

The Coalition Handbook

Volume 2



**THE COALITION OF
INNOVATING CONGREGATIONS**

An initiative with The Jewish Education Project
with funding from UJA-Federation of New York

Introduction

More study with colleagues [brings] more wisdom.

— Pirkei Avot 2:8

When the Coalition of Innovating Congregations began to form in 2009, 26 congregations in LOMED started experimenting with Whole Person Learning and Assessment, 21st Century Design Principles, Professional Learning Teams, and Educational Leadership Teams — all meant to “boost” new models of part-time Jewish education. Educators and congregational leaders struggled with new language, new work, new roles, and new visions. Two years later, with LOMED Chadash joining the movement, we released the LOMED Handbook for Powerful Learning Experiences, documenting what we had learned from you — members of the Coalition — describing what these challenging and worthy new concepts looked like in action and how to make them work.

Another two years have passed, Express Innovation has joined our ranks, and we have learned much more along the way. The first volume of the Handbook reflected what we knew at that time. But we all — educators, congregational leaders, consultants, staff — have been learners on this journey and have added much to the collective knowledge of the group.

Volume II of the Handbook — now called the “Coalition Handbook” to reflect the broader range of congregations working together — shares that collective knowledge that has been gained in the last two years. This second volume focuses on Powerful Learning (Chapters 2-4), High Impact Models (Chapters 5-6), and Sustaining Innovation (Chapters 7-9). We don’t expect that this is a complete Handbook. It is simply another piece of the very large puzzle we are putting together as a coalition.

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Powerful Learning

Noticing Targets Revisited (Chapter 2)

In the two years since printing the first volume of the Handbook, staff and members of the Coalition alike have had much more practice in writing targets and assessing for outcomes. As a Coalition, we have become better at naming outcomes that are for living and experience, beyond the classroom. This chapter will serve to refresh and update educators on the process of assessment as well as provide new sample noticing targets, three sets for each priority goal.

Whole Person Learning: Belonging (Chapter 3)

This chapter will focus on one area of Whole Person Learning: Belonging. It will support educators in exploring the value of creating learning that fosters Belonging. By exploring what Belonging is and why it is important, this chapter aims to help educators design learning that builds connections among people. The chapter also offers tools to access this outcome.

Designing Learning with the Year in Mind (Chapter 4)

Congregations that are having the greatest impact are designing learning — family experiences and peer learning — as one large unit. All of the experiences are intentionally designed to contribute toward identified goals. This chapter provides a guide for linking learning throughout a unit or year. To do this congregations:

- Identify outcomes;
- Connect all learning to the same big idea(s); and
- Cradle “lived experiences” with pre- and post-learning

High Impact Models

Models Emerging in the Coalition (Chapter 5)

The Coalition of Innovating Congregations has worked intentionally over the last few years to create alternative models to traditional Hebrew School. Coalition congregations are redefining part-time Jewish learning. They believe that the primary Jewish experience of our children needs to be more than sitting in a classroom a few hours a week with peers. Today, 10 years after the RE-IMAGINE Project began supporting 5 different models of congregational education, the Coalition has more than tripled that number. This chapter describes 17 models that are recognizable as distinct from traditional Hebrew School.

Camp Connect: Four Relationships to Make Education Camp-Like, Camp-Linked, and Camp-Inspired (Chapter 6)

Close relationships among congregations and camps lead to new and powerful yearlong learning and recruiting strategies that benefit congregations, camps and children. In order for synagogues to offer camp-inspired learning and increase attendance at overnight camps, numerous new relationships must be developed. This chapter describes four critical relationships that strengthen Jewish learning through congregational and camp education. In these descriptions, the chapter explores the lessons learned from Camp Connect and the groundwork congregations can lay for forging these new relationships.

Sustaining Innovation

Networks: Innovators Need Innovators (Chapter 7)

Innovators need innovators. The more that we can be in conversation with one another to share and improve practice, the stronger we will be individually and as a group. This chapter will be a resource to those who are seeking the wisdom, and support of a network. It includes the most current thinking on the why, what and how of networks in Jewish education. This chapter provides a vivid snapshot of a network within the Coalition, demonstrating how curiosity and need can lead to connections that foster spiritual/emotional wellbeing as well as concrete ways to create powerful learning.

Ensuring Innovation Becomes “The Way We Do Business Here” (Chapter 8)

In order to sustain innovation, you must work with stakeholders so that they understand, believe in and feel some partnership with the educational innovation. This chapter will help you focus on two major groups: 1) the synagogue board of directors, and 2) prospective parents who might engage in your innovation. The skills and practices reviewed in this chapter that are geared toward board members and prospective parents can be adapted to almost any group that has a say in determining “the way we do business.”

Staffing Models that Support Innovation (Chapter 9)

This chapter will explore how adding a new staffing position — the Coalition Educator — has enabled congregations to more quickly and robustly foster innovation. Education Directors, clergy, teachers and lay leaders continue to play their part in the work of educational leadership. The new staffing position has been critical in moving good ideas to reality. Having a designated person who is a master of powerful learning, a member of the leadership team, a leader in professional learning and a networker with other congregations provides the human energy to make innovation possible.

Summary

Volume II shares the experience of the Coalition of Innovating Congregations in creating powerful learning and high impact models. This volume also shares learning that will help innovation become “the way we do business.”

Powerful Learning

Noticing Targets

Revisited

Seek the sacred within the ordinary. Seek the remarkable within the commonplace.

— Rebbe Nachman of Breslov

Why Revisit?

When the LOMED Handbook was first printed in 2011, Chapter 4: Whole Person Learning and Noticing Targets/Outcomes and Chapter 5: Noticing/Assessment for Whole Person Learning outlined the process for selecting noticing targets and conducting learning assessment, also known as “noticing.” In the two years since printing the Handbook, staff and members of the Coalition alike have had much more practice in writing targets and assessing for outcomes. As a Coalition, we have become better at naming outcomes that are for living and experience, beyond the classroom learning. This chapter will serve to refresh and update educators on the process of assessment as well as provide new sample noticing targets, three sets for each priority goal.

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Summary of the Noticing Process

The LOMED Handbook lays out a process for identifying or selecting noticing targets, designing learning around them, creating prompts toward assessment, and learning from the data collected. This section summarizes the steps and refers to the chapters and pages that offer more detailed information.

- Understand the four target areas — Knowing, Doing, Believing/Valuing, and Belonging — to design learning for the “whole person.” *See Volume 1, pages 42 – 44 for an explanation of the four target areas.*
- Choose your noticing targets. We suggest you work with your team. *See Vol. 1, page 45 for an exercise to do with your team to select noticing targets.*
- Guide learners to set their own noticing targets, especially teens and adults. Enabling a learner to identify personal life outcomes is essential to supporting life journeys rooted in Judaism. *See Vol. 1, page 47 for more explanation.*
- Select a tool with which to collect the noticing data. These tools should fit into the overall learning design. *See Vol. 1, pages 54 – 60 to learn more about selecting noticing tools and creating learner portfolios.*

- Learn from the noticing data you collect. Identify whether each learner is close, middle, or far from the targets and then cycle back to your planning to redesign learning that better reaches your targets. *See Vol. 1, Chapter 6: Learning from Noticing/Assessment, pages 61 – 68.*

Direct Learning and Leave Room for Personalization

There is a delicate balance between naming outcomes and enabling the serendipity and personalization of growth. These samples are an attempt at finding that balance. They are specific enough to guide learning experiences and open enough for the educator and the learner to discover and identify according to their own goals and interests. For example, “Describes specific ways Jewish values...” offers direction and leaves room for which values would be selected. A phrase like “makes choices” again offers direction and enables the learner and educator to identify the enactment of the learning.

Are Synergistic with One Another and Over Time

We’ve learned that it is important to link the noticing targets to one another. Each target is connected to and reinforced by the other targets. The following questions help you connect action with knowledge, belief/values and relationships.

One way to approach making the connections among the noticing targets is to consider the following questions in order:

1. **Doing:** What will the learner be doing? What Jewish living will the learner be engaged in during and as a result of the ‘unit’?
2. **Knowing:** In order for the learner to do/live this action, what will she/he need to know?
3. **Belonging:** Who will the learner need to be in relationship with in order to do this?
4. **Believing/Valuing:** What opportunities will they have to reflect and express their values and/or beliefs?

Noticing targets are also synergistic over time. In order to develop deep connections and meaning, learners need to revisit the Big Idea or Essential Questions of the unit at different levels of their development. Developmentally, the noticing targets return to common Big Ideas.

Let yourself be
silently drawn to
the stronger pull of
what you really love.

— Rumi

SAMPLES FOR FOUR PRIORITY GOALS

The following is a sample of noticing targets. They are written as examples for educators and learners to sit together and answer the question: What will we notice at the end of a “unit” to mark growth and change?

1 Learners will be on a journey of applying Torah to daily life.

	Elementary	Middle School/Teen	Adult/Family
KNOWING	Describes specific ways Jewish values can be used in the learner’s life.	Identifies and defines Jewish values and their sources that can be applied to daily life.	Applies methods to analyze Torah in order to identify and define values that apply to today in multiple ways.
DOING	Acts in accordance with Jewish values, using lessons from Torah as a guide.	Acts in accordance with Jewish values, using lessons from Torah as a guide.	Applies Torah values in complex and challenging personal situations.
BELIEVING/ VALUING	Explores and expresses value of using lessons learned from Torah to help act in everyday decisions.	Reflects on the challenge and benefit of using Torah based values when making day to day choices.	Explores and expresses the value and challenge of wrestling with Torah values that complement and are in conflict with secular values.
BELONGING	Identifies biblical characters who can “talk to them when making decisions.” Has ongoing conversations with adults/teens in their community about value decisions in everyday life.	Describes Torah character(s) with whom s/he identifies; Tells about new relationships formed with peers or community members through Torah study and engaging in acts based on Torah derived values.	Refers to biblical characters as models. Tells about new relationships or old relationships strengthened by Torah study (in conversation with younger congregants) or by engaging in acts based on Torah derived values.

Note how the targets guide learning and leave room for the individual learner

2 Learners will be on a spiritual journey rooted in Jewish tradition.

Note the targets build big ideas over time toward enduring learning/ understanding.

	Elementary	Middle School/Teen	Adult/Family
KNOWING	Recites blessings and prayers in Hebrew; Identifies the times s/he uses blessings in fixed and personal ways.	Has skills to join in lead communal prayer; Explains the role of fixed and personal prayer in daily life.	Describes role of prayer as a source of both inspiration and support; Has skills to lead/facilitate communal prayer and rituals.
DOING	Uses prayer, fixed and personal, in synagogue and at home.	Applies Jewish values learned from fixed prayer to daily life; Engages in both fixed and personal prayer in synagogue and at home.	Employs prayer, both fixed and personal, as a guide for daily life; Makes life choices based on values derived from prayers.
BELIEVING/ VALUING	Explores and expresses the benefit of engaging in fixed and personal prayer.	Reflects and expresses value of a personal and communal prayer life.	Explores and expresses the value and challenges of developing a personal and communal prayer.
BELONGING	Talks regularly with peers and role models about praying in synagogue and at home.	Shares reflections on developing a prayer life with peer/ teen/ adult who is also developing a prayer life.	Voluntarily engages with peers in communal prayer and rituals. Is in conversation with younger congregants about developing a prayer life.

3 Learners will be in an ongoing relationship with Am Yisrael and/or Eretz Yisrael.

	Elementary	Middle School/Teen	Adult/Family
KNOWING	Retells stories of heroism/strength of people connected to Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael including family members.	Describes characteristics of people in the Jewish community and in Jewish history who serve as role models; Explains the role of Eretz Yisrael in the lives of Jews worldwide.	Describes people in Jewish history and in the Jewish community today who are a source of inspiration; Analyzes issues facing both Am Yisrael and/or Eretz Yisrael.
DOING	Researches and tells “my family story” connected to Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael.	Joins with local community for both formal and informal activities; Deepens research and understanding of “my family story.”	Participates in community work to support Am Yisrael and/or Eretz Yisrael; Traces the family tree of people, places and values.
BELIEVING/ VALUING	Explores and expresses the uniqueness/specialness of being part of Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael.	Reflects on meaning and value of being part of Am Yisrael; Explores and expresses what it means to be Jewish, American.	Explores personal connection to Am Yisrael and/or Eretz Yisrael.
BELONGING	Engages with family members to learn “my family story,” and builds connections with peers who share their “family story.”	Describes relationships with peers and adults in the congregation; Tells about connections (past, present, or future) to people and/or places in Israel.	Describes personal connection to Am Yisrael and/or Eretz Yisrael; Shares “My family story” with younger congregants.

Note the targets focus learning and leave room for the learner to help set goals.

4 Learners will be on a journey of mending the world guided by a Jewish moral compass.

Note the connections among knowing, doing, believing and relationships.

	Elementary	Middle School/Teen	Adult/Family
KNOWING	Describes responsibility to take care of the world; Identifies Jewish values that guide us in working towards social justice and tikkun olam.	Names opportunities for social justice and tikkun olam; Identifies Jewish texts that guide us in making moral decisions.	Analyzes Jewish texts connected to social justice and tikkun olam; Identifies opportunities to work towards social justice and tikkun olam.
DOING	Participates in work towards social justice and tikkun olam.	Plans, organizes and/or voluntarily engages in work towards tikkun olam.	Organizes and/or voluntarily engages in work towards tikkun olam, using Jewish texts and values as a guide.
BELIEVING/ VALUING	Explores and expresses value of working toward social justice and tikkun olam.	Reflects on Jewish texts as part of exploring value of working toward social justice and tikkun olam	Explores Jewish texts as a source of guidance in work toward social justice and tikkun olam.
BELONGING	Tells about relationship developed with member of community (peer or adult) while engaging in work towards social justice and tikkun olam.	Describes him/herself as part of a group that works towards social justice and tikkun olam.	Connects with members of the community to work towards social justice and tikkun olam; Connects with younger congregants learning to mend the world.

Summary

The coalition has been developing the practice of using noticing targets to guide learning and help children and families see growth over time. The samples in this chapter illustrate two important things to consider:

- Make sure each target is linked. Doing/action requires knowledge, relationships and reflection that give voice to beliefs/values.
- When creating noticing targets, be certain there is an opportunity for the learner to set goals.

Powerful Learning Whole Person Learning: Belonging

We are lonesome animals. We spend all our life trying to be less lonesome. One of our ancient methods is to tell a story begging the listener to say — and to feel — ‘Yes, that’s the way it is, or at least that’s the way I feel it. You’re not as alone as you thought.’

— John Steinbeck, “In Awe of Words,” *The Exonian*, 75th anniversary edition, Exeter University (1930)

Introduction

If the idea of Jewish education is to create Jewish learning for real life, we know that one way to do this is by creating educational experiences that nurture the whole of a person. The whole of a person is complex. We know it includes but it not limited to their minds, their hands, their hearts and their feet. To recognize the whole of our learners, LOMED uses a framework that names four target areas: **Knowing, Doing, Believing/Valuing and Belonging.**

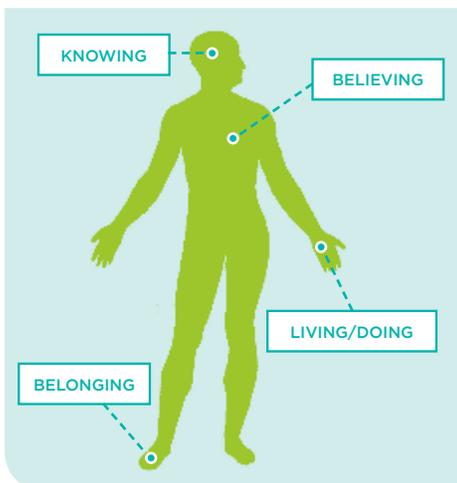
Even though we seem more connected than ever through texting, email and social media, our sense of community and responsibility to one another and the entire people of Israel remains fragile. In recent years, the Jewish community as a whole has begun to place more emphasis on creating a sense of Belonging through a variety of initiatives. UJA Federation of New York has focused upon “Connected Congregations: From Dues and Membership to Sustaining Communities of Purpose” to help Jewish professional and lay leaders think about the ways in which they can best serve the changing needs of the community and create a greater sense of Belonging (www.ujafedny.org/event/view/connected-congregation). Additionally, Dr. Ron Wolfson, in *Relational Judaism*, highlights those communities and organizations whose emphasis on creating Belonging is central to their vision and mission of greater Jewish connectedness. For the future of the Jewish community as a whole, paying attention to and creating a sense of Belonging now is key.

This chapter will support educators in exploring the value of creating learning that fosters Belonging. By first understanding what Belonging is and why it is important, this chapter aims to help educators design learning that builds connections among people. Educators will ask: How can I help connect my learners to their peers? To their families? How does this lesson help build connections among my community members? To the rest of the Jewish world?

This chapter will also help educators learn to name and assess Belonging outcomes in observable, measurable and worthy ways by offering examples of Belonging noticing targets and tools that have been used in Coalition Congregations.

What is Belonging? Why Belonging?

Let's look at Levi, our model of whole person learning. Belonging can be understood most easily through a person's feet. Where does one choose to stand? With whom does one stand? Where does one feel at home? But Belonging is also about a person's heart: Does he feel valued by his community? Do the values of the community reflect her beliefs? — and hands: Is this a community to which a person wants to contribute his time, energy and resources?



There are some aspects of Belonging that we cannot know for certain when a person is young. We ask ourselves: Will this child grow to belong to the Jewish people? This is a long-term outcome that we cannot predict now. We can't know in advance each step on a person's life journey. However, as educators in this person's life now, we can have an influence on the short-term outcomes of Belonging. We can pay attention to our learner's connections — With whom is he in conversation? Where does she ask her small and big questions? Who is his role model? Whom does she look up to? Who cares about and knows this child?

Answers to these questions can be explored by the Jewish educator in partnership with the family and community. When Jewish education fosters connections among peers, with role models (including clergy, educators, and other members of the community) and among families of all ages and life stages, we can observe increased Belonging in our learners today. Simply said, these relationships matter in our lives, and they matter in the lives of our learners. But building relationships takes time.

As educators we often use many tools that help create community in learning settings — such as when we invite our learners to turn to the person next to them and share a story or react to a text — but building relationships among our learners means thinking about the role of relationships and relationship building in our educational model over time. What are the goals of our model? What is the sense of Belonging we want to engender among our participants? How do we imagine these relationships will grow and change in the next three months? Twelve months? Two years? Ten?

We can begin this process of building connections among our learners by inviting them to reflect deeply on who they are, what they value, and their life journey thus far. By encouraging this type of inquiry we are already prioritizing one's relationship to oneself and his or her own Jewish and Life Journey. From there, we can ask our learners to share these thoughts and questions with other members of their family

and community. In this way, the threads of connection among learners in our models begin to be built up slowly, over time, growing into a more strongly connected web of learners and communities. So how do we begin to create relationships that foster a sense of Belonging for our learners?

Seven Concrete Ways Educators Can Foster Belonging

1. Prioritize Relationship Building

Educators who understand that making connections among people is as important as presenting any content, will spend time making this happen. In general education there is an axiom that says: “What is measured is done.” This means that if educators know there is an outcome that can be measured over time, energy will be spent on the process. Using noticing targets and tools to measure Belonging can help educators measure the growth of connection over time ensuring this dimension of learning doesn’t fall by the way side.

One of the most important aspects of this type of relationship building is to pay attention to the types of relationships that are essential and possible. This means looking carefully at the educational model that has been or is being created and asking what relationships an educator can help facilitate within the context of the model. Different models afford different types of relationship emphasis. Some models focus on peer to peer relationships, others on those that can be fostered among members of families, and still others that seek to broaden the relationships among members of the same community.

2. Create Safe Space

Relationships need safe space in order to grow and develop. The values and rules of how people speak to, ask questions of, and learn from each other are but a few examples of how educators can create and build safe space. Jewish ideas and values are also important guides in the creation of safe space. By remembering and reminding our learners, that each of us is created *B'tzelem Elohim* — in the image of God, we can model the inherent holiness found in the act of creating relationships. Drawing on other values like *savlanut* — patience, and when necessary, *teshuva* — repentance, can also help foster a safe environment in which relationships can grow.

Educators who seek to create safe space in their learning environments can encourage a community conversation about the values that are common to all learners and how those values can be upheld in the educational model. In this way, learners can say what they need in order to feel both heard and appreciated. Educators can encourage their learners to follow these communal norms by noticing when someone practices them and highlighting this behavior as “heroic” or sharing the story of how this learner emulates the values held by the group.

It's easy to criticize others and make them feel unwanted. Anyone can do it. What takes effort and skill is picking them up and making them feel good.

— Rebbe Nachman
of Breslov

Some communal norms that can be introduced the first few times learners get together may include:

- Respecting confidentiality of other learners — ensuring that personal information or comments are not shared outside the learning environment
- Listening respectfully to different perspectives — letting people finish their thoughts before responding
- Using “I statements” (such as “I believe that...”) rather than generalizing or playing devil’s advocate (“But don’t you think that...?”)
- Allowing learners to remain silent in large group discussions

Adapted from the University of Wisconsin Learn Center (www.uw.edu/learn/diversity/safeclassroom.php)

3. Practice Knowing and Caring

Each one of us wants to feel known and cared about. Educators who make room for learners to share their questions and stories demonstrate that in this place and at this time, their learners are known. This can begin by simply asking how someone’s day was and really listening to their response. Educators can encourage learners’ feelings of Belonging by acknowledging their presence, recognizing their unique contributions, and responding to each learner’s individual questions and ideas. Additionally, each learner can assess his or her own sense of belonging through self-reflection and the use of noticing tools. At the end of this chapter, there are a series of tools that will help you assess Belonging.

4. Make Room for Conversation Through Talking and Listening

Conversation enables learning that aligns directly with 21st Century Design Principles. Using conversation creates opportunities for learning that is content rich, speaks to the questions of daily life, enables learners to inquire, reflect and derive their own meaning from the experience and builds relationships among learners. Conversation is a *life skill* that allows learners to engage with others to figure out the big and small questions.

Conversations can be both social and functional. Social conversation is free flowing and informal, *functional* conversation can be used as a tool for more directed sharing of information among learners as well as an opportunity for reflection and inquiry.

Facilitating Conversations: Educators can use conversation as a window to hear what their learners are thinking about and to understand the questions that are most important to them. Conversation can happen around meals; as a warm up or cool down to another activity; in transit, when you are moving between spaces; during hands-on activities; when you want to reach for new perspectives or hear new voices; as a ritual, establishing a time and place for *sicha* — conversation. Conversation can enrich the relationship between both the educator and learners as well as among learners.

Practicing Sacred Listening (*Hineni*): There are many ways to listen. As Jewish educators, one way we listen is to be present, *Hineni*: to pause, to breathe, and actually to hear what the other is saying. In sacred listening we make space for individuals to share what’s happened to them in the past, what concerns they have in the present and what their hopes are for the future by asking open questions, listening without judgment, and by showing we care. Along with this careful listening we can also endeavor to make connections between our learners’ stories in the present and the larger stories of the Jewish people across time. Young people can know they are not alone.

5. Become a *Shadchan*, a Network Weaver

Our stories connect us to each other and to the Jewish people. A key part of an educator’s role is to listen to the stories being shared by learners and to facilitate connections among learners. This work extends beyond classroom walls and continues into the larger community of the synagogue, into learners’ homes and out into the world. Rather than simply “covering the material,” we enrich the lives of our learners by practicing sacred listening to truly hear their joys, sorrows, and the questions of their everyday lives. This listening is enhanced when we can connect our learners to others who are on a similar path or those who can support their journey.

6. Share Life Experiences

Living together in community opens the opportunity for us to invite our learners to share in life events. Bringing our learners to life cycle events experienced by their classmates or others in the community fosters the larger communal sense of Belonging we hope our learners and their families will embrace for the long term. Offering comfort at a shiva minyan, celebrating with a couple at their *aufruf* on Shabbat morning, or sharing weekly Shabbat meals in people’s homes allows for a greater sense of connection between our learners and the communities in which they live.

7. Connect to the Master Story

As educators it is also our responsibility to help our learners feel that they are in a relationship with things that are larger than themselves or even their families or home communities. As Coalition member Rabbi Marc Margolius writes: “Understanding how one’s personal narrative reflects and resonates with the central myths of Judaism, fosters a more personal connection to Judaism...it helps storytellers see their story as part of a much larger narrative of the Jewish people’s narrative.” Fostering this type of Belonging can be done by connecting learners with spiritual mentors or guides who can help them link their story with the larger stories of the Jewish people. Emphasis on this type of Belonging also brings to life the Priority Goal of “Learners will be in an ongoing relationship with Am Israel and Eretz Yisrael,” encouraging deeper thinking about Jewish peoplehood and the Land of Israel.

Understanding how one’s personal narrative reflects and resonates with the central myths of Judaism fosters a more personal connection to Judaism

— Rabbi Marc Margolius

Assessing Belonging

Fostering a sense of Belonging can never be guaranteed. Connections between and among people are often serendipitous. Coalition educators have developed certain tools to help make some aspects of Belonging more observable and measurable. In adapting or using these tools, it helps to ask, “What would I observe if Belonging were happening? I would see...”

CHECKLIST VERSION 1					
Name:					
	Not at all	A Little	Some	A Lot	Comments
Addresses others by name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Shares ideas and stories with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Reaches out to others <i>e.g., asks questions, seeks help, gives feedback</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Works with others <i>e.g., creates product together, makes decisions together</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

CHECKLIST VERSION 2			
	Name:	Name:	Name:
Addresses others by name	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Shares ideas, stories with others	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Listens respectfully to ideas, stories of others	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Engages with others <i>e.g., asks questions, seeks help, participates in informal conversations</i>	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Works with others <i>e.g., creates product together, makes decision together</i>	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Shares stories about pursuing relationships outside of learning time <i>e.g., on breaks, at home</i>	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR THE LEARNER

Name:					Date:
	Not at all	A Little	Some	A Lot	Reflections/Questions
I shared my ideas with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I listened respectfully to others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I worked with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I included others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I felt respected by others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I felt included by others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I felt connected to others in the group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I felt connected to Jews and/or Judaism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I would like to deepen my connection to others in the group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR ADULT LEARNERS					
Name:					
<i>Take time to think about your connections. Think about your connections to the learners in the room. As Jews we are tied to one another. You are also bound to the Jewish people. Your story is connected to Jews who came before you. Our learning helps you explore connections to one another and to your people.</i>					
Assessment	Not at all	A Little	Some	A Lot	Comments
I shared something important to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I listened with interest to ideas that were important to others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I gained a tool or an idea that I want to experiment with in my own practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I learned something important from someone here	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I felt included by others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I felt connected to someone/others in the group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I felt connected to Jews and/or Judaism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I want to learn more or explore a Jewish idea from today	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
I would like to increase my connection to someone/another in this group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Create Your Own Prompts To Notice Belonging: The Questions We Ask Matter!

Definition

Prompts are key questions, or idea starters, that evoke responses from the learners specifically around the noticing targets. In this way, tools (like a journal or blog) and prompts work together to document a learner’s growth over time. The responses reflect learner progress toward the noticing target, and thereby document experience with and measure progress toward the priority goal.

Characteristics of a Good Prompt

- Relates directly to (is aligned with) the noticing target
- Is open-ended
- Clearly expresses expectations and criteria for an appropriate response
- Requires learners to make connections (e.g., with Jewish texts and values, with experiences)
- Engages learners in reflection on their experience and/or learning

Sample Prompts for Belonging

Read and evaluate the strength of the prompts below. What makes them good or strong? How could they be strengthened?

PROMPT	NOTICING TARGET	STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES
Describe what it was like to go with other members of your temple/class/family to perform the mitzvah of ma'achil re'evim. Be sure to use Hebrew terms in your response.	Develops relationship with other community members through tikkun olam work.	
Draw a picture of your family that includes Abraham and Sarah. Imagine Abraham and Sarah talking to you about hachnasat orchim. What are they reminding your family to do? Be sure to use Hebrew terms in your response.	Identifies self as part of the Jewish people beginning with Abraham and Sarah.	
Tell about a new person you met or a friendship you made doing tikkun olam this year. Be sure to use the Hebrew names of the Jewish values you were doing.	Develops relationships with peers through involvement in tikkun olam.	
What prayer do you most like to sing with other people and why?	Explains to others a prayer or ritual that is personally meaningful.	
Tell a story about a member of our congregation who applied Torah to daily life. What lessons did you learn from that person's story that you will use in your own life?	Tells stories of others in the congregation who apply Torah to daily life.	
How did it feel to treat someone nicely? Use Hebrew terms in your response.	Acts with sensitivity toward others in peer group.	
Describe the sense of connection (or not) to God, other people, etc., when you led part of a service.	Takes a leadership role in communal prayer or ritual.	

Sample Assessment Tool-Designed by Temple Beth Abraham

TBA LinkedIn: Are You Connected?

Our Goal: to build connections and relationships! Teacher to student, student to student, teacher to parent, parent & student to the larger TBA community.

Keep in mind:

- Every time you interact with a parent or student you have the opportunity to strengthen or weaken your connection with that person.
- Use the person’s name! Instead of “Good morning!” to a student, say “Good Morning, Susie!” People like being addressed by name. It makes them feel known.
- Relationship-building can occur in person, on the phone, via email.
- Interactions have to be authentic. Kids can tell when you are dialing it in!
- Only do things that you feel comfortable doing!

Teacher to Student	Student to Student	Teacher to Parent
Getting to know you sheet with specifics that you can keep referring to throughout the year.	Community Builder Activities.	“Nachas Notes” — send email/phone call to parent about something good a child did in class.
Greet students at door as they come in.	Group kids ahead of class to make groups of kids not from the same school district.	Send absence note/email/phone call “Oh, we missed X today in school. Hope everything is ok!”
Make a point to ask a kid a specific question about his/her life on way to <i>tefillah</i> or music or during pizza time.	Create collaborative, discussion based activities in class so kids get to interact with one another (i.e., have them create a skit, song or poster together. This forces them to interact).	At traffic duty, catch a parent for a moment and tell them something their child said or did.
Invite students over for dinner/Shabbat/out to ice cream/challah baking.	Send HW assignments that make one kid call another to get an answer.	Invite parents over for dinner/Shabbat/out to ice cream/challah baking.
Use Mensch strips for reinforcement.	Show & Tell – ask kids to bring in something meaningful to them (Jewish or not) and let them tell the class about it. Do a few kids each week.	Call parents of each student new to the school just to introduce yourself.
For older students, start a closed Facebook group or Google plus group for your class. Post questions for them to answer during the week.	Create groups based on something simple like favorite color, favorite food. Then give the group something to do - either curriculum driven or just fun (i.e., ask the purple group to come up with 10 things that are purple.)	Use Family Ed programs, mitzvah projects etc. to talk to parents one on one about their lives. Check in with parents.

Teacher to Student	Student to Student	Teacher to Parent
Offer to meet a kid on Skype for ten minutes to review something.	Have students tutor one another.	Send home monthly or biweekly newsletters with info.
Have an “Ask the Teacher” session – similar to “Ask the Rabbi” let kids write-down questions on an index card and when you have time, you pull one out and answer it!	Create a shared experience for the class – i.e. a class trip.	Start a closed Facebook group or google plus group for the parents in your class. Post questions for them to talk to their kids about during the week.
Put a “Mailbox” in the room where kids can write you letters about things. And of course, write them back!	Have a student call out the names for attendance. Switch who it is every week.	

Connections/ Relationships Worksheet

Every teacher is asked to do at least one idea from each column every month in every class. Use the chart to help you.

Teacher to Student	Student to Student	Teacher to Parent
What I did was...	What I did was...	What I did was...
The response / effect I saw was...	The response / effect I saw was...	The response / effect I saw was...

Voices from the Field and Our Tradition

Dr. Ron Wolfson, author of *Relational Judaism*, emphasizes nine different levels of relationship that can help guide our emphasis on the outcome of Belonging.

These include:

LEVEL 1	<i>Bayn Adam l'Atzmo</i> – Self
LEVEL 2	<i>Bayn Adam L'Mishpachah</i> – Family
LEVEL 3	<i>Bayn Adam L'Haveiro</i> – Friends
LEVEL 4	<i>Bayn Adam L'Yahadut</i> – Jewish Living
LEVEL 5	<i>Bayn Adam L'Kehillah</i> – Community
LEVEL 6	<i>Bayn Adam L'Am</i> – Peoplehood
LEVEL 7	<i>Bayn Adam L'Yisrael</i> – Israel
LEVEL 8	<i>Bayn Adam L'Olam</i> – World
LEVEL 9	<i>Bayn Adam L'Makom</i> – God

Relationship building is a major component of the Mitzvah Map. Families build relationships with BJ rabbis and educators, people in the BJ community doing mitzvot, with other families. And perhaps most importantly, they strengthen bonds within their own family. During the three-year journey between receiving a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date and standing on the bima as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, parents and children participate in intimate, meaningful dialogue at specific moments. At the beginning of the journey, parents offer a blessing to their children filled with hopes and dreams for them throughout this process and beyond. It's an extremely meaningful moment for both parents and children.

— Emily Walsh, Assistant Director of Education Youth and Family, B'nai Jeshurun

The B'nai Mitzvah Opening Ritual was amazing. I had my absolute most impactful parenting moment of my life (so far) at your event and I had nothing to do with it other than watch it play out. Michael was reading his prayer to Jeremy and was so emotional he was crying. Jeremy was listening to him so intently and was so moved that HE started crying and I stood watching both of them in profile while they both literally had tears rolling down their faces. I have never seen Jeremy cry from deep emotion before (as in not in pain or frustration) but he really understood how big a moment it was. Then, that night, Jeremy wrote a prayer for Michael and gave it to him Sunday morning. It was really mind blowing. Thank you.

— Congregation B'nai Jeshurun Mitzvah Map Parent Participant

Listening To Each Other's Stories

Once the Gerer Rebbe, may his memory protect us, decided to question one of his disciples: 'How is Moshe Yaakov doing?' The disciple didn't know. 'What?!' shouted the Rebbe, 'You don't know? You pray under the same roof, you study the same texts, you serve the same God, you sing the same songs and yet you dare to tell me that you don't know whether Moshe Yaakov is in good health, whether he needs help, advice, or comforting?'

Here lies the very essence of our way of life: Every person must share in the life of others, and not leave them to themselves, either in sorrow or in job."

— Elie Wiesel

Learning specific strategies for facilitating conversations will help you get in touch with children's thinking. To do this, teachers need to learn the following skills:

- *Listening carefully*
- *Embracing silence*
- *Asking good questions*
- *Helping children develop conversational skills*
- *Summarizing conversations*
- *Using memory tools*
- *Bringing conversations to a close*

— Lisa Berman, author of *Are You Listening? Fostering Conversations That Help Young Children Learn*

The simple act of sitting down with friends or family members, asking them sincerely about their lives, and listening deeply to their responses is powerful and sometimes even life-changing for the storyteller and the questioner alike...You can take conversation into the realm of the personal by asking students if they've had a meaningful conversation with anyone over 30 minutes in length in the past month. Was it a face to face talk, or over the phone? Did it happen without a TV or radio in the background or while you were doing another task at the same time? How might these factors affect a conversation between two people?

— Lisa Winkler, *Teacher's Guide to Listening is An Act of Love, Pages 9–10*

Truth [is] being involved in an eternal conversation about things that matter, conducted with passion and discipline...truth is not in the conclusions so much as in the process of conversation itself...if you want to be in truth you must be in conversation.

— Parker Palmer

Summary

This chapter shares some of the tools that have been used in the Coalition to foster relationships among learners, educators and across generations. Also included are specific ways educators and learners can mark growth over time in building relationships. Intentional design and tools can make our good intentions real and measurable.

Powerful Learning

Designing Learning with the Year in Mind

Americans hold the notion that good teaching comes through artful and spontaneous interactions with students during lessons... such views minimize the importance of planning increasingly effective lessons and lend credence to the folk belief that good teachers are born, not made.

— James Stigler and James Hiebert, “Understanding and Improving Classroom Mathematics Instruction,” 1997, p.20 (Quoted in Wiggins and McTighe, “Understanding by Design,” p. 254)

We all know that stand-alone experiences don't add up to powerful learning. For children and adults to develop knowledge, beliefs/values, relationships and lived action they need a continual reinforcing cycle of learning, experimenting, questioning and learning anew. Yet educators find it challenging to ensure that learning experiences throughout a year contribute to this meaning making cycle, resulting too often in learners experiencing the faulty “one shot” or stand-alone experience.

In the Coalition of Innovating Congregations, educators are moving away from stand-alone experiences towards designing with the year in mind. In other words, we aim to move from a program, event or lesson mindset to a unit or yearlong mindset.

A number of New York congregations have created models that have a family engagement component. These family learning experiences usually happen once or twice a month and augment peer group experiences that happen weekly (e.g. youth meeting in one another's homes each week). What we've seen in congregations that are having the greatest impact is that these experiences, both the family experiences, and the peer learning, are designed as one large unit. All of the experiences are intentionally designed to contribute toward identified goals.

So instead of one-shot “family education,” congregations are creating regularized, reinforced and recurrent learning. Instead of children's learning having little to do with these family experiences, they are integrated. This chapter will give a guide for linking learning throughout a unit or year. To do this congregations:

- Identify outcomes
- Connect all learning to the same big idea(s); and
- Cradle “lived experiences” with pre- and post-learning

For more information on Powerful Learning design, refer to Vol. I, “Chapter 4: Whole Person Learning and Noticing Targets/Outcomes” and Vol. I, “Chapter 7: Designing Powerful Learning.”

In each and every one of our gestures the Blessed Creator is present... When our speech is directed toward the good, connecting thought to each word, we connect the two worlds and generate good.

- Keter Shem Tov
No. 273

Begin with the End in Mind: Learner Outcomes / Noticing Targets

Step 1

When linking a unit or year of family experiences together, identify outcomes/noticing targets from the beginning (see Vol. I, Chapter 4 for more information on noticing targets). Imagine your families at the end of the year or a unit — not an individual time of engagement — and consider the following:

DO	What do you see the learners doing differently as a result of the year of learning?
KNOW	What would they need to know to do that?
BELIEVE/VALUE	What values and beliefs do you want them to have opportunities to reflect upon?
BELONG	With whom/what do we want them to build a stronger relationship and sense of belonging ?

Sample Outcomes/Noticing Targets

By answering the above questions, you can identify outcomes/noticing targets. To see an example of how these questions might be answered, refer to the Sample Planning for a Year of Lived Experiences on page I44.

To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you are going so that you better understand where you are now so that the steps you take are always in the right direction. (Stephen Covey, “7 Habits of Highly Effective People,” p. 98)

The Big Idea

Step 2

We know that learners are not engaging every day, or possibly every week, with Jewish content and experiences. Therefore, it is important to have something that

holds a series of experiences together for the learner. In this way, memory and meaning are developed.

Once the outcomes are clear, ask: “What is the idea — Velcro that can hold these experiences together during the unit/year?” Drawing from the work of Wiggins and McTighe, this “idea-Velcro” is called the “big idea.”

Examples of “big ideas” congregations design around:

- God is when...
- We are responsible for one another
- Love your Neighbor as Yourself
- *Am Yisrael Chai*

To see an example of how these questions might be answered, refer to the Sample Planning for a Year of Lived Experiences on page I44.

Cradling Lived Experiences with Pre/Post-Learning

Step 3

Summer is calendar time. Mark on your calendar those special “lived experiences.” Then make sure that you also calendar pre- and post-learning for each one of those lived experiences. In this way, you are able to ensure that learners have recurring and reinforcing learning that supports memory and meaning.

Pre-learning usually focuses on:

- Skill building
- Content to inform experience
- Identifying what learners already “Know” about what the experiences are
- Team and relationship building
- Setting expectations and norms

Post-learning usually focuses on:

- Reflection
- Exploring and expressing values and beliefs
- Unpacking experiences
- Returning to skills and content
- Feedback and goal setting

Both pre- and post-learning can happen in a classroom for children and or they can happen on line (e.g. with a blog) or in a home.

To see examples of powerful learning experiences that align to the big idea and to the identified KDBB, refer to the sample calendar for “God is when...” on page I44.

Sample: Planning for a Year of Lived Experiences

Designers begin with their priority goal and outcomes before calendaring.

Congregation's Priority Goal Families will be on a spiritual journey grounded in Jewish tradition.

Big Idea “God is when...”

Outcomes/Noticing Targets As a result of the year of learning, families will...

DO	Engage in experiences, say <i>b'rachot</i> , and express, “God is when...”
KNOW	Learn when and how to say <i>b'rachot</i>
BELIEVE/VALUE	Explore and express their response to “God is when...”
BELONG	Be in conversations within a family and across families and clergy about “God is when...”

Designers then create a plan for a year of lived experiences, keeping in mind the need for pre- and post-learning.

SAMPLE CALENDAR FOR “GOD IS WHEN...”	
SEPTEMBER	
Pre-learning	Children and parents receive tutoring and tape for Shabbat blessings
Lived Experience	Shabbat family dinners in shul and at home
Post-learning	Families make entries into “God is when...” blog. Receive additional tutoring on Shabbat blessings
OCTOBER	
Pre-learning	Children and parents receive tutoring and tape for blessings in nature
Lived Experience	Family guided hikes
Post-learning	Families make entries into “God is when...” blog. Compare and contrast “God is when...” on Shabbat and in nature
NOVEMBER	
Pre-learning	Children and parents receive tutoring and tape for bedtime ritual
Lived Experience	A musical concert on Yiddish lullabies; home bedtime ritual
Post-learning	Families make entries into “God is when...” blog. Compare and contrast “God is when...” on Shabbat and in nature and at bedtime

This sample shows how intentional design can weave together experiences, learning and reflection in a way that fosters meaning. This method of design contrasts with episodic design that focuses on isolated experiences not framed by pre-learning and reflection.

Tools for Designing

As a team, use the template below to identify your goal, big idea and noticing targets.

PLANNING FOR A YEAR OF LIVED EXPERIENCES
Congregation & Team Information
Congregation:
Team Members:
Learning Plan Priority Goal And Big Idea
Priority Goal:
Big Idea:
Learner Outcomes/Noticing Targets
Knowing:
Doing:
Believing/Valuing:
Belonging:

After completing the above chart, use the template on the following page to design learning experiences that align to your goal, big idea and noticing targets.

LEARNING PLAN CALENDAR					
	Pre Learning Date And Format	Experience Date and Format	Post Learning Date and Format	Big Idea of the Learning Experience <i>You may choose to use Essential Questions in place of or in addition to Big Ideas.</i>	In what way(s) will this experience contribute to reaching your end of the year goals?
Learning Experience #1					
Learning Experience #2					
Learning Experience #3					
Learning Experience #4					
Learning Experience #5					
Learning Experience #6					
Learning Experience #7					
Learning Experience #8					
Learning Experience #9					

 **In Summary**

All new models of Jewish Education seem to include some combination of lived experiences, family connection and peer learning. To make experiences meaningful, all of these components must be tied together throughout the year and not seen as separate initiatives. Congregations integrate the learning by:

1. Identifying learner outcomes/noticing targets that guide all experiences;
2. Connecting all learning to the same big idea(s); and
3. Cradling “lived experiences” with pre- and post-learning.

High Impact Models Models Emerging in the Coalition

Who cuts a path for the thunderstorm and carves a road for the rain to water the desolate wasteland, the land where no man lives; to make the wilderness blossom and cover the desert with grass?

—Job 38:25-27 translation Stephen Mitchell

The Coalition of Innovating Congregations has worked to create alternative models to traditional Hebrew School. Children seated in classrooms a few hours a week separate from authentic Jewish living and from community has proven to be a faulty system to raise a generation. So, Coalition congregations are redefining part-time Jewish learning by changing when, where and how learning takes place. These congregations are changing the traditional responses to, “Who are the learners and the teachers?” As a result, there are now at least 17 models of Jewish learning that offer dynamic alternatives for Jewish part-time education.

A decade ago, The RE-IMAGINE Project of the Experiment in Congregational Education, scoured the country for alternatives to Hebrew School. At that time, they profiled five models that could be identified as alternative to traditional Hebrew School. The models were described as: Shabbat Centered, Family Learning, Parent-led learning, Retreat Learning and Elective Subjects. *See Vol. 1, Chapter 3: High Impact Models that Nurture the Whole Person for more explanation on what constitutes an educational model.*

This chapter describes 17 models that are recognizable as distinct from traditional Hebrew School. As congregations continue to uncover and invent learning to speak to today’s families, more models will likely emerge.

MODEL DESCRIPTIONS	
Model Type	Model Description
Shabbat Family Celebration	<p>Jewish education focuses on family learning and growing Jewishly through shared study, observance and celebration in “real Jewish time”—on Shabbat. It involves experiencing Shabbat, not simply learning about Shabbat. Families come together in some regular rhythm (e.g., weekly or bi-weekly) on Shabbat (Friday and/or Saturday) in homes or in synagogue for learning and celebration. The model includes a combination of adult time, children time and family time, often a combination of meal, worship, and learning. An emphasis on creating connections within and among participating families (and with the congregation) drives much of the educational design.</p> <p>In most cases these experiences are augmented with some other form of learning for children such as regular peer classes, tutoring, or Skype lessons.</p>
Family (non-Shabbat) Learning	<p>This model focuses on families learning and growing Jewishly through shared experiences and study. Families come together on a regular basis in homes, synagogue and/or the larger community to learn, worship, and/or share a meal. Sometimes the meetings follow the rhythm of holidays. Sometimes the focus is on a specific learning theme (e.g., Jewish New York) and learning takes place in sites that support the learning (e.g., Ellis Island). An emphasis on creating connections within and among participating families (and with the congregation) drives much of the educational design.</p> <p>In most cases these experiences are augmented with some other form of learning for children such as regular peer classes, tutoring, or Skype lessons.</p>
Intergenerational/Multi-age Learning	<p>Jewish education brings together learners across lines of age and stage of development. Variations of this model focus on varied relationships. Models might involve children working with adult congregants not related to them, older and younger children, children and teens, or teens and adults. The model provides all learners with the opportunity to build relationships and learn with and from other members of the community with whom they would not typically have contact.</p>
Home-Based Learning	<p>Home is seen as a sacred learning place. Individual families are supported to learn in their own homes with materials or staff. Or, families gather in one another’s homes for learning supported by materials and/or staff of the congregation. The model can include social activity and meals as well as learning. By meeting in homes, the model shifts some of the responsibility for setting goals and determining content to the learners, and also provides flexibility for scheduling. The home setting provides a natural context for learning about subjects ranging from sibling rivalry to kashrut, and encourages the possibility of extending or transferring the learning to day-to-day living.</p>

MODEL DESCRIPTIONS	
Model Type	Model Description
Jewish Service Learning	The model uses the three part experiential learning approach of preparation/action/reflection. Learners engage with a variety of Jewish texts to deepen their understanding of relevant mitzvot and Jewish values. They also regularly participate in hands-on social service in a variety of settings, most often outside of the congregation, to put their learning into action. A key component is reflection on action, allowing learners to make deeper connections between the values they have studied and the action they have performed. Core to this model is the belief that tikkun olam is not a project to be completed but an ongoing responsibility in the life of a Jew. This model can be used with children, teens or families.
Congregation-wide Theme-based Learning	Learning is centered on a core curriculum that is pertinent for children and adults throughout the congregation. All congregational learning focuses on selected content (e.g., rabbi's sermons, family programs, classroom study, communication with congregation like newsletters). Often the curricular focus is one or several Jewish values.
Mentoring Self-Directed Learning	The model employs self-paced learning in a beit midrash format or open classroom format. Learners gather together in a space, and engage in learning individually, with a partner or in small groups. The goals and materials may vary from learner to learner. Teachers and/or tutors are available to support the learners in meeting goals.
Retreat-Based Learning	This model uses intensive experiences held over an extended period of time (like a full day or weekend), occurring throughout the year, usually off-site. Learning is supported by preparation before and reflection afterwards. Children's retreat-based learning is typically augmented with some other form of learning like regular peer classes, tutoring, or Skype lessons.
Distance Learning & Technology <i>including Skype Hebrew</i>	In this model, technology is used to support distance learning, enabling learners to have either more control over the content, time and pace of their learning or to eliminate logistical challenges like transportation. This model can employ available online content (e.g., Hebrew learning games, MyJewishLearning) or can facilitate interaction with a tutor or teacher. The approach is usually integrated with regularized peer or family learning.
Choice-Based Learning	In this model, congregations establish a set of broad learning requirements and opportunities for fulfilling them. Families, teens, and/or children select the time, the content and/or the approach to learning that interests them in order to meet those requirements. Learners select from a wide array of possibilities from family travel, to visiting museums, to study groups provided by the congregation.

MODEL DESCRIPTIONS	
Model Type	Model Description
City as Classroom Learning	Children and/or families seek out alternative geographic locations to support the content of learning (e.g., a museum, a mall, a yoga studio) or select goals and content for learning based on rich resources in the surrounding community (e.g., because Ellis Island and the Tenement Museum are nearby, the decision is made to explore issues of immigration and resettlement).
Holiday Celebration/ Observance-Based Learning	In this model for families and/or children, the program revolves around the celebration of holidays in the home and congregation. Experiences include learning, worship, and meals. Often includes preparation, communal celebration/observance, and reflection.
Project-Based Learning	Learners engage with a real-life need or a problem of the community, identified by the educator, the community or the learners. Learning is structured so learners understand the need/problem, develop a solution through study, deliberation and consultation, implement it, and reflect on the process. A critical piece of the learning process involves creating and sharing a product with a wider public or audience, generally a solution to the problem explored or the fulfillment of the need addressed.
Camp, Camp-like, Camp-linked, Camp-Inspired	This model is executed in one of two ways. In some cases it is held during school vacations and holidays and is led with the active participation of congregational teens as counselors. It includes formal and informal activities for learning. Or, the model uses a camp-like format on a weekly basis and includes experiential activities in camp-like spaces within the congregation. Emphasis is placed on building rich, meaningful community while also deepening Jewish knowledge, understanding, values and skills.
Havurah (Small groups)	Learners meet in small groups with a facilitator/teacher usually in homes or other settings. Often the agenda for learning is set by the decision and/or interests and questions of the group in consultation with the teacher. Small groups are often linked with some regular Shabbat, holiday or social gathering.
Leadership Development for Teens/Teens as Educators and Mentors	Teens are trained to be leaders and role models for educational programs for other learners in their congregations. Teens may lead social activities, worship, experiential learning, formal learning, tutoring, or some combination.
Family Coaching/ Concierge	This model involves the training of congregants as coaches to work with other families in the congregation. The coaches support learning in those families, based on the interests of the families.

*A congregation may operate more than one model. Some congregational models are hybrids of more than one type of model or model characteristic described above (e.g., a model might both be Shabbat-based and include Jewish service learning).

High Impact Models

Camp Connect

Networking with other organizations and building partnerships and alliances offers you the opportunity to leverage your own organization – multiplying its effectiveness, extending its reach, and helping limited human and financial resources go much farther.

– Jerry Kitzzi, “Cooperative Strategy: Building Networks, Partnerships, and Alliances,” *Strategic Tools for Social Entrepreneurs*

Four Relationships to Make Education Camp-Like, Camp-Linked, and Camp-Inspired

Can Congregational Learning benefit from becoming more like summer camp? There are voices in the community who say supplementary education has to be more camp-like in order to engage today’s youth. Others insist that the unique immersive environment of camp can’t be replicated and shouldn’t be attempted.¹

Six synagogues in the Coalition of Innovating Congregations (Temple Beth Shalom of Roslyn Heights, Temple Shaaray Tefila of New York, Temple Sinai of Roslyn Heights, Temple Israel of New Rochelle, Community Synagogue of Rye and The Village Temple), the Jewish Education Project and the Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC) hold a third point of view:

Close relationships among congregations and camps lead to new and powerful yearlong learning and recruiting strategies that benefit congregations, camps and children.

At the core of this point of view is the word “relationship.” In order for synagogues to offer camp-inspired learning and increase attendance at overnight camps, numerous new relationships must be developed. The silos are strong but can be bridged.

This chapter describes four critical relationships that strengthen Jewish learning through congregational and camp education. In these descriptions, the chapter explores the lessons learned from Camp Connect and the groundwork congregations can lay for forging these new relationships.

FOUR CAMP CONNECT RELATIONSHIPS

1. Connect Funding Organizations
2. Connect Camps and Congregations
3. Connect the Camp Connect Congregations
4. Connect Parents to Each Other

I. For an example of this argument, see “Being ‘Just Like Camp’ is Not Enough,” <http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/being-just-like-camp-is-not-enough-renewing-jewish-learning-afterschool>

CAMP AND SYNAGOGUE LEADERS GATHERED TO BUILD THEIR RELATIONSHIPS AND SAID “CAMP IS A PLACE WHERE...”

- Campers can become their best selves
- You can try out a new role for yourself
- Staff and campers can be challenged
- Camp is a place for magic
- Friendships are fast and forever
- Everyone there learns something about themselves
- We experience Jewish living
- The ideal becomes real
- Children feel comfortable in their own skin
- Everybody knows your name
- Campers learn how to be independent and part of community
- Learning is living

Relationship One: Connect Funding Organizations

In June 2011, a partnership between the Jewish Education Project and FJC provided funding, consultant support, and networking opportunities for six congregations to experiment with altering the relationships between camps and congregations.

The Jewish Education Project and FJC had not worked together prior to this project. Nevertheless, casual, personal conversation led leaders of both organizations to see the possibilities of working together. The two agencies collaborated to write a memorandum of understanding that set out each organization’s roles and responsibilities.

Camp Connect’s Working Assumptions

- Most congregations that actively supported children going to camp supported one camp, usually their movement camp.
- Congregational leaders had limited access to the wide variety of existing Jewish camps.
- Congregations seeking to create new models of education could have their imaginations stirred by close relationships with camps.
- A 12-month Jewish experience held greater potential for impacting learners, than a 2- or 9-month experience.
- Organizations working together with trust and common purpose would achieve greater results toward each organization’s goal.

Camp Connect’s Goals

- Increase the number of children attending Jewish overnight camp (FJC’s primary goal)
- Foster congregational models of Jewish learning that were camp-like, camp-linked, or camp-inspired (Jewish Education Project’s primary goal)

Relationship Two: Connect Camps and Congregations

A relationship can’t begin without a “first date.” In the summer of 2011, four congregations and 12 camps (represented by 22 camp staff and 20 congregational team members) came together to imagine what was possible if they worked together to create a 12-month experience for children. Sparks flew. Participants answered the question, “What will children experience when camps and congregations work together seamlessly?” Their answers included:

- Easy transferable ethics, language, values...so that people can apply [a] framework of Jewish values to their whole life [sic].
- Children will experience better camp experiences and better congregational experiences
- Creating shared language

Unanimously the big idea of a coordinated/connected Jewish experience inspired all. The energy in the room was palpable.

Site Visits

Following the first Camp Connect meeting, congregational teams visited a wide variety of summer camps. FJC coordinated camp visits for congregational teams each summer.

The visits exposed educators to non-denominational camps and allowed them to experience the uniqueness of each camp. There was also an opportunity to speak with counselors, senior staff, and campers. After each visit, the group reflected on several questions, such as:

- Which camp elements did you observe that you might want to incorporate into your model?
- What did you observe about the environment (buildings, layout, signage, etc.) that helps make camp feel like camp? How is it different or similar to the environment at your congregation? What message does the environment convey?
- For whom might this camp make sense in your congregation?

Bringing Camp Practices into the Congregation

Camp visits provide an opportunity to intersect with many different camp practices related to community, values in action, and intentional use of environment or space. Camp Connect asks congregations to consider which elements might translate to or inspire their educational models.

At Eden Village Camp, an independent, pluralistic, Jewish environmental overnight camp, campers and staff express experiencing a vibrant spiritual life, acquisition of technical skills like outdoor living and learning social skills like how to thrive in community. The staff of Eden Village work hard to put Jewish values into action and encourage children to make their world a more joyous, safe and sustainable place. One example of a practice, value or project that might translate to or inspire congregations, relates to one element of the Eden Village approach — the concept of “No body talk” — no positive, neutral or negative comments about someone’s body or appearance. This helps everyone at Eden Village focus on what they think and feel on the inside, what really matters about each human being. Everyone at Eden Village appreciates how this small change can make a big difference. Imagine the power of this practice or a practice like it in a congregational setting. Imagine a 12 month curriculum around this value.

Temple Beth Sholom of Roslyn Heights now recommends ten Jewish overnight camps to their congregants, based on personal relationships with each camp.

- Camp Louemma
- Camp Poyntelle
- Camp Ramah in the Berkshires
- Camp Young Judea-Sprout Lake
- Eden Village Camp
- Habonim Dror — Camp Naaleh
- New Jersey Y Camps
- Pinemere Camp
- Ramah in the Rockies
- Six Points Sports Academy

Expand the Number and Diversity of Congregational/ Camp Relationships

As outlined in the assumptions, many congregational leaders had singular commitments to recommending/promoting the summer camp associated with their movement and region. We also learned through a survey of 651 parents that a singular recommendation was inconsistent with ways parents make decisions about overnight camps.

“I think that community is the foundation of excellent experiential learning. If participants feel comfortable with each other they will allow themselves to fully experience the learning.”

– Rabbi Beth Nichols
Temple Israel
New Rochelle

At Temple Beth Sholom (TBS) of Roslyn Heights, the director of education, Gila Hadani Ward, reviewed the survey results and then worked with clergy and FJC staff to dramatically change the congregation’s practice for camp promotion. As Gila said, “Now, I know why parents were going down the street to the ‘camp lady’ to seek advice about camp instead of coming to us [the congregation].” Congregants already knew what TBS staff would say. By limiting the number of camps they recommended, TBS was not in parents’ conversations about options for camps. After building relationships with many camps, TBS has a menu of ten camps they recommend, and find themselves back in the conversation.

Relationship Three: Across Congregations

As members of the Coalition of Innovating Congregations, teams in Camp Connect congregations had already developed a practice of connecting across congregations. The congregational teams gather in person and online to discuss shared challenges and successes. Last year, for example, teams gathered to explore the characteristics of “Good experiential learning.”

At one significant Camp Connect gathering, congregational teams deconstructed the phrase “just like camp.” The Camp Connect congregations, as others have pointed out, acknowledged that they could not fully replicate camp during the year. But, the congregations realized that what you can do is identify the characteristics that make powerful experiences and adapt those characteristics to a new way of structuring time, place, learning and relationships.

Shared Insights

- **Relationships across age cohorts.** Young children were in close relationship with older children who acted as role models. At Temple Beth Sholom, Roslyn Heights, the Yedidim model regularly brings together children of different ages to read and learn with part of the expressed goals being to develop the “Role Model Continuum” in the congregation.
- **Camp is for the counselors.** Rabbi Avi Orlow of FJC points out, “Camp is for the counselors;” the experience and training for teens and older groups is life changing. In an example of reaching multiple ages of learners, Village Temple developed a model where older children are prepared to be “counselors” to younger children.

- **Hebrew and Israel education.** Temple Israel of Roslyn is experimenting with Israel education inspired by camp experiences. Along with adapting learning structures, such as small groups and experiential techniques for learners, Community Synagogue of Rye aims to fundamentally change how children learn Hebrew, aiming for camp-inspired learning.
- **Family units.** Temple Shaaray Tefila of New York is deepening their work in creating family units or strengthening family units, very much in-line with core practices of camps such as Camp Pinemere or B'nai B'rith Perlman Camp.

Camp Connect congregations are building a shared lexicon and shared assumptions as they work to increase the number of children in their congregations who attend overnight camp and create more camp-inspired learning throughout the year.

Relationship Four: Connect Parents to Each Other

In trying to understand what influenced parental decision-making around Jewish summer camp, The Jewish Education Project administered a survey to parents from the initial four congregations in Camp Connect.

2012 CAMP CONNECT SURVEY

The survey was sent to parents in the four participating congregations. 651 parents responded. The findings are included below.

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The majority of families surveyed sent their children to non-sectarian (non-Jewish) camps. Yet some parents felt that even though they send their children to non-sectarian camp, they still get Jewish benefits from their camp, such as spending time with other Jewish children, eating Kosher food, and having Shabbat evening experiences.

.....

Children begin attending overnight camp between 3rd and 5th grades, but the decision of whether and where to go to overnight camp begins earlier.

.....

Parents' social connections matter in the decision making process. Recommendations from friends were important to parents when deciding where to send their children to camp.

.....

The majority of families that sent children to Jewish overnight camps sent them to camps where they already knew children, indicating that relationships among children are also important in influencing parents' decisions.

.....

We learned that most members in Camp Connect congregations send their children to overnight summer camps, but for the most part, those camps are not Jewish.

Social connections among parents are crucial in the decision to send children to Jewish overnight camp.

A feeling of familiarity is more influential than recommendations from congregational leaders and educators.

Age matters. Children begin attending camp between 3rd and 5th grades, but influencing the decision happens in earlier years, when parents are creating social networks and deciding what is important for their children's development.

Uncovering the behaviors and motivations of parents enables congregations to better align their approaches to increasing camp attendance. For a long time congregational leaders held beliefs like, "If the rabbi makes a pitch for camp, then more kids will go to camp." Our survey says congregations may see a greater increase in camp enrollment if they use their unique relationship with parents to build relationships among parents.

"Family education" can have a primary goal of fostering parental connections with families already committed to Jewish overnight camp. Knowing, that 4th and 5th grades are years that families make these decisions, it is clear that relationships have to develop prior to that time. Therefore, focus on parent connections should be focused on the early grades.

CAMP CONNECT MODELS

Remembering Rabbi Orlow's teaching: "Camp is for the counselors, " many congregations put new focus on madrichim.

Congregational learning is not trying to be a mirror image of camp. Rather we see how synagogues create new models when they ask two questions: 1) What characteristics of camp can be adopted by congregations to create more powerful learning? and 2) What is our role in increasing camp attendance?

CHAVURAH AND LIMMUD COMMUNITY SYNAGOGUE OF RYE

Camp Inspired Learning

Through its Center for Jewish Learning, the Community Synagogue of Rye offers several high-impact models for children and teens inspired by the overnight Jewish camp experience. In Chavurah, an alternative home-based model beginning its third year, 5th, 6th and 7th Grade learners meet each week in small groups with a facilitator. The agenda for the learning is typically set by the interests and questions of the group. They will sometimes meet in a museum, mall or coffee shop depending on the topic. Chavurah also includes Hebrew sessions by Skype or in person, as well as monthly family learning experiences. 7th Grade Limmud, new in 2012-13, features small group learning for families that is facilitated by clergy staff on Torah, Avodah

and Gemilut Hasadim. A Madrichim in Training course, also new this past year, trains teens to be leaders and facilitators of learning. As part of the Camp Connect Grant, “Hebrew through Movement,” an immersive program for learning Hebrew language, is being piloted in 3rd Grade in the coming year.

Increased Camp Enrollment

The synagogue’s camp recruitment plan is designed to build awareness and interest in Jewish overnight camps and increase the number of children able to benefit from this experience. Parent volunteers are being recruited to take leadership roles to promote Jewish camping experiences. A “Jewish Camp of the Month” will be featured in the synagogue bulletin along with quotes from campers who attend Jewish camps. A bulletin board located in a high-traffic area will feature literature about Jewish camps and the synagogue’s website will provide links to Jewish camps. Other strategies include a day-long retreat scheduled at Eden Village Camp in October and a bulletin article about Jewish camp in September.



CHAVAYA TEMPLE ISRAEL OF NEW ROCHELLE

Camp Inspired Learning

Chavaya is both a camp-like and camp-inspired model of Jewish learning. Bringing learners together in mixed age groups, the model takes place in a variety of spaces throughout the synagogue creating opportunities for experiential and informal learning based in camp-like experiences. The individuals staffing the model include unit heads, educators, Manheegim (paid teens) and Madrichim (volunteer teens). The model provides an intergenerational experience for the learners as well as leadership development for the teens. Parents participate in a variety of ways throughout the year helping out with preparation for learning, occasionally helping to lead learning, and sharing in the learning along with their children.

Increased Camp Enrollment

As a new Camp Connect congregation, and already thinking about how they would do recruitment, TINR moved forward with their recruitment model by participating in two camp visits where staff had a chance to experience six camps in the area. In the coming months, the educational team will provide opportunities for children and parents to learn about a variety of camps in the area. They are actively gathering data about the camps that children in the congregation currently attend and plan to raise the profile of Jewish camps in the congregation, possibly with parent ambassadors, recruitment visits and partnerships with select camps.

CHIBURIM THE VILLAGE TEMPLE

Camp Inspired Learning

There are two elements to the The Village Temple Chiburim model: Madrichim Training and roles; and Days of Camp. The Village Temple model works to develop teens as madrichim/educational guides for classroom, informal education with young families, and for The Village Temple Days of Camp. The Village Temple Days of Camp take place on specific days when schools are closed and after-school in May and June. The days are camp-inspired in how they develop relationships among children, create an inter-age family feel, engage teens as educational leaders, and use experiential education to engage and teach.

Increased Camp Enrollment

The Village Temple is developing partnerships with a number of camps including and beyond the Reform Movement regional camps. Starting with Habonim Dror Na'ale and Camp Zeke, The Village Temple has identified ways to open their doors to the camps for meaningful activities, work with madrichim, and access to parents that go beyond mere recruitment speeches and videos. They are beginning with camps where there is already a connection in the system or where the opportunity to bring something unique to the congregation exists. They are still looking for additional camps with whom to partner.

“There are so many ways to transform the classroom, the hallways, the sanctuary and the open spaces inside the synagogue to engage students in successful experiential education.”

- Tara Siegel
Coalition Educator

YEDIDIM TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM OF ROSLYN HEIGHTS

Camp Inspired Learning

Yedidim is a school-wide camp model about creating inter-age relationships and an overall feeling of belonging to a community that is larger than any one grade. Partners participate both in formal and informal learning opportunities together and learn to look out for each other, appreciate each other and enjoy doing Jewish and everyday things together. Experiential tefillah opportunities are growing, featuring visual tefillah, tefillah through yoga and movement, meditation and more. Music is camp-ruach. Madrichim play a role in supporting Shabbat family learning, the Yedidim initiative and retreats. Summer Camp partners play an ongoing role during the year in creating learning experiences for learners and families.

Increased Camp Enrollment

TBS has developed partnerships with 10 camps that meet a set of criteria they had developed and who were willing to partner with TBS. A cadre of parent ambassadors that send their kids to TBS's 10 partner camps create parent to parent opportunities to answer questions and encourage parents to send their children to Jewish overnight camp. There are several recruitment events such as Machane Ma-

nia which invites the partner camps to create family experiences that engage, while giving parents the opportunity to ask questions and learn about camp. The congregation is in process of creating a brochure featuring information on each of the partner camps. Most of key staff spends time at camp each summer and sees Jewish overnight camp as a priority. Clergy and educational staff visit campers during the summer.

MASA **TEMPLE SHAARAY TEFILA, NEW YORK CITY**

Camp Inspired Learning

MASA is an alternative, camp-inspired, family learning model for learners in kindergarten through 5th grade. Families come together primarily on Sunday afternoons approximately twice a month to learn in an informal, experiential environment. Gatherings include learning as a whole family as well as parallel learning with adults and children learning separately. Families choose between two different content tracks for a given year. Learning takes place in a variety of settings including the synagogue, sites around New York City and individual homes.

Increased Camp Enrollment

Temple Shaaray Tefila recruits actively for the Union for Reform Judaism Camps in the New York region. They are working to create opportunities for parents and children to learn about non-movement camps in the region as well. They plan to develop a group of parents whose children attend Jewish camps who can serve as ambassadors for the camps, inviting their peers and parents of younger children to conversations about the value of Jewish camping for their children and their families.

Congregations develop new relationships with multiple camps and extend their menu of possibilities for families.

HEVRA **TEMPLE SINAI OF ROSLYN**

Camp-Inspired Learning

The main model, Hevra (for families with kids in grades 4-6), is the essence of camp-inspired learning, incorporating inter-age Shabbat family learning experiences, camp-inspired tefillah, experiential learning around questions and issues which build Jewish identity, relationships and community, and connection to Jewish living and life. Hevra is designed with the LOMED High Five in mind. “Got Shabbat” is the pre-cursor initiative for the families of kids in grades K-2 and incorporates an early opportunity for positive associations with Jewish overnight camp. Professional Learning is for the entire staff around the High Five. Staff learns in grade cohorts which function as communities of practice dedicated to creating powerful learning with the High Five in mind.

Increased Camp Enrollment

The staff person in charge of teens is also in charge of camp recruitment, which is a huge priority for this congregation. Recruitment is done through one-on-one concierge outreach to the families, several recruitment events, role-modeling (as almost every key staff person sees Jewish overnight camp as a priority), ceremonies to send off and welcome back campers, photos and regalia as a natural part of daily environment, large presence and role of madrichim connected to camp, and intentional work to hire staff in many positions including a song-leader, to create camp-school connections and camp-inspired tefillah.

Summary

Camp Connect, an initiative of six congregations in the Greater New York area, supported by The Jewish Education Project and The Foundation for Jewish Camp is exploring how to achieve two primary goals:

- Increase the number of children attending Jewish overnight camp
- Foster congregational models of Jewish learning that were camp-like/camp-linked/camp inspired

Our work so far has shown that close relationships among congregations and camps lead to new and powerful yearlong learning and recruiting strategies that benefit congregations, camps, and children. As a result we are seeing new models of education and camp recruiting emerge.

Four Camp Connect Relationships

1. Connect Funding Organizations
2. Connect Camps and Congregations
3. Connect the Camp Connect Congregations
4. Connect Parents to Each Other

Sustaining Innovation Networks: Innovators Need Innovators

The network is emerging as the signature form of organization in the Information Age, just as bureaucracy stamped the Industrial Age, hierarchy controlled the Agricultural Era, and the small group roamed the Nomadic Era.

- Lipnack and Stamps, *The Age of the Network: Organizing Principles for the 21st Century*, p. 3.

Planning, organizing, leading and coordinating: these are all activities suited to the network Judaism model.

- Herring, *Network Judaism: A Fresh Look at the Organization of the American Jewish Community*

New York's Coalition of Innovating Congregations is celebrated nationally for its shared commitment to re-imagining Congregational Education. Over fifty congregations (<http://innovatingcongregations.org/about/coalition-congregations>), belonging to different movements and located across greater New York, actively share challenges and successes in order to foster educational innovation. This pattern of intentional connecting and learning among congregations has only recently become a communal norm in New York. With practice and a genuine desire to solve unmet challenges these congregations are breaking down silos and participating in networks.

In The Coalition of Innovating Congregations, educators reflect on how connecting across congregations has strengthened their ability to create powerful learning. Coalition members have connected with other innovators in restaurants, in one another's homes, and at gatherings like Yachdav. At places like City Winery, they've used protocols to learn one another's stories including challenges and successes. They've had conversations on line to learn how colleagues in other congregations are using noticing targets and creating new models of education. These are formal gatherings of the networks. But now we also find that Coalition members seek each other in informal ways to pursue answers to questions like, "How do you engage parents more effectively?" or "How are you working with board members to sustain innovation?" In all of these experiences an individual's own educational resources have been enriched by connecting with others seeking to create learning that moves to real life.

This network of educational innovators, known as The Coalition of Innovating Congregations, is nascent. To develop the Coalition, participants will want to increase their ability to strengthen and participate in a network. This chapter will be a resource to people who are seeking the wisdom, and support of a network. You'll find the most current thinking on the why, what and how of networks in Jewish education. Lastly, this chapter provides a vivid snapshot of a network within the Coalition demonstrating how curiosity and need can lead to connections that foster spiritual/emotional well being as well as concrete ways to create powerful learning.

Innovators need innovators. The more that we can be in conversation with one another to share and improve practice, and to encourage bold action, the stronger we will be individually and as a group. Let's begin by revisiting an overview of networking as an effective strategy for sparking and spreading innovation.

Network 101

To put it simply, a network is a collection of “nodes” — individuals, groups, or organizations — and “ties” — the relationships among them. Human beings have always lived in networks because we've always lived in relationship with other people. However, there are a few things worth mentioning that are different about networks today:

- We've seen the rise of “networked individualism” with fairly recent developments like the freeway system, portable 401(k)'s, and personal computing. Whereas our networks used to be more about groups in the past, today individuals are connecting directly to one another in new and interesting ways.
- Today our networks are more flexible. It used to be that many Jews would live in exclusively Jewish communities where they could get everything they needed. Now we tap into different collections of people for different, or more specific needs. Instead of depending on one community for everything, we pick and choose from a wide array of groups and institutions that can offer us more personalized resources.
- The rise of social media has made our networks both more accessible and more visible. Social media platforms, like Facebook, are tools that help us uncover, discover, and use social networks. Quickly and easily, with devices that live closer and closer to our bodies and keep getting smaller and smaller, we can not only tap into our own networks, but peek into others'.

Why Networks?

Understanding networks and helping them to evolve can have important implications on the work we do as innovators. Healthy networks are fundamental to innovation. We need networks for at least two reasons:

1. Support, validation, and camaraderie
2. New and challenging ideas and perspectives

A healthy network, shown here as the Core/Periphery Network, offers both of these things. It offers support through a tight “core” (a safe center of close contacts) and new ideas through a diverse “periphery” (relationships on the edges of the network, representing people and groups with whom you have less frequent contact, but who have important information and resources to offer).

Innovators need innovators.

I have found that networking with other educators in the Coalition has expanded our scope of what is possible and what we’re willing to try. When you’re planning learning entirely in-house, you all share the same vision, but you’re also limited in scope. For example, for many years, I kept our programs in-house (inside the synagogue). But working with other congregations, especially our Camp Connect Network, opened my eyes to see the possibilities for learning when you go to other places, such as a child’s home or a farm.

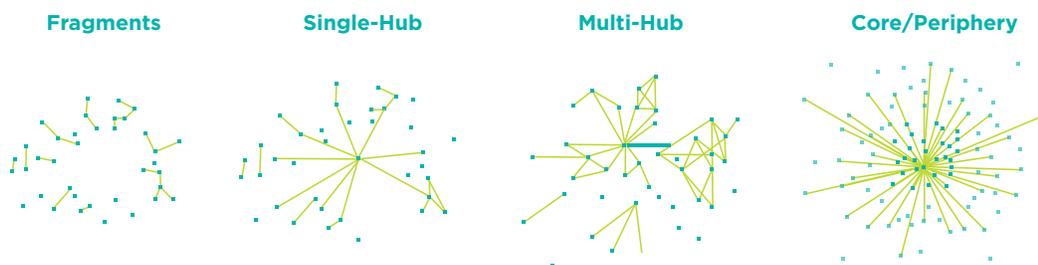
In congregational education, we have so few hours with our kids that we sometimes feel an extra pressure to make sure each minute counts and you feel afraid to do something too different that will rock the boat. But working with other congregations has exposed us to what they’ve tried and learned, so we don’t have to be the guinea pigs; we’re more willing to take risks.

And, networking with other educators feels “safe.” The reflection and evaluation is from one educator to another. We can share real insights and feedback and not worry about “proving” anything.

– Sharon Solomon, Religious School Director, Temple Beth Shalom of Roslyn Heights

We need close contacts to cheer for us, make us feel secure, and help bring our ideas to life. But we also need to hear critiques, understand opposing ideas, and connect with thoughtful people who challenge our assumptions. The best networks offer all of these elements, which are essential to supporting and sustaining innovation.

When we pay attention to networks, and engage thoughtfully with the people around us, we can make our innovative work better, stronger, and more effective.



Network Weaving

There has been a lot of talk in the Jewish world recently about the idea of “network weaving.” A “network weaver” is someone who pays attention to the networks around them, and actively works to make them healthier and more effective. Network weavers are folks who can look beyond their own connections and help foster those of the people around them. They are both strategic thinkers and open to serendipity. They are practical and optimistic. Every one of us has acted as a network weaver at some point.

Here are a few things a network weaver might do — and that you can try! — to make the networks around you better (and, in doing so, help promote innovation):

- **Listen for connection.** Some of us naturally and consistently introduce friends and colleagues who may have something in common or could accomplish something together. For others of us, this is a skill that takes some practice. Next time you have a conversation with someone, actively listen for opportunities to connect that person to other people, not just to resources and content.
- **Make the introduction.** Introduce two people who have a common goal or interest or who see things very differently and might benefit from one another’s viewpoints. Host that connection, and make sure to follow-up to see if the relationship has moved forward.
- **Follow-up.** This goes both for the people you’ve recently introduced and those with whom you may have lost touch.
- **Facilitate a small group.**
- **Ask “big questions.”** For an explanation of “big questions” versus “hard questions,” watch this video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TEtC4QROM0>.
- **Share your knowledge, resources, and stories.**

The Kiddush Test

Kiddush is a perfect time to practice your network weaving skills and build what’s called *social capital* among your community. Social capital is all the good stuff that comes from being connected to other human beings, such as a sense of trust, assumed reciprocity, and generosity. The more social capital you can build among people, the stronger the network. There are two basic kinds of connections you can create in order to foster a richly woven community with good social capital:

1. **Bonding:** Bonding is what happens when people who are alike connect with one another. So, when you introduce two friends who both love romantic comedies or both have children studying abroad in Israel — that’s bonding social capital.
2. **Bridging:** Bridging is both more difficult and less common. Bridging social capital is what happens when you have an interfaith dialogue among Jews and Muslims, for instance, or host an intergenerational conversation.

Based on what you see happening at *kiddush*, how strong is your congregation's network? Is there an active, well-connected core? Whom can you connect to help build this network, and ultimately strengthen the community?

CASE STUDY: NETWORKING IN PRACTICE

A LITTLE NETWORK THAT GREW

by *Suri Jacknis*

As a consultant from the Jewish Education Project, I started the Long Island Family Learning Network with high hopes. But, only the host director and one participant joined our first meeting. It was a tough go in the beginning to get some traction. We tried various venues and invited people in by phone and Skype. I had more one-on-one conversations with educators that shared a deep interest in family learning.

The turning point came when one director came to a meeting with four of her teachers. It was amazing to see a “team” contribute to and learn from the network. Word spread and other teams and individuals came; the network grew to include approximately thirty participants. Some came occasionally, others regularly, all were interested in discussing ways to make family learning more compelling and transformative. There were several time lapses when for a variety of reasons the network was quiet. Yet, the bonds among the participants and the interest in the core mission were compelling enough to keep the network going and growing.

What do the participants get out of the network?

It's all about the relationships. People genuinely want to be together; to be part of each other's lives as colleagues and friends. Each has a commitment to family learning and also a rich depth of experience creating and experimenting with various aspects of family learning that they want to share. They want to hear what others are doing, how it worked and how they can adapt it for their own congregations. Often, two or three participants meet between the meetings, continuing to share and build on ideas that were raised during the monthly meetings. Experienced directors have mentored newer directors; role-alike people have met to think about family learning from their own perspectives; participants have visited each other's powerful learning to learn by doing.

What do we do at the network meeting?

The network as a whole decides on an overarching theme for the year. Some of our themes have been: How to make the adult learning transformative, Learner Outcomes for Families, Using Ritual to Build Community. At this stage, the network meeting is co-planned by the facilitator and the volunteer host.

We have a few “rituals.” We begin by sharing breakfast and 10 – 15 minutes of “schmooze” time. Then, everyone responds to a connection question so that everyone is introduced — in the room or on the phone. The host gives or facilitates a d’var Torah and leads a Jewish text study. The core discussion can be led by one or more network participants or by an outside resource person either in person or by Skype. We close with good and welfare and especially with communal announcements of relevance and importance to the group.

Tips for building a Network

Back Channel: The conversations between meetings are often more important than the actual meetings. The network facilitator deepens relationships, follows-up on comments, and connects participants to each other and to other resources. Back channeling is also an opportunity to empower leadership, uncover issues and possibilities, and further the goals of the network.

Build Relationships: Try to look for opportunities to build the social connections of the group — through shared work, planning, experiences, and conversations. Look to create an environment that encourages people to connect, such as schmooze time, introductions, or place cards that encourage people to sit with new people.

Nurture Leadership and empower people: People enjoy contributing to a group that values their talents. A survey, interview or conversation can uncover network participants’ interests and talents. Calling upon these talents helps group members feel an increased sense of belonging to the group and gives people an opportunity to lead with their strengths and to shine.

Outreach to Involve New People: By creating rituals to welcome new people and a culture which values multiple and new perspectives, people feel the energy of new voices. There should always be an open invitation for new members and current participants should be encouraged to identify friends and colleagues who might become part of the network.

Appreciation: Everyone enjoys feeling a sense of belonging to the group and feeling appreciated for their contributions. We thank our hosts and presenters at the beginning and end of every meeting and often give them small gifts. We announce their participation in the publicity and thank them in the follow-up email that goes out with the notes/highlights.

Challenges: Working in a networked way certainly has many benefits. Yet, there are also challenges.

Sometimes people feel protective of their ideas and upset when others use these ideas in their own settings. A networked approach says there is an eco-system of communal sharing where each person is both a giver and taker. By sharing,

participants open themselves up to improving their practice. We also have a Jewish principle — *“b’shem om-ro”* — which teaches us that we must acknowledge the source of an idea.

For many years the prevailing culture among Jewish educators was individualistic. Educators went in their classrooms, closed the door and taught. Educational directors spent many hours working alone. In today’s culture of collaboration and learning communities, the emphasis has shifted to a shared vision; there are many opportunities to co-plan learning, co-facilitate, co-assess and to reflect and learn from our practice in community. The accompanying shift to seeing the value in being part of a network and developing the regular habit of reaching out to a network is still in progress. It is an ongoing challenge to make a networked approach our default when it comes to any aspect of our design, implementation, and assessment of our work.

Another challenge is that networks need to include people of diverse perspectives in order to challenge participants with new ideas. Over time, networks can devolve into being homogenized with people who have similar viewpoints and thinking. Networks need strategies of outreach to a diverse pool of people in order to keep innovation and new ideas flowing.

CHALLENGE	POSSIBLE STRATEGY
“You are copying me”	Acknowledge the source of the learning (<i>b’shem o’mro</i>). When someone “copies” you, take the compliment!
“I have to do it myself”	“Do what you do best and network the rest.” Tap into others’ talents and interests. Leaning on network resources for inspiration, ideas, and help makes a higher-quality end product.
“Networks become an echo chamber”	At regular intervals, reach out to include new people of diverse perspectives and backgrounds to energize the network.

Summary/Conclusion

Healthy networks are fundamental to innovation because innovators need innovators. When we pay attention to networks, and engage thoughtfully with the people around us, we can make our innovative work better, stronger, and more effective by gaining support for our innovation efforts and challenging each other with new ideas and perspectives.

Network weaving is an important role for innovators to create their own networks and to strengthen the innovation network as a whole. Network weaving happens by listening for connection, making introductions, following up, facilitating small groups, asking questions, and sharing, knowledge, resources, and stories. The Kiddush Test is a way of assessing your congregation’s networks.

Building a network requires “back channeling,” building relationships, nurturing leadership, reaching out to new network members, providing plenty of appreciation, and facing challenges.

Weaving and strengthening networks lead to more innovation across the field, which benefits all families and also comes right back like a boomerang to support and develop the innovations in your congregation.

How Educational Directors Can Use Networking To Strengthen Their Congregational System

Another important way that networks can support innovation is the formation of internal networks that bring together educational leaders across a congregational system in service of their congregational vision. These educational leaders come together to appreciate and share successes, identify and seek input regarding challenges/dilemmas and to design and create powerful learning experiences for learners at various stages of development.

One example of a congregation that created such internal networks is Temple Israel Center of White Plains. Nancy Parkes, Director of Congregational Learning, created two cross-departmental networks. She decided to enlarge her Professional Learning Team to include the Nursery School Director, the Director of the Religious School, the Director of Family and Youth Education, the Director of Student Services (special education), as well as the LOMED consultant and the Coalition Educator. She also created the Education Council (formerly the Religious School and Havurat Torah High School Board) by including not only representatives from the religious school, but also a representative of the day school community, the Adult Education Chairperson, the Director of Family and Youth Education, and the Nursery School Director. The clergy also sit on this education council.

Nancy brought these networks together for conversations that sought to create shared trusting relationships, greater understanding of and alignment to a common vision, and mutual learning and planning. As the network participants develop more mutual trust, participants report that the quality of the sharing is very moving and very deep. The sense of shared responsibility toward the implementation of the vision and the desire to support and spread innovation across the system is growing.

Nancy comments that she knew that she was making inroads when a representative from the High School started sharing ideas for the Nursery School. Nancy remarks that it took a year or so for people to understand what it meant to create a council that looked at learning as lifelong. Now, instead of each department seeing the world from their own perspective, there is a shared perspective of the family’s journey across time and across the various opportunities provided by Temple Israel Center.

Nancy is thrilled with the synergy among departments. She adds, “The amazing powerful learning created as a result of planning together for families is a result of the collaboration of our educational leaders from across our system working together with common purpose, passion and mutual commitment to vision.”

Summary

The Coalition of Innovating Congregations is a network that can grow stronger with intentional use of networking tools. Benefits from the network are emotional and practical. People experience comradarie and support and receive new ideas and practices from the Coalition.

Sustaining Innovation

Ensuring Innovation Becomes “The Way We Do Business Here”

Nothing can grow in a self-sustaining way unless there are reinforcing processes underlying its growth...three reinforcing processes that sustain profound change by building upon each other:

- *Enhancing personal results (It matters in people's lives)*
- *Developing networks of committed people*
- *Improving (and sharing) results*

- The Dance of Change, Peter Senge, p. 42 - 43

Introduction

In the Coalition, congregations have worked tirelessly to create innovative models of education that bring meaning and depth to families' Jewish experiences. But, at some point in the process of innovation, congregations will inevitably ask themselves, “How do we keep this going?”

In synagogues, as in most organizations, innovations often begin as experiments or special “additional” programs. When those innovations prove to be successful, leaders have to determine how to absorb them into the regular system. No organization can forever offer special additional programs. If a program is to become a model — the core way children and families experience learning — and is going to survive, it must be absorbed into the organization and become a part of “how we do business here.”

What Does It Take To Become “The Way We Do Business?”

Sustaining an innovation so that it becomes regular business requires the support of many members of your community. This chapter will help you focus on two major groups: 1) the synagogue board of directors, and 2) prospective parents who might engage in your innovation. The board is an essential partner in sustaining innovation because they provide oversight and make policy and budgetary decisions. Parents are important partners in sustaining innovation because they can “vote with their feet,”

THE MESSAGING CENTER Resources and Tools for Sustaining Innovation

Use Data: Speak to the Head

A guide for using data.

Chart Template

An excel spreadsheet to “plug in” your numbers and create graphs. Includes a PowerPoint Presentation Template (which has a place to include your data and graphs in the larger presentation).

Communication Template

This template will help you write an article and includes a place for data.

*Get these materials from **innovating congregations.org's** Messaging Center to help you plan and share your message.*

meaning that you need them to believe in and value the educational model in order to enroll their families in it.

As you scan your organizational system, you may identify additional stakeholders who need to be engaged in order to sustain your innovation. That might include: outside funders, individual donors, an educational resource provider or an affinity group within the congregation (e.g., the Men’s Club). The skills and practices reviewed in this chapter that are geared toward board members and prospective parents can be adapted to almost any group that has a say in determining “the way we do business.”

In order to sustain innovation, you must work with stakeholders so that they understand, believe in and feel some partnership with the educational innovation.

The KDBB of Sustaining Innovation

Just like creating powerful learning for your learners, garnering support from parents and boards requires speaking to whole persons — heads, hands, hearts, and feet. Before determining the messages to share with your audiences, you will need to think about each audience individually:

- What do you want your audience to **Know**?
- What do you want your audience to **Do**?
- What do you want your audience to **Believe** in or **Value** about your model?
- How do you want your audience to feel about **Belonging**?; that is, what will be their buy-in or partnership with the model?

Once you have created targets for your audience in each of the domains, determine the messages you need to send. Then for each audience, ask yourself, “What is the best medium for getting my messages out?”

1. Who are the stakeholders we need to engage?
2. What are the outcomes I hope to achieve? (KDBB)
3. What message speaks to these goals?
4. What is the best medium (e.g., face to face, PowerPoint) to communicate with the stakeholder(s)?

Cold Hard Facts: Use Data

When crafting communication with stakeholders, sometimes you’ll be busy conveying the cold hard facts. Certain stakeholders will feel more moved by data and the bottom line. They’ll want to know answers to questions like: How much does it cost? How many families are engaged? In what ways does this meet our stated goals? An honest, well presented, display of the data connected to your model can help

others see the big “why” for sustaining the innovation. Stakeholders can become supporters when they see powerful numbers, charts and dollars connected to your innovation.

Before providing data, your team should agree on what it will take as evidence. If it is important for the congregation to see that families are engaged in the congregation, your team will need to agree on what constitutes “engaged.” Does that mean showing up a certain number of times during the year? Does that mean taking on volunteer or leadership positions? Does that mean giving more money?

Warm Emotions: Tell Stories

Even the most rational people among us make decisions based on their emotions. Human beings are not designed to solely make rational decisions based on data, as much as we may believe that it’s possible. People are complex psychosocial beings that thrive on emotional messages. Just as we design learning that speaks to the spiritual and emotional part of our learners, we can deliver messages that speak to the spiritual and emotional parts of our audiences.

Emotional messages are delivered through storytelling. One of the oldest technologies available to human beings is the Hero’s Journey — a particular storytelling technique that has been in use for millennia and was “discovered” by the mythologist, Joseph Campbell, in the mid-twentieth century. Storytelling in general, and the Hero’s Journey in specific, are familiar techniques to the Jewish people. One of the oldest examples of the Hero’s Journey is the story of Exodus: Moses (the hero) was mentored by God to fight the evil Pharaoh and complete the seemingly impossible task of freeing thousands of Hebrew slaves.

THE MESSAGING CENTER

Hero’s Journey Template

This template will help you write your story in the Hero’s Journey format.

PowerPoint Presentation

This presentation will help you share your story within a larger presentation to board members and/or parents.

Communication Template

This template will help you write an article that includes your hero’s story.

*Get these materials from **innovating congregations.org**’s Messaging Center to help you plan and share your message.*

There is a long and rich history of Jewish storytelling that has helped our people understand their lives and how to act in the world for countless generations. By accessing our storytelling tradition, you can move your audiences in deep and meaningful ways.

Selecting the Story

Selecting the right story to tell is the first and most important step in your storytelling process. Below are a few suggestions for how you can go about uncovering your story to tell.

- **Tell your own stories first.** Sit with your team and take turns sharing a story of your own transformation; a time when you found yourself able to accomplish something you once thought was impossible. Who encouraged you on that path (your mentor)? What experience gave you the tools you needed to make the transformation? Once everyone has had a chance to share, ask the group to think of learners they have seen go through transformations.
- **Share stories of “great kids.”** In your team, share stories of “great kids,” learners you feel proud of and have seen do great stuff. As the stories begin to flow, start trying to hone in on stories of kids that have demonstrated some transformation.
- **Write stories as “homework.”** Have members of your team think about their learners on their own time. Ask them to choose one learner each that has gone through a transformation. Tell the stories in a group meeting and ask each other questions to bring out more fully formed stories.

Once you have a few good stories to choose from, using one of the methods above — or one you come up with on your own, choose the story to tell carefully. Make sure that it is a story of a learner who has demonstrated transformation due in some part to the experience in your model. The story should be emotional and also demonstrate the impact that your model can have.

Make a Plan

In order to share your message effectively, you need to be thoughtful and have a plan in place. When in the midst of daily work, it can be very easy to set aside or forget about messaging. But, in order for the messages — stories and data — to be truly effective, your audiences need to hear them multiple times during the year in various formats. For example, parents might respond well to seeing a bulletin article or two, information on the congregation’s website, and a live presentation from the educator and alumni parents over the course of a year. This allows the messages to sink in over time and become familiar concepts. One-time messaging, although potentially

powerful, may not have the longer-term impact you would like.

The good news is that there are many milestones during your work year that are already in place and perfect for messaging. Here are some examples of previously scheduled events that you may want to take advantage of:

- **Regular bulletin deadlines:** Most congregational bulletins feature an article about the educational program in each issue. Since this is a regular deadline for the educator, using this space to talk about your new model likely makes sense for some number of articles.
- **Board meetings:** Board meetings are often scheduled months in advance. If you know that you have a presentation to make to the board, utilize the opportunity to share your messages about your model. Try to give presentations about the model in board meetings early in the year so that the budgeting season is not the first time your board hears the message.
- **Parent meetings or recruiting events:** If you have a meeting to help parents learn about what is involved in the new model (this may be done for recruiting purposes or at the beginning of the year for orientation purposes), this is a perfect opportunity to share your message with your parents.

One Audience at a Time

Plan out your messaging for one audience at a time. If you choose to work on messaging for more than one audience during the year, you may find there are opportunities to share your message with more than one audience, such as a bulletin article. However, it is important to begin by making the first-draft plans for each audience separately. By looking at each audience individually, you will paint a picture of how that group will learn about your innovative model throughout the year so that you can be sure they receive a complete message in varied formats.

Summary

Communicating goals and success to parents and lay leaders is integral to ensuring that continual innovation is “the way we do business here.” A thoughtful plan for communication will keep the story of innovation alive in your congregation.

THE MESSAGING CENTER

Choose Your Audience

Materials are organized based on two main audiences, board and parents, to help you think about targeting one audience at a time.

Timeline for Board Messaging

A timeline to help you plan when to share messages with your board.

Suggestions For Messaging To Parents

Includes website, parent meetings, community-wide communications, and parent ambassador suggestions.

*Get these materials from **innovating congregations.org**'s Messaging Center to help you plan and share your message.*

Sustaining Innovation Staffing Models That Support Innovation

It is helpful to think of the staffing pattern of a congregational school (or any educational institution for that matter) as a pyramid. At the bottom of the pyramid are the “front-line” educators — the teachers. At the top of the pyramid is the senior educator... The senior educator requires assistance from a variety of people who comprise the middle sections of the pyramid — teacher trainers, mentor teachers, curriculum writers, and many others.

- Dr. Isa Aron, “Realism as the Key to Excellence in Congregational Education.” *Agenda: Jewish Education*, Spring 2004

The Need for a New Staffing Model

Coalition congregations’ commitment to creating high impact models with powerful learning has revealed a gap in the staffing structure of congregations. Education Directors reported that the time needed to imagine and implement innovation demands more human resources than their staffing traditionally provided. Directors, for example, have more than a full calendar to attend to as administrative and educational leaders. Educators also shared that they found it difficult to be creative when working alone. Educators needed thought partners to innovate. And educators felt that they needed a highly skilled implementer to share in the work of bringing innovative ideas to life.

The Jewish Education Project conducted a Network Analysis in the New York Jewish educational community and saw the concerns of educators substantiated. The analysis showed that Directors of Education were the primary, and often the only, people responsible and able to connect to new ideas, resources and implementation. This “bottleneck” was keeping congregations from moving forward with innovation. To fill the gap, a new staff position was created: the Coalition Educator (CE).

This chapter will explore how adding a new staffing position has enabled congregations to more quickly and robustly foster innovation. Education Directors, clergy, teachers and lay leaders continue to play their part in the work of educational leadership. The new staffing position has been critical in moving good ideas to reality. Having a designated person who is a master of powerful learning, a member of the

leadership team, a leader in professional learning and a networker with other congregations provides the human energy to make innovation possible.

What is a Coalition Educator?

A Coalition Educator is a shared resource, working for 10 hours a week in three different synagogues simultaneously. The CE spends the balance of her time pursuing professional learning so that she can continue to grow as an educator. The CE also works closely with other CEs in the Coalition to share challenges and successes so that ideas move from one congregation to the next. In this way, the big idea that “innovators need innovators” is enacted. The CE, who has the expressed job to connect ideas from one congregation to another, is able to bring the innovations of one congregation to the other, seeding and magnifying ways to impact learners.

CEs have helped to facilitate real and meaningful change in the congregations they serve. They are well versed in powerful learning and are able to move to quick implementation of innovative learning within a congregation. Start up time for change is reduced considerably, opening the congregation to experience and value change.

For example, one CE began to use 21st century design principles within a mostly traditional classroom. The congregational leadership, although open to experimentation, was not thinking beyond the classroom. Learners, parents and synagogue leaders were impressed by the results of the kind of learning that focused on children’s questions and built relationships among children. Because of the success, the congregation became open to thinking more broadly.

The following year, the congregation launched a relationship-based model that emphasized how Judaism stays with learners at home and on the way; the curriculum emerged from learners’ questions about their real life experiences. The CE articulated to leadership the characteristics of learning that were unique. Also because the CE was trained in documentation (noticing/noticing tools), she was able to show results. Subsequently, working with an Educational Leadership Team, including the vision of the clergy, the congregation launched a model that takes place both in the homes of learners and at sites they visit regularly, parks and malls, restaurants and ball fields.

This story reflects the notion that congregations, while open to experimentation, need to have an experience of what is possible before imagining broader horizons. The CE had well-developed skills in teaching powerful learning and quickly brought the *Na’aseh v’nishmah* principle of doing before fully understanding to the congregational leadership. Once they experienced powerful learning and saw the results, they could think more broadly and were open to more significant change.

COALITION EDUCATOR

The CE functions as a power station of innovation in each of the three synagogues where she works. Because the CEs have training in education and have possibility temperaments they are able to hold several roles within the congregation, including thought partner and implementer of the innovative vision developed in partnership with the Education Director and the lay leadership.

Coalition Educators Play a Key Role in Professional Learning

Professional learning is essential in creating learning that is relationship based, content rich, speaks to the questions of learners and enables meaning making. Educators who work in alternative settings, like homes and museums, need to learn new ways to create powerful learning.

To speak to this need, Coalition congregations have ongoing learning for educators. Again, one has to ask, who will lead this ongoing work for educators? While the Director of Education plays a key role in establishing goals and values, we see it is challenging for them to also design, implement and evaluate this ongoing process. Time and time again the CE has taken on the role of a key member of the Professional Learning Team (PLT) working with educators to develop Communities of Practice that meet regularly during the year. The Professional Learning Team is most often made up of the Director of Education, a lead teacher(s) and the Coalition Educator.

Mentor-Based Professional Learning

In one congregation, a CE worked with the PLT to create a mentor-based model for faculty. In that congregation, seasoned faculty worked closely with newer faculty to develop skills in noticing and powerful learning. The time it takes to develop such a program can't be understated. The CE's role was essential to provide the ongoing monitoring and support to enable the mentoring system to develop.

It is well known that teachers are an essential component in educational innovation, but there is a great deal of work to be done to activate that leadership. Part of the CE's work was to empower teachers so that the CE's were not the only ones responsible for designing and facilitating ongoing professional learning. The CE's were leaders of PLT's and helped to build what can be called second-tier leadership.

The CE's found that educators needed to see themselves as leaders in this work. The congregational structure, however, did not necessarily support this approach. CE's served to develop teachers' sense that they were important voices in developing high impact models. CE's also helped Education Directors view their faculty as team members who could assist them in this work. CE's designed professional learning for the entire faculty, but they also worked directly with the teacher leadership team to nurture their skills and to create a group of leaders who functioned as second-tier leadership within the congregation. These new leaders then continue moving the cycle of innovation forward so that the Education Director does not stand alone.

In other congregations, CE's have developed team-teaching protocols, faculty-led professional learning that focuses on a teacher's particular area of expertise, and collegial relationships that lead to improved learning design. All CE congregations see growth in both the depth and breadth of professional learning with the CE at the center of planning and implementing sessions that support innovation. It is notable

that each congregation required a slightly different approach to professional learning. Because the CE is on the “inside” of the system and has a close working relationship with learners, faculty and the Education Director, her insight into what is needed is essential.

Networking: Because CEs served nine congregations, ideas from these congregations would easily migrate from one to another. A CE might implement a multi-grade learning program in one congregation, and then easily reframe it for application in another. In addition to sharing ideas within the nine CE congregations, CEs were exposed to new ideas from the entire Coalition and beyond. They often brought their knowledge of the network to a particular congregation.

CE is a Leadership Team Member and an Educator Close to the Learning

It is noteworthy that the CE also was a respected member of the educational team where she regularly met with the Educational Leadership Team and the Professional Learning Team. She was in conversation with leadership about goals, roles and results. In effect, the CE plays the roles of a master educator in powerful learning as well as a respected leadership team member able to bring the stories of powerful learning to leadership. The Education Director continues to play the primary leadership role but instead of acting alone, or having all responsibility for implementation on him, he has a partner in the CE.

CEs spent a great deal of time working with the Education Directors at their congregations, but because their job description included planning professional learning for the faculty, serving as a faculty resource, and, often, teaching in the high impact model, they also developed strong relationships with teachers and learners in their congregations. Often, CEs met with and mentored teachers as they worked toward a particular goal for their own professional development. When a CE served as a teacher in a high impact model, her learning experiences often served as a laboratory for other teachers, allowing them to witness powerful learning first hand. And CEs enjoyed real connections with their learners, which, in many cases, included both children and adults. Their first-hand knowledge of what matters to families allowed them to design learning that was relevant and meaningful, and to take into account the needs and desires of those learners when working with the Education Director on the direction of innovation. Their ongoing contact with Directors, teachers, and learners enabled CEs to make change from the center of their systems.

Navigating Multiple Systems Requires Support

CEs were asked to work in four different systems at once. They had to navigate the complexity of three congregations as well as their work with the Jewish Education Project. To support their ability to learn innovation and navigation tools they were provided with regular mentoring and ongoing professional learning.

The CEs spent an hour a week with a mentor who was outside of their congregational systems. The mentors allowed the CEs to reflect on their work, to problem solve, to refine their curriculum, to develop interpersonal and time management skills, to navigate the sometimes conflicting needs of three congregations, and to sharpen the developing vision of innovation in their congregations. CEs reported that the time with their mentors was among the most valuable of their commitments.

Professional Learning: Ten hours of professional learning a week meant that CEs were spending a full quarter of their work time developing skills, building networks with other innovators, and being exposed to new ideas. Their professional growth directly benefitted the congregations they served, allowing them to bring, for example, bits and pieces from a Rosh Hodesh training or a new idea heard at a Jewish Futures conference to the development of a high impact model in their congregations.

Shared Resources: CEs worked part-time in three congregations. The sharing of resources had many benefits, including a strong network as described above. But an important additional factor was the sharing of the financial burden of hiring a highly skilled educator. The Jewish Education Project was an important partner with the three congregations; responsible for coordinating hiring, mentorship, and professional learning for the CEs. We found that in this particular model, three partner congregations were too many and that both the CEs and the congregations felt it was difficult to fulfill the high level of commitment to each congregation in the hours allotted; we changed the format so that CEs will work in two congregations.

The Cost is Worth It

In this era of shrinking congregational affiliation, we realize budgets are shrinking as well. It may be hard to imagine setting aside the budget to hire an additional staff member, especially one who is highly qualified and, therefore, worthy of a higher salary.

While we encourage congregations to work together and share the hiring of one highly qualified educator, a single congregation can also implement this type of model independently.

Adapt the CE Model

As congregations innovate, staffing needs evolve. Congregations can adapt the CE model to their own needs by:

- Identifying a skilled educator
- Redesigning the role to include responsibilities like:
 - thought partner for both the Education Director and the other teachers,

Sharing resources like this type of educator allows for a smaller budgetary commitment. In addition to financial benefit, sharing resources also means an inherent sharing of ideas.

- designer of professional learning, and/or master of powerful learning
- Seeking possible volunteer mentors from within the congregation
- Prioritizing professional learning opportunities for the educator
- Connecting her to other educators in the region so that she has a network.

Role of Coalition Educator

Job Description

A Coalition Educator (CE) is an innovator, bringing energy, resources and ideas to a congregation committed to creating positive measurable results in learners. The CE strengthens teacher leadership so that innovation can be accelerated and not fall only the shoulders of the director.

During the 12 hours a week the CE will be responsible for:

Supporting Alignment and Expansion to the New Vision

- The CE will work with the consultant to engage the Educational Leadership Team (ELT) in planning and collaborative decision making around expanding new models and mobilizing congregational support for educational innovation.
- The CE will notice areas that are fertile for growth and can suggest next steps.
- The CE is part of a system's checks and balances for alignment to vision and priority goal.
- The CE will share feedback on her experiences in the new model as well as her first-hand knowledge of the learners with ELT in support of a cycle of continuous reflection and improvement.
- Working under the supervision of the Director of Education, and in collaboration with the consultant, the CE will document and share success of: the new model; professional learning; measurement; and powerful learning.

Professional Learning

- The CE will work under the direction of the Education Director in consultation with the consultant to identify *benchmarks of success* for the Professional Learning Team (PLT). They will also identify benchmarks for the teachers engaged in Professional Learning in support of high impact learning experiences. (For example, how do we write noticing targets for intergenerational learning? How does one deal with logistical concerns when learning takes place in non-classroom environments such as a mall, baseball field or museum? How does one continue to build community when learning is a blend of various virtual and independent individual, family, and communal experiences?)
- The CE will co-plan and co-implement professional learning to reach these goals.

- The CE's role in PL may also include meetings with teachers for individual and group coaching, invitations to colleagues to observe CE teaching as a laboratory for experimenting with new strategies and practices, development of various curricula in support of the goals, identifying and providing resources in support of goals.

Teaching in the New Model

- The CE can teach up to 2 hours a week in the congregation's high-impact model.

Strengthening the Network

- The CE will build relationships and community within the congregation through interacting and conversing with stakeholders and learners in the course of their work.
- The CE will help link the successes and needs of individual congregations with the successes and needs of other congregations in the Coalition.
- The CE will access and broker the resources of ERP's to best achieve the goals set by the PLT and ELT.

During the 10 hours a week with the Coalition Educator Network each coalition educator will:

- Engage in ongoing learning to foster their ability to achieve stated goals of congregation. This learning can include meetings of their own network, days of learning with the mentors and project director as well as with outside resources, participation in the Leadership Institute, participant in Consultant calls and Days of Learning as well as pursuit of other professional learning aligned to each CE's goals for professional growth, determined by the CE in collaboration with her mentor at the beginning of each year.
- Receive supervision from a LOMED mentor. (4 hours per month)
- Work closely with the LOMED consultant to assure good communication and coordination
- Build a network of idea and information sharing among congregations with common successes and challenges by linking the successes and needs of congregations
- Document successes, new methods, curricula/materials and models in order for the congregation and the community to benefit from experimentation.

Summary: A CE Breaks the Bottleneck of Innovation

The work of innovation can't rest only on the Director of Education. The bottleneck reported by educators and substantiated by a Network Analysis needed to be broken so people's hopes could turn to reality. Adjusting the staffing structure enables a congregation to have a person who can:

1. Quickly implement and model powerful learning
2. Lead ongoing professional learning
3. Be a connector between learning and leadership's ideas of possibility
4. Network with other innovators and resources

The cumulative impact of having a CE in a congregation is much greater than the sum of any of the specific responsibilities that she carries. CEs bring energy, spirit, determination, curiosity, new perspectives, powers of observation, and “with-it-ness” that infuse their congregations and propel these congregations to heights of innovation. Because the CE is often charged to work with leadership to bring the vision to life, she is the one who imagines structures, creates curricula, and provides the staffing for and documentation of amazing powerful learning that leads to new levels of Jewish living and meaning-making. The CE is a pivotal influence in creating new educational realities that become the standard for the way learning happens in high impact models.