

A Curriculum for Interfaith Study and Teaching

By Michael Shire and Robert W. Pazmiño

Institutional Settings and Histories¹

In 2001, Hebrew College (HC) moved from Brookline, Massachusetts to a new hilltop campus in Newton it would share with Andover Newton Theological School (ANTS). Two years later, HC, which began in 1921 as a secular cultural institution, created a rabbinical school. For the last twelve years, the staff and students of the newest Jewish seminary and the oldest Protestant seminary in the country—ANTS's roots go back to the founding of Andover Seminary in 1807—have formed a partnership that has changed the way both schools think about their educational goals, curricula for theological education and the nature of their particular communities. Newton's "Institution Hill," named for the other ancestor of Andover Newton, the Newton Baptist Institute, has become "Faith Hill" providing a unique setting for interfaith study and teaching in the formation of religious and spiritual leaders for the third millennium.

ANTS is formally affiliated with two Protestant denominations, the United Church of Christ and the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A., and functionally related to the Unitarian Universalist Society, whose members now comprise a third of its student body. Given HC's roots as a cultural institution, and former President David M. Gordis' commitment to religious pluralism, the Rabbinical School was founded as a transdenominational program, welcoming Jewish students from all or none of the denominations (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist). The challenge in curricular work is how to both embrace and celebrate one's faith identity and be open to one's neighbor from a different religious tradition with the common ground of equipping students to be effective teachers of their faith.

Soon after HC moved into its new buildings in 2001, a new feature appeared on the landscape, one that had not been sketched on the official blueprint: a footpath between the campuses made by students who began meeting to talk about their respective traditions, their common vocations, and their personal lives. Even before the faculties and administrations of the two schools offered interfaith courses and public programs, the students of ANTS and HC began to create a dynamic inter-religious culture. They wanted to learn together and from one another as they prepared for careers as teachers, preachers, pastors, rabbis, cantors and ritual makers.

Spurred by this enterprising group of students, the faculties and administration deepened their commitment to this burgeoning interfaith venture. We created joint academic courses co-taught by Jewish and Christian faculty and populated by students from both schools. We organized a series of "Community Days" during which students, faculty, and staff from both institutions participate together in service projects around Boston and learn of common efforts to deepen religious faith and social ministries. The most recent Community Day included welcoming the addition of a jointly-appointed Muslim scholar to Faith Hill and learning about the American Muslim community. The students formed Journeys on the Hill (JOTH), which sponsors seasonal and thematic events organized around our sacred calendars and other key religious, cultural, and political issues. They also created peer study groups that serve as an important context for relationship building, spiritual exploration, and professional development. Crucial to all these educational efforts is the invitation to develop relationships across the divide of religious difference. The history of the United States has been plagued with the perception that difference equals deficiency and the opportunity to study, learn and work together invites border crossing across faith communities. This border crossing does not

eliminate differences, but serves to clarify what each tradition offers to the common human task in religious education of teaching a faith to rising generations that is vital and transformative.

Havruta Relationship

Havruta is an Aramaic word meaning friendship or fellowship. As an ancient form of textual study, it has become normative in the world of Jewish traditional study in the yeshiva or beit midrash. It involves a pair of students helping each other to read and understand the written text together. The word refers both to the partners engaged in the study as well as the actual process of collaborative learning. There are three types of dynamics involved in Havruta learning. The first is the idea of shared ownership of the text in which both partners equally engage in exegesis and isogesis collaboratively. The second is the active listening and reflecting back of each partner in order to fully understand the stance of the partner. Thirdly, it provides the opportunity for structured debate and sharpening of argument through questioning and focusing on a close reading of the text. Havruta relationships can become lifelong relationships that may begin with the text but continue in a larger context of work, friendship or lifelong study. It becomes a spiritual practice and a means of meaning making between two trusted study and life partners. The learning skills developed in Havruta can include critical reasoning, finely honed argumentation, second person perspective taking, analytical reasoning, appreciation and wonder to name but a few. These learning stances are not dissimilar from the impact of collaborative and cooperative learning. The Havruta model became a conceptual framework for designing a course in teaching and learning across two religious traditions as well as providing a guiding framework for the relationship between instructors and between instructors and students.

In this course, we used Havruta widely and extended it to dyads and larger group work as well as between ourselves as instructors. Student feedback demonstrated the powerful experiences of working closely with colleagues from another religious perspective and tradition and specifically appreciated the Havruta relationship modeled by the instructors. This approach honors both particularism and pluralism among faith traditions. The course content focused the teaching and learning in our two religious traditions in three foci: textual study, teaching and learning for social responsibility and enculturation of customs and ceremonies. These were areas we felt had significant valence in both traditions but with distinct contributions offered by each faith. It was our goal therefore to ‘teach about’ these foci in two traditions but also ‘teach from’ these foci towards deeper and broader understanding.

Personal Backgrounds

Teaching both “who we are” (Palmer, 1998, 2) and whose we are in relation to our God and religious tradition, and finding common ground across our traditions were curricular themes undergirding our joint effort. Below is noted how we introduced ourselves to our students on Schoology which is the learning platform that both are schools are using for distance education elements of our courses. A great deal of the course content was supplied to students prior to the intensive course encouraging participants to both read and discuss their reactions to texts. We sought to model a teaching team across religious traditions and actually had students carefully observe and evaluate our own past and current teaching practices. In Bob’s case, we showed twenty minutes of a tape made of his teaching in 1984 on the topic of values and valuing in teaching. Viewing and evaluating the teaching episode also served to practice using a presentation evaluation form that was used for providing feedback from team-teaching presentations the students themselves made within a twenty-minute limit. In Michael’s case, he effectively demonstrated the use of Godly Play in recounting the nation of Israel’s

escape across the desert and deliverance by the hand of God. Observation of the professorial team came through actual classroom interactions during the week.

Rabbi Michael Shire: “I am the Dean of Education at HC and delighted to be co-teaching this course with Professor Pazmiño. We worked together last year on a course I ran at HC so this is the comeback team! I trained in the UK with graduate degrees in the USA at Hebrew Union College (not to be confused with our own HC). I have found that teaching and learning is much more individually focused in Europe than it is here in Massachusetts. In the UK, teaching involved a lot of individual assessment on a daily basis with customized targets for each assignment and assessment. Teachers had to be able to identify learning styles and needs as well as accommodate the curriculum and their teaching strategies for all types of learners. Religious education is part of every state school as a core curriculum subject so teaching about and from religion is part and parcel of every teacher's experience particularly in elementary schooling. I hope this course will enable us all to learn about the nature of teaching for religious education and refine it for own settings. I also hope that we will be able to learn that being in the 'presence of the other' is always enriching for our own faith perspective.”

Professor Bob Pazmiño: “I am Valeria Stone Professor of Christian Education at ANTS and it is a joy for me to teach with a kindred spirit in the field of religious education, Rabbi Michael Shire. As Michael notes, we have shared teaching occasions both in his course last year and at a joint Community Day with both our schools two years ago. I am originally from Brooklyn, New York and am currently working on an educational and spiritual memoir entitled *A Boy Grows in Brooklyn* that Wipf and Stock will publish. I have taught at Andover Newton since 1986, previously having taught at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary for five years and other theological schools across the country and abroad. I completed my Ed.D. from Teachers College, Columbia University in cooperation with Union Seminary and my M.Div. at Gordon-Conwell. I have also served as a national consultant for the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion since 2001. I am married to Wanda R. Pazmiño who is a home-school liaison for the Newton Public Schools and we have two children and two grandchildren who live nearby in Newton. We also care for my mother-in-law who lives in a nearby nursing home. I pray that you all will experience the joy of learning more and teaching others both within and across our religious traditions.”

Students also read articles and books written by both professors and had classroom access to book reviews of our works to provide perspective on our reflections of teaching and learning. Opportunities to travel on a short field trip to a local Jewish religious day school and an evening meal and panel discussion with local religious leaders also served to develop connections outside the classroom. We also interacted with students over our lunch breaks with a nearby classroom that provided tables for bag lunches we brought with both school's cafeterias closed during the course dates.

Curricular Planning

The particulars of the curriculum planned are noted in the shortened form of the course syllabus appended below, but the team presentations and evening panel with Master religious educators are worthy of elaboration.

Team Presentations

Key to the curriculum design was a planned presentation by groups of students that included ANTS and HC students. The intent of the overall course design was to inform, form and

transform students with the use of interfaith student teams that was planned for the final sessions of the intensive week. . The task required that the groups spend at least three sessions in planning a lesson or unit that reflected the forms of religious education being taught in the course. Then each group presented or enacted the lesson with all members of the group required to be engaged. This was followed by peer feedback (drawing upon the model of teacher evaluation) and finally faculty feedback. As part of the assessment regimen, students were asked to journal their reflections of their own group's presentation in the light of the peer and faculty feedback. The presentations were varied in their style and content though some common elements emerged such as the choice of a common sacred text either of the Hebrew Bible or early rabbinic material (Mishnah). At first this seemed unusual in that there was a 2:1 ratio of Christian to Jewish students. However on reflection, perhaps the nature of shared canonical texts as reflected in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament were most compelling to student teams. Presentations dealt with environmental responsibility, working with teens, issues around death, etc. Some of the pitfalls students experienced were using troubling texts without preparing students appropriately (the binding of Isaac, texts related to death and dying). In addition, students reflected well the content of a lesson but sometimes handled context and person (learner) less well. It is clear that religious teaching is a disciplined practice that takes many hours of involvement to master. It was also clear that the goal of achieving working teams across religious traditions within two seminaries can be a powerful and multivoiced group within a short period of time able to produce impactful learning opportunities above and beyond any individual contribution.

Master Religious Educators

Students were exposed to Master Religious Educators in an evening program that was opened to the wider ANTS/HC faculty and students in the Center for Inter-Religious and Communal Leadership Education (CIRCLE) program. The evening began with a traditional 'dvar torah' – word of Torah from President Danny Lehmann of HC speaking from Exodus 18:1-12 highlighting how Moses' gentile father-in-law observed God's blessing in delivering the Israelites from the Egyptians and Pharaoh, and affirming the importance of interfaith relationships modeled for us in this encounter. Serendipitously this was the same historical event portrayed in our Godly Play class demonstration.

Professor Sara Lee, author of one of our required course texts, summed up the interreligious learning experience when she insightfully quoted the need for personal transformation when teaching and learning in the presence of the other. Her experience with Dr. Mary Boys led her to understand how her own religious identity could be shaped by virtue of deeply experiencing the relationship with another person of a different faith. This confirmed the course's intentionality behind personal and group development as one of its aims. She demonstrated how texts could both bring together and divide people depending on the intent of the readers. President Elect Dr. Martin Copenhaver whose teaching ministry as a shepherd pastor was documented and read by students (Siew, 2013) shared his relationship with a local rabbi. They have exchanged congregational visits face-to-face and learned of other religious traditions "shoulder-to-shoulder" in visiting together a spiritual retreat center populated by spiritual and not religious persons.

Instructional Design of a School Visit

One distinct element of the course design was the planning of a school visit to the Solomon Schechter Day School located in Newton, Massachusetts as arranged with Arnold Zar-Kessler, Head of School. The three-hour visit occurred at the midpoint of the course and students read

about the philosophy of Jewish education inherent in the school prior to our visit. The field trip to Solomon Schechter Day School just before their own team presentations served to deepen their observation skills prior to evaluating their own and their peers' teaching efforts planned for the following day. The age groups selected by the teaching teams for their own presentations included both middle and high school age students as their audience, so the school visit served as a reality check for the characteristics of adolescent learners. It is noteworthy that a number of our Jewish students had not visited a Jewish Day School prior to our visit, recognizing that only about one-tenth of the Jewish school age population attends such schools. The aims of the visit itself were stated as the following:

- To introduce Jewish and Christian graduate students to the Jewish Day School system as a means to provide religious and cultural instruction to the Jewish community
- To explore and examine instruction in an educational institution with a focus on the provision of religious and general education for Grades 4-8 in the Upper School
- To extend the three foci of the course by demonstrating evidence of textual study, teaching and learning for social responsibility and enculturation of customs and ceremonies

Students, a number of whom had previous teaching experience, were able to critically note the teaching dynamics of the day school. This was particularly evident in relation to the stated philosophy of the Schechter School system of forming Jews with a clear sense of identity and high academic capabilities, and engaging the modern world as committed Jewish leaders. The formation of Jewish identity included a clear commitment to the nation of Israel globally. This ability to see 'theory in practice' drew upon the early part of the course with its models of religious education. Students were able to see a school not just as a generalized learning institution but with a incisive eye to its own stated ideological purposes. In general, the graduate students were impressed with the quality of teaching observed and student achievement and confidence as young Jewish leaders but noted the lack of commitment to more directly address the communal outreach of the school. Alternative educational philosophies had informed them of the role of religious education in forming students to serve social needs of the wider Boston community while recognizing of the challenges of survival that historically the Jewish community has confronted. Critical evaluation of the school was then placed appropriately in the context of its stated mission.

Evaluation

The ideal was to have an equal number of both twelve Jewish Hebrew College and twelve Christian Andover Newton students enroll in the course in working toward educational equity across both traditions. In reality, we had five Jewish HC students and fourteen Christian and Unitarian Universalist ANTS students, thirteen working at the masters-level and one doctoral student in the course. Our academic calendars differed across the schools and the course met degree requirements in the case of the masters-level students at Andover Newton.

Course evaluations indicated a great appreciation for the course despite the intensity of the full week schedule, along with the variety added by a field trip, dinner and panel discussion. The reading load was viewed as heavy with a desire for more in-depth discussion of the reading that though possible on-line was not extensively engaged. The variety and extent of readings directly related to the desired exposure to both traditions and the fact that in the case of Hebrew College Jewish students, more advanced reading was expected after their previous study in religious education courses. In the case of Andover Newton students, this course could meet just the one required course in a Master of Divinity program. Even with those curricular constraints, participants experienced ample time and safe space for their questions, concerns and discoveries across the traditions and valued learning about "the other" who soon became the neighbor and partner in team teaching presentations. Students noted that they imagined

new ways of teaching never thought about before and that their final projects reflected the learning gained in the course. The sense of community contributed to the perceived connections and relationships made. The Tu B' Shvat celebration shared by the Jewish participants prior to our Thursday evening meal was a rich experience for the Christian participants. One comment was "Eyes opened a little wider to see differences in religious education between our traditions and think more intentionally about why Christian education and Jewish education is the way they are." Shared bagged lunch times were also viewed as productive in that they nurtured "easy, honest and open discussions with professors and students that was open to wondering and curiosity." In relation to the interfaith experience itself, one student shared that we "confronted some misconceptions, dealt with difficult questions, produced insightful conversations and inspired ideas for the future." A number of students hoped the course would be offered again with "learning about the religious other as an imperative" and they intended to recommend it to other students in each of the schools.

Conclusion

We concluded the week long intensive with a recent article by Jack Seymour and Deborah Court (see references) offering a typology of interfaith learning. This typology owes its origins to conceptions of religious education in the European state schooling systems where religious instruction (learning about) has broadened to understanding the religious perspective on life and values (learning from). In this graduate course incorporating inter-religious dialogue into a class on teaching and religious education within and across two faith traditions, we modelled a number of the Seymour and Court typologies. As one student wrote on her evaluation form:

I learned about Jewish and Christian teaching as well as general teaching methodology and certainly learned from experience and example in class. I loved the interfaith setting and learning with HC/ANTS faculty and students together.

A graduate religious education class that brings together these multiple typologies of learning about, learning from, and learning with offers a cumulative impact. The experience goes to the heart of understanding how teaching and learning in the presence of the Other is not only deeply compelling and crucial in our interdependent age but also personally enriching and spiritually enhancing for all who are involved; faculty, graduate students and future generations alike.

Appendix- Shortened Syllabus:

CMED 680/880 Teaching In and Across Religious Traditions

Winterim January 13-17, 2014, Andover Newton Theological School/Hebrew College

Instructors: Rabbi Dr. Michael Shire, Professor Robert Pazmiño

Description:

The course seeks to explore and practice the art and craft of teaching in the Jewish and Christian traditions. The course will focus on common issues shared by the two traditions but approached in particularistic ways: the teaching of the Bible and the Prophets, teaching social responsibility and *tzedaka*, and cultivating ritual practices and observance of a religious tradition. It also inductively explores what is being learned from interfaith encounters and ministries regarding religious identity and openness to one's neighbors as a religious educator.

One aspect of teaching is the educational methods which addresses the question of: *How* is religious education undertaken and realized? This question will be explored in the context of other educational questions which address the nature, purposes, context, and interpersonal relationships of any teaching ministry.

Learning Objectives:

- To articulate a vision of learning and teaching for religious education and practice skills in teaching
- To be sensitive to and committed to a vision of an interdependent approach to religious education in and across religious traditions
- To become familiar with signature pedagogies through two religious traditions in relation to sacred story, social responsibility and ritual practice
- To be engaged in interreligious dialogue with fellow educators and clergy
- To apply methods of teaching and learning to understanding the nature of self, community, other/neighbor, and God and to gain skills in evaluation.
- To come to know the self as religious educator

Assessment: Assessment will be conducted through case study analysis, Havruta pedagogy, student presentations and self-reflection on teaching that incorporates theological reflection on the *what* and *why* of our teaching. The value of what we do in class will be facilitated if we can initiate effective procedures for evaluation, our evaluation of your work and your self-evaluation.

Schedule:

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| 9.00-12.00 | Introduction to framework. (RP/MJS) Teaching Bible Texts case study (Exodus) Personal Stories (Who am I & Whose am I?) | Teaching Social Responsibility & Action (RP/MJS) Personal Stories (Connections with religious traditions) | Teaching customs and ceremonies (RP/MJS) Connections with Worship & Daily Practices | Havruta presentations & evaluation | Reflections on Teaching Final Review & Summary of Insights. Class ends at 1pm |
| lunch | | | | | |
| 1.00-4.00 | Lesson & Curricular Planning in two groups Personal Stories of Transformative Teaching: Principles & Metaphors to Guide Future Efforts Havruta time | Frameworks for Social Education Havruta time | Field trip to Solomon Schechter Day School Debrief and review of observations | Havruta Presentations Tu B'Shvat celebration | |
| | | | Havruta presentation prep time | | |

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|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 6.00-8.00 | | | | Supper and Evening panel discussion with Religious Education Leaders | |
|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|

Course information:

Improving our competence as teachers will be difficult if we depend exclusively on traditional academic approaches. Therefore, a significant portion of the course will involve your actual practice of teaching and careful observation and evaluation of others in and out of the class. Grading will follow the respective frameworks in the institution in which you are registered.

Requirements:

1. Regular and punctual attendance every session. (Note: This is especially supportive when peers are presenting.)
2. Participation in class discussions, assignments, evaluations and prayer for class participants.
3. Complete assigned readings prior to the course and engage in independent reading for at least an equivalent time to that in class sessions.
4. Maintain a journal and reading log of class sessions and independent reading (**first option**) to be submitted **February 24th**. Journals should include entries of at least one type-written page for each class session (morning, afternoon and evening) or teaching event outside of class. Reading Logs should list author, title and annotated review of parts read. A **second option** is to combine written assignments by writing up an extended rationale for a curriculum and specific lesson plans for a unit of the curriculum as required in item # 6 below. The rationale should draw upon course readings and outline your personal theology/philosophy for teaching and a detailed description of both the persons taught and their specific context. A **third option** is to write up an extended essay on teaching that relates theology and religion to education with specific recommendations for teaching practice. You need to obtain approval from the instructors before commencing one of these assignments. **All written work is due February 24th.**
5. Do one teaching episode in class as part of a chavruta (paired learning) and participate in peer review. Teamwork requires careful planning and practice in and outside of class time and requires the instructors' approval for the teaching assignment.
6. Complete 1 **detailed** lesson plan for your teaching presentation in chavruta. This should include the rationale for the lesson as well as activities and learning outcomes. It should also include a 1 page reflection summary that draws upon the peer review session following your presentation. This should be self-reflective of what you learned about yourself as a religious educator through this process. Lesson Plans **due February 24.**

Resources for Learning:

1. Reading: Reading is considered one of the primary educational resources of the course. It is suggested that you plan your reading to coincide with what we are doing in class and with your own teaching episodes. Recommendations will be made in various sources. A bibliography is provided, but it does not limit your reading in other sources.

2. Reserve Shelf: Required and recommended texts are located there.
 3. Periodicals: It is strongly recommended that you do not neglect periodical literature. Periodicals will keep you informed of current developments in the field and acquaint you with a number of useful resources.
4. Texts: **Required**

Boys, Mary C. and Sara S. Lee. *Christians and Jews in Dialogue: Learning in the Presence of the Other*. Woodstock, VT: Sky Light Paths, 2006.

Palmer, Parker. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

Rosenak, Michael. *Commandments and Concerns: Jewish Religious Education in a Secular Society*. (Part two and three). New York: JPSA, 1987.

Recommended

Bracke, John M., Karen B. Tye. *Teaching the Bible in the Church*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003.

Chazan, Barry. *The Language of Jewish Education: Crisis and Hope in the Jewish School*. New York: Hartmore House, 1978.

Harris, Maria. *Fashion Me A People: Curriculum in the Church*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989.

Holtz, Barry. *Textual Knowledge; Teaching the Bible in Theory and Practice*. New York: JTSA 2003.

Kress, Jeffrey. *Growing Jewish Minds, Growing Jewish Souls*. New York: URJ Press, 2013.

Miller, Helena; Grant, Lisa; Pomson, A. *International Handbook of Jewish Education, Part One: Section 2*. Heidelberg: Springer, 2011.

O'Neill, William. *Educational Ideologies: Contemporary Expressions of Educational Philosophy*. Santa Monica: Goodyear Publishing, 1981. (Appendix 1: Judaism and Jewish Education)

Pazmiño, Robert W. *Basics of Teaching Christians: Preparation, Instruction, and Evaluation*. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2002.

Pazmiño, Robert W. *So What Makes Our Teaching Christian: Teaching in the Name, Spirit and Power Of Jesus*. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2008.

Westerhoff, John H. *Spiritual Life: The Foundation for Preaching and Teaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994.

Journals: Christian Education Journal, Journal of Jewish Education, Religious Education, Encyclopedia Judaica

Other articles and references will be provided prior to the course assigned to particular teaching days.

800 Level Course Work: Those taking the course at the *800 level* are expected to address in greater depth theoretically and theologically course assignments and are expected to discuss their work individually with the instructors at the beginning of the course for sources to consider.

The visit schedule was:

1:00-1:30pm Departure and Travel to the school site (Early arrival actually enabled a group photo in front of the school's sign.)

1.30 -2.00pm Arrival and Orientation to the School: Ethos, history, vision, mission, population served, context, organization, background to instructional staffing.

2.00 – 2.40pm: Five groups with a max of 4 persons each to view the following areas:
Teacher Instruction: watching a variety of teachers, speaking to teachers, lesson planning etc.
Student learning: observing students, interviewing students, examining student work etc.
Environment for Learning: School displays, architecture, classroom layout, sensory reception, visual ethos etc.
Curriculum Planning and Development: Hebrew and Jewish Studies curriculum, cross curricula activities, all-school programming, text books etc.

2.45- 3.15pm: Review and Reflection with School team

3.15- 3.30pm: Final Meeting with Head of School or equivalent

3.30-4.00pm: Visitors meet privately for review with faculty members

The observation tasks noted that “observation is work and requires your concentration; be prepared to take notes because we are limited to a small group per classroom” and included:

Tasks

1. Select one particular teacher, student, classroom setting or curriculum practice and flow to observe immediately upon entering the classroom and being situated for observation.
2. Maintain a passive role while observing by saying and doing less than you normally would. Try to remain focused on your observation area regardless of what happens and who else appears on the scene.
3. In the case of observation areas 1 and 2, write down all you can of what one teacher or student does/says in approximately a five minute block.
4. In the case of area 2, estimate the attention spans if observing a particular student in approximately a five minute block.
5. For 15 minutes record all significant behavior indicating intellectual, emotional or social functioning of a teacher or child, how the environment supports or distracts from learning, or how the curriculum takes shape in actual practice in this setting.
6. Review observation recordings and attempt to answer questions below and/or pose additional questions.

Questions for observations:

1. How does your particular person react to the presence of you and others in the classroom?
2. Language in Teaching and Learning
 - a. What is the extent of the teacher’s or student’s vocabulary? How many different words are used in relation to lesson?
 - b. How long his /her sentences are (number of words)?
 - c. What sort of questions does the teacher or student ask? Are the questions answered? Why or why not?
 - d. Is language accompanied by gesturing to indicate its meaning?
 - e. Does the language of others appear to control the person’s behavior?
 - f. In the case of a student, do the teacher’s commands or verbalizations of other children interrupt the student’s actions? In the case of a teacher, do the students’ responses shift the flow of teaching and in what ways?
3. How long is the attention span of the student or teacher?
How long does she/he continue at one activity?
What activities sustain his/her attention and efforts?
What distracts the student or teacher from their tasks?
4. How does the student or teacher solve a particular problem in the classroom activities, such as not understanding a task or needing to get the teacher’s or students’ attention?

5. Was there any evidence of imaginative or creative thought or activity? What was it? How does the environment support learning and creative expression? How does the curriculum allow for creative expression?
6. How can you describe the interaction of one child with other persons in the room? With teacher? With peers? With you as an observer?
7. What is the nature of the classroom interaction and its general atmosphere?
8. How effective is the teaching and learning in this particular setting and what might better enhance the experiences of students and teachers?
9. Besides the explicit curriculum, how would you describe the implicit, null and evaded curricula in this setting?
10. What most impressed you in your observations and what questions linger from your experience?

REFERENCES

Court, Deborah and Jack Seymour. (2013) "What Might Meaningful Interfaith Education Look Like? Exploring Politics, Principles and Pedagogy," *Religious Education Association Conference*, November 9, Waltham, MA.

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Siew, Yau Man. (2013). "Pastor as Shepherd-Teacher: Insiders' Stories of Pastoral and Educational Imagination," *Christian Education Journal* Series 3, Vol. 10, No. 1, 48-70.

¹ Adapted from <http://www.interreligiousleadership.org/about/mission-history> that is the website description for the joint program of Hebrew College and Andover Newton Theological School entitled CIRCLE, Center for Inter-Religious and Communal Leadership Education

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