

TEACHING ADULT JEWISH EDUCATORS ABOUT
TEACHING BIBLE: WHAT THEY NEED TO KNOW
AND HOW THEY MIGHT LEARN IT

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The Initiative on Bridging Scholarship
and Pedagogy in Jewish Studies

Working Paper No. 9
May 2007

Brandeis University

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for Studies in Jewish Education

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ABSTRACT

What do teachers of Bible to adults in liberal settings need to know and be able to do, and what kinds of learning opportunities foster those capacities? The authors, co-teachers, have--through three iterations of their course "Teaching Bible to Adults"--developed an integrated approach in teaching their respective fields of Bible and Jewish education. Through a variety of methods, they have increasingly attempted to facilitate in their students the mastery of the pedagogic content knowledge necessary for their own effective teaching, rather than bifurcating knowledge of Bible and knowledge of pedagogic strategies. This paper details the process of the course's development as a reflection of the authors' ongoing investigation, reading, and revision of their own teaching practices.

INTRODUCTION

The study of classical Jewish texts is a central component of the contemporary renaissance of Jewish life and culture in North America. Liberal Jews, in particular, are re-discovering the profundity of these texts and the joy of engaging them seriously. But with the growth of this phenomenon comes a demand for more and better teachers of text, especially teachers of Bible. Such teachers must not only develop a deep understanding of and facility with text study but they also must be able to respond creatively and sensitively to the needs and motivations of adults when they first come to the study table and as they continue to grow as learners.

What do these teachers need to know and be able to do, in order to teach Bible well in liberal Jewish settings? What kinds of learning opportunities do those teachers need, themselves, in order to develop these capacities? Practitioners of teacher education frequently, and unreflectively, divide their task into two: facilitating a mastery of content, on the one hand, and facilitating a mastery of pedagogic strategies and knowledge, on the other. But recent scholarship in general education emphasizes that this bifurcation of what teachers need to know, and how they need to learn it, is both impractical and insufficient. Instead, we need to pay attention to the integration of content and pedagogy, to bring together subject-matter specialists and pedagogical specialists, and to strive to

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create a deeper and richer investigation of the challenges and possibilities inherent in the teaching of particular subject areas.

This paper is a study of an attempt, or in fact a series of attempts, by the authors to do just that. The paper describes how this process of “reading” our teaching (McDonald, 1992) through conversation and writing enabled us to develop a more reflective practice that had a significant impact on how we designed and taught the course. We believe such public reflection both enhances our own teaching and, hopefully, raises questions and deepens the thinking of others who are engaged in the preparation of teachers of Bible. As we will show, through this process, our thinking has shifted significantly from a linear, building-block perspective to a more integrative stance that places the process of learning (and thus teaching) how to teach Bible—that is, the integration of content and method in the acquisition of “pedagogic content knowledge”—at the center.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In June of 2001, a cadre of recently hired tenure-track faculty from the three U.S. campuses of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion joined together for a three-day seminar on the enhancement of teaching, funded by the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion. As a result of our conversations during this seminar about the relationship between subject matter and pedagogy, Andrea Weiss, professor of Bible, and Lisa Grant, professor of Jewish Education, decided to collaborate on a course on teaching Bible to adult Jewish learners.

At the time, we had both just completed our first year of teaching at HUC-JIR in New York. Besides our academic teaching credentials, we had varied experiences teaching biblical texts to Jewish adults. By combining forces, we believed we could craft a learning experience for rabbinical, education, and cantorial students that would, in the words of Deborah Ball, “bridge practices” (2000) by integrating the learning of Bible with the learning of how to teach the subject to a particular audience: Jewish adults in the diverse settings where Jewish learning takes place.

The resulting course, “Teaching Bible to Adults,” is an elective offered to advanced students in rabbinical, cantorial, and Jewish education graduate programs. Typically, elective classes at HUC-JIR are quite small; we had nine, seven, and ten students each time we taught the course, in the spring of 2002, fall of 2003, and fall of 2005, respectively. These students were largely a mix of fourth- and fifth-year rabbinical and advanced MA students in Jewish education, with one cantorial student in our third class. Even within these relatively small groups, there was a considerable range of skills, competencies, Hebrew language abilities, and experience with biblical study and teaching. At minimum, all students had taken a one-semester course in Jewish education and at least one year of Bible before enrolling in our class.

While the overarching goals and many of the basic structural elements have remained the same since we first taught this course, our experiences and conversations about those experiences have prompted us to modify the course each time we returned to it. These deliberations, along with the process of writing this paper, have produced new insights and clarity about the distinctions between our espoused goals and the actual teaching that took place. As a result, the third time we taught the

course, we radically shifted the way we conceptually frame and organize the course, from a model that distinguishes between content and pedagogy to a more holistic approach that creates opportunities for our students to think about how adult Jewish students can learn Bible by observing and practicing various methods of biblical exegesis in the learning laboratory of the classroom.

INITIAL CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Our initial assumptions about what our students need to know about teaching Bible—and how we should teach it to them—were based on our understanding of the dynamic relationship between three sets of knowledge: subject matter, the art and method of teaching, and the needs and motivations of students. Hawkins (1974) visualizes this relationship as a triangle whose three points represent the learner, the teacher, and the subject matter. This triangle is then embedded in a larger circle, representing the context or setting that shapes culture, ideology and expectations. If this diagram is an appropriate conceptualization of the practice of teaching—that is, if learning occurs through the interactions and balancing between the points of the triangle—then we surmised that excellence in teaching requires mastery of each point of the triangle.

Thus, the three points of Hawkins’ educational triangle provided the organizing structure for the first two iterations of the course; and we established specific learning goals for our students, future teachers, based on each point of the triangle. In terms of the learners, we hoped to enhance our students’ sensitivity to and understanding of adult Jewish learners: who they are and why, what, and how they want to learn. In regard to content, we wanted to expand the students’ knowledge of biblical genres and methods of analysis. Our focus was both on exegesis and hermeneutics, developing greater competencies with the tools of biblical analysis and a greater consciousness of beliefs about what Grossman (1990) defines as one’s “orientation” or interpretive stance to the text.

When setting goals for knowledge connected with the third point of the triangle, the teacher, we determined that we should focus on teachers’ blending of content and pedagogy through the selection, organization, and representation of texts. This is what Lee Shulman (1987) describes as pedagogic content knowledge: the ability to skillfully shape and blend subject matter knowledge, pedagogic knowledge, and knowledge about learners’ motivations, abilities, and needs into meaningful educational experiences for a particular audience in a particular context—that is, the ability to knowledgeably teach a particular topic to a particular audience.

In accordance with these goals, the course contained three main components: audience, texts and teaching. These areas of concern in turn correspond closely to three questions Deborah Ball (2000) asks teacher educators to consider in the preparation of teachers. First, how can we best select and translate content into meaningful learning that is responsive to adult learners’ needs, interests, and experiences? This requires an understanding of both who adult Jewish learners are and what type of learning experiences are suitable to meet their needs and inspire them to further study. Second, what content matters for good teaching? As we designed the course, this question informed the choice of texts, genres, and exegetical and hermeneutical approaches. Third, how do we cultivate capabilities to translate our understandings into concepts and language that our students will grasp?

In other words, how do we create opportunities to use our knowledge of Bible in the varied contexts of practice, the actual process of *teaching*?

These three components – audience, texts, and teaching – have been central to each version of the course. What changed over time is how we understand the relationship between the components, and how that relationship shapes the way that teachers need to learn. Over time, we came to realize that we had not paid sufficient heed to Hawkins’ point that the three elements are in a dynamic relationship. Our earlier tendency was to treat them as discrete elements, and to conceptualize the third point of the triangle, the teacher, as a separate sphere of knowledge about teaching. But this was a mistake, because it is Hawkins’ model as a whole that represents the practice of teaching, not any one piece of it. By the third time we taught the class, we more clearly understood learner, subject matter, and teaching—or, in Ball’s terms, audience, text, and teaching—as inseparable and interactive parts of the whole. This shift in thinking had a significant impact on the sequence and structure of the course, on how we define and act on our roles as co-teachers, and on the nature of the work assignments. For the balance of the paper, we will use these three components as the lenses through which to examine our reflections, decisions, and approaches.

AUDIENCE

Each time we taught the course we began with an introductory unit on adult Jewish learners and learning. Here, we provided a broad overview of research findings and trends about adult development, adult learning and adult Jewish learning. We also considered a series of questions about Jewish adults: What are their developmental needs and motivations for Jewish study? What are their preferences for types of learning environments? What are their understandings, conceptions, and misconceptions about biblical study? What do they want and expect from their teachers? We also engaged in an interactive exercise where students were presented with brief descriptions of different types of learners’ goals and their backgrounds and then worked in pairs to consider what type of instructional strategy, setting, and program might best meet these different learners’ needs.

Two core concepts framed our conversations about teaching Jewish adults. First, was the enduring notion presented by Franz Rosenzweig in his speech at the opening of the Judisches Lehrhaus in the 1920s, an adult Jewish education center in Frankfurt on Main. Rosenzweig posited that after the Emancipation, Jewish learning must take place in “reverse order,” that is: “A learning that no longer starts from the Torah and leads to life, but the other way round: from life, from a world that knows nothing of the Law, or pretends to know nothing, back to the Torah” (Rosenzweig in Glatzer, 1955, p. 98). Rosenzweig’s insights led to rich discussions about the interaction between life experience and personal meaning-making in various approaches to text study and to teaching. Consideration of life-Torah-life and Torah-life-Torah paradigms became one of the major through-lines of the course.

We derived a second frame through a discussion of different teaching styles. Here, we took up Marla Frankel’s description (1999) of Nechama Leibowitz’s pedagogic versus facilitative approaches in her writings that guide Bible study in different instructional contexts. With beginning students, Leibowitz’s pedagogic approach is a form of teacher-centered instruction where the teacher articulates

a problem in the text, brings commentary to bear, and formulates an interpretation. The learner, or in this case the reader, remains passive, absorbing the information as presented. In contrast, with more advanced students, Leibowitz describes a facilitative approach which requires more active learning. Here, the teacher poses questions which direct students to a range of sources without providing answers or offering solutions, allowing the students to develop their own interpretations. Consideration of these two approaches framed our discussion about the differences between teaching styles that promote dialogue, learner self-direction, and active engagement in the production of knowledge, as compared to teaching that is more of a demonstration of teacher expertise through a frontal presentation. We then explored these distinctions in light of questions about the purposes of text study and learners' inclinations towards passive or active learning based on knowledge base, developmental readiness, and motivation.

When we originally designed the course, additional readings on religious education and adult Jewish learning were interspersed throughout the semester, and we used this material to frame our analysis of various biblical texts we studied. Then, in response to student requests for an even greater emphasis on the practical tools for teaching, the second time we taught the course, we front-loaded the syllabus with readings about pedagogy and concentrated more exclusively on content during the middle phase. Thus, during the first few weeks of the semester, we focused almost entirely on theories of adult development and teaching adults and only moved into significant text study after this first unit of study.

TEXTS

In its first two iterations, the text component was largely organized around four thematic units. We chose the themes based on the questions and concerns we heard most frequently in our own experiences teaching Bible to Jewish adults: (1) how to deal with troubling texts; (2) how to be a confident reader of biblical narrative; (3) how to find personal meaning in the text; and (4) the question of historicity. The selection of texts to study was guided by a desire to expose our students to a variety of biblical genres and methods of exegesis. We also took into account what had been covered during the required Bible courses and chose content and analytical methods that most students had not studied earlier. The units that followed the introductory sessions about adult learners and learning included:

1. Teaching Troubling Texts: Esther 9
2. Unlocking the Artistry of Biblical Narrative: 2 Samuel 11:1 – 12:25
3. The Quest for Personal Meaning: Exodus 25:1-40
4. The Heresy of History: Exodus 1:1-22

The first time we taught the course, each of the four Bible units contained two class sessions. Readings for these classes included primary text preparation, as well as secondary source material about the texts in question and educational material relevant to teaching adults and/or the topic at hand. In the first class session, Andrea would teach the text and we would discuss the readings; in the second class, students would present model lessons using the same text we studied the week prior. Based in part on student feedback and also because of some quirks of the calendar during the semester we

were teaching the class, we re-arranged the schedule somewhat in the second version of the course. This time, we taught the same four Bible lessons consecutively, with one class session devoted to each topic. These four classes were then followed by four weeks devoted strictly to student presentations of sample lessons from their final project.

Various forms of biblical criticism shaped our study in the first two units. With Esther 9, we employed Adele Berlin's characterization of the book as a comedy as one way of dealing with an otherwise troubling text (2001). In the David and Bathsheba narrative, we explored the use of dialogue and point of view in character and plot development. Unit three introduced archeological data and the comparative method as the starting point to address questions of personal meaning in the texts containing the instructions for the Tabernacle. In unit four, we examined the presence and absence of historical evidence for the exodus. Then, we listened to Rabbi David Wolpe's controversial Pesach 5761 (2001) sermon that dealt with the question of whether the meaning of the exodus needs to be rooted in any historical base. We also read the responses his sermon received in the popular press as a backdrop for thinking about how to address questions of historicity that abound for Jewish adults.

TEACHING

The small size of our classes allowed us to fashion a teaching laboratory where each student taught a model lesson followed by a process of unpacking the teaching to analyze the selection of methods and application to its particular audience and setting. Here, our goal was to provide our students with opportunities to design and practice teaching authentic experiences of biblical text study for adult Jewish learners, that is, to model teaching that would most closely fit within their current and future contexts. For most of our students, these "authentic" experiences are situated in a Reform congregational setting. Within this domain, there are a myriad of program types with learners of different backgrounds, levels, and goals that dictate different instructional strategies and methods. We wanted our students both to develop the skills to understand adult learners' motivations and learning styles and also to be able to adapt their teaching to the various settings where teaching Bible may occur in a Reform congregation, such as committee meetings, ongoing parshat hashavuah study groups, Rosh Chodesh groups, the adult component of a family education program, and any number of short or long-term classes where the study of Bible occurs.

For the first round of the course, we asked students to create a lesson based on one of the four texts we had studied in our thematic units and designed for a particular setting, such as a synagogue board meeting or a downtown lunch & learn session. Again, based on student suggestions, we modified this requirement the second time by allowing students greater flexibility to select any biblical text that fit within the same thematic category of one of the four units we had studied: a troubling text, a narrative passage, a legal or cultic section of the Torah, or a text that raises an historical issue. After receiving feedback on their in-class presentations, students made revisions and incorporated that lesson into their final project, a three-session class for adult Bible study.

AN INTEGRATIVE STANCE

The last several years at HUC-JIR have been devoted to a substantive redesign and implementation of a new Core Curriculum for rabbinical education. This planning process has focused on the rabbinical school, but it has had a significant impact on all the graduate programs. The guiding principle supporting these changes is integration. This includes integration across the disciplines, as well as a more integrated focus on three inter-related aspects of our students' development as religious leaders: Judaic knowledge, professional development, and personal religious growth. Achieving this integrated approach to learning requires rethinking what and how we teach as well as how we assess and help our students reflect on their learning, both within and outside of the classroom.

While "Teaching Bible to Adults" is not directly part of the Core Curriculum, the larger conversations about integration certainly sharpened our awareness of the gap between our stated goals about negotiating the dynamic tensions between learner, teacher, and content and the more linear way in which we actually structured and taught the course the first two times. As a result of these conversations about integration and our own process of reflecting on the course, we began to see the potential for richer integration of content and method, of texts and teaching – to enhance the learning of our students and also to help us grow as co-teachers as well.

As noted earlier, the essential goals for the course have not changed. However, we gradually took up a more systemic perspective about how to attain them. In our initial development of the course, we began by thinking about how to adequately address the numerous things that teachers need to know in order to teach well. We borrowed Hawkins' conceptual scheme to help us break down the complex work of teaching into three separate domains of knowledge. That was our first approximation of "what teachers need to know." In the process of reflecting on our teaching, however, we discovered that our attempts to responsibly cover the terrain were inadvertently fragmenting it, reinforcing dichotomies that we intended to break down.

As an example of our developing awareness, we realized, upon reflection, that the organization of our second syllabus still fostered an unproductive bifurcation between content and pedagogy, a split that was exacerbated by a three-week break during the High Holidays. We had divided the teaching load along conventional lines with Lisa taking major responsibility for covering the teaching tools during the first weeks of the course, and Andrea taking responsibility for the texts and methods of analysis that came after the High Holiday break. We had hoped to convey the idea that methods of biblical study are inseparable from the content (Seixas, 1999); however, by separating the two domains and keeping to traditional roles of "Bible scholar" and "pedagogy expert," we inadvertently reinforced the notion that subject matter is distinct from the "practical" skills of teaching.

We also realized after the second time we taught the course that we did not allocate enough time during the text study sections of the course to debrief and deconstruct our own teaching methods or to apply the lessons to different learners and settings. The results of this unproductive split became apparent when it came time for students to present their model lessons. Few of the students were seriously reflective about how issues of adult development and learning covered in the earlier part

of the semester had shaped their planning and instruction; neither did they deliberately integrate the pedagogical research assigned early in the semester into their final projects.

If we were going to have a course that integrated scholarship and pedagogy, that allowed for created collaboration between a Bible scholar and an Education scholar, and that enabled students to be working on teaching Bible to adults at all times, we realized we needed to think differently about our model of “what teachers need to know.” Thus, in its third iteration, the organizing frame for the syllabus transitioned away from viewing audience, text, and teaching as separate elements towards an integrated model shaped by questions and themes that derive from the challenges we believe are central to teaching Bible to adults. We are still concerned about each point of the instructional triangle, but rather than viewing the course as a series of the building blocks that lay the foundation for practice, we now see it more as a system of bridges, where each of these elements are integral to the practice of teaching.

A NEW CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Three interrelated ideas from the scholarship on teaching and learning helped us as we reflected on this new, more integrative approach. First, was Ball’s notion of bridging practices, paying more deliberate attention to modeling and creating opportunities for reflecting on the interactions between teacher content knowledge, and understanding of the learner, with the actual practice of teaching (Ball, 2000). Next, was a more integrative stance towards the development of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987). Whereas we had once considered PCK as the “teaching” point of the triangle, we grew to understand it as the narrative thread that weaves the course together. This shifted the focus from what we know about adult learners, biblical content and method, and teaching, to how we synthesize our knowledge of learners, content, and method and translate it into meaningful educational experiences—that is, to an integrative stance that made content inseparable from pedagogy.

The third new idea that helped guide our thinking as we restructured the course was Peter Seixas’ notion of “doing the discipline” (1999)—how the practice of inquiry into subject matter (Bible study in our case) shapes the practice of teaching and learning. In this conception, learning a subject is understood as learning how to know a subject. Therefore, pedagogy is more than a matter of delivery of content, but rather entails teaching students how to do what the teacher already knows how to do—that is, to “do” whatever discipline is being taught. And if this is the case, then the process of developing pedagogical content knowledge requires integrating questions about teaching with the future teachers’ own learning and doing. In our case, this requires designing learning experiences that create opportunities for learning Bible by simulating or exploring the varied contexts through which Bible may be taught (Ball, 2000). As Seixas writes, “It is in the doing of the discipline that content becomes pedagogy and vice versa” (p. 328, italics in original). In other words, student teachers learn content in a way that they can teach it by interacting with content in a disciplinary fashion—by exploring it and exploring the process of investigating it—not just by adding to their store of content knowledge.

TOWARDS GREATER INTEGRATION

This shift towards greater integration affected the course in three ways: content (that is, organization of the syllabus), instruction, and assignments. In terms of content, we retained our four original themes – teaching troubling texts, reading biblical narrative, finding personal meaning, and grappling with historicity – but we used the time differently to explore the questions of how to translate textual knowledge into pedagogic content knowledge. We also added two new themes and topics: “Parashat Hashavua: A Contrast between Exegesis and Isogesis” and “Trends in Translations of the Tanakh.” For the parashat hashavua class, we taught two model lessons that approached the same text from different orientations in order to concretize the distinction between exegesis and isogesis. In the other new lesson, the comparison of several recent translations of Genesis 22 led to a discussion of Edward Greenstein’s distinction between “author-oriented” and “audience-oriented” translations, a concept we applied to the contrast between teacher-focused and student-focused learning. In both cases, the design of the lesson was driven less by a desire to teach a particular genre of biblical literature or a specific text and more by an intent to use the study of a biblical passage to also illustrate a broader pedagogical insight.

The second dimension of integration meant that we moved towards more integrated roles as teachers, blurring the demarcation of responsibilities as the Bible scholar and pedagogy expert. For example, twice during the semester, both of us taught the same biblical text in different ways and the class analyzed the different methods of teaching through a developmental frame. By this, we mean that we asked the students to assess the underlying assumptions and premises that shaped our interpretive stance based on the developmental needs of learners and different life stages, different knowledge levels, and different motivations; we then discussed what type of ‘orientation’ best fits what type of learner and setting.

We also more deliberately linked content and pedagogy each time we studied a particular biblical text by asking our students to explore with us how our pedagogic content knowledge shaped the design and presentation of the lesson. In virtually every class, we devoted 20-30 minutes of the 2.5 hour session to this type of reflective discussion on methods of analysis and the fit between orientation to textual interpretation, audience, and setting. We found Barry Holtz’s chapter “Teaching the Bible” in *Textual Knowledge* (2003) to be a particularly useful resource to frame these conversations. We developed an exercise that linked his presentation of orientations to teaching Bible to Diane Schuster’s treatment of learning orientations and preferences that she presents in *Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning* (2003). After each model lesson, we would ask students to consider the learner’s developmental needs and motivation in relationship to textual orientations and instructional approaches that the learner might appreciate.

In addition, we offered two other ways to help students develop a reflective stance. First, we added an assignment that required students to observe an actual adult education Bible class and prepare a written reflection that assessed the teaching process. Towards the end of the semester, we also invited a scholar of midrash to teach a model lesson on how the Bible can be read through the lens of rabbinic literature. He used midrashic literature on the opening lines of Genesis to show how the rabbis reinterpreted the creation story to fit within their desired theological framework. After the

lesson, he remained with us to engage in an open process of “reading” his teaching, responding to questions about his lesson planning and instruction and reflecting together with the class on how the lesson was understood.

We further sought to enhance the integration of the classroom experience by creating assignments that fit with the real world of our students as rabbis and educators working in congregations. For example, during the early weeks of the course, we selected texts to fit with the season in order to build repertoire for students going out to High Holiday pulpits and other related work. In a new assignment, designed to help students apply the theoretical material on adult development and adult Jewish learning to an actual context, we asked students to prepare a written presentation to the board of directors of their synagogue (imagined or real) on the purposes and goals for adult Jewish learning.

The idea of “doing the discipline” also prompted us to delete an earlier assignment that asked students to prepare an annotated translation of a biblical passage that they would later incorporate into their teaching. While this assignment focused on building an important skill in biblical analysis, in keeping with our aim of integration, we decided to give up this project in favor of assignments that, like the classroom observation and the model lesson, were more directly connected to developing our students’ capabilities as teachers.

The third aspect of this integrative stance affected the final project. The first two times we taught the course, the students designed and presented a model lesson, received constructive feedback on that lesson, then revised and incorporated it into a three part unit for adult Jewish learners. This time, weighing our time constraints, rather than having students teach a segment of one of their lessons they simply summarized the main features of the three-session unit.

Just as the instructors more deliberately modeled the benefits of collaboration, we asked students to work in pairs on the final assignment, giving them more opportunities for conversation and reflection as they prepare their teaching materials. We also asked them to more carefully “script” the lessons to provide us with a detailed sense of their understanding of who their learners are, what questions they might ask and how active or passive they will be in the learning. Though we would not expect them to follow the script in an actual teaching setting, we believed this detailed approach would help reveal and document their grasp of pedagogic content knowledge.

The more integrative approach required us to be much more explicit with each other and our students about how we were going to teach, what we were going to teach, and why. It resulted in a more conscious efforts to “pull back the curtain” on our own teaching by uncovering the premises and theoretical underpinnings of our methods as we modeled teaching Bible, and asking our students to do the same both in analyzing our teaching and develop their own practice.

CONCLUSION

As we graded these various assignments, we saw a marked improvement in the students’ ability to apply the research and theories about adult development and adult learning to their work. Throughout the semester, in written work and class discussions, students referred to assigned readings and

core concepts covered in class. They were able to effectively critique and carefully consider how different approaches to teaching Bible are better suited to different audiences and settings. And, their final assignments demonstrated their ability to translate their own textual knowledge into powerful learning experiences for various types of adult learners. Another benefit of the redesigned syllabus was that we were able to teach more Bible. Instead of concentrating four Bible lessons into a distinct block mid-way through the semester, we engaged in text study in nearly every class session.

On the other hand, while we are pleased with the way the course has developed, there have also been tradeoffs. When we revised the syllabus, one of the things we had to give up was time for student teaching. The additional time we spent deliberately unpacking our own teaching meant that there was not ample time for the students to practice teaching themselves, a trade-off worth reconsidering the next time we teach the class. Another area to consider adding to the course is more of a focus on teaching our students how to study Bible on their own in preparation for their teaching. For example, we might make this kind of content preparation an explicit focus of the unpacking discussions, asking of ourselves and of other instructors not only how and why we taught as we did but also how and why we prepared as we did.

The focus of this paper, however, is not merely on what worked for us, and what we might still need to improve. Rather, this paper has attempted to describe the evolution of this course as a way to articulate our developing understanding of what it takes to nurture the pedagogic capacities of teachers of Bible. Our work together teaching and reflecting on our teaching has helped us realize that our course goals can be better served through an integrative stance that focuses on teaching students how to teach Bible to adults by blending the teaching of content and pedagogy—and, indeed, by not thinking of them as two separate realms at all. This is a sophisticated process that requires careful thinking, planning, and execution. The process of writing this paper has helped us add a further layer of reflection on our practice that has enriched our thinking and helped us again reformulate the course through greater attention to integration and strengthening the development of pedagogic content knowledge through every aspect of the course.

Accomplishing these goals requires us to model them through our own teaching practice, through building in more time for conscious and public reflection on our teaching both with each other and with our students, and through a mix of assignments designed to reflect authentic settings for teaching Bible to adults. “Doing the discipline” has required us to engage in an ongoing process of “reading” our teaching and to expand our knowledge of each other’s discipline. Moreover, we will continue to make our pedagogy of this course itself a model for our students—doing the kind of reflective analysis with them that we have done for ourselves and, in this paper, for our readers.

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This paper is one of a series of working papers on the teaching of Jewish studies, available for free download from the website of the Initiative on Bridging Scholarship and Pedagogy in Jewish Studies, a project of the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education at Brandeis University.

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