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UNIT FOR LEARNING FROM SUCCESS AND ONGOING LEARNING
IN HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Promoting Organizational Learning Processes: A Handbook Introducing Learning from Success and Ongoing Learning

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Executive Summary

The Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute has a Unit for Learning from Success and Ongoing Learning in Human Resource Organizations. As part of its work, the unit offers programs to promote action-oriented learning processes based on learning from success. This work is closely followed by learning companions specially trained for the position by the unit.

This handbook describes the process of introducing the concept and practice of Learning from Success as a lever of ongoing learning in human service organizations. This, in order to enable learning companions to introduce it in organizational systems.

The program of Learning from Success rests on three interrelated learning methods:

1. ***First Method***: Learning from Past Success – the Retrospective Method
2. ***Second Method***: From a Learning Question to the Quest for Learning – the Prospective Method
3. ***Third Method***: Learning on Learning – the Method for Introducing Ongoing Learning for Action

The aim of the three methods is to identify successes scored by members of any organizational system in order to produce the "actionable knowledge" that led to them. Such knowledge has the potential to promote the achievement of goals of a system and thereby also the wellbeing of the people it serves. The three methods combined can help introduce mechanisms for ongoing learning, which reflects the striving of the organizations and their members for constant improvement of their work.

Turning to this type of learning is enabled by members of an organization participating in an introductory workshop, which exposes them to reflection-based methods of learning and practice. The acquaintance with different modes of learning is facilitated by a learning companion experienced in doing so in different organizations.

The introductory meetings are planned together with the persons in charge of introducing ongoing learning into an organization, according to the special characteristics of each organization. The meetings provide an opportunity to acquaint participants with the conceptual world related to the processes of learning from success and ongoing learning, as well as to try out the method/s of learning, and to highlight any unresolved issues. The necessary steps preceding such meetings include preparing the learning space, coordinating the date and duration of a meeting, determining theoretical aspects, and deciding on the stakeholders who will participate in the process.

The handbook rests on the cumulative experience of learning companions in many different organizations and opens with a general outline of the recommended procedures. To this end, it familiarizes the reader with the methods presented in the handbook; one chapter includes the key contextual terms of, and for, learning from success. It also includes a quasi-dictionary that clarifies the ideas and the basic processes of learning. It is interspersed with quotations and concludes with appendices containing examples and recommended modes of action to be deployed. In addition, there is a bibliography, which enables readers to become acquainted both with the processes of learning from success and their theoretical background.

The introductory process to learning from success comprises three main stages:

1. The preliminary meeting focuses first on establishing initial contact with representatives of the organization interested in the process, it is followed by presenting the learning methods and, finally, by preparing for the introductory meeting.
2. The second stage, which comprises the heart of the handbook, consists of 10 phases of the introductory group meetings with the first learning group of the workshop where each phase is elaborated with explanations and examples.
3. The third stage relates to planning continued contact to outline ongoing learning processes for the future.

The Stages in the Process of Introduction to the Methods of Learning:

Part I. Preparing for the Introductory Meeting

a. Prior to the preparatory meeting
   - Preliminary study of the organizational system
   - Issues of coordination and preparation

b. Initial meeting with the persons in charge of introducing the workshop into the organization, which includes the processes of:
   - Mutual acquaintance
   - Why "learn from success"?
   - Defining the goal of the introductory meeting
   - Characterizing potential candidates for the introductory workshop
   - Presenting the process of learning from success
   - Identifying preliminary goals of the process of learning
   - Administrative and organizational aspects
   - Aspects of content

c. Tasks following the initial meeting

d. Activities relating to the forthcoming introductory meeting

Part II. The Introductory Meeting

1. Mutual acquaintance and agreement on expectations
2. Presenting the goal of the introductory meeting and its course
3. Why "learn from success"?
4. Introduction to the background and key concepts related to the process of learning from success
5. Concise description of the three methods, their interrelationship and the significance of ongoing learning
6. Discourse on the implications of the process of learning
7. Practicing the first method and processing the experience
8. Questions and answers
9. Learning on learning – how have we learned?
10. Summary and issues related to continuing the contact

Part III. Conclusion of the Introductory Process

1. Documentation – proofreading and distribution to participants
2. Discussion of feasibility of continued contact

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