

# **From Madrichim to Expert Educators: New Career Ladder for Professional Development for Supplementary, Congregational and Day School Teachers**

**by Richard D. Solomon, Ph.D., Elaine C. Solomon and Hana Bor, Ph.D.**

There is abundant empirical and documented evidence<sup>1</sup> that we need more highly competent Jewish educators in both Judaics and pedagogy for our supplementary, congregational and day schools. That is not debatable.

The JESNA task force on recruitment, development, retention and replacement<sup>2</sup>, put it succinctly:

*<T> here is a chronic shortage of Jewish educators at every level and in every setting. Schools, camps, and youth programs are constantly seeking staff, ranging from entry-level teachers, counselors, and advisors to the senior personnel necessary to administer institutions and programs. In an open society with few barriers for Jews, not enough young people are choosing to become Jewish educators, and not enough of those who make this choice stay with Jewish education as a lifelong career.*

The good news is there are many excellent programs designed to train candidates to become skilled Jewish teachers, administrators and leaders. We have listed a few exemplary programs below:

- DeLeT Program at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Rhea Hirsh School in Los Angeles and at the Mandel Center at Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts
- Masters in Jewish Education Program at the Fingerhut School of Education, American Jewish University (formerly the University of Judaism), Los Angeles, California
- Masters of Jewish Education at HUC-JIR in Los Angeles, California
- Yeshiva University's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration, New York, New York
- Masters in Jewish Education at the Davidson School of Education, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, New York
- Masters in Jewish Education at Gratz College (including on line courses), Melrose Park, Pennsylvania

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Wertheimer, Jack (2005). Linking the silos: How to accelerate the momentum in Jewish education today. NY: The AVI CHAI Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> Flexner, Paul A. & Gold, Sandra O. (2003). Providing for the Jewish future: Report on the task force on professional recruitment, development, retention, and placement. NY: Jewish Education Service of North America.

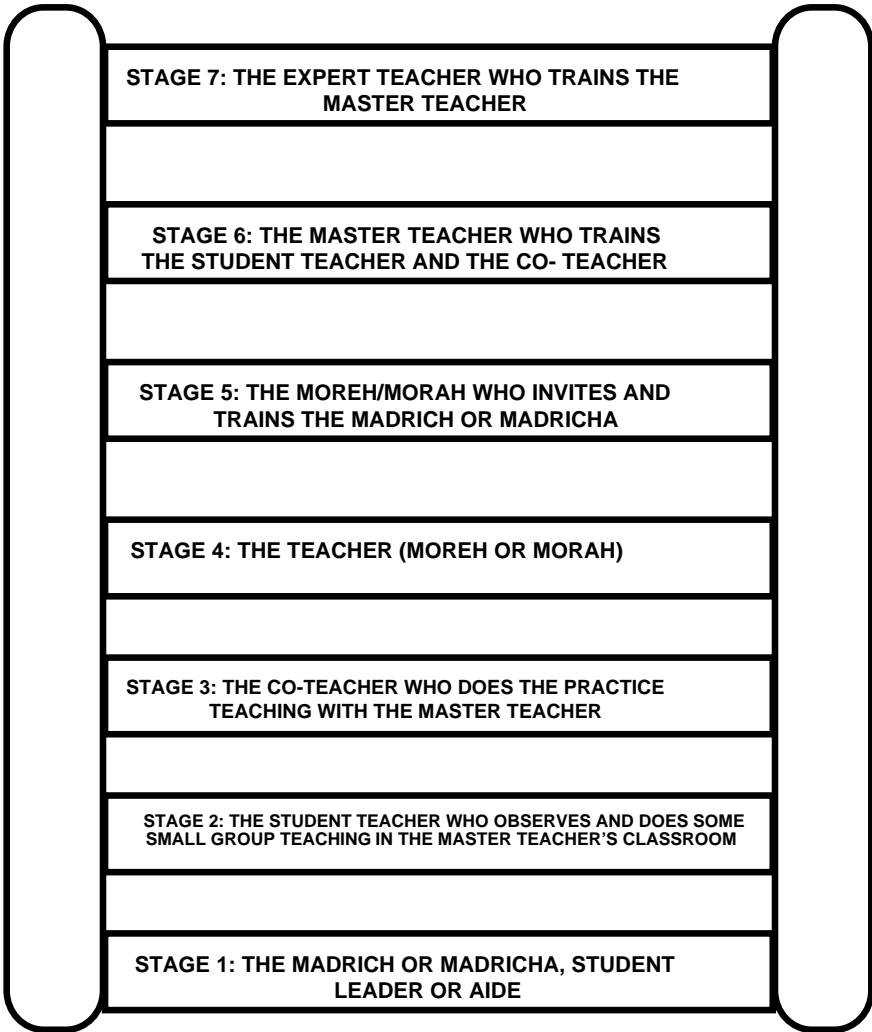
- Masters in Jewish Education at Baltimore Hebrew College (including on line courses), Baltimore, Maryland
- Masters in Jewish Education at Hebrew College, Boston, Massachusetts
- Masters in Jewish Education at Hebrew University, Rothberg International School, Jerusalem, Israel
- Masters in Jewish Education, Spertus College, Chicago, Illinois
- Masters in Jewish Education, Siegal College of Judaic Studies, Cleveland, Ohio (including on line courses)

We strongly believe, however, that there is a compelling need to create a new track in Jewish teacher training from the madrich to the expert teacher. At the present time we are missing a golden opportunity to plant the seeds of a teaching career as early as high school if we do not create teacher training programs for our 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders in their supplementary, congregational and day schools. Moreover, we need to provide undergraduate Jewish Studies majors with a structured for credit program to learn the pedagogical knowledge and skills to become Jewish educators.

In addition, Jewish teacher training in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will not be dependent upon proximity to a college or university near the student. With the advent of distance learning high school, undergraduate and graduate students will be able to take courses in Judaics and pedagogy from any location that has internet services. Indeed, at the present time Gratz College offers online courses for these learners.

Below you will find a graphic organizer that depicts a seven stage ladder of career development for Jewish supplementary, congregational and day school teachers.

**CAREER DEVELOPMENT LADDER FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS  
IN A SUPPLEMENTARY, CONGREGATIONAL OR DAY SCHOOL**



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To make this career ladder a reality, we would like to offer the following recommendations:

1. Supplementary, congregational and day schools consider implementing madrich programs which offer some of their 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> participants a two year paid teacher internship program.<sup>3</sup> In the 11<sup>th</sup> grade these teacher

<sup>3</sup> A similar model two-year internship program for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders has been successfully implemented at Congregation Ohev Shalom, Marlboro, New Jersey since 1997. You can contact either, Gloria Becker, former education director at Ohev Shalom, or Wendy Light educational consultant with

candidates would strengthen their knowledge base of Judaics and receive classes in best practices in teaching. During the first semester of the senior year in addition to performing the duties of the madrich/madricha, the student teacher would have an enhanced responsibility. He or she would now be observing, reflecting and doing some small group teaching in preparation for becoming a co-teacher during the second semester. During the co-teaching phase, the teacher candidate would now be engaged in co-planning, co-instructing and co-reflecting with his or her master teacher. Together they may be engaged in team teaching where they alternate instructing the whole class, or they might divide the class into small learning groups which each one directs. Ultimately, the goal of co-teaching is for the teacher candidate to assume most, if not all, of the responsibilities of the master teacher.

2. Colleges and universities that offer undergraduate programs in Judaic Studies consider providing credit bearing courses in pedagogy. These courses can also be offered on line to 12<sup>th</sup> grade supplementary, congregational and day school students who receive the recommendation from their respective schools.
3. Colleges and universities that offer master's programs in Jewish Education and Administration consider providing online courses for master teachers in supervision, mentoring, staff development and models of teaching.
4. Supplementary, congregational and day schools, bureaus and central agencies of Jewish education, and Jewish educational foundations consider funding this new track for professional teachers.

There is no question that there are excellent graduate and some undergraduate programs to develop Jewish educational leaders. Our point is that the state of Jewish education today requires that we begin this initiative while students are still in their supplementary, congregational and day schools.

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USCJ, who co-created this program. Gloria Becker can be reached at this email address: [gloria.becker@or-ami.org](mailto:gloria.becker@or-ami.org). Wendy Light can be reached at this email address: [Light@uscj.org](mailto:Light@uscj.org). In addition, at the present time the Jewish Community High School of Gratz College has a two year program for high school students. Upon successful completion of the program, high school graduates earn a teaching certificate which enables them to teach in a Hebrew school while in college. For more information about this program contact the Jewish Community High School of Gratz College at this email address: [jchs@gratz.edu](mailto:jchs@gratz.edu).