

# MAPPING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR JEWISH EDUCATORS

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# MAPPING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR JEWISH EDUCATORS

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## INTRODUCTION

Since earliest times, the Jewish people have had the mandate to teach their children well. Fulfilling this commandment is particularly challenging in the contemporary American setting. Initiatives by local communities and national agencies have had limited success in figuring out new and better ways to attract and serve Jewish youth. The post-bar/t mitzvah dropout rate remains high and rates of engagement in Jewish life on campus remain low. Secular interests compete for time and attention and, unlike previous eras, parents can no longer be counted on to stand up for Jewish interests. The learning styles and lifestyles of young people have changed, driven in large measure by advances in media and technology, but Jewish programs and organizations have been slow to catch on to these new tools and their potentialities. At the same time, opportunity abounds. Regardless of societal changes, youth still have developmental needs and tasks that they must accomplish—intellectual, social, physical, and spiritual—and all of these could well be addressed through Jewish venues and approaches.

In this landscape of challenges and opportunities, professional development is a focal concern. There is no question that the quality of Jewish educational institutions and the education they deliver depends heavily on the excellence of the professional staff. Yet there are reports of staffing shortages and difficulties finding competent educators and administrators in day schools, congregational schools, summer camps, and other sectors of the education field. Many of those working in congregational schools and informal education are part-time or temporary workers. They may not see this work as a career, they do not necessarily identify as professionals, and they certainly do not have the opportunities and perquisites of full professionals. Counselors at camp, advisors in youth groups, and Hillel JCSC<sup>2</sup> fellows on campus eventually age out of their positions, creating a need for recruitment efforts, induction programs, and career development. There are structural issues, found in pockets across the field, that undermine professional strength—ineffective or “old-school” leadership, under-resourcing of creative talent, inability or unwillingness of organizations to support professional development, and the silos that separate those working in different positions or sectors. Professional development cannot fix all of these problems but it can do much to cultivate talent in the field.

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<sup>1</sup> The authors extend their sincerest gratitude to Sharon Feiman-Nemser, Barry Chazan, Sara Lee, Josh Elkin, and Marion Gribetz for their careful read of the manuscript and their detailed feedback.

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## Outline of the Report

This report describes professional development efforts in Jewish education. It begins with a list of desirable and necessary features for effective professional development in education. The list comes from the literature on professional development in public school education, which is informed by extensive field experience and research. The report next presents current professional development opportunities in Jewish education, describing them by sub-sector (i.e., camp, year-round informal education, Hillel, day school, congregational school, and Israel). In the final section, current offerings in the Jewish sector are viewed in light of the desiderata for professional development in order to find possibilities for future expansion and improvement.

Three caveats must be kept in mind in reading this report. First, most of the information on opportunities in the Jewish sector comes from the database we are building on Jewish education. The database currently houses information on every relevant national organization and program that we could locate. It also contains information on organizations and programs in the eight communities included in our study: Boston, Washington, D.C., Cleveland, Detroit, Kansas City, Denver, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. These communities were selected as instructive local models. They were also selected to represent communities of different sizes and in different regions of the country. The report is thus based on professional development activities that are sponsored by national entities or are homegrown in one of the eight local communities. Professional development activity in other locales is not included in this report.

Second, Jewish education is a fluid field in which organizations and programs emerge, morph, and sunset. Our report describes what existed at the time of writing and cannot capture important changes that have undoubtedly occurred with time. Third, our study is descriptive and not evaluative. The report describes existing approaches and opportunities for professional development but contains no data on their outcomes and makes no judgment on their comparative value.

## DESIDERATA

*Professional development* is a broadly encompassing term that covers a range of endeavors to secure high-quality professionals for the field, to make the best of the skills and talents that they bring to the enterprise, and to insure continuing growth and job satisfaction. In this section, we lay out eight desiderata for professional development as understood from studies and practice in general education.

**Professional development extends across all levels and career stages from the preparation of new educators to the executive education of top administrators.**

It includes pre-service education; induction; and early, middle, and late career opportunities for personal and professional growth. Although the need for professional development is career-long, it serves different purposes over time, from recruitment,

socialization into the profession, and induction, to career development, advancement, and retention. Its content and design should reflect these various purposes.

**Professional development helps educators gain not only technical skills but also the knowledge and dispositions required for professional practice.**

It is both an intellectual and a practical pursuit. It must help teachers learn more not only about the subjects they teach but also about how students learn these subjects (Garet et al., 2001). It needs to meld theory and practice. For example, youth educators in informal educational settings need to learn about adolescent development, but they also need a forum for discussing situations encountered and possible responses in light of theory, experience, and practice. Because it works on these various levels, effective professional development often challenges teachers' assumptions about education and their beliefs about student learning and the teacher's role (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Hawley & Valli, 1999; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Wilson & Berne, 1999).

**Professional development should be based on sound pedagogy that takes into account how adults learn.**

On the simplest level this requirement might be met by helping teachers understand the purpose of new practices, showing them examples in contexts similar to their own, and giving them opportunities to practice with coaching and feedback. On a more sophisticated level it entails recognition of what Shulman (2005) calls "signature pedagogies," professions' unique ways of preparing their professionals. Some of these signature pedagogies rely on direct teaching; others on laboratory investigation, collaborative design, Socratic exchange, or clinical rounds. Importantly, the form itself teaches a great deal about how to think and act like a member of the profession. A professional development experience based on a collaborative learning model, for example, implicitly teaches the norm of collaboration. Good professional development programs are aware of this connection and develop their frameworks with care.

Active learning is a key pedagogical component. Professional development activities should include opportunities for hands-on work such as planning for implementation back home, observing and being observed teaching, reviewing students' work, giving presentations and demonstrations, and so on. The research shows that active learning produces greater gains in knowledge and skills (Garet et al., 1999). Reflection is another key component. Successful professional development efforts help teachers think and talk critically about their own practice; and they create the norms, language, and trust that facilitate such discussions (Wilson & Berne, 1999).

**Professional development should be embedded in the teacher's experience.**

It should be school-wide and context-specific (Richardson & Placier, 2001). Successful programs involve the collective participation of professionals from the same school, the integration of what is learned in the program into the daily life of the school, and coherence with other learning experiences (Garet et al., 1999; Hawley & Valli, 1999;

Knapp, 2003; Stodolsky, Dorph, & Nemser, 2006; Wilson & Berne, 1999). The more direct the connection between learning and application, the greater the meaning for the teacher and the potential impact on students (Hawley & Valli, 1999).

Learning must take place at all levels in the organization for such integration to occur (Richard & Placier, 2001). Problems emerge when one part of the system receives training but another does not. Young workers become frustrated when their supervisor does not “get it” or is not open to the new ideas they bring to the organization from their professional development activities. Directors who develop a vision at an executive training program may return home only to find that they are unable to align their staff and lay leaders with it. Educating all parts of the system makes it possible to shift the professional culture of a school and thereby increase the effectiveness of professional development efforts.

**Professional development is not a one-shot deal but must be an ongoing, dynamic activity for continual enhancement of knowledge and skills.**

To keep up with changes in students and in the environment, teachers must continually learn and relate new learning to their ever-changing reality. As well, teachers, themselves, change and accumulate experience each year, creating new possibilities for professional development at different phases in their careers (Borko & Putnam, 1996). The quintessential Jewish example is the Passover seder. The seder, it is often remarked, is “new” every year not because the story has changed but because the participants have.

Research indicates that for professional development activities to have an impact they must be of sufficient duration in terms of both time span and contact hours (Garet, et al., 1999; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Stodolsky, Dorph, & Nemser, 2006). Duration may be important because longer experiences tend to include significantly more opportunities for active learning, a key feature of effective professional development.

**Formal opportunities for professional development take many forms, and it is assumed that the learner will take advantage of different types of opportunities.**

These include conferences, seminars, workshops, academic courses, on-line or distance learning, Israel experiences, fellowships, internships, networks, mentoring, coaching, communities of practice, and other organized forms of support, connection, and development. Many programs tackle the professional development challenge through a combination or a sequencing of these activities. Interestingly, research shows that the particular type of program has significantly less impact on teacher outcomes than does the duration, collective participation, content, level of active learning, and coherence offered by the program (Garet et al., 1999).

**Professional development should include informal learning within the context of the workplace.**

Great potential for professional development resides in everyday interactions in the workplace—informal conversations about student learning, educational practices, curriculum, and goals. At the organizational level, the effectiveness of these interactions depends on a school culture that encourages such discussion and fosters openness, collaboration, common goals, and shared responsibility for the learning of all students. It also depends on having structures and time for these interactions. Structures might include, for example, classroom observation, collaboration on curriculum, joint review of student work, or forums for the regular exchange of ideas and materials. At the interpersonal level, it depends on teachers' knowing one another well enough personally and professionally to contribute meaningfully to one another's learning. And it involves the capacity for conversations that permit challenges and critique (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Little, 1999; Lord, 1994; Stodolsky, Dorph, & Nemser, 2006; Wilson & Berne, 1999). The optimal workplace, it has been said, is one where learning is considered part of work (Smylie, 1995).

The creation of such a learning environment requires administrators who appreciate professional development and master teachers who can implement these learning structures in the school (Sherrill, 1999). And, in turn, these administrators and master teachers need professional development opportunities in which to learn collaboration and supervision skills as well as knowledge of effective teaching and learning strategies, adult learning theory, and so on (Sherrill, 1999).

**Professional development is but a means to an end.**

Professional development aims to increase the competence of individual professionals, from entry point through executive level, so that their organizations and programs will be strengthened. These are steps toward the end goal which, in the Jewish sector, is to raise the quality of Jewish education for youth so that they, in turn, will have positive Jewish outcomes in their lives. It is important to remember that professional development is not an end in itself.

**CURRENT ACTIVITIES IN THE JEWISH SECTOR**

We turn from the desiderata for professional development in education writ large to current professional development activity in the Jewish education sector. The JJF Jewish Education Database currently has information on over 2,500 programs involved with Jewish education for children and youth. Of these, about 200 (less than 1%) are principally concerned with professional development. Analysis of these programs indicates the following:

- Professional development in the Jewish sector is largely carried out at the local level—by central agencies, federations, and local schools and organizations. Almost

one-third of the entries in the database come from the mere eight local communities included in the study.

In the course of our research, we also learned that professional development takes on a unique quality in each community in line with the zeitgeist of that locale. San Francisco—with its abundance of creative, entrepreneurial educators—has a host of professional networks that create links among these individuals. Los Angeles has a plethora of conferences but little continuous development work, a reflection of the community's large and geographically dispersed population and its proclivity toward institution-building (as opposed to individual development). In Boston—where education is considered the heart and soul of the community—the federation has partnered with local synagogues and colleges to create new careers for Jewish educators. The federation is committed to funding these congregational educators over the long-term, a commitment that contrasts with the one-year or limited-term grants for educational experimentation found elsewhere.

- Professional development efforts are most often targeted to educators in elementary, middle, and high school and significantly less often to those working at the preschool or college level.
- Although much of Jewish education is denominationally-based, denomination is not the key organizing principle for professional development. Two-thirds of the programs in the database are pluralist, trans-denominational, or non-denominational and only one-third are clearly identified with one of the religious movements.
- Most professional development programs in the Jewish sector are of relatively short duration. About one-fifth continue for a year or longer.
- Professional development tends to focus on those working either in formal (e.g., schools) or informal (e.g., camps) educational settings. Of the 200 professional development programs in the database, fewer than 30 work across this divide.

The Jewish educational enterprise—including its funding, capacity-building initiatives, and leadership—is largely structured around sub-sectors, and it is therefore not surprising that most professional development activity is housed within a specific sub-sector. In order to understand how each of the sub-sectors provides professional development opportunities to its educators, this section describes the approach that characterizes camping, year-round informal educational programs, Hillel, day schools, and congregational schools. Included, as well, is information about Israel education—how teachers are being prepared to teach about Israel and how Israel is used in teacher education.

### **Camping: Top-down, Bottom-up Approach**

The Foundation for Jewish Camping (FJC) provides the glue for an integrated camping sector, playing to common interests in the growth of excellence and capacity and cutting

across differences in denomination and sponsorship. In this role, FJC has managed to orchestrate professional development across the field.

The approach, a combination of top-down and bottom-up education/training, is a reflection of camp reality. Our previous research made clear that enhanced Jewish education at camp must begin with the director, the “captain of the ship” who sets the camp’s course both in terms of its general mission and its Jewish purpose (Sales & Saxe, 2004). At the same time, unless counselors are also “ready, willing, and able” to create Jewish life at camp, it will not happen. Professional development at one end of the staff hierarchy is insufficient. Development at both the top and the bottom is necessary for excellence and change in the camping field.

The Foundation for Jewish Camping offers several learning initiatives for camp professionals at different levels. The Executive Leadership Institute targets the top of the camp hierarchy, working with experienced camp professionals on their business, management, and leadership skills. These include, among others, marketing, recruitment, strategic planning, visioning, board development, and fundraising. Content is informed by Jewish values, informal education, and best practices in both the private and public sectors. The 18-month Institute is built around eight off-site seminars, personal coaching, and mentoring. Also targeting top camp leadership is *Tze Ul’mad*, Jewish learning enrichment for camp directors, and Jewish Teachable Moments, a program that trains camp directors to help counselors use such moments for educational purposes.

The Cornerstone Fellowship targets the other end of the staff hierarchy. The fellowship was originally designed to incentivize counselors to return for a third year of service by adding a stipend to their regular salary. Recognizing the value of these counselors as emerging Jewish leaders, the program soon added a four-day professional development seminar to the requisite conditions for receiving the incentive stipend. Participants learn leadership and life skills. They are encouraged to see themselves as Jewish educators and to have confidence in their capacities to play this role. During the summer at camp, a senior staff member reinforces curricular concepts and helps fellows implement the Jewish skills and programs they learned at the seminar.

A similar top-down, bottom-up approach is seen in the JCC camping system. Through *Lekhu Lakhem*, the JCCA provides two years of executive training for select camp directors. Simultaneously, through its TAG<sup>3</sup> initiative, it is developing programming units for infusing everyday camp life with Jewish values. The programming materials are for counselors, many of whom have limited Judaic backgrounds. In order for camps to receive the materials, they must agree to have their counselors trained to use them. The education originally took place at regional seminars but shifted to on-site education during staff orientation. The impetus for this shift came from directors who participated in *Lekhu Lakhem* and were ready to move the Jewish agenda at their camps. As the professional development press is coming simultaneously from the top and the bottom, it is hoped that it will lead to a camping system with increased motivation and capacity to be serious about its Judaism.

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<sup>3</sup> *Torah, Avoda, Gemilut Hasadim*

### **Year-round Informal Educational Programs: Individual Approach**

Year-round experiential programs depend on creative, young talent that can design and deliver programs and motivate participation. Until recently, the concept of professional development for informal youth educators was oxymoronic. The disparate jobs had not coalesced into a field of practice and, to the extent there was a defined field, it had none of the trappings of a profession (e.g., standards of practice, advanced degree programs, professional association, body of literature on theory and research, etc.). Through a variety of forces, including the advent of the North American Alliance (later JEXNET) and the Institute for Informal Jewish Education at Brandeis University (IJE), the notion of this sector began to change and new energy was applied to professional development.

Professionals hold jobs like youth director or youth group advisor which tend not to be part of an organizational career ladder. Accordingly, professional development targets individuals and focuses on optimizing their contribution in their current job. However, to maximize their impact, such efforts should also give participants a sense of belonging to the wider field of informal and experiential education and support them in making lateral or diagonal moves from one organization to another. In Fall 2007, JEXNET, which had created a network of professionals from across denominations and organizations, closed its doors on the premise that the various national Jewish youth organizations had substantially increased their in-house professional development opportunities. What may have been lost in this move is the opportunity to educate informal youth professionals for the wider field of practice.

At the same time, several graduate schools have created specializations that prepare professionals for work in informal education broadly defined. Hebrew College in Boston, for example, offers a two-year certificate program in Jewish Informal Education, Youth Leadership and Camping. The program is designed for youth directors, synagogue program directors, Jewish camp leaders, and Israel educators and trip leaders. It focuses on the content, methodology, and leadership skills needed for experiential Jewish education. In addition to coursework, the program includes internships in informal settings, participation in Boston's youth educator professional network, and leadership experience at a summer camp or retreat. Baltimore Hebrew University, Siegal College, the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at George Washington University, the School of Education at Hebrew Union College in New York and Los Angeles, and the William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary similarly provide graduate training for Jewish educators who will be working in a variety of informal educational settings.

Boston has created some integration of the field with its Youth Educator Initiative (YESOD), a professional development program for informal youth educators. Although all of the participants work in congregational settings, they represent different denominational youth groups, synagogues, and towns in Greater Boston. Participants attend an off-site retreat at the beginning of the year and then monthly meetings. Coursework is provided through Hebrew College and Brandeis University. Participating

congregations receive funding for their youth educator over a three-year period and then are eligible to receive one-year, renewable grants for efforts to increase the number of participants in youth programs. The design of the program has several benefits: federation funding, academic legitimacy from an advanced certificate program, and a supportive network of congregational professionals facing similar job challenges.

### **Hillel: Field-wide Approach**

Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life is an umbrella organization which sets the overall mission for its local foundations. Although it cannot mandate ideological positions, programs, or curricula at the local level, it does play a central role in promoting Hillel as a career and in providing professional development for the entire field.

Rather than stratifying professional development by level in the organization, the Hillel model is a democratic one in which all staff are trained together. In contrast to the camping sector, where counselor retention efforts have a three-year time frame, Hillel hopes that talented staff will find enough opportunities in campus work to make it their career. For several years, Hillel tackled the recruitment challenge internally with its Hillel Steinhardt Jewish Campus Service Corps (JCSC). This one- or two-year fellowship placed recent college graduates in Hillel foundations where they worked on student engagement. The fellowship was regarded as a potential first step toward a career in Jewish campus work. A JCSC fellow might then become a program director, then an assistant executive, and eventually an executive, first at a small Hillel and then at a larger one.

Hillel's strategic plan sets forth three objectives aimed at meeting its goal of recruiting, developing, and retaining talented professionals: to become an employer of choice, to increase professional development opportunities, and to develop paths for career advancement. As seen in this formulation, Hillel's effort is at once professional and career development. The effort also puts strong emphasis on both Judaic and job-related skills, an acknowledgement perhaps of Hillel's academic context and its prior history of rabbi-director leadership.

Each summer, all new Hillel professionals across levels are invited to the center in Washington, DC for orientation and training from veterans in the field. In addition, new directors are assigned mentors for their first year on the job. Career development grants support professionals at any level who wish to pursue a specific developmental goal by taking a course, attending a workshop, or traveling to another campus to learn from a colleague. Through Hillel's partnerships with Pardes Institute and Melitz in Jerusalem and Brandeis Collegiate Institute in Los Angeles, staff at different levels can take advantage of personal Jewish experiences and study opportunities during summers. Throughout the year, Hillel offers workshops on topics related to both Judaic and job skills (e.g., spirituality, social justice, Israel, supervision, fundraising). The centerpiece is the annual professional staff conference, where hundreds of professionals—from all schools and levels—gather for skill development, Jewish learning, networking, and celebration.

## **Curriculum-based**

Through the Everett Ethical Leadership Institute, Hillel offers an opportunity for staff to engage in personal exploration of Jewish ethics as well as professional education in the use of a new ethics curriculum. The program has three phases: a two- or three-day Ethics Training Institute in which participants explore the curriculum through text study and discussions; a Tzedek Experiential Seminar in which they engage in a social justice activity in the United States or Israel (e.g., rebuilding damaged homes or working in an underprivileged community); and design of a Student Ethical Leadership Program for their individual campuses. Tzedek Advocacy Grants will be made available for these campuses to implement their social justice programs and to develop student leaders for them.

### **Day Schools: Differentiated and Integrated Approach**

The Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE) is a service organization whose main thrust is capacity building for day schools. The agency is working to fulfill the schools' needs to learn about visioning, strategic planning, fundraising, leadership development, lay-professional relations, and the like. Among its institutional capacity-building efforts, it offers conferences, coaching, and communities of practice for school leadership. The intent is for professionals to partake of all three opportunities, starting perhaps with attendance at a conference, then receiving coaching, and then joining a community of practice. Although it has little command power in the field and is not itself a provider of professional development, PEJE has become the central agency for promoting concepts, like professional development, that foster excellence in day school education.

The Jewish day school system is large and complex with over 750 schools in the United States (Schick, 2005). They range from preschool through high school. They cover the denominational spectrum and include, as well, pluralist and nondenominational community schools. Some are co-ed; others are single-sex. They teach both general and Jewish studies and also offer a range of sports and extracurricular activities to match that of any independent school. The result is a diverse staff of teachers, administrators, development professionals, curriculum designers, psychologists and other specialists. Professional development in such a setting faces the core tension in organization life between differentiation and integration. In terms of differentiation, there is need for specific efforts by job title, grade level, and discipline. In terms of integration, there is a need to develop within a school a shared vision of Jewish education, of the educated Jewish child, and of the mission of the school vis-à-vis the students, their families, and the community.

PEJE attempts to meet these differentiated needs by establishing communities of practice for specific positions or concerns in the day school world: financial management, financial resource development, admissions, lay leadership, diverse learners, and Israel engagement. Almost 1,000 people belong to one or more of these communities of

practice and, regardless of their level of activity, have access to the listserv or bulletin board and receive all of the announcements and summaries of meetings. Importantly, PEJE, in cooperation with the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education at Brandeis University, recently launched a community of practice for those responsible for professional development within their schools.

A range of other entities offer professional development opportunities for day school teachers and administrators. The multiplicity of initiatives is both possible and necessary given the size and diversity of the day school world. The following is a partial catalogue of efforts in pre-service, induction, Hebrew literacy, curriculum-based learning, and leadership development.

### **Pre-service**

Pre-service educational programs target the shortage of qualified day school teachers. Their underlying premise is that day school education is best served by faculty specifically prepared for work in this setting. Some of these programs require graduates to work, for some period of time, in a Jewish school after completing their degrees. In this way, programs like Day School Leadership through Teaching (DeLeT, which is housed at Brandeis University and at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles (HUC)), Pardes Jewish Educators Program (which offers a Certificate of Advanced Jewish Studies from Pardes and a Masters in Jewish Education from Hebrew College), and HUC's MA in Jewish Education fulfill their mission to bring new teachers into the field.

### **Induction**

Induction refers to efforts to welcome new staff, socialize them into the culture of the school, orient them to their positions, and help them integrate into the community. Done well, induction can make a significant difference in the first two years on the job and, ultimately, may be a first step toward longer-term retention.

Programs like DeLeT and the Jewish New Teacher Project work at both ends of the spectrum. They are concerned with induction and seek ways to support and nurture teachers during their early years of teaching. At the same time, their use of mentor teachers provides new leadership roles and ongoing professional development for veteran educators. The Jewish New Teacher Project of the New Teacher Center at the University of California Santa Cruz teaches the knowledge, skills and understandings needed to work with beginning teachers. Since 2003, the Project has supported induction programs in Jewish day schools in the New York metropolitan area. Mentor teachers in DeLeT have a field supervisor who observes their practice. Through examination of practice and interactions between teachers, mentors, and supervisors, the program seeks to improve teaching not only for novice teachers but for experienced teachers as well.

The Induction Partnership, an R&D initiative of the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education at Brandeis University, is helping four local day schools create school-based induction programs. At the same time, it is using these schools as cases to understand the

factors that facilitate or prevent schools from attending to teacher induction. Teams from participating schools convene throughout the year to learn about induction, develop mentoring capacity, set goals, and assess progress toward goals. Results from this effort will be used to promote stronger induction practices in day schools.

### **Hebrew Literacy**

Hebrew language competency is a desideratum in many day schools, particularly for Jewish studies faculty. However, Hebrew literacy cannot be achieved in a short professional training program, and it is not necessarily learned in graduate school. The AVI CHAI Foundation views Hebrew language as key to Jewish peoplehood and therefore a critical element of day school education. One way it is promoting Hebrew language is through professional development, helping Jewish studies faculty gain the confidence and mastery needed to teach in Hebrew. Its *Ivriyon* project with the Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education and the Department of Hebrew Language at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) is a one-month program for non-native speakers of Hebrew with at least an intermediate level of competence. Its goal is to help teachers create a Hebrew environment in their classrooms, help their students express themselves in Hebrew, and converse comfortably with Israeli colleagues. It is limited to 15 participants who are currently teaching or are completing a Masters in Jewish Education and will be taking a position in a day school. Participants receive full tuition and are awarded a scholarship upon successful completion of the program.

### **Curriculum-based**

Learning to teach a new curriculum can be an effective form of professional development for teachers, particularly if the curriculum entails new ways of thinking about teaching and learning. It can be an opportunity for teachers to gain knowledge and to enhance their pedagogical skills. For example, MaToK (*Mezam Tanakhi Konservativi*) is a curriculum for Solomon Schechter day schools, third through sixth grade. JTS runs workshops in which teachers learn about the principles that underlie MaToK, practice the skills that help students become independent learners of Torah, investigate sample lessons, discover their own lessons in Torah study, and meet colleagues from across the country.

Sponsoring organizations can leverage schools to require professional development for teachers who would use the new curriculum. NETA is a Hebrew language curriculum for Jewish secondary schools. Created by Hebrew University in Jerusalem and administered by Hebrew College in Boston, NETA includes the preparation of master teachers, ongoing professional development for educators, consultation to schools, and evaluation research. Schools that use the curriculum must assure that their Hebrew teachers participate either in NETA's Certificate in Hebrew Language Teaching program or in a NETA introductory seminar. The former is intensive learning. It is comprised of a 25-day course at Hebrew College in the first summer, 40 hours of teaching practicum during the year, and a 10-day course of study during the second summer. Participants must have an undergraduate degree, a background in Jewish studies, and fluency in Hebrew. Those

lacking these qualifications or unable to do the certificate program attend the introductory seminar, which imparts the basic knowledge and skills needed to use the curriculum.

### **Leadership Development**

Leadership development programs focus on developing the capacities of current and/or potential leadership. Some train principals and administrators for a particular segment of the day school world; others prepare them for day schools across the spectrum. In all cases, the programs are concerned not only with general administrative and leadership skills but also those needed to lead in a specifically Jewish setting.

The Lookstein Center at Bar-Ilan University, for example, offers a Principals' Program for current leadership in all types of day schools in North America. And RAVSAK<sup>4</sup> offers Project Sulam, a fully-funded, 13-month course of study for the current heads of Jewish community day schools. The Day School Leadership Training Institute (DSLTI), an 18-month program of the Jewish Theological Seminary, is designed to develop future leadership. It targets professionals who have teaching and administrative experience, Jewish and Hebrew literacy, and advanced degrees, but do not currently serve as heads of school. Harvard University/AVI CHAI Foundation Principals Training includes both current and aspiring principals from across the spectrum of Jewish day schools. The program is comprised of a 10-day summer institute at Harvard and follow-up conferences for a select group of institute participants. In addition to these professional development programs, graduate degree programs in Jewish educational administration are helping to elevate the level of day school professional leadership. These include the programs at the schools of education at the George Washington University, Jewish Theological Seminary, Loyola University, University of Judaism, and Yeshiva University among others. (See Appendix.)

All of the professional development programs for top leadership mix off-site or classroom learning with practical application back home through individual action plans and/or mentoring. This extension to the back home setting is important both because it serves to connect learning to application and because it creates a more dynamic and ongoing professional development experience.

### **Congregational Schools**

There seems to be new energy and optimism in the field of supplementary Jewish education as evidenced in “new ideas and curricula, a raft of new initiatives, new strategies, and dozens of schools actively engaged in a process of reinvention” (Wertheimer, 2007, p. 3). As Wertheimer explains, this positive shift is driven by a number of factors including the recognition of the importance of the supplementary schools in the education enterprise, new interest by parents and teachers in strengthening Jewish education, investment by the central agencies in these schools, and changes within synagogues that support new thinking about congregation-based Jewish education. At the

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<sup>4</sup> The Jewish Community Day School Network for the advancement and support of pluralistic Jewish day school education.

same time, congregational schools face significant obstacles. Among others, these include minimal community funding, poor fundraising track records by their synagogues and their movements, high competition for families' time and attention, minimal hours of instruction, and reliance on part-time faculty (Sales, 2006; Wertheimer, 2007).

The notion that professional development is key to the improvement of these schools may be gaining traction. In its Framework for Excellence in the Conservative Synagogue School, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ) included a clause on ongoing professional development of education directors, principals, teachers, and family educators and it urged professional development plans for everyone working in the congregational school. Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools (NESS), Philadelphia's initiative to improve its congregational schools, has placed much of its emphasis on professional development.

Nonetheless, few national programs are specifically designed as professional development for congregational educators. We present here a few examples of programs for leadership and for classroom teachers as well as examples of curriculum-based professional development and professional development that occurs as a by-product of school planning.

### **Leadership Development**

Education for congregational school leadership is provided through in-service programs that target current principals and education directors. The Conservative movement, for example, has two professional development programs for its religious school principals and education directors. The New Directors' Institute is for those entering their jobs with little or no experience as principals; *Lilmod U'Lilamed: The Not-So-New Directors' Institute* is for those with somewhat more experience. The emphasis is on pedagogic leadership rather than administrative skills. At the New Directors' Institute, participants experience a variety of teaching methods; they learn about models for educational programs; and they develop strategies for working with parents and lay leaders. Importantly, participants in these programs receive ongoing support in the form of regular phone consultations and periodic site visits. Another example is the Leadership Institute for Congregational School Principals, a project of UJA-Federation of New York. The Institute works with principals with at least two years experience to enhance their leadership and pedagogic skills and to increase their Judaic knowledge. Co-sponsored by JTS and HUC, it is open to candidates from all denominations in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut. The program offers two-years of mentoring, summer seminars, symposia, and a trip to Israel.

### **Teachers**

Even when the national movement is involved, most professional development for congregational teachers takes place at the local level. In an interesting experiment in Pittsburgh, the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) is partnering with the local Agency for Jewish Learning (AJL) on a two-year professional development program for teachers in

three of the community's Reform synagogues. The purpose is to address chronic staffing shortages by providing movement-specific learning for teachers. To this end, the curriculum gives equal time to the topics of Reform Judaism and pedagogy. The curriculum was developed by the URJ but most of the teaching is done by AJL faculty. The program also includes two weeks in Israel and a camp retreat. A parallel program for trustees of the synagogues helps insure that lay leaders will be supportive of the professional development of faculty in the synagogue. The partnership of the national movement, the local agency, and the individual synagogues makes possible a program that no one of them alone could accomplish.

Given the unique challenges of supplementary school education, there is a need to develop models for professional development for teachers in this setting. One promising model is mentoring (JESNA, nd). The Rhea Hirsch School of Education at HUC in Los Angeles is piloting a teacher-mentor project called Creating Teaching Excellence in Congregational Education. To date, four schools have each trained two mentors, who then formed a team with two less experienced teachers. With education and guidance from their education director and from HUC faculty, the teams work on staff education and retention. A "Mentoring Handbook" is being developed so that congregations in other communities can benefit from what is learned in these pilot sites about the creation of a "culture of mentoring" in the congregational school.

### **Curriculum-based**

As noted above, a new curriculum presents an opportunity for professional development and access to the new curriculum can be used to leverage schools to provide this opportunity to their teachers. There has been notable curricular innovation in the congregational schools which has included learning activities for teachers.

For example, *BabagaNewz* made its way into congregational schools as a magazine and then added lesson plans and text sources for teachers. Jewish Family & Life, the publisher, provided educational workshops around the country designed to teach teachers how to use these materials. Project Etgar, a middle school curriculum for Conservative congregational schools, is based on a new learning model in which students work in groups, exploring primary texts and relating everyday issues in their own lives to Jewish values. Schools that choose Project Etgar must send their education director and teachers to professional development workshops to learn how to use the curriculum. Back home, master teachers work with the faculty on implementation. The Reform movement's *Chai* curriculum, for elementary and middle school students, is based on the three themes of Torah, *Avoda* and *Gemilut Hasadim*. Attendant to the curriculum are teacher training, professional resources, and ongoing assistance in the form of teacher conference calls, study guides, regional workshops, electronic courses, a monthly newsletter, and a listserv.

## **In the Name of Planning**

Professional development can be a by-product of a synagogue change effort. For example, New York's The Re-Imagine Project and Hartford's *La'atid* program are working to improve congregational schools through systemic planning and change processes.<sup>5</sup> Implicit and explicit in these efforts is professional learning for educators (Isaacs, 2006; Wertheimer, 2007). Educators may have their beliefs challenged and they may gain in knowledge, skills, and understanding by engaging in the text study, seminars, and workshops that are part of these programs. They may also learn simply by going through the process with others in the congregation. Through the Coaches Training Institute of The Center for Excellence in Congregational Education, JESNA is beginning to train central agency staff to coach local synagogues in education change initiatives. As the Institute scales up, the potential of change initiatives to affect professional development will deserve further attention.

## **Israel Education**

Israel education has generally been considered a sub-sector of informal Jewish education alongside camping, year-round youth group, and campus work. In recent years, particularly with Taglit-birthright Israel, Israel has provided the focus for a great deal of engagement and educational work. In terms of professional development, there are programs designed to help educators improve Israel education and others that take place in Israel but do not have Israel as a central topic.

## **Teaching Israel**

Teaching about Israel presents a challenge across the field—in formal and informal educational programs, at the high school and college level. The problem is seen most clearly on college campuses where the issue of Israel is exacerbated by provocative political rhetoric, focus on the Middle East conflict rather than on modern Israel per se, confusion felt by many young Jews about their own views, and inadequate knowledge to hold their own in conversations about Israel and the Middle East (Sales & Saxe, 2006). One thrust in Israel education is to bring Israel more fully and consistently into classrooms and programs. Rather than adopt specific curricula, the goal is to suffuse Israel into everyday activities so that it becomes an integral part of the social, academic, and physical environment of the school, camp, or program.

Recent years have seen new initiatives focused on teaching college faculty, Jewish educators in congregational and day schools, and informal youth educators to teach about Israel. Four examples follow.

NACIE's<sup>6</sup> *Makom*: Israel Engagement Network offers Israel-related teaching resources, professional development, and mentoring for educators, rabbis, and cultural arts

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<sup>5</sup> The RE-IMAGINE Project is being carried out by ECE with funding from UJA-Federation of New York. *La'atid* is coordinated by Hartford Federation's Commission on Jewish Education.

<sup>6</sup> North American Coalition for Israel Engagement

specialists across the spectrum of educational institutions. For example, *Makom* developed teaching units and multimedia resources to aid classroom discussions about the 2006 Lebanon war. In a related teleconference, educators shared their thoughts about discussing the war with their students and colleagues. *Makom*'s ARTSY Seminar provides mentoring and resources to help educators in youth groups, summer camps, JCCs, and day schools spark conversations about Israel with teens.

The Institute for the Study of Modern Israel at Emory University offers one-week workshops, at various locations throughout the U.S., on the teaching of the history, politics, and culture of modern Israel. The program now has over 350 alumni, most of whom are teachers in grades 5 through 12 in day schools and congregational schools. To participate in the workshop, teachers need a letter of commitment from the head of their school that the study of Israel will be integrated into their program.

Brandeis University's Summer Institute for Israel Studies provides faculty at universities in North America with tools to teach about Israel more effectively and to introduce new courses in Israel studies at their schools. The program brings scholars to the Brandeis campus for a two-week program where they explore Israel through the lens of various academic disciplines, and to Israel where they spend 10 days meeting with Israeli scholars, politicians, artists, and writers. As part of the seminar, participants develop syllabi for new courses to be offered in their home institutions.

Leo Baeck Education Center, Lokey International Academy of Jewish Studies, offers The Sacred Community of Educators: Israel Professional Development at Home. The program targets groups of North American Jewish educators from a particular school, organization, movement, or region and trains them in multi-day seminars in their home community. The Center also offers *Ofakim* (Israel Horizons), one- to three-week professional development programs in Israel for North American teachers. The seminars, text-based field trips, and *mifgashim* (encounters) with Israeli Jewish educators aim to inspire participants to enrich their teaching venues with Israel content.

### **Israel as a Site for Professional Development**

Israel also serves as a site for professional development even when Israel itself is not the topic of study. These opportunities make use of the expertise in Israel. They globalize the task, bringing American Jewish educators into contact with Israeli peers, scholars, and master teachers and, in some instances, with learners from other Jewish communities around the world. And through everyday experiences, they implicitly build participants' connection to and understanding of Israel. As the goal is to prepare teachers for work in North American schools, time in Israel is but one component of the program.

One example is the Pardes Jewish Educators program, which offers a Certificate of Advanced Jewish Studies from Pardes and a Masters in Jewish Education from Hebrew College in Boston. Upon completion of the program, graduates are committed to serving as fulltime Judaic studies teachers in North American day schools for at least three years. The curriculum includes study of Hebrew texts, Jewish education and Jewish studies

courses, distance learning with Hebrew College, and a seven-week residency in Boston including an internship and intensive study at Hebrew College. During the second year of the program, students participate in a semester-long teaching internship.

Another example is the Masters program in Jewish Education at HUC's Rhea Hirsch School of Education. The concentration in day school education begins in the second year of studies, after a year of Hebrew language and Jewish text study at HUC-JIR's Jerusalem campus. Included in the concentration is a one-month internship in a Jewish day school in the U.S., where students observe classes, interact with experienced teachers and administrators, and assist in Jewish co-curricular activities. Students receive their MA after the three-year academic program, and then enter a two-year postgraduate residency in a day school under the supervision of mentor teachers and the Judaic studies director.

### **Cross-sector**

Although most professional development activity takes place within specific sub-sectors of the Jewish education world, there are a few exceptions of note. These are in the areas of recruitment, pre- and in-service education, and development of master teachers.

#### **Recruitment**

A few national initiatives are trying to increase the pool of candidates for positions in Jewish education. JESNA's Lainer Interns for Jewish Education tackles the problem at the earliest point, identifying potential educators when they are still in college. The purpose of the program is to motivate students to become Jewish educators and to prepare them for careers in the field. The program involves one year at a university in Israel and one year in North America, learning about Jewish education and gaining practical experience in the field. Other programs that serve the field in this way are the Schusterman College Program at CAJE,<sup>7</sup> which brings together college students interested in Jewish education, and JERRI,<sup>8</sup> which aims to understand and address the challenges of recruiting and retaining educators. All of these efforts are concerned with Jewish education across the board.

#### **Pre-Service and In-Service**

Some graduate programs provide pre-service or in-service learning for Jewish educators who will or do work in various types of Jewish education. Gateways for Learning at HUC's School of Education in New York is notable both for its broad concern with the field and its sequencing of professional development and graduate education. Participants work at their own pace within a structured program to improve their teaching skills, expand their Jewish knowledge, strengthen their Jewish identity, and develop leadership skills. The program offers several options, each of which can be a step towards a more intensive learning experience. (1) Professional Development includes conferences,

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<sup>7</sup> Conference of the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education

<sup>8</sup> Jewish Educator Recruitment/Retention Initiative

workshops, lectures, focused discussions, evening courses, and a summer institute. (2) Intensive Summer Institute Program offers week-long institutes for educators working in the field. Credits earned during the summer institute can be applied toward a Jewish education certification. (3) Certificate Programs focus on informal and day school education. Certificates are awarded after students have completed six courses in the Continuing Education program, a two-semester placement in their area of concentration, and an educational project at their placement. Eligible students can apply these credits towards an MA in Religious Education. (4) The MA in Religious Education is for practitioners in Jewish education who want to upgrade their credentials and for general educators who wish to work in Jewish education. The program involves Judaic and education courses, and a supervised practicum in the student's area of specialization, either adult and family education or informal education.

### **Master Teachers**

The Mandel Teacher Educator Institute (MTEI) develops master teacher (teachers of teachers) who can promote on-site professional development in their home institutions. Participants include senior educators from across the field—consultants, heads of school, and lead teachers. Through its national program and local programs in Boston and San Francisco, MTEI has prepared over 150 educators for this work. The program, which takes place over two years, introduces participants to current research on professional development and explores the applications of this knowledge to the varied settings where participants work—day schools, congregational schools, central agencies for Jewish education, denominational organizations, and adult education programs. MTEI is important because it addresses seriously the need to develop professional developers.

## **CONCLUSION**

We began this report with eight desiderata for professional development in education. The list came from the field of public school education and, as such, its application to the Jewish sector requires a bit of metaphoric thinking. We conclude by examining the particularities of Jewish education and areas for future professional development work. We then revisit the desiderata and consider the extent to which Jewish education fulfills them or not.

### **Particularities of Jewish Education**

Jewish education covers a broader range of activities than public school education. It includes both fulltime and part-time experiences and both formal and informal programs. Jewish educational institutions include not only schools but also camps, youth groups, and Israel experiences. The place for professional development in Jewish education is complicated by the reality that many positions are part-time and attrition during the first years on the job is high. Under such conditions, it is difficult to build and maintain the collaborative relationships that are supposed to be the foundation of professional development.

Moreover, job categories and career tracks in Jewish education differ greatly from those of the public schools with their unions, tenure systems, and established departments and hierarchies. Professional development in the Jewish sector needs to take into consideration the learning needs of the summer camp counselor, the year-round youth group director, the Hillel engagement worker, the Sunday school teacher, as well as the Judaic studies teacher and the head of school in the day school. It also needs to be linked to institutional development, out of which might emerge career paths and opportunities for advancement. Hillel's efforts to develop paths for career advancement might offer a model for the field.

Another important difference is the role of lay leadership in Jewish education and the relationship between lay leaders and professionals. For example, important decisions about the congregational school involve not only the rabbi and the education director, but also the president of the synagogue and the lay chair of the education, religious school, and/or youth committee. For this reason, the PEJE model of capacity building for day schools involves coaching the top lay-professional dyad; and the ECE model for reinventing the congregational school includes a task force comprised of all of these players plus teachers, parents, and other members of the congregation (Aron, 2000; Elkin, 1992).

There are certainly places that appreciate the importance of lay leadership to the educational enterprise. In Cleveland and Washington DC, there was clear understanding that restructuring and empowering the central agency required loading its board with top lay leaders, most of whom were drawn from the federation. The Foundation for Jewish Camping will not accept a camp director to the Executive Leadership Institute unless s/he has the support of lay leadership to move the camp in new directions. As well, FJC's first national Leadership Assembly included a healthy mix of professional and lay leaders in the camping field. PEJE's communities of practice welcome both professionals and volunteers, creating forums for information and idea sharing across these lines.

Nonetheless, of the almost 170 individuals interviewed for our JJF study, few mentioned lay leadership in their discussion of the educational infrastructure. As well, none of the programs in our database are centrally concerned with lay leadership development for Jewish education. Programs like Wexner Heritage raise the level of volunteer leadership and increase the pool of talent available for lay boards. Wexner reports a particularly high result for alumni making their way onto the boards of educational institutions, but these programs are generalist in terms of destination and are not concerned with creating educational leadership per se.

Professional development in Jewish education largely occurs within sub-sectors. Accordingly, the approach to professional development seems to be more elaborated and cohesive in areas that have a strong national entity pushing the professional development agenda. But more experimentation seems to be taking place in areas where the activity is driven by local synagogues, organizations, or agencies. Perhaps the optimal approach would combine these two strengths or would, at least, assure that what was developed and learned in one sub-sector or at one level was disseminated to the others.

### **Areas for Future Development**

Four elements appear to be lacking in professional development for Jewish educators and suggest areas for future work.

1. With few exceptions (e.g., MTEI, The Jewish New Teacher Project), little work is being done to develop master teachers, mentors, and professional developers. To the extent that professional development needs to be embedded in the institution, there is a field-wide need to develop such talent.
2. Each individual school, camp, Hillel foundation, and program needs to arrive at a vision for the education it is providing. Unless there is a clear view of educational goals and purposes, it is difficult to specify what educators need to do and know in order to engage in excellent professional practice. Without this analysis, it is possible neither to specify the content or goals of professional development activities nor to assess the outcomes of these activities. Yet, the programs described here tend not to have collective participation from a given institution and tend not to have shared vision setting as their starting point. Perhaps such work is taking place at the local level but, if not, a method is needed for creating such visions and aligning professional development with them.
3. Evaluation research on professional development in Jewish education is hard to find, either because it has not been done or has not been published. We have presented this map of programs as a description of the current landscape but without any assessment of its quality, efficacy, cost-benefit ratio, or impact. Research is needed to understand the relative merit of the various types and content of professional development and their influence on professional practice. Studies are needed to know the extent to which professional development translates into changed practices and how these practices affect the educational outcomes of Jewish children and youth.
4. With the exception of conferences and networks, most of the professional development programs on the landscape educate small numbers each year. Some of the more innovative programs have reached fewer than 20 people. Some programs are highly selective and choose to work only with a small group of carefully chosen professionals. Others simply do not have the resources to educate more participants.

Regardless of the reason for the small size, these numbers are dismaying given the career-long need for professional development, the continuous entry of new people into the field, the rate of production of new knowledge and new possibilities in education, and the ongoing need to keep educational programs vital and fresh. There is a need to scale up successful professional development programs and to increase capacity across the field.

### **Desiderata Revisited**

Reviewing current professional development activities in the Jewish sector in light of the desiderata from the general educational literature leads us to the following conclusions.

**1. Professional development extends across all levels and career stages from the preparation of new educators to the executive education of top administrators.**

With a few exceptions, such as day school initiatives like DeLeT and the academic degree programs, professional development activities in the Jewish sector target professionals already at work in the field. Relatively little is being done at the first steps of professional development where new talent is identified, recruited, and prepared for professional work. Unless these first steps are successful, problems with the quality of professional practice, high rates of attrition, and the absence of a professional culture will persist.

**2. Professional development helps educators gain not only technical skills but also the knowledge and dispositions required for professional practice.**

Research in general education finds that teachers at all levels may lack the rich and flexible knowledge of the subject matter required to teach for understanding (rather than rote memory of facts) and to respond to students' thinking about the subject in ways that support meaningful learning (Borko & Putnam, 1996). This finding echoes the situation in Jewish education, particularly in informal settings where counselors, youth educators, and campus workers often lack expertise in Judaics. The need for Jewish education is pervasive. Grade level, educational approach, or organization type in no way mitigate the need for teachers, counselors, and youth workers to be knowledgeable Jews. This issue is particularly important because Jewish educators are not just teachers but also serve as role models to the children and youth with whom they work.

Jewish educational professionals also need professional and clinical learning. They need to know about learners and learning and about the various contexts of their work. They need to enhance their job skills. For front-line workers, these skills concern all aspects of pedagogy (group dynamics, lesson planning, materials preparation, behavior management, etc.). For administrators and executives it concerns supervision, management, and organization skills, including strategic planning, human resource management, operations, financial resource development, working with lay boards, and so on.

The programs described above tend to combine Judaic and professional learning although some emphasize one over the other. For example, the DeLeT pre-service day school program is primarily concerned with education, and its graduates may not be equipped to be Judaic studies teachers. Pardes, in contrast, has more intensive Judaic content but provides its students with little practical training. The optimal approach would perhaps meld the two content areas. For example, JCCA's *Lekhu Lakhem* program for camp directors has integrated Jewish content into skills learning. When the directors learn to set a vision for their camps, they are setting a "Jewish" vision. They are learning to think not only as leaders but as specifically Jewish leaders of Jewish organizations.

The complexity of the professional development task raises questions about the role of secular opportunities for such work. For example, in the camping field, the American Camping Association offers high levels of expertise and an array of resources and educational opportunities related to the growth and management of camps, covering everything from business and finance to transportation. As well, the Foundation for Jewish Camping has established a partnership with the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) in Greensboro, NC. CCL provides a three-day intensive workshop for FJC's Executive Leadership Institute that is exclusively designed to help camp leaders become more effective in managing their operations. Conducting similar education under Jewish auspices would be redundant unless it can be demonstrated that Jewish camps are different from non-Jewish camps in critical ways or unless these managerial issues are melded with Jewish values and Jewish approaches to organization and community building.

### **3. Professional development should be based on sound pedagogy that takes into account how adults learn.**

Although we did not look in detail at the methods used in the different programs, there is much evidence of active learning. Participants in JCCA's *Lekhu Lakhem* executive training develop a mission statement for their camps; participants in IJE's Seminar in Professional Leadership developed plans for program innovation; participants in the Everett Ethical Leadership Institute design a social justice leadership program for students on their campuses; and participants in Brandeis University's Summer Institute for Israel Studies develop syllabi for new courses on Israel. Each of these might suggest models for professional development activities in other sub-sectors or programs.

### **4. Effective professional development should be embedded in the teacher's experience.**

As seen in the examples of active learning or in curriculum-based programs, much of the professional development activity in the Jewish sector is context-specific and encourages professionals to apply lessons learned to their home institutions. Less common in our data are institution-wide programs that lead to learning at all levels in the organization. With the exception of the Hillel model and perhaps the JCCA camp model, almost all of the programs target a specific career stage or job category. This design would not be a problem if each of these programs were embedded in a larger professional development effort in the organization.

### **5. Professional development is not a one-shot deal but must be an ongoing, dynamic activity for continual enhancement of knowledge and skills.**

A recent study of Jewish educators concluded that a great deal of professional development activity, particularly for teachers in supplementary schools, is one day or less (JESNA, 2008). Nonetheless, the national agencies offer multiple learning opportunities that, along with local activities, should give opportunity for ongoing

professional development. The issues, then, will be whether educators partake of these opportunities and whether the various activities have coherence or are a smattering of different theories and methods. Most of the programs described herein are of limited duration, spanning only a few days or months. Unless well coordinated with other learning opportunities, research suggests that they will not have the intended impact.

Communities of practice are important vehicles for ongoing professional development as they provide venues for continuing conversation after the summer seminar has ended or the annual convention is over. Within the community of practice, professionals can share problems, challenges, and issues as these emerge in their practice. PEJE and JESNA have been actively establishing communities of practice. Other agencies, too, through listservs and regular email interactions, are beginning to build this kind of professional community.

**6. Formal opportunities for professional development take many forms, and it is assumed that the learner will take advantage of different types of opportunities.**

The programs described in this report employ multiple approaches. In the optimal design, each component builds on the others so that mentoring back home, for example, builds on concepts developed during the off-site education program. The multiplicity of approaches is valuable because each has inherent strengths and limitations.

**National versus community programs.** National professional development efforts within sectors have several benefits. For one, the education can respond to the realities of the particular sector. Running a camp, for example, differs in fundamental ways from running a congregational school, uses a different language, and requires a particular skill set. As well, these efforts can develop the sense of an integrated field with a vision, purpose, and specialized knowledge. They can create momentum or drive change in the field. However, they lack the benefit of the day-to-day contact that is possible in a local program, and they do not necessarily contribute to overall community strength in the way that the community cohort model does. Their greatest challenge is assuring that lessons learned in their program are applied well back home.

Community programs also have a number of benefits. They can create valuable synergies among the federation, the central agency for Jewish education, and participating synagogues, schools, or organizations. They can create face-to-face communities of practice and develop collegial and collaborative relationships among professionals within the community. Importantly, they make Jewish education a community endeavor and help to strengthen the educational enterprise in the community overall. The downside is the danger of each community re-inventing the wheel. As has been noted elsewhere, the optimal approach would assure that what was developed and learned in one community was disseminated to others.

**Conferences.** Virtually every national Jewish educational organization offers an annual or biennial conference at which professionals can re-energize themselves, network, and learn from experts in the field. Conferences generally include lectures, workshops,

planning meetings, vendor displays, job placement, networking, socializing, and celebration. They attempt to give coherence to fields of practice and to create a shared sense of campus work, day school education, summer camping, and the like. For example, PEJE's Assemblies for Jewish Day School Education, attended by hundreds of professionals and lay leaders from across the field, attempt to drive home a single theme (e.g., adaptive leadership, collaborations) that could set a new language and framework for the task of day school leadership writ large.

In the movements and other umbrella organizations, conferences are often parsed by audience. In the Reform movement, for example, there is the Youth Workers Conference for youth workers, clergy, educators, and lay leaders working with youth in Reform Jewish settings; and there is a separate Conference of the National Association of Temple Educators, the organization of congregation-based Reform educators. Similarly in the Conservative movement, there is the Jewish Educators Assembly, an annual multi-day conference with special sessions for heads of day schools and for early childhood, high school, and family educators. There is also the Jewish Youth Director's Association annual convention for youth directors and advisors and the National Solomon Schechter Principals Conference. Significant resources of time, energy, and money undoubtedly go into organizing these various conferences each year. Yet, on their own, they fail to meet the desiderata for professional development and may do little to enhance professionals' knowledge and skills or to promote new or enhanced practices in the field.

**Curriculum-based.** Learning to teach new curricula can be an effective form of professional development for teachers, particularly if the curriculum entails new ways of thinking about teaching and learning. It can be an opportunity for teachers to gain knowledge and to enhance their pedagogical skills. Curriculum development and studying new materials in order to figure out how to use them thoughtfully can be powerful professional development activities in themselves. However, if the learning is simply technical skills learning, then the curriculum-based activities will not succeed as professional development.

**Graduate degree programs.** Graduate degree programs are a way into the field for novices and offer a career ladder for current professionals. These programs provide access to the intellectual resources of the college or university where they are housed. They blend theory and practice so that their graduates presumably have classroom and administrative skills as well as familiarity with educational theory. Through a joint or dual degree program or an additional certificate of specialization, students may also be able to gain advanced knowledge in particular subject matter. Because of the commitment required by a graduate program, candidates tend to see Jewish education as their career and a degree as a smart step toward their advancement. Part of the programs' cache resides in the degrees, certificates, and state licensure that they confer. The greatest challenge faced by these programs is bridging between academic and practical experiences and assuring that lessons learned in the field are maximized through critical analysis and discussion.

## **7. Professional development should include informal learning within the context of the workplace.**

At the core of this feature is the creation of an in-house professional community where each professional learns from and contributes to the learning of colleagues. Stodolsky, Dorph, & Nemser's (2006) study, based on surveys of teachers in 10 Jewish schools, found that regular collaboration among teachers and regular professional conversation around the content of teaching and learning was rare. In the congregational schools, only 20% of the teachers had the opportunity to observe another teacher's classroom or to be observed by a colleague. If this study is any indication, the great opportunity for professional development in Jewish education lies in creating a learning environment within schools and other institutions.

The JCC preschool in Palo Alto offers an object lesson in how to effect such a shift in a school. The executive director, a knowledgeable and experienced Jewish educator, wanted to raise teachers' level of Judaic knowledge in order to grow their capacity to teach the children and their parents. He began with a 360 review process. As a precursor, he engaged the staff in a study of the Torah's lesson on rebuking (translated here as giving feedback). The staff spent several weeks studying Torah in lieu of staff meetings. According to the director, when they finally did the reviews, the tone came from a Jewish source and was so constructive that he decided to scrap teacher meetings and replace them with in-service. Faculty in this school now have a 50-minute in-service every week, studying Jewish sources. Staff meeting time is also spent looking at how they teach, who their children are, what their community is. The director finds that this shift has affected how teachers present material in their classes and how they talk to parents about it. And it has made a significant impact on the look, feel, and culture of the school.

The positives are easy to see in this example: The executive director is directly involved in professional development so that there is no disconnect between the top and the front line. Content can be directly related to the day-to-day work of the classroom teacher. Innovation based on these discussions can be applied immediately and directly. And the faculty move from an aggregate of individual teachers into a learning community. The key element, it should be noted, is the educational sophistication and Judaic knowledge of the executive director, a resource lacking in many organizations.

Professional development can change the culture of local organizations and build the field more generally. Current theory supports embedded professional development that occurs in the home institution, with colleagues, on a regular basis. Activity in Jewish education suggests an equally strong interest in special mega-events and off-site experiences—conferences, institutes, Israel trips. The challenge is to allow both to flourish but also to create structures for bringing what is learned outside into the everyday life and work of the organization.

**8. Professional development is a means to an end.**

Professional development is ultimately not about the staff but about the youth for whom they are teachers, counselors, advisors, role models, and mentors. The Jewish lives and learning of these children and youth need to be at the heart of any professional development effort. It is perhaps in this light that we can best understand the desiderata, which essentially posit that professional development is an unrelenting effort that creates and is created by a learning community. Such a community would be the ideal setting in which to educate Jewish children and inspire their love of Jewish life and learning.

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## APPENDIX

*Mapping Professional Development* was informed by the work of the following organizations and their programs. It should be noted that the chart does not represent the full contribution of these organizations to professional development. Their efforts extend well beyond formal programs to include a variety of resources, networks, seminars, conferences, research, consultation, and other measures to promote the practice of Jewish education. As well, the chart is based on conditions at a given moment. The field is in constant motion and the passage of time will undoubtedly require additions and changes to the map.

<b>Host Organization</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Primary Target</b>	<b>Degree/certificate</b>
<b>Camping</b>			
Foundation for Jewish Camping (FJC)	Jewish Teachable Moments	Counselors	
	Cornerstone Fellowship	Counselors (experienced)	
	Executive Leadership Institute	Leadership	
	<i>Tze Ul'mad</i> (Go Out and Learn)	Leadership	
	Launch Pad: The Fellowship for Jewish Camp and Community Leaders	Leadership (administrators; supervisors)	
FJC; Brandeis University (Hornstein Program in Jewish Professional Leadership)	Robert & Elisa Spungen Bildner Graduate Fellowship	Leadership (pre-service)	MA/MBA
JCC Association	TAG	Counselors	
	<i>Lekhu Lakhem</i>	Leadership	
<b>Year-round Informal Education</b>			
Boston Bureau of Jewish Education; Synagogue Council of Massachusetts	Youth Educator Initiative (YESOD)	Educators (informal; congregation)	Graduate credits
Brandeis University (Institute for Informal Jewish Education)	Seminar in Jewish Experiential Learning	Educators (informal)	
Hebrew College	Certificate Program in Jewish Informal Education, Youth Leadership and Camping	Educators (informal)	Graduate certificate

**Hillel**

Hillel International	Everett Ethical Leadership Institute	Educators (campus)	
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**Day Schools**

Bar-Ilan University (Lookstein Center for Jewish Education in the Diaspora)	Principals' Program	Leadership	
Brandeis University (Education Program)	Master of Arts in Teaching; concentration in Jewish day school teaching	Teachers	MAT
Brandeis University (Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education)	DeLeT	Teachers (elementary; new)	MAT; state certification
	Induction Partnership	Teachers (new)	
Drisha Institute for Jewish Education; Beit Rabban Center for Research in Jewish Education	<i>HaSha'ar</i>	Teachers	
Harvard University; The AVI CHAI Foundation	Principals Training	Leadership	
Hebrew College	NETA (curriculum training)	Teachers (secondary; Hebrew language)	Certificate in Hebrew Language Teaching
Hebrew Union College LA (Rhea Hirsch School of Education)	DeLeT	Teachers (elementary; new)	State certification
	MA in Jewish Education; concentration in day school education	Teachers	MAJE
Jewish Educational Leadership Institute (JELI); Loyola University	Masters in Administration and Supervision; Day School Principal Certification	Leadership (pre-service)	M.Ed.; Day School Principal Certification
Jewish Family & Life; JESNA	JSkyway (distance learning and resources)	Teachers	
Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS)	Day School Leadership Training Institute	Leadership (pre-service)	
JTS (Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education; Department of Hebrew)	<i>Ivriyon</i> (Hebrew immersion program)	Teachers	
<i>Kivunim</i> : The Institute of Experiential Learning for Israel and World Jewish Communities	Summer Seminars for Teachers in Jewish Schools	Teachers	Graduate credits

Studies; Siegal College of  
Judaic Studies

Loyola University	Masters of Education in Administration and Supervision	Leadership	M.Ed.; Day School/Yeshiva Principal Certificate
Pardes	Educators Program	Teachers	Masters (optional)
Pardes; Hebrew College	Pardes Jewish Educators Program	Teachers	Certificate of Advanced Jewish Studies; MAJE
RAVSAK	Project Sulam: Study, Leadership and Mentoring	Leadership	
Shalom Hartman Institute	<i>TICHON</i> : Vision Seminar for Principals	Leadership	
	<i>TICHON</i> : Educator Enrichment Program	Teachers (community schools)	
Shalom Hartman Institute; Tel Aviv University (Russ Berrie School of Teacher Training)	<i>TICHON: Melamdim</i>	Teachers (new; community schools)	MA in Jewish Thought
Solomon Schechter Day School Association (SSDSA); United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ)	SREL Fellowship Program	Leadership (pre- service)	
SSDSA; USCJ; JTS	MaToK Bible Curriculum (curriculum training)	Teachers (Solomon Schechter day schools; elementary)	
UC Santa Cruz (New Teacher Center)	Jewish New Teacher Project	Teachers (new)	

**Congregational Education**

Aubertach Central Agency of Philadelphia	Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools (NESS)	All levels	
Experiment in Congregational Education (ECE)	The RE-IMAGINE Project	All levels	
Hartford Federation Commission on Jewish Education	<i>La'atid</i>	All levels	
HUC LA (Rhea Hirsch School of Education)	Creating Teaching Excellence in Congregational Education	Teachers	

Jewish Family & Life	<i>BabagaNewz</i> (curriculum training)	Teachers (middle school)	
JTS; HUC	Leadership Institute for Congregational School Principals	Leadership	
Union of Reform Judaism	<i>Chai</i> (curriculum training)	Teachers (elementary; middle school)	
USCJ	New Directors' Institute	Leadership (new)	
	<i>Lilmod U'Lilamed</i> : Not-So-New Directors' Institute	Top leadership	
USCJ; JTS (Melton Research Center)	Project Etgar (curriculum training)	Teachers (middle school)	
<b>Israel Education</b>			
Brandeis University (Schusterman Center for Israel Studies)	Summer Institute for Israel Studies	Teachers (college)	
Emory University (Institute for the Study of Modern Israel)	ISMI One-Week Teacher Workshops	Teachers	
Leo Baeck Education Center (Lokey International Academy of Jewish Studies)	Sacred Community of Educators: Israel Professional Development at Home	Teachers	
North American Coalition for Israel Engagement	<i>Makom</i> : Israel Engagement Network	Educators; rabbis	
<b>Cross-sector</b>			
American Jewish University (Fingerhut School of Education)	Masters in Jewish Education	Teachers; administrators	MAJE
Baltimore Hebrew University	Masters in Jewish Education and Jewish communal service or Jewish studies	Educators (formal; informal)	MAJS; MAJE; MAJCS
Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE)	Schusterman College Program at CAJE	Educators (pre-service)	
Fairleigh Dickinson University	Master of Arts in Teaching; concentration in Jewish education	Teachers (day school, <i>yeshivot</i> , supplementary)	Jewish education concentration certificate; MAT
George Washington University (Graduate School of Education and Human Development); Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning	Cooperative Graduate and Professional Development Program	Educators; administrators (formal; informal)	MA; Certificates in specialization

Gratz College	Doctorate in Jewish Education	Leadership	Ed.D.
	Masters in Jewish Education or Jewish Early Childhood Education	Teachers; administrators (formal; informal)	MA
Hebrew College (Shoolman Graduate School)	Masters in Jewish Education	Educators (formal; informal)	MAJE; Certificates in specialization
HUC LA (Rhea Hirsch School of Education)	MA in Jewish Education; Ph.D. in Jewish education	Educators (formal; informal)	MAJE; Ph.D.
HUC NY (School of Education)	Gateways for Learning; Masters in Religious Education	Educators (formal; informal)	Jewish education certificates; MARE
Hebrew University (Melton Center for Jewish Education)	In-service Training Programs	Educators	
	Senior Educators Program	Educators (formal; informal)	
Hebrew University (Rothberg International School)	Masters in Jewish Education	Educators	MAJE
Hebrew University (Rothberg International School, Division of Hebrew Language Instruction)	Programs on Hebrew language teaching methods	Teachers	Certificate
Hebrew University; Tel Aviv University; JESNA	Lainer Interns for Jewish Education	Educators (pre-service)	
Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA)	Jewish Educator Recruitment and Retention Initiative (JERRI)	Educators	
JTS (William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education)	Doctorate in Jewish Education, concentration in leadership/administration	Administrators	Ed.D.
	Masters in Jewish Education	Educators (formal; informal)	MA
Mandel Foundation	Jerusalem Fellows	Leadership	
	Mandel Teacher Educator Institute (MTEI)	Teachers (experienced)	
New York University (School of Education; Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies; Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development)	Doctoral Study in Education and Jewish Studies; specialization in administration, curriculum, or academics/research	Leadership	Ed.D.
Siegal College	In-service Education;	Educators	

	Professional Growth Program			
	Executive Educator Program	Leadership		
	Masters in Judaic Studies, concentration in Jewish Education	Teachers (formal; informal); administrators		MA
Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies	Master of Science or Master of Arts in Jewish Education	Teachers; administrators		MSJE, MAJE
The Ohio State University (College of Education, School of Teaching and Learning; Melton Center for Jewish Studies)	Masters in Education; specialization in Jewish studies	Teachers		MA
University of Maryland (Department of Education Policy, Planning, and Administration; Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies)	Masters in Education; concentration in Jewish studies	Leadership		M.Ed.
Yeshiva University (Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration)	Certificate or Doctorate in Administration and Supervision	Administrators		Specialist Certificate; Ed.D.
	Masters in Jewish Education	Teachers (elementary; secondary)		MS