

***A JEWISH MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM***

By

Semadar Goldstein

PROJECT MENTOR:
Esther Lapian

ATID FELLOWS
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Semadar Goldstein is an elementary and junior high school teacher of Tanach and EFL (English as a foreign language) in Dugma Boys' School and Evelina de Rothschild in Jerusalem. Prior to her *aliyah*, she taught Tanach in the US at the Yeshiva of Flatbush Middle Division and in Hillel Torah Day School in Chicago. She holds a BA from Stern College and an MA in Jewish Education from Azrieli Graduate School of Yeshiva University.

Project Description

This project explores the concepts and advantages of incorporating a Multiple Intelligence curriculum in a Jewish junior high school. The author presents the successful implementation of Multiple Intelligence curricula in the US, which incorporates relevant subject matter and character development, in a variety of learning styles. The author then suggests methods of implementation for a Jewish curriculum.

Abstract

People learn in different ways. One person is linguistically strong while another excels in interpersonal or visual-spatial skills. Howard Gardner analyzes the different learning styles people have and labels them *Multiple Intelligences* (MI). The Multiple Intelligences are linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and natural. Gardner encourages teachers to relate information in many different styles in order to access all students in the classroom.

Last year for the ATID project, the author adapted these creative teaching methods to the Bible classroom. In continued research, the author discovered that Multiple Intelligence Schools have developed Howard Gardner's theories into an entire school curriculum, not just individual lesson plans. Gardner's goals are to create a relevant learning environment for children. This means that students can gain skills and develop character in ways that will positively influence them. Gardner outlines the following elements for a MI based

school curriculum. All of the elements are adapted to a Judaic Studies curriculum in the project and briefly explained below. They are:

❖ *Character Development:*

Without character development, Gardner claims that we have missed the point in education. One must educate students to be contributing members of society. This means educating beyond the classroom, beyond the text and the test. Behaving morally and understanding and implementing Jewish values are far more important lessons than knowing another chapter in Tanach.

❖ *Education for Understanding (Applied Knowledge):*

For knowledge to be gained, students must successfully apply it in new situations. Gardner calls this *education for understanding*. He writes how infrequently education for understanding occurs in elementary, high school and college graduates.

❖ *An Interdisciplinary Curriculum:*

Teaching thematically encourages education for understanding. A current school curriculum consists of individual, unrelated classes. If all subjects overlap one theme, knowledge is more easily absorbed, longer retained, constantly tested and applied, and allows a student to question, explore and challenge information more fully. MI schools usually conduct three thematic units per year.

❖ *Student Projects and Evaluations:*

Far more exhaustive than tests, research projects allow students to explore subjects at their own pace, and present their findings in ways they enjoy that best express their intelligences. At the end of each theme-based unit of instruction, students present projects. Teachers guide, stimulate and provide encouragement to students, in addition

to offering a variety of presentation methods based on the various intelligences. At the end of each project, students evaluate their work through written and audio-visual aids.

❖ *Mentors and Apprenticeships:*

Students are able to choose from a variety of subjects that interest them and actually work with a specialist in the field at school. Projects are created under the guidance of the specialist, questions are answered, goals set and accomplished. Different options are available each semester, or the student may choose to continue in the same field. Another effective method of apprenticeship training is sending students to work with professionals. This has proven to be highly beneficial for both parent and child. Gardner believes that apprenticeship training should cover three different intelligences – one in the arts, one in academia, and one in dance or sports.

❖ *Motivated Learning:*

The above factors stimulate the natural desire of a child to learn. A relevant, exciting curriculum, as well as teachers who focus on utilizing all intelligences in the classroom will produce more highly and naturally motivated students.

ADAPTATION

The author adapted the book of Exodus to a Jewish Studies MI curriculum. Following the thematic learning system, the book is divided into three sections or themes; Ancient Egypt, Wanderings in the Desert and the Building of the Tabernacle. The project focuses on Section I, Ancient Egypt. A sample weekly schedule is included in the project. An interdisciplinary Judaic studies curriculum would cover the following topics in relation to Ancient Egypt: Bible, Navi, Mishna, Talmud, Jewish Law, Jewish history and Hebrew

language. In addition to learning the first few chapters of Exodus chronologically, students focus on themes that overlap all subjects, including those belonging to “general studies” (math, science, geography, social studies, drama, art and music). Students are not only studying text but also creating a miniature Ancient Egypt in their classrooms. All themes are taught using MI intelligences, with students breaking up into groups and creating projects on material they have learned. Upon completion, students present their findings to the class.

STUDENT PROJECTS, OCCUPATIONS AND EVALUATIONS

Three separate student projects are conducted each year, in collaboration with the themes studied in an interdisciplinary curriculum. In order to connect the project to a MI curriculum, the author combined occupation and projects. The student chooses an occupation of interest mentioned or referred to in the Bible. Then, he must explore it using other Biblical references and commentaries, include world knowledge, explain the occupation’s relevance to Ancient Egyptian times, and compare it to its modern day equivalent, if one exists. Most importantly, to enhance character development, the student must make a creative contribution to the profession after having evaluated the profession’s requirements and services provided. If available, students go to work with someone in the field. Students are also expected to prepare related projects at home from a suggested list of MI presentations. Teachers give no grades, but thorough evaluations are conducted. As a sample, the author researched the occupation of midwifery. Her findings are included in the project.

MITZVAH HUNT, BIBLICAL LEADERS, AND BIBLICAL LINGUISTICS

The author created these three unique classes for a MI curriculum. Ideas were based on Gardner's criterion that the courses overlap the interdisciplinary theme, are easily adapted to student created projects, and require applied knowledge. The Mitzvah Hunt is where students search the text, evaluating which mitzvot are mentioned in their theme and why. This also gives the student Jewish global knowledge of the mitzvah and its context. Biblical leaders are researched in an effort to study their outstanding character traits and incorporate them in the students' lives. Biblical Linguistics is a course intended to increase sensitivity and locations of word subtleties in the Bible.

In the project, advantages and disadvantages of adapting Gardner's work are outlined. Some major advantages increased class participation, a reduction of disciplinary problems, inclusion of all student skills in the classroom, relevant and exciting coursework, character improvement, vocational training, and retained knowledge.

Tremendous workload for teachers, staff resistance to implementing a new curriculum, and less coverage are a few examples of why parents and educators would not welcome MI in their schools. Plus, all the ideas suggested in this paper have not yet been put to practice. The author hopes to implement as many of these innovative ideas as possible, but recognizes that community staff effort is required. The author firmly believes in the educational and pedagogical rewards in implementing MI for both teacher and student.

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INTRODUCTION: MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

People absorb information differently. At an early age, children are encouraged to utilize all their senses and disciplines to discover the world around them. As they grow older, many of these skills take a back stage to basic reading, writing, and arithmetic. Yet think of how many other skills one utilizes throughout the day – social skills, creating visual diagrams, analysis, physical activity, and others. Depending on your profession, one will hone in on one or more of what Howard Gardner calls Multiple Intelligences (henceforth referred to as MI).

MI theory states that children learn through different intelligences, or skills. The intelligences include linguistic, logical–mathematical, visual–spatial (artistic, good at building models), bodily-kinesthetic (good at dance, sports, acting) musical, interpersonal (social skills, funny, charming, friendly), intrapersonal (insightful, introspective), and natural (skilled at classifying nature and environment).

Traditionally, educators focus on the two most popular intelligences, linguistic and logical-mathematical. However, current educational trends demand that more attention be paid to other skills students display both in and out of the classroom. For example, emphasis on interpersonal skills, social interaction, is emphasized as the most important in some schools. A mass of literature, teacher information and books explain how to incorporate MI in the classroom.

Teaching with MI means less frontal lecturing and more group work for students. Students are given opportunities to use all the intelligences in all subjects. They learn the strengths in which they excel as well as gain respect for peers who display talent in other, often less popular, intelligences. Working with MI also includes veering from traditional assessment, tests, and creating and presenting projects in the different disciplines.

I became interested in the subject as I discovered that little information exists for the Jewish educator on applying these theories. In my ATID project last year, I created lesson plans for teaching Judaic studies utilizing the intelligences. This meant more creative, interactive lessons, with the teacher as a guided facilitator. Students built models of Israel for Navi, composed songs about the jobs of the Levites for the book of Numbers, and drew pictures of powerful moments in both Bible and Navi class. This was done both in class and for homework.

The results were highly enthusiastic students (and teacher), increased class participation, and more student-initiated activities. In addition, in receiving feedback from their next year's teacher, my students seemed to actually remember the material we had learned. For further details, please see the project in its entirety in *Biblical Interactive Learning Centers*¹.

¹Ben-Zvi, Semadar, *Biblical Interactive Learning Centers, A Study of MI Theory in the Tanach Classroom*, ATID Fellow, 1998-99, <http://www.atidfellows.org.il>

PART I: MI SCHOOLS AND THE GOALS OF EDUCATION

After further research on Gardner's theory, I discovered that teaching creatively is not sufficient in fulfilling MI theory and the purpose of education. Schools have developed Howard Gardner's theories into an entire school curriculum. Gardner outlines essential elements for a MI based school curriculum². Six schools utilizing MI theory for five years or more were evaluated for use of MI and its success. Certain factors were common to all schools, though each boasted its own unique MI adaptation in its curriculum. The common goals of education were:

- ❖ Character Development
- ❖ Education for Understanding (Applied Knowledge)
- ❖ An Interdisciplinary Curriculum
- ❖ Student Projects
- ❖ Mentors and Apprenticeships
- ❖ Motivated Learning

The rest of my paper is divided into two sections. The first section explains Gardner's elements for MI schools, and the second section applies those concepts to a Judaic studies curriculum that I created for the book of Exodus.

²Campbell, Linda and Campbell, Bruce, *Multiple Intelligences and Student Achievement, Success Stories from Six Schools*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, VA, ©1999, p. xii.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Without character development, Gardner claims that we have missed the point in education. One must educate students to be contributing members of society. This means educating beyond the classroom, beyond the text and the test. One must educate to live. Gardner writes “...one may question whether the knowledge and skills attained will prove of value to the students or to the society that has entrusted them to the institution called school³.”

Giving students the opportunity to respectfully challenge themselves as individuals, as well as their peers will increase moral awareness in our schools. “Who are we,...what can we achieve alone and together...to learn about the human search to discover what is truth,...beauty,...and goodness...without this,...we are, in fact, uncivilized⁴.”

Behaving morally and understanding and implementing Jewish values are far more important lessons than knowing another chapter in Tanach. This is known in Jewish schools as *Derech Eretz*, as well as advocating *mitzvoth bein adam lachavero* – commandments between man and his friend. Many schools are vocal in stating *Derech Eretz Kadmah LaTorah* (*good manners come before Torah learning*), but do little to implement programs and values education. In secular schools, this is known as *character development*. Various programs have been implemented to increase moral awareness in schools, as there is a desperate need for improvement.

³ Gardner, Howard, *The Unschooled Mind, How Children Think and How Schools Should Teach*, Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., New York, NY (1991), p. 137.

⁴Scherer, Marge, *The Understanding Pathway, An Interview with Howard Gardner*, *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*, November 1999, p. 16.

Thomas Lickona, an internationally renowned developmental psychologist and educator, researched moral development and value education. He brings us depressing news in his book, *Educating for Character, How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*, that moral decline is on the rise. Troubling youth trends such as violence and vandalism, stealing, cheating, disrespect for authority, peer cruelty, bad language, sexual precocity and abuse, increasing self-centeredness and declining civic responsibility, and finally, self-destructive behavior, have all increased in American public schools⁵. Jewish Day schools in the US and Israel are plagued with many, if not all, of these problems. Violence in the Israeli School System has become so commonplace that many schools have integrated a ‘violence policy’ for the expected fistfights and heavy cursing that occur daily. MI schools therefore have a major focus of instilling the 4th and 5th “R’s”, “respect and responsibility⁶,” in an effort to curb these devastating issues.

In my experience, I am dismayed by the existence and recurrence of such behaviors in Jewish Day Schools at which I have taught in both America and Israel. If I could ask to change one attribute about my students, it wouldn’t be that they magically understand another chapter of the book we are studying. I would far prefer that they address their classmates and me with more respect.

Finally, society is plagued with difficult problems that require complex solutions. I was never asked in my years of schooling “what can you do to solve, help, increase or decrease the rise of....” Children think of and have good ideas. Yet we rarely ask them.

⁵Lickona, Thomas, *Educating for Character, How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*, Bantam Books, NY, NY ©1991, pp. 13-18.

We are too busy stuffing them with calculus theories and history lessons. Learning must be approached with a hands-on, applicable touch. Math can be taught in terms of distributing food amount to solve world hunger issues or other environmental and progressive issues. History can be expressed as a tool to prevent other world crises, instead of demanding that students memorize useless timelines and hundreds of difficult names and titles. These ideas are easily applicable to learning Judaic subjects. For example, what benefit is it to recite quotes from the book of Samuel if one cannot inspire prayer like Channa's or examine one's own actions as King David's? Jewish history and culture exist to model behavior, not solely for the purpose of memorization or analysis.

Lickona provides many methods of teaching character education within a classroom framework to combat the trends listed above. He claims that to begin creating a positive moral culture in a school, six elements must be included. They are:

- (1) Moral and academic leadership from the principal.
- (2) Schoolwide discipline that models, promotes and upholds the school's values in all school environments.
- (3) A schoolwide sense of community.
- (4) Student government that involves students in democratic self-government and fosters the feeling 'This is our school, and we're responsible for making it the best school it can be.'
- (5) A moral atmosphere of mutual respect, fairness, and cooperation that pervades all relationships – those among the adults in the school as well as those between adults and students.
- (6) Elevating the importance of morality by spending school time on moral concerns⁷.

Other character education programs are what Jewish schools often call “chessed programs.” Many Jewish schools require students to participate in weekly “chessed programs.” The students often choose from a variety of volunteering opportunities such as visiting old age homes, hospitals, or working with handicapped or disabled children.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid, p. 325.

Eli Kohn, former Head of Jewish Studies in the Herzliya School of Cape Town, South Africa, also developed similar such programs for “non-academic 9th and 10th graders.” Each student would have an ‘adopted’ grandparent in a nearby old age home with whom they would visit weekly. The students also had an option of working with handicapped children in the neighborhood. Kids who loved animals were sent to do voluntary animal work at the RSPCA, as connected to their classes in *Tzaar Baalei Chaim (causing pain to animals)*⁸. Kohn claims that the experience was a positive one for all participants involved. When children are allowed into the ‘adult world,’ where real life happens and real people care, they too will internalize those qualities. Chessed programs have proven beneficial to many Jewish schools and should be implemented at all grades for all students to promote character development.

MI schools execute character education with themes studied in school. For example, the Skyview School in Washington conducts a “Breakout Project” with their 9th graders. This requires each student to create a program that benefits the community, based on his MI strength. To prepare for the project, students volunteer in hospitals, nursing homes, and special schools. Through volunteering and active research, students assess needs in the community and create projects that improve the quality of life. Examples of their final products include video production of publicizing community and local environmental causes, writing computer programs, fund raising, and establishing rehabilitation products. Teachers evaluate their work at the end of the year, but the

⁸ Kohn, Eli, Lookstein Center, Lookjed Digest II:16, February 23, 2000.

significant contribution to the community is the most empowering for student and school staff⁹.

APPLIED KNOWLEDGE / EDUCATION FOR UNDERSTANDING

In addition to character development, Gardner notes that to increase knowledge, it must be applied to new situations. He calls this “education for understanding.” He writes in *The Unschooled Mind, How Children Think and How Schools Should Teach*, how infrequently “education for understanding” occurs in elementary, high school and college graduates. Lack of applied knowledge is one of the greatest failures of American education.

Perhaps most stunning is the case of physics. Researchers at Johns Hopkins, MIT and other well regarded universities have documented that students who receive honor grades in college level physics courses are frequently unable to solve basic problems and questions encountered in a form slightly different from that on which they have been formally instructed and tested¹⁰.

MIT College students made the same errors as seven-year-olds in a game that tested the basic laws of physics. These same students, some of them honors’ students, were able to repeat important physics laws, such as Newton’s laws of motion or vector summation. But when faced with applied knowledge, they failed to make the connection¹¹. Gardner claims that similar results were shown for all subjects¹². *New or old knowledge must be applied.*

⁹ Campbell and Campbell, (1999) p. 48.

¹⁰ Gardner (1991), p. 4.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 153.

¹² Ibid., p. 4.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CURRICULUM

Gardner claims that teaching thematically is an improved method of pedagogy that encourages education for understanding. A current school curriculum consists of individual, unrelated classes. In Language Arts, students learn stories written by famous authors of one period or another. In science, students examine the solar system. In math, students study algebra. In history, the American Civil War. Each subject is approached as a separate entity.

MI Theory states that combining the subjects into one theme is more beneficial for the student, as he/she is able to immerse himself in the subject matter. Questions overlap, and the student is able to fully explore a topic. This is called an *interdisciplinary curriculum*. For example, assume a class is studying the solar system. In history, students explore the history of the knowledge of the solar system. When did people start discovering the secrets of the solar system*? What did they know and when*? Who were the people that contributed to its discoveries*? In Language Arts, students can read stories of solar system exploration, science fiction, and write their own creative stories*¹³. In math, students calculate the distance from the earth, from other planets, climate differences, or the billions of dollars invested in space research.

¹³* Compare to Biblical /Historical Jewish knowledge. These questions can be applied to any Jewish Studies topic.

ADVANTAGES TO AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CURRICULUM

- ❖ More complete knowledge leads to greater understanding of subject.
- ❖ Knowledge is better retained.
- ❖ New and old knowledge is constantly tested and applied.
- ❖ Holistic learning approach lends itself to complete absorption, creating a better environment for higher order thinking skills (HOTS).
- ❖ Deeper exposure to content provides greater challenges to the student.

A major concern by teachers is the amount of material they will cover. Alas, students will study less material in an interdisciplinary curriculum. The downside of covering from “Cleopatra to Clinton¹⁴” by the end of the school year is that the students generally don’t remember much about Cleopatra by the end of the term.

“What’s the point of knowing lots of disconnected facts...? Other than winning the jackpot on jeopardy, I don’t see the point. Moreover, with encyclopedias and Palm Pilots, all factual information can be ready at our fingertips.... The power of a curriculum [is to] delve deeply within consequential events, to begin to **comprehend the reasons for these events**, the processes that were involved, and **the lessons that can be learned and applied in other periods**¹⁵...I’m afraid that many people who should know better mindlessly embrace coverage rather than uncovering¹⁶.”

STUDENT PROJECTS

To enhance an interdisciplinary curriculum, MI Schools promote student projects as an important learning opportunity for their students. Far more exhaustive than tests, research projects allow students to explore subjects at their own pace, and present their

¹⁴ Gardner, Howard, *The Disciplined Mind, What All Students Should Understand*, Simon and Schuster, New York, NY, ©1999, p. 125.

¹⁵ Bolded writing is added.

¹⁶ Scherer, p. 13.

findings in ways they enjoy that best express their intelligences¹⁷. The Key Learning Community, a K-8 elementary school in Indianapolis, IN, conducts three such student projects a year, in connection with the three themes in their annual curriculum. At the end of each theme-based unit of instruction, students present their projects. Teachers guide students in research, stimulate and provide encouragement, and offer a variety of presentation methods based on the various intelligences¹⁸. Students find this helpful because they gain information on various facets of the theme through each of their classmate's work. Student projects are demanding, but feedback from students has been positive. They are proud of their accomplishments and enjoy presenting their work to their peers¹⁹.

Another MI school in Edinboro, PA states that both students and teachers look forward to presentation day. More rewarding than the presented projects was the mutual enthusiasm from students. One even asked another for a copy of another's project. Impressed, teacher Marian Beckman, Ed.D., writes, "what better affirmation of learning than to have a fellow classmate admire the work and want to share in it²⁰?"

STUDENT AND TEACHER EVALUATIONS

Student evaluations are of equal importance to student projects. Evaluation has two elements, evaluation and documentation, according to Samuel Meisels, Professor of

¹⁷ Gardner (1991), p. 216.

¹⁸ <http://www.ips.k12.in.us/mskey/projects/Projectshome.html>

¹⁹ Campbell and Campbell, (1999) p. 57.

²⁰ Ibid.

Education at University of Ann Arbor, MI²¹. Evaluation shows how closely something resembles a standard, whether objective or subjective. Documentation is the record collected of what is learned. Documentation can be in written, charted, graphed, interviewed, or audio and videotaped. “How the document is obtained is nearly as important as what is documented,” claims Meisels²². Key Learning Community students are guided with self-evaluation sheets, which they submit with their projects.

Just as MI focuses on different intelligences, so too, evaluations focus on the development of those intelligences. A single digit grade, the most popular educational grading system, does little to reflect a child’s various skills and abilities²³. These are considered assessments without documentation. A teacher can easily pull out a grade book and point to test scores. But the grade fails to reflect what the child learned, and how he learned it, which is far more valuable information.

“Assessments without documentation are blind. But documentation without context also does not illuminate student performance and can be misleading. Lack of specificity and absence of explanation and illustration are among the greatest limitations of norm referenced, group administered...tests²⁴.”

Meisels therefore produced the Work Sampling System; a performance assessment based on teachers’ observations of students’ interaction in the classroom. The Work Sampling System includes developmental guidelines and checklists, portfolios, and summary reports²⁵. With these tools in hand, “teachers learn how to observe, document, and evaluate student performance during actual classroom lessons...systematically

²¹Meisels, Samuel, *Using Work Sampling in Authentic Assessments*, *Educational Leadership*, ASCD, December, 1996, Vol. 54, No. 4, <http://www.ascd.org/pubs/el/dec96/meisels.html>, p. 2.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

assess[ing] student progress in seven curricular areas: personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, the arts, and physical development²⁶.”

In the Key Learning Community, not only do students present their projects to the class, but also each student presentation is videotaped to allow for further self-reflection and evaluation. Each student receives his own ‘video portfolio’ of the projects he presented. The student has time to watch himself, evaluate his strengths and weaknesses, and prepare himself better for his upcoming presentation²⁷. In my teaching experience, I cannot think of one student who wouldn’t love to watch himself on video doing anything, let alone presenting something valuable. This focuses on increasing self-esteem and enriches the natural desire of a student to learn.

Evaluation is also essential to the learning process because of the importance of trial and error. “Students continually try out ideas and practices for themselves and see where they work and where they prove inadequate,” Gardner claims in an interview with an educational magazine²⁸. Thus, self – evaluations are a valuable tool for development and growth in MI schools.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Meisels (1996), p. 1.

²⁷ Gardner (1991), p.216.

²⁸ Scherer, p. 13.

Below is a sample evaluation sheet from the Key Learning Community for a Junior High Level student (grades 6-8).

PROJECT SAMPLE EVALUATION SHEET²⁹:

Work (Intermediate level)

Name _____

Theme _____

Date _____

Check off the line beside finished work.

Project title _____

I kept a log- wrote at least once a week about work progress on my project.

I taped my project.

I shared the information I learned by presenting my project in front of my class.

I included visual aids while presenting information to class.

The visuals were neat and attractive.

I wrote a report in ink, on #5 paper about my project.

Date when all work was completed. _____

Reflectively evaluate your work here. Check one line only.

I am satisfied with the work I did on this project.

I am pleased with the work I did on this project.

I am very pleased with the work I did on this project.

²⁹<http://www.ips.k12.in.us/mskey/projects/Proj.Reflection.html>

Check one line of the following.

These questions help a child in evaluating his character and how to relate that knowledge to his community.

___ I have a clear understanding of the theme and how it relates to the world and my work at school.

___ I have an understanding of the theme and how it relates to the world and my work at school.

___ I am almost sure of what the theme means and how it relates to the world and my work at school.

What would you do now to improve your project? Write that information here:

Is this information that would improve another project? yes no

How has doing this project changed you?

Write the thing or things you learned while doing this project that will make doing another project easier.

REFLECTION ON PROJECT WORK (INTERMEDIATE LEVEL)

Theme: _____

Name _____ Date _____

Title of Project _____

On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate your work on this project and why?

On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate your presentation of this project and why?

Where did you get the idea for this project?

Why did you have to do this project?

If you were to repeat this project, what would you change and why?

How does your project tell about the theme or the meaning of the theme?

How will you use this information in the future?³⁰

³⁰ In a Jewish MI school, the 'theme' would be Biblically or Judaically based.

REFLECTIVE EVALUATION

Directions:

Write the meaning of reflection here:

Write the meaning of evaluation here:

Check the response with which you feel most comfortable.

I stood squarely. yes no

I concentrated and thought about the purpose of my presentation before beginning my presentation. yes no

I spoke clearly. yes no

I spoke loudly enough to be heard by my audience. yes no

I presented the information in an interesting way. yes no

I presented the most up to date information about my project. yes no

I connected my interest with the theme. yes no

I gave a clear title. yes no

I gave a concluding statement. yes no

I was able to answer questions from the audience. yes no

I actively involved the audience in my presentation. yes no

I think I did an extraordinary job in this area of my presentation

Name _____

Date _____

TESTS VS. PROJECTS

Compare the learning in projects and evaluations to tests. Whether subject or standardized, written exams have become the accepted means of determining intelligence and evaluating learning. Students generally forget information on tests as soon as the test date is history. Plus, how useful are tests in assessing student knowledge of covered material?

As psychologist Ulric Neisser suggests, academic knowledge is typically assessed with arbitrary problems that a student has little intrinsic interest in or motivation to answer, and performances on such instruments have little predictive power for performances outside of a scholastic environment³¹.

Gardner comments in an interview with educational magazine, *The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)*, “I am not a fan of short answer tests because they can’t really assess understanding. The world does not come with four choices, the last one being ‘none of the above’³².”

Students who are assessed in non-traditional methods in MI schools don’t suffer on standardized tests, either. Studies show that students in MI schools have “performed as well or better than those of matched ability and background who had attended traditional institutions^{33, 34}.” Sixth and eighth grade students from the Key Learning Community in Indiana scored higher in reading, language and math exams in the 1998 Indiana Statewide

³¹ Gardner (1991), p. 133.

³² Scherer, p. 13

³³ Gardner (1991), p. 194.

³⁴ Campbell and Campbell, (1999), xii.

testing for Educational Progress. The other five schools in Campbell's book fared the same, impressively noting that three of the schools are inner-city schools³⁵.

APPRENTICESHIPS AND SPECIALISTS

The final steps in creating a MI school are apprenticeships and specialists. School has become isolated in its last few decades of its development. John Dewey, a 20th century educational philosopher, heavily protested the 'farmhouse school,' where students were restricted to the four walls of a classroom. He insisted that the best kind of learning occurs by participating in the active world around us. Dewey stated, "Education is not preparation for life: education is life itself." There is a need for practical classes away from textbook learning.

Gardner echoes this view by introducing *apprenticeships*. Students are able to choose from a variety of subjects that interest them and actually work with a specialist in the field at school. Projects are created under the guidance of the specialist, questions are answered, goals set and accomplished. In the Key Learning Community, students choose from botany, architecture, and cooking in the first semester³⁶. The EXPO school in St. Paul, Minnesota offers 30 different elective classes to students three times a year for eight weeks each. A specialist leads each course. Students must fill out forms to apply and be accepted, and are expected to work hard to gain real world knowledge³⁷. Other options are available at each semester, or the student may choose to increase his expertise by continuing in the same field.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 61.

³⁶ Campbell, Linda, "Variations on a Theme," *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 55, No. 1, Sept, 1997, p. 2. (<http://www.ascd.org/pubs/el/sept97/cambell.html>).

BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH A SPECIALIST

- ❖ Hear first hand what the job is really like.
- ❖ Analyze required skills for the job.
- ❖ Determine, with professional assistance, if those skills are personally displayed or desire to be learned.
- ❖ Gain confidence in ability to perform skills with real life applications.
- ❖ Receive evaluation about performance in a non-threatening atmosphere.
- ❖ Respect students who display skills you don't have.
- ❖ Respect professionals of different cultures and skills.

GOING TO WORK WITH A SPECIALIST

Another effective method of apprenticeship training is sending kids to work with a professional, usually with parents and parents' friends. This has been tested in a few schools in the US and England and has proven to be highly beneficial for both parent and child³⁸. Gardner believes that students should participate in this for up to one-third of their schooling experience. Students are meant to participate in three apprenticeships, covering three different intelligences – one in the arts, one in academia, and one in dance or sports³⁹.

BENEFITS OF GOING TO WORK WITH A SPECIALIST

- ❖ Explore interests and talents. Many students must decide at a very early age on their college major or school specialty. This is always a difficult decision, and often made with very little encounter of the profession. When a student goes to work and sees

³⁷ Campbell and Campbell, (1999), p. 32.

³⁸ Abbott, John, "Children Need Communities --- Communities Need Children," Educational Leadership, Volume 52, Number 8, May 1995, p. 1. (<http://www.ascd.org/pubs/el/abbott.html>.)

various necessary skills in effect, he can more easily decide if he feels he will succeed in that field.

- ❖ Participate in a real-life situation that does not include textbooks and written tests. What better way to teach children about real life than have them experience it on their own?
- ❖ Express self productively in a non-threatening atmosphere. Children stated the obvious benefits of learning what work was really like, regardless of the trade. They were introduced to many new practices and ideas while on the job. One daughter who had gone to work with her father said, “they really treated me as if I mattered; it was wonderful to be part of the team. I wish it could be like that more of the time. We helped each other, and that made me feel good⁴⁰.”
- ❖ Strengthens family relationships. One father mentioned that he truly appreciated the insights provided by his child, stating he wouldn't have thought of his son's idea. In addition to the helpful information, the experience taught him to look at his son in a new light, respecting him both for the burgeoning business acumen and for the new relationship that was forged between them. Families stated that they enjoyed the additional time spent together and both looked forward to future visits⁴¹.
- ❖ Reduces family stress. Including children in work that often takes Daddy or Mommy away from them reduces resentment encountered when they feel threatened by their parents' lack of time and energy for them. “I also understand why my dad

³⁹ Campbell, p. 2.

⁴⁰ Abbott, p. 4.

⁴¹ Ibid.

sometimes falls asleep on the settee in the evenings; he has to work very hard and lots of people want to talk to him⁴².’”

Had I viewed teaching through the eyes of a teacher before I decided to enter the field of education? Did I see the hours of preparation, sit in on classes or staff meetings or see teachers’ payday reactions perhaps my decision would have changed.

FIELD TRIPS

In addition to apprenticeships in and out of school, MI learning is enhanced with field trips. Museums, workshops and visitors’ centers are ready and waiting for students to come and visit. Students have reported that they learn the most from interactive museums, where they were able to interact with all seven intelligences⁴³. First grade students in The New City School in MI even constructed a student-created museum! The children toured many different museums, decided what was in common about the ones they liked best (interactivity) and created their own ‘museum’ for visitors. Learning must not be confined to the four walls of a classroom. World knowledge that is formally presented to the public should be introduced to students (when the museum focus relates to their themes).

MI PHILOSOPHY

In addition to a stimulating curriculum, MI schools offer a unique educational philosophy. In the survey of six MI schools in the US, the following criteria were

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Faculty, New City School, *Celebrating Multiple Intelligences: Teaching for Success*, Graphic Design, St. Louis, MI © 1994, p. 237.

common to all six schools⁴⁴. I would include these principles as basic tenets of a MI Jewish School. I find that they present unique aspects to learning and student development.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESSFUL MI PROGRAMS⁴⁵

1. *Teachers believe students are intellectually competent in multifaceted ways.*
2. *The school's mission, culture, and curriculum promote intellectual diversity.*
3. *Teachers become astute observers of students and adjust their instruction accordingly.*
4. *Student learning is active, hands-on and multimodal.*
5. *Student strengths are used to improve academic weaknesses.*
6. *Students have opportunities to personalize their educational experiences while also acquiring basic skills.*
7. *Students develop autonomous learning skills through initiating and completing independent projects.*
8. *School or community experts mentor students in their intelligence strengths.*
9. *Students study core disciplinary concepts in multi-age groupings or through interdisciplinary perspectives for in-depth understanding.*
10. *Students apply classroom learning in real-world contexts.*
11. *Assessment is as varied as instruction and includes performance-based measures, traditional tests, feedback from numerous sources, and active student self-assessment.*

MOTIVATED LEARNING

MI schools motivate more than creative thinking or academic achievement. As Gardner quotes in an interview with curriculum writers at Zephyr Press,

MI cannot be an educational end in itself. MI is, rather, a powerful tool that can help us to achieve educational ends more effectively. From my vantagepoint, MI is most useful for two educational ends:

1. It allows us to plan educational programs that will enable children to realize desired end states (for example, the musician, the scientist, the civic-minded person);
2. It helps us to reach more children who are trying to understand important theories and concepts in the disciplines⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ Campbell and Campbell, p. xii.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 93.

For learning to be effective, teachers must motivate students to want to continue learning, not just for the grade on the report card or for the college recommendation. “Students (and ex-students) must come to learn because they have a desire to learn,” Gardner writes, “not because someone is giving them an *A* or an M&M⁴⁷.” Gardner feels that if the elements described above are implemented in a school curriculum, stimulating a child’s natural desire to learn will emerge much more quickly.

⁴⁶ <http://www.zephyrpress.com/gardner.html>

⁴⁷ Scherer, p. 13.

PART II: CREATING A MI JEWISH SCHOOL CURRICULUM
WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF A MI JEWISH SCHOOL ON
THE BOOK OF EXODUS

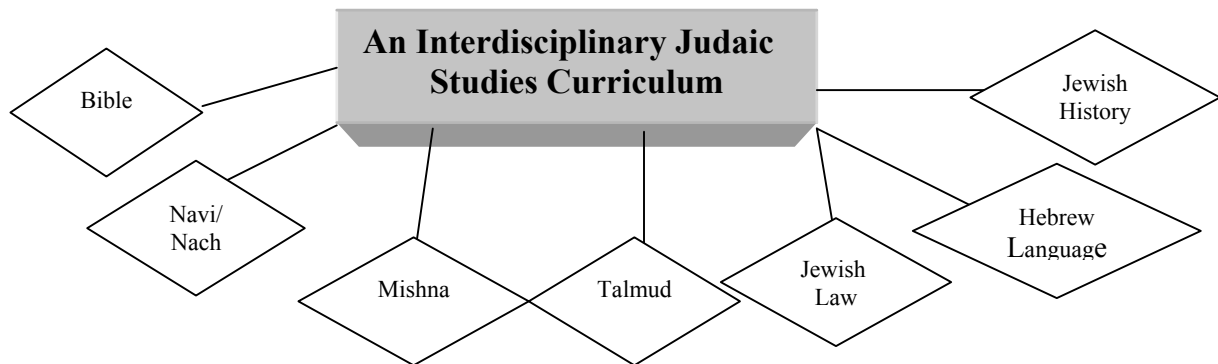
After researching MI schools, I created my own curriculum for a MI Israeli Jewish Junior High School, as yet to be opened. The curriculum aims to incorporate Gardner’s elements for MI learning. Classes are explained in detail below. Some classes are completed as a sample, others classes are offered as a sample. For personal evaluative purposes, each completed sample stage of the curriculum is divided into planning, execution and evaluation.

	8:00-9:30	9:45 –10:45	11:00- 12:30	12:45-2:00
Sunday	Interdisciplinary Ancient Egypt: (Integrated Bible, Language arts, morals, Jewish history, Jewish Law, culture, geography, math, music, art)	Integrated Mishna-Talmud	Sports (including Ancient Egyptian ones!)	Integrated Mitzvah hunt / Biblical Leadership/ Biblical Linguistics
Monday	* Research projects (ancient vs. modern occupation, with specialist) *go to work with specialist	Integrated Mishna-Talmud	*Field Trip foreign language	*Field Trip
Tuesday	Interdisciplinary Ancient Egypt	Continue Interdisciplinary Studies, different subject	Sports	Integrated Mishna-Talmud
Wednesday	*Research projects/ *go to work with specialist	Integrated Mishna-Talmud	Integrated Mitzvah hunt / Biblical Leadership/ Linguistics	Interdisciplinary curriculum
Thursday	Interdisciplinary Ancient Egypt	Integrated Bible - Navi	Integrated Mishna-Talmud	Foreign language
Friday	Research projects	Integrated Chessed	Integrated Chessed	XXXXXXXXXX

*Indicates twice a month

A MI JEWISH STUDIES CURRICULUM DEFINED

Since an interdisciplinary curriculum has been successful in American public and magnet schools, I adapted this system to a Judaic studies curriculum. I divided the book of Exodus into three categories, or themes; 1. Ancient Egypt 2. The Building of the Tabernacle 3. Wanderings in the Desert. I focus on section I, Ancient Egypt. The following Judaic subjects are included in an interdisciplinary curriculum regarding the theme of Ancient Egypt: Bible, Navi, Mishna, Talmud, Jewish Law, Jewish History, and Hebrew Language.



Instead of teaching verse by verse, a teacher focuses on themes within this section that covers a few subjects. Some sample themes on Ancient Egypt are magic, culture / morals, and agriculture. Appropriate Biblical verses from the text are studied. Where else are these themes mentioned? Talmud and Mishna are consulted. Global historical knowledge is researched. Linguistic sensitivities in the text and comparable situations and language in Nach are analyzed. Then, students present their findings through a MI based presentation. Group projects are created as described above, as well as in partners. “Secular” subjects are also incorporated, such as geography, science, social studies, math, and art, all relating to the theme of Ancient Egypt.

Thus, the students are not only studying text but also creating a miniature Ancient Egypt in their classrooms. When entering the classroom, one should feel as if he's stepped into Greater Thebes, Karnak or Luxor in the Upper Kingdom 3000 years ago. Students will create these settings after studying each section.

Separate time daily is allocated for Talmud. The Tractate *Pesachim* will be learnt in parallel to Ancient Egypt to improve skills. If a book of Navi does not connect to the theme being studied then a separate Navi class is designated.

PERSONAL ADDITIONS TO A JEWISH MI CURRICULUM

Below are three ideas I introduce to a MI Jewish curriculum. They are a Mitzvah Hunt, Biblical Leadership, and Biblical Linguistics. Each is explained below, although only the Mitzvah Hunt is completed as a sample. There is a special time designated for these classes, and one idea would be completed per year, as each is an extensive project. I felt these ideas are appropriate because they fulfill Gardner's elements of a MI curriculum as well as enhancing Jewish learning. This is developed through:

- a. Overlap of the interdisciplinary curriculum (the same theme is covered).
- b. Learned and applied knowledge (education for understanding).
- c. Improved quality of moral and religious life (character development). When children understand the reason or history behind mitzvot, they will be more likely to observe them and with relish. When studying character traits of a Biblical figure, the project would include how to apply those characteristics to his /her everyday life.

d. Easily lends itself to student projects and evaluations. Mitzvoth and Biblical leaders' characteristics can be presented easily through models, plays, journals and other MI friendly pursuits.

MITZVAH HUNT

Counting mitzvoth in each chapter. The following questions would be answered when pursuing the Mitzvah Hunt:

1. Which mitzvoth are referred to in the Exodus story?
2. How was the mitzvah observed then, and how is it observed today? If there are different observances, why (i.e. Holiday of Pesach vs. *Korban Pesach*)?
3. When was it observed in Jewish history (correctly or incorrectly)
4. What is the relevance to the story?
5. What is the reason for the mitzvah?
6. How can you present the information you learned in a MI friendly way?
7. Evaluate work.

BIBLICAL / HISTORICAL LEADERS AND FIGURES

Jewish leaders and characters are fascinating figures. Students would choose a Biblical figure mentioned in the theme studied (Ancient Egypt in this case) and trace important characteristics.

1. List textual references that define this person's character - both positive and negative traits.
2. Locate other Jewish sources that mention these traits, or sources mentioning this person displaying these character traits.
3. Consult traditional Jewish texts extrapolating traits, such as Mesilat Yesharim, Orchot Tzadikim, as well as medieval commentators.
4. Include global knowledge such as The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People and see if traits compare. Discuss why or why not.
5. Identify other leaders and figures that display these traits.
6. Offer two scenarios where the personality trait had conflicting results.
7. Discuss the effects of decisions made by the Biblical leader. How could they have turned out differently without that personality trait?
8. Create scenarios in your life, which echo the need for those traits.
9. How can you change yourself to adapt those personality traits that you've researched?
10. How can you motivate the class to adopt those personality traits?
11. Evaluate work.

ANALYZING BIBLICAL LINGUISTICS

This is a project analyzing word sensitivities in Biblical language and comparing it to other locations in Tanach to determine clarity of the word. Although this has not been completed as its own sample, much of the idea was completed for the midwifery research project for the word ‘ovnaim.’

1. Focus on a word or phrase unique to the studied theme.
2. What does the word or phrase represent: a concept, Jewish Law, cultural or historical reference?
3. Cross-reference Tanach for repeated use of the word.
4. Consult Biblical dictionary or other source book for word origins.
5. Refer to Mishna and Talmudic sources.
6. Explain any legal ramification of the word or phrase.
7. Arrive at conclusion.
8. Evaluate work.

SAMPLE MITZVAH HUNT COMPLETED

Korban Pesach is a mitzvah referred to in the Exodus story.

How was the mitzvah observed then and now? A mitzvah crucial to the Exodus is the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb. The mitzvah was observed by slaying less than one year old unblemished male lamb, sheep or goat on the 14th day of Nissan. The lamb was to be roasted over fire, with no leftovers remaining. A side dish was bitter herbs. Blood was taken from the lamb and spread on the doorposts. Only Jews could participate in the mitzvah. Today, instead of offering a sacrifice, a roasted shankbone is placed on the Seder plate on Passover evening. Traditionally, roasted meats are not eaten on that night.

When was it observed historically? Historically, the Paschal lamb was a one-time ordeal, incumbent upon the Jewish people only on the night they left Egypt. Later on, some Jews protested. They were unable to observe the offering because they were impure at the time of the Exodus, and they also wanted to participate.

As quoted from Numbers 9:6-14, *“There were men who had been contaminated by a human corpse and could not make the pesach-offering on that day; so they approached Moses and Aaron on that day. Those men said to him, “We are contaminated through a human corpse; why should we be diminished by not offering Hashem’s offering in its appointed time among the Children of Israel⁴⁸?”*

Moshe consulted with God, who granted permission for them to observe the commandment in the desert a month later on *Pesach Sheni*, the 14th of Iyar.

⁴⁸ Scherman, Nosson Rabbi, and Zlotowitz, Meir Rabbi, *The Stone Edition Artscroll Series, Bamidbar*, Mesorah Publications, Brooklyn, New York, ©1995, p. 54.

What is the relevance to the story and the reason for the mitzvah? As Egyptians didn't eat cow meat, God wanted to specifically show them who was boss⁴⁹. He did this by beginning to exercise His laws over the Jewish people. This specifically meant doing things they were not accustomed to seeing or doing in front of Egyptians, in order to break them of the slave mentality. *Rashi* comments on this earlier on in the chapter, when Moshe requests a three day journey from Pharaoh to go sacrifice in the desert (See Exodus 8:22). Moshe requests the distance so as not to offend the Egyptians by sacrificing in front of them.

In addition to intentionally choosing to slaughter an animal that Egyptians wouldn't eat, there is the Zodiacal symbol of the *taleh* (lamb) for the month of *Nissan*. *Ramban* claims that God commanded us to eat a *taleh* specifically because it was the Zodiac sign. Zodiacal powers were a large influence in Egyptian culture. God specifically chose this month, with the Zodiacal symbol and ritual slaughter of an animal forbidden to the Egyptians to increase the distance between the two nations⁵⁰.

⁴⁹ יב:ג, איש שה לבית אבותם, רמב"ן, חזקוני, Chizkuni, 12:3
⁵⁰ ח:כב תועבת מצרים, ראב"ע הארוך, *Ibn Ezra*, long version, 8:22

MITZVAH HUNT SOURCES

Below are sources that support the theories about the observance of the Paschal lamb. Sources would be provided to students and / or pairs of students would discover the information during class time. Pairs of students work together on exploring mitzvot, though not all students need research the same mitzvah.

1) יב:ג איש שה לבית אבותם, רמב"ן – Exodus 12:3, Ramban

טעם המצווה הזאת בעבור כי מזל טלה בחדש ניסן בכוחו גדול, כי הוא מזל הצומח, לכך צווה לשחוט טלה ולאכול אותו להודיע שלא בכוח מזל יצאנו משם אלא בגזרת עליון. ועל דעת רבותינו (ראה רש"י לעיל ח כב) שהיו המצרים עובדים אותו כל שכן שהודיע במצווה הזאת שהשפיל אלוהיהם וכחם בהיותו במעלה העליונה שלו. וכך אמרו (שמו"ר טס ב) "קחו לכם צאן ושחטו אלוהיהם של מצרים."

2) יב:ג ויקחו להם איש שה, חזקוני - Exodus 12:3, Chizkuni

ע"י שמזל טלה היה יראתם, ובגללו היו עובדים לצאן, אתם תיקחו יראתם בידכם לא תהיה בהם יכולת לעכב אתכם וילקו בחדש שמזלו טלה ולא יועיל להם.

3) ח:כב תועבת מצרים, רש"י - Exodus 8:22, Rashi

דבר שנאווי הוא למצרים זביחה שאנו שזובחים, שהרי יראתם אנו זובחים.

4) ח:כב תועבת מצרים, ראב"ע הארוך - Exodus 8:22, Ibn Ezra

משה כתב כן לגנות ע"ז, כי לא אמר לפרעה רק אלוהי מצרים, והוא אמר, כי היה אלוהיהם על צורת טלה, כי היו חושבים על מזל טלה שהוא מושל בארצם, ובעבור זה לא היו אוכלים בשר. ואילו היה כן, למה לא יאכלו בשר שור או בשר גדיים. ולפי

דעתי, כי אנשי מצרים בימי משה היו על דעת אנשי לנדיא"ה (הינדיה – הודו) שהם יותר מחצי העולם, וכולם הם בני חם ואינו אוכלים בשר עד היום, גם דם וחלב ודג ובצים, והכלל כל דבר שיצא מן החי, והם מתעבים מי שיאכל אותם. ומלאכה נמאסה בעיניהם לרעות הצאן, וכן כתוב כי תועבת מצרים כל רועה צאן (בר' מו לד). ועד היום לא יניחו אדם שיאכל בשר בארצם, ואם אחד מהם יבא בארץ נכריה, יברח מכל מקום שיאכלו בו בשר, ולא יאכל כל דבר שיגע בו אוכל בשר, וכליו טמאים בעיניהם, וכן כתוב כי לא יוכלון המצרים לאכול את העברים לחם (ברא, מג לב). והנה יוסף כאשר היה בבית פוטיפר המשילו על הכל לבד על הלחם אשר הוא אוכל (בר' לט ו), כי לא יגע בו בעבור שהוא עברי. ואין טעם לשאול אם כן למה היה להם מקנה, כי כן יש לאנשי לנדיא"ה, כי הסוסים והחמורים והגמלים למשא ולרכוב, והבקר לחרוש, והצאן לצמר, ועוד אדבר על זה בפסח מצרים.

MI PRESENTATION:

After completing his research, the student would choose to represent his knowledge from a list of MI presentations. The intelligence is quoted in parentheses at the end of each assignment. These are basic suggestions. The student would receive a much more detailed list of requirements after choosing the assignment.

- 1) Write a play depicting the performance of the Jews fulfilling the commandment and a scenario of the Egyptian reaction (interpersonal).
- 2) Write a song of the historical enactment comparing the mitzvah of the Paschal lamb in Exodus and Numbers (Bamidbar), to modern times (musical).
- 3) Advertise a commercial or brochure advocating the performance of the Paschal lamb (Interpersonal, intrapersonal).
- 4) Build a model of a lamb and the surrounding images of the Jews preparing to leave Egypt or of the Jews observing the mitzvah on in the desert (bodily – kinesthetic).
- 5) Write a journal entry of a Jew preparing to leave Egypt while observing the mitzvah. Compare to entry an Egyptian watching the scene (linguistic).
- 6) Illustrate the Jews performing the mitzvah, with Egyptians hovering in the background (visual-spatial).
- 7) Chart the differences of the observance of the *Korban Pesach* in *Nissan* and *Iyar*. Include Jewish reaction, days, months, and times, requirements of lamb and other relevant information (logical – mathematical).

The mitzvot listed below are further Mitzvah hunt samples for student groups. A basic outline of the mitzvot and their meanings are listed. Sources are not provided for each. Only the above sample has sources for complete lessons.

1. Reference to Brit Milah: When Moshe comes up from Midyan (*medrash*) and Exodus 12:47, Rashi: *Only men who have a circumcision may eat from the Korban Pesach* רק בעלי ברית מילה יכולים לאכול מהקורבן פסח. Circumcision is the only built-in physical symbol of the Jewish people. God wanted to begin separating the Jews from their Egyptian neighbors, by having them eat different foods, perform rituals that were foreign to Egyptian culture, and by emphasizing that only those with the physical symbol of the Jews would be included in the mitzvah.
2. Remembrance of Leaving Egypt, Exodus 13:3 *We learn that we must remember the Exodus from Egypt every day (Mechilta)* למד שמזכירין יציאת מצרים בכל יום (מכילתא) After such a powerful event in history, when God's acts were witnessed by all, He didn't want to let us forget it.
3. Equality of converts in the community. Even the foreigners among us, those who chose to join the Jews in Egypt, and those who choose to join us from other faiths and religions must always be welcome. Not only that, but they must maintain an honorable position among us, since we were foreigners of a foreign country. We therefore must recall the discomforts we felt and be sensitive to other people's adjustments to our religion (*this is a good source for character development as well*).

4. Sanctity and Transfer of the first born, Exodus 13:11 Sanctity of the firstborn and the transfer of the firstborn status: the final powerful plague of slaying of the firstborn is one that is to be commemorated. Empathy to the Egyptians –especially where there are innocent victims (children, sons of slaves, animals) - is an attribute that is crucial to continue our existence as a *righteous, merciful and kind nation, chasdanim, rachmanim and gamlanim*. Even in our moments of triumph, we remember the downtrodden *My creations are drowning in the sea, and you are singing praise?*

5. Keeping the Holiday of Pesach Exodus 13:4-12 –the laws of the holiday must be recorded and commemorated for all time.

6. Putting on Tefillin, Exodus 13:16– The witnessing of the Exodus by all Jews marked the event as the most important in history since creation. We are obligated to remember it daily, on the Sabbath and all holidays, and in the binding of *tefillin*. The binding of *tefillin* on a man represents the unbreakable bond between God and His people. We are bound to Him as He is to us. Since the ‘nationhood’ of the Jews began in Egypt, it is therefore fitting that the binding of the *tefillin* recalls the story of the Exodus.

OCCUPATIONS IN RESEARCH PROJECTS

Gardner's emphasis on practical learning leads to exposure to occupations in the modern world. To adapt this to a Judaic Studies curriculum, I thought to base these occupations in the Bible. Students are still learning practical knowledge about professions, but receive exposure to the ancient Biblical world as well as the modern one.

Planning:

Each student or pair of students must explore an occupation that existed in Ancient Egypt and compare it to modern times. If the occupation no longer exists, the student must explain why not (i.e. necromancers, or in which culture does this still exist and why). The project is meant to occupy a third of a semester. Three such projects a year are to be conducted. The 13 steps listed below would occur during "Research Project" time as part of the school curriculum with teachers and facilitators (and even older students) present during research. The MI projects listed later are to be created at home.

1. Define occupation.
2. State whether occupation is mentioned clearly in the Bible or if inferred by text. List Biblical source or reference. This text is to be thoroughly reviewed by the student.
3. Include relevant and supportive commentaries. Conflicting commentaries can be included, with the student searching for a dovetail, if any, of the conflicting ideas. If a conflict remains, student should present both sides.

4. Explore global knowledge of ancient occupation in detail through research (internet, encyclopedias, interviews, magazines, etc.)
5. Cross-reference other places in the Bible where occupation is mentioned and compare differences and similarities.
6. Explain contribution of occupation to Egyptian culture.
7. Explore modern version of occupation.
8. Compare differences of ancient vs. modern occupation.
9. Contribute to profession in meaningful way.
10. Invite professional to address students.
11. Go to work with professional.
12. Present research and findings to the class through creative MI project (some ideas found on page 46).
13. Evaluate one's research, project and presentation through evaluation sheets, teacher and student critiques, and audio-visual aids.

A list of professions that existed in Ancient Egypt is listed below. Occupations marked with a ▼ are mentioned explicitly in the text. The rest of the occupations are inferred from the text and cultural times.

<u>Business/ Leadership</u>	<u>Agriculture</u>	<u>Skilled laborer</u>	<u>Laborer</u>
▼ Viceroy (CEO, manager)	▼ Shepherd	Scribe	▼ Pyramid builder
▼ priest	Farmer	Chariot builder	Tomb builder
		▼ midwife	▼ Overseer
		Architect	Grain storage builder
		weaver	Architect

<u>Royalty</u>	<u>Slave</u>	<u>Military</u>	<u>Unique to Egyptian Times</u>
▼ King	▼ King's servants	▼ Foot soldier	▼ Necromancer
▼ Prince	▼ Royal maidens	▼ Chariotmen	Mummifier
▼ Princess	Eunuchs	▼ Horseriders	
Queen		Spear throwers	Astrologers
Royal vizier			
▼ advisors			

Execution:

I fulfilled the task myself as a sample for a student. As birthing has become a subject of increasing interest to me, I chose to learn about midwifery. My research is listed below.

The famous story of the Hebrew midwives, *Miyaldot Haivriot*, is the Biblical focus.

**MIDWIFERY
A NECESSARY AND DEVELOPING PROFESSION
IN BIBLICAL TIMES⁵¹.**

Exodus 1:15-22

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of the first was Shifrah and the name of the second was Puah - : and he said, "When you deliver the Hebrew women, and you see them on the birthstool; if it is a son, you are to kill him, and if it is a daughter, she shall live." But the midwives feared God and they did not do as the king of Egypt spoke to them, and they caused the boys to live.

The King of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, that you have caused the boys to live!"

The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are unlike the Egyptian women, for they are experts; before the midwife comes to them, they have given birth."

God benefited the midwives – and the people increased and became very strong. And it was because the midwives feared God that He made them houses⁵².

⁵¹ א:טו חזקוני, שפרה, פועה, Chizkuni, 1:15,

MIDWIFERY SKILLS MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE:

1. 'Ovnaim,' or Birthing Stool – Use of tools to make birthing easier.
2. Knowledge of female and infant anatomy (See *Daat Mikra, 1:15, Birthing Stool*)
3. Oral skills in calming women and babies (See *Rashi, 1:15*)
4. Cleaning baby after birth (See *Rashi, 1:15*)
5. Feeding the baby after birth (See *Rashi, 1:15*)
6. Innovative emergency medical care (See *Maharam 1:15*)
7. Resuscitation (See *Maharam 1:15*)

שפּרה: חזקוני א:טו *Chizkuni 1:15*, Need for many midwives,

י"מ (ראב"ע): שרות היו על כל המיילדות, כי אין ספק כי יותר מחמש מאות מילדות היו (וכו') הרבה מילדות היו במצרים, שהרי שתים אלו לא היו מספיקות מזון לסי' ריבוא, אלא לשתים אלו ביו שרות על כולן.

על האבנים: רש"י א:טו, *Rashi 1:15*, Tools to make birthing easier,

- (1) מושב האישה היולדת, ובמקום אחר קוראו משבר (ישעיה לז:ג). וכמוהו עושה מלאכה על האבנים (ירמיהו יח:ג), מושב כלי אומנות יוצר חרס (ש"ר שם יד: סוטה שם).
- (2) דעת מקרא: עליכם לראות (להסתכל ולהתבונן) את הילד בעודנו מנח על האבנים, הוא הכסא, שמושיבים עליו את היולדת. הוא נקרא 'אבנים' על שם שהיה עשוי שתי אבנים זו לעמת זו, והיו סוברים, שהישיבה על כסא מעין זה מקלה על פתיחת רחמה של היולדת. כסא זה נקרא גם 'משבר' (השווה מ' ערכין א ד).

⁵² Scherman, Nosson Rabbi, and Zlotowitz, Meir Rabbi, *The Stone Edition Artscroll Series, Exodus*, Mesorah Publications, Brooklyn, New York, ©1995, p. 5.

Pharaoh's comments confirm the fact that the birthing stool was a popular tool used by midwives. Pharaoh commands the midwives to kill the baby on the birthing stool since the structure of the birthing stool first puts the baby in contact with the midwife.

על האבנים: דעת מקרא

Daat Mikrah, On the Birthing Stool :Knowledge of female and infant anatomy

(3) פרוש אחר: 'אבנים' – כנוי לאיברי הלידה ולמקום יציאת הולד.

Rashi, 1:15: Cleaning Baby After Birth :רש"י א:טו:

זו יוכבד על שם שמשפרת את הולד (ש"ר שם: סוטה יא:)

Rashi, 1:17 (Sotah) Feeding Baby After Birth: (סוטה) :רש"י א:יז (סוטה)

מספקות להם מים ומזון

Rashi, 1:15 Oral skills in calming women :רש"י א:טו:

(1) זו מרים (סוטה יא, ב *Sotah, 11:B*) שפועה ומדברת והוגה לולד, כדרך הנשים המפייסות תינוק הבוכה

(2) לשון צעקה, כמו כיולדה אפעה (ישעיה מב:יד)

Maharam, 1:15 Emergency Medical Care - Resuscitation :מהר"ם א:טו

...1) כי דרך המיילדות לפעמים כשהוולד נולד מת לוקחין שפופרת של קנה ומשימין אותו שפופרת בבני מעיו ומנפחין בו ומשיבין רוח הילד.

Maharam, 1:15 , Innovative emergency medical care, :מהר"ם א:טו

(2) ושפרה הייתה מילדת ראשונה שעשתה זה שפרה לשון שפופרת, וזה שגילה לנו המסורה ברוחו שמים שפרה כמו התם ברוחו שמים שפרה הכא נמי גם רוח הילד בשפופרת.

WHERE ELSE IN JEWISH LITERATURE ARE MIDWIVES MENTIONED?

This is to provide the student with global knowledge of Biblical text and culture.

❖ THE BIBLE

Listed as the second oldest profession in the Bible, midwives are mentioned in the book of Genesis, first for the birth of Benjamin, then in recognizing the birth order of the twins of Tamar, Peretz and Zerach.

בראשית לה:יז: ויהי בהשקתה בלדתה ותאמר לה המילדת, אל תיראי כי גם זה לך בן

Genesis 35:17 “*And it was when she had difficulty in her labor that the **midwife** said to her, “Have no fear, for this one, too, is a son for you⁵³.”*”

The midwife tries to calm the mother, encouraging her to hang on for the birth of her son. Using the term ‘too,’ perhaps indicates that she helped Rachel birth her elder son, Joseph.

Genesis 38:27-38:

*“And it came to pass at the time she gave birth that behold! There were twins in her womb. And it happened that as she gave birth, one put out a hand; the **midwife** took a crimson thread and tied it on his hand saying, ‘This one emerged first!’ And it was, as he drew back his hand, that behold! His brother emerged. And she said ‘With what strength you have asserted yourself!’ And he called his name Perez. Afterwards, his brother on whose hand was the crimson thread came out; and he called his name Zerah⁵⁴.”*

⁵³Sherman, Rabbi Nosson and Zlotowitz, Rabbi Meir, *Genesis*, (1995), p. 189.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

Both stories indicate the crucial presence of a midwife during delivery. No mention of a doctor or other caretaker is mentioned. Both midwives show concern and creativity in caring for the mother or the babies. For Rachel, the midwife creatively encourages her not to despair, reminding her of her other child and of her additional lineage of an heir for Jacob. Tamar's midwife displays creativity in determining the birth order of the twins.

❖ MISHNAH AND JEWISH LAW

The term 'midwife' is not used in the Mishna. Rather, midwives are termed "*Chachamah*," or wise woman. Rav Gamliel the Elder even permitted a midwife to travel on Shabbat, no matter how far, to help a woman in labor (*Rosh Hashanah* 2:5; *Shabbat* 18:3). She was also permitted to use oil on Shabbat to lubricate the birthing passage⁵⁵.

❖ THE TALMUD AND JEWISH LAW

The Talmud (Tosefta Baba Batra 2:2) recognizes the testimony of a midwife to attest the birth order of twins and must be believed⁵⁶.

In general, midwives were treated with respect and even paid a fee. Midwives alone attended to abortions, as women's health was crucial (*Baba Kama* 59a)⁵⁷. These references give a greater insight into the knowledge and skills midwives had and to the awareness and sensitivities of society to them.

⁵⁵Naaman, Tammy, Siegel-Kellner, Miriam and Silman, Marion, *A History of the Midwife*, Gefen Publishing House, Jerusalem, ©1991, p. 16.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

WHERE ELSE IN THE BIBLE ARE BIRTHING STOOLS MENTIONED?

❖ JEREMIAH 17:3

The birthing stool is only mentioned once elsewhere in Tanach. However, the reference in Jeremiah is not a birthing stool, but a potter's wheel.

יְרֵמְיָהוּ יֵג: "וְאָרַד בֵּית הַיּוֹצֵר וְהִנְהוּ עֹשֶׂה מְלֹאכָה עַל הָאֲבָנִים"

Jeremiah 17:3

"Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels⁵⁸."

In Jeremiah, the reference to a potter's wheel is an analogy to man at the mercy of God's hands. Just as a potter can crush the vessel he is forming with a twist of his hands, so can our lives be instantly snuffed at the will of God. This is significant to the Exodus story since the infant is comparatively at the mercy of the midwives. Pharaoh wanted the midwives to work against their grain – kill, with their hands, instead of physically draw forth life.

The Encyclopedia Mikrait provides insight into the root of the word 'ovnaim.' Though early commentators translate it as a 'birthing stool' (*Rashi, Radak*), later researchers offer another translation: a table where a midwife or doctor brings the baby to be checked after birth⁵⁹. This translation would increase the difficulty of Pharaoh's commandment to the

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Friedlander, M., *The Bible*, Sinai Publishing, Tel Aviv, Israel © 1996, p. 875.

⁵⁹ Sokniran, Elazar, *Encyclopedia Mikrait (Biblical Encyclopedia – Hebrew), Volume I*, Mossad Bialik Publications, Israel, © 1965, p. 58.

midwives to kill the boys ‘upon the birthing stool,’ as the mother would have already heard the cry of her newborn.

A direct connection between the birthing stool and the potter’s wheel lies in Egyptian culture. Apparently, ancient Egyptians believed that the god Hinam formed man. Images of Egyptians dressed as Hinam are found sitting by a potter’s wheel, forming clay images of people. Thus, the term ‘ovnaim’ once referred to a potter’s wheel that helped form man-like images evolved into a birthing stool. The development of a ‘potter’s wheel’ into a ‘birthing stool’ recognizes the Egyptian culture as the originators of the term ‘ovnaim⁶⁰.’

The comparison from a potter’s wheel to birthing stool remains in the hands of the beholder – the one who is in control of the ‘ovnaim’ is clearly in control of the fruits of its labor. Because the potter used an upper wheel in which to form the dish and a lower wheel to spin it, the term came to be accepted in the plural form, ‘ovnaim⁶¹.’ All these literary analyses reinforce the Egyptian root of the word and concept, harboring greater glimpses into Biblical linguistics and culture.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 59.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 58.

GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE ON ANCIENT MIDWIVES:

The following paragraphs describes the practices of ancient midwives. The parallels between them and the Bible are fascinating.

Literature on the ancient world provides a glimpse of the tasks and skills of an ancient midwife. Egyptian sources from the code of Hammurabi from Mesopotamia provide the first complete write up of a midwife's role. Papyri dating to 1950 B.C.E. indicate that the midwife had the dominant role in obstetrics⁶². Midwives had extensive knowledge of reproduction and pregnancy. This extensive knowledge earned them respect and status in the ancient world⁶³.

Their knowledge, written up in papyrus scrolls, ranged from recipes for fertility, birth control, to how to diagnose pregnancy and the sex of the child⁶⁴, as well as offering advice for massage during labor⁶⁵. In later studies, Valerie French writes about *Midwives and Maternity Care in the Roman World*⁶⁶. Pliny the Elder and Soranus (98-138 A.D), a physician in ancient Rome detailed the equipment used for normal labor and delivery, in the first textbook written for midwives, the main reference guide for the next 1400 years⁶⁷. Of particular importance in both articles is the mention of the birthing stool, mentioned in 1:16 in the Exodus story.

Soranus claims that the midwife must have certain oils and creams to assist in the labor and delivery. Other items include **a midwife's stool** or **chair** [this was the property of the midwife; she brought it with her to the home where the delivery was to take place], and two beds [a hard one for use during labor and a soft one for rest after delivery]...⁶⁸. The

⁶² Naaman, Tammy, Siegel-Kellner, and Silman, (1991), p. 7.

⁶³ Galil, Gershon, editor, *Olam HaTanach, Exodus*, approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture, (Hebrew) Grapholite Publishers, Tel Aviv, Israel, © 1993, p. 24.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Naaman, Tammy, Siegel-Kellner, and Silman, (1991), p. 7.

⁶⁶ French, Valerie, "Rescuing Creusa: New Methodological Approaches to Women in Antiquity," (Helios, New Series 13 (2), 1986, pp. 69-84), (<http://www.indiana.edu/~ancmed/midwife.HTM>).

⁶⁷ Naaman, Siegel-Kellner and Silman (1991), p. 7.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Papyrus Westcar 1650-1550 B.C.E. describes the use of “**simple and sophisticated types of birthing chairs**⁶⁹.”

Soranus provides a good description of the midwife's stool; **this chair was used only during the actual delivery**, not during labor. Apparently both midwives and physicians believed that normal delivery was easier when the mother sat upright. In the seat of the chair was a crescent-shaped hole through which the baby would be delivered⁷⁰. The sides of the chair had armrests, in the shape of the letter "pi," for the mother to grasp during delivery⁷¹. The chair was to have a sturdy back against which the patient was to press her hips and buttocks. Soranus's description implies, however, that some midwives' stools did not have backs and that an attendant stood behind the patient to support her, a less desirable arrangement because of the danger that the patient might recline or slip backwards. The midwife herself, covered by an apron, sat in front of the mother and throughout the delivery assured her that all was going well⁷².

One of the midwife's duties was to instruct the mother on proper breathing and on how to push downwards during a contraction. The assistants who stood by the sides of the chair were to assist in delivery by gently pushing downwards on the patient's abdomen. Soranus's discussion, supplemented by passages from later medical writers, is similar to the instructions now given to women choosing natural childbirth⁷³. Ancient Egyptian writings also indicate the presence of assistants (at least four) by the laboring mother. A male doctor was not even usually present at births unless there were severe complications⁷⁴. The four midwives' main role was to ease labor pain by distracting the mother with their voices.

⁶⁹ Naaman, Siegel-Kellner and Silman (1991), p. 7.

⁷⁰ This clarifies Pharaoh's command, וְתִרְאִינָה עַל הַאֲבוֹנִים אֶת־טוֹ, understanding that the midwives were the first to see the baby at birthing.

⁷¹ Compare to description provided by Daat Mikra

⁷² French (1986), p. 2.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Galil, *Exodus*, (1993), p. 24.

In a normal headfirst delivery, the midwife might stretch the cervical opening slightly to help the fetus's head and shoulders through, after which she gently pulled out the rest of the infant's body. The midwife was also to take care that the umbilical cord was not distended and to remove gently the placenta immediately after the birth of the baby. Soranus instructs the midwife to wrap her hands in pieces of cloth or thin papyrus⁷⁵ so that the slippery newborn does not slide out of her grasp⁷⁶. Soranus seems to think that if the midwife's hands are so wrapped, she will not inadvertently squeeze the baby too hard in her efforts to maintain a firm hold⁷⁷.

In a lengthy section, Soranus treats the conditions under which the fetus itself causes a difficult delivery and gives detailed instructions for handling various kinds of cases, including those in which the fetus is dead. Unfortunately, it is impossible to tell even roughly what proportion of births were subject to these complications. But the very length of Soranus's discussion implies that midwives could expect to encounter a significant number of complicated births. And although the obstetrical procedures described seem basically sound, **many otherwise healthy fetuses probably died during a difficult delivery**⁷⁸.

We learn from the ancient Biblical text of Ezekiel (16:4) that post-natal care included the cutting of the umbilical cord, washing the baby in healing salts, and diapering him⁷⁹.

⁷⁵an Egyptian invention

⁷⁶ French, (1986).

⁷⁷ This statement gives us clearer insight to Pharaoh's command to the midwives to kill the newborn "upon the birthing stool."

⁷⁸ Ibid. This makes Pharaoh's command easier to understand.

⁷⁹ Galil, *Exodus*, (1993), p. 24.

MODERN MIDWIFERY SKILLS

I researched through the internet, which students would have access to during research lessons. The student would be responsible for researching issues such as:

- ❖ Modern midwifery skills⁸⁰. Obviously, modern care is much more sophisticated and advanced. Advice from a midwife can range from nutritional guidelines for gestational diabetes to choosing the sex of one's baby pre-pregnancy⁸¹.
- ❖ Varying use of midwives: Use of midwives varies from country to country. In the US and Canada, nurses are present for the majority of labor, calling in the OB when the woman is in the end. In primitive countries such as Tunisia, only birthing stools and midwives are used.
- ❖ What is needed to become a midwife⁸²? Education, 'residency', and certification would all be properly researched.
- ❖ What are similarities between ancient and modern midwifery? An example is listed below, where the student would display appropriate information.

Similarities between ancient and modern midwifery:
Birthing stools were once in widespread use and have been reintroduced by women who argue that giving birth in a sitting position is both more natural and more comfortable, using gravity to assist in birthing ⁸³ .

⁸⁰<http://www.members.home.net/cnmpat/unitedstates.htm>

⁸¹<http://www.members.home.net/cnmpat/handouts.htm>

⁸²<http://www.members.home.net/cnmpat/unitedstates.htm#1>. MIDWIFERY IN THE UNITED STATES:

⁸³http://www.wsu.edu:8000/~brians/science_fiction/handmaid.html#20

PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE MIDWIFERY PROFESSION

Gardner's belief that knowledge be practical as well as helpful to society encourages MI schools to produce helpful citizens (character development). The six schools listed in Campbell's book all direct students to contribute to their communities. In Jewish circles, community leadership has always been stressed, but schools do not usually incorporate their daily curriculum with contributions to society. Therefore, like the Breakout project from Skyview (mentioned on page 7), students would be required to suggest an innovation for the studied profession.

I chose to create a birthing pillow for the birthing stool. Just in case the midwife doesn't arrive in time, or the baby slips out of her hands, a thick yet sturdy soft plastic pillow is attached to the sides of the stool. The pillow is lined with holes to allow birthing fluids to flow onto the floor (this is, of course, assuming that the mother is delivering while on a birthing stool, a practice still done in many civilized as well as primitive countries). In addition, a modern showerhead is attached to wash the baby as soon as it passes by them (like those automatic sinks). This will not only clean the baby of birthing fluids, but also ease its entry from a water-filled world into a dry one. Please see clay model of "*birthing stool pillow.*"

EVALUATION OF PROJECT RESEARCH.

These are skills and insights gained from completing the sample student project. All of these evaluations are rarely found in one's everyday Tanach lesson or even a test. The range of knowledge, skill and self-esteem are encouraging elements in creating a MI Jewish curriculum such as this.

- ❖ Clearer and stronger understanding of Biblical and ancient culture.
- ❖ Enhanced Jewish textual knowledge from other sources where midwifery and birthing stools are mentioned.
- ❖ Language and analytical skills gained from researching commentaries and other sources.
- ❖ Global knowledge of midwifery and birthing stools.
- ❖ Effectiveness and development of midwifery and birthing stools in civilized and primitive societies.
- ❖ Appreciation of ancient texts and professions.
- ❖ Insight into modern profession.
- ❖ Assessment of skills needed become a midwife.
- ❖ Assessment of personal decision to enter midwife profession.
- ❖ Understanding of role of midwife now and then.
- ❖ Contribution to modern profession.
- ❖ Satisfactions of accomplishing one's research (essential for student self-esteem and growth).
- ❖ Pride in contributing design to modern profession.

MI PROJECTS ON ANCIENT EGYPT RELATED TO OCCUPATION RESEARCH:

- a. **Construct a modern or ancient birthing stool, ‘ovnaim’ as mentioned in Exodus and Jeremiah. Compare differences and similarities to modern birthing stool.**
- b. Build a model of a pyramid. Explain the reasons for building pyramids, how they were constructed⁸⁴, and who built them. Explain Biblical references to their construction and show differing opinions how the laborers could or could not have been Hebrew slaves.
- c. Prepare a ‘papyrus scroll’ or message boards of hieroglyphics, describing important events of the Jews in Egypt. Explain the importance and usage of hieroglyphics. Include Biblical quotes when available. Compare to skills of a Jewish scribe.
- d. Prepare an environmental overview of Ancient vs. Modern Egypt. Was the Nile polluted? With what? Describe the physical state of the Nile today, and how to clean it and protect it from further pollution. Discuss the effects the plagues had on the environment in Egypt.
- e. Illustrate the story of a child of a (pick one): Jewish slave, pharaoh, or Egyptian citizen. Write about one day in your life. Include pictures and Biblical quotes.
- f. Visualize (through video, 3-D model or other) one of the plagues, and how they devastated the Egyptians and their society i.e. they worshipped

⁸⁴ Bannister, Barbara Farley, and Candice, Janice B., *Ready-To-Use Thematic Activities for Grades 4-8*, The Center for Applied Research in Education, West Nyack, NY, 1994, p. 15.

the Nile, therefore God turned it to blood, proving His power over their god.

Discuss other natural plagues in history and how these compared.

- g. Write a play about the Hebrews witnessing Egyptians suffering from the plagues. Include commentaries that condemn and praise the various reactions of the Hebrew slaves.

INTEGRATED MIDRASH AND TALMUD ON ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CULTURE

The references below would be included in a MI curriculum as part of the integrated Talmud lesson.

- ❖ **ערייות - Immorality**: This excerpt is appropriate because it mentions what the Jewish people longed for in Egypt. The fact that they missed immorality indicates the immoral culture in which the Jews were surrounded in Egyptian society.

◀ סוטה עה. Sotah 75a

“זכרנו את הדגה שנאכל במצרים חנם (במדבר יא).” רב ושמואל, חד אמר ‘דגים’ חד אמר ‘ערייות’. מאן דאמר דגים? דכתיב ‘נאכל’. ומאן דאמר ערייות? דכתיב ‘חנם’. ומאן דאמר ערייות? הא כתיב נאכל (יבמות יא: וש”נ).

The commentaries below reinforce the concept of immorality present in Egyptian society. Although there is a conflict of opinion, the fact that this argument exists is testimony to the Egyptians’ low levels of morality.

◀ יב:ל רש”י: כי אין בית אשר אין שם מת: Rashi 12:30

יש שם בכור, מת. אין שם בכור, גדול הבית קרוי בכור שנאמר: אף אני בכור אתנהו (תהילים פט כח). דבר אחר (מכילתא פסחא פי”ג) מצריות מזנות תחת בעליהן ויולדות מרווקים פנויים והיו להם בכורות הרבה, פעמים הם חמישה לאישה אחת, כל אחד בכור לאביו.

◀ יב:ל: רמב”ן כי אין בית אשר אין שם מת: Ramban, 12:30

לשון רש”י. ועל דרך הפשט הבכורות שמתו במצרים בכורי פטר רחם היו, ועל כן קדש תחתיהם כל בכור פטר רחם בבני ישראל באדם ובבהמה (להלן יג:ב), והיה בכור פרעה היושב על כיסאו פטר רחם לאמו, וכן מנהג המלכים להיות הגבירה המולכת בתולה כעניין שנאמר באחשורוש (אסתר ב:ג). אבל דעת רבותינו נתרץ (ע”פ כ”י א, ובס”ש: על דעת רבותינו הקב”ה נתרצה. ומקורו במדרש תהילים (קה, י): ויך כל בכור, בכור לאיש, בכור לאישה, ובכור לבהמה וכו’, וכל בית שאין שם בכור הורג לאפוטרופוס שלו וע”ע בשמות רבה יח:ג). שהכה במצרים כל

בכוריהם, כלומר בכור האב ראשית אונו, ובכור האם פטר רחם וגם גדול הבית ולא רצה לקדש תחתיהם בישראל רק בכור האם שהוא יודע ומפורסם יותר, ובבהמה לא יודע כלל רק בכור האם, ובחר בכולם המין ההוא (הבכור לאם), וכדמות ראייה לזה (שהכה במצרים כל בכוריהם גם בכור לאב) ויך כל בכור במצרים ראשית אונים באהלי כס (תהילים עח:נא) עי על הזכר יאמר כן.

◀ **ויק"ר כגז: Vayikra Rabba 23:7**

כשהיו ישראל במצרים היו מצרים בעלי זנות⁸⁵.

Although the Egyptians were deeply steeped in immorality, another Midrash notes that the Jewish people were not influenced by their culture. When presenting their findings, students will need to include Jewish behavior in relation to Egyptian cultural influences.

◀ **קידושין מט: Tractate Kiddushin 49b**

עשרה קבים כשפים ירדו לעולם, תשעה נטלה מצרים.

◀ **ויק"ר לב:ה Vayikra Rabba 32:5**

בשביל ד' דברים נגאלו ישראל ממצרים – שלא שינו את שמם, ואת לשונם ולא אמרו לשון הרע ולא נמצא ביניהן אחד מהן פרוץ בערוה⁸⁶.

◀ **במדב"ר גז: Bamidbar Rabba 3:4**

על שהרחיקו עצמן מן הזנות הוציאן ממצרים⁸⁷.

- ❖ **כיִשׁוּף - Magic**: Another cultural reference of ancient Egypt was its belief and skill in creating magic. Commentaries that refer to the Egyptian trend are referred to below.

◀ **אבות דר"נ כח: Avot Drabbi Natan 28**

⁸⁵ גרוס, הרב משה דוד, אוצר האגדה התלמודית והמדרשית, כרך שני כ-פ, הוצאת מוסד הרב קוק, ירושלים, עמ' תשכה.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

אין לך כשפים ככשפים של מצרים⁸⁸.

◀ **תדבאר ז:**

אין לך אומה בעולם שהייתה שטופה בדברים מכוערים וחש ודין בכשפים ובזימה ובכל מעשים רעים אלא המצרים בלבד. לפיכך בא להם למצרים תקלה על ידם של ישראל⁸⁹.

◀ **תו"כ אחרי יח:18 Torat Cohanim**

מה מעשיהם של מצריים שטופים בעכו"ם ובגילוי עריות ובשפיכות דמים ובמשכב זרע ובהרבעת בהמה, אף מעשיהם של כנענים⁹⁰.

◀ **תו"כ אחרי יח:18 Torat Cohanim**

מגיד הכתוב שמעשיהם של מצרים מקולקלין מכל העממין⁹¹.

Ibid.⁸⁸
Ibid.⁸⁹, עמ' תשכד.
Ibid.⁹⁰
Ibid.⁹¹

DISADVANTAGES OF USING A MI CURRICULUM:

Although implementing a MI curriculum is worthwhile, it is not without apparent obstacles. Some of the main disadvantages are:

- ❖ *Lack of set curriculum.* Creating a MI school curriculum is really starting from scratch. Incorporating Gardner's elements into a school curriculum means turning one's back on traditional educational models. Experimentation requires a few years of trial and error before a new curriculum is set in place. Now that six school models in the US have set precedents, adaptation is easier. However, each school designs its curriculum with its own goals and focuses in mind, so each curriculum is unique. A few schools mentioned that the first few years, a lot of fluff was taught. Schools have the advantage of being aware of this and doing what they can to prevent it. Social skills are often a main focus in the beginning, and continue to be so after the school has established a more concrete curriculum.
- ❖ *Workload for teachers.* Thinking of and designing this curriculum required a tremendous amount of time and effort. MI Schools in the US combated this problem by uniting forces. Teachers claimed that the workload softened when they were able to work in teams and have frequent meetings and evaluations. Plus, after the initial few years, much of the work was done. Ideas were then improved, not necessarily designed from the beginning. All teaching requires constant preparation. Teaching with a MI curriculum requires adjusting to a different sort of preparation. As themes change in a MI school, new ideas and curriculum must constantly be created and implemented, so the workload then increases again. Teachers stated that being part of

such a worthwhile system, and seeing the students thrive, was a motivating factor in sticking to MI implementation.

❖ Resistance of non-convinced staff. Because of the newness, time, and dedication required to implement a whole new curriculum and approach to education, many teachers will not be in favor of the ‘switch.’ These teachers will have seniority, a longstanding reputation with the school, and possible tenure. Asking these teachers to change the way they’ve taught for many years will not always be possible or easy. The schools which have already implemented MI theory claimed that after a few years of resistance, even old timers adjusted as they saw that the new curriculum was in the children’s best interests. This might or might not happen in other schools.

❖ Less material will be covered. This is a well-known in MI schools, as chosen themes are thoroughly completed each year. This may cause problems in schools and among parents and teachers who are accustomed to students completing more than one book of Bible or Prophets and pages and pages of Talmud per semester or year. Pressures of *mivchan artzi* (national Bible tests and competitions) *Bagrut* (national college entrance exams), as well as comparisons to other schools and what they’re ‘covering’ will all be presented as negatives to a MI curriculum. MI schools currently running do not pay heed to coverage. The increased self-esteem of students, high national and state testing scores, and general success of the operating MI schools attest to their preference.

❖ Jewish MI curriculum has yet to be implemented. As this Jewish MI curriculum has yet to be implemented, one cannot be sure which ideas will be most successful. Oftentimes, I have spent hours developing ideas that went over poorly

with my students and spontaneous games or lessons were a big success. I am more concerned with “kinks” in the system than with the program as a whole. Trial and error proves to be the best assessment of the method.

SUMMARY OF EDUCATIONAL SOLUTIONS PROVIDED BY A MI CURRICULUM

The following is a short summary of Jewish educational benefits to adapting a MI curriculum. For a detailed exposition of the problems that a MI curriculum attempts to solve, see pages 1-30.

The problems facing Jewish educators today are similar to the ones in secular education. Incorporating a MI curriculum into a Jewish day school opts to rid schools of many of these issues. Many of the situations below feed into one another, but a defined list of problems is as follows:

- ❖ *Boredom – Frustration with traditional learning styles:* When children’s learning skills are not catered to, they’re bored. Seventy percent of schooling consists of copying notes from the board on unrelated, irrelevant topics. When students are bored, discipline problems increase. Bodily kinesthetic students literally jump out of their seats, musical ones tap pencils on desks, and visual spatial ones are doodling away, which is mercifully quiet.

King Solomon also recognized the different learning styles children have when he stated in *Mishlei*, “*Chanoch lanaar al pi darko*” – *educate every youth according to his need*. If that means bodily–kinesthetic instead of linguistic, then Judaic studies teachers should take heed. MI teachers learn to channel children’s energies into enhancing a lesson, and Judaic subjects should be no different.

- ❖ Material is repeated: How many times does a child review the laws of Chanukah or the book of Genesis before graduating day school? Most teachers are not familiar with the previous year's curriculum or the knowledge of the students. Each assumes responsibility for inculcating the student with information, regardless if he has learned it in previous years. Spiral curriculums are sometimes implemented in schools to avoid this problem, but it is not always successful.
- ❖ Sense that school is useless and unrelated to life: The most popular reason children come to school every day is to see their friends. Subject matter does not interest them because it does not relate to their lives. Knowledge is gained for grades, averages or high school and college recommendations. This is clearly not the purpose of education. The curriculum suggested in this paper creates a relevant learning environment, where children are equal and valued members of a community, and are encouraged to express their equality in ways that best display their intelligences.
- ❖ Quickly forgotten knowledge: When children are studying for a grade on a test, the chances that the knowledge will remain with him are low. Gardner's claims that modern education no longer requires stuffing children with information holds true for Judaic studies as well. How much of our elementary, high school, or (those who have) Jewish university education do we retain? A MI curriculum introduces knowledge in ways that are constantly tested and applied and in relevant surroundings. The rest of the above quote from *Mishlei*, "*gam ki yazkin, lo yasur mimenu*" and when the child grows older, he will not sway from it, remains true to us. Judaic studies teachers must focus on applying knowledge, so that as children do get older, they will a) remember what

they've been taught b) retain knowledge that is expected of him which is necessary for an Jewish observant life.

❖ Importance of character development in Jewish education: When children argue with teachers that they don't want to pick up a pencil from the floor because 'it's not mine' or clean up a mess that they didn't create, there is a clear lack of community and environmental concern. Children need to be taught how to care, and how to best express that responsibility. As our sages quote, "*derech erez kadma latorah*" – being a mensch precedes Torah learning. The suggestions for character development in this project promote community concern, which filters into school and peer interest. These ideals should be taught at home, many argue, but often aren't. Stressing their importance by teaching them in school as well will only benefit students, families, and society.

❖ Violence: Lack of "Bein Adam Lachavero – Commandment of love between man and his friend": Although five of the Ten Commandments revolve around this basic mitzvah, little is done to promote these relationships in a school setting. The rising incidents of physical violence in US and Israeli schools are frightening. Violence stems from a lack of interpersonal skills, as well as from absorption from violent media coverage and entertainment. Unfortunately, many children witness this behavior at home and mimic their parents in school.

MI schools heavily target the interpersonal skills needed to communicate with both friends and 'enemies.' Strong emphasis is placed on communication, problem solving, relevant moral student dilemmas, and other real life issues kids face in the school day.

Working with guided facilitators require children to participate in groups to create a community project. Group work imitates real life situations, where adults interact with people considered friend and less. Frontal lectures, with rows of students facing teachers lead to many problems where students are quick to blame one another for the constant disruptions. Students often don't know that there are other forms of solving problems. When breaking up fights in 3rd and 4th grade classes, I've asked the students, "When I get mad at you, do I hit you?" They look at me puzzled, like 'what a silly thing to say!' Sometimes the connection hits that perhaps they shouldn't be solving their problems that way either. The Talmud brings us many cases of opponents who vehemently disagree but don't beat each other in the process. Children should be imbued with these forms of interpersonal skills, and not physical violence.

INTERVIEW WITH PRINCIPAL OF A MI JEWISH DAY SCHOOL
HILLEL DAY SCHOOL, BOCA RATON, FL
JANUARY 11, 2000

Through my research of MI, I discovered that the Hillel Day School in Boca Raton, FL considers itself a MI school. Intrigued, I contacted the principal, Rabbi Tzvi Kilstein, and arranged a phone interview. Rabbi Kilstein mentioned many of the positive and negative aspects I describe in using a MI curriculum. Overall, he opts for MI. This is a summary of our conversation.

1. *How does your curriculum work? Do you have an interdisciplinary curriculum? If so, how many subjects are covered?*

At first, the introduction of MI curriculum was overwhelming to the teachers. MI theory and lesson plans had to be introduced. Certainly an interdisciplinary curriculum is the goal. Building to that point must be done in stages. First a weekly MI lesson plan is introduced in the classroom. Then it became bi-weekly. Soon, every day had some sort of MI activity. Eventually, we hope to have an interdisciplinary curriculum, although maybe not this year. Plus, parents want regular coverage of the Bible.

2. *How much preparation is it for the teachers? Is it more difficult than preparing for regular classes?*

The preparation is more difficult and takes longer because it is new. Plus, MI lessons often involve more preparation for teachers since different aspects of learning are targeted. However, the teachers receive a lot of support in their preparation and implementation. The junior high school teachers, grades 6-8, plus grade 4, are involved. One group of general studies and one group of Judaic studies teachers were trained. They met weekly, discussing how to include MI in their lessons, and how to teach an interdisciplinary curriculum. They found the group sessions helpful in preparing for their classes. They also found it a good opportunity to discuss ideas that

work, as well as difficulties. For example, one teacher expressed his concern that he “didn’t feel he could teach properly in a non-frontal setting⁹².” Please note that the points of the sessions are not always to offer solutions, but to let voices be heard, and often that is satisfying enough for the teacher.

As this is the first year of implementation of the curriculum in the school, the staff knows that they will make mistakes and learn along the way. They are comfortable with this, and feel that that the preparation is therefore “going okay.” Generally, teachers are responding positively to the new curriculum. They find that both they and the students are enjoying classes more, learning more from each other, and look forward to continuing lessons.

3. *How much ‘teacher training’ did the teachers go through? What was involved in their teacher training, i.e. – who spoke, what about, etc?*

Training began in the summer of 1999. Expert speakers on MI curriculum lectured and displayed MI classes and theories. I brought in many secular studies curricula, lesson plans, and ideas for teachers to see. Adaptation to Judaic studies curriculum was encouraged. Teachers had opportunity to ask questions, work in groups, and brainstorm on adaptation.

4. *How are kids responding to new system? How do you know if they like it?*

The kids are much more excited about their classes. There is a general attitudinal change in the school among the students. Some crucial changes are the rise of self-esteem, an increased level of participation, and a decrease in discipline problems.

⁹² This is a common fear of teachers newly introduced to MI teaching.

5. ***How does assessment work? Are written exams still the most popular form of assessment?***

Assessment is still unfortunately very conventional. The pressure of state wide and nation wide exams restrict teachers into assessing their students similarly. MI studies have shown that MI learners succeed better on standardized tests, so we hope to veer away from conventional exams in the future and allow the students to be assessed through different skills.

6. ***What is the most unique aspect of the school's MI adaptation?***

The greatest difference about our new curriculum is the change in the students. Students' self-esteem has shot up. They have stated that they never knew that *Student X* had this talent, and they are recognizing that not all students learn in the same way. There is more respect among the kids for each other, and generally more enthusiasm about learning. This change has been very satisfying to watch among the students.

7. ***Have you viewed many of the classes?***

Yes, of course. That is the goal, to observe as many classes to chart changes and required adjustments. We decided to implement MI first in grades four, six, seven and eight, so that we would *not bite off more than we could chew - Tafasta meruba lo tafasta*. Next year, we hope to include all of grades three, four and five.

8. ***What motivated you to start a MI school?***

There was a gifted program in Hillel and I noticed that many creative activities were being offered in the gifted program that were not available in the regular school. Many students could have benefited from the creative teaching processes in the gifted program, but acceptance was limited. This limited acceptance was a

source of jealousy and unhealthy competition among students. High IQ scores only determined acceptance. If a child missed the cutoff by even a point, he was rejected, when many teachers knew that the child was well worthy of being accepted. I attempted to put a stop to the gifted program by implementing MI in the school curriculum. I hope this will convert the competition to healthier channels, as well as provide all students with equal opportunity to display their intelligences. The gifted program is now in its last year, and next year, all students will be integrated in the MI curriculum.

9. ***What is your educational background? For how long have you been principal?***

I have been principal of the Hillel Day School for three years. I have a Ph.D. in Education, Administration and Supervision, as well as Rabbinical Ordination. I come from the NY area, and was principal of a Jewish Day School in Memphis, TN and in a day school in Queens before joining Hillel.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, I feel the benefits of Gardner's Multiple Intelligence schools far outweigh the hindrances. His theories boil down to two main ideas, integrating practical knowledge into a school setting and helping a person become a *mentsch*. His programs promote positive behavior and relevant learning experiences. Although teachers bear the brunt of lots of preparation, to me, the benefits for student and teacher in creating an environment such as this are far more encouraging.

Judaism stresses value education in much of its literature, yet I have found that many schools are caught up with 'coverage' and that character development is overlooked. At the end of 15 years in a Jewish day school, more and more parents and teachers should be asking, "what does my child know, remember, and appreciate, of his Jewish education?" Too often, responses are not high, certainly not high enough. What do we want our children to know, remember and appreciate from his schooling? The goal of adapting a MI curriculum in a Jewish school aims to increase retained knowledge, provide challenging and relevant learning experiences to students, and empower them to become active members of the community now and in the future.

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CONTACTS

1. Rabbi Tzvi Kilstein, Principal, Hillel Day School, Boca Raton, Florida, Rebtsvi@aol.com