Citation: Stojanović, D. (2025). Intergenerational dialogue across technological and educational spaces in learning about Jewish history and culture. *Colloquia Humanistica*, *2025*(14), Article 3387. https://doi.org/10.11649/ch.3387

Colloquia Humanistica 14 (2025)
Commemoration of Jewish Culture, Tradition and Heritage Outside Western Europe
Article No. 3387
https://doi.org/10.11649/ch.3387

COLLOQUIA HUMANISTICA

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Intergenerational Dialogue Across Technological and Educational Spaces in Learning About Jewish History and Culture

Abstract

The paper discusses the importance of engaging technological and educational spaces in contemporary processes of learning about Jewish history and culture. The author explores the potentials of merging contemporary technology with innovative approaches to education, particularly in fostering and improving intergenerational and intracommunal dialogues. To analyze the role of the immersion effect in extended educational realities, as well as its significance for intergenerational dialogue in small Jewish communities, two case studies from Serbia are presented and analyzed: the Midrasha project and the Interactive Tour of Jewish Belgrade. The exhibited results show the transformational potential of two different learning programs in the context of extended educational realities at the crossroads of technology and education. These findings might contribute to further reflections and practices in Jewish education and education in general, as well as to the encouragement of intergenerational dialogues.

Keywords: intergenerational dialogue, small Jewish communities, immersion, education, teaching methods.

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Publisher: Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences
Editor-in-chief: Jolanta Sujecka
Conception and academic editing: Katarzyna Taczyńska, Jolanta Sujecka, & Monika Stobiecka

Jewish History and Culture in the Networks of Intergenerational Communication: Memory, Technology, and Intergenerational Dialogue

As a vital part of individual and collective orientation in time, space, and identification context, memory stands at the crossroads of past and present. Speaking in the bio-info-technological discourse, a memory is always stored in a sort of information carrier, of which the human body seems to have particular complexity. In the light of media theories that discuss the transmission of cultural forms in different times, in order to keep memory in the general discursive reality we technically don't need a human being as an information carrier: After all, memories can also be stored on paper, kept recorded in audio or audio-video format, and multiplied in vast and almost immaterial digital space, depending on the mediasphere (Debre, 2000).[1] However, in order for a memory to be intergenerationally transmitted, a human being has to encounter the memory source and to recognize it as relevant to their present identity and life. It can still mean that this human being can pick up the memory from an artificial technological source that stores it (from paper, an audio or video player, or simply from the Internet in the current times), but the most complex memory transference still happens in human-to-human interaction, precisely because of the emotional, affective, and biodynamic response that occurs on the spot. Having said that, this is not to say that artificial or technological memory stores and communication channels are less valuable or less important than human-to-human ones[2] – the artificial technological spaces of remembering and memory exchange play an important role in contemporary learning about histories and cultures, but it is also important not to leave out the human actors from this picture.

Concentrating on the human element in memory transmission, how long can a historical or cultural memory survive? This certainly depends on several elements: the impact of the memorized content on the individual life or perceived collective destiny, the presence and availability of technological aids, tools, information carriers and sources, and the relevance of what is memorized to the lives of future generations who would or would not adopt the

[1] According to Regis Debray, a mediasphere is a bio-info-technological communication macroenvironment that defines and regulates individual and social stances and attitudes, the temporal orientation of an individual or a society, and a specific way of grouping of communities (Debre, 2000, p. 58).

[2] One can even say that memory today is not individual or collective, but connective – "structured by digital networks, and constituted through the flux of contacts between people and digital technologies and media" (Hoskins, 2011, p. 272).

memory as part of their own legacy. The selection is thus made on the basis of recognized relevance, not much differently than in the case of tradition in general. As a matter of fact, that is exactly how the process of memory transmission plays its part in establishing the notion of tradition and values, which then have a crucial role in individual or collective sociocultural orientation. However, there is a difference between memories formed as a consequence of an event that the person lived through and memory formed as acquired cultural or generational inherited knowledge. Also, in the case of acquired memory, it is not the same if the memory was received as communicative, cultural, or institutional memory (Albvaš, 2015; Asman, 2015). There is also a fine line between memory transmitted while the original carrier is still alive (memory era) or later (postmemory era) (Hirsch, 2012). Postmemory times are almost always followed by the fear or worry that the memories in question might be forgotten. Partially, this is a natural process, and one that has a function – as for the individual, so for human societies (Guimarães Pereira et al., 2014). On the other hand, forgetting or mixing elements of the past can contribute to overall confusion regarding one's identification centeredness (which may or may not be a bad thing to happen, depending on the context and interpretation), and it can also blur the connectional lines and bonds between the living generations. In cases where the family or the community is small, this could cause strong feelings of isolation and intergenerational misunderstandings. It all becomes more sensitive in cases where trauma-related memory plays a huge part in the current memory corpus, such as in the case of Jewish history and culture.

In Jewish culture, memory and memorial practices play a crucial role in establishing the idea of the continuity of the community. From the times and narrative layers of the Torah, the challenge of constant change has been contradicted by a strengthening of the memorial culture, paired by memorial activities that still hold an important place in the diverse spectrum of Jewish observances – from cultural to religious. However, it seems that almost no historical trauma can be comparable to the effect that the Holocaust left on Jewish communities – especially in Europe, where the Holocaust predominantly took place. The amount of this trauma impact can be due to the fact that, first of all, the Holocaust happened roughly 80 years ago, which is still quite recently in historical terms (there are still living witnesses, although we are rapidly entering the postmemory Holocaust-related era), and, secondly, it devastated Jewish communities in Europe, with some communities being almost wiped away.[3] This

[3] Such is the case with the Jewish community in Serbia, which counted around 34,000 individuals before the Holocaust, and it was shrunk down to just a remaining 10 percent – around 3,300 people, with around 2,000 members residing in Belgrade (*Serbia*, n.d.).

caused immense shock and a deep void in the Jewish historical and cultural memoryscape, creating absent (Fine, 1988) and prosthetic memories (Lury & Landberg, 1998), phantomic crypts and pains in the inherited body of memory (Jilovsky, 2015; Yassa, 2002). This was further paired with the long-held silence of the first generation of survivors, followed by the intense attachment of the second generation, who tried to reach towards that memory hole (Jacobs, 2016). In the meantime, the third generation grew up with a great many question marks that often brought them to all sorts of creative and proactive initiatives, including using different technological and educational spaces to establish connection with the generations before them (Jacobs, 2010). This process feels more and more urgent as more and more individuals of the first generation leave this world.[4] The whole process of learning about such traumatizing history that runs through families and communities, and cuts into all the other areas of Jewish culture and life, can be quite exhaustive, and working with this topic in the domain of education and knowledge transference is always sensitive. It often stirs up plenty of emotions with many affective responses, followed by mixed feelings of a strong need for and reluctance about connecting with the older generations in order to find out more about oneself and one's identity. The same goes the other way round: Although having children and descendants after the Holocaust was, in many Holocaust survivors' testimonies, seen as a kind of a triumph over the Nazi idea of annihilating the Jewish population in Europe (Gaon, 2001–2009), sometimes the first generation found it hard not to see the descending generations, scarce in numbers compared to what could have been, as painful reminders of the overall effect of the Holocaust on Jewish families and communities (Jacobs, 2016). All this adds to the complexity of intergenerational relations in Jewish communities since the Holocaust, making intergenerational communication and learning a challenging but also significant element of contemporary Jewish lives. Transgenerational dialogue is especially hard to achieve in very small communities that were extremely reduced in numbers. A small number of community members in total usually means a smaller number of people across generations; this creates an active issue regarding successful intracommunal learning about Jewish history and culture within such Jewish communities. The small number of people in each generation does not create a huge mass of age-related audiences for learning or socializing, so such communities often face challenges regarding generation-related activities. On the other hand, this atmosphere creates a perfect platform for intergenerational learning about

[4] The literature on the transgenerational inheritance of the Holocaust trauma is quite extensive, and the references listed here are just a tiny part of all the discussions and works related to this topic.

the past and the present of Jewish lives – but it is often more complicated than simple as it sounds. Different generations work with different memories, but also with different sets of social knowledge and attitudes, and different sets of technological interest and skills. These are all the elements that will influence learning about history and culture in general, but they will also influence intergenerational dialogue, potentially burdening memory and knowledge exchange with difficulties. So what is the way of solving these issues? Can technology help?

The Importance of Techno-Educational Spaces in Intracommunal Learning About Jewish History and Culture

Technology has always been an essential part of education. Usually, when speaking about technology, there is a tendency to think about the newest technologies, such as digital technology, artificial intelligence, or augmented reality – but the very field of technology and technological tools goes way beyond that (Weiss, 2006). Even the simple pencil and paper, or even the biomechanism of the human body that is still actively used in teaching these days, are also examples of technology that both those who teach and those who learn use during the learning process (Debre, 2000; McLuhan, 1964). Through the process of learning, technology thus becomes one of the key elements in constituting social relations and bonds in the community (Kellner, 2006). Also, exploring the potentials of using technology in educational environments can possibly bring different generations together, making individuals and age groups more socially interactive and curious for one another's sets of questions (Luke, 2006). This could improve the effect of mutual learning, at the same time enhancing transgenerational memory transfer. After all, meanings are formed, actualized and embodied only when they are shared, thought through and discussed in an intracommunal environment and atmosphere (Downes, 2008). This is how communities get strengthened, together with the individuals becoming empowered by being *heard* in the bigger group. As the techno-ecology of the communicative environment can be used quite successfully to create this kind of social bonding, even very small and diverse communities can benefit from this effect.

The problem, however, might be how to choose an adequate techno-ecological environment for such a bonding effect to occur in a small community, specifically in the Jewish communities of Serbia, some of which are really tiny: A community might consist of not more than a dozen individuals in a certain generational group. Not to generalize, but different generations often choose different preferred methods of learning, and usually the younger generations are going to be more interested in contemporary digital technology and virtu-

al learning environments,[5] compared to older generational groups that would prefer meeting in person and discussing with the help of paper, pencil and various physical panels or boards for better visualization of ideas and conclusions. Also, younger generations often prefer a fast, eventful learning process, compared to the more chatty and take-your-time style of the more mature generations.[6] This difference often stems from cultivated habits taken from the mediasphere that was dominant in a given generation's formative schooling and working years (Debre, 2000).

What can be beneficial in cases of intergenerational dialogue when learning about Jewish history and culture in Jewish communities is that, no matter their size, they are usually used to continual lifelong learning. Jewish learning typically uses many different communication techniques taken both from Jewish traditional learning (such as *havruta*) and from informal learning contexts (Holzer & Kent, 2013). Both learning legacies are very well used in the Jewish community in Serbia, too. Also, as traditional Jewish learning is already cultivated as multilayered intergenerational dialogue discovery,[7] it can serve as a good platform for further exploration of the potentials of intracommunal intergenerational Jewish learning in different technoenvironments.

Although learning can happen through any technological aid, the choice of mediasphere in the learning process can be quite important. Exploring new and innovative mediaspheres might be extremely important not only for engaging the youngest learners, but also for enhancing efficient contact between different generations. In the end, the contemporary mediasphere still incorporates the communication styles and info-objects of previous mediaspheres, such as texts, images, or sound recordings (Debre, 2000). This points to the fact that, with some adaptation and care, all the generations can feel quite at home even in the most recent mediasphere. That is why virtual

[5] Of course, there are many individuals in the older age groups who are quite tech-savvy, although this is sometimes also an effect of exposing them to learning through contemporary technology. Having been encouraged to join the educational programs in digital virtual environments, many people feel an increased interest in new technologies and the benefits that they bring.

[6] My conclusions are based on observing and participating in different educational activities in Jewish communities in Serbia in the previous 10 years. Here, I was a part of the educational process either as a learner or as an educator, mostly through programs of the Memorial Committee of the Jewish community of Belgrade, of which I am a member, or through the Jewish educational organization Haver Srbija (*About Haver Serbia*, n.d.), with which I cooperate as an educational program consultant.

[7] The Talmudic forms of text (Mishna + Gemara) are already an example of this approach, which continues further into the historical layers of rabbinic and educational thought.

learning environments are so great for stimulating intergenerational learning and engagement (Weiss, 2006). This can be extremely practical in cases where such engagement is needed – as in the case of knowledge and memory transference in small communities. If used to their maximum potential, virtual learning environments can retain the effect of the social presence of the speakers/learners (Palloff & Pratt, 2007), and they can be very generous with enabling the participants to feel, express and process their emotions in a safe and productive way (Burbules, 2006; Kalogeras, 2014).[8] This can be especially important when dealing with sensitive or trauma-related elements of Jewish transgenerational heritage. Of course, in such cases the virtual learning methods and techniques have to be chosen responsibly and the learning session has to be carefully planned, so as to avoid the effect of "being left alone in the room" after a sensitive, emotional online session.

Above all this, a necessary element needed for activating intergenerational dialogue through learning is certainly the phenomenon of immersion (Blazauskas & Gudoniene, 2020; Burbules, 2006; Galés & Gallon, 2020). Regardless of the mediasphere chosen for the education in question, a well-established immersion level will significantly influence the process of successful transference of memorial, historical, and cultural knowledge. The stronger the immersion effect, the better and more comprehensive the learning or remembering process will be (Blazauskas & Gudoniene, 2020; Burbules, 2006).

Immersive Effect in Extended Educational Realities: Building Communities Through Intergenerational Educational Events in the Jewish Community of Serbia

The phenomenon of immersion is directly related to extended educational realities and experiences, no matter which technology is used. The key point with immersion is not in the technology itself, but in the very feeling of being actively immersed (or active while immersed) in a specific (learning) environment. The immersion effect is thus attained through the active engagement of the participants (here: learners) in the immersion-potent environment (Burbules, 2006). The immersion effect can arise from any mediasphere, or any technological environment – both offline and online, and all generations have experienced the immersion effect at some point in their learning, working, or

[8] Using different pre-set or custom-made emojis, for example, enhances the visibility of emotional or behavioral reactions (such as smiling, sadness, hand-clapping etc.) in a way that is quite comprehensible to all the generations, often resulting in the speaker feeling more heard.

gaming life. That is why immersion is a very useful method that can be applied even when the learners come from very different technological backgrounds, or where there is no possibility to group them according to those differences or preferences. To practically analyze the benefits and effects of using online and offline immersion in an intergenerational environment in learning about Jewish history and culture, I will describe two case studies of learning and bonding through immersion that I have observed or been a part of. Both case studies represent learning events in the Jewish community of Serbia. The different approach in these two case studies will show that the success of the techno-educational space for intergenerational dialogue often depends not on the technology we use for learning, but in the way that this technology is open to various generational and other specific needs and habits.

According to Nicholas Burbules, the very phenomenon of immersion, no matter the mediasphere, implies "forgetting the mechanism through which it's happening" (Burbules, 2006, p. 43). In order for immersion to be successfully attained and sustained, the chosen technology has to be familiar enough, and present for quite some time, so that its techno-educational surroundings feel almost natural. It's hard to say when a new technology achieves this status. For example, Regis Debray thinks that it might need a full generation that grew up with the new technology in order for society to be ready to really think through and with(in) this technology (Debre, 2000, p. 231). Closely following this idea, the implicit thought might be that older generations, or the generations of the previous mediaspheres, might not be fully ready to step into the new technological world, even if this technology has become more and more prominent in daily life. Also, we might think that this context would create an almost permanent gap in intergenerational communication. However, this is not a black-and-white situation. Besides that, sometimes it can happen that a sudden and immediate change in daily life speeds up this process. This is exactly what happened in 2020 and 2021 with the COVID-19 crisis, when – under the harsh circumstances of being physically isolated from one another – different generations came together and started meeting regularly in online learning environments.

This is actually how Haver Srbija's[9] *Midrasha* project grew into a platform for intergenerational dialogue in Jewish learning.[10] Starting as a regular,

[9] Haver Srbija (aka Haver Serbia) is a non-profit, nongovernmental Jewish educational organization that promotes a diverse and inclusive society in Serbia. It was established in January 2013. More about the organization can be found on its website: https://haver.rs/about/ (*About Haver Serbia*, n.d.).

[10] The *Midrasha* project started in 2016 and up until now, 90 courses have taken place. The courses take place throughout the year, and the participants can choose from topics

in-person series of courses about Jewish history, culture, and tradition, the *Midrasha* project offered a rich array of topics, hoping to ignite an interest in ongoing Jewish learning in Serbia for both Jewish individuals and the broader public. Using the techniques of informal education and traditional and contemporary Jewish education, the courses took place fully in person until March 2020, when all in-person activities ceased due to COVID-19 regulations. This was a huge change. The very beginning of this time felt like quite a disturbance to the course; suddenly, the usual course rhythm was interrupted by the impossibility of the effective organization of learning sessions – nothing was as it used to be. However, as online communication platforms evolved increasingly fast, they also transformed into a possibility for the continuation of the *Midrasha* project in the current changed reality. Although initially worried about the possible effect that this might have on its audience,[11] very soon after March 2020 Haver Serbia launched online *Midrasha* learning sessions. In the beginning this required lots of patience from both the participants and the organizers, but it also sparked a new interest to learn how to express oneself in the online mode.

For example, the online mode of communication, unlike meetings in person, opened up the possibility of using chat and written communication for expressing thoughts and asking questions, which made participation more approachable and inclusive both for those who favored verbal discussion and for those who preferred to think things through and then share their thoughts in written form. Also, it enabled the participants not only to take their own time to write their response (if they preferred), but also to think further about each other's responses and return to them again during the meeting (because the responses and comments would stay in the chat box until the end of the learning session). In terms of fostering intergenerational discussion, what was observed in this kind of environment, compared to the in-person/offline modality, was that the chat option assumed the function of a bonding element between generations, but also between communicators representing different

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that seem the most appealing to them. Each month, over two or three days, the course covers one or two topics which are discussed and learned in depth. Since 2016, the *Midrasha* project has been funded by different institutions, foundations, and individuals: the Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund, the Kantor Foundation, the Jewish American Distribution Committee, Paideia – Institute of Jewish Studies, Sweden, Nevatim, the Schusterman Foundation, the Jewish Community of Belgrade, Synagogue Sukat Shalom, Belgrade. All online courses are available on the YouTube channel of Haver Srbija: https://www.youtube.com/@haversrbija2668 (*Haver Srbija*, n.d.).

[11] At that time, not all of the generations had sufficient knowledge or, more importantly, the habit of using the Internet for meeting and learning.

communication styles. To be more precise, in the offline environment it was often the case that people from different generations showed different paces of communication in the discussion – the young often being very fast to respond in a shortened kind of way and eager to go forward, in comparison to other generations who were more willing to stop at a certain point to think or discuss something further. Of course, this was not a black-and-white situation: Not all the young people were quick in their responses, nor did all the older generations want to discuss things in a long and thorough fashion; it also depended on the personal communication and learning style preference. However, having the possibility of expressing oneself in different modalities of the verbal medium (written and spoken) in the online environment activated a communication platform that recognized these differences,[12] made them present, and turned them into a simultaneous inclusive learning and discussion experience. In such a context, the exchange of thoughts is not only possible in one, temporally dependent simultaneous moment, but also along more diffused and diverse lines.

Another change that was observed was the widening of the generational scope, or the age range among the participants of the program. The offline, in-person program, although it had its own values,[13] was discovered to be quite restrictive when it comes to certain groups of participants, namely those whose health or mobility prevented them from coming to *Midrasha* learning sessions.[14] The same is true for those who would decide not to attend because they couldn't reach the physical location of the learning session due to their work-time, school or study-related schedule.[15] By transferring the *Midrasha* program to the online platform, the generational scope widened, enabling both those among the oldest to participate and those among the youngest to enter the e-room while returning from their work or school, and without the need to be present at a fixed address at a certain time.[16] Widening the generational scope

[12] Often also motivated by age or experience.

[13] Such as closer, more immediate contact between the participants, or more direct and more visible emotional exchange that stems from a more visible bodily language. This can lead to a richer experience of learning in the sense of multisensorial communication that may contribute to remembering elements and details of the things being learned or discussed.

[14] This is often the case with senior generations.

[15] Often seen in younger generations.

[16] Here the time dimension is still relevant, since the learning session does begin at a certain time point, but the location of the participants is not relevant anymore, which is suitable for all the participants who could not participate in the in-person program due to being unable to come to its location on time, or to come there physically in general.

enabled people of different generations to meet and exchange their viewpoints while discussing topics relevant for Jewish learning and Jewish life, strengthening the sense of rightful belonging to the same (and diverse) community.

Contrary to initial worries, this new situation produced a twofold progression: First of all, the online course form felt closer to the younger generations that already used the Internet in their daily activities; secondly, the generation that typically didn't use it started to enjoy newly discovered skills and worlds. For example, over the course of time, differences in communication styles typical for different generations started to blur: Older generations started using emojis and emoji reactions more often and more freely, which made communication closer and more relevant for the young participants, too. The easiness of hopping in and out of the breakout rooms enabled more varied contacts between the participants, and opened up a more intensive experience when it comes to sharing knowledge and exchanging thoughts or viewpoints, which influenced all the participants regardless of age. This is harder to attain in offline settings, since the physical bodily presence of all the participants makes any changes of or within a discussion group slower and more tied to a facilitator's support.

On top of all the above, the online sessions enabled participants from cities and towns other than Belgrade to join in, widening the concept of the contemporary Jewish community in Serbia and transforming it from small, strictly locally based groups to a more interconnected, regional type. This may be especially important in the case of small Jewish communities (such as the Serbian one), since it represents and gathers the community at large. This may influence future initiatives within the community, and it may contribute to a more contentful continuity of such a community. Also, not only members of the Jewish communities from Serbia joined in the online *Midrasha* learning sessions: Participants from all over the ex-Yugoslav space started taking part in the courses more and more. In the very beginning, methodologically and dynamically the online classroom functioned similarly to the offline one, but as time went by, the educators, often with the help of other participants, found new and diverse ways to activate the online learning environment, using the flexibility of the breakout rooms, the versatility of whiteboards, and shared documents that allowed all the participants' thoughts and activities to be visible and thus to function as vehicles of further learning and discussion. As most of the members of the ex-Yugoslav countries speak languages that are mutually fully comprehensible, the participants in the *Midrasha* learning sessions started to establish a fully interactive and functional platform that influenced and enhanced the intergenerational transference of Jewish history,

culture, and knowledge. This dynamic also strengthened the community itself, and added the feeling of belonging to the community. Through the online immersive space, many members of the Jewish communities from the former Yugoslavia reconnected after a longer time, and people from different generations met one another and created a fully functional, living communication and learning environment. The immersion effect succeeded, resulting in people completely forgetting that all of this was happening within a specific digital technological environment: The community felt real and, in the end, it was real, it established itself as real – and actively intergenerational. What proves this effect is that even after the COVID-19 regulations were lifted, the *Midrasha* participants insisted that its online form should nevertheless continue. Today the *Midrasha* project works in both online and offline spaces, following the effects and benefits of intergenerational connection in both mediaspheres. Typically, even today in 2025, when offline meetings are fully possible again, the online *Midrasha* courses have more participants (typically 30–45) compared to the in-person sessions (typically 10–20 participants). Both are equally requested by participants, due to their different settings and qualities that influence the learning process.

Another example, completely different in the choice of the mediasphere used for immersion in intergenerational learning about Jewish history and culture, is the *Interactive Tour of Jewish Belgrade*.[17] What is different here, compared to the previous example, is that a multimodal mixed techno-environment is used as an element inducing to immersion while learning, and it was chosen deliberately (it was not related to any sort of extreme external conditions).

The *Interactive Tour of Jewish Belgrade* was designed with the idea to provide a deep dive into the rich and multifaceted history of the Jewish community in Belgrade. The project began in 2015 and was intended for national and international youth groups, teachers, students, pupils, volunteers of Haver Srbija, ambassadors, and many more interested individuals and groups.[18] The tours are organized two to three times per year, according to the overall yearly event schedule of Haver Serbia and according to opportunities that may arise for this event.[19] The participants, gathered in small groups, are guided

[17] This is also a project of Haver Srbija.

[18] The interactive and historical tours of Belgrade were supported by the city government of Belgrade (Sekretarijat za kulturu grada Beograda), but also IHRA and the Claims Conference through the project *Footsteps of the Past, Present, and Future*.

[19] The *Interactive Tour of Jewish Belgrade* is mostly organized as an individual event announced through the communication channels of the Haver Srbija organization. Sometimes it might be included in Haver Srbija's other seminars and educational programs, in which case the group is already gathered by the given event.

through significant landmarks such as synagogues, cultural institutions, and historical sites while engaging in stories that span centuries – from the arrival of Jews in Belgrade to their contributions to the city's cultural and economic development. The tour also highlights the resilience of the community during the Holocaust and its revival in contemporary times. Through multimedia elements, personal narratives, and various tasks, visitors are guided from "station to station" to gain an immersive understanding of Jewish heritage and its enduring legacy in Belgrade's cultural tapestry. Different tasks and clues are given to the participants through previously prepared online groups and platforms, and the discoveries, but also the feedback that the tour participants send back to the event facilitators, are shown in different media formats and forms (text, image/photography, sound/song, maps, and so on). The tour is, however, inclusive – it also enables participation without social media or a smartphone, since it's enough that one person in the group has an Internet connection and access to the group/channel providing the clues or tasks will be sent to them. Also, at the different stations the group can find and meet a person of a different generation who might share a personal story regarding their memory about Jewish history in Belgrade,[20] or teach the group some traditional songs characteristic for the Jewish community in Belgrade, share some specific knowledge related to the community, or help the participants' group to fulfill their task while learning something about that particular location, or "station." Each tour gathers approximately 20–30 participants divided into smaller groups of 6–10 people that walk simultaneously in time, seeing the same landmarks during the tour but using different routes given by the facilitators, so they do not run into each other. At the conclusion of the tour, however, all the groups end up at the same landmark, around the same time.[21] There, at the final "station," all the groups gather with the facilitators to reflect on the experience together and ask additional questions about the history and contemporaneity of the Jewish community of Belgrade.

In a more concrete way, the *Interactive Tour of Jewish Belgrade* functions through two spatially separated offline dimensions. During most of the tour, the facilitators are stationed at one location – for example, sitting in the office – while the participants of the tour are at another, moving location, busy exploring the designated part of the city. Simultaneously, the facilitators and the participants meet and communicate in a virtual, online dimension, being to-

[20] This ensures the visibility of generation-relevant layers of the memory of the Jewish community of Belgrade, and can fill intergenerational gaps in memory-related knowledge.

[21] The group that arrives first will then wait for the other groups, which is communicated by the facilitators throughout the process.

gether during the event through a previously formed group on one of the existing social networking platforms that all the participants with an Internet connection would use. Through online communication, the facilitators send the participants inputs, tasks, and clues that help the participants move through the former Jewish neighborhood of Belgrade and discover its "stations" in the process. The instructions and clues for the next station are given after the participants reach the previous station and fulfill their task. The tasks given to the participants at the "stations" always ask them to "connect" the offline, physical environment they are encountering with the virtual one (with the group where they send the results and outcomes of their tasks when they are done). In this way, the participants transfer the material, offline-found information to a group-created digital format that might appear as a short video filmed on the spot, a story that the group will write or record after encountering a certain location, or photographs with the purpose of telling a story about the location. Every task asks for the activity of all the participants. The fact that the task can be fulfilled only through participation of the whole group has a stimulative effect on the learning process, but it also contributes to bonding within the group, which can encourage intergenerational dialogue and strengthen the active approach of different generational groups towards the culture, history and contemporaneity of Jewish life, fostering intergenerational learning, too. In cases where the participants all come from the Jewish community, this effect may contribute to their personal sense of what it means to be a part of a community that found its continuation despite the devastating consequences of the Holocaust in the 20th century, and it may offer a platform for intergenerational bonding within the community – through the stories shared along the way,[22] through thinking together about individual and group contributions to the task, or through helping one another in creating the content to be shared with the facilitators in a technical or content-related aspect.[23] In cases where the group does not consist of people from the Jewish community or is mixed, these effects may lead to a better understanding of the continuity of the presence of

[22] Spending some time while on the move and walking through the city together offers a very different setting for interpersonal or intergenerational bonding compared to the classic classroom environment (Blazauskas & Gudoniene, 2020; Kellner, 2006).

[23] Although it is by no means the rule, the younger generation often finds themselves thinking more quickly in the technological sense, using their mobile phones quickly and offering numerous solutions for the technical aspects of designing the content, while at the same time they can listen to the other generations sharing knowledge drawn from their memories or experiences. What happens here is, actually, the exchange of different types of experiences which should, ideally, fruitfully merge into vibrant educational content produced together, intergenerationally.

Jewish culture in Belgrade, possibly contributing to a better, inclusive and prejudice-free understanding of the city's historical and cultural diversity.[24]

In this case the immersion effect is not activated through or because of the online digital mediasphere; the immersion works through the merging of the online and offline realities, where everybody learns and becomes a content creator, which is a twofold experience that can enhance the effects of the learning. Both the online reality (communicating via a social media group and sending feedback to the facilitators in the form of digital responses) and the offline reality (seeing real, historical places and buildings relevant to the history of the Jewish community of the city, meeting real persons and hearing real stories and songs in a physical setting) merge into one immersive multimedia learning environment. The aura of the physical, walked-through streets paired with participants' steps and street-related sounds enhance the interconnection of the past and present (Morten et al., 2018), making the immersion, in a way, a transtemporal experience, too. Also, in the case of the *Interactive Tour of Jewish Belgrade* both those who use the online platforms and those who don't are encouraged to be active, trying to respond together to the prompts of the facilitators sent through the digital channel. This enables all the generations, with all of their specific communication preferences, to be active and to work together on different tasks. Sometimes it is previous knowledge or experience that is needed to successfully move on to the next station, and sometimes what is needed is digital communication expertise, or a digital browsing skill. In this kind of atmosphere, all the different generations are actively led into a dialogue and exchange of their approaches to history and contemporaneity, at the same time feeling seen and needed for the successful completion of the tour. This method directly influences and stimulates intergenerational dialogue, activating the curiosity of each generation for other generations' perspectives and questions related to the history and culture of the Jewish community in Belgrade. This kind of immersion can also contribute to a more substantial, affective response to the feeling of togetherness, and can help in building intracommunal connections. Furthermore, increased intergenerational dialogue in a small community can directly add to an increased experience of belonging and mattering, while actualizing itself through the potential for a further cultural transference continuum. Another

[24] The aim of Haver Srbija here is also for activities like this, done interactively and in teams, to influence possible prejudices and gaps in knowledge that may exist in relation to Jews and the Jewish community in Belgrade and in Serbia, leading to greater awareness of the necessity to prevent and combat antisemitism and, in a wider sense, all exclusionary types of politics, standpoints and actions.

important element of the *Interactive Tour of Jewish Belgrade* is that all the materials produced during the tour, as well as all the participants' contacts,[25] stay available in the chat that the participants use even after the event has ended. In this way, the participants can go back to this content and use it as learning material, while at the same time staying in touch with the other participants, if they so desire. This may also support and enhance the sense of belonging and/or togetherness in relation to the Jewish history, presence, continuity and community (especially when the participants already come from the Jewish community, but also when the group is mixed). Also, this can add to future constructive initiatives that may arise among the former participants of the *Interactive Tour of Jewish Belgrade*.

In a very short conclusion, I would like to stress the importance of creating and attaining contentful and effective immersion in the educational space. Immersion carries the potential to activate knowledge transformation into an active, living experience that might influence the future curiosity, choices, and life paths of the learner. The effects of such immersion range from increased motivation for current and further learning to the continuation of historical and cultural knowledge due to an increased intergenerational dialogue. Also, most of the time, the key to successful immersion is not the technology used[26] – it is the people being motivated, and it is about people creating learning communities within the techno-educational spaces that they move through. If activated intracommunally, these learning communities can contribute to the further life of the actual, embodied communities, inspiring the transgenerational transference of knowledge, experiences and memories. Learning about Jewish history and culture in such an immersive context can, hopefully, lead to a strengthened feeling of belonging in all the present generations, and move them towards the continuation of Jewish history and culture in the future.

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[25] With the participants' consent, of course.

[26] Although, of course, the choice of and access to technology can be quite helpful for the creative designing of immersive learning spaces.

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Međugeneracijski dijalog u tehnološkim i edukacijskim prostorima u kontekstu učenja o jevrejskoj istoriji i kulturi

Ovaj rad diskutuje važnost angažovanja tehnoloških i obrazovnih prostora u savremenim procesima učenja o jevrejskoj istoriji i kulturi. Rad istražuje potencijale stapanja savremene tehnologije i inovativnih pristupa učenju, posebno u kontekstu negovanja i unapređenja međugeneracijskih dijaloga unutar

zajednice. Kako bi se analizirala uloga efekta imerzije u produženim obrazovnim stvarnostima, kao i njegov značaj za međugeneracijske dijaloge u malim jevrejskim zajednicama, prikazane su i analizirane dve studije slučaja iz Srbije: Midraša projekat i Interaktivna tura Jevrejski Beograd. Izloženi rezultati pokazuju transformacioni potencijal dva različita obrazovna programa u kontekstu produženih obrazovnih stvarnosti na preseku tehnologije i obrazovanja. Ovi nalazi mogu doprineti daljim osvrtima i praksama u oblasti jevrejskog obrazovanja i obrazovanja uopšte, kao i jačanju intergeneracijskih dijaloga.

Ključne reči: međugeneracijski dijalog, male jevrejske zajednice, imerzija, obrazovanje, metode nastave.

Dialog międzypokoleniowy w przestrzeniach technologicznych i edukacyjnych w kontekście nauki o historii i kulturze żydowskiej

Artykuł omawia znaczenie zaangażowania przestrzeni technologicznych i edukacyjnych we współczesnych procesach nauczania o historii i kulturze żydowskiej. Analizuje potencjał łączenia nowoczesnych technologii z innowacyjnym podejściem do nauczania, szczególnie w kontekście wspierania i rozwijania dialogu międzypokoleniowego w obrębie społeczności. Aby przeanalizować rolę efektu immersji w rozszerzonych rzeczywistościach edukacyjnych oraz jego znaczenie dla dialogu międzypokoleniowego w małych społecznościach żydowskich, przedstawiono i omówiono dwa studia przypadku z Serbii: projekt *Midrasz* oraz projekt *Interaktywna wycieczka po żydowskim Belgradzie*. Zaprezentowane wyniki pokazują transformacyjny potencjał dwóch różnych programów edukacyjnych w kontekście rozszerzonych rzeczywistości edukacyjnych na styku technologii i edukacji. Otrzymane wnioski mogą przyczynić się do dalszych refleksji i praktyk w dziedzinie edukacji żydowskiej i edukacji ogólnej, a także do wzmacniania dialogu międzypokoleniowego.

Słowa kluczowe: dialog międzypokoleniowy, małe społeczności żydowskie, immersja, edukacja, metody nauczania.

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The preparation of this article was self-funded by the author.
No competing interests have been declared.

Publication History

Received: 2025-02-20, Accepted: 2025-08-15, Published: 2025-12-06