

**The place of the topic, “U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews”, in Israeli high-school studies**

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# **The place of the topic, “U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews”, in Israeli high-school studies**

## **1. Introduction**

During years of exile, the demography of Jewish populations in the world was marked by shifting patterns of Jewish communities scattered around the world. Five generations ago, some 90 percent of Jews in the world lived in Central and Eastern Europe. Today, however, 80 percent of the Jews in the world are either Americans or Israelis. U.S. Jewry represents an unprecedented phenomenon in Jewish history in terms of the rapid growth in its economic, cultural and political clout. This fact alters the dynamics of relations among world Jewry, and between the latter and other cultures and nations. This new definition of the diaspora, with its cultural and political implications, creates a need for a better and more profound knowledge of U.S. Jewry.

Among educators who are involved in the field of Judaic studies, there is a growing perception that it is necessary to foster among pupils in Israel a higher awareness of the change that has taken place in the situation of Jews in the world, of the cultural-spiritual and strategic-political importance of U.S. Jewry, and of the link between Israeli Jewry and U.S. Jewry, from the cultural and religious points of view. It is important to learn about U.S.

Jewry's centers, sub-cultures, denominations, cultural creativity and community life, as well as about its influence inside and outside of the U.S.

Teachers who undertake to create encounters with U.S. Jewry and to examine the differences between the two cultures - for example, in the relations between "religion and state", separated in the U.S. as opposed to linked in Israel – find that by looking into the U.S Jewry situation we can learn a lot about ourselves.

The starting point of this investigation states that it is necessary to foster awareness of the existence of multiculturalism, a **variety of possibilities for belief and faith**, such as diversity of religious identities and to encourage respect for and tolerance of pluralism and difference. The pursuit of the topics that arise in this study may well contribute to the nurturing of these values.

## **2. Aims of the research**

This study is being conducted in order to examine the manner in which the education system in Israeli high schools relates to U.S. Jewry, from two points of view:

- The curricula: Which curricula and teaching and enrichment materials are already included in the system, and what part of them is being **implemented / put into practice**?
- The perceptions of the history teachers who teach the topic of U.S. Jewry: How do the history teachers perceive the place of the topic of U.S. Jewry and the relations between U.S. Jewry and Israel, in high-school studies?

### **3. Research method**

**The study is being conducted in two parts:**

- Part I, whose aim is to examine what is included in the curricula and the teaching and enrichment materials that have been used in the Israeli high school education system, during the past three years;
- Part II, whose aim is to examine, understand and survey the perceptions and needs of history teachers in Israeli high schools, with regard to studies of U.S. Jewry.

**3.1 Part I: An examination of the curricula and the teaching and enrichment materials that have existed in the high-school education system during the past three<sup>1</sup> years, pertaining to the topic of U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews.**

**In this part, the following questions will be examined:**

1. Which curricula and teaching and enrichment materials on the topic of the U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews exist in the high-school education system in Israel?
2. What are the underlying assumptions of each curriculum – its target population, contents, and the advised nature of teaching and learning?

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<sup>1</sup> We are referring to the past 3 years in order to focus on the present, authentic, situation.

### **The research procedure (Part I)**

A search was conducted for information about curricula, teaching and enrichment materials and websites in the fields of history, literature and cinema, which has either existed in the system or has been recommended for use in it during the past three years, on the topic of American Jewry, as available in:

1. The Internet;
2. Libraries;
3. Pedagogical services and curricular centers;
4. The Department of Curricula at the Ministry of Education;
5. Lists and catalogs of publications issued by leading publishers that specialize in teaching materials, such as "Reches" Publications.

Below is an example of a table for analyzing the information:

**Characteristics of curricula and teaching and enrichment materials on the topic of the U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews**

	<b>Name of the curriculum / teaching material Who devised and who published it, Where and when?</b>	<b>Contents and didactic recommendations</b>
<b>Curriculum</b>		
<b>Teaching materials</b>		

Enrichment materials		
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### **3.2 Part II: An examination of the perceptions of high-school history teachers, of the topic's “U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews”, and its place in high-school studies**

This part of the research consists of two stages:

**Stage 1:** During this stage, 12 educators were interviewed, using in-depth, semi-structured questionnaires. The interviewees, who were chosen by random sample and subsequently by means of the snowball approach (one interviewee leads to the next), came from different sectors of the education system: state (8), state religious (3) and independent (1). The aim of the sample was to permit the voices of interviewees from the different sectors to be heard, taking into account the relative size of the particular sector in the education system. This would serve as the infrastructure for preparing a comprehensive, countrywide survey based on close-ended questionnaires, to be conducted during the 1995-6 school year.

The questions in those interviews were derived from the central research questions: whether, what, and how the topic of U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews should be taught in the high-school education system (in the different sectors). The interviewees were asked how they perceived the place of the above-mentioned topic in high-school studies in Israel. What was their attitude toward the topic? In their opinion, is it important in high-

school studies, and if so, why? Did they believe that it should be introduced into the curriculum of their institutions? To which student populations should it correspond? What should be taught? How? What should the scope of the studies be? etc. (The detailed interview appears in Appendix 1.)

This part of the research aims to assist the researchers construct a questionnaire that examines the perceptions of history teachers in the high-school education system with regard to the study of the topic, “U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews”.

An analysis of the interviews produced several ideas and themes that shed light on the central perceptions of the place of the above-mentioned topic in high-school education. These ideas and themes add up to indicate **four different and distinct Jewish narratives**, which represent the different approaches toward the relations between Israeli Jewry and Diaspora Jewry, and the place of U.S. Jewry in this context. Each of the narratives that emerged was found to be significant with regard to the speaker’s perception as to the place of the topic in high-school studies.

**Stage 2:** During this stage, a predominantly closed questionnaire was constructed. (The full interview appears in Appendix 2.) It examines the perceptions of history teachers in high-schools pertaining to what exists and what they would like as regards the topic, U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews, in high-school studies. During the next school year (2005-2006), the questionnaire will be distributed to a representative sample of

high-school history teachers all over Israel. The data collected along of the survey will be statistically analyzed and further discussed.

## **4. Research findings**

### **Part I: The database- An annotated bibliography of programs and materials of studies and enrichment on the topic of American Jewry, for Israeli high schools**

In this part, a database of curricula and teaching and enrichment materials for the Bagrut (the Israeli matriculation examinations) recommended by the Ministry of Education was constructed – The database will be attached in a separate brochure.

#### **A “picture” of the curricula and teaching and enrichment materials, on the topic of U.S. Jewry for high schools**

	<b>Type of material</b>	<b>Number of items found</b>
<b>Curricula for Bagrut</b>	The appearances of the discussed topic in the Bagrut (the Israeli matriculation examination) in the last three years	<b>3</b>



<b>Teaching materials for Bagrut</b>	Bagrut textbooks	<b>20</b>
<b>Enrichment books</b>	Prose and documentary books for enrichment	<b>5 prose, 24-documentary</b>
<b>Enrichment movies</b>	Movies and documentaries	<b>19</b>
<b>Enrichment internet sites</b>	Sites or parts of sites, on the Internet that offer information about American Jewry	<b>20</b>

**An examination of the database according to topics in U.S. Jewry**

**studies:**

**U.S. Jews – Curricula for Bagrut during the past three years**

The great immigration at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – 2

U.S. Jewry between the two World Wars – 2

U.S. Jewry and the Holocaust – 1

**U.S. Jews – Textbooks for Bagrut**

The great immigration at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – 8

U.S. Jewry between the two World Wars – 4

U.S. Jewry and the Holocaust – 2

Relations between the State of Israel and the Diaspora – 2

**U.S. Jews – Enrichment movies**

The great immigration at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – 1

U.S. Jewry between the two World Wars – 7

U.S. Jewry in the 50s – 1

U.S. Jewry in the 40s – 3

U.S. Jewry today – 6

Relations between the State of Israel and U.S. Jews during the course of the first 50 years of Israel’s statehood – 1

It is clear that the Bagrut exams and their attendant teaching materials require and feature mainly knowledge about the great immigration of the Jews to the U.S. in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, about the Jews in the U.S. between the two World Wars, and about U.S. Jews in the context of the Holocaust. A minority of the teaching materials also deals with the relations between U.S. Jewry and Israel; and overall, the extent of materials available is strikingly meager.

## **4.2 Part 2**

**Stage 1: An examination of the perceptions of high-school educators<sup>2</sup> with regard to the place of the topic, “U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews”, in high-school studies.**

***1. Scattered Jewry ("Pzura"), Diaspora, center, or global village – where does the Jewish narrative take place?***

When the teachers and principals were asked about the place of the topic, “U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews”, in high-school studies, four distinct perceptions of the Jewish narrative emerged. The various

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perceptions were given ideological and value-based justifications, and were supported by the political-economic value as opposed to the spiritual-social value.

**a. Judaism as a multiplicity of different narratives of the communities of Israel and the Diaspora:** This perception stresses the component of multiple Jewish communities and Jewish “voices” in the world. Every one of these communities is perceived as equally significant and legitimate for the purpose of determining Jewish identity. The aim of studying Jewish history is to serve as an anchor for the pupils when examining and consolidating their identity as Jews. Presenting the “stories” of Jewish communities throughout the world offers the pupil alternative evidence of the existence of the Jewish spirit and enables her to embark on a process of identity consolidation from a broader base of knowledge and meaningfulness.

The State of Israel and the U.S., in this context, are no different from any other Jewish community in the Diaspora. According to this perception, while the topic, “U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews”, is relevant to the high-school curriculum, it is no less relevant and meaningful to discuss each of the other Jewish communities. This perception stressed that “the Jewish spirit” exists beyond time and space – in other words, it lives in each and every Diaspora and is not a political-economic matter:

**A Jew is not a Jew only here in Israel.** There are all kinds of places and times in being a Jew. Every community and dispersion has its own way of 'being a Jew'. It is a matter of

spirit, not a political matter. To be a Jew in Israel or the U.S. or any other place today is not the same, and it is also different from what it was years ago. A pupil must be acquainted with various examples of the Jewish spirit latitudinally, in different places, and longitudinally, in various communities at different times, so that on the basis of this plurality, he can shape and consolidate for himself a perception of himself as a Jew – his own independent Jewish identity. (*A history and civics teacher in a state high school*)

**My motto, [when] I teach them Jewish identity,** for their existence, for their perception, I want them to be people with open minds, with broad thinking, with comprehensive vision as to who they are and where [they are] in this whole world, and I want them to see themselves not on the limited plane – “I, the individual” – and that’s it. I don’t have to care about anything but...myself, and my advancement, because they are in something much bigger. And from this greatness, you’re a part of a people. Also of mankind, of course, but it is very important to me, very important, to perpetuate **the existence of the Jewish people.**

And...to this end, you have to educate, you have to...give content, give shared experiences. So there are Jews in the U.S. and they have identities in a context and there are [Jews] in the Soviet Union [*sic*] and there are [Jews] in Israel and

every youngster in Israel has to know about everyone and choose and consolidate his own identity for himself. (*A history and civics teacher in a state high school*)

**b. Judaism as a personal-subjective issue, in the framework of the multiplicity of Jewish voices in the “global village”:** To some extent, this perception is the radicalization of the previous one, since it presents Judaism as the emerging or “disappearing” identity within a global village in which there are multiple communal and personal narratives regarding Judaism. This perception cancels out the centrality of the communal and/or collective component, and presents Judaism as an identity that either thrives or becomes extinct on the personal-subjective plane, and seeks its communal sources of belonging through a perpetual journey. This framework of meaning presented the discussion about U.S. Jewry as relevant, together with the discussion about additional Jewish communities. People who adhere to this perception complain about the egocentricity of today’s youngsters and their desire to advance the personal “I” and pursue material values. They consider the influence of the mass media and the Internet, the “global village” phenomenon, to be a central factor in the loss of communality and the sense of "drowning" which some people feel when trying to find themselves and choose an identity:

**Today, for instance, when you mention the unification of Europe, you discard nationality.** Right? The world is becoming a global world, the economy a global

economy... Globalization of everything.... Internet. What difference does it make who you are? I can communicate on the Internet with Kuwait. I can download songs from the library of someone from Kuwait or from someplace else. In other words, I no longer have to... There's a world wide trend that you don't attribute to nationality at all. The whole world is like one village. Everyone sees at the same time – with the satellite, you see everything! If it's the Olympics, and if it's some event, and if it's a revolution in Romania, or... So there are Jews everywhere. So ultimately you can choose for yourself, on your own, how to be a Jew. (*A history and civics teacher in a state high school*)

**Today, society is really... we're losing the consensus more and more,** there is less agreement about things – not that in the past there was so much agreement; today there isn't [any] about many, many things. So it's obvious that it'll be expressed by children, when the individual becomes more and more central. So if in the past, let's say, the country was the important thing, the collective was the important thing, and within the collective, if you speak about a state, then it's a Jewish state, then you already have an affinity with the Jewish people. But now there's a trend (which has began in the seventies) in which the individual

becomes more and more important, less so the collective, and then if the individual... “Of what interest are the Jewish people to me, you understand,” he (the student) says to himself, *I* interest me, I want to succeed. And especially, when today the world, the whole world is one global village, they begin to discard (what doesn't fit them-the students)... *(A history and civics teacher in a state high school)*

**c. Dominant narratives within Judaism:** According to this perception, there are more dominant Jewish narratives as a result of their influence in the world, such as U.S. Jewry and Israeli Jewry, which represent two noticeable alternative centers. The people who adhere to this perception consider the topic, “U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews”, as having great relevance to the high-school curriculum because of the significant place that U.S. Jewry occupies in the inclusive Jewish narrative. These people stressed the relative freedom and the concomitant economic and political clout of U.S. Jewry.

**I consider it more important to teach about U.S. Jewry because of several aspects.** First of all, the pupils should learn about additional Diasporas that exist in the world, from the point of view of (gaining) knowledge. With this material (knowledge about U.S Jewry), it's also possible

to accomplish the second aim – universal values. For instance, ... when the topic of pluralism is taught, when the religious approaches, the religious denominations are taught, when responsibility and the solidarity of the Jews of the United States is taught, uh, to the Jews in the world, it's certainly important, and not just focusing on topics such as the Holocaust or topics like pogroms and the uprisings in Eretz Israel... To take advantage of the democratic values of individual liberty, I decided that it's possible to **lever** it to the relationship in the population as well. If in the United States, they allowed the Jews to pray on a certain day, or Jews drove for example on Rosh Hashana to study for exams at university, I've given an example of the concept of pluralism with regard to the minorities. We have pupils in the school – Arabs – who, from last year, girls came with scarves on their heads, with a veil on their heads. It was something very special in a Jewish high school. (...)? So I said to the pupils, how can it be that Jews are also a minority in the United States? (*A history teacher and position holder in a state high school*)

**The biggest diaspora from the point of view of a center** is the United States diaspora. So it's clear that there has to be a connection. Uh, if we're talking from the point of



view of the ultra-Orthodox, religious, facet, the Halachic topic as well. There are consultations with the rabbis abroad, too, about all kinds of topics. So there are very major connections between these two bodies – both from the political point of view and from the point of view of building and helping everyone – all the things that the Jewish people needs. So there is a connection, there must be a connection. *(The principal of a state high school)*

**d. The Zionist narrative of “the people in Israel” as a central narrative and other Jewish narratives as subordinate to it.** Here the central Jewish narrative belongs to Israeli Jews, Israeli society, while **other Jewish narratives, of the other Jewish communities, are considered peripheral.**

The interviewees who adhere to this perception did not stress the relevance of the topic, “U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews”, to high-school studies. They considered the involvement with U.S. Jewry as reflecting a misplaced reaction, an exaggerated stress on the economic-political clout of this Jewry. This can be seen in the following case of the secular principal of a pluralistic high school, who believed that the subject was not relevant to his school’s curriculum (which aimed more at promoting dialog between Jews and Arabs) and that there was no justification to focus expressly on the context of U.S. Jewry, which is just one Diaspora among all the Jewish diasporas in the world:

**Why (teach about) the relationship with the Jews of the United States and not about the relationship with the Jews of Argentina** and not about the relationship with the Jews of France and not the relationship with the Jews of Iraq and not the relationship with the Jews of Morocco? In other words, I don't understand, if there is a community that has financial capability, why is this factor determinant (in deciding what to teach)... Why must it be?

I think that the relevant topic, from the point of view of the pupil, must be a strengthening of the awareness and knowledge of his Jewish heritage. And that's all, and through those things to link up to other things. I don't think that we need to have lessons about communities of one kind or another. Because the moment you deal with communities, if you begin to spread it to communities, it also begins to be a matter of "he who pays the piper calls the tune"... Who can guarantee, or who can determine the importance of one community rather than another? (*The principal of a state school*)

In the view of the people who adhere to this perception, it is necessary, for example, to expand on current affairs, such as the relations between different groups in Israel (e.g., religious and secular Jews, Jews and Arabs), either because it is necessary to promote a dialog and mutual respect, or because

there are inherent dangers in these issues, such as a security threat, political rivalry and conflict, and so on.

I remember that for years, the topic of making aliya among the Jews of the United States was not something that was taken for granted. I can pay and I'm a good Zionist even if I just pay. And then one can raise the whole argument between Nachum Goldman and David Ben Gurion, the historic argument, about what it means to be a Zionist. **To be a Zionist, do you have to make aliya, or is it enough that you write a check, which the State of Israel also needs like air to breathe?**

What does that mean? So if you don't make aliya, you give money. Does money atone for blood? It's simple. It means, we get killed here, it doesn't matter if it's in wars, or Intifadas, or things like that, and they – they (American jews) even allow themselves to criticize (us).

There are things that burn more in our bones, from the point of view of... from the point of view of our existential issues in Israel. When there's little time to teach, it's preferable to deal with the important questions here in Israel such as the problems between Arabs and Jews, religious and secular, etc. *(a history and civics teacher in a state religious high school)*

**To sum up:** The four perceptions of the Jewish narrative, as described above, can be placed on a continuum at one end of which there is a

preference for universal spiritual values and at the other end of which there is a reference to material values and current affairs. However, the interviewees occasionally mention some of the perceptions that were described above, side by side, and it can be supposed that those perceptions and their composition are likely to change in accordance with changes in the political-economic and cultural situation. For instance, when there are terrorist attacks, the Jewish-Zionist narrative emerges more than the other narratives, as does a tendency to deal with current affairs.

***2. Curricular perceptions regarding the place of the topic “U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews”, in high-school studies.***

The curricular perceptions regarding the place of the topic, “U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israeli Jews”, in high-school studies, fluctuate between relating to “what exists” – the part that **has been allocated to** this topic in the “**Focus**” programs for Bagrut during the last two years, and “what is wished for” – should the topic be integrated into high-school studies, and if so, how?

It can be said, that dealing with U.S. Jewry is done mainly in the framework of the required formal “rubric”: **preparation for questions on this topic in the Focus for the Bagrut exams in history.** Infrequently, the topic is dealt with in multidisciplinary contexts such as Bagrut written projects (done in lieu of an examination), reading texts in literature, and so on. In special places, such as the Ulpanot of **Ultra orthodox Education**, in which many of the teachers and their (female) students come from a Jewish-American background, the topic of U.S. Jewry is organically interwoven in the

curriculum in many of the disciplines. The topic is sometimes also dealt with in the framework of special projects at the center of which is the creation of a face-to-face and/or virtual relationship between Jewish Israeli youngsters and American Jewish youngsters.

**a. The current place of the topic and the nature of its presence in the Israeli high school curriculum.**

**The formal “rubric” – preparation for the Bagrut exams in history**

In the last three years, topics linked to U.S. Jewry have occasionally appeared in the **Focuses** for the Bagrut exams. The interviewees mentioned that most of the work on this topic in the schools in which they teach is done as a part of the “material” that is studied for the Bagrut exams in history. During the course of teaching for the Bagrut, discussions on current events that are linked to U.S. Jews and are not required for the Bagrut, such as the Jonathan Pollard affair, sometimes arise during history and/or civics lessons.

**Dealing with U.S. Jewry in the formal curriculum – in multidisciplinary contexts**

To the best of the interviewees’ knowledge, the topic of U.S. Jewry is not expressed significantly in multidisciplinary contexts such as literature, geography and so on. One of the interviewees spoke about being an advisor for a Bagrut paper in literature in which the pupil examined instances in which U.S. Jewry was mentioned in literary texts.

**“Interweaving” the topic of U.S. Jewry as an organic part of the curriculum**

According to the interviewees, in the framework of the **recognized (Ultra orthodox) education sector**, in the seminaries and ulpanot that are meant for girls from the Bet Ya’akov network and operate in accordance with the special curriculum of the sector, subjects like history and civics are considered to be “secular subjects”, and as such are not studied in the high-school yeshivot beyond the independent elementary education.

In some of the ulpanot, many of the teachers and the pupils come from an American Jewish background, and there, in spite of the fact that they have renounced the focused study of history, there is constant reference to U.S. Jewry. This reference is interwoven naturally and organically with the studies. For instance, in the **homeroom teacher's lessons**, the political implications of U.S. Jewry for the situation in the Middle East in general and Israel in particular, are discussed.

According to the teacher who was interviewed (she teaches and also serves as an inspector in the **Ultra orthodox education** network), the topic of U.S. Jewry is included in almost every possible area of the curriculum in some of the ulpanot, and it is impossible not to discuss it. In the interview with her, she reported on additional contexts, in which the topic is applied, such as geography lessons, English language studies, and so on. Many of the pupils have relatives in the U.S., and some of the kindergartens of the sector, for instance, are run in English. Both the interviewees from the state-religious education sector and those from the independent sector mentioned the unique spiritual contribution of the rabbis from the U.S. to **homeroom** and

Judaism lessons. The **interviewee from the national-religious education sector** related more to the personal contribution of the rabbis to Zionist thinking, while the interviewee from the **Ultra orthodox education** sector related more to their contribution on the community level.

### **Dealing with U.S. Jewry in the framework of special social projects**

Another way of dealing with the topic of U.S. Jewry, as was mentioned previously, is by means of special social projects. In this framework, ties are established with U.S Jewry. The following are some of the projects that were mentioned: a project on Tel Aviv / Los Angeles **under the auspices** of the Jewish Agency's Partnership 2000 (virtual meetings between pupils from Tel Aviv and Los Angeles); the Birthright Israel Project, which was initiated by Charles Bronfman, and includes the arrival of American students from abroad with the aim of acquainting them with Israel and encouraging aliya. In this framework, encounters are held between American Jewish high school students and Israeli high-school students. There are also special donor projects (for instance, the **Price-Brodie** initiative in Jaffa, in cooperation with Tel Aviv University and the Tel Aviv Municipality, which operates in the Jaffa community to promote its Jewish and Arab residents by stressing educational programs for children and teenagers from the public sector), as well as individual lectures given by representatives of the Jewish American Council.

### **The problem of teaching materials**

The two secular teachers who taught the topic of U.S. Jewry in the framework of their history lessons reported difficulties in obtaining teaching materials, even for the contexts that are required by the Ministry of Education and appear in the curriculum. (For example, one of the books recommended by the Ministry of Education, *Jewish Existence in the Diaspora*, is unobtainable.) These teachers reported the extensive work they invested in creating the curriculum. They teach the material by combining a variety of work methods and materials (such as work in the computer room, discussions, personal stories, awareness surveys, extracts from movies, stories of family ties, material downloaded from the Internet, works of art and even money bills). They also reported the use of materials from the pupils' everyday lives, for instance, pointing out Jewish motifs in the current movie, *Meet the Fockers*. However, they said that the time and energy resources that are needed for preparing their students for **the Bagrut**, in addition to the dearth of resources in the schools, make it difficult to teach the material in a manner that is not frontal (because it might need a lot more preparation).

In the state-religious education, less use of varied materials and a renunciation of activities and **activations** were reported. In the **Ultra-Orthodox** sector, active discussions in the framework of **homeroom lessons** were reported, in an attempt to direct the world-view of the sector. As mentioned previously, subjects like civics and history are not taught there because they are secular subjects.



**b. What is wished for – what the interviewees consider to be the optimal way of dealing with U.S. Jewry**

The interviewees' perceptions of "what is wished for", with regard to U.S. Jewry studies, stemmed from their perceptions of the place/s of the Jewish narrative described above. The description of "what is wished for" included several issues:

**Dealing with the topic of U.S. Jewry as "internal or external" and as "disciplinary or multidisciplinary pertaining to high schools' formal curriculum**

In answer to the question regarding the desired form of study, the interviewees differed in their views. Some felt that it should be included in the high school formal curriculum, while others felt that it should be external to the institution – in the framework of activities belonging to non-formal education such as encounters, connections and youth delegations.

Two of the secular teachers claimed that the topic should be an inherent part of the curriculum because of the humanistic values of pluralism, liberty, autonomy of the individual, and so on, that it promotes. They also stressed the value of the multidisciplinary study of the topic and said that if they could include the topic in different disciplines such as literature and/or geography, and if they could include youth encounters while teaching it, they would have been a lot more satisfied. One of the teachers said half jokingly that a trip by her pupils to the United States could be very valuable from the learning point of view. The encounter with the tall buildings and the visits to the relevant cultural institutions that exist there, such as the

Holocaust Museum, could teach the pupils a great deal, both on the cognitive and on the emotional-identity levels. The Ultra-Orthodox teacher/inspector who was interviewed considered the topic to be important to the curriculum because it is a part of almost every area of her pupils' lives, and concerns the life of the ultra-Orthodox society around them. The topic also seemed important to her because of U.S. Jewry's status as the dominant spiritual center equivalent to Israel. She claimed that if she could offer a program on the topic, she would offer one that would encourage American Jews to make aliya.

Two of the interviewees who held management positions in the schools claimed that the topic was less relevant to the school curriculum, and if it were dealt with at all, it would have to be in a framework of the activities belonging to non-formal education, or a part of the general topic of the Diaspora.

### **Matching the topic to the pupil populations**

According to what the two secular interviewees said, the material that should be taught on the topic of U.S. Jewry is extremely comprehensive and complex, and therefore it is difficult for the pupils in the lower (10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>) grades to digest. One of the secular teachers prepared a detailed chart of the religious streams and organizations among U.S. Jewry for publication on the Internet. It was not published because it was perceived as overly complex by the management of the educational institution in which she teaches. According to her estimate, many schools are liable to shy away from teaching the topic in the future, and will opt to focus on a topic that is

less broad and complex, such as Polish Jewry. Another secular teacher teaches the material by means of summaries that she prepares and hands out to the pupils, in order to make the topic more user-friendly. The teacher in the Ultra-Orthodox education sector also stressed that the material taught in the framework of history and civics lessons is more suitable for pupils in the higher grades.

In an interview with a teacher who is also a vice-principal in the National-religious sector, the interviewee reiterated that the topic should be taught in other (non-formal) forums, and only select pupils – ones who are knowledgeable about the subject – should have access to the topic. The two interviewees in the National-religious schools mentioned English as an obstacle that sometimes precludes the participation of pupils in the non-formal projects, since the latter are based on encounters or virtual dialog between youngsters from Israel and the U.S.

### **Emphases in teaching and studying the topic of U.S. Jewry**

#### **1. Emphasis on the emotional aspects of teaching the topic**

The secular teachers who were interviewed claimed that emphasizing the emotional aspects of teaching the topic would help bring the pupils closer to it. Dealing with the religious denominations among U.S. Jewry was perceived by these teachers as extremely meaningful and noteworthy for the secular pupils because it sparks emotional reactions. The topic of the religious denominations among U.S. Jewry also turned out to be meaningful for the teacher from the recognized (i.e., ultra orthodox) stream. It caused the teachers to take a clear stand against Reform movement and emphasized the

danger that such reforms constitute with regard to Judaism. Among the interviewees from the national religious education, the topic was presented as irrelevant – the Reform movement in Israel was too negligible to warrant any special attention.

## 2. Emphasis on teaching the topic of U.S. Jewry in actual contexts

Some of the teachers spoke about the need for teaching the topic of U.S. Jewry in current contexts. One secular teacher, who perceives herself as teaching history from a pluralistic standpoint, said that she used the topic in the context of current problems in order to point out values of pluralism as well as the enormous value of education. The same teacher mentioned, for instance, that as a teacher in a mixed Jewish-Arab school, when she taught about U.S. Jewry, she related to the fact that Arab girls come to school with a veil. She did so in order to get the Jewish and Arab pupils to understand how a minority feels in Israel and in the U.S. and that they are, in fact, all human beings. She also showed the class prayers in which the Reform Jews had made changes to the Orthodox version, and saw how the topic sparked the involvement and interest of the religious pupils in the class.

### **To sum up:**

The teachers and position-holders from the various sectors, who were interviewed during the course of this part of the research, hold different views of the Jewish narrative as well as its place/s and its strengths. It can be supposed that these points of view are tied to value-based considerations that are partially personal and partially sector-related. The interviewees'

curricular perceptions appeared to be closely tied to their particular views of the Jewish narrative. The interviewees who considered U.S. Jewry as mainly symbolizing freedom and choice, similar to Israeli Jewry, supported the expansion of the study of the topic in high school, using an entire spectrum of materials and methods to teach it. The interviewees who perceived all the Diasporas as equal or Israel as dominant with the others subordinate to it from the point of view of Judaism did not see the need to emphasize the topic of U.S. Jewry more than any other Diaspora. They generally stressed that it is preferable to devote the precious time of the civics and history lessons to current affairs such as the relations between groups in Israel.

When relating to **“what exists”** in the topic of U.S. Jewry in the high-school curriculum, the interviewees spoke predominantly about the curriculum for the Bagrut, but occasionally also mentioned teaching the topic by means of youth encounters in the framework of non-formal education. Some of the teachers mentioned that the existing teaching materials for Bagrut preparation were not adequate, and therefore they felt the need to devise their own materials and activities.

When relating to **“what is wished for”** in the topic of U.S. Jewry in high schools, some of the interviewees said that the topic must continue being taught and that it must even be expanded in the framework of the formal Bagrut curriculum. Others claimed that it would be more appropriate to deal with the topic – if it is dealt with at all – outside of the formal educational institutions, in the framework of non-formal education, for instance, in face-to-face or virtual youth encounters. Some of the interviewees spoke about

the need to stress the emotional as well as the current aspects in the teaching of the topic of U.S. Jewry.

## **Stage 2 – A survey of perceptions among history teachers in high-school education in Israel**

### **Sample Description**

154 teachers who took part in professional development courses in Civics and related subjects in the Beit Yatziv institute in Beer Sheba and in the Levinsky College of education, in 2006 participated in the research.

**Gender:** male- 10.6%, female- 89.4% (one has to note that not all of the teachers answered all of the questions).

**Mother tongue:** Hebrew- 88.6%, Arabic- 1.5%, English- 3.0%, other- 3.8%

**Discipline of specialization:** Jewish studies- **18.2%**, Bible studies- **27.9%**, Science- **2.6%**, Environmental studies- **1.9%**, History- **13%**, Geography- **5.8%**, Literature- **12.3%**, Civics- **6.5%**, Mathematics- **6.5%**, Other- **19.5%** (answers are not exclusive).

**Role at school:** managerial role- **31.2%**, homeroom teacher- **19.5%** (answers are not exclusive).

**School level:** kindergarten- **0.6%**, elementary- **19.5%**, middle school, **15.6%**, high school- **13%** other- **0.6%** (answers are not exclusive).

**Educational Sector:** National- **92%**, National- Religious- **5.1%**, other- **2.9%**(answers are not exclusive).

**Years of teaching**- average of 16 (years) S.D. 9.5

**Academic level**- B.A (or Bed) - **60.5%**, M.A (or Med)- **39.5%**

## **Findings**

### **A. Teachers views of the current place of the topic of American Jewry in the Israeli curriculum**

Teachers were asked about the current situation pertaining to the integration of the topic of American Jewry in the Israeli curriculum:

**A.1. 13.6%** of the teachers said that during the past three years, the topic of U.S. Jewry **has been taught** in their schools, **60.5%** said the topic **hasn't been taught** in their schools and **25.9%** claimed they **didn't know** weather the topic was taught in their schools<sup>3</sup>.

**A.2.** Out of the teachers who positively answered the previous question, **7.8%** claimed that the topic of U.S. Jewry has been taught during history lessons **1.3%**- during Civics lessons **1.3%** geography lessons, 0.6% during literature lessons, **0.6%** homeroom teacher hours. Answers were not exclusive.

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<sup>3</sup> We would like to comment that the above described sample is a result of a compromise we had to reach because it was not possible to obtain the first proposed sample, due to difficulties in reaching the designated subjects. As suggested in our research proposal, we first tried to interview school principals (we called 60 of them and only 9 were willing to answer the interviewer, however, they refused to be part of a research- "any research" as they've said). Our request of the head supervisor of history studies in the ministry of education, to hand questionnaires to his area supervisors or teachers, was refused. This tricky situation was assumed to be a result of the educational reform Israel has been going through since 1.5 years ago and the change of government that left educators puzzled and frustrated about the situation, and thus suspicious of any attempt at picking their brain about ideas that might have a political significance.

Finally we managed to get a permit to distribute questionnaires to teachers who participate in professional development courses in Beit Yatziv and in our teacher training college. Therefore the current sample might represent mostly teachers who take care to continue their education in service from the non religious sector of the Israeli educational system.

**A.3. 13.6%** claimed that the topic was studied during one lesson, **59.1%** claimed it "occupied" 2-4 lessons, **13.6%** claimed it "occupied" 5-7 lessons, **9.1%** claimed it "occupied" 8-15 lessons and **4.5%** said it was taught during more than 15 lessons.

**A.4.** Teachers claimed that teaching the topic consisted mainly of: Lectures **8.4%**, Discussions **9.1%**, Research activities **1.9%** youth encounters **1.3%**

**A.5.** To the question: "**To the best of your knowledge, in the framework of teaching the topic, which of the following subjects are dealt with?**"- The answers diverged as follows:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>I don't know</b>
The dispersion of the Jews in the U.S. throughout history	42.9%	38.1%	19.0%
The religious streams, among U.S. Jewry	70.8%	12.5%	16.7%
The immigration to the U.S. and the building of the Jewish community in the U.S. prior to World Wars	60.9%	21.7%	17.4%
The Jews in the U.S. between the two World Wars	30%	40%	30%
The Jews in the U.S. during and after the Holocaust	11.1%	55.6%	33.3%
The political-economic influence of the Jews in the U.S. today	47.4%	26.3%	26.3%
The cultural contribution of U.S. Jews	43.8%	31.3%	25%



The table shows that the subject which were most dealt with were: "The religious streams, among U.S. Jewry", "The immigration to the U.S. and the building of the Jewish community in the U.S. prior to World Wars" and " The political-economic influence of the Jews in the U.S. today".

**A.5.** 60% High school teachers<sup>4</sup> (only) said that the topic was taught at their schools as a part of the preparation for the matriculation examination ("the Bagrut") exclusively. 40% of the High school teachers said that the topic was taught at their schools, not only as a part of the preparation for the matriculation examination ("the Bagrut").

**B. Teachers views of the "wished for" place of the topic of American Jewry in the Israeli curriculum**

The teachers were asked what should be the place of the topic "American Jewry and its relationship with Israel" in the Israeli educational system's curriculum:

**B.1.** **84.6%** of the teachers thought the topic should be taught in Israeli schools, **15.4%** thought it shouldn't.

**B. 2.** **1.9%** of the teachers thought it should be taught in 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grades, **11%** -5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades, **28.6%** - 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grades, **39.6%** - 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades (the answers weren't exclusive).

**B. 3.** **33.8%** of the teachers thought the topic fits to be taught in history, **20.8%**- as a part of Civics, **10. 4%** - Geography, **1.9%**- Literature, **13%**- Homeroom hours, **29.2%**- Judaism.

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It must be noted that only 15 teachers answered this question. <sup>4</sup>

**B. 4.** 18.2% of the teachers thought the best way to teach the topic is by lecturing, 30.5%- via discussions, 24.7%- research activities, 44.2%- youth meetings (the answers weren't exclusive).

**B.5.** When asked about the main sub- topics that should be taught under the topic of "American Jewry and its relationship with Israel", 27.3% of the teachers thought that's important to teach about American Jewry history up to our times, 35.1%- the Jewish religious streams among American Jewry and 42.2% -the current political and economic impact of American Jewry (answers weren't exclusive).

**B. 6.** Teachers were asked to relate to a variety of opinions expressed by colleagues who spoke about the place of the topic of U.S. Jewry in the Israeli national curriculum (Instructions were: "You are about to read statements uttered by high-school teachers who were interviewed in the framework of the study. Rank each statement from 1-6 according to the extent to which you agree with it. 1 means "I don't agree at all" and 6 means "I totally agree.") **The results were as follows:**

**B.6.1. Teachers' attitudes, pertaining to the ideological aspect of teaching about American Jewry.**

As a teacher, when I weigh up the importance of teaching the topic of U.S. Jewry in the high-school curriculum, I think that:	% that Checked 5 or 6	Average	S.D
1. U.S. Jewry should be taught because of its great political-economic clout	27.8	3.0	0.6
2. Today, in an age of conflicts, it is preferable to teach about the relations between different groups	24.2	2.4	0.5

in Israel instead of about U.S. Jewry			
3. It is important that students get acquainted with the vast Jewish American literature	14.2	2.2	0.4
4. It is important to learn about U.S. Jewry because it represents values of freedom, tolerance and pluralism	27.4	1.8	0.4
5. The topic of U.S. Jewry needs to be taught in the context of the Holocaust	17.9	2.6	0.3
<b>6. U.S. Jewry must be dealt with equally to any other Jewish community</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>7. One should focus on Israeli history and treat all the other Jewish communities equivalently</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>0.3</b>

The table shows that more teachers thought that one should allocate the same importance to all Jewish Diasporas thus no preference of American Jewry (**items 6, 7**).

A factor analysis, with orthogonal rotation, using the Varimax method, on the attitudes pertaining to the **ideological aspect of teaching about American Jewry** yielded two factors: The first factor reflects the view of giving the topic a place in the curriculum because of the economic, political and spiritual importance of American Jewry. This factor explains **32%** of the total variance (**items 1-5- the "pro factor"**). The second factor reflects the view of giving each Jewish Diaspora an equal place in the curriculum. This factor explains **23%** of the variance (**Items 6, 7- the "No preference factor"**).

**B.6.2. Teachers' attitudes, pertaining to the pragmatic aspect of teaching about American Jewry.**

As a teacher, when I weigh up the importance of teaching the topic of U.S. Jewry in the high-school curriculum, I think that:	% that Checked 5 or 6	Average	S.D
1. The topic of U.S. Jewry is more suitable to a non-formal educational framework	14.7	2.5	0.5
2. It is very important to encourage meetings between Israeli and Jewish American students	56.1	2.7	0.4
3. It is important to initiate more professional development courses on the topic of American Jewry	32.8	2.6	0.4
4. It is important to encourage Israeli students to write personal papers about American Jewry	9.8	1.7	0.6
5. It is important that teachers get acquainted with the vast variety of studying materials on the topic of American Jewry	24.0	1.9	0.3

The table shows that teachers mostly supported the idea of encouraging more meetings between Jewish America and Israeli youth (item 2). They were also relatively pro getting more educated about American Jewry (items 3, 5)

The items that dealt with the pragmatic aspect of teaching about American Jewry **yielded only one factor-the "pragmatic 'pro' factor"**

Consequently, three measures were respectively computed on the basis of the results of the factor analysis: the "Pro factor", the "No preference factor" and the "'pro' pragmatic factor" .The means and standard deviations of the factors were as follows:

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Pro	3.4094	.92268	136
No preference	3.7370	1.29267	135
Pro pragmatic	3.3838	.84546	136

Pearson coefficients of correlation were computed in order to examine the relationships between the three measures. A high significant correlation ( $r=.68^{***}$ ) was found between the **Pro factor and the Pro-Pragmatic factor**. No significant relationship was found between the "No preference" factor and the Pragmatic factor.

### **B.6.3. Attitudes pertaining to the ideological and pragmatic aspects of teaching about American Jewry- are they tied to demographic and/or occupational sample characteristics?**

#### **Attitude and discipline of specialization-**

As indicated by t-tests for independent samples, among the teachers' specializations, only teachers who **specialize in Jewish studies** were found to be significantly more positive towards teaching the topic of American Jewry than others. The t values of the "Pro factor" measure and the "Pro-Pragmatic measure" were 1.92\* and 3.32\*\* respectively.

#### **Attitude and school level-**

As indicated by t-test for independent samples, **only middle school teachers, when compared with all others**, were found to hold more positive attitude (spiritually and pragmatically) towards giving a place to the topic of American Jewry in the Curriculum,  $t=1.69^*$ ,  $2.32^*$  respectively.

Other demographic, occupational and academic weren't found to be in connection with teachers attitudes.

## Discussion

The findings show that there's a gap between what's actually done at schools to what the teachers think should be done. While 84.9% of the teachers thought that the topic of American Jewry should be taught at school only 13.6% of them said that it had been actually taught at their schools, within the last three years. 60% of the high school teachers (the only school level where the topic is sometimes formally taught as a part of the history program) reported that the topic was taught, only in the context of preparation to the Bagrut exams.

24-32 percent of the teachers are interested in learning more about American Jewry. About half of the teachers think more meetings among Jewish American and Israeli youth should be encouraged. Only 14.5% of the teachers think the topic is more suited to be dealt with in the context of informal education.

However more teachers think that American Jewry should be treated equally to any other Jewish Diaspora in the national curriculum, than that it's important to study about American Jewry due to its political, economical as well as spiritual importance.

## Appendix 1 – The Questions for the Interview

The opening of the interview: We are interested in knowing what is going on in the Israeli education system with regard to the topic of **U.S. Jewry and its relations with Israel**. Your answers will help us construct a survey to examine the topic.

- Have you had encounters with U.S. Jewry? Talk about it...What happened during those encounters? What did you sense, feel and think about it? Did you establish ties? What was their scope? Talk about it...Did it spark any kind of desire for action in you?
- As a teacher, have you dealt with and/or taught these topics? Talk about it...
- Are you dealing with and/or teaching these topics at the moment? Talk about it...
- In your opinion, should these topics be dealt with in the education system? Why? What should their scope be? Where? In what form? In the framework of which fields/subjects/central topics?
- In your opinion, what is it important for **the pupils** to know about U.S. Jewry and its relations...
- Should feelings... attitudes... emotions... activities... also be related to? Why? How?
- If you could propose a program on the topic, what would you propose?

- Rationale, aims, contents, activities, for whom? When? What should their scope be?



## Appendix 2 – The Questionnaire

Levinsky College of Education

The Research and Development Authority

### The place of the topic of U.S. Jewry in high-school studies

September 2005

Dear teacher,

We are interested in finding out how history teachers perceive the place of the topic of U.S. Jewry in the high-school curriculum. We would be very grateful if you would grant us a few minutes of your time and complete the following questionnaire. The questionnaire is anonymous and the details you are requested to provide are for research purposes only.

#### To which sector does the school in which you teach belong?

Mark the appropriate answer with a V.

State \_\_\_\_ State-Religious \_\_\_\_ Independent \_\_\_\_

Other (elaborate) \_\_\_\_\_

**During the past three years, was the topic of U.S. Jewry taught in your school?** Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

**In which framework was the topic taught?** Mark the appropriate answer with a V.

History lessons \_\_\_\_ Civics lessons \_\_\_\_ Geography lessons \_\_\_\_

Literature lessons \_\_\_\_ Other (elaborate)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Was the topic taught** only in the framework of Bagrut preparation? \_\_\_\_

Not in the framework of Bagrut preparation? \_\_\_\_

**In which classes is the topic studied?** (elaborate)

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**The topic is studied in class for:** 5-7 lessons \_\_\_\_ 8-15 lessons \_\_\_\_  
more than 15 lessons \_\_\_\_

**Teaching the topic consists mainly of:** lectures \_\_\_\_ discussions \_\_\_\_  
research activities \_\_\_\_ youth encounters \_\_\_\_

Other (elaborate)

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**To the best of your knowledge, in the framework of teaching the topic, which of the following are dealt with?** Circle the appropriate answer.

The dispersion of the Jews in the U.S. throughout history

Yes/No

The religious streams, among U.S. Jewry

Yes/No

The immigration to the U.S. and the building of the Jewish community

in the U.S. prior to World War **one**

Yes/No

The Jews in the U.S. between the two World Wars

Yes/No

The Jews in the U.S. during and after the Holocaust

Yes/No

The political-economic influence of the Jews in the U.S. today

Yes/No

The cultural contribution of U.S. Jews

Yes/No

**\*In your opinion, is it necessary to teach the topic in your school? If so, when should it be taught? What should the scope of teaching be? How should it be taught? Explain and justify your answer briefly.**

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**You are about to read statements uttered by high-school teachers who were interviewed in the framework of the study. Rank each statement from 1-5 according to the extent to which you agree with it. 1 means “I don’t agree at all” and 5 means “I totally agree.”**

<b>As a teacher, when I weigh up the importance of teaching the topic of U.S. Jewry in the high-school curriculum, I think that:</b>	<b>I don't agree at all</b>				<b>I totally agree</b>
U.S. Jewry should be taught because of its great political-economic clout	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Today, in an age of conflicts, it is preferable to teach about the relations between different groups in Israel instead of about U.S. Jewry	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
The topic of U.S. Jewry is more suitable to a non-formal educational framework	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I wish to learn more about U.S. Jewry	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I would like to become acquainted with more teaching and reading materials on the topic	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

of U.S. Jewry					
It is important to learn about U.S. Jewry because it represents values of freedom, tolerance and pluralism	1	2	3	4	5
U.S. Jewry must be dealt with equally to any other Jewish community					
It is important to teach the topic of U.S. Jewry in the context of the Holocaust	1	2	3	4	5
We must focus on the history of Israel, and relate peripherally to all the Jewish communities outside of Israel, equally					

**Now, a few details about yourself, to be used only for segmenting the findings of the survey:**

Which disciplines do/did you teach in high school?

History \_\_\_\_ Geography \_\_\_\_ Literature \_\_\_\_ Civics \_\_\_\_

Other (elaborate) \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been working in the field of education?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your mother tongue: Hebrew / Arabic / Russian / Amharic /

Other (elaborate) \_\_\_\_\_

Which degree/s do you hold? B.A. \_\_\_\_ M.A. \_\_\_\_ Ph.D. \_\_\_\_

**Thank you very much for participating in the research.**



## תפיסות אנשי חינוך את מקומו של נושא "יהדות ארה"ב והזיקה בינה לבין היהדות בישראל" בלימודי התיכון בישראל- דוח פרלימינארי על חלקו האיכותי של סקר הצרכים במחקר

שרון שאלתיאל, שרה שמעוני- יחידת המו"פ, מכללת לוינסקי

בחלק זה של המחקר, רואיינו עשרה אנשי חינוך ראיונות עומק, חצי מובנים. אנשי החינוך שנשאלו הגיעו ממגזרים שונים של מערכת החינוך: הממלכתי (7), הממלכתי-דתי (2), והעצמאי (1). במסגרת ראיונות אלו נשאלו המורים והמנהלים הללו כיצד הם תופסים את מקומו של הנושא "יהדות ארצות הברית והזיקה בינה לבין ישראל", בלימודי התיכון בארץ? מהי עמדתם כלפי הנושא? האם יש בו, לדעתם, חשיבות בלימודי התיכון, ואם כן, מהי? האם יש לנושא מקום כבר היום בקוריקולום של מוסדותיהם? אם כן, מהו? האם הם סוברים כי יש להכניסו לקוריקולום של מוסדותיהם? לאלו אוכלוסיות תלמידים יש להתאימו? מה יש ללמד? כיצד? באיזה היקף? וכיו"ב.

### שאלות אלו נגזרו משאלת המחקר המרכזית:

האם, מה, וכיצד, יש ללמד את נושא יהדות ארצות הברית וזיקתה לישראל, במערכת החינוך התיכונית (על מגזריה השונים).

אין לראות בממצאי הראיונות כמייצגים את מכלול התפיסות במכלול המגזרים במערכת החינוך (לשם כך ייערך בהמשך, באמצעות שאלון שיבנה, סקר על מדגם מייצג של מורים ומנהלים משלושת מגזרי החינוך התיכוני), אך ניתן לראות בהם הצגה של מספר נקודות ראות המהוות נקודת מוצא לבחינה רחבה יותר של המערכת.

ניתוח נתוני הראיונות מעלה מספר רעיונות ותמות המאירות תפיסות מרכזיות של מקום הנושא האמור בחינוך התיכוני. הרעיונות והתמות מצטרפים לארבעה נרטיבים יהודיים, המייצגים התייחסויות לזיקות בין היהדות בישראל ליהדות התפוצות ומקומה של יהדות ארה"ב בהקשר זה. כל אחד מהנרטיבים שעלו נמצא כבעל משמעות לגבי תפיסת הדובר את מקומו של הנושא האמור בלימודי התיכון.

חלק זה של המחקר נועד לסייע לחוקרים לבנות שאלון הבוחן את צורכי מנהלים ומורים במערכת החינוך התיכונית, ואת רמת מודעותם ביחס ללימודי הנושא "יהדות ארצות הברית והזיקה בינה לבין ישראל".

בהמשך יתוארו ארבע תפיסות שעלו, מתוך הראיונות, ביחס למקומו (הממשי והמטפורי) של הנרטיב היהודי ותפיסות קוריקולריות הנגזרות מהן.

## **פזורה, תפוצה, מרכז, או כפר גלובלי – איפה מתרחש הנרטיב היהודי**

בקרב המורים והמנהלים, בהישאלם על מקום הנושא יהדות ארה"ב וזיקתה לישראל, בלימודי התיכון, עלו ארבע תפיסות מובחנות של הנרטיב היהודי. תפיסות אלו שמשו כבסיס להתייחסות למקום הנושא האמור, בתוכנית הלימודים. התפיסות השונות זכו לצידוקים אידיאולוגיים וערכיים, ונשענו על העמדת הערך הפוליטי-כלכלי לעומת הערך הרוחני-חברתי.

א. **יהדות כאוסף של נרטיבים שונים של ישראל והתפוצות** – תפיסה זו מדגישה את המרכיב של ריבוי קהילות ו"קולות" יהודיים בעולם. כל אחת מקהילות אלו נתפסת כמשמעותית וכלגיטימית באותה מידה לקביעתה של הזהות היהודית. מדינת ישראל בהקשר זה, אינה שונה מכל קהילה יהודית אחרת בתפוצות. על פי תפיסה זו, הנושא של יהדות ארצות הברית וזיקתה לישראל רלוונטי לתכנית הלימודים בבתי הספר התיכוניים, אך רלוונטי ומשמעותי לא פחות לדון בכל אחת מהקהילות היהודיות האחרות. תפיסה זו הדגישה כי "הרוח היהודית" קיימת מעבר לזמן ומרחב- כלומר היא חיה בכל תפוצה ותפוצה ואינה עניין פוליטי-כלכלי.

ב. **דפוס "היהודי הנווד"** – תפיסה זו היא במידה מסוימת הקצנתה של התפיסה הקודמת, מכיוון שהיא מציגה את היהדות כזהות המתהווה בתוך כפר גלובלי שבו יש ריבוי נרטיבים שונים לגבי יהדות. אולם תפיסה זו מבטלת את המרכיב הקהילתי, ומציגה יהדות כזהות הצומחת במישור האישי-סובייקטיבי ללא קהילה, והמחפשת אחר מקורות ההשתייכות הקהילתיים שלה בתהליך של מסע מתמיד, המתחבר הרבה פעמים לאובדן (בהקשר זה, עלו דימויים של השואה, תרבות אשכנזית שנכחדה, אידיש). מסגרת משמעות זו הציגה את הדיון ביהדות ארצות הברית כרלוונטי, יחד עם הדיון בקהילות יהודיות נוספות. יחד עם זאת, במסגרת משמעות זאת, יהדות ארצות הברית במיוחד מסתמנת, עבור הפרט המחפש זהות, בדומה ל"היות ישראלי", כ"חלופה" משחררת ליהדות ה"גלותית", של התפוצות האחרות, ומסמלת ערכים של פתיחות, חופש, בחירה ואוטונומיה. גם תפיסה זו נשענה על היות היהדות עניין שברוח ולא עניין פוליטי-כלכלי.

ג. **בולטות של נרטיבים בתוך היהדות** – על פי תפיסה זו ישנם נרטיבים יהודיים בולטים יותר בשל השפעתם בעולם כמו יהדות ארה"ב ויהדות ישראל המייצגות שני מרכזים בולטים אלטרנטיביים. המחזיקים בתפיסה רואים את נושא יהדות ארה"ב וזיקתו לישראל, כבעל רלוונטיות גדולה לתכנית הלימודים בתיכון, בגלל המקום המשמעותי שתופסת יהדות ארצות הברית, בנרטיב היהודי הכולל. המחזיקים בתפיסה זו הדגישו את הכוח הכלכלי ופוליטי של יהדות ארצות הברית ואת השפעתו על מצבה של היהדות בישראל.

ד. **הנרטיב הציוני של "העם בישראלי" כנרטיב מרכזי ונרטיבים יהודים אחרים, ככפיפים לו.** כאן נתפס הנרטיב היהודי כבעל מוקד מרכזי- בחברה הישראלית, ופריפריה- בתפוצות (אנחנו והם). המחזיקים בתפיסה אינם מדגישים את הרלבנטיות של נושא יהדות ארה"ב וזיקתה לישראל ללימודי התיכון. בעיני המחזיקים בתפיסה זו יש, למשל, להרחיב יותר בענייני השעה, כמו היחסים בין קבוצות שונות בארץ (למשל דתיים וחילוניים, יהודים וערבים). אם משום שיש לטפח הידברות וכבוד הדדי, או משום שבסוגיות אלו טמונות סכנות כמו איום ביטחוני, תחרות וקונפליקט מדיני וכך הלאה. בעלי תפיסה זו ראו את העיסוק ביהדות ארצות הברית כמשקף הענות, שאינה במקומה, לכוח הכלכלי-פוליטי של יהדות זו. הם הדגישו כי על אף תרומתה של יהדות זו לישראל, יש להתמקד יותר בענייני השעה הדחופים, המהווים איום יום-יומי. נרטיב זה, יותר מקודמיו, היה שזור ברעיונות סותרים.

המוטיב הציוני, בתפיסה המתוארת לעיל הוצג על ידי מנהל תיכון חילוני, מנהל בחינוך הממלכתי-דתי וסגנית מנהל תיכון דתי. מנהל התיכון הממלכתי- חילוני הציג את המוטיב הציוני בהשקפתו כפרי בחירה מודעת בעוד שסגנית המנהל מן התיכון



הממלכתית-דתית הציגה את המוטיב הציוני כחלק מתפיסת עולם דתית- מובנת מאליה, הממוקדת בהיות עם ישראל עם נבחר. בדברי אחד מן המראיינים שימש כוחה של יהדות הברית ארצות הברית כסיבה לאי העדפתה על יהדות במקומות אחרים (כל התפוצות שוות) ולעומת זאת, כוחה של היהדות בישראל שימש סיבה לצורך בהגעה להחלטה כי חשוב לעסוק בהיסטוריה ישראלית, מ"המקום היהודי".

## **תפיסות קוריקולריות ביחס למקומו של הנושא "יהדות ארצות הברית והזיקה בינה לבין ישראל", בלימודי התיכון**

התפיסות הקוריקולריות ביחס למקומו של הנושא "יהדות ארצות הברית והזיקה בינה לבין ישראל" (בשל הצורך בחזרות רבות על מונח זה, יצוין בקיצור על ידי ראשי התיבות: **יאה"ב**), בלימודי התיכון, נעות בין התייחסויות ל"מצוי", החלק המיועד לנושא זה בתוכניות ה"מיקוד" לבגרות בשנתיים האחרונות וה"רצוי"- האם וכיצד יש לשלב את הנושא בלימודי התיכון. ניתן לאמור, על פי דיווחי המרואיינים, כי העיסוק ביאה"ב נעשה בעיקר במסגרת ה"משבצת" הפורמאלית, הנדרשת, ההכנה לסוגיות בנושא זה, המופיעות במיקוד לבחינות הבגרות בהיסטוריה. לעתים ישנו עיסוק בנושא בהקשרים רב תחומיים כמו: עבודות בגרות, קריאת טקסטים בספרות וכיו"ב. במקומות ייחודיים, כמו למשל אולפנות של החינוך המוכר שהרבה ממוריהן ותלמידותיהן באים מרקע יהודי-אמריקאי, העיסוק בנושא יאה"ב שזור באופן אורגאני, בקוריקולום, בהרבה מן התחומים. עיסוק בנושא יאה"ב נעשה לעיתים גם במסגרת פרויקטים מיוחדים שבמרכזם יצירת קשר חי ו/או וירטואלי בין נוער יהודי-ישראלי לבין נוער יהודי-אמריקאי.

### **המצוי: מיקום הנושא בתכנית הלימודים כיום**

#### **ה"משבצת" הפורמאלית- ההכנה לבחינות הבגרות בהיסטוריה**

בשלוש השנים האחרונות מופיעים, מידי פעם, נושאים הקשורים ביאה"ב במיקודים לבחינות הבגרות. המרואיינים ציינו כי עיקר העיסוק בנושא יאה"ב, בבתי הספר בהם הם מלמדים, נעשה במסגרת ה"חומר" הנלמד לקראת בחינות הבגרות, בהיסטוריה, במסגרת המיקוד לבחינות. במהלך הלמידה לקראת הבגרות עולים מידי פעם בשיעורי היסטוריה ו/או אזרחות דיונים בנושאי השעה, המתקשרים ליאה"ב ואינם נדרשים לבגרות, כמו פרשת ג'ונתן פולארד.

### עיסוק ביארה"ב, בתוכנית הלימודים הפורמאלית- בהקשרים רב תחומיים

לפי מיטב ידיעת המרואיינים, אין לנושא יארה"ב ביטוי משמעותי בהקשרים רב תחומיים כמו לימודי הספרות, גיאוגרפיה ואחרים. אחת המרואיינות סיפרה על הנחיית עבודת בגרות בספרות בה בחנה התלמידה אזכורים של יארה"ב בטקסטים ספרותיים.

### "שזירת" נושא יארה"ב, כחלק אורגני בתוכנית הלימודים

במסגרת מגזר החינוך המוכר, בסמינרים ובאולפנות המיועדים לבנות של רשת בית יעקוב, הפועלים בהתאם לתכנית הלימודים הייחודית של המגזר נחשבים מקצועות כמו היסטוריה ואזרחות, כ"מקצועות חול", ולכן לא נלמדים בישיבות התיכוניות, מעבר לחינוך העצמאי היסודי.

בחלק מן האולפנות, רבים מן המורים והתלמידות באים מרקע יהודי אמריקאי ושם למרות היותור על העיסוק הממוקד בהיסטוריה, ישנה התייחסות מתמדת ליהדות ארה"ב. התייחסות זו שזורה באופן טבעי ואורגני בלימודים. למשל: בשיעורי חינוך והשקפה, נידונות ההשלכות הפוליטיות של יהדות ארצות הברית, על המצב במזרח התיכון בכלל ובישראל בפרט. לפי המורה שרואינה (אשר מלמדת ואף בעלת תפקיד של פיקוח, ברשת החינוך המוכר), נושא יארה"ב, משולב כמעט בכל תחום אפשרי של תכנית הלימודים, ואי אפשר שלא לדון בו. בראיון עימה היא דיווחה על הקשרים נוספים שבו הנושא מיושם, כגון לימודי גיאוגרפיה, שימת הדגש על לימודי השפה האנגלית, וכיו"ב. לרבים מהתלמידים קרובים בארצות הברית, וחלק מגני הילדים של המגזר, למשל, מתנהלים בשפה האנגלית. הן המרואיינים מהמגזר החינוך הממלכתי-דתי, והן המרואיינת מהמגזר העצמאי, ציינו את תרומתם הרוחנית הייחודית של רבנים מארצות הברית לשיעורי החינוך והיהדות. הראשונים התייחסו יותר לתרומתם האישית של רבנים לחשיבה הציונית, בעוד המרואיינת מהמגזר החינוך המוכר התייחסה יותר לתרומתם במישור הקהילתי.

### עיסוק ביארה"ב במסגרת פרויקטים ייחודיים

דרך נוספת של עיסוק בנושא יארה"ב, כפי שצוינה לעיל, היא במסגרת פרויקטים ייחודיים שבמסגרתם נעשית יצירת קשרים עם יהדות ארצות הברית: בין הפרויקטים

שהוזכרו: פרויקט תל אביב/ לוס אנג'לס במסגרת שותפות 2000 של הסוכנות היהודית (פגישות וירטואליות בין תלמידים מתל אביב ולוס אנג'לס), פרויקט תגלית שיזם המיליונר צ'רלס ברונפמן הכולל הגעת סטודנטים אמריקאיים מחו"ל במטרה להכיר להם את הארץ ולעודד עלייה, במסגרת זאת מתקיימים מפגשים עם תלמידי תיכון, וכן פרויקטים ייחודיים של תורמים (לדוגמא יוזמת פרייס-ברודי ביפו, בשיתוף עם אוניברסיטת תל אביב ועיריית תל אביב הפועלת בקהילת יפו לקידום תושביה היהודים והערבים תוך מתן דגש על תוכניות חינוכיות לילדים ולנוער מהמגזר הציבורי), וכן הרצאות חד פעמיות של נציגי הוועד היהודי-אמריקאי.

### **בעיית חומרי הלמידה**

שתי המורות החילוניות אשר למדו את נושא יארה"ב, במסגרת הוראת ההיסטוריה, דיווחו על קשיים בהשגת חומרי למידה, גם לאותם הקשרים המוכתבים על ידי משרד החינוך ומופיעים בתכנית הלימודים (לדוגמא, אחד הספרים המומלצים על ידי משרד החינוך: הקיום היהודי בתפוצות, הוא בלתי ניתן להשגה). מורות אלו דיווחו על השקעת עבודה עצמית אקסטנסיבית, בעיצוב התכנית. הן מלמדות את החומר תוך שילוב דרכי עבודה וחומרים מגוונים (כמו עבודה בחדר מחשב, דיונים, סיפורי אישים, הצגת סקרי מודעות, קטעי סרטים, סיפורים על קשרי משפחה, חומרים שהורדו מהאינטרנט, יצירות אמנות ואפילו הבאת שטרי כסף לשיעור). הן דיווחו גם על שימוש בחומרים מן ההווי היומיומי של התלמידים. לדוגמא: הצבעה על מוטיבים יהודיים בסרט העכשווי "פגוש את הפוקרס". יחד עם זאת, הן אמרו כי משאבי הזמן והיקף החומר, המוכתבים בהתאם לדרישות משרד הברורות, בנוסף למיעוט המשאבים בבתי הספר, מקשים ללמד את החומר בצורה שאינה פרונטלית.

בחינוך הממלכתי –דתי, דווח על פחות שימוש בחומרים מגוונים, ויותר על פעילויות והפעלות. בחינוך המוכר דווח על דיונים פעילים במסגרת **שיעורי החינוך**, תוך ניסיון לכוון להשקפת העולם של המגזר. כזכור, מקצועות כמו אזרחות והיסטוריה אינם נלמדים שם, בשל היותם מקצועות חול.

### **הרצוי- כיצד רואים המרואיינים את העיסוק המיטבי ביארה"ב**

תפיסותיהם של המרואיינים את הרצוי, לגבי לימודי יארה"ב, נבעו מתפיסותיהם את מקומו/מקומותיו של הנרטיב היהודי, אשר תוארו לעיל. תיאור "הרצוי" כלל מספר סוגיות:

**העיסוק בנושא יארה"ב כ"פנימי או חיצוני" וכ" תחומי או רב תחומי", במוסד החינוכי הפורמאלי**

בתשובה לשאלה לגבי צורת הלימוד הרצויה, נבדלו המרואיינים באופן הראייה שלהם את הנושא כצריך להיות משולב בתכנית הלימודים המוסדית, לעומת ראייה המציגה אותו כצריך להיות אקסטרני למוסד, במסגרת פעילויות של חינוך לא פורמאלי כמו מפגשים, קשרים ומשלחות נוער.

שתיים מן המורות החילוניות טענו כי הנושא צריך להיות חלק אינהרנטי מתכנית הלימודים בשל הערכים ההומנים של פלורליזם, חופש, אוטונומיה של הפרט, וכיו"ב, שהוא נושא עימו. כן הן הדגישו את הערך של לימוד רב תחומי בנושא ואמרו כי לו היו יכולות לשלב את הנושא, בתחומים שונים כמו ספרות, גיאוגרפיה וכיו"ב, ולו היו יכולות לשלב בהוראתו מפגשי נוער וכיו"ב, היה טוב יותר. אחת המורות אמרה, ספק בבדיחות הדעת ספק ברצינות, כי נסיעה של תלמידיה, לארצות הברית, הייתה יכולה להיות רבת ערך מבחינה לימודית. המפגש עם הבניינים הגבוהים והביקור במוסדות התרבות הרלבנטיים, הקיימים שם, כמו מוזיאון השואה, יכולים ללמד את התלמידים הרבה, במישור הקוגניטיבי כמו במישור הרגשי-זהותי. המורה - המפקחת החרדית ראתה בנושא חשיבות לתכנית הלימודים, בשל היותו משולב, בקרב תלמידותיה, כמעט בכל תחום של חייהן, ובעל נגיעה לחיים בחברה החרדית סביבן. הנושא נראה לה חשוב גם ובשל היות יהדות ארצות הברית מרכז דומיננטי רוחני שקול לישראל. היא טענה כי לו יכלה להציע תכנית בנושא, הייתה מציעה תכנית שתפעל לעידוד עלייה בקרב יהודים אמריקאיים.

שניים מן המרואיינים, בעלי עמדות ניהול בבתי הספר (מנהל בבית ספר תיכון ממלכתי ומנהל, ומורה-סגנית מנהל, בבתי ספר תיכון ממלכתיים - דתיים), טענו כי הנושא פחות רלוונטי לתכנית הלימודים הבית ספרית, והעיסוק בו צריך להיערך, אם בכלל, במסגרת פעילויות של החינוך הלא פורמאלי, או כחלק מנושא כללי של התפוצות.

**התאמת הנושא לאוכלוסיות התלמידים**

לפי דברי שתי המורות החילוניות שרואיינו החומר הצריך להילמד בנושא יארה"ב, הוא רב היקף ומורכב ולכן קשה לעיכול לתלמידים משכבות הכיתות הנמוכות יותר (י', י"א) . אחת המורות החילוניות הכינה טבלה מפורטת לפרסום באינטרנט, של הזרמים והאירגונים הדתיים בקרב יארה"ב, אשר לא פורסמה, מכיוון שנתפסה כמורכבת מדי על ידי הנהלת המוסד החינוכי בו היא מלמדת. לפי הערכתה, בתי ספר רבים יעדיפו לסגת בעתיד מהוראת הנושא, ויעדיפו להתמקד בנושא שהוא פחות רחב ומורכב, כמו יהדות פולין. מורה חילונית אחרת מלמדת את החומר על פי סיכומים שהיא מכינה ומחלקת לתלמידיה, כדי להפוך את הנושא לידידותי יותר. גם המורה בחינוך המוכר

הדגישה כי החומר הנלמד במסגרת שיעורי היסטוריה ואזרחות מתאים יותר לתלמידים משכבות הגיל הגבוהות יותר.

בראיון עם מורה- סגנית מנהל, במגזר הממלכתי דתי, הייתה חזרה על כך שהנושא צריך להילמד בפורומים אחרים (לא פורמאליים) ורק תלמידים נבחרים, "בעלי אמירה", יכולים להיות בעלי גישה לנושא. שני המרואיינים בבתי הספר הממלכתי דתי ציינו את האנגלית כמכשלה שמונעת לעיתים השתתפות של תלמידים בפרויקטים הלא פורמאליים, שבמרכזם מפגשים או שיח וירטואלי בין בני נוער מישראל ומארה"ב.

### **הדגשים בהוראה ולימוד נושא יארה"ב**

#### **א. הדגשים רגשיים**

המורות החילוניות שרואינו טענו כי הדגשת היבטים רגשיים בהוראת הנושא, תסייע לקרוב התלמידים לנושא. העיסוק בזרמים הדתיים בקרב יהדות ארה"ב, נתפס על ידי מורות אלו, כמשמעותי וכבולט ביותר עבור התלמידים החילוניים, בשל היותו מעורר תגובות רגשיות. נושא הזרמים הדתיים בקרב יארה"ב, עלה כמשמעותי גם אצל המורה מזרם החינוך המוכר ומלווה בנקיטת עמדה ברורה של המורים כנגד הרפורמים והדגשת הסכנה שהם מהווים ליהדות. בקרב המרואיינים בחינוך הממלכתי-דתי הנושא הוצג כלא ענייני – הרפורמים בארץ "בטלים בשישים", מכדי להקצות להם התייחסות מיוחדת.

#### **ב. דגש על הוראת נושא יארה"ב בהקשרים אקטואליים**

חלק מן המורים דברו על הצורך בהוראת נושא יארה"ב, בהקשרים אקטואליים. אחת המורות החילוניות, אשר רואה עצמה כמלמדת את ההיסטוריה מתוך ראייה פלורליסטית, אמרה כי השתמשה בנושא יארה"ב, בהקשר לבעיות השעה, על מנת להצביע על ערכים של פלורליזם וכן להצביע על הערך הגדול של השכלה. אותה מורה צינה למשל כי בהיותה מורה בבית ספר מעורב, יהודי-ערבי, בלמדה על יהדות ארה"ב, דברה על העובדה שבנות ערביות מגיעות עם רעלה לבית הספר, כדי לכוון את התלמידים היהודים והערבים בכיתה להבין כיצד מרגיש מיעוט כאן ושם, וכי בעצם, כולם בני אדם. היא גם הציגה בפני הכיתה תפילות שהרפורמים הנהיגו בהן שינוי מן הנוסח האורתודוקסי, וראתה כיצד הנושא עורר מעורבות ועניין מצד תלמידים דתיים בכיתה.

## לסיכום:

המורים ובעלי התפקידים, מן המגזרים השונים, בעלי ראיות שונות של הנרטיב היהודי, מקומותיו ויחסי הכוחות שבו. ראיות אלה מבוססות על שיקולים ערכיים שונים שבחלקם אישיים ובחלקם מגזריים. התפיסות הקוריקולריות של המרואיינים נמצאות בזיקה לראיותיהם את מקומותיו של הנרטיב היהודי. הרואים ביהדות ארה"ב יהדות המסמלת יותר חרות ובחירה, דומה יותר ליהדות בישראל, מצדדים בהרחבת לימוד הנושא בתיכון ובגיוון הקשת של חומרי ודרכי הוראתו. הרואים את כל התפוצות כשוות או את ישראל כדומיננטית והאחרות ככפיפות לה, מבחינת היהדות, אינם רואים צורך בהדגשת נושא יהדות ארה"ב, על פני תפוצות אחרות ובעיקר מדגישים כי עדיף להקדיש את הזמן היקר של שיעורי האזרחות וההיסטוריה לבעיות השעה כמו יחסים בין קבוצות בישראל.

בהתייחסם למצוי בנושא יארה"ב, בתוכנית הלימודים בתיכונים, המרואיינים דברו בעיקר על תוכנית הלימודים לבגרות אך לעיתים העלו גם את לימוד הנושא באמצעות מפגשי נוער, בחינוך הבלתי פורמאלי. חלק מן המורים ציינו כי חומרי הלמידה המצויים, לצורך ההכנה לבגרות, אינם מספקים וכך הם חשים צורך לבנות חומרים והפעלות בעצמם.

בהתייחס לרצוי בתוכניות הלימודים בנושא יארה"ב, בתיכונים, אמרו חלק מן המרואיינים כי יש להמשיך וללמד את הנושא ואף להרחיבו במסגרת תוכנית הלימודים הפורמאלית, לבגרות ואחרים טענו כי מתאים יותר לעסוק בנושא, אם בכלל, מחוץ למוסדות החינוך הפורמאליים, במסגרת מפגשי נוער פנים אל פנים או מפגשים וירטואליים, במסגרות החינוך הבלתי פורמאליות. חלק מן המרואיינים דברו על הצורך בהדגשת היבטים רגשיים ואף היבטים אקטואליים, בלימוד נושא יארה"ב.