

Gavriel Salomon: In Memoriam

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Gavriel Salomon, “Gabi,” passed away on January 4, 2016 after a lengthy illness. In fact, given some of his medical problems over recent years, his continued life was a bit of a miracle, sustained no doubt by the sheer energy of our remarkable friend and colleague. No one who knew him failed to remark on his energy, productivity, intensity, humor, intellect, and decency.

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Gabi and I were born the same year, 1938, met in graduate school and each received Stanford Ph. D's in 1968. We had a rich friendship for over 50 years. He was truly an international scholar, working often in other countries. But it was at the University of Haifa where he spent many of his most productive years. There he served as Professor of Educational Psychology, dean of the Faculty of Education, and eventually, co-director of the Center for Research on Peace Education, which he founded. Gabi's legacy is in many areas—the cognitive effects of media's symbol systems, the expenditure of mental effort, mindfulness and mindlessness, organizational change, the design of intelligent computer tools, transfer of learning, and the design and systemic study of technology-afforded learning environments. But no enduring effect would please him more than to be remembered for his experimental and theoretical work on peace education. In the last two decades of his life, he tirelessly worked to bridge the gaps in perceptions of Arabs and Israeli's toward each other.

Gabi received his B.A. and M.A. (Summa cum Laude) in geography, education, and psychology from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1966), served also as a paratrooper and psychologist in the Israeli army, and received his Ph. D. in educational psychology and communication from Stanford University (1968).

Gabi was a fellow of the Center for the Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford (1998–9), the American Psychological Society (1985), and the Division of Educational Psychology (1983). He also served as editor of the *Educational Psychologist* (1991–5), as well as president of the Educational, Instructional, and School Psychology Division of the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP, 1990–1994). He was an active member of the European Association for Learning and Instruction (EARLI) and both the National Academy of Education and the International Academy of Education. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Catholic University in Leuven, Belgium; was recipient of Israel's highest scientific award, the Israel prize; received the “Peter-Becker-Preis für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung,” which is the highest award for Peace and Conflict Studies in Germany. Division 15 of APA also honored Gabi with the Sylvia Scribner award. Among his many articles and books is “The Interaction of Media, Cognition and Learning,” named as a “Citation Classic” for its originality and impact. We will miss our friend and colleague Gabi, who is survived by his wife Esti Neeman, also a peace activist, and his two daughters, 3 stepchildren, and 11 grand children.

David C. Berliner,
Past President, Division 15, APA
Regents' Professor Emeritus of Education
Arizona State University

I first met Gabi Salomon sometime in the mid-1970s, when on one of his numerous trips to the USA, he called in at Stanford to touch bases with Dick Snow, Lee Cronbach, and Elliot Eisner. I was “blown away” by the sheer energy and joie de vivre of this rather impish-looking scholar. A few years later, he spent a sabbatical with us, in an office just around the corner from mine, and we quickly became good friends. I realized that perhaps chief among his characteristics was his passion for ideas—any ideas; this often revealed itself in his willingness to throw himself wholeheartedly into a “no holds barred” debate on almost any topic. I saw the

“flip side” side of this characteristic once in Guadalajara, when he and I were in a market shopping for Mexican shirts—the poor vendor stood no chance as Gabi started to “negotiate” with him. When it was all over, Gabi wandered away while the shirts were being packaged, and the exhausted vendor whispered to me “Who on earth is your friend?” I replied that he was a world famous Israeli psychologist. “Ah!” said the vendor, with a tone of resignation in his voice that indicated he now understood that he had just confronted an irresistible force of nature. Gabi’s wide range of interests led him to be an incessant traveler, and from time to time, I was lucky enough to accompany him. But once, in 2013, I emailed him about some International Academy of Education business, and he was slow in replying. It turned out that, despite the serious health problems that by this stage beset him, he had been away on yet another overseas trip (and this was by no means his last). I was inspired to write a piece of verse, which apparently he enjoyed, so I take the liberty of including it here:

Gabi Salomon lives in Haifa
 (That’s what some people say),
 But he emailed me from Finland –
 That’s where he is today.
 Last week he was in Belgium,
 The week before he wrote from Greece;
 Then of course a stint in Mexico –
 His travels never seem to cease.
 He made a flying trip to Sydney,
 And another one to Brazil –
 This peripatetic Israeli
 Can’t possibly stay still!
 Why on earth does he have this wanderlust –
 Why the hell can’t he stay home?
 I guess he’ll give an answer
 When he’s back from visiting Rome!

Denis Phillips
 Emeritus Professor of Education and Philosophy
 Stanford University

Richard Lazarus, the noted stress and emotion researcher, once defined “hope” as “fearing the worst, but looking forward to the best.” In that sense, Gabi Salomon was the very embodiment of hope and optimism. When fearing the worst for the future of Israel during the national trauma experienced by the Israeli populace in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur war in 1973, Gabi left the ivory towers of academia to volunteer for a year’s tour of duty in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). During his stint as a major in the IFD, he helped set up the first Psychological Unit providing treatment to soldiers suffering from battle fatigue and post-trauma. Only after consulting with Seymour Sarason, the noted School and Community Psychologist, then on sabbatical at the Hebrew University, did he decide to forgo a promising military career and continue in his academic research: “We all,” said Seymour to Gabi, “want to leave our footprint in the sand on the beach, but we have to choose what beach it will be.”

Yet, out of a deep concern for the ongoing conflict and continual friction between Israel and its neighbors and sincerely hoping for peace and appeasement between the conflicting parties in this cradle of world unrest, Gabi forged a vision of education for peace among the adversaries—as part of the solution. He founded Center for Research on Peace Education (CERPE) and embarked on a successful program of research on peace education. Even in the twilight of his life, suffering from multiple maladies and health problems, and a kidney transplant, he never lost his zest for life, good cheer, passion, gusto, optimism, and sense of humor. When asked how old he was, he would reply: “What part of my anatomy are you referring to exactly?” Our paths crossed during a number of critical junctures throughout our lives: as close neighbors in Jerusalem’s KiryatYovel district during the 1970s, as staff members and friends at the Hebrew University in the 1980s, during brief stints at the Psychological Program at Stanford’s School of Education, and as Deans at Haifa University. I much appreciated his wise counsel and warm support, his great sense of humor and good cheer, and his creative insights. He leaves behind a rich legacy of seminal papers, classic books, and educational programs. He will surely continue to live in the hearts and minds of all those who loved and cherished him. Following Mark Twain, Gabi recently quipped that when his day comes, he has no preference for heaven or hell, “as he has friends in both places.” Knowing Gabi, I am sure he does and I hope he is now pleasantly engaged catching up with friends and colleagues.

Moshe Zeidner

Professor of Educational Psychology and Human Development
University of Haifa, Israel

Although many of us knew that Gabi Salomon’s health has been poor for some time, his passing away nevertheless came as a shock. Indeed, it looked as if his will to survive and continue his intellectual activity was overruling his serious health problems.

I met Gabi in the early 1980s through the late Dick Snow during my regular visits at the School of Education at Stanford University. We usually met every year at the American Educational Research Association Convention, and I was always impressed by his vibrant high-quality presentations, reviews, and interactions. I had more contacts with him during the 1990s, for instance at NATO Advanced Study Institutes in Leuven Belgium and Crete, both focused on one of the main topics in which he was a top expert, namely, technology-based learning environments. It is disappointing that his excellent work and wonderful ideas relating to the use of technology in education have not been implemented in educational practice. In the academic year 1998–1999, our roads crossed at Stanford: he was a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences while I was visiting scholar at the School of Education. I have the best remembrances of the many opportunities for animated discussions, sometimes heated disputes about specific topics of common interest such as the use of technology, distributed learning, low-road and high-road transfer, design-based research, math education, but also more general issues.

In February 1999, my Alma Mater, the University of Leuven, rendered homage to Gabi’s excellent contribution to educational and psychological research by conferring on him an Honorary Doctorate of the university.

Gabi joined the European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI) in 1993. He became a very active and enthusiastic member participating in all conferences till the one in Munich in 2013. He served as member of the EARLI Executive Committee from 1999 to 2003. Many members were pleased to meet him briefly during the last EARLI Conference

in August 2015 in Limassol where he was by chance visiting accompanied by his grandson. We all will miss him in the EARLI community.

Erik De Corte

Emeritus Professor of Educational Psychology
Center for Instructional Psychology & Technology (CIP&T)
University of Leuven, Belgium

We are all quite sad and a little surprised at Gabi's passing. I met Gabi while we were fellow doctoral students at Stanford in 1968. I can assure you of his exuberance at that time, an exuberance that carried him through his life. At the time, he was flying through the doctoral program and his research on affordances of technology still remains vivid in my mind; it is still some of the best research on the use of technology to create cognitive capacities by simulating mental processes. That was the launching pad for a remarkable life, one of contributions to educational psychology, personality, peace, and so on. This said he was an enigma—creative, brilliant, collegial... and at time impossible. I will miss him much.

Richard J. Shavelson

Margaret Jacks Professor of Education (Emeritus)
Graduate School of Education
Stanford University

For the last 8 years, I had the enormous privilege of sharing with Gabi Salomon two beautiful commitments that a small group of fellows of the International Academy of Education (IAE) voluntarily assumed as of 2007. Lorin Anderson, Maria de Ibarrola, Denis Phillips, Gabi Salomon, and Ulrich Teichler (Denis Phillips named us “the gang of five”) met on several occasions: three times in Mexico, other times in the different places where the General Assemblies of the International Academy took place: Cyprus, South Africa, Vancouver, Germany... Our specific purpose was to dialogue, debate, and elaborate what finally became two books published during 2014. The first one was a debate on the Nurturing of new educational researchers, where he defended a “Two track Doctorate in Education,” while elaborating that “there is more than one path to advanced scholarship” oriented not to rigorously and relatively narrowly defined research questions, but to “the real, multivariate and complex world of education focusing on actual changes and designs of educational systems and practices.”

The second book we edited was the international and interdisciplinary sharing of self-experiences in the making of an educational researcher, written by 14 fellows, at the invitation of “the gang” titled: *Leaders in educational research*.

I was able to get to know Gabi during the 2 or 3-day reunions and many hours of dialogue we shared through his always intense positions—and sometimes sarcastic humor—but mainly through his autobiography and the initial discussion regarding how we identify ourselves: academics, educational researchers, professors, doctors. He positioned himself as a “restless scholar,” fully accepting the characterization made of him by some colleagues in a previous edition to celebrate his retirement.

Reading and rereading the five initial biographies, in order to find grounds of common interest for inviting other fellows to join the venture, I was able to take a deep look into what Gabi wanted to share with us.

Why had he chosen education?

As an active member of the youth movement, I was chosen to become a young counselor of kids five years younger than I. After some basic training I started on the long journey of becoming an educator, a route I am travelling still today...

What was it like to live in a war context? How did war influence his family and schooling?

... being since birth part of a society at war could not but leave long-lasting residues. War ignited my childish imagination but it also scared me quite a bit. All this surfaced when some 60 years later I established the Center for Research on Peace Education. Peace education became my field of expertise and my ideological conviction.

When, where and how did he learn to do educational research? How did he consolidate an academic career? He graduated Summa Cum Laude at the Hebrew University and got a scholarship to study at Stanford, accepted by none other than Lee J. Cronbach, who later invited him to be his teaching assistant, opening the road to become a professional researcher, something he had not foreseen after finishing his Masters degree in Israel.

All through the 9000 words, we established as a mean length for the self-biographies, Gabi explains in a beautiful manner his early research, his pretensions and intentions, how he developed his love for both the content and languages of the arts. He recounts his years at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS) at Stanford, the diversity of projects and travels via sabbaticals, and the many different themes that aroused his interest, for example, the popularity of computers in education. Back in Israel, he recounts the Tel Aviv years, his return to Haifa, the way he selected to approach peace education, a deep concern since his childhood: "I felt like I was entering a relatively muddled and poorly defined territory with much to contribute to it," and the creation with a colleague of the Center for Research on Peace Education (CERPE).

He skillfully places his interests, his different papers and publications, his academic positions and values, his ideology, the persons he admired, he met and worked with, and many other personal remembrances within this general chronology of his life. He ends with a reflection of what he learned from more than 40 years in Academia and wonders what would happen to knowledge in the specific fields where he worked: "I had a good time and enjoyed this life. But what is the residue of all this?"

During 2015, we kept an e-correspondence sharing the details on the editing and distribution of the books, advices and counsels on the preparation of the 2015 IAE General Assembly (Neither of us was able to attend), and his illness. Among general descriptions, Gabi wrote once: "as they say, old age is not for sissies." However, I did not believe then that we would not meet again.

Rest in peace, dear restless friend.

Maria de Ibarrola

Professor, Department of Educational Research

Center for Research and Advanced Studies

Former President of the Mexican Council of Educational Research

Gabi Salomon was my dissertation advisor, research collaborator, and friend. He was an amazing teacher and an inventive, productive researcher whose ideas were decades ahead of his time in areas such as motivation and the use of technology. He was curious about national and cultural differences and so invested considerable effort and time supporting and

collaborating with educational psychologists in many nations. He was also a generous colleague and friend.

After completing his Ph. D. at Stanford University in 1968, Gabi joined the education faculty at Indiana University where I was lucky enough to enroll in the first seminar he taught. It was an early afternoon doctoral seminar on technology in education that was so engaging it sometimes drifted into the evening hours and once broke up only when we agreed to meet the next day to continue an argument. Gabi's advance organizer for a class was to propose a dramatic, counterintuitive claim that I suspect he knew would be difficult for students to accept, and he provided citations for us to check in advance of a class meeting. He insisted we use evidence from studies when arguing and after a number of students drifted to his point of view, he'd occasionally and perversely change his position. At some point, in most of the arguments, he would present us with the draft of a manuscript on a similar topic that he was developing and invite us to tear it apart. As the manuscript developed and was published, we had the opportunity to experience the writing of an article from start to finish—and experience that benefitted all of us. He challenged students to avoid “wasting your time writing papers for classes and instead write them with the idea that you will submit for publication.” He encouraged us to tackle areas where popular strategies used in practice conflicted with research on the strategies and to become contrarians as a way to “foster conceptual conflict” and “get people thinking.”

It was Gabi's encouragement that led me to challenge beliefs about learning from newer media. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, we co-authored a Review of Educational Research article (in 1977) and later a *Handbook of Research on Teaching* chapter (in 1986), on the use of media in instruction. In those days before email, we were sending each other 20 or more single-spaced letters of detail and argument as our manuscripts developed. It turned out that we disagreed on some basic issues and while he was upset about our differences he gave me the backhand compliment that he had “created a monster” and found creative and respectful ways to present our different points of view.

Gabi's decision to move most of his effort from educational psychology to peace research was a puzzle only to people who did not know him well. He urged others to get “personally and deeply” involved in national and international politics whenever they perceived that events were “headed in a completely unacceptable direction.” His decision to co-direct a center for peace research in Israel was largely due to Gabi taking his own advice.

My wish for graduate students in our field is that they will encounter an advisor with Gabi's high expectations for their students, impressive productivity, a nuanced grasp of psychology, enormous energy, an evolved sense of humor, and exceptional teaching skill. My fervent hope for educational psychology during a difficult time is that we can continue to attract colleagues like Gavriel Salomon. He was one of the very best and those of us who knew him will not forget him.

Richard Clark

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