

# Learning from Taglit-Birthright Israel: An Academic Symposium

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## Guidelines for Moderators and Presenters

The goal of the conference is to engage a multi-disciplinary group of scholars, practitioners, and policy analysts in an examination of Taglit-Birthright Israel. Our goal is to explore what can be learned from an initiative that has been responsible for the travel of over 300,000 young adults from Diaspora communities around the world to Israel for ten-day educational experiences. It is an opportunity for researchers and practitioners, some of whom have been involved in Taglit and others who have not, to assess what we have learned from this large-scale educational experiment and consider its implications for education, development of religious and ethnic identity, and our understanding of young adult development.

Participants will be scholars, educational practitioners and policy makers from Israel and North America. To ensure that we maximize the potential of the meeting for exchange of ideas, we would like to alter the norms associated with a traditional academic meeting. Instead of multiple panels of 20 minute lectures—typically papers that are read or PowerPoint decks that are described—we would like to see sessions be more interactive. The intent is to engage participants in dialogue and to use our limited time to promote exchanged of ideas. Rather than focus on information-sharing presentations, presenters are asked to share materials on-line (via the conference website), with presentations focused on provoking discussion. There will be two exceptions to the general rules— talks that we will treat as “keynote” addresses—and these will be given at dinner the first night, lunch the second day.

### **General Guidelines:**

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

*Background materials:* The key to fostering dialogue, and limiting the amount of simple information sharing, is for presenters to provide materials which can be hyper-linked to the presenter's session in the online program. Along with biographical information, 1-3 papers should be included. What is appropriate will depend on the presenter.

*Mechanics:* Each session will have an assigned “techie” and a time-keeper (both will be Brandeis staff). The techie will help presenters who want to use PowerPoint (PPT) slides and, as well, will facilitate use of biographical slides (see details below) that will substitute for introductions (we mostly know one another and standard introductions would just fill time). The time-keeper will help to make sure that the session starts/ends on time and will also let the moderator/presenter know when speakers go over time.

### **Moderator Guidelines:**

*Role:* Moderators (aka chairs) should view themselves as facilitators of the discussion. They may want to make a framing comment at the beginning of a session and, later, engage with presenters and the audience in raising

questions and pointing out areas of agreement/disagreement. The role involves managing the discussion and determining when/how to engage the audience.

*Preparation:* In advance of the conference, the moderator should arrange a conference call of presenters (Cohen Center staff will make logistic arrangements and one of the local team members will participate). The moderator should review the order of presentation, the general focus of each presentation, and the kind of issues that should be addressed. A discussion should be held with respect to time limits. As described below (presenter guidelines), it is suggested that no single presentation comment be longer than 10 minutes. Any changes to the time frame should be discussed beforehand.

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

### ***Presenter Guidelines:***

*General:* Each presenter should have available 15-20 minutes of “air time” during their plenary. Rather than a single 15-20 minute presentation, it is suggested that presenters make initial remarks of no more than 10 minutes (5 or so PPT slides), with one to three rounds of additional comments of 3-5 minutes each (to react to other presenters/questions). Along with providing detailed information in preconference posted materials, presenters can maximize how they use their time by avoiding: (a) discussion of the time limits and its effect on what you can present, as well as, how much/little time you have, (b) extensive references (either to your own work or others), and (c) elaborate discussion of data (which can be better presented in written materials).

*Substance:* The initial presentation (10 minutes) should focus on summarizing key ideas and challenges. Later, in response to other presenters and questions from the audience, presenters should focus on how their ideas/conclusions relate to others on the panel and to the overall conference themes. Disagreement is fine, disagreeableness is not ok. The focus of each session should be for the presenter to help others at the conference understand better their ideas/perspective and, at the end, for each of us to have learned and understood things that we didn't before.

*Mechanics:* Presenters should email biographical details that will be included in a PPT slide during his/her presentation. Information should be organized as follows (all categories not required): Name, Title/Institutional Affiliation, Previous Research, Recent Publications/Selected Publications, Research Interests/Current Research. In addition, presenters are free to submit in advance any papers that are directly relevant to the session theme. These papers will be posted on the session webpage. If presenters will be using PPT during the presentation, they are asked to provide slides a few days before the conference (by 22 May). To save time, we want to preload materials and avoid technical pauses. If it's impossible to provide the slides before arriving in Boston, please send us a draft version (to enable us to test your format) by the 22nd. A “techie” will be available to assist. In regard to timing, please be respectful of the moderator and other panelists. If you think you need help, check with the time-keeper ahead of time: by request, he/she will be prepared to signal you at regular intervals.