



Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute
The Unit for Learning from Success
and Ongoing Learning in Human Services



Ministry of Education
Pedagogic Administration
Secondary Education Division

Learning from Success as Leverage for School-wide Learning

A Pilot Program – 2002-2005

Part 2

The Second Method:

From a Learning Question to a Learning Quest The Prospective Method

Tzila Weiss ♦ Tali Gavish ♦ Jona M. Rosenfeld ♦ Sarit Ellenbogen-Frankovits ♦ Israel Sykes



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Program Development

Dr. Tzila Weiss, Secondary Education Division
Prof. Jona Rosenfeld, Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute
Israel Sykes, Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute

Authors

Dr. Tzila Weiss, Secondary Education Division
Tali Gavish, Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute
Prof. Jona Rosenfeld, Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute
Sarit Ellenbogen-Frankovits, Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute
Israel Sykes, Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute

The method was developed during work with a team of learning companions:

Adi Artum	Riki Kasif
Shavit Bar-On	Yehiel Peretz
Oren Ben-Yosef	Ilana Shani
Ruti Biran ¹	Omer Shibli
Orna Dafna	Tama Shochat
Sarit Ellenbogen-Frankovits	Israel Sykes
Dr. Amnon Glassner	Dr. Sa'ad Tzartzur

Editor: Mati Moyal, Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute

Graphics and production: Leslie Klineman, Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute

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¹ Ruti Biran held the position of National Implementation Coordinator from 2005/6–2006/7



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To order these publications, please contact the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, P.O.B. 3886, Jerusalem, 91037; Tel: (02) 655-7400; Fax: 902)561-2391; E-mail: brook@jdc.org.il or the Secondary Education Division at the Ministry of Education

Executive Summary

This is the second in a series of three publications summarizing the three methods on which the Learning from Success as Leverage for School-wide Learning program is based. The program was developed jointly by the Secondary Education Division at the Ministry of Education and the Unit for Learning from Success and Ongoing Learning in Human Services at the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute. It was implemented as a pilot from 2002 to 2005 in 44 secondary schools serving a range of populations: Jewish, Arab, Bedouin, and Druze. Since the 2005/6 academic year, the program has been disseminated as a system-wide program and is now being implemented in secondary schools in all sectors throughout Israel.

This publication presents the prospective method: From a Learning Question to a Learning Quest.

Learning from Success as Leverage for School-wide Learning

The goal of the program is to foster a culture of ongoing joint learning in schools in order to advance the students in all areas by creating process of continuous joint learning for the school staff and all stakeholders in educational activity. The role of this learning process is to identify challenges in the work currently being done and to further efforts to meet them within the framework of the vision of the school's educational staff. To this end, the schools work in structured, learning-oriented frameworks for independent action and to develop joint reflective thinking based primarily on the teachers' knowledge.

The program consists of three learning circles: the school circle, the local authority or district circle, and the national circle. All are based on joint, non-hierarchical learning. Two officials serve as a link connecting the circles:

- ◆ *The school learning coordinator* – whose role is to lead the learning processes in the school and work with the principal to assimilate them; and
- ◆ *The learning companion* – whose role is to supervise the staff leading the school learning process in building the infrastructure for school learning and to assist in formulating and disseminating the knowledge accumulated at the school. The learning companion also belongs to the district and national circles and contributes to the learning connections among the schools. The learning companion is not employed by the school, nor is he/she on the school staff.

The program comprises three interlocking components, each of which implements a different learning method: Learning from Past Successes – the Retrospective Method; From a Learning Question to a Learning Quest – The Prospective Method; and Learning from Learning – Decoding and Developing Modes of Learning.

- ◆ *Learning from Past Successes – the Retrospective Method* is designed to develop the school's ability to learn reflectively and retroactively from past successes. Joint reflective

learning makes it possible to identify tacit knowledge, which has helped the teachers to become experts, and transform it into actionable knowledge that can be used in the future.

- ◆ *From a Learning Question to a Learning Quest – The Prospective Method* is designed to promote educational activity at the school in response to a selected learning question that represents an unresolved issue at the school. The incorporation of action in the learning facilitates the advancement of the students and of the educational knowledge.
- ◆ *Learning from Learning – Decoding and Developing Modes of Learning* is designed to instill at the school a tradition of continuous shared learning that is authentic and autonomous. Learning from Learning makes it possible to identify patterns of joint learning that have led to a paradigmatic change in school staff activity and contributed to educational change.

Each part of the program generates organizational and social processes that promote the learning of the school staff and other stakeholders at the school. The synergy produced among the components creates the "leverage" that promotes the learning and organizational culture at the school and the school's ability to fulfill its mission.

Another essential component of the program is the process of ongoing documentation and the dissemination thereof. Documentation constitutes the basis of the learning that takes place in the learning workshop, reflects the processes, and facilitates the dissemination of knowledge both within each school and among all the schools. Documentation makes it possible to transform the tacit knowledge at school into overt knowledge that is accessible to all. In order for the documentation to be accessible and effective, standardized documentation forms have been drawn up for each of the methods on which the schools record the contents learned and the outcomes.

From a Learning Question to a Learning Quest

The second method takes place after a learning workshop in the school conducted in accordance with the first method: Learning from Past Successes. The first workshop prepared the participants for another quest, one that includes both a learning workshop and educational activity at school and involves working together – through learning and practical activity equally – to address issues that have remained unresolved at the school.

As in the previous learning workshop, which focused on learning from past successes, preparation for the quest in this workshop again includes agreeing upon and fixing the times and location for the learning workshop.

The workshops are conducted on the basis of an egalitarian discourse, decision-making by consensus, transparency and sharing of knowledge, openness to "wild" ideas, being ready for exposure and criticism, generosity, and upholding the participants' dignity. Adhering to these principles of discourse should promote a "spirit of discourse" characterized by mutual openness, readiness for change, and a commitment to the results, particularly to continued learning within the school.

Stages

The Learning Quest comprises ten stages.

1. Identifying an area in school life that needs to be changed
2. Selecting the target population for the program
3. Broadening the circle of participants in the learning workshop and team building for members of the action circle.
4. Defining the learning question
5. Setting out alternative courses of action and selecting one of them
6. Devising an action plan and establishing the measures of success
7. Implementing the program and gathering the data alongside ongoing learning based on action and identification of unresolved issues
8. Identifying the principles leading to the pupils' success
9. Identifying positive and negative by-products and barriers
10. Public discussion, publication, and dissemination

The workshop participants follow the sequence of stages. Some members also take part in the *inner circle*, the taskforce that implements the action program, and all participants in the learning group are included in the *outer circle*. The learning group observes what takes place in the component parts, focuses on the intermediate outcomes, identifies barriers along the way, and helps devise the action program.

The documentation that is produced during the quest is processed and recorded on the documentation form. This makes it possible to focus the knowledge acquired in the process and to pool it in a clear, clear concise, action-oriented manner that is accessible to all members of the school staff and to outsiders.

The activities that have proven to advance students are integrated into ongoing school activity and the learning process is assimilated in the school learning pattern. New learning and action groups are formed; they implement new action programs and make their own contribution to the continued shaping of learning patterns at the school.

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