



## Tell Me What the World Was Like When You Were Young: Talking About Ourselves

by Simon Lichman and Rivanna Miller

*Simon Lichman, a folklorist, and Rivanna Miller, a program evaluator, have been involved in the field of shared-society or co-existence education since 1991. In this article we discuss how the process of interviewing has become an intrinsic component of our folklore-based programs that bring together Israeli and Palestinian school and college communities. We examine how the interviewing process helps our Arab and Jewish participants gain knowledge of each other's daily lives and cultures and, through their interactions, overcome negative stereotyping and de-humanization.*

Simon's interest in interviewing emerged out of a childhood passion for storytelling. Whenever his family celebrated weddings, bar mitzvahs, special birthdays, and festivals, the older generation would begin to tell stories. He would revel in the way the tellers and audience rolled around with infectious laughter at each embellishment. Nowadays, having moved up the generations, he and his cousins joyously tell their own versions of these stories.

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*About the photo: Students research family food traditions and continue to discover each other's cultures during Joint Activities in which they make pickled vegetables according to different families' traditions.*

Rivanna grew up in Southern Africa and then lived in multicultural settings in England, the U.S., and Israel. Her background has given her a wealth of experience listening to other people's voices and, most of all, allowing them to speak freely and be heard. She integrated her own love of family stories and experience of folklore fieldwork into her profession of Program Evaluation. She believes that the stories people tell are not only fascinating for others, but also help them to process their experiences themselves. The result is a deep narrative that enriches every experience.

It was appreciation of family tradition and a cultural ease that set Simon on his course to becoming a folklorist, doing his PhD research on British Folk Drama, primarily in the village of Marshfield, South West England.<sup>1</sup> Although studies included interviewing techniques and discussions about the sensibilities that fieldworkers need when entering and leaving communities, Simon's interviewing skills were already second nature and he found himself challenging some accepted fieldwork conventions.

For example, in the participant observation technique,<sup>2</sup> interviews are conducted by an "outsider," the fieldworker (participant) who must be unobtrusive (observer), influencing the interviewee and community as little as possible. As he grew close to those from whom data was collected, he became aware that being himself created a mutual, trusting relationship that enabled people to share all sorts of information from the "factual" to the idiosyncratic and highly personal.<sup>3</sup>

### **Program Background**

In 1991, Simon established the [Centre for Creativity in Education and Cultural Heritage](#) (CCECH), a nonprofit organization in Jerusalem that runs shared-society education programs and enrichment courses for school communities, teachers, and colleges. Rivanna's role in CCECH programs is one of evaluator, both formative and summative. Furthermore, she serves as a reflector for program activities, encouraging staff and participants to reflect deeply on their experiences. The use of reflective stories as described in this article is an outgrowth of this role.

Although these programs can bring together any diverse cultural groups, not necessarily those hostile to each other, we chose to concentrate on the relationships between the Jewish and Arab (Muslim and Christian), Israeli and Palestinian, communities of Israel and the region, and to provide positive opportunities for both children and adults to meet as ordinary people, rather than as feared stereotypes.

Many programs in Israel bring together Arab and Jewish groups.<sup>4</sup> Due to the conflict, participating in "co-existence" or "shared-society" programs is complicated since most families in the region have been affected by the complex history and ensuing violence. What makes CCECH programs unique is that they are based on the study and exchange of folklore.<sup>5</sup> In general, we have found that participants in our programs enjoy talking about their traditions. Even those people who seem to be against the idea of Jews and Arabs getting to know each other are hooked by the program's interest in their pasts and welcome the opportunity of telling their children about their childhoods.

In a society where rapid changes occur all the time, younger generations often dismiss their home cultures as irrelevant to their modern lives, while older generations lose their natural audience for the transmission of tradition. Information might be lost where formal or specific questions are not asked within this ever-widening gap between the younger generations and their cultures. We think

it is important, therefore, that our program participants first study their own folklore or home cultures. Central to this process is the interviewing of different generations within their own families. Their knowledge is then used as the vehicle for bringing together the Arab and Jewish partners in dynamic events in the school programs or as the basis for group discussions and dialogue in college and teacher enrichment courses where there is already a diverse student body. Although interviewing, per se, is not presented as the primary goal, the process of collecting information through interviewing underlies all our activities.

### **Program Descriptions**

Our school-community programs pair Arab and Jewish schools.<sup>6</sup> Each participating class is in the program for two years. CCECH team members lead separate one-hour weekly lessons with the class teachers in the Arab and Jewish schools. Participants are introduced to the folklore subjects, after which they go home to interview their families, returning to share the information collected in their own classes.

Throughout the year the children meet in several Joint Activities constructed around each specific unit of study. The pupils are the primary target population, but their family members (parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings) are intrinsic to the program, both in transmitting information at home and in the meetings between the Jewish and Arab children. Teachers are also direct beneficiaries through their in-house training. Our choice of age group (nine- to twelve-year-olds) is dependent on the children's intellectual curiosity and ability to interview their families, collect and present information, and be open to meeting people from other cultural backgrounds. Parents and grandparents from both communities are invited to participate in their expert capacities as tradition bearers and folk artists. The material becomes active in these meetings, taking on a physical presence as some of the games are played, or when food is prepared together. Joint Activities take place in schools, community centers, shared space like public parks, and places of worship (mosques, synagogues, churches).

The first unit of study is usually *Traditions in Play*. The children work on games that parents and grandparents played in their childhoods. In the Joint Activities they are divided into small, mixed groups to play a selection of these traditional games. Where possible, parents and grandparents join the teachers and CCECH's team of facilitators to teach the different versions of games.<sup>7</sup>



The traditional game of walking planks.

Second-year subjects include *Foodways*. Children learn about the changing world through a brief introduction to the development of agriculture and the industrialization of food preparation. They research their families' food traditions and continue to discover each other's cultures during Joint Activities in which they make pickled vegetables according to different families' traditions, or they share a variety of starch-based foods (such as bread) and assorted spreads (hummus, cheeses, jams). (See opening photograph.)

Our college courses are based on the best practices of CCECH's experience in the school-community pairing programs. They provide a forum for students to examine stereotypes they have of each other and of themselves, while learning how the rich cultural resources of their own families can be used in multicultural education and shared-society work.



5<sup>th</sup> grader interviews her grandmother.

### **Interviews and Context**

Training participants in interviewing techniques is not a formal objective of our programs, nor is there time for it in the limited hours allotted to our teaching in schools, and the college students come from various disciplines but do not study Folklore. However, we do some basic preparation about the interviewing process and we have developed guideline questions that shape their fieldwork and help these inexperienced interviewers maintain the balance between conversation and interview.

## Sample questions from the Traditional Play and Foodways Units of Study

Relationship to Interviewer (mother/father/grandmother...)  
Approximate Age (and the decade that places their childhoods in social history)  
Country of Origin (City/Town/Village...)  
Location of Childhood (which might differ from where they were born)

### Information for Games

What games did you play in your childhood?  
Number of players, age of players, boys/girls/both, outdoors/indoors  
Seasonal/year-round/festivals  
Who did you play with (friends, neighbors, families, siblings, cousins...)?  
Where did you play (gardens, parks, forests, roads, schoolyards...)?

### Specific Game Questions

Name of game in source language and Arabic/ Hebrew/English equivalent where different  
Physical conditions required (walls, water, flat spaces, hard or rough surface, holes, trees, etc.)  
Equipment needed (found objects such as stones, nuts, fruit pips, planks, sticks, bones; scrap materials such as cloth, rope, clothing elastic, tires; handmade objects; bought things such as marbles, balls, bats, skipping ropes)  
Brief description of the rules and method of play

### Specific Pickling Tradition Questions

Does anyone in the family make pickles now?  
Is there anyone in the family who used to make pickles?  
Which seasons?  
What type of pickles do/did they make?  
Source of vegetables in each generation (homegrown, local farms, open market, supermarket)  
From whom did the pickle maker learn to make pickles and from whom did their teachers learn?  
Is anyone in the family learning from them now?  
Who is given the pickles (nuclear family, extended family, friends...)?

### Pickling Process Questions

Ingredients and amounts  
Pickling agents (vinegar, citric acid, lemons, salt...)  
How long until ready for eating?  
Storage until ready (window ledge, shade, direct sunlight, refrigerator...)  
Briefly describe the process

The questions are designed to help the school pupils and college students focus on a complexity they might otherwise gloss over by thinking in terms of “yes” “no” answers or accumulating simple lists of games or recipes, and we talk about going beyond the short answers that close down the process of collecting information. Whereas folklorists automatically include questions about context in their fieldwork interviews, this is not obviously important to the teachers, pupils, and students, who need to learn to avoid limiting potentially expansive answers that might lead to unexpected revelations. We explain why context matters and how this kind of information provides an insight into the past.

We use role playing and orally transmitted examples to illustrate the interview situation. For example, the general opening question in the Traditional Play Unit, “What games did you play in your childhood?” might be answered with, “We didn’t have time to play,” or “We were too poor to play.” In this situation alternative follow-up questions with a slight change of focus, such as, “What did you do in your spare time?” might elicit a more accurate and complex answer. Or we might discuss what contextual information is missing and suggest follow-up questions so that the statements might be discovered to mean that their time was taken up with daily chores before and after school (if they had schooling) and they needed to devise games that could be played while working. For example, we have heard accounts of games suitable for young shepherds or a three sticks variant played with tent-sewing needles.

All program participants are “insiders” as opposed to impartial researchers since they are part of the family and community being studied and the interviews tend to have a conversational quality. The “insider” position is further highlighted when, for example, the children compare their families’ traditional games to their own repertoires of play and the college students interview themselves as representing their own generation.<sup>8</sup>

While the one-on-one interview is the basic model, students can also interview family members in pairs or small groups, which could elicit a more natural response to the questions and a sense of group excitement, with each person stimulating another’s memories.<sup>9</sup> This atmosphere more accurately replicates a traditional group gathering that might lead to the exchange of information either as an informal discussion, banter, or storytelling event. However, because the object of this exercise is to collect information that will be used in program activities (presenting in class and exchanging in Joint Activities) the interviewer also needs to ensure consciously that each interviewee can complete and articulate their own thoughts.

It is also crucial to use teachers’ understandings of personal issues that might arise when their pupils are delving into family stories so that interview preparation can be steered in directions that best suit individual pupils. Where there are no living grandparents, children can interview someone of the relevant generation from the same cultural background (great-aunt or uncle, family friend, neighbor). If family members live too far away to visit, telephone or email interviews are encouraged. We recommend that participants conduct their home interviews in their mother tongues so that the conversation flows. The material is translated orally into Hebrew or Arabic when being shared in class and in the Joint Activities.

### **Presenting Data**

When we first began working in schools, teachers would write our questions on the board for the children to copy. The fact that we did not use a previously prepared handout offered the flexibility to fine-tune questions and information categories to each class since academic levels and interests vary widely. However, most teachers soon requested a more formal printed handout with space for answers. Although we were concerned that this might restrict the scope of information being collected, we recognized that their suggestions could lead to an easier, more accessible method of conveying these guidelines. Of course, children still tend to use the constraints of the actual sheet of paper, squeezing their answers into the spaces they think have been provided, mostly ignoring the option of adding pages for more information or more than one interviewee.

We ask for as *many* games and their contexts from as *many* family members as possible, leaving the number of interviewees and the material to be collected open so that there is a built-in fluidity

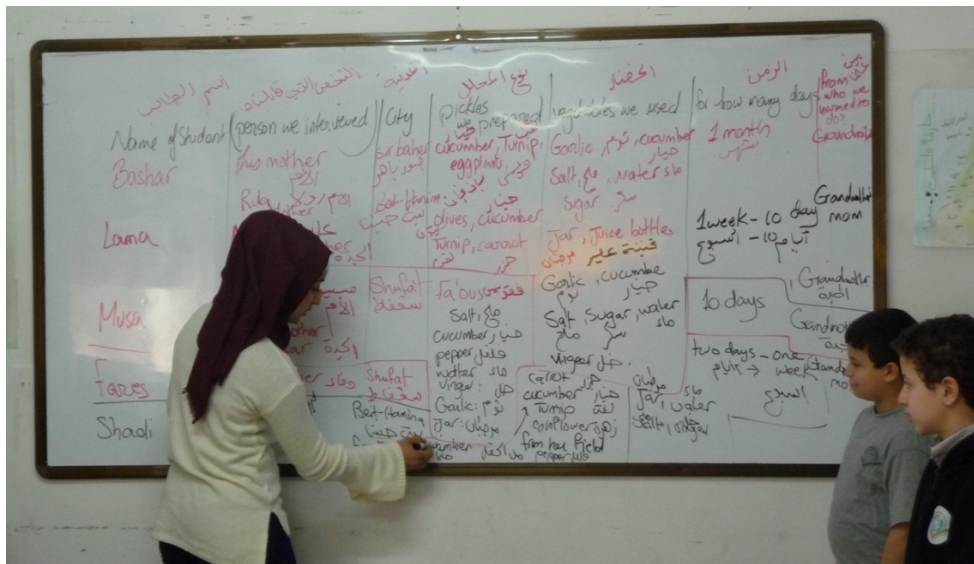
to the interview situation. Some teachers prefer to specify *how many* people need to be interviewed and *how many* games should be presented, often telling the class to choose *one* game from *one* parent or grandparent.<sup>10</sup> The tension between our approaches lies with our wanting the children to get a sense of the “world of play” and the teachers’ wanting clearer end-products that can be shared in a more controlled way.

Where the interviews are broad (with more than one family member interviewed), the scope for comparisons becomes even more interesting. Children can see the differences between their parents and grandparents as well as between other families of their class community. This raises their levels of awareness about the world around them and the evolution of their communities within the larger society.

Children who have difficulty with the process of formal education can excel in this work. As well as writing, they have the option of oral presentations, recording interviews, making drawings, and bringing examples of homemade toys, pickles, and jams to show the class. We encourage all participants to save the information they collect over the two years and to treat it as a treasure, a family resource and archive, as opposed to a study project that might lose relevance over time.

The struggle to represent interviews formally in writing often dulls the content, whereas the interview itself might have been far-reaching and full of energy, and we strive to help the presenters recapture the dynamic spirit of their interviews. However, the way their information is shared in class also depends on the style of each teacher. Our program team prefers to enter the material into a table or chart on the board or Bristol paper so that the class can see their community’s display of home cultures at a glance. Our objective is for every child to have the chance to present and be heard. This can take several lessons. Teachers often want to limit this sharing process to avoid the class getting bored, feeling that today children need more speed, which they attribute to the influence of the Internet on education.

In contrast, there are teachers who believe in giving their classes the chance to explore topics according to the pace of their engagement and the process of discovery. These teachers give the children a sense that there is always enough class time to enable everyone to present their material



An example of a home cultures chart in the classroom.

in their own ways. The interview process sometimes enables children to show something of their private family life they may otherwise feel shy about “exposing.” They will have gained the confidence to do this from having seen how their classmates are genuinely interested in each other’s discoveries. For example, the children are asked to bring lullabies passed down through the generations in the original languages together with rough translations. The classes always listen to each other’s songs with respect and we can see the pride glowing in each presenter’s eyes. Through such experiences children and their teachers become aware of aspects of home life they might not have known such as, how some of their classmates are bi- or tri-lingual.<sup>11</sup>

### **Opening Doors**

The breadth and depth of cultural diversity is reflected in the range of material brought from home and the richness of variations. The mix of cultures in Israel is determined by various communities’ countries of origin.<sup>12</sup> Lying on major trade routes, the Middle East has been a region of migration, immigration, and exile for thousands of years, building up civilizations and enduring declines and endless warfare.

We have chosen the world of play as our opening subject because, as clichéd as this sounds, all generations have played, even in the most depressed and uncertain childhoods. On being given this interview to do as homework in the school-community pairing programs, children often say of their parents and grandparents, “Oh, they didn’t play games.” Their discoveries to the contrary amaze them.

Questions of context plunge the interviewers into worlds that are not necessarily new to them, but definitely alter or redefine the way they look at their physical environment. For example, parents and grandparents might have played in a field or an open lot that is now a block of apartments or system of roads. They learn of a freedom of movement in these outside spaces and compare this to their own period in history when playing outside is mostly associated with public parks, designated structured play areas, and the public spaces around apartment blocks.

The schoolchildren and our college students are usually surprised and delighted by accounts of games specifically suited to terrains that might be foreign to them. They bring examples of seasonal games dependent on finding horse chestnuts and apricot pips, such as the British game of conkers and the Israeli/Palestinian game of *adjoim/gogim/adjum*, respectively; or Bedouin games for dark evenings without electricity when sound is used to locate thrown stones or bones. They hear accounts that describe how the search for suitable play materials was part of game time and how games were especially devised or adapted, for example, to desert play in the Middle East or the snows of Eastern Europe.

For the school pupils, the emphasis is on interviewing the older generations (parents and grandparents) about their childhoods, as a way of coming to understand how the world we take for granted is in a constant state of flux, with changes from generation to generation. The college students become aware of the same process, but they interview four generations for each subject (grandparents, parents, themselves as representing their generation, and a child between 8 and 12 years old) to see their own and each other's families’ sweep of history.

As a means of introducing our college students to Folklore and the transmission of home culture, we ask them to bring an artifact that has been passed from generation to generation.<sup>13</sup> We explain that this exercise is dependent on talking to their families because the story of the artifact is as



important as the object itself since it is placed within the evolution of their family's individual and societal identity. By including context as part of their presentations, these students are immediately building up pictures of their families' lives through time. Each subsequent interview focuses on a new theme or subject, thereby participants are constantly accumulating knowledge about themselves, their fellow students, and their families. When sharing their material with each other, they see what they have discovered in a new light as it now enters the group's experience of each other's cultural backgrounds, family histories, and religions.

Many of the college students have never thought of formally interviewing their families although they might have knowledge of family history from stories.<sup>14</sup> Students have told us that interviewing their families about the world of play seemed a ridiculous idea for a compulsory college course assignment. They did not anticipate that the interview would be interesting or of educational value. Some students also worried that their families would feel that being interviewed was an imposition. Most students recount how the excitement generated in the actual interview sessions moved them past their initial negative responses to the exercise and, influenced by this atmosphere, they were able to expand the scope of their interest. They returned to class with unexpected enthusiasm, looking forward to the next assignment.

They have also often discovered things they did not know about their families and talk about how this process inspired them with further questions. A student described asking her mother if the family had any traditional artifacts, having little expectation of discovering anything. Her mother appeared with a small suitcase that contained an elaborate cloak from Morocco used for her pre-wedding henna ceremony some 30 years earlier. The student had never seen it because her mother thought no one would be interested. The student blessed this exercise for, without it, she might never have heard the detailed story of her mother's wedding and the complicated transition from one culture to another. She planned to wear this cloak at her own henna ceremony.<sup>15</sup>



Student artifacts discovered through an interview exercise.

The final work in our college courses is based on a more comprehensive set of interviews. Students are divided into small, mixed Jewish and Arab study groups and they design research questions relevant to their chosen topic. Issues include: Men's and Women's Roles in Their Communities; Traditional and Contemporary Methods of Settling Disputes; Family Honor and Transgression; Access to Education and Choices of Profession; Marriage-Courting Conventions and Wedding Rituals; Festivals; Foodways.

Looking at these cross-cultural interviews of three generations (grandparents, parents, and themselves representing their own generation) the students analyze how the issues have changed through time and what impact these changes have had on their communities. They read their interviews to each other, discussing themes they have developed as a group. Each student is responsible for ensuring that the material of their interviews is germane to the subject since their families are the sources of information as opposed to academic articles or formal histories. A secondary benefit of this approach is that their discussions are less likely to be dominated by political rhetoric, thus enabling the groups to be empathetic even when challenging and controversial subjects are raised.

### **Reflections**

Interviews provide opportunities for participants to connect formally with their traditions and their families' tradition bearers. Through experiencing the interview process, participants are introduced to the way in which information is transmitted across and between generations and diverse home cultures, causing them to reassess how their own home culture may be valuable in shaping their contemporary identities.

Many children, college students, and family members have told us how excited they felt about interviewing and being interviewed. We realized that the experience of the interview itself was felt to be as important as the material being collected, therefore, we added questions that would encourage all pupils and students to reflect on their family interview experiences as part of their assessment of the course or program. One student wrote, "The interviewing was enjoyable and gave me an added perspective on the life my family led. It was good to see the family's smile when talking about their simple, happy childhoods. All old and discarded materials were used in imaginative play, nothing was taken for granted. And all this gives me a different way of looking at our lives today."<sup>16</sup>

A Jewish student-teacher said, "I realized that I haven't really spent so much time with my grandmother, I mean that I was used to being with her during the Sabbath and at bar mitzvahs and weddings, but we don't usually sit down together, just the two of us. I was so excited by this interviewing that I decided from now on to visit her once a week. She tells me the story of her life, which I've heard before but don't mind hearing again, and lots of things about her life that I didn't know keep popping up because now she knows I'm interested in the details, and we have much deeper conversations. It's given me a stronger sense of where I've come from, I can see how it all fits into my own life. And it has given my grandmother the chance to learn about my life—she says this brings her joy."

The interviews bring the family into the program and, through this, into the schools and colleges where participants see their parents and grandparents being respected for what they know and what they can transmit. In their reflections, several Bedouin and Jewish students wrote about how their grandmothers, who did not have access to formal education, had always felt too self-conscious to have any role in their children's and grandchildren's education. They could not believe that what they had to say was considered important enough to become part of the material used in a university course. One student wrote, "My grandmother cried to think that my professors were interested in her stories."

A Bedouin student-teacher added, “Researching home culture fascinated me. Most people are interesting. My family told me about their lives and they talked about the ‘values’ by which they have lived. I will use the idea of children interviewing their families in my own teaching. I believe that learning these values will help our children to live in a mixed society.”

The interviewing process itself brings participants to the nuances of contact. The family interview as an assignment in educational settings provides a framework for collecting information at home beyond that which is already known or discovered as a consequence of growing up in the family. The fact that participants are aware that they are all interviewing their parents and grandparents links them in ways beyond or outside programs activities and compounds their feelings of togetherness, as if they have been part of each other’s interviews. In recognizing their own and each other’s parents’ and grandparents’ roles in history, Jewish and Arab school pupils and college students appreciate that they too have a role in this process, which includes being responsible for how they interact with each other, replacing fear-bound expectations with a more hopeful vision of a shared society.

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*Rivanna Miller has worked in Evaluation and Program Design since 1982, using reflective evaluation as especially suitable for shared-society work and teacher training. In addition to documenting the programs of the Centre for Creativity in Education and Cultural Heritage through video and still photography, she uses these visual materials as internal evaluation tools for participants. Her photographs appear in numerous articles about CCECH’s work.*

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URL <https://sites.google.com/site/ccechfund/home>

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Simon Lichman, *The Gardener's Story and What Came Next: A Contextual Analysis of the Marshfield Paper Boys' Mumming Play*, PhD Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1981.

<sup>2</sup> See Hortense Powdermaker. 1966. *Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist*. New York: W.W. Norton. For a general discussion of fieldwork techniques and interviewing see also: Clifford Geertz. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books; Robert A. Georges and Michael O. Jones. 1980. *People Studying People: The Human Element in Fieldwork*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press; Kenneth S. Goldstein. 1964. *A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore*. Hatboro, Pennsylvania: Folklore Associates; Elliot G. Mishler. 1986. *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University

Press; James P. Spradley. 1980. *Participant Observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston; Victor Turner. 1970. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

- <sup>3</sup> See Simon Lichman. 2018. Sensibility and Rule Breaking in Israeli-Palestinian Shared Society Education Programs, unpublished paper, Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society (Buffalo).
- <sup>4</sup> For a discussion of shared society programs see Aneelah Afzali and Laura Colleton. 2003. Constructing Coexistence: A Survey of Coexistence Projects in Areas of Ethnic Conflict. In *Imagine Coexistence: Restoring Humanity After Violent Ethnic Conflict*, eds. Antonia Chayes and Martha Minow. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 3-20.
- <sup>5</sup> This article is part of a wider study about how Folklore is effective as a tool for bringing together diverse groups, some of whom may be in conflict.
- <sup>6</sup> When the State of Israel was created in 1948, the Arab communities chose to maintain a separate school system in which Arabic was the language of learning. In both Arab and Jewish schools, the class may be composed of children with family backgrounds from several countries, ethnic groups, and religions. Contact between Jewish and Arab communities, even those living side by side, is often limited to the workplace, with little opportunity for children to gain direct, positive knowledge of one another.
- <sup>7</sup> A fuller description of the program can be found in Simon Lichman. 2001. From Hopscotch to Siji: Generations at Play in a Cross-cultural Setting. In *Play Today in the Primary School Playground: Life, Learning and Creativity*, eds. Julia Bishop and Mavis Curtis. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- <sup>8</sup> See Gabriella Modan and Amy Shuman. 2011. Positioning the Interviewer: Strategic Uses of Embedded Orientation in Interview. In "Narratives in Interviews, Interviews in Narratives," eds. Anna De Fina and Sabina Perrino. Special issue, *Language in Society*. 40.1: 13-25. In their discussion of "embedded orientation," Gabriella Modan and Amy Shuman examine the significance of "the interviewer...as an insider and outsider." We find it of interest to note that the interviews in our programs are between insider and insider. See also, Powdermaker, op. cit., for a discussion of fieldworkers researching their own communities
- <sup>9</sup> The effect of sharing material in this way can be compared with what Barbara Rosenstein calls *stimulated recall*, where, according to her research, showing photographs and video clips can elicit deeper responses because of the visual stimulation. See Barbara Rosenstein. 2002. Video Use in Social Science Research and Program Evaluation. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 1.3; 22-43.
- <sup>10</sup> For a detailed example for how the information gathered is used, see Simon Lichman. 2015. Uses of Hopscotch in Multicultural, Intergenerational Co-existence Education. *Journal of Folklore and Education*. 2: 3-13.
- <sup>11</sup> This is a prime example of a syndrome Amy Shuman discusses in *Storytelling Rights: The Uses of Oral and Written Texts by Urban Adolescents* (1986, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) where teachers might not necessarily be aware of the high level of literacy functioning in the home lives of pupils who struggle in school.
- <sup>12</sup> See Jacob M. Landau. 1969. Chapters 1 (Some Basic Data) and 2 (Adaptation or Alienation). In *The Arabs in Israel: A Political Study*. London: Oxford University Press. Also see Harry M. Rosen. 1970. *The Arabs and Jews in Israel: The Reality and the Dilemma, the Promise*. New York: The American Jewish Press, 12-6.
- <sup>13</sup> The students bring such objects as tea kettles from Morocco; teapots from England; Middle Eastern *Finjans* for making coffee; *Kiddush* Cups and candlesticks used on the Jewish Sabbath; prayer carpets and prayer beads used by Muslim worshippers; hand-embroidered garments, wall hangings and tablecloths; and handwoven carpets.
- <sup>14</sup> Most families tell stories in various natural settings such as parties, get-togethers, festive meals (Christmas, Thanksgiving, Ramadan, Passover), mourning periods (wakes and *shivvas*). We are consciously asking participants to create non-traditional moments of transmission (the homework situation of interviewing) as well as to share the stories (information) that are part of their families' repertoire. This is similar to Kenneth Goldstein's concept of "induced natural contexts" (Goldstein 1964, 87-90) as a means of collecting folklore. However, the induced settings for transmission in this work are quite different because both interviewer and interviewee are from the same family and the moment they are together, the older generation interviewees take on the role of tradition bearer as a matter of course, once they get past any self-consciousness they might have at being interviewed formally.
- <sup>15</sup> Although we have run teacher training and enrichment courses in various settings, most material to which we refer in this article is from our course *Researching Home Cultures as a Tool for Shared Society Encounters*, in the Multicultural Project for Jewish and Bedouin student-teachers at Kaye Academic College for Education, Beersheva. We would like to thank the other members of the team of the Multicultural Project for sharing their experience and profound insights over many years.
- <sup>16</sup> In contrast to these happy memories we are sometimes told that the interviewing has been difficult, especially when memories are painful, and people have been loath to share them. However, even here, the interview framework, which seems to have a formal structure, often opens the door to a flow of information and a way of articulating painful experiences.