
College Education

Friendster. Uggs. Dulce. JT. Fo Shizzle.

RHODA A. WEISMAN

The most effective professionals who love their work with teens or 20-somethings knew these words a year ago. They have to – it's their business. Creating meaning by balancing popular culture with age-old Jewish values, history, and practice is what these professionals do daily. Intuitively or learned, they meet others where they are at first, and not where they would like them to be. That is no easy task to achieve. And just about anyone who knows teens and adults in their 20's will attest to their 6th sense, the one that spots inauthenticity and repels it immediately. So not only does a great professional in this field need to understand a world that literally changes daily and be able to meaningfully transmit the Jewish story, they must also model the best of it, consistently.

What does it take to do this well? Some naivete that

good does prevail in the end and that the hard work of community building matters – even though the mainstream message is that it doesn't. It takes a great deal of targeted recruiting to find those young professionals with tremendous potential rather than accepting only those who come to our community's doors. Now add coaches who advocate for and sometimes shelter the professional; continued learning that only creates enthusiasm yet is regularly overlooked and under-funded; good benefits and pay; access to strong networks and the respect of their professional and lay communities. Again no easy task. Effective professionals can work without this, but not for long...

Rhoda A. Weisman is the Executive Director of the Professional Leaders Project.

Getting Them in the Door

JOHANNA LOEWENSTEIN

Deciding to work for Hillel was not a difficult decision, but if you had asked me in high school what job I thought I'd have coming out of college, I never would have guessed it. I was planning on being a professional stage manager. I loved theater, and I thought I wanted a career behind the scenes, pulling the threads and creating magic. And, in a sense, I still do that, just not on a stage. In the same way I used to help bring a script to life on stage, I help to make Judaism come to life for Jewish students at New York University.

I spent my junior year abroad in Israel, studying at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Having been involved at my Hillel at the University of Wisconsin, I knew that Hillel at Hebrew University would be a place to call home, so I was quick to get involved there as well. I became very close to the JCSC Fellow there, and he encouraged me to think about becoming a Fellow myself. My senior year, as I was deciding what to do after graduation, I could think of nothing else.

My job is definitely full of challenges. There are many moments where I feel like I'm forcing meaning into people's lives, and that takes its toll. I spend a lot of time out on campus, bribing students to my table with candy, handing out information about Jewish holidays and events. People look at me like I'm crazy, or avoid me because they don't think that Jewish life is something that could be a part of their experience in college. They don't want to give up their Friday nights at the bars to go to *Shabbat* services, and they love eating out in many of New York's fabulous restaurants, so *kashrut* is totally out of the question.

What they don't understand is that I'm not trying to make them more observant. I couldn't care less if they keep *Shabbat* or skip the cheese on their burgers. I'm about making Judaism apply to them, in whatever way is meaningful to them. Sometimes, that means hanging out and listening to Israeli music while eating falafel. Sometimes it's about having a discussion about what Judaism has to say about sex. Sometimes it's

about serving Thanksgiving dinner at a soup kitchen. But more importantly, it's about giving students a safe space to talk about who they are and who they want to become after this very pivotal time in their life.

I have learned that there are two types of leaders: those who get in front and pull, and those who get behind and push. I am definitely a pusher. What I love most about my job is that I am in a position to

push individual students to challenge themselves and bring meaning into their lives. That what keeps me in this job, and I'm so honored to have had this experience as a Fellow.

Johanna Loewenstein is a Jewish Campus Service Corps Fellow at New York University.

Adult Jewish Education The Journey Never Ends

BETSY DOLGIN KATZ

As the number of settings for adult learning continues to expand, the providers of adult education face the challenge of finding highly qualified individuals to teach. Growth has raised the expectations of "experienced" learners who demand and deserve the best. While there is more support available in the form of curriculum, new books on adult Jewish learning and organizations devoted to the improvement of the field, the demand shows signs of exceeding the supply.

What are the qualifications for a teacher of adults?

1. Deep knowledge of subject matter. Never be in a position where you must teach 100% of what you know about any subject.
2. Knowledge of how adults learn best and how to provide learning opportunities in an organized, clear manner. Devote time to preparation no matter how knowledgeable or experienced you are.
3. Strength to overcome the compulsion to deliver all the knowledge one possesses. Allow students to question and interact with the ideas and with one another. Do not fill the space in the classroom with words. Rather allow room for learners to grow.
4. A sense of humor and the ability to relate to students in a personal way. Let them get to know you

and share your joy, your passion and your commitment to learning.

5. Ability to reflect on ones work and to grow and change continually. The best teachers are the best learners.
6. Respect for the learning Jew. People participating in lifelong learning are all somewhere in the middle and benefit from the challenge and support a teacher can provide.

The best preparation for the field is a solid Jewish education in subjects such as *TaNaKh*, *Talmud*, commentaries, history, philosophy, liturgy and literature. In addition, a growing number of institutions of higher learning provide degrees in adult learning and courses at Jewish institutions in adult Jewish learning. There are those who possess knowledge of subject matter who are "natural teachers;" however the literature in the field of adult development and learning can hone one's skills and insure that goals are accomplished in the best way possible. Add to this the ability to learn from students, from colleagues and from reflection on ones own practice of adult teaching and you have the ideal teacher of adults.

Dr. Betsy Dolgin Katz is the North American Director of the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School.