

# Session One Agenda: Introduction to RE-IMAGINE Professional Learning

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## Welcome and Introduction to the Project and Today's Session

### Connection

Who are the members of your team and what about them makes them vital to this project?

### Text Study: *Derekh Eretz Zuta: What Makes a Talmid Chacham?*

### Core Discussion One: Shaping Professional Learning Through Beliefs and Assumptions

Whether you agree or disagree, these statements will make you think more deeply about professional learning in congregational education. Explore your assumptions and those of your team.

### Core Discussion Two: Case Study Analysis and Design Considerations for Professional Learning

What could professional learning aligned to vision look like? What are the factors that designers must attend to when creating aligned professional learning?

### Break

### Core Discussion Three: Making Vision Concrete with an Innovation Configuration Map

How can we create a concrete understanding of what the vision will look like when successfully enacted? What will it look like for learner? For teacher? For others?

### Next Steps

- Exploring Beliefs and Assumptions about PL in your synagogue
- Developing your Innovation Configuration Map

### Reflection

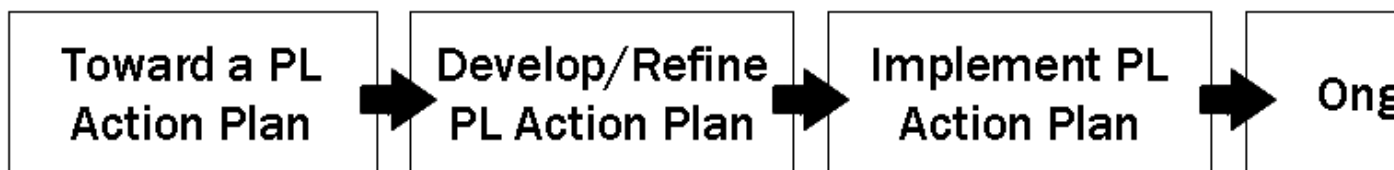
Today was a professional learning experience for you. As you reflect on what we did and how we did it, what is one aspect of what we did today—whether content, process, or context—that “worked” for you as a learning experience. What made it work?



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# Project Roadmap

## REIMAGINE Professional Learning



### PL Innovator Teams:

#### Five Workshops

- Derive **Content** from Vision
- Create **Process** with Powerful Designs
- Develop **Context** of Congregational Support
- Outline PL Action Plan

#### Meet in Your PLIT

- Develop PL Action Plan
- Gather Input and Refine
- Prepare to Implement on Pilot Basis

#### Two Workshops:

- Implement PL Action Plan
- Gather Assessment Evidence
- Develop Institutional Support
- Revise/Update Plans for Coming Year
- Develop Resources for PL

#### Siyyum:

- Celebrate Successes
- Review Assessment Evidence
- Plan for a Continued

### Timeline:



## REIMAGINE Professional Learning

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## Text Study: Derech Eretz Zuta Perek 3

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*After saying the blessing before study, answer the following question. Then, with a hevruta partner, read the text on the next page and discuss the questions on the lower half of this page.*

### Before you study the text:

Think of someone you consider to be a wise person. Create a list of the characteristics that make them a wise person.

### Background Information

*Derech Eretz* is a minor tractate of the Babylonian Talmud, the quintessential collection of the rabbinic oral tradition. While there is some disagreement, many scholars assume that *Derech Eretz* was written during the Babylonian Talmudic period (around the 5<sup>th</sup> century) and was edited during the Geonic period (8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> century). The term “derech eretz” literally means “the way of the land.” Colloquially, it translates as “common decency,” or “social etiquette.” For the most part *Derech Eretz Zuta*, one section of this tractate, addresses the scholar and proper conduct of his life of study.

### Questions to Consider:

1. Are there characteristics listed in the text that are not clear? If so, which ones?
2. Compare your list of characteristics to the list in the text. Which characteristics are similar and which are different?
3. The Hebrew term for “great scholar” is *talmid chacham*. The literal translation of *Talmid Chacham* is “a wise student.” In what ways does this text enhance your understanding of the term “great scholar?” What might be the connection to professional learning?
4. What does this text suggest might be important attributes and behaviors of good teachers or good teaching?

Fifteen characteristics are mentioned of a *Talmid Chacham*

חמש עשרה מדות נאמרו בת"ח

And they are:

ואלו הן

He is pleasant when he comes in (and when he leaves),

נאה בביאתו

He is unassuming in his academy,

חסיד בישיבתו

Discerning in his fear of God

ערום ביראה

Genuinely wise

פקח בדעת

Wise in his ways

חכם בדרכיו

He gathers knowledge and remembers

כונס וזכרן

He answers fully

מרבה להשיב

Makes his questions relevant

שואל כענין

And replies in accordance with the accepted decisions

ומשיב כהלכה

RE-IMAGINE Professional  
▲ Listens and adds something novel of his own to each and every chapter

ומשיב על כל פרק ופרק דבר

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Spends time with a sage

הולך אצל חכם

And learns in order to teach and practice.

ולמד ע"מ ללמד ועל מנת לעשות

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# Shaping Professional Learning Through Beliefs and Assumptions

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Please go through the survey twice: first **circle** an answer for each item based on your own belief regarding the statement. Then go back through the items and, for each item, place an **X** at the point on the scale to indicate the beliefs or assumptions about Professional Learning under which your congregation/school operates currently.

1. Jewish education must address not only what students know but also their actions, beliefs, and sense of belonging.  
*1-strongly disagree                      2-disagree                      3-agree                      4-strongly agree*
2. You cannot teach what you have not experienced yourself.  
*1-strongly disagree                      2-disagree                      3-agree                      4-strongly agree*
3. “One-shot” professional development workshops violate good professional development practice.  
*1-strongly disagree                      2-disagree                      3-agree                      4-strongly agree*
4. Congregational leaders will invest in professional learning that demonstrates impact on the lives of congregants.  
*1-strongly disagree                      2-disagree                      3-agree                      4-strongly agree*
5. Teachers will invest more time and resources in their own learning when they see the synagogue valuing it.  
*1-strongly disagree                      2-disagree                      3-agree                      4-strongly agree*
6. Professional learning for teachers is really about changing the student experience.  
*1-strongly disagree                      2-disagree                      3-agree                      4-strongly agree*
7. Teachers should teach according to the core values and beliefs of the synagogue.  
*1-strongly disagree                      2-disagree                      3-agree                      4-strongly agree*
8. Teachers’ capacity to invent solutions to educational problems is a powerful, untapped resource.  
*1-strongly disagree                      2-disagree                      3-agree                      4-strongly agree*
9. Professional learning has little to do with the synagogue’s educational vision.  
*1-strongly disagree                      2-disagree                      3-agree                      4-strongly agree*
10. To be worthwhile, professional learning has to be designed by outside specialists.  
*1-strongly disagree                      2-disagree                      3-agree                      4-strongly agree*

## **Questions for discussion in your team:**

1. On what items do members of your team personally agree and disagree? Consensus is not expected; have a conversation about the differences in your opinions. Share your thinking with one another. How might professional learning look different in action depending on which of these assumptions you accept or reject?
2. How consistent are your personal assumptions with your views of the beliefs about PD/PL operating in your congregation/school? What do you see going on in the congregation/school that leads you to identify these as the operating assumptions?
3. Be prepared—and choose a spokesperson—to share with the full group one highlight of your discussion that feels like it will have important implications for the work you will do in this project.

# Shaping Professional Learning Through Beliefs and Assumptions

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# A Case Study: Aligning Professional Learning to Vision in a Congregational Setting

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*The following story describes one Conservative congregation's attempt to create well developed professional learning aligned to their vision. This material is adapted from Isa Aron's Becoming a Congregation of Learners (2000).*

## Nurturing the Teachers As Well As the Students, by Dr. Lisa Malik (adapted)

Beth Am Israel is a small Conservative Synagogue in the western suburbs of Philadelphia, with a membership of 330. Professional and lay leaders engaged in a process of reflection and visioning, which resulted in Beth Am defining itself as a “Shabbat-centered community where what is learned informs daily living.” Studying Torah, the “tree of life,” and living by its precepts were identified as the content that had the potential to generate shared language, values, problem solving and living for staff and learners of all ages. This shared content and way of learning defined the community. According to Rabbi Marc Margolius:

Torah study is a conversation, but that doesn't mean that it's just a few Jews sitting around talking about anything. Torah is not “what I say it is.” Torah is an intergenerational conversation that involves listening to the text as well as to each other's voices. Torah study also involves listening to what people said before you—such as Rashi and other commentators.

After interviewing several staff and lay people at Beth Am Israel, I began to take note of the recurrence of the phrase “Torah is a conversation.” This phrase is part of what Education Director Cyd Weissman refers to as ‘Beth Amese,’ the shared vocabulary of the Beth Am community.

The common language employed by the various people whom I encountered at Beth Am Israel highlighted a defining characteristic of the congregation: *consistency*. I heard the same phrases and educational philosophy used repeatedly among the teachers, rabbi, education director, and education committee chairperson.

Beth Am's professional leaders led conversations with lay committees to identify overarching goals derived from their vision. A primary goal that they identified was for all learners to develop a framework for daily decision-making rooted in Torah. “Torah is a Conversation” became a way to telegraph the congregations' educational values and focus.

In an effort to educate its congregation holistically, Beth Am Israel created Beit Midrash, an alternative model to Beth Am's Sunday-Thursday religious school program with six family education programs a year. Beit Midrash, as an alternative, is “designed to bring children and adults into the rhythm of Jewish life.” In addition to Hebrew studies (focused on prayer) for students in grades 3-6 on Thursday afternoons, students in grades K-6 who participate in Beit Midrash attend services and study sessions on Shabbat mornings. Parents who sign up for the program are told “to go on the journey with their children and find a way that is meaningful for them to participate on Shabbat.” On Shabbat morning the congregation offers a range of adult study courses, family educational experiences, family *minyanim*, and congregational prayer services. Shabbat mornings begin with coffee, juice and croissants.

The congregation made a commitment to develop in professionals and lay leaders a shared commitment to the vision of the congregation. In order to assure the teachers' role in achieving the vision and overarching goals, teachers study together twice a month while students attend *minyanim* led by specialized staff, parents, and lay leaders in *madrichim*. During the session I observed, Cyd reiterated four guiding principals for lesson planning.

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She noted that, if the goal was to move learning in to the lives of students, then learning had to:

1. make explicit connections between what is learned and the personal stories of learners
2. be distinct from general education and add value
3. be applicable to daily living
4. be shared and valued by the community

At the staff learning session, Cyd stressed the importance of keeping Beth Am Israel's educational overarching goals in mind when planning lessons. After reviewing the goals and the four steps to guide lessons, teachers began to share the lessons they had created for their own classrooms.

Although Cyd was the primary facilitator for the learning session, each teacher took on the role of teacher when sharing their expertise, their successes and challenges. Teachers identified the results their lessons were producing in students.

Teachers shared lessons they had led in the previous week. On this day the focus of discussion was applying learning to daily living. Teachers shared their successes and frustrations. They offered suggestions for developing one another's plans.

The discussion was lively. Comfort among teachers had developed over time and was fostered anew each year by beginning the year with a *Shabbaton* at a retreat center. At the yearly *Shabbaton*, teachers experienced the kind of learning and communal experience that they were to design for students during the year. The rabbi and lay leaders from the Education Committee also attended the *Shabbaton*.

Money was allocated for the retreat and for teacher learning throughout the year because the board had grown to understand the essential role teachers played in achieving the goals of the congregation. Research from general education about embedded, ongoing professional learning was presented to the board and the education committee. Student outcomes that resulted from new teacher skills were also shared with congregational leader and parents.

As the teachers spoke about lesson plans that enabled students to make connections between the Torah and their daily lives, one could hear the chanting of *Etz Hayim Hi* through the walls. Torah as a "tree of life" is an idea that literally and figuratively permeates the walls of the synagogue and all learning.

# Case Study Worksheet

1. Think about this case in light of the chapter you read as pre-work for today's session ("Professional Development Requires a Discipline for Seeing Wholes"). What evidence can you point to in the case that shows Beth Am's attention to the content, process, and context of professional learning (PL)? Record your answers in the column labeled "Evidence" below.
2. Suppose you got a chance to interview anyone you wanted from the congregation (i.e. teachers, lay leaders, rabbi, educator, students). What questions would you ask about content, process, or context? Record your questions in the right hand column, indicating who you would ask.

	Evidence in Case	Questions
<b>Content</b>		
<b>Process</b>		
<b>Context</b>		

3. What difference did it seem to make that Beth Am attended to all three areas in developing its approach to PL for its teachers? How did it help them align PL to their vision? What might have been the consequence of leaving one out?

# RE-IMAGINING Professional Learning: Design Considerations

## **CONTEXT**

Context standards address the organization, system, and culture in which the new learning will be implemented. They describe the structures that must be in place for successful learning to occur.

## **PROCESS**

Process refers to the “how” of staff development. It describes the learning processes used in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. Process standards address the use of data, evaluation, and research.

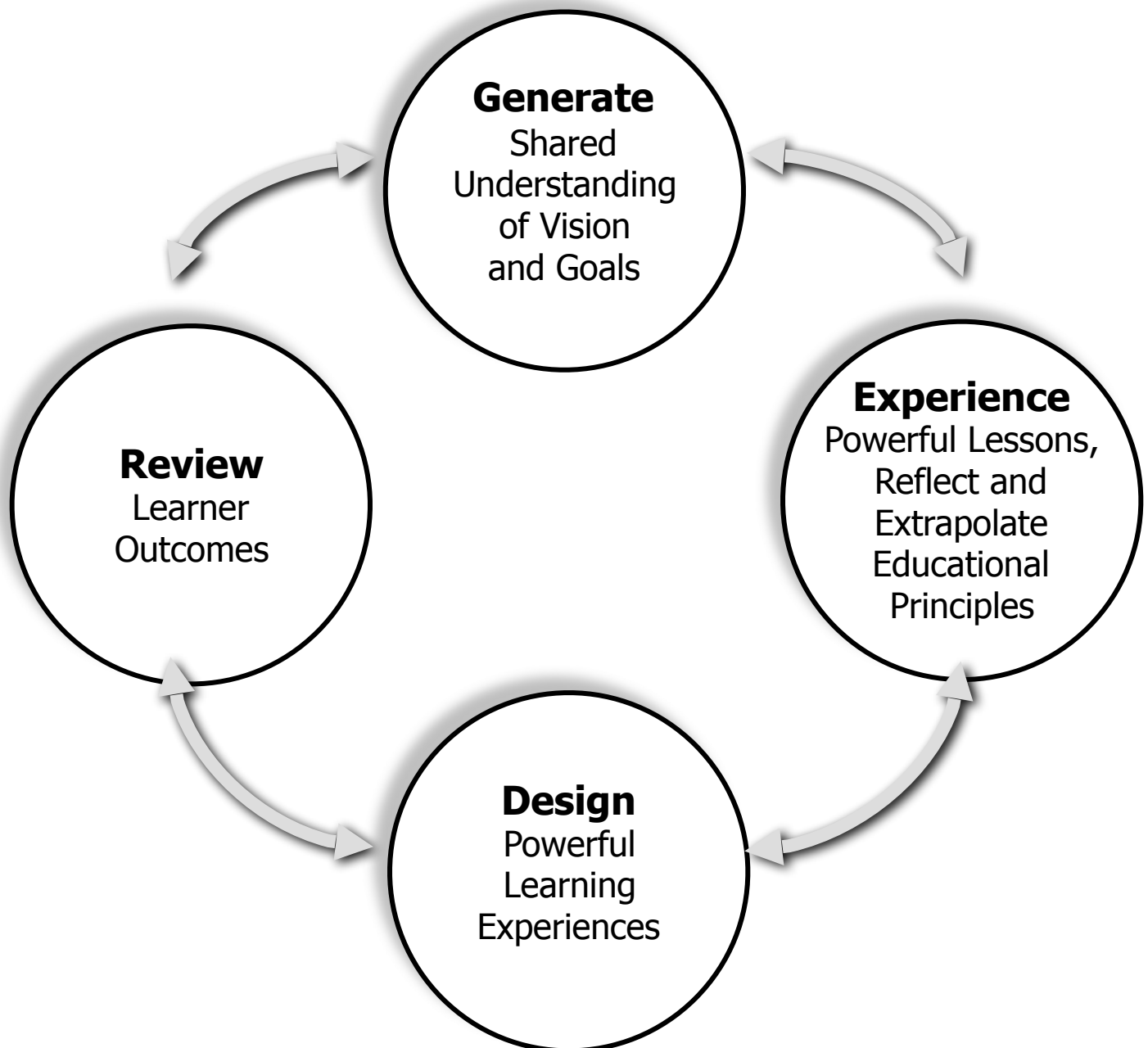
## **CONTENT**

Content refers to the “what” of staff development. Content decisions begin with an examination of what students must know and be able to do. Staff development content addresses the knowledge, skills, beliefs and sense of belonging that ensure all students are successful.



# The Innovation Cycle

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# Innovation Configuration Map: To Live A Vibrant Jewish Life in the Home

## Knowing

### Students

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

**Desired Outcome:** Students demonstrate knowledge of Jewish objects used in the home, prayers said and rituals performed at home, Jewish holidays and the Jewish calendar.

1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify/name/ explain Jewish objects used at home</li> <li>▪ Name prayers that are said at home</li> <li>▪ Name the Jewish holidays and dates on the calendar</li> <li>▪ Identify/name/ explain the rituals performed at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify/name/ explain Jewish objects used at home</li> <li>▪ Name prayers that are said at home</li> <li>▪ Name the Jewish holidays and dates on the calendar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify/name/ explain Jewish objects used at home</li> <li>▪ Name prayers that are said at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify/name/ explain Jewish objects used at home</li> </ul>

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## Knowing (continued)

### Teachers with Students

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

Desired Outcome:			
1	2	3	4

### Parents with Students

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

Desired Outcome:			
1	2	3	4

### Teachers with Parents

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

Desired Outcome:			
1	2	3	4

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## Doing/Living

### Students

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

**Desired Outcome:** Students experience living according to the rhythm of the Jewish calendar, using Jewish objects, reciting prayers, celebrating Jewish holidays, and performing rituals at home.

1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use Jewish objects at home</li> <li>▪ Recite prayers at home</li> <li>▪ Celebrate the Jewish holidays</li> <li>▪ Perform Jewish rituals at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use Jewish objects at home</li> <li>▪ Recite prayers at home</li> <li>▪ Celebrate the Jewish holidays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use Jewish objects at home</li> <li>▪ Recite prayers at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use Jewish objects at home</li> </ul>

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## Doing/Living (continued)

### Teachers with Students

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

**Desired Outcome:** Teachers build students skills, create experiences of home practice, and provide models and opportunities for personal reflection.

1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build students' skills to use Jewish objects, recite prayers, celebrate holidays, and perform rituals at home.</li> <li>▪ Structure experiences of home practice with others in authentic Jewish time.</li> <li>▪ Provide opportunities to hear and celebrate stories of home practice of Jewish life from a variety of sources.</li> <li>▪ Structure opportunities for students to reflect on the personal meaning of Jewish living in the home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build students' skills to use Jewish objects, recite prayers, celebrate holidays, and perform rituals at home.</li> <li>▪ Structure experiences of home practice with others in authentic Jewish time.</li> <li>▪ Provide opportunities to hear and celebrate stories of home practice of Jewish life from a variety of sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build students' skills to use Jewish objects, recite prayers, celebrate holidays, and perform rituals at home.</li> <li>▪ Structure experiences of home practice with others in authentic Jewish time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build students' skills to use Jewish objects, recite prayers, celebrate holidays, and perform rituals at home.</li> </ul>

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## Doing/Living (continued)

### Parents with Students

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

**Desired Outcome:** Parents experience living according to the rhythm of the Jewish calendar—using Jewish objects, reciting prayers, celebrating Jewish holidays, and performing rituals at home—and help their children learn and do the same.

1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide time, support, and—when possible—assistance for student’s rehearsing and building skills of home observance.</li> <li>■ Participate with student in teacher- or synagogue-initiated experiences that model Jewish living at home.</li> <li>■ Structure conversations in which parent and child share and reflect on their respective experiences of Jewish living at home.</li> <li>■ Initiate opportunities for real time home observance including using Jewish objects, reciting prayers, celebrating Jewish holidays and/or performing rituals at home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide time, support, and—when possible—assistance for student’s rehearsing and building skills of home observance.</li> <li>■ Participate with student in teacher- or synagogue-initiated experiences that model Jewish living at home.</li> <li>■ Structure conversations in which parent and child share and reflect on their respective experiences of Jewish living at home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide time, support, and—when possible—assistance for student’s rehearsing and building skills of home observance.</li> <li>■ Participate with student in teacher- or synagogue-initiated experiences that model Jewish living at home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide time, support, and—when possible—assistance for student’s rehearsing and building skills of home observance.</li> </ul>

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## Doing/Living (continued)

### Teachers with Parents

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

**Desired Outcome:** Teachers regularly inform parents, structure authentic experiences of home observance, and structure opportunities for parent learning as adults.

1	2	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regularly provide information to parents regarding student learning.</li> <li>▪ Structure experiences of home practice with others in authentic Jewish time and in a safe, non-judgmental environment that is sensitive to family circumstances.</li> <li>▪ Structure opportunities for parents to learn, as adults, both skills of home observance and how to create home observance with children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regularly provide information to parents regarding student learning.</li> <li>▪ Structure experiences of home practice with others in authentic Jewish time and in a safe, non-judgmental environment that is sensitive to family circumstances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regularly provide information to parents regarding student learning.</li> </ul>

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## Believing

### Students

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

**Desired Outcome:** Students articulate, discuss, and make decisions about personal home practice based on the relationship of personal beliefs and values to those underlying home-based prayers and rituals.

1	2	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Articulate beliefs/values that underlie prayers and rituals observed at home</li> <li>▪ Discusses own beliefs and values in relation to the beliefs/values that underlie prayers and rituals said at home</li> <li>▪ Makes decisions about personal and/or family home observance based on personal beliefs and values in relation to beliefs/values that underlie prayers and rituals observed at home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Articulate beliefs/values that underlie prayers and rituals observed at home</li> <li>▪ Discusses own beliefs and values in relation to the beliefs/values that underlie prayers and rituals observed at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Articulate beliefs/values that underlie prayers and rituals observed at home</li> </ul>

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## Believing (continued)

### Teachers with Students

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

Desired Outcome:			
1	2	3	4

### Parents with Students

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

Desired Outcome:			
1	2	3	4

### Teachers with Parents

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

Desired Outcome:			
1	2	3	4



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# Belonging

## Students

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

**Desired Outcome:** Students include family members, invite and welcome community members (friends and acquaintances) to join in home rituals, and actively choose to be part of a community of others who regularly celebrate in the home.

1	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include family members in home rituals, prayers, and holiday celebrations</li> <li>▪ Include friends in home rituals, prayers, and holiday celebrations</li> <li>▪ Invite and welcome unfamiliar members of the community to join in home rituals, prayers and holiday celebrations</li> <li>▪ Choose to be part of the community that regularly observes home rituals, prayers and holiday celebrations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include family members in home rituals, prayers, and holiday celebrations</li> <li>▪ Include friends in home rituals, prayers, and holiday celebrations</li> <li>▪ Invite and welcome unfamiliar members of the community to join in home rituals, prayers and holiday celebrations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include family members in home rituals, prayers, and holiday celebrations</li> <li>▪ Include friends in home rituals, prayers, and holiday celebrations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include family members in home rituals, prayers, and holiday celebrations</li> </ul>

RE-IMAGINE Professional

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## Belonging (continued)

### Teachers with Students

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

Desired Outcome:			
1	2	3	4

### Parents with Students

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

Desired Outcome:			
1	2	3	4

### Teachers with Parents

For students to live a vibrant Jewish life in the home...

Desired Outcome:			
1	2	3	4

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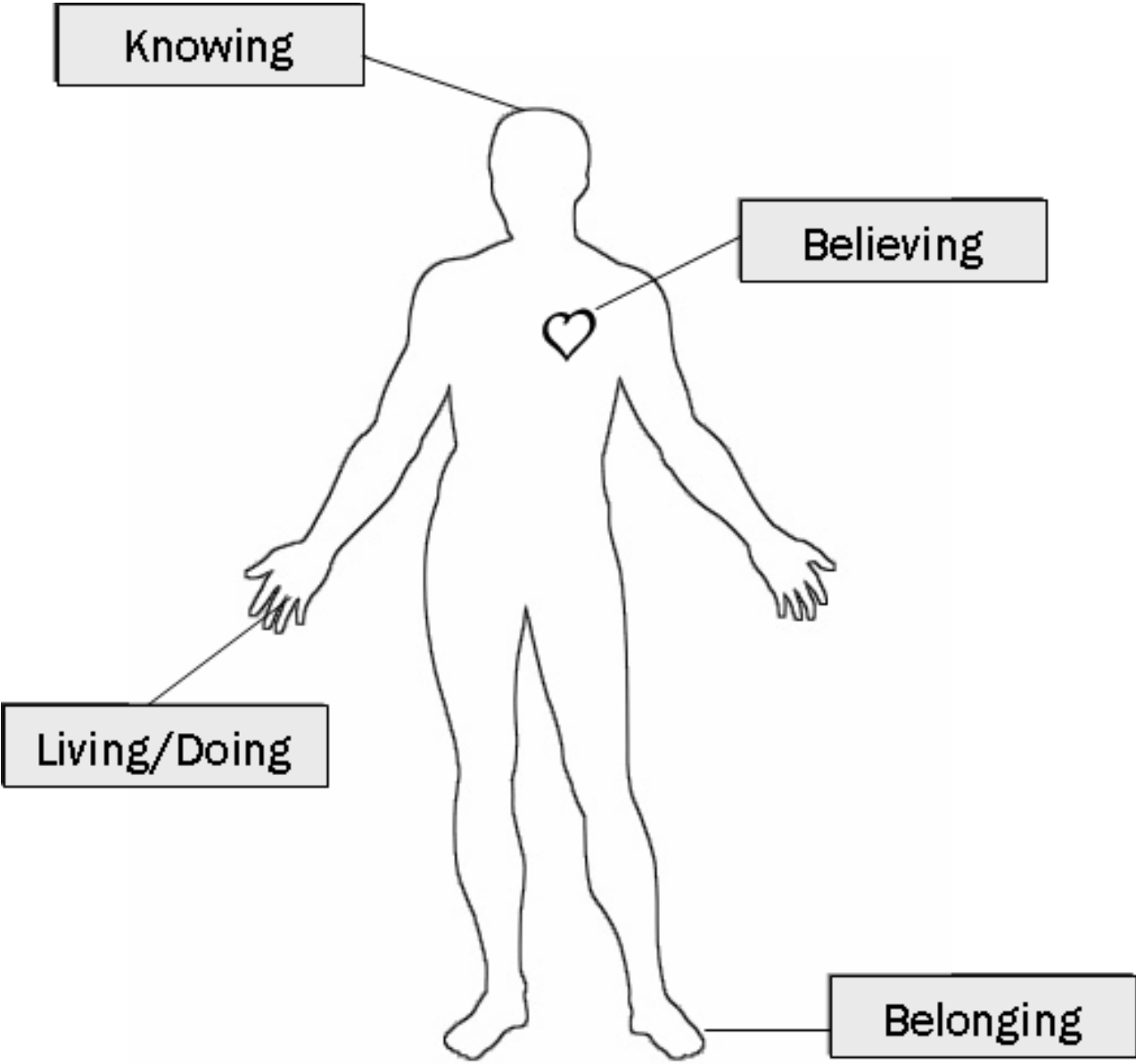
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# Making Meaning in Jewish Learning Requires the Whole Person

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# Steps to Construct an Innovation Configuration Map

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An Innovation Configuration (IC) Map can be a powerful tool in translating your vision into concrete reality. The following are the steps to follow in constructing an IC Map:

1. Select a **goal** from among the goals derived from your vision. Make sure it is stated as a goal.
2. Identify the important **components** of the goal i.e. important components of what the vision would look like on the ground when it is enacted. We decided to use knowing, doing/living, believing, belonging as important components of any Jewish educational goal.
3. Within each component, brainstorm the **outcomes for students**. That is, what would it look like for students if we fulfilled this goal from our vision? What could we see and hear? Follow the first rule of brainstorming—list out as many ideas as you can without questioning, discussing, or discounting anyone’s ideas.
4. Once you have a good list (and no one was generating any more ideas) **consolidate the list** by asking three questions:
  - Which items are similar and could be combined into one statement, starting with an active, observable verb?
  - What is important that is missing or needs to be clarified?
  - What is here that doesn’t belong (e.g. is too detailed) or belongs somewhere else (e.g. under a different component)?
5. Using the consolidated list, **array the outcomes**, identifying what represents **minimal practice** and, in what order to add the practices **incrementally** toward the **ideal**.
6. Draft a brief **desired outcome** statement that describes (sometimes in less-detailed language) what the **ideal** (highest level) looks like for each major component.
7. Repeat steps 1-6, this time for **teachers** within each component. Ask, “What do teachers have to do in terms of knowing, doing/living, believing, or belonging in order for students to achieve the outcomes we just defined for them?”
8. Repeat steps 1-6, this time for **parents** within each component. Ask, “What do parents have to do in terms of knowing, doing/living, believing, or belonging in order for students to achieve the outcomes we just defined for them?” and then again, asking what the role of teachers needs to be in relationship to the parent outcomes.
9. Test the wording of the tool with independent readers to see if the words you’ve chosen actually express to someone else what you intended. This is a fine-tuning of the language not the content.
10. Validate the components, outcomes and increments with stakeholders in the congregation.