



FIELD ANALYSIS

of Israel Education, 2023

IMPLICATIONS FOR GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

ABSTRACT

This report provides a companion piece to the Israel Education in North America 2023 report. The addendum includes multiple analyses of the field using different analytic frameworks.

INTRODUCTION

This report serves as a companion piece to the Landscape Analysis of the Field report. The report is based on the same methodology used for the Landscape report but provides multiple analyses of the data using different frameworks. The analyses are meant to provide additional catalysts for thinking about growth in Israel education as a field.

The analyses include:

Factors That Accelerated or Inhibited Progress in the Field of Israel Education

This analysis identifies specific field levers that either helped or hindered the growth of the field.

Israel Education Through a Field Building Lens

This analysis uses a traditional field building framework to summarize the extent to which Israel education is a field, its status as a field, and the potential strategies needed to advance the field.

Israel Education Through an Implementation Science Lens

The next analytic lens briefly uses a traditional implementation science framework to analyze the field, examining reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation, and maintenance.

Israel Education Using a Practice Setting Lens

This analysis identifies practice settings with dedicated Israel education professionals, providing information on professional development opportunities available, and the stage of Israel education implementation in these settings. Also described are the challenges that have emerged for each of the settings as they adopt, implement, and sustain Israel education practices.

Israel Education Using a Jewish Identity/Identities Lens

This analytic lens reviews ease of access, receptivity, and likelihood of success in implementing Israel education practices using characteristics of audiences or settings identified by interview respondents.

Israel Education Using a Teaching and Learning Lens

This section provides an analysis of how well Israel education practices align with effective practices in teaching and learning.

Israel Education Using a Professional Development Lens

The final section analyzes the extent to which practices in Israel education align with the evidence-based research on features of effective professional development for teachers.

ANALYSIS OF ISRAEL EDUCATION: FACTORS THAT SERVED TO ACCELERATE OR INHIBIT PROGRESS IN THE GROWTH OF THE FIELD

An analysis of website and interview data shows that a number of factors appear to be associated with acceleration of growth in the field of Israel education:

Field Leaders

- The field has a strong and effective set of champions, insightful thought leaders, and influencers across many different sectors with many different roles in many different disciplines and fields of work/study.

Leadership Development

- The field has provided credentialing for leaders and leadership development that promotes deep knowledge of subject matter and issues.
- Many educators with professional certification or academic credentials are in positions of influence.

Systems Characteristics

- The field has many different organizations in many geographic locations offering services in Israel education;
- There is strong evidence of strategic thinking within and among most organizations and funders;
- Israel educators are using common language and have common beliefs about the value of Israel education in the formation of Jewish identity;
- Some Israel education organizations that provide professional development have adopted evidence-based effective practices for teaching and learning;
- Many Israel education organizations make their materials and resources publicly available.
- There is an increase in available funding.

Additional Levers for Change

- The field leaders have converged in thinking about the importance of promoting connection with both Israel and Israelis as a major component of Israel education.
- The field has an increasing focus on Israel as part of Jewish identity/identities.
- The field has often worked together to promote professionalism in the field.
- The field has experienced growth in the communities of researchers that study and advance effective practices.
- The field has developed some exemplars of effectiveness in various settings.
- The field has experienced growth in marketing and outreach.

An analysis of data also reveals a number of factors that appeared to be associated with inhibiting growth in the field of Israel education:

Generational Leadership Opportunities

- There are too few new generation leaders in Israel education and too few succession plans among top leaders in multiple organizations.
- There are too few convenings of thought leaders to discuss systems issues such as strategy effectiveness, lessons learned, field growth agenda, research agenda, and duplication of effort.

Uneven Quality of Professional Development

- The field has too much superficiality among its educational offerings;
- There is a lack of follow-through for alumni of Israel education experiences.
- There are too few support mechanisms and opportunities for advanced coursework in Israel education.

- There is a general lack of accommodation to meet generational needs and proclivities of specific age groups that often have differing world views, sources of information, opinions about individual responsibility to society, varying degrees of connectedness with Jewish life.
- There is too little effort to bridge the gap between Israeli and North American educators in the ways they address Israel education.
- The field has no comprehensive centralized clearinghouse. There is a paucity of strategies to institutionalize learning in the context of teacher turnover.

System Characteristics

- There is far too much frontline educator turnover due to challenges with pay, benefits, organizational culture, and poor leadership/mentoring, leading to less experienced and knowledgeable facilitators of learning and the need to duplicate professional development efforts every year.
- There is little incentive to change things that are not working.
- There is too much competition for funding, leading to a lack of collaboration in the field.
- There is a lack of intentional networking at every level to foster relationships, provide forums, seed conversations, and share lessons learned.
- There are no specific pipelines for Israel educators.
- There are too few idea incubators.
- There is no field level research agenda.
- There is little intentionality/incursion into public education through strategies such as introducing social studies standards, Hebrew as a foreign language, and pushing a research agenda into schools of public policy, sociology, psychology, and other fields of study using strategies such as predoctoral scholarships.

ANALYSIS OF ISRAEL EDUCATION THROUGH A FIELD BUILDING LENS

According to Farnham, Northmann, and Daniels of The Bridgespan Group (2020, p.6), a field is:

a set of individuals and organizations working to address a common social issue or problem, often developing and using a common knowledge base.

Field building includes those activities and investments that drive progress toward impact at scale. The stages of field building include:

- **Emerging:** scattered/sporadic impact, small portion of need/problem met.
- **Forming:** more consistent impact as infrastructure, collaboration, and coordination accelerate progress.
- **Evolving/Sustaining:** accelerated impacts, achievement of impact at scale, sustaining impact over time in response to evolving needs and conditions.

Is Israel Education a Field?

Using the Bridgespan Group (2020) definitions and using the field diagnostic tool, the following table shows the analysis of the extent to which Israel education can be considered a field as reflected in the website analysis and responses of thought leaders.

Is Israel Education a Field? Characteristics Related to Field Definitions

YES	NO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General consensus on common need: ensuring that Israel as a people and place is part of Jewish identity/identities. • Increasing development of a common knowledge base. • Strengthening organizations. • Strong leadership. • Increasing coordination and collaboration. • Professionalism of the workforce. • Some key intermediaries and clearinghouses for resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clearly defined set of strategies and research on how to meet the need. • Growing knowledge base but not yet common since limited dissemination, lack of building on one another’s research/evaluation/lessons. • Lack of new generation of leaders and succession plan. • Too much competition and not enough collaboration. • Challenges in retaining the workforce. • Uncoordinated resources in many areas. • Too few resources for some key audiences such as early childhood education. • Too few strategies for non-Jews.

The sentiments in this analysis reflect the same general findings as shown in the landscape, but additional analysis illuminates what can be done to advance the growth of Israel education and promote convergence of thinking of Israel education as a field. Researchers have found that using this framework allows leaders to develop better strategies for moving organizations to develop more effective infrastructure, sustainable practices, and overall impact. To that end, the following tables provide a more detailed analysis showing definitions of the factors associated with field building and alignment of Israel education to field building characteristics, along with a rating of Israel education as a field.

Knowledge Base

Definition: Body of academic and practical research/knowledge to help understand the problem, identify barriers, and develop solutions.

Field Characteristics (Bridgespan)

Emerging: knowledge base is relatively new or narrow, focusing on research describing the magnitude and severity of the problem.

Forming: knowledge base is growing with field actors drawing on it and contributing to it in meaningful ways, includes research and practice-based insights that hold promise of greater impact if spread more broadly in existing systems or channels with population-level reach.

Evolving/Sustaining: researchers and practitioners work together to continuously update the knowledge base as the field develops evolving understanding of the problems, barriers to progress, and effectiveness of solutions, leading actors to adapt based on new insights and evidence.

Israel Education

Rating: Forming

- Growing knowledge base and growing common understanding of need (increased since Oct.7).
- Some identification of barriers and gaps to addressing need.
- Some research on what works but sparse and not consistently high quality, not widely shared.
- Some effort toward reaching scale in some sectors/age groups.

To advance, the field needs better mechanisms to update/disseminate knowledge base; greater sharing of results and lessons learned; strategy for replication; strategy for innovation and customization to client needs.

Actors

Definition: Individuals and organizations bring a sense of shared identity and common vision.

Field Characteristics (Bridgespan)

Emerging: small set of actors with researchers and practitioners who are developing the knowledge base and working on targeted solutions to meet needs. See the need to engage others and define an objective beyond their own organization or initiatives.

Forming: set of actors grows and diversifies to include field catalysts, governing actors for systemic issues, funder champions, shared identity anchored in common view of field need through a diversity of lenses, shared goal of meeting the need to meet individual mission, respected leaders direct progress.

Evolving/Sustaining: set of heterogeneous and complementary actors identify with the field; diverse representative leaders; field catalysts and intermediaries coordinate/convene, funders with targeted roles including being less prominent.

Israel Education

Rating: Evolving

- Broad set of heterogeneous and complementary actors and funder champions.
- Respected leaders direct progress.
- Leaders with passion and desire to grow the field but not yet fully addressing system issues.
- Field catalysts play a variety of roles.
- Some coordination and convening by intermediaries.
- Not at scale.
- Not yet a common field identity .

To advance, the field needs an even more diverse set of representative leaders, especially younger leaders, and more intermediaries to coordinate/convene.

Field-Level Agenda

Definition: Strategic suite of approaches to address barriers and promote progress, co-created and continuously adapted.

Field Characteristics (Bridgespan)

Emerging: actors focused on distinct pieces of the core problem, working in own lanes, often ad hoc, localized, informal, narrowly focused on small segments or geographic boundaries.

Forming: working on a broader set of solutions such as training for field practitioners, designed with scale in mind, informed by practitioners. Initial overlap among actors as experimentation occurs and discovery of what works. Over time, intentional coordination and adaptation, agreement on what works for impact.

Evolving/Sustaining: heterogeneous, complementary, adaptive approaches (e.g., education, advocacy) work in concert, guided by co-created emergent field strategy to guide progress. Reaching impact at scale, alignment to an overarching vision of how collective efforts lead to change.

Israel Education

Rating: Forming

- Much experimentation to determine what works and a lot of building on what works.
- Initial overlap among actors as experimentation occurs and discovery of what works.
- Continuous feedback/improvement based on practitioner feedback.
- Attempts at intentional coordination and collaboration, some agreement on what works.
- Some complementary approaches to working in concert.

To advance, the field needs an overarching vision, greater collaboration and sharing of what works for impact, a common field agenda with a co-created field strategy, and a research agenda to advance effectiveness, along with more funding for evaluation and research.

Infrastructure

Definition: Connective tissue to strengthen other field factors and promote connection and effectiveness.

Field Characteristics (Bridgespan)

Emerging: informal, ad hoc mechanisms to connect actors to share lessons and insights, but mostly working in silos.

Forming: more formalized structures including technical assistance providers, convenings. Often intermediaries, dissemination of effective practices, spread of understanding.

Evolving/Sustaining: intermediaries provide technical assistance, strengthen connections, cultivate collaboration, build capacity, sustain progress, promote adaptation to meet new challenges as context evolves.

Israel Education

Rating: Forming

- Some sharing of ideas, lessons learned.
- Some collaboration, some coordination.
- Some placements of skilled individual in one another's organizations.
- Not a good sense of "connective tissue."
- Some identification and dissemination of effective practices in some sectors.
- General availability of support for each other when there is an external shock to the system.

To advance, the field needs more intermediaries to provide technical assistance and cultivate collaboration, more strategies to sustain progress, more rapid and nimble adaptation to meet new challenges as context evolves, more sharing of effective practices.

Resources

Definition: Financial and non-financial support.

Field Characteristics (Bridgespan)

Emerging: funders support research, learning, innovation, though no long term or formal commitment of resources to field building.

Forming: funders bring cohesion to their collective support, fewer branded initiatives, more effort toward broader field-level support, financial and social capital (leveraging other funders, convenings).

Evolving/Sustaining: committed set of funders investing in the field, helping tackle systemic issues, provision of funding for bringing to scale and aligned to long-term resource needs.

Israel Education

Rating: Evolving

- Committed set of funders.
- Relative cohesion among groups of funders though not across the entire field.
- Provision of financial and social support.
- Systemic approach.
- Focus on scale and long-term needs.

To advance, the field needs to attract more funders and generate commitment to both experimentation and meeting system and infrastructure needs.

ANALYSIS OF ISRAEL EDUCATION USING AN IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE FRAMEWORK

Implementation science frameworks were developed using traditional factors for understanding growth in a field, most often addressing the ways in which practices are adopted and diffused within a large system such as public health or education (e.g., Holtrop, Estabrooks, Gaglio, et. al. 2021). This analytic framework examines reach, effectiveness in attaining goals, adoption of new practices (change in institutions, practice settings), fidelity of implementation of learned strategies, and maintenance of new practices. The acronym RE-AIM is often used in describing the approach.

The following table provides an overview of Israel education using these implementation categories, based on website reviews and interviewee insights.

Framework Category	Definition	Israel Education Status
Reach	Proportion of the population engaged	<p>Estimated 20% of targeted educators are engaged in Israel education to some degree.</p> <p>Estimated 25% of targeted youth are engaged in Israel education to some degree.</p> <p>Individual organization numbers in the Appendix reflect reach of over an estimated 2 million individuals (duplicated count).</p>
Effectiveness	Goal attainment	Field of Jewish education has recognized the importance of Israel education and shifted its focus, pedagogy, language, curriculum; field is becoming professionalized, impact is beginning to be measured and realized. Goals from individual organizations have been met. Very few have measured impact.
Adoption	Institutional change	Implementation of Israel education activities can be found in most Jewish education settings, including schools, camps, supplemental programs, synagogues, youth groups, and Jewish communal organizations.
Implementation	Fidelity	Varies depending on competence and confidence of educator, and degree of institutional support.
Maintenance	Sustained as a routine practice	Strong desire to sustain among affected institutions; challenges with churn in employment.

ANALYSIS OF ISRAEL EDUCATION USING A PRACTICE SETTING LENS

An alternative way to examine reach, implementation, and institutionalization is to use the lens of practice settings, that is, the types of settings that have a dedicated Israel education position and/or have adopted Israel education as part of their mission. This analysis used website and interviewee responses for professional development opportunities and stage of implementation (Bridgespan definitions). Common challenges found in these settings were identified by interviewees.

Type of Setting	Professional Development Opportunities	Stage of Implementation	Common Challenges
Day Schools (formal)	Plentiful	Evolving	Staff turnover, lack of agreement on when and how aspects of Israel should be taught, and lack of pedagogical knowledge.
Summer Camps	Plentiful	Emerging	Staff turnover, lack of pedagogical and content knowledge, not institutionalized, and too many superficial activities.
Youth Organizations	Plentiful	Evolving	Staff turnover, lack of pedagogical and content knowledge, and challenges in working with youth who have differing points of view/focus/desire for activism.
Supplementary Schools	Sparse, especially for Hebrew schools	Emerging	Staff churn, lack of pedagogical and content knowledge, lack of belief of importance of teaching about Israel, lack of Israel education infusion into existing curriculum, and faculty and student perception of the topic as boring.
Colleges and Universities	Plentiful	Evolving	Political environment, challenges in working with differences in points of view and need for activism, and degree to which the topic is viewed as relevant in specific content areas (e.g., political science, sociology).
Federations	Plentiful	Evolving	Staff turnover, prioritization of Israel education within the services offered, lack of content and pedagogical knowledge and confidence to implement Israel education experiences.
Philanthropic Foundations	Plentiful	Sustaining	Varying and sometimes competing theories of change, challenges finding the balance between supporting competition and encouraging collaboration, need to attract additional funders, and need to provide sufficient funding to reach field-level goals.

ANALYSIS OF ISRAEL EDUCATION USING A JEWISH IDENTITY LENS

Israel education has been embraced, tolerated but viewed as “boring,” or rebuffed within North America. Pomson (2018), for example, categorizes some groups as devoted, disengaged, or disillusioned. Using his work along with other thought pieces and interviewee insights, the following table examines receptivity to Israel education from those most likely to embrace it to those least likely.

The table suggests the need for different starting points, strategies, and prioritization of effort.

Ease of Access and Likelihood of Success	Description of Settings/Individuals with Different Jewish Identity/Identities
Easiest (“low hanging fruit”)	Schools and other institutions dedicated to serving Orthodox Jewish children and families.
Easy	Schools and other institutions dedicated to serving religious Jews of any denomination.
Middle range	Individuals who identify as being culturally Jewish, even if they are not religious; individuals interested in understanding peace in the world and multiple narratives; Jews that marry non-Jews.
Somewhat difficult	Individuals who are critical of their experiences of being a Jew when they were young (“the Seth Rogen effect”).
More difficult	Non-Jews who are agnostic about Israel or know few or no Jews.
Most difficult	Non-Jews critical of Israel.

ANALYSIS OF ISRAEL EDUCATION USING A TEACHING AND LEARNING EVIDENCE BASE LENS

The research on effective teaching and learning and professional development strategies is reflected in two bodies of knowledge: effective practices in general education and how teachers learn best in professional development sessions. The analysis here is necessarily superficial since a formal review of teaching and learning was not conducted. However, using a literature review on effective educational practices applied to sample professional development sessions or descriptions from websites and interviews, this analysis suggests some ways that Israel education approaches align with effective practices and where they do not.

Effective General Educational Practices

The literature of effective educational practices focuses on what to teach (curriculum and content standards), how to teach (pedagogy), how to motivate learners, how to know what was learned (assessment), and how to support various learners (differentiated instruction and learner supports). This analysis provides a simplistic snapshot of the alignment of Israel education with effective general educational practices.

General Education Practices	Israel Education Practices
Curriculum/content standards (what to teach, when to teach, and the depth of knowledge to be taught)	Most sites that address Israel education use a curriculum that is adopted, adapted, or created from learnings or resources available from the field. There are no existing content standards (what to teach and at what level) though there are commonalities in the field, particularly when sites adopt specific organizations' model curricula or lessons. It is not clear that the sequencing of what is taught when is standardized or has been studied for effectiveness.
Pedagogies (instructional approaches including when to use direct instruction (lecture), when to use practice activities, challenge levels, relevance, and engagement strategies – and overall degree of learner-centered learning)	The extent to which sites have adopted effective pedagogies is not clear. Interviewees suggested that many sites still rely on direct instruction/lecture, though some sites that serve children and teens use active learning strategies such as role plays, multi-sensory activities, and discussion. Many available materials in Israel education, though, are learner-centered and there appears to have been a shift in the number of sites using these strategies, though it is not clear how many use them or the groups with whom they are used.
Motivation to learn	It is not clear how motivation to learn is stimulated.
Assessment	It is not clear how learning is being assessed except for a few evaluations that are survey-based and ask questions such as sense of connection to Israel.
Differentiation/learning supports	It is not clear whether or how instruction is differentiated based on learner needs.

Effective Professional Development for Educators

An analysis of studies of effective professional learning for teachers (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner, 2017) provides guidance for defining and understanding the components of effective professional development for Israel educators. Researchers that conducted this analysis defined effective professional development as “structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes.” (p.v) The seven widely shared features of effective professional development are listed below with a comparison of practices in Israel education based on available resources (websites and interviews). This analysis is suggestive but not definitive since a formal evaluation was not conducted.

Features of Effective Professional Development for Teachers

Practices in Israel education

Content Focus: providers have an intentional focus on discipline-specific curriculum development and pedagogies

While foci differ, most Israel education is intentionally focused on Israel and learning about Israel and/or developing a sense of belonging or connection to Israel and the pedagogies used are directly related to that purpose.

Active Learning: teachers are engaged directly in designing and trying teaching strategies that can easily be applied to their teaching settings. Active learning typically includes authentic artifacts, interactive activities, and strategies that provided deeply embedded and highly contextualized professional learning, moving away from lectures or activities with no direction connection to teacher classrooms/settings and their students.

Professional development in Israel education varies in its use of active learning strategies. Some organizations consistently use such strategies while many others primarily use direct instruction (lecture) with supplementary learning activities.

Collaboration: providers create spaces for teachers to share ideas and collaborate in their learning, often in job-embedded contexts.

The degree to which Israel education organizations incorporate collaboration in their approaches varies across organizations. This also varies by content area, setting, beginner v. advanced learning, and other factors.

Models of Effective Practices: providers share a clear vision of what best practices look like and disseminate models that include lesson plans, unit plans, sample student work, observations of peer teachers, and videos or written cases of teaching.

Many providers present a vision for best practices, though the clarity of the vision varies. The field is rife with lesson plans and unit plans, though other suggested materials such as sample student work or video cases of best practice are not prevalent.

Coaching and Expert Support: sharing expertise about content and evidence-based practices focused directly on teachers' individual needs.

The extent to which coaching and expert support is available in Israel education varies by organization, with some offering individual consultations and others providing group modeling and coaching.

Feedback and Reflection: providing time for teachers to think about, receive input on, and make changes to their practice through reflection and receiving feedback.

The extent to which feedback and reflection occurs within the field of Israel education varies, but most often is not included in professional development approaches.

Sustained Duration: adequate time to learn, practice, implement, and reflect upon new strategies.

A few organizations provide sustained duration for learning, typically through provision of a series of workshops/events. Most do not provide extended learning time.

Israel education has general strengths in its growth of high-quality content, materials, and resources, relevance of content, and number of participating educators, some with advanced learning. Israel education has general gaps (with notable exceptions in some organizations) with too little emphasis on engaging teaching strategies, depth of knowledge, application of knowledge, development of support networks, and focus on retention of educators in the field.

To improve a field, researchers recommend adopting standards for professional development to guide design, evaluation, and funding of professional learning; increasing the opportunities for professional learning and collaboration, including participation in professional learning communities, peer coaching, observation of teaching and learning, and collaborative planning; routinely conducting needs assessments to understand areas where professional learning is most pressing and desired, identifying and developing expert teachers as mentors; providing technology-facilitated opportunities for professional learning; and providing flexible funding to providers to encourage sustained collaboration, mentoring, coaching, institutes, and advanced learning opportunities (Darling-Hammond, Hyster, and Gardner, 2017, p.vi-vii).

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