Abstract

Identifying Key Factors Influencing Adolescent Prayer Education in a Modern Orthodox School:

Teacher, Student and Environmental Components

Jewish prayer may be conceived as a self-reflective conversation between the supplicant and the Divine, an anchor in moments of challenge or success, and a tool for clarifying values, meaning and purpose. Acquisition of *tefilla* (prayer) skills is an important goal during adolescence, and psychological and biological changes occurring during adolescence accentuate the relevance of positive *tefilla* experiences. Appropriate engagement of middle school and high school students by the Yeshiva school community can play a significant role in the development of an adolescent's Jewish identity and lifelong commitment to prayer. The purpose of this study was to explore factors critical to student engagement in *tefilla* during adolescence, particularly those that may create a foundation for lifelong *tefilla* practice. Key factors identified in this study include the quality of the teacher-student relationship, the student's commitment and unique attribution of meaning/purpose to *tefilla*, the degree to which students experienced a sense of belonging to their peer community, environmental considerations (e.g. space and time), and responsiveness of the *tefilla* program to emerging aspects of normal adolescent development (e.g., the drive for autonomy and struggle to forge a unique identity). When these aspects are taken into consideration, students demonstrate a connection and appreciation for *tefilla* and incorporate tefilla into their Jewish identity. While this study did not explore connections to *tefilla* beyond 12th grade, the findings suggest that middle and high school tefilla experiences can provide a foundation for an enduring, lifelong commitment to tefilla. In summary, prayer is a central

component of daily Jewish ritual that requires closer scrutiny if it is to be taught effectively with the aim of securing the transmission of this sacred and ancient practice for future generations. This study hopefully provides foundational material for reaching this goal.

Keywords: tefilla, prayer, adolescence

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Teacher, Student and Environmental Components

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Dedication

I dedicate this paper to my mother's memory, Yvonne Drelich. Once a year my mother bought a new siddur, a prayer book, with an English translation. She never learned Hebrew and always prayed in English. But her prayers were unlike most people. Instead of reciting words, she rent her heart open and soaked the pages with tears. She poured her soul into the words and gave them flight. She prayed for herself and her family, and she did so each and every day. By the end of the year, her siddur had absorbed all the prayers it could, its binding loose and pages warped from clutching and crying.

This work is dedicated to her, and the joy she took in her new siddur each year. To the way she prayed daily as though it was Yom Kippur. To my father Pincus Drelich who faithfully carried his prayer shawl and tefillin with him when he left the house each morning at four AM to open his bakery.

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Introduction and Rationale

Jewish prayer (*tefilla*) is an essential and major component of daily Jewish life dating all the way back to the time of Judaism's founding forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Centuries later, prayer was formalized by the Jewish Sages into prescribed and structured texts, and, toward the end of the 2nd Temple era, specific times for daily prayer were canonized into formal recitations three times daily (Babylonian Talmud, Ber. 25b). Prayer is a central ritual observed by Jews throughout the world on the Sabbath, and additional prayers capture the theme and essence of each of the annual Jewish holidays.

The Babylonian Talmud (Ta'anit. 2a), in explains the meaning of the biblical verse "Love Hashem your G-d, and serve Him with all your heart" (Pentateuch, Deut. 11:13) by saying: "What is the service of the heart? We say that it is prayer."[1]

In Orthodox Jewish educational institutions, prayer periods are programmed into every student's daily schedule, the amount of time allotted varying according to the age and grade level of the students. Despite this prominence, prayer is not

[1] AND TO SERVE HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART (Deuteronomy 11:12) — Rashi: i.e. to serve Him with a service that is in the heart: that is prayer, for prayer is termed service, as it is said, (Daniel 6:17) "Thy God whom thou servest continually".

always treated as a formal aspect of the curriculum (Goldmintz J. , 2007). In other areas of academic concern, curricula are developed according to standard educational criteria such as the developmental level of students, their prior experience, prerequisite skills and knowledge, and educational goals and objectives. Yet, when it comes to prayer, it is expected that students will instinctively know what to do during *tefilla* and will experience growth in skills and spirituality without goal-directed educational guidance. Assumptions are made that students have learned to pray at some point in the past, without ever addressing the question of exactly what it means to pray, and students are expected to pray without ever inquiring as to their concept, if any, of prayer (Goldmintz J. , 2009).

These assumptions may be based on the belief that Jewish students attending *yeshivas* (Jewish day schools) have received perfunctory prayer instruction at home, in their synagogues and/or during the first five years of their formal yeshiva education. It is true that some students may have learned to chant or sing the prayers, properly read and pronounce the Hebrew or Aramaic words from the text, and acquired proper comportment behaviors for the various sections of prayers requiring standing, sitting or other postural adjustments; yet there is often a degree of superficiality to all of this learning. In commenting on institutional priorities in creating meaningful *tefilla* experiences, Grumet (1991) noted:

> At a young age they [the students] are required to perform rote reading in a language they barely understand. As years go by, they are "mainstreamed" into minyanim in which they are expected to race through long passages in the siddur at breakneck speeds. The issue of

> kavannah becomes moot – not only do students not know what the tefillot mean, they have little incentive to want to know what they mean (Creating a tefilla environment: Personal and institutional priorities., p. 39).

Thus, without defining for Jewish students what Jewish prayer is and is not, and/or the goals and anticipated outcomes of the prayer experience, educators are not truly educating, students are not learning, and the opportunity to transmit the necessary skills and lessons for a lifelong, meaningful prayer experience is squandered.

Literature Review

Definitions and Function of Prayer

There exist myriad definitions of prayer. In the Christian liturgy, prayer is described as "every kind of inward communion or conversation with the Power recognized as divine" (James, 1902, p. 350), and typically includes elements of thanksgiving, praise, confession and supplication. The Oxford English Dictionary defines prayer as "a request for help or expression of thanks addressed to God or a god" (Waite, 2013, p. 564), and the English word *prayer* actually derives from the Latin word "to beg", reflecting a petitionary aspect to prayer (Aaron, 2008). Although there is no fixed time for daily Christian prayer, the majority of identified Christians pray weekly; of these, more than half pray several times a day, with the average length of prayer reportedly less than five minutes (Knysh, Williams, & Yaron, 2007). The most basic of all Christian prayers, which is also the first prayer taught to young children, is the Trinity Prayer: "Love of Jesus, Fill us. Holy Spirit, Guide us. Will of the Father be done. Amen" (Wagner, 2003, p. 319). In this most basic sense, Christian prayer appears to view man as an empty vessel to be filled by a Higher Power, who will then direct man's actions appropriately; man need only ask.

Prayer as a Reflective Action. Judaism's approach to prayer stands in noticeable contrast to the Christian view described above. Prayer in Judaism is called *tefilla,* a word derived from the Hebrew root *palel* (to judge). The infinitive form of the verb, *l'hitpallel* (to pray), is reflexive. In other words, the action of prayer is seen as reflecting back onto the one who is praying, i.e., in ideal

circumstances, the act of Jewish prayer affects change in the one who prays: "In tefilla, we talk to G-d. Tefilla is about creating intimacy with G-d so as to experience a closer connection with Him. The closer we feel to G-d, the more we change" (Aaron, 2008, p. 5).

Jewish prayer is not viewed as a passive process nor an attempt to gain a "moment of ecstasy," but rather, as an opportunity to improve and "become the best people we can be, to cultivate and live out qualities such as gratitude, love and humility in the world" (Jacobson-Maisels, 2013, p. 2). To emphasize the importance of prayer as a transformative process, the Babylonian Talmud reports that G-d Himself prays, so "that His mercy might overcome His judgment" (Babylonian Talmud, Ber. 7a). In commenting on this reflexive aspect of prayer, Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch suggested that:

> Tefillah means to infuse the heart with truths that come from outside one's self…To pray means to work on refining one's inner self, to elevate one's mind and heart to lofty heights of recognition of truth and desire for serving G-d (Hirsch S. , 2005).

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, echoed these words: *"*For in prayer I attend to the presence of G-d, listening as well as speaking, opening myself up to a reality infinitely vaster than my own, and I become a different person as a result*"* (Sacks, 2009, p. 133). Contained within the words of Rabbi Sacks is the concept that, in embracing G-d, the human being confronts his own beliefs and works toward aligning his values with those inherent in the Divine. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik concurred, describing in vivid imagery

that prayer is, uniquely, an interactive dialogue between oneself and G-d: *"*In prayer we have a dialogue, which is bilateral and reciprocal. Man climbs the mountain toward G-d while He descends, figuratively, from the mountaintop. Two hands embrace in a handshake" (Besdin, 1993, p. 77). While the words of the Jewish scholars are spiritually elevating, given the paucity of prayer instruction in formal Jewish education, one wonders whether this interactive concept and the reflexive purpose of prayer has been even partially grasped by graduating high school seniors.

Prayer: Private spirituality or communal religiosity? In Judaism, prayer is a multi-faceted activity that is both an individual and communal experience. However, as Donin (1980) noted, within traditional Judaism, communal prayer carries special value: "One of the distinctive features of Jewish prayer from the very beginning was the value and importance of communal or congregational worship" (p. 6). The Jewish definition of a congregation, a *minyan* (quorum), is defined as a minimum of ten adult males (13 years of age or older) gathering in one place to pray. While a Jewish male may fulfill his daily prayer obligation by praying privately, tradition holds that there exists a special merit for men who pray as part of a congregation. So much significance is placed on communal worship that if a man cannot attend a communal service, he is advised to pray at the same time as the congregation because this is when his prayer is most likely to be accepted by G-d (Babylonian Talmud, Ber. 6a, 8a).

Prayer, as an act of intimate connection with G-d, would seemingly require a private space for worship- an idea that, on the surface, conflicts with the desirability

of prayer within a communal setting. On closer examination, however, it becomes apparent that traditional Judaism views communal prayer as a place where both private *and* public prayer coincide. The Babylonian Talmud (Ber. 26a) relates a well-known dispute by rabbinic leaders regarding the origins of obligatory morning, afternoon and evening prayers. R. Yehoshua son of Levi, argued that prayers were instituted to replace the daily Temple offerings/sacrifices that were no longer possible after the destruction of the Second Temple (68 CE), while R. Yose, son of R. Hanina declared that prayers were instituted by the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob before the existence of the Temple. How do these differing conceptions illuminate the public vs. private nature of prayer in traditional Judaism?

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks proposed that the core of the rabbinic dispute is not about the origin of prayer, but rather the very nature and essence of prayer itself (Sacks, 2009). Rabbi Sacks goes on to describe two distinct prayer traditions in Judaism: One deriving from the prophets and one deriving from the priests. In ancient times, many prophets were viewed as ordinary individuals possessing extraordinary gifts, the greatest of which was the ability to hear and speak the word of G-d. The patriarchs, along with Moses and King David, were all considered prophets; yet, they were also all shepherds or farmers. Lacking official robes of office, far away from the noise and distractions of civilization, these men "prayed as the situation demanded. No two prayers were the same. They spoke from the depths of their being to the One who is the depth of all Being" (Sacks, 2009, p. 131). Their approach to G-d was "marked by spontaneity, directness, and familiarity – G-d was near" (Knysh et al., 2007, p.2). In contrast, the priest was not considered an

ordinary man; wearing special robes of office, he was "holy", set apart from his brethren. His primary responsibilities involved the sacrificial offerings of the Temple, all of which had detailed and precisely defined rituals, measurements and locations. Spontaneity, essential to the prophet, was the antithesis of the priest whose prayers were rigidly defined by time and space. The *Torah* (Pentateuch) records that on the singular occasion when the two sons of Aaron the Priest, Nadav and Avihu, made a personal, spontaneous offering, they were instantly struck dead in punishment (Leviticus, 10:1-2).

The question debated by R. Yose, son of R. Hanina, and R. Yehoshua, son of Levi, was: To which tradition does Jewish prayer belong? To the patriarchs or the priests? To the spontaneous spirit or the formalized ritual? To supplication or to sacrifice? Is Jewish prayer the personal dialogue of the soul expressed in whispers in an intimate relationship with the Almighty or the collective worship of a nation exemplified in ritual? This dichotomy can be understood as the dialectic between *spirituality*, a private and personal experience incorporating a *"*search for the sacred and a process through which people seek to discover, hold on to, and when necessary, transform whatever they hold sacred in their lives" (Hill & Pargament, 2003, p. 65), and *religiosity*, a "commitment to beliefs and practices endorsed by an organized institution that may include prayer, reading holy scripts and regularly attending services" (Bryant-Davis, et al., 2012, p. 302). As Bandura (2003) also notes, spirituality is the "sense of seeking meaning and social connectedness to something greater than oneself", while religiosity serves as a "socially-grounded rather than intrapsychic self-engagement with a Supreme Being" (pp. 170-171).

The answer, according to Rabbi Sacks, is that Jewish prayer is an integration of both. For example, the *Amidah*, the individual prayer that is the cornerstone of the ritualized prayer service, is recited twice during each morning and afternoon service - once by the individual and a second time ("reader's repetition") publicly with the rest of the congregation (Sacks, 2009). Individual prayer, which represents the spiritual aspect of prayer, is an individual's private audience with G-d, an opportunity to express personal yearnings and make private requests. Although the formal language of the private Amidah remains plural, it is still considered sacred time set aside for connecting to one's inner voice, a quiet place to reflect on one's deepest thoughts, hopes, fears, dreams, and goals, and a quiet moment to concentrate and concretize thoughts so as to achieve clarity in sharing these thoughts with the Creator. The latter idea is based in the Mishnah in Berakhot (28b) in which Rabbi Eliezer is quoted as saying: "One whose prayer is *fixed*, his prayer is not supplication." Rabba and Rabbi Yosef interpret "fixed prayer" as the situation in which an individual is unable to introduce a novel element of personal concern into his private prayers (Babylonian Talmud, Ber. 29b). The idea of adding and inserting requests of an individual nature into the silent *Amidah* was codified in the laws of prayer in the Code of Jewish Law (Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayyim Siman 101:4). In contrast, the reader's repetition of the *Amidah* read aloud in public and representing religiosity, does not include private requests. It is an exercise and obligation that reflects each person's membership and role in the community of Israel and the community-based responsibilities of communion with G-d. It is a time for feeling the support and unity that comes from being part of a larger entity.

Thus, we begin to see a paradigm for prayer wherein individuals can clarify their thoughts and values through private, personal relational prayer, yet simultaneously benefit from the social support of the larger community defined within ritual prayer obligations. The yeshiva could theoretically serve as such a community, a spiritually supportive environment wherein study and prayer are practiced and valued as key foundational components of its educational mission. In so doing, the school prayer experience offers the possibility of didactic, observational and participatory learning models for relational prayer. That being considered, one has to also consider whether the impact of communal prayer is potentially divergent in the two genders, as the communally-defined responsibilities and opportunities for participation in an Orthodox minyan are not available to women; yet the experience of social support and feeling of unity would appear to be accessible to both genders.

Prayer as an Inner Voice: Clarifying thoughts and values. Interestingly, a paradigm for individual relational prayer in Judaism is a female - the biblical figure *Hannah* - who was observed by the High Priest as she prayed to conceive a son. Because Hannah's mouth moved but her voice was inaudible, the priest initially chastised her, mistakenly thinking she was drunk; later, realizing his mistake, he blessed her and she conceived a son, the prophet, Samuel (Samuel 1:13). From this exegesis, traditional Judaism holds that ideal prayer is not a silent action, but one's inner voice, quietly emitted during spiritual contemplation. In traditional Jewish theology, it is not enough to *think* one's thoughts; one's inner

voice must actually emerge (Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 73a). Even when praying privately, the worshipper's prayers must be slightly audible (Shulchan Aruch 101:2)

Interestingly, vocalizing one's inner voice, sometimes referred to as "egocentric speech", has long been a topic of discussion among developmental psychologists. Jean Piaget paid special attention to the spontaneous speech of young children, reporting that 45% percent of preschoolers' speech was unrelated to the listener, "egocentric", and eventually replaced by more sophisticated thought and language (Crain, 2011). Piaget's less well-known contemporary, Lev Vygotsky, believed that the self-guiding dialogues of young children do not ever disappear, but are transformed by eight years of age into a *private inner speech,* a silent, internal dialogue that facilitates an individual's powers of thought and abstract thinking, including the capacity to reflect on past actions and/or plans for the future (Vygotsky, 1986). Thus, one can begin to understand the inherent value in a capacity for internal dialogue that extends beyond childhood.

Several studies have demonstrated the use of self-talk by adolescents engaged in goal-oriented activities (DePape, Hakim-Larson & Voelker, 2012; Kronk, 1994). In one study by Kronk (1994), 46 of 47 students taking a 30-minute exam engaged in self-talk that aided in their thinking and analysis of exam questions, leading Kronk to conclude that private speech is a normal function of young adults, but often suppressed for social reasons. A larger study (Duncan & Cheyne, 1999) conducted on a sample of 1,132 undergraduate students who completed the Self-Verbalization Questionnaire (SVG) found that a majority of students employed private speech for "intrapsychic purposes" (Incidence and

functions of self-reported private speech in young adults: A self-verbalization questionnaire., p. 135). Cognitive-behavioral psychologist Donald Meichenbaum has reported that clients who engage in self-talk while working on a task improve their performance (Meichenbaum, 1977), and several other studies have reported on the benefits of self-talk in children and adults for improving focus, reasoning and problem solving, and working through emotional challenges (Flavell, Beach & Chinsky, 1966; Gardner, 1999; Garvin & Berk, 1984). Thus, one can wonder whether, Jewish prayer, through its canonization of a "barely audible" format, encourages a space for the inner voice of supplicants to engage in reflective thinking as part of a dialogue with the Creator.

A Developmental View of Prayer

Research has demonstrated that an individual's understanding of prayer and the content of his or her prayers shift dramatically across the developmental lifespan. In one study of youth ages 12-20 years of age, prayer was described as appearing in two developmental variants: *young prayer* and *mature prayer* (Perriello & Scarlett, 1991). The motivation of young prayer is a desire to have G-d change reality to match the wishes of the supplicant, with a focus on what G-d can do for the individual. Mature prayer, which emerges sometime during adolescence, shifts from a demand directed *at* G-d to a conversation *with* G-d. Mature prayer thus serves a reflexive function by enabling individuals, and, in particular adolescents to cope with challenges in their lives and to seek a "closeness" with G-d (Perriello & Scarlett, 1991). Other faith theoreticians concur, noting that adolescence is a time of searching for meaning and purpose in life (Stephens, 1996; Peck, 1993; Rinehart, 1993; Kessler; Allport, 1967; Arnett, 2000, 2003, 2007;). Rachel Kessler (Kessler, 2007), in discussing how to bring "soul" back into the classroom, argues for the importance of concentrating on "heart and meaning" as adolescents "grapple with the profound questions of loss, love and letting go...of meaning, purpose, and service...of self-reliance and community, and of choice and surrender" (p. para. 4).

According to psychologist Eric Erikson, the primary developmental task of adolescence is to navigate the two poles of "identify versus confusion", a task requiring both reflection on the past and contemplation of future hopes, dreams and goals (Crain, 2011). In this process, adolescents engage in separation and

individuation, becoming acutely aware of their individual selves as distinct entities apart from their families, communities and the world (Bryant-Davis et al., 2012). It is also a time when many begin to question what previously was adopted through blind acceptance, and when doubt, including religious doubt, is given voice. Yet, James Fowler (1981) suggests that, as adolescents experience an increased desire for peer relationships, they also experience a parallel desire for a personal relationship with G-d. Gary Levine (2007) echoes this thought, suggesting that exploring a relationship with G-d and/or a Higher Power can be incorporated into the spiritual aspects of a religious school curriculum. Thus, it would appear that, during this period of "identity versus confusion" prayer may serve as a vehicle for exploring the self and a spiritual relationship with G-d.

Not surprisingly, many studies have shown the positive impact of religious practice during adolescence, including providing a sense of meaning, hope, optimism, self-esteem, love, and purpose in life, reducing stress, and promoting positive coping and happiness (Bryant-Davis, et al., 2012; Dowling, Gestsdottir, Anderson, von Eye, & Lerner, 2004; Holder, Coleman, & Wallace, 2010; Markstrom, 1999; Chatters, 2000; Hill & Pargament, 2003). Adolescents involved in religious activities, particularly those who pray frequently, have been reported to be less likely to engage in high risk behaviors such as early sexual activity (Laflin, Laflin, Wang, & Barry, 2008), substance abuse, binge drinking, and cigarette smoking (Brown, Salsman, Brechting, & Carlson, 2007; Doss, et al., 2007; Francis, 1997; Goggin, et al., 2007; Hoge & Petrillo, 1978; Marsal, 2009; Merrill, Salazar, & Gardner, 2001; Rotosky, Danner, & Riggle, 2007; Sharma, 2009; Walker, Ainette,

Wills, & Mendoza, 2007) Smith and Snell (2005) using data from the National Study of Youth and Religion to study the religious and spiritual lives of emerging adults, report that, while religious practice generally declines among 18-23 year olds, those involved in formal religion are more likely to exhibit characteristics associated with maturing ethical development, engage in abstinence or healthy sexual relationships, demonstrate a consistent moral ethic, volunteer, and donate more to charities. Arnett (2001) has also reported that "higher religiosity" and participation in religious services is correlated with lower levels of substance abuse. Thus, it would appear that the establishment of a firm and steady connection to daily *tefilla* may have significant psychological, emotional, and spiritual benefits for middle and high school students transitioning between the chaos of adolescence and the stability of adulthood.

Tefilla Education

Background & Current Challenges. Moshe Sokolow (2006) has commented that prayer is the most "frustrating subject" in modern Orthodox religious education. While knowledge of Hebrew and components of the prayer services are undoubtedly important and essential in developing prayer skills, they are not sufficient to make prayer meaningful and important to students nor for creating the impetus for an enduring lifelong relationship with prayer (p. 18)

For close to three decades I have had the privilege of teaching and leading prayer (*tefilla*) services in a modern Orthodox yeshiva setting. During my first few years, I struggled with how to make *tefilla* a rewarding spiritual experience for my students. How could I help them take ownership of the sacred texts and the experience of *tefilla* itself? In what manner, shape or form could I, as teacher, model the proper attitude and approach toward *tefilla*? What were the goals of *tefilla* and how could I provide my students with the necessary tools to make *tefilla* a time of personal spiritual growth and connection to G-d? These are the questions I continually asked myself.

I have no doubt that teachers and administrators regularly confront these questions, and all have their stories of struggle and frustration. Several years ago I chaired a *tefilla* workshop for a group of educators who taught in Orthodox yeshiva settings. Almost all of the 20 participants in the workshop identified leading *tefilla* as one of the most challenging times of the school day. Recently, I attended another prayer symposium – this time for Jewish educators across a broad spectrum of observances – and the conversation was similar. Sad

but true, these observations speak to a common dilemma among Jewish educators, one that has continued to float through my mind for many years. Devra Lehhman (2010) notes that Jewish educators and administrators "frequently bemoan the lack of spirituality and decorum in student prayer" (p. 303). Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel remarked on this issue some 50 years ago, noting that the "fixed pattern and regularity of our services tends to stifle the spontaneity of devotion. Our great problem is therefore, how not to let the principle of regularity impair the power of spontaneity" (Heschel, 1953, p. 165). Sztokman (2007), in a recent study of *tefilla* amongst female orthodox high school students, reported that "religion becomes all about obedience and nothing else, where the individual quest for G-d is gone, destroyed." James Macobson-Maisels (2013) concurs, describing school *tefilla* as a "rushed obligation" which is often "meaningless and uninspiring for the students.

Dialectical Dilemmas. At the heart of this challenge of teaching *tefilla* are the seemingly complex dialectical dilemmas that exist within *tefilla* itself: the *ritual* (structured) versus *spiritual* (transformative) and the *individual* (private) versus *community* (public) aspects. Rabbi Heschel (1953) alluded to this in 1950 when, addressing the Rabbinical Assembly of America, he commented that:

> Jewish prayer is guided by two opposite principles: order and outburst, regularity and spontaneity, uniformity and individuality, law and freedom… Since each of the two moves in the opposite direction, the equilibrium can only be maintained if both are of equal force (pp. 164-65).

The ritual aspects of *tefilla* education are word-oriented and technical, whereas the spiritual aspects relate to "matters of the heart." Ritual education demands a focus on the acquisition of instrumental cognitive and behavioral skills underlying the technical aspects of

prayer, including the mastery of Hebrew reading, knowledge of which prayers belong to daily, Shabbat or holiday services, standardized comportment behaviors, etc. In contrast, spiritual education demands an affective engagement with students using cognitive and experiential tools that guide students through a transformative and meaningful spiritual practice.

Yet, how does one create a spiritual practice, which is, in essence a meaningful and *voluntary* relationship between the student and G-d, by *requiring* students to participate in a ritualized *tefilla* program? In other words, how does one mandate an individual to form a relationship with their Creator? Cognitive approaches may tap into a sense of meaning and purpose, establishing values, beliefs, standards and ethics, and developing an awareness and appreciation of a "transcendent dimension" of life beyond self. Experiential components require consideration of the total learning environment including a focus on time and space. Creating and having a welcoming and inspiring *m'kom tefilla* as a sanctuary (for both genders) also requires the creation of a sense of emotional safety for students, one that fosters strong, positive affective engagement. While mandating a relationship between a student and his/her Creator is beyond the purview of the yeshiva educator, all of the components described above may foster and encourage serious exploration of such a relationship.

Similar dichotomies to those described above between the *ritual* and *spiritual* also exist between the *individual* versus *community* aspects of *tefilla*, with the former focusing on an experiential, personal and unique connection with the Divine and the latter focusing on an experiential sense of inclusiveness and group belongingness that places uniqueness and individuality on a lower rung of the ladder below a general religious relationship with G-d shared by all identified Jews. How do respect for the individual and demand for conformity

to the group simultaneously co-exist in one *m'kom tefilla*? What aspects of the *tefilla* program contribute to this integration? What tools can be used to help students to transition from the silence of individual spiritual connection to the loud cacophony of voices joining together in communal prayer?

Role of the Tefilla Educator For both the ritual and spiritual aspects of *tefilla* education, the *tefilla* educator may be viewed as an influential and powerful force – either negative or positive. Golombek (2002), reporting on his experience at a community day school in Pittsburgh, reported that students "resented teachers who acted as 'police' but did not involve themselves in *tefilla;* and rejected all attempts to force them into a relationship with G-d" (para. 2). It is apparent, thus, that, *tefilla* educators need to build "healthy relationships [with students]" where students will "ask questions…take risks, make mistakes, and grow…and wrestle with the demons inside…" (Kessler, 2007, p. para.1). If the *tefilla* educator can model an authentic practice of *tefilla* while allowing for - and encouraging - the expression of thoughts and feelings of uncertainty and confusion, students will experience the *m'kom tefilla* as a safe and supportive environment for exploring their emerging identities. Thus, the role of the tefilla educator would appear to include responsibility for not only for providing didactic insight, but also for modeling *midot* (personal characteristics) that demonstrate spiritual sincerity and authenticity and devoting him/herself to the formation of authentic and meaningful relationships with students.

Teaching Prayer. In recognizing the historical significance of Jewish prayer, the sociological and psychological benefits of prayer, and the challenges in teaching prayer, one may turn to biological and sociological models of adolescence

that may have relevance in identifying key factors for a successful *tefilla* education experience.

Brain development. Significant biologically-based cognitive and neurological changes occurring during adolescence may be considered when identifying factors relevant to *tefilla* education programs. While both the limbic system, which is involved in emotional responsivity and regulation, and the prefrontal cortex, the center of executive function, demonstrate accelerated development beginning in adolescence, they do so at wildly divergent rates, differing by as much as a decade (Giedd, 2015). The limbic system develops first, promotes novelty seeking, risk taking and peer-focused activities, followed by development of the prefrontal cortex with its expertise in managing impulses, planning ahead, and considering future consequences of behavioral choices (Walsh, 2004). This differential development in key parts of the brain is at the core of many of the impulsive adolescent behaviors that adults find perplexing, yet implies that engaging the adolescent effectively during *tefilla* education requires accessing both parts of the adolescent brain and incorporating both cognitive and affective approaches. Not to be discounted is the importance of novelty and peer-supported environments, as well as connecting the present with the past (history) and future (goals)

Another relevant neurological process involves mechanisms of cortical growth during adolescence specifically the initial rapid overgrowth of neurons ("blossoming") followed by the loss of unused or maladaptive neurons ("pruning") by the end of adolescence, and the increase in speed of transmission of neural

information throughout the brain following rapid myelinization (Giedd, 2015; Walsh, 2004). Adolescence presents both a *window of opportunity*, a biologically sensitive period when the brain has unique opportunities to develop key capacities, and a *window of sensitivity*, a period during which the brain, because of certain fragilities associated with growth and development, is more susceptible to damage. Thus, adolescence, a time when "major brain circuits related to social relationships are blossoming and being pruned away" (Walsh, 2004, p. 37) reflects both opportunity and sensitivity toward the formation of lifelong patterns of relationship, including spiritual relationships, as Fowler (1981) has suggested. During this critical period, positive *tefilla* experiences may help to establish a long-lasting commitment to *tefilla*, both individual and communal, while negative experiences may create sustained damage and disconnection from spirituality.

According to researchers Graybiel and Smith (2014), habit formation involves a moment-by-moment cortical monitoring of the actions and consequences, during which positive or negative "weights" are associated with specific behaviors. Negatively weighted behaviors are ultimately discarded, while positively weighted behaviors transform into habits**.** This weighting process is mediated by interactions between the cortex and limbic systems - the same two systems that are undergoing rapid change during adolescence. One can hypothesize that each day the adolescent participates in a *tefilla* experience, the brain weights this experience positively or negatively, and, in so doing, enhances or diminishes possibilities for retention and habit formation. Perhaps this idea is also alluded to by the sage Elisha ben Abuyah, who taught: *"That which one learns in his youth is like ink written on clean paper;*

that which learns in his old age is like ink written on blotted paper" (Ethics of our Fathers, 4:25).

Modeling & Social Learning Theory. At the end of the 19th century, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, wrote:

> "To educate", means to guide or lead someone else toward oneself… Our children can learn to walk and talk only by seeing us walk and talk. How else, then, should they be able to learn from us patience, equanimity, gentleness, sincerity, honesty, moderation, humility, justice and loving-kindness if not through our example? (Hirsch S. , 1992, pp. 133-134)

In his commentary on Exodus (Shemot 13:6) regarding the mitzvah of לבנך והגדת (teaching your child about the Exodus from Egypt), Rabbi Hirsch further stresses the importance of modeling as an accompaniment to didactic education:

Not through unthinking habit, nor through moralizing, should our children be led to

> fully observe the Torah's commandments; those methods will not suffice. Rather we must show them the way by our own enthusiastic example, and at the same time awaken their hearts and minds by explaining to them what we are doing, so that they learn to practice the mitzvah with intelligence and awareness, and become excited about and fascinated by the task of Judaism (Hirsch S. , 2005, p. 212).

The role of spiritual exemplars is developed early on in a Jewish child's religious education (Silberman, 2003) through the use of the *Avot* and *Imhahot* (Patriarchs and Matriarchs) as symbolic role models *and ma`aseh avot siman le-banim* (the actions of the patriarchs are a paradigm for their descendants) is an explicit and implicit part of the curriculum in Jewish day schools. So, too, from the presentation of the early Jewish Sages as

role models to the pivotal role of the Chassidic *rebbe* (teacher) or *tzaddik* (righteous one) having characteristics deserving of emulation, Jewish tradition has long recognized the significance of religious and spiritual modeling. Judaism goes so far as to describe a "wise person" as one who has the capacity to learn from every person (Ethics of the Fathers, 1:4).

John Westerhoff III (Westerhoff-III, 1981) proposes that the development of religious practice relies heavily on modeling, particularly during the younger years. During adolescence, a period of "Searching Faith", Westerhoff suggests that the impact of rote modeling lessens, replaced by a search for "personal meaning" and a desire to "personalize" faith (Westerhoff-III, 1981). Oman and Thoresen (2003) make a distinction between two types of religious models: "exalted" models who "instill vicarious motivation by offering unparalleled testimony to the joys and rewards of the spiritual path" and "everyday" models "with whom ordinary people can more confidently compare themselves…[and who offer] testimony to the more mundane and shorter term benefits of spiritual or religious commitment" (Oman & Thoresen, The Many Frontiers of Modeling, 2003, p. 208). Interestingly, the portrayals of "exalted" role models in the Torah (Pentateuch) are notable for the realism of their struggles and strivings for perfection in the face of personal challenges and character flaws. In presenting the ideal as one who struggles spiritually, a *tefilla* educator embraces the adolescent who is searching for his faith, looking for personal meaning and struggling in the formation of his or her identity.

Tefilla educators, as models, can only give what they themselves possess, spiritually and academically. Indeed, as Rav Kook was reported to have acknowledged, the word "*hashpa'ah*" (to influence others) comes from the word "*shefa*" (abundance); one must be overflowing to impact others (Grumet, 1991). Thus, teachers cannot give forth information

that they do not know, nor can they inspire spiritual journeys in others unless they themselves have experienced or are experiencing a spiritual journey. James Jacobson-Maisels (2013) argues passionately for the importance of educators who have a "deep, conscious, meaningful and developed relationship with prayer" (Prayer as transformation: A vision of tefilla education., p. 18) and who have "developed a systematic understanding of prayer as a spiritual practice" (p. 31). If a teacher experiences leading children in *tefilla* as a chore, it is unlikely that s/he will be able to convey the joy or warmth of *tefilla* to students. Alternatively, a teacher, in modeling joy and passion for *tefilla* may serve as a positive role model for the role of prayer in developing a healthy, honest and ongoing relationship with the Creator.

Modeling in the affective domain differs from modeling in the didactic or cognitive domain. Yet, the concept of affective modeling was long ago alluded to in the Book of Proverbs (27:19): "As water reflects a face back to a face, so one's heart is reflected back to him by another." Emotional mirroring has received recent support from research conducted by John Michael at the Aarhus University of Copenhagen (Michael, et al., 2014) suggesting that specific brain cells known as *mirror neurons* may help people interpret the actions of others by mirroring similar brain experiences within the observer. Thus, specialized brain cells exist for allowing individuals to learn, empathize and engage in introspection through neurological mirroring of experiences (Iacoboni, 2009). Bandura, the founder of *Social Learning Theory*, concurs, stating that the "emotional responses of another person, as conveyed through vocal, facial and postural manifestations, can arouse strong emotional reactions in observers", and that most human behavior is learned through observation of "models" (Bandura, 1977, p. 77)**.** According to Bandura, modeling is not limited to exact

imitation; rather, individuals may "extract the principles or standards embodied in the thinking and actions exhibited by others…to generate new instances of the behavior that go beyond what they have seen, read, or heard… fostering values, standards and a sense of personal and collective efficacy" (Bandura, 2003, p. 169). One can hypothesize that *tefilla* educators, in conveying their own experience of joy in *tefilla* and conveying their spiritual struggles and perseverance in the face of difficulties, may serve as models for adolescents grappling with spiritual identity.

Miller and Dollard, who first invented the term "Social Learning Theory", correctly note that for imimetic learning to occur, "observers must be motivated to act, must be provided with an example of the desired behavior, must perform responses that match the example, and must be positively reinforced for performing the behavior" (Miller & Dollard, 1941, pp. 5-6)**.** Bandura expanded on this concept to identify four sub-processes involved in modeling: Attentional, retention, motoric reproduction, and motivational (Bandura, 1977)**.** Each of these can be examined in relation to a possible role in *tefilla e*ducation.

Attentional processes. Exposure is necessary but sufficient for attention. Within any social group, certain individuals - - including teachers and peers - - are more likely to attract attention by others. These include positive role models (physically attractive, charismatic) and poorly behaved negative role models. Attentional processes may be disrupted by genetic factors (e.g., attention deficit disorder or learning disabilities), situational factors (e.g., distracting, noisy or unpleasant environments), and physiological factors (e.g., sleep, hunger, etc.). A relevant example of the latter is circadian rhythm, a biological process that regulates physiologic changes in the body in a roughly 24 hour cycle, including regular rhythmic shifts in sleep and wakefulness throughout the day (National Institute of General Medical Sciences,

2015). While in adults, the strongest sleep drives occur from 2:00-4:00 am and 1:00-3:00 pm, adolescents have their strongest sleep drives between 3:00am and 7:00am. sometimes extending until 10:00am. Thus, for some, if not many adolescents, while their bodies may be physically present during the early morning prayer service, their brains may be technically "asleep" (Lahey, 2015).

Retentional processes. According to Bandura, a person cannot be influenced through modeling without memory (Bandura, 1977). Trauma studies differentiate between two types of memory: explicit and implicit. Explicit memory is cognitive and language-based, i.e., that part of memory that allows us to recall and tell our stories. Implicit or "body" memory is somatic, or sensory-based, and related to affective recollection. It forms through exposure to external stimuli (e.g., sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch) and internal stimuli (e.g., respiration, body temperature, muscular tension, visceral discomfort, vestibular and kinesthetic sensations, etc.). When confronted with similar internal or external stimuli later, both cognitive and affective memories are triggered (Rothschild, 2000, p. 30). The communal *tefilla* includes many forms of extrinsic stimuli, for example the visual aspects of the m'kom ha'tefilla (e.g., light, space and beauty - or lack of) and non-verbal (body language) communications of the *tefilla* educator and other students the auditory stimuli of prayer melodies sung in unison or the encouraging (or harsh, critical) voices of authority figures, the tactile experience of holding the siddur, and/or wearing a *tallith*, etc.

Motoric reproduction processes. Bandura's third component of modeling involves the transference of symbolic representations into coordinated actions

(Bandura, 1977). Applying this to *tefilla*, students should 1) have fluency in Hebrew language; 2) possess cognitive concepts of time and order (e.g., *Pesukei D'Zimra* precedes *Amidah),* and 3) be physically capable of prayer actions (e.g., standing, bowing, etc.). Motor reproduction may be challenging for students with learning disabilities, executive functioning deficits, sensory-motor, fine motor and gross motor disabilities, and/or visual or auditory impairments.

Reinforcement and motivational processes. Positive reinforcements support and negative sanctions inhibit the performance of behaviors at a later date (Bandura, 1977). Unless providing social or "meaning-making" benefits, extrinsic rewards (e.g., stickers, monetary rewards) do not support long-lasting psychological or behavioral change (Bandura, 1977; Goldmintz J. , 2007), and modeling associated with inhibitory emotions (e.g., humiliation, sadness, fear), is particularly detrimental (Bandura, 1977). Thus, one can hypothesize that a child may learn the mechanics of *tefilla*, but not perform these actions voluntarily in adulthood if they have previously encountered emotionally negative sanctions. Adolescents, who are undergoing rapid physical changes and experience an intense need for peer approval, are particularly at risk for unintentional embarrassment. When asked to take leadership roles in the *tefilla* service, for example, mistakes or criticisms may lead to shame experiences that negatively impact connection to *tefilla*. In contrast, socially supportive peers and emotionally supportive *tefilla* educators may offer experiences of trust and connection with tefilla.

While the discussion thus far has focused on the possible role of the school prayer experience on an adolescent's long-term relationship with *tefilla*, it would be remiss not to

consider the role of the family. Studies of adolescents (ages 13-18) conducted by Kieren and Munro (1987) point to the influence of parents' religious practice on adolescent children, particularly the congregational activity of the father and the mother's satisfaction with religious life. Hoge & Petrillo (1978), while identifying parental religious activity as important, also note the importance of beliefs, values and attitudes, e.g., ease of discussing beliefs, perceived parental religious orientation, and valuing religion as an important component of family life. Lee, Rice & Gillespie (1997), who studied the influence of family worship patterns on adolescent behavior and beliefs, found that "active faith" was highest among families whose worship practices actively involved youth. Smith (2005) in his National Study on Youth and Religion emphazies the significant influence of the adolescent parent in ther religious life, "…the evidence clearly shows that the single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents". Extrapolating from Bandura's *Social Learning Theory*, one could hypothesize that family and school prayer activities would theoretically have a reciprocal influence. Assuming that the *tefilla* experiences in both the home and school environments are positive, each would augment the other. In contrast, a negative home environment or a negative school environment could each negate the positive impact of the other.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this study was to engage in a phenomenological exploration of the experience and impact of a particular 7th grade *tefilla* program (*Tefilla-7*) on the perceptions, beliefs and practices of students five years later. *Tefilla-7*, a program offered to 7th grade male and female students attending a modern Orthodox yeshiva in the Bronx, New York, was designed to address cognitive and affective aspects of *tefilla* education, integrating spiritual modeling with didactic education. The study's original objectives were to explore the impact of 1) cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects of the program and individual/community and ritual/spiritual dialectics, and 2) specific techniques incorporated into *Tefilla-7* that successfully facilitated skills development, enhanced Jewish identity formation, and/or created a positive, meaningful and durable connection to a relationship with G-d through *tefilla*.

Development of Tefilla-7 program goals. *Tefilla-7*, at its inception, was designed to merge an authentic affective *tefilla* experience with didactic *tefilla* education. As *tefilla* is rich with foundational Jewish morals, values and beliefs, ideals of faith, trust and love of G-d, and Jewish identity, the instructional lens of *tefillot* is inherently imbued with concepts to penetrate the consciousness of students without disrupting the "spiritual flow" of the *tefilla* experience. In *Tefilla-7*, the role of the *tefilla* educator was to spark a passionate connection to the Creator within his or her students. Serving as a conductor of a spiritual orchestra with a musical score consisting of specific goals and objectives, the tefilla educator would help students to create a personal and meaningful experience of *tefilla*. This would be approached

through affective and cognitive strategies, and would need to be implemented consistently in the face of student and/or educator challenges, e.g., personal struggles, non-compliance or resistance, time constraints, language barriers, etc. Specific behavioral, affective and cognitive goals developed in accordance with both Bloom's Taxonomy and Steven Bailey's adaptation of Anderson & Krathwohl's Affective Taxonomy (Bailey, 2007, David Krathwohl's Affective Taxonomy; Krathwohl, 2002) are described in Appendix 2.

Translating Goals into Program Components: Didactic components. *Tefilla-7* incorporated didactic focal points ("mini shout-outs") interspersed throughout the *tefilla* service. Each day, ideas or themes present in an upcoming paragraph or section of *tefilla* were offered to students as concepts to reflect upon in a personal way as they prayed. In this way, mini shout-outs also addressed one of the most difficult challenges of leading t*efilla:* maintaining a level of meaningful engagement throughout the entire service. For example, students were told that that every word of *tefilla* was an "eternal diamond", a unique opportunity to connect to G-d. On Wednesdays, when the last of the daily prayers (*Shir Shel Yom*) was the longest of the week, students were asked to reconsider this prayer as an "opportunity" to collect the largest number of diamonds. Hence, Wednesday became concretized in the minds of many students' minds as the "Double Diamond Day", and the prayer that had once seemed burdensome acquired became meaningful. A hyperlink of the "mini shout-outs" is contained in Appendix 5).

Translating Goals into Program Components: Transparency. A second cornerstone of *Tefilla-7* was openness on the part of the *tefilla* educator in sharing his own spiritual journey. Far beyond teaching the mechanics of prayer, the *tefilla* educator's goal was to model a set of spiritual strategies and principles for managing life's challenges. In

opening a window to observe an authentic relationship with G-d, the *tefilla* educator's goal was to establish trust and present the spiritual voice as one not of perfection, but of striving to be closer to the Creator, thereby giving students permission for their own spiritual struggles. Without trust, education could not occur, for if the student cannot connect to the source, s/he cannot accept that which emanates from the source. As John Gottman (2011) has noted, "trust and safety in relationships are the theoretical pillars of…attachment" (p. 30).

Translating Goals into Program Components: Physical Space. Another cornerstone of *Tefilla-7,* the design of the *m'kom tefilla,* acknowledged the importance of sensory stimuli for affective connection. Goldmintz (2007), in recognizing the tension between the structural aspects of *tefilla* and "matters of the heart" that are the "essence" of *tefilla,* recommends the use of visual aids to "bridge the two worlds" (para. 2). Thus, while the *m'kom tefilla* for *Tefilla-7* was a multipurpose room without inherent spirituality, it was purposefully "bejeweled" with visual stimuli, e.g., posters of Eretz Yisroel, the Israeli flag, the *Misheberach leHayalim,* the *Beit HaMikdash,* and a picture of a garbage dump beyond the Temple Mount. The first four pictures were selected to create meaningful connection to the historical greatness of the Jewish people - - past, present and future. The last poster reflected the idea that, as long as garbage remains on the Temple Mount, the task of the Jewish people is incomplete, a message that it was the students' own dreams and actions that could ultimately bring about a culmination of historical events. The idea that each student possessed a unique place in Jewish history and that this was his or her opportunity to grasp - - *or not* - - was designed to provide a powerful anchor for the developing adolescent seeking meaning and purpose in life. Also purposely placed in the *m'kom tefilla* were *Tefillah Pyramid* posters clarifying the structure of morning tefilla. (Figure 1)

Translating Goals into Program Components: The Challenges of Time. Many aspects of the *Tefilla-7* experience were impacted by time. *Tefilla-7* began at 8:25am, a time that conflicted with the biologically-based maximal capacity for adolescent attentiveness. The number of students in the *m'kom tefilla* was large (90-100 students), also creating a challenge to attention. The time allotted for *tefilla* was 35-45 minutes: Too lengthy to hold the attention of some students and, perhaps, too short for others, causing the "rushed obligation " described earlier by James Macobson-Maisels (Jacobson-Maisels, 2013). Students attending *Tefilla-7* were not always in control of their arrival times as they were still dependent on being driven by parents to school, yet received detention if they were more than six minutes late or marked absent if more than 15 minutes late.

Study Design

MMPR Designs. This dissertation describes a mixed methods phenomenological research project (MMPR) designed to study the seventh grade *tefilla* experiences of Jewish students attending an Orthodox Jewish high school in the Bronx, New York, with a focus on both short and long-term impact. MMPR is a unique research model that "combines phenomenological methods with methods grounded in an alternative paradigm within a single study" (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2014, p. 1), allowing the integration of quantitative information with the deeper insights provided by qualitative analyses (Castro, 2010). MMPR designs collect phenomenological data in advance of quantitative when the quantitative variables are unknown, use phenomenological methods to "expand" upon quantitative results, or use quantitative methods to identify individuals who have the "lived experience" that is the subject of the subsequent phenomenological exploration (Cresswell, Fetters, & Ivankova, Designing a mixed methods study in primary care., 2004). Regardless, MMPR studies have the advantage of providing methodological triangulation, validating data through cross-verification by two sources and increasing the depth of understanding of the behavior being studied (Cohen & Manion, 2000; Altrichter, Feldman, Posch, & Somekh, 2008; O'Donoghue & Punch, 2003). Since publication of the first MMPR study in 2003, there has been a steady growth in the number of studies using MMPR, with the most common complementary methodology being a quantitative questionnaire or survey instrument (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2014).

Phenomenological Inquiry. At its core, phenomenology holds the position that the "most basic human truths are accessible only through inner subjectivity" (Flood, 2010, p. 1). The goal of phenomenological analysis is thus to understand the essence of a sociological or psychological phenomenon (e.g., prayer) as perceived by the subject. This is accomplished by exploring the individual "meanings of lived experiences" of that phenomenon (Cresswell, Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions., 1998).

In addressing this goal, phenomenological research is distinctly different from quantitative research in its formulation of the research question, selection of participants, sample size and instrumentation. The critical research question in quantitative science is one of correlation or causality – *Does X cause Y*? *How much of X causes how much of Y?* In this case, an independent and dependent variable are identified, hypotheses are formed about their relationship, and the goal of the research study is to prove the hypothesis as true or false (Englander, 2012). In contrast, in phenomenological research, the primary research question is: *What is the meaning of this phenomenon and how does this impact an individual's lived experience?* Thus, phenomenological researchers are interested in knowing: *What is it (the phenomenon) like?* (Englander, 2012). In this way, the phenomenological researcher comes to understand the lived experience of research subjects and searches for a commonality of themes in their experiences (Flood, 2010). Breadth of the sample, therefore, is less important than depth of the sample, and sample sizes in phenomenological research tend to be much smaller than in quantitative studies.

Instrumentation

For the purposes of this study, the MMPR design utilized a combination of an online closed question screening questionnaire and face-to-face phenomenological interviews.

There are two methods of applying mixed methods modalities: concurrent and sequential. Concurrent designs are characterized by the collection of both types of data during the same stage (Cresswell, Fetters, & Ivankova, 2004; Creswell, Plano, Guttman, & Hanson, 2003). In the sequential design of this study, an online screening questionnaire preceded a phenomenological interview of a subsample of the original participants.

Screening Questionnaire. The purpose of the online screening questionnaire was multifaceted, and involved several essential components identified by Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie (2014) including: 1) Orienting - clarifying the orientation of the students in advance of the interview to help identify an "information-rich" sample of participants for the phenomenological interview (p. 5), 2) Confirming - cross-validating findings through convergence, corroboration and/or correspondence of results from the phenomenological and online survey methods, and 3)

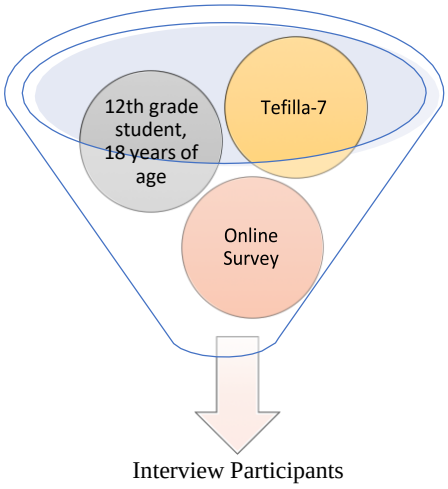

Figure 1: Selection of Interview Participants

Layering - increasing the breadth and depth of inquiry with a focus on "harmonious illumination and sense-making" (p. 1). Thus, the screening questionnaire is considered both

a supplemental source of information to enhance analysis of the qualitative data, and a funneling tool for identifying subjects for the phenomenological interview who can provide rich descriptive data.

The final version of the screening questionnaire consisted of 27 questions[2] designed to capture the students' reflections on both *Tefilla-7* and their current 12th grade school *tefilla* experiences, as well as to identify key contributors to these reflections. Questions were constructed in five domains:

1. Past Experience (7th grade): Questions that asked students to evaluate their overall 7th grade *tefilla* experience (short & long-term impact). This category provided a general lens through which students could reflect back on their attitudes, beliefs and experiences.

2. Specific Factors (7th grade): Questions that asked students to reflect on specific aspects of *Tefilla*-7, such as singing, teacher interactions, space considerations, mini shout-outs, peer interactions, etc.

3. Current Experience (12th grade) Questions that asked students to reflect on their present day experience of *tefilla*, e.g., attitude toward *tefilla*, perceived role of *tefilla* in a relationship with G-d, *tefilla* as an aspect of their Jewish identity, etc.

4. Current Practice (12th grade) Questions that asked students to reflect on their current practices on non-school days, holidays and Shabbat.

5. Influential Models: Questions that asked students to identify modeling influences, including teachers, friends and family.

[2] See Appendix 3 for a list of all survey questions.

The first 24 questions of the screening questionnaire were formatted as a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Totally Disagree to Totally Agree or Very Negative to Very Positive Questions were constructed in two formats, either positive (e.g., "7th grade davening changed my attitude toward tefilla in a positive way") or negative (e.g., "I was bored during 7th grade *tefilla*).[3]

The last three questions on the survey were open-ended questions (What I liked best about 7th grade *tefilla.* What I disliked most about 7th grade *tefilla.* If I had the power, the one thing I would change about the school *tefilla* experience would be…).

The screening questionnaire went through several iterations until the questions captured the essential *tefilla* experiences and feelings of the 12th graders without prejudice. The researcher sought out assistance and counsel from quantitative researchers for their assistance and expertise in reviewing and re-editing the questions for the survey. The online screening questionnaire was developed using Google forms that allowed the researcher to import the subjects' responses into a Microsoft Excel work sheet where it could be sorted, organized and evaluated for further study.

An online method was chosen over a standard written format for the screening questionnaire for two reasons. First, the online methodology met the students in the digital world in which they reside and feel most comfortable. The high school is an educational institution where the digital platform of computers and the web are regularly used to deliver educational content to their students and the majority of the students bring their own

[3] During the data analysis, responses to questions stated in the negative underwent a reversal process so that high positivity was always reflected with a score of five, whereas high negativity was always reflected as a score of one.

computers to class on a daily basis. Student who don't have personal computers are provided with digital access using either school laptops or desktop stations located throughout the school. Students have been schooled so as to have sufficient knowledge and necessary skills in the use of digital technology. Second, by leveraging computer technology, an online survey served as an efficient means for the researcher to track, gather, compile and evaluate the student response data in a timely and organized manner.

Phenomenological Interviews. In line with phenomenological research criteria, interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format in which only the initial questions were pre-defined, and subsequent follow-up questions depended upon the responses of participants to the original questions. Regardless, all questions were open-ended so as to provide the greatest opportunity for subjects to describe and express their experiences in their own words (See Appendix 3a for list of interview questions). Furthermore, the researcher went to great effort, including participating in trainings with an outside expert, to maintain the integrity of the phenomenological approach, for example, by consciously setting aside any preconceived notions or beliefs during the interview, a process referred to as "bracketing" (Cottrell & McKenzie, 2005; Hycner, 1985)

Methodology

Sampling Method and Target Population. In quantitative research, the "gold standard" is random probability sampling that answers the question: *"Does the subject belong to [represent] the population I am studying?"* However, to address a phenomenological interest in the "lived experience" of interviewees (e.g. *What is it like?),* the key question in sample selection is "*Do you have the experience I am looking for?* (Englander, 2012)*."* Thus, in phenomenological research, non-probability sampling is used and samples are deemed appropriate if they are "informationally representative" rather than "statistically representative" (Cottrell & McKenzie, 2005).

For this study a combination of convenience (online screening questionnaire) and purposive (face-to-face interview) sampling was used. That is, a convenience sample of all current 12th grade male and female students who participated in *Tefilla-7* under the supervision and tutelage of the researcher between the years 2010-2011[4] and were at least 18 years of age at the start of the study were invited to participate in the initial screening questionnaire. Potential participants were initially identified using a class roster provided by the school's administrators. Of the 150 high school students who were in 12th grade at the high school, 92 were excluded because they had not participated in the *Tefilla-7* prayer program. The remaining, 58 students were eligible to participate in the screening questionnaire; however, two students (females) declined to participate. The remaining 56

[4] The seventh grade tefilla program was offered under the tutelage of this researcher for the period 1995-2010. This cohort represents the entire population exposed to the intervention.

students (n=56) completed the screening questionnaire. The researcher reached out to the two female non-participants students during the school day to find out why they opted out of the survey. One female student remarked that she was uncomfortable sharing her thoughts, opinions and feelings online. The second female student felt she had nothing to offer and therefore wished not to participate in the study. No further follow up was done with the two female students.

Based on responses to five statements in the online screening questionnaire that reflected core positive or negative experiences of *Tefilla*-7, a smaller sample of students was selected for the in-depth interview phase. The five screening statements were:

1. I often felt tired during the 7th grade morning tefilla services.
2. I often felt bored during 7th grade tefilla services.
3. Most days, 7th grade tefilla was a spiritual experience for me.
4. 7th grade tefilla was more of a social experience than a religious or spiritual experience for me.
5. My 7th grade tefilla experience changed my attitude about davening in a positive way.

Agreement/disagreement scores from each of these five statements (*Tefillah Experience Scale*) were combined to yield a total *Tefillah Experience Score*. Students with the highest (most positive) and lowest (most negative) scores were identified as interview candidates. Duplicate scores were found at both ends of the spectrum (positive and negative experiences). In these instances, the researcher consulted with the 12th grade coordinator at the high school identified those students who had good verbal communication skills, and equal numbers of male and female students were selected.. The general nature and structure

of an Orthodox communal prayer service designates that males have a more active role (i.e. leading services, counting for a quorum, etc.), and therefore, having an even distribution among the genders was an important consideration for the second sampling phase.

Initially, a purposive sample of six students (three males, three females) who described either a) highly positive experience of *Tefilla-7* or a b) highly negative experience of *Tefilla-7* was selected for the in-depth phenomenological interview phase. Later, as the data had not appeared to reach a point of saturation[5], an additional two students (one male, one female) were included in the in-depth interview phase.

IRB Approval. Prior to implementation of the study, the researcher completed an online training course through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) on Human Subjects Research (HSR) in conjunction with the Internal Review Board (IRB) of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and applied through IRIS (Integrated Research Informational System) to the Albert Einstein College of Medicine Internal Review Board (IRB) for approval of the study. Approval for the study was granted and assigned the IRB # 2015-4974.

Administration of the Online Screening Survey. As a first step the researcher received oral consent from the principal of the school to approach students about participating in the study. One week prior to the administration of the online screening survey, the researcher visited each 12th grade religious studies class and made an oral presentation to inform the students about the purpose of the study, that their participation was

[5] Phenomenological studies require a minimum sample size of three to six participants (Flood, 2010; Sandelowski, 1995). When the data being collected reaches a point of redundancy/saturation because no new thematic information is revealed during continued interviewing of additional subjects, the sample size is said to have reached its necessary limit (Giorgi, 2009; Husserl, 1960; Patton, 2002).

optional, and that all responses would remain anonymous and confidential. The researcher also informed students that they would be receiving an email within the week that would provide them with a link to access the online screening survey and request completion of the questionnaire within one week.

When students clicked on the link, the first page of the online screening survey appeared with a passive consent stated as follows:

This survey is part of a study that explores what contributes to a positive or negative davening experience in middle school. Most of the survey questions ask you to recall your davening experience during 7th grade tefilla at school and questions about your experience of davening now."

The passive consent also informed students that participating in the survey was "OPTIONAL" and added: *"If you choose to participate, please answer all questions honestly and feel free to express positive or negative feelings. Your answers will be confidential and will have no impact on your grade or standing in school. After the surveys are reviewed, approximately six students will be invited to participate in additional videotaped interviews."*

Although all students were asked to provide contact information (name, email address), on the survey, seven students chose to remain anonymous. It is unclear to the researcher as to the reason behind this and no further information could be obtained as the contact information was missing. While the responses of these seven students were included in the analysis of the online screening survey data, these students were not considered as interview candidates.

Interviews. Based on their response to the screening survey, three high scoring and three low scoring students, including three males and three females were selected for the phenomenological phase of the study. These six students were approached by the researcher during the school day and asked if they would be willing to participate in a one-on-one follow-up interview. Five of the students agreed to a follow-up interview. One female student, with a low score on the *Tefilla Experience Scale*, declined to participate, saying she was uncomfortable with having her answers recorded. In order to maintain gender balance, an additional female with a duplicate score was identified from the survey responses; she accepted the researcher's request for an interview. As mentioned previously, in order to achieve saturation, two additional students were later identified using the same rubric and were approached to participate after the initial interviews were underway. Both students agreed.

. Interviews with students were scheduled throughout the day depending on when each participant had a free period. All interviews took place in a classroom on the main floor of the school building. The average interview lasted 40 minutes, with a range of 35-45 minutes. During the taped interviews only the researcher and the subject were present.

Prior to the beginning of each interview, each subject was asked to sign a written consent form in accordance with the Albert Einstein School of Medicine IRB protocol. A copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix 6. Each interview was recorded with a voice app iPad recorder. The researcher sat across a desk from the subject during the interview and asked for the student's consent to take notes during the interview. One of the purposes of note taking was to compile a glossary of Hebrew words with correct English

transliterations to accompany each recording sent to the transcriber. The recorded interviews were saved and downloaded to Google Drive and then transcribed into a Word document.

Data Analysis

Multicomponent Data Analysis. Data from each component of the study (survey, interviews) were first analyzed, after which, the findings from each section were linked to create a fuller understanding of the data as presented in the Discussion section.

Quantitative Analysis: Data from the online screening survey generated quantitative results that were analyzed by a professional statistician who computed correlation coefficients and conducted multiple regression analyses under the direction of the researcher.

Qualitative Analysis. Analysis of the phenomenological data involved a meticulous study of audio recordings and transcripts from the subsample of student participants, followed by extraction of common themes. This process, known as thematic analysis began with a review of interview transcripts to identify repeating patterns of meaning or *themes*.[6] Themes can be identified through one of two methods, inductive or deductive, and are organized around two levels, either semantic or latent (Boyatzis, 1998)[7,8] In this case,

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[6] Braun and Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis as " a flexible and widely used qualitative analytic method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data, reducing complex qualitative data to a useful form while retaining the richness and depth of the data."

[7] In a semantic approach, themes are identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data. Thematic analysis at the latent level goes beyond the semantic content of the data, involving interpretive work that seeks to identify underlying ideas, assumptions, conceptualizations, and ideologies that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data. (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

[8] Deductive reasoning is theory-driven and involves placing data into pre-existing frames or models. Inductive reasoning is data-driven and allows for themes to emerge, unrestricted, from the data without fitting into a pre-existing coding frame or the researcher's analytic preconceptions. Themes are also not driven by the researcher's theoretical interest in the area or topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

inductive reasoning and a semantic approach were used. The analytic process of interview data is described in detail below:

1) Immersion*:* The first stage, immersion, involved increasing familiarity with the "depth and breath of the data," through repeated "simple" readings of the data, followed by repeated "active" readings accompanied by an intentional focus on meanings and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

2) Generating Initial Codes: Stage 2 involved multiple reviews of transcripts and audio recordings of interviews to bring the data into clearer focus. Relevant pieces of data (i.e., quotations) were coded into "meaningful and easily retrievable segments" (Merriam, 1998). Part of this process involved "dimensionalization", i.e., attending to "nuances and shades of emphasis" in the wording, with "more intense" verbal descriptions of experience leading to higher rankings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At the end of this process, a tentative set of thematic categories had been created.

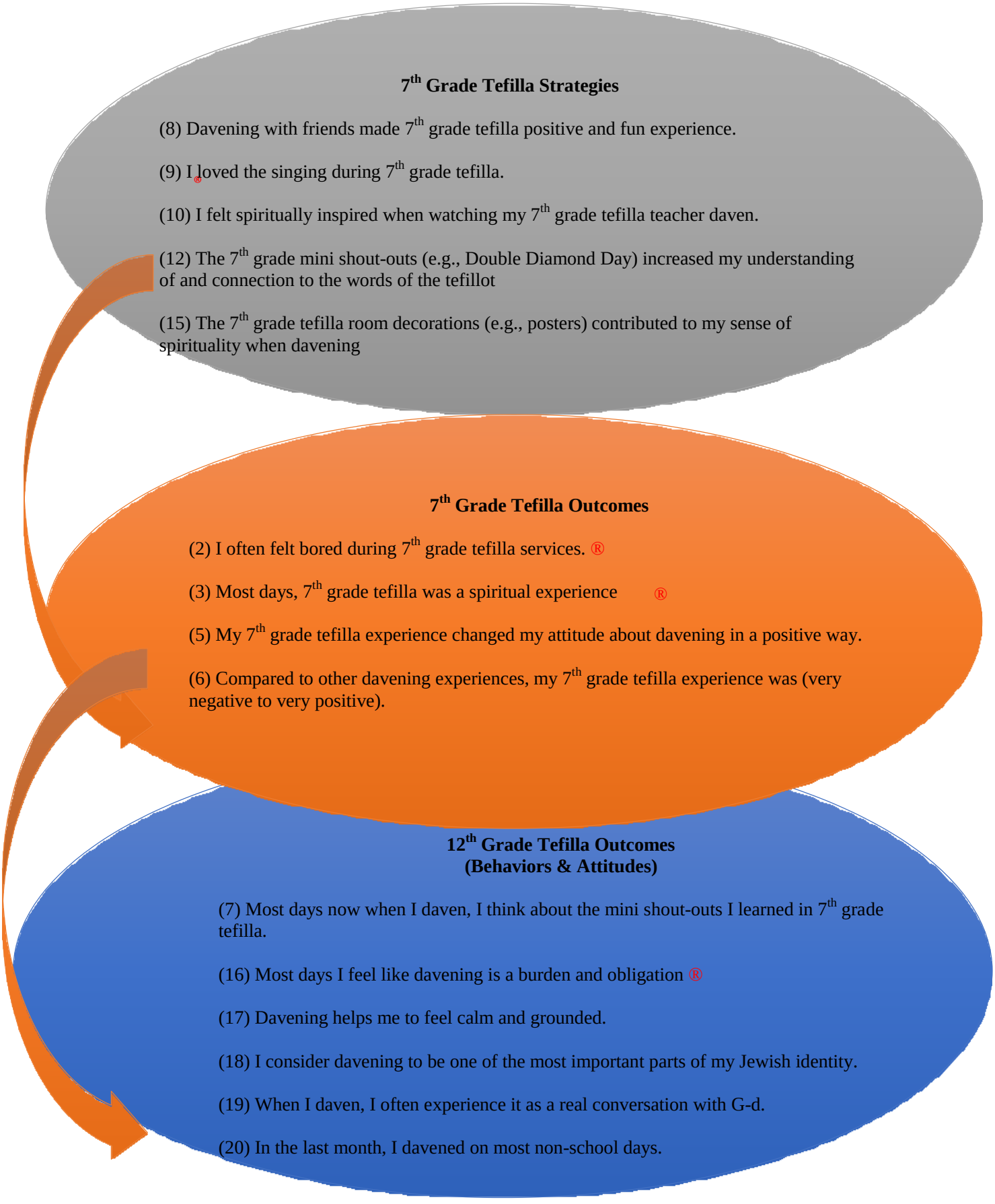
3) Organizing Themes: During Stage 3, student quotations were placed into charts according to thematic content. Initially, the researcher included as many potential themes as possible; eventually overlapping themes and patterns were combined or consolidated, decreasing the number of thematic categories. The goal of Stage 3 was to create the smallest number of viable thematic categories, with each containing at least 20% of the total response codes (Cresswell, Fetters, & Ivankova, 2004).

4) Reviewing Themes: In Stage 4, themes were reviewed by the researcher data was re-coded data to further refine the categories. This process involved a re-reading of the supportive quotations within each thematic category to determine if the data as coded was consistent with the theme (Patton, 2002).

5) Refining Themes: In Stage 5, the researcher sought to “define and refine‟ themes, reviewing them to detect redundancy or excessive complexity so that each theme effectively and clearly reflected the coded data and told its “story” without duplication. In this stage, the “essence” (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of each theme was clarified and sub-themes were identified as appropriate. Labels in the form of “words or short phrases that symbolically assign a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute” (Salanda, 2008) were created by the researcher for each theme and sub-theme.

6) Producing the Report: In this final stage, the researcher wrote up the thematic analysis in prose to “tell the story” of the data.

Figure 2: Relationships between 7th Grade Tefilla Strategies, Experience & Present Day Behavior & Atitude



Results

Quantitative Results. Analysis of the quantitative results addressed the researcher's hypothesis that 7th grade tefilla experiences can have an important and enduring impact on a student's relationship with *tefilla*. It was hypothesized that strategies implemented in *Tefilla-7* caused shifts in attitudes and behavior during 7th grade (7th grade "outcomes") that were then reflected in 12th grade attitudes and behaviors (12th grade "outcomes") (See Figure 5).

As a first step in this analysis, a correlational matrix was conducted to determine whether there were relationships between *Tefilla-7* strategies and 7th grade outcomes. Questions associated with *Tefilla-7* strategies were correlated with questions associated with 7th grade *tefilla* outcomes. Figure 3 displays these correlations.

Figure 3: Correlations between *Tefilla-7* strategies & *Tefilla-7* outcomes

	***Tefilla* outcomes**			
Strategies	Not Bored	Spiritual Experience	Changed Attitude	Positive Experience
Davening with friends	.24	.24**	.13	.25
Singing	.24	.42**	.28*	.27*
Observing teacher praying	.42**	.57***	.59***	.49***
Mini shout-outs	.04	.32*	.29*	.07
Room decorations	.02	.13	.39**	.19

*=p<.05; **=p<.01; ***=p<.001

A correlational matrix was then conducted to determine whether there were relationships between 7th grade *tefilla* outcomes and current 12th grade *tefilla* outcomes Figure 4 below displays the correlations.

Figure 4: Correlations between *Tefilla-7* outcomes and 12th grade *tefilla* outcomes.

	12th grade *tefilla* outcomes					
***Tefilla-7* outcomes**	Mini shout-outs	Burden or Obligation	Calm & Grounded	Part of Jewish Identity	*Tefilla* as conversation w/G-d	Pray on Non-school days
Not Bored	.40**	.56***	.37**	.44**	.35*	.26
Spiritual Experience	.26	.24	.30*	.35**	.38**	.19
Changed Attitude	.46***	.28	.45***	.42***	.22	.25
Positive Experience	.29*	.09	.22	.27*	.12	.09

*=p<.05; **=p<.01; ***=p<.001

To investigate further, multiple regression analyses were conducted in two parts: The first part explored the predictive abilities of *Tefilla-7* strategies on 7th grade *tefilla* outcomes, and the second part explored the predictive abilities of 7th grade *tefilla* outcomes on current 12th grade *tefilla* outcomes.

Part I: Ability of Tefilla-7 strategies to predict Tefilla-7 student outcomes. The first multiple regression analysis evaluated whether *Tefilla-7* strategies predicted whether students experienced boredom during 7th grade *tefilla* services. Preliminary analyses were done to determine whether or not multicollinearity was an issue. The VIF statistical values were investigated and found to be <1.5 for all of the variables. In addition, correlations among the predictors were investigated and found to be rather modest. Therefore, no sign of harmful multicollinearity was detected. The multiple regression analysis revealed a significant effect of *Tefilla-7* strategies on the degree to which students reported feeling bored during 7th grade *tefilla*, R^2=.24, $F(5,50) = 3.15$, $p<.05$. Approximately 24% of the variance in the degree of

boredom reported during 7th grade *tefilla* was accounted for by a linear combination of these components. Feeling spiritually inspired when watching the teacher pray was the only significant predictor of the degree to which students reported feeling bored (β=.36, $p<.001$).[9] Students who reported feeling more spiritually inspired while watching their teacher pray were less likely to report feeling bored during *tefilla*.

A second multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate whether *Tefilla-7* strategies predicted whether students typically experienced *Tefilla-7* as a "spiritual experience." Preliminary analyses were done to determine whether or not multicollinearity was an issue. The VIF statistical values were investigated and found to be <1.5 for all of the variables. In addition, correlations among the predictors were investigated and found to be rather modest. Therefore, no sign of harmful multicollinearity was detected. The multiple regression analysis revealed that a significant effect of *Tefilla-7* strategies on whether students reported 7th grade *tefilla* as being a "spiritual experience", $R^2=.44$, $F(5,50) = 7.69$, $p<.001$. Approximately 44% of the variance in spiritual experience was accounted for by the linear combination of *Tefilla-7* strategies. Feeling spiritually inspired when watching the teacher pray was the only significant predictor of whether students reported that 7th grade tefilla was a spiritual experience. (β=.40, $p<.001$).

A third multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate whether *Tefilla-7* strategies predicted a positive change in attitude about *tefilla*. Preliminary analyses were done to determine whether or not multicollinearity was an issue. The VIF statistical values were investigated and found to be <1.5 for all of the variables. In addition, correlations

[9] Note that this statement and other statements written in negative form were analyzed as a reversal such that the outcome variable declined in relation to the independent variable.

among the predictors were investigated and found to be rather modest. Therefore, no sign of harmful multicollinearity was detected. The multiple regression analysis revealed a significant effect of *Tefilla-7* strategies on whether students reported experiencing a positive change in attitude about *tefilla*, R^2=.41, $F(5,50) = 7.07$, $p<.001$. Approximately 41% of the variance in positive attitude change about *tefilla* was accounted for by *Tefilla-7* strategies. A student feeling spiritually inspired when watching his/her teacher pray was the only significant predictor of a positive attitude change (β=.41, $p<.001$).

A fourth multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate whether *Tefilla-7* strategies predicted a positive 7th grade *tefilla* experience (relative to other *tefilla* experiences). Preliminary analyses were done to determine whether or not multicollinearity was an issue. The VIF statistical values were investigated and found to be <1.4 for all of the variables. In addition, correlations among the predictors were investigated and found to be rather modest. Therefore, no sign of harmful multicollinearity was detected. The multiple regression analysis revealed a significant effect of *Tefilla-7* strategies on whether students reported experiencing 7th grade *tefilla* as positive relative to other *tefilla* experiences. R^2=.28, $F(5,49) = 3.88$, $p<.01$. Approximately 28% of the variance in experiencing *Tefilla-7* as positive was accounted for by the linear combination of these components. Feeling spiritually inspired when watching their teacher pray was the only significant predictor of feeling positive about the 7th grade *tefilla* experience (β=.30, $p<.01$).

Part II: Ability of Tefilla-7 outcomes to predict 12th grade (current) tefilla outcomes. The first multiple regression analysis evaluated whether *Tefilla-7* outcomes predicted recalling the mini shout-outs (presented in *Tefilla-7*) when praying in 12th grade. Preliminary analyses were done to determine whether or not multicollinearity was an issue. The VIF

statistical values were investigated and found to be <2.3 for all of the variables. In addition, correlations among the predictors were investigated and found to be rather modest. Therefore, no sign of harmful multicollinearity was detected. The multiple regression analysis revealed a significant effect of Tefilla-*7* outcomes on students consciously remembering the didactic mini shout-outs when praying in 12th grade, R^2=.25, $F(4,50) = 4.18$, $p<.01$. Approximately 25% of the variance in mini shout-outs recall was accounted for by the linear combination of these components. The only significant predictor of recalling mini shout-outs in 12th grade was a positive attitude change facilitated by the *Tefilla-7* experience (β=.49, $p<.01$). The more positive change in attitude experienced by a student in 7th grade *tefilla*, the more likely the student was to report recalling mini shout-outs during his/her *tefilla* in 12th grade.

A second multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate whether *Tefilla-7* outcomes predicted experiencing current *tefilla* as a burden and obligation in 12th grade. Preliminary analyses were done to determine whether or not multicollinearity was an issue. The VIF statistical values were investigated and found to be <2.3 for all of the variables. In addition, correlations among the predictors were investigated and found to be rather modest. Therefore, no sign of harmful multicollinearity was detected. The multiple regression analysis revealed a significant effect of Tefilla-*7* outcomes on whether students experienced tefilla in 12th grade as a burden and obligation, R^2=.38, $F(4,50) = 7.57$, $p<.001$. Approximately 38% of the variance in whether a student reported experiencing *tefilla* as a burden and obligation in 12th grade was accounted for by the linear combination of these components. Feeling bored during 7th grade *tefilla* was the strongest predictor of whether students experienced *tefilla* as a burden and obligation in 12th grade (β=.89, $p<.001$),

followed by not experiencing 7th grade *tefilla* as positive relative to other *tefilla* experiences. (β=-.67, $p<.05$). The greater the negative experience during *Tefilla-7*, the stronger the predictor.

A third multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate whether *Tefilla-7* outcomes predicted whether students reported that *tefilla* made them feel "calm and grounded" in 12th grade. Preliminary analyses were done to determine whether or not multicollinearity was an issue. The VIF statistical values were investigated and found to be <2.3 for all of the variables. In addition, correlations among the predictors were investigated and found to be rather modest. Therefore, no sign of harmful multicollinearity was detected. The multiple regression analysis revealed a significant effect of *Tefilla-7* outcomes on whether students reported that *tefilla* made them feel calm and grounded in 12th grade, $R^2=.24$, $F(4,50) = 3.84$, $p<.01$. Approximately 24% of the variance in feeling calm and grounded in the 12th grade was accounted for by the linear combination of these components. The only significant predictor of feeling calm and grounded in 12th grade was whether students reported that *Tefilla-7* changed their attitude about *tefilla* in a positive way (β=.55, $p<.01$).

A fourth multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate whether *Tefilla-7* outcomes predicted students reporting that *tefilla* was one of the most important parts of their Jewish identity in 12th grade. Preliminary analyses were done to determine whether or not multicollinearity was an issue. The VIF statistical values were investigated and found to be <2.3 for all of the variables. In addition, correlations among the predictors were investigated and found to be rather modest. Therefore, no sign of harmful multicollinearity was detected. The multiple regression analysis revealed a significant effect of *Tefilla-7* outcomes on

whether students identified *tefilla* as being one of the most important parts of their Jewish identity in 12th grade, R^2=.26, $F(4,50) = 4.34$, $p<.01$. Approximately 26% of the variance in students reporting that tefilla was being one of the most important parts of their Jewish identity in 12th grade was accounted for by the linear combination of these components. The strongest significant predictor of incorporating t*efilla* into the students' Jewish identity was whether the students reported that *Tefilla-7* changed their attitude about *tefilla* in a positive way (β=.49, $p<.05$), followed by whether students reported not feeling bored during *Tefilla-7* services[10] (β=.47, $p<.05$).

A fifth multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate whether *Tefilla-7* outcomes predicted students reporting that they experienced *tefilla* as a "real conversation with G-d" in 12th grade. Preliminary analyses were done to determine whether or not multicollinearity was an issue. The VIF statistical values were investigated and found to be <2.3 for all of the variables. In addition, correlations among the predictors were investigated and found to be rather modest. Therefore, no sign of harmful multicollinearity was detected. The multiple regression analysis revealed a significant effect of Tefilla-*7* outcomes on whether students experienced *tefilla* as a "real conversation with G-d" in 12th grade, R^2=.18, $F(4,50) = 2.75$, $p<.05$. Approximately 18% of the variance in experiencing *tefilla* as a "real conversation with G-d" was accounted for by the linear combination of these components. The only significant predictor of the "real conversation with G-d" variable was whether students reported that tefilla was a spiritual experience in 7th grade (β=.48, $p<.05$).

[10] Note: Since this is reverse coded, it means the less bored they felt the more it predicts davening being one of the most important parts of their Jewish identity.

A sixth multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate whether *Tefilla-7* outcomes predicted whether a student chose to pray on most non-school days[11]. Preliminary analyses were done to determine whether or not multicollinearity was an issue. The VIF statistical values were investigated and found to be <2.3 for all of the variables. In addition, correlations among the predictors were investigated and found to be rather modest. Therefore, no sign of harmful multicollinearity was detected. The multiple regression analysis did not reveal a relationship between *Tefilla-7* outcomes on whether students choose to pray on non-school days, R^2=.10, $F(4,50) = 1.42$, *ns*.

Qualitative Results. During analysis of the phenomenological interviews, the following and subthemes emerged:

1) Adolescence
    a. Autonomy vs. Restraint[12]
    b. Individual Identity Exploration, Expression & Formation
2) Teacher-Student Relationship
    a. Caring
    b. Authenticity[13]
    c. Authoritarian vs. Authoritative[14]
3) Individual Commitment (Goals)/Meaning Making (Values)
    a. Context
    b. Hebrew Fluency/Comprehension

[11] The timeframe for this question was "in the past month."
[12] Autonomy refers to a freedom to make choices and creatively express a sense of self
[13] Authenticity refers to being present in the manner described by Carl Rogers rather than serving as a model in the sense described by Bandura.
[14] This refers to differing styles of authority and is described in more detail later.

4) Community
    a. Commitment[15]
    b. Caring
    c. Sharing/Belonging vs. Exclusion[16]
5) Environment
    a. Space
    b. Time

Theme #1: Adolescence. Adolescence is a developmental stage involving intense emotional, neurological and physical transformations with a focus on identity exploration and formation. Not surprisingly, this emerged as an important theme in the qualitative data analysis, defined more fully in the two subthemes of 1) *Autonomy vs. Restraint* and 2) *Individual Exploration, Expression & Identity Formation*.

Sub-theme #1: Autonomy vs. Restraint. Autonomy in this context describes the freedom to make choices and decisions that are considered fundamentally important to the individual *and* the independence to carry out these choices. Restraint describes the opposite experience, i.e., having one's choices restrained or being forced to adopt the choices of others. The importance of autonomy is captured in the statement of one male student (M3) who described his first experience with a student-led *tefilla* group in 7th grade in terms of a revelation: "[T]hat was something, like, we can do this…. We don't need our teacher anymore. The training wheels came off and [the tefilla leader was] there just to inspire us to daven, to become better people." Another male student (M1) talked about the importance of being able

[15] Commitment is to the group; involves peer-to-peer relationships
[16] Sharing is what participants spoke about when describing the experience of belonging; exclusion is the opposite of belonging

to create "my own davening" when praying in a tefilla group "without any real supervision." A third male student (M2) noted that in his *tefilla* group, teachers were not "such a big influence", remarking: "In a way it's kind of good, because sometimes as kids we don't really want a teacher influencing us, we just want to make our own path, and do what we want to do."

Punctuating the importance of choice even within limits (e.g., school's requirement that students participate in a *tefilla* group), seven out of eight students interviewed commented favorably on the efforts of the high school to offer alternative forms of *tefilla* (e.g., traditional, musical, meditation, women's etc.) These groups were viewed by students as opportunities for personal religious expression. One student (M2) used the word "amazing" in describing these groups, remarking that exploring new *tefilla* practices was "a cool new thing that I can do." A female student (F2) participating in a women's tefilla group spoke about the opportunities afforded her in this group to be more actively involved. A female student (F1) who identified as Sephardic expressed joy at being able to pray in a Sephardic *tefilla* group, noting the positive impact it had on the rest of her day: "I love it! I think it's like an awesome part of my day. It's really super-grounding… " A male student (M3) emphasized how, in his alternative group, the freedom of each student being able to create his or her own *tefilla* experience created a "positive tefilla environment" for *him*:

> I think that the mix of both serious kids who want to pray, want to be involved, and the…very few kids who are quiet on the side, creates this make-it-what-you-want kind of environment and not so much as, oh, you *have* to pray…

Another male student (M4) also described how autonomy in his alternative *tefilla* group allowed him to make *tefilla* a personally meaningful experience rather than a rote performance:

> Something that I do appreciate is that…in our balcony minyan, the teachers don't force you to daven. They allow you to be in charge of what you want. I find that better [because after] I get there I need a few minutes just to get like emotionally ready, or I need [to focus first on my] kavanah. So I, personally, wouldn't like it when teachers say alright, come on, let's go, put the tefillin on, open a siddur…[Y]ou kind of want to be just like davening with your own kavanah, you don't want to be pressured into doing something. You kind of just want to do it because you want to, and *you* think it's important, and not because teachers are pressuring you to do something."

Not surprisingly, restraint-of-choice was viewed negatively by students. Students most often expressed this as a frustration with more traditional teacher-led *tefilla* groups. One male student (M3) who proposed and subsequently created an all-male alternative *tefilla* group with "a bunch of guys who are committed" spoke about his annoyance when approached by the school administration to modify his group so as to include female students: "[V]iewing what had happened last year, because there was such a good result, I said, you know, why mess with something that's good? If it's not broken, don't fix it!**"** Clearly this student was frustrated when the school attempted to restructure *his tefilla* group.

Sub-theme #2: Individual Exploration, Expression & Identity Formation. Identity formation is a cornerstone of adolescence, representing the primary "crisis" of this stage of

development. Not surprisingly, this emerged as an important subtheme. Amongst nearly all of the students, *tefilla* appeared to serve as a vehicle for exploration of the religious or spiritual self. One female student (F1), who described herself as a "spiritual person" talked about a transformative moment at the Kotel (Western Wall) in Jerusalem during her early high school years when she transitioned from the belief that she was "not expected to have kavannah in my tefilla" to a resolve to "step up," take ownership of her *tefilla* and explore ways to integrate it into her emerging identity. Expressing her independent affirmation of *tefilla* as a tool for actualizing her spiritual self, the student described the questions she asked herself: "[H]ow do I make *tefilla* mine? And how do I like grow from *tefilla*? If it's already going to be my everyday life, why like waste an hour…why not make the best of that hour…?" In reassessing her involvement with prayer, this student affirmed her obligation to engage in *tefilla*, albeit in ways that were entirely personal and part of her emerging identity as a spiritual and religious being.

Another student (M1) talked enthusiastically about his identity as a Kohen describing his blind acceptance of this role prior to bar mitzvah age, and his conscious affirmation of this role as part of his post-bar mitzvah identity:

> Just being a Kohen has a special impact in my davening life. From a young age, I would always go up for *Birkat Kohanim* with my dad." So I felt a little special and connected right away. Being *my own* Kohen, once I was Bar-Mitzvahed just helped elevate everything, all of the feelings.

In stating the words "my own Kohen", this student takes ownership of his role as a Kohen as an independent affirmation of his religious identity, separate from his natural inheritance of this role through his father.

Similarly, another male student (M3) who appeared to be in the midst of figuring out his personal religious identity, talked about being "17 ½ year old boy who has found his spot", yet also demonstrated his ongoing struggle to take ownership of his more inclusive religious views when condemning a published article about "social orthodoxy:"

> [M]y dad read an article…about the 'social orthodoxy', this huge thing where a lot of people came out saying, 'Oh, I only go to shul because my neighbor goes to shul.' And I think that it's a very controversial thing to say that they're not real, they're not invested… they don't believe in it… I think it's the exact opposite. Someone's going out of their limits, like, they feel they're out of their comfort zone and they're putting themselves in shul… and I think it's important to be a part of this. And I think that we as a people …[we] have to bring those people in and say, yeah, we can. Let's help you out.

In these comments, one can see the process of individuation and religious identity formation as this student takes a position opposite to that upheld by the religious establishment.

Interestingly, *tefilla* was not only used by students as a vehicle for exploring their religious or spiritual selves, but also served as a vehicle for exploring other aspects of their emerging identities. One male student (M1) talked about his joy in discovering his capacity for leadership during *tefilla*, commenting how "[b]eing a leader is very cool, especially for younger kids who look up to you as a senior in the school." Speaking about his spontaneous delivery of a D'var Torah during morning *tefilla,* he reflected on discovering his skill as a "good speaker," adding how he is "able to inspire people, and not crashing when under pressure, and just getting something done when I have to, which I was happy to find out."

Thus it appears that this student used *tefilla* as a platform for exploring and discovering aspects of his self in the process of defining his general identity.

In contrast to the majority of students who saw in *tefilla* an opportunity for identity exploration/formation, one female student (F4) who was the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor understood *tefilla* as a "commitment" and "obligation", unquestioningly adopting beliefs expressed by her mother and grandfather. This student declared that "[e]verybody has to serve G-d" and suggested that tefilla is merely a matter of "checking the box…like it's another mitzvah…like on a long list of mitzvahs, or a long list of obligations." She denied any "emotional" connection to *tefilla*, describing herself as "somebody that doesn't look at davening as a transformative, self-realizing act, [but] as … as a practical [contractual] act." Quoting her mother, she gave a simple and unexamined explanation that "the reason that my family's been so blessed [and] everybody is so healthy is because my grandfather suffered enough for all of us [in the Holocaust]." Yet, the student also mentions in passing that her aunt has just become sick, and that this will be a focal point of her prayers now, and it is not clear what might happen to her belief system should her aunt not regain her health. Perhaps such an occurrence would call into question her understanding of *tefilla*. While this student clearly denies the potential for *tefilla* to serve as an instrument for self-exploration and forecloses the possibility of spiritual individuation and identity formation, she is nevertheless aware that of this process in her peers as revealed in the following two comments: (1) "I know a lot of people see davening as something that there's so much to gain from, like introspective kind of exploration time, but that's really not what it is for me." (2) A lot of people think that it's like more special to daven in English… [so] you understand the words, but I never really bought into that. For me it's like so special to daven the words that Jews

have been davening for generations of generations." For this student, it appears that *tefilla* is about physical survival, about the remnants of a people destroyed and a relationship with an unknowable G-d salvaged.

Theme #2: Teacher-Student Relationship. All students cited the *Teacher- Student Relationship* as a critical factor in how they experienced tefilla. Three sub-themes emerged within this category: Authenticity vs. Modeling, Authoritative vs. Authoritarian and Caring vs. Indifference.

Sub-theme #1: Authenticity vs. Inauthentic Modeling. *Authenticity* describes a state of emotional transparency, genuineness and sincerity and the experience of an energy directed outward from teacher to student. This is contrasted with *inauthentic modeling*, a disingenuous form of exhibition (e.g., *just going through the motions*) lacking a transparent, authentic connection between the "actor" (teacher) and the "act" (*tefilla*) or the actor (teacher) and observer (student). The goal in Authenticity is relationship and a reproduction of observed behaviors as aspects of self-identity, whereas the goal in inauthentic modeling is copying and compliance.

Several students described the experience of observing *genuine* behavior displayed by the *tefilla* teacher as having a positive impact on their *tefilla* experience. One female student (F1) commented that teachers who appeared to be genuinely enjoying *tefilla*, those "who are really having fun", were "easier to respect" than teachers who prayed without an authentic sense of joy. The student described a transfer (mirroring) of joy, saying that when her teachers are "happy" then "I have a smile on my face," adding that this was especially important to adolescents who find *tefilla* a "hassle" in the morning because "people are grumpy." This is in

contrast to the student's reflection on teachers whose primary purpose was "just to take attendance… to shush you."

An overemphasis on taking attendance and "shushing" was viewed by most students as a lack of authenticity and was associated with negative feelings toward *tefilla*. One female student (F4) said: "I think it's unfortunate that they [the teachers] spend more time shushing than teaching." When asked to recall her 7th grade *tefilla* experience (five years previous), she said cynically: "I remember the woman that davened with us would shush us a lot…I guess the only thing that was funny was how seriously she took it..." Another female student (F2) described her current tefilla group as "very genuine, and it's like easy to concentrate there because you're not being told by a teacher every few minutes to be quiet."

One male student (M4) spoke about how observing an authentic and "animated" *tefilla* teacher "get[s] people inspired." A second male student (M3) described authenticity in the form of an energy transfer from teacher to student: "[T]here were plenty of times … [when the *tefilla* teacher] gave us a pick-me-up…like you're plugging in a charger and your battery is a little higher than it was before." Recalling his observations of his 7th grade *tefilla* teacher engaged in prayer, he recalled:

> I was like impressed…And I think all us were like, this is the kind of davener we want to be. And I remember…there were times when [he] got a little emotional during Shemoneh Esrai and I would be like…How does he do that? How does he get emotional? We're saying the same words every day and he's like some 50-year old guy, a rabbi, who's been saying these words since like, before we were born and he gets emotional every time he says it! It's unbelievable!"

In contrast, one student (M4) described with cynicism a teacher who delivered a D'var Torah [17] by reading from an Internet cite on his cellphone:

> One of the biggest annoyances or things that… that irked me was [when the] head of the minyan or rabbi or whoever was reading a D'var Torah, they'd be like, Oh, and I'm just gonna read it from my thing… and they just scroll and scroll. And like, so great, you can read English like, off your phone.

A female student (F3) who expressed feelings of disconnection from *tefilla* describing singing as a "waste of time" commenting that: "It's just him [the tefilla teacher] like putting on a show which no one wants to hear."

Sub-theme #2: Authoritarian vs. Authoritative. Authoritarian and *Authoritative* refer to differing styles of teacher-student interaction. Authoritarian implies a use of power and/or position to force, enforce and control, whereas Authoritative refers to the use of leadership, expertise and negotiation to guide students toward growth. One female student (F3) who was detached from *tefilla,* described how her *tefilla* leader "would like force people to daven…even if they don't want to…and people [were] really annoyed because like you can't force someone to do it if they don't want to." A male student (M2) who felt positive about his own *tefilla* experiences, spoke about the long-term impact on students of being "forced to lead davening" saying: "If they just don't want to, they just don't want to, you know? That means that some kids who are actually doing davening won't daven anymore, and that forcing students to daven pushes them away from it." Another male student (M1) described a student-run *tefilla* group as enjoyable because "no one's yelling at me to put on my tefillin or daven; I do it on my own…" A third male student (M4) said that he "appreciate[s]" that in

[17] The High School requires every tefilla leader to give a one-minute D'var Torah in each *tefilla* service.

his *tefilla* group, the "teachers don't force you to daven. They allow you to be in charge of what you want," adding "[Y]ou don't want to be pressured into doing something."

An issue that was repeatedly mentioned by students was teacher enforcement of detention when students would arrive five minutes late. As students often do not have control over their arrival time - - due to carpools and bus transportation - - this policy was experienced by students as harsh and authoritarian, and created feelings of frustration that impacted their experience of *tefilla*. For example, one female student (F1) said:

> I'm on a bus, and sometimes they come late, and I'm still penalized for that even though it's not entirely in my control… this is really hurting the tefilla experience. I think people are only focusing on can I get to davening by that point? and it's incredibly frustrating.

Another female student (F3) who appeared disconnected from *tefilla* complained:

> You get to school on time, not on time. If you get to school past 8:05 you don't even go to davening 'cause you'll get the absence anyway…So, like it's not even a question…hang out with your friends …and get an absence, or be in davening and get an absence?

In contrast, another female student (F1) described her current *tefilla* group positively describing it as "chill" because of the authoritative (vs. authoritarian) approach of her tefilla leader and his "leniency behind attendance," saying that "knowing that it's [detention] not going to happen makes it [tefilla] more enjoyable. *I'm not there just for attendance."*

Sub-theme #3: Caring vs. Indifference. Another subtheme of the Teacher-Student Relationship was *Caring vs. Indifference*. Caring described actions that were seen as nurturing, expressing interest in student needs, and/or requiring an investment of time and/or

energy, and was associated with feelings of being valued and validated. Teacher indifference was experienced as a lack of investment or interest in the student and his/her needs.

One male student (M1) described how feeling cared for by his *tefilla* teacher lead to feelings of respect trust in the relationship, and a desire to invest in *tefilla*:

> [K]nowing that someone cares for you… makes it hard to not respect them, and it makes it difficult to not want to care back…[W] hen someone cares for you, you know that they're going to invest their time into you, and it's difficult to just throw that aside… Nothing can go wrong when someone cares for you…

This same student described how, when his 7th grade *tefilla* teacher made it his "business" to "walk over to the back and show interest," the student interpreted this as "caring for everyone," commenting that this "made everything [about *tefilla*] easier." A male student (M3) reflected on Divrai Torah given by his 7th grade *tefilla* teacher, saying "I can't remember anything specifically that [my teacher] said, but I can vividly remember shaking my head and being, like…I can hear what [he is]…saying. And that would help me…get through those tough days where I just was really struggling." It is interesting to note that the student's memory was not of the didactic content, but rather the affective/relationship-based experience of tefilla.

One female student (F1) talked about how when *tefilla* teachers took the time to share their optimism and joy during *tefilla,* she experienced this as a demonstration of their "want[ing] to see you grow in your davening, "something that "propelled" her toward her own "*tefilla* mission." Despite claiming that she had a "bad memory", this same student remembered "very clearly" that, on her birthday, her *tefilla* teacher lifted her up in a chair in

celebration. The student described this recognition as a caring affirmation of her value as a person and member of the community. Another female student (F4) recognized her teacher's interest in getting her "to feel something for davening…to ignite a relationship with God," but did not indicate whether his attempts had an actual impact on her.

When the *tefilla* teacher was present but indifferent to the students' spiritual needs, this was associated with negative feelings about *tefilla*. One female student (F2) remarked: "The teacher doesn't really do anything, [except] take attendance… he didn't care." Another female student (F3) with a particularly negative attitude toward *tefilla* commented how a teacher's indifference caused a similar indifference on the part of the students: "He just didn't care. He just wanted you to daven…[so] people like wouldn't care…so [you] were just there for…50 minutes every day…just sitting there…wishing it was over…[P]eople…weren't excited to daven."

Theme #3: Individual Commitment /Meaning Making (values.) Another important theme that emerged during student interviews was *Individual Commitment/Meaning Making*. This theme described a universal desire on the part of the students to create personal meaning within their *tefilla* experience, and the relationship between an absence of meaning and detachment from the *tefilla* experience. Interestingly, personal meaning was created according to unique personal goals established by each student. The goals were highly individualized and reflected each student's personal journey toward spiritual self-actualization. Goals that may have been personally meaningful to one appeared to shift with maturation. Achievement of personal goals was associated with a sense of fulfillment, feelings of success and a connection to *tefilla*. For the most part, goals could be classified within two subthemes relating to either *Context* or *Hebrew Fluency/Comprehension*.

Sub-theme #1: Context. Context refers to defining *tefilla* within a framework of established personally meaningful values, and creating tefilla-based goals associated with these values. One male student (M1) openly acknowledged the importance of setting meaningful goals as part of the process of engagement in *tefilla* and utilizing the *tefilla* group as a motivational factor in meeting those goals. He describes his "ultimate goal" as "learn[ing] to love davening and enjoy it with true passion." Elaborating, he said:

> I think that interest in davening is hard to come by when you're not naturally born into that. It's kind of a giant learning curve, and it is very easy to turn away from davening...For me personally, some days I'm more attentive than others, some days I focus a lot more. I think that you need to have a goal for yourself in order to be interested.

Many students spoke about *tefilla* as a time and space for focusing on values such as gratitude, Israel, family, and connection to G-d. One male student (M4) talked about the importance of using *tefilla* to express gratitude: "Why do I come to daven? Because I think it's important…to stop for 40 minutes a day, and to just appreciate what you have." Another male student (M2) described his transition from *tefilla* as an obligation without personal meaning to a meaningful opportunity to express gratitude and as part of a developing relationship with G-d. The student said that during 7th grade *tefilla* he "just sort of went in, said the words, and left," adding that, "You know, I never really thought like actually talking to G-d doing that. You just go in, say the words, and go to school." By 12th grade this same student saw prayer as an opportunity to express gratitude and create a relationship with G-d: "I have so much to be thankful for. So davening gives me an opportunity to thank G-d for all that I have." Similarly, the first male student discussed above also described *tefilla* as an

opportunity to develop his relationship with G-d, describing the inherent value in such a relationship: "I love davening… I think just the space to reflect, to acknowledge, to appreciate … I think everyone should have that time, their own time with Hashem. To just ask Him anything…" This idea of *tefilla* as a space for asking G-d for things that are personally meaningful was echoed by a female student (F1): "Like, I can ask Hashem for anything…like please make my family happy and healthy…"

Students appeared open to adopting meaning offered by their *tefilla* teacher, for example a *tefilla* teacher's reframing of a lengthy Wednesday prayer as an opportunity to "collect the most diamonds," comparing the words of prayer to diamonds and labeling Wednesday as *Double Diamond Day*. Students reported that this reframing helped them to remain motivated and engaged, transforming their view of Wednesday from a burden into a meaningful opportunity. [18] One student summarized *Double Diamond Day* as follows: [The tefilla teacher] made a potentially boring experience into an experience that meant something, and was, in a way, fun, by kind of giving everyone a meaning to what they were saying." Another student (F2) commented that she came to understand that "more words" meant more "opportunities to talk to G-d", and a male student (M2) commented that the visual image of collecting extra diamonds on Wednesdays still "pops into my head." What is most striking about the frequency with which *Double Diamond Day* was mentioned in the interviews is that this concept was introduced five years prior during 7th grade *tefilla*. It appears that the combination of meaning and visual imagery was an especially powerful experience for the majority of students.

[18] The specific prayer assigned to each day appears at the very end of the morning service when students are least likely to be engaged.

An ability to pray to G-d on behalf of family and friends was also mentioned by a student (F4) as a value that personalized and brought meaning to her *tefilla* experience: "I daven (pray) for mainly, like personal things…the health of my family members, and my loved ones, and my close friends." She also recalled praying in 7th grade on behalf of others who were suffering, reflecting on this as a highly meaningful aspect of her *tefilla* experience:

> I remember the *Mishaberach Wall* (list of names of people who were ill)… and I think that was something that was important to us, where you could put up names of relatives and I think it really kind of made it more of a personal davening (prayer).

Similarly, another female student (F1) spoke about the value of praying on behalf of the community and how this enhanced her relationship with G-d: "I feel like I'm connecting to Hashem from a greater people. … It's like my responsibility as an individual to speak on behalf of the community." For this student, taking responsibility for others through *tefilla* expressed an important personal value and turned a solitary inward experience into an outwardly-directed experience that embraced her entire community.

Another female student (F4) who, for the most part, saw *tefilla* as an obligatory aspect of being born into the Jewish faith, assigned meaning to this experience by connecting it to her heritage: **"**I'm davening the same words that my ancestors that came before me have davened (prayed), and that the people who are going to come after me will daven…For me it's like so special to daven the words that Jews have been davening for generations of generations." For this student, tefilla became a very personal bridge between past, present and future.

Two students mentioned Israel as a context for meaning in their *tefilla*. One male student (M1) stated:

> My mother is Israeli… [W]hen I daven, I think about Israel a lot; that's a big portion of my davening, probably the majority of my davening… when something hits so close to home for you, it's hard to just push it away, and that's what propels my davening.

Similarly a female student (F4) who was planning to join the Israeli army after graduation from high school expressed the personal connection she felt between this future goal and her current *tefilla* experience in school:**"**[O]ne of the roles for the women [in school] is to say the tefilla, Chayal Tzahal: "I'm excited to know that one day I'm going to be a Chayal Tzahal. I daven for the wellbeing of the state of Israel…and the safety of the people."

Sub-theme #2: Hebrew Fluency & Comprehension. The text of traditional Jewish prayers is written and recited in Hebrew, which can create barriers for individuals lacking Hebrew fluency, especially given the speed with which prayers are often recited. Without comprehension, prayer can become a nonsensical mumbling of sounds without meaning or purpose. Thus, it is not surprising that a number of students discussed improving Hebrew fluency and comprehension as primary goals they actively cultivated during *tefilla*. Hebrew fluency was seen as a prerequisite to understanding and finding meaning in prayer, as well as for being able to participate fully and share in the prayer experience with peers.

One female (F4) student commented: **"**One of my main like goals when davening is I would try to read every single word. Also to improve my Hebrew…" A male student (M3) said, **"**I really worked hard on language. Hebrew language doesn't come so easy to me..." Another male student (M4) spoke at length about the challenge he experienced in reconciling

his conflicting desire to pray in Hebrew and comprehend the meaning of the prayers, and the importance of finding a balance between these two goals. The student described the problem as follows: "Kids are davening in Hebrew, and then they're like, hey wait, I don't understand what I'm saying. Then they go back and try and read the English, but by then, the minyan's already ahead." The student stressed his value of "quality over quantity", saying he "would rather understand a few portions of davenings, rather than doing like 20… I would like to understand at least one or two [prayers], and then hopefully build off that." The student also noted that the effort he was able to put into tefilla directly reflected his understanding of what he was saying:

> I think when we do a paragraph in English about the American soldiers… I find myself being able to connect to that more… to put a lot more kavannah into that, because I actually know what I'm saying…[versus] when I'm davening in Hebrew, I don't fully understand what I'm saying, so it's kind of hard for me to put the effort into praying.

Another male student (M2) talked about his experience with a tefilla group that encouraged students to refrain from rushing through prayers without kavannah, allocating time at the beginning of the morning service for students to choose introductory prayers to recite quietly to themselves at their own pace. In this environment, the student reported that he was able to enhance his understanding of the meaning of the prayers, so that when praying in a traditional minyan on other days, he was able to pray at a more rapid pace while still understanding the meaning of the words:

> I have some times struggled …with understanding some of the [Hebrew] text that I'm reading… So this [*tefilla* group] gives me the opportunity to better

myself at reading it, so that when I go back to a regular minyan, then I could actually understand what I'm saying, and also read it better.

One female student (F1) reflecting back on her 7th grade experience commented on how she was a "slow Hebrew reader" who was "never able to finish it [the prayers] before the chazzan said the ending." In response, the student set a goal of increasing her fluency: " So I…always did the first two words of every line, and it wasn't at all, but I felt like I was getting something done." Interestingly, the student herself didn't' understand that setting a concrete goal was her way of creating meaning and purpose in her *tefilla* practice. In 12th grade, she commented on her two-word exercise as follows: "Now I look back, it's kind of ridiculous, because what I was saying had no meaning at all, whatsoever. *I guess it was personally fulfilling to get down to the end of it.*" Interestingly, while the student devised a unique method for feeling connected to *tefilla* in the absence of comprehension, she did not fully understand her own rationale behind this goal five years later when her fluency and comprehension had significantly improved.

Just as the personal meaning through goal setting was associated with a connection and interest in *tefillah,* a lack of personal meaning was associated with disconnection. This was evident during the interview of one 12th grade student (F3) who described her tefilla experience as follows: "…for like 50 minutes every day like just sitting there like wishing it was over." In contrast, this student ascribed meaning to being with her friends and saw the mandatory *tefilla* group as an obstacle to spending time with them. Throughout her interview, she described the experience of *tefilla* as one of isolation, a place where "no one cared" and where her role was to "just come on time…just daven to myself and then leave." The lack of personal meaning was also evident in her comment that "if you daven for 30 minutes you

should have a 30 minute break." Here the student suggests that there is no inherent value in the experience of *tefilla*; it is merely an unpleasant passing of time.

Theme #4: Community. A significant theme that emerged from the data was *community.* All students identified the importance of a sense of community in their experience of *tefilla*. More specifically, three aspects of community were cited as critical to their identification, or lack of identification, with tefilla. These three subthemes were: Commitment vs. Lack of Commitment, Caring vs. Indifference and Sharing/Belonging vs. Exclusion.

Sub-theme #1: Commitment vs. Lack of Commitment. Students described commitment as a demonstration of behavioral investment in the *tefilla* group by being present and participating. The presence of group commitment was associated with connection to the community and positive feelings about tefilla whereas the absence of commitment was associated with a sense of detachment and negative feelings toward tefilla. One female student (F2) commented that belonging to a *tefilla* group comprised of *"*committed*"* and "serious" girls where there was "definitely no problem with people stepping up and just doing things" created a "positive experience.*"* This same student described an earlier experience of praying in a co-ed group as "ridiculous" because the male students *"*never stepped up to daven." A male student (M3) shared his desire to be in a *tefilla* group with fellow students who were "as invested as possible," describing a personal sense of responsibility to foster and cultivate it within the group: "I take it upon myself to make sure that everyone actually feels involved in the tefilla…" Another female student (F4) contrasted a former positive summer camp experience in Israel when, as a counselor she was "surrounded by people [campers and counselors] who were connected and motivated" with

her more negative impression of tefilla groups in the United States where "it's hard to find people like that." Another female student, (F1), described how a lack of commitment by other students hindered her own personal connection to the tefilla experience: "I guess if others were davening I'd find it more inspirational."

Even during times when students acknowledged experiencing early morning fatigue, they stressed the importance of their own personal commitment to the community, describing this in terms of varying degrees of behavioral investment. For example, one male student (M4) commented:

> [When] I don't find myself having the energy to lead, or to practice laining…I still stand up when I'm supposed to stand. Even when I'm tired and I don't feel like I can put a lot of kavannah into my davening, I try not to distract other people…or if there's a section of davening where you're supposed to stand…I would contribute.

It is interesting to note that many students encompassed both leadership *and* supportive roles within their definition of active commitment to the *tefilla* group.

Sub-theme #2: Caring. Another subtheme that emerged within community was *caring*. Students defined caring as consideration, concern and the experience of being valued for by others in the tefilla group. M2, whose father passed away when he was in seventh grade and therefore was obligated to pray every morning in a formal *tefilla* group, commented:

> [J]ust knowing that you guys were always waiting for me, no matter what time I showed up…meant a lot to me… made me feel good, you know? It just

made me feel like you guys were watching out for me, and that, really, as a family we look out for each other….

The significance of this student's ability to recall this experience - - one that occurred five years prior to his interview - - demonstrated the enduring impact of caring on *tefilla* affiliation. In contrast, another female student (F3), whose interview was peppered with descriptions of *tefilla* as meaningless, commented the lack of student commitment, saying students "weren't excited to daven" and how this paralleled her own experience of detachment: "People like wouldn't care." This student described herself as "[e]very day like just sitting there, like wishing it [*tefilla*] was over."

Subtheme #3: Sharing/Belonging vs Exclusion. The third subtheme supporting the concept of Community was *Sharing/Belonging vs. Exclusion*. Sharing/Belonging was described as being able to fully participate in the communal experience *in the same way* as other *tefilla* members, generating a sense of contentment and belongingness within the community. In contrast, when students did not experience sharing, they described feelings of separation and exclusion from the community.

One of the male students, (M3) who was among the last boys in 7th grade to reach the age of bar mitzvah[19] described his experience of 7th grade tefilla as a "horrible" experience: "I was not really a part [of it]… I felt kind of separated…" Passionately he added: "I want to be involved! I want to daven! I want to lead service! I want to just be a part of it!" When asked what he would have changed about his 7th grade *tefilla* experience, he responded: "I'd change my [birth date] so I could have "enjoyed the davening …and felt involved." Clearly, this student's experience of *tefilla* was negatively affected by being denied the traditional

[19] Full participation in services for males does not occur until the time of Bar Mitzvah (age 13 years)

opportunities for leadership, which he experienced as an essential element of the male role in his *tefilla* community. Given that this experience occurred during the 7th grade year, a time when male students are in the process of assuming, for the first time, official leadership responsibilities in the *tefilla* group, his experience of exclusion by being among the youngest in his group may have been especially frustrating.

As prayers in Orthodox tefilla groups are recited in Hebrew, even a rudimentary knowledge of Hebrew attains importance as a vehicle for facilitating feelings of sharing or exclusion. One female student (F4), recalled her experience of connection in a foreign country while vacationing with her family, noting how the common language of prayer created a shared sense of peoplehood traversing international borders: "I like the idea that you can walk into any shul in the entire globe [and participate]." In contrast, a male student (M4) described how praying in Hebrew interfered with his ability to understand, creating a conflict between a desire to share in his community and a desire to engage in a meaningful dialogue with his Creator:

> [W]hen I'm davening in Hebrew, I don't fully understand what I'm saying, so it's kind of hard for me to put the effort into praying...I think that definitely helps me connect when I hear in English, and I actually understand what I'm saying…If everyone is doing Hebrew, and you're the only one doing English, you might feel secluded and isolated…Physically you could be in the middle, but you may emotionally feel like you're on the side….alone.

Several students appeared surprised by the discovery of a tension between meaningful individual *tefilla* and meaningful communal *tefilla,* yet concluded that each aspect complemented the other. For example, one female student (F2) commented:

> The idea of something being communal and that you're doing it with other people seems like it would be contradicting with the fact that it can be personal. But… it's really a space where you have the opportunity to be with other people, while still being connected on an individual level.

Another female student (F1) spoke about "all of the terror in the world," and how she asks, "Hashem, just for this Shabbat, end the horror and terror, and bring peace," reflecting that "it's personal, but I think it's more the mission of the community. It's like my responsibility as an individual to speak on behalf of the community."

Theme #5: Environment (Space & Time). Desiring to foster a sense of awe and reverence during *tefilla,* Jewish sages prescribed that synagogues be constructed with windows and a physical space that was clean (Code of Jewish Law, 151:9). During the interviews, students talked about the importance of the space, light, functionality and architectural design, and how these positively or negatively impacted their tefilla experience.

Subtheme #1: Space Functionality: Openness & Light. The ratio between room size and the number of participants appeared to be an important factor in the positive or negative experience of *tefilla*. One female student (F1) commented on the "importance of minyan space not being too big or too small – creating a physical space to support a coherent group." She further clarified, contrasting her *tefilla* experience in two different rooms:

> "We used to daven in the library [where]…it's super-dispersed [so] we weren't a coherent group…[M]y favorite [place to daven] is in 404, because it's closed off. It's not too big [and] there's room for everyone…it's like the perfect [size]."

A male student (M2) commented how a larger more open space cultivated positive feelings: "What I liked about the balcony [room] was that it was like a very open space… It didn't feel like we were all crammed…We all had our space…Everyone's not sitting on top of each other."

Another male student (M3) complained about a *tefilla* space that was unpleasant, saying: "I didn't really like that it was a little stuffy…It [was also] a dark room. " When asked about one thing he would change about 7th grade *tefilla,* he immediately answered: "The room. I'd change the room that we were in. Like I keep saying, I like open rooms, I like sunlight." The student also described how these negative feelings where transformed when he moved to a new *tefilla* space that was larger and more illuminated:

> "I love that room. It's an amazing room and it's really open. I liked that there was light. …When I'm davening…I like to see the rays [of the sun]…[I]t makes me…feel closer to G-d, *and makes me feel like I feel Him*."

He not only enjoyed the open space, but the natural sunlight that permeated the room helped him cultivate a strong sense of connection to G-d.

The importance of a room that facilitated connection to *tefilla* in both tangible and intangible ways was exemplified in many student comments. One female student (F2), speaking negatively about a particular *tefilla* room simply said: "[I]t wasn't a good space…it wasn't like a functioning space." Another female student (F4) commenting on a 5th grade *tefilla* experience she recalled spoke about the difficulty of connecting to *tefilla* in a classroom devoid of any sense of spirituality: "[F]rom 5th grade and below, we actually davened in classrooms, girls and boys next to each other, just saying the words out loud." This same student described her excitement in 8th grade moving into a "cool, architectural

shul." Another female student (F3), who presented as apathetic or negative toward *tefilla,* talked about how she used the location and space of the 7th grade tefilla room to her advantage when arriving late to school. "I just remember it was in the multipurpose room so you could come late and still get there on time because it was right off the entrance. … That was very useful."

As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, the 7th grade *tefilla* room was decorated with posters reflecting different aspects of prayer and the connection of the Jewish people to Israel. When students were asked about their visual memories of the 7th grade *tefilla* space, most recalled the presence, but not details, of posters on the walls. One female student (F4) with a slightly more detailed recollection of the content of the posters (e.g., tefilla, tefillin, Israel), said the visuals "helped me when like…your eyes wander during davening", describing how they gave her focal point facilitated engagement. Another female student (F1) said that she liked having the distraction of visuals, even if they were not related to *tefilla*, commenting that having "different things to look at…like the chem periodic table, or different signs, or various objects around the classroom…which could be …something you get distracted by, but I like it." The student's comment is interesting in that she appears to assert that visual objects could be a distraction, but that in her case, they facilitated a positive and connected experience, perhaps in some way limiting her distractibility and encouraging a return to mindfulness in prayer.

Subtheme #2: Time. Time was another factor that many students mentioned as impacting their *tefilla* experience. For example, one male student (M3) recalling his memory of 7th grade *tefilla* said: "Obviously, looking back, I remember it was long, but like that's 7th grade davening." A frequent topic amongst students was early morning exhaustion,

challenges in maintaining a wakeful state, and difficulty concentrating. As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, an adolescent's circadian rhythm dictates maximal sleep drive between 3:00 am-7:00 am, extending even to 10:00 am, precisely during the time of morning *tefilla*. One male student (M4) described the problem as follows:

> I find myself a lot more tired this year…Even when I'm there [in tefilla], I find myself not being able to pay attention and to really put effort into it, because I'm just so tired…[D]uring mincha [the afternoon prayer] I find myself putting more effort it, more thought, and more kavannah…because I don't find myself so tired, like in the mornings.

Similar sentiments were expressed by a female student (F2) who said: "It's pretty early in the morning. I'm pretty tired."

Memories of early morning fatigue also came up as a descriptor of 7th grade *tefilla*. When a male student (M2) was asked about what he remembered from his 7th grade morning routine, he responded:

> I probably wasn't happy, but not because of davening, just about being in school so early. You know; every kid just wants more sleep. You know, no matter what time you wake up, you want more sleep, you're always more tired.

In addition to feeling tired, students also reported being "rushed" in the morning and worrying about their needs to complete homework and organize for the day ahead. One male student (M3) summarized it this way:

> I really, I'm half asleep when I get [there]. So there are days where…I really hope davening just zooms by and I can just go straight to breakfast, where I

> can finish my homework. And then have that 30-minute window where I can just do work and kind of just get ready for the day.

Many of students expressed a wish that the time allocated for *tefilla* were shorter, albeit each with a unique motivation. One female student (F1) said that choosing to participate in the shorter all-women's *tefilla* service improved her concentration and focus: "So it's is definitely shorter, which probably helps with the concentration…" Another female student (F3) who had no connection to tefilla repeatedly made comments such as "It just took so long." Unlike other students who acknowledged the value of *tefilla*, but felt conflicted by issues relating to fatigue or competitive commitments (e.g., to complete homework), this student's empty experience of *tefilla* was evident in her description of t*efilla* as an activity that took up time but added no value to her life, interfering with activities she felt were more important:

> Like if you daven for 30 minutes you should have a 30-minute break. You shouldn't end davening at 8:50 and then have a 10-minute break…Like I don't think anyone has time. You are like so rushed. You like have to finish homework in the morning. Just so many other things that like you have to do that… it's not…on the top five important things in the morning.

One of the non-negotiables that the school's teachers and students have to deal with is the school's mandatory penalties when arriving 5 minutes or later past the stated start time for morning *tefilla.* Late arrival sets in motion a number of negative consequences for the student, including detention. Many students expressed resentment about this policy, as their arrival times were not in their control (e.g., slow traffic, being part of a carpool, etc.) One female student (F1) voiced her frustration with this policy, saying: "I genuinely believe that

this 8:05 lateness is really hurting the *tefillah* experience. I think people are only focusing on, Can I get to davening by that point? And it's incredibly frustrating." This frustration also created unforeseen consequences among some students who felt discouraged from even trying to arrive on time. As recalled by a male student (M3) who reflected on his experience of leading a successful student minyan that chose to be lenient in this matter:

> We're not going to be, like, 8:05; you have RPT [Right Place & Time, a.k.a. as "In school detention"]. Like, look, get there as soon as you can. Stuff happens… I hear it from my friends all the time. They're like, they get to school at 8:07 and they're like, I'm not goanna show up until like 8:14 because it's the same thing. And, I'm like, no! I don't want that. Please come to davening. Look, if you get there at 8:06, come. *Just get there.*

Discussion

The original goal of this study was to explore the experience and impact of a particular 7th grade *tefilla* program ("*Tefilla-7"*) on students attending a Modern Orthodox Jewish school in New York City. The study was designed to explore the meaning of this experience and whether it created a durable and lasting influence on student commitment to *tefilla* as demonstrated in 12th grade perceptions, beliefs and practices relating to *tefilla*. Cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects of the *tefilla* experience were examined. Facets of the program that may have facilitated skills development, enhanced Jewish identity formation, and/or fostered the development of a positive, meaningful and durable relationship with *tefilla* were of particular interest. A mixed methods phenomenological research (MMPR) design that combined primary phenomenological inquiry with supportive quantitative data was used to accomplish these goals. In actual fact, the phenomenological portion of the study was richer in commentary on beliefs, attitudes and perceptions relating to 12th grade *tefilla* experiences than to 7th grade *tefilla* experiences. This is reflected in the discussion below that integrates the phenomenological and survey-based findings into a coherent whole.

Analysis of phenomenological data revealed that 12th grade students were able to recall moments of high affective impact from their 7th grade *tefilla* experience more easily than specific content-based aspects of the *Tefilla-7* program. Student inability to recall details about the *Tefilla-7* program experience is not surprising given that *Tefilla-7* occurred five years previous, a long period of time given that the average age of the students was 18

years. During the interviews, however, students did provide detailed and valuable information about the impact of specific components of 12th grade *tefilla* programs and, importantly, many of these key factors were also present in *Tefilla-7*. The quantitative data also provided support for the impact of these key factors in both the 7th and 12th grades. Thus, one can tentatively assert that there are certain identifiable key factors inherent in *tefilla* education having the potential to impact student connection to *tefilla* (positively or negatively) when integrated into school-based *tefilla* programs during adolescence. These key factors are discussed below in terms of the initial hypotheses of this study.

Teacher-Student Relationships. One of the important initial hypotheses put forth by this researcher suggested that modeling by the tefilla teacher would play a significant role in helping students cultivate a positive appreciation for *tefilla* in their daily lives. Analysis of the phenomenological data revealed that modeling involving students observing *tefilla* teachers engaged in prayer activities did not necessarily increase student engagement, and, at times had the opposite effect, especially when accompanied by authoritarian practices that emphasized compliance and/or coercion rather than spirituality or relationship. Of particular note was the plethora of negative comments students expressed about teachers whose primary focus was on keeping students quiet ("shushing") or taking attendance (under threat of detention), the former causing cynicism and the latter creating resentment as many high school students taking buses or carpools did not have any control over their arrival times.

In addition, any attempt to force students into a defined relationship with G-d was strongly rejected by the students, who repeatedly spoke about their need to create their own relationships with G-d. It is of interest to note that students were, in fact, motivated to develop a relationship with G-d, and contrasted their positive feelings about *tefilla* groups

that allowed time for students to enter into their own *kavanah* with negative feelings about *tefilla* groups that required students to launch into prayer immediately regardless of their state of spiritual readiness.

In addition students talked about feeling disconnected from the *tefilla* experience when they perceived *tefilla* educators as insincere, unprepared or not invested in the experience of tefilla, for example, when a teacher read a D'var Torah verbatim off of a cell phone or modeled tefilla in a way that appeared more like a "show" than a genuine expression of spirituality. Students did respond in a positive manner to *tefilla* educators who appeared authentically connected to tefilla and prayed with a obvious sense of joy, the latter having what students described as a mirroring effect on their own experience of joy.

Students also spoke of the positive impact of their *tefilla* educator providing cognitive spiritual insights, sharing how these insights transformed *tefilla* from a "burden" into an "opportunity" and from a "boring" experience into a "fun" experience. Of note is that the spiritual insights discussed were brief, constructed using visual imagery, and had immediate applicability. These findings were supported by analysis of the quantitative data demonstrating positive correlations between the cognitively based mini shout-outs offered by the *tefilla* teacher in *Tefilla=7* and students reporting that a) they experienced *tefilla* as a spiritual (rather than social) experience (r=.32, p<.05) and b) they developed a positive attitude about *tefilla* as a result of participating in*Tefilla-7* (r=.29, p<.05).

Another important finding was the positive impact on students when *tefilla* teachers used a relationship-based approach, taking a personal interest in the students' lives or demonstrating respect for the students' own strivings toward an authentic relationship with G-d. Students fondly reflected on teachers who took the time to celebrate meaningful events

such as birthdays, supported them during challenging times such as the death of a parent, or regularly expressed interest in how they were doing in school or at home. In talking about these memories, students repeatedly used the word "caring." They also commented on how a caring relationship generated respect, and encouraged an openness and receptivity to guidance, both didactic and through modeling

The findings about the teacher-student relationship were echoed during analysis of the quantitative data during which "feeling spiritually inspired when watching my 7th grade *tefilla* teacher daven" was the variable most highly correlated with experiencing 7th grade *tefilla* as positive relative to other experiences (r=.49, p<.001) and as spiritual (rather than social) experience (r=.57, p<.001), and as being related to less boredom (r=.42, p<.001 and a positive change in attitude toward *tefilla* (r=.59, p<.001). Furthermore, a multiple regression analysis of the quantitative data, while demonstrating that a combination of all *Tefilla-7* strategies were together predictive of positive 7th grade *tefilla* outcomes (e.g., experiencing *tefilla* as spiritual and positive, reducing boredom, and developing a positive attitude about *tefilla*), also revealed that the variable of "feeling inspired watching the 7th grade *tefilla* teacher" was the only individually *significant* predictor variable (p<.01).

When considering the goal of creating an enduring relationship with *tefilla*, one possible measure would be the degree to which students voluntarily elect to attend *tefilla* services outside of the compulsory school-based *tefilla*. In this paradigm, teacher influences also appeared to be extremely important. Quantitative data analysis involving a multiple regression of spiritual modeling influences (family members, peers and rebbes/rebbetzins/teachers) showed a significant effect on whether students chose to pray on non-school days and the Sabbath, accounting for 26% and 22% of the variance, respectively

($p<.01$) Yet, in both instances, the only individually significant predictor variable was the rebbes/rebbetzins/teachers (Non=school days: $\beta=.74$, $p<.001$, Shabbat: $\beta=.58$, $p<.01$).

These findings clearly support the important role of the *tefilla* educator in the lives of Jewish students. The challenge is that this role, depending on how it is implemented, can have either enduring positive or negative effects. A *tefilla* educator who has developed an authentic spirituality, who models joy in tefilla, and who invests in developing caring, empathic and authentic relationships with students has the ability to provide spiritual guidance and insight for his/her students,, while *tefilla* teachers who are authoritarian, coercive or insensitive have an opposite and negative effect on the development of their students, creating distance, distrust and a cynicism that is reflected in the student's relationship with the teacher and their views about tefilla, religion and spirituality.

Meaning-Making. Findings from this study revealed that 12th grade students are highly motivated to find meaning in their daily *tefilla* experiences. Nearly all students talked about their desire for and strong commitment to creating meaningful prayer experiences, particularly one that included an understanding of the words of the prayers. Thus, Grumet's notion that the process of spiritual education in the day school system results in students having "little incentive to want to know what they [the tefilla] mean" (Grumet, 1991, p.39) appears to be true because the educational system is focused more on "rote memorization," mainstreaming into minyanim conducted at "breakneck speeds," and ignoring the adolocent's strong drive and commitment toward comprehending the words of the prayers and developing a meaningful prayer experience, including a personalized sense of kavannah, appears to emerge in full force during adolescence. Importantly, meaning was found for students through highly personalized goals that reflected each student's journey toward self-

actualization, and goals that may have ben personally meaningful to one student were not necessarily meaningful to other students. This thinking is in line with what Westerhoff-III suggested in speaking about the transition to “searching faith” during the teenage years when adolescents begin to “personalize” their faith and search for “personal meaning” (Westerhoff-III, 1981). This is also in line with Smith’s conclusion when talking about U.S. teenagers in genral “who are themselves engaged in a kind of search for their own souls.” (Smith C. , 2005)S

Achievement of personal goals was associated with a sense of fulfillment, self-efficacy and connection to *tefilla,* whereas an absence of goals and personal meaning was associated with detachment from *tefilla.* Goals were related to either value-based context (e.g., gratitude, prayers for family members, identification with the state of Israel, etc.) or comprehension (e.g., increasing knowledge of the language of Hebrew prayer so as to improve comprehension.) Interestingly, these goals were always sequential with comprehension being viewed as a necessary prerequisite to creating meaning. In instances where both were incorporated nearly simultaneously into *tefilla* instruction (e.g., Double Diamond Day), the fusion occurred spontaneously; however, in instances where the *tefilla* educator was not providing this type of instruction, the students, on their own, devised systems to allow them to comprehend words so as to be able to create meaning.

Another very important meaning-making goal expressed by students was, as suggested by Fowler (1981), developing a personal relationship with G-d, an outgrowth of the adolescent focus on relationships in general. While G-d is still viewed as a Higher Power who is capable of providing for all needs upon request, adolescents appear to recognize that

requests to G-d based on their desires are made in the context of a relationship in which they also have obligations, e.g., to express gratitude and observe G-d's desires.

The creation of personal meaning as important to the student's experience of prayer was also validated by the quantitative data. For example, the didactic mini shout-outs were highly correlated among 7th grade students with experiencing *Tefilla-7* as "spiritual" and "positive" relative to other *tefilla* experiences, and nearly 28% of students in 12th grade *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement that on most days when they pray in 12th grade, they think about the mini shout-outs that they learned *five years earlier* in 7th grade. [20]

Given the importance of individual goals in the adolescent *tefilla* experience, one can envision an organized, focused and individualized approach implemented by the administration in which time would be allocated at the beginning of each semester for students to identify (write down) two to three goals they wish to achieve in tefilla during the 45 minutes set aside five days per week for this purpose. These goals should be accessible in written format to students in the tefilla room, and can be reassessed by the students at regular intervals and adjusted according to the students' progress or shifting spiritual priorities. When considering the transmission of values, this methodology offers two benefits: First, it transmits the idea that *tefilla* is a purposeful and meaningful activity and therefore should be accompanied by the presence of goals; second, as *tefilla* embodies a lifelong relationship with G-d that endures the ups and downs and many transitions throughout the journey of life, one's goals are, therefore, not fixed, but fluid.

Environment. Another important hypothesis put forth by the researcher was that the student's physical environment would have an impact on the experience of *tefilla*, operating

[20] Of course, inherent in this statement is an assumption that the "spiritual" is inherently "meaningful", and this may be open to some discussion.

through the creation and later activation of implicit or somatic sensory-based affective memories and the moment-by-moment cerebral monitoring of affective responses that is contributory to habit formation (Rothschild, 2000 & Graviel & Smith, 2014). Among the environmental factors that emerged as important contributors to emotional and psychological aspects of the *tefilla* experience were light, space, visual stimuli and time.

Light and Space. Students described how open rooms with sunlight, fostered a higher level of spirituality and connection to both *tefilla* and G-d. One student captured this feeling when he described how seeing the "rays [of the sun}" made him "feel closer to G-d…*like I feel Him*," whereas "dark and stuffy" rooms distanced him from connection to anything spiritual. This finding appears to support directive in the Code of Jewish Law (151:9) to build houses of worship with windows so as to instill a sense of awe and reverence in petitioners. The finding also makes sense in light of the role of sunlight (or artificial light at the wavelength of sunlight) in regulating the circadian rhythm and signaling the body toward a state of awakening and alertness.

Students also talked about the importance of the *tefilla* space "not being too big or too small," cautioning against small, cramped spaces, but also against large rooms where students would be "super-dispersed," so as to inhibit the sense group cohesiveness. Finding a suitable *tefilla* space is not an exact science and may limited by the physical structure of a school building. However, when allocating space for *tefilla*, administrators should consider the number of students, the dimensions of the room and the amount of natural sunlight. If natural sunlight is not available, the lighting should still be sufficiently bright and appropriate for reading. *Tefilla* room allocation by a school's administration can be viewed as a reflection of school values, specifically the degree to which the school considers *tefilla* to be an

important, worthwhile and valued endeavor. When rooms allocated to *tefilla* are "dark and stuffy" with poor lighting, this diminishes the value of *tefilla* in the eyes of the students. On the other hand, when rooms provide appropriate space and are filled with sunlight and views of G-d's world, students are informed that *tefilla* is of great importance to the soul of the Jew.

Visual Stimuli. In his initial research proposal, the researcher hypothesized that the visual stimuli of posters within the *tefilla* space of *Tefillah-7* would invigorate awareness of Jewish identity and awaken contemplation of spiritual purpose and meaning. The *m'kom tefilla* contained posters of Eretz Yisroel, the Israeli flag, the *Misheberach leHayalim*, the *Beit HaMikdash*, and a *Tefilla Pyramid* that clarified the structure of the morning *tefilla*. One question in the screening questionnaire addressed this issue: *To what degree did the 7th grade tefilla room decorations (e.g. posters) contribute to a your sense of spirituality when davening?* The mean and standard deviation of student responses, based on a 5 point Likert Scale, were 2.8 +/- 1.2, and analysis of this data showed only a modest correlation (r=.39, p<.01) between the posters and a positive change in attitude about *tefilla* No significant correlations were found between the posters and any of the other 7th grade outcome variables (lack of boredom, an overall positive feeling about *Tefilla-7* relative to other prayer experiences, experiencing *Tefilla-7* as more spiritual than social).

When interviewed, some students recalled the presence of the posters, but most could not recall specifics. Whether this is an artifact of the five years lag time between experience of *Tefilla-7* and the collection of data or whether this is a reflection of the insignificance of the posters, is not clear, but the analysis of quantitative data would argue for the latter. One student did recall the *Tefilla Pyramid* poster, and another student commented that the presence of posters prevented her eyes from "wander[ing]" during *tefilla*. This "wandering factor" was echoed by a student discussing non-religious visual stimuli in her 12th grade tefilla room, specifically

the “chem periodic table or different signs or various objects” that provided something to be “distracted by.” While, at first this may seem antithetical to focused prayer, one could argue that it is a natural tendency for human eyes and minds to wander during any concentrated form of meditation, including prayer; therefore, intentionally providing visual focal points with *spiritual value* may have some benefit and should be the subject of further exploration and. As partial confirmation of this idea, it is worthwhile to note that one student also recalled the list of names of the *cholim* on the walls of the *Tefilla-7* room, noting that this enabled him to have a more ”personal davening.” Clearly his eyes “wandered” to this visual, yet this enhanced his experience of prayer. One could also argue, however, that this particular visual stimulus was substantively different than the posters in that the latter are passive stimuli, while the former places a demand on students for compassionate action, i.e., adding additional names, thinking about people who are facing challenges in life, and/or actively praying for these people.

Time. Another aspect of environment explored by this study was “time.” The researcher provided two hypotheses about time, including the interrelationship of circadian rhythm and the scheduled time of davening as it impacts focus, and the challenges of finding the appropriate amount of time for a *tefilla* service such that it is neither too long nor too short. Both hypotheses were confirmed in the phenomenological analysis. Two additional aspects of time – not having control over it and competing morning priorities – also emerged during phenomenological analysis.

The screening survey did not ask direct questions about time, but one could argue that the statement about boredom (*I often felt bored during tefilla services*) served as a marker for the students’ experience of time. Analysis of the boredom data would thus support the

importance of time as a strong contributing factor to the *tefilla* experience as boredom during 7th grade was highly correlated with experiencing *tefilla* as a "burden and obligation" in 12th grade (r=.56, $p<.001$), and not experiencing boredom in 7th grade tefilla was strongly correlated with associating *tefilla* with feeling "calm and grounded" (r=.56, $p<.01$) viewing *tefilla* as central to one's Jewish identity (r=.56, $p<.01$), and experiencing *tefilla* as a "conversation with G-d" (r=.56, $p<.05$), in 12th grade.

Given the adolescent's unique circadian rhythm, it is not surprising that frequent complaints amongst students, recalled by 12th graders even in relation to 7th grade prayer, were early morning exhaustion, challenges in maintaining a wakeful state, and difficulty concentrating. For some students who were disconnected from *tefilla*, any length of prayer service appeared too long (e.g., F3:v"for like everyday, like just sitting there, like wishing it was over"), whereas for other students, feelings about the length of the prayer service varied according to competing priorities or goals. Several students noted, for example, that on days when they were hungry or needed to finish their homework[21] from the night before, they felt frustrated by the length of the *tefilla* service, desiring instead to get something to eat and complete their assignments as quickly as possible. These students noted that when these competing priorities existed, their concentration was diminished, whereas, on days when these priorities did not exist, they felt satisfied with the length of the prayer service. With regard to goals, some students expressed a value in having more time during *tefilla* so as to be able to say the Hebrew words and understand the meaning of these words. A wide variety of goals was expressed by other students (see Meaning Making section above) and this

[21] The schedule at the high school is that the first activity of the day is prayer, followed by a breakfast break, and then classes.

appears to have been largely satisfactorily addressed through the availability of alternative minyanim.

The third aspect of time - - not having control over it - - was mentioned repeatedly by students as a source of frustration and disconnection. Specifically, an automatic detention for late arrivals (three five-minute late arrivals or one 15 minute late arrival) that was often applied to students who were traveling by bus or in carpools driven by adults, was experienced by students as harsh and unfair, and created both resentment toward the administration and a negative attitude toward *tefilla*. Several students commented on the pointlessness of going to pray if they arrived past the 15 minute cut-off time, as, at that point they had a choice of either getting an absence *and* "hanging out with friends" in the hallways or getting an absence while sitting through the prayer service.

Thus, rather than embracing students in their desire to connect with G-d through *tefilla*, harsh administrative policies that punish adolescents for things beyond their control have aversive consequences. One can ask, when a student arrives late, what value does the school want to transmit in its response? An uncaring, harsh, authoritarian lack of concern, or a caring, compassionate relationship that involves a problem-solving partnership between school administrators and the student, so as to facilitate healthy growth and development? One alternative approach to lateness might be for the *tefilla* educator to identify students who exhibit a pattern of lateness and for the administration to put effort toward factors that contribute to these patterns. If the pattern were related to a late carpool, then a more thoughtful approach would be for the school to discuss the issue with the parent or driver; if the pattern were related to late bus arrival, then the administration would need to address this issue with the transportation company. If the issue is, in fact, related to the student, then

further exploration *with the student* is merited. Is it a reluctance to participate in tefilla, and if so, why? Is it an inability to organize in the morning, as may be the case of a child with ADD or ADHD? Is the child preoccupied with other matters, for example a dysfunctional home environment (divorce, separation, violence, etc.), difficult peer relationships and/or academic struggles/failure? Each of these alternative explanations would relegate on-time arrival as a lower priority.

Adolescence. Individuation and identity exploration and formation are the essence of adolescence. All students spoke about *tefilla* in the context of 1) *autonomy vs. restraint* and 2) *identity exploration/formation*. Autonomy, a prerequisite for identity exploration, refers to the freedom to make decisions fundamental to the individual *and* the autonomy to carry out these decisions. Restraint is the opposite of autonomy, that is, having one's choices restrained by or being forced to adopt the choices of others, in this case, authority figures in the school. Thus, 12th grade students talked about a welcomed decline in teacher influence (e.g., removing the "training wheels") and a strong drive to take ownership of their own *tefilla* experiences. Students noted the value of choosing to pray because it was important to them rather than because they were "pressured" into it, and voiced their appreciation for efforts made by their school to offer alternative *tefilla* groups to aid in their exploration, using terms such as "amazing", "awesome" and "super-grounding."

Nearly all students consciously raised open-ended questions (e.g., How do I make *tefilla* mine? How do I grow from *tefilla*?) about the role they wished to *tefilla* to play in their own emerging identities. Interestingly, tefilla appeared to serve as a vehicle not only for the exploration of spiritual identity, but also for an exploration of other aspects of identity, e.g., leadership, public speaking, etc. Several students spoke about their *tefilla* in the context of

questioning the previously unquestioned aspects of their religious identity (e.g., the meaning of being Kohen and, "social orthodoxy" as a positive or negative construct, etc.), evaluating which aspects were in alignment with their emerging identities and which were to be rejected. While most students appeared engaged in active identity exploration and individuation, one student, the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, felt no need to explore her religious identity and appeared to be stalled in identity foreclosure.

Analysis of the quantitative data demonstrated that when students experienced *tefilla* in 7th grade as positive, they were more likely to incorporate *tefilla* into their Jewish identity in 12th grade. Thus, both not being bored during *tefilla* and experiencing a positive change in attitude toward *tefilla* in 7th grade were both correlated with the student reporting that *tefilla* was an important part of his/her Jewish identity in 12th grade (r=.44, p<.01 and r=.42, p<.001, respectively). Furthermore, believing *tefilla* to be an important aspect of one's Jewish identity was moderately correlated with religious behavior, i.e., choosing to pray on non-school days (r=.45) and the Sabbath days (r=.43).

Community. Student tefilla groups provide structured, healthy opportunities for adolescents to fulfill their need for "belonging", as well as to experience the demands of accountability and commitment associated with belonging - - prerequisites to becoming responsible and competent adult members of society. The experience of "belonging," a key component of community, is not to be confused with socializing, the latter representing superficial interactions that may be contributory to the building of a sense of belonging, but differ from the deep sense of having a "place," of being welcomed upon arrival and being noticed in one's absence, that is included in the word "belonging."

The quantitative and qualitative data both support the fulfillment of belonging, rather than socializing, as an important component of a positive *tefilla* experience. Students disagreed with the statement that *tefilla* was more of a "social" than "spiritual experience" on the screening survey, yet spoke at length in the phenomenological interviews about the importance of a sense of belonging, delineated in terms of a number of factors, including *sharing* – the full and equal participation in the tefilla experience *at the same level as other members of the same gender*. Enhancements to self-esteem that accrued from being able to fulfill gender-defined roles contributed to a sense of belonging and an enhanced self-concept, whereas an inability to participate fully appeared to have a negative impact on group identification and the developing self-concept. This is best illustrated by one student's description of the emotional pain he experienced as each of his classmates turned 13 years of age in 7th grade. As the youngest male in his grade, he had to watch while his male peers took on leadership roles, leaving him feeling as if he didn't "really count." The student described this experience as "annoying" and "horrible", going so far as to say that it made him feel like he was "a woman, and I'm like, get me out of here."

Criteria for belonging, in terms of participatory expectations, split along gender lines. This is not surprising given the differing roles of men and women in Orthodox communal *tefilla*. The mechitza has often been a focal point of this issue and was addressed in the quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Both male and female students expressed the view on the screening questionnaire that the mechitza did little to enhance concentration, with male students feeling slightly more positive than female students (e.g., Males: mean 3.12 +/- 1.31, median 3.00; Females: mean 2.84 +/- 1.00, median 3.00). However, while males "strongly agreed" with a

statement that the mechitza did not make them feel excluded, (Likert scale median = 5.0, mean = 4.36+/- 0.99), females only "agreed" (Likert scale median = 4.0, mean 3.84 +/- 1.16)

An interesting gender-typed pattern also emerged in the interview data when the subject of mechitza was discussed: Male students appeared to relate to the mechitza as a non-issue about which they had little to say. In contrast, females provided *rationales* as to *why* the mechitza was *not* an issue, for example, denying concern about the mechitza by describing their enjoyment of parts of the service that they *were* allowed to actively participate in or stating that they didn't object to the mechitza because its low height permitted them to see everything happening on the men's side. Other gender-typed differences appeared. For example, as mentioned earlier, one male, who was the youngest in his 7th grade class, described painful feelings of not belonging as all of his male peers sequentially took on post-bar mitzvah leadership roles; for females, the pre/post bat mitzvah transition appeared to be a non-issue vis-à-vis *tefilla*. As many students prayed in single-gender *tefilla* groups, opinions about mechitza may or may not have been part of their "lived experience" at the time of the interviews, and thus, this subject requires further exploration.

A *tefilla* group that offered positive emotional support ("caring") was also connected to the sense of community and a positive *tefilla* experience. This is different than the caring expressed by teachers and *tefilla* educators: Caring by students was described as the experience of being valued by their peers, expressed as consideration, concern and prosocial acts that benefited the individual, even at the expense of group needs. This concept is best

illustrated by a male student who clearly recalled when in 7th grade, when his father passed away and he was religiously obligated to pray in a formal *tefilla* group (with ten males) three times daily, his *tefilla* group chose to delay the start of formal prayer until his arrival, even on those days when he arrived late. The degree to which this positively impacted his view of communal *tefilla* is attested to by the detail with which he recalled this incident five years after its occurrence. When students were unable to experience a sense caring within a *tefilla* group, they associated *tefilla* with feelings of separation, aloneness and exclusion. This is reflected well in the words of one female student who talked about the meaninglessness of *tefilla* because "[p]eople [in my tefilla group]like wouldn't care."

Nearly all students spoke about the importance of accountability and commitment to the *tefilla* group as an inherent part of community, describing this exclusively terms of *behavioral* investment by peers. Behavioral investment was strongly connected to a positive tefilla experience, whereas a lack of commitment was associated with a sense of detachment and negative feelings toward *tefilla*. The specific commitments which students ascribed to accountability varied according to *tefilla* group. For example, some students described behavioral investment as stepping up" to lead and participate in *tefilla*," while others defined it as "showing up" to support the group, not "distract[ing] other people," or cultivating a culture of commitment where "everyone feels involved." *Tefilla* groups that did not have committed and accountable participants were described disparagingly as "ridiculous" and lacking "inspiration." It is interesting to note that students themselves created the definitions of commitment and accountability, rather than having this dictated by school administrators. If one were to compare the two definitions, the administrators definition of showing up on

time and taking leadership roles in the service appears vastly different, less expansive, and less diverse than the student definitions.

What other factors supported or created barriers to sharing and belonging experiences? Many students spoke about challenges with sharing in the communal *tefilla* experience secondary to a lack of Hebrew comprehension. Students spoke about their struggles between a desire to pray in Hebrew so as to share in the communal experience of *tefilla* experience and a desire to pray in English so as to be able to understand the meaning of their words. One student described the price of not praying in Hebrew as being "secluded and isolated," saying: "Physically you could be in the middle, but …emotionally…you're on the side…. alone."

One may wonder, given that adolescence is identified simultaneously as a period defined by strong alliances with a peer community and the development of a unique, individual identity, how these two facets coalesced in community. Students actually expressed surprise at recognizing that a tension they *anticipated* between meaningful individual prayer and communal *tefilla* generally did *not* exist and, in fact, each aspect complimented the other.[22] One student captured this well, describing communal *tefilla* as where "you have the opportunity to be with other people, while still being connected [to the Divine] on an individual level." Other students spoke about how the communal aspects of *tefilla* enhanced their own personal *tefilla*, for example, when davening for individuals in the community who were ill.

[22] Albeit, this was mentioned with regard to being able to understand the meaning of the prayers while simultaneously trying to keep up with the group tefillot in Hebrew.

Taken in total, this study suggests that adolescents ascribe a very high value to community and belonging, while defining communal roles, responsibilities, and accountability quite differently than school administrators. Adolescents focus more on collectivist roles, such as providing emotional support and consistently "showing up," and value experiences that create a sense of belonging to the group with criteria for belonging varying by *tefilla* group and gender role expectations. Clearly the importance of redefining roles in school-based *tefilla* for students in ways that are generous and inclusive, taking into account age and gender issues, is an essential task for administrators to consider, as this can be a source of frustration, anger, and detachment if not addressed, and a source of belonging, positive self concept, and commitment if sensitively addressed. Refocusing on collectivist goals rather than individualist performance goals can also be extended beyond the communal responsibility of praying for those who are sick to charitable projects created by individual *tefilla* groups that benefit the larger community, activities that are known to enhance group cohesiveness, as well as self-esteem and feelings of personal responsibility, and changes in self-concept such that adolescents are more inclined to view themselves positively as "concerned, other-oriented individuals" (Shaffer, 2009, p. 356)

Creating Enduring Connections to Tefilla. One can argue that if students elect to pray outside of the mandatory school *tefilla* services, this represents a voluntary commitment and the foundation for an enduring relationship with tefilla, the goal of tefilla education. In examining this factor in the present study, it is important to differentiate the contributions of intrinsic *factors* (e.g., not experiencing *tefilla* as a burden, *tefilla* a source of feeling calm and

grounded, *tefilla* as an important component of Jewish identity, and *tefilla* being experienced as a real conversation with G-d) from extrinsic factors (e.g., the spiritual modeling by rebbes/rebbetzins/teachers). As discussed in several sections above, all of these factors were mentioned in student interviews as relevant to their experience of *tefilla*. A multiple regression analysis of the impact of intrinsic factors found that 46% of the variance of whether students chose to pray on non-school days (R^2=.46, $F(4,52) = 11.13$ $p<.001$) and 33% of the variance of whether students chose to pray on Shabbat was determined by these intrinsic factors (R^2=.33, $F(4,52) = 6.53$ $p<.001$). The most significant factor for non-school days was students associated *tefilla* with feeling "calm and grounded" (þ=59, $p<.01$), while the most significant factor for Shabbat was *tefilla* not "feeling like a burden" (þ=54, $p<.05$). The difference between these two variances may indicate the influence of other factors on the Shabbat, e.g., family influences may be important on the Shabbat as going to synagogue is often a family activity.

Also instrumental in fostering the beginning of an enduring relationship with *tefilla* was the influence of spiritual role models. Thus, a multiple regression analysis revealed that 26% of the variance of student decisions to pray on non-school days (R^2=.26, $F(3,51) = 6.04$ $p<.01$) and 22% on Shabbat (R^2=.22, $F(3,51) = 4.75$ $p<.01$) was related to the spiritual models in their lives, with the impact of their rebbes, rebbetzins and teachers representing the greatest contribution (Non-school days: β=74, $p<.001$, Shabbat: β=58, $p<.01$).

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be mentioned. First, and most importantly, the students' 7th grade tefilla teacher conducted the study. This may have created bias in student responses to either the survey questionnaire and/or during phenomenological interviews when students were questioned by the researcher/*tefilla* teacher. The factor of students wanting to please their rebbe, consciously or unconsciously, cannot be discounted.

The length of time (five years) between the intervention (*Tefilla-7*) and the current research study was too long for detailed recall by most students. Data collected during the interviews suggests that 12th grade students are primarily present-oriented and have difficulty recalling specifics of an experience five years earlier – nearly one-third the length of their lives. Follow-up studies evaluating *tefilla* experiences within a few months of the experience would be to enhance recall and accuracy.

The impact of the family religious practices specifically commitment to daily tefilla was not fully exploredin this study. The major emphasis of the study was focused on tefilla practices of the educator and the educational institute. The influence oof the students home cannot be discounted and would be an area for further study.

Support for the role of meaning-making in the quantitative data is limited, in part because this outcome was not anticipated at the time the quantitative survey was designed,

and therefore questions that would address this issue directly were not included. If the study were to be repeated in the future, such questions should be included.

One might also consider the natural maturation of students and/or life events that may have impacted the students between 7th and 12th grade (and were unknown to the researcher) as contributing factors when interpreting the results.

Conclusion

In the course of this study, many of my initial thoughts about a student's relationship with *tefilla* were borne out; yet, much of what was learned over the course of many months of reading and rereading the "lived experiences" of the students who graciously agreed to participate in this study was new information. My original belief, based on the work of Bandura, was that modeling by the *tefilla* teacher was the most important consideration in creating a familiarity and fondness for *tefilla*. If students could observe an authentic relationship between a *tefilla* teacher and G-d, if they could observe a *tefilla* teacher engaged in fervent prayer, and if they could listen to a *tefilla* teacher talk about the importance of *tefilla* in his own life, the student would be inspired and adopt similar attitudes and behaviors.

What I learned instead was that the most important factor in connecting students to *tefilla* is neither observations nor lectures, but the experience of an authentic and caring relationship between teacher and student. Brene Brown has said that "we are hardwired to connect" and John Bowlby, Mary Ainsworth and, most recently, Susan Johnson, have spoken eloquently about the importance of attachment as a prerequisite for the sharing of thoughts, beliefs and values (Brown B. , 2012). In the absence of a caring relationship between teacher and student, there can be no transmission of skills, values or beliefs.

Thus, a teacher must prioritize building trusting and caring relationships with students so as to open the gates of interest, a thirst for knowledge, and learning. To clarify, "caring" does not mean a non-directive or permissive teaching style; rather, this refers to an

authoritative and empathic stance that welcomes discussion, holds confusion, and encourages growth. When teachers earn their students' trust, they will engage their hearts in the pursuit of wisdom, as it is written, "an understanding heart will pursue wisdom" (Proverbs 15:14).

Thus, I have come to understand that the phrase of "*tefilla* teacher" must be replaced with the words, "*tefilla educator*." Educator, derived from the Latin *educat*, means, "to bring out or develop something in potential." The role of a Jewish educator is so much more than transmitting information. To be a Jewish educator is to empower students with the skills to recognize their unique and unlimited potential as human beings. To be a Jewish educator is to encourage students to listen to their "inner voices" and support them in seeking meaning and purpose in their lives. To be a Jewish educator is to cultivate within each student a passion and enthusiasm for connection to G-d and the Jewish people that transforms into a unique and committed Jewish identity.

On a social level, being a Jewish educator means fostering a sense of community and communal responsibility. This involves providing opportunities for students to try on different religious "hats" through the offering of alternative minyanim, openly valuing peer-to-peer support, and encouraging active participation by creating leadership opportunities for both men and women. It is about seeking out opportunities to celebrate the uniqueness of each student during *tefilla* services and paying attention to who is sad or struggling on any given day. Transmitting the importance of *tefilla* is not just about "shushing" to obtain quiet in the room or perfunctorily taking attendance and giving detentions when students arrive late; it is about being present and constant in the lives of our students. It is also about providing an uplifting, light-filled space that awakens and alerts the adolescent's brain to the

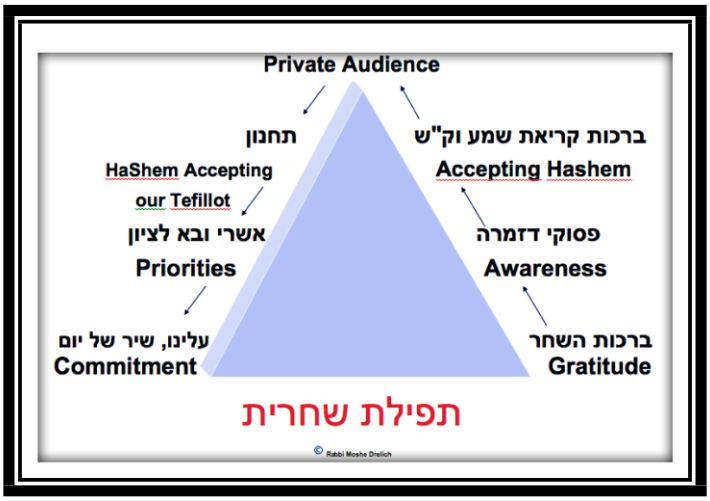
joy of prayer, creates inspiration, and communicates in very concrete terms, the tremendous value of *tefilla*.

Ultimately, if we are serious as educators about helping our students cultivate an enduring relationship with their Creator, we are charged to undertake a far-reaching and delicate exercise. We cannot come from the perspective of one who has already accepted all the tenets of our faith, for adolescence is a time when students are questioning all the tenets of *their* faith. In recognizing the weight of their own responsibility in creating relationships – including spiritual relationships – forming a relationship with an eternal and all-powerful G-d is a serious and thoughtful enterprise, perhaps, sometimes even overwhelming and daunting. Unanswerable questions arise, and finding an open ear and open heart of one who is spiritually invested - an *educator* - can provide a steady light in the turbulent storm adolescent confusion and identity formation. In this regard, it is also important that we take seriously the need to separate Hebrew fluency and comprehension from spiritual fluency and comprehension, supporting each separately so that they will eventually merge into a unified whole.

After Adam sins in Gan Eden, G-d asks him: "*Ayekha*?" "Where are you?" In the silence that echoes in this moment, Adam's fear is palpable. Yet, in those words, G-d attempts to engage Adam, encouraging him to take a moment to pause and reflect on his actions before approaching the Almighty. This enduring model of approaching prayer with a reflexive and thoughtful pause serves Jewish educators, and all who wish to pray, with the most guileless of tools: take a brief moment to be honest with yourself, and the heart will open to channels of wisdom and connection. As Jewish educators, let us be faithful stewards

of this process, and with G-d's help, support our students through these powerful moments that shape identity and unearth dreams.

Figure 5: Tefilla Pyramid Structure Poster



Gratitude – From *Modah Ani* until *Korbanot* we thank Hashem for all our basic gifts of life (eyesight, physical strength, hearing, health, etc.) and the hope to use them well.

Awareness – Reflects *Hashem's* presence found in nature and the universe which is reflected in the psalms of *Pesukei D'Zimra*

Accepting Hashem – Reflects our obligation to accept Hashem as our one G-d and to accept His Torah and to respond to Hashem's love for us with our love for Hashem.

Private Audience – Is the pinnacle of the *tefilla*. It the opportunity to enter into our private and intimate space with *Hashem* and share our innermost desires and thoughts with Hashem (Reflected in taking 3 steps back and 3 steps forward, reciting the prayers quietly to ourselves.)

Hashem accepting our prayers (new opportunities) –In the last *pasuk* of *Tachnun* and *Shomer Yisrael* we ask Hashem to accept us and our *tefillot* and the new opportunities that this presents to us, i.e., a second chance at growing as a Jew, as a human being and renewing our special relationship with Hashem)

Priorities - *Ashrei*, *Lamnatzeach* and *U'Va L'Tzion* are filled with Jewish ideals and goals that we are to incorporate into our consciences as we prepare to leave the sanctuary of prayer and face the challenges of the outside world.

Commitment – *Aleneu* and *Shir Shel Yom* remind us of our mission and our commitment to our special responsibility as role models in this world as we transition from the theory of prayer to the practice of life.

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Appendix 1: Glossary

Bat Mitzva (Age 12 at which Jewish females are considered adults)

Bar Mitzva (Age 13 at which Jewish males are considered adults)

Davening (The act of praying)/Davener (Someone praying)

D'var Torah (Biblical lesson)

Divra Torah (Biblical lessons)

HaShem (Name refers to God)

Kavannah (Focused attention)

Kohen (Priest)

Laning (Reading from a Torah Scroll)

Minyan (Quorum of 10 Jewish males)

Minyanim (Plural of minyan)

M'kom tefilla (Prayer room)

Misheberach leHayalim (Prayer for the welfare of soldiers)

Shemoneh Esrai (Jewish prayer consisting of 19 blessings)

Shir Shel Yom (Song of the day – recited at the conclusion of morning prayers)

Siddur (Prayer book)

Tefilla (Prayer)

Tallith (Prayer shawl)

Appendix 2: Goals of *Tefilla-7*

Affective Goals:

1. Students will experience daily *tefilla* as a positive religious obligation with personal relevance.
2. Students will experience *tefilla* as an intrapsychic tool for self-reflection and character improvement.
3. Students will experience *tefilla* as a platform through which to develop a valued, personalized relationship with G-d.
4. Students will experience *tefilla* as an opportunity for connection with peers and adult role models.
5. Students will use *tefilla* as a platform for developing a Jewish identity and evaluating their day-to-day activities and interactions with others.

Cognitive Goals:

1. Students will recognize and recall main categories and affiliated *tefillot* comprising components of the morning *tefilla* service (*Birchot HaShachar, Pesukei DeZimra, Birchat Kriyat Shema, Shema, Amidah, Tahanun*, etc.), and understand the flow of the service.

2. Students will identify and classify *tefilla* themes associated with the various components of morning *tefilla*.
3. Students will identify key words or phrases that reflect the main theme of each *tefilla* and translate them into English.
4. Students will compare and contrast themes for the different parts of the morning *tefilla* service and recognize similarities with other tefilla services.

Behavioral Goals:

1. Students will demonstrate proper behavior and physical comportment during the recitation of the morning prayers.
2. Students will read text aloud, with proper pronunciation and punctuation, as indicated by the *ta'amei hamikra*.
3. Students will demonstrate an ability to lead morning services in accordance with *halacha*.
4. Students will choose to pray on non-school days.

Appendix 3: Screening Questionnaire Survey Questions

7TH GRADE TEFILLA EXPERIENCE (SHORT & LONG-TERM IMPACT)
(1) I often felt tired during the 7th grade morning tefilla services. ®
(2) I often felt bored during 7th grade tefilla services. ®
(3) Most days, 7th grade tefilla was a spiritual experience.
(4) 7th grade tefilla was more of a social experience than a religious or spiritual experience for me. ®
(5) My 7th grade tefilla experience changed my attitude about davening in a positive way.
(6) Compared to other davening experiences, my 7th grade tefilla experience was (very negative to very positive)
(7) Most days now when I daven, I think about the mini shout-outs I learned in 7th grade tefilla.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE
8) Davening with friends made 7th grade tefilla positive and fun experience.
9) I loved the singing during 7th grade tefilla.
(10) I felt spiritually inspired when watching my 7th grade tefilla teacher daven.
(11) The presence of a teacher during 7th grade tefilla made the experience feel more like a class and less like a religious or spiritual experience. ®
(12) The 7th grade mini shout-outs (e.g., Double Diamond Day) increased my understanding of and connection to the words of the tefillot
(13) Having a mechitza in the 7th grade tefilla room helped me to concentrate better on my davening
(14) Having a mechitza in 7th grade tefilla made me feel excluded from the davening. ®
(15) The 7th grade tefilla room decorations (e.g., posters) contributed to my sense of spirituality when davening

CURRENT EXPERIENCE OF TEFILLA
(16) Most days I feel like davening is a burden and obligation ®
(17) Davening helps me to feel calm and grounded
(18) I consider davening to be one of the most important parts of my Jewish identity
(19) When I daven, I often experience it as a real conversation with G-d

CURRENT PRACTICE OF DAVENING
(20) In the last month, I davened on most non-school days
(21) In the last month, I davened in shul on most Shabbat mornings

MODELING INFLUENCES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL
(22) Members of my family (parents, grandparents, siblings) are important positive spiritual role models for me.
(23) Some of my rebbes, teachers or rebbetzins are important spiritual role models for me.
(24) Some of my friends are important positive spiritual role models for me.

® - Indicates question was stated in the negative and required reversal of Likert Scale responses during the quantitative analysis phase.

Appendix 3a: Interview Questions

Practice, Attitude & Behavior

In order to maximize the interviewing process to gather maximum recall and accurately capture the subjects' reflections on the 7th grade davening experience it is important to create a comfortable and non-judgmental space between the interviewer and interviewee. Be cautious of leading questions or questions that easily result in a yes or no response. Questions should be open-ended using phrases such as "I'm curious…can you tell me more…. Using the language of the subject to help in framing further probes (mirroring).

Section 1 - Davening in the present.

1. In as much detail as possible, can you please describe to me your experience of davening in school this year?

Depending on answer– Can you tell me what makes your davening experience Meaningful / Not Meaningful?

Further Probes to elicit factors that may have impacted the experience: (1,2,3,4 signify domains –see end of sheet)

3 - Physical room (windows, posters, chairs)
3 - Mechitza
1 - Peer relationships
3 - Distraction – talking
3 - Time of day
1 – Teacher /Adult model(Male or Female)
2 - Stories
2 – Tefilla Explanations
3 - Feelings-tired, focused, anxious, restlessness
2 – Daily Divrei Torah
4 – Prayers for the Sick (family)
4 – Prayers for the Welfare of Israeli Soldiers (All Jews are family)
3 - Physical/Biological Factors-tired, focused, anxious, restlessness
2 – Opportunity/Lack of Leading/Not Leading davening/Kriyat HaTorah

2. (Segway – Looking to see if the school davening experience is a match or mismatch for student expectations?) –

Based on your answers from the previous question – Before the start of the school year – or even before the start of every day – do you have ideas or thoughts about what you want to get out of your davening experience at school?

Expectations:
School obligation,
Meet requirements so I don't get failed out
Religious obligation,
Desire to connect to Gd,
Desire to feel more spiritual,
Opportunity for greater understanding,
Socialize,
Parental pressure,
Prepare myself for Israel?

Section 2 – 7th Grade davening.

1. I know it's been awhile, but I'm wondering if you can take a minute to think back about your 7th grade davening experience. When you think back , are there things remember, things that stood out as important or not important? Things that were positive or negative?

If no response – Can you think of or remember a particular day of 7th grade davening?

3 - Physical room (windows, posters, chairs)
3 - Mechitza
1 - Peer relationships
3 - Distraction – talking
3 - Time of day
1 – Teacher /Adult model(Male or Female)
2 - Stories
2 – Tefilla Explanations
3 - Feelings-tired, focused, anxious, restlessness
2 – Daily Divrei Torah
4 – Prayers for the Sick (family)
4 – Prayers for the Welfare of Israeli Soldiers (All Jews are family)
3 - Physical/Biological Factors-tired, focused, anxious, restlessness

Is there one story that encapsulates your memories of your 7th grade davening experience?

2. (Segway – Looking to see if the 7th grade davening experience is a match or mismatch what you wanted to get out of 7th grade davening?) –

Do you think your experience of 7th grade davening matched your imagination of what the experience was going to be like?

(Note – it's possible that the students won't have had any expectations or will not be able to recall expectations – it was a long time ago)

Probes: Did you expect that davening would be:
- Meaningful
- Fun
- Boring
- A good social opportunity
- A spiritual opportunity

General

Can you tell me in 5 words that come to mind when you think of the davening?

(Follow up to 1st question in section 2) Are there any images/feelings that have remained with you from your 7th grade davening?

If you could wave a magic wand what if anything would you change about 7th grade davening?

If you could wave a magic wand what if anything would you change about your current davening?

Many thanks for your time…

The four domains:

1. Affective Components: Spiritual modeling factors (e.g. adult and peer modeling)
2. Cognitive Components: Didactic insertions (e.g., mini shout-outs)
3. Sensory Components: Environmental factors (e.g., comfortability, timing, *mechitza*, etc.)
4. Familial Components: Familial factors (e.g., approach to religion, family trauma, etc.)

Appendix 4: Quantitative Data Results

Note: Refer to Appendix 3 for Explanation of Question #

Figure 6: Overall 7th grade tefilla experience (short & long term)

ID#*	Gender F=1 M=2	1®	2®	3	4®	5	6	7
1	2	4	4	2	5	3	4	4
2	2	5	5	3	5	4	5	5
3	1	5	5	3	2	4	4	4
4	2	3	3	2	4	3	3	2
5	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
6	1	4	4	2	4	4	4	5
7	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	5
8	2	4	4	3	3	4	4	3
9	2	2	2	2	4	2	3	3
10	1	4	3	3	4	2	4	2
11	1	3	4	4		5	5	3
12	1	4	3	4	4	3	3	3
13	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	3
14	2	5	5	4	5	3	4	3
15	1	3	4	4	4	4	5	5
16	2	2	2	3	5	5	5	3
17	2	4	4	5	5	4	5	4
18	1	3	2	2	3	2	3	5
19	2	4	4	3	5	3	4	3
20	1	2	2	4	2	3	3	1
21	2	2	2	3	2	2		2
22	1	2	2	2	3	1	2	2
23	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	2
24	1	4	4	3	5	3	3	4
25	2	4	2	3	4	4	4	3
26	1	1	3	4	3	2	4	2
27	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	1
28	1	2	3	2	3	3	3	3
29	2	1	1	1	5	2	--	1
30	1	3	3	2	4	4	4	5

31	1	2	4	4	4	3	4	3
32	1	3	3	4	2	3	4	2
33	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	2
34	1	4	3	3	3	3	4	2
35	2	4	4	4	4	1	5	2
36	2	1	2	2	3	4	4	3
37	2	3	3	2	4	3	4	2
38	2	2	1	1	3	2	3	1
39	1	3	3	4	3	4	5	4
40	1	1	3	4	4	3	4	1
41	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	2
42	1	2	2	3	4	4	4	3
43	2	3	3	2	4	3	3	3
44	1	2	3	2	1	1	4	2
45	2	2	1	1	5	3	3	1
46	2	2	2	1	2	3	3	1
47	1	3	4	3	4	3	3	4
48	1	4	4	4	5	3	5	2
49	1	2	2	3	2	2	3	3
50	1	3	4	4	5	4	5	4
51	1	2	4	4	5	4	4	4
52	1	3	4	4	5	4	5	3
53	1	2	3	2	3	1	3	1
54	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	5
55	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3
56	1	3	4	4	3	4	5	2
57	2	4	4	4	5	5	5	3
	n	57	57	57	56	57	55	57
	$\bar{x}$	2.8	3.1	2.9	3.6	3.1	3.8	2.8
	s.d.	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0	0.8	1.2

Figure 7: Specific Factors Contributing to 7th Grade Tefilla Experiences

ID#	Gender F=1 M=2	8	9	10	11®	12	13	14®	15
1	2	2	2	3	5	4	4	4	2
2	2	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	2
3	1	4	3	4	2	2	5	5	1
4	2	2	4	2	3	2	5	5	1
5	1	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	2
6	1	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
7	2	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	3
8	2	4	3	5	4	3	2	2	3
9	2	3	2	3	4	2	2	2	1
10	1	3	4	2	4	4	2	3	2
11	1	2	4	5	5	3	3	5	2
12	1	3	5	5	4	5	2	4	2
13	2	4	3	4	4	3	5	5	2
14	2	3	4	5	4	4	3	3	2
15	1	3	3	4	5	5	2	2	2
16	2	2	4	5	5	5	4	5	4
17	2	4	2	4	3	5	1	5	4
18	1	2	2	2	2	5	3	5	3
19	2	4	2	4	5	3	3	5	3
20	1	5	5	5	4	5	3	4	2
21	2	3	3	4	2	2	2	5	
22	1	4	5	1	1	4	2	2	2
23	1	4	2	3	2	5	3	4	2
24	1	4	4	4	5	5	3	5	2
25	2	4	3	4	4	5	3	4	4
26	1	4	4	3	3	5	1	1	1
27	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	5	1
28	1	4	5	3	3	5	3	3	4
29	2	2	1	1	5	1	1		1
30	1	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5
31	1	3	5	5	4	4	3	5	2
32	1	5	5	4	5	5	3	4	4
33	2	3	2	3	2	4	5	5	3
34	1	5	4	4	5	4	5	5	2
35	2	4	4	4	4	3	2	5	2
36	2	5	3	2	3	4	3	3	3
37	2	4	5	1	3	4	4	4	2

38	2	2	3	3	5	3	2	5	1
39	1	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	5
40	1	3	4	4	3	3	2	3	3
41	1	2	3	2	4	5	3	3	2
42	1	5	5	4	2	4	2	2	2
43	2	3	4	3	4	4	2	4	2
44	1	5	3	1	3	4	1	3	2
45	2	2	2	3	4	4	1	3	1
46	2	2	3	4	4	1	4	5	5
47	1	4	3	4	4	5	3	4	4
48	1	4	4	5	5	3	3	5	1
49	1	4	3	2	3	3	1	4	2
50	1	5	5	5	1	5	3	5	2
51	1	5	5	2	3	4	3	4	3
52	1	2 4	3	3	3	4	5	3	
53	1	3	3	2	2	1	4	5	1
54	2	3	3	4	2	5	3	5	3
55	2	4	4	2	3	3	3	5	2
56	1	5	4	4	5 4	2	3	2	
57	2	4	5	5	5	4	3	5	3
	n	57	57	57	57	57	57	56	56
	$\bar{x}$	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.0	3.0	4.1	2.4
	s.d.	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.7

Figure 8: Current Experience of Tefilla

ID#	Gender F=1 M=2	16®	17	18	19	ID#	Gender F=1 M=2	16®	17	18	19	ID#	Gender F=1 M=2	16®	17	18	19
1	2	4	3	2	3	25	2	2	4	4	2	49	1	1	1	2	2
2	2	5	5	5	4	26	1	3	2	1	4	50	1	5	5	5	5
3	1	5	3	4	2	27	2	3	2	3	2	51	1	4	4	5	4
4	2	4	4	2	3	28	1	3	3	2	1	52	1	4	5	5	3
5	1	3	3	3	3	29	2	1	1	1	1	53	1	4	2	3	2
6	1	4	4	2	2	30	1	4	5	5	3	54	2	3	3	2	3
7	2	4	3	3	4	31	1	4	2	3	3	55	2	4	3	2	2
8	2	4	2	1	3	32	1	2	2	3	3	56	1	2	2	3	1
9	2	2	2	1	1	33	2	4	3	4	5	57	2	4	4	4	4
10	1	4	4	3	3	34	1	4	3	4	4						
11	1	3	4	5	3	35	2	1	1	1	1		n	57	57	57	57
12	1	3	2	3	2	36	2	1	1	1	1		$\bar{x}$	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.6
13	2	5	4	4	3	37	2	3	4	5	2		s.d.	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.2
14	2	5	5	5	3	38	2	1	2	1	1						
15	1	3	3	3	2	39	1	3	2	2	2						
16	2	4	5	5	2	40	1	1	2	1	1						
17	2	2	5	2	2	41	1	3	3	3	3						
18	1	3	2	1	2	42	1	4	4	3	4						
19	2	5	4	5	4	43	2	3	3	2	1						
20	1	3	5	4	5	44	1	1	1	1	1						
21	2	2	2	2	1	45	2	1	1	1	1						
22	1	5	5	5	4	46	2	1	1	1	1						
23	1	1	3	2	2	47	1	4	4	3	3						
24	1	5	4	4	3	48	1	3	3	3	4						

Figure 9: Current Tefilla Practices

ID #	Gender F=1 M=2	19	20	ID #	Gender F=1 M=2	19	20
1	2	2	4	30	1	1	1
2	2	4	5	31	1	1	3
3	1	3	5	32	1	1	4
4	2	5	5	33	2	2	2
5	1	3	5	34	1	2	4
6	1	1	5	35	2	1	1
7	2	3	4	36	2	1	5
8	2	1	1	37	2	4	5
9	2	1	1	38	2	1	1
10	1	4	2	39	1	1	3
11	1	4	4	40	1	1	1
12	1	1	4	41	1	2	5
13	2	5	5	42	1	3	5
14	2	5	5	43	2	3	5
15	1	1	4	44	1	1	1
16	2	5	5	45	2	1	1
17	2	5	5	46	2	1	2
18	1	5	5	47	1	2	5
19	2	5	5	48	1	1	1
20	1	1	5	49	1	1	1
21	2	2	1	50	1	3	3
22	1	4	4	51	1	4	5
23	1	1	2	52	1	4	3
24	1	4	5	53	1	2	5
25	2	5	5	54	2	3	5
26	1	1	1	55	2	3	5
27	2	4	5	56	1	1	1
28	1	1	2	57	2	3	3
29	2	1	1				
					n	57	57
					$\bar{x}$	2.5	3.4
					s.d.	1.5	1.7

Figure 10: Modeling Influences Outside of School

ID #	Gender F=1 M=2	21	22	23	ID #	Gender F=1 M=2	21	22	23
1	2	5	3	4	30	1	5	5	5
2	2	3	5	2	31	1	5	4	2
3	1	5	4	3	32	1	5	5	4
4	2	2	4	1	33	2	3	5	1
5	1	4	4	4	34	1	4	5	3
6	1	5	2	4	35	2	1	1	4
7	2	5	4	4	36	2	4	4	4
8	2	4	3	1	37	2	4	-	4
9	2	2	4	1	38	2	2	2	1
10	1	5	5	4	39	1	3	5	5
11	1	1	5	2	40	1	3	2	1
12	1	5	5	5	41	1	4	4	4
13	2	3	5	4	42	1	3	4	4
14	2	4	5	4	43	2	3	4	3
15	1	5	4	3	44	1	4	2	2
16	2	5	5	3	45	2	3	2	2
17	2	2	3	3	46	2	1	1	3
18	1	3	5	3	47	1	3	3	4
19	2	5	4	3	48	1	5	3	2
20	1	5	5	4	49	1	2	2	2
21	2	2	3	2	50	1	4	4	4
22	1	5	5	5	51	1	5	5	5
23	1	3	3	5	52	1	5	5	2
24	1	5	5	4	53	1	1	1	1
25	2	4	4	4	54	2	3	5	5
26	1	3	4	4	55	2	5	5	4
27	2	4	4	2	56	1	5	3	5
28	1	4	4	4	57	2	5	4	4
29	2	-	-	-					
						N	56	55	56
						$\bar{x}$	3.7	3.8	3.2
						s.d.	1.3	1.2	1.3

*Refers to ID numbers assigned to students to retain anonymity

Appendix 5: Mini Spiritual Shout-Outs

Tefilla Mini Shout Outs

(https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jp9wfkWI8czvDVmpkvZ1KiSFM1Ki-9sY9Kv2m4yxxs4/edit?usp=sharing)

Appendix 6: IRB Consent Form

ALBERT EINSTEIN COLLEGE OF MEDICINE OF YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT AND HIPAA AUTHORIZATION

Introduction You are being asked to participate in a research study called Meaningful Tefila Practices. Your participation is voluntary -- it is up to you whether you would like to participate. It is fine to say "no" now or at any time after you have started the study. If you say "no," your decision will not affect any of your rights or benefits.

The researcher in charge of this project is called the "Principal Investigator." His name is

Dr. David Pelcovitz.

You can reach Dr. David Pelcovitz at: Office Address: Azrieli Graduate School of Education and Administration 729 W 186th Street.

City, State Zip NY, NY 10033

Telephone #: (212) 960-0186

For questions about the research study, or if you believe you have an injury, contact the Principal Investigator or the IRB.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Montefiore Medical Center has approved this research study. The IRB # is in the stamp in the upper right hand corner. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject you may contact the IRB office at 718-430-2253 or by mail:

Einstein IRB Albert Einstein College of Medicine 1300 Morris Park Ave., Belfer Bldg #1002 Bronx, New York 10461

Why is this study being done?

The goal of this study is to ...

1. Demonstrate aspects /components of an in-school 7th grade tefilla experience that have had a lasting positive impact on the students in their relationship to and connection with G-d and their engagement with tefila. . 2. Identify and quantify particular practices of the 7th grade tefilla experience that can be classified as successful strategies that have enhanced student engagement in tefilla and have cultivated lifelong commitment to tefilla practices.

Einstein IRB Minimal Risk Template v. 12/12/2014 Page 1 of 4

IRB NUMBER: 2015-4974 IRB APPROVAL DATE: 06/16/2015 IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 06/15/2016

Why am I being asked to participate?

You are being asked to participate in this study because of your past participation in the 7th Grade Tefila Program. You will be one of many past participants who will be participating in this study. The goal of this study is to interview 25 to 35 past participants. Interviews will take place at the High School and a location that is convenient for the participant.

What will happen if I participate in the study?

You will be interviewed by the co-principal investigator regarding your reflections on your past experience in the 7th Grade Tefila program. You may be asked to see the co principal investigator for a follow up interview questions. Each visit will last approximately 30 minutes to an hour.

Will there be audio and/or video recording?

Interviews between the co-principal investigator and subject will be video recorded on a IPad and uploaded to YouTube with a privacy setting for analysis by the researcher. The contents of the video will remain confidential and only be shared with the Doctoral team designated for this specific research project.

Information Banking (Future Use and Storage)

Data Stored with Identification Linking Code

We will store information about you in a "bank", which is a library of information from many studies. This information can be linked to you. In the future, researchers can apply for permission to use the information for new studies. You may remove your consent for future research at any time by contacting the Principal Investigator named on the first page of the consent or the IRB office at 718-430-2237. If you do, we will destroy the information in the bank but if the information was already shared with other researchers, we cannot get it back.

INITIAL ONE (1) OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS

_____ I consent to have my information used for future research studies.

_____ I do NOT consent to have my information used for future research studies. The information will be destroyed at the end of the study.

INITIAL YOUR CHOICE BELOW

I consent to be contacted in the future to learn about:

IRB NUMBER: 2015-4974 IRB APPROVAL DATE: 06/16/2015 IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 06/15/2016

_____ New research protocols that I may wish to join.

_____ General information about research findings.

Some researchers may develop tests, treatments or products that are worth money. You will not receive payment of any kind for your information or for any tests, treatments, products or other things of value that may result from the research.

Will I be paid for being in this research study?

You will not receive any payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

Will it cost me anything to participate in this study?

There will be no cost to you to participate in the study.

Are there any risks to me? The risks to you for participating in this study are minimal due to the nature and purpose of this study.

Confidentiality We will keep your information confidential, however, a risk of taking part in this study is that your confidential information might be shared accidentally with someone who is not on the study team and is not supposed to see or know about your information. This is very unlikely, because the study team takes confidentiality of your information seriously. Your research records will be kept confidential and your name will not be used in any written or verbal reports. Your information will be given a code number and separated from your name or any other information that

could identify you. The form that links your name to the code number will be kept in a locked file cabinet and only the investigator and study staff will have access to the file. All information will be kept in a secure manner and computer records will be password protected.

The only people who can see your research records are:

• The research team and staff who work with them

• Groups that review research (the Einstein IRB, and the Office for Human Research

Protections,

These people who receive your health information, may not be required by privacy laws to protect it and may share your information with others without your permission, if permitted by laws governing them. All of these groups have been asked to keep your information confidential.

Are there any times you would not keep my data confidential? If you give us information that suggests that your child or any other child is being abused, we are required by law to report that information to the Administration for Children's Services

(ACS). Reporting this information may put you, your family, or others who are involved at risk of questioning and legal action by the authorities.

Are there possible benefits to me?

You may or may not receive personal, direct benefit from taking part in this study. The possible benefits of taking part in this study include [describe any benefits to the participant which may reasonably be expected from the research].

You will not experience any direct benefit personally from participating in this study. We hope you will participate because the study will generate important information about the 7th grade *tefila* that may, in the future, benefit other subjects who participate in a school *tefila* program.

What choices do I have other than participating in this study?

You can refuse to participate in the study. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

Are there any consequences to me if I decide to stop participating in this study?

No. If you decide to take part, you are free to stop participating at any time without giving a reason. However, some of the information may have already been entered into the study and that will not be removed.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE I have read the consent form and I understand that it is up to me whether or not I participate. I know enough about the purpose, methods, risks and benefits of the research study to decide that I want to take part in it. I understand that I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this informed consent document. I will be given a signed copy of this consent form.

_____ _____ _____ Printed name of participant Signature of participant Date

_____ _____ _____ Printed name of the person conducting the consent process

Signature Date

IRB NUMBER: 2015-4974 IRB APPROVAL DATE: 06/16/2015 IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 06/15/2016