

MEMORANDUM

To: Steve Kraus, Executive Director, The Alliance for Continuing Rabbinic Education (ACRE)

From: The Rosov Consulting Team

Re: Strategies to Advance the Assessment of the Outcomes of Continuing Rabbinic Education Phase I – Building Capacity – Assessment Instruments

Date: May 1st, 2014

Overview

Our Approach

In this first phase of work, our proposal called for working individually with up to four (a fifth organization was added later in the process) ACRE member organizations to build their capacity to evaluate participant outcomes for their programs. In collaboration with ACRE, we designed a brief survey to ascertain interest in a coaching process. In February 2014 we began working with 4 organizations and in April 2014 the 5th organization was added. The substantive work of each coaching session varied according to the needs of the organization. Nevertheless, there was an overall trajectory that characterized the work:

Session I: Where available, the program providers shared an existing evaluation instrument and talked with the coach about how they have used their evaluations to date and their goals for participants. The Rosov consultant helped the organization to focus specifically on participant outcomes in contrast to programmatic evaluation. (i.e. *What will be different for the Rabbi* as opposed to *how successful was a particular dimension of the programmatic offering*.) Between sessions I and II, program providers had homework to move their process forward. For example, one organization created a logic model for their program, one organization conducted focus groups with their target population to inform the development of an outcomes survey, one organization focused on defining indicators of their desired outcomes. (See Appendix for more specific information about each organization's process.)

Session II: The Rosov consultant reviewed the homework and worked with the program provider to begin to draft survey questions that would yield information about participant outcomes. Some of the work of this second session involved aligning the survey approach with larger organizational goals and with language that is particular and unique to each organization's program. In some cases, the Rosov consultant took on the task of developing a penultimate draft for review at Session III.

Session III: The Rosov consultant and program provider reviewed and finalized a participant outcome evaluation instrument. Together we discussed when and how it would be most beneficial to field these surveys.

Participating Organizations

1. CLAL—Rabbis Without Borders
2. YU—Rabbanan.org
3. AJR—Alumni Intensive
4. IJS—18 Month Jewish Meditation Teacher Training (JMTT); Kivvun; Clergy Leadership Program
5. HUC—Continuing Education Series

General Comments

Each of the organizations that chose to participate in this coaching process was motivated to develop instruments that would help them learn more about what they are accomplishing with the Rabbis who participate in their programs. Not surprisingly, the program providers' focus, to date, has been on program development and implementation. This coaching process shifted the lens away from programmatic inputs toward participant outcomes.

In addition, it does appear that the coaching homework was occasion for our contacts in the organization to convene conversations with other program stakeholders about outcomes and how to measure them. Finally, it should be noted that the organizations each came to this process with different levels of capacity and experience in thinking about outcomes evaluation and yet, it would appear that each organization advanced its thinking about and capacity for the development of outcomes oriented evaluation.

Recommendation

Although each organization proffered a program that was unique in focus and orientation, we believe that there would be value to the field in sharing these finalized evaluation instruments with other ACRE member organizations. We respectfully suggest that ACRE ask these organizations for permission to do so.

Appendix

(What follows are the evaluation instruments with a brief précis by Rosov Consulting)

Rabbis Without Borders

The following artifact is an outcome evaluation instrument, which emerges out of a prior program evaluation of Cohorts I, II consisting of 67 alumni conducted by CLAL. A close reading together with RWB staff of their evaluation report yielded important information about the kinds of outcomes they were hoping to find and the very specific indicators of those outcomes. RWB conducted internal conversations with their senior leadership to further explore measurable indicators. The revised instrument has moved from more generic descriptors of outcomes to more concrete indicators. In addition, some new dimensions critical to RWB's mission have now been added (i.e. use of language, disposition toward optimism and risk taking.) This instrument will be fielded to Cohorts II-V in Summer 2014.

Participant Impact Survey: Revised /March 2014

Thank you for taking the time to assess the impact that participating in RWB has had on you and your work. As alumni of RWB, we hope you will recognize in these questions many of the themes and focus areas of our program. We also hope that you will find value in this reflection. For each question, please consider your response in relation to the impact the RWB program and community has had. NOTE: Please read all the answers to each question carefully before responding. The first response that makes sense to you may **not** be the one that is **most** true.

1. As you reflect on your efforts to understand the constituency you serve (your audience) what feels most true?

- I often have to guess about my audience's priorities
- I have no tools or strategies for reading my audience and taking their priorities seriously
- I have some tools/strategies for reading my audience and taking their priorities seriously
- I feel well positioned to read my audience and take their priorities seriously

Please offer one example to explain your answer:

2. As you reflect on your comfort level with and approach to speaking about contemporary Jewish issues, what feels most true?

- I stay away from contemporary Jewish issues
- I speak about them but feel as though I alienate some people
- I speak about them and I feel like I don't have enough context to do it well
- I speak about them and I have a good contextual understanding for doing so
- I speak about them with ease and have new ways of doing this well

Please offer one example to explain your answer:

3. As you reflect on your comfort level with and approach to speaking about contemporary American societal issues, what feels most true?

- I stay away from contemporary American issues
- I speak about them but feel as though I alienate some people
- I speak about them and I feel like I don't have enough context to do it well
- I speak about them and I have a good contextual understanding for doing so
- I speak about them with ease and have new ways of doing it well

Please offer one example to explain your answer:

4. Please indicate your top 4 sources of information about the world:

- Print media
- Jewish print media
- Other religious news sources
- Jewish sites on the Internet
- Facebook
- TV
- US based Political Commentary
- Israel based Political Commentary
- Professional Journals
- Other

5. How would you assess your capacity to work with new constituencies?

- I don't know how to reach beyond my current audience
- I have some ideas about how to expand my reach but have not implemented them
- I have tried to reach new constituencies and have been unsuccessful
- I am beginning to see the results of my efforts to reach new audiences
- I am successfully reaching new audiences

Please offer one example to explain your answer:

6. If you are working with new constituencies, please indicate which ones you are now working with that you did not reach before:

- Marginal synagogue members
- Families with young children
- Interfaith families
- Jewish community members not affiliated with your synagogue or organization
- Jews who do not identify with the organized Jewish community
- Jewish community professionals
- Jews in isolated areas
- Non-Jews
- Readers of Jewish publications
- Readers of general publications
- Radio listeners and/or tv viewers
- Web users
- Other

7. How would you rate the frequency with which you cross denominational or institutional boundaries?

- Never
- Rarely (once every few years)
- Sometimes (a few times a year)
- Often (at least once a month)
- All the time

If there has been a recent change in the frequency, please describe what has contributed to that change:

8. How would you rate your comfort level with any of the following methods for achieving your goals:
[On a scale of 1-5 with 1=very uncomfortable and 5=very comfortable]

- Social media (Facebook, twitter)
- Blogging
- Using creative arts (music, drama, etc)
- Using alternatives to a frontal sermon
- Designing experiential Jewish moments
- Moving away from 'business as usual' in committee meetings
- Innovating new rituals or approaches to tradition

9. How would you assess the quality of your professional interactions with people? Please check all that apply.

- My interactions are shallow and disappointing
- My interactions often feel like they are falling short of the mark
- I need a larger tool kit to draw from to deepen my professional interactions
- I have improved the quality of my interactions
- I frequently have meaningful professional interactions

Please offer one example to explain your answer:

10. As you consider your teaching and speaking, please check all that apply:

- I am generally unconscious of the way I use language
- I sometimes use language that makes others uncomfortable
- I have an expanded vocabulary with which to communicate in my work
- I am conscious of using language that is pluralistic and inclusive
- I am conscious of using language that conveys openness to the other

Please offer one example to explain your answers:

11. How would you rate the extent to which you integrate multiple perspectives into my teaching and speaking?
[On a scale of 1-5 with 1=usually and 5=rarely if ever]

Please offer one example to explain your answer.

12. As you think about your increasing comfort level with difference, please indicate which of the following are now firmly established habits in your life?

- I try to actively understand perspectives that are different from my own on a variety of issues
- I regularly seek out people who have a perspective on issues that is different from my own
- I put myself in unfamiliar situations where I will be exposed to people who are different from me

Please offer one example of your comfort level with difference.

13. How would you rate the extent to which you actively/consciously integrate the following into your rabbinate
[On a scale of 1-5 with 1=not at all to 5=always]

- Infusing Jewish experiences with meaning
- Encouraging social connections in Jewish settings
- Cultivating gratitude to God in prayer and daily life
- Strengthening resilience through connection to God

14. How would you rate the extent to which these are characteristics of your rabbinate? For each one please offer a short explanation for your rating.

[On a scale of 1-5 with 1=not at all to 5=very much so]

Risk Taker

Explanation:

Optimistic about the Jewish world

Explanation:

15. To the extent that you feel you have succeeded at becoming a Rabbi Without Borders:

- a. What has most contributed to your success?
- b. What has presented the biggest challenge to overcome

AJR Alumni Intensive She'asani B'Tsalmu

The following artifact is a completely new outcome evaluation for AJR. Until now, AJR has conducted thorough program evaluations to get feedback about specific program elements of their intensives. Our coaching sessions took place immediately before and after the delivery of this program. AJR staff was guided to conduct focus groups with select alumni and staff to understand better what types of outcomes might be expected from this type of Intensive program. They were encouraged to think about these outcomes in three categories: Cognitive (What will the Rabbis know?), Practical (What will the Rabbis know how to do?) and Formative (Who are the Rabbis becoming?). As will be noted below, they identified three large categories of outcomes and delineated questions within each of those categories. The current instrument is expected to be fielded to all participants in the program in June '14 and they are already adapting the approach for their Fall Retreat.

Participant Impact Survey Draft April 2014

It has been 3 months since we gathered together for our Intensive. Thank you for taking the time to assess the impact that participating in our Intensive on Disabilities and Inclusion is having on you and your work. We are eager to learn from our Alumni, how the experiences we create for you can further enhance your ability to integrate the learning into your work. You will note that there are three primary areas of focus for this survey. The first is to understand to what extent the intensive has sensitized you and enabled you to make shifts in your own setting, the second is to understand how you are integrating text study into your work with respect to the topic of disabilities and inclusion and in general. The final area relates to your own spiritual growth.

Sensitize and Educate about Disabilities

1. As you reflect on your professional priorities, where does this issue fall? Please use the numbers to indicate if it is your 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th priority. If it is not in the top 5 please indicate other.

__1
__2
__3
__4
__5
__Other

2. If attendance at the Intensive, changed your sense of the priority please explain how:

3. Upon return to your home community, do you see your setting with new eyes?

__Yes
__No

4. As you reflect on any actions you have taken since the intensive, relative to the topic of inclusion and disability, please check all that apply:

- I have had conversations with staff about what I learned and what we might do differently
- I have had conversations with congregants about this topic
- I have found reason to integrate this topic into other teaching I was doing
- I have actively taught about this topic in sermons or classes
- I have set up a committee to look at our building's accessibility
- I have engaged others in supporting efforts of outside organizations or parts of the community on this topic
- Other. Please explain:

5. Please indicate which if any of the various constituencies and stakeholders in your community, you have actively engaged in this topic.

- Adult members
- Seniors
- Youth
- Board members
- Donors

If applicable, Please offer one example of a successful engagement or intervention:

6. If you have made any changes to the physical space of your work, please indicate all that apply:

- Lowered mezuzot
- Ensure there are chairs at Kiddush
- Ensure room access for those with wheelchairs or handrail needs
- Other, Please describe:

7. Have you been personally inspired to take my learning and understand of this topic to another level?

- Yes
- No

Please explain:

Integrating Jewish Text Study for the Purpose of Struggling with Contemporary Issues

8. Have you had occasion to teach about inclusion and disabilities using text study as one component of that teaching?

- Yes
- No

9. If yes, were you able to make use of the sources you explored during the intensive?

- Yes
- No

10. As you reflect on the frequency with which you engage in Jewish text based teaching to explore contemporary issues, please indicate which feels most true:

- I *rarely* integrate Jewish text into my teaching of contemporary issues
- I *occasionally* integrate Jewish text into my teaching of contemporary issues
- I *always* integrate Jewish text into my teaching of contemporary issues

11. As you reflect on the ease of integrating Jewish text into your teaching of contemporary issues, please check all that apply:

- I integrate Jewish text into my teaching regularly
- The community has come to expect the integration of Jewish text into our teaching
- I would like to integrate more Jewish text but can't always access the Jewish texts that are relevant
- I prepare Jewish texts for my teaching but do not always use it
- I like to integrate Jewish texts into my teaching but my community/students are not responsive to it

Please offer one example to explain your answer:

Rejuvenation, Spiritual Inspiration and Collegial Community.

12. To the extent that the experiences at the intensive inspired you either personally or professionally (e.g. tefillah, communal conversations, communal singing, chevruta study, etc.) please help us understand what was impactful and what continues to resonate?

13. In conclusion:

What else should we take into account to make this a useful and meaningful experience for AJR alumni?

Rabbanan.org

The following artifact represents a process that began with YU completing a logic model template for rabbanan.org. As we worked through the outcomes in three categories (knowledge, actions, conditions) we sought to differentiate between the outcomes which served YU's institutional need and those which accrued to the Rabbis who took advantage of the resources of the website. Prior to our coaching work, Rabbanan.org had attempted to glean some early feedback on the use of the website from focus groups and found that it was difficult to obtain useful information. They also had a basic questionnaire to learn about the demographics of the participants. The following survey can be administered to the most frequent users of the website to ascertain impact.

Outcomes Draft Survey Instrument

1. How frequently do you visit rabbanan.org:

Weekly
 Monthly
 A few times a year
 Other. (please explain) _____

2. Ability to find and use online resources
[Check that which most accurately represents your experience]

I am able to find information online that helps me in my job
 I know what I am looking for but do not have the technical skills to access what I need
 I know what I am looking for but can't always find it online
 I do not know how best to make use of online resources for my work

3. When I do use online resources, I most often use it for:

Finding drasha materials
 Finding class ideas and materials
 Informing myself of other people's programs and ideas
 Learning about a specific topic area

4. Please tell us what you would like to know more about as it relates to using online resources for your work:
[short answer question]

5. Please indicate how much you make use of mobile or web-based applications to improve your work life:

daily
 weekly
 occasionally
 rarely
 never

6. On a scale of 1-5 how adept would you say you are in the use of mobile applications for your work. [1=highly adept; 5=not at all adept]

__1__2__3__4__5

7. Please indicate to what extent you use the following web-based or mobile applications. [1=daily 2=weekly 3= occasionally 4=rarely 5=never]

__Calendar

__scheduling tools

__social media (facebook, twitter, etc)

__to design source sheets, handouts or flyers

__Mobile tefila applications (e.g. cemetery prayers, hospital prayers, wedding brachos, etc)

8. Please indicate how frequently you engage in the following activities.

1=daily 2=weekly 3= occasionally 4=rarely 5=never

__post to social media website

__write a blog

__communicate with my congregants via email

__check the Rabbanan.org website

__post to the Rabban.org website

9. Please tell us what you would like to learn how to do or learn how to do better with online resources: [short answer question]

10. What is your view of the usefulness of online resources for the following purposes? Please check the 3 that are most relevant to you:

__connecting with my congregants/students/etc.

__collaborating with my Rabbinic colleagues

__serving my constituency with more relevant and current content

__making me more efficient with my time

__helping me to organize a large amount of information

__reducing my stress level

__stimulate me intellectually

11. What is your view of the usefulness of online resources for the following purposes? Please check the 3 that are least relevant to you:

- connecting with my congregants/students/etc.
- collaborating with my Rabbinic colleagues
- serving my constituency with more relevant and current content
- making me more efficient with my time
- helping me to organize a large amount of information
- reducing my stress level
- stimulate me intellectually

12. To what extent do you feel supported in your rabbinate?
[1=not supported at all; 5=very supported]

1 2 3 4 5

13. To what extent do you feel close to your fellow rabbis?
[1=not so close; 5=very close]

1 2 3 4 5

14. [RIETS only] To what extent do you feel close to your yeshiva RIETS?
[1=not so close; 5=very close]

1 2 3 4 5

15. Please tell us how Rabbanan.org could significantly improve the conditions in which you work. What would it be offering you?
[short answer question]

Institute for Jewish Spirituality (IJS)

Starting our work with IJS, we learned that they were already employing a sophisticated approach to post-program evaluation. They were using data for formative purposes (to shape on-going program design) and for summative purposes (to report to funders and other stakeholders about program impact). Their challenge was that the response rates to surveys were often low or that respondents left surveys incomplete when they included great numbers of open-ended questions. Our work focused on (i) identifying how IJS might pare back their surveys, separating out the collection of open-ended, largely formative data, from summative data, and (ii) how they might collect longer-term data from alumni about what has changed since they completed surveys soon after the end of programs. The following survey is specifically tailored to alumni who identified development goals after they completed the IJS Clergy Leadership Program. It explores the extent to which these goals have been realized. The survey is well designed. It is easy to complete while providing useful open-ended data.

*** 1. NOW, nine months after the end of the program, how often do you engage in these modalities as personal spiritual practice?**

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Several Times a Year	Rarely or Never
Meditation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tikkun Middot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prayer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spiritual Direction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yoga	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talmud Torah in Hevruta	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other Mindfulness Practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*** 2. We are interested in learning how often you integrate any of these practices into the life of your community. The venue may include, for example: worship, board meetings, adult education, religious school, sermons and bulletin messages, pastoral counseling, work with staff and volunteers.**

	Frequently		Sometimes		Rarely or Never
Meditation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Silence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tikkun Middot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prayer that includes spiritual and/or mindfulness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spiritual Direction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yoga	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hasidut-inspired Talmud Torah	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other mindfulness practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. In the post -cohort impact survey you identified your six -month goals in terms of how you wanted to apply mindfulness to your personal life. We have inserted those goals, below. Please reflect on the extent to which you are achieving those goals.

"My goals are to continue chevruta study, and make sure I pray each morning."

Satisfied with extent to which I have achieved the goals				Challenge to achieve these goals
○	○	○	○	○

4. In the post -cohort impact survey you identified your six -month goals in terms of how you wanted to apply mindfulness to your leadership and professional life. We have inserted those goals, below. Please reflect on the extent to which you are achieving those goals.

"My goal is to try to shift "services" at synagogue to more engaging prayer, especially on the High Holy Days."

Satisfied with extent to which I have achieved the goals				Challenge to achieve these goals
○	○	○	○	○

5. What are your goals for the next six months in terms of how you want to apply mindfulness to your personal life?

1	
2	
3	

6. What are your goals for the next six months in terms of how you want to apply mindfulness to your leadership and professional life?