those who currently teach in Jewish day schools, those on leave from day school teaching, and those who have moved on to other careers. This represents 95 percent of the total graduates during the first four years of the program.

This survey builds on two previous research models designed to understand the background, identity, practices, and work setting of Jewish day school teachers. The first model, illustrated by Saul Wachs's (1998) research, involves a small-scale, longitudinal inquiry of alumni who graduated from Gratz College and were prepared to take on Jewish education and teaching positions. The second model illustrated by surveys of national (Ben-Avie and Kress, 2008) and community-wide (Gamoran et al., 1998) samples, provides a detailed snapshot of Jewish educators' background, preparation, and work setting.

Each research model has its merits. One-shot surveys with large samples allow researchers to draw generalizable conclusions about the field. Longitudinal studies even with smaller samples enable the researcher to document changes over time, including what kinds of careers teachers actually have.

This report is the first in a series of reports that will track DeLeT graduates over time, documenting how their Jewish upbringing, secular and Jewish education, professional preparation, and work experience relate to their career commitments, self perceptions, teaching practice, and current beliefs. This longitudinal survey of DeLeT alumni will provide the basis for a set of scholarly papers that explore important questions about this population. For example, which factors were most salient in shaping career commitments and trajectories among the DeLeT alumni? Our goal is to understand how various factors related to DeLeT teachers' background, preparation, and work experience influence their career choices, leadership roles, and teaching practices. We also want to understand how individual background factors interact with preparation in DeLeT and day school teaching experience to shape these outcomes.

DeLeT is still a relatively young and small program. In order to measure effectively and understand fully the career patterns of the DeLeT alumni and the particular effects of these variables, we need patience and persistence as we add more graduates to our database in the coming years. Only then will we have a large enough population to detect significant trends and patterns.

We hope that this report and those which follow will contribute to a critical discussion about what kinds of teachers our day schools need, how well programs of teacher education prepare such teachers, and how well day schools support and sustain them. Data about the experiences and decisions of DeLeT alumni over time can help us understand the opportunities and challenges that day school teachers face and the ways in which their professional growth is and can be nurtured.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ The EJSS, conducted by Ben-Avie and Kress (2008), includes both day school teachers and supplementary school teachers. Throughout this report, we draw comparisons between the DeLeT population and the day school teachers in the EJSS sample.
- ² For example, young teachers, like other professionals, might be more likely to make more transitions during their first years on the job. They also might be less determined to choose the best-paying jobs when they are young and do not have a family to care for.
- ³ This means that DeLeT population is denominationally pluralistic, even though one of the sponsoring institutions (HUC-JIR) is a Reform institution.
- ⁴ National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) 2000–01, Jewish adults ages 18–29, a united Jewish communities presentation of findings to the Jewish education leadership summit, February 8, 2004.
- ⁵ EJSS sample consists of all types of teachers who teach in Jewish day schools (including Jewish studies and regular teachers).
- ⁶ EJSS, p. 6.
- ⁷ Despite this focus, DeLeT is open to candidates from all denominations. The program has placed interns in modern Orthodox schools, and its graduates teach in day schools across the denominational spectrum.
- ⁸ The DeLeT survey item gauging family’s engagement in Jewish life is based on the NJPS 2000–01 but includes several revisions.
- ⁹ NJPS 2000–01, Jewish adults ages 18–29, a united Jewish communities presentation of findings to the Jewish education leadership summit, February 8, 2004.
- ¹⁰ Steven M. Cohen (April 2004). “Jewish educational background: Trends and variations among today’s Jewish adults.” United Jewish Communities Report Series on the National Jewish Population Survey 2000–01, Report 1, p. 17.
- ¹¹ The Choosing to Teach Study, another Mandel Center research project, probed this issue through a series of in-depth interviews with ten DeLeT teachers. Overall, findings suggest that past educational experience helped to frame and guide alumni decisions to become teachers. (For more details go to <http://www.brandeis.edu/mandel/projects/choosingtoteach.html>.)
- ¹² The issue of Hebrew had been the focus of ongoing discussion, at least at Brandeis where program leaders tried unsuccessfully to incorporate Hebrew study into the summer curriculum. Applicants with weak Hebrew are regularly advised to improve their language skills before entering the program.
- ¹³ We ranked universities and colleges based on the average SAT scores of their accepted applicants. In tier 1 universities (Rank 1), average SAT scores range from 650 to 730. In the second group (Rank 2) SAT scores range from 580 to 649, and in the third group (Rank 3) SAT scores range from 500 to 579. Data were retrieved from www.princetonreview.com.
- ¹⁴ This fact that DeLeT alumni did not choose education as undergraduates makes them similar to people who enter teaching via alternative teacher-certification programs.
- ¹⁵ Before 2007, DeLeT fellows at Brandeis could earn an MAT degree by continuing their professional studies during the first year of teaching and adding a third summer of coursework.
- ¹⁶ EJSS, p. 7.

¹⁷ EJSS, p. 7.

¹⁸ NJPS 2000–01, Jewish adults ages 18–29, a United Jewish Communities presentation of findings to the Jewish Education Leadership Summit, February 8, 2004.

¹⁹ To date, at Brandeis, the cost of tuition and stipend per DeLeT student is \$38,000 (\$28,000 for tuition and \$10,000 for the stipend).

²⁰ This vision that undergirds DeLeT as a program responds to debates about the need to better integrate the curriculum in Jewish day schools (e.g., Drake, 1993; Zeldin, 1992).

²¹ DeLeT carefully selects partner schools and helps to shape a collaborative professional culture, especially through its intensive work with mentor teachers.

²² Recent changes in both DeLeT programs, particularly at HUC-JIR which introduced new course offerings to comply with California teacher certification requirements, mean that future DeLeT alumni might be more satisfied with their preparation in key subject areas.

²³ Although this finding seems relatively marginal compared to the rest of the features, it actually represents a high figure, considering the fact that most respondents to this survey are beginning teachers who teach for fewer than four years and thus are less likely to have the mental resources needed to engage in leadership activities at their schools.

²⁴ This finding corresponds closely with a previous finding in which respondents indicated that collaborating with colleagues is very important for them (80 percent).

²⁵ EJSS, p. 12.

²⁶ EJSS, p. 31.

²⁷ For purpose of clarity, Figure 11 presents all careers tracks that might relate to education in Jewish day schools and in general. Not included in the graph are graduates who chose to go to graduate school, take maternity leave, or pursue noneducation positions.

²⁸ We need more specific information to interpret such a finding. For example, we know that some DeLeT alumni on maternity leave with one or two young children opt to teach in congregational schools to earn some money, contribute to Jewish education, and stay connected to teaching.

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