CASJE Announces Recipients of Small Grants for Research on the Practice of Jewish Education

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Washington, DC – CASJE (The Consortium for Applied Studies in Jewish Education) today announced three grants for research projects focused on the practice of Jewish education. The grants, $30,000 each, were selected from 19 proposals submitted in response to an open call. The winning projects cover different aspects of Jewish education, will be completed by the end of 2018, and will be shared broadly with the field.

The grant recipients and their projects are:

~ Sharon Avni, PhD, CUNY–BMCC and Avital Karpman, PhD, University of Maryland
Mapping Hebrew education in public schools: A resource for Jewish educators

This study will examine Hebrew language programs at charter schools and at regular public schools, estimated to instruct approximately 6,000 students in 35 programs across the U.S. Until now, research has focused on the teaching and learning of Hebrew in Jewish day schools and informal Jewish educational contexts. However, significant growth over the past decade in the number of Hebrew language programs (HLPs) at schools across the country, and especially in Hebrew charter schools, warrants new research attention. Understanding how Hebrew language learning is conceptualized in these settings, how they appeal to Jewish and non-Jewish learners, and what instructional methods are used, will enable educators to gain a fuller picture of Hebrew learning outside of Jewish settings.

~ Jonah Hassenfeld, PhD, Gann Academy
What can teacher research offer Jewish education?

This study will explore teacher research as a way to promote teacher leadership. Hassenfeld will document the efforts of a newly formed Teacher Research Group – teachers conducting research on their own practice – as they form a community of teacher researchers and support each other in the conduct of research in their own classrooms. Hassenfeld will explore the outcomes of this experience for teacher researchers, their students, and their leadership within the school. He will examine the process through which teachers generate systematic knowledge that contributes to the field of Jewish education and will examine teacher research as a possible avenue for the development of teacher-leaders.

~ Lesley Litman, EdD, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion and Michael Zeldin, Ph.D, Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion
Enduring dilemmas: The pathway from competent administration to inspired and inspiring leadership
This study will explore the capacity of educational leaders in Jewish schools to distinguish between problems to be solved and dilemmas to be managed. Through a series of interviews with Jewish educational leaders, Litman and Zeldin will examine how senior personnel understand enduring dilemmas in their roles and their leadership practices, and how mastery of a range of strategies to address these dilemmas contribute to their perceptions of their capacity to be effective leaders. Jewish educational leaders face a steady stream of challenges, some of them requiring immediate responses and others calling for careful deliberation. This study addresses how educational leaders identify these dilemmas and manage them in complex and creative ways.

Upon completing the research, grantees will share their findings with the broader field of Jewish education at conferences, via social media, and in publications.

About: CASJE is a community of researchers, practitioners, and philanthropic leaders committed to sharing knowledge to improve Jewish education.