

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 one's 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 one's 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.

Learning at Any Age

SYLVIA FRANKEL

What is so unique about the Florence Melton Adult Education program and what attracted me to apply for and then remain a faculty member in it?

The Jewish community in Portland, Oregon, has experienced tremendous growth in the last decade or so, a phenomenon experienced across America. Growth not only in number but also in the peoples desire to become more knowledgeable in their own heritage.

Some seven years ago a committee was formed to determine how best to serve our community as far as Jewish education was concerned. A number of introductory classes were being offered for adults, in congregational and community settings, but none of them went beyond the “101” level nor lasted more than a few sessions. The search was on to find a program that would fill this gap. When the committee – after researching several adult curricula – reached the decision to buy into the Melton program, I immediately applied to become one of its instructors.

What entitled me to become a teacher in this program? I was an adjunct professor at several local colleges and universities and had been teaching Introduction to Judaism and a variety of Jewish history classes for more than a decade.

What attracted me to become a Melton faculty member? The context, format and support system, offered by

Hebrew University, where the curricula is developed by highly experienced and skilled educators. The staff are accessible to the instructors and they, in turn, are encouraged to provide feedback to the staff. A website with lots of useful materials and links are available to instructors.

Having said all this, I must admit that the most attractive aspect of teaching for Melton are the students. Here are a group of motivated adults who have chosen to attend a class for which they pay tuition once a week for two hours. Many of them come to the program following a full day of work yet they are determined to find out what Judaism is all about. Watching the students discover material they never knew existed, helping them decode the various texts is extremely rewarding and inspiring. Since the Melton program prides itself in presenting the material in a pluralistic way, students, from the entire spectrum of the Jewish community, feel comfortable enrolling in such a class.

The students’ commitment to the program has, and continues to inspire me to further my own studies in Judaism and be better equipped to answer their challenging questions.

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Editor’s Suggested Discussion Guide:

- Each narrative conveys a story of deep personal fulfillment and satisfaction experienced by an educator in the field. What do they perceive as the most rewarding aspects of their work? How might we capitalize on these experiences in addressing the challenges of educator recruitment and retention?
- Each story reflects a unique professional journey into a particular area of Jewish education. How might your

community support similar journeys (including training and professional development) to enable individuals who wish to specialize in particular aspects of Jewish education?

- Each educator cites particular resources and tools that enhance their personal and professional growth as Jewish educators in their special fields. What are these resources and tools – and how does/might your community provide similar assistance?