

---

**64th Annual Meeting**  
**National Conference of Jewish Communal Service**  
**and associated groups**  
**Atlantic City, N. J.      June 2-6, 1962**

---

**FIRST STEP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CURRICULUM FOR  
IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF JEWISH COMMUNITY  
CENTER WORKERS \***

by ARNULF M. PINS

*Director, Bureau of Personnel and Training, National Jewish Welfare Board, New York*

**S**PECIAL training for Jewish communal service has a long, and not too happy, history in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The need for special in-service training to help professional workers become effective practitioners in Jewish community centers has been studied and demonstrated.<sup>2</sup> However, despite frequent discussion, debate and experimentation, there is, as yet, not sufficient clarity, agreement and commitment about the *why, what, when* and *how* of such training programs.

The special background and competence required by Jewish community center workers have been the primary concern and focus of the professional education committee of the National Association of Jewish Community Center Workers during the past two years. The major theme of the meetings of the

Association, during the June 1962 National Conference of Jewish Communal Service will be "The Jewish Knowledge and Skill Necessary for Jewish Community Center work." About half of the sessions will be devoted to a discussion of this subject and an analysis of its implications for in-service training programs of local centers, JWB and NAJCW. It is hoped that this paper will stimulate and help professional workers to begin to think about this important area of concern.

**Guide for Discussion of Training  
Content**

This presentation is not a comprehensive or definitive paper on the subject of in-service training for Jewish community center work, nor is it a position paper on the part of the author or the JWB Bureau of Personnel and Training. It is merely a "working document" for discussion purposes. The purpose of this paper is to suggest an approach by which a curriculum can be developed and to suggest a tentative list of areas for consideration and expansion. An analysis of the "what" (content) of a curriculum for Jewish community center work can prepare the way for consideration and decision regarding "when" (sequence) and "how" (method).

In this paper, no attempt will be made

---

\* Based on presentation made to Large City Centers' Executive Conference, National Conference of Jewish Communal Service. Boston, May 1961.

<sup>1</sup> See Michael Freund, *Training for Jewish Social Welfare* (with special reference to the Training Bureau for Jewish Communal Service), Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, New York, 1956, pp. 1-150.

<sup>2</sup> Selma Hall, Charles Levy, Seymour Mirelowitz, and Manuel Cynamon, "Study of Distinguishing Characteristics of Group Work Practice in Agencies Under Jewish Auspices," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. XXXV, No. 4 (1959), pp. 355-360.

to deal with "why" in-service training is needed nor "when" and "how" it is best accomplished. Arthur Rotman explored these areas in another paper<sup>3</sup> and some published guides are already in existence.<sup>4</sup>

The content of the paper is based on two assumptions: (a) that Jewish community centers have defined objectives and unique Jewish purposes; and (b) that professional workers need additional training to help them become informed, comfortable, effective and creative Jewish Community center workers.

This exploration of a curriculum for Jewish community center work is limited to an analysis of the gap between the "background equipment" and "practice expectations" of graduates of schools of social work, whose classroom and field instruction was concentrated in the social group work method and who accept employment in Jewish community centers. Additional study will need to be undertaken in order to develop similar (although somewhat different) curricula, for health and physical education workers, adult educators, nursery school staff and workers from other disciplines who are now, or will be in the future, employed by Jewish community centers.

#### In-Service Training More Urgent Than Ever

While schools of social work have always stressed the need for employing agencies to assume responsibility for orientation and "extending professional

education,"<sup>5</sup> the development of more generic social work education in the past decade has further highlighted this need and increased its urgency. In a recent paper, Grace White, a consultant of the Council on Social Work Education, stated the following:

"Today's graduate is not a 'finished product' in the sense of being a competent practitioner, but he should have most of the essentials for becoming one. Like his fellow graduates of ten or twenty years ago, he needs induction into the particular field, supervision of his practice and benefit of a staff development program. He will not come empty-handed with reference to pertinent knowledge, but he may not have the depth of knowledge which his employer deems desirable in a beginning worker. His induction period should focus on the specifics in the particular field. . . . While the above relates to the deepening of competence in practice it must be extended to setting via orientation as well as practice via supervision and in-service staff development."<sup>6</sup>

At the present time, graduate schools of social work, most of them under non-sectarian auspices, a few under religious sponsorship and only one as part of a Jewish-sponsored university with a Jewish component in its curriculum, are preparing students for practice in sectarian, multi-sectarian and non-sectarian agencies. Many Jewish students enter a school of social work to become a social worker and only at the time of graduation decide between employment in a non-sectarian agency and that in a Jewish community center. Other students first choose Jewish community center work as their career and then seek graduate social work education as the necessary preparation. Students in both groups, similar to other Jewish young adults today, represent a

<sup>5</sup> Council on Social Work Education, *School-Agency Responsibility in Extending Professional Education*, New York, 1956.

<sup>6</sup> Grace White, "Generic Education for Social Work—the Implications for Fields of Practice," *Child Welfare*, November, 1960.

range in Jewish background and education and vary in their participation in Jewish life and their feelings about it. Most workers entering the Jewish community center field in recent years have brought more professional preparation but less Jewish education than their predecessors of one or two decades ago.

Recent research, as summarized by Joshua Fishman in an article in this Journal,<sup>7</sup> has highlighted the changing characteristics of American Jews, their values and needs. The socio-economic status, the interests and problems of members of Jewish community centers today are different from those most workers knew and experienced in their youth. If Jewish community center workers are to effectively serve the needs of the Jewish community and center membership, they need deep, comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge about the American Jewish community. This knowledge most workers do not bring from their own life experience of Jewish education nor can they obtain it from graduate social work education.

#### Systematic Consideration Needed

Even though there is a general acceptance by agencies, workers, and schools of the need for in-service education and a growing demand for in-service education projects and training materials, relatively little systematic consideration has been given to the basic question of *what unique knowledge, attitudes and skills* (in addition to those achieved through two years of graduate social work education) *do Jewish community center workers really need to be effective.*

It is relatively easy to get most Jewish community center workers and in-

<sup>7</sup> Joshua Fishman, "The Emerging Picture of Modern American Jewry," *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 1 (1960). pp. 21-34.

dividual lay people to make a list of what they consider most important for a new Jewish community center worker to know, feel, and be able to do, in view of the needs and priorities of their particular agency or community. However, if we are to develop a comprehensive and effective in-service program for the Jewish community center field, ways will need to be found to obtain a consensus on a basic curriculum and approach and a systematic testing of training materials and methods. We will need to clarify what in-service training can or should be conducted by the local Jewish community center or what part needs or ought to be conducted by the field as a whole.

#### A Suggested Approach to Curriculum Construction

Since we are facing a problem of curriculum construction, it may be well to apply the theory and methods of this field. Ralph Tyler's formulation, may be most helpful. He proposes the following steps for any curriculum building:<sup>8</sup>

1. Formulation and determination of desirable educational objectives (in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills).
2. Selection of learning experiences to attain these objectives.
3. Organization of these learning experiences to insure their cumulative effect.
4. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum.

The selection of objectives must be our first task. Until we are clear about *what we aim to achieve* there will be little meaning or value in discussing *when* and *how* the material should be taught, in deciding who should conduct

<sup>8</sup> Ralph Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1950.

the in-service programs, or in evaluating their effectiveness.

We must look at the purposes and programs of Jewish community centers to determine the kind and degrees of competence a worker needs to be effective. The amount and degree of social work knowledge, attitudes and skill a new worker brings to a job must also be considered in selecting training objectives of a Jewish community center in-service program. Similarly, the nature of a worker's Jewish background and experience, his conviction about Jewish life and his motivation for and experience in Jewish community center work will determine, to an extent, what additional knowledge, attitude and skill he needs to acquire through in-service training and will affect his interest in obtaining it.

Even though this paper uses the needs of the field as the point of departure for the consideration and development of an in-service program, the worker's needs and capacity should not be overlooked. Eileen Blackey has suggested that "the individual's capacity and the agency's expectations are components of the same diagnostic process and must be taken into account in assessing educational needs."<sup>9</sup>

The determination of *what to teach* is certainly the highest priority for the development of a curriculum for Jewish community center work. It will require careful study, detailed discussion and courageous and firm decision. If the curriculum is to be implemented, study of *who* our workers are and consideration of *how* and *when* to conduct the training programs (and under whose sponsorship) should not be delayed too long. However, the questions of *who*, *when* and *how* cannot be determined

<sup>9</sup> Eileen Blackey, *Group Leadership in Staff Training, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D.C., 1957, page 22.*

arbitrarily or, so to say, "logically"; they will need to be considered "scientifically" in terms of what we know or can determine about the learner and the learning process. Final decisions about the sequence of learning or the methods of instruction should not and cannot be made solely through discussion or compromise. The purposes of the Jewish community center, and goals and priorities of in-service training programs together with research data about the background of workers and the effectiveness of certain teaching techniques should determine the nature and timing of in-service education programs.

#### Suggested Curriculum Areas

The tentative listing of curriculum areas and objectives given below should be reviewed and expanded and will need to be adjusted in practice to the nature of the students (background, feelings and competence of the new Jewish community center workers) which may vary in different years and geographic locations.

The curriculum items fall into three broad categories: Social work, the Jewish community, and the Jewish community center. Since center social work staff has had graduate college education in social work and frequently only elementary or secondary education dealing with Jewish life, the latter is represented more frequently in the listing of information and competence gaps. Using Tyler's formulation, an attempt has been made to classify the curriculum items in terms of knowledge, attitude and skill. The listing which follows includes many items, which no doubt overlap in some instances, and may seem overwhelming at first glance. Not all areas are of equal importance nor can all be learned at one time. Before a realistic curriculum can be developed, decisions need to be made regarding priority in general and differentiation of levels

of achievement in knowledge, attitudes and skills which are required for beginning competence. While it is possible and necessary to separate the areas of knowledge, attitudes and skills, in order to study them, all three are interacting and interdependent in both learning and practice.

#### I. Knowledge Areas

The knowledge areas fall into four different groups dealing with (A) professional knowledge, (B) the Jewish community, (C) Jewish beliefs, practices, and culture and (D) the Jewish community center field. Future analysis can determine whether a level of awareness, familiarity or understanding is needed for each item.

##### A. Professional Knowledge

1. Current developments in private public social welfare and particularly in group service agencies.
2. New knowledge in social work theory and practice and particularly in the social group work method.
3. New knowledge in sociology, psychology, education, recreation and other disciplines related to Jewish community center work.
4. Knowledge about urban and suburban trends and behavior of minority groups.
5. Purpose and program of the National Association of Social Workers and other related professional groups.

##### B. The Jewish Community

6. History of the Jewish people and its effect on Jewish life.
7. History of the American Jewish community and its effect on Jewish life today.
8. Nature and needs of American Jewish community today.
9. Purpose, history and program of Jewish organizations and institutions in America.
10. Trends and issues in modern Jewish life in America, Israel and the world.
11. Current trends in America and world society which affect Jewish life.
12. Normal life development, interest and need of the modern American Jew (all age groups).

##### C. Jewish Beliefs, Practices and Culture

13. Traditional and modern religious and secular philosophies of Jewish life.
14. Jewish religious beliefs, values and practices.
15. Traditional and modern Jewish literature.
16. Jewish music, dance, drama and other cultural expressions.

##### D. Jewish Communal Services in the United States

17. History, purpose and program of Jewish communal services in the United States and their relation to social welfare generally.
18. Current developments and issues in Jewish communal service.
19. Purpose and program of National Conference of Jewish Communal Service.

##### E. The Jewish Community Center

20. Purpose and function of the Jewish community center.
21. Program and structure of the Jewish community center.
22. History and current trends of the Jewish community center field.
23. Relationship of Jewish community center to local Jewish federations and community chests or councils and to other institutions in Jewish and general life and social welfare.
24. Purpose, function and resources of JWB.
25. Purpose and program of National Association of Jewish Center Workers.

#### II. Attitude Areas

It is recognized that the attitudes of a professional worker contribute or detract from his effectiveness. It is also generally accepted that knowledge alone does not always influence attitudes, nor is it possible or desirable for schools or agencies to "brain wash" workers so that all come out with a common set of accepted values and attitudes. On the other hand, attitudes which are considered necessary for effective practice should serve as a screen in the recruitment and selection of workers and can be a guide in helping workers to become aware of and to examine their attitudes through work experience, training pro-

grams, supervision, and when necessary through therapy.

The attitude areas can be divided into three groupings: attitudes about (A) personal and professional self, (B) Jewish and American life, and (C) The Jewish community center and Jewish communal service. Future analysis can determine whether a level of appreciation, acceptance or commitment is needed for each item.

A. Personal and Professional Self

1. Personal identification and involvement in Jewish life.
2. Self-recognition as social worker and Jewish communal worker and leader (not only technician employed by Jewish agency).
3. Need to continue to learn about Jewish life, social work and Jewish community center work through in-service programs, self-study and research.
4. Recognized significance of one's own professional and Jewish contribution, and readiness to recruit others to the field.

B. Jewish and American Life

5. Meaning and significance of Judaism.
6. Future of Jewish life in America and the diaspora generally.
7. Responsibility and role of synagogues and other organizations and institutions in Jewish life.
8. Responsibility and relationship of American Jews to world Jewry and Israel.
9. Function of groups in democratic society.
10. Desirability of pluralism in American life.

C. Jewish Community Center and Jewish Communal Service

11. The appropriateness of voluntary sectarian social welfare services.
12. Validity and value of the purposes and programs of the Jewish community center and Jewish communal service.
13. Appropriateness and effectiveness of social work methods for the achievement of Jewish community center purposes.
14. The contribution of other professional disciplines (in addition to social group work) to Jewish community center practice.
15. The role of lay people, volunteers and staff in the function of the Jewish com-

munity center and other community agencies.

III. Skill Areas

A worker's skill consciously to use his professional and Jewish knowledge and attitudes is crucial for effective practice. The skill areas fall into the following three major categories: (A) service, (B) administration and (C) self-development. As in the knowledge and attitude areas, future analysis can determine the level of competence. Three levels of skill can be considered. They are observation, execution and interpretation.

A. Providing Service

1. Working with all age groups including adults.
2. Planning, organizing and evaluating program for age groups or special projects.
3. Studying local, Jewish and general community history, patterns, needs and resources.
4. Using social group work method to achieve the unique functions of the Jewish community center.
5. Using cultural arts in the program.

B. Administration

6. Recruitment, selection and training of part-time group leaders, specialists and volunteers.
7. Providing interpretation and inspiration about Jewish and democratic values and giving leadership toward their achievement.
8. Working with other staff of agency (group workers, other specialists, clerical and maintenance).
9. Relating to other professionals in the Jewish community and general community, government, education, health and welfare agencies.
10. Working with board committees and individual lay leaders.
11. Recording for education, administrative and interpretative purposes.
12. Administering (control, finances, etc.) age division and/or special programs and projects.
13. Using publicity and public relations.

C. Self-Development

14. Knowing when and how to seek and use

supervisory help and other professional resources.

15. Learning from research and applying it.

Possible Next Steps

As indicated in the title of this paper, this presentation and the discussion which it may stimulate are only a "first step in the development of a curriculum for Jewish community center work."

Professional executives and workers of Jewish community centers, NAJCW as a whole, lay leaders in the Jewish community center field, JWB, Jewish educators, the Jewish communal leaders and faculty in schools of social work will need to study and, in the not too distant future, decide on a curriculum for Jewish community center work.

The following next steps are suggested for consideration by Jewish community center workers:

1. Review this and other suggested lists of educational objectives to see if any important areas could or should be added or if any less significant areas can or ought to be omitted.
2. Obtain accurate up-to-date information about what workers entering the Jewish community center field know and can do in each of the areas considered necessary or desirable for effective practice.
3. Determine the degree of achievement desirable or necessary for beginning practice for each objective.
4. Consider the precise subject content and learning experiences which can best achieve the specified objectives.
5. Study which of the learning experiences (training programs) can or

should be conducted by local Jewish community centers and which should have broader sponsorship and participation, and also explore when they should be conducted and in what sequence.

6. Test in practice the appropriateness and comprehensiveness of the chosen objectives and the effectiveness of the content, methods, sponsorship and timing of the in-service programs.
7. Reevaluate, periodically, the objectives of the in-service curriculum in view of changes and developments in the purposes, role and programs of Jewish community centers, the curricula of schools of social work, as well as the background and experience of new workers entering practice in Jewish community centers.
8. Consider what other content areas and what higher levels of competence are required for professionals who are beyond beginning jobs in the Jewish community center field.

In Conclusion

There is no doubt that the development of a curriculum for Jewish community center work to supplement the generic professional education of new workers poses many difficult, complex and delicate problems. I hope that we can draw courage to begin the task, despite the obvious obstacles, from the well known saying in *Pirke Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers) "It is not thy duty to complete the work, nor art thou free to desist from it."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Chap. II:21.