A Needs Assessment Regarding Programs for Russian Adolescents in Orthodox Jewish Day Schools: A Comparative Case Study

Fruma Sara Rosenfeld
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education (with coursework component)

2014

Centre for Program Evaluation and Youth Research Centre
Melbourne Graduate School of Education
The University of Melbourne

Produced on archival quality paper
ABSTRACT

Ultra-Orthodox Jewish Day Schools devote considerable time to advanced Jewish studies. When students join at the secondary level with limited or no previous Jewish education, the schools face an enormous challenge of providing appropriate programming to facilitate integration into the mainstream classroom and the broader school community. This qualitative study, focussing on parent and student voices, examines how two orthodox Jewish schools educated first and second generation Russian students who entered the schools at various levels and the impact this educational experience had on the students’ Jewish identities and observances. The aim is to inform best practice in educational programming.
Declaration

This is to certify that

i) the thesis comprises only my original work toward the degree of Doctor of Education

ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used

iii) the thesis is fewer than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Fruma Sara Rosenfeld
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my supervisor of many years, Associate Professor Rosalind Elizabeth Hurworth, the Director of the Centre for Program Evaluation at the University of Melbourne. Her untimely passing in 2012 has left a huge hole in the field of qualitative studies. Her support, encouragement and enthusiasm for this project was invaluable, although she was not able to see the completion of this study.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis took many years to complete. In an idealistic frame of mind, I was certain that six years part time was more than enough to complete this research. Life, however, does not always work to plan. In the interim years, I have married off two children, had another child of my own, and welcomed three grandchildren into the world. I was also working full time and caring for a special needs child. While these delays were for good occasions, the delay due to the illness and passing of my first supervisor, Rosalind Hurworth, was a much more difficult one to face.

Through it all, I must acknowledge the patience and support of my husband Yisrael. If not for his prowess in the kitchen and general household duties, and the willingness to take some family holidays with the children and without me, this thesis would never have been completed. I must also thank my children, who were so understanding and who grew up knowing that Mommy was working on her thesis. Thank you Chaya Mushka, Chanoch, Baruch, Batsheva, Avremel and Menucha for your understanding and patience. I know you must all be so relieved.

Thank you to Inna Zaitseva, my friend and support for all things Russian. Her willingness to share her research and her skills, were invaluable in being able to reach out to the Russian community in their own language.

Thank you to Hilary Ash for her willingness to help me through the last stages of this thesis and the challenges of working with new supervisors. Her patience and willingness to give of her time to listen to my thoughts, challenge my thinking, and help me tighten up my writing was an invaluable gift.

Gratitude is also extended to my supervisors Johanna Wyn and Helen Stokes. Thank you for agreeing to take me on at such an emotional time and gently prodding me to make the changes that needed to be made while still respecting the stamp Rosalind had left all over this thesis. Your encouragement and understanding were greatly appreciated.
I would like to extend my thanks to all those who participated in this research and returned the surveys and/or gave of their time to be interviewed. The sharing of your personal stories has been a gift to the community. A window into your experiences and insights are now documented for posterity, and will hopefully create a platform for more understanding and inclusiveness in the Jewish community.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my own roots in the former USSR. My parents, both from distinguished Rabbinic Jewish families, fled the former Soviet Union as young children in the late 40s on false Polish passports, leaving behind many dear ones, both living and deceased. My father never knew his father, who had been sent to the Russian front and killed before he was born. Their early lives were fraught with hunger and fear, constantly fleeing from both the advancing Nazis and the KGB. Today, there is a rebirth of Jewish life in the former USSR, and I am proud of my cousins, friends and even students, who have returned to the country of their roots and who now serve as Rabbis and Rebbetzins of these burgeoning openly Jewish communities.
# Table of Contents

List of Appendices.............................................................................................................viii
List of Maps and Tables....................................................................................................ix
Glossary ............................................................................................................................ xi

Chapter One: Research Rationale and Aims................................................................. 1
Chapter Two: Literature Review .................................................................................... 13
Chapter Three: Research Design .................................................................................. 55
Chapter Four: Analysis of School Documents and Staff Views................................. 79
Chapter Five: Analysis of Participant Experience Prior to Arrival in Australia........... 87
Chapter Six: New Reality on Australian Shores.......................................................... 107
Chapter Seven: Meeting Goals and Expectations....................................................... 140
Chapter Eight: Variation in Student Outcomes.......................................................... 184
Chapter Nine: Areas for Improvement and Participant Suggestions for the Future ...... 202
Chapter Ten: Concluding Comments.......................................................................... 220
References:....................................................................................................................... 229
List of Appendices

Appendix A ............................................................................................................................ 239
Appendix B ............................................................................................................................ 241
Appendix C ............................................................................................................................ 242
Appendix D ............................................................................................................................ 243
Appendix E ............................................................................................................................ 244
Appendix F ............................................................................................................................ 246
Appendix G ............................................................................................................................ 247
Appendix H ............................................................................................................................ 249
Appendix I ............................................................................................................................ 276
List of Maps and Tables

Map 1: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) Prior to *Perestroika*  88
Map 2: Commonwealth of Independent States – Post *Perestroika*  105
Table 1: Questionnaire Respondents by School and Type  69
Table 2: Interviews Completed by School and Type  70
Table 3: Proportion of Russian Students 2002  80
Table 4: Proportion of Russian Students in 2008  80
Table 5: Proportion of Russian Students in 2013  81
Table 6: Staff Perceptions –“What are the Issues Regarding Russian Students?”  83
Table 7: Results of NGT Round One: “How Can We Serve the Needs of Students with Russian Backgrounds in the Best Way?”  84
Table 8: Second Round and Rankings  85
Table 9: The Most Important Elements for Preserving Jewish Heritage in the Former USSR  97
Table 10: The Most Important Elements for Preserving Jewish Heritage in Australia  119
Table 11: Why Did You/Your Parent Choose These Schools?  121
Table 12: What Were the Three Most Important Factors in Choosing the School?  122
Table 13: Word Frequency in Defining Jewish Education  132
Table 14: Ranked Order of Choice Factors for Top Three Advantages of Jewish Education  135
Table 15: Ranked Order of Choice Factors for Top Three Disadvantages of Jewish Education  136
Table 16: Expectations Regarding Jewish Education  137
Table 17: Expectations Regarding General Education  138
Table 18: Student Ability in Hebrew  156
Table 19: Response to Facets of Jewish Identification  157
Table 20: Further Questions Related to Jewish Feeling and Identity  159
Table 21: If Someone In Australia Asks For Your Background, What Would You Answer  160
Table 22: If Someone In Australia Mistakes You For A Non-Jew, Would You Correct The Mistake?  161
Table 23: Which Of The Following Practices Do You Observe? (Students) 162
Table 24 Which Of The Following Practices Do You Observe? (Parents) 162
Table 25: How Often Do You Attend Synagogue? 164
Table 26: Parents’ Ability in English Languages: 193
Table 27: Parents’ Ability in Hebrew Language: 194
Table 28: Participant Suggestions for Curricular Improvements 206
Table 29: Participant Suggestions for Celebrating Diversity 207
Table 30: Participant Suggestions for Increasing Parental Involvement 209
Glossary of Hebrew and Yiddish Terms

Aleph beis – Aleph and Beis are the first two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Therefore this is the term used to refer to the entire Hebrew alphabet.

Aliya - Literally ‘ascent’, the term used when a Jewish person immigrates to Israel, as its spiritual significance and superiority in Biblical terms over other lands implies an ‘ascent’ in one’s life when moving there.

Ashkenazi - Ashkenazi Jews trace their origins to Germany and Eastern Europe. There are variations in the customs and liturgy of religious Jews from Ashkenazi or Sefardi (see below) origins, but not in the essence of the Torah law which they both uphold.

Ashrei – The first word of a particular prayer opening with two verses from Psalm 84:5 and 144:15 respectively. The rest of the prayer is from Psalm 145. This prayer is said three times daily as part of the morning and afternoon prayers.

Baruch- “Blessed” – as in “Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d”. This is the beginning of all Jewish Blessings made to G-d.

Bentch gomel - Recite a particular prayer (Hagomel) blessing G-d for his benevolence, recited when one is saved from a dangerous situation or recovered from a life-threatening illness. This prayer is also recited after travelling overseas which was traditionally a dangerous undertaking.

Bnos – Literally ‘daughters’ in Hebrew, but used as the shortened version of “Bnos Chabad” – “daughters of Chabad”, the name given to the youth group that meets on Saturday afternoon.

Bris- Circumcision

Bracha – a blessing

Brachot – blessings (plural)

Chabad - A particular philosophy within Orthodox Judaism. See Appendix A for a description of this movement.

Chag/chaggim – singular and plural for Jewish festivals
**Chassid** - Term used loosely to mean an ultra-orthodox Jew. More accurately, it refers to a Jew who identifies with one of the many sects within the Chassidic movement which began with Rabbi Yisrael ‘Baal Shem Tov’ (1698-1760). See Appendix A.

**Chassidut** - Chassidic philosophy

**Chanukah** – Jewish Festival of Lights

**Chazzan** - Cantor- the leader of prayers and singing in the synagogue

**Cheder** - religious Jewish school for children

**Chevra Kaddisha** - Jewish Burial Society

**Chumash** – Bible – Five Books of Moses

**Chuppah**- Jewish wedding ceremony held outdoors under a canopy. It is only after this religious ceremony that a Jewish man and woman are recognized as husband and wife.

**Davening** – praying

**Frum** – religious

**Gemara** - Used interchangeably for ‘Talmud’. More precisely, it refers to the Rabbinic discussion within the Talmud that took place from c. 200 CE to 500 CE.

**Haggadah** - Jewish text that sets forth the order, rituals, prayers and songs of the Passover ‘Seder’ –the traditional meal held on the eve of Passover.

**Halacha** – Jewish law

**Halachos** – Jewish laws

**Hashem** - Literally – ‘the name’, used to refer to G-d whose names Jews do not pronounce other than in prayer. The Tetragammon, G-d’s four letter name is never pronounced, not even in prayer.

**Hashkafa** - Jewish paradigm

**Kashrut**- Jewish dietary laws

**Kesubah** - Jewish marriage contract

**Kiddush**- A celebration held in the synagogue after prayers on a Saturday. Kiddush refers more specifically to the blessing over wine and the accompanying prayers said on Friday nights, Saturdays and Jewish festivals after synagogue prayers and before one is allowed to partake of any food.

**Kosher**- Jewish dietary laws
Lubavitch - a particular group of Chassidic Jews, named after the town of Lubavitch in White Russia where the groups’ early leaders lived.

Maariv- Evening prayer

Matzah – Unleavened bread (flat bread) specially made and supervised for the Passover festival.

Mechanech – person designated to deliver pastoral care

Mechina - Hebrew for ‘preparatory’. This was the name used in the school for any separate programs or classes for students with limited Hebrew knowledge. These programs were seen as preparing the students to be able to take a more active role in Jewish studies classes and/or Jewish life.

Mesiba Shabbos – Literally “Sabbath party”. Used to refer to Saturday afternoon youth movement activities.

Mikvah – ritual bath

Mincha – Afternoon prayer

Mitzvot - Commandments

Modeh ani - Two line prayer said immediately upon awakening in the morning to thank G-d for allowing the soul to return to the body.

Mohel - One who has been specially trained to perform ritual circumcisions.

Navi – Prophet – When used as a title for a subject, it refers to the study of the Prophets (part of the twenty four books of the Jewish Biblical Canon).

Parsha - A section of the Bible, as indicated by specific spacing in a Torah scroll. The term more commonly is used to refer to the sections of the Five Books of Moses, as divided by weekly readings in the synagogue.

Perek - Chapter

Pesach - Passover

Pidyon haben- Special ceremony held at 30 days of age for a firstborn male

Posuk – One verse in the Bible

Rebbe - Title given to a spiritual leader of a Chassidic sect

Rosh Hashanah – Jewish New Year
**Seder** - Elaborate traditional Passover meal held on Passover eve

**Sefardi** - Sefardi Jews originated in Spain and other Middle Eastern countries. There are variations in the customs and liturgy of religious Jews from Sefardi or Ashkenazi (see entry above) origins, but not in the essence of the Torah law which they both uphold.

**Shabbatons** - Weekend away, where a larger number of people/families celebrate Sabbath together. Sometimes it can refer to just having a Sabbath meal together without necessarily going out of town.

**Shabbos** – Sabbath (Saturday)

**Shecht** – verb; to ritually slaughter chicken and other kosher animals such as cows, goats, and sheep.

**Shema** - “Hear (o Israel)” – central Jewish prayer recited both morning and evening on a daily basis

**Shlichus** - mission

**Shmone Esrei** - “Eighteen Blessings” – central and climactic part of each of the daily prayers.

**Shtetl** - Yiddish word for small town or village with a large Jewish Yiddish speaking population primarily in Central and Eastern Europe pre-World War II.

**Shochat** – Ritual slaughterer

**Shul** - Synagogue

**Sukkah** - A ritual hut in which Jews dwell for the seven days of the holiday of Sukkos/Sukkot.

**Sukkos** - Festival of the Tabernacles

**Talmud** - The Talmud is a central text of Judaism (c. 500 CE). A key feature of a large portion of school hours in orthodox male education, the Talmud is a record of rabbinic discussions pertaining to many different areas of Judaism, including Jewish law, ethics and philosophy among others. It is also the basis for all codes of rabbinic law.

**Tefillin** – Phylacteries - Tefillin are a set of small leather boxes with black leather straps extending from the boxes. Specific scriptural verses inscribed on parchment are located inside the respective boxes. It is Biblical requirement (based on Exodus 13:9 and 16 and
Deuteronomy 6:8 and 11:18) to be worn on the head and the arm of all Jewish males from the age of 13 for the morning prayers on weekdays.

**Tzitzit**- Four cornered garment with specially knotted fringes worn by observant Jewish males, from the age of three, to remind them of G-d’s 613 commandments given to the Jewish people.

**Yahadut** - Translated as “Judaism”, this class would incorporate Jewish laws and customs pertaining to Jewish holidays and general Jewish life.

**Yarmulkas** - Head covering worn by all orthodox males from the age of three, also referred to as a ‘kippah’.

**Yiddishkeit**- Yiddish term for Judaism

**Yom Kippur**- Day of Atonement, a 25 hour fast day and the holiest day on the Jewish calendar.
Chapter One: Research Rationale and Aims

Education is, and has always been, a challenge for educational providers. Decisions about what to teach in the allotted time and what to leave out imply a value decision; what is most important to teach and what can be left to parents and the greater community?

In relation to curriculum, each school or education provider must consider its aims and goals as well as its population or target population to make decisions appropriate for its community. I found myself wrestling with such concerns and decisions when, upon completing my Master of Education with a focus on Curriculum development, and after writing a curriculum for Jewish Philosophy for Years P-12, I was asked by the Principal of the school I was working in, to develop a curriculum for the Russian students in the school. This was required because these students, unlike the rest of the student population, had often come to the school with very little, if any, Jewish educational background.

Consequently, I asked myself: What kind of ‘curriculum’ was needed? What was the goal of this ‘curriculum’? How would the school know if this ‘curriculum’ met its goals? Was the school’s current program based on any information gathered from these students, their families, teachers or community leaders? Why did they need a special curriculum?

Answers to these questions led to the conclusion that formal research had not taken place in the school in the past and so the idea to have a specially-designed curriculum came from anecdotes, assumptions and failure in the past to integrate these students. I therefore felt that the only way to approach this task was, first of all, to find out more about this target population both within my own school (a girls’ school) and our brother school, a neighbouring boys’ school. Hence, this research was born, taking the form of an
examination of the experience of first and second generation Russian\(^1\) immigrant adolescents in two orthodox Jewish day schools.

**General Background**

Queen Esther School for Girls\(^2\) and its brother school, King Solomon School\(^3\) for Boys, are Jewish orthodox\(^4\) P-12 schools\(^5\) in Victoria, Australia. They are, by public perception, small Jewish private schools where students obtain high Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)\(^6\) scores. However, a number of students from non-orthodox Jewish backgrounds join the schools at varying levels of their education. Their reasons for joining the school vary but it is assumed that many join because of the high VCE results and the possibility of obtaining consideration for reduced fees.

It is also known that some students join the school due to familial associations with Chabad-Lubavitch\(^7\) emissaries who espouse the importance of Jewish education and who encourage parents to send their children to Jewish day schools. The Queen Esther and King Solomon Schools are part of this broader Chabad movement whose main mission is to educate Jews about their heritage. Therefore, the schools have a welcoming, fairly open-door policy to any Jewish students who want a Jewish education, regardless of their previous levels of Jewish learning.

\(^1\) The Jewish population from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) is considered to be culturally Russian as were people from other nationalities in the former Soviet Union such as Ukrainians and Byelorussians. In the FSU, “Jewish” was considered a nationality not a religion. Jews were therefore not referred to as “Russian”, “Ukrainian”, “Byelorussian” and so on while living there. However, upon migrating to other countries, they are often referred to as “Russians”, regardless from which part of the FSU they originated due to the language and culture they bring with them. In this study “Russian” will be used in this broader sense.
\(^2\) A pseudonym
\(^3\) A pseudonym
\(^4\) Orthodox Jews are often referred to as ‘observant Jews’. This is usually in a religious sense meaning – observing Jewish laws in relation to day-to-day living, family life and Jewish holidays. (Strict observance of Sabbath holidays, keeping kosher – Jewish dietary laws– both within and outside the home and keeping the laws of family purity, are minimalist measures of religious observance.)
\(^5\) Prep to year 12. Prep is the year before Grade 1 and is the first formal year of school.
\(^6\) This is a Victorian government granted certificate upon completion of mandated coursework and exams set by the government for the final years of secondary school. Effectively, this is the secondary school (high school) government diploma.
\(^7\) See Appendix A for a description of this movement and its impact on the community.
Many of these students have come from Russian backgrounds. However, there has been very little formal documentation relating to this population in the two schools. Thus, little is known formally about the backgrounds of these students, their reasons for joining the schools or their goals in relation to their Jewish education.

Schools’ Mission Statements
Although these schools are run by a single administration and are considered to be brother-sister schools, the programs they offer are different. Each school has its own curriculum and choice of subjects and the programs offered to support students with special needs also vary.

The girls’ school’s aim is “to educate Jewish girls devoted to our holy tradition” and the school is dedicated to “providing a first class educational experience for all students” (School Mission Statement, emphasis mine). Similarly the boys’ school “aims to provide a strong educational foundation for each student... to take their place in society with pride in their Jewish identity...”. The boys’ school also “encourages...students to make a personal commitment to Torah\(^8\) values” (School prospectus; n.d.).

As orthodox Jewish day schools, Queen Esther and King Solomon Schools see themselves, as do many other orthodox Jewish day schools (Rietveld-Van Wingerden, 2003), as the transmitters of Jewish identity through the valued knowledge, beliefs and attitudes of the Jewish religion, culture and tradition of the past 3,300 years. This is accomplished through the offering of a dual curriculum, i.e. both secular and religious, since “the major instrument of enculturation adopted by a school is its curriculum” (Bullivant, 1983, p.52).

The Dual Curriculum
At the Queen Esther School, an advanced Jewish studies curriculum is offered alongside a general studies curriculum leading into VCE. The number of periods devoted to Jewish studies varies from year to year with younger secondary\(^9\) classes having more time devoted

---

\(^8\) The whole body of Jewish traditional teaching including the Oral Law.

\(^9\) Secondary school is the name for what is generally known overseas as Middle School and High School. Australian secondary schools usually incorporate all classes from Year/Grade 7 onwards.
to Jewish Studies than upper secondary classes. A Year Seven class may have twenty forty minute periods a week of Jewish studies while Year 12 may have only eleven. Subjects in Jewish Studies include the study of Biblical texts, Hebrew language, Jewish history, Jewish laws and customs and Jewish philosophy. To accommodate this dual curriculum, the school day, at the time of this study, starts at 8.30 am for prayer. Classes begin at 9.05 and conclude at 4.05 pm (4.45 on Mondays and 3.15 on Fridays to accommodate the beginning of the Sabbath at Friday sunset). There is one morning recess break of 15 minutes and a lunch break of 40 minutes. On Mondays, due to the longer school day, an additional 10 minute afternoon recess break is given. Some VCE classes are also held during the lunch break. All Jewish studies classes are interspersed among general studies classes.

**The Curriculum for Boys:**

Similarly, the King Solomon School offers a dual curriculum. However, in the boys’ school more emphasis is placed on the study of Talmud\(^{10}\) and Jewish Law. The boys start school at 7.20 am for prayer. Classes begin at 8.30 and conclude at 4.45 pm (3.15 on Fridays) with two fifteen minute breaks and a 45 minute lunch break. Classes begin with three lessons of Jewish studies at all year levels. In years 7-9 an additional seven Jewish studies’ lessons per week take place interspersed among general studies classes. This brings the total number of Jewish studies lessons per week to 22. Year 10 has 20 lessons of Jewish studies per week and Years 11 and 12 have 15.

**Lack of Pre-requisites for Success**

The level of Jewish studies at the secondary schools requires an advanced knowledge of Jewish culture and religion. For instance, grounding in the Hebrew language, and familiarity with textual study of the Bible in its original Hebrew form, are prerequisites for full participation in Jewish studies classes. Boys are also expected to have had a firm grounding in the study of the Talmud (written in Aramaic) and Jewish law.

---

\(^{10}\) The **Talmud** is a record of rabbinic discussions of Jewish law, ethics, customs, and stories, which are authoritative in Jewish tradition. It is the fundamental source for rabbinic legislation and case law.
Consequently, the Hebrew alphabet is formally taught at both Queen Esther and King Solomon in Prep\textsuperscript{11} and all students master the ability to read and write Hebrew and English simultaneously by the end of their prep year. Textual Biblical Studies begin in Year 1 in both schools and the boys begin their introductory study of Talmud in Year 3. Thus students attending these primary schools are well-prepared to continue their studies at an advanced level in the secondary schools.

As might be expected then, any students with limited, or no Jewish educational background are at a severe disadvantage when entering these schools in their late primary years or in secondary school. These students do not possess the assumed textual, cultural and religious knowledge to be able to participate fully in the Jewish studies classes at the secondary level. They also do not have the ability to show mastery of the outcomes expected from the students who have completed their Jewish schooling at the Queen Esther or King Solomon primary schools\textsuperscript{12}. Because of this, the schools’ role as ‘transmitters of Jewish identity’ through its curriculum is compromised.

At the commencement of this study, it appeared that many students who arrived with such limited understandings often came from homes where Russian was the primary spoken language. In the past these were students born in the former Soviet Union and whose parents had emigrated from there.

In more recent times, with a decrease in the numbers of Jews emigrating from the former USSR (FSU) to Australia, they are usually children born in Australia of longer-standing (Soviet) Russian immigrants. There are also some Russian families who first migrated to Israel and then came to Australia after a number of years. In these cases some of the children were actually born in Israel. However, there is also a small group of non-Russian students who arrive with little background.

\textsuperscript{11} Informally, the Hebrew alphabet is explored in the preceding years of kinder and pre-prep. Students from observant homes are likely to be introduced to this alphabet at home at an even earlier age.

\textsuperscript{12} E.g. They cannot read or write Hebrew fluently and do not know the names of all the Hebrew months or holidays and their related laws and customs. They are not familiar or only vaguely familiar with ancient Jewish history as studied in primary school from Biblical texts and the role of the Land of Israel in Jewish tradition. In addition they: are familiar with only some of the main Jewish life cycle events; do not have the ability to study original Biblical texts; and are not familiar with everyday Hebrew terminologies that are used in Jewish life.
The exact numbers of students in the different categories mentioned above, in each school, were not known since there has never been any formal investigation into this issue, but there have always been a considerable number from the FSU. A decision was made therefore, that this thesis should focus on the Russian students.

There has also never been any formal knowledge about why these schools seem to attract a considerable number of students from Russian speaking homes. In addition, it has not been understood clearly why these students have chosen to come to these particular schools, given the difficulties they face in accessing the full dual curriculum. Moreover, there seems to have been no consistency in relation to the level of Jewish studies knowledge and skills achieved by these students in their time spent at either school. In addition, there appear to have been varying levels of social mingling between these students and the rest of the student body. This group of students have often been viewed as ‘Russian cliques’ who frequently fail to participate in religious/cultural school events beyond normal school hours.

Finally, there has also been a perceived sense of frustration among teachers who have often seemed to view these students as uninterested, uninvolved and disruptive during Jewish studies classes. A perception among some teachers that these students are ‘using the system’ without respecting it, has caused some teachers to resent the extra work involved in modifying courses so that the Russian students can access coursework more readily. Others have also found it difficult to know how to engage these students.

Given this limited knowledge and various assumptions, the two schools have used various means to cater to the needs of these students. However, there has never been any formal documentation about the need to run particular programs or an evaluation of the success or cost-effectiveness of any of these programs. There has also never been an investigation to consider the inconsistent levels of acculturation achieved by this particular cohort within the student body.
**Aims of the Study:**

As a result of the above situation, the main purposes of this study are threefold:
First, it aims to identify and document the experiences of the Russian students with minimal Jewish educational background in the two secondary schools, with particular emphasis on the students’ and their parents’ perspectives. To place their experience in context, this part of the study also attempts to understand:

- the background of these students
- the reasons for choosing the two schools
- the expectations from their schooling
- some of the factors that may have impacted on the degree to which they integrated into the school community.

Secondly, the study aims to focus on the programs offered in these schools with the intention to:

- evaluate more fully whether there is need for special support programs for students with minimal Jewish educational background
- clarify the rationale and intended outcomes for these programs
- explore the effectiveness of the programs that are presently offered to meet the needs identified in the study
- explore the possibilities of enhancing the programs or offering new programs to meet the needs identified by the various stakeholders.

Thirdly, this study attempts to compare the needs presented and the programs offered in the Queen Esther School and the King Solomon School in an effort to help the two schools learn from each other.

Two additional aims of this study are to help the schools understand the values, beliefs and attitudes of this particular segment of their student population and to present a case study that may help other schools in similar circumstances to evaluate their own programs.
Significance of the Study

This study will help to dispel perceptions and assumptions about a particular group of students in the school and replace them with student, parent and community voices to help school personnel understand and cater for the needs of all their students. In this way the study can play a role in improving conditions for teachers and students alike.

The issues of the degree of acculturation achieved by a particular cohort of the student population, is an important issue to raise in private Jewish schools where the same sort of cultural diversity as might be found in other private or government schools does not exist. Orthodox Jewish day schools have only Jewish students and teachers can, therefore, mistakenly assume that there is no cultural diversity in their classroom. Yet even within the Jewish population there are cultural differences depending on the ancestry, country of origin and level of Jewish education. These differences, though not as great as differences between the Jewish and non-Jewish population, can affect the attitudes towards, and values placed upon, Jewish studies education and the importance of being committed to a Jewish life.

If teachers feel that their teaching is having no effect, or indeed is being scorned or not valued by students or parents, it becomes very hard to sustain the same level of commitment and enthusiasm for teaching. A demoralized teacher will not be a good teacher. Furthermore, if these perceptions are shared between teachers, an unintentional prejudicial attitude can develop toward a particular segment of students. This can be demonstrated by reduced expectations of achievement from particular students or even by a refusal to teach classes with high numbers of these students. This is of course, unfair and unacceptable. Thus, it is important to encourage discussion of cultural difference within the Jewish classroom in order for teachers to meet the needs of all their students appropriately.

The issues addressed in this study are not isolated to Melbourne but have national and international relevance. Every Jewish community that has a Chabad-Lubavitch\textsuperscript{13} presence and a Jewish day school, whether Chabad or otherwise, is likely to face similar challenges.

\textsuperscript{13} see Appendix A
Chabad schools in particular, which share the same values of the importance of advanced Jewish studies, yet also have an open door policy and accept students with limited Jewish educational backgrounds, will face similar dilemmas to those of the schools being studied.

Taking into account that there are over 4000 full time Chabad emissaries in over 60 countries and over 3,300 Chabad institutions worldwide with multiple new institutions opening yearly, this study may be of use to any associated schools and to any other Jewish schools that have first or second generation immigrant students from the FSU. Other non-Jewish schools with immigrant populations may also be able to glean some insight from this research regarding the ways to approach and bridge the cultural gap between the school and their families, regardless of the origins of their student population.

Research Question and sub-questions

The key research question is:

**How can the Queen Esther School for Girls and the King Solomon School for Boys (while following their respective mission statements) provide optimal secondary education for their Russian student populations who have had minimal prior Jewish education?**

There are a number of associated sub-questions:

1. What are the demographic and other characteristics of these students\(^\text{14}\)?
2. What are the needs of students, their parents and the community?
3. What programs are currently being offered?
4. To what extent are the programs currently offered addressing the identified needs of these particular students?
5. What can the schools do to enhance their programs further?

\(^{14}\) This sub-question includes questions about demographics, Jewish identity, Jewish education, choice of school and expectations and responsibilities. See Appendix B for the full list of questions.
Outline of Thesis

This thesis has been organized in the following way:

Chapter 1 – Introduction
This chapter has presented the context and background information that led to this study. The research rationale and aims have been presented, and the research questions and sub-questions delineated.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review
This review will explore key relevant factors gleaned from the literature, which formed the foundation for further investigation and framed the specific questions asked of participants in this study. This will demonstrate how the wider research, around immigrant ethnicity, identity, and acculturation into a new host society, is germane to the discussion, and how many of the findings in research studies of Russian émigrés to Western countries pertain to the cohort under study.

Chapter 3 – The Design of the Study
This methodology chapter will outline the rationale for choosing to design this qualitative study as a needs assessment while also being an instrumental case study. In addition specific decisions regarding sampling, data collection and data analysis are explained and the considerations of ethics, rigour, trustworthiness and the limitations of the research are presented.

Chapter 4 - Analysis of School Documents and Staff Views
Six chapters of this thesis are devoted towards presenting the findings of the study. Each chapter is devoted to a particular aspect for clarity of reading. Chapter Four outlines the findings from school documents and staff. These provide the context for the study and help clarify the assumptions that prompted this research.
Chapter 5-Analysis of Participant Experience Prior to Arrival in Australia
Chapter Five begins to tell the story of immigration as presented by the participants in this study. This chapter is limited to experiences prior to arrival in Australia, including events leading to their emigration from the Former Soviet Union and while en route to Australia. This chapter lays the foundation for understanding the backgrounds of many of the students in the cohort under study.

Chapter 6-New Reality on Australian Shores
Chapter Six explores the reality facing these immigrants on Australian shores and the challenges of integrating into their host society. This chapter also explores the factors associated with choosing to provide a Jewish education for their children.

Chapter 7-Meeting Goals and Expectations
Chapter Seven documents the perceptions of participants as to whether the schools met their goals and expectations. School programs are outlined and participants elaborated on the success and failures of these programs in meeting their needs.

Chapter 8-Variation in Student Outcomes
Chapter Eight examines factors that may have contributed to the varying impact the Jewish education offered at the Schools had on students’ outlook on and practice of Judaism.

Chapter 9-Areas for Improvement and Participant Suggestions for the Future
Chapter Nine presents the suggestions of participants in how the Schools can improve their programming to better meet the needs of Russian students. Suggestions addressed both curricular and co-curricular programming.

Chapter 10 – Conclusion
This final chapter will explore the broader lessons to be learned from this study in terms of the formation of Jewish identity, the efficacy of Jewish education and the particular aspects of the immigration experience that must be considered. In addition, suggestion for further research will conclude the thesis.
Appendices

There are nine appendices at the end of this thesis. The first two relate to Chapter One. Appendix A explains the philosophy of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, whose members founded the schools under study. This philosophy still underpins all decisions made by the Schools. Appendix B delineates the twelve specific questions included in the first sub-question of this study.

Appendix C presents in detail the typology of Jewish identity presented by one of the researchers explored in the literature review chapter.

Appendices D through I are related to items in the methodology chapter. Appendix D has examples of visual models created in computer assisted data analysis software NVivo. Appendix E presents the free nodes and tree nodes developed during data analysis and Appendix F presents examples and explanations for the referencing used in order to provide the audit trail. Appendix G outlines the interview questions used for the different cohorts of participants while Appendix H contains the bilingual questionnaire given to parents with the student questionnaire found in the final Appendix I.

Conventions

Due to the nature of this study, many Hebrew and Yiddish words are used. These words are written in italics when found within the text and the first time they appear, an explanation will appear in a footnote. In addition, a full glossary of all Hebrew and Yiddish words and terms used in this thesis are presented right before the first chapter.

Whenever acronyms are used, these are written in full the first time they appear, with the acronym appearing in brackets. Henceforth, only the acronyms are used.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

This study arose from the observation that Russian students are different from the rest of the study body in such a way that focused research might yield valuable teaching information. Their participation in the Jewish education classes varied in quality and commitment from their general studies, which raised questions as to why they chose orthodox Jewish day schools.

To inform this study, predominantly interested in addressing the needs of Russian students in two orthodox Jewish day schools in Melbourne, Australia, existing research was sought relating to Russian students and their Jewish education. Familiarity was also sought regarding the Russian immigration experience to Australia, Russian culture, and what was known about the attitudes of Russian families towards education in general and Jewish education in particular, as well as their view of Jewish identity often assumed to be strengthened through Jewish education.

This chapter provides a discussion of the relevant factors gleaned from the literature, which formed the foundation for further investigation and framed the specific questions asked of participants in this study. This will demonstrate how the wider research, around immigrant ethnicity, identity, and acculturation into a new host society, is germane to the discussion, and how many of the findings in research studies of Russian émigrés to Western countries pertain to the cohort under study.

To begin, an overview of Russian Jewry in Australia is presented, to understand how they arrived and under what programs. The notion of ethnicity and ethnic identity and how this can relate to cultural tension in educational settings in general is explored before examining how this relates to Jewish identity and attitudes towards Jewish education. I continue by discussing key areas which research suggests will reflect differences in attitude between Jewish Russian émigrés and the receiving Jewish host community, which may thus impact on the attitude of students from the former Soviet Union versus other immigrant or non-
orthodox students at these orthodox schools. Finally, I examine research that investigates the formation of strong Jewish identity, namely through Jewish education and through parental influence. I then analyse this through the broader research that differentiates between the process of acculturation versus enculturation.

**Australian Soviet Jewry**

This section outlines the migration to Australia and the particular settlement patterns that placed the schools under study in the geographic centre for this immigrant community.

The Australian Migration Program accepts migrants based on three streams: skill, family reunion, and special eligibility (e.g. former residents wanting to return). In addition there is a humanitarian program which allows for resettlement of refugees or displaced persons who have suffered discrimination in their home countries. Special assistance categories can be assigned as a sub-class of this displaced persons stream. Whereas refugees arrive with full government assistance, it is assumed that people arriving in the special assistance categories will receive support from those who lobbied for their arrival.

Migration from the former Soviet Union occurred in two distinct waves (Rutland, 2011) with several sub-waves in the post-communist migrations (Remennick, 2011). The first wave of migration was between 1971 and 1980 (Rutland, 2011). In this wave, during the period of the Cold War, migration was very limited. Although approximately 30,000 Jews managed to secure visas (Harris, 2011), these were due to demands from world Jewry (Rutland, 2011). These visas were for family reunion to Israel only, but once they left the Soviet Union many chose, and were able to go to other Western countries of their choice, by waiting in transition camps in Europe for visas from those countries. In this period, migration reached its peak in 1979 and Jews coming to Australia were classified under the humanitarian migration program. Between 1980 and 1987, emigration from the former Soviet Union (FSU) practically ceased until it resumed again in a second wave of

---

15 The term Soviet and Russian Jews are used interchangeably as adopted by other researchers (Rutland, 2011).
16 [http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/01backgd_01.htm](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/01backgd_01.htm)
emigration with the advent of *glasnost* in 1987. This wave transformed into a mass emigration following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Rutland, 2011). However, between 1987 and 1990, the majority of Jews leaving the Soviet Union with Israeli visas, actually arrived in the United States of America (USA) as Jewish refugees. By the end of 1989, the USA drastically reduced its quotas and tightened their terms of entry limiting it mainly to family reunions. At the same time, direct flight routes opened to Israel, thereby closing the transitions camps located in Rome, Vienna and some other European cities (Remennick, 2011). Simultaneously, the Jewish community in Australia lobbied the Government for the creation of a special category for their compatriots from the former USSR (Zaitseva, 2006).

Thus, between 1991 and 1997, the bulk of Jewish émigrés were redirected to Israel (Remennick, 2011) and many Russian Jews also arrived in Australia under the status of Special Assistance Category Visa (sub-class 210), for the “minorities of the former USSR” specifically because they were Jewish (Zaitseva, 2006) and were suffering anti-Semitism in the FSU. The irony of this will be discussed later. Migration of Russian-speaking Jews to Australia declined significantly after 1997, when this humanitarian visa (sub-class 210) ceased to exist. By 2005, over 1.8 million Jews had emigrated from the FSU, with 60% heading to Israel, about 30% to the USA, and around 10% to other Western countries (Remennick, 2005).

According to the 2001 ABS\(^\text{17}\) census, which is the most relevant data for the period under study, 83,993 Jews were living in Australia and 38,374 (nearly 46%) of these in Victoria. This constituted the largest Jewish community in Australia (Rubinstein, 2003). However, based on the known underestimation of the Jewish population on the census, due to failure to identify religion, the estimated number of Jews in Australia was more likely between 110,000 and 115,000 and the number in Victoria 53,238 (Rubinstein, 2003) or 55,450 (Szwarc, 2004), depending on the method used to determine the underestimation. Even so, it has been estimated that 98.4% of Victorian Jews lived in Melbourne (Rubinstein), the capital of the State of Victoria.

\(^{17}\) Australian Bureau of Statistics
Of particular interest to this study is the census report that indicates that only 6751 Australian Jews were born in the former Soviet Union. Yet, in the Victorian report:

- 2,923 Jewish people indicated that they originated from the former Soviet Union
- A further 2,020 were from the Ukraine
- 1,753 were from other parts of Southern and Eastern Europe
- 6,852 people (12.3%) indicated that Russian was the language spoken at home
- 2,557 people did not identify the birthplace.

It appears highly likely that the Russian Jewish population is larger than the census suggests. This is due to the increased tendency among Russian Jewry not to identify themselves as either Russian or Jews. Referring to ex-Soviet Jewry in Australia, Rubinstein (2003) puts the figure at over 20,000 more than the census indicates.

The much higher estimate of Russian immigrants is certainly borne out when looking at anecdotal evidence. For instance Roman Mirkus, then president of Melbourne’s Shalom Association, is quoted in the Australian Jewish News (Nov, 27, 1998) as saying, “We believe 12,000 Jews have come to Melbourne from the former Soviet Union in the past 20 years”. Another article (2003) in the same paper reports that an estimate of over 20,000 Russian Jews had made their way to Melbourne and that would constitute close to half the city’s Jewish population. The article goes on to wonder about their under-representation in the community’s life. Zaitseva (2006), a Soviet immigrant herself, who has researched the Russian community in Melbourne, claims that there are about 25,000 Russian Jews residing in Australia. This would represent 25% of Australia’s Jewish community! Clearly, there are more ex-Soviet Jews than officially recorded on the census.

According to a Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV) report (Szwarc, 2004), based on this 2001 Australian census, the bulk of Russian immigrants tended to arrive over the 20-year period, between 1975-1995. In the period between 1996 and 2001 there was a reduction of immigrants from the FSU and Ukraine to Victoria from 1,317 to just 296. Although migration to Australia from the former Soviet Union and Ukraine decreased significantly in the period between 1996 and 2001, they still represented 19% of Jewish immigrants to Victoria. The reduction in immigration from the FSU is reflected in the fact
that many nominally Russian students in this study were in fact born in Australia, or in other countries en route from the FSU to Australia.

The Jewish Community Council of Victoria report (Szwarc, 2004) reveals that 51% of the Victorian Jewish population live in the so-called Golden Mile region. This region is actually a number of suburbs adjacent to each other that are close to both the city and the beaches, with substantial homes. This Golden Mile region also borders the region with the next highest Jewish population, meaning that approximately 27,151-28,279 Jews lived in the area. The schools in this study are located in this Golden Mile. There are also seven other Jewish day schools in these suburbs. 8,500 Jewish families with children lived in the suburbs around the schools.

The census also indicated that 77.4% of Jewish students attended non-government schools and there was an increase in the number of Jewish students in Jewish secondary schools in comparison with primary schools (Szwarc, 2004). This information is in line with my personal experience of students entering Queen Esther secondary school from government schools. It also correlates with information derived from internal statistics from the Jewish day schools.

The secondary schools in this study, with student populations of approximately 250 and 160, represent 15-18% of Jewish students in the seven Jewish secondary schools in Victoria. Thus it would seem that this research, focussing on a small yet significant portion of the Jewish population, might not only help the schools involved in the study, but may shed light on the successes and/or failures of other Jewish schools in Victoria to cater for the Russian populations in their school bodies. It may also shed some light about why there may be a significantly greater percentage of Russian students in some Jewish schools as compared to others. A full investigation of this is, however, beyond the scope of this research.

Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

A key element in assessing the needs of a particular group is understanding their culture and the way they identify themselves. Before looking at Jewish identity per se, it is useful to have some understanding of ethnicity and ethnic identity in general. Remennick (2005) maintains that ethnicity and ethnic identity arise from and are shaped by social constructions, context, personal circumstances and historic processes. Thus, how one identifies ethnically is often affected by outside factors. Remennick also found three main factors contributing to the preservation of Jewish identity in the Former Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries. She describes anti-Semitism both in institutions and among the populace, meaning Jewish people experienced suffering arising from limited educational and career opportunities exacerbated by prejudice and insults, the ongoing collective memory of the Holocaust, and the anti-Israel propaganda across the Eastern Bloc countries following the establishment of Israel.

In the same vein, but on the flip side of this, when Jews migrated from these countries to the West and to other Jewish communities, they began to identify more as Russian than as Jews. This is, according to Remennick (2005), often a result of majority-minority relations in the receiving society. Thus she explains the situational and reactive influences on immigrant ethnic identity, which is fed by reactions to the ruling majority’s discriminating or socially excluding behaviour. In this context, Al-Haj (2002) uses the concept of reactive ethnicity, describing it as a reactive response to the immigrant experience of alienation from the society they have joined. The type of discrimination, or perceived discrimination, and the reasons for social exclusion, can arise from several different factors including levels of religiosity, the host society’s perception of lost job opportunities, and immigrants’ lack of good command of the host language (Markowitz, 1993, 1994; Birman and Trickett, 2001; Remennick, 2005; Zaitseva, 2006).

Remennick (2005) elaborates further regarding how frictions grow between immigrant minorities and their host majority, who perceive separate activities as a rejection and a lack of interest to integrate. In their new country, immigrants often seek to maintain aspects of the cultural life of their homeland, continuing to speak in their native language, and setting
up clubs and societies, an ethnic press, and language schools for their children. This reactive ethnic identification phenomenon is clearly illustrated in many different bodies of research, and will be explored further later in this chapter.

**Culture Tension in Education**

While there are various cultural paradigms affecting Jewish education, culture differences are not solely pertinent to religious issues. A number of researchers have explored many facets of education and culture including: student motivation across cultures (Hufton, Elliot & Illushin, 2003); Russian students’ understanding of and willingness to achieve success (Schepkina, 2002); the difference in immigrant parent responses to student misbehaviours versus parental responses in the Western World (Shor, 2005; Shor & Bernhard, 2003); differing educational expectations and how they affect ESL college students (Rubenstein, 2006); educational experiences of immigrants from the FSU in Canada (Asanova, 2005); effectiveness in schools with mixed student bodies (Rich, Ben Ari, Ami & Eliassy, 1996); and models governing education of new immigrant children in Israel (Eisikovits & Beck, 1990). These have all highlighted the significance of cultural paradigms as they affect both immigrant populations and wider areas of education. However, Rubinstein (2006) has found out that the East/West dimension is the most visible divide in educational systems. This supports the decision of this researcher to focus on students from the former Soviet Union rather than other immigrant students.

The various areas of education affected by cultural paradigms, as discussed in the above mentioned research, includes: the perceived role of parents and teachers in the education process; the degree of student-teacher relations; the correct way to behave in a classroom; the role of teacher versus the role of the student in maintaining student interest and in achieving academic success; the appropriate way to use free time after school; the perceived importance of particular subjects over others; and the connections between strong ethnic self-identification and academic success.

In addition, the understanding of these cultural paradigms has been noted as crucial in supporting positive school-parent communication. In fact Shor (2005) found that most
disagreements were culturally based because of differences in the worldview of the immigrants and the common worldview of the educational system in their new country. He also maintains that by learning and understanding the difference in cultural perceptions of parents, particularly in relation to the worldview and perception of education from immigrants from the FSU, professionals can address potential gaps and misunderstandings in their communication with these parents. Shor concludes, that an attempt to gain this knowledge about any cultural conflict should be considered as an important step in supporting their successful absorption in the school community.

In fact, The Victorian Institute of Teaching\(^\text{19}\) (VIT) has developed standards of professional practice for full registration for teachers in Victorian schools. One of these standards relates to “Teachers know their students” a subset of which reads: “Teachers are aware of the social, cultural and religious backgrounds of the students they teach, and treat students equitably”.

The importance of this standard is highlighted by Hattie and Yates (2014) in their discussion of the findings in social psychology and interpersonal relationships and the relevance to teaching and learning. From social psychology, Hattie and Yates explore the importance of positive relationships between teacher and student and the long term positive effect this can have on academic outcomes. If a teacher has a particular negative feeling or association with a particular student or group of students, the converse would hold true. Importantly, attempts to mask these true emotions will not be entirely successful as emotional leakage is still bound to occur. This refers to subtle sign of the true emotions underpinning the relationship. This could be in the tone of voice or a facial expression among others, that would be not be consciously executed by the person exhibiting these signs. From a study on interpersonal relationships (Nordgren, Banas & MacDonald, 2011), Hattie and Yates discuss the impact of empathy gap in the classroom. It is difficult to put oneself in the shoes of someone whose experiences are alien to your own and therefore the empathy gap precludes a person from truly understanding the level of hurt or frustration a

\(^{19}\) The Victorian Institute of Teaching is a statutory authority for the regulation of the teaching profession in Victoria established by the *Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001*. 

- 20 -
particular situation can cause. Thus, the starting point of this study, where teachers had negative views of a particular cohort of students, was likely to be creating the wrong environment for learning to occur. The specific experiences of this cohort in Soviet Russia would also have been significantly different to the experiences of their teachers thus encouraging empathy gap in numerous areas.

In line with the conclusion of Shor (2005), Nordgren et al. (2011) and Hattie and Yates (2014) above, and the requirements of the VIT, the aim of this research was to learn about the particular cultural paradigms of this cohort of parents and students, in order to inform school personnel and help them develop more effective means of communicating with these parents, and a better understanding of the students and their experiences to ultimately provide better educational outcomes for their children.

**Cultural Tension and Jewish Learning**

In the context of the literature referred to above, which describes the impact of cultural paradigms on the effectiveness of education, the question “How can the school best provide for the needs of the Russian student population?” would require an exploration of the differing views of Jewish identity, the view of Jewish education, and the degree of parent commitment to the schools’ values. For example, both Bullivant (1983) and Heilman (1992) focussed their studies on Jewish schools, in an attempt to understand the extent to which Jewish learning in Jewish day schools affect the students. They both address culture tension and offer differing views on the factors that cause it.

Bullivant (1983) refers to culture tension as enculturation dissonance in his participatory observation fieldwork in 1969-1970 at what he calls the “Lubavitcher School”, which is in fact the very same King Solomon school under study in this research. Bullivant proposes that some of this dissonance is caused by the school itself due to its offering dual curricula, one of the Great Tradition and the other of the Academic Tradition, which require

---

20 This is his term for the Jewish curriculum since it is based on a tradition that is derived from the Torah, viewed as a Divine Source (Bullivant 1983, p.56).

21 This is his term for the general curriculum, less ancient in origin and similar to the academic curricula in non-Jewish state and private schools (Bullivant 1983, p.56).
different approaches and compete for the students’ energies and time. He argues that since enculturation is about mastering a particular new culture, if there are actually two new cultures that need to be mastered, more problems will arise.

He explains further that when the students try to operate within these two very different curricula, the messages of how to approach one type of learning effectively impedes students’ ability to gain knowledge in other areas. Staff perceptions of behavioural aberrations and maladjustments among Russian students, suggesting difficulties arising from cultural adaptation, underpinned this study.

For the purposes of this study, Heilman’s (1992) examination of cultural tension, explored through an ethnographical study of three separate American Jewish day schools, has been of particular relevance and value, insofar as his observations and findings resonated so profoundly with the underpinnings for the current study. Hence this section will unpack and focus on Heilman’s study in some detail.

Heilman’s study was concerned with the question of the extent to which the Jewish learning taking place in Jewish day schools actually succeeds in imprinting character, environment and culture. He posits that underlying all education, and especially Jewish education, is the assumption that humans are incomplete or unfinished animals. Classical educational approaches (Geertz, 2000) maintain that humans are completed through knowledge, since knowledge is the prerequisite to being and doing. Thus Heilman (1992) explains that training students in basic skills, exposing them to history and teaching them science, goes beyond introducing them to the traditions of Western culture, and asserts that it is the civilising element of these studies that completes students. By the same token, it is a Jewish education about what Jewish people do and have done that makes a Jew complete. Belief, he suggests, is predicated on knowledge.

However, in arguing that this, in fact, may not be the only way to view education, Heilman (1992) offers an alternative perspective, suggesting that completion may first require a
person to feel Jewish, to be fully committed to the community’s life and culture. This line of argument leads him to conclude that knowledge is predicated on belief.

The implication of this latter suggestion would mean, that in order to assimilate Jewish learning there must be commitment to its role in the student’s life, without which the student will have an alienating, distant feeling of culture tension when participating in Jewish studies classes. Heilman views culture tension as negatively affecting the process of education, whereby those who do not feel strong links to key aspects of Judaism will take a reluctant approach to Jewish studies.

Heilman elaborates further on the result of this culture tension within the classroom. The most obvious behaviour resulting from culture tension is what he terms flooding out, more commonly understood as lack of student engagement in the classroom learning experience. Indicative behaviours include people talking out of turn, switching into some other activity, breaking into laughter, trying to change the topic, asking irrelevant questions and so on. The biggest problem facing the teacher is that flooding out is contagious, whereby one student’s disruption of a classroom activity disrupts everyone else as well.

However, Heilman also points out, that there are two other options for the culturally tense participants. The first alternative option seems a bit paradoxical. Through high involvement, Heilman explains, students are able to develop an intense interest in a class when they set their unease aside. A charismatic teacher, or engagement with a significant cohort of students, or with particularly compelling material, may disarm disengaged students to the point where they find themselves involved, despite themselves.

The second alternative to flooding out is partial involvement. This is when the student engages in side activities while still maintaining a partial involvement in what the class is doing. Side activities may include doodling, passing notes, reading something else during class and so on. According to Heilman, teachers find a real challenge in such students, who seem to teeter on the edge of engagement. It is as though the teacher is made responsible
for the direction these partially involved students choose to follow, be it involvement or breaking out.

In his exploration of the flooding out phenomenon, Heilman found it to provide a signal that there was some kind of block preventing the student from taking in Jewish learning. He found this signal occurred among students unclear about their links with Judaism, and thus what they were doing at a Jewish school.

Hattie and Yates (2014) offer an explanation for the findings of Heilman among students with unclear links to Judaism. Basing their discussion on the work of Willingham (2009), Hattie and Yates assert that students will be motivated to increase their knowledge only when they already know something about the matter being studied. When they can perceive a gap in their knowledge and an ability to close this gap in a reasonable amount of time, they will then be willing to exert effort to learn. However, if there is a chasm rather than a gap in our knowledge based relative to what is being demanded in the classroom, this a great demotivating factor.

Thus, the research of Bullivant (1983) and Heilman (1992) and their conclusions matched quite accurately to the observations and assumptions of teachers about this particular cohort which was the initial impetus for this study and Hattie and Yates (2014) offer another explanation about why this phenomenon may occur in classrooms in general. The following section will consider literature relating to reasons behind the particular sensitivity of immigrant Russian students to culture tension at a Jewish school and help explain why these students might be viewing Jewish studies as knowledge chasms impossible to bridge.

**Students from Former Soviet Union versus Others**

The literature on Soviet Jewry from around the world suggests key cultural differences in the views of Soviet Jewish émigrés towards their Jewish identity, the role Jews play in the wider society in which they find themselves, and the importance of education in general
and Jewish education in particular. This section outlines some of these differences and the role they play in this study.

**Strong Jewish Identity Despite Minimal Jewish Education**

The literature on Soviet Jewry discusses the seeming paradox of strong Jewish identity despite minimal Jewish education. Gitelman (1989, cited in Zaitseva, 1997) explains the minimal Jewish education in the context of an isolation of between thirty and fifty years of Soviet Jewry from Jews in the rest of the world, depriving them of access to Jewish education, or positive information about Israel. Soviet Jews had become, Zaitseva (1997) points out, more Russian than Jewish in their culture. Under Soviet rule, large numbers of Jewish people moved away from the small towns, where Yiddish was spoken and religious practices adhered to, to large urban centres. Although intermarriage rates underwent a sudden and significant increase, suggesting their integration into Soviet culture, this did not signify their having assimilated. They continued to be identified as Jews, and indeed identified themselves as intrinsically so. This happened despite their Jewishness carrying negative and discriminatory connotations, and their apparently taking on the predominant Russian culture (Gilison 1984, and Gitelman 1989, cited in Zaitseva 1997; Markowitz, 1993; Remennick, 2005).

The Western delineation between being Jewish and practising Judaism is emphasised differently among Russian Jews. Markowitz (1993) explains that the Russian word *evreistvo* refers to both the religious aspects of Judaism, including beliefs and ritual, and the intrinsic cultural or racial quality of Jewishness, which entails definition as Jewish by themselves and by others. For seventy plus years the USSR has placed decreasing value on all religion, restricting its practise and education. Jewishness therefore became a national category, and religious Jews were viewed by Soviet Jews as only a small internally delineated sub-group.

The fact that Jewish identity carries a different meaning for Russian immigrants has been documented in many studies (Galperin and Harte, 1992; Goldlust and Taft, 1993; Zaitseva 1997, 2006; Remennick, 2005; Gershenson and Shneer, 2011). Thus, the literature supports
the notion that although Russian students may be similar to others in regard to their minimal Jewish education when entering a Jewish secondary school after attending a non-Jewish state school, their understanding of Jewish identity and the importance they place on acquiring further education in regard to the Jewish religion may be very different. This was a key area that this study attempted to determine by asking specific questions of the Russian students and their parents about their views and definitions of Jewish identity and Jewish education.

The Notion of *Intelligentsia*

Another cultural difference among Russian Jewish immigrants around the world and their Jewish host communities, is their use of the term *intelligentsia* in representing themselves and their group (Rapoport & Feder, 2002). The term connotes a wide spectrum of cultural, artistic, philosophical and scientific interests and pursuits, conferring a profound sense of intellectual endeavour and excellence. It also included dedication to scholarship and education, to critical thinking, to reading and the encouragement of intelligent conversations. A deep appreciation of and familiarity with Russian Culture (with a capital C) and literature was understood, with children encouraged to read, to play chess and musical instruments, and to appreciate the contribution Jewish people made in all the specified fields (Gilison, 1984; Lissak & Leshem, 1995; Rapoport & Feder, 2002; Zaitseva, 1997; Gershenson and Shneer, 2011). Rapoport and Feder (2002) set out to demonstrate how this *intelligentsia* is acquired, internalized and reproduced in different contexts by interviewing 43 Russian Jewish university students in Israel who spent their childhood years in Russia before making *aliyah*22. Through their life histories they examine what the notion of *intelligentsia* meant in Russia and its continued meaning for Russians in Israel.

In a country where they were the persecuted ethnic minority, parents reassured their children; “we’re not the same…we’re different” and told them that they “have to be twice as good as everybody else” (Rapoport and Feder 2002, p.238). Taking pride in the accomplishment of Jews by drawing on the qualities of *intelligentsia* allowed them to maintain and claim a distinctiveness of which they were proud in a country that stripped

---

22 A term used for migration to Israel. Literally meaning ‘going up’ in Hebrew.
them of formal Jewish education, Jewish religion and culture (Gershenson and Shneer, 2011) and was always trying to demean them (Remennick, 2011).

This sense of possessing cultural capital, that could allow them to feel superior to others, had an important place in raising children in the former Soviet Union. By cultivating and valuing intellectual effort in their offspring, Jewish parents helped their children eventually earn their places in respectable professions such as medicine, science, education, law, culture and the arts (Remennick, 2011). What Rapoport and Feder (2002) discovered was that with Perestroika and then later when moving to Israel, the notion of intelligentsia, i.e. the blend of Jewishness and Russianness that it embodied, did not disappear. Instead, it was maintained and even fortified because the students retained their Russian culture while at the same time broadening their definition of being a Jew to include more of the Jewish symbols, values, religious beliefs and participation in Jewish communal life. However, the extent to which they embraced these Jewish aspects differed.

Similarly, Kheimets and Epstein (2001) in their research, also in Israel, found that the intelligentsia values of the Russian Jews were favoured over the desire for full assimilation into Israeli society, with immigrants considering Russian language more respectable, more useful in transmitting culture, more beautiful, more international and even more important for the transmission of Jewish values. This is another example of the reactive ethnic identification phenomenon described by Remennick (2005). However, researchers in America did not encounter such resistance to the host culture amongst Russian immigrants, as did those in Israel (Kheimets & Epstein, 2001). Additionally, Elias (2011) disputes the notion that Russian immigrants to Israel maintain their Russian language and culture at the expense of integration into Israeli society. Through the study of media consumption in Israel, she posits that they actually develop a “hybrid identity” (p.101), comprising strong identification with Israel and their Jewishness, as well as a deep connection with Russian language and culture.

---

23 This Russian term, now used in English, refers to the policy of economic and governmental reform instituted by Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union during the mid-1980s. Its literal meaning is ‘restructuring’.
In relation to my study, the *intelligentsia* prism offered a likely motivation for why Russian parents might value education, and Jewish education in particular yet not religious education. It was assumed that the effect of *intelligentsia* here in Australia would be more like in North America, than in Israel. These were therefore more fully explored in the questionnaire and in interviews held with students and parents. In addition, teachers at the school were asked specific questions in their interviews to determine whether they were aware of the cultural capital of their parent body and if so, if they were valuing this knowledge in any concrete manner.

Views on Jewish Identity and Jewish Education

Another key area of difference among Soviet Jewish immigrants and their Jewish counterparts in Western countries relates to how they define their Jewish identity and Jewish education. This area has been examined by many researchers. Numerous studies relating to the adjustment and resettlement of Soviet immigrants have taken place in the United States, Canada, Israel, Australia, and more recently in Germany. Goldlust and Taft (1993) undertook a review of the studies that had taken place in the USA, Canada and Australia regarding the Jewishness of Soviet émigrés in the 1970s. The review incorporated the studies of: Feinstein (1981); Frankel Paul & Jacobs (1981); Gilison (1981); Gitelman (1981, 1984); Karklins (1987); Simon (1985, 1987a, 1987b); Simon and Simon (1982a, 1982b, 1985) from the USA. Also referred to were: Markus & Schwartz (1984); Saunders (1985) from Canada; as well as Steinkalk (1982); Taft and Steinkalk (1982, 1985); and Taft (1988) from Australia.

There were two interesting findings in this review that were pertinent to this study. The first was the theme of the relationship between education and Jewish identity and the second was the identification of similarities in attitudes toward education in general and Jewish education in particular. These will now be discussed in more detail below.

The Goldlust and Taft (1993) review found a broad commonality in research undertaken in the ‘70s in which Jewish identity was determined across a number of facets (Himmelfarb 1982, cited by Goldlust and Taft), with religion listed as only one of these. The list included
religion, communal involvement, social relations, Yiddish, Israel, defence of Jewish identity, and positive emotional involvement.

These different aspects were used in two other Melbourne studies: that by Steinkalk (1982) during her study of Soviet Jewish adolescents and their parents; and later by Zaitseva (1997) in her study of the Jewish identity of Soviet immigrants in Melbourne. Interestingly, the notion of being a cultured part of the intelligentsia, so much part of the Russian Jewish paradigm, did not appear on this list.

Overall, though, a consensus emerges that Russian Jews generally were less religious and tended to have less participation in formal Jewish community organizations than their American or Australian counterparts. They were also more likely to have other Soviet Jews as friends.

Most studies in the Goldlust and Taft review, indicated further that Jewish identity was related more to nationality and ethnic group identity than to Yiddish or other traditional folk culture. A positive attachment to Israel was also an important component of Jewish identification and the majority had strong emotional connections with being Jewish.

Another view of Jewish identity in the Soviet Union and the post-Soviet context is offered by Smola (2011) as primarily interpreted in social and political terms. To be Jewish, according to Smola, was to be part of a dissident culture in a country where there was a political ban on freedom of expression.

These findings concerning varying aspects of Jewish identity were used to frame a range of questions for my study that sought to find out more about parents’ and students’ views of Jewish identity. As I discuss in the methodology, these questions were also modelled based on similar questions used by Zaitseva (1997).

Markowitz (1993) explains that adjusting to this differing definition of Jewish identity was one of the challenges that immigrants faced when they moved to the United States. Their
Jewishness was suddenly questioned due to the lack of observance of the Jewish religion. According to Zaitseva (2006) Soviet Jews experienced the same challenges when coming to Australia which has thereby caused limited integration into the existing Australia Jewish community who ironically had lobbied to bring them to this country.

Yet, for Soviet Jews whose identity as Jews was always the label that caused them difficulties in their homeland, there is no doubt in their mind that they are Jewish. For them, the meaning of being Jewish is about their self-perception rather than their actions (Galperin & Harte, 1992). Galperin and Harte concluded further that applying pressure on newly migrated Soviet Jews to become more religious would be counterproductive and they suggested that there must be awareness of the new arrivals’ feelings when planning for programs directed at this segment of the Jewish population.

Such religious heavy handedness as a potential turn-off has been borne out with the findings of Remennick (2005) through her 2003 research with Jews from the FSU who had migrated to Germany. Their entry into Germany was based on their Jewishness, when in 1991 the first government of a united Germany granted particular status to former Soviet Jews, allowing them to come into the country under special refugee criteria. The process of their resettlement, however, while funded by the Government was managed by local Jewish communities. The Government definition of “Who is a Jew?” was rather loose and therefore included many who would not be considered Jewish by Jewish law. These were people not born to a Jewish mother although they may have had a Jewish father. There were also many families where only the mother was Jewish. The Central Jewish Council of Germany, and the local communities, seeing themselves as primary religious organizations, took the stringent religious definition and accepted only those Jews born to a Jewish mother. As a result, a number of families with mixed marriages opted not to partake of the services where only the mother and children could participate or receive financial aid but not the father. Thus, they were effectively cut out of Jewish religious circles, even at times when the children were actually Jewish according to the strict religious definition. Others, initially partook of their Jewish Council services, which provided classes in Hebrew and Jewish traditions, due to feelings of obligation towards
their receiving community. However, they eventually stopped going because they felt no connection with any of the religiously oriented activities that were completely foreign to them based on their experience in the FSU.

Like the Central Jewish Council in Germany, the policy of the schools under study is to determine a person’s Jewishness by the strict religious definition of one born to a Jewish mother. While the schools would not claim to be heavy-handed in their approach to encouraging religious observance, it is certainly an aim of their mission statements that students take on this commitment. This reflects the views of the Chabad-Lubavitch Rebbe ob”m, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994), who is considered to be the spiritual leader of the schools and whose teachings are an integral part of the school curriculum. In a letter, dated 5741\textsuperscript{24}, to participants of a “Major conference for the Jewish community on issues and needs of Jewish retarded” the Rebbe explained the importance of providing Jews with special needs the opportunity to participate in traditional Torah-Judaism. While the Rebbe acknowledged that there are other ways of expressing national identity, these factors, the Rebbe argued, is not what allowed the Jewish nation to survive throughout the ages in the most adverse of circumstances. This was a sentiment expressed in other communal letters as well (Schneerson, 1957; 1973) If one is concerned about Jewish continuity, then Jews must be educated in how to live their lives as Jews as indicated in the Torah (Schneerson, 1964). This becomes even more important, when Jews live in democratic societies where they are free to practise their religion. Under persecution, Jewish identity cannot be forgotten or dismissed\textsuperscript{25}. Yet, in a free society, the memories and

\textsuperscript{24} 5741 is the Jewish date based on the Biblical account of Creation to the present day, corresponding to 1981 on the Gregorian calendar.

\textsuperscript{25} The Rebbe and previous Chabad Rebbes discussed this phenomenon numerous times in their oral teaching and writings from both a practical and spiritual perspective. For an example of this in English see Schneerson & Green (2006) where he presents and explains the last discourse annotated by the Rebbe and personally distributed to his followers. The Rebbe had intimate knowledge about the persecution in the FSU both from personal experience – he was born and raised there, and his own father was persecuted and eventually died for the crime of being a Rabbi and teaching and upholding Jewish life there – and from his followers and others he often sent on secret missions to the Soviet Union before glasnost. For more on the Rebbe’s intimate knowledge of what was happening behind the Iron Curtain, see Riskin (2010) and Telushkin (2014). The Rebbe’s father in law, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson (1880-1950) also experienced first-hand the effects of the KGB (Soviet secret service), and was imprisoned for the crime of teaching Judaism (Schneerson & Kaploun, 1997; Schneerson & Metzger, 1999). The Rebbe, and his father-in-law, have been credited for keeping Judaism alive during communist times (See Lau, 2011, p.193) and Telushkin 2014, p.304)
feeling of parents cannot be passed on to the next generation (Kafka, 1966). It is only actions, rituals and concrete observances that reflect the Jewish way of life and represent a type of Jewish identity that can be passed on to ensuing generations who may otherwise become solely engaged in the secular values of the free society around them (Schneerson, 1973a, 1973b).

Once again, the extent to which this different definition of Jewish identity affected the impact of the Jewish education offered at the school, became a focus for the questions addressed to parent and student participants.

View of Education and Choice of Jewish Education
A second finding in the review of Goldlust and Taft (1993) was a strong similarity in specific attitudes toward education and Jewish education. In these studies the majority of immigrants came from the so-called heartland Republics of Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia. These immigrants were generally very well educated and they continued to perceive education to be important. Most studies indicated that the majority of these immigrants left the Soviet Union because of anti-Semitism. Others referred to political freedom, children’s education or children’s future. The aforementioned are all related to anti-Semitism, since carrying the title of Jew limited prospects of places in higher educational institutions (Goldlust & Taft, 1993). However, emigrating because of anti-Jewish discrimination did not necessarily mean that these immigrants wanted religious freedom or that they were concerned about this. Instead, as Gilison (1981, cited in Goldlust Taft, 1993) discovered, the Jewish identity conferred an extra burden of job discrimination in a Soviet economy of scarce resources, such that they felt like second class citizens, and this syndrome underpinned their main reason for leaving.

26 In a letter to his father Franz Kafka (1883-1924) said: “You really had brought some traces of Judaism with you from the ghetto-like village community. It was not much and it dwindled a little more in the city and during your military service; but still, the impressions and memories of your youth did just about suffice for some sort of Jewish life… Even in this there was still Judaism enough, but it was too little to be handed on to the child; it all dribbled away while you were passing it on… it was youthful memories that could not be passed on…” (Kafka, 1966, pp79-81)
Thus it would seem that school-age education as an avenue to further education and job opportunities was of greater importance than education for religious reasons. Once again, many of these findings were confirmed amongst the Melbourne Russian community through the research of Zaitseva (1997) and will be used to discuss the findings in my study.

In addition, when investigating the facet of Jewish identity described as defence of Jewish identity, in other words, the extent to which Soviet Jews wish to ensure that Jewish identification is continued into the next generation, many studies used choice of schooling as an indicator. In their North American studies, Goldlust and Taft (1993) found that overall respondents were in favour of their children’s continuing to identify as Jewish. This was supported by evidence of at least 20% of respondents (in Vancouver) and up to 39% (in Baltimore) who had enrolled their children in Jewish day schools. Of particular relevance to this study were findings relating to Soviet parents, indicating that in their decision to enrol their children in Jewish schools they prioritised potential academic achievement, leading to university with its corollary of socio-economic mobility, over any Jewish component (Goldlust & Taft, 1993; Markus & Schwartz, 1984). In fact, Markus & Schwartz (1984) found that nearly all Soviet parents did not even understand the principles that underpinned the Jewish education at the schools they chose. As soon as they felt that the Judaic component of their child’s education might hinder rather than enhance their ability to access further tertiary study, they moved their children to public schools. Furthermore, Levkov’s survey (1984) found that though still of some importance, the religious factor was the least important factor in choosing a Jewish school.

Due to the concerns raised above, indicating that choice of school was not a good indicator for defence of Jewish identity, questions for this facet, in the survey for this study, were not based on choice of schooling, but rather on particular attitudes towards assimilation and intermarriage. In addition, in order to test the findings of Markus and Schwartz (1984) referred to above, that parents do not understand the principles underlying Jewish education, participants were asked to define the term “Jewish education”.
However, it should be noted that this trend of enrolling children in ethnic schools for ulterior motives might have much in common with that of the general population. Kelman (1984) found that the majority of parents sending their children to non-orthodox Jewish day schools in Los Angeles were doing so for secular reasons. Kelman claims that this result is similar to the studies of Greeley and Rossi (1966) in their research of parents who sent their children to Catholic schools, and Kapel (1972), who researched parents who sent their children to Jewish schools. The difference may be that whereas Russian parents may not comprehend the Jewish principles underlying the school’s philosophy, the American parents do understand them, yet those principles are not of paramount importance to them.

In discussing the choices of Soviet immigrants in Melbourne, Steinkalk (1982) posits that given the capacity to pay the fees for ethnic day schools, and that the standard of secular education meets their aspirations, they will prefer an ethnic school for their children. She found that the choice of a Jewish school over a Government state school did reflect parents’ stronger identification with aspects of Jewishness. Goldlust and Taft (1992), argue that this finding may indicate a lower interest in Jewish identification among parents choosing a state school for their children.

More recently, Cohen and Kelner (2007) set out to investigate what affected the choice of non-orthodox parents in enrolling their children in Jewish day schools in North America. Their findings demonstrated that contrary to popular belief, financial consideration was not the greatest disincentive. Rather, similar in some ways to Steinkalk (1992), it was those parents with more of an interest in being involved in Jewish life, and those who believed in the efficacy of the Jewish day school to support their children’s’ future commitment to Jewish life while still preparing them to succeed in the secular world, who were more likely to enrol their children in a Jewish day school, irrespective of the cost.

The research above provided a frame of reference for differing reasons Soviet parents might choose Jewish education for their children. One of the goals of this study was to find out why, indeed, did Soviet parents choose these particular orthodox schools. Thus the
differing reasons offered by the varying research studies above, formed the basis for the questions asked of participants in this study.

**Forming a Jewish Identity**

There is another area of research that was pertinent to this study. It is assumed by the schools’ mission statements that the education provided with the correct supporting programs is enough to allow the schools to fulfil their goals. For the Queen Esther School this would mean to help Russian students form a strong Jewish identity with a “commitment to Torah values” and “devoted to the holy traditions” (Queen Esther School’s Mission Statement, n.d.). In the King Solomon School, its program is assumed to be able to allow students to have “pride in their Jewish identity” and to be able to “make a personal commitment to Torah values” (King Solomon School prospectus, n.d.). But this begs the question: Is there evidence that Jewish education can affect Jewish identification in the wider Jewish population? Steinkalk (1982) felt that no conclusion could be drawn from her research in Melbourne about the long-term effects of Jewish schools in regard to Jewish identification, and she suggested that this might be an area for future research.

Research about the long-term effect of Jewish schooling on Jewish identification has been conducted over the years, both in Australia and overseas, with contradictory results. In a review of the relevant literature, Dashefsky (1992) found that a few early studies conducted in the 1960s (Goldlust, 1970; Rosen, 1965; Sauna, 1964) did not attribute much independent effect of schooling on Jewish identification. This is similar to results of Dubb (1971, cited by Simai-Aroni, 1985) in South Africa. Dashefsky states that only Lazerwitz (1972) found some effect, but this was not as powerful as family factors. However, in the 1970s and early ’80s further research (Bock, 1976; Cohen, 1974; Himmelfarb, 1974; Shapiro & Dashefsky, 1974; Sigal, August & Beltempo, 1981 all cited in Dashefsky 1992) did not support the latter claim and found that Jewish education did influence Jewish identification independent of family factors. But to accomplish this, such education had to be substantial and continue through high school years. It was generally not considered as powerful as family influences, but neither was it simply an extension of the home. The
studies also showed that the independent effect was more apparent in certain facets of identification, such as ritual observance and intellectual-aesthetic domain, than in others.

Goodman (1984) identified the absence in the various different studies of attention to religious attitudes of orthodox Jewish day school graduates. He pointed to flaws in the questionnaires of researchers, such as Birnbaum (1968 cited in Goodman 1984), the results of whose questions about religious observance led him to conclude that there was no difference in religious attitudes between graduates of orthodox Jewish day schools and of Reform movement Sunday schools.

Because of this, Goodman developed an instrument to test the orthodox hashkafah (religious attitude and world view) under the guidance of ten distinguished experts in the field; that is each expert possessed a) a Rabbinic degree from an orthodox seminary and b) a graduate degree in another field of study (MA or PhD). Goodman’s instrument was tested with a reliability coefficient of .855. The results of his study demonstrated that there was a moderately strong relationship between Jewish education and hashkafa independent of the parents’ level of observance. In discussing the implication of his instrument and its revelations, Goodman argues that just as studies in law or medicine can enable students to master their subjects, so too can an orthodox Jewish education enable students to master both information about and practice of Jewish law. He proposes that the survival of the traditions embedded in orthodox Judaism, of teaching Jewish law and following its precepts, is evidence of its efficacy. The present study examines the efforts the two schools made when confronted with failure of their systems to awaken Russian students to those Jewish traditions.

Identity versus Identification
Similar research conducted in Melbourne by Simai-Aroni (1985) looked at the effect of Jewish and non-Jewish schooling on Jewish identity and commitment. She claimed that her research was an extension of that undertaken by Bock (1975), Chazzan (1980), Goldlust (1973) and Himmelfarb (1976). She focussed on the question; “Does Jewish schooling matter?”. Her main criticism of previous research was that most of it assessed Jewish
identification in terms of religiosity rather than other forms of identification. In addition, she took issue with the fact that concepts of identification and identity are not separated. Simai-Aroni (1985) noted that past researchers have defined their own criteria to determine commitment to Jewish identification when measuring the effectiveness of Jewish schooling in encouraging that identification. Researchers failed to explore perceptions held by respondents regarding the meaning they ascribed to being Jewish, nor did they enquire how respondents perceived the impact of their schooling on their Jewish identity.

Although she criticised the aforementioned research of the ’70s for using a mainly quantitative approach for collecting data, Simai-Aroni’s (1985) conclusion was very similar to theirs: schooling does have an independent effect on certain modes of Jewish identification, although which facet of Jewish identification schooling indeed affects is the subject of debate. She determined that while no independent effect was found from Jewish schooling on such elements as ethics, affiliation in organisations, or ongoing practice of religion, other aspects relating to identification with Judaism were affected. These included issues of survival, such as choosing a Jewish partner, knowledge of Hebrew and similar cultural links, and associating with other Jewish people.

In her further analysis of qualitative data from interviews, she explained that schools did have an impact on non-cognitive outcomes, i.e. values, behaviours and beliefs, by virtue of the choice of knowledge which they presented in their curricula. This was also not exclusive to Jewish schools. In schools with a dual curriculum there was certainly more Jewish knowledge made available to students, but this was not a guarantee that students would value it. What differentiated the impact of the Jewish curriculum on the students was the way in which different schools framed and classified the knowledge, and the status that parents, students and staff attached to that same knowledge.

Simai-Aroni’s (1985) study which demonstrated no independent effect on religious beliefs may have resulted from the particular type of Jewish schools she was researching. However, in comparison, Goodman’s study (1984) cited above, involving primarily New Yorkers, involved different schools with different frames of Jewish curricula, and perhaps
therefore also yielded different results. Consequently, his work articulated that Jewish schools could have an independent effect on religious beliefs and practices.

On the other hand, Simai-Aroni (1985) did find Jewish schooling did positively affect some aspects of identification with being Jewish. These included extra-curricular activities which the school integrated into its educational goals and formal curriculum. She also pointed to the positive impact on students of learning in a Jewish environment, which includes normalising being Jewish in the wider community.

In light of the contradictory research results on the effects of Jewish education, and the suggestion that a factor contributing to the positive or lack of effect was due to the value placed upon it by the parents and students, parent and student participants in the present study were explicitly asked about the values they placed on varying facets of Jewish education.

All of the above material related to identification but not identity. Respondents in Simai-Aroni’s (1985) study found it difficult to describe their personal identity, and there was no indication of any relationship between either Jewish or non-Jewish schooling or respondents’ perceptions of self. There was also no indication that schooling was significant in affecting the intensity or degree to which respondents felt their Jewishness. Based on her interview data, Simai-Aroni came up with a rudimentary typology of forms of Jewish identity and categories in intensity of Jewishness described (see Appendix C). This typology, and the seven categories of intensity of Jewishness, is helpful in understanding the variations found in the views of participants in this study.

Weighing in on the debate on the effect of Jewish education, the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, argued that the security of Jewish survival lay mainly, although not exclusively, in Jewish education (Sacks, 1994). He further maintained that the threat facing the survival of Anglo-Jewry is due largely to the neglect of Jewish education in the UK.
Rabbi Sacks contends that Jewish education has a vital role to play in shaping religious identity. However, a decade later, Short (2005) disputed the premise of Sacks’ views, and demonstrated that Jewish education was in fact not neglected in the UK. Short therefore asserts that it is wrong to believe that the lack of Jewish education alone leads to more assimilation, or that providing Jewish education is the answer to preventing it. Rather than dismissing the importance of Jewish education, Short qualifies that more than merely learning about Judaism, educators’ role is to ensure that, in schools as well as in less structured settings, Jewish students will become adults committed to perpetuating the culture and traditions, in the belief that they are worth preserving. Short acknowledges that providing knowledge is a prerequisite to obtaining commitment, yet maintains that knowledge alone will not guarantee it.

In very recent years, after the data collection of this research was completed, some very pertinent research and discussions came to light. The first was in two Australian reports published by Monash University’s Australian Centre for Jewish Civilization entitled “Jewish Continuity” (Markus, 2011) and “Education: A Statistical Analysis” (Graham, 2012). These reports were based on the Gen08 Survey of 5,840 Jewish respondents, aged 18-34 residing in Melbourne and Sydney Australia. These two reports specifically addressed the factors that affect Jewish continuity, which depends on “the long term transmission of strong Jewish values and identity” (Markus 2011, p. 2).

Key findings from Markus (2011) related to forming and maintaining a strong Jewish identity included:

1) Identify formation is best understood in terms of five key inter-related factors: a young person’s home environment; school attended; form of Judaism/synagogue affiliation; youth group involvement; and experience of Israel (p.3).
2) The more consistent and integrated these factors, the stronger one’s Jewish identity, i.e. each of the factors above in isolation have limited impact (p.3).
3) The glue that appears to bind the above experiences is the home (p.5).
Markus (2011) discusses the positive impact of Jewish schooling as most evident in areas of subject matter such as Hebrew, not taught in non-Jewish schools, or not to the same extent, the connection to Israel and for Jewish socialization. His conclusions were thus nearly identical to Simai-Aroni (1985) from over two decades earlier. Yet, Markus (2011) also posits, that the strongest variable shaping the range of experiences and choice was the religious identification of the home environment in which the young person grew up. It was an orthodox Jewish upbringing in particular that promised the strongest insurance for Jewish continuity.

Graham (2012) presents the statistical analysis that supports Markus’ conclusions above, and discusses the varying research from around the world that attempts to answer the question of the impact of Jewish education on Jewish identity and Jewish continuity. These views are similar to what was discussed previously in this chapter. Intuitively, respondents of the Gen08 survey considered the main advantages of Jewish education as strengthening Jewish identity. In addition, Graham presents data that could lead to the conclusion that orthodox Jewish day school attendance is associated with increased orthodoxy in adulthood. At the same time Graham challenges these assumptions, and by presenting the statistical analysis, both of the Gen08 study and other studies around the world, demonstrates that Jewish day schools, by themselves, do not inculcate strong Jewish identity in adulthood. When isolating different variables, years at a Jewish school had the greatest impact on Jewish socialization but it was indeed the type of Jewish upbringing that had the greatest effect on mental ethnicity/religiosity, religious practice and ritual practice.

Thus the discussion is ongoing concerning the role Jewish education has to play in raising committed Jews. Certainly, imparting Jewish knowledge alone, especially in a school setting is not enough. This leads to the next pertinent area of study: To what degree can schools be held responsible for transmitting Jewish identity? What is the role of parents in this important venture?
Parental Involvement

The responsibility of passing on Jewish knowledge, tradition and culture belongs, according to Jewish law, to the parents, and more specifically the fathers. The source for this is the Biblical command: “You shall teach them [the commandments] to your children” (Deuteronomy 6:7 and 11:19). The role of the parent in educating the child begins from the time the child can say its first words (Rashi\(^\text{27}\) on Deuteronomy, 11:11). Where parents are incapable of teaching their children themselves, Jewish law requires them to hire a teacher to fulfil that role.

Throughout the ages, *chinuch*, the religious training of children, has been one of the central concerns of Jewish parents (Singer, 1991). Hiring teachers was primarily for Jewish scholarship and textual study. Jewish ritual practices and laws governing everyday life were taught at home by example (Glicksberg, 1984). It is only a relatively new phenomenon in Jewish history, in the past two hundred years with the rise of the Enlightenment and Reform Judaism in Germany, that many Jews have moved from traditional orthodox practices with different streams forming within Judaism. This, and the pre and post World War immigration to Western predominantly Christian countries, accelerated the degree of assimilation among Jews. The role of Jewish schooling has, for many, replaced the home in transmitting the culture, laws and traditions of Judaism, and hence the key for reversing the trend of assimilation (Isaacs, 1992; Rietveld-Van Wingerden, 2003). However, numerous studies, discussed earlier in this chapter, have indicated that in many cases positive Jewish identification was still more as a result of familial influence than of schooling. Sacks (1994) also concedes that it is not the school alone that shapes the Jewish identity of the child. He enumerates a range of wider social influences, but maintains that parents and home are critical, to the point that a child may experience destructive cognitive dissonance if parental values are at odds with the school’s values.

\(^{27}\) Rashi – Hebrew acronym for Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki. He who wrote the most commonly studied commentary on the Bible, found in every Jewish Bible that contains more than just the text. Rashi lived in France from 1040-1105. (Teich & Goldwurm, 1982, p.122)
A parallel phenomenon has been found in other, non-Jewish, religious schools, where a lack of congruity between parents’ and schools’ goals and understandings interferes with students’ engagement with many aspects of the curriculum, especially those which relate to religious principles and practices. When parents expect a school to take the lion’s share of responsibility for religious education, its impact is likely to be significantly weaker, as the practices have nowhere to grow (Fried, 1974, cited in Glass, 1994; Glass, 1994; Reimer 1992).

This factor has been recognized in the United States, where numerous Jewish family education programs have sprung up to allow parents to learn more about their Jewish heritage, so that they can support the learning that occurs in the school (Katz & Parker, 2008; Reimer, 1992). Calls have also been made for the need to investigate more fully the relationship between parental motives and attitudes about schooling and Judaism (Kelman, 1992) and in Australia, Rutland (2008) has called for development of family education programs as one of the key future directions for Jewish education in this country.

Cohen (1992) concedes that the family is the most powerful predictor of involvement in the Jewish community. He warns, however, that to assume parents who are not involved are uncommitted or unmotivated would be wrong. Instead, he proposes that those without opportunities cannot act on their commitment or motivation. The key opportunities, lie in the strength of the communities in which they find themselves. Parents who send their children to a Jewish school, cannot be deemed unaffiliated. They are connected to some extent by virtue of their children, and it is then up to those schools to draw these parents into their communities. These communities need to be compelling enough to inspire, involve and educate the families, not just the school-age children.

In Australia, Markus (2011) maintained that there are multiple pathways to a strong Jewish identity, but also that family upbringing was the strongest factor. Reflecting on the reality that many of the Jewish community not raised in orthodox homes would not adopt an orthodox lifestyle, the thrust of Markus’ suggestions for ensuring Jewish continuity, is aimed at what he calls “the middle segment of the Jewish community” – those raised in
traditional but not orthodox Jewish homes, where Jewish identity is challenged but where strong traditional beliefs and linkages still remain. He argues that to have the most impact on the future of Jewish continuity in Australia, the Jewish community must allocate more funding to establish programs to strengthen Jewish identity among these non-orthodox children, teenagers, young adults and parents.

Markus (2011) also presents a list of five options of how this might look in action. Most interesting to this study is the first of his two suggestions focused on increasing parental involvement and youth participation in social Jewish groups. Markus suggests that schools create subsidized places in pre-school, after school and the first years of secondary school, dependant on the parent involvement in discussion groups, weekends away, or even five day camps. Here, challenges facing Jewish parents would be discussed and parents would develop an understanding of the partnership between school and home. In addition, the secondary subsidized program would include required participation of students in a fully subsidized youth program.

While Markus (2011) painted quite an optimistic view of Jewish continuity among orthodox youth, raised in orthodox homes, a recent international discussion on the effectiveness of Jewish education on its recipients’ commitment to Judaism as a religion presented a different view. As recently as Spring 2012, an entire issue of the e-journal *Klal Perspectives* was devoted to “Connectedness”, exploring the current phenomenon of young people, raised in orthodox Jewish homes, and receiving orthodox educations, leaving the fold of their communities and upbringing. While Markus (2011) did identify 3% of secular/not religious respondents who were raised in Ultra-orthodox or strictly orthodox homes, the focus of the study was not on that minority. In contrast, this e-journal aimed at orthodox educators, would view even one child leaving the fold as a major catastrophe. Many contributors identified lack of commitment to G-d, His Torah and the Jewish people as the most serious challenge facing orthodox Jewry today. The sources or reasons offered for this disconnect varied as did the possible solutions. However, similar to many of them was the claim that Jewish schools focus primarily on the practice of laws and rituals without enough discussion about why this practice might be worth following. Suggestions for
reversing this trend included more emphasis on allowing for discussions around faith and spirituality, teaching more of the inner dimension of the laws and rituals and finding ways to inspire and emotionally connect young people to G-d and by extension to His Torah and His people. While these recommendations arose from concerns of orthodox youth leaving the path of their upbringing, the same could be applied to inspire those not affiliated with orthodoxy.

With the importance of parental involvement so clearly demonstrated in the literature, the extent of parents’ awareness of the goals of the school, the responsibility they have in helping the school achieve its goals, and the extent to which they are prepared to undertake this responsibility will all be explored in this study. In addition, the extent to which these school communities involve the parents in broader community events will also be examined.

In addition, one aim of this study was to be able to propose some concrete steps the schools could take to improve their Jewish educational programming. The suggestions from the literature, as well as the suggestions of participants will form the base of these next steps. To consider the role of parents in the integration of their children into any host society, it was helpful to examine the literature about the different ways immigrants adjust in their new surroundings, and the role parents and others play in these varying scenarios. This is the subject of the next section.

Integration, Acculturation or Enculturation?

As religious schools, the two schools under study see as part of their mission\textsuperscript{28}, not only to educate and inform their students about the Jewish religion but to enculturate them in religious practice. In this sense the schools reflect the schooling model identified by Rietveld-Van Wingerden (2003) discussed above, and measure their success in terms of how effectively students from non-religious backgrounds acculturate into the Jewish religious community. This success is thus being measured by both academic achievements and by social indicators. It might still be argued that to participate effectively in the social

\textsuperscript{28} See Chapter 1, p.\ldots
aspects of a religious community, prior knowledge would be required. Yet one cannot ignore the social goals that are nevertheless implied.

To understand the meanings of acculturation and enculturation, some explanation is required. The term acculturation is used in the literature in many different ways and with different meanings. This section will differentiate between them and clarify the definition as it will be used in this thesis. WordNet Dictionary defines acculturation as “the adoption of the behaviour patterns of the surrounding culture”; Korzenny (1999) calls it “the process of acquiring a second culture”; for Sandler (n.d.) it means bicultural; and the Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology (1996) refers to it as the process of acquiring culture traits as a result of contact. Bosher (1998) views the acculturation process as multidimensional and nonlinear, suggesting that immigrants typically opt for a level of biculturalism, achieving varying levels of adeptness in both cultures. Earlier dualistic acculturation models, positing that a group will undergo a simple transformation from one type of ethnicity to another, have been discarded in favour of models that conceptualize ethnic identity as more fluid and flexible, created, manipulated, and negotiated (Waters, 1990, cited in Camino & Krulfeld, 1994). There is also variation regarding which aspects of the host culture are adopted, as well as which aspects of the native culture are maintained. Berry (1980, 1986, cited in Bosher, 1998) identifies four strategies of acculturation, namely assimilation, integration, rejection, and deculturation.

**Assimilation** refers to the processes whereby a person adopts a new host culture, thereby relinquishing their native culture (Berry 1980, 1986 cited in Bosher 1998; Korzenny, 1999; Remennick, 2004; Titiev cited in King and Wright n.d.). **Integration** is a process whereby people can maintain their ethnic identity while absorbing aspects of the new host culture (Berry 1980, 1986 cited in Bosher 1998; Taft, 1965). Remennick (2004) sees the integration process as incremental, with immigrants adapting to the new environment in stages, and as a response to becoming functional in the new society. This is also synonymous with adaptation, as used by Steinkalk (1982) and adjustment, as defined by Eisikovits & Beck (1990). Berry (1980, 1986 cited in Bosher, 1998) also explains rejection and deculturation: **Rejection** is when people withdraw from the majority culture, either of
their own volition or through externally driven segregation; Deculturation is the alienation or loss of identity which occurs when people lose cultural affiliation with both native and host cultures.

Differentiating between the terms acculturation and enculturation are also useful to this study for understanding the goals of the schools and the experience of Russian students and their parents. Enculturation is the socialization of children to the norms of their culture (Word Net dictionary). This word is used in the context of transmitting one’s own culture from one generation to the next (Bullivant, 1983). Thus it is more about socialization to the norms of one’s own native culture then to the norm of another culture.

Jewish students from a Soviet background, although Jewish by Jewish law, knew very little about Jewish culture. In this respect, although the schools see their role as enculturation, for these students it is more like the acculturation process of taking on a new culture. In this respect, the literature surrounding processes of acculturation sheds light on some of the underlying issues, namely, why is it that students from Soviet background experience more culture tension (Heilman, 1982) in the classroom and why do they not seem to assimilate effectively into the school community?

Factors Affecting Acculturation
Trickett and Birman’s (2005) study explored links between acculturation and school outcomes, including how acculturation is measured, and the significance of the specific schools and relevant populations. By using a unique measurement of acculturation based on a multidimensional process including language, identity and behaviour, these researchers found some differences in the Russian population they studied versus the findings published prior to theirs. Of particular interest to the current study was that while other research revealed that retention of the culture of origin can serve as a positive factor in school performance, Trickett and Birman found the opposite to be true. Overall retention of Russian culture did not serve as a positive factor. Instead, it was overall American acculturation that made the difference.
The researchers suggest that this may be due to the differences in the majority-minority grouping for Russians in America that differ from other groups of immigrants. Russian students who come to the USA become part of the White majority, while they were the minority persecuted group in their country of origin. For many Asian or Latin immigrants, the reverse process is true. In America they become ethnic/racial minorities. It would therefore seem that assimilating into American culture may bring positive outcomes for Russian groups more so than for others.

Trickett and Birman (2005) also found that higher overall American acculturation and lower adolescent perceived discrimination was associated with the level of parental education. School belonging and overall American acculturation, as well as a lower overall level of Russian acculturation, was associated with the length of time living in the country. It was clear, in their study, that as students became more American they became less Russian.

Another interesting finding came to light when comparing the extreme groups of excellent students and those with disciplinary infractions. According to Trickett and Birman (2005) the students who excelled might be said to have assimilated, or become acculturated, insofar as they identified more as American than as Russian in language, identity and behaviour. The students displaying behaviour infractions identified more strongly as Russian, demonstrated in their overall behaviour. Trickett and Birman reflected on the specific dissonance between Russian identity and behaviour, whose peer support networks contribute to rebelling against rules and authority, whereas American peer networks focus on feelings of belonging, which are linked to potential success. Social support, they argue, must therefore be separated and differentiated rather than just be considered a global concept. They do suggest that for students struggling to find a place for themselves in a foreign school community, ethnic peer support can offer a sense of belonging.

Trickett and Birman (2005) reflect on the varied and conflicting pattern of findings in their research versus other studies. They maintain that this just serves to emphasize the importance of a so-called acculturative press of school. This concept of acculturative press,
taken from earlier research, refers to a high pressure social setting, such as a high school classroom. A school’s acculturative press is represented by the ways in which it rewards or punishes varied acculturative styles, and thus influences the experiences and outcomes of immigrant students. Thus in the school they studied, the acculturative press expressed assimilationist aims. They concede results may be different in other schools with a different acculturative press.

In this study, interested in identifying why some Russian students seemed to integrate more easily than others into the school community, the findings of Trickett and Birman shed light on the importance of exploring the extent to which the Russian students remained in ethnic peer groups and whether this negatively affected their integration. The acculturative press of the schools will also be explored.

**Parental Support and Psychological Adjustment During Acculturation Process**

In the course of this research, one of the schools in this study was rocked by the suicide of one of its Russian graduates. While deeper aspects of mental health issues are beyond the scope of this study, this shocking experience does exemplify an area where partial psychological acculturation, as often happened with the Russian students, whose home and school environments were so very much at odds in many cases, might have exacerbated the stress underpinning this student’s tragic choice (Berry, 1990, and Berry & Kim 1988, cited in Jasinskaja-Lahti Liebkind 2001).

Due to this, many studies looking at mental health in immigrants have analysed factors involved in the acculturative process that could affect psychological symptoms such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and even psychosomatic symptoms. Jasinskaja-Lahti and Liebkind (2001) identified numerous studies whose gathered evidence points to major acculturative strain, typically among immigrants, arising from believing oneself to suffer discrimination at the hands of members of the dominant host group. The aggregate of immigrants’ subjective views and experiences, as individuals and members of their community, were found to affect the stress levels and psychological adjustment of their acculturation, both positively and negatively.
Yet, they found very little research focussed on adaptational problems as a result of negative prejudice or negative attitudes of the majority group or research examining the specific resources which enable adolescents to protect themselves from negative influences. It was in regard to this gap that their research was focussed.

At the conclusion of their research the above authors noted a number of key points relating to the impact of parental support and family values on adolescents’ adjustment. Adolescents experiencing parental support and understanding revealed higher self-esteem and better adjustment, linked to reduced acculturative stress and sense of discrimination. However, adolescents who were less likely to seek contacts with members of the host society, and thus to believe they were somewhat discriminated against, were those who adhered more strictly to family values. Jasinskaja-Lahti and Liebkind (2001) observed that this paradox, where increased psychological adjustment could be linked to increased sense of discrimination, verified earlier research (from Git et al., 1994 cited by Jasinkskaja & Liebkind) pointing out the variable ramifications of acculturation. They further posit that adherence to family values, when combined with a positive view of the host society, confers high adaptive strength.

The importance of parental support and their positive attitude toward the host culture has been verified many times as being a key factor to adolescent adjustment into a new culture. These findings are therefore quite similar to those investigating the effect of parental support on the impact of Jewish education, since in actual fact, most studies have been done in societies where the host culture is not Jewish. Thus, imparting a Jewish culture, especially if it is not the primary culture operating in the home, is going to have some similarities to general issues arising from acculturation into any host society. The common thread is, once more, the extent of parental support and involvement in this process.

Yet, it is also clear, that parents alone cannot take the credit or blame for the successful acculturation of their children or lack thereof. Attitudes in the schools and among peers
also play a significant role in this process as demonstrated by Resnik, Saba, Shapira and Shoham (2001) in their study of Israeli schools.

**The Israeli Experience of Assimilationist vs. Integrationist Ideology**

Resnik, Saba, Shapira and Shoham (2001) took a closer look at the absorption of CIS\(^{29}\) immigrants into Israeli schools. This research sheds some insight into the dilemmas of the two schools in this study and demonstrates the paradigm of the ‘acculturative press’ of schools.

In Resnik et al.’s study, undertaken in 1993–94, experiences in a religious school were compared with those in a secular school. CIS students in the secular school were perceived to have a temporary language deficiency. In all other ways they were considered to be the same as other students. They all led secular lifestyles. However, in the religious school, CIS students were given much more support because they were thought of as different from the rest of the population and therefore in need of special assistance. Here the differentiation was not just in terms of language but in terms of knowledge of Jewish culture and practice.

The official schools’ policy was immediate integration. Both types of schools claimed to be pluralistic in their attitude toward the immigrants and not assimilationist, as the policy in Israel had been in earlier years. Yet, there was very little evidence of this in the schools themselves. Russian customs or culture were not encouraged, displayed or talked about. Although Russians were not assigned new Hebrew names as in previous generations, the curriculum was not adjusted to incorporate other cultures. The Jewish or Israeli nationalist culture was still the marked culture in both schools.

While the main goal of the *ulpan*\(^{30}\) classes was to teach the Hebrew language, they also provided a framework to support immigrant absorption. Even though both schools suffered

---

\(^{29}\) CIS - Commonwealth of Independent States, the former Soviet Union

\(^{30}\) The *ulpan*, in the school is modelled after the *ulpan* program designed to teach adult immigrants to Israel the basic language skills of conversation, writing and comprehension. Most *ulpanim* also provide instruction in the fundamentals of Israeli culture, history, and geography. The primary purpose of the *ulpan*
from insufficient *ulpan* classes, irregular teachers and inadequate classroom space, in practice the teachers were the ones charged with the absorption process of their immigrant students (Resnick et al., 2001). However, despite these policies and attempts to integrate Russian students, Resnick et al. (2001) found that other factors inhibited successful integration attempts.

First, immediate integration attempts were unsuccessful due to lack of resources. Not enough lessons, time or money was given to schools to resource programs needed for full and successful integration. Secondly, the general national ideology reflecting a more individualistic atmosphere permeated school ideology and therefore allowed for retention of cultures other than the collective Israeli culture. This flowed through to an acceptance of separatism in the schools. Thirdly, mutual hostility between veteran and immigrant students expressed itself rapidly, characterised by distance, stereotyping, and highlighting strangeness of each other.

Finally, the high self-esteem of CIS immigrants, and their isolationist tendencies, led them to reject full integration. Some of this was due to the feeling of superiority of the education in Russia and the perception that they were more cultivated than Israelis in the areas of science, literature and music. They also felt that Israelis were very rough, bad mannered, and rejecting. This encouraged feelings of self-preservation, and not wanting to lose their own culture. Resnik et al (2001) went on to point out that in religious schools the feelings of rejection were exacerbated by the low opinion religious students had of all non-religious people.

Instead of achieving full integration, this study revealed the development of semipermeable enclaves, a concept which combines both the element of an ethnic enclave, which is a segregationist mode of integration, yet at the same time implies that they are not totally isolated from their host environment. CIS students are, from the outset, identified as Israeli

---

is to help new citizens to be integrated as quickly and as easily as possible into the social, cultural and economic life of their new country. An ulpan program in a school would have the same goal of helping its students integrate as quickly as possible into the school program.
citizens by the Israeli Law of Return, and they learn the Hebrew language and study the Israeli curriculum.

The conclusions of Resnik et al. (2001) echo the exploration earlier in this chapter of ethnic identity and *intelligentsia* and reactive ethnic identification. They demonstrate Remennick’s (2005) description of the flip of immigrants, to identifying themselves more as Russian after leaving the FSU, arising from the majority-minority relations in the receiving society. The findings also demonstrate how a school’s acculturative press results from its policies and more importantly from the extent to which it enforces or does not enforce its own policies.

It is also worth noting that although claiming to be integrationist and reflective of individualist ideologies, the schools in Resnik et al.’s (2001) study, demonstrated many of the characteristics of the assimilationist model of schools in 1984-85 described by Eisikovits & Beck (1990). They maintain that true integration means that there is adjustment made by both the immigrant and the host society and that individualism is celebrated. Therefore, they note the following to be crucial factors that differentiated the schools seen as giving immigrant students positive schooling experiences, in contrast to other schools:

- School authorities accept the problems faced by immigrants students as legitimate
- there is no limit to the time given for when one can have new immigrant student status
- there is maximum degree of parental involvement especially in extracurricular activities
- every effort is made to give expression to the varied cultural heritages represented in the student body
- special programs for the students must be coordinated with the rest of the organization and curriculum
- there is direct involvement from school personnel
- harm to cultural identity should be minimized
School personnel should adopt approaches that are individualized and that introduce expectations gradually (Eisikovits & Beck, 1990, pp.194-195).

The experience of CIS immigrants in the study of Resnik et al. (2001) in Israel bore many similarities to the situation in the schools examined in this study which prompted this research. Therefore, in my study I will explore to what extent these conclusions hold true for the schools under study, and which, if any, of the factors put forward by Eisikovits & Beck (1990) are present at the Queen Esther and King Solomon schools.

In addition, the feeling of rejection felt by students in the study of Resnik et al. (2001) which led to the formation of semi-permeable enclaves might well be an example of empathy gap on the part of the host society, i.e. the teacher and students at the school, and reverse empathy gap on the part of the immigrant students. Nordgren et al. (2011) explain that just as those who have not experienced the pain of social exclusion cannot understand or empathize with those who are experiencing the phenomenon and may therefore underestimate the impact of it, and thus not do enough to intervene, the same might be said in the reverse. Those who are feeling rejection and are in social and emotional pain as a result, may at that time be unable to empathize with the feeling of social inclusion. This empathy gap, Nordgren et al. propose, might therefore preclude them from having the motivating factors to pursue opportunities to change their situation.

**Conclusion**

This study was based, initially, on the assumption that Russian students are different from the rest of the student body in a significant way and thus worthy of focussed research. A review of the literature confirmed the likelihood that there would be cultural tension between Russian students and their families and the Western educational provider due to the significant differences in their educational paradigms. The literature also revealed key themes around ethnicity and ethnic identity and the factors that support or impinge on the formation and maintenance of this identity. In addition, the effect of Jewish schooling on Jewish identity is evidently long contested with many variables affecting the ultimate outcomes. The literature also confirmed that culture tension would be even more likely for
Russian students, if the education relates to strengthening Jewish identity through the practice of Judaism rather than through purely secular avenues. Additionally, it has been argued that this cultural tension between Russian students and their families and Western education providers can be minimized through open communication and understanding of the underlying reason for these varying views.

Thus, the literature confirmed the initial assumption of this research and provided insight into the particular types of questions that would be important to ask, such as participants’ definitions of Jewish education and Jewish identity, their views regarding their own Jewish and/or Russian identities, the purpose of Jewish education and the importance they placed on parental involvement in Jewish educational endeavours.

The literature reviewed has also confirmed the need for a qualitative approach for this research i.e. to seek to understand the paradigms of the Russian students and their families in order to serve their needs within the two schools better. The specific type of qualitative study chosen for this research and the rationale for this choice as well as other methodological considerations are the subjects of the next chapter.
Chapter Three: Research Design

In this chapter, I discuss the rationale for choosing a predominantly qualitative approach of interviews with a small survey, my rationale for designing this study as a needs assessment while also being a comparative case study and the type of data collected, the methods used to collect them, the sampling techniques and the analysis process. I conclude with a discussion of ethics, rigour and trustworthiness.

The first aim of this study is to identify and document the experiences of the Russian students with minimal Jewish educational background in the two secondary schools, with particular emphasis on the students’ and their parents’ perspectives. To place their experience in context, this part of the study also attempts to understand:

- the background of these students
- the reasons for choosing the two schools
- the expectations from their schooling
- some of the factors that may have impacted on the degree to which they integrated into the school community.

Secondly, the study aims to focus on the programs offered in these schools with the intention to:

- evaluate more fully whether there is need for special support programs for students with minimal Jewish educational background
- clarify the rationale and intended outcomes for these programs
- explore the effectiveness of the programs that are presently offered to meet the needs identified in the study
- explore the possibilities of enhancing the programs or offering new programs to meet the needs identified by the various stakeholders.
Thirdly, this study attempts to compare the needs presented and the programs offered in the Queen Esther School and the King Solomon School in an effort to help the two schools learn from each other.

Two additional aims of this study are to help the schools understand the values, beliefs and attitudes of this particular segment of their student population and to present a case study that may help other schools in similar circumstances to evaluate their own programs.

A Needs Assessment

At the time of project design, the above aims and purposes were best met with a needs assessment approach to program evaluation since the study fits the following definition of needs assessment put forward by Witkin and Altschuld (1995). They state that it is:

... a systematic set of procedures undertaken for the purpose of setting priorities and making decisions about program or organisational improvements and allocation of resources. The priorities are based on identified needs (p.4).

So what is a need? The Webster’s Third International Dictionary (1976) defines it as; “something that is necessary or useful for the fulfilment of a defensible purpose”. This definition used by Stufflebeam, McCormick, Brinkerhoff and Nelson (1985) is “intentionally flexible in order to be useful in the many settings and content areas in which needs assessments occur. It also accommodates the various concepts of need found in the needs assessment literature” (p.12). This flexibility can be seen by noting; “something necessary is required to achieve a particular purpose” while “something useful helps but may not be essential”. In both cases a defensible purpose “is one that meets certain evaluative criteria” (p.12). Stufflebeam et al. therefore conclude that “needs do not exist per se but rather are the outcomes of human judgments, values, and interactions within a given context” (p.12). This conclusion is in some ways similar to the definition offered by McKillip (1987) that “a need is a value judgement that some group has a problem that can be solved” (p.10). In both aforementioned views, need is used as a noun, something that is needed and therefore must be considered in the solution. Yet it is also a subjective value statement. As such, I wanted to ensure that I allowed varying voices to be heard in relation to the population under study.
Owen (2006) offers a slightly different perspective to the notion of needs. He states that a need is a discrepancy, a gap between the present and desired state. Viewing ‘need’ as a noun in this way, he posits, will keep one focussed not only on solutions but on the investigations that must precede implementing perceived solutions. Thus, he maintains that for an evaluative needs assessment one must be concerned with five elements:

1) The desired or ideal condition or state of affairs, or what ought to be;
2) the present or actual condition or state of affairs;
3) the discrepancies between desired and actual conditions;
4) reasons for the discrepancies; and
5) deciding which needs should be given priority for action through a treatment or program (p.172).

Common to all views above is the notion that ‘need’ is to be viewed, not as a verb or a ‘want’, but as a noun; a discrepancy or something that will solve a particular problem. In either case, the decision about what constitutes a ‘need’ remains a subjective value judgement. Therefore, since the purpose of this study is to determine needs, I had to be cognizant of the fact that different groups might have different views on what the ‘needs’ of the target population actually were.

According to McKillip (1987), defining needs as a value judgment that a particular group has a solvable problem recognizes four aspects of needs:

1) People with different values will recognize different needs. Further, the person seeing the need and the person experiencing the need may differ.
2) A need is possessed by a particular group of people in a certain set of circumstances. A description of the target population and its environment is an important part of a needs analysis.
3) A problem is an inadequate outcome, an outcome that violates expectations. There are many sources of expectations, reflecting different values (e.g. in the case of my thesis parents, students, teachers, community expectations). Problems can also be indicated by inadequate process, if there is the expectation that without action, inadequate outcomes will develop.
4) Recognition of a need involves a judgment that a solution exists for a problem. A problem may have many potential solutions, solutions that vary in the probability of alleviating the problem and in the cost and feasibility of implementation (p.10).

The definitions of Stufflebeam et.al. (1985), McKillip (1987) and Owen (2006) guided this study which aims to answer “How can the Queen Esther School for Girls and the King Solomon School for Boys provide optimal secondary education for their Russian student populations who have had minimal prior Jewish education?”

Therefore, drawing on the definitions of Stufflebeam et al. and McKillip the research is designed to:

1) gather data describing this targeted students’ population as relevant to this study.
2) obtain data to describe the schools’ environments where relevant.
3) acquire information to describe the community environment in which the schools relevant to this study are located.
4) seek expectations of the school experience from various stakeholders to help identify the cause of the problem.
5) identify and state explicitly the values of the various stakeholders with regard to Jewish education and its purpose.
6) seek the views of needs from various stakeholders, differentiating between those needs that are necessary and those that are useful.
7) explore solutions to the identified needs and their role in alleviating the problems.

In light of Owen’s (2006) views, stakeholders were also asked to:
8) specify what they would view as the ‘ideal state’.

Then:

- the present and actual conditions were explored a) through the eyes of various stakeholders b) with a review of program documents.
- the ideal states and actual states were compared for each group of stakeholders.
reasons for the discrepancies were explored in light of the literature and also
from information gleaned from the stakeholders via interviews and
questionnaires.

A Qualitative Approach

The focus of this exploratory study as a needs assessment, based on the experiences of a
particular group of students largely from a particular cultural background, lent itself to a
predominantly qualitative approach. This is because qualitative research “implies a direct
concern with experience as it is ‘lived or felt or undergone’” (Sherman & Webb 1998, p.7
as cited in Merriam 1998, p.6). In addition, the strength of a qualitative study lies in the
ability to explore issues in all their complexity, in context and through the eyes of the
participants (Bogden and Biklen, 2003) which was one of the key aims of this study.

The Use of Qualitative Case Studies

Within the general qualitative approaches, I decided a case study design and more
specifically, a comparative case study design of the two schools would be most appropriate
for the following reasons:

First, case studies can be defined by their special features; they focus on a particular
situation, event, program or phenomenon, they are descriptive and heuristic; that is they
illuminate the reader’s understanding of the particular phenomenon under study (Merriam
1998). Yin (2003) distinguishes between these various descriptors and defines case study
types based on their particular purpose. They can be explanatory, for example looking for
explanation to link program implementation to the program effects, exploratory where the
aim is to explore situations where the outcomes vary, or descriptive, which describes an
intervention of phenomenon in the context in which it occurred. In addition, a case study
can be intrinsic (Stake, 1995) when the study is purely due to interest in a particular case
and not for transferability to other cases or to build theories, or instrumental, when used to
contribute to an understanding of something else. This study focussed on only one
particular situation within the schools i.e. the presumed cultural dissonance of a particular
group of students and the relationship between these experiences to the programs offered,
with an attempt to illuminate the reader’s understanding of this problem. However, the purpose of this study is not purely to explain, explore or describe what happened. Rather, in doing all three, a better understanding of underlying theories related to Jewish identity, Jewish education, parental involvement and acculturation is anticipated. Thus, this study is best described as an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) that could help inform not only the schools involved, but other schools faced with minority populations.

Second, a case study with the focus on a particular group or problem is an especially strong design for practical problems (Merriam, 1998). In attempting to answer “how” or “why”, and where contextual conditions are very relevant, case study designs are recommended (Yin, 2003).

Third, the ultimate purpose of this research is to inform practice. As such Merriam (1998) explains that; “educational processes, problems and programs can be examined to bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve (educational) practice. Case study has proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, evaluating programs, and for informing policy” (p.41).

Finally, Baxter and Jack (2008) explain that qualitative case studies facilitate exploring situations within particular contexts from a variety of sources and through multiple lenses. This was also a very important component of this study, as vital to this research was to ensure that the voices and paradigms of varying participants including staff, students, parents and community members were heard and better understood.

**A Comparative Case Study**
Comparative case studies aim to compare two or more cases. Yin (2003) calls this a multiple case study or collective case studies. This study is focusing on comparing the experiences of students from two schools that operate under the same administrative umbrella yet offer two different environments and programs. It is hoped that by comparing the two schools, some common themes will emerge that are applicable to educating both
genders. A comparison will also allow any significant differences between the schools to become apparent and thus give the schools an opportunity to evaluate their policies.

**Elements of Ethnographic Case Study**

Denscombe (2003) describes ethnography as “the study of the lifestyle, understanding and beliefs of cultures or groups” (p.85). He further explains that “ethnography tends to emphasise the importance of understanding things from the points of view of those involved” (p.85). This study aims to explore the experiences of students particularly from Russian speaking homes in order to understand more clearly how their particular cultural beliefs and attitudes might affect their experience and their perceptions of the programs in the school and whether they do, or do not, meet their needs. Thus elements of an ethnographic case study can also be found in this study.

**Sampling Decisions**

The unit of analysis for each case study was each individual school and its community. The target population for this study were all present and past Russian students who had attended either Queen Esther secondary school for girls or the King Solomon secondary school for boys over the last ten years. Parents of such students and school personnel who have or have had a direct relationship with them also needed to be a part of the study. Community leaders and personnel working in agencies serving the Russian population were also included to serve as key informants as suggested by McKillip (1987) and Witkin & Altschuld (1995).

Being a predominantly qualitative study, the sampling approach was purposeful, (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2003; Creswell 2002) incorporating a number of different purposeful sampling strategies (Creswell, 2002; Patton, 2002). Since the target population of students all shared a similar characteristic, this was a homogeneous sampling strategy (Creswell, 2002; Patton, 2002). In addition, Patton (2002) recommends maximum variation sampling aimed at “capturing and describing the central themes that cut across a great deal of variation” (p. 235). In other words, in order to see if there were any shared views among the various
stakeholders in this research, it was important to attempt to include participants with varying characteristics.

Students
To maximize the variation for the student population, students were targeted based on the following characteristics:

- attending different schools
- past or present students
- different year levels
- different levels of religiosity
- different stages for entering and exiting the school.

Initial sampling involved recruiting as many participants as possible from the school in which the researcher taught (i.e. the girls’ school) after ethics approval was received from the University ethics committee (ID 060352X). Contact was first made by phone and then Plain Language Statements, consent forms and questionnaires were sent only to those agreeing, in theory, to participate. There was a certain degree of self-selection for participation and this was thought to be the best way to achieve trustworthy responses due to the nature of the study and the information sought as according to Vinokurov, Birman and Trickett (2000) many research studies have demonstrated low response rates to questionnaires from the Russian speaking population when they did not know or had never personally met the researcher.

Staff
To ensure maximum variation for staff, the following characteristics were considered:

- Whether the teachers taught General or Jewish studies
- The school in which the teacher taught
- Other staff positions outside of teaching

Initial research statements, co-signed by the researcher and school principals, was sent to all secondary staff at the two schools under study asking for indications of willingness to participate in the study and preferred level of involvement, i.e. to participate in an Nominal Group Technique session, to participate in an interview or both.
The initial recruitment drew only a limited number of students. Therefore, further purposive snowball or opportunistic sampling was required to recruit, deliberately, more students from the second school involved and also to include students perceived to have had different experiences from those that had already been interviewed. This was accomplished by making personal contact with members of the target population and through a highly educated Russian friend. Having a Russian speaking person contact some potential participants was modelled on the study of Aronowitz (1992) and having a particular highly educated friend was based on Remennick (2002) who claimed that “middle aged immigrant woman with higher education are known to elicit better cooperation of the immigrant respondents” (p.519). In addition Vinokurov et al. (2000) states that many prior research studies have indicated that using existing social networks can result in higher response rates.

Purposive criterion sampling was once again employed to choose personnel working in Jewish Care agencies, the Russian synagogue and other known Russian cultural organizations. Such people were invited to participate only if they acted as a key informant for the local Russian population.

Further Details Regarding Recruitment Process Challenges
The initial task of locating names and addresses of families in the targeted population for this study proved more difficult than expected because the schools did not have a current database. It was only by chance that I discovered a partial database compiled by the youth group associated with the schools. Using this as a start, I attempted to contact students who had attended the schools in different graduating classes over the course of the past ten years. Even so, many telephone numbers were not listed, or had been disconnected. To those I managed to contact, I briefly explained my role as a researcher and asked them if they would be prepared to have a look at the material I would send in the mail. It was only after I had made this initial contact, and confirmed addresses, that I sent out the Plain Language Statement, consent forms and background questionnaires with an attached personal note. I was hoping that by making this initial contact I would increase the likelihood of agreement to participate.
I initially wanted to have an even number of students from each of the two schools. I also wanted to have representation from those who had been in the school for the majority of their schooling, those who only came into secondary school and from those who left the schools before graduating. However, I was not in control of who agreed to participate.

A Note of Caution Regarding the Sample
It seems students with a positive memory of me as their teacher, and/or with generally positive memories of school were more willing to participate than others with less favourable experiences. This must be considered when reviewing the results of the study. However, as a qualitative study, this research is not to be representative of the students of the school. Rather, it is an attempt to allow the voices of Russian families, who wanted to be heard, a chance to do so.

Data Collection Methods
Data collected for this study was through varying techniques depending on the type of data sought. Document analysis was used to find information related to the schools, their mission statements, programs, Russian student population over the years, and any other information available that might shed light on the students’ experiences at the schools. Staff participated in a Nominal Group Technique session (explained below) and interviews while students and parents were asked to participate via questionnaires and/or interviews. A full description of each of these methods follows.

Document Analysis
Documents are a valuable source of information in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2002). For a needs assessment, they are extremely useful in gathering background and contextual information such as social indicators (McKillip 1987; Witkin and Altschuld, 1995) since they are an unobtrusive method of gathering the information and, when considering the past, they are often more reliable than memory.
The strength of document analysis lies also in the ability to examine programs or events that have taken place before the onset of the study (Patton 1980 cited in Caulley, 1983). Documents were analysed in this study for the following three purposes:

The first purpose of using documents was related to understanding the context of the school and its population in the wider Jewish community. Census materials and demographic studies of the Jewish community based on Census material were perused for descriptive information and any apparent trends related to this population as Bogdan and Biklen (2003) suggested.

The second purpose for document analysis was to understand the context of each school and its programs. School mission statements, program documents, enrolment records, subject offerings and groupings were examined.

The third purpose was to try to ascertain the level of involvement of these particular students in school life. School yearbooks and school production videos were reviewed for this purpose.

**Nominal Group Technique**

The Nominal Group Technique (NGT) is a group decision process used to identify areas for formative evaluation (Lapine, 1987). It is essentially a “method for structuring a small group meeting that allows individual judgments about a topic or issue to be pooled effectively and used in situation in which uncertainty or disagreement exist about the nature of a problem and possible solutions” (Moore 1994, p.10). A modified NGT has also been shown to be useful as a basis of a needs assessment by gathering input from key informants (Pokorny, Lyle, Tylor & Topolski, 1988). The strength of the technique lies in the ability to identify problems, explore solutions and establish priorities, all in a relatively short amount of time (Moore, 1994).
The use of an NGT in this study was needed to gather data from the teachers and administrators in the two schools and to establish priorities about the perceived needs of the Russian student population and to obtain suggestions for programs.

NGT Sampling

It was intended to hold separate sessions for the staff of each school with no more than ten participants in each group and consisting of teachers from all disciplines and other staff such as secretarial staff, librarians and other support staff not involved in monetary decisions. However, the girls’ secondary school employs 60 teachers and support staff yet all except 10 are part time. The boys’ school also employs 43 teachers and staff with only 6 working full time. Due to the difficulty in finding times for groups of mostly part time teachers, only one NGT session was conducted. It included 13 teachers from only one of the schools and all from the Jewish studies department. This session took place early in the research. I found that most of what was said was supported by later interviews with individual staff, regardless of their subject area. It was also for this reason that further NGT sessions were not planned.

The NGT Process

An NGT session has clearly defined steps. The meeting is facilitated by any person well versed in the technique and is structured, according to Moore (1994, p.10), in four steps:

1. *Silent generation of ideas in writing:* Working silently and independently participants jot down their responses to a stimulus question posed by the facilitator.

2. *Round-robin recording of ideas:* When called on, each participant contributes a single idea that is recorded where all can see, i.e. on a flip chart or white board. No discussion about the ideas takes place at this point. The facilitator continues calling on participants in turn until all ideas have been recorded.

3. *Serial discussion of the list of ideas:* Participants discuss the list so that they are clear about the meaning of the ideas. Jones and Hunter (1996) add that at this point, similar suggestions can be grouped together based on the group discussion.

4. *Voting:* The participants identify what they believe to be the most important ideas and they rank order their preferences privately. This is then presented and recorded by the facilitator on the flip chart or white board. The voting pattern is then discussed.
Jones and Hunter (1996) explain that this process does not actually end at this point. Rather once the overall ranking is discussed, the ideas are re-ranked in what is known as ‘Round 2’. Final rankings are then tabulated and the results fed back to participants on the spot. The NGT session in this study followed this dual ranking model.

**NGT Question for this Study**

Before the NGT, participants were first asked a ‘warm up’ question to bring their attention to the issues at hand. A discussion took place concerning: “What are the issues regarding Russian students in our school?” Ideas were generated in a round robin method and posted for all to see on a whiteboard. This was followed by asking the main question: “How can we best serve the needs of students with Russian backgrounds?” This question was answered through the more formal NGT process of silent response generation and voting on listed responses.

**Questionnaire Pre-Interview**

The questionnaire used in this study included both closed and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions rely on multiple choice and are often used to gather specific information, and to measure opinions and attitudes. Data is easily scored and can be standardized. On many of these closed-ended questions, an option of “other” was often supplied so that an unanticipated answer could still be given (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). For this study, closed questions related to demographic information, skills, attitudes and beliefs, and time in the school. Open-ended questions are questions posed where the subject respond individually on open lines. Though harder to score, and at times disliked by subjects taking a survey, these type of questions allow for follow up by interviewer (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). For this study, some open-ended questions related to certain definitions, their personal experiences in varying areas of educations and suggestions for future services. In this way, a small amount of quantitative data was collected to precede a predominantly qualitative study. The purpose was to understand the context of stakeholder’s views better and to be able to make comparisons between subgroups of the population under study.
Most of the questions relating to demographics, skills, attitudes and beliefs were taken from previous research completed in the Russian Jewish community in Melbourne (Jewish Community Survey 1991 reported in Goldust 1993, Zaitseva 1997). The inclusion of such questions was in order to assist with understanding, supporting or disproving the conclusions made by previous research and clarifying, if, in fact, the student body at these colleges fit the same profile as obtained from research in the wider Russian community. Such findings were to help the schools understand this population better and in so doing be able to serve them with more relevant programs. The student questionnaire was in English and was piloted by a student from the research cohort. The parent questionnaire was presented in both Russian and English and was piloted by a parent and another member of the Russian community. Both questionnaires took between 30 and 40 minutes to complete. Minor corrections and additions were made after the pilot to adjust some items for clarity and to include some overlooked items.

Logistics
This questionnaire was sent initially to those students or their parents who had been contacted by phone and had agreed verbally to participate. It was sent together with a Plain Language Statement and a consent form. It also sought an indication of the recipient’s willingness to participate more fully in this study by taking part in an interview and for permission to view their own, or (in the case of parents) their children’s, academic records. Those willing to participate further were contacted to schedule semi-structured in-depth interviews.

Initial Return Rate
Questionnaires were originally included in this study as a secondary source of information based on previous experience of Zaitseva (1997). As a researcher from the former USSR, Zaitseva only used questionnaires in her study of Russian immigrants in Melbourne in preference to personal interviews because “it succeeded in being totally anonymous, which is a very important psychological element in surveying former Soviet Jews and it excluded subjective interpretations” (p.5). My study was looking for subjective interpretations and therefore did not intend to rely solely on questionnaires. However, recognizing that there may be some resistance among Soviet immigrants to being interviewed personally, it was
hoped that starting with questionnaires would encourage further participation in the study later.

In fact, the opposite occurred. 17 people (45%) returned the original 38 questionnaires initially sent out and only 5 of those agreed to be interviewed. Indeed, starting with a questionnaire may have scared off some participants. For others, it seems that once the questionnaires were completed, they felt they had done their duty and did not elect to participate later in an interview. Due to the very small return rate of the questionnaire and an even smaller response of agreement to be interviewed, a change of approach was required.

**Adjustments to the Design**

Thus, after the initial round of questionnaires were returned, I decided to contact further stakeholders and this time also tried to target specific groups, such as more students from the boys school. In many of these cases I tried to schedule interviews before giving them the questionnaires. In this way, many contacted by phone in the second round of recruitment actually agreed to be interviewed. Questionnaires were given to them after the interview, with stamped self-addressed envelopes. Although not all of these interviewees returned their questionnaires, the really important conversation, namely the interview, had already taken place. In addition, further questionnaires were sent out to those who did not agree to be interviewed or wanted to think about it. In this way, a further 39 questionnaires were given or sent out and 20 of these were completed and returned. Thus a total of 77 were distributed and 37 were completed. Table 1 summarizes the number of respondents by school and type.

**Table 1: Questionnaire Respondents by School and Type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>King Solomon</th>
<th>Queen Esther</th>
<th>From Both Schools</th>
<th>Total Parents or students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total returned</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>questionnaires</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interviews
The bulk of data for this study was sought from rich descriptions collected via semi-structured interviews with stakeholders. Patton (2002, p.4) describes that during such interviews “Open ended questions and probes yield in-depth responses about people’s experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge.” These “purposeful conversations” (Bogden & Biklen 2003, p.45), also offered the opportunity to explore feelings, values and opinions without being limited by preconceived notions. This conversational construct thus allowed me to follow the lead of the interviewee and thereby explore issues that may not have previously been considered. However, as Bogden and Biklen explain, these semi-structured, in-depth interviews with certain set questions allowed for some comparisons to be made between the participants while still allowing scope for free-flowing conversation.

Table 2: Interviews Completed by School and Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>King Solomon</th>
<th>Queen Esther</th>
<th>From Both schools</th>
<th>Total by type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Interviews</td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Logistics of Interviews
Interviews were conducted with four different groups: staff at the schools; parents; students in the target population; and community stakeholders. Interviews with parents and students explored their background and their experiences associated with these schools. The focus was on the perceived past or present needs and whether these needs were, or are, being catered for. In addition, participants were asked to consider a number of potential program options and their appropriateness in meeting the identified needs.
Meanwhile, discussions with staff explored perceived issues and needs for this special group and sought to hear about experiences with them both within their classrooms and through other areas of responsibility. Then, interviews with stakeholders in the Russian community aimed to consider what they perceived to be the needs of Russian community and what they viewed the role of the schools should be, if any, in meeting those needs.

Most of the interviews took approximately one hour. In some cases, where participants demonstrated a desire to talk, the interview took considerably longer. Table 2 summarizes the number of interviews categorised by school and type.

**Limitation of Data Collection Stage**

Due to reliance on voluntary participation and lack of ease of access to past student current phone numbers, the data collected was from a small cohort. Thirty eight survey questionnaires were returned representing twenty four families including: eleven mothers and their daughters; one mother and son; one father and daughter; one father and son; three girls; three boys; two mothers; and two fathers. Of these participants, fifteen (thirteen students and two parents) also took part in an interview. An additional six interviews took place, where the interviewees did not return a completed questionnaire. However, only three of these interviews represented families not already included in the survey. The others interviewees included two who had siblings who did complete a survey, and one was the parent of a survey participant.

In addition, three of these interviews were held over the phone and were therefore much briefer than a face to face interview. One survey was also filled in via a phone interview and was therefore not completed in its entirety. All of these phone conversations took place when it was apparent that a face to face meeting was unlikely and due to the particular experiences of these participants, it was deemed important to hear their views on at least some of the issues. In total, the study can claim to represent the ‘voice’ of twenty-seven families.
Nineteen members of staff, thirteen from Queen Esther, four from King Solomon and two who worked across both schools, agreed to be interviewed. In addition three members of the Russian Jewish community, served as ‘expert informants’. It should be noted that the five parents interviewed also discussed issues relating to the broader Russian community and in this way also served as ‘expert informants’ in addition to their parent voice.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis in a qualitative study involves determining themes and concepts from often thick descriptions offered by participants. The data is often relatively unstructured, and the researcher is faced with an often messy and complex job of making sense of the data (Kervin, Vialle, Herrington, & Okely, 2006). As more data is gathered, initial themes and concepts can be rethought, confirmed, rejected or considered to be an overarching concept or indeed a sub-set of a larger theme (Kervin et al, 2006; Punch, 2009). Once particular sentences of the data are coded satisfactorily, the issue then becomes the ease of retrieving the information to support each of the identified themes when interpreting the data and writing up the findings without losing the context of what was said (Punch, 2009). The messiness of this coding process, when dealing with 38 surveys and 44 interviews required a system to make the coding, recoding and retrieval process easier. To accomplish this, it was decided to use specialist software designed for this purpose.

**NVivo**

Data analysis for this study was supported by the Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) program called NVivo. Developed by social science researchers, this program does not analyse data by itself; no program can. Rather, it is a tool in the hands of the researcher to manage data, manage ideas, make queries of the data, model the data graphically in order to help link themes and gain report from the data conceptually (Bazeley, 2007). The advantages of a qualitative data analysis package are that the messiness of coding and recoding data is simplified; it is easy to rename codes and create levels by categories and subcategories in structures known as ‘trees’; and retrieving portions of data related to a single theme is as easy as a click of a button. In addition, all
data sources are clearly marked and one can always go back to the context in which things were said with the click of a button.

In Nvivo, codes created are called nodes. The clear listing of these nodes, and often in hierarchical structure, aided in the organizing of headings and constructing a logical flow when relating the findings of this study.

**Data Analysis During Collection**

Data analysis began as soon as the first few interviews took place. This was an important step since “data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity in qualitative research” (Merriam 1998, p.151). In addition, a “logico-inductive” analysis (Kervin et al., 2006) takes place initially followed by a deductive analysis of further interviews. Thus the analysis continually alternates between inductive and deductive reasoning (Punch, 2009).

Interviews were first transcribed solely by the researcher. This allowed for an intimate familiarisation of the data, an important first step recommended by Kervin et al. (2006), as interviews were heard numerous times in the process of transcribing, checking and editing the data. The data was then imported into NVivo and coded (as ‘nodes’) for emerging themes. As coding progressed certain concepts and themes appeared to be related. These were tested using the visual model capability of NVivo (See Appendix D for sample). Displaying the information, regarded by Miles and Huberman (1994) as essential for data analysis, helped see the connections between emerging themes. Certain nodes were reclassified using NVivo’s hierarchical tree structure (See Appendix E). Initial researcher impressions and preliminary findings were recorded and stored in the memo function of NVivo. Recording the researcher’s thoughts as analysis progresses, is considered by Kervin et al, (2006) to be crucial in making sense of the data. At times, this impression began to occur during the interview itself. As such, in those situations where note taking was not practical or intrusive, notes were written as soon as possible after the event (Hurworth, 2003). These initial impressions and emerging nodes helped guide further interviews.
Dealing with Open Ended Questions on Questionnaires and Interviews

The open ended questions on the questionnaire as well as questions from the semi-structured interviews gave rise to an initial list of categories for content analysis such as reasons for choosing the schools, needs, expectations, highlight of educational experience and areas for improvement. In addition, certain themes that appeared in the literature were also used as initial categories such as cultural dissonance, parental involvement and Russian culture. As each interview was read, further categories were created based on the data. These codes were then to be used to shape further interviews and to analyze documents (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993). Further coding became necessary as more data was collected and analysed (Kervin et al., 2006; Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Punch 2009).

Dealing with descriptive data from questionnaires

Another function of NVivo is the ability to easily apply attributes to different cases. For example, one can label each ‘case’ by category such as gender, particular school, whether the ‘case’ is from parent or student. Descriptive data from questionnaires was used as attributes for different cases to see whether there were any connections between demographics and experiences in the school. NVivo itself was not always needed to accomplish this task due to the relatively small numbers of participants from one of the schools often allowed this to be handled manually.

Within-case and cross-case

Since this is a comparative case study there were two stages to the analysis: the “within-case analysis” and the “cross-case analysis” (Merriam, 1998 p.194). Each case (in this study, each school) was treated comprehensively as a case in, and of, itself. Once this was completed for both cases i.e. for both schools a cross-case analysis took place as determined by the research questions.

Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2003) suggests that ethical issues be considered at every stage of the research. Creswell provides a conceptual framework which, with the work of Bibby (1997) has
informed this research through the following steps. First, the problem identified and the outcome of this research was intended to benefit the individuals being studied and in no way marginalize or disempower them (Creswell, 2003). Second, all guidelines were followed to obtain University of Melbourne ethics clearance. Third, to avoid any perceptions of conflict of interest students who were at the time in the researchers’ own classes were not approached to participate. In addition, based on the recommendations of Bibby (1997) and Creswell (2003) all contact with students was out of school time in order to minimize the possibility of isolating any particular subgroup of students from the general student population (Bibby, 1997) and to minimise the disruption of any of the educational programs provided by the school (Bibby, 1997; Creswell, 2003).

**Ethical Issues in the Data Analysis and Interpretation and in the Writing**
Anonymity was maintained where practical by using pseudonyms and by changing any identifying information (Bibby, 1997). Care has been taken to report and communicate results in such a way that it minimizes the likelihood of data being taken out of context and research findings have been reported as accurately as possible and without censorship (ibid). When excerpts from interviews were used, some editing of quotations took place to clarify participants’ meaning and to correct grammatical errors.

**Rigour, Trustworthiness**
Issues of rigour and trustworthiness for a qualitative study are similar to issues for other studies primarily in ensuring that methods of data collection and data analysis are rigorous and logical. In addition conclusions reached should be seen as clearly resting upon the data (Merriam, 1998). The difference is of course, that a qualitative study rests upon the interpretations of data that is subjective and therefore cannot be neatly replicated as a quantitative study might be. Each researcher brings their own understandings to a situation and therefore no claim can be made that such a study is totally replicable (Bogden and Biklen, 2003). However, reality is also not objective. Reality is what people perceive the situation to be. (Lincoln and Guba 1985 cited in Merriam 1998). Since qualitative studies rely on the human researcher, it is much closer to this ‘reality’ than if numerical data collection instruments were used (Merriam, 1998).
The key terms used for trustworthiness are thus also different to those used in quantitative studies (Erlandson et al., 1993). Erlandson et al. suggest, based on the work of Lincoln and Guba, (1985), that trustworthiness is established by “use of techniques that provide truth value through credibility, applicability through transferability, consistency through dependability and neutrality through confirmability” (p.132). In this study a number of steps were taken to demonstrate that the data, although interpreted primarily by the researcher, has been checked against other people’s perception of reality and is credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable (Hurworth, 2003; Merriam, 1998; for Lincoln and Guba 1985, Erlandson et al., 1993). Specific actions taken are outlined below.

Based on the recommendations of Merriam (1998) data was collected from a number of different sources and through a number of methods to check for consistency of data and consistency of perceptions by triangulating the data by both source and method.

To ensure accuracy, interviews were taped with consent. Transcripts of the interviews were sent to participants for checking before being analysed. Interviews that were not taped had researcher transcripts which were sent to the interviewee before being analysed (Merriam, 1998). For referential adequacy, unobtrusive measures were used to collect yearbooks, handbooks, view school photographs and school production videos to support credibility by providing context rich materials to support data analysis and interpretation (Erlandson et al. 1993). To allow for transferability to other schools whose mission is to impart culture and religion, there has been a clear description of the context of the study, how participants were selected and their background (Hurworth, 2003; Merriam, 1998). In addition, rich, thick description has been used to allow readers to judge whether these results could be transferred to other settings (Merriam, 1998). To address dependability and confirmability of this study, an audit trail has been kept so that all findings can be traced back to their source (Merriam, 1998). Each participant in this study was assigned a unique number. A participant by this definition included those who agreed to receive a survey even if they in fact did not complete or return it. Names of participants and their unique number was kept in a separate secure excel file.
Participants were divided into four categories: Staff (Stf), Students (Std), Parents (P), Community Members (C). Indication of the source of information was designated as Interviews (I), Survey (S), or a particular node summary (N) and its reference number (R1, R2 etc). If information was gleaned from an interview, the lines of the transcript, as indicated when viewing in Nvivo are indicated. For examples, see Appendix F.

Other Issues
There were two other issues that needed to be addressed for this particular study. One was the fact that I, as the researcher was an ‘insider’ in the context of the schools under study and the second was the limitation of working with another culture. I will address these two concerns below.

Researcher as Insider
There are those who recommend that a researcher not research their own school setting due to the lack of objectivity and the difficulty to see beyond what all assume is obvious in the setting (Anderson, Herr & Nihlen, 1994; Bogden and Biklen, 2003;). However, there is also the strength of insider tacit knowledge about the setting that would be impossible for other researchers to gain (Anderson et al., 1994). To help balance this ‘subjective’ view, this research conducted by myself, a teacher practitioner in one of the schools being studied, was conducted in collaboration with a supervisor, as an outside ‘critical friend’ (Anderson et al., 1994).

Working with Another Culture
I am aware of the challenge that may be presented by the fact that I am a practising orthodox Jewess and teacher in the school. The reasons for my research may have been suspect in the eyes of some Russian parents. This is part of the challenge of working with another culture (Bogden and Biklen, 2003). To minimise these effects, I consulted a number of Russian friends about the best way to present the purpose of the research as well as to gain advice on the wording of the questionnaires. A Russian friend who is also a linguist translated and typed the Russian translation of the Plain Language Statement and questionnaire. This bi-lingual questionnaire was then piloted with at least two more Russian speaking adults.
Limitations of the Research

At this stage, it is important to acknowledge a number of limitations of this research. First, this research was designed as a case study and thus does not purport to be generalized to other contexts. However, an attempt was made to provide enough description so that readers can determine if there are lessons to be learnt that can be applied in other contexts. Second, case studies are considered to be ‘snapshots’ of events as they are perceived at a given point in time. The purpose of this research was not to offer a definitive demographic study of these two schools, but rather to illuminate understandings of a particular cohort of the study population based on a sample of this group. Third, the number of cases examined within each school was dependant on the consent and participation of the target population and therefore the results cannot be assumed to represent all members of this cohort. In addition, while examining the programs at this school, the research was not intended to be a definitive judgment on the worth of any of the individual programs. It was however, intended to reveal some of the issues that must be considered by those responsible for future decisions concerning these programs. Finally, the researcher as insider may have limited the type of information that was shared as well as the willingness of the target population to be involved and the researcher as an orthodox Jewess and teacher in the school may also have limited the kind of information that participants were willing to share.

Conclusion

This study was conducted initially as a needs assessment, using a predominantly qualitative method. The bulk of data was obtained via semi-structured interviews with participants from the target population as well as with staff members from the schools and community leaders. Document analysis, an NGT session and a questionnaire were also used. Issues of ethics, rigour and trustworthiness were all considered in the design and implementation of this research study. Data was analysed with the support of the qualitative data analysis program NVivo. Specific findings from this data collection are presented in the next chapter.
Chapter Four: Analysis of School Documents and Staff Views

This research was born from the perceived need for a separate curriculum or program to address the apparent lack of engagement and interest Russian students displayed in mainstream Jewish Studies classes and programs in the identified schools. The main aim of this study was to discover a broader perspective on these students’ educational experiences, and the specific background information that may have impacted upon their Jewish education. This was achieved by allowing both students’ and parents’ viewpoint to be considered in the light of staff perceptions. The secondary aim of this research was to use this broader perspective to inform any curriculum or program planning within the schools.

In light of the primary aim, the findings concerning what was known, or easily retrieved in the schools help to illustrate the widespread perceptions held by staff and community members concerning these students and is presented first in this chapter. Then the ‘other side of the coin’, as told by students and parents, is presented as well as an attempt to juxtapose these views with more detailed perceptions of staff. The student and parent voice is divided between Chapter 5, the experience prior to arrival in Australia and Chapter 6, the experience as new immigrants in Australia. Chapters 7 and 8 continue with the specific student experiences at the schools under study.

School Based ‘Knowledge’

In trying to access school documents relevant to this research, surprisingly few were kept or made accessible. Curriculum documents appeared not to be available and yearbooks were produced irregularly in both schools. Furthermore, newsletters had not been kept beyond more recent years when everything became electronic. The main items to emerge were some yearbooks from the boys’ and girls’ schools, school photos and some videos from past school productions.
School Year Books and Class Photos

The school year books and class photos reflected the change in the Russian population at the schools over the years. Most accessible were documents from 2002 to 2013. As a snapshot of this decade, Tables 3 & 4 demonstrate changes in student numbers over a six year period, representing two completely different populations. Students in Year 7 in 2002 would have graduated secondary school in 2007. Table 5 presents the most recent data on student population at the end of this decade.

**Table 3: Proportion of Russian Students 2002**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>King Solomon School</th>
<th>Queen Esther School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total # Students in Yr level</td>
<td># Students from Russian background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Total</strong>:</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4: Proportion of Russian Students in 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>King Solomon School</th>
<th>Queen Esther School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total # Students in Yr level</td>
<td># Students from Russian background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Total</strong>:</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5: Proportion of Russian Students in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>King Solomon School</th>
<th>Queen Esther School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total # Students</td>
<td># Students from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Russian background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Total:</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the beginning of the decade (2002), both the boys and girls schools shared similar percentages of students with Russian backgrounds. However, over the next ten years some noticeable changes occurred. In King Solomon school, the number of students in general dropped by 23% with Russian student numbers decreasing by 93%. Meanwhile, in the Queen Esther school, there was a 18% drop in student population between 2002 and 2013 and a 56% drop in Russian students. As a result, they remain a noticeable proportion in the girls’ school.

Staff members in both schools mentioned this decline in numbers during their interviews and offered reasons for this phenomenon:\(^{31}\):

*Firstly there are not as many Russian immigrants coming to Australia, and then they don’t necessarily want to come to us, because they don’t want the pressure of having to conform to the way we perceive them and want them to be* (#100, I-Stf, L468-473).

\(^{31}\) A broader discussion of why the numbers differ between the two schools will follow in Chapter 5.
...there are seven or eight Jewish day schools in Melbourne and some of the second generation might find other schools and their systems more suited to their family needs (#97, I-Stf, L355-367).

School Production Videos
Each year the Queen Esther School puts on a school production. These productions give students the opportunity to showcase talents not otherwise seen in the school environment such as acrobatic skills, musical talent or great acting abilities as demonstrated in auditions. It also provides the opportunity for students to work together across year levels and for more senior students to take leadership roles.

Students choose an area in which they wish to be involved; namely drama, choir, gym, prop, scenery or playing a musical instrument. This production also provides an opportunity for students with limited Jewish background to participate equally. Therefore, Russian students usually did not ‘stand out’ as Russians. One year a Russian student, trained in rhythmic gymnastics, was a particular feature. In another year a Russian flautist took centre stage. However, one year, when there was a particularly large cohort of Russian students, they featured in the production singing a song in Russian. Interestingly, Russian students rarely featured in any acting role. They were more likely to be in dancing groups or working backstage as prop hands or ushers.

Staff Perceptions about Russian Students in the School (Queen Esther)
At the beginning of the fieldwork for this research in 2007, a Nominal Group Technique session32 was held with 13 Jewish Studies Staff from Queen Esther. This session was particularly important for gauging the degree of consensus among staff perceptions that could be explored later with parents and students. In addition, staff members were asked to identify ways the school could serve the needs of this particular population better and then to narrow the choices to the top three most important strategies.

32 See Chapter 3, p. 79
The session began with a warm-up question: ‘What are the issues regarding Russian students in our schools?’ Staff responses could be categorized into three main issues i.e. those related to: perceived Russian culture; lack of Jewish knowledge; and issues related to how the school was catering for Russian students’ needs. The responses to the warm up question are listed below in Table 6 in their respective categories.

Table 6:
Staff Perceptions –“What are the Issues Regarding Russian Students?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Cultural issues:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Cultural difference – don’t go to camp because they can’t sleep out; don’t see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the same value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Family (single parent homes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Social interests are different – often only child raised among adults; grow up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Attitude of take what you can from the system even if you don’t need it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Grandparents influence and input/ interference – powerful in decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Don’t understand Australian culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stay with ‘own’ and mix with either younger or older Russian students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Speak Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stigma for Russians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mix with other Russian students from other schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Older students influence younger students(network)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Like parties – big family affairs and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- (perceived) Negativity /indifference towards religious classes, Hebrew etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Second generation differs (acclimatized) but this differs with the length of residency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Different expectations – exam/results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Don’t want to pay fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- See themselves as needy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of Jewish knowledge:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Lack of religious/observant background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Won’t put effort in (even when given help) /see Jewish Studies as irrelevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pushed away by Jewish studies because reinforced what’s done is wrong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Issues:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Set up for failure because of lack of support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not giving students what they need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not valued – background is never addressed and the attitude is very different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The curriculum may not be appropriate / does not encourage good feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lack of pride in the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once staff had identified some of the issues, they were asked: ‘How can we serve the needs of students with Russian backgrounds in the best way?’ Using the ‘Round Robin technique’ (described in Chapter 3, p.66) 26 ideas were documented on a whiteboard and participants silently chose the ‘best eight’ ideas and ranked them, with 1 being high and 8 being low. The numbers following each idea below represent the ranking of this idea by one or more staff members.

Table 7:
Results of NGT Round One:
“How Can We Serve the Needs of Students with Russian Backgrounds in the Best Way?”

1. Ask them (8,3)
2. Assign buddy within class (could be non-Russian) (2,5)
3. Meet with parents to explain expectations (8,3,4,1,2)
4. Enforce expectations (2,3,2,3,8,2,8)
5. Have opportunities for discussion (4)
6. Hold separate classes (e.g. for Jewish content) (4,3,1)
7. Get them involved (8,4,5,3,5)
8. Create inspirational activities (6,1,2)
9. Modify reaction /attitude (staff) (4)
10. Show acceptance/respect (1,3,4,7,7)
11. Employ more Russian speaking staff (1,3,7,8)
12. Have their own curriculum (in 1st year) for all subject and stagger re-entry (5,5,2,5,2,2,1,1)
13. Ignore background when disciplining (7)
14. Show interest in them personally (4,3,3,4,5,3,3,2,1)
15. Invite [parents, grandparents] family to activities (religious) in and out of school (8,4)
16. Invite them to teachers’ homes
17. Have activities in Russian homes (8,6,8)
18. Encourage class to be inclusive (6,7,6,3)
19. Encourage them to share their knowledge and culture in class (7,8,6,5)
20. Use Russian relevant examples in class (6)
21. Introduce teacher mentors (one teacher) (6,6,7,4,8)
22. Start in early years (5,2,7,1,8,1,5,5,2,7,6,2)
23. Show pride in school/high morale (1,5,4,1,1)
24. Give them leadership roles (4,6,7,6,7,4)
25. Learn more about the Russian background of students
26. Develop a Mechanech\textsuperscript{33} program to deal with issues (7,7,6,8)

\textsuperscript{33} Pastoral care
The second round of ranking involved only the highest ranking items from the list above. Staff were then asked to choose the top three items for the schools to address. Once again, the numbers following each item in Table 8 below, represent the ranking order.

**Table 8: Second Round and Rankings:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Ranking Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>(merged) Meet with parents to explain and enforce expectations</td>
<td>(2,2,2,2,2,3,1,1,1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Get them involved/engaged</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Show acceptance and respect</td>
<td>(3,1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Have their own curriculum</td>
<td>(2,2,1,1,1,1,1,2,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Show interest in them personally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>A teacher becomes a mentor</td>
<td>(2,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Start in early years</td>
<td>(2,3,1,3,3,3,5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Staff proud of school</td>
<td>(1,3,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Give them leadership roles</td>
<td>(3,3,3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above, the final top three items for suggestions for how the school could serve the needs of Russian students in the best way were:

1. Have their own curriculum
2. Meet with parents to explain and enforce expectations
3. Start in early years.

However, as soon as the results appeared, some teachers completely disagreed. They felt that all the final strategies which emerged from the NGT were dealing with the effects rather than the cause of the issue. Also, the Jewish Studies Director, felt very strongly that the point of enforcing rules and laying out expectations was already occurring in the school. He kept asking for ideas for enforcement but none was forthcoming. Another teacher pointed out that the final strategies were all school-centred while many of the original strategies were teacher-centred, requiring minimal effort for what could have impact without creating “huge waves”. It seemed that many of these staff members felt that the school administration was not doing enough to screen potential students before their acceptance into the school. They wanted the school administration to take responsibility rather than finding solutions themselves.
Findings Form the Basis of the Research: Are Teachers’ Views Accurate?

In this chapter, easily obtainable school based knowledge was presented, including many staff perceptions of Russian students at the schools under study. From the findings, staff seemed to have quite a negative perception of these students. One of the major purposes of this research was to explore why these perceptions existed, how many of them were actually well founded and what perceptions existed on the other side of the equation; i.e. from the perspective of students and their parents. Questions needing to be answered included:

- From what kind of backgrounds did these students come?
- What attitudes and beliefs did they and their families hold regarding Judaism and Jewish education?
- How did their backgrounds impact on their beliefs?
- Why did they choose to come to the two schools?

This ‘family’ voice is explored in the next two chapters in two sections: “Experience Prior to Arrival in Australia” and in the next chapter, the “New Reality on Australian Shores”.
Chapter Five: Analysis of Participant Experience
Prior to Arrival in Australia

Students and families coming from the former Soviet Union faced unique challenges both in their country of origin and in the migration experience. As discussed previously in Chapter 2, Remennick (2005) maintains that historic processes and personal circumstances help form and shape ethnic identity. Understanding these issues sheds light on many of the cultural paradigms demonstrated by these families and students, an insight deemed crucial by Shor (2005) in catering to immigrant parents and their children. It is this experience within the FSU and in the process of emigration that will be presented in this chapter.

First, participants origins will be explored, as according to Goldlust and Taft (1993) those from the heartland republics of Russia such as Ukraine and Belaroussia are likely to be well educated and to perceived education as important. Second, participants’ reasons for leaving the FSU are examined which allow a comparison to be made to the findings in the review of Goldlust and Taft (1993) which indicated that this would be for economic rather than religious reasons. Third, key factors such as minimal Jewish education but strong Jewish identity and the importance of being part of the intelligentsia, outlined previously by Goldlust and Taft (1993) and Rapoport and Feder (2002), are presented in the voice of participants. Finally, the experiences during the emigration process itself are described which, for many, had a significant impact on their view of Judaism and religion.

Participant Origins
Forty three parents and students from twenty six families participated in this study. Nearly all of these participants (37) were born overseas. Of the 24 student participants, only six indicated that they were born in Australia. Participants born overseas came mostly from the Western and South Western Republics of the Former Soviet Union34 (FSU). Only four

34 Latvia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
came from Russia itself (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg) while the majority (23) came from the Ukraine (see Map 1).

Map 1:
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) Prior to Perestroika

Reasons for Leaving

When describing their reasons for leaving the FSU, the most popular survey response was ‘to improve standard of living’ (24) followed by ‘Soviet anti-Semitism’ (14). To ‘reunite with family/relatives’ was third (13). Interestingly, but not surprisingly, ‘religious

---

35 The restructuring of the Soviet economy and bureaucracy that began in the mid 1980s.
freedom’ hardly featured at all (2). A better understanding of these responses and the context is outlined below.

Improving the Standard of Living
Although ‘to improve standard of living’ was the main reason for leaving, the underlying cause for the ‘poor standard of living’ was not only the general lack of capitalism under communism but also the lack of educational opportunities for Jews due to a) Soviet anti-Semitism and b) poor education leading on from that.

Overt Anti-Semitism
A number of participants described examples of open anti-Semitism experienced by themselves or other family members in the FSU:

...there we were with my grandmother in a wheelchair and my grandfather on the verge of a third heart attack and myself aged 10 and my mum by herself, and my sister at 4, and my mum schlepping [lugging] everyone to Australia and people screaming “Dirty Jews! - trying to take everything with them, trying to take everything out of Russia”, and just because we had bed linen in our bags... people were screaming, “Dirty Jews! Taking everything out of Russia” (#56, I-Std, L377-386).

When I was seven, in first grade, the teacher, on the first day asked every child their nationality. I was so ashamed that I didn’t say that I was Jewish; I said that I was Ukrainian because my father was born in the Ukraine. (#74, I-P, L607-610)... My brother was five or six years old. He wasn’t in school yet but he went to my grandmother asking, “Why do children call me Jhid on the street? I was born in Leningrad; I have blond hair and blue eyes. Why do they call me Jhid?” Does this explain why we were ashamed? Because to be a Jew was like to be a ‘nigger’, or a black or a pig or something. To be Jewish you were ashamed. That is how we grew up, with that (#74, I-P, L612-618).

__________________________
36 Jew
Discrimination in Education

Education was seen as the key to a better life and thus, Soviet ‘anti-Semitism’ actually reared its head in both direct and indirect ways. Anti-Semitism, especially in education was more subtle. Older participants who grew up in the FSU described what it was like to try to get into tertiary institutions. These experiences contributed to their desire to leave the FSU in order to guarantee a ‘better standard of living’ for their children. A student described her perception of the situation:

*Basically, we all knew that we didn’t have much of a future in Russia, mainly because we were Jewish, and unless you really could pay your way through university or you could ask someone for a favour, higher education was very limited for Jewish people.* (#56, I-Std, L23-26)...*Unless you had a connection or money you could put on the table, you couldn’t provide your child with a good education or a stable job and you knew that they were going to be discriminated against because they were Jewish. They could have been Einstein, but they were Jewish and that’s what it boiled down to. If you were from a main city, you had half a chance. If you weren’t from a main city and you were a girl, forget it* (#56, I-Std, L 494-499).

A parent, who managed to go to university added:

*To be a Jew in Russia you had to be the top, better than someone else. Some positions were closed to us. It was a whole game. You can’t go to [study] medicine unless you bribe [people]* (#59, I-P, L71-72).

Yet another parent described his experience:

*It took me three times to get into university. None of the universities would take me, so I was forced to apply to another lower grade institute. There I had an honours degree but a prestigious and world recognized [institution] wouldn’t accept it. The same [thing] happened to my parents* (#76, I-P, L51-54).
These participants have illustrated that anti-Semitism was not due to religion, and support the claim of Galperin and Harte (1992) that being Jewish was “what they are rather than what they do” (p.138).

**Factors in the Former Soviet Union Shaping Ethnic Identity and Cultural Paradigms**

The following section, will explore some of the factors described by participants that are unique to the Russian experience and thus can be argued to have shaped their cultural paradigms.

**Education as a ‘Ticket to Success’**

As we have seen, the difficulty in obtaining an education served to make it highly sought after. It also helped form an underdog mentality in the minds of Soviet Jews. To have an education and to be cultured was their way of proving to the Russians, and perhaps also to themselves, that they were better than their neighbours tried to make them feel (Rapoport & Feder, 2001; Resnik et al, 2001). Education was seen to be the key to a better life. Participants explained:

> Education was everything, private enterprise was forbidden and you couldn’t achieve anything any other way. Even though you couldn’t do everything you wanted, it was the ticket to something better (#90, I-Stf, L71-73).

...coming from Russia, if you are a Jew, you are automatically disadvantaged. It doesn’t matter if you are brilliant. Some non-Jewish people, job-wise, will be promoted ahead of you because you are Jewish...To get into uni there, just into anything there, you have to be a ‘five’, as their entry is on a system of 1-5-which is like 98 to 100% on a test to get into university, or an excellent school. Not everyone went to uni but they still wanted their kids to go. It was viewed as a prestigious thing, not like here [in Australia] where you go or you don’t go... so I suppose in that sense you had to try harder because you are disadvantaged (#37, I-Std, L931-938).
The definition of culture by Soviet Jewry and the notion of intelligentsia and its importance developed as a result of disadvantages. Participants explained:

*It was making something of yourself, since you couldn’t attain material goods there. So culture, music, theatre and reading; those were important, as was studying and attaining good professions. Therefore, there were a disproportionate number of lawyers, doctors, optometrists, ophthalmologists. Becoming a professional was very important. There in Russia you could be dirt poor and live in terrible conditions but still be doctors and lawyers (#90, I-Stf, L101-106).*

*They think to go to theatre, movies, restaurant is to be cultured. They read a lot of Russian literature, because there everyone was literate and was reading a lot of beautiful books. They can’t imagine what Jewish culture is, they are just out of it. They don’t know what it is. You know that it took me ten years to understand what is ‘spiritual’, what is ‘G-d’*. I was embarrassed to say G-d out loud. It took me ten years here in Australia not to be ashamed to be a believer, to be religious. It was so implanted in us -we were born with it-, [the notion] that it was shame to be Jewish. It is double shame to be religious. [Therefore] they think it is to be cultured if you read a few books in your life. They don’t understand anything at all about culture. They don’t know their own history; what is Torah, or anything (#74, I-P, L613-623).

**Extent of Exposure to Jewish Traditions in Russia**

As mentioned above, ‘religious freedom’ hardly featured as a reason for leaving the Soviet Union. At first glance this is not surprising as the general perception about Jewish life in the FSU is that it did not exist, thanks to Communism and the ban on religion (Remennick, 2005; Zaitseva, 1997). Therefore, immigrants coming from the FSU are presumed to know nothing about Judaism. To a certain extent this is accurate, especially for Jews from large cities. For example, a parent described his ‘non-Jewish’ life in Odessa:

---

37 In Jewish tradition one does not fully spell the name of the Holy One and thus the dash represents the letter ‘o’

38 Reference to the Bible (the Old Testament)
From the Jewish point of view, there was no Judaism, no Yiddishkeit\(^{39}\). We all ate pork. It was lovely meat and that was the normal way of life. Nobody would even think about it. I grew up on prawns, fish and pork- as much as we could get them- because otherwise you’d eat bones (#72, I-P, L195-198).

Yet another parent described the lack of knowledge of anything Jewish:

A friend of mine gave me “A History of the Jews” to read and I read it and it was an emotional shock. We didn’t know anything about it and it was a feeling that it [Russia] was not the right place to live. (#76, I-P, L17-19) …I knew that I was a Jew, but what is this? I believe normal people who lived in the big cities in the FSU, 99% of them had no idea what it was all about (L23-24).

However, a number of participants related how they were exposed to certain Jewish traditions in the FSU, usually through grandparents. Although they did not always understand what they were seeing, or keep the traditions themselves, a presumption of total ignorance of the Jewish way of life would be incorrect.

For instance, one parent described her memories of her grandfather. Note how frequently Jewish terms are used in this short excerpt:

*My grandfather, my mother’s father, finished [his education] in[a] conservatory in Budapest. He was a Chazzan\(^{40}\). First in Moscow, he [would] close [the] window when he was davening\(^{41}\). He kept kosher\(^{42}\). We didn’t but he did. He taught me… When I went to shul\(^{43}\) all his tunes [that he sang] came back to me. We kept Pesach\(^{44}\) and Rosh Hashanah\(^{45}\), but not Sukkos\(^{46}\) or Shabbos\(^{47}\). We were working. My father finished cheder\(^{48}\) long ago. He could read.*

---

\(^{39}\) Yiddish term for Judaism.

\(^{40}\) Cantor- the leader of prayers and singing in the synagogue

\(^{41}\) praying

\(^{42}\) Jewish dietary laws

\(^{43}\) synagogue

\(^{44}\) Passover

\(^{45}\) Jewish New Year

\(^{46}\) Festival of Tabernacles

\(^{47}\) Sabbath

\(^{48}\) religious Jewish school for children
My brother brought my grandfather’s kippah here and people recognized it and said it was a Dutch kippah. And he [my grandfather] could shecht chickens, I remember, the poor chicken tied to our chair, and my grandmother would cook it. It was not like we were totally out of religion. We believed, but we did not practice always (#59, I-P, L46-57).

A student also shared her recollections of her childhood in the FSU, the Jewish influence of her grandparents and the benefits to Jews of living in a small town. She also made the point that, although they may not have understood the reasons for many of the Jewish laws and customs, they still kept them:

I came from Kiev, but my grandparents came from a smaller town and I lived there for a while, and this was just before I came to Australia. We had a Mikvah, a shochat; we had the basics as you would say, and we did have some knowledge of the big chaggim and everything. But we didn’t have an opportunity to go to [Jewish schools], [so] the boys couldn’t go to a yeshiva. They would not be circumcised because they would end up going to the army and you don’t know what kind of consequences that would bring. My uncle, went to the army. He wasn’t circumcised. His son, when they came here, he did have a circumcision for him (#56, I-Std, L61-68).

She continued:

I don’t think you can know that you are Jewish and not know anything after that because you would inevitably see something happening around your family table. We would know when it was Sukkot, for example, not only because someone tried to build a sukkah but because all the Russian neighbours, non-Jewish neighbors, would say; “Oh it is a Jewish holiday, because it is raining,” - typical comments

---

49 skullcap
50 Jewish ritual slaughter
51 Jewish ritual bath
52 Jewish ritual slaughterer
53 Jewish holidays
54 Religious Jewish boys’ schools for teenagers and young adults
55 Feast of Tabernacles
56 Ritual hut in which Jews dwell for the seven days of the holiday
like that…I [also] remember when I was four years old baking matzah with my grandmother and a whole group of people because they were living in a smaller town. This was not something you could do in a big town where you had to do it undercover. But people would send money, or flour, eggs – anything - and we would send boxes back. My uncle was living in Russia, [while] we were living in the Ukraine, and we would send [him] boxes of matzah. So you did a lot of things, [although] obviously you didn’t have the opportunity to learn about the reasons why you did certain things at the festivals. …I [also] didn’t know that there were Sefardi and Ashkenazi Jews until I came to the [Queen Esther School] (#56, I-Std, L81-95).

The fear of openly practicing Judaism in Russia was very real. It often meant that the older generation, who did know the Jewish laws and understood the reasons for the rituals, were too intimidated to share this information with their families. This was both to protect themselves and others. They purposely kept their children in the dark on many occasions hoping to protect them in some way. As one parent explained:

[My husband] ...is from a religious family; his father was a student in yeshiva and he was very familiar with everything, and he spent six years in prison in the north of Russia. And aside from being religious, I don’t know if you could say he was a Rabbi, but he finished yeshiva and he even organized a Chuppah for us. Of course, he knew everything; he was a Chassid, not Lubavitch but I don’t know [what group]. But after six years in prison he was afraid even to open his mouth to tell one word. But in spite of all that, every Friday they held Shabbos and when [my husband] first brought me home to introduce me to his parents, it was Friday night and they were sitting in hats. It was September, autumn, and when I saw three

57 Unleavened bread, specially prepared out of flour and water for the Passover holiday.
58 Sefardi Jews originated in Spain and other Middle Eastern countries while Ashkenazi Jews trace their origins to Germany and Eastern Europe. There are variations in the customs and liturgy of religious Jews from Sefardi or Ashkenazi origins, but not in the essence of the Torah law which they both uphold.
59 Jewish wedding ceremony held outdoors under a canopy. It is only after this religious ceremony that a Jewish man and woman are recognized as husband and wife.
60 a particular group of Chassidic Jews well known to the interviewee named after the town of Lubavitch in White Russia where the group’s early leaders lived.
61 celebrated the Jewish Sabbath
men sitting at the table with hats on, I didn’t understand what was going on. They were all crazy! They looked normal, they spoke normally but they were wearing these hats! And then he stood up and said the prayer. I remember he always started “Baruch”, and then I couldn’t understand the rest. It was every Friday in Leningrad in the 70s. We got married in ’66. In ‘65 he introduced me. I couldn’t understand anything and nobody was going to explain to me because they were afraid, not afraid that he was marrying me, but afraid to tell me something (#74, I-P, L69-84). I didn’t know [what a] Chuppah [was] but I had one. They brought a carpet and a lot of men were sitting at the table writing something... He invited people..and he gave me a ring (L86-94).

When this same parent came to Melbourne, she had to rely on her two aunts to verify that she had a Jewish wedding ceremony with a Jewish marriage contract, as required by Jewish law, since she did not recognize what it was at the time:

*I didn’t know what it was. I didn’t remember... We had to rewrite the Kesubah because [it was left] in Leningrad. It should be in the Leningrad synagogue if they didn’t destroy it. He [her father-in-law] didn’t want us to keep the document at home, and he was right. He didn’t know that we would be refusniks but he didn’t want us to keep it at home because you could go to prison for that; he was in prison for that. ....Rabbi L., called my two aunties. They were both here [in Australia] and they were both there [in Russia] when I had the Chuppah and he asked them what it was and they knew much more than I knew about it (L87-99).

To summarise the variation in experience, one participant explained:

*It depends on their family and where they come from. Because some from the Western Ukraine and little places had many more Jewish traditions at home, so they saw things in the home. Others, from big cities, (although not always), would know a lot less. For some people, their parents would hide from them (on purpose)

---

62 “Blessed” – as in “Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d”. This is the beginning of all Jewish Blessings made to G-d.
63 Jewish marriage contract
64 A Jew in the former Soviet Union who was refused permission to emigrate
anything Jewish so they could have a ‘normal life’ as they would put it, and not have the baggage like they had with Jewish things. So people had different experiences (#81, I, L149-155).

Jewish Identity in the Former Soviet Union
Participants in the survey were asked, via multiple choice questions, how they felt about their Jewishness in the FSU and what they considered to be the most important factor in preserving Jewish heritage there. Consistent with the lack of Jewish education in the FSU, ten out of fifteen students chose ‘I had little awareness of Jewishness in the former USSR’ while nine of seventeen parents indicated the same. Parents also indicated that they were ‘uncomfortable presenting themselves as Jews’ (5), and even ‘disliked being a Jew’ (3). On the other hand, nine parents indicated that they were ‘proud of being Jewish’.

Parents and students were also asked, “What was the most important factor for preserving Jewish heritage in the Former Soviet Union?” The overwhelming response from both parents and students was ‘to be born and raised in a Jewish family’ once again confirming the position of Galperin and Harte (1992). Table 9 indicates the range of other answers given.

Table 9:
The Most Important Elements for Preserving Jewish Heritage in the Former USSR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yiddish language/our ‘folk culture’</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew/State of Israel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being born and raised in a Jewish family</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1- anti-Semitism</td>
<td>1 – did not know about Judaism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

65 Survey Question 12
With this better understanding of life as it was in the FSU, details of the migration experience itself will now be explored.

**Details of Emigration from the Former Soviet Union (FSU)**

Overseas born participants in this study emigrated from the FSU between 1977 and 1995 with time of arrival in Australia ranging from December 1977 to January 2004. The majority of these participants (28) left the FSU in the 1990s.

**Events Affecting the Move to Australia Prior to Perestroika**

Participants mostly came directly to Australia, with only three families first living in other countries prior to their arrival; one in Israel, one in New Zealand and the third in both Israel and New Zealand. In addition, three families were delayed in Italy for seven to eight months waiting for entry visas while emigrating during 1977, 1988 and 1989 respectively.

The ability to leave the FSU varied depending on the political situation at the time. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union on December 25th, 1991, leaving the country depended on receiving an invitation from outside the FSU. The easiest pathway out was to Israel but not everyone wanted to move there. One parent described the process of leaving the Soviet Union before its collapse:

> In ’89 I already applied to leave. [Actually] you can’t apply to leave; it’s like applying to leave a concentration camp. So you had to have an invitation from some relatives, probably from Israel because they didn’t let people leave for the countries where they had diplomatic relationships - because there was some agreement about paying money or something. So mostly they allowed you to leave for Israel, [as Russia had] no relations with them. So, they strip your citizenship from you- you are nobody, you are a refugee, you go to Israel and then on the way you can change your destination (#76, I, L98-105).

This pathway was similar for some in the late ’70s for as another parent recounted:
We departed on the way to Israel and when we came to Vienna, we told them [the Israeli Authorities] that we want to go to Australia, so we changed our course (#73, I, L57-59).

That was the procedure. You could not leave Russia or Ukraine at the time just to go to Australia. That wouldn’t happen. They only allowed people to go to their Israeli ‘homeland’. That was the only way you could leave. So we had to go under that pretence. We knew that we didn’t want to go to Israel because we had a family situation where my mum told me that if I went to Israel with all the wars, she would stay in Odessa. So I had very little choice, I wanted her to follow me, and she did (#73, I, L101-106).

Others also considered Israel as a non-option:

My grandmother’s brother was here [in Australia] and he was able to get us in. Everyone else went to America or Israel. Well, America before, but we couldn’t get in at all. We had relatives but not close and I don’t think America was accepting [anyone] at that time. It was 1996. So, Australia was the only option that we wanted to take. My parents didn’t want to go to Israel because of the situation there…(#67, I, L675-679).

Sometimes though, receiving even numerous invitations was not enough if the Communist government decided not to allow a family to go. A grandparent described how her immediate and extended family left for Australia and she was planning to go as well but could not. She related how:

[In Russia my husband] was working in the factory that produces tractors and vehicles for the ‘war machine’. But it was really an excuse. He didn’t have any real secrets or anything; he was just a mechanical engineer for vehicles. They didn’t let us go for ten years.. (#74, I, L34-36). …

They were stopping us because of him and they were trying to make his life as miserable as possible because we had so many invitations from two cousins in Israel. We had like sixteen invitations and then… from Australia they also sent us invitations. And they knew we had so many relatives around…It was changing. It
was Perestroika and Bob Hawke, then Prime Minister of Australia, came with a list of eighty families who he personally asked Gorbachev to let go (#74, I, L47-53).

Once families finally got their invitation, there could still be a wait and numerous obstacles:

Once you got the invitation you start to do things to prepare to leave, so then it took from April until [we] got permission to leave early July, three months. Because at that time it became speedy, they set up deadlines, because before [that] people applied and waited half a year or more just to get a response that they are still in a queue. Then Gorbachev started Perestroika. More and more people [were applying to leave]. It was a huge wave so they put more [government] people on and they set up deadlines that [applications] should be considered in three months, but you couldn’t get it earlier than three months although some people could (#76, I, L129-137).

Refugees were faced with other obstacles, such as limitations on their luggage allowance and the amount of money that could be taken out of the country:

First you had to give away citizenship and receive a piece of paper that says, not passport, just ‘permission to leave’ document and with approximate destination Israel. So many people [were leaving so] you are allowed to exchange 90 rubles per person. So you are not allowed to take anything. So it depended on how you are travelling; if you are travelling by plane, it cost huge amount of money to take more than two suitcases. If by train, you can take a bit more, but it takes ages to go through customs, so the [emigrants] had a big problem when they arrived at the border. The customs search started and they missed the trains. So, [the government] made a lot of obstacles (#76, I, L140-149).

Delay in Italy en Route to Australia
Once families left the FSU before 1991, and revealed their intentions to the Israeli Agency that they wanted to go to Australia, they were transferred to Italy where they had to wait to receive entry visas. This experience was different from those heading off to America but
not all that bad. For some this meant a few months, for others even longer. One participant who had a short stay related his experience:

*We bought a ticket to Czechoslovakia and from there to Vienna. This is a two hour train ride. And then we were met by Sochnut\(^{66}\) and they did everything and in a week we were sent to Italy. In Vienna you [might] change your destination but they don’t let you go anywhere until you have approval from Australia that relatives from here will support your immigration; otherwise they won’t. So the Sochnut would pay for people going to Israel. They took them immediately to Israel. The JOINT\(^{67}\) would pay for people waiting for America. People waiting for Canada or Australia, could only go there if someone from Canada or Australia, signed an agreement that they would support their immigration because nobody paid for them. So my uncle paid for me to be there, in Italy, Sochnut paid for Vienna somehow. My wife was pregnant and they expected a soccer championship in Italy so they wanted to clear out the refugee camps (#76, I, L155-168).*

Another participant shared similar information but explained that going to Italy was perceived to be a holiday for some:

*What happened in Vienna was that you would come and they would ask you where you wanted to go, and if you said you wanted to go to Israel, you go straight away, you don’t have to wait. If you are going America you probably could wait in Vienna or Italy, and if you have long waiting period (like to go to Canada or Australia) you go to Italy. Many people would say that, just to go to Italy for a free holiday. Some people still from Italy would go to America but it was a very short period, like one month maximum. Those who were going to Australia or Canada would wait seven or eight months (#74, I, L554-561).*

---

\(^{66}\)Jewish Agency for Israel. For over 80 years it has served as the link between Jewish people and Israel. (www.jafi.org.il/JewishAgency/English/about accessed Dec 22, 2011)

\(^{67}\)American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee work to rescue Jewish lives at risk, bring relief to Jews in need and renew lost bonds to Jewish identity and Jewish culture. (www.jdc.org/about-jdc accessed Dec 22, 2011)
This period of time, although frustrating in terms of a delay to Australia, had some side benefits. During this period, refugees had the opportunity to study English, to be introduced to Jewish life, to work and to travel. The experiences in the ‘70s seemed similar to those in the late ‘80s. A participant who left in the late ‘70s described what happened after they told the Sochnut that they did not want to go to Israel:

_They obviously tried to convince us to stay and go to Israel. We said, “Look, we made our minds up, just let us go.” They said, “Look, other boys and girls like you are going to Israel why not you?” We said, “No, we decided to go to Australia”._

_They put us in some sort of a villa to stay for a few days sharing one room with another young family like ours. 11 days later we arrived in Rome and from Rome we went to HIAS and JOINT working together. After that they give us the money to go find a flat and we went and lived in Ladispoli for eight months. It is a seaside resort about 40km north of Rome and that is where we stayed. I was going to Rome almost every day to study English, and my wife stayed there with [my daughter]. We were there for eight months. We were sharing the flat with other families. We had three rooms for three families. It was temporary but it was a nice Roman holiday. We were well looked after and I got my English education as much as I could (#73, I-P, L115-128)._  

One research participant, a Russian qualified doctor who emigrated in the late ‘80s, explained further that:

_They established a little clinic in the synagogue and I think from England, there was a lot of medication donated and equipment. Russians couldn’t go to [an] Italian doctor [because] we didn’t have money... HIAS employed us kind of, would pay us three dollars or five dollars per patient for me to see. And I would sit there like one or two hours a day. And there was a big cabinet of medication. There were

---

68 Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, founded in 1881, is the international migration agency of the American Jewish community. They provide rescue and refuge for oppressed Jews from around the world and more recently have directed their expertise to assist refugees and immigrants from all backgrounds. (www.hias.org/en/page/who-are-we accessed Dec 22, 2011)
not many patients, I didn’t even think that I could use it [the medication]. When I opened it, it was all different from the medications in Russia but because all Italian [contains] so much Latin, I could understand [that] this is an antibiotic, this is for liver, this is for stomach, this is for diarrhea. So, I started giving it out because it all came from England specifically to be given to people in transition. People here [in Australia] sometimes come to me, “Oh! You saved my life!”, because it was free antibiotics, good antibiotics. So, it was good and I was working there and that is how we could afford to travel a little bit (#74, I, L570-583).

HIAS was giving money, cash; we would rent a flat, we would buy food and cook, and because he [her husband] was working in the shop we could have kosher [food. (L590-591).

Her husband also found work which enabled them to travel:

[He] was working in a little kosher shop. He was working in the shop [that] distributed kosher chicken and kosher food, and then he organized also kosher tours. He would rent a bus...we would go and buy some food and we would go around Italy in the bus (L583-586).

Chabad69 emissaries and other Jewish organizations recognized that these refugees knew very little about Judaism and so they taught them and organized religious activities. Some refugees may not have appreciated the effort completely, but the following one did:

On Pesach70, a very rich Chassid71, organized kosher Pesach for 800 people for 8 days and only cost like 18 dollars for three meals for eight days. He wanted every single Russian person to eat kosher for Pesach. [My husband] was organizing that and [my daughters] were helping in the kitchen with all the preparation. That was Pesach in Italy. I still remember it (#74, I, L591-601).

69 A particular philosophy within Orthodox Judaism. See Appendix A for a description of this movement.
70 Passover
71 Term used loosely to mean an ultra-orthodox Jew. More accurately, it refers to a Jew who identifies with one of the many sects within the Chassidic movement which began with Rabbi Yisrael ‘Baal Shem Tov’ (1698-1760) See Appendix A.
We were kind of asking him why he wanted to feed Russians kosher so much because they didn’t appreciate it. And he said; “It is so important that at least once in their lifetime they should eat kosher on Pesach”. He was a real believer that it was very important (L591-601).

The atmosphere in Ladispoli with Rabbi H., was so inspiring, so interesting, so new. Every day we would go to synagogue and we were working in the synagogue and we were involved in everything. It was like a seven month festival. It was very nice (L170-173).

Even in Vienna, there was an opportunity for some of the refugees to learn more about Judaism. One past student, now married and keeping a more observant lifestyle, explained that her family’s journey to discovering Judaism began en route to Australia: “We came through Vienna and already there the Chabad Rabbi was in touch with us and started teaching us” (#33, I-Std, L8-9). It is interesting to note that the participants who were introduced to Judaism en route, continued to look for more participation in the Jewish observant community upon their arrival.

Emigration to Australia Post Perestroika
With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the fifteen soviet socialist republics gained their independence. A new Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was formed to maintain interaction between most of these states but on the basis of sovereign equality (Map 2).
It was at this time that the Australian Jewish community lobbied for the creation of a special category for immigration that resulted in the “Special Assistance Category Visa, sub class 210, for the ‘minority from the former Soviet Union’”. Many participants in this study came to Australia under this type of visa. Others came via ‘concession family visas’, or ‘preferential family visas’ while only two families arrived on ‘professional visas’ in ’92 and ’94. In these cases, travel was direct to Australia with no need to wait in other countries. While this allowed the migrants to arrive within a shorter period of time, these people did not have the benefit of learning more about Judaism before they landed on Australian shores.

**Conclusion**

The ‘parent and student voice’ of life in the FSU and en route to Australia has been presented to gain a better understanding of the background of these families and how their experiences may have impacted upon and shaped their ethnic identities. The majority of
participants did come from Ukraine and emphasised the importance of education as expected according to Goldlust and Taft (1993). Their reasons for leaving were also centred more around economic concerns due to educational constraints placed upon Jews, even non-practising ones. This once again echoed the findings in Goldlust and Taft’s (1993) review of many other studies concerning Russian Jewry. The minimal Jewish education in the FSU, described by many previous researchers, has been confirmed though there was not complete lack of exposure to Jewish practice amongst many in this cohort. A number of students and parents were indeed familiar with certain Jewish rituals from their in lives in the former Soviet Union. They had seen religious relatives and religious practices even if they did not fully understand all they had viewed.

However, a strong Jewish identity and a notion of intelligentsia was evident due to discrimination exactly as other researchers have claimed (Rapoport and Feder, 2002; Remennick, 2005; Zaitseva, 1997). The emigration process was often a drawn out affair, but because of this, also allowed more exposure to Jewish practice before their arrival in Australia. The importance of these experiences will be further understood in light of the specific findings related to Russian participants’ experiences upon arrival in Australia and in subsequent years. These will be presented in the next chapter.
Chapter Six: New Reality on Australian Shores

As seen in the previous chapter, life in the FSU under Communism presented unique challenges. The lack of Jewish education and Jewish practice was a direct attempt by the Communist government to eradicate the practice of the Jewish religion. Ironically, at the same time, Jews, practising (under threat of their lives) or non-practising (due to fear or ignorance) were still targets of anti-Semitism. These life experiences created a particular Russian mentality not always understood by fellow Jews in Australia. This meeting of cultures in the wider Jewish community and at the Queen Esther and King Solomon Schools will be explored in this chapter.

New Reality in Australia

For new immigrants, arriving into a Western country from a very different culture, research suggests (Markowitz, 1993; Shor, 2005 among others) that issues will arise in areas where the culture or language affect understandings in the new host society. This section will explore the issues and events arising directly from the emigration from the FSU such as issues of identity, community support, career changes and the subsequent parental expectations of their children.

Identity

As noted in the previous chapter, emigrants from the FSU had a strong Jewish identity due to the anti-Semitism endured in that country. However, upon arrival in Australia, they were regarded as ‘Russians’ by the local Jewish community. For some this was disconcerting. One student explained:

When I would go to my mum and say, ‘People call me Russian’, you know, with that stigma, she says, ‘You are not Russian but I am not Russian either’. In Russia to be Russian means, Russian Orthodox, Christian, and we are Jewish not Russian. Because I always say Jewish is a religion and Russian is a nationality. But mum, says, ‘No, we are Jewish, we are not Russian’. She always says that to me (#66, I-Std, L346-351).
This confusion of identity accurately reflects the findings of Markowitz (1993) discussed in the Chapter Two.

Community Support

Nearly all participants in this study arrived with relatives already here in Australia. Many of them went on to describe their initial time in Australia and how they were helped by the local Jewish Chabad community. To understand the particular connection between these participants, Chabad and the schools within this study, it is important to recognize that the schools are considered to be community schools under Chabad auspices. In addition, an organization called FREE (Friends of Refugees of Eastern Europe) was established in 1980 by a Chabad Rabbi, (himself a refugee from the Soviet Union) with the blessing and encouragement of the Rebbe\textsuperscript{72} Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson \textsuperscript{ob”m\textsuperscript{73}}, the leader of the Chabad movement worldwide.

This Russian Rabbi explained his role in the following way:

\textit{Obviously they needed a Russian speaking person who would deal with all their problems, especially with the children. When I came here I started to teach at [King Solomon and Queen Esther schools], with the Russian students and besides that I opened this centre called F.R.E.E. I spent the rest of my time with them. First my priority was to organize schools for the children. To explain: I used to have to go to the appointments, because the people had just arrived and couldn't speak. Now they speak better than me! But then I had to go and make the appointments with the principals and to explain and to ask the questions etc. (#80, I-C, L8-18).}

\textit{I would explain what kind of a Jewish school it is with both things, secular studies and Jewish studies, and the importance of course [of Jewish studies] and I would take them there. Any problems in the future, the schools would refer them to me, at least at the beginning. Always that was a part of my Shlichus, [mission] to work}

\textsuperscript{72} Title given to a spiritual leader of a Chassidic sect
\textsuperscript{73} Of Blessed Memory. In Jewish tradition, this acronym is written after the name of someone who has passed away.
with the mishpochos [families], and the Rebbe underlined that, not only to teach in the [school]... and I did everything.

When the boys needed circumcision, we organized, Boruch Hashem [thank G-d]. Since then we have carried out over 500 brisim [circumcisions] performed for different ages from 0 to 67 (I think was the oldest). Even the girls, when they enroll in a Jewish school, on the official form they ask for their Hebrew name, but they don’t even know what that is. [The school would ask about] parents and their chuppah74, I had to explain this whole thing. We made Chuppah, gave Jewish names to the girls and explained how [to choose an appropriate Jewish name]. Not like they do in Israel, [where] if a girl is called Sveta, in Russian it means light, so call her Ora, that’s it. Ei [even though] they are called Sveta because the bobbe [grandmother] or grand Aunty or grandmother was called Sara, they [just] took the first letter. We find out everything [about their background and their family history] and we give them certificates etc, properly done, with a Kiddush75...

We try to help them with work, to find a job. I mean I am not an official looking for jobs but at the beginning until they establish themselves, we find work somewhere, in Jewish businesses or other businesses, and refer, and give them references etc. (L21-40).

This is how another long-standing staff member described the Russian Rabbi’s role in addition to teaching at the school:

[He was] a sort of social worker. He did a lot of work with the families, helping them to establish themselves materially and helping them with accommodation, with finding jobs. In that way we built up contact with the families and he, being a religious person, would build on that contact that he had; first by helping them

---

74 Jewish wedding ceremony held outdoors under a canopy. It is only after this religious ceremony that a Jewish man and woman are recognized as husband and wife.
75 A celebration held in the synagogue after prayers on a Saturday. Kiddush refers more specifically to the blessing over wine and the accompanying prayers said on Friday nights, Saturdays and Jewish festivals after synagogue prayers and before one is allowed to partake of any food.
materially, physically. Then he would build on that and invite them to his home for Shabbos. (#97, I-Stf, L169-174).

The particular attraction for these Russian refugees was explained further by another member of staff:

*You have to understand the history of our own school in that the founders were Russian in origin and they, the founders of our school, many of whom were still alive at that time, actually related very positively and could identify with exactly what was happening to these people. Contact with the parents was not just with the school but with our community, because there was a lot of empathy for these people, given that our school itself was established by people of Russian origin. Many of the community would establish contacts with these people. Pesach for example, many of these new arrivals would be invited to a Seder in the homes of people in the community. I remember myself having invited numerous families over the years to the Seder and one of them did become fully observant and their children are now sending their children to our school. That is just one example, but there are many. Part of the reason is because it wasn’t just contacts set up by this particular Rabbi, but he organized for the community to be involved with them* (#97, I-Stf, L180-193).

Some participants also explained how the community helped them find employment:

*At the time [my wife] got her first employment through Mr. ... He and some others, helped her to get a job at [the old age home]. So that was her first job... just cleaning, cooking in the kitchen, these kind of things. I got my first job somewhere else, with some relatives* (#72, I-P, L225-232).

What also became apparent was that employment within the religious Jewish community helped the new employees to form views towards the religious Jews and their entire family. Keeping in mind that these were families coming with very little knowledge of orthodox Jewry, this contact had ramifications for many years to come. Students who still had connections in the religious community, or were more observant themselves years after
graduating, attributed this, in part, to this working relationship and the fact that the families were not scared of religion as much as some of their counterparts:

*The community was really helpful. My mother worked for a Jewish family so over the years she has become more accepting too [of religious people] (#61, I-Std, L93-94).*

*When we came to Melbourne, my grandmother was already here before and she had worked with an orthodox family. She saw them up close. She was close to them and they treated her very well. She introduced us and they would also invite us over. Because of that contact, my family was not ‘afraid’ of religious people the way other Russian families were (#33, I-Std, L9-15).*

*[My mother] worked in the community so she was lucky that way. She was able to see and know the different chaggim*76 and all on a different level, not just from us coming home and telling her what we did in school that day, when you are sort of half listening because you don’t want to ignore your child and you are half doing all the millions of things that you need to do. So, I think, because she was able to get to know the people, she was able to see the people, and she grew up in the shtetl77 community that I was talking about, so she didn’t have this indifference, I guess, putting up a wall as a lot of Russian people do. Because quite a lot of them, even those who do send their children to Jewish schools, they say, “This is just too much! They are all fanatical about it all. It’s just too much! Who needs this kind of thing?” But I think when you are more involved and you see by example and you get to know the people [you are not as afraid] (#56, I-Std, L653-664).

**Career Changes**

A number of the parents in this study were highly qualified professionals in the FSU. Yet upon their arrival they faced two major hurdles. One was the language barrier and the other was the acceptance of their prior qualifications. Community members assisted to find them

76 Jewish Holidays
77 Yiddish word for small town or village with a large Jewish Yiddish speaking population primarily in Central and Eastern Europe pre-World War II.
employment but they often had to resort to more menial jobs. A staff member who speaks Russian, and was quite familiar with this particular cohort of the Jewish community, pointed out:

[The young people] came from families, and parents often remind them of this, where the parents left the life they had behind, where often they were professionals. Now they are doing menial tasks here because they can’t get jobs in their profession or the actual re-qualifying process is so difficult. So, it prevents them from doing what they did before (#88, I-Stf, L32-35).

Hence, professionals such as senior engineers and doctors might have ended up working in childcare. One previously professional parent recounted:

There, I was a person. Here I have to clean toilets. I put all my ambitions behind me, and [decided to] forget the past and go forward to the future (#59, I-P, L103-105).

On arrival, this also meant that parents were on a limited income which then led to various other problems. As a staff member remarked:

The parents were professionals in Russia and here they had to do menial jobs and that made them feel inferior. Doctors by profession were working as cleaning ladies. [The students’] Australian friends had beautiful homes while they had little flats, or government-provided flats. So, there were these vast differences between them, vast social difference, and parents doing menial tasks and depending on the kindness of others, and this must have made [Russian families] feel quite humiliated (#90, I-Stf, L87-92).

Challenges of Re-Qualifying

Nevertheless, there were parents who chose to re-qualify upon arrival in Australia, but that too came with its own set of challenges. A parent who arrived after practicing Medicine for 20 years in the FSU described the difficulties stemming from lack of fluency in English:

Imagine how hard it was. We were past 45 years of age and we had to go learn a new language. [My husband] also needed English but he went to a six month
engineering English course because he couldn’t get a job without the English. But in engineering you don’t need as much English as in psycho-therapy. He was able to get a job after that and has always had a job since then. He has specialist knowledge (#74, I-P, L948-952).

She then went on to describe how different her experience in the medical field had been from that of her engineer husband, first in training and then in getting a job:

> Of course, I couldn’t pass my exams because I still didn’t have [enough general English]. It was easy with the professional language because it all has Latin roots and with medical terms and everything I didn’t have a problem (L188-190).

> …They let me study the same course a second time and after the second time I passed but I still didn’t know much general [English]. After I finished my professional English, I went to general English and I had another half a year, and after that I started looking for a job but still I couldn’t speak on the telephone. I couldn’t understand. When you look at a person it is easier but on the phone I couldn’t understand. My brother would come at lunch time, not helping me, just pushing me to talk on the phone. I said; “I can’t.” I was so happy that he came, I thought that he would do it for me or he would ask the questions. But no, he would sit there and not go away until I made the call. It was so hard. [I got a job eventually] in Dandenong, [a suburb] where nobody wanted to go (L192-207).

However, the challenges were not over when she had enough English to practice:

> At that time, they would give only a four year temporary registration as a recognized foreign doctor in each State (L912-913). … Then you first had to pass an English exam, and then all the medical exams from the beginning like any beginning medical student here. They were so hard, and I couldn’t do it in four years (L918-920). … with the multiple choice questions on the exam, … like they give you two minutes for each question. But there are four choices and all in English. It was hard; I couldn’t even read the questions in that amount of time. I passed with A in [named fields she was qualified in from FSU] because these were
the fields I was working in. But, [with other things] I could not pass. I was not familiar with them. I was working at $43,000 a year and three people in the house were studying, so I couldn’t stop working to study too (L931-937).

This parent eventually gave up her ambitions to re-qualify adding:

*They gave me another year but the only hospital placements they would give me to finish were in NSW. My daughter was pregnant here in Victoria and I didn’t want to leave her alone. It was a choice between me and her, so I happily stopped. Someone needed to be home for the children. If she was not pregnant at the time, I probably would have gone to NSW for the year to finish. I had a friend who kept telling me to come with him. It would be easy. But I didn’t. I had a choice but he didn’t. He was the male breadwinner in his house. I decided to let my children continue their education instead (L920-928).*

Even changing careers in Australia didn’t always help, for as one participant explained:

*[My mum] finished uni to be an accountant but it was really hard for her to get a job because of the language thing. She was kind of older when she finished, in her 40s already, so it was hard to get hired at that age. So she started a crèche thing in our house (#69, I-Std, L446-448).*

The experiences described here, echo the findings of Remennick (1999) that older and female immigrants to Israel, often had to resort to making their living by unskilled or semi-skilled work, as they could not find jobs in the area of their qualification.

**Resultant Expectations from Parental Sacrifice**

Such were the sacrifice parents made to provide a better life for their offspring. As part of this, there was the expectation that their children would recognize this sacrifice and make the most of the educational opportunities afforded to them in their new domicile. In addition, the parents’ unpleasant experiences in trying to acquire a higher education in a field of their choice in the FSU, and the belief that one must excel to get anywhere in life,
reinforced the paradigm that it was of primary importance for their children to excel academically. Consequently, parents expected their children to work hard:

*Russian people want to achieve the best. To achieve something there we had to be better [in fact] to achieve anything* (#59, I-P, L189-190).

**Varied Student Reaction to Parental Expectation**

Students with Russian immigrant parents felt this pressure to excel; some rose to the occasion, others did not. Students who were immigrants themselves seemed to understand this pressure better than those born in Australia. This view was shared by an immigrant student:

*We came to this country. We did not know what to expect. All we knew was that we left our lives completely behind without any guarantees that this was going to be for the better-hopefully, but no guarantee. So you’d better sit down and work, and if it takes you until you are blue in the face, that is what you have to do. My mum never said that, but it was kind of implied from very early on* (#56, I-Std, L762-767).

A staff member who was also an ex-collegian of the school verified how she noted this when she attended the girls’ school:

*When I went to school, the Russian girls who were in my class, were really motivated throughout the whole of high school and there seemed to be a real appreciation of the opportunities that they were getting from the school. I don’t think that that exists as much anymore* (#93, I-Stf, L50-53).

She felt that the difference in how hard students tried was generational:

*I think that for the girls who were from Russia when I was going through school, their parents had perhaps just arrived or they had experienced migrating, whereas I think the girls who are going through now, perhaps they were born here and so perhaps do not see how difficult it was actually to arrive in Australia. They seem perhaps to get caught up in more social issues and things like that because they don’t have the appreciation for how hard it was and the opportunities that they now*
This participant remembered a specific example of the generational change in attitude apparent in the same family:

When I went to school, I was in the same class as …..and she came in, I think year ten or year eleven. She was fun to be with and she was really hilarious and everyone got on really well with her. She was very studious and really motivated and really hard working and everyone really, really loved her. We thought she was fantastic. And then I came back and taught here and there was a girl called … and I taught her in Year Nine, just for English Language Extension at that stage. She was not motivated at all; she had very poor English expression and written skills. She had no interest whatsoever, and she had a lot of attitude and just wanted to be with her other Russian friends…and I found out that these two girls were sisters. So [name] had become [shortened version of the surname] and the difference in their attitudes was so remarkable, I just couldn’t believe it (#93, I-Stf, L380-391).

These were her thoughts on the possible reasons for the difference in attitude between the two sisters:

..They had just migrated - they had just come and [the elder sister] was so motivated to learn and was wanting to socialize with everyone in the class and there didn’t seem to be any barriers at all. But with her little sister, I don’t know if she was born here or maybe she was a lot younger, or maybe her family was a little bit more settled, but she didn’t have the same sort of desire to learn or to fit in or just to be friends with everyone. She just seemed to be more insular (#93, I-Stf, L396-401). According to some participants, the reluctance on the part of the students to fulfill their parents’ expectations was not always the fault of the students. Some felt that, unfortunately, the parental expectation for high achievement was not always realistic for their child:

The girls feel very responsible and they really feel like they have got to make up to their parents, for that kind of loss. Sometimes it can be a little bit extreme, when parents decide they want their daughter to do a certain course. I am speaking of
sciences—medicine, dentistry and pharmacy are probably the three courses that are most favoured but which have got very, very high ENTER\textsuperscript{78} scores just to get into them. They [the parents] put pressure on them. Some of them, who would be much better off doing humanities, end up doing sciences. Look, I am generalizing obviously, but that happens far more for the Russian students than for non-Russian students (#88, I-Stf, L35-44).

Other times, the parental expectation was realistic but not necessarily what the student really wanted to do:

\begin{quote}
I ended up doing the subjects that my mum wanted me to do. Now looking back on it, OK, I am happy because I like science. But I don’t know if I like science because that is what I had to do, so I made myself like it or because it was meant to be. I wanted to do art, and psychology. I wouldn’t have minded doing maths and chemistry. But I ended up doing two maths and chemistry and physics because that is what my mum thought was important (#36, I-Std, L236-241).
\end{quote}

Although the participant above was still relatively happy with her choices, other children seemed to resent the pressure to achieve as defined by their parents:

\begin{quote}
[Parents say] ‘You have to get good marks. You can’t go out if you are getting bad marks - You can’t go out at night.’ It is very restrictive and it is very hard to deal with (#57, I-Std, L242-244).
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
...It is [expected that you will get] a university degree and that is it. You have to have it; otherwise you are looked at as a failure. So it is really not fun being in that family where if you don’t get good marks, and if you don’t go to university, then they think you failed and that you haven’t achieved anything (#57, I-Std, L248-252).
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{78} Amalgamate score of year 12 courses, scaled by population. Different minimum scores are required by Australian Universities to gain access to each particular university course.
There were also parents who adjusted their expectations based on the reality of their children’s educational record. As one young person recounted:

*My parents expected me to do really well. I think they expected me to get really good marks because of all the stuff that they had heard from other people. They expected it to be a really, really good school, really, really high standard of education and they expected me to come out and be a lawyer or a doctor. That is when I started. Then slowly they realized that, OK it is not happening. I think at the start, their dream of what would happen by sending me and my brother here, was that they thought that we could come out with really good jobs (#69, I-Std, L130-136).*

…*My parents, when I started off they were like, “This is very important, you have to [do really well]” …you see they grew up where you had 20 exams and that was normal. They would say, “Education here is so easy so you have to do it”. My mum went to uni [here], and she was like “What are you complaining about? I learned English and went to uni..” But seeing my [older] brother and how hard it was for him… (my dad didn’t care, it was mostly my mum. My dad was like; “whatever, as long as you are happy I’m happy”). But I think my mum kind of realized along the way that this was really difficult. It’s not going to be 99.95. That is not realistic. You just have to do the best you can (#69, I-Std, L421-431).*

**Matters Associated with Choosing a Jewish Education**

In this section, all matters associated with choosing Jewish education are explored including their reasons for choosing the particular schools under study, their definition of Jewish education, the importance placed upon it, the perceived advantages and disadvantages of this education and the expectations regarding the education they were to receive at the school under study.

On surveys, participants were asked what they considered to be the most important in preserving their Jewish heritage in Australia. The responses are presented below in Table 10. This question was asked to gauge the contrast, if any, between this view and the responses to the same question regarding Jewish heritage in the former Soviet Union.
Those responses were presented in Table 9 in Chapter Five. For convenience, that table is presented again below followed by Table 10.

**Table 9 (reprinted):**

**The Most Important Elements for Preserving Jewish Heritage in the Former USSR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yiddish language/our ‘folk culture’</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew/State of Israel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being born and raised in a Jewish family</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 - anti-Semitism</td>
<td>1 – did not know about Judaism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 10:**

**The Most Important Elements for Preserving Jewish Heritage in Australia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parents (n=18)*</th>
<th>Students (n=19)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yiddish language/our ‘folk culture’</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew/State of Israel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish education</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 – keeping traditions and marrying Jewish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Three parents chose more than one option. These parents all chose Jewish education plus religion. Two included a third option, either Yiddish or Hebrew/State of Israel.

*One student chose two options, Jewish education in addition to Hebrew/State of Israel.
It becomes clear when comparing responses for preserving Jewish heritage in the former Soviet Union versus Australia, that the vast majority of both students and parents chose “being born to a Jewish family” for the former Soviet Union, where Jewish education was fairly impossible to have yet discrimination and anti-Semitism were common. Yet, once in Australia, the majority of both of these groups identified Jewish education to be the most important factor in preserving their Jewish heritage. Concerning the importance of language in preserving Jewish heritage, it was only native speakers of Russian (but not all of them) or Hebrew who identified their mother tongue language as important.

Selection of Schools
As we have already seen, the importance of a good education was a commonly repeated theme expressed by participants in this study. It would, therefore, be expected that their choice of schooling would include factors such as academic rigour. We have now also seen that the majority of participants recognized the importance of Jewish education as a factor in preserving their Jewish heritage. However, given that the institutions in question were orthodox Jewish schools, what was their definition of a Jewish education? And, more importantly, was ‘good education’ or ‘Jewish education’ the key reason for choosing such schools?

The perception of a good general education certainly affected their selection of schools, but was not necessarily placed top of the agenda (See Table 11 below). In survey responses, parents’ reasons for choosing the King Solomon or Queen Esther schools for their children varied, with the most common answers for the 18 parents being ‘financial subsidies were available’ (14) followed closely by ‘recommendation of friends and family’ (11). For students (n = 20) ‘better schooling and high VCE results’ was the item chosen most frequently for why their parents chose to send them to the schools (13), followed equally (12 each) by ‘recommendations from friends’ and ‘availability of financial subsidies’. The choice ‘able to acquire knowledge of Judaism’ came third (9). The least popular response

---

[79] Knowledge of Judaism and religion were two distinct choices on the survey. This followed the distinction made on an earlier survey of Russian Jewish population in Melbourne (Zaitseva) and is based on the experience of Russian Jewry. Religion was virtually unknown in the FSU. “Knowledge of Judaism”
for students (2 each) was ‘sibling attending the schools’, ‘religion’, and ‘respect for parents’. Parents, on the other hand, indicated that for each school, ‘it is of superior quality when compared with other private and public schools’ had the least bearing on their choice.

**Table 11:**

**Why Did You/Your Parent Choose These Schools?**

*(Ranked Order based on number chosen)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parents (n=18)</th>
<th>Students (n=20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial subsidies available</td>
<td>14 (78%)</td>
<td>12 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation of friends and family</td>
<td>11 (61%)</td>
<td>12 “</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better environment</td>
<td>11 “</td>
<td>8 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish identity, solidarity</td>
<td>10 (56%)</td>
<td>8 “</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better schooling and high VCE(^{80}) results</td>
<td>9 (50%)</td>
<td>13 (65%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can acquire a knowledge of Judaism</td>
<td>9 “</td>
<td>9 (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Standard of Jewish education</td>
<td>7 (39%)</td>
<td>5 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>7 “</td>
<td>2 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>6 (33%)</td>
<td>3 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for parents</td>
<td>6 “</td>
<td>2 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings attend the school</td>
<td>6 “</td>
<td>2 “</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior quality in comparison with other private and public schools</td>
<td>3 (17%)</td>
<td>4 (20%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, choices connected to religion and Judaism were chosen more often by parents than by students. In addition, when asked at what point they read the School’s\(^{81}\) mission statements, (which one would think might bear some weight when choosing a school),

---

\(^{80}\) **Victorian Certificate of Education** – Victorian government granted certificate upon completion of mandated coursework and exams set by the government for the final years of secondary school.

\(^{81}\) Parents were asked to comment on each school separately. Most parents had a child in either the boys’ or girls’ school but not both.
eight parents and eleven students indicated that they had never seen or read the School’s mission statement. Four parents and eight students claimed to have read the mission statement after enrolment, and only four parents read this statement before they sent their children.

Yet, when asked to choose the three most important factors in choosing the schools, a slightly different picture emerged, as indicated in Table 12.

**Table 12:**

**What Were the Three Most Important Factors in Choosing the School?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Parents (n=1782)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Students (n=1783)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial subsidies available</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better schooling and high VCE results</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can acquire a knowledge of Judaism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation of friends and family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish identity, solidarity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better environment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Standard of Jewish education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings (or relative) attend the school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for parents</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior quality to other private and public schools</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Twice as many students as parents thought that ‘financial subsidy’ was among the top three reasons for choosing the schools, while twice as many parents as students felt that the high standard of Jewish education deserved to be towards the top of the list. While ‘high VCE

---

82 One parent omitted this page on the survey, perhaps accidentally
83 Some students did not respond to this question or at least not to all parts of it.
standard’ was ranked highly, so was the ‘ability to acquire knowledge of Judaism’. Thus, the findings of Goldlust & Taft (1993) and Markus & Schwartz (1994) that Russian parents prioritized potential academic achievement, leading to university with its corollary of social-economic mobility (represented here by ‘high VCE results’) over any Jewish component, did not hold true for the participants in this study. Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly given the lack of religious education in the FSU, and the lack of religious observance among the participants, ‘religion’ was not considered by any parent or student in the top three criteria for choosing the school. In this aspect, the choices here are similar to the findings of Levkov (1984) and Zaitseva (1997).

The Financial Picture

The high percentage of participants who chose ‘financial subsidies available’ as a reason for choosing the schools in question, validates the perception encountered in the interviews with staff and community members that many Russian families choose the schools in this study for financial reasons. It also supports the view of Steinkalk (1982) that Russian parents do prefer ethnic day school as long as the standard of secular education meets their aspirations and they can meet the financial demands. Staff stated explicitly that they felt Russian parents chose the schools because:

[They can get] free education, [or it is] cheaper (#84, I-Stf, L53).

Another staff member gave further evidence for this view:

I asked a Russian parent, “How do you find [Queen Esther]?” They replied, “It is good, cheap independent private school, for my girl”. That is it- cheap private school (#83, I-Stf, L219-221).... It certainly shouldn’t be our raison d’être to give cheap secular studies to Russian kids. [but this is] absolutely, 100%, the dominant factor why they come here (#83, I-Stf, L222-227).

Yet another staff member felt the schools’ financial policy reflected very positively on the institution:

Well they can have a really good, private school education without paying much. I think that is a big reason. I think the school is very generous in its approach in
letting in students, and I agree with it. I think it is great, that [Queen Esther] does not look at how much the parents can afford to pay as fees and they offer Jewish education for every girl or family who requests it. I think that is very generous and commendable and is something that I really love about this place. So they come here because they can afford it and they can get a good education (#88, I-Stf, L213-219).

Meanwhile, another staff member went as far as saying they felt the school philosophy was being abused by Russian families:

*There is a [certain] perception and an attitude out there because of our school’s philosophy which says that everyone is entitled to a Jewish education. So, if a family is unable to pay we don’t send them away to a state school but rather we try to assist in fee reduction, and often our assistance is abused. They become very clever at hiding the truth [about their real financial situation]* (#99, I-Stf, L16-19).

Other staff in the schools were more balanced in their views. They did acknowledge that it was finances combined with the opportunity for a very good education that attracted this Russian population. For example, one staff member related how:

*[They came] to get a good secular education, one or two may have even told me directly. Most did not come for the Yiddishkeit. They probably also came because of scholarships, [they could get] a good quality education and parents could afford to send them* (#94, I-Stf, L47-49).

Yet the following staff participant still felt that finance was the “number one reason”:

*I think they are in the school because it is known for getting good marks and also they can get in because of the price* (#87, I-Stf, L46-47)... the number one reason is that they can come to a private school and they can get financial assistance. They don’t have to pay so much and they know how to use the system (L141-144).
Coming to the schools, some staff felt, was also for the opportunity to receive a Jewish education, even if the parents were not quite aware of how much, or what type of, Jewish education the schools delivered. They believed:

*For some, it is probably the opportunity to have a Jewish education that they would never have had at home. Without wanting to be too cynical, the fact that if they can do it with little financial strain, then that is a positive. I think most of the parents do really want their children to have some sort of Jewish education; but they are not quite sure how much they are going to obtain here (#86, I-Stf, L56-60).*

*They bring them here because it's private education and they want a Jewish education to a degree. They do prefer [that] but it is certainly for Jewish identity rather than to be religious. Also they come from Russia and they want their children to have opportunities to obtain a high VCE standard and to do it on the cheap. I assume they probably also feel safer in Jewish environment (#99, I-Stf, L38-42).*

This latter quote reflects parents’ and students’ choices quite accurately. Thus, while it is quite evident, from both parents and students that finance was an important factor underlying the choice of school, the perception that it is the only “dominant factor for why they come” was not supported from the evidence. As we have seen, both the survey responses outlined above and data collected from interviews told a different story.

**Parental Sacrifice for Jewish Education**

A number of parents indicated that they had made great financial sacrifices so that their children could have a Jewish education. In fact, one parent seemed quite annoyed about the perception that she sent her child only because the education was ‘free’:

*I can look anyone in the face. I see [my son’s] education in my hands, I work in [the school] and I pay school fees, maybe less than top [rate], but I pay. I did not ask for any subsidy, I don’t care what people say, but I work with my hands (#59, I-P, L329-333).*
This parent continued to describe some of the other sacrifices she made to pay tuition and to live in the Jewish neighborhood close to her child’s school. She stressed, however, that her views were not shared by her peers. She went on to explain why many of them did not send their children to Jewish schools:

*Other people they come here, they start to work, they want [a] house, they want [things] like everyone else...In Russia, they didn’t pay money for education. It is [the] mentality. Here, they want to build house, and if they work and they have to pay for education, they won’t catch up .... For me the education [of my child] was my investment. I did not build [a house]; I want to live in the flat here...It was cheaper in a Housing Commission flat than here, but I have invested everything in my child. Not all people are like that. Intelligent people come here and they don’t have anything. You can’t blame them [for not wanting to make the sacrifices]. They want to catch up and suddenly you have to work and pay $10,000 [in school fees]. Instead you can send [your children] to government schools- and why not? I finished government school [in Russia]. We achieved. And then the school here starts to put the fees up and people hold back. They just start to breathe a little bit and suddenly [there is] this rise. It is a mentality, and you can’t blame them (#59, I-P, L334-342).*

The sacrifices made were not only financial. In trying to lead a more Jewish life, at the insistence of her son who wanted to be part of the social group at school, she sacrificed her own friendships:

*They watched us very strangely. He wore tzitzit<sup>84</sup> and couldn’t eat here or there. I actually lost a lot of Russian friends because of kashrut<sup>85</sup>. I may have one or two. The rest I lost. They all meet on Friday or Saturday but I didn’t go. I mean I don’t miss it, but I lost a lot (#59, I-P, L160-163).*

---

<sup>84</sup> Four cornered garment with specially knotted fringes worn by observant Jewish males to remind them of G-d’s 613 commandments given to the Jewish people.

<sup>85</sup> Jewish Dietary laws
...It makes it complicated for me. I’ve lost touch with the Russian community now. And honestly I am not interested in the songs and concerts. I had this in Russia-the theatre, and musicians- but I am not missing it (#59, I-P, L180-182).

Yet, there was evidence from other parents that they too were making sacrifices specifically to obtain a Jewish education, while also considering themselves an exception to the rule:

A big problem with a lot of Ruskies, or Russian boys and girls, is that there is no support from the family because the families have absolutely no background and they don’t want it. They just say, “Go and finish school and go be a lawyer or some other thing”. I didn't approach it that way. I wanted to be supportive and to help him to get a Jewish education. I missed it myself, and I dedicated my life’s effort and [my wife ’s] life effort to get my children a Jewish education. I was an exception. If you speak to almost 90% of Russians in my generation, they don’t have my attitude. I went way beyond because I love my children and I thought very carefully about how I could give them the best (#72, I-P, L501-509).

Once again, these participants have demonstrated that at least some of the parents who sent their children to these schools were doing so specifically for the Jewish education, a view not described by other researchers.

Original Attraction for Friends and Family

The second reason for choosing these schools was based on recommendations of friends and family. This begs the question: Why did newly arrived Russian immigrants choose an orthodox Jewish day school when their families were not religious at all? Some insight into this was offered by a staff member at the boys’ school. As mentioned previously, the School’s founders were immigrants from the Soviet Union, the School employed Russian speaking staff and worked together with FREE\(^{86}\), thereby catering for many of the new arrivals. This staff member described some of the challenges facing this cohort upon arrival in Australia, and how the school was able to address their needs:

---

\(^{86}\) Friends of Refugees from Eastern Europe – the organization established specifically to support emigrants from the former Soviet Union.
When you say ‘Russian students’ that can mean a lot of things. It wouldn’t mean the same thing today as it meant in the early 1980s. At that time we had a very large influx of Russian students who could be classified almost as refugees. They came with virtually no material possessions. The parents were unemployed and were almost unemployable because they didn’t know the language. Children didn’t know the language, they grew up in a different culture and many of them had just, in a sense, escaped from the Soviet Union and culturally they were bringing with them a lot of baggage. They had been discriminated against; many of them had lost their jobs while they were in Russia once they had applied to emigrate.

The children often had never been in a school because in Russia, at least at that time, people would begin their formal education at about seven years of age, or sometimes eight, then many of these people travelled, either to Rome or to similar places, and they could be there for sometimes up to a couple of years before they would come to Australia. Although there was an attempt to have the children in school, you can understand that people who are more or less in transit, it is very hard for them to settle in to serious education. So, often, students that came here to Australia, to [this school], had never really been in a formal school (#97, I-Stf, L13-31).

After describing these challenges, this staff member described how the school tried to support these students, while respecting their backgrounds:

We actually set up what we called an LDU (Language Development Unit) (#97, I-Stf, L58-59)... The principle driving it was that these students, to succeed in school, needed to still be in touch with their own culture and to look towards becoming bicultural initially, not necessarily making them sever their association with their previous culture. That was seen as very important to them, for their own self-esteem, to know that what they had brought with them was of value, not only to them but also to us (L68-73).

Furthermore, staff felt that it was the success of this culturally sensitive approach that
attracted more students to the school:

Originally, in the 80s, when they came, it was because we provided this program for them, this LDU. It spread very quickly among their community and culturally they felt more at home than in another school because we offered them this opportunity to speak and to learn in their mother tongue. We employed rabbis who understood their culture and the community was more accepting. For all of these reasons, that is why they came originally. And of course we provided a lot of this free of charge. Even now, [with some Russian students in the school] I think that to some extent because their parents attended, and they had a good experience, they are prepared to send their children (#97, I-Stf, L273-282).

The refugees from the ‘80s it seems, though very different from the students who participated in this research, benefited tremendously from coming to the schools, and this reputation, it seems, continued on to their relatives and friends who arrived later and so has now begun to affect their decision to send their own children to the King Solomon or Queen Esther schools.

Better Environment

The third top response for choosing these schools was because of a ‘better environment’. Further insight into this choice came from interviews across a range of participants. One mother, who had attended Queen Esther only for a few months in Year 12, (mainly to pick up English), described why she chose to send her daughter to the school:

First of all, they had to go to a Jewish school. There was no question about that. Secondly I wanted them to go to an all girls school and there are not many options. Thirdly, I did some investigation, (especially with my oldest one before she started kinder) and I wanted her to have continuity, to go to kinder where she would go on to school and so I went to several. I had a look at [different schools] And I just liked the atmosphere and the attitude of [Queen Esther] best so that is where we started and where we have been ever since (#75, I-P, L21-27).

When she was asked how she determined the atmosphere she explained:
Just from talking, and spending a little bit of time coming to the kindergarten and observing the children and the staff and how they reacted to each child.... when you come to [Queen Esther], they forget the parents, they take the child. They started involving her, talking to her. So it was a different attitude which I quite liked (L42-51).

“Better” often seemed to mean “safer” as indicated by the following excerpts from staff interviews at both schools:

...As the girls get older their parents begin to worry about influences from the non-Jewish schools (#89, I-Stf, L83-84).

...They know that [King Solomon] is a nurturing place, a nurturing environment where the children will be safe (#97, I-Stf, L289-290).

This was validated further by a student whose brother attended King Solomon. She was asked why her brother was sent to that school and in her response she touched upon many of the key reasons mentioned above:

I think it had a lot to do with my brother being bullied [at his former school] and also the education level there wasn’t very good. And they heard a lot about [King Solomon and Queen Esther schools] and that the education level was really good, and from family friends and from people who had graduated. So they were like, we are going to move him, to a good Jewish environment with good Jewish people and a good education (#69, I-Std, L41-45).

Yet other staff and students referred to the single sex school characteristic as the cause for being “safer”:

There are some families who are pretty strict and they do not want their girls to be educated together with boys (#88, I-Stf, L232-233).

The boys’ parents really aren’t interested if it is boys, girls or mixed but sometimes with girls, they feel their girls will be safer in an all-girls environment. It certainly
wouldn’t be a prerequisite for them wanting to send the girls here, but it has come up, that they are sort of nurturing their daughters a bit more by doing this (#100, I, L383-387).

I like the fact that it is not co-ed, that boys were not with us. I think it is better for girls, they are not intimidated. You take away one trouble from the equation (#30, I-Std, 49-50).

The emerging picture is that parents sending their children to the Queen Esther and King Solomon schools certainly had financial support in mind but they also wanted the Jewish education, relied on the recommendation of family and friends or felt it was a safer environment. The ensuing questions then arise: What was their definition of ‘Jewish education’? Did they realize the type of education that was being offered at these schools when they enrolled their children? What happened when the true nature of the schools’ Jewish educational offerings was realized? It is these questions that will now be addressed.

Defining Jewish Education

Participants were asked a number of questions related to their view of Jewish education to test the finding of Markus & Schwartz (1984) that the vast majority of Soviet parents did not understand the principles that underpinned the Jewish education at the schools they chose. First, they were asked to define the term ‘Jewish education’. The most common definitions included “knowledge of Jewish traditions/customs” (10) followed very closely by “knowledge of Jewish history” (9). The frequency of the most common specific key words used in their definitions and categorized by parents or students can be seen in Table 13 below.
Table 13: Word Frequency in Defining Jewish Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Word</th>
<th>Students (n=1787)</th>
<th>Parents (n=888)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditions/Customs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torah/Jewish texts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language/Hebrew</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish day school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish holidays</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Others words used by either parents or students in their definitions were Jewish “philosophy”, “practice”, “morals”, “way of life”, “teaching” and learning “what being Jewish means” or “about Judaism”. What is telling about the responses is the use of the word “Torah”, which represents Judaism’s authoritative code of life and practice and the basis for the Jewish religion. This was only mentioned by students who had already experienced education at these schools. Thus, it could be argued that the view of Markus & Schwartz (1984) has been validated. Parents really did not understand the main principles underlying the Jewish education at this school, which was primarily to nurture young people to be committed to the Torah as practicing Jews.

Importance of Jewish Education versus Other Types

Participants were next asked to rate the importance for a Jewish child to receive a Jewish education. All participants indicated that this was either ‘very important’ or ‘important’.

---

87 Twenty students responded to the survey but two did not answer this question and one misunderstood the question.
88 Of the eighteen parents who responded to this survey, eight did not answer this question and two misunderstood its intent.
Interestingly, during the interviews, a number of students wondered about the length and breadth of the required education. They did not necessarily contradict the fact that Jewish education in general was important but they questioned whether it needed to be as intensive an education as that received in the King Solomon or Queen Esther schools. They also wondered whether it was really necessary for Jewish children to be in an all Jewish environment from Prep to Year 12. They further openly pondered whether it was more important for Jewish children to receive a primary or secondary Jewish education and whether mingling with non-Jewish children in a state school might be more beneficial in preparing their children for real life.

In most cases, student participants were reflecting on their own experiences as a guide for what they would do in the future, with students who entered the schools at the secondary level apparently happy that they came in at that level. Reflecting these views, one student discussed sending her future children to co-educational schools before sending them on to Queen Esther:

_ I really think it is important for kids to know what it is like to have coeducation. I know [Queen Esther] is really not into that, but I know for me, when I got to uni, I was fine. Whereas other girls from [the school], who were not even from religious families, but were in [Queen Esther] for their whole lives, they were like, “Oh my G-d! I don’t know what it is like to learn with boys,” and it was crazy for them. So I think it is important for the kids to see that there is another world out there because that is how most of society does things and it is important to have a general knowledge base...But then from year 7, I would send them to [Queen Esther] (#38, I-Std, L816-824).

But then there was a dilemma as:

_ On the other hand, you know that you want them to already be influenced at a young age. You want them to have a Jewish influence already, but then I would definitely not send them to a public school for high school because it is really important in those years to have that influence and Jewish friends. So I don’t know. But I would
definitely at some point want them [future children] to have, not secular but at least a co-ed experience (#38, I-Std, L826-831).

Another student shared similar thoughts concerning the timing of entry to the schools based on her own experience:

*It was good for me to go to a public school ‘cause I learned a lot about other people and not only Jewish people. I had friendships with other people from other backgrounds and other religions and that was good for me ‘cause it is good to have that wide [acquaintance]… it is good to know people outside your little box, your little community. But when you get older and especially when girls start to get mature and start to think about marrying people or going out with boys, then it is good to be in your own community because those are the people you want to marry. I wouldn’t want my child to intermarry. So I think for high school I would send her to [Queen Esther] but primary I think I would send to a public school just so that she wouldn’t be so close minded to everyone else in the world* (#69, I-Std, L595-606).

One student, who spent her whole school life at the school, also felt that perhaps a different primary education would have been better. She explained her reasoning:

*I was really, really good in Jewish studies in primary school but then when I got to year 7 I kind of burnt out. At least that is my theory. And people who came here in year 7, they came in fresh and so they are still going because they didn’t burn out* (#61, I-Std, L134-137).

A parent who had spent a short time as a student at Queen Esther had her own children in the girls’ school, but not all of them seemed appreciative of the Jewish education they were receiving. She shared this view:

*I grew up in non-Jewish schools and you learn to appreciate what you have and to be proud of it because you have to constantly talk to people about it. You are different and you are Jewish and you learn more about it that way, rather than being in a protected environment. So it might not be such a bad thing, I don’t know* (#75, I-P, L355-359).
Main Advantages and Disadvantages of Jewish Education

Participants were asked to indicate what they considered to be the three main advantages and disadvantages of Jewish education. The top three responses for the main advantages, in order of popularity, were: “strengthen Jewish identity” (10), “strengthen Jewish values” (7), and to “encourage Jewish friendships” (6). It is evident that the broader Jewish identity goals were usually chosen over the more specific academic or religious goals. The full range of responses is presented in Table 14.

Table 14:
Ranked Order of Choice Factors for
Top Three Advantages of Jewish Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice Factor</th>
<th>Number of participants who listed this choice as one of top three (n=36^{89}).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen Jewish Identity</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance Jewish knowledge</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage Jewish friendships</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen Jewish values</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain knowledge of Israel and Jewish history</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Jewish atmosphere</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide strong academic education</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage Jewish observance</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure emotional stability</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach Jewish traditions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach Hebrew and Yiddish</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imbue with Jewish culture</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for Bar/Bar Mitzvah</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^{89} Two participants did not respond to this question.
When asked about the main disadvantages of Jewish education, the most common ones cited were, “too expensive” (12) and “too religious” (7). Once more, these results correlate with previous data. The ranked order for the top three choices reflecting the disadvantages of Jewish education appears in the following table (Table 15).

Table 15:
Ranked Order of Choice Factors for Top Three Disadvantages of Jewish Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice Factor</th>
<th>Number of participants who listed this choice as one of top three (n=38).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too expensive</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited subject choices</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too religious</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separates Jews from other Australians</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of sports/extras</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No disadvantages</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much Hebrew/Jewish Studies</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too elitist</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor discipline</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor quality teaching of Hebrew/Jewish studies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t cater for children with special needs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor quality academic education</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expectations of the Schools
As noted previously, of 38 survey participants, 20 never read the Schools’ mission statements and 13 did so only after they, or their children, had been enrolled. Only, four claimed to have read the mission statement before enrolment. This limited understanding of the Schools’ mission, and the more general view of Jewish education outlined above,
would have most likely influenced the expectations these stakeholders had for what the school would offer them or their children. Nevertheless, participants were asked to pick three key expectations regarding both Jewish and general education, and the results are given below in Tables 16 and 17.

### Table 16:

**Expectations Regarding Jewish Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choices</th>
<th>Students (n=19)</th>
<th>Parents (n=18)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be well versed in tradition and culture</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make Jewish friends in a Jewish environment</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To know Jewish history</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be able to pray in the synagogue</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be aware of issues in Israel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be aware and respectful of all different types of Jews</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To read and speak Hebrew</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be able to continue in Jewish religious institutions locally or internationally</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be able to study independently from Jewish texts</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student and parent expectation regarding Jewish education were aligned with their definition of Jewish education. Being well versed in tradition and culture was the highest ranked response for both students and parents. Having Jewish friends and knowing Jewish history were also ranked highly. At the same time, being able to read and speak Hebrew, continue their Jewish education post-secondary school and study Jewish texts independently was hardly expected, if at all. Perhaps students who had already attended the school were more aware of the skills needed to study texts independently and were therefore able to respond more realistically in terms of this expectation.
In relation to expectations of general education, these too seemed aligned with the reasons given for choosing the schools. Both Schools’ reputation for excellent VCE results, which also leads to university entry, weighed heavily in what both students and parents hoped to gain from coming to the Queen Esther and King Solomon Schools.

Table 17:
Expectations Regarding General Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choices</th>
<th>Students (n=19)</th>
<th>Parents (n=16)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To develop excellent communication and networking skills</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guarantee of high VCE scores</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To prepare for university</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To develop a well rounded Australian citizen</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To prepare for a career</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership skills</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent math/science knowledge</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Two parents left this question blank.

Conclusion

The challenges described by participants in this study in settling in to a new Western culture and established Jewish community, echoed the challenges described by others such as Markowitz (2003). Participants also represented and confirmed the varying views and attitudes toward Jewish education and choice of schooling seen in numerous studies of Russian students and adults around the world (Goldlust & Taft, 1993; Levkov (1984); Markus & Schwartz 1984; Steinkalk, 1982). They too chose Jewish education without fully understanding what this meant and in most cases not for religious education, but certainly for many other aspects of Jewish identity.
Given the expectations and view of Jewish and general education that the participants expressed, it would be prudent now to explore how these expectations were, or were not, met at the schools under study. A closer look at the experiences at the schools follows in the next chapter.
Chapter Seven: Meeting Goals and Expectations

With an understanding of participants’ backgrounds, view of Jewish education and expectations of the school, the first two sub-questions, (see p.9 and Appendix B) of the main research question of this thesis have been addressed. This chapter will focus will focus on the next two sub-questions, “What programs were offered?” and “To what extent did the programs offered address the identified needs of these students?” Following the guidelines of McKillip (1987) and Owen (2006), information on how well and in what way the school met the expectations of these stakeholders came from the stakeholders themselves and the discrepancy between the desired and actual outcomes could thus be labelled as their needs. In addition, this chapter will investigate how well the school met their own goals in relation to their mission statements for these particular students.

Meeting Student and Parent Expectations

In an open-ended question on parent and student surveys, participants were asked whether each school met the expectation as indicated for both Jewish and general studies and to explain their responses. For Jewish studies, the overwhelming majority of the 38 survey participants responded that their expectations were met (25) or mostly met (9). Two parents left this question unanswered and two students felt their expectations were only met partially. Students were quite consistent in detailing what they had achieved in relation to their expectations, while parents were more likely to respond simply “yes” expectations had been met. Those participants who felt their expectations were only partially met or not met at all also used this opportunity to state where they felt the schools were lacking. One student from each of the schools felt that there was not enough taught about current events and issues in Israel, while one student from King Solomon indicated that Jewish history was not taught other than what was in the Bible. Two students from the girls’ school felt they were unable to pray in synagogue while one student and one parent, both from the girls’ school, felt that Hebrew language acquisition needed improvement. One student from each of the schools also indicated that they felt the Jewish education needed to be more tailored to suit the students.
In general studies, by contrast, only 18 participants indicated that their expectations were met in full. Nine felt their expectations were partially met, eight (seven parents, and one student who left the school before graduating) did not respond and three felt their expectations were not met at all. Of these, one was a student who indicated that it was her fault, and the other two were parents, one from each school. Grievances concerning general studies included: low standard of some VCE teachers (3), lack of elective subjects (2), lower VCE results than expected (3), too much time on Jewish studies (1) and lack of preparation for the co-ed and broader community environment at university (2).

The marked difference in satisfaction between the Jewish and general education offered at the school may be attributed to the standards participants used as a comparison for success. Both of these schools pride themselves on the level of Jewish and general education offered. However, these participants came with very little Jewish education background and everything they learned would have been a gain. Upon graduating, they were therefore more knowledgeable than their parents and any friends from other Jewish day schools, and most certainly from state schools. In general studies, however, the objective nature of the VCE results and university entry scores would have made it much easier to compare their education to those of their peers at other schools. Parents would also have been able to compare the general education to their own education and standards, a feat impossible to do with Jewish studies.

Given this mostly satisfied view of the education received at the schools under study, details of the school programming that underpinned the students’ experiences will now be presented.

**Details of School Programming**

Curriculum documentation for general education is always guided by government requirements. However, Jewish studies documentation proved more elusive, and specific documentation of programming for Russian students appeared virtually non-existent. Therefore, information concerning the Jewish studies programs offered was obtained from interviews with past and present staff members, as well as from my own insider knowledge.
of what has occurred over the last 20 years. Consequently, it was known that both schools adjusted their programming based on the perceived needs of the students at the time.

**Queen Esther**

The school day begins with prayer in the school hall from 8.30 to 9.00. However, for many years, students from Russian background as well as other students possessing very limited or no Hebrew language skills prayed separately with a designated teacher. At times, depending on the need, this was when the students learned to read the Hebrew alphabet and were then introduced to small sections of the prayers, thereby gradually increasing their fluency and their knowledge of the prayers over the years. As former students commented:

> It was good that we had [the same teacher] for five out of the six years. She understood, and she made it very easy (#63, I-Std, L176-177).

> [We had] Mechina\(^{90}\) davening\(^{91}\) and [our teacher] was really good. I loved her. I know all the other girls were really not nice to her because they didn’t really want to be there, but she taught us how to daven [pray]. It was such a good gift....She basically taught me how to read Hebrew and how to daven most of the things. And she also always put in a little thing like what this prayer is about and what you should be thinking about....That was a really big help and I think that my year was the first year that they did that. I think before that all the Russian girls would just go to the main davening and they would just sit there and talk because they had no idea what was going on (#38, I-Std, L107-121).

After prayer, and during the years when most participants attended the school, students began classes of 45 minutes in duration with eight lessons each day and school ending at 4.05.\(^{92}\) On Mondays, due to a morning form assembly, school ended at 4.40 and on Fridays,  

---

\(^{90}\) Hebrew for preparatory. This was the name used in the school for any separate programs or classes for students with limited Hebrew knowledge since these programs were seen as preparing the students to be able to take a more active role in Jewish studies classes and/or Jewish life.  

\(^{91}\) prayers  

\(^{92}\) In recent years, class duration was reduced to 40 minutes, and the day extended to 4.10 with 9 lessons every day.
due to the impending Sabbath (which commences at sunset), school finished at 3.15. In winter months, school ending time on Friday was pushed back to 2.45. In the girls’ school, Jewish and general studies classes were spread throughout the day. However, the majority of Jewish Studies were taught in the morning due to the almost exclusive part-time female staff for Jewish studies (many of whom had young families).

For a number of years, students with Russian backgrounds had separate Jewish studies classes for several of the more textually-based subjects. These included Bible studies or other Jewish studies classes such as those pertaining to Jewish Laws, where it was felt that the lack of background knowledge would be too disadvantageous to the students in the mainstream classroom. This program was called “Mechina” which translates as a preparatory class because the intent was to prepare these students to be able to integrate with the rest of the school community. This program was not formally documented. Rather, it was up to the teacher to decide what the students needed most in the way of introduction to Judaism.

When the number of Russian students was high, and they were recently arrived immigrants, this Mechina program was taught by a teacher who spoke Russian and who was thereby able to communicate with the students easily. This teacher explained:

*I taught all Jewish studies in Russian: Chumash\(^{93}\), Jewish history and Yahadut\(^{94}\). There was one period when there was a very big influx, so at some stage I had Mechina of only Russian girls, ten to twelve girls, because of the language difficulty. I taught them everything in Russian, I taught them how to read Hebrew. We also had Mechina later with other girls also, not only Russians (#90, I-Stf, L9-13).*

As indicated above, as numbers of newly arrived immigrants dwindled, the program was modified. The teacher no longer had to speak Russian, various teachers were employed,

---

\(^{93}\) Bible

\(^{94}\) Translated as “Judaism”, this class would incorporate Jewish laws and customs pertaining to Jewish holidays and general Jewish life.
and the classes were not limited to students from a Russian background but included any student with limited Hebrew and/or Jewish studies knowledge. The intention was to cater for all of these students’ needs by offering an opportunity to learn more of the basics of Judaism and to explore the Bible in a more discussion-type atmosphere rather than by textual analysis. The teachers who taught these classes were also given no formal direction or curriculum to follow other than to aim for the following goal:

*To give them more of an appreciation and understanding of yiddishkeit*\textsuperscript{95} which was not second nature to them as their lifestyle was different from the school lifestyle (#94, I-Stf, L16-17).

The success of these classes seemed to vary, depending on the teacher, the subject and the particular cohort of students in any particular year. It also depended on how long the students had already been in the school. One student described what her experience was like:

*I did not know anything. But then they put us into streams. I think my year was one of the first years that they did that for Chumash\textsuperscript{96} and Halacha\textsuperscript{97} or Yahadut\textsuperscript{98}, whatever they called it in Year 9. ... I had a lot of arguments with them. I just didn’t get what he was trying to [say]... For me they were talking about all these halachos\textsuperscript{99} and for me it was like, ‘What do you mean? What are you talking about? It was all such a shock* (#38, I-Std, L88-94).

*His class was just called Mechina and he was meant to teach us all those things. But I think at the end people would just sit and ask him questions and he would try to answer them but I don’t think he had a curriculum and if he did I don’t think he stuck to it because all I remember is that the class was about discussions about*

\textsuperscript{95} Yiddish word for Judaism
\textsuperscript{96} Bible
\textsuperscript{97} Jewish Law
\textsuperscript{98} Translated as “Judaism”, this class would incorporate Jewish laws and customs pertaining to Jewish holidays and general Jewish life.
\textsuperscript{99} Jewish laws
whatever. Like one class I remember we talked about dreams and if they mean anything (#38, I-Std, L140-145).

These Mechina classes had no time limit; students could remain in this group for as long as they wished. While this appears to meet the criterion cited by Eisikovits & Beck (1990) that for true integration to take place in a school there should be no limit to the time given for when one can have new immigrant student status (p.194), having classes catering specifically for their level of knowledge indefinitely also had its problems. Because all of these students were together, it provided a breeding ground for bad attitudes and thus reflected the findings of Trickett and Birman (2005). If the students were not interested in Jewish studies, then the peer pressure was very high for no one to show interest. One student, who really wanted to learn when she first arrived, was very unhappy with the situation but could also see the benefits of the situation in the long term:

In year 7 and 8, I wasn’t friends with [the other newly arrived Russian students who] were quite mean to me. There were times when they would say, ‘Why are you trying so hard?’ (#66, I-Std, L396-398).

I remember being very upset and that is kind of what pushed me to be friends with all the other girls, not just the Russian girls, and now I am very thankful for that (#66, I-Std, L407-409).

Yet another student, who started off in this Mechina group, was moved into the mainstream class after a year. She thought it was perhaps because the school recognized that she had more potential. She was also grateful for this as she felt that this impacted on her in a more positive way:

I think [the move to the mainstream] was really good because if I had stayed there [in Mechina] I would have just continued arguing with [the teacher] and I wouldn’t have been exposed to anything more (#38, I-Std, L164-166).

It was because of situations such as these that the girls’ school decided to abolish the Mechina program. The principal felt that having the students in a separate class for so many
of their Jewish studies was not allowing them to be exposed to the mainstream class discussion and inhibited their integration with the rest of the school. This was especially so because students rarely graduated from this class into the mainstream class. Once they were in Mechina, unlike the student above, they tended to remain in the Mechina group through to year 12. The principal felt, therefore, that students were leaving secondary school without gaining necessary skills and that it was because they were relying on the Mechina program and not putting in the effort to achieve at the same level as the mainstream classes. However, he recognized that students were still arriving in the secondary school from state schools with very little Jewish studies knowledge and needed some sort of bridging program before they could engage in a mainstream class. For this reason, in 2001, I was directed to write a program that would meet this bridging need. This program was called ULPAN based on the ULPAN program for Israel’s newly arrived immigrants, who are given intense courses for a short period, in Hebrew language, and often the basics of Israeli culture, history and geography. This is to enable them to integrate into Israeli society as quickly as possible.

This ULPAN program was the only fully documented program available. The aim was to give new students coming to the school an intensive one-year program, delivered in eight lessons a week, covering the basics of Judaism in five main areas: Hebrew language, Jewish history, Jewish laws and customs, Jewish life cycle and Jewish festivals. After one year of this intensive program, students were expected to return to mainstream classes and cope with minimal extra support. They would be no different from the weaker students in a heterogeneous classroom for whom the teacher would need to differentiate the curriculum. In this case, the students were not necessarily weaker students but they had a deficit, albeit a smaller deficit than when they first came to the school, in matters relating to Hebrew language acquisition, comprehension and general Jewish knowledge normally gleaned from years of living an observant lifestyle. Individual Jewish studies teachers accommodated the lack of Hebrew knowledge by translating Hebrew words, allowing students to use Biblical texts with English translations and offering modified assessments with Hebrew terminology translated into English.
The ULPAN program also has a diagnostic tool to be used with new students coming to the school at any level, to ascertain the level of readiness or support needed to enter the mainstream classrooms at their year level. This program is still being delivered in the girls’ school.

While both the *Mechina* and ULPAN program were running, there were still opportunities for Russian students to stay in the mainstream classes for some of their Jewish studies subjects, such as Jewish philosophy and Jewish history. Once Jewish Studies electives took effect at Year 11, other Jewish studies subjects as contemporary issues in Jewish law, *hashkafa* (Jewish paradigm for a multitude of contemporary issues), Holocaust studies and Jewish history were offered, in addition to a number of textually-based Jewish subjects. Furthermore, VCE Texts and Traditions and VCE Religion and Society, both general subjects with Jewish content, were offered. This allowed students with limited Hebrew knowledge to attend the same Jewish classes as their peers and students felt that this encouraged better integration. It was explained that:

*In year 11 and 12 there were streamed classes, so I was put in a class that accommodated my knowledge. And I liked Hashkafa. That was good and [I also liked] Contemporary Halachic Issues, I could understand [and I could] apply it to daily life (#66, I-Std, L144-146).*

As a teacher researcher, I taught a number of these streamed classes. One year it was for Chumash (Bible) and for a number of years it was for Chassidic philosophy. The content of my classes was the same as for the mainstream. I just taught at a slower pace and had to explain much more about the background knowledge and context.

For general studies, students who needed support due to their recent arrival and lack of English, were withdrawn from some classes to receive ESL support. Older student immigrants sometimes attended English language school for a few months before coming to Queen Esther.

---

100 See Appendix A.
It seemed that due to the smaller classes at the senior levels and the more consistent contact with a smaller group of girls, greater integration between the various groups of students developed. Different students confirmed:

*In year 11 when you choose your streams of subjects, whatever VCE subjects you do that is who you are basically friends with* (#38, I-Std, L180-182).

*In VCE no one really took the Jewish studies classes very seriously as there were no exams or anything. While in 9,10,11 as you got close to the time, you could still listen but there were no exams on it. So I guess, that is when I started to feel more comfortable. Because that is when everyone started to come together, I don’t know how to explain it* (#63, I-Std, L133-119).

In the last decade, with recent Russian arrivals diminishing, most students accessing ESL support are students arriving from Israel rather than from Russia.

**King Solomon**

Once again, while general studies could easily be tracked, formal curriculum or program descriptors were not available in the boys’ school to describe how they catered for students who did not have enough Jewish educational background to join the mainstream Jewish studies classes. Information was therefore gleaned from the staff who taught these students.

The boys’ school standard program for Years 7-10 begins at 7.20 in the morning with prayer followed by breakfast and three intensive text-based Jewish studies classes: two in Talmud[^1] and one on the Bible. Three additional compulsory lessons in Jewish law and two in Jewish philosophy are delivered at different times throughout the week in

[^1]: Talmud is a central text of mainstream Judaism and the basis for all codes of Rabbinic law. Made up of two parts: the Mishna, the first written compendium of Jewish oral law (c.200 CE) and the Gemara (c.500 CE) which contains Rabbinical discussions on quoted sections of the Mishna. Talmud is studied for a major part of the day and is central to the curriculum in orthodox boys’ schools (Yeshivot) around the world and was for thousands of years considered the domain of boys alone. In the latter part of the 20th century, a number of Jewish high schools and tertiary institutions have begun to offer Talmud study to girls and woman as well, including the Queen Esther school, although this is still controversial in many Jewish religious circles.
conjunction with the general studies program that begins after 11 am every day and ends at 4.45 pm.

The school also has a parallel program. This alternate program, offered to any student who does not feel ready to join the mainstream program, begins at 8.30 in the morning, with prayer followed by two lessons of less intensive Jewish studies covering the basic of Judaism. These classes, while often still officially text based, are actually more discussion based, although centred on a text. The texts used are also not as difficult as the texts used in the mainstream classes. The additional compulsory five lessons a week in Jewish law and Jewish philosophy are delivered together with the mainstream classes.

Once the boys enter year 11, compulsory Jewish studies are only until 11 am each day. Once again, mainstream classes begin at 7.20 with prayer followed by breakfast and two compulsory text-based classes of Talmud and Halacha, while the parallel program begins at 8.30 as in Years 7-10.

In the past, when the school had a larger number of boys from Russian backgrounds, this alternate program was largely provided for those students. Classes were not limited to a particular year level but comprised students from a number of year levels who had similar needs. The class was taught by a staff member who spoke Russian and who was involved with the Russian community. Students had support with prayer, not unlike at the girls’ school. However, the boys had an extra requirement to lay Tefillin, (Phylacteries)\footnote{102} each day. Often the Russian boys did not own their own pair. As one described:

\textit{Rabbi ... taught us. We would start off saying the brachot\footnote{103} slowly and he would teach us how to read, so the first few weeks he was reading and we would read after him and then we would become a bit more proficient. And then we would go through to Tefillin. There was one pair of Tefillin so we had to share for a while, so we...}

\footnote{102}{Tefillin are a set of small leather boxes with black leather straps extending from the boxes. Specific scriptural verses inscribed on parchment are located inside the respective boxes. It is Biblical requirement (based on Exodus 13:9 and 16 and Deuteronomy 6:8 and 11:18) to be worn on the head and the arm of all Jewish males from the age of 13 for the morning prayers on weekdays.}

\footnote{103}{blessings}
would only say Shema and then the other guy would put it on (#37, I-Std, L67-72).

A student described the mixed feelings he had about this class. On one hand, he felt:

*It was good. He would take us from the environment where there were religious boys who were so beyond the level I was, and did things and was very good at it. He put us in an environment where we were all equal and all new and really bad at reading and he was teaching us how to read. We were on the same level and there was no one far, far ahead of us. There was someone who could read a bit better than us but that was about it. And this teacher would also reward us for doing well. That was good* (#73, I-Std, L74-80).

At the same time, he still felt it was all a bit beyond him at the time and he did not have the appreciation for what they were doing:

*They put me through Rabbi ... ’s class and he would teach us intensively and force us as well. But, back then I didn’t like it. But the more I think about it now, I really appreciate it that I was put through what they put me through because [then] it was beyond my understanding and now I understand why they did it. It made me an appreciator of what the religious people are doing and why they are doing it* (#73, I-Std, L50-55).

More recently, the number of students speaking Russian as their first language has decreased and the school no longer employs a Russian-speaking teacher specifically for them. The alternate program offered now has students from non-religious homes, or students identified to be at risk but not necessarily from Russian-speaking homes. There are significantly fewer students of this category at the school now, for as one staff member from King Solomon explained:

*Currently there are so few, they are not kept as a group.... Now it is more like remedial, like individual or very small groups, not enough to make a class*

---

104 “Hear (o Israel)” – central Jewish prayer recited both morning and evening on a daily basis
themselves. Not just Russian for sure, more at risk or secular background groups (#95, I, L113-117).

What was noticeably different in the curriculum between the two schools was the heavy emphasis on Jewish law at the boys’ school, the prevalence there of Jewish subjects that required Hebrew texts, and the lack of Jewish studies electives in the senior years. While the girls had non-Hebrew text-based Jewish compulsory subjects such as Jewish history, Jewish philosophy and Yahadut105 in years 7-10, the boys did not. At the boys’ school Jewish philosophy was offered as more of a text-based class and therefore did not always cater for the unaffiliated. Thus, one boy complained:

*He would give us a book and it was all in Hebrew and he expected us to fill it out and I was not sure what I was filling out. I could barely read or write Hebrew and so I didn’t enjoy it at all. But if it had been more like a discussion, I think it would have been better. [If the teacher would say,] “You don’t have to write anything down, just listen to what I am saying”, then the kids could interpret in their own way I think, and apply it to themselves in whatever way they felt applies. I think they would find that more interesting and probably listen to it (#73, I-Std, 327-333).*

In addition, at the King Solomon School, Jewish history was taught under the SOSE (Studies of Society and Environment106) banner and was not mandatory. Boys could elect to do more Talmud study instead. Thus, when the boys had Jewish history, many did not recognize it as a Jewish subject in the way the girls did:

*That [Jewish history] was a secular subject for us, it wasn’t in the morning and it was more to do with medieval history and that sort of thing and WWII stuff. And there was a class called SOSE where we learned about the Spanish Inquisition. But I don’t associate that with Jewish studies because it was a secular subject called Jewish history. So we did learn about that, but I don’t put the two together (#37, I-Std, L175-179).*

---

105 Translated as “Judaism”, this class would incorporate Jewish laws and customs pertaining to Jewish holidays and general Jewish life.

106 Otherwise known as ‘social studies’ or ‘social sciences’
In the senior years, electives offered at the girls’ school, such as Jewish life cycle, Prophets, Holocaust studies and contemporary issues in Jewish law were not offered for boys. In addition, while curriculum handbooks stated that VCE Religion and Society and VCE Texts and Traditions were offered, this rarely eventuated. This may have been due to the smaller number of students in the senior years’ cohort which effectively limited the subjects running in any given year.

This difference was noticed by the boys, especially if they had one or more siblings attending the girls’ school. One student expressed it this way:

*I don’t know about the Jewish studies, except that they did different subjects...They had electives but we had nothing of the sort (#37, I-Std, 359-361).*

Another Russian student, who was in the mainstream classes, felt this lack of broader Jewish studies subjects once he left school, saying:

*I have other Jewish friends at uni and some of them will ask me basic questions such as, “Why does G-d want me to pray to him? What’s the point?” or things like that. I don’t think we were ever taught to answer those sort of questions. I guess it was not fundamental, but philosophical stuff that people would ask you... A lot of Jewish studies was that you opened up and learned the Gemara\(^{107}\) and then you learned the Parsha\(^{108}\) in Chumash\(^{109}\) and then the dinim\(^{110}\) but you were never taught that [philosophical questions that people might ask] (#60, I-Std, L206-216).*

With a broader understanding of the programs offered by the school, it is easier to see how the students felt that their expectations of their Jewish education were or were not met. I now turn to the question of whether these programs accomplished what the school intended.

---

\(^{107}\) Used interchangeably for ‘Talmud’. More precisely, it refers to the Rabbinic discussion within the Talmud that took place from c. 200 CE to 500 CE.

\(^{108}\) A section of the Bible, as indicated by specific spacing in a Torah scroll. The term more commonly is used to refer to the sections of the Five Books of Moses, as divided by weekly readings in the synagogue.

\(^{109}\) Five Books of Moses

\(^{110}\) Jewish laws
Student Outcomes Based on Mission Statements

Given this detail of school programming, were both schools successful in achieving the outcomes for Russian students as designated in their mission statements? A review of the respective schools’ mission statement yields specific criteria to which student outcomes can be compared.

**Queen Esther Mission Statement:**

...Jewish community school whose hallmark is individual achievement and academic excellence. We educate young women to take their part in society as responsible citizens with the commitment to Torah values imbued by Chassidic teachings.”

**King Solomon Mission Statement:**

...Community school whose raison d’être is to educate students in the knowledge and spirit of Torah Judaism, preparing them to be adults who are committed, loyal and devoted to their religion and people, and to provide them with a general education that will enable them to become successful professionals, businessmen or academics, who have an in-depth understanding of Judaism and are practising Jews.

Both schools emphasized three key areas in their mission statements: academic excellence in both Jewish and general studies, commitment to Torah and its observance, and the ability to take an active part in the wider community in which they would live.

Along these same lines, when staff members were asked how they would determine school success for this particular cohort, they referred to demonstration of Jewish pride, ex-students marrying other Jews, involvement in the Jewish community, and an allegiance to the School (e.g demonstrated when students send their own children to the School). Staff felt that expecting students to become religious was not realistic, but that if they did, it caused great pride. Russian students’ outcomes will now be examined in relation to these desired traits.
Academic Achievement—General Studies and Responsible Citizens in Society

Students and parents confirmed that their general studies education, certainly in all core subjects, prepared them well for further study. Most students acknowledged achieving high VCE scores with one boy achieving dux of the state. Nearly every student mentioned their university degrees or their successful careers. These included two doctors, a pharmacist, computer scientist, actuary, lawyer, accountant and an aerospace engineer. The goal of encouraging “individual academic excellence” and providing “a general education that will enable them to become successful professionals, businessmen or academics” and “to take part in society as responsible citizens” seems to have been met for the participants of this study.

Academic Achievement—Jewish Studies

The majority of observant students both at the boys’ and girls’ schools choose to defer university places for at least one year in order to study advanced Jewish studies, both locally and overseas. When students from non-observant families choose this option, it reflects recognition of the importance of continuing their Jewish education originally fostered by the schools. It also can demonstrate a high standard of achievement in Jewish studies required by some of the tertiary Jewish studies institutions. The majority of Russian students did not even consider this option. For the few who did, the choice was difficult:

Towards the end, I was considering going to YG111 for a year. A lot of my good close friends were but I was always going to go down the university line. But my mum left the choice up to me [regarding] if I wanted to spend an extra year on Jewish studies. I am not sure if I regret not doing it, but mum left it up to me and it was something I considered (#60, 1-Std, L82-86).

I remember when I finished school, Rabbi... was trying to convince me to take a year off and study overseas and I was, “No way, I am going to uni, I am not ready for this” and he was saying, “We will pay for you to go”, and I refused. And then I took him up on it at the end of second year uni, but it still wasn’t right for me (#38, 111 Yeshivah Gedolah – local post secondary boys’ school.)
I-Std, L328-332). I wanted to learn more text based, like Gemara or Halacha or all the kind of basic things, even Navi\textsuperscript{112}, But there it was mostly Chassidut\textsuperscript{113}, which I love, but I felt I had so much of that here already. And I wanted something different that I couldn’t get here (L339-342).

Finally, after she finished university she found what she was looking for:

Now when I went to Israel, I spend four months at N., which was exactly what I wanted. So I got it in the end but it took a long time (L348-349).

Another aspect of successful achievement in Jewish education is the acquisition of the Hebrew language. Modern Hebrew is based on classical Hebrew which is the language of the Bible, Rabbinic writings and all traditional Jewish liturgies. The ability, or inability, to read and understand Hebrew is a key contributory factor to how comfortable a Jew will be in the synagogue and with Jewish rituals. The ability to speak modern Hebrew, while very useful in conversing with other Jews from Israel and around the world, and helpful to understanding classical Hebrew, is not as important in day-to-day religious practice.

Therefore, students who have spent a number of years at the schools under study would be expected at least to read Hebrew extremely well, as well as to have a fairly good understanding of the language. Participants were asked to indicate, on a six point scale, their level of Hebrew competence in reading, understanding, writing and speaking. The results from student surveys are outlined in Table 18.

\textsuperscript{112} Prophets
\textsuperscript{113} Chassidic philosophy
Table 18:

Student Ability in Hebrew

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of Hebrew</th>
<th>Extremely well</th>
<th>Very well</th>
<th>Fairly well</th>
<th>Adequately well</th>
<th>Only a little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Total n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One participant left this response empty

From this question, it becomes apparent that more than half the student participants felt that their ability to ready Hebrew was fairly good or better. However, the same cannot be said of their ability in other areas of Hebrew language, with the ability to speak Hebrew rating worst of all areas. However, when this result is compared to the student and parent expectation from the school (see Table 16, p.137), the outcomes are better than the expectations. Only five students expected to be able to pray in the synagogue, and only two hoped to be able to read and speak Hebrew.

Seven Facets of Jewish Identity

A closer look at the schools’ mission statements reveals an understanding of many different facets of Jewish identity as identified by Goldlust and Taft (1993), Simai-Aroni (1985) and used by Steinkalk (1982) and Zaitseva (1997). While Queen Esther’s mission statement states that it wishes to educate young woman “with a commitment to Torah values”, King Solomon’s mission included educating students to be “committed, loyal and devoted to their people” in addition to their religion. This statement could be interpreted to include other aspects of demonstration of Jewish identity in addition to “being practising Jews”. Having Jewish friends, getting involved in Jewish communal affairs, being concerned for

---

114 Although 20 students completed surveys, one did so over the phone and did not answer this section. Another student spent thirteen years in Israel and claimed Hebrew to be his 'mother-tongue'. His responses to these questions were therefore excluded as his command of Hebrew was not due to his education at the school.
the survival of Jewish feeling in future generations and the fate of Jews around the world, could also be included as indicators of success in meeting, at least part of the mission statement.

To measure the success of these goals, survey questions were asked based on facets of Jewish identity used in a social survey of the Soviet Jews in Melbourne conducted by Steinkalk (1982), and identified by Goldlust and Taft (1993) as commonly used in social research of Jewish people around the globe. These facets included: religion, communal involvement, social relations, Yiddish, Israel, defence of Jewish identity and positive emotional involvement. Table 19 represents the data from participants’ surveys for all these facets. Each facet will then be discussed at greater length based on further survey data and interviews.

Table 19:
Response to Facets of Jewish Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important are the following to you:</th>
<th>Essential/very important</th>
<th>Fairly important</th>
<th>Not very/not at all important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S (n=19)</td>
<td>P (n=18)</td>
<td>S (n=19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observance of Jewish religion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be active in the affairs of the Jewish community(^{15})</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having Jewish friends</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{15}\) One student left this question unanswered. Percentages for students, on this question, were therefore calculated out of 18.
The results demonstrated in Table 19 seemed to indicate a similarity between parents’ and students’ attitudes towards many of these facets. Although students seem to have a stronger feeling for the land of Israel and the “survival of Jewish feeling in future generations”, and a more positive view on involvement in community affairs, in other areas parent and student attitudes were nearly identical.

To further check for aspects of Jewish identity and consistency with the questions above, participants were asked to respond on a six point scale based on their reaction to a number of statements regarding Jews and various aspects of Jewish identity. The results for these questions are below in Table 20.
Table 20:
Further Questions Related to Jewish Feeling and Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Give your reaction to the following statements:</th>
<th>Strongly agree/agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree/Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S(n=19)   P(n=18)</td>
<td>S(n=19)   P(n=18)</td>
<td>S(n=19)   P(n=18)</td>
<td>S(n=19)   P(n=18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%         %</td>
<td>%         %</td>
<td>%         %</td>
<td>%         %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion plays a role in centrality of Jewishness</td>
<td>12/12</td>
<td>6/2</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>0/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63%/67%</td>
<td>32%/11%</td>
<td>5%/11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important to defend my Jewishness as a continuation of my Jewish identity.</td>
<td>17/16</td>
<td>2/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>89%/89%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fact that I am Jewish plays a very important role in my life.</td>
<td>16/14</td>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>0/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84%/78%</td>
<td>16%/6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is very important to preserve Yiddish language and Yiddish culture</td>
<td>8/9</td>
<td>8/3</td>
<td>2/0</td>
<td>0/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42%/50%</td>
<td>42%/17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews are neither better nor worse than other peoples.</td>
<td>16/13</td>
<td>3/2</td>
<td>0/3</td>
<td>0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84%/72%</td>
<td>16%/11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S= Student                     P= Parent

Once again, parent and student responses were quite similar and upheld the previous responses given. Even for those where religion was not central to their Jewishness, their Jewish identity and the importance of defending it was highly valued. It is interesting to note that on these opinion questions, no student ever responded “I don’t know”, while some parents did so in nearly every question. Parents were more likely to believe that Jews were not equal to other people, with one parent adding “We are better” to the response. This could very well be due to their experience in the former Soviet Union, where they were always denigrated and often tried to prove the point, if only amongst themselves, that they
were actually better by achieving excellence in their field of choice and being cultured (as discussed earlier in this paper).

The similarity between parent and student responses on so many facets of Jewish identity might indicate that parents have more influence on the students than the school values have, as Markus (2011) claimed. It may also be that student education and discussion at home affected parents’ attitudes, but neither of these assumptions can be ascertained from the data. The school effect in these areas is thus inconclusive.

**Self-Identification**

A further set of questions was asked related to self-identification. Participants were asked how they would identify themselves in general, and if they would correct someone who mistook them for a non-Jew. The responses to these questions are outlined below in Tables 21 and 22.

**Table 21:**

If Someone In Australia Asks For Your Background, What Would You Answer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students (n=19)</th>
<th>Parents (n=18)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am Jewish</td>
<td>2 11%</td>
<td>7 39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am Russian</td>
<td>5 26%</td>
<td>1 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am an Australian</td>
<td>1 5%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a Russian Jew</td>
<td>10 53%</td>
<td>10 56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am an Australian Jew</td>
<td>1 5%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 22:
If Someone In Australia Mistakes You For A Non-Jew, Would You Correct The Mistake?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>I am not sure, but I think yes</th>
<th>For sure not/no</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=19 %</td>
<td>N=18 %</td>
<td>N=19 %</td>
<td>N=18 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Jew</td>
<td>15 79%</td>
<td>13 72%</td>
<td>3  16%</td>
<td>3  17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Semite</td>
<td>11 58%</td>
<td>10 56%</td>
<td>2  11%</td>
<td>3  17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S=Student        P=Parent

In Table 21, it is quite interesting to see that more students than parents would have identified themselves as Russian. Once again, based on information seen earlier in this paper, parents would more likely view “Russian” as referring to the non-Jewish people encountered in the former Soviet Union whereas students might be reflecting their experience on Australian shores, where they were identified by others as “Russian”. Still, the most popular response for both parents and students was the self-identification as a “Russian Jew”. At the same time, if mistaken for a non-Jew, the majority of participants would correct the person and identify themselves as a Jew regardless of whether they felt the person was an anti-Semite. This confirms the strong self-identification as a Jew, regardless of Jewish practice.

In addition to the questions above which revealed an overview of attitudes of Jewish identity and self-identification, additional questions focussed on specific facets. The remainder of this chapter will now explore participants’ views on each of these facets in more detail, and other indicators that could be considered a result of a successful education at the schools.
Committed to Torah and Religion, One Facet of Jewish Identity

In addition to the general question concerning the perceived importance of religious observance mentioned in Table 19 (p.157), and the centrality of religion to feelings of Jewishness outlined in Table 20 (p.159), another small section of the survey dealt specifically with actual observance of more well-known Jewish traditions. Participants were asked to respond to these questions on a four points scale. Student and parent responses to these questions are in Tables 23 and 24.

Table 23:
Which Of The Following Practices Do You Observe?

Student Responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strictly</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Loosely</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Total n=20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yom Kippur116</td>
<td>16 (80%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesach117</td>
<td>6 (30%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanukah</td>
<td>4 (20%)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2 (10%)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukkot118</td>
<td>4 (20%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6 (30%)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shabbat119</td>
<td>3 (15%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10 (50%)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashrut120</td>
<td>3 (15%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10 (50%)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 24
Which Of The Following Practices Do You Observe?

Parent Responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strictly</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Loosely</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Total n=18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yom Kippur</td>
<td>9 (50%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesach</td>
<td>7 (39%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanukah</td>
<td>6 (33%)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukkot</td>
<td>5 (28%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5 (28%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shabbat</td>
<td>5 (28%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 (22%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashrut121</td>
<td>4 (22%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7 (39%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

116 Day of Atonement and the holiest day on the Jewish calendar
117 Passover
118 Festival of the Huts
119 Sabbath
120 Kosher dietary laws
121 Kosher dietary laws
What is most interesting, and perhaps not so surprising in these responses, is that the more public and well known festivals among traditional Jews, requiring once a year commitment, were more strictly observed by more participants than the more regular observances such as the Sabbath and the kosher dietary laws. A number of parents who participated in the survey were strictly observant across all the festivals, while those who were not strictly observant were more likely to be fairly non-observant. The significant number of parents who did not choose a response to certain observances may indicate that they were not even familiar with the names or terms. Therefore, when combining the response ‘not at all’ with the column of ‘no response given’, a greater percentage of parents did not observe Sukkot or Kashrut, with an equal number of parents and students not observing the Sabbath.

Another question in this section of the survey asked about attendance at the synagogue. This question is more of an indicator of religious observance for men than for women in Jewish tradition, as men are required to pray in a quorum of ten men daily. A woman’s obligation in prayer is more individual and while women are encouraged to attend synagogue when they can, it is not obligatory as it is for the men. Most orthodox Jewish women would attend synagogue on High Holidays and Festivals. Female attendance on the Sabbath is more likely to be made up of single girls and women, post child-bearing women, or women whose children are old enough to attend the synagogue as well. Table 25, therefore, differentiates the participant responses to synagogue attendance by parents and students as well as by gender.
Table 25:
How Often Do You Attend Synagogue?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students Male n=5</th>
<th>Parents Male n=5</th>
<th>Students Female n=15</th>
<th>Parents Female n=13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About once a week</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About once a month</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a month</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Holidays only</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special occasions only</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Bar Mitzvah, weddings etc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Holidays and special occasions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From survey responses, it seems that the commitment to Torah observance as an expected outcome of the education provided at the school was not common for the majority of students. However, the survey was also limited in the list of observances. In interviews, participants were able to explain more about why they were, or were not yet, committed to a variety of other Jewish traditions.

Students’ Views on Religious Observance

For some students, their Jewish identity was synonymous with their religious observance. One young man, in medical school, described his identity in this way:

*I am a religious Jew. When I go to the hospital, like now I am in a country hospital, I wear my yarmulke, I wear tzitzit\(^{122}\), I keep Shabbos and I keep kosher. Obviously

\(^{122}\) This literally means the specially knotted spiritual fringes worn on a specially made four cornered garment as commanded in the Bible (Numbers 15:38 and Deuteronomy 22:12). While also attached to the prayer shawl, the term ‘tzitzit as used in common language refers to the fringes worn on a four cornered garment of cotton or wool. It is usually worn, under the normal shirt, by orthodox males from the age of three as a reminder to keep the 613 Biblical commandments.
with other things I am not as perfect. I put on Tefillin each morning and daven\textsuperscript{123} on Shabbos but will often forget to daven mincha and maariv\textsuperscript{124}. I sometime sleep in on Shabbos and miss shul\textsuperscript{125}. Still I am very strongly Jewish and observant, orthodox (#60, I-Std, L131-135). ... I am a very proud Jew (L455).

Another student described what she had gained from her education at Queen Esther, both in terms of knowledge and her level of commitment toward a number of religious practices:

\textit{I think once I get married I do want to keep Shabbos.\textsuperscript{126} Just going to [my friends'] houses for Shabbos and bnos\textsuperscript{127} occasionally, I really liked the atmosphere, and it was so nice and we would just sit around and talk, and I want to do that because I like how inviting and warm that was. And going to shul\textsuperscript{128} and stuff because when I came to [Queen Esther] I never did that, so I will be going to shul. (#66, I-Std, L196-201)...I think when I have my own home, I would want to keep kosher to some extent (L373-374)...[it is] the knowledge, that when I leave school that I am going to go to shul and I know when Chanukah\textsuperscript{129} and Rosh Hashanah\textsuperscript{130} are, I do know what it is about. It is not just a name for me [anymore], I now know the background to it. I had no idea about anything and now I feel like I really do know what everything is [about] (L427-430).

Others spoke about how they influenced their parents to observe more of the Jewish traditions:

\textit{We got a mezuzah and I taught them to kiss it. And at one stage I was into Shabbat candles and I did it with my mum, but then it was summer and it started getting later and later and we stopped. Now, I will start again probably. And the school

\textsuperscript{123} pray\textsuperscript{124} Mincha and Maariv are the afternoon and evening prayers\textsuperscript{125} synagogue\textsuperscript{126} Sabbath\textsuperscript{127} Girls’ youth group that would meet every Saturday afternoon\textsuperscript{128} synagogue\textsuperscript{129} Festival of Lights – Hannukah in English.\textsuperscript{130} Jewish New Year
gave us a haggadah\textsuperscript{131}, so at Pesach\textsuperscript{132} we will probably flip through it. My mum got all excited. She said, “Oh! Now we will know what to say” (#63, I-Std, L217-221).

Students from Queen Esther also described what they would want to occur in their future homes:

\textit{For me, there would be much more than what I grew up with. I would definitely want Friday night meals and [I would] do seders\textsuperscript{133} and do little things like that. I would want that typical Jewish home but I don’t think I would be overly religious. But definitely [it would be] much more than what I have grown up with} (#69, I-Std, L244-247).

Another student described her understanding of other aspects of the culture such as how to dress:

\textit{I now understand about being religious. Not just how girls wear skirts up to the knee and cover the elbows, but you understand what they are doing. And it is not just men in black hats and with beards, I actually understand about it} (#66, I-Std, L184-186).

Still others, when asked to describe the highlights of their school years referred to other knowledge gained about Judaism which ultimately led them to becoming observant. Interestingly, while the many teachers felt that the experiences of school camps and class weekends away had the biggest impact, this student told otherwise:

\textit{I think [the best thing was] getting closer to Judaism. I think it made such a big difference. Sometimes I think back on it and if I hadn’t have gone to [Queen Esther], (though you never know, I could have come across Judaism in a different way) I think I would have been a totally different person. It had such a big impact on my life in that way. I never went on any of the school camps or any of the shabbatons}\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{131} Jewish text that sets forth the order, rituals, prayers and songs of the Passover ‘Seder’ – the traditional meal held on the eve of Passover.
\textsuperscript{132} Passover
\textsuperscript{133} Elaborate traditional Passover meal held on Passover eve.
\textsuperscript{134} Weekend ‘getaway’, organized by the Schools for one year level at a time and focused on observing the Sabbath according to Jewish law, usually held at a campsite from Friday afternoon to late Saturday night.
because I always felt, “I don’t know. It will be too much for me.” But even just being around people, you really got to see the beauty of leading a more religious life and the conscious feeling of getting closer to Hashem\textsuperscript{135}, and all these mitzvot\textsuperscript{136}. All these things were totally new to me and I am really, really grateful that I had the opportunity to get exposed to that. It really made a total difference to my life (#38, I-Std, L267-276).

At the same time, there were students from both schools who recognized that they knew much more, although they were not really ready yet to commit to practising what they had learned (#61, I-Std, L108). One young man was quite frank about his non-observance while at the same time acknowledging the efforts made by the school:

\begin{quote}
I am confused about the whole being religious and not being religious. But I strongly believe that I don’t want to be religious, as in observant. (#73, I-Std, L9-11)... I believe that you should know about being Jewish and be proud of it. You shouldn’t ignore it and should not be scared to tell someone that you are Jewish. But I don’t necessarily believe that I have to pray every morning and just follow all these customs or things that we do. (L13-17)... the way [the school] put it to me, it was good, I really appreciated the effort they went to, it was actually really good. But I just didn’t feel that I needed to continue with it after I left. I left [the school] and that’s it, I didn’t want to touch it again. And that is pretty much what I did. I didn’t touch it, I can read Hebrew and that is it (L40-44).
\end{quote}

However, this same young man, a little later, also acknowledged that he might be missing something with his present views. When asked if he would attend a learning class if his former classmates invited him, he responded:

\begin{quote}
I would be reluctant again, but recently I have been thinking about this quite a lot and I think I would, because I feel like I have lost a lot, ‘cause I have been away from it for so long. I have been thinking about it a lot, I probably would go (#73, I-
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{135} Literally – ‘the name’, used to refer to G-d whose names Jews do not pronounce other than in prayer. The Tetragrammon, G-d’s four letter name is never pronounced, not even in prayer.

\textsuperscript{136} Commandments
Staff Anecdotal Evidence For Student Observance

While the survey asked about specific Jewish practices, there are a number of other practices which are in fact crucial for Jewish family life and continuity and revolve around Jewish life cycle laws and rituals. These include, in addition to marrying Jewish, having a Jewish marriage ceremony (chuppah), performing a circumcision on newborn males, receiving a Jewish divorce if needed in addition to a civil divorce, and proper Jewish burial.

Although staff were not asked about these rituals specifically, when they were asked what they would consider success indicators for this particular cohort, these were the types of practices to which they referred in the context of these students’ backgrounds:

*They have come from a culture that has not only not offered them no religious values, but it negated them, it was worse than nothing. In Australia, the Jews know that there is G-d and we believe that there is a G-d and we are all Jewish. But there, G-d is nonsense.* (#91, I-Stf, L429-434)… *If you get this Russian family to have a chuppah, that is a huge achievement; it is absolutely a huge achievement. If you get them to have a bris, that is fantastic. There was a student in [King Solomon] who kept nothing, absolutely nothing, and his teacher [the Russian Rabbi] lost contact with him. Then he had a car accident and he came to shul, not to bentsch gome*\(^{137}\), *but to do something because he survived. And he told the Rabbi, ever since he left school he says modeh ani*\(^{138}\) *in the morning. That is something. And he said, he was at some family function and they served pork and he refused to eat it. He said he will do anything but that far he was not going. So that is an achievement.* (L416-425).

---

\(^{137}\) Recite a particular prayer (Hagomel) blessing G-d for his benevolence, recited when one is saved from a dangerous situation or recovered from a life-threatening illness. This prayer is also recited after travelling overseas which was traditionally a dangerous undertaking.

\(^{138}\) Two line prayer said immediately upon awakening in the morning to thank G-d for allowing the soul to return to the body.
Some became really religious, fully observant.... and there were some who did not become fully observant but they now send their girls to [Queen Esther] and they married Jewish and I have been invited to many chuppahs\textsuperscript{139}, and pidyon haben\textsuperscript{140}'s and circumcisions. They wanted to get married with a full traditional wedding and they retained their connections to the community (#90, I-Stf, L26-31). ... Some became quite close to Judaism, others not, but they still maintain the connection and they keep in touch with their school friends (L53-54).

Another staff member who was also involved in the Russian synagogue reported similarly, that while ex-students did not necessarily attend synagogue regularly, they would come at key times of the year and for life cycle events:

\begin{quote}
We don't have a huge shul-going community. So a few times a year they come. And then it is huge, like overflowing. Like Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.... They come when they need something, so our graduates will come for a Chuppah, a bris bzmamo [circumcision at the right time-eight days], which is wonderful, fantastic, maybe we have achieved something (#91, I-Stf, L397-404).
\end{quote}

Staff and community members also indicated that while some may not have become religious they certainly maintained a connection, had Jewish ideas in their heads and demonstrated certain skills, even if that connection or skill did not surface until many years later. As one interviewee related:

\begin{quote}
I have had very different feedback from those who came from the school, basically from all the Yiddishkeit [Judaism] and all the values and all the things they did, they became frum [religious] or didn't but had a lot of Jewish things because of the school. And then I had some people who didn’t have much connection but when they came and started to learn, like a person who finished 15 years ago and we took a mayan chai\textsuperscript{141} and he started to read. And I said, “Wait, you have not read for 15 years!” , but he still was able to read (#81, I-C, L418-425).
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{139} Jewish marriage ceremony
\textsuperscript{140} Special ceremony held at 30 days of age for a firstborn male.
\textsuperscript{141} A publication on the weekly Torah portion, based on the talk of Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson o.b.m. The aim of these books, which are written in simplified Hebrew, was for Israeli children to have access to
Thus, it becomes apparent that students definitely gained a knowledge of Judaism and some did become fully practising Jews. For them, the schools’ had accomplished their mission statements in this area. Others took on some Jewish practices while yet others were still considering the matter but not necessarily discarding it completely.

Defence of Jewish Identity – Survey Data
Due to the major threat to Jewish identity in future generations from assimilation and intermarriage, participants were asked four questions to gauge their views on these matters. All parent and student participants were either married to a Jew or single.

Those who were married (18 parents, 2 students), were asked if it would concern them if their child or other near relation married a non-Jew. Both of the students and 14 of the parents replied “I would not like it under any circumstance”. One parent felt it was fine if that person converted to Judaism while three parents had nothing against this. Among the 17 students who were unmarried, five indicated they would be concerned if a close relative, including siblings, married a non-Jew, four felt it would be fine if the person converted to Judaism and eight had nothing against it. Finally, participants were asked their opinion of a Jew who converted to another religion. Although by Jewish law this is not possible, the perception among many non-observant Jews is that it can happen, and thus this question further gauges the extent of their feelings toward the ‘defence of Jewish identity’. Twelve students and eight parents were opposed to this conversion notion, two students and two parents were opposed but felt they may understand the person, five students and six parents felt it was the person’s private affair, and two parents indicated they would be supportive.

This particular aspect of defence of Jewish identity is quite concerning, as eight of the 17 unmarried students, including three of the four boys interviewed, were not opposed to intermarriage amongst their close relatives or siblings even after receiving their Jewish education at these schools. When analysing this response in comparison to previous responses concerning other facets of Jewish identity, a revealing picture emerges. Six of

the main ideas of these often profound talks. They are often used by adults as well because of their simplified form and ease of use.
these students still agreed that religion played a central role in Judaism, and five also indicated that religion was very important to them. Yet, paradoxically, none of these students was strictly observant of Shabbat, the laws of Kosher, or any Jewish festivals other than Yom Kippur, with two only loosely observing this holiest day on the Jewish calendar. Of particular note, seven of these students listed Jewish feeling as the most important aspect of their Jewish identity among other identity factors, such as Jewish friends, the fate of Jews, and Israel. This tallies with Schneerson’s (1957, 1973a) assertion that Jewish identity factors other than observance of the Jewish religion, as dictated by the Torah, will not be able to prevent assimilation. Kafka (1966) also argued that Jewish feeling without observance cannot be passed on to the next generation. This supports the contention that those students who emphasised the importance of Jewish feelings, yet were not opposed to intermarriage would be at risk of losing the capacity to pass on their Jewish identities.

Since intermarriage is one of the greatest threats to Jewish continuity, given the centrality of Jewish continuity in their respective Mission Statements through Torah observance, it would seem imperative that the schools do much more to include this phenomenon in a relevant part of their curriculum, although from interview data, at least Queen Esther School does seem to be addressing the issue, as evident in the following section.

**Defence of Jewish Identity – Interview Data**

A number of students acknowledged that although they would not consider themselves religious or observant, they were certainly more aware of their Jewish identity and the importance of preserving this identity because of the education they had received at the schools. One student made such points and even identified the particular subjects that she felt had brought this feeling home for her:

*It definitely made me aware of my Jewish identity... And to have a Jewish wedding and to get married to someone Jewish, oh, that was actually a very big part of my experience at [Queen Esther]. They taught me to get married to someone Jewish. We actually had a guest speaker who was very good... he talked about why you should get married to someone Jewish. (#63, I-Std, L492, 497-501)... It wasn’t from*
It was not just the talks that she felt influenced her but also the subjects she took. She explained the extent of her commitment to this facet and why:

*In history we did the Holocaust but there was also an elective [on the Holocaust] I took and it was all in one semester, so it was so much. History was very good and it really highlighted how important it was to keep your Jewish identity strong and to continue your Jewish legacy and that was something that 100%, even though I am going to uni, it is going to stay really important. Because I know for many people they think, “Yeah, I am going to get married to someone Jewish”, but then they meet someone not Jewish and things happen and it is very difficult*  (#63, I-Std, L518-525).

This student felt that the talks and the subjects that addressed the importance of marrying a Jewish person were presented in a positive way that wasn’t overly serious and did not emphasize the punishing aspects of intermarriage which she felt might have pushed her further away from Judaism.

Another student felt that her education at the school made her aware of how important it is to ensure that her own children have the opportunity as well. She explained:

*I think, that fact that we did go to [Queen Esther] made a huge impact on the fact that we want to raise our children as Jewish children, we want to present them with an opportunity to go to a Jewish school and make it their choice, but make it an educated choice. Because someone asked me, “What did you get out of [Queen Esther]?”, I said, “I got the opportunity and the freedom to make an educated choice about the way I live my life”*  (#56, I-Std, L567-573).

While not all students may have felt this way, some staff felt that even though some students did marry out, there were other factors at play in their lives and perhaps many more of them would have done so if not for the education they received. One staff member
expressed this view:

The sad part is that I have seen the number of graduates who have married out. I don't feel we could be blamed for that in any formal way. I think those students and probably maybe far more have married out. But had they not been in the school, like [Queen Esther and King Solomon], many more of them would have married out (#100, I-Stf, L341-345).

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the girls spoke about the impact of the school on their Jewish identity, and the importance of marrying within the fold, based on their studies and subjects (such as Holocaust studies) not offered in the boys’ school. Since Jewish lineage is maternal, a boy’s intermarriage presents a significantly greater threat to Jewish continuity than a girl’s, though both would be highly discouraged. Yet there seemed to be no emphasis on this in the boys’ school, despite its major ramifications.

Cultural Connection – Positive Emotional Involvement Facet of Jewish Identity

Another outcome of the education received at these schools was a stronger cultural connection with Judaism. This could be interpreted as a successful indicator of the mission statement “to educate students in the spirit of Judaism”. Students talked of the aspects of rituals and practices that they enjoyed and continue to practise because they now felt comfortable with these practices. Once again, it was not for particularly religious reasons:

I picked up more on the behaviour rather than the things like kashrut\textsuperscript{142} and customs, I picked up on the yiddishkeit\textsuperscript{143} in terms of behaviour and in terms of morals and values, and I am still like that. For example, I still refuse, if someone is older than me, even if they do invite me to call them by first name, or something more casual, I still refuse to do it. I can’t. (#57, I-Std, L211-215) ...And just caring about the people around me. Like in school we had our typical custom which was that if someone wasn’t at school you automatically called them and found out what was wrong (L217-220).

\textsuperscript{142} Jewish dietary laws
\textsuperscript{143} Judaism
I guess, as a result of going to [Queen Esther], you know and are more aware of such things. You are more inclined to be traditional. I love the fact that it is an opportunity for the family to get together at every chag. I think that is a fantastic idea. But, again, I am taking away more the cultural element of it rather than the halacha. At the same time, I want my child to receive a Jewish education. I want my child to be part of this community, because now that I have that opportunity, I think it is fantastic (#56, I-Std, L357-364).

Another student recalled an argument she had with her husband about how they would dress their daughter and the type of message it would send out to people on the street. She concluded:

Obviously, you are a product of your surroundings and of your environment. [Queen Esther] probably did put a lot of things in my head that probably would not have been there, and I would not have been as acutely aware of things because I would not think that they were as important if I wasn’t at the school (#56, I-Std, 941-944).

Jewish Friends – Social Relations Aspect of Jewish Identity

One of the reasons for choosing Jewish schools was to have Jewish friends, reflecting the social relations aspect of Jewish identity. This certainly was realised for many of the students and was considered to be one of the important contributions they felt the school made to their lives. Some typical comments included:

I think I am more of an outgoing person because the girls were so nice and so friendly and always willing to do things for you, I am going to take away lot of friendships (#66, I-Std, L190-192).

[If I hadn’t gone to the School] first of all, I still wouldn’t know anything about Jewish life, and I probably wouldn’t have any Jewish friends [as it] depends on the school you go to (#69, I-Std, L482-483).

144 Jewish holiday
145 Jewish law
We are all still in touch as we were a very close knit class. We still know where everyone is and we try our best to be there, whether it is something not so good, or something good. We try to be there for each other and, at least, if we can’t come and see them in person, we send them messages (#57, I-Std, L231-234).

[I was] very part of the class. I was very close with a lot of people, even those who were more religious. I was always welcomed with open arms to most girls’ houses and birthday parties. It was very pleasant. I never had a problem with anybody (#28, I-Std, L146-149).

One parent wanted his son to be more connected to religious observances. He felt that although his son had religious friends while in school, many did not keep up with his son after school ended. He bemoaned:

The boys were friendly. That is not an issue but they didn’t follow it up after school finished. So the only boys that were left here are non-religious ones and that is what [my son] is surrounded with and that is not fair (#72, I-P, L925-928).

At the same time, his son looked backed positively at the friendly atmosphere in the boys’ school. While acknowledging that his friends after finishing school were mostly the Russian boys, he still claimed contact with the religious schoolmates:

It was a very close knit community which was really good...Everyone knew everyone and if you didn’t you would learn who they are, and it was good (#73, I-Std, L652-655)... We are still happy to see the religious boys. (L663)...sometimes I bump into them at uni...Every now and then [one of them] organizes something and we go and visit him. It is good (L667-669).

This contact with religious friends did not necessarily mean that the Russian students became observant themselves. However, because these friends would invite them to their homes for Sabbath and festivals it allowed them to be more open minded to the idea, and in some cases, it did encourage them to become more observant themselves. A student
spoke of her school friendships and how they led her away from the Russian cliques at school which also eventually led her and her mother to becoming more religious:

_There were always other religious girls who were friendly and they straight away would invite me for Yom Tov[^146] meals all the time. That was really nice. That was already from the first year, [I was in the school]... So I was already becoming friends with them_ (#38, I-Std, L176-180).

She also spoke of the connection her brother (also a participant in this study) had with his religious friends, although he was not yet demonstrating his own initiative to be religious:

_So sometimes he will go to mesiba Shabbos[^147] with friends for Shabbos and now he started going to shul[^148] for mincha[^149] on Shabbos and he will go to all the weddings and he likes those kinds of things, but then he doesn’t really translate that to doing it himself. So I don’t know, maybe he will, maybe he won’t_ (L756-760).

**Identification with the Land of Israel Facet of Jewish Identity**

As seen earlier in Table 1[^9], the land of Israel was rated “essential” or “very important” to 89% of student participants, with a further 5% deeming it as “fairly important”. Parents felt similarly with 78% and a further 17% indicating the importance of Israel in their lives. Once again, it is inconclusive as to whether the schools can take credit for this feeling. During interviews, it became apparent that many Russian families already had connections to Israel before any involvement in the schools, although the schools may have fostered additional positive feelings.

Seven students mentioned, during their interviews, that they had gone on or were planning to go on a Birthright[^150] trip Israel and one parent (whose child was not part of this study)

[^146]: Jewish festivals
[^147]: Saturday afternoon youth movement activity
[^148]: synagogue
[^149]: Daily afternoon prayer
[^150]: Birthright also known as Taglit-Birthright Israel is a not for profit organization that provides the gift of first time educational trips to Israel for Jewish young adults aged 18 to 26 in order to strengthen participants’ personal Jewish identity and connection to the Jewish people. (http://www.birthrightisrael.com/site/PageServer) July 7, 2012
also mentioned that his son had travelled to Israel on Birthright. These trips took place either immediately after graduating secondary school or in the first few years at university.

Students had various motives for travelling, in addition to the fact that it was funded. Some explicitly spoke of their connection to Israel as a part of their Jewish identity:

\[I\ feel\ Jewish,\ and\ I\ can\ also\ identify\ with\ Israel,\ I\ guess\ it’s\ a\ combination.\ I\ don’t\ necessarily want\ to\ bring\ G\-d\ into\ it,\ because\ G\-d\ is\ essential,\ but\ it’s\ not\ centrally\ how\ I\ feel.\ I\ feel\ Jewish,\ I\ share\ common\ beliefs\ with\ these\ Jews.\ I\ don’t\ necessarily\ intend\ to\ do\ aliyah^{151},\ but\ I\ do\ want\ to\ be\ in\ Israel\ a\ fair\ bit\ in\ my\ life.\ I\ loved\ it\ there\ \#28,\ I-Std,\ L670-674).\]

Other students had family members who had emigrated from the FSU to Israel when their own families had come to Australia. These students often mentioned that in addition to the Birthright ten or twenty day program, they extended their stays in Israel to visit their relatives as well as visiting their own homeland:

\[I\ have\ grandparents\ there\ [in\ Israel]….\ I\ also\ have\ an\ auntie\ and\ two\ cousins\ in\ Israel.\ I\ would\ have\ gone\ anyway\ to\ see\ them,\ so\ this\ is\ just\ lucky\ \#67,\ I-Std,\ L671-673).\ …\ [My\ desire\ for\ going\ to\ Israel]\ was\ a\ mixture\ of\ both.\ I\ would\ have\ gone\ because\ of\ the\ family\ that\ I\ haven’t\ seen\ in\ a\ decade\ or\ more,\ which\ is\ a\ very\ long\ time,\ they\ really\ want\ to\ see\ me.\ But\ it\ would\ also\ be\ nice\ to\ go\ there\ to\ see\ everything\ that\ I\ learned,\ to\ see\ where\ I\ came\ from\ (L677-680).\]

Birthright was the best program. I did the 10 day program, and then I travelled around Israel \#28, I-Std, L686-687).

Others stayed on to study at religious institutions for a short time while they were already in Israel:

\[My\ son]\ only\ managed\ to\ be\ in\ Israel\ [before\ the]\ start\ of\ uni\ or\ between\ first\ and\ second\ year\ uni,\ when\ there\ was\ a\ break.\ There\ was\ a\ birthright\ program\ and\ then\]

---

^{151} Literally ‘ascent’, the term used when a Jewish person immigrates to Israel, as its spiritual significance and superiority in Biblical terms over other lands implies an ‘ascent’ in one’s life when moving there.
he stayed another six weeks in some yeshiva in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) (#76, I-P, L519-522).

[It was the] end of the second year uni for me. It was with AUJS152. So it wasn’t religious at all. We did three weeks there, which was good.... Then after that I spent a bit of time with my family and then I went to [religious post-secondary school for young Jewish women who are learning about Judaism] for three weeks (#38, I-Std, L321-325).

One student went back to Israel for a second time for a few months to continue her Jewish studies and then met and got engaged to a boy from Israel. At the time of her interview, she was planning to get married in Israel and then return to Australia to finish her university studies before moving permanently to Israel.

Communal Involvement Facet of Jewish Identity

While 11% of students and 22% of parents rated community involvement as “essential/very important” and a further 72% of students and 44% of parents rated it “fairly important” there was no place on the survey to indicate what community involvement meant. For some this may have meant being involved in the local synagogue or being friends with members of their local Jewish community. There was certainly indication from a number of participants that students were indeed still involved with their friends from school, were often invited to Jewish homes for Sabbath and holidays and attended community events at their local synagogue. However, students also admitted that their parents were not involved and preferred to stay with their Russian friends.

For others, community involvement could have meant being involved in the wider Jewish community and its organizations such as JCCV (Jewish Community Council Victoria)153

---

152 Australasian Union of Jewish Students – active on university campuses
153 The Jewish Community Council of Victoria is the roof body of Victorian Jewry, Australia’s largest Jewish community. With almost sixty major communal organisations as its affiliates, the JCCV represents the mosaic of religious, political, cultural, welfare, educational, religious and social associations operating in Victoria. <http://www.jccv.org.au/index.php?page=overview> July, 10, 2012
and any of its fifty-six affiliate organizations, or being actively in local branches of organizations supporting Israel, such as UIA (United Israel Appeal) and JNF (Jewish National Fund). There was very little evidence of this type of wider community involvement among the participants in this study.

One participant, who works within the Russian community, did mention involvement with the UIA. But he also queried the meaning of involvement and integration into the local Jewish community. He wondered:

> What is integration? That they should participate in all local Jewish organizations? Depends if they like it or don’t like it. There is a strong group of Russians who make appeals for UIA yearly so they are very active. They make calls and ask people for donations and all, so is this integration or not? A lot of people, who are most actively involved in that, don’t speak English, so are they integrated or not? Their children marry into the local Jewish community, becoming part of the community, whatever that means. Some do marry local Jews, but the question is do they become part of the local Jewish community? (#81, I, L257-265).

Indeed, according the Gen08 survey report on Jewish Continuity (Markus, 2011 p.56) only 37% of respondents from all segments of the Jewish community viewed community involvement as important, with the degree of orthodoxy playing a role in more positive responses\(^\text{154}\). It should therefore not be surprising that from the small number who participated in this study, there was also no evidence of this type of community involvement.

**Sending Their Own Children to the Schools**

A logical indicator of any successful school is when the graduating students feel that they would like to send their own children there. In fact, two staff members remarked explicitly upon this when asked what the ideal situation for this cohort would be:

\(^{154}\) On this identity scale, for communal involvement, scores within the top third level (strongest level of involvement) ranged from 62% for Ultra-Orthodox Jews, 53% for Modern Orthodox, 39% for Traditional, 35% for Conservative/Progressive and 15% for Secular Jews.
I would say when their kids come back, G-d willing they would see the beauty in the school and they would bring their kids back and then they would fit in easily (#87, I-Std, L250-251).

I actually brought two old collegians through [the schools] last week, that had both been to the school. They were both Russian and both become observant, and that was an amazing thing for me to see. So whilst the numbers mightn’t be high, this was what we are trying to achieve. You can see the fruit of your work so to speak when they bring in another generation into the school (#100, I-Std, L328-332).

Nearly all participants who were interviewed confirmed that they would most likely send their own children to the schools being studied. They remarked:

*I have talked about whether I would send my kids there, and I think I would. It is a good school* (#60, I-Std, L422-423).

*I think out of all the Jewish schools [around here] I would send them to [Queen Esther], because I just feel that all the other ones, from what I have heard, are not what I want them to be exposed to* (#38, I-Std, L814-816).

*I might [consider sending them here]. I like the fact that it is not co-ed, that boys were not with us. I think it is better for girls. They are not intimidated. You take away one trouble from the equation. I guess though it would depend who I marry* (#30, I-Std, L49-51).

*I probably would [send my own children back], yes...with the experience I had, and the kind of people that go there, and the variety, like there is Russian culture going through there, the religious and European, because there are Jews from Western Europe and Polish, or whatever. It was a good mix* (#73, I-Std, L614-618).

However, while they enjoyed their experience, to the point of thinking about sending their children to the school in the future, the decision, for some, was dependent on things staying
the same as it was in their day. Consequently, this group were unsure whether to send them or not:

*I am not sure, I had a really good experience. The thing is, if it stays the same I would, but if it changes I don’t know, I would have to see* (#66, I-Std, L172-173).

*I want to send my children to the school because I want them to have a Jewish environment in the crèche. And of course I want [the same] principal to be there, but I don’t know if we will be that lucky. But I don’t want it to change as much* (#56, I-Std, L991-993).

**Conclusion**

This chapter has begun to explore the needs of Russian students and parents at the school by documenting participants’ views regarding the realization of their goals and expectations of the Jewish and general education delivered. Students and parents were generally satisfied with the education received at the school, with greater satisfaction in Jewish studies than general studies resulting from perhaps lesser expectations and reduced comparability to other schools and community achievements. Dissatisfaction in areas of Jewish studies reflected the fact that while both Schools had programming aimed at supporting students with minimal Jewish educational background, these programs, aside from the ULPAN program in the girls’ School, were not well structured or documented. When students were assigned to these parallel programs, there did not seem to be a clear pathway to integrate back into the mainstream classes. In addition, the lack of non-textual Jewish subjects in the boys’ School, severely limited the Jewish education received as compared to the girls’ School. For many participants, their needs thus related to a more structured and tailored Jewish studies program, even better VCE choices and electives and better preparation for life beyond school.

However, when comparing this cohort, with Steinkalk’s (1982) cohort of Soviet adolescents and their parents in Melbourne, on the seven facets of Jewish identification, both the students and parents in this study identified more strongly with observance of the Jewish religion and being active in the Jewish community. Students in this study also rated
“having Jewish friends”, “the survival of Jewish feeling in future generations” and “the fate of Jews throughout the world” as more important. Without knowing who the adolescents were in Steinkalk’s study or the schools they attended, and considering that the students in this study attended religious schools, this result seems to support Goodman’s finding (1984) that orthodox Jewish schools do affect religious attitude and world views and that having been educated in orthodox secondary schools has indeed positively affected these particular students. At the same time, it could also support the view of Steinkalk (1982) and Cohen & Kelner (2007) that parents who believed in the efficacy of Jewish schools to impart these values, were the ones who enrolled their children into the Jewish schools. Or, as Goldlust and Taft (1992) argue, it is parents with a greater interest in Jewish identification who choose Jewish days schools over state schools. Thus, it could also be parental attitude that had an impact on these results.

Interestingly, students and parents in this study were closely matched to Steinkalk’s cohort regarding their feelings of the importance of Israel in their lives. This is in line with the overview of Goldlust and Taft (1993) from numerous research studies that indicate that Russian immigrants around the world generally do have a close affinity with Israel regardless of their Jewish education. In Melbourne, this may also reflect the strong affiliation with Israel and Israeli causes in many of the Jewish day schools and in the Jewish youth groups, the very vocal and active organizations working on behalf of Israel, as well as the indication that many of the Melbourne Russian community have relatives living in Israel.

Students in this study were similar to Steinkalks’s Soviet adolescents on the view of Yiddish language and culture. The fact that their parents thought it more important was once again in line with Goldlust and Taft (1993) who found that, around the world, the importance of Yiddish was very much generational, with the younger generation deeming it decreasingly important to their Jewish identity. As neither school in this study offered Yiddish language as a subject, or emphasized Yiddish culture (that is often anti-religious), it should be of no surprise that these students did not feel any differently to this aspect of their Jewish identification than other Soviet adolescents.
When comparing the views of parents in this study to those in Steinkalk’s, they were very similar on the importance of “having Jewish friends” and the “survival of Jewish feeling in future generations”. Interestingly, the parents of this study viewed “Yiddish language and culture” and “fate of Jews throughout the world” as less important than those in Steinkalk’s study.

In summary, this cohort was not significantly different to the cohort studied by Steinkalk despite the education received in these orthodox schools. For very few, the success of their Jewish education as measured by the Schools’ mission statements was obvious and for them it can be argued that their needs, from a school point of view, were met. For others, a comparison to the Schools’ mission statement would indicate that the school did not meet their needs in this regard. What affected this variation? This became clearer during the interviews, as staff, students and parents talked about the experiences at the schools in question. This will be the subject of the next chapter.
Chapter Eight: Variation in Student Outcomes

When reviewing student outcomes as compared to expectations and the schools’ mission statements, it becomes obvious that there are broad differences across a full spectrum of expression of Jewish identity for this particular cohort of students. Why were students from similar backgrounds affected differently by the Jewish education they received? This chapter will explore some factors, as identified in the literature review by researchers such as Glass (1994), Heilman (1992), Markus (2011), Reimer (1992), Sacks (1994), Resnik et al. (2001) and Trickett and Birman (2005) among others, that may have had an impact on the extent to which the Jewish education at the school affected students’ lives.

Experience of Cultural Dissonance in School

The common denominator for all students, regardless of the year in which they entered the school, was the initial culture shock when they first began attending the schools. Many of the students described their first days at school as confusing or challenging. There were so many things, taken for granted by an orthodox student, that were incomprehensible to them. One student described her first day with her friend who had also just come to the school:

*We didn’t know anyone. We were sitting in the year 7 davening\(^{155}\) room and everyone was davening and we were sitting there looking around the room, “What is happening?”, it was so weird for us. We both didn’t know about long skirts and tops and everything and in fact she [her friend] came to the orientation day in little shorts and a little singlet and everyone was looking at her. It was just weird, very weird\(^{(#63, I-Std, L54-59)}\).*

As they attended classes, the confusion just grew:

*Firstly it was a big shock to me because I did not know anything. I remember I went to Navi\(^{156}\) class and she said, “Open to this perek\(^{157}\) and this posuk\(^{158}\)” and I didn’t*

---

\(^{155}\) prayer  
\(^{156}\) Prophets  
\(^{157}\) chapter  
\(^{158}\) verse
This student, who had arrived in Year 9, was even confused while attending the Mechina class,

For me they were talking about all these halachos\(^{159}\) and for me it was like, ‘What do you mean? What are you talking about? It was all such a shock (#38, I-Std, L92-94).

Even once they began learning, some didn’t feel they belonged since their families did not follow the observances they were being taught in school. As one student explained:

School was really challenging for us. I had never heard of Jewish things, never heard of the New Year or Yom Kippur. The majority of us felt we didn’t belong because parents didn’t do anything but the school imposed it. Because we weren’t brought up that way. I still gave respect, but I was never going to be a proper observant person, though it was a good education (#30, I-Std, L41-45).

I felt very different because I didn’t know any of the brochot [blessings] and I didn’t know anything that they knew (#61, I-Std, L58-59).

A student who had been in the school for a number of years, still felt alienated. She felt she believed but didn’t practice:

It just feels different when you are in a massive room of people who you know all believe in it and practise it. Like, I believe in it but I don’t practise it. And you are standing there and everyone is davening and you look around and you think, “I am so different. Why am I doing this?” And they make you say the words, and I don’t want to say the words. So I stand there, I don’t say anything. I am respectful, I don’t talk and I sit there, and if I am told to say the words, I never say them, because it is kind of condescending, because you can’t push someone to say words that they don’t want to say (#61, I-Std, L316-324).

\(^{159}\) Jewish laws
Russian students who had attended different, less observant Jewish day schools also found the curriculum quite challenging though they had some background knowledge:

*I guess I was a little lost at first because we didn’t have the same Jewish curriculum and it was a more stringent Jewish curriculum. There was a lot of it that I just couldn’t grasp at that stage. I was taught a lot by my grandmother but I never had that education per se. So it was hard at first, a shock, because I had no clue what they were talking about* (#28, I-Std, L132-136).

*Before I had gone to [another Jewish day school] and we had Yiddish classes and a bit of Hebrew classes and maybe even a bit of Jewish history but nothing about religion, so it was like a different world completely* (#63, I-Std, L132-134).

As time progressed, some students were able to integrate more easily into the school community while others felt on the outside for most of their school life. The factors that may have impacted on these varying outcomes are now discussed.

Factors Affecting Cultural Dissonance

There seemed to be some key factors that affected the extent of cultural dissonance felt by students. These included the a) age of arrival at the schools b) the degree to which the home reflected the views of the wider Russian community c) the degree to which the home supported the schools’ values and d) the degree to which parents could offer academic support in Jewish studies.

Timing of Arrival

Students who came to Queen Esther in primary school did not necessarily integrate better than those who came in Year 7. In fact, at least four students specifically noted this. One came in prep and felt that by the time she was in secondary school, she was burnt out and wanted no part of religion. The others felt excluded in primary school and so once they were older was not drawn to the religious girls any longer. On the other hand, girls who came in Year 7 or later, felt that they really wanted to learn, that girls were accepting and they mixed with their non-Russian peers more easily. The following student elaborated on this:
I don't know if it was because I came at the time in my life when I was ready for it, you know in Year 9, when you are starting to question things more. I know other girls who were there their whole lives. They obviously saw different aspects from me, or maybe they got sick of it by the time they got there. It was different for them. But for me it was all positive, I wouldn't say that I have anything bad to say about it. I thought it was really, really, good (#38, I-Std, L775-780).

I really do think, from talking to other girls, that coming in high school is very different from being there your whole life. I feel like a lot of girls are into it in primary school but then they got sick of it, or maybe had some not-so-good experiences (L844-847).

They had all those experiences in primary school so by the time they got to high school, they were, “Ok if they are not going to accept me, if I am not good enough then I am not going necessarily to accept things”. I think, for me, I was learning too much to get to the stage of, “Ok, I want to contribute too.” I was just taking (L860-863).

Yet this student felt that the older one was on arrival, the greater the disadvantage. She had this to say about the difference between her experience and her attitude toward religious studies in comparison with her sister. She had arrived in Grade 3 when her sister was already in Year 9:

She didn’t take it [to Judaism and Jewish learning] so much, I think because she was older; she was more used to [life] the other way (#57, I-Std, L167-168).

However, her sister proffered another view:

At [Queen Esther], obviously, I had some adjustments to make because it was just very different from what I was used to. It took me about a year, and it had nothing to do with the fact that I wanted to go out with boys or things like that because I wasn’t like that at all. Some girls in my year were, but I wasn’t. I was more interested in finishing my studies, and making the most of my time at the school. I
absolutely loved Jewish history and Yahadut\textsuperscript{160} and everything. They were my favourite subjects. I just thought it was a great place to be. And all the time, especially in Year 11 and 12, I kept saying, “if I have a child, I would love to send her to [Queen Esther], and hopefully ...[named]... will still be the principal”. That is what I kept saying the whole time. Yes, I had a very, very pleasant experience, I have very fond memories of the environment; it was such a family surrounding. I think I am not the only person saying this, I think quite a few girls would feel this way (\#56, I-Std, L129-140).

Meanwhile, in the King Solomon School, earlier arrival did make considerable difference to the level of participation in the mainstream education offered by the school. The earlier the boy arrived, the more skills were gained, the more easily he was able to join the mainstream classes, which were nearly all text based. The following participant attested to this fact:

\begin{quote}
I think because I had been in it from the beginning, I never really had an accent, I don’t think, I was pretty much just one of the boys. [In terms of Jewish studies], I was always in the mainstream class or in the higher class even for some. I had been in [King Solomon] for most of my life and we became religious quite early (\#60, I-Std, L33-39).
\end{quote}

\textbf{Home and Community Versus School}

Although the schools were delivering what was believed to be an appropriate curriculum to teach Jewish laws, values and observances to these students, the success of this delivery was affected by the attitudes, both at home and in the wider Russian community. This phenomenon was previously described by Glass (1994), Reimer (1992), and Sacks (1994) and participants shared the same:

\begin{quote}
I remember going home, (my mum told me this), and I said a brocho\textsuperscript{161} on something and my mum got scared because she doesn’t want me to [become

\textsuperscript{160} Translated as “Judaism”, this class would incorporate Jewish laws and customs pertaining to Jewish holidays and general Jewish life.

\textsuperscript{161} Blessing (in this context, before eating food)
religious] and she explained to me that we don’t do it at home. She didn’t actually give me the choice; she just said, “We don’t do it at home” so I never did it after that. I only did it that one time (#61, I-Std, L60-64).

Everyone sees it in such a negative way in the Russian community, (like in the non-religious Russian community). Everyone kind of shuns it and they start laughing if you even bring it up, like it is a big joke. So I guess, it would be a bit embarrassing ...like they all laughed at my mum saying [about me], “She is going to turn all religious” (#61, I-Std, L70-74).

Even when this female student felt that perhaps she would like to join in, she was afraid of the stigma it might place upon her amongst her non-religious peers and in the Russian community:

Like when I was sitting in davening162, I felt silly. I know everyone was davening there, but everyone knows that I am not religious and the people who are not religious they don’t daven either and they kind of look at you if you start davening. I don’t know, I can’t explain it...I think I would feel a bit embarrassed because a lot of them judge....that I was becoming more religious... I know it sounds bad, but the negative connotation that is like linked to that, for them [held me back] (#61, I-Std, L373-397).

As mentioned earlier, one participant, who eventually overcame the negative feelings towards religion, explained why this was so difficult to do and why her friends and relatives in the Russian community were so anti-religious. She believed such negative connotations to religion were a result of their upbringing in the FSU:

You know that it took me ten years to understand what spiritual [means], what is god. I was embarrassed to say G-d out loud. It took me ten years here in Australia not to be ashamed to be a believer, to be religious. It was so implanted in us [in the FSU], we were born with that, that it was shame to be Jewish, it is double shame to be religious (#74, I-P, L617-621).

162 Prayer/praying
She continued:

You can’t even imagine how difficult [it is] for Russians, how embarrassing to be religious. Because G-d doesn’t exist in Russia. In Russia, even in Russian religion, Christians or something, you are also considered an idiot. They are so materialistic, all the culture, all the ideas, that if you can’t touch it, doesn’t exist (L668-673).

However, another student, felt supported at home but recognized that she was different from her peers. She felt the school was supportive but that many of the students did not take advantage of the opportunities the school was providing:

I think the school has to give you both opportunities to learn things in a different way and be there to kind of understand that you might not know everything. But at the same time, the girls also have to show a positive attitude towards this. I know that a lot of them, or most of them in my class (who were like me, i.e. from a Russian background), definitely didn’t. And they had already all been at [Queen Esther] way longer than me. But they were very against [religion], because that is what it was like in their family. They thought that all religious people were crazy (#38, I-Std, L414-442).

Staff recognized this barrier as well. When asked if they saw any change in the students over the years, one staff member replied:

Observance of our religion obviously requires a lot of support from the home. You can talk about kosher food but many parents wouldn’t be prepared to buy kosher food because it costs a lot more. So, in actual observance I can’t say that it made a very big difference immediately. It was more subtle. It was more psychological initially. Culturally, the religion to them was always degraded and we had to get over that barrier. [However,] they slowly became comfortable with religious practices and customs (#97, I-Stf, L147-153).

When discussing the more recent second generation Russian students at the school, this staff member felt that for some, they were fully integrated and you would not know that
they came from a Russian background. But for others, there was still an apparent indifference to religion:

> For some of them, there still is this attitude, I suppose, in terms of priority. Religion is not very highly rated if you were to prioritize it. I think that they are interested in Jewish culture but religion as such is still a problem. I think that this is a carry-over from the Communist times and parents, in some situations, are not prepared to embrace religion when it comes at a financial cost (#97, I-Stf, L204-208).

This dichotomy between school and home was recognized in the community and indeed kept many parents from enrolling their children in the schools. One parent related the reaction of her friends when she inquired why they would not send their daughters to Queen Esther:

> A lot of them said, “We would like our children to go to [Queen Esther], but we can’t become kosher, we are not going to keep kosher. They will tell her in [Queen Esther] one thing, we will tell her at home another thing and we don’t want her to be confused or to go away from us” (#74, I-P, L658-661).

She justified their argument:

> You know everyone wants their children to be like them [the parents] (#74, I-P, L661-662).

Another parent explained that for Russian parents is was natural to keep the home and school separate and to disregard and tell their children to disregard any part of the school education in which they did not believe. He explained the historical background to this attitude:

> I know my Uncle, his rule at home was, “Whatever you learn at school is for school and what you learn at home is for home.” It is the Russian way. There in school you learn to be a communist and at home you learn real life from your family, and when you went outside to the street to play with your friends you learn real life from kids... So it was like three different lives and you conform there and there and there. So they continued to do the same here, they say, “This is for school, this is for us”.

- 191 -
Whatever the kids do outside the family at school, it is a different sort of life and they keep it separate (#76, I-P, L391-401).

In line with this attitude, parents were willing to tolerate the religious environment so that their children could gain a good general education. As one staff member commented:

Whilst they don’t mind their children to be in a religious environment, they don’t see the need for their children to have to spend such a great part of their day davening [prayer], learning about Jewish studies, heritage. They would like us to concentrate probably on a fully secular curriculum (#100, I-Stf, L19-22).

The Extent to Which Home Supports School

At the same time, however, there were families, where parents did support their children in their growth because the parents themselves were also on a journey of discovery. In these cases, the students did take on more of the practices that were learned, because the parents were happy to implement these practices at home as well. Once again, this reflects the conclusions of previous research of Glass (1994), Markus (2011), Reimer (1992) and Sacks (1994). A student from King Solomon felt that this was clearly what made the difference to being a part of the crowd or whether one was considered Russian throughout school. He explained:

There was one other kid, whose parents became religious as he went through and he was always, or rather, never considered Russian and there was another kid who came in to Grade 1, pretty much the same, from the beginning, but his mum never let him go to anything. She was anti-religious the whole time. I don’t know why she would send him to [King Solomon] in the first place. She was scared he would become religious. She wouldn’t let him come to any of the Bar mitzvahs. And so that was definitely family attitude, ... that he was considered more Russian even though he had been there pretty much as long as I had. (#60, I-Std, L275-283) If she would have encouraged him to do all these things, then he would have enjoyed it more and would have been happier at school. He would have been more like one of the boys, rather than this fact that he never came [to anything]. And [this caused]
the other boys’ attitude toward him: “Is there any point in inviting him to anything? He never comes” (L309-313).

The Extent to Which Parents Could Offer Jewish Studies Homework Support
Another factor, not mentioned explicitly by participants in interviews, but apparent in survey data, was the inability of most parents to give their children academic support in areas of Jewish studies and Hebrew. Taking subjects that were completely foreign to their parents, and for which the parents would offer no support, could have been particularly difficult for this cohort.

Parents were asked how well they could speak, read, write and understand both English and Hebrew. The parents’ ability in these languages serves as an indicator of how well they could support their children in their academic studies. The results are set out below in Tables 26 and 27.

Table 26:
Parents’ Ability in English Language: How well can you…:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability in English</th>
<th>Extremely well/Very well</th>
<th>Fairly well/Adequately</th>
<th>Only a little/not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speak English</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read English</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand English</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 193 -
Table 27:
Parents’ Ability in Hebrew Language: How well can you…:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability in Hebrew</th>
<th>Extremely well/Very well</th>
<th>Fairly well/Adequately</th>
<th>Only a little/not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = 17*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak Hebrew</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Hebrew</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write Hebrew</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand Hebrew</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One parent left these questions blank

It was no surprise to discover that when parents were asked how confident they were to help their child with Jewish studies homework, only two parents claimed to be ‘confident’ in doing so, while five were ‘not confident’ and nine parents were ‘not at all confident’. The vast majority of students in this study (18) claimed that their parents could not help them at all. In addition, eleven of these students claimed there was no one else they could approach for help in completing Jewish studies homework.

In contrast, three parents were ‘very confident’ in their ability to support their child with general studies homework while seven others were ‘confident’. In supporting general studies there were still three parents who felt ‘not confident’ and two more who were ‘not at all confident’ even in this realm. Once again, this logically aligns with the parents’ self-nominated ability in English language. Students also indicated that their parents were more skilled in helping them with general studies. Seven students received considerable parental help, nine more claimed only a little help, while two students still indicated they could not receive any help from their parents, even in general studies.
Effects of Cultural Dissonance

Cultural dissonance, i.e. the gap between the school culture and the home culture, and the discomfort this caused, expressed itself in various ways in both schools reflecting quite accurately the findings of Heilman (1992). It led to:

Disruption in Class

One expected outcome of cultural dissonance and lack of interest was disruption in the classroom. This became a key issue for many teachers and students alike. As one teacher explained:

They don’t want to embrace the Jewish studies. I am now teaching Chumash, and in the Chumash class I have this Russian boy, who just says “My family is not religious, and I am not keeping it anyway and I am not interested in learning”... He disrupts the class (#98, I-Stf, L89-95).

A Russian student who did want to learn Jewish studies was also frustrated saying:

I know one of my friends, in Jewish studies she sat at the back and she was constantly talking and I actually got annoyed myself, and said, “Can you not [do that!]- because we want to learn and we can’t because of you, because you are not being quiet” and she would quieten down. But in the secular classes, she was a different student. She sat in the front row, books open, furiously writing notes and she was on the ball (#69, I-Std, L829-835).

Disengagement –“Flooding Out”

At times, students did not necessarily cause trouble in class, but they certainly did not engage in the lessons. One disengaged students reported how:

I tried to concentrate and listen but it was very difficult because I couldn’t apply myself to it because I felt it was a world away from me (#66, I-Std, L133-134).

Some other students took the attitude of their parents as illustrated by this observation from a Queen Esther girl:

---

163 Five Books of Moses
164 Term coined by Heilman (1992), see Literature Review, Chapter Two.
I don’t think I really listened in Jewish studies in Year 8... We just didn’t view it as important, that’s all. We had our different priorities, and we thought that maths was more important. It’s true, and everyone noticed it (#67, I-Std, 268-274).

The same attitude prevailed at King Solomon:

*I never bothered too much with Hebrew studies. I regretted it later because I wanted to go in to the Israeli army but I couldn’t because I didn’t know any Hebrew (#78, I-Std, L18-20).

*I didn’t feel that I got a good Jewish education, not that the school wasn’t providing it, but mainly because I personally was not interested. They tried their best and they did a really good job of it but I just wasn’t interested. I am being really honest (#73, I-Std, L270-273).

**Lack of Achievement**

Disengagement and lack of interest resulted, logically, in lack of achievement in Jewish studies classes, and this could not be attributed to the students’ general abilities. As one staff member remarked:

*Well there is an obvious discrepancy in their reports. In general they did OK in the secular studies. But, when it came to Jewish studies, the Es and Fs started appearing. You did, however, get every year, one or two girls who would shine and really warm to the Yiddishkeit that they got in the school (#87, I-Stf, L125-128).

Another staff member felt that the lack of Judaic achievement was due to the fact that it was all just over their heads and that their parents had no understanding of what the students were learning. Consequently:

*Another Jewish day school would probably have been a better setting for them. Don’t get me wrong, as far as education was concerned, they couldn’t have got better. We loved them, we nurtured them, we gave them everything they could possibly want, especially the integrated children. We gave them so much koach*
[power, strength] to go on with their lives but on the other hand all the other stuff that went on within the school was totally out of their league (#92, I-Stf, L194-199).

Avoidance

Another way students resolved their feelings of cultural dissonance was to avoid any non-compulsory Jewish activities whenever possible. School camps, which were officially part of the school program and mandatory for students to attend, were particularly overwhelming and proved to be an obvious casualty in terms of participation from this cohort. At school camps, (which in the girls’ school always involved a weekend away), students were put into a religious environment for a number of days. For example, it requires students to keep the Sabbath strictly according to Jewish law and to dress modestly. From the school’s point of view, this is an essential part of the school camp experience. A key goal of the camps is to enable non-religious students to experience a Sabbath as observed by orthodox Jews. Although some did participate and enjoyed the experience, many could not bring themselves to attend commenting:

I didn’t even go to one school camp. First of all, I didn’t really have the wardrobe, I would have had to go shopping and buy all these different skirts and everything and I just didn’t feel like I wanted to go.. I regret it though; at least I should have gone to one (#63, I-Std, L149-158).

I never went on any of the school camps or any of the Shabbatons* because I was always, like, “I don’t know, it will be too much for me” (#38, I-Std, L271-272).

Meanwhile others, who did go to the camps, really enjoyed the experience:

I always liked the camps. One thing I always remember was how we used to sing so much, I still do that now, when I am with friends, and I start singing the songs and they all look at me in a funny way. I loved that atmosphere. The atmosphere here is like nowhere else. It is so warm and so unique (#66, I-Std, L264-267).

---

*I Weekend away, usually shorter in duration than school camp, and held for one year level at a time.*
Semi-permeable Enclaves - Another Expression of Cultural Dissonance

In a new environment, it is quite natural for people to be drawn to others in similar situations. Thus, as discussed by Resnik et al. (2001) it would be quite natural to find the Russian students sticking together in “semi-permeable enclaves”. For this cohort under study, while they attended many classes with all their classmates, many still hung out together at recess or other times. This was probably comforting for students when coming to a strange place. As this student remarked:

I was friends with the Russian girls from the start because they knew that I was Russian, so as soon as I came, they straight away took me. It was, “OK, we hang out here, and you will come and spend time with us and don’t hang out with the religious girls because they are all really crazy and blah, blah, blah”. The religious girls were nice but they didn’t go out of their way to welcome me like the Russian girls who took me in straight away (#38, I-Std, L59-65).

This reinforced the separate image amongst both the student and staff bodies in relation to the Russian group:

It is sort of a segmentation of our school population. They very much stick together, in my opinion and they don’t integrate well with the other girls in their year levels. You will have fluidity between different kinds of [religiously oriented] communities here but I don’t see that so much with the Russian kids as they tend to stick together. So that just reinforces the mores of that particular community (#83, I-Stf, L72-77).

Also, as Trickett and Birman (2005) found, groups of students could influence each other negatively and hinder their progress both academically and socially. These two elements were expressed by staff:

Generally during the years that I taught, I found that when I taught Russians as a [separate] group, they stuck together and weren’t open to learn about other cultures such as Yiddishkeit. However, whenever I had a class, let’s say with two Russians [in it], their progress was much greater (#98, I-Stf, L21-24).
They were always second rate citizens in the school. They were considered the Russian girls because they stayed in their cliques, because they understood each other, and I say those that were lucky and fortunate enough to integrate with the mainstreams girls were the ones that have survived and done well (#92, I-St, L134-139).

A student concurred and added that she felt this was reinforced by streamed classes:

*It would have been better for them to have been in the mainstream definitely. Because I think [keeping them streamed] probably just continued to make them feel different. It was like the Russian class and they were never pushed or cared. It bred the attitude, “We just don’t care about Jewish studies”. Whereas if they had mixed in more, I think they would have been in an environment where the standard would have been higher. In the mainstream class they would not have been surrounded initially by all these kids who didn’t really care. I think when they were all together they sort of fed on that attitude and it was all a bit of a joke* (#60, I-Std, L351-359).

It was because of these issues that the girls’ school stopped their *Mechina* program as noted earlier. In the boys’ school, the program ended because of dwindling numbers.

Maintaining their Russian identity within these semi-permeable enclaves was, however, not the experience of all Russian students. Many felt that forming cliques was not so common in the schools and that most students were quite welcoming. Students explained how this friendly inclusive environment affected them:

*I think I am more of an outgoing person because the girls were so nice and so friendly and always willing to do things for you* (#66, I-Std, L190-191).

*Just being around people, you really got to see the beauty of leading a more religious life and the conscious feeling of getting closer to Hashem*, and all these *mitzvot*, all these things were totally new to me and I am really, really grateful

---

166 G-d  
167 commandments
that I had the opportunity to get exposed to that. It really made a total difference to my life (#38, I-Std, L272-276).

Indeed, some Russian students, separated themselves from other Russian students on purpose so that they would not be seen as part of the group. They did so in an effort to integrate more with the other students in their year level. This student, who was initially comforted by the welcome of her Russian peers, later chose to separate from them:

So I was friends with the Russians at first but they were not really my type of people ... (#38, I-Std, L67-68)...We weren’t into doing the same things; I am not like the type of Russian girl who likes to go to Russian restaurants and have a boyfriend who was four years older than me. That is not what I did. So I hung out with them at first, as beggars can’t be choosers when you come to a new school. But everyone else was also friendly, so it was good... so at the end I became friends with whoever I wanted to (#38, I-Std, L79-84).

While some students claimed there was a cliquiness in the school that made them feel like outsiders, others claimed the opposite. It seems it very much depended on the year level and on the effort the Russian student made to socialize with the mainstream group of students. Students, who were more outgoing and purposely separated themselves from any Russian cliques, were better able to make friends with other students in the school. Their personal friendships, which extended to spending time in their homes, being invited for weekends and Jewish holidays, helped these Russian students develop a much more positive feeling towards Jewish observance and also felt more integrated into the school and the school community. On the other hand, those students who felt excluded, did not mention any attempts on their part to alleviate the social pain stemming from this lack of inclusion. This could be explained based on the theory of Nordgren et al. (2011) that empathy gap can work in reverse, that is, that those in social pain may not be able to imagine the relief of social inclusion and this empathy gap may therefore stop them from pursuing opportunities to foster more acceptance and inclusion.
Conclusion

While the vast majority of stakeholders were satisfied with the Jewish education they received, felt it met their expectations and even relayed the affect their education had on their appreciation for the Jewish religion and Jewish culture, their academic outcomes in Jewish studies and many of their attitudes towards Jewish life and religion did not meet the expectation of the schools’ mission statements. For the very few who did become committed practising Jews, parental involvement and support in choosing this path was paramount. Thus the research of all those\textsuperscript{168} who maintain the crucial link between parental involvement and the efficacy of Jewish day school education in varying areas, has been validated once again in this study.

There were also areas of school programming that contributed to the Jewish education being internalized or less effective and at times even rejected. In the next chapter, participant suggestions of how the schools might improve outcomes for their Russian students will be explored.

Chapter Nine: Areas for Improvement and Participant Suggestions for the Future

The fifth and final sub-question related to the main thesis question was “What can the schools do to enhance their programs further?” This chapter will present an overview of the participant suggestions for improvement to better meet the needs of Russian adolescents in these two schools.

All participants were asked for suggestions on how the schools might improve the experiences and outcomes for Russian students. On the surveys six students and ten parents indicated that they were very happy with the education or were unsure of what to suggest. In interviews, many students also found it difficult to identify areas for improvement when asked for this directly. Instead, they made comments like, “I really liked the school”, “I don’t know what I would change; it was really good”. When this occurred, participants were presented with suggestions from other participants and asked to respond to those suggestions.

Meanwhile, during staff interviews, when participants were asked for suggestions on how the school might serve this cohort better, a number of teachers also raised broader school issues that were seen to affect the success of full integration into the school community for these cohorts of students.

Acceptance and Respect/Judging Favourably

When describing their experiences in the school, a number of students described the perception that students from Russian background were discriminated against. They felt this was due to assumptions being made about them or their attitude due to behaviours which had been observed in other such students, and lack of specific knowledge of the individual in question. Their concerns were not just in areas related to Jewish studies or Jewish observances, but across the board. This perception was enough to cause some of these students to leave the school. Four different participants highlighted this problem:
[A student] is leaving and she was telling me that she was discriminated against because she was Russian, not because she was not observant. She said teachers don’t pick on her [to answer questions] because she is Russian (#84, I-Stf, L37-40).

Look we are very quick to jump to [conclusions]. I know I was walking outside the school and one of the Russians was being dropped off by a boy, and I immediately thought, oh, must have been a boyfriend. I was told it was her brother, and it actually was her brother, but the first assumption, you know, if someone else was dropped off you wouldn’t even think about it, because unfortunately we have targeted these girls, and boys...So they are often [judged], because they have a much freer lifestyle, you know they have boyfriend, and they felt that we were certainly judging them in that aspect (#100, I-Stf, L604-612).

One student became quite emotional as she described her final years before she left the school one year before graduating. She got sick and missed a lot of school and then:

I had a really bad situation with two of the teachers because I had given in some work, and they must have misplaced it and they blamed it on me... And then it got to a point where I was so sick for about a week and a half and I came back to school and I asked if it was ok for me to get the papers so I could catch up and she is like, “just find them yourself.” And I would go to another teacher with “I came up with a question”, and she was, “I don’t want to hear it,” and she didn’t even want to help and it just hurt (#28, I-std, L180-185). ... It was the secular teachers. The Jewish studies teachers were always quite pleasant, I had no problems with them. I never had big problems in Jewish studies, never, I loved it, I genuinely enjoyed Jewish studies. But, secular for some reason, I don’t understand. I don’t know, perhaps because I wasn’t religious, perhaps because I didn’t take my studies as seriously, I don’t know (L217-221).
This student concluded that this was “definitely” and “undoubtedly” a result of unfortunate comparison between her and a number of other Russian girls in her class who were not serious about their studies.

A student who overall had a good experience in the school and remained to the end of Year 12 highlighted this issue as the one time she was very angry:

*I had a teacher, it was not a frum [religious] teacher, but I did feel discriminated against because I was Russian but it wasn’t in a Jewish subject. I basically was told straight to my face that I wasn’t as important as the other students because I was Russian so my work wasn’t that important as everybody else. Also, because I wasn’t doing that particular subject in the mainstream class with everybody else, my work wouldn’t be marked. [This was] a year 12 subject, because I qualified for ESL169. Nevertheless I still ended up doing very, very well in VCE. That was the only time that I was very angry (#56, I-Std, L806-814).*

In summary, students wanted to be judged and respected equally, and wanted teachers to be more careful in making generalizations about them due to experiences with other Russian students. This reflects one of the crucial factors identified by Eisikovits & Beck (1990) as leading to positive school experiences for immigrant students, namely that “harm to cultural identity should be minimized (p.195). One the other side of this same coin; instead of just focusing on what not to do, participants suggested more inclusive alternatives.

**Inclusive Education and Celebrating Diversity**

In a number of interviews, staff and students spoke of the need to be inclusive in the education provided in two ways: by providing them with more choice within Jewish Studies subjects and ensuring that these subjects are seen to have relevance to these students and by recognizing that these students have another culture with which they are familiar, and celebrating that culture.

---

169 English as a second language. Students qualifying under this category had special allowances for their work and exams.
In both of these areas, participants placed a caveat on the suggestion: it would not only be for Russian students but would be incorporated within a larger focus on celebrating diversity and multiculturalism, as an aspect of the Jewish community itself in the schools. In this way they would feel valued but not targeted (#85, I-Stf, N:IE-R1; #88, I-Stf, N:IE R4).

**Inclusive Education**

Despite the numerous Jewish studies elective offerings and frequent streaming in the upper years at the girls school, these students felt that to have made their educational experience even better, more choice was required in Jewish studies in both the upper and lower years: 

*Elective s, options, nothing should be forced. Of course you have to teach everything but there should be more options in what people want to learn* 

(I-Std, #61, L292-293). *I think it would have been nice to have it in primary but I don’t think I was an independent thinker to be able to actually choose what I wanted. I think in primary I just accepted everything and it wasn’t a problem. I think it became a problem when I started thinking for myself and I didn’t actually want to do something.... I think year 7 is fine* (297-305).

*More choices to accommodate us in the upper years. Looking back I feel a bit bad that I didn’t apply myself as much as I did in year 7 and 8 and 9. I can’t say that I lost interest, it is just that I felt that I could not relate to what they were teaching and they were a world away from me and that is why I didn’t try as hard as I did in the younger years* (#66, L291-295).

The key in their responses seems to be not only about choice but about relevance. The schools need constantly to view their subject offerings in light of student need and interest, as well as to do more in supporting their teachers in learning how to engage the students and demonstrate the relevance of the Jewish studies to their personal lives. Table 28 outlines curriculum suggestions that were made, divided by school:
**Table 28: Participant Suggestions for Curricular Improvements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Queen Esther</th>
<th>King Solomon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provide more:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provide more:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• focus on Hebrew language (#5, S-Std, Q62; #4, S-P, Q59)</td>
<td>• value based, rather than text based subjects (#79, S-Std, Q62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• focus on ensuring students can pray/follow along in synagogue services (#1, S-Std, Q59; #12, S-Std, Q59)</td>
<td>• about the meaning of Hebrew prayer (#72, S-P, Q62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• opportunities for self-directed learning or in response to topics chosen by students (#84, I-Stf, N:IE-R4,5; #85, I-Stf, N:IE-R2,3)</td>
<td>• focus on all areas of Jewish identity, not just religion (#77, S-Std, Q62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• focus on ensuring students have a positive attitude toward Judaism and its importance in everyday life. (#75, S-P, Q59)</td>
<td>• Tailored learning for different knowledge levels (#73, S-Std, Q62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• opportunity to stay in Ulpan classes for more than one year (#63, S-Std, Q59 &amp; Q62)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• preparation for the university experience as Jews with better networking skills (#51, #57, S-Std, Q61 &amp; Q62)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Both Schools:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Provide more:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide more hands on learning for the practical aspects of Judaism (#76, S-P, Q62; #84, I-Stf, N:IE-R4).</td>
<td>• value based, rather than text based subjects (#79, S-Std, Q62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focus more on current events and issues in Israel (#75, S-Std, Q58; #77, S-Std, Q59)</td>
<td>• about the meaning of Hebrew prayer (#72, S-P, Q62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Jewish history classes ((#18, S-P, Q62; #19, S-Std, Q62, #77, S-Std, Q58)</td>
<td>• focus on all areas of Jewish identity, not just religion (#77, S-Std, Q62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide more classes where the learned and unlearned students are together (#28, #73, S-Std, Q62)</td>
<td>• Tailored learning for different knowledge levels (#73, S-Std, Q62)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Celebrating Diversity

Suggestions for celebrating diversity included both curricular and co-curricular opportunities as illustrated in Table 29 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curricular Opportunities</th>
<th>Co-curricular Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Allow students to bring in recipes from their own culture for the class to make in Home Economics. (#57, I-Std, N:IE-R3)</td>
<td>• Continue to allow students, who wished to do so, the opportunity to speak in their mother tongue (LOTE\textsuperscript{170}) at school functions such as graduations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bring in more Russian literature (translated to English) in English classes. (#86, I-Stf, N:IE-R1; #93, I-Stf, N:IE-R2)</td>
<td>• Incorporate music with lyrics in LOTE in school productions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Invite students or their parents to speak to the classes when dealing with topics around communism such as when classes study the novel <em>Animal Farm</em>, which is a satire of communism or in History or Jewish History classes. (#85, I-Stf, N:IE-R1; #86, I-Stf, N:IE-R1; #93, I-Stf, N:IE-R3; #67, I-Std, N:IE-R1)</td>
<td>• Provide more opportunities to explore their Jewish identity earlier in secondary school. (#75, S-P, Q62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have international weeks, such as Russian Week, Israel Week, Iran Week, where the week could be focused on the foods, music, literature or history of that country or culture. (#88, I-Stf, N:IE-R1,4)</td>
<td>• Foster a more understanding environment for students from non-religious homes (#1, #16, S-Std, Q62)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{170} Language other than English

Increased Parental Involvement

Given the centrality of parental involvement in supporting the education provided for the school to the success of the impact of that education (Cohen, 1992; Eisikovits & Beck, 1990; Glass, 1994; Katz & Parker, 2008; Kelmen, 1992; Markus, 2011; Reimer, 1992;
Rutland, 2008; and Sacks, 1994), students were asked explicitly on their surveys: In what way do you think the school could help your parents to be more involved in the education of your children? Parents were asked: In what way do you think the school could support the parent body to be more involved in the education of their children?

On the survey, eight of the eighteen parents left this question blank, one stated, “I do not know” (#11, S-P, Q63) one wrote, “not many, it’s hard when parents don’t speak English” (#15, S-P, Q63,) and yet another “I think the school did enough in this matter” (#34, S-P, Q63). In contrast, only five of twenty students left this blank (#5,#79,#37, S-Std, Q63,) or wrote ‘none’ (#63) or ‘not many’ (#16), while an additional three students were unsure of what to suggest (#60,#30,#12, S-Std, Q63). Clearly, there seems to be much resistance in this area.

Meanwhile, during interviews, the need for increased parental involvement was incorporated into many of the earlier suggestions for improving the Jewish educational experience for Russian students. Most interviewees mentioned that this particular cohort of parents was not engaged in any aspect of school life. The overarching perception was that increasing this involvement would help overcome cultural dissonance in many areas, which in fact is exactly what many researchers also concluded (Glass, 1994; Sacks 1994 amongst others).

The following ideas, in Table 30 were put forward in both surveys and interviews as ways to get parents more involved in the schools under study. Suggestions included involvement in areas of curricular and co-curricular activities, reflecting one of the factors Eisikovits & Beck (1990) identified as crucial in giving immigrant students a positive school experience.

The suggestions have been divided by those aimed at increasing general involvement in school life and those specifically targeting involvement in Jewish life. Within these categories, suggestions were further divided into curricular and co-curricular activities.
Table 30: Participant Suggestions for Increasing Parental Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Involvement</th>
<th>Jewish Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curricular Activities:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Curricular Activities:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Increase communication with parents and require more interaction, such as more frequent parent teacher interviews, weekly emails, requirement to tick off homework. (S, Q63: #1,#19,#24,#50,#54,#67,#72,#73,#77)</td>
<td>- Offer classes for parents so that they could learn more about what their children were learning. (#28,#30,#72, S-P&amp;Std, Q63; #57, I-Std, N:PI-R5; #28, I-Std, N:PI-R2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Invite parents to be more involved in the school by finding areas of expertise and inviting them as guest speakers. (#86, I-Stf, N:PI-R4)</td>
<td>- Explain the Jewish studies curriculum to parents. (#61,#57, S-Std, Q63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have teachers use curriculum opportunities that lend themselves to issues of immigration, communism, anti-Semitism and the like, and inviting these parents to share their experiences. (#86, I-Stf, N:PI-R4,6; #88, I-Stf, N:PI-R1; #28, I-Std, N:PI-R4)</td>
<td>- Send home written information about subjects and upcoming holiday. (#57, I-Std, N:PI-R6,7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Keep parents informed of all school events (#23, S-P, Q63)</td>
<td>- Find ways to gauge parents’ understanding of what student are learning, perhaps through surveys or questionnaires. (#51, S-Std,Q63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Work with parents to generate ideas and implement strategies encouraging inclusion, equality and unity within the community (#76, S-P, Q63)</td>
<td>- Offer classes in basic Judaism for parents (#57,#72, #76, S-P&amp;Std, Q63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Co-curricular activities:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Co-curricular activities:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have more social events for parents and for parents and students. (#18,#77,S-P&amp;Std,Q63; #86,I-Stf, N:PI-R5; #90, I-Stf, N:PI-R2)</td>
<td>- Have parent/child events before the Jewish holidays. (#77, S-Std, Q63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Offer group functions like a public Seder (Passover feast) or other holidays, or Shabbatons.¹⁷¹ (#33;I-Stf,N:PI; #56, I-Std, N:PI-R3; #92, I-Stf, N:PI-R4)</td>
<td>- Offer more assistance to families that the schools consider not committed to Jewish education (#72, S-P, Q63)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹⁷¹ Weekend away, where a larger number of people/families celebrate Sabbath together. Sometimes it can refer to just having a Sabbath meal together without necessarily going out of town.
When students were interviewed, they were asked for their opinions in regard to these suggestions: If such events were offered would their parents come? The response to this question was mixed: Many students felt that their parents would not come, while a few said their parents, (usually their mother) would have been very happy to have been more involved had she been given the opportunity.

Students and parents gave various reasons for this lack of engagement: lack of time, poor English skills, lack of interest in Judaism, fear of being coerced into religion, personalities, and the Russian mentality to stay out of school affairs (I, N:PI). Yet, some students still felt it was worthwhile for the schools to make more of an effort to include their parents.

One staff member claimed that social functions, classes for parents and even a Russian newsletter, were trialled in the past for up to two years with no improved parental involvement (#100, I-Stf, N:PI-R2). Given that this took place many years ago, and the number of participants who are once again advocating for these very same strategies, it would perhaps be prudent for the schools to consider trialling these again.

**More Community Involvement and Personal Connections**

A number of participants talked of the positive impact upon their families of being invited and welcomed by other members of the Jewish community. It was not only the invitations from classmates but also from teachers and other members of the community that, to a large extent, differentiated those families who became more observant and/or more involved in the Jewish community and those who did not. Participants explained that due to their ignorance of the Jewish religion, these invitations were their way of learning how Jewish laws and traditions were kept:

*I didn’t know anything and I wouldn’t know anything unless, let’s say you invited me for Sukkos and you invited me for Shabbos, otherwise how would I know what it looks like? You can’t learn from a book how to make Shabbos or how to make Sukkos. So people invited me for Pesach (#76, I-P, L384-386).*
This participant also stressed that the broader Jewish community really did not realize how ignorant he and his family were:

\[
\text{[when] the lady found out that we never had Pesach before and she was in big shock, she couldn't imagine[that a family had never had Pesach before]} \ (#76, I-P, L387-388).
\]

It was, perhaps, for this reason that the following suggestions were made on the participants’ survey in relation to improving the Jewish educational experience at the schools:

- Encourage, ensure that children from non-religious homes have an opportunity to celebrate the Sabbath and Jewish festivals with religious families (#33, S-Std, Q62)
- help students not exposed to the Jewish life at home to experience practical aspects of what they learn at school (individual approach is required) (#76, S-P, Q62)
- help parents not practicing Jewish life to learn the significance of Jewish values for them and their children (#76, S-P, Q62)

Some participants felt that this sort of invitation was not widespread enough in the wider Jewish community. One student, who lived in an outer suburb where there was a Jewish community, reflected:

\[
\text{They didn’t say “Why don’t you come for Shabbos dinner?” We never had anyone say, “Come for Shabbos dinner.” That’s always a nice thing, you know. It’s a small thing, but it does a lot, because they’ll be like “Oh! Maybe we should do this!”} \ (#28, I-Std, L1032-1034). ...it sounds like we’re sulking. It’s not, we just don’t know where to start. We honestly don’t know where to start. It’s so broad. Judaism is such a broad thing (L1048-1050).
\]

One staff member also indicated that more needed to be done even within the schools and not just for the Jewish holidays:

\[
\text{Because it is such a frum [religious] school, an orthodox school, there is not enough outreach with the students like at weekends. They go to school during the day and follow the party line at school and then they go home. It is like they live a}
\]
dual life, a double life. Their lives don’t match and no thought has been given by the school about these children. Often they are asked to come to homes for Yom Tov [Jewish holidays] and Shabbos and stuff but it is not enough. They don’t understand the ethos of the school (#92, I-Stf, L15-22).

One parent went so far as to say, that many of the local Russian Jewish community were at risk because of their lack of information about Judaism and because the Jewish community was not active enough to reach out to them and engage them. He explained how he was trying to raise awareness of this issue:

*I am trying to explain to the local community about the neglect of education of Russian Jews. This brings them to the situation that they are targeted by the missionaries, they send their kids to learn Russian in the churches, the churches organize these classes, like this, [showed me a flyer] the first night of Chanukah, not because they have something against it, they try to celebrate Chanukah in the way they understand but they understand nothing because nobody taught them* (#76, I-P, L599-604).

As evident from these interviews, participants in this study clearly illustrated the strength of community involvement advocated by Cohen (1992). While the schools under study cannot be held responsible for the entire Jewish community, it seems they need to do more to empower the Russian students within their schools to take a more active part in their own Russian Jewish communities, whose culture they would understand better than any outsider.

Meanwhile for their own school community, the schools need to realize that students who were most affected by Jewish education were those whose families were also embraced by the school community, and who were constantly invited to be part of that community. This was not just for religious events, but also in terms of broader friendships. The effect of these personal connections should not be underestimated, and the schools need to do more to facilitate these family connections.
Creating a School Identity/Community

While many non-Jewish schools have very strong school identities, school alumnae organizations, school sporting teams and the like, the schools under question did not. Perhaps this lack of school identity is due to the fact that the schools cater to students from a diverse range of Jewish communities. Families would attend various synagogues, and it is this synagogue affiliation, together with the connection to the Rabbi and community of this synagogue that families would deem as their community over the school their children attended. This would seem quite logical, since their association with the schools would be limited to the times that their children attend, while their affiliation with a synagogue could be life-long.

However, this phenomenon adversely affects families with no synagogue affiliation. For them, there may not be another strong Jewish community with which they associate. Many of the families in this study did not attend the Russian synagogue or feel any particular connection to the Russian Rabbi. For them, and for other non-religious families from other backgrounds who attend the schools, creating a stronger school community, together with a strong school alumnae organization could likely be their only future contact with a religious Jewish community, and for some with any Jewish community.

Although students spoke of having reunions with their classmates, this was always organized by the students themselves, without any support or backing from the schools. A more organized ex-collegian or alumnae association would also perhaps help with the next item raised: fostering pride in the schools.

Fostering Pride in the School

As community schools, both the boys’ and girls’ schools comprise students from a range of religious observance and outlooks. They attend a range of synagogues (if any). Even at the school, they maintain their distinct entities and don’t come together as one community. One staff member spoke quite passionately about the fact that students did not seem to have any pride in the schools, and he gave examples of how each group voices its own
complaints about how the school is not really catering for their religious needs. He compared this to the school he attended as a teenager, and taught in as well:

*The school I went to* is like triple concentrated tomato paste ethnic diversity, and yet the kids walk out and they’re walking the walk and talking the talk and they are part of a community. And they go into this ongoing community of graduates of this school who just keep coming back, to talk, to help kids, to mentor, to fund scholarships, to build new buildings. And it would be great if ex-collegians would [do that] here (#83, I-Stf, L545-550).

He admitted that a number of students had come back to the schools in question to teach but felt that it was not enough:

*We have that here, a lot of our graduates come back to teach here. But this pride in the school, the kids walking out of here thinking, all of them, wow that was such a fantastic experience the school gave me, turned my life around* (L552-555).

This discussion then led on to the question: What makes people proud to be at a school and what deters them from having this pride? One response was:

*I don’t think the kids are given a real sense of purpose and pride and ownership in the school and the way you do that is by having a staff who have a strong sense of pride, respect and ownership of the school. And you do that by having a very slickly run school by highly trained professionals who are living and breathing [the school ethos] and are there on the ground at all times, conveying that message to all staff members. You do that by insisting on certain standards of behaviour, of dress, of attitude - conduct that leads you to think that you have an institution that takes itself seriously. And that is something that I think we are falling down on* (#83, I-Stf, 172-180). ...*Because there is no one doing the enforcing, no one doing the checking...we don’t do it because we’ve got no energy, we’ve got no time, because everyone walks out the door at one minute past four* (#83, I-Stf, L307, L312-313).
A staff member expressed similar sentiments when discussing why Russian students seemed to integrate far less than other immigrant groups such as South Africans or Israelis. Her view was:

*I actually think that some of the Russians didn’t want to [integrate into the school community]. It was just a school that they came to, it wasn’t their school. A lot of these students might have gone to Russian school after [school], out of school hours; they had their own social groups* (#100, I-Stf, L264-268).

This leads on the next area participants suggested for improving the educational outcomes for Russian students.

**Increase Enforcement of School Rules**

A recurring theme, from both the Nominal Group Technique session with staff and interviews with participants, was the perception that both schools don’t enforce their rules and regulations. This lack of enforcement, staff felt, not only contributed to the lack of pride in the school, but also contributed to student perception that the educational offerings and other school regulations did not have to be taken seriously, both while in school and once they graduated. When students came from homes that didn’t necessarily support the school ethos to begin with, this attitude certainly did not help them to feel that they were missing out on something important. One teacher expressed it this way:

*They think, “Oh, we can do whatever the hell we want”. And guess what? They can do whatever they want! They can really come here and do whatever they want because, we let them. It is a terrible thing to say, but we let them; that’s why they do whatever they want* (#83, I-Stf, L604-607).

Another staff member felt that this related not only to discipline but to also to expectations around school uniform and modest dress from both students and staff. At the girls’ school:

*I don’t think they have guidelines that are accurate. Staff have all different levels of dress code so what can you expect from students? [At another school] where the guidelines are so strict and you are aware of them, there are no shades and if you are to have girls and boys come to your school that has a certain religiosity then it*
is up to the school to maintain its standards and say, “While you are at our school, this is the dress code and it doesn’t mean just Monday to Friday, it means seven days a week you are a [Queen Esther] girl”. I think the guidelines are not clear cut, they are not black and white, and they have to be in this type of school (#92, I-Stf, L69-77).

They were lax in the style of the dress of the staff, so if they are lax with the staff with their dress code they were lax with the girls. The only times they pounced on the girls was when we had a uniform free day, the girls had to maintain a certain style of thing. And you wouldn’t need to do that if the admitting officer had given them the strict guidelines at the beginning. And it needed to go over to the parents when they attended the school and the fathers should have to wear a kippah when they came into the school. There should be no, “Well it is OK, they are Russian, they don’t understand”. You come to this school, your role is you have to dress like that, you are at [Queen Esther] ... Why, if we claim to be such a frum [observant] school, don’t we impose these restrictions? (#92, I-Stf, L92-105).

At the boys’ school, staff also complained about the lack of enforcement in ensuring that the boys wore their kippah (required head covering) and tzizit (required ritual fringes) at all times while on school grounds and on school excursions.

**Framing Knowledge**

Simai-Aroni (1985) posits that what differentiated the impact of a Jewish curriculum on students in any particular school was the way the school framed and classified the knowledge and the status parents, students and staff attached to that same knowledge. The effect of how values and beliefs were framed was an issue that staff recognized. This staff member felt, quite adamantly, that due to the laxity within the school, coupled with the lack of observance and Jewish knowledge from home, the majority of Russian students graduating from the school still knew very little about Judaism and how to observe Jewish laws correctly. She gave these two examples:

---

172 Head covering worn by all orthodox males from the age of three.
You know one of the girls, (I’ll call her Rachel), I would say, “You know Rosh Hashana\textsuperscript{173} is coming up, do you know what day it starts?” “Tell me again” [was her response]. It wasn’t that she hadn’t learned it, but it was not followed up at home, and because it is not followed up at home she didn’t really have to learn it at school because no one was going to ask her questions at home. And if you called Rachel’s parents in, it was only, “What do you mean? She is not doing well in science?” (#92, I-Stf, L160-165).

Now [student name] comes back to school for visits. She came once in hot pants, really short shorts and a singlet top and slip on high heel shoes. When she came in, the first thing, she said, ”I came for a visit to see you.” And I said, “I am really happy you have come but I think the next time you come you need to look at how you are dressing.” And she said, “I wasn’t sure”. Now this is the interesting line she gave me, “I wasn’t sure how I should dress because I don’t come to school here anymore.” Now if we did our job well, the whole idea would be that when you leave school or you go anywhere, is that you look modest, so we didn’t do our job well ((#92, I-Stf, L288-296).

This lack of enforcement was also an issue when students cut Jewish studies classes. It seems this problem became worse in both the boys’ and girls’ school once students were in Years 11 and 12 and the stress of VCE took over. However, laxity in insisting on Jewish studies attendance was seen by staff as sending the message that it was not really that important. For students, whose families also viewed Jewish studies as secondary or even unnecessary at times, the schools’ attitude was perceived to contribute greatly to the problem.

**Pastoral Care**

While a number of participants spoke with appreciation of the pastoral care they received from the schools when home life was rough for various reasons (I,N-PC:#28,57,61,73), others felt that more needed to be done in this area. This included the suggestion for better

\textsuperscript{173} Jewish New Year – two day High Holiday
tracking of these students while in the school (I,N-PC,#87) and ways to ensure they were still connected when they left school.

**Making School and Families Responsible**

There were a number of interviewees, both staff and students, who felt that the school does not need to do anything different in providing a Jewish education for these students. They maintained that the onus of success in education should be upon the students and their parents. Attitude and a respect for the school they chose to attend, was paramount to them. They felt that the students and parents should be made more responsible and held accountable for what happens at the school.

**Educating Staff**

As this study was aimed to explore the views of the Russian community in light of staff perception, it would now seem logical that staff at the schools need to have particular professional development sessions to explore some of the many views expressed in this study. Staff need to be aware of the positive or negative impact they can make on the future Jewish lives of their students. More of an understanding of the backgrounds of these students and the family attitudes would hopefully allow them to interact with these students in an even more constructive manner, while also fulfilling the requirements under the professional standards for teachers in Victoria which reads: “Teachers are aware of the social, cultural and religious backgrounds of the students they teach, and treat students equitably”.

**Conclusion**

An important aim of this study was to explore the possibilities of enhancing the programs at the Schools or offering new programs to meet the needs identified by various stakeholders. Often, programs are designed and implemented because the school administration makes a decision about what their students might need. In this chapter suggestions of participants reflect what they view as their most important needs and the programs they would like to see offered. From parent and student suggestions it is evident

---

174 See pg. 33 of this study.
that their perceived needs are centred on acceptance, respect, and inclusiveness in both the school and the community.

Meanwhile, the staff suggestions often included improvements in holistic school environment issues that were perceived to be vital if the schools wanted to implement their mission statements successfully. Staff felt strongly that parents were not taking enough responsibility in acting as partners with the Schools in the education of their children. In addition, there were a number of areas where staff, students and parents all agreed more could be done. These were in particular curricular and co-curricular suggestions, in ways to increase parental involvement and in a more effective Jewish pastoral care program for students in the school and more specifically for alumni.

Finally, from a researcher perspective, the knowledge and understanding gained from speaking with the participants in this study have allowed me to make more careful decisions about the curricular programming I suggest to the schools within which I work. Educating staff so they too have better insight into this community and their needs was thus my own logical conclusion.

A complete overview of the aims of this study and concluding remarks are the subjects of the next chapter.
Chapter Ten: Concluding Comments

As Orthodox Jewish day schools, the Queen Esther and King Solomon schools see themselves as the transmitters of Jewish identity through the valued knowledge, beliefs and attitudes of the Jewish religion, culture and tradition of the past 3,300 years. This is accomplished through the offering of a dual curriculum, i.e. both secular and religious. The level of Jewish studies at the secondary schools requires an advanced knowledge of Jewish culture and religion. As might be expected then, any students with limited, or no Jewish educational background are at a severe disadvantage when entering these schools in their late primary years or in secondary school and the Schools’ role as “transmitters of Jewish identity” through its curriculum is compromised.

A review of the respective Schools’ mission statement yielded specific criteria to which student outcomes could be compared.

**Queen Esther’s School Mission Statement:**

...Jewish community school whose hallmark is individual achievement and academic excellence. We educate young women to take their part in society as responsible citizens with the commitment to Torah values imbued by Chassidic teachings.”

**King Solomon’s School Mission Statement:**

...Community school whose raison d’être is to educate students in the knowledge and spirit of Torah Judaism, preparing them to be adults who are committed, loyal and devoted to their religion and people, and to provide them with a general education that will enable them to become successful professionals, businessmen or academics, who have an in-depth understanding of Judaism and are practising Jews.

This research began from the realization that the Schools were trying to cater to many Russian immigrant students, who often joined the school at the secondary level. There was
an assumption that they knew very little if anything about their Jewish heritage and that they were primarily in the schools due to the excellent reputation the schools had in preparing students for their VCE and future university studies, and for the financial discounts on tuition that were generously offered. This study provides evidence either to support or refute these assumptions by giving these students and their parents a voice.

**The Needs Assessment: Linking School and Community**

A needs assessment approach was taken to generate evidence that would answer the question of the research, “How can the Queen Esther School for Girls and the King Solomon School for Boys (while following their respective mission statements) provide optimal secondary education for their Russian student populations who have had minimal prior Jewish education?”

There were also a number of associated sub-questions:

1. What are the demographic and other characteristics of these students\(^\text{175}\)?
2. What are the needs of students, their parents and the community?
3. What programs are currently being offered?
4. To what extent are the programs currently offered addressing the identified needs of these particular students?
5. What can the schools do to enhance their programs further?

In asking these questions, this study aimed to identify and document the experiences of the Russian students with minimal Jewish educational background in the two secondary schools, with particular emphasis on the students’ and their parents’ perspectives. To place their experience in context, this part of the study also attempted to understand:

- the background of these students
- the reasons for choosing the two schools
- the expectations from their schooling
- some of the factors that may have impacted on the degree to which they integrated into the school community.

\(^{175}\) This sub-question includes questions about demographics, Jewish identity, Jewish education, choice of school and expectations and responsibilities. See Appendix B for the full list of questions.
All of these elements have been explored and discussed at length in Chapters 5 through 8. In summary, students were first and second generation immigrants from the Former Soviet Union. They came from both large and small towns, and this affected the amount of knowledge they had about Judaism and Jewish practices, yet they all suffered from anti-Semitism and cited this as a key reason for emigration. Contrary to most staff perceptions, the majority of participants chose the two Schools under study for the Jewish education and not just for financial reasons, although they defined Jewish education differently to the Schools. The expectations parents and students had of their schooling reflected their definition of Jewish education and was often more about cultural knowledge and friendship than text based study and religious observances. The degree to which they integrated into the school community and were affected by their Jewish education was often related to the personal friendships they had with other students and families in the wider Jewish community and by the home environment and attitudes of their Russian parents. The more parental support of and involvement in Jewish life, the more obvious the impact of their Jewish education in an Orthodox school.

Secondly, the study aimed to focus on the programs offered in these schools with the intention to:

- evaluate more fully whether there is need for special support programs for students with minimal Jewish educational background
- clarify the rationale and intended outcomes for these programs
- explore the effectiveness of the programs that are presently offered to meet the needs identified in the study
- explore the possibilities of enhancing the programs or offering new programs to meet the needs identified by the various stakeholders.

This program evaluation aspect of this needs assessment is reflected in Chapters 7 through 9. To judge the effectiveness of the programs they had to be assessed against their intent, and from the view of the students towards whom these programs were geared. Both schools emphasized three key areas in their mission statements: academic excellence in both Jewish and general studies, commitment to Torah and its observance, and the ability to take an
active part in the wider community in which they would live. Thus the intent of any special programming was related to these goals, even when not explicitly stated. To evaluate the success of the education, the research sought the views of school staff and the affected cohort, namely Russian parents, students, and community members, who were asked to describe the need of the Russian student population as they perceived them. Using this methodology, the needs reflect the discrepancies between the desired and actual state of affairs. Participants were also asked to suggest solutions to close this gap.

From a staff point of view, Russian students’ needs were seen to be related to their lack of engagement in Jewish studies classes, lack of knowledge of Jewish religious observances and Hebrew language, and thus also a lack of commitment to the ethos and religious observance encouraged by the schools. Parents and students, however saw their needs as relating to acceptance, tolerance and celebration of their unique background; in their words, social factors were paramount. In addition, building Jewish friendships, knowing about Jewish culture and history and getting good VCE results, were more important to them than learning how to practice Judaism in day-to-day life. The solutions, offered by these different cohorts in the preceding chapter, thus reflected their view of the needs of Russian students at the schools.

The key themes, emerging from interviews with participants as the basis for an improved delivery of the schools’ mission statements, is the need for the schools to take on a more holistic view and hence approach to Jewish education. There is certainly still a need for special support programs as new students still join the schools in upper primary and more significantly secondary levels. The rationale and intended outcomes of many of the programs that had been offered were often vague and without supporting documentation and thus their effectiveness was limited. The notable exception to this was the ULPAN program in the girls’ School. It was not only well documented and structured but was well received by the students and had a proven track record of succeeding in its intended outcomes of provided the pathway for new students to access the mainstream Jewish studies classes after only one year at the school. Using this program as a model, not only must more be done to make the subjects learned more relevant to the students, especially
in the boys’ school, but the schools must also see as part of their mission, the responsibility to involve parents in both curricular and co-curricular activities.

In addition, time and time again, participants relayed the crucial role the broader Jewish community played in their ability to internalize the teaching of the school and in forming their attitudes towards Jewish religion and practice. Personal connection with classmates and teachers, and invitations to celebrate Jewish festivals with observant families, affected students much more than the theoretical teaching in the classroom. Once again, the social aspects of schooling and community had a stronger impact than pure academia. The schools need to be more involved in ensuring that all families with minimal Jewish background feel part of the school community, and that the more religiously observant families informally adopt families of their children’s classmates, so that not only the children are exposed to the practice of Judaism, but their parents are as well. This responsibility to their school community also does not end when a student graduates. Maintaining contact with alumni, especially those from families who are not active in the Jewish community, was also seen as an important component in ensuring any long term effect of the Jewish education received.

A third aim of this study was to compare the needs presented and the programs offered in the Queen Esther School and the King Solomon School in an effort to help the two schools learn from each other. It is evident, that for this particular cohort, the girls’ School had much more effective educational offering than the boys and there is now an opportunity for the King Solomon School to reassess their traditional subject offering in light of this research.

Two additional aims of this study were to help the schools understand the values, beliefs and attitudes of this particular segment of their student population and to present a case study that may help other schools in similar circumstances to evaluate their own programs.

A needs assessment would normally have a short turnaround and the results fed back to the interested parties. As an insider researcher, there were many opportunities to relay these
findings to the schools in question as the research was occurring and a more formal synopsis of the findings has also been relayed to the Principal and Heads of each campus. To date, many suggestions offered have already been implemented while others are still being considered. For example, there is now a Pastoral Rabbi who oversees the needs of the students across both schools and who also serves as the Rabbi of what was once the only Russian synagogue. In this role he has the opportunity to maintain contact with a number of graduates as they mark and celebrate life cycle events. In addition, the schools also now have more involvement in organising reunions by graduating year.

In the areas of curricula, both schools are now reviewing and adjusting their elective offerings to better suit all students and their varying interests, skills and Jewish knowledge. There is now also greater focus on creating more co-curricular opportunities and in working with youth programs and youth leaders to encourage more active participation in Jewish life and Jewish learning outside of school hours.

These final aims have thus begun to be realised in the schools under study, and other schools will hopefully benefit once this work is published and accessible to the wider community.

However, as a doctoral study, this research has gone beyond just a needs assessment, and offers a peek into a slice of history and identity in the Melbourne Jewish community.

**Beyond a Needs Assessment: Jewish Identity**

In the process of undertaking this needs assessment, this research has explored the experience of immigration for a number of families from the FSU to Australia, and debunked a number of staff assumptions about this particular cohort. At the same time, the study has also confirmed other assumptions and many previous studies in relation to the view of Soviet parents on education in general, and Jewish education in particular, and the impact on their choice of schooling for their children. Most importantly, this study, while rooted in a needs assessment, has also become a significant analysis on the meaning of
Jewish identity in contemporary Melbourne, how that identity is formed and the efficacy of Jewish education in affecting this formation of identity.

A key factor in the cultural dissonance experienced by Russian students concerned the differing views maintained by students and parents versus those of the schools on the purpose of Jewish education and the meaning of Jewish identity most important for Jewish continuity. While it is true that the varying facets of Jewish identity used in many other research studies were also identified by this cohort as important to their own identity, it was also clear that facets other than religious observance, as identified by the majority of the interviewees, did not seem to impact on views of intermarriage, which is the greatest risk to Jewish continuity. Eight of the 17 unmarried students, including three of the four boys interviewed, were not opposed to intermarriage amongst their close relatives or siblings even after receiving their Jewish education at these schools. When analysing this response in comparison to previous responses concerning other facets of Jewish identity, a revealing picture emerges. Six of these students still agreed that religion played a central role in Judaism, and five also indicated that religion was very important to them. Yet, paradoxically, none of these students was strictly observant of Shabbat, the laws of keeping Kosher, or any Jewish festivals other than Yom Kippur, with two only loosely observing this holiest day on the Jewish calendar. Of particular note, seven of these students listed Jewish feeling as the most important aspect of their Jewish identity among other identity factors, such as Jewish friends, the fate of Jews, and Israel. This gives further support to the premise that Jewish identity absent observance of Jewish practice is insufficient to prevent assimilation and that Jewish feeling without observance cannot be passed on to the next generation.

Since intermarriage is one of the greatest threats to Jewish continuity, given the centrality of Jewish continuity in their respective Mission Statements through Torah observance, it would seem imperative that the schools do much more to include this phenomenon in a relevant part of their curriculum. To encourage unaffiliated students to take on more religious practices and observances in their personal lives, by extension, means that the schools under study, and any school seriously concerned about Jewish continuity, must also do much more to involve unaffiliated parents into Jewish life, a result echoing Markus
(2011). It is not only a reflection of contemporary society that Jewish schools have become the bearers of responsibility to pass on Jewish traditions to the next generation instead of the parents, but they must also include the parents in their educational endeavours.

In addition, this study has offered a method by which schools can ascertain if they are indeed meeting the goals of their mission statements. Too often, the school mission statement is one developed by the administration of the school, at times with the contribution of staff members. However, a systematic approach to assessing the impact or effect of this mission statement has not been discussed in Jewish educational research. This study has demonstrated that relying on anecdotal evidence or staff perception is not the best way to achieve this goal.

Finally, this study has highlighted the crucial factor, often overlooked by Jewish schools, namely that the needs assumed by the mission statement are not necessarily congruous with the needs of the students as perceived by them and their parents. An ideal mission statement will only be wholly successful if all parties concerned are in agreement that the goals of the mission statement fulfil their needs. This information can only be ascertained by speaking to parents and students directly, either during in-take interviews or through surveys of students and their parents. If the parties are not in agreement, the school has two choices: It can adjust its mission statement to reflect better the needs of all its student body, or it can do more to help those students and parents who don’t agree with the needs as implied in the mission statement, to recognize the value and importance of the mission statement, and thereby to accept these needs as their own. I suspect many schools have based their mission statements on dearly held philosophical beliefs as the schools under study have done. In these cases, changing a mission statement would be a rare event, and the second option would make more sense for the school to pursue.

Surveys on the perceived needs and the effect of educational programming, both curricular and co-curricular, need not be limited to graduates of the school. Rather, systematic and repeated surveys, over the years of a student’s schooling, can highlight problems with school programming that may be impinging on the effect of a school’s mission statement.
By gaining this information before students graduate, the school has the opportunity to address concerns before students leave the environs of the Jewish educational institution.

**Further Research**

As this study comes to a close, a number of changes have occurred in the schools under study. The two schools are now under the direction of one Principal, although they still maintain their distinct campuses and full segregation between boys and girls. A concerted effort to recruiting new students through intensive PR has brought a number of new families into the schools. This has resulted in more students, even at primary level, without the Jewish educational background of their age group. This is a particularly new problem for the boys’ primary school, and lessons can certainly be learned from this study in how to approach this challenge. In addition, students with minimal Jewish education, both from Russian homes and others, are still arriving in the girls’ secondary school.

More intriguing, however, is the slowly expanding cohort of Russian speaking families who are observant. Some of these families became observant while in Australia, but a number have arrived from the FSU, either directly or via Israel, already observant. This reflects the new reality in the FSU, and the tremendous growth in religious schools, activities and religious communities. The questions that arise are: How much of the cultural paradigm of the non-observant Russian parents is shared by these observant Russian parents and/or the second generation of Russian parents and students at the Schools? Can the new generation of Russian parents have a role to play in fostering more involvement from the more reluctant Russian parents? Is the new generation of Russian parents better able to support their children in the rigorous Jewish education offered at the schools? These questions could offer the basis for future studies at these schools.
References:


Appendix A

Chabad-Lubavitch Movement and philosophy

The Chabad-Lubavitch movement, often referred to as just “Chabad” or just “Lubavitch”, is an international Chassidic movement with over 3,300 educational and religious outreach institutions worldwide dedicated to the welfare of the Jewish people. The word Chabad is a reference to its particular brand of Chassidic philosophy formulated by its founder, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812). Lubavitch is the name of the Russian village which was the home of this movement in its early years.

Quality Torah-education for all children has always been a top priority for the movement. For seven generations, its leaders have been a powerful force in the establishment of innovative, effective educational institutions, and have been a source of inspiration to educators and parents throughout the world (www.Chabad.org).

The Chabad philosophy espouses three main points:

1) Chabad is a Hebrew acronym for the three intellectual faculties of *chachmah*- wisdom, *binah*- comprehension and *da’at* – knowledge. The movement’s system of Jewish religious philosophy, expounds the most refined and delicate aspects of Jewish mysticism, the deepest dimension of G-d’s Torah. It teaches understanding and recognition of the Creator, the role and purpose of Creation, and the importance and unique mission of each Creature. This philosophy guides a person to refine and govern his and her every act and feeling through wisdom, comprehension and knowledge.

2) A fundamental belief that every Jew, regardless of affiliation or background, possesses a *neshama*, a unique soul, a G-dly spark. In its essence, this spark of G-dliness is common to all Jews and equal in all Jews. By virtue of the *neshama*, the Torah and all its precepts are the inheritance, the right and the privilege of all our people.

3) It is the privilege, honour and obligation placed on every Jew to help respectfully every other Jew perform Mitzvoth and learn about their heritage. All the Jewish people are like one body and we are all responsible for one another. As the Baal Shem tov, founder of the
Chassidic movement used to say; “Love of Yisrael is love of g-d. “you are children of G-d your G-d”. When one loves the father- one loves the children.

In Melbourne, the “Queen Esther” and “King Solomon” Schools are part of a larger Chabad organization which incorporates kinders, a girls tertiary teacher’s seminary, a boys Rabbinical College, adult education programs, camps and programs for youth and various other Jewish outreach activities.

There are also other Chabad institutions in close proximity to the schools. There are 13 Chabad Houses/centres operating within a ten km radius. The importance of bringing Jews back to their heritage and encouraging Jewish education for children is a key component of their work. They operate crèches, pre-schools, after school and Sunday religious programs, teen programs and adult education programs. One caters specifically to Russian Jews, another for Israelis and yet a third to Sephardic Jews.

A number of Rabbis holding the pulpit at non-Chabad Synagogues are Chabad Rabbis. The Chabad philosophy guides their interactions with their constituents and Jewish education is encouraged.

In addition to this, UJEB, the Jewish Education Board operating in state schools to provide RE for Jewish students, has a number of Chabad women working as heads of the program at various schools. This means that they also see a role in encouraging students to enrol in Jewish day schools. The most welcoming schools for these students are the Chabad schools.

As families learn and grow in their knowledge and practice of Judaism, the likelihood of sending their children to Jewish schools increases as well.

All of this may contribute to the reasons why the “Queen Esther” and ‘King Solomon’ Schools in general and their secondary schools in particular attract a number of students who do not have a strong primary Jewish education.
Appendix B

Research sub-questions

Sub-question one included the following questions:

Demographics

1) Where were they born?
2) Where were their parents born?
3) When did they emigrate?
4) What language do they speak at home?

Jewish Identity

5) What constitutes their personal identity?
6) How do they demonstrate their Jewish identification?

Jewish education

7) How do they define Jewish education?
8) What value do they place on Jewish education?
9) What do they feel is the purpose of Jewish education?

Choice of school

9) Why did they choose this school?
10) To what extent were they aware of the philosophy of the school?
11) Did they read the school mission statement?

Expectations

12) What were the expectations from the school in regard to their Jewish and general education?
Appendix C

Simai- Aroni’s Typology of Jewish identity

1) The existentialist Jew – feels Jewish

2) The aligned or fated Jew – shares a common destiny with the Jewish people

3) The national Jew – identifies with Israel and/or intends on going on aliya

4) The religious Jew – my religion, my belief in G-d, my belief in the Tanach

(Simai-Aroni 1985, p280-281)

Simai-Aroni’s seven categories in the intensity of Jewishness (how much does your Jewishness influence your lifestyle)

1) Essential Jew – their Jewishness is central to their lives irrespective of the mode in which it is expressed.

2) Active Jews – active in Jewish affairs, who take part in Jewish communal life regularly, but their mode and ‘flow’ of living is essentially that of the ‘civic’ society.

3) Affiliating Jews - Those who are affiliated with a youth movement, but not really active. They may attend summer camps, but not attend regular meetings. Their membership reflects mainly person social interests and needs rather than a concern for the public purposes of Jewish life.

4) Consumer Jews- they use the synagogue for celebrations such as bar mitzvah, weddings, etc, or for memorial services, but their attendance otherwise is minimal.

5) Peripheral Jews, they identify as Jews, but are totally uninvolved in Jewish life.

6) Rejector Jews, they deny or hide their Jewishness.

7) Straddler Jews, these are Jews who are ‘assimilated’ in most ways. Their Jewishness is totally incidental to them. 

(Simai-Aroni 1985, p.283)
Appendix D
Sample NVivo Models

Early interview #1: Initial Model:
## Appendix E

### Tree Nodes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>References</th>
<th>Created On</th>
<th>Created By</th>
<th>Modified On</th>
<th>Modified By</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>choosing Jewish schools</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>22/02/2008 1:31 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>5/08/2010 11:38 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>academic results</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22/02/2008 4:40 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>6/03/2008 11:07 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheap education</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22/02/2008 4:38 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>6/03/2008 11:54 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contact with other Jews</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22/02/2008 4:44 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>22/02/2008 4:44 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family or friend referral</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30/02/2010 12:45 AM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>2/08/2010 10:51 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Education</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5/2/2008 16:16 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>6/03/2008 11:22 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open door policy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22/02/2008 2:38 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>6/07/2010 2:36 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>side environment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22/02/2008 4:41 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>4/03/2010 10:18 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultural differences</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30/04/2009 11:16 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>5/2/2012 11:21 AM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effects</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30/04/2008 11:20 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>1/01/2012 2:21 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define 2 and 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5/03/2010 5:55 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>5/03/2010 5:55 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>married 2 and 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5/03/2010 5:55 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>5/03/2010 5:55 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married 2 and 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5/03/2010 5:55 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>5/03/2010 5:55 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main advantages of 2 and 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5/03/2010 5:55 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>5/03/2010 5:55 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Free Nodes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>References</th>
<th>Created On</th>
<th>Created By</th>
<th>Modified On</th>
<th>Modified By</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>academic aspirations</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>09/05/2009 2:19 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>04/08/2010 10:24 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blindness</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20/04/2009 11:07 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>28/01/2010 8:26 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-curricular events</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22/02/2009 12:38 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>23/09/2010 10:42 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coeducation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30/05/2010 11:35 AM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>20/09/2010 9:41 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coming to Australia</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30/05/2010 9:35 AM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>23/12/2011 2:1 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community involvement</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>13/01/2010 11:16 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>05/09/2010 11:59 AM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creating a school identity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14/06/2008 1:03 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>19/05/2008 11:33 AM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultural connection</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>30/04/2010 11:05 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>05/09/2010 11:59 AM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decisive enforcement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>05/06/2008 12:11 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>02/06/2008 11:13 AM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>declining numbers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>09/05/2008 2:12 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>23/01/2010 10:34 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>defining Jewish education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30/05/2010 11:03 AM</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>23/09/2010 11:14 PM</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- word frequency defining Jewish education
- discrimination
- education in FSU
- English language acquisition
- family environment
- first school experience
- framing knowledge
- government grants
- Holocaust shadowing identity
- home versus school
- inclusive education
- involvement in Russian community
- Israel
- Jewish identity
- Jewish life in FSU
- lack of enforcement
- lack of politics in school
- language
- making students and families responsible
- modeling behaviour
- needs
- non-religious non-Russian
- personal involvement
- parental sacrifices
- pastime care
- perceptions
- Personal connections
- personal identity
- positive asset
- positive experiences
- post FMR
- present Russian services
- reasons for leaving FSU
- Russian culture
- Russian for VCE
- school expectations
- school ID
- school's educational goals
- school's entrance
- school's integration
- school's lifestyle
- school's performance
- socio-economic
- spiritual programming
- stress indicators
- timing of arrival at FSU
- visiting different subject offering

- 245 -
## Appendix F

### Audit Trail Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Participant Number</th>
<th>Source Type</th>
<th>Participant group</th>
<th>Nvivo Node Name (where identified)</th>
<th>Interview Lines/Node Reference #/Survey Question Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#93,I-Stf, L396-401</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lines 396-401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#74, I-P, L612-618</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lines 612-618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#66, I-Std, L346-351</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lines 346-351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#80, I-C, L8-18</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Community Member</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lines 8-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#85, I-Stf, N:IE-R1</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Inclusive Education</td>
<td>Reference 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#84, I-Stf,N:IE-R4,5</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Inclusive Education</td>
<td>References 4 and 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#90, I-Stf, N:PI-R2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Parental Involvement</td>
<td>Reference 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#18, S-P, Q62</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Question 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5, S-Std, Q59</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td></td>
<td>Question 59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G

INTERVIEW TOPICS/ AREAS OF DISCUSSION FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

1) Tell me a little bit about yourself and your family.
2) How did you hear about [Name of School]?
3) What motivated you to send your children (or to come) to our school?
4) What were your feelings when you began at the school?
5) What did you expect from the school?
6) In which ways were you expectations met or not met?
7) What are the highlights or the best parts of the school?
8) What did you find the most difficult as a parent/student in the school?
9) To what extent do you think the school is sensitive to your needs as a Russian parent (student)? Give examples.
10) What ways could the school have supported you, or your family better?
11) Staff at the school came up with the following suggestions to improve our programs:
   a) Which one of these suggestions do you think will work best in our school? Why?
   b) Would you participate if this program was offered? Why or why not?
   c) Do you have any other suggestions for how the school could cater for your needs?
12) Is there anything else you want us to know?

QUESTIONS FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE RUSSIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

1) What services do you provide to the Russian community?
2) Why do you provide these particular services?
3) What do you perceive to be the needs of the Russian Jewish community within the wider Jewish community?
4) Do you believe the schools have a role to play in providing for these needs?
   a) If yes, how?
   b) If no, why not?
5) Is there anything else you feel we should know?
NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE QUESTIONS FOR STAFF

Warm up Questions:
1) What do you perceive as the ‘issues’ regarding the Russian students who attend our schools?
2) Why do you think they attend our schools?
3) What do you perceive to be the needs of the Russian students in our school?

Key Question:
1) How can we best serve the needs of students with Russian backgrounds?

Prompts:
- a. What would the ideal desired state be?
- b. How might we get to this ideal state?
- c. What would be the minimal state of acceptability?

QUESTIONS FOR SEMI-SRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH STAFF
If staff member has not attended an NGT session, then the questions from the NGT will be asked first. The following would be asked of all staff participating in interviews.

1) What subject do you teach?
2) What role do you play in the school other than teaching?
3) How long have you been employed at the school?
4) What is your current time allotment at the school?
5) Do you believe there is any difference in the performance of Russian students versus the rest of the student body in your class/ in your area? Can you give some specific examples?
6) If there is a difference, what do you think contributes to this difference?
7) In what ways do you think the school could help to minimize this difference?
8) What ways do you think the school could support you better in relation to your contact with these students?
9) Please share any personal experience relating to this target population that would inform this research

For Administration staff:
Which of the programs suggested by staff could we offer to the parents?
Appendix H
Parent and Student Surveys

PARENT SURVEY
АНКЕТИРОВАНИЕ РОДИТЕЛЕЙ

Dear Parents,

As part of a needs assessment to evaluate the programs in our schools related to our Russian students, we need a better understanding of your personal values and beliefs. This survey also includes questions related to your immigration to Australia and your experiences in the former USSR. These questions are taken from previous research of the Melbourne Jewish community from the former USSR and will help us to assess whether the conclusions of this previous research applies to our school population.

Your attitudes, beliefs or comments will in no way affect the provision of programs to your children in our schools. Please take the time to complete this questionnaire and note that, although providing your name will help us in our interviews, it is entirely optional and does not exclude you from participating in later interviews. If you do choose to provide your name, your responses will still be completely confidential according to the University’s ethical guidelines and no one, other than the researcher, will be able to trace what you have written.

Уважаемые родители,

Для того, чтобы оценить нужды программ обучения студентов из бывшего СССР в наших школах, нам необходимо понять систему ваших личных ценностей и взглядов. Данное исследование включает в себя вопросы, связанные с вашим личным опытом иммиграции и жизненным опытом в бывшем СССР. Эти вопросы взяты из предыдущего исследования евреев-выходцев из бывшего СССР в Мельбурне. Они позволят определить степень важности выводов предыдущего исследования для наших школ.

Ваши замечания и комментарии ни в коем случае не отразятся на результатах обучения ваших детей в наших школах. Назвав себя при заполнении анкеты, облегчит процесс вашего интервьюирования. Тем не менее давать свои личные данные не обязательно. Если вы решите написать свои личные данные, мы гарантируем полную конфиденциальность этих данных в соответствии с этическими нормами Мельбурнского университета. Никто, кроме исследователя, не узнает о том, что вы написали в вашей анкете.
Section 1: The first part of this questionnaire relates to your background and immigration experience.

Опрос родителей

Часть 1. В этой части анкеты, вопросы касаются вашего происхождения и личного опыта иммиграции

Q1. Name (optional): Имя (отвечать не обязательно)
__________________________

Q2. Address (optional) Адрес (отвечать не обязательно)
__________________________________________Suburb (район):__________________________

Q3: Post Code (Почтовый индекс)__________________________________________

Q4. Date of Birth: (Дата рождения)__________________________________________

Q5. Country and city of Birth (Страна и город рождения)_______________________

Q6. Gender (please tick) Пол (пожалуйста отметьте галочкой)

□ Male Муж □ Female Жен

Q7. Age: Возраст □ 0-17 □ 18-25 □ 26-35 □ 36-45

□ 46-55 □ 56-65 □ 65+

Q8. Current marital status: Семейное положение

□ Single одинокий □ Married женат/замужем
□ Divorced/separated разведён □ Other другое

Q9. Were you born overseas? (please tick) Вы родились за рубежём? (Пожалуйста отметьте галочкой)

□ Yes Да (Go to Q9a) (переходите к вопросу 9а)
□ No Нет (Go to Q13) (переходите к вопросу 13)

Q9a. Date of arrival in Australia Дата приезда в Австралию
__________________________________________

Q9b. Where in the former USSR were you born? Место рождения в бывшем СССР?
__________________________________________
Q9c. In which republic of the former USSR did you last live?
В какой республике бывшего СССР Вы жили до приезда в Австралию?

Q9d. Did you live mainly in:
Вы проживали в:
☐ City Столица| крупном городе
☐ Small town местечке
☐ Town городе
☐ Village селе

Q9e. Did you live in another country, other than your country of birth before arriving in Australia? (please tick) Проживали ли вы в других странах до приезда в Австралию?
☐ Yes (Go to Q9f) Да(Переходите к вопросу 9f)
☐ No (Go to Q10) Нет (Переходите к вопросу 10)

Q9f. Where did you live? В какой стране вы проживали?

Q9g. How long did you live there? Как долго вы жили там?

Q10. Which of the following best describes your reasons for leaving the former USSR?
Что из нижеперечисленного, лучше всего описывает причины Вашего отъезда из бывшего СССР?
☐ To reunite with family/relatives Объединение семьи
☐ To improve standards of living Лучшие условия жизни
☐ Soviet anti-Semitism Советский антисемитизм
☐ Religious freedom Свобода вероисповедания
☐ Other, please specify Другое, пожалуйста уточните_______________________
Q11 Under what category of immigration did you come to Australia?

По какой программе Вы иммигрировали в Австралию

☐ Special assistance category (through the Jewish Welfare Program) — как еврей, по специальной программе для евреев выходцев из бывшего СССР\Велфер

☐ Professional — Профессиональная

☐ Concession family — Родственная

☐ Preferential family — Воссоединение семей

☐ Other, please specify — Другая, пожалуйста уточните________________________

Q12 In the former USSR: В бывшем СССР:

a) I was proud of being Jewish — Я гордился тем, что был евреем

☐ Yes — Да

☐ No — Нет

b) I had little awareness of Jewishness — Я мало знал об еврействе

☐ Yes — Да

☐ No — Нет

c) I disliked being a Jew — Мне не нравилось быть евреем

☐ Yes — Да

☐ No — Нет

d) I was uncomfortable to present myself as a Jew — Мне было неловко представляться евреем

☐ Yes — Да

☐ No — Нет

Q13. Which one of the following was the most important in preserving you Jewish heritage in the former USSR? (Choose only one option)

Что из нижеперечисленного способствовало сохранению вашей национальной принадлежности как еврея в бывшем СССР?

☐ Yiddish language/our “folk culture” — Идиш/народные традиции

☐ Religion — Религия

☐ Hebrew/State of Israel — Иврит\государство Израиль

☐ Jewish education — Еврейское образование

☐ Being born and raised in a Jewish family — Рождённый и воспитанный в еврейской семье

☐ Other, please specify — Другое (пожалуйста уточните)______________________________ 
Section 2: This section relates to your general and Jewish education.

Часть 2. Вопросы этой части анкеты имеет отношение к вашему светскому и еврейскому образованию.

Q14. What is your highest academic qualification? (Please tick one in each country if relevant)

Ваше образование (Пожалуйста, отметьте галочкой в каждой стране)

In the former USSR: В бывшем СССР
- [ ] Masters or Doctoral degree
- [ ] Aspirantura Аспирантура
- [ ] University postgraduate diploma or honours degree

In Australia: В Австралии:
- [ ] University undergraduate
- [ ] TAFE Тейф
- [ ] Secondary school
- [ ] Vocational secondary school

Институт или университет
- [ ] Secondary school
- [ ] Vocational secondary school

Техникум
- [ ] Secondary school

Средняя школа
- [ ] Secondary school

Профессионально-техническое училище
- [ ] Secondary school

Начальная школа
- [ ] Primary school
Q15 What was your spouse’s highest academic qualification? (Please tick one in each country if relevant)

Образование вашей супруги/супруга (Пожалуйста отметьте в каждой стране)

In the former USSR: В бывшем СССР

☐ Masters or Doctoral degree

Степень Магистра или Доктора

☐ Aspirantura Аспирантура

In Australia: В Австралии:

☐ University postgraduate diploma or honours degree

Диплом университета, полученный после высшего образования

☐ Institut or Universitet Институт/университет

☐ University undergraduate Диплом Университета

☐ Srednyaya shkola Средняя школа

☐ High school Секондэри скул

☐ Tehnikum Техникум

☐ TAFE Тейф

☐ Professional’no tehnicheskoya Uchilischche Профессионально-техническое училище

☐ Vocational high school Вокайнэл секондэри скул

☐ Nachalnaya shkola Начальная школа

☐ Primary school Праймери скул
Q16. Have you ever attended any full-time Jewish school?
Учились ли вы когда-либо в еврейской школе?
☐ Yes Да ☐ No (Go to Q17) Нет (переходите к вопросу 17)

Q16a If yes, was this primary or secondary or both?
Если да, то была ли это только начальная, только средняя школа или начальная и средняя?
☐ Primary only Только начальная ☐ Secondary only Только средняя
☐ Both И средняя, и начальная

Q16b. If you did attend full time Jewish school, how many years of full time Jewish education did you receive in total?
Если вы обучались только в еврейской школе, то сколько лет вы учились в ней?
☐ 1-3 years 1-3 лет
☐ 4-6 years 4-6 лет
☐ 7-9 years 7-9 лет
☐ 10-12 years 10-12 лет
☐ 13 or more 13 и более лет

Q17. Did you receive any part time Jewish education as a child?
Ходили ли вы в еврейскую школу в детстве?
☐ Yes Да ☐ No (Go to Q18) Нет (Переходите к вопросу 18)

Q17a If yes, about how old were you?
Если да, то сколько вам было лет?
☐ Before the age of 13 only до 13 лет только
☐ After the age of 13 only после 13 лет только
☐ Both before and after the age of 13 и до и после 13 лет
Q18. As an adult, have you attended any full-time or part time courses on Judaism?

☐ Yes full-time Да полный курс

☐ As part of other full-time course Как часть другого курса

☐ Yes, part time Да, частично

☐ No, not at all Нет

Section 3: This section looks at your use of languages.

Часть 3. В этой части анкеты говорится о языках, которыми вы владеете

Q19 In the former USSR, did you study English?

Изучали ли вы английский в бывшем СССР?

☐ Yes Да ☐ No (Go to Q20) Нет (переходите к вопросу 20)

Q19a. If “Yes”, where did you study it? Если да, то где вы изучали его?

☐ High school only В средней школе

☐ High school and university В средней школе и университете/институте

☐ University only Только в университете

☐ Language courses На курсах иностранных языков

☐ Private Частным образом

Q19b How long did you formally study English? Please specify

Как долго вы занимались английским? Уточните пожалуйста

☐ Several months Несколько месяцев

☐ Several years Несколько лет
Q20. Which languages do you speak with your family at home?
На каких языках вы говорите дома?

(Place a 1 next to language spoken most often, 2 next to the language spoken but not as often. Please mark only up to three languages.)
(Поставьте цифру 1 рядом с тем языком, на котором вы в основном говорите дома, цифру 2 рядом с языком, на котором вы говорите не так часто. Дайте не более трёх ответов)

_____ Russian  Русский
_____ English  Английский
_____ Hebrew  Иврит
_____ Yiddish  Идиш
_____ Other (please name)  Другой (пожалуйста назовите его) ______________________

Q21 Which language do you usually speak with most of your friends?
На каком языке вы в основном общаетесь со своими друзьями?

(Place a 1 next to language spoken most often, 2 next to the language spoken but not as often. Please mark only up to three languages.)
(Поставьте цифру 1 рядом с тем языком, на котором вы в основном говорите, цифру 2 рядом с языком, на котором вы говорите не так часто. Дайте не более трёх ответов)

_____ Russian  Русский
_____ English  Английский
_____ Hebrew  Иврит
_____ Yiddish  Идиш
_____ Other (please name)  Другой (пожалуйста назовите его) ______________________

Q22 What language would you call your mother–tongue?
Какой язык ваш родной?

☐ English (Go to Q25)  Английский (переходите к вопросу 25)
☐ Russian  Русский
☐ Hebrew  Иврит
☐ Yiddish  Идиш
☐ Other  Другой (пожалуйста назовите его) ______________________

Q23. How well can you speak English? (Please tick)
Как хорошо Вы говорите по-английски? (Пожалуйста отметьте галочкой)

☐ Extremely well  Исклучительно хорошо ☐ Very well  Очень хорошо
☐ Fairly well  Сносно ☐ Adequately  Адекватно
☐ Only a little  С трудом ☐ Not at all  Вообще не говорю
Q23a. How well can you read English? (Please tick)

Как хорошо Вы читаете по-английски (Пожалуйста отметьте галочкой)

☐ Extremely well Исклучительно хорошо  ☐ Very well Очень хорошо
☐ Fairly well Сносно  ☐ Adequately Адекватно
☐ Only a little C трудом  ☐ Not at all Вообще не говорю

Q23b. How well can you write English? (Please tick)

Как хорошо Вы пишете по-английски? (Пожалуйста отметьте галочкой)

☐ Extremely well Исклучительно хорошо  ☐ Very well Очень хорошо
☐ Fairly well Сносно  ☐ Adequately Адекватно
☐ Only a little C трудом  ☐ Not at all Вообще не говорю

Q23c. How well do you understand English? (Please tick)

Как хорошо Вы понимаете по-английски? (Пожалуйста отметьте галочкой)

☐ Extremely well Исклучительно хорошо  ☐ Very well Очень хорошо
☐ Fairly well Сносно  ☐ Adequately Адекватно
☐ Only a little C трудом  ☐ Not at all Вообще не говорю

Q24. How well can you speak Hebrew? (Please tick)

Как хорошо Вы говорите на иврите? (Пожалуйста отметьте галочкой)

☐ Extremely well Исклучительно хорошо  ☐ Very well Очень хорошо
☐ Fairly well Сносно  ☐ Adequately Адекватно
☐ Only a little C трудом  ☐ Not at all Вообще не говорю

Q24a. How well can you read Hebrew? (Please tick)

Как хорошо Вы читаете на иврите? (Пожалуйста отметьте галочкой)

☐ Extremely well Исклучительно хорошо  ☐ Very well Очень хорошо
☐ Fairly well Сносно  ☐ Adequately Адекватно
☐ Only a little C трудом  ☐ Not at all Вообще не говорю
Q24b. How well can you write Hebrew? (Please tick)

Как хорошо Вы пишете на иврите? (Пожалуйста отметьте галочкой)

☐ Extremely well Исключительно хорошо ☐ Very well Очень хорошо
☐ Fairly well Сносно ☐ Adequately Адекватно
☐ Only a little С трудом ☐ Not at all Вообще не говорю

Q24c. How well can you understand Hebrew? (Please tick)

Как хорошо Вы понимаете Иврит? (Пожалуйста отметьте галочкой)

☐ Extremely well Исключительно хорошо ☐ Very well Очень хорошо
☐ Fairly well Сносно ☐ Adequately Адекватно
☐ Only a little С трудом ☐ Not at all Вообще не говорю

Section 4: This section looks at your image of a Jew and Jewishness.

Your honest response in this section is particularly important to us as it will assist us in the future design of educational programs that are better matched to views and values of the whole school community and specifically to help integrate those of Russian Jewish background.

Часть 4. В этой части анкеты речь пойдёт о вашем представлении об евреях и еврействе

Ваш искренний ответ в этой части исследования особенно важен, поскольку это поможет нам разработать программы, которые оптимально отразят взгляды и ценности всех учеников школы и помогут интеграции студентов из семей-выходцев из бывшего СССР.

Q25. Which one of the following is the most important in preserving your Jewish heritage in Australia? (Choose only one option)

Что, по вашему мнению, является самым важным в сохранении еврейского наследия в Австралии? (Дайте только один ответ)

☐ Yiddish language/our “folk culture” Язык идиш/национальная культура
☐ Religion Религия
☐ Russian language Русский язык
☐ Hebrew/State of Israel Иврит/государство Израиль
☐ Jewish education Еврейское образование
☐ Other, please specify__________________

Другое (уточните пожалуйста)__________________
Q26. How important are the following to you:

Пожалуйста отметьте, насколько важно для Вас:

A) To be active in the affairs of the Jewish community

Принимать активное участие в жизни еврейской общины

☐ Essential   Весьма важно   ☐ Very Important   Очень важно
☐ Fairly important   Важно   ☐ Not very important   Не очень важно
☐ Not at all important   Совсем не важно

B) Observance of the Jewish religion

Исповедовать Иудаизм

☐ Essential   Весьма важно   ☐ Very Important   Очень важно
☐ Fairly important   Важно   ☐ Not very important   Не очень важно
☐ Not at all important   Совсем не важно

C) The fate of Jews around the world

Участь мирового еврейства

☐ Essential   Весьма важно   ☐ Very Important   Очень важно
☐ Fairly important   Важно   ☐ Not very important   Не очень важно
☐ Not at all important   Совсем не важно

D) Yiddish language and culture

Язык Идиш и Идиш культура

☐ Essential   Весьма важно   ☐ Very Important   Очень важно
☐ Fairly important   Важно   ☐ Not very important   Не очень важно
☐ Not at all important   Совсем не важно

E) Having Jewish friends

иметь друзей-евреев

☐ Essential   Весьма важно   ☐ Very Important   Очень важно
☐ Fairly important   Важно   ☐ Not very important   Не очень важно
☐ Not at all important   Совсем не важно
F) Survival of Jewish feeling in future generations

Сохранение еврейского сознания у будущих поколений

- Essential Весьма важно
- Very Important Очень важно
- Fairly important Важно
- Not very important Не очень важно
- Not at all important Совсем не важно

G) Israel Израиль

- Essential Весьма важно
- Very Important Очень важно
- Fairly important Важно
- Not very important Не очень важно
- Not at all important Совсем не важно

Q27. If a non-Jewish journal or newspaper praises Jews, does it make you

Если не еврейский журнал или газета восхваляют евреев, вы

- Proud гордитесь
- Indifferent безразличны
- Hostile враждебны
- Do not know не знаю

Q28. Are you married to:

Вы замужем\женаты на:

- A Jew Еврее
- A non-Jew Не еврее
- Not married Не женат\не замужем

Q29. To what extent would it concern you if your child or other near relation, married a non-Jew?

Беспокоит ли Вас, что ваш ребёнок или родственник женится\выйдет замуж за не еврея?

- I would not like it under any circumstances
- I have nothing against it Я не возражаю
- Yes, if she/he converts to Judaism Да, если она перейдёт в иудаизм
Q30. What is your opinion of a Jew who converts to another religion?

☐ Opposed  Против этого  ☐ Supportive  Поддерживаю

☐ Opposed, but may understand him  Против этого, но могу понять его

☐ It is his/her private affair  Это его/ее личное дело

Q31. If a non-Jew in Australia mistakes you for a non-Jew, would you correct his mistake and tell him you are a Jew?

Если не еврей в Австралии ошибочно примет вас за нееврея, попытаетесь ли Вы исправить его и сказать, что вы еврей?

☐ Yes  Да

☐ I am not sure but I think I would tell him  Не уверен, но думаю, что сказал бы

☐ I do not know what to do  Не знаю

☐ For sure I would not  Конечно, нет

☐ No  Нет

Q32. If somebody in Australia asks you about your background what would you answer?

Если кто-то в Австралии спросит вас о вашем происхождении, что Вы ответите?

Please, tick only one answer.

☐ I am Jewish  Я еврей

☐ I am Russian  Я русский

☐ I am an Australian  Я Австралиец

☐ I am a Russian Jew  Я еврей из России

☐ I am an Australian Jew  Я Австралийский еврей

Q33. If an anti-Semite mistakes you for a non-Jew, would you correct his mistake and tell him that you are a Jew?

Если антисемит в Австралии ошибочно примет вас за нееврея, попытаетесь ли Вы исправить его и сказать, что вы еврей?

☐ Yes  Да

☐ I do not know  Не знаю

☐ I would tell him  Сказал бы

☐ No  Нет

☐ I am not sure but I think I would tell him  Не уверен, но наверное сказал бы
Now please give your reaction to the following statements:
Как вы относитесь к следующим утверждениям:

Q34. Religion plays a role in regard to centrality of Jewishness.
Религия играет главную роль в еврействе
☐ Strongly agree  Полностью согласен  ☐ Agree  Согласен
☐ Neither agree nor disagree  Ни да/ ни нет  ☐ Disagree  Не согласен
☐ Strongly disagree  Полностью не согласен  ☐ Do not know  Не знаю

Q35. It is important to defend my Jewishness as a continuation of my Jewish identity.
Защищать еврейство необходимо, т.к. это является продолжением меня как еврея
☐ Strongly agree  Полностью согласен  ☐ Agree  Согласен
☐ Neither agree nor disagree  Ни да/ ни нет  ☐ Disagree  Не согласен
☐ Strongly disagree  Полностью не согласен  ☐ Do not know  Не знаю

Q36. Jews are neither better nor worse than other peoples.
Евреи не лучше и не хуже других народов
☐ Strongly agree  Полностью согласен  ☐ Agree  Согласен
☐ Neither agree nor disagree  Ни да/ ни нет  ☐ Disagree  Не согласен
☐ Strongly disagree  Полностью не согласен  ☐ Do not know  Не знаю

Q37. The fact that I am Jewish plays a very important part in my life.
То, что я еврей, играет огромную роль в моей жизни
☐ Strongly agree  Полностью согласен  ☐ Agree  Согласен
☐ Neither agree nor disagree  Ни да/ ни нет  ☐ Disagree  Не согласен
☐ Strongly disagree  Полностью не согласен  ☐ Do not know  Не знаю

Q38. It is very important to preserve Yiddish language and Yiddish culture.
Очень важно сохранять язык и культуру Идиш
☐ Strongly agree  Полностью согласен  ☐ Agree  Согласен
☐ Neither agree nor disagree  Ни да/ ни нет  ☐ Disagree  Не согласен
☐ Strongly disagree  Полностью не согласен  ☐ Do not know  Не знаю
Q39. What is your attitude to the languages of Jews, e. g. Yiddish, Hebrew?
Каково ваше отношение к языкам, на которых говорят евреи, например идиш, иврит?

- Very positive очень положительное
- Positive Положительное
- No particular feeling Нет особого отношения
- Negative Негативное
- Very negative Очень негативное

Q40. In your opinion, which one of the following best indicates that someone is a Jew? Please, tick only one answer.
Как вы считаете, что из нижеперечисленного лучше всего указывает на то, кто является евреем? Отметьте галочкой только один ответ

- Considers him/herself to be a Jew Сам/сама считает себя евреем/еврейкой
- Speaks one of the Jewish languages Говорит на одном из еврейских языков
- Observes Judaism as a religion Исповедует иудаизм как религию
- Observes Jewish traditions/rituals Соблюдает еврейские традиции/ритуалы
- Inscription “Jewish” in the passport Записан евреем в паспорте
- Jews by his/her character and mentality Евреи/еврейка по своему характеру/ментальности
- Peculiar Jewish appearance and manners Типично еврейская внешность и манеры
- Jewish mother Мать еврейка
- Jewish father Отец еврей
- Either Jewish mother or father Либо мать, либо отец еврей
- Both Jewish mother and father И мать, и отец еврей
- Other, please specify Другое (уточните, пожалуйста)________
- Do not know Не знаю
Section 5: This section looks at your involvement in Jewish practices.

A large emphasis in the present Jewish studies curriculum is on Jewish practice. The following two questions will assist us in evaluating the type and extent of background support students from families of the former USSR might need to fully participate in these lessons.

Эта часть анкеты рассмотрит насколько вы соблюдаете еврейские обычаи

Особый акцент по еврейским предметам делается на соблюдение еврейских обычаев. Следующие два вопроса помогут определить, какую помощь необходимо оказать студентам из семей-выходцев из бывшего СССР, чтобы они активнее участвовали на этих уроках.

Q41. Which of the following practices do you observe? Какие из перечисленных обычаев вы соблюдаете?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Strictly</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Loosely</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pesach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanukah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukkot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shabbat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yom Kippur</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashrut</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q42. How often do you attend synagogue? Как часто вы ходите в синагогу?

☐ Every day
☐ About once a week
☐ About once a month
☐ Less than once a month
☐ High holidays only
☐ Special occasion (weddings, bar mitzvah etc) only

Только по особым случаям (свадьбы, бар мицвы и т.д.)
Section 6: This sections looks at attitudes towards Jewish education.

В этой части анкеты речь пойдёт о вашем отношении к еврейскому образованию

Q43. How would you define Jewish education?  
Как вы считаете, что такое «еврейское образование»

Q44. How important do you think it is for a Jewish child to receive a Jewish education?  
Важно ли, чтобы еврейский ребёнок получил еврейское образование?

☐ Very important Очень важно
☐ Important Важно
☐ Not very important Не очень важно
☐ Not at all important Вовсе не важно

Q45. What do you consider to be the main advantages of full time Jewish schooling for Jewish children?  
(Choose from this list up to three main advantages.)
Какое по-вашему мнению основное преимущество дневной еврейской школы для еврейских детей? (Дайте не более трёх ответов)

☐ Strengthens Jewish identity Усиливает еврейскую индивидуальность
☐ Enhances Jewish knowledge Повышает знания об еврействе
☐ Encourages Jewish friendships Поощряет дружбу между евреями
☐ Strengthens Jewish values Усиливает еврейские ценности
☐ Provides Jewish atmosphere Обеспечивает еврейскую атмосферу
☐ Provides strong academic education Обеспечивает сильное академическое образование
☐ Teaches Hebrew/Yiddish Обучает иврит/идиш
☐ Provides emotional security Обеспечивает эмоциональную стабильность
☐ Encourages Jewish observances Поощряет соблюдение еврейских обычаев
☐ Teaches about Israel and Jewish History Дает знания по еврейской истории и об Израиле
☐ Prepares young people for Bar-Bat mitzvah Готовит молодых людей к бар-бат
☐ Has no advantages Нет никаких преимуществ
☐ Other, please specify ________________________________
Другое, уточните пожалуйста______________________________
☐ Don’t know Не знаю
Q46 Which of the three advantages that you chose above do you think is:
Какое из трёх выбранных вами преимуществ является по-вашему мнению:
Most important Наиболее важным ______________________________________
2nd in importance Менее важным ______________________________________
3rd in importance Наименее важным ______________________________________

Q47. What do you consider to be the main disadvantages of full-time Jewish schooling for Jewish children? Choose from this list up to three disadvantages:
Что по вашему мнению является основным недостатком обучения еврейских детей в дневной еврейской школе?
☐ Too expensive Слишком дорого
☐ Separates Jews from other Australians Изолирует евреев от остальных австралийцев
☐ Lack of sport/extras Недостаток спорта/факультативных занятий
☐ Too religious Слишком религиозное
☐ Too much Hebrew/Jewish studies Слишком много иврита/еврейских занятий
☐ Too elitist Слишком элитное
☐ Limited subject choices Ограниченный выбор предметов
☐ Poor quality teaching of Hebrew/Jewish subjects Плохое качество преподавания Иврита/еврейских предметов
☐ Poor discipline Плохая дисциплина
☐ Doesn’t cater for children with special needs Не предназначена для детей с особыми нуждами
☐ No disadvantages Нет никаких недостатков
☐ Poor quality academic education Плохое качество академического образования
☐ Other, please specify __________________________
Другое, уточните пожалуйста __________________________
☐ Don’t know Не знаю
Q48 From the three disadvantages that you chose above, which do you think is the:

Какое из трёх выбранных вами недостатков является по-вашему мнению:

Main disadvantage  Основным недостатком_________________________
2nd ranked disadvantage  Менее недостатком____________________________
3rd ranked disadvantage  Наименьшим недостатком_______________________

Section 7: This section looks at reasons for choosing [Name of school]

Часть 7. Почему вы выбрали школу Ешива\Бет Ривка для

обучения своих детей

Q49. How many children do you have? (Please write the number)

Сколько у вас детей? (Пожалуйста укажите это цифрой)

_____ Boys  Мальчиков  _____ Girls  Девочек.

Q50. How many children did you send to:

Сколько детей вы отправили в

[Name of Girl’s school]_________________ [Name of Boys’ school]_________________
Q51. Why did you choose to send your child/ren to these schools? (Tick all that apply)
Почему ваш выбор выпал на эти школы (укажите галочкой всё, что относится к вам)

[Name of Girls’ School]

☐ Better schooling and high standard of education (high VCE results)
Лучшее образование и высокий уровень обучения (высокие результаты ВСИ)

☐ High standard of Jewish education
Высокий уровень еврейского образования

☐ Siblings attend the school
Другие ваши дети посещают школу

☐ Can acquire a knowledge of Judaism
Могут получить знания об иудаизме

☐ Religion
Религия

☐ Discipline
Дисциплина

☐ Better environment
Лучшее окружение

☐ Jewish identity, solidarity
Еврейская индивидуальность/солидарность

☐ Respect for parents
Уважение родителей

☐ It is of superior quality if compared with other private and public schools
Более высокий уровень, чем другие частные и государственные школы

☐ Recommendation of friends or relatives
Рекомендовали друзья или родственники

☐ Financial subsidies were available
Наличие финансовой поддержки

☐ Other, please specify_________________________________________________________
Другое, уточните пожалуйста_________________________________________________
[Name of Boys’ School]

☐ Better schooling and high standard of education (high VCE results)

Лучшее образование и высокий уровень обучения (высокий результаты ВСИ)

☐ High standard of Jewish education

Высокий уровень еврейского образования

☐ Siblings attend the school

Другие ваши дети посещают школу

☐ Can acquire a knowledge of Judaism

Могут получить знания об иудаизме

☐ Religion

Религия

☐ Discipline

Дисциплина

☐ Better environment

Лучшее окружение

☐ Jewish identity, solidarity

Еврейская индивидуальность\солидарность

☐ Respect for parents

Уважение родителей

☐ It is of superior quality if compared with other private and public schools

Более высокий уровень, чем другие частные и государственные школы

☐ Recommendation of friends or relatives

Рекомендовали друзья или родственники

☐ Financial subsidies were available

Наличие финансовой поддержки

☐ Other, please specify______________________________

Другое, уточните пожалуйста ____________________
Q52 From the list of reasons in Q51 for sending your child/ren to our schools, which were the three most important considerations?

Какие из перечисленных в вопросе 51 причин, являются тремя наиболее важными, послужившие вашему решению послать своих детей/ребёнка в эти школы?

[Name of Girls’ School]
1st most important consideration  Самая важная__________________.
2nd important consideration  Менее важная__________________
3rd consideration  Наименее важная__________________

[Name of Boys’ School]
1st most important consideration  Самая важная__________________.
2nd important consideration  Менее важная__________________
3rd consideration  Наименее важная__________________

Q53. In your opinion how is [Name of School] different from other Jewish day schools in Melbourne?

Чем, по-вашему мнению, Ешива Бет Ривка отличаются от других дневных еврейских школ Мельбурна?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Q54. At what stage did you read the school’s mission statement?

Когда вы ознакомились с заявлением о миссии школы?

☐ Before I sent my children  До того, как я послал своих детей
☐ After my child/ren were already enrolled  После того, когда мои дети были записаны в школу
☐ I have never seen or read the school mission statement.  Никогда не видел или читал заявление о миссии школы
Section 8: Parental involvement and expectations in education

Часть 8. Какое участие принимают родители в образовании детей и чего они ожидают от образования

Q55. How confident are you when helping your child with Jewish studies homework?
Насколько вы уверены в своих знаниях, помогая ребёнку выполнить домашнее задание по еврейскому предмету?
☐ Very confident Очень уверен ☐ Confident Уверен
☐ Not confident Не уверен ☐ Not at all Вовсе не уверен

Q56. How confident are you when helping your child with General studies homework?
Насколько вы уверены в своих знаниях, помогая ребёнку выполнить домашнее задание по другим предметам?
☐ Very confident Очень уверен ☐ Confident Уверен
☐ Not confident Не уверен ☐ Not at all Вовсе не уверен

Q57. What role do you think parents ought to play in the education of their children? (Tick up to three)
Какую роль, по вашему мнению, должны играть родители в обучении своих детей? (Пометьте галочкой три варианта ответа)
☐ Encourage student to achieve excellence in all their subjects
Поощрять ребёнка быть отличником по всем предметам
☐ Supervise the student
Наблюдать за учёбой ребёнка
☐ Hire tutors
Нанимать репетиторов
☐ Seek feedback from teachers on a regular basis
Регулярно прислушиваться к мнению учителя
☐ Be informed/aware of what the child is learning
Знать, что изучает ребёнок
☐ Ensure child comes to school on time
Добиться, чтобы ученик приходил во-время домой
☐ Ensure child attends school regularly and does not miss too many days
Добиться, чтобы ребёнок регулярно посещал и не пропускал школу
☐ Help the child with homework
Помогать ребёнку с домашним заданием
☐ Reinforce and encourage implementation of what is taught at school.
Укреплять и поддерживать выполнение того, чему учат в школе
☐ Other, please specify
Другое, уточните пожалуйста
Q58. What did you (do you) expect the school to be able to provide your child in regard to their Jewish education? Tick no more than three.

Чего вы ожидали от школы в отношении помощи вашему ребёнку в еврейском образовании. Отметьте галочкой не более трёх ответов

☐ To read and speak Hebrew  Читать и говорить на иврите
☐ To be able to pray in Synagogue  Научиться молиться в синагоге
☐ To be well-versed in tradition and culture  Хорошо знать свои традиции и культуру
☐ To be able to study independently from Jewish texts

Уметь самому изучать еврейские тексты

☐ To be able to continue in Jewish Religion institutions locally or overseas

Продолжать обучаться в местных или зарубежных еврейских религиозных заведениях

☐ To make Jewish friends in a Jewish environment

Обзавестись еврейскими друзьями в еврейском окружении

☐ To be aware and respectful of all different types of Jews

Знать и уважать разнообразие типов евреев

☐ To be aware of issues in Israel

Знать, что происходит в Израиле

☐ To know Jewish history

Знать еврейскую историю

☐ Other, please specify ______________________________

Другое, уточните пожалуйста ______________________________

Q59 Did the school (or is the school) meeting your expectations in relation to the provision of Jewish education? Please explain.

Отвечает ли школа вашим требованиям по отношению к еврейскому образованию? Объясните, пожалуйста.

[Name of Girls’ School]__________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

[Name of Boys’ School]__________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________
Q60. What expectations do you/did you have of the school in regards to preparing students for life after school? Tick no more than three
Чего вы ожидали от школы в отношении подготовки студентов к жизни после окончания школы? Дайте не более трёх ответов

☐ A guarantee of high VCE scores  Гарантия высокого балла в ВСИ
☐ Preparation for University  Подготовка к университету
☐ To develop a well-rounded Australian citizen  Развитие настоящего гражданина Австралии
☐ The acquisition of excellent Math/Science knowledge  Получение отличных знаний по математике/ точным наукам
☐ Effective careers education  Эффективное образование в достижении карьеры
☐ The development of excellent communication and networking skills  Развитие отличных навыков умения общаться и заводить знакомства
☐ The development of leadership skills  Развитие навыков лидерства
☐ Other, please specify________________________________________
Другое, уточните пожалуйста ____________________________________

Q61 To what extent did the school (or is the school) meeting your expectations in relation to the provision of general education? Please explain.
В какой степени школа отвечает вашим требованиям по отношению к общему образованию? Пожалуйста объясните

[Name of Girls’ School]__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

[Name of Boys’ School]__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Q62. In which ways do you think the school could provide your children with a better Jewish educational experience?

Каким образом, по вашему мнению, школа может дать вашим детям лучшее еврейское образование?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Q63 In what way do you think the school could support the parent body to be more involved in the education of their children?

Каким образом, по вашему мнению, школа может помочь родителям быть более вовлечёнными в образование своих детей?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX I

CURRENT AND PAST STUDENT SURVEY

Dear Past and Present Students,
As part of a needs assessment to evaluate the programs in our schools related to our Russian students, we need a better understanding of your personal values and beliefs. This survey also includes questions related to your immigration to Australia and your experiences in the former USSR. These questions are taken from previous research of the Melbourne Jewish community from the former USSR and will help us to assess whether the conclusions of this previous research applies to our school population.

Your attitudes, beliefs or comments will in no way affect the provision of programs to you or your children in our schools and if you are still a student at the school, to your academic marks. Please take the time to complete this questionnaire and note that, although providing your name will help us in our interviews, it is entirely optional and does not exclude you from participating in later interviews. If you do choose to provide your name, your responses will still be completely confidential according to the University’s ethical guidelines and no one, other than the researcher, will be able to trace what you have written.

Please note that if you are under 18, your parents must sign the consent form enclosed before you complete this questionnaire.

Section 1: The first part of this questionnaire relates to your background and immigration experience.

Q1. Name (optional): ____________________________________________
Q2. Address (optional) __________________________ Suburb: ________________
Q3: Post Code____________________________________________________
Q4. Date of Birth:_________________________________________________
Q5. Country and city of Birth________________________________________
Q6. Gender (please tick) □ Male □ Female
Q7. Age:
□ 0-17 (please ensure that your parent has signed the consent form before you continue)
□ 18-25 □ 26-35
Q8. Current marital status:
☐ Single   ☐ Married   ☐ Divorced/separated   ☐ Other

Q9. Were you born overseas? (please tick)
☐ Yes (Go to Q9a)   ☐ No (Go to Q13)

Q9a. Date of arrival in Australia

Q9b. Where in the former USSR were you born?

Q9c. In which republic of the former USSR did you last live?

Q9d. Did you live mainly in
☐ City   ☐ Town   ☐ Small town   ☐ Village

Q9e. Did you live in another country, other than your country of birth before arriving in Australia? (please tick)
☐ Yes (Go to Q9f)   ☐ No (Go to Q10)

Q9f. Where did you live?

Q9g. How long did you live there?

Q10. Which of the following best describes your reasons for leaving the former USSR?
☐ To reunite with family/relatives
☐ To improve standards of living
☐ Soviet anti-Semitism
☐ Religious freedom
☐ Other, please specify

Q11 Under what category of immigration did you come to Australia?
☐ Special assistance category (through the Jewish Welfare Program)
☐ Professional
☐ Concession family
☐ Preferential family
☐ Other, please specify
☐ Don’t know
Q12 In the former USSR (Please, choose only one option)

a) I was proud of being Jewish
   □ Yes    □ No
b) I had little awareness of Jewishness
   □ Yes    □ No
c) I disliked being a Jew
   □ Yes    □ No
d) I was uncomfortable presenting myself as a Jew
   □ Yes    □ No

Q13. Which one was the most important in preserving you Jewish heritage in the former USSR? (Choose only one option)
   □ Yiddish language/our “folk culture”
   □ Religion
   □ Hebrew/State of Israel
   □ Jewish education
   □ Being born and raised in a Jewish family
   □ Other, please specify ________________________________

Section 2: This section relates to your general and Jewish education.

Q14. What is your highest academic qualification? (Please tick one in each country if relevant)

In the former USSR:          In Australia:
   □ Masters or Doctoral degree
   □ Aspirantura
   □ University postgraduate diploma or
      honours degree
   □ Institut or Universitet
   □ University undergraduate
   □ Tehnikiem
   □ TAFE
   □ Srednyaya shkola
   □ High school
   □ Professional’no tehnicheskaya uchilischche
   □ Vocational high school
   □ Nachalnaya shkola
   □ Primary school
Q15 If married, what is your spouse’s highest academic qualification? (please tick one in each country if relevant)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the former USSR:</th>
<th>In Australia:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Aspirantura</td>
<td>□ Masters or Doctoral degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Institut or Universitet</td>
<td>□ University postgraduate diploma or honours degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Srednyaya shkola</td>
<td>□ University undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Tehnikiem</td>
<td>□ High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Professional’no tehnicheskoya Uchilischche</td>
<td>□ TAFE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Nachalnaya shkola</td>
<td>□ Vocational high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Primary school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q16a. Please write the name of the school you attended for each of the years written below. If the school was not in Melbourne, please include the city as well.

☐ I have only attended [Name of School]
Pre school___________________________
Prep_______________________________
Grade 1___________________________
Grade 2___________________________
Grade 3___________________________
Grade 4___________________________
Grade 5___________________________
Grade 6___________________________
Grade 7___________________________
Grade 8___________________________
Grade 9___________________________
Grade 10__________________________
Grade 11__________________________
Grade 12__________________________

Q16b. In what year did you graduate?
☐ I graduated in ____________________.
☐ I did not graduate secondary school (I left school early.)
☐ I am still in secondary school.

Q17. Did you receive any part time Jewish education as a child?
☐ Yes       ☐ No (Go to Q18)

Q17a If yes, about how old were you?
☐ Before the age of 13 only
☐ After the age of 13 only
☐ Both before and after the age of 13
Q18a. After leaving or finishing secondary school, have you attended any full-time or part-time courses about Judaism?
(Please tick the appropriate box and write the appropriate number)

☐ Yes full-time for _______________ months OR ____________ years
☐ As part of other full-time course for __________ months OR __________ years
☐ Yes, part time _______________ months OR ____________ years
☐ No, not at all ☐ I am still in secondary school.

Section 3: This section looks at your use of languages.

Q19 In the former USSR, did you study English?
☐ Yes ☐ No (Go to Q20)

Q19a. If “Yes”, where did you study it?
☐ High school only ☐ High school and university
☐ University only ☐ Language courses
☐ Private ☐ Primary school

Q19b How long did you formally study English? Please specify
☐ Several months_____________ ☐ Several years ______________

Q20. Which languages do you speak with your family at home?
(Place a 1 next to language spoken most often, 2 next to the language spoken but not as often. Please mark only up to three languages.)

_____ Russian
_____ English
_____ Hebrew
_____ Yiddish
_____ Other (please name) ____________

Q21 Which language do you usually speak with most of your friends?
(Place a 1 next to language spoken most often, 2 next to the language spoken but not as often. Please mark only up to three languages.)

_____ Russian
_____ English
_____ Hebrew
_____ Yiddish
_____ Other (please name) ____________
Q22 What language would you call your mother–tongue?

☐ English (Go to Q24)
☐ Russian
☐ Hebrew
☐ Yiddish
☐ Other ____________

Q23. How well can you speak English? (Please tick)

☐ Extremely well ☐ Very well ☐ Fairly well ☐ Adequately ☐ Only a little ☐ Not at all

Q23a. How well can you read English? (Please tick)

☐ Extremely well ☐ Very well ☐ Fairly well ☐ Adequately ☐ Only a little ☐ Not at all

Q23b. How well can you write English? (Please tick)

☐ Extremely well ☐ Very well ☐ Fairly well ☐ Adequately ☐ Only a little ☐ Not at all

Q23c How well do you understand English? (Please tick)

☐ Extremely well ☐ Very well ☐ Fairly well ☐ Adequately ☐ Only a little ☐ Not at all

Q24. How well can you speak Hebrew? (Please tick)

☐ Extremely well ☐ Very well ☐ Fairly well ☐ Adequately ☐ Only a little ☐ Not at all

Q24a. How well can you read Hebrew? (Please tick)

☐ Extremely well ☐ Very well ☐ Fairly well ☐ Adequately ☐ Only a little ☐ Not at all

Q24b. How well can you write Hebrew? (Please tick)

☐ Extremely well ☐ Very well ☐ Fairly well ☐ Adequately ☐ Only a little ☐ Not at all

Q24c. How well can you understand Hebrew? (Please tick)

☐ Extremely well ☐ Very well ☐ Fairly well ☐ Adequately ☐ Only a little ☐ Not at all
Section 4: This section looks at your image of a Jew and Jewishness.
Your honest response in this section is particularly important to us as it will assist us
in the future design of educational programs that are better matched to views and
values of the whole school community and specifically to help integrate those of
Russian Jewish background.

Q25. Which one of the following is the most important in preserving your Jewish
heritage in Australia? (Choose only one option)

☐ Yiddish language/our “folk culture”
☐ Religion
☐ Russian language
☐ Hebrew/State of Israel
☐ Jewish education
☐ Other, please specify ________________________________

Q26. How important are the following to you:

A) To be active in the affairs of the Jewish community
☐ Essential ☐ Very Important ☐ Fairly important
☐ Not very important ☐ Not at all important

B) Observance of the Jewish religion
☐ Essential ☐ Very Important ☐ Fairly important
☐ Not very important ☐ Not at all important

C) The fate of Jews around the world
☐ Essential ☐ Very Important ☐ Fairly important
☐ Not very important ☐ Not at all important

D) Yiddish language and culture
☐ Essential ☐ Very Important ☐ Fairly important
☐ Not very important ☐ Not at all important

E) Having Jewish friends
☐ Essential ☐ Very Important ☐ Fairly important
☐ Not very important ☐ Not at all important
F) Survival of Jewish feeling in future generations
- Essential
- Very Important
- Fairly important
- Not very important
- Not at all important

G) Israel
- Essential
- Very Important
- Fairly important
- Not very important
- Not at all important

Q27. If a non-Jewish journal or newspaper praises Jews, does it make you
- Proud
- Indifferent
- Hostile
- Do not know

Q28. Are you married to:
- A Jew
- A non-Jew
- Not married Go to Q.29

Q28a. Would it concern you if your child married a non-Jew?
- I would not like it under any circumstances
- I have nothing against it
- Yes, if she/he converts to Judaism

Q29. Would it concern you if a close relative (including siblings) married a non-Jew?
- I would not like it under any circumstances
- I have nothing against it
- Yes, if she/he converts to Judaism

Q30. What is your opinion of a Jew who converts to another religion?
- Opposed
- Opposed, but may understand him
- Supportive
- It is his/her private affair

Q31. If a non-Jew in Australia mistakes you for a non-Jew, would you correct his mistake and tell him you are a Jew?
- Yes
- I am not sure but I think I would tell him
- I do not know what to do
- For sure I would not
- No
Q32. If somebody in Australia asks you about your background what would you answer? Please, tick only one answer.

☐ I am Jewish   ☐ I am Russian   ☐ I am an Australian
☐ I am a Russian Jew   ☐ I am an Australian Jew

Q33. If an anti-Semite mistakes you for a non-Jew, would you correct his mistake and tell him that you are a Jew?

☐ Yes   ☐ I do not know   ☐ I would tell him   ☐ No
☐ I am not sure but I think I would tell him

Now please give your reaction to the following statements:

Q34. Religion plays a role in regard to centrality of Jewishness.

☐ Strongly agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
☐ Disagree   ☐ Strongly disagree   ☐ Do not know

Q35. It is important to defend my Jewishness as a continuation of my Jewish identity.

☐ Strongly agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
☐ Disagree   ☐ Strongly disagree   ☐ Do not know

Q36. Jews are neither better nor worse than other peoples.

☐ Strongly agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
☐ Disagree   ☐ Strongly disagree   ☐ Do not know

Q37. The fact that I am Jewish plays a very important part in my life.

☐ Strongly agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
☐ Disagree   ☐ Strongly disagree   ☐ Do not know

Q38. It is very important to preserve Yiddish language and Yiddish culture.

☐ Strongly agree   ☐ Agree   ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
☐ Disagree   ☐ Strongly disagree   ☐ Do not know
Q39. What is your attitude to the languages of Jews, e. g. Yiddish, Hebrew?

☐ Very positive  ☐ Positive  ☐ No particular feeling

☐ Negative  ☐ Very negative

Q40. In your opinion, which one of the following best indicates that someone is a Jew? Please, tick only one answer.

☐ Considers him/herself to be a Jew

☐ Speaks one of the Jewish languages

☐ Observes Judaism as a religion

☐ Observes Jewish traditions/rituals

☐ Inscription “Jewish” in the passport

☐ Jews by his/her character and mentality

☐ Peculiar Jewish appearance and manners

☐ Jewish mother

☐ Jewish father

☐ Either Jewish mother or father

☐ Both Jewish mother and father

☐ Other, please specify _____________________________

☐ Do not know
Section 5: This section looks at your involvement in Jewish practices.

A large emphasis in the present Jewish studies curriculum is on Jewish practice. The following two questions will assist us in evaluating the type and extent of background support students from families of the former USSR might need to fully participate in these lessons.

Q41. Which of the following practices do you observe?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Strictly</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Loosely</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pesach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanukah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukkot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shabbat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yom Kippur</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashrut</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q42. How often do you attend synagogue?

- Every day
- About once a week
- About once a month
- Less than once a month
- High holidays only
- Special occasion (weddings, bar mitzvah etc) only
- Never

Section 6: This sections looks at attitudes towards Jewish education.

Q43. How would you define Jewish education?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

- 287 -
Q44. How important do you think it is for a Jewish child to receive a Jewish education?

☐ Very important    ☐ Important    ☐ Not very important    ☐ Not at all important

Q45. What do you consider to be the main advantages of full time Jewish schooling for Jewish children? (Choose from this list up to three main advantages.)

☐ Strengthens Jewish identity
☐ Enhances Jewish knowledge
☐ Encourages Jewish friendships
☐ Strengthens Jewish values
☐ Provides Jewish atmosphere
☐ Provides strong academic education
☐ Teaches Hebrew/Yiddish
☐ Provides emotional security
☐ Encourages Jewish observances
☐ Teaches about Israel and Jewish History
☐ Prepares young people for Bar-Bat mitzvah
☐ Has no advantages
☐ Other, please specify ______________________________
☐ Don’t’ know.

Q46 Which of the three advantages that you chose above do you think is

Most important ________________________________

2nd in importance______________________________

3rd in importance______________________________
Q47. What do you consider to be the main disadvantages of full-time Jewish schooling for Jewish children? Choose from this list up to three disadvantages:

☐ Too expensive
☐ Separates Jews from other Australians
☐ Lack of sport/extras
☐ Too religious
☐ Too much Hebrew/Jewish studies
☐ Too elitist
☐ Limited subject choices
☐ Poor quality teaching of Hebrew/Jewish subjects
☐ Poor discipline
☐ Doesn’t cater for children with special needs
☐ No disadvantages
☐ Poor quality academic education
☐ Other, please specify ____________________________
☐ Don’t know

Q48. From the three disadvantages that you chose above, which do you think is the
Main disadvantage ________________________________.
2nd ranked disadvantage ______________________________
3rd ranked disadvantage ______________________________
Section 7: This section looks at your reasons for choosing [Name of School]

Q49. How many siblings do you have? (Please write the number)

_____ Boys

_____ Girls.

Q50. How many of your siblings attended:

[Name of Girls’ School] [Name of Boys’ School]

Q51. Why did you choose, or your parents choose for you, to come to this school?

(Tick all that apply)

[Name of Girls’ School]

☐ Better schooling and high standard of education (high VCE results)

☐ High standard of Jewish education

☐ Siblings attended the school

☐ Able to acquire knowledge of Judaism

☐ Religion

☐ Discipline

☐ Better environment

☐ Jewish identity, solidarity

☐ Respect for parents

☐ It is of superior quality if compared to other private and public schools

☐ Recommendation of friends or relatives

☐ Financial subsidies were available

☐ Other, please specify___________________________________________

[Name of Boys’ School]

☐ Better schooling and high standard of education (high VCE results)

☐ High standard of Jewish education

☐ Siblings attended the school

☐ Able to acquire knowledge of Judaism

☐ Religion

☐ Discipline [continues on the next page]

☐ Better environment
☐ Jewish identity, solidarity
☐ Respect for parents
☐ It is of superior quality if compared with other private and public schools
☐ Recommendation of friends or relatives
☐ Financial subsidies were available
☐ Other, please specify__________________________________________

Q52 From the list of reasons in Q51 for coming to the school, which were the three most important considerations?

[Name of Girls’ School]
1st most important consideration______________________________________.

2nd important consideration___________________________________________

3rd consideration____________________________________________________

[Name of Boys’ School]
1st most important consideration______________________________________.

2nd important consideration___________________________________________

3rd consideration_____________________________________________________

Q53. In your opinion, how is [Name of School] different from other Jewish day schools in Melbourne?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Q54. At what stage did you read the school’s mission statement?
☐ Before I came to the school

☐ After I was already enrolled

☐ I have never seen or read the school mission statement.
Section 8: Parental involvement and expectations in education

Q55. To what extent can (or could) your parents help you with Jewish studies homework when you need (or needed) help?

☐ Yes, Very well  ☐ Yes, pretty much  ☐ Only a little  ☐ Not at all

Q55a. Is there someone else who can help you with Jewish studies homework if you need it?  
(or past students: Was there someone else who could have helped you when you needed it?)

☐ Yes  ☐ No (Go to Q56)

Q55b. If yes, who can help (or Past students; Who was able to help)?

☐ Grandparent  ☐ sibling (brother or sister)  ☐ Neighbor  ☐ Friend  ☐ Tutor

☐ Other, please specify______________________________.

Q56. To what extent can (or could) your parents help you with General studies homework if you need (or needed) it?

☐ Yes, Very well  ☐ Yes, pretty much  ☐ Only a little  ☐ Not at all

Q56a. Is there someone else who can help you with General studies homework if you need it?  
(or past students: Was there someone else who could have helped you when you needed it?)

☐ Yes  ☐ No (Go to Q57)

Q56b. If yes, who can help (or past students; Who was able to help)?

☐ Grandparent  ☐ sibling (brother or sister)  ☐ Neighbor  ☐ Friend  ☐ Tutor

☐ Other, please specify______________________________.

Q57. What role do you think parents ought to play in the education of their children? (Tick up to three)

☐ Encourage student to achieve excellence in all their subjects

☐ Supervise the student

☐ Hire tutors

☐ Seek feedback from teachers on a regular basis

☐ Be informed/aware of what the child is learning

☐ Ensure child comes to school on time

☐ Ensure child attends school regularly and does not miss too many days

☐ Help the child with homework

☐ Reinforce and encourage implementation of what is taught at school.

☐ Other, please specify_______________________________________
Q58. What did you (do you) expect the school to be able to provide to you in regard to your Jewish education? Tick no more than three.

- To read and speak Hebrew
- To be able to pray in Synagogue
- To be well-versed in tradition and culture
- To be able to study independently from Jewish texts
- To be able to continue in Jewish Religion institutions locally or overseas
- To make Jewish friends in a Jewish environment
- To be aware and respectful of all different types of Jews
- To be aware of issues in Israel
- To know Jewish history
- Other, please specify ________________________________________________

Q59 Did the school (or is the school) meeting your expectations in Jewish studies as you ticked above? Please explain.

[Name of School] ______________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

[Name of Boys’ School] ________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

- 293 -
Q60. What expectations did you/do you have of the school in regards to preparing you for life after school? Tick no more than three.

- Guarantee of high VCE scores
- To prepare me to go to University
- To develop me to be a well rounded Australian citizen
- To give me excellent Math/Science knowledge
- To prepare me for a career
- To develop excellent communication and networking skills
- To teach me leadership skills
- Other, please specify________________________________________________________

Q61 Did the school (or is the school) meeting your expectations in General studies as you ticked above? Please explain.

[Name of Girls’ School]________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

[Name of Boys’ School]________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
Q62. In which ways do you think the school could give you a better Jewish educational experience?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Q63 In what way do you think the school could help your parents to be more involved in the education of their children?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Author/s:
Rosenfeld, Fruma

Title:
A needs assessment regarding programs for Russian adolescents in Orthodox Jewish Day Schools: a comparative case study

Date:
2014

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/52780

File Description:
A needs assessment regarding programs for Russian adolescents in Orthodox Jewish Day Schools: a comparative case study