

Blog Post: Practitioners as Researchers

By Jon Levisohn
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The Mandel Center is committed to research in Jewish education. Our mission statement refers to “advancing knowledge,” but how do we advance knowledge in Jewish education?

At the Mandel Center, some of the research that we do is traditional scholarly work, carried out by the well-trained academic researchers on our staff. Other inquiries are carried out by practitioners who have both close familiarity with and intense curiosity about some aspect of their practice. These studies of practice by practitioners, when done well, can provide powerful insights and images for the field.

But what do these models of research look like? In this short [video](#), you’ll meet a talented elementary day school teacher, who researched her practice in order to develop a [webcase](#), and a well-respected congregational rabbi, who participated in a project in which he researched his practice in order to produce an article (to be published in a forthcoming volume).

<https://vimeo.com/31601477>

As Mandel Center Director Sharon Feiman-Nemser says, “Enabling practitioners to study their work in a systematic way, and to share what they’re learning with a wider audience, is one of the ways that we can tap the expertise of talented teachers and other practitioners, and benefit from their knowledge and their experience.” If we want to add to the knowledge base on teaching and learning in Jewish education, we need to take advantage of the insightful inquiries of those who know the most about it.

What do other models of practitioner research look like? What are some other effective ways to tap the expertise of skillful practitioners?

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