MS-831: Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980-2011.
Series F: CIJE Accrual, 1981-2011, undated.
Subseries 1: Barry Holtz, 1988-2005, undated.

Box	Folder
72	9

Professors group (Folder 1 of 2), 1998-1999, 2005.

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Professors of Jewish Education
January 2005

Dear Friends:

I'm looking forward to seeing you at our meetings on January 18th and 19th. Here are some details that you should know:

1. We are meeting at the offices of the United Jewish Community. 111 8th Avenue @15th street. 11th floor. Give yourself time to go through the downstairs security and have a picture ID.
2. If you need to contact me, my cell phone number is 917-685-0313.
3. We will begin on Tuesday with coffee at 9 AM. Have lunch together and finish by 5:00.
4. On Wednesday we are beginning at 8:30. Promptly because we have a videoconference with Danny Marom in Israel beginning at 8:45. We will conclude with lunch around noon.
5. **Agenda**: We have an interesting agenda and I think you'll find it stimulating:
6.

Tuesday

Morning

--General discussion among all about what has been happening re vision and their work. If you have specific examples of courses, etc. please be prepared to talk about them

--Discussion with Jeff Schein about his work (see paper attached).

Afternoon

--Discussion with Danny Pekarsky of his Beit Rabban paper (attached).

Wednesday

--Video conference with Danny Marom on Brinker (read Chapter 5 and supplement in the *Visions* book

--Continuing the conversation

--Conversation about next steps

7. **Preparation**: Please prepare for the meetings in the following ways
   a. **Read**:
      i. Jeff Schein's short paper (attached)
      ii. Danny Pekarsky's longer article. Note: this is connected to Danny's forthcoming book on Beit Rabban and was written for a

festschrift for Mike Rosenak. Since it's not out yet (and Mike doesn't know about this piece), please don't distribute.

iii. The Chapter and Supplement in the Visions book on Brinker (pp. 95-122)

b. **Think about**:

i. Things that you might be able to report from your own work and teaching in which issues related to vision and Jewish education have been explored since we last met.

8. Below you will see the list of participants.

I'll see you soon!

Barry

Participants	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**
Barry Holtz	√	√
Bethamie Horowitz	√	√
Dan Pekarsky	√	√
Jeff Schein	√	√
Rami Wernick	√	√
Carol Ingall	Morning only	√ (until 12:15)
Gail Dorph	√	√
Susan Shevitz	√	No
Alex Sinclair	No	√
James Hyman	√	√

[2005]

IN SEARCH OF BEZALEL: CAN EDUCATIONAL CRAFTSPERSONS AND VISIONARIES LIVE IN THE SAME HOUSE?

Dr. Jeffrey Schein

When God gave Moses the instructions for building the Tabernacle, Moses decided to test the chief builder, Bezalel, by passing on God's instructions in the wrong order, telling to construct first the Holy Ark, then the furnishings of the Tabernacle, and only then the sanctuary. Herupon, wise Bezalel said to Moses:" It is the way of man first to build his house and only then to provide its furnishings. Yet you have directed me to provide furnishing first and then to build a sanctuary. What shall I do with the furnishings when there is no sanctuary ready to receive them? Moses was delighted with Bezalel's wisdom (Aggadat Shir 5, 36-7)

We can easily treat this midrash as a parable for contemporary Jewish education. Substitute ideal faculty for Holy Ark and curriculum for the furnishings of the tabernacle and one has a ready-made proof-text pointing to many of the more profound problems of Jewish education today. Indeed, instead of creating holistic visions of Jewish education (the sanctuary in the original midrash now turned educational metaphor) we often focus our energies on the individual components of the educational enterprise. Put another way, we are so busy maintaining our educational bayits that we rarely have an opportunity to look at the total construction of our educational programs (including their underlying foundations).

In some ways this Midrash applied to the context of Jewish education might serve as the "master story" of the current emphasis on visioning in Jewish education. I have personally and professionally benefited from the contemporary focus on reclaiming vision as the cornerstone of our educational process. The volume *Visions of Jewish Education* (Marom, Fox, Scheffler; Cambridge University) is perhaps my favorite teaching text for the classes I teach at Siegal College. Yet, both because I believe "all theories are partial" (Joseph Schwab) and because I resist treating any Jewish text as a "proof text" I often begin my work with congregations creating a vision of an educated Jew with an indirect invitation to argue with this Midrash in a particular way. I invite the people around the table to share their last experience remodeling or decorating a home in which they have lived (the full gamut of possibilities including college dorm rooms, remodeling of a portion of a house, or building a new home).

A few individuals will have the rare privilege of having collaborated with an architect to create their "ideal" home. Others will have bought track homes. Still others will talk about the transformation of an existing living space. When this happens the dialogue I really want will have begun.. I want to acknowledge without privileging the rather Platonic emphasis on comprehensive vision that animates much of contemporary visioning in Jewish education. Yet, I don't want to eliminate the possibility (more Aristotelian in philosophic origins I believe)) of a more craftsman like approach to renewing Jewish education that would choose a different set of strategies and work on giving new shape and form to what already exists in Jewish education.

Communal Variations on a Theme

Wherever a Jewish educator might fall in relationship to the two incipient notions of visioning lay out above, the Midrash and metaphor is useful in a tachlis way. The reality is that the educational communities with which we engage in a visioning process are in various stages of construction. At least this is very much the case in Cleveland. Below I will

describe the two with which I have worked most closely (one has consultant; the other as member) and know the best. Scanning the community as a whole, however, I notice at least four different implicit strategies/stances towards visioning:

1). Build Your Bayit from Ground Up (where there is no pre-existing educational program);
2). Infiltrate the Hedarim(Rooms) (create a vision which is carried by stakeholders who have created the vision into the various educational activities of school, adult learning, youth groups , etc.)
3). Rebuild the Existing Educational Bayit in an Entirely New Tzelem (often as a "congregation of learners")
4). Refurbish a Particular Heder (aspect of the educational program) with an Eye Towards Replicating the same Processes in All the Other Hedarim.

There certainly are strategies 6,7, and 8 as well. My educational experience tells me that each of these strategies has built in potentials and constraints. My educational instincts suggest that we need to begin collecting (the Mandel Institute certainly has begun such a process) our own midrashic accounts of the similarities and differences in each of these visioning processes so that the enterprise as a whole will be strengthened. What follows in the next section--a sketch of some similarities and differences in two visioning processes--should be seen in that context. It is by design a quick, surface skimming of a process that should be documented in much greater depth.

A Tale of Two Visioning Processes

Congregation Keren Or is a Reform congregation with an educational program that began in 1955. Congregation Shir Halev is a Reconstructionist congregation which does Shabbat learning together but has not yet established an educational program. Keren Or has its roots in a "classical" understanding of Reform Judaism (it began in 1947 in part as a response to a parent congregation becoming too Zionist in its orientation). Its recent change to a Hebrew name illustrates some of the congregation's struggle and challenge with assuming a more mainstream and "traditional" reform Jewish identity. Shir Halev began as a small Havurah with a majority of its children in a Jewish day school. It now has 100 "educable" children with only about a third attending day school (hence the demographic challenge of creating an educational program).

Both congregations engaged in an educational visioning process in 2003-04. In the useful terminology of Daniel Pekarsky, one of the processes (Keren Or) was focused on "existential vision". The very name of the process "In Search of the Educated Reform Jew" is suggestive of that existential focus. To create a group of meaningful stakeholders in the vision a visioning taskforce was established consisting of two executive officers of the synagogue board, the chair of a newly formed congregational strategic task force, three teachers from the religious school, the youth group director, and the four primary professionals on the synagogue staff (Rabbi, administrator, education director, and family educator). The group devoted six sessions to studying classical Jewish texts, reviewing the history of their own educational program, and studying in some depth the article "The Educated Reform Jew" by Michael Meyer from *The Visions of Jewish Education* volume. They wrestle in particular with a passage about the balancing of autonomy and individualism with the primacy of "acculturating circles of commitment" that Meyer puts forth as the cornerstone of his new vision. The end product is the vision below.

Vision of the Educated Reform Jew at Keren Or

We Affirm that our goal is to develop forms of education that will support and challenge learners of all ages to become educated Reform Jews who:

***Engage** with Torah as the Jewish people's ongoing, creative and sacred search for meaning and purpose in life.*

***Develop** a living and personal Judaism by integrating the moral and spiritual values of Judaism throughout the life cycle, during times of grief, discouragement and joy.*

***Develop** a personal relationship with God that deepens their own spirituality through exploration of the full range of Jewish understandings of God.*

***Celebrate** Shabbat, festivals and life-cycle events as families and as members of Kol Halev*

***Cherish** and **Study** Hebrew, the language of the Jewish people.*

***Appreciate** the values embedded in t'filah (prayer) and develop the skills to comfortable and competently pray at Keren Or;*

***Engage** in Tikkun olam (repair of the world) by assuming moral responsibility for the Jewish people and the global community, and transforming that responsibility into action.*

***Proudly Celebrate** and positively express their Jewish identities as American Reform Jews as committed members of Keren Or;*

***Feel Personally and Historically Connected** to the people, land and State of Israel as members of K'lal Yisrael (the community of the Jewish people).*

***Respectfully understand** all expressions of Judaism as enriching Jewish peoplehood.*

At Shir Halev the origins of the visioning process are quite different. At Keren Or the reform congregation it is muvan may-alav (understood from the beginning) that a religious school is an important part of the educational bayit. It has been so for fifty years. The challenge is to reconstruct this bayit so it has something to do with the larger congregational bayit and ultimately to the bayit of contemporary Reform Judaism. At Shir Halev there is no such consensus. There is no institutional history of a formal Jewish education program yet there is vibrancy and intimacy to the gatherings of Shir Halev children learning on Shabbat. There is also a rather amazing track record of sending a dozen children to the national Reconstructionist camp outside of Chicago(by far the most of any Reconstructionist affiliate that is not in the region). Indeed, the very success of informal Shabbat learning and informal Jewish education when combined with fairly vivid memories of congregants of their own poor Jewish educations create an "I'm from Missouri" kind of mind-set of prove to us that formal education makes any difference at all. There are further intergenerational dynamics at work in this congregation not dissimilar to other non-Reconstructionist congregations. Many of the havurah/congregation founders (and most generous givers as well) have already raised and educated their Jewish children. In many ways, visioning at Shir

Halev carries an extra burden of building a consensus of the importance of an educational program that is instrumental to the future of Shir Halev as well as Judaism.

Not surprisingly this vision statement (an excerpt of which appears below) will look quite different than Keren Or's. In the first place it will be a bit more "out of the box". A distrust of traditional forms of Jewish educational is reflected in the prologue. With some ease this community can dismiss the very notion of a bayit (traditional form of Jewish education) because it moves outside of the educational mainstream.

Why *THIS* Kind of Jewish Education for Kol Halev?

At one time, Jewish educators and policy makers imagined that a single thread of good, formal classroom oriented Jewish education could sustain a strong Jewish identity and commitment. Many adults in our community lived through "Hebrew school" educations and emerged with negative feelings about Jewish life, proving this belief to be somewhat misplaced. Nowadays, the operating wisdom in the Jewish community is much more attuned to this wisdom from the Book of Proverbs: "a three-fold cord is not easily broken!"

The three-fold cord of strong Jewish identity is often conceptualized today as 1) knowledge provided in some formal environment, 2) bonding with kids through youth groups, and 3) immersion experiences in Jewish life such as camping or Shabbatonim. The new Kol Halev education program tries to create such a strong, three-fold cord. Wrapped through each cord is a silver thread of parental involvement reflecting our belief that Jewish education can only succeed in partnership with parents. Both faith and the sound evidence of contemporary research in Jewish education leads us to believe that this new program will make a profound difference in the lives of our children.

Yet, somewhat paradoxically when compared to Keren Or more of the educational vision is concerned with building structures (perhaps because lacking any present ones it cannot be assumed that new wine can be poured into old vessels). In Daniel Pekarsky's terms "institutional vision" receives more emphasis than in the Keren Or document.

Keren Or and Shir Halev will share some challenges and face radically different ones as they move to the next phase of their visioning process. A similar challenge will be to provide (Pekarsky) "existence proofs" that of what it will mean to have someone emerge from these new/renewed educational visions having embodied the existential vision outlined in the vision. Each committee crafting the vision has begun a draft of what this would look like. Much more needs to be done in each instance but this second stage has begun:

EXISTENCE PROOFS AT KEREN

Goal: Jews who take religion personally, feel that it is living and real when they:

Existence Proofs: Jewish learners will emerge from the educational process who

- *Celebrate holidays at home*
- *Mark lifecycles in a Jewish way*
- *Identify yourself publicly as Jewish*
- *Commit to Bar/Bat Mitzvah at 13 or beyond*
- *Complete Confirmation*
- *As adult, join a synagogue*
- *As young adult, join youth group, be a Madrich/Madricha*

- *As adult, become involved in committees*
- *As adult, become involved in the Jewish community*
- *Develop a spiritual relationship*
- *Become a Jewish educator*
- *Go to a Jewish camp*
- *Develop a relationship with Israel*
- *Continue on a journey of life long learning*

Shir Halev Existence Proofs

You know you have well-educated Reconstructionist Jewish children when they

** value questions as much as answers;*
**savor new Jewish knowledge;*
** quite naturally ask of their parents "what's the meaning of this new Jewish insight or tradition for our family?"*
they
** dream bilingually in both Hebrew and English;*
**pray the nuanced differences of Kol Haneshamah as if it were the "traditional" way to daven;*
** they can explain based on Jewish values why the would vote for George W. Bush or John Kerry*

There will also be different challenges for Keren Or and Shir Halev in their next stage of vision work. In many ways, Keren Or's challenge can be best understood in the framework of Lippit'sand Watson's classic on educational change *The Dynamics of Planned Change.* Every educational change must meet the challenge argue Lippit and Watson of "spread throughout the system." . The members of Keren Or's task force, the school board, and the congregational board as a whole needs to ask the question needs to figure out what this vision of an educated reform Jew look like in all the various "rooms" of the bayit (school, adult learning, congregational life). Having focused on existential vision Keren Or must now carefully think about institutional vision as well. A reconstituted education committee (presently a "school committee") is the first step in that direction.

Shir Halev is at a very different place in regard to its visioning process. This new program needs to become the child of the entire community. A series of parlor meetings are being orchestrated to engage the entire community. The ethos of the congregation is one of critical engagement so it is likely that the vision will be reshaped somewhat in the process.

CONCLUSION

In my minds eye, I can imagine selected members of Shir Hale's and Keren Oar's task forces learning a great deal were they to sit down together and compare and contrast their own processes and the present challenges of taking their respective visioning processes to the next level. In this regard they are a microcosm I think of the larger world of Jewish education. We have really collectively begun an important new chapter in the history of Jewish education in North America. Documenting and researching the unfolding chapter is of great importance.

Believing that there is more than one path along which this visioning process will unfold I also wonder how the crafters of the educational vision at Keren or and Shir Halev might read this Midrash about Bezalel a year later. For indeed with all the enormous vision and wisdom credited to Bezalel in the Midrash the contemporary JPS translation (1963) renders lev hochma as "skilled craftsman" rather than "wise-hearted" as in the 19l7 translation. Which brings me back finally to the title of this article. Surely, all the work of educational change done these past thirty years in Jewish education (improved experiences, curricula, and understandings) has a craftsman like element that we don't want to loose as we carve (notice the very word) out a larger vision of Jewish education. If Bezalel represents both craftsmanship and vision perhaps he is suggestive of such a synthesis for our educational programs all in various stages of construction.

EXEMPLIFYING VISION-DRIVEN PRACTICE:

THE CASE OF BEIT RABBAN[1] (January 2005)

INTRODUCTION

In this article, I will offer a portrait of a vision-driven educating institution. I do so in the spirit of the age-old belief that "one picture is worth a thousand words." A single powerful example may serve to communicate core ideas and distinctions much more effectively than many words written *about* vision-driven practice. If successful, the example will illustrate what a vision is, what vision-driven practice is, and why organizing educating institutions around compelling visions is a worthy challenge for educators. For these reasons, even if the institution I will be describing were purely the product of imagination, encountering it would be fruitful. Because, however, the portrait the reader will encounter *is* based on a real-life institution, it offers an additional benefit, the explanation of which will serve to situate this project in a significant tradition of contemporary educational inquiry.

Many individuals who may find the idea of vision-driven practice intellectually compelling will nonetheless dismiss the possibility of vision-driven institutions as a philosopher's pipe-dream, incapable of realization under real-world conditions. In adopting this stance, they place themselves in a long tradition of educational pessimism – a tradition which may, unfortunately, contribute to a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. For the conviction that the institutions of our dreams are no more than dreams may

[1] The research described in this paper would have been impossible without the generous support and encouragement of the Mandel Foundation. I also want to thank the editors of this volume, whose incisive questions and suggestions along the way have contributed to the development of this article.

discourage or contaminate potentially fruitful efforts to build such institutions. If such pessimism is unwarranted, it is therefore important to dislodge it.

One can distinguish two very different strategies for accomplishing this purpose. One of them is to assault the theoretical considerations and/or empirical data that lead the pessimists to believe that the institutions we would like to build are incapable of being established. As an example, when James Coleman's study of equal opportunity and the schools gave rise to a widespread pessimistic assessment of the possibility of creating schools that could significantly enhance the life chances of economically disadvantaged minorities,[2] critics immediately attacked the methodological and/or theoretical tools that informed his research effort.

The second strategy used to challenge the pessimist's bleak assessment of the possibility of the kinds of schools we would like to see is radically different. It is to show that such schools already exist! This strategy is also exemplified in the responses to Coleman's research. As against the conclusion suggested by Coleman's study that we would be unlikely to find schools in which economically disadvantaged children of color regularly make leaps in educational achievement, critics went in search of – and appear to have found – living institutions in which such children show dramatic improvement.[3] The search for such institutions, coupled with the effort to figure out both what makes them work and how to replicate them, forms the core of what has come to be known as the effective schools movement.

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[2] See James S. Coleman et al. *Equality and Educational Opportunity* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966).

[3] For a popular account of such schools written in the era this movement came into being, see Charles Silberman, *Crisis in the Classroom* (New York: Random House, 1969), pp. 95-112.

The intuition at the heart of this second approach to vindicating the possibility of establishing exemplary institutions is captured, as Charles Silberman suggested, in Robert Merton's observation: "Whatever is, is possible." In a similar vein, Seymour Fox, who in turn credits Lee Shulman with the concept, characterized the ability to point to institutions which skeptics believe impossible as a kind of 'existence proof' that such institutions can come into being.[4]

The present project is very much within this "existence proof" tradition. As against those who believe vision-driven practice an impossibility under real-world conditions, I point to Beit Rabban, a Jewish day school on the Upper West Side of New York City, as a living example of such an institution, with the hope that it will give pessimists pause and perhaps inspire others to try to build vision-driven educating institutions.[5] It is important to add to this that the account of Beit Rabban offered in the discussion that follows is based on interviews with the school's founder/director, on a review of various written materials (many of them public and some published) describing the school, and on observations of the school in the late 1990s. I make no comments in the paper about what has happened to the school since that time.

It is also important to note that although attention is paid to some of the school's weaknesses and challenges, they are not at the heart of my inquiry, which primarily focuses on what makes Beit Rabban a vision-driven institution. This is worthy of mention

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[4] See Seymour Fox, Israel Scheffler, and Daniel Marom, *Visions of Jewish Education,* Cambridge. England: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 262.

[5] This project is thus in the 'effective schools movement' tradition to the extent that it seeks to identify successful institutions of a kind that some may believe impossible. But it is important to add that my understanding of Beit Rabban as a "successful" institution is not informed by the interest in achievement scores that was central to the understanding of success in the effective-schools movement. Though it is entirely likely that Beit Rabban students have high achievement scores, I characterize Beit Rabban as successful not for this reason, but because it exhibits the possibility of not only designing but also establishing and sustaining a vision-driven school under real-world conditions.

for more than one reason, not the least of them being to make sure that the reader understands that, at the time of this study, this school (like any other real-world institution) was far from perfect and faced significant challenges, including the important one of assuring its own long-term existence as a vision-driven institution. I return to these matters below.

Having urged that this paper is designed to offer a living example of a vision-driven educating institution, it needs to be added that the power of the example depends on our having at least a rudimentary understanding of what is being exemplified. Although gravity was operating before Newton came along, the events in which it was embodied did not function as *examples* until, thanks to Newton, we became aware of the relevant concepts and principles. Similarly, in the case of vision-driven practice: it's important to prepare the way for the example of a vision-driven institution through a brief, more general discussion that identifies the key ideas that will be illustrated. In the first section following this introduction, I therefore discuss the concepts of vision and vision-driven practice, and I make the case for encouraging vision-driven educating institutions. In the second section I illustrate some of the key ideas by painting a portrait of Beit Rabban. It is worth noting that Beit Rabban is of interest not just because it is a vision-driven institution, but because it exemplifies something which many people might find very counter-intuitive – namely, possibility of a vision-driven *religious* educating institution that is pluralistic, intellectually open and serious, and non-dogmatic.

Though the section describing Beit Rabban is designed to emphasize the power of vision as a tool in educational planning, the section ends by discussing, and using the case of Beit Rabban to illustrate, the *in*sufficiency of vision – more precisely, of vision

alone - as a guide to practice. In the third and concluding section, I discuss inferences that may – and may not – be legitimately drawn from the claim that an educating institution is vision-driven, and I then use a skeptic's query as a vehicle of briefly re-considering, and in the end reconfirming, the desirability of striving for vision-driven practice.

As a final prefatory comment, I want to acknowledge my intellectual debt to three individuals. One of them is Professor Michael Rosenak, whose ideas on education, in general, and Jewish education in particular, as they have been expressed in his publications, in his lectures, and in the wonderful conversations I have been privileged to have with him over the years, have influenced me in ways too numerous to mention. If the school I will describe exhibits at an institutional level the possibility of a union among religious seriousness, critical thinking, and openness, certainly Mike Rosenak powerfully exemplifies their compatibility at the individual level.

The second individual I want to acknowledge is Professor Seymour Fox, under whose guidance I first came to think in a systematic and continuing way about the place of vision in education, both general and Jewish. In this case, too, my debts are too many to specify in detail, but they are profound.[6] Professor Fox has strongly influenced not

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[6] I have had the opportunity to encounter and reflect on Seymour Fox's ideas in a variety of contexts, including his writings and a course on Jewish education that he delivered to the Jerusalem Fellows in 1987-88. Other ideas emerged in conversations between him, myself and his associate, Daniel Marom. Representative writings of his and/or his associates that discuss questions relating to vision include Seymour Fox, "The Educated Jew: A Guiding Principle for Jewish Education," (1991), and Seymour Fox with William Novak, *Vision at the Heart*, Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education and the Mandel Institute, 1997. For those who have an interest in questions relating to vision and Jewish education, a particularly important major volume is: Seymour Fox, Israel Scheffler, and Daniel Marom, *Visions of Jewish Education,* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

just the development of my ideas concerning education but also the kinds of questions I bring to educational inquiries.

The third person I want to acknowledge is Devora Steinmetz, the founding director and the spirit behind Beit Rabban. Over a two year period, not only did she allow me unfettered access to the school and its teachers, Dr. Steinmetz also spent many hours helping me understand the school's informing vision, the ways in which it played out in the life of the school, and the dilemmas she and the school struggled with. Without her active help, this study would have been significantly impoverished and probably impossible.

VISION-DRIVEN PRACTICE

Vision-driven institutions are institutions that are organized around thoughtfully and passionately held conceptions of what they are trying to achieve, conceptions that give meaning and direction to the activities of the participants and to the enterprise as a whole. A useful place to begin in trying to make sense of this statement is to offer interpretations both of vision and vision-driven practice. I begin with the former.

The Concept of Vision

Three senses of vision. The term "vision" has been used in so many ways and so loosely that it is threatened with losing not just all substantive meaning but also its power to evoke more than a chagrined rolling of the eyes in the hearer. If, therefore, the word is to be rescued, it is necessary to begin with a clear articulation of what it refers to. Of the many ways in which "vision" can be understood, I want to focus on three that are especially pertinent.

1. **Existential vision.** An existential vision is a conception of the kind of person and/or community that one is hoping to cultivate through the educational process. It picks out what one would count as the successful outcome(s) of the educational process along intellectual, social, moral, and other dimensions. An existential vision is an answer to the question, "What is this enterprise all about? What's its raison d'etre?"
2. **Institutional vision.** An institutional vision is a conception of what, at its best, an institution will be like. "An institution that is suffused with caring", "an institution that is [in a determinate sense] inclusive down to its very details" – these are characterizations of institutional (as distinct from existential) visions. An institutional vision may be more or less systematically filled in. While it might do no more than specify the institution's hallmark characteristic, an institutional vision will sometimes be much more thickly articulated; it may, for example, identify norms, practices, kinds of education to be encouraged, and/or the kinds of settings that make up the physical and social environment.
3. **Strategic vision.** A strategic vision is a plan of action grounded in the recognition that there is a gap between current reality and the kind of institution to which we aspire: it is essentially a design for closing or at least reducing this gap – and, if this is achieved, for ensuring that the gap will not re-emerge.

People who discuss the role of vision in education often fail to discriminate between these (and other) understandings of vision. My own account of vision-driven practice draws on all three of these understandings, which it orders in a particular way. Let's begin by considering the relationship between existential and institutional vision.

First, in the spirit of the adage that "form follows function", from a conceptual standpoint, an existential vision should precede one's institutional vision. That is, as an educator, the first question one needs to address is, "What kind of person/community am I hoping to encourage into being through the educational process?" The answer to this question should then substantially drive one's attempt to identify appropriate institutional arrangements; for these should be arrangements that will encourage progress towards the educational outcomes identified in one's existential vision.

It is important to qualify this point in a number of respects. First, although, as just noted, I am suggesting that from a conceptual point of view we should view existential vision as prior to institutional vision, some educational thinkers will prefer to begin their effort to develop a guiding educational perspective at the level of institutional vision and will only later proceed to the identification of an existential vision. That is, one can readily imagine someone who begins his/her educational deliberations with a powerful image of an ideal educational environment and only later seeks to tease out the conception of an educated person that is implicit in this image. From the perspective developed here, there is nothing wrong with proceeding in this fashion so long as, in the end, the enterprise as a whole is justified by means of an account that gives logical – or perhaps it is moral – priority to the existential vision.

Second, although, as suggested above, an appropriately designed educating institution is strongly influenced by a guiding existential vision, it needs emphasizing that the existential vision does not *dictate* the institutional vision. One reason for this is that, inevitably, the move from existential to institutional vision requires a host of additional understandings that are not themselves part of the existential vision. These include, for

example, beliefs about human motivation and development, beliefs about learning, and beliefs about the cultural circumstances and background of likely clients.[7]

A second reason for resisting the notion that existential vision *dictates* institutional vision is that most of us would be very uncomfortable with the notion that "He who wills the end wills the means!", i.e., that effectiveness in helping us actualize our existential vision is the sole criterion we should employ in determining optimal institutional arrangements. As deontological moral theorists have often pointed out, while promoting outcomes we regard as inherently good, e.g., the general happiness, is praiseworthy and/or obligatory, not everything that will contribute to these outcomes is morally defensible. As John Rawls has put it, our efforts to promote what is good need to honor certain side-constraints which rule out unethical means of achieving our purposes, however worthy these purposes may be. Returning to the case of educational institutions, we can readily imagine practices which we would want to rule out on moral grounds even if we had convincing empirical evidence that these practices would help achieve our larger educational purposes.

We come now to the third understanding of vision, which I have identified as *strategic*. In *The Republic*, Plato's existential vision (his conception of a well-ordered society and how individuals live within such a society), combined with his beliefs concerning human nature , human growth, and the effects of different social arrangements on human development, gives rise to an institutional vision defined by the requisite educational arrangements. From thence to reality, a wave of a magic wand proves sufficient. But in the real world, it is at best with great difficulty that those who

[7] This point is developed below, pp.

hold a conception of an educating institution that is very different from the society's standard fare can produce an institution that bears a meaningful resemblance to their aspirations. To make progress in this direction requires what I am calling a strategic vision, i.e., a thoughtful plan of action grounded in a hard-headed assessment of obstacles, resources, opportunities, risks, uncertainties, and costs.

At this point, it may be useful to summarize the relationship between these three kinds of vision. Briefly, in the conception I am painting, a strategic vision is an attempt to make progress towards practice organized around an inspiring institutional vision, which is in turn guided by, and substantially justified with reference to, an existential vision judged to be worthy.

The Concept of Existential Vision

Since existential vision is at the heart of the matter, more needs to be said about vision in this sense, and here I will emphasize three points. First, an existential vision is not – is much more than – a slogan. More specifically, an existential vision needs to be sufficiently specific to offer educators real guidance. When, in his famous "I have a dream" speech, Martin Luther King urged people of different races to sit down together at the table of brotherhood, many Americans were profoundly inspired and as a result mobilized to act on behalf of Civil Rights legislation. But from an educational standpoint, the idea of 'sitting down together at the table of brotherhood' falls far short of what I am calling existential vision; and the reason is that, though it may well rule out certain attitudes and forms of conduct, this phrase is too vague to offer much guidance to educators. Do brothers love, respect, support, or just tolerate each other? Are they color-blind, ignoring the differences between them, or do they learn to appreciate

these differences? Do they intermarry? Depending on how one interprets the concept of brotherhood, one ends up with a very different set of educational aspirations. For "Brotherhood" to function as a guiding existential vision, or as an element in such a vision, it must be brought down from the realm of slogans and given the kind of determinate intellectual and moral content that will allow educators to identify understandings, habits of mind and heart, as well as dispositions, that should be nurtured in those we hope will come to regard each other as brothers and sisters.

Second, existential visions vary with respect to their comprehensiveness. One shouldn't assume that an existential vision necessarily embodies an all-encompassing blueprint for what a community or an individual should be like. Although some existential visions may be relatively comprehensive (in that they specify the recommended way of life in great detail), an existential vision may be relatively narrow in scope, emphasizing a single hallmark characteristic, leaving the rest of life under-determined. The way of life represented by the Amish exemplifies a fairly comprehensive existential vision. As an example of a narrow guiding conception, one can imagine an institution organized around the idea that youngsters should become "autonomous human beings"(assuming, of course, that this notion is, in the spirit of the last point, interpreted more specifically), leaving everything else undetermined.[8]

Third, *at its best*, an existential vision in the sense that I have in mind is not *any* guiding conception but one that has stood the test of careful reflection. It is a guiding idea that has been subjected to critical examination, with attention to the different ways it

[8]One ought not to think that an educational agenda associated with a single characteristic like autonomy will give rise to a thin educational agenda. For although an educational ideal like *autonomy* is in one sense a single characteristic, the capacity for autonomy will require a constellation of attitudes, dispositions, and skills, some or all of which may require systematic cultivation.

might be interpreted, to the rationale that informs it, to the costs and implications of achieving it, and to competing ideas around which an educating community might mobilize.[9]

Vision-Driven Institutions

A vision-driven institution is one that is genuinely *serious* about the vision around which it claims to be organized. To say that it is *serious* is to suggest two things: first, that there is a deep sense of commitment to this vision; and second, that the key stake holders go significantly beyond lip-service and token implementation in their efforts to incorporate the vision into the life of the institution. *Seriousness* is exhibited in deliberate, thoughtful efforts to design and maintain institutional arrangements that have a reasonable chance of facilitating meaningful progress toward the actualization of the vision. A corollary of this is that there are a limited number of aspirations about which an institution can afford to be serious: that is, since seriousness about the achievement of any given aspiration will typically require a significant investment of institutional energies and resources, institutions must be very careful in deciding what they are prepared to be serious about.

Against this background, we may, as a first approximation, characterize a vision-driven educating institution as one that down to its details is guided by the informing existential vision: not only curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation, but also architecture, interior design, hiring, and those various, sometimes hard to articulate, elements that

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[9] Since one can readily point to vision-driven institutions in which the vision has not been subjected to this kind of scrutiny, this point is clearly prescriptive. It is intended to encourage those who are interested in organizing practice around compelling guiding visions to subject their ideas to careful examination. For an approach to the cultivation of educational leadership that takes this notion very seriously, see Mordecai Nisan, *'Educational Identity' as a Primary Factor in the Development of Educational Leadership*, Jerusalem: The Mandel Institute, 1997.

enter into the culture of an institution are all significantly informed by the guiding vision. In the ideal case, any and every aspect of the institution's design can be explained in relation to this guiding idea (in conjunction with other assumptions concerning such matters as the institution's clientele, human nature, child development, and surrounding social and cultural circumstances).

That said, it needs to be added immediately that few, if any, real-world institutions are fully vision-driven in the sense just specified. For a variety of reasons, there is always likely to be a gap between what the institution is actually like and what it would look like were it fully in sync with the vision. For this reason, it may be wiser, and certainly less deflating to institutions striving to be vision-driven, to characterize a vision-driven institution as one that regularly seeks to identify and to close gaps between current practice and what it would look like if it were adequately organized around the vision in question.

It is also important to add, in part as a way of steering the reader away from a likely, and troubling, misconception, that there is nothing in the nature of a vision-driven institution that precludes the possibility that the vision itself will undergo change in the course of the institution's life. Indeed, one can readily imagine – and, in fact, we can point to - institutions whose visions change in the course of time, as well as institutions and other social bodies whose ethos asserts the desirability of openness to change at the level of vision.[10]

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[10] As a famous case-in-point, the United States Constitution, which embodies a conception of what the United States of America is fundamentally about, includes ground-rules for its own transformation, as necessitated by changes in social circumstances, understandings, and values. That is, an integral part of the nation's vision is the idea that there is room to reinterpret its guiding ideals and to amend the framework within which communal life proceeds. That said, it is important to add that to say of a social system that the ideal or vision that informs it can change doesn't mean that it is infinitely transformable. Some of its

As an aside, it is worth adding that there should be nothing surprising or confusing in this idea that change at the level of vision may be part of the life of a vision-driven institution. Although, as educators, we may strive to cultivate human beings who embody what we take to be worthy traits, there is no reason for us to believe that our current ideas about these matters will survive unchanged into the future. On the contrary, our knowledge of human history, not to mention our own personal histories, gives us good reason to think the opposite: that over time, in small and/or big ways, our ideas about the most important things (in which category the ideas that enter into a guiding existential vision fall) *are* likely to undergo change. This may be the result of what we discover when we fail to realize these ideas; it may be a result of what we discover when we *succeed* in realizing them; or, it may be the result of changes in our sensibilities and understandings. For present purposes, this doesn't matter: what does matter is that change at the level of vision is itself an ordinary part of life at the level of individual, institution, and community. Far from being a threat to institutional life, change at the level of vision is something that a wise institution may want to make room for and encourage as a way of ensuring its own vitality over time.[11]

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guiding ideas are likely to have a foundational character, representing a core which, in part through re-interpretation, is protected at all costs.

[11] Here again the case of the U.S. Constitution is instructive, it being arguable that it is precisely the fact that it is possible to both re-interpret the Constitution (through the courts) and to amend it (through the legislative process) in light of changing circumstances, values, and understandings that has enabled the United States to continue thriving under rapidly changing conditions that have spanned more than two centuries.

A critic might respond that the admission that our guiding vision is likely to change, sometimes profoundly, in the course of time entails a rejection of the idea of vision-driven practice. "Why in the world," says this critic, "should we subscribe to a vision and use it as a guide to educational practice when we know in advance that, over time, we may come to radically reinterpret, if not reject, some of its major tenets?" There is more than one answer to this question. One of them is to note that this kind of reasoning undermines human efforts to achieve thriving, morally worthy lives. For on this view, the recognition that our conceptions of thriving or of what is morally required of us may well undergo change over time empties our existing conceptions of any value, and we might as well set these conceptions aside as we determine how to act; and this would leave us with no basis for determining such things other than momentary impulse. A line of reasoning that leads to such a conclusion would, on the face of it, seem seriously problematic.

A second response is to note that although we know that some elements in our outlook *may* – indeed, are likely to – undergo change over time, we don't know which ones they will be. Thus, we are best off embracing the ideas that seem wisest to us at the time, while being open to the possibility that over time we may want to revise some of them.

Common to these responses is a rejection of the notion that acknowledging that our guiding ideas may over time undergo change should undermine our willingness to act on them in the present. Nonetheless, this awareness may appropriately inform the way we approach our lives and make our choices at personal and institutional levels. As suggested earlier, this awareness might reasonably give rise to an outlook that is open to,

and perhaps encourages scanning for, reasons to re-think one's guiding ideal, an outlook that discourages ways of acting and thinking that might undermine the possibility of seriously revisiting one's guiding beliefs. This awareness might also give rise to an approach to achieving one's guiding ideal that does not completely sacrifice the present on the altar of the future.[12] But while such accommodations may be wise responses to our recognition that the views which seem compelling to us today may not seem so in the future, they fall short of a decision to abandon reliance on guiding ideals because of the possibility that down the road they will be found wanting. We turn now to some key considerations that favor organizing educational practice around guiding existential ideals.

The Case for Vision-Driven Practice

A number of considerations support the ideal of vision-driven practice. First, a conception of the kind of person/community one is hoping to bring into being through the educational process affords the educator a powerful, perhaps *the* most powerful, tool for non-arbitrary educational planning concerning matters as diverse as curriculum, pedagogy, hiring, architecture, social organization, and admissions. Second, such a conception offers a meaningful basis for evaluating the success of the school. Third, to the extent that the institution's educators understand and identify with its guiding conception and see the connection between this conception and what they are seeking to achieve in their encounters with learners, their work is invested with meaning. What they are trying to accomplish loses its potentially parochial, narrow cast and comes to be

[12] The dangers of sacrificing the present to the future are discussed in a number of John Dewey's writings. See, for example, *Experience and Education*, New York: Collier Books, 1963, p. 49.

viewed as a contribution to a shared, morally worthy purpose, i.e., the cultivation of a kind of human being and community that inspires enthusiastic identification.

This is to be contrasted with the more ordinary situation that has the following features. First, educational decision-making is heavily influenced by factors like tradition, fads, internal and external pressure groups, and the idiosyncrasies of particular educators. Second, like piece-workers in a factory, educators in many schools pursue limited goals in relative ignorance of how their efforts and those of others tie together in the service of larger purposes with which everyone is identified. Under these circumstances, the activities of educators typically do not reflect any larger agenda that they share; indeed, the outcomes they strive for may well be at cross-purposes.[13] Moreover, it will not be personally fulfilling to the educators in the way that it might be if they recognize themselves as a community engaged with one another in the accomplishment of a shared and worthy moral purpose.

It goes without saying that important objections to vision-driven practice as I have characterized it need to be considered. There is, for example, the charge – or at least the

[13] As an example. I cite the (by now predictable) results of an assignment I have regularly given students preparing to be secondary school educators at my university. I ask the students to interview three teachers in their practicum sites concerning their most fundamental educational aspirations and the beliefs that stand behind these aspirations. What emerges is that within any given school teachers operate with an incoherent mix of sometimes competing aspirations. For example, while some are exclusively focused on skills and understandings relating to their subject-matter, others are concerned with self-esteem and cooperation. While some want their students to acquire skills and attitudes that will equip them to succeed in college and in the work-place, others are interested in cultivating their social conscience. The language and the level and moral direction to be found in their descriptions of what they are about testify to a cacophony of disconnected voices. Though the hypothesis that these teachers are dealing with different populations of students might be appealing, the facts would not bear this out. One might, of course, argue that the encounter with this cacophony of voices is itself a powerful communication, and that perhaps the underlying vision of the school is discoverable in this circumstance. But nothing in the mission-statements of these schools, or the words of their lead-administrators, suggests that this kind of cacophony, or what it communicates to the students, is intended. Yet another possibility is that, amidst their very different aspirations, they educators themselves (or if not they, then a talented ethnographer who witnesses their practices) might succeed in identifying certain values that all of them consistently embrace in the midst of all this diversity. This hypothesis has been explored and advanced by any number of thinkers, including, for example, Philip Cusick, *The Egalitarian Ideal and the American High School* (New York: Longman, 1983).

fear - that vision-driven education is manipulative or indoctrinatory. Addressing this and other objections is important because the concerns that give rise to these objections may well inhibit support for efforts to make educating institutions more vision-driven; and my suspicion is that addressing them will end up strengthening the case for vision-practice. But I defer this endeavor to another occasion, limiting myself on this one to the equally important task of offering what I hope will prove an illuminating example of vision-driven practice.

BEIT RABBAN AS A VISION-DRIVEN EDUCATING INSTITUTION

Beit Rabban's Guiding Vision

Beit Rabban's conception of what, educationally speaking, it wants to achieve – what I earlier called its *existential vision* - has both individual and social dimensions. At the individual level, Beit Rabban is organized around a vision of an educated Jewish human being which gives a central place to engagement with Jewish texts: the ideal graduate of Beit Rabban is a person whose understandings and way of life as a Jew are grounded in this engagement with the text, who experiences this engagement as part of his or her identity as a Jewish human being, and who views it as a contribution to the growth of Torah.

This ideal graduate of this school brings to his or her engagement with the text a problem-solving orientation that, though perhaps not identical with, significantly overlaps the approach he or she brings to other encounters with the world. This person approaches all situations, textual and other, in a spirit of open, reflective inquiry, alert for difficulties and eager to use his/her critical faculties and imagination, as well as available bodies of expertise and wisdom, to address these difficulties in a meaningful way. In relation to our

activities and practices, this means thinking of them as instruments of our purposes, to be thoughtfully assessed (and, when appropriate, revised) based on whether they are proving adequate to these purposes.[14]

Because human beings differ from each other in their sensibilities, aptitudes and experience, their encounters with the text, as with other situations, are likely to lead them to different understandings and conclusions, and a corollary of this is that their understandings of what Judaism says and requires of them are likely to differ. In this sense, diversity of belief and practice (what many would call 'pluralism'), particularly when it emerges out of careful encounters with the text, is more authentically Jewish than is any particular historical variant of Judaism.

Complementing Beit Rabban's emphasis on cultivating individuals whose personal understanding of Judaism arises through an intellectually serious, open, and rigorous engagement with Jewish texts are also other key emphases. Especially noteworthy are 1) the school's aspiration to cultivate individuals who will recognize an obligation to use their abilities to help relieve human suffering, and 2) its interest in helping them become human beings who take pleasure in exercising and striving to develop the abilities with which they have been blessed.

As suggested earlier, this conception of an educated Jewish person is also associated with a conception of *community.* It is an *ethical* community in the sense that its members recognize an obligation to treat one another with respect and to relieve the suffering in their midst. It is a *pluralistic* community in the sense that its members

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[14] As suggested in what follows, the important exception to this point are activities like Torah learning, treating one another with respect, and community service the value of which Beit Rabban takes as a given and which are at the core of the school's outlook and identity. The most important purposes that other activities in the school are designed to advance are derivable from the school's interest in supporting these core-activities at a high level of quality.

recognize that their encounters with Jewish texts and ideas, as mediated by their different sensibilities, experiences, understandings, and aptitudes, will give rise to different understandings of Judaism.[15] And it will also be a *learning* community of a certain kind. It will be a learning community in which engaging with texts is a central – indeed, an anchoring – activity, but in which other forms of inquiry also abound. And it will be a learning community not just in the sense that all of its members are engaged in learning but also in the sense that they recognize one another as potential resources in their own learning. At its best, it's a community whose members value the creation of spaces in which they both feel empowered to offer their own ideas and are eager to listen carefully to what others have to say. In its own way, this is a vision of an Olam M'tukan, a perfected world.

It is important to stress that Steinmetz does not view the elements that enter into this vision of Jewish existence as an idiosyncratic laundry list. On the contrary, the kinds of traits that she believes to be important – for example, the kind of patient, reflective, imaginative, rigorous inquiry into the text's meaning that gives rise to different understandings of Judaism, and the felt-obligation to relieve human suffering – are, in her educated opinion, central to mainstream Judaism as it has been lived across thousands of years.

The Beit Rabban Vision Embodied

Following the lines of our earlier discussion, two claims are embedded in my claim that Beit Rabban is driven by the vision just described:

[15] Though I find the word "pluralistic" a useful way to characterize this aspect of the Beit Rabban vision, Devora Steinmetz does not generally use this term, tending to refer to the school as "nondenominational".

1) In significant respects, the vision is actually embodied in the practice of the school and serves as a guide to decision-making across its various domains.

2) The school is on the lookout for gaps between vision and practice and makes serious efforts to close them.

I will try to illustrate how these criteria apply to Beit Rabban through some examples that capture the character of this school. It is important to note that these examples fall into two categories: those observed by the author and reconstructions based on reports, oral and/or written, that come from the school's director, Devora Steinmetz. All but the last example reflect activities and events that actually transpired in a form that closely resembles the description; as will be discussed below, the last example reflects a design, the actualization of which fell significantly short of the mark.

First example: ***"Let's sit in a circle."***

> A group of some fifteen children, about 5 years old, are gathered around their teachers, and one of the teachers says, "Let's sit in a circle so that we can all see each other."

It may seem like a trivial, insignificant event, and in one sense it surely is. And yet, this little incident captures a key – if not *the* key – idea animating this school. The teacher could have simply said in an encouraging and friendly way, "Let's get in a circle," and the youngsters might have happily complied. But by adding the phrase "so that we can all see each other," the teacher conveys that there is and should be a good reason for what she asks the children to do. More specifically, implicit in this communication is the message that school-practices – small ones like this one, as well as ostensibly more significant ones – are goal-oriented, that they are informed by

purposes; and because they are guided by purposes, we have a basis for evaluating them. School-practices are thus not to be accepted as 'the way things are'. We have the right to inquire into the purposes that inform them and to assess their reasonableness relative to these purposes. As Steinmetz put it very simply in one of my conversations with her, "The basic idea of the school is that things should make sense."

Second example: '*Avoda m'tzuyenet*' ('*Excellent work*')

> One day the director of the school, Steinmetz, comes across a bulletin board at the top of which in big letters is the phrase "AVODA M'TZUYENET" ("EXCELLENT WORK"), and beneath which were a number of examples of the children's work in this teacher's class. Steinmetz was disturbed by this, asked the teacher to remove the display, and invited her to a conversation in which she explained her reasons.

One ought not to infer from this episode that Beit Rabban doesn't value excellent work or excellence, in general. On the contrary: one of the reasons Steinmetz discourages such displays is that she believes that, in practice, they often operate to undermine the meaning of excellence. More specifically, she thinks that because contemporary teachers are sensitive to self-esteem issues and concerned about wounding children whose work is not truly excellent, oftentimes the so-called excellent work that is exhibited includes examples of everyone's work, with the effect that the currency of the word "Excellent" is destroyed. And the youngsters realize soon enough that the inclusion of their work doesn't necessarily mean anything except that their teachers desire to include everyone's work. And since the teachers will not come right out and say this, they end up pretending that everyone's work really is excellent, leading the youngsters to realize that dishonesty has crept into their relationship with their teachers, that – at least in this arena – it's all a kind of game.

The foregoing might lead someone to believe that Steinmetz would therefore be comfortable with an arrangement in which the teacher honestly assesses which of her students has completed what she takes to be genuinely excellent work and then singles them out for attention and praise. Not so! For this situation is problematic in other ways. Prominent among them is the sub-text, identifiable in the situation just described, that human beings are worthy of praise to the extent that their work approaches impersonal standards of excellence. Among the reasons Steinmetz is troubled by this sub-text is that she shares with contemporary moral philosophers like John Rawls a particular moral intuition: whether a child is capable of satisfying the teacher's standards substantially depends on the morally irrelevant circumstance that he or she has been fortunate enough to acquire certain abilities through heredity or a favorable familial environment. To her, it does not seem right that one child should be rewarded for achievements that are due to gifts for which he or she can take no credit, while other children who are not so blessed should go unrewarded and unacknowledged; and it's wrong that one child who can do an assignment beautifully (by the teacher's standards) in five minutes should be praised, while another child, who is perhaps less able, works for hours on the same assignment and receives a lukewarm response because he or she has produced something that, by the teacher's standards, is less accomplished.

Given the centrality of this moral insight to the school's self-conception, it works hard not to convey, through thoughtlessly designed practices, a moral message that is antithetical to this idea. Although, as we will have occasion to discuss more fully below, Beit Rabban is by no means hostile to the idea that there should be performance standards, a system that distributes praise based on where the learner stands relative to

standards of excellence does nothing to encourage youngsters to do the most important thing, which is to do the best they can relative to their abilities and to continue developing their abilities. In Beit Rabban's view, to the extent that praise or other rewards should be distributed to youngsters for their accomplishments, the basis for this distribution should not be achievement per se but whether the youngsters have done the best they can relative to their abilities and have, through this effort, grown beyond their previous levels of achievement. Not only would this avoid invidious comparisons between students, it would communicate to all the children, whether particularly able or not, that there is always a possibility for growth, as well as for stagnation. Thus, in a well-designed school, the particularly able student doesn't feel smug or able to rest on his or her laurels; nor do less able students feel that they are constantly coming up short. Both types should be encountering and seriously responding to challenges that take them beyond their current levels of understanding and achievement; and their sense of themselves as learners should be grounded in this, rather than in where they stand relative to one another or to some absolute standard of excellence announced by the teacher. This incident thus illustrates Beit Rabban's conviction that human beings should be striving to grow to the utmost of their abilities. They should evaluate themselves based not on how well they measure up to any set of fixed standards but on whether they have made the most of the abilities that they have.[16]

[16] I am grateful to Professor Michael Inbar for pointing out to me the strong resonance between Steinmetz's views on these matters and the exciting recent work of psychologist Carol S. Dweck. Dweck's ideas lend strong empirical support for Steinmetz's reluctance to praise children for the abilities that they have. See here *Self-Theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality, and Development*, Philadelphia: Psychology Press, 2000.

Another point illustrated by this incident relates to the school's response to the teacher who created the "EXCELLENT WORK" bulletin board. Because it cares deeply about achieving its guiding aspirations, a seriously vision-driven school like Beit Rabban is likely to monitor its faculty's activities to ensure conformity with the guiding vision. When, as in the case we are considering, it is discovered – not just on one isolated occasion but on many -- that a teacher's work is not consonant with this vision and that the teacher is unable to align his/her teaching with the school's guiding vision, the teacher is unlikely to stay at the school very long. Put differently, this episode reminds us of two things: first, that in a vision-driven school the operation of vision is revealed not just in what is included in the school but in what is excluded or prohibited; and second, that the guiding vision plays a critical role in decisions concerning hiring and firing, in evaluation, and in the determination of professional development experiences.

Before leaving this example, it is important to note another consideration that was at work in Steinmetz's response to this teacher. She was troubled by the fact that, more often than not, when the so-called excellent work of students is displayed, they have only the foggiest, if any, idea of the standards in relation to which their work is being assessed. And this brings us to the next example.

Third example: ***The Caldecott Awards.***

> A few years back the children in the kindergarten-first grade were reading a series of books that had received Caldecott Awards, and at some point a child asked: how is it decided which books get this award? Since nobody knew the answer, it was agreed that a letter should be written to the Caldecott-people, requesting their selection-criteria. Although they responded, their answer was vague and gave very little real information. At which point the teacher suggested an idea that caught fire with the children: "Why don't we invent our own book-award, to be given to books that we ourselves judge to be outstanding?" The children loved the idea and found themselves embarked on a successful effort to develop their own standards for book excellence.

Once again, we encounter the idea that things (in this case the standards used to judge excellence) are grounded in reasons. This is a particularly important example, because so much of school-life (and life beyond school) is organized around the evaluation of our work – except that, in the normal course of events, the basis for the evaluations to which we are subjected remains mysterious. Either we are not clued in to the fact that there are standards that stand behind the evaluations; or we are not told what the standards are; or, if we are told what the standards are, we are left clueless as to why these standards are being used to assess our performances. In contrast, Beit Rabban de-mystifies this situation: it emphasizes that awards are grounded in standards, and that the standards are not simply 'out there' but are the creations of human beings who select them based on considerations that, on reflection, seem reasonable to them. Thus, instead of spending their early years just internalizing others' standards or inhabiting a world in which, in the spirit of "I'm Ok; you're Ok", adults try to shield them from all standards, the children at Beit Rabban have a chance to develop some understanding of how and why standards come into being and to begin developing their own.

Equally important, this episode illustrates a theme already highlighted – namely, that we have the right to inquire about why things are the way they are and not to assume that because they are a certain way, this is the way they should be. In encouraging the youngsters to write to the Caldecott people, the school emphasizes that things are open to question; and the inability or unwillingness of the Caldecott-people to articulate clear and reasonable selection-criteria opened up the opportunity for the youngsters to work towards standards grounded in considerations that did make sense to them.

Since we have earlier emphasized Beit Rabban's rejection of the way standards function in conventional educational institutions, this episode also provides an excellent opportunity to guard against a misimpression. True, Beit Rabban is hostile to standards that are vague or mysterious, i.e., that are not grounded in higher-order considerations that seem clear and sensible; and it's also true that the Beit Rabban approach to education puts the emphasis, not on whether the achievement of the youngsters satisfies certain fixed standards of excellence but on encouraging learners, no matter what level they're at, to make a serious effort to work up to their potential. But that said, the school is by no means hostile to standards: standards of excellence, including performance-standards, that are reasonable and that make sense to the learners can be invaluable tools in the educational process, guiding their efforts to develop and sometimes motivating them by giving them something to reach towards. As this school sees it, the problem in education is not reliance on standards *per se,* but reliance on standards that are not articulated, explained, and/or used in meaningful ways.

How does one have a standard that is able to relate to the specific needs of each child?

Fourth example: *Homeless Joe.*[17]

> Throughout the year the children have become familiar with a number of social service projects and agencies through regular community service activities. More recently, earlier this week, Nurit and her co-teacher had posted a sign on the wall, which asks: WHERE WILL WE GIVE OUR TZDAKAH?, and throughout the week a list slowly developed that reflected the children's encounters with various programs. And now, the final decision was at hand!
>
> At the appointed time the kids clustered around Nurit, who was standing near the list of possible charities. Here were the candidates on the list (in the children's own words): DOROT [an organization that tries to meet the needs of the Jewish elderly]; Project ORE [care for Jewish homeless people]; 'learn how to

[17] The description that follows, and especially the particulars of the conversation, is an imaginative reconstruction based on a number of sources. Though the description purports to capture the spirit of the activity and the general direction of the conversation, it should not be viewed as a fully accurate account of what happened.

help sick people in hospitals' [medical research]; the Jewish Home and Hospital; and 'poor people/people on the street'.

Nurit introduces the activity. "This year we have been meeting our responsibility to help people in need in two ways. Every week we have tried to help needy people directly, and we have also collected Tzdakah money, which can help needy people in other ways. But, you know, collecting money is only half the challenge; it's also important that we think carefully and wisely about how to best use this money so that it will do some real good."

We will, she went on to say, take a vote, but before voting it's important that we have a chance to think together about the various possibilities. And she then invited each person who had contributed a possibility to the list to explain or, since the kids were already familiar with many of the options, to review) whatever he or she can about the proposed destination of the funds and how they would be used to fulfill the purposes of Tzdakah. The kids were incredibly eloquent in pleading the case for their favorite candidates; and, when it seemed appropriate, Nurit or her co-teacher would ask a question that elicited more information that seemed pertinent.

And then H-Hour arrived and the children voted: Dorot got 5 votes; Medical Research - 2 votes; poor people/people on the street, a whopping 7 votes, the clear winner!! Already strong democrats, losers and winners alike are getting excited about giving their accumulated $40 to Joe, the man who regularly stands on the corner. Apparently, Joe always has a kind word for the kids, and many look forward to their encounters with him on the way in and out of school. One of the children now proposes bringing him the can of Tzdakah-money on the spot, and this idea is greeted with enthusiasm from the others. The only ones who look a little unhappy are Nurit and her co-teacher, who seem surprised by this turn-of-events.

Thinking fast, Nurit finally says, "Seems like an interesting idea. But before we act on it, let's think about whether it will really help Joe."

"What do you mean?" asked one of the girls.

"Well, do you remember when, some time ago, we had a guest from the shelter – I think she was the director - who spoke with us about homelessness? One of the things she mentioned is that some homeless people have serious alcohol or drug problems."

"I remember, "one boy said with a smile. "Because after she said that people who are alcoholics sometimes can't help themselves, I said that that's the way I feel when I see chocolate."

Nurit smiled. "That's right. And when people have very bad habits like that – I don't mean with chocolate, but with alcohol or drugs, it may be very hard for them not to use money that comes their way to support these habits rather than to get things they really need." That's one of the reasons why, Nurit went on to explain, it's sometimes wiser to give Tzdakah-money directly to social service organizations rather than to individuals directly.

"But we've never seen Joe looking drunk of anything!" another child complained.

"That may be true," Nurit countered, "but you can't always be sure. And if he does have a drug or alcohol problem, not only will our money not do him any good, it may actually hurt him. So my suggestion is this: if you're interested in helping homeless people, why not give the money to Project ORE?"

"But we don't just want to help homeless people, we want to help Joe," exclaims the boy who had proposed this option in the first place. "He's poor, and he's always friendly to us. And if we give our money to Project ORE, it's probably not going to help him."

Everyone, teacher and children alike, sat in silence for a moment as though contemplating the situation. The children had taken in the teacher□s point but didn□t seem ready to abandon the idea of giving their Tzdakah to Joe. Finally, one little girl spoke up. When called on by the teacher, she said, "I've got an idea. Maybe we shouldn't give Joe money; maybe we should give him something else -- you know, the things that money is supposed to buy for Joe; that way we don't have to worry about his using the money for bad things or wasting it."

The comment seemed to re-energize the room. Remembering a recent food-drive, someone suggested bringing cans of food for Joe, but someone else wondered whether Joe even had the utensils to handle cans of different kinds or to heat up food. Someone else suggested getting Joe a new coat, but others were concerned that they didn't know Joe's size or the kind of coat he might like. Finally, someone said that "maybe we could make Joe a good sandwich to eat."

"That seems like a good idea," said another, "but we have enough money to buy a lot of sandwiches."

"That's no problem," said a third child. ""fter all, though we know Joe better, there are lots of homeless people in the neighborhood, and they're probably hungry, too. Let's make enough sandwiches for all of them."

The idea seemed to gather support around the room, and soon it was agreed on. Nurit seemed relieved -- and also pleased; and she announced that on

Monday she would bring to school the supplies needed for them to make the sandwiches. At this point the class moves on to another activity.

True to her promise, Nurit showed up in class on Monday with all the supplies needed to make peanut-butter and jelly sandwiches. She also immediately complicates the situation by announcing that the whole activity would be completed in Hebrew. Surprised but not shocked, the children respond enthusiastically to the challenge. Divided into pairs, the children devote themselves to their work, and one little boy is overheard saying to his partner (in English), "I'm not going to take one bite, because a lot of people need this stuff!" The other nods in agreement.

When they have done making the sandwiches and packing them into bags, Nurit and her co-teacher lead a short conversation about what it might be like to talk with people whom they don't know, people who might not always be very clean and who might talk very differently than they do. But the kids don't seem at all alarmed.

They head out the building and one of the boys, David, spots Joe. He grabs one of the bags and approaches him. Joe greets him in a friendly way ("How ya' doin', David?" and David answers, "Great," followed by "We've brought some sandwiches!" Joe accepts the bag and smiles. "Thanks, David. I never say no to food!" That's it, but it's enough. The children move along, a look of pride on their faces, a feeling that they have made a real difference in someone's life.

They continue down the street and Nurit spots a man looking through the window of a restaurant, trying to catch the eye of one of the waiters; but, not surprisingly, they all look the other way. With encouragement from Nurit, Yonatan, a little bit nervous, approaches the man. Here's the interaction.

"Sir?"

"Hi there."

"Sir, we have some sandwiches we made. Do you want them?"

The man bends down and sticks out his hand, saying, "Gimme five, my man!", and Yonatan immediately 'gives him five' with enthusiasm.

"My buddy," says the man. "That's sure nice of you. You be safe, you and all your friends. Be safe." And then, after Yonatan hands him the sandwich bag, "I sure am hungry. Thanks a lot."

> The children and Nurit continue on their way. At the end of their journey, they are left with a number of sandwiches, and the children ask to take the sandwiches home with them so that they can distribute them to needy people in their own neighborhoods.

A number of cardinal features of the Beit Rabban vision are embodied in this incident. Note first, and perhaps most obviously, the concern with alleviating suffering that is central to this weekly school activity; and it is important to add here that this concern is not understood as a hobby but as an obligation, as something we are called upon to do whether we like it or not. The question embedded in this activity is not whether it is important to be engaged in alleviating human suffering, but how this is best accomplished.

Second, note that the activity is organized to offer the youngsters an opportunity to engage in genuine deliberation concerning the best way to address a presenting problem. It is not an unguided, free-for-all deliberation (the kind that might have led to simply bringing Joe the money they had raised). Rather, the deliberation was informed by expert opinion concerning the situation of homeless individuals (the homelessness-expert that had addressed the youngsters earlier in the year), as well as by careful thinking. The aim is not 'to do something that makes us feel good', but to actually make a positive difference in the lives of others. This requires hard-thinking, with attention to alternatives and to consequences -- thinking that takes into account the educated opinions of those who have studied the problem at hand.

And this brings us to a third feature of this activity. The deliberation that leads to the decision to make sandwiches for Joe and other homeless people is something that goes on not in a single individual but in a community of individuals whose comments

respond to and build on one another in powerful ways. The solution arrived at is the product not of an individual and not of 'group-think' but of a community of independent thinkers engaged by a common problem and educated to listen carefully to and to build on one another's comments, with attention to the relevant evidence. As we shall soon see, something similar is typically at work in the youngsters' examination of classical Jewish texts.

Fifth example: ***3 Instances of Studying Torah.***

> ***The first instance.*** Grouped in pairs, the 3/4/5 grade children are engaged in Torah study, and the sounds of Torah-trope can be heard all over the room. I [the author] join one such pair, and find that one of the two boys is chanting a passage, while the other is following along, periodically translating the passage into English. They smile at me when I sit down but continue with their activity. After a while I ask them what the assignment is, and they tell me that there is no specific assignment. They're to move along in the study of the text, they say. When I ask them how they've arrived at the process I'm witnessing (one of them chanting, the other translating), they tell me that they decided themselves to proceed in this way. Both boys read very well, and one of them is a superb reader; they move along steadily until the whole class is called together by the teacher to consider the passage together. The passage (*Genesis*, Ch. 1:27) declares that "in the beginning God creates the Adam in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Immediately a question from one of the children: "Why are we told three different times that God creates the human being?", followed by a succession of hypotheses from the others, as well new questions: What does it mean to say that the human being was created "in His image"? Does God have a physical image -- and if not, what can "B'tzelem" ('in the image of') refer to? Does it mean that we are "like God", and if so, in what sense? Are we, one child wonders, like God by virtue of having eaten from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?"

At work in this episode is the school's commitment to open-ended inquiry, a commitment that is as much discernable in the study of the biblical text as it is in the examination of science.[18] Notice also that this episode exhibits the active role that the

[18] To claim this is *not* to suggest that "open-ended inquiry" is necessarily one and the same thing in science as it is Torah-study, especially when that study takes place in a religious community. For an illuminating

youngsters play in shaping the learning experience, not just when they gather as a single large group but when they work in smaller units. When paired up with a study-partner [in Chevruta], they are encouraged to develop a plan of learning that will facilitate working towards general goals identified by the teacher in a way that allows them to explore the text in a way that makes sense to them – with the consequence, says Steinmetz, that their interest is piqued by all sorts of questions that might not have occurred to the adults in the school. Here the notion that the youngsters are autonomous individuals, with the responsibility for their own learning, is front and center.

> ***The second instance.*** We are in Beit Rabban's multi-age Beit Midrash, in which children in the second through fourth years of Chumash study make their way through the biblical narrative. Different sub-groups are at different places in the story. On this day, a few of the children were busily investigating the episode in *Genesis* where Yaakov tore his garments because he thought Yosef had been ripped up by an animal. Along the way, one girl got the idea that maybe tearing garments in the Tanakh was done not as an act of mourning but only when one was in a state of doubt about a significant matter. Yaakov, after all, didn't really *know* what had happened to his son Yosef. Her hypothesis excited the kids in the class – both those in her group and others who had been studying other biblical passages. Eager to see whether there was evidence to support this hypothesis, she and the others soon found their way to the concordances in the room and looked up other places in the Tanakh where people tear their garments.

We witness here another example of the school's commitment to the cultivation of inquiring human beings. Note that here inquiry refers not just to intellectual curiosity and imagination but also to the disposition to put one's ideas to an appropriate test. In the case being considered, the appropriate test consists in investigating other biblical passages. In other situations, the test would be very different – for example, the test of experience.

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interpretation of what may be the key differences, see Michael Rosenak's *Commandments and Concerns,* Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1987, pp. 174 ff.

This episode is also illustrative of Beit Rabban's effort to encourage inquiry in a way that is authentic to the discipline in question. As much as possible, in subjects as diverse as math, science or Bible, the learning-tasks that youngsters take on are not 'school-tasks' but grow out of genuine encounters with the material at hand. Thus, in this instance, the children turn to the concordance not because the teacher has invented an assignment that will get them to use it but because, in the course of their own inquiries, they have come upon a question that it can help them address.

As already intimated, this episode also points to another way in which the inquiries children undertake in Beit Rabban are authentic: the youngsters seem genuinely excited about what they are doing, carried along by the momentum of their own interest. What is striking in this particular example is not just that the question that triggers the inquiry comes from one of the children, but that once it has been voiced, even children who a few minutes earlier had been engaged with other parts of the biblical story have spontaneously chosen to participate in the new investigation now under way.

> ***The third instance.*** Steinmetz was working with a group of first/second graders around God's announcement near the beginning of *Genesis* that there would be a flood in seven days time. A discussion ensued about whether this indicated that the flood would begin on Shabbat, but, after a while, a consensus seemed to emerge that it did not. Steinmetz commented that, even if not, mention of seven days recalls the Creation story, and one of the children says: "It's like God worked on Creation for six days and it was complete on the seventh; now, God planned the destruction of Creation for six days and did it on the seventh." Building on these comments, another child comments: "And at the same time Noah is using these six days to start the world all over again."
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> After these first interchanges, Steinmetz led a discussion about the flood as the destruction of Creation and the beginning of a new Creation, and she said that the group should look for evidence of this as they read more of the story. She pointed out that the opening of *ma'ayanot tehom* and *arubot hashamayim* [waters from below and above] reverses the separation of waters in chapter 1. And she added that they had already seen another passage which talks about water coming from above and below. Mentally scanning this earlier work in order to discover this passage, the children were silent, and then one of them remembered the fifth

> and sixth verses in chapter 2 -- about the earth not yet being watered by rain from above but by an *ed* [a mist] which comes from the earth. "Yes," Steinmetz said, "but did you notice that there the water brings life to the earth, but here it destroys the earth?"
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> At this point the children began clamoring to share their ideas and took turns doing so. They were so excited that Steinmetz found it virtually impossible to get them to go down to their movement class, which they were already late for, and which they loved. And finally, one of the children says, "I had an idea, and then I listened to other kids' ideas, and I put them together, and now I have a better idea," which he proceeded to share. And as though this was not enough, another child then comments: "This [the separation of waters at the time of the Creation and the re-merging of thewaters in the flood story] reminds me of *queri'at yam suf* [the parting of the Red Sea]." It happened to be just before Pesach. "I was thinking the same thing," said another child. At the end of the week, Steinmetz sent this idea home as the basis for a family discussion about Pesach.

In a conversation concerning this episode, Steinmetz has suggested that it captures an essential dimension of Beit Rabban. The school attempts (successfully in this instance) to live out the idea that responsible thinking is thinking that engages the ideas of other people. In this as in many other situations, the children discover that rich webs of meaning, and genuinely fresh and exciting ideas, will emerge through the process of reflective give-and-take. But Steinmetz emphasizes the centrality of the text to this give-and-take. The enterprise out of which the give-and-take among the children emerges and around which it continues to be organized is that of learning the text. In the course of this encounter with the text, problems or questions arise – in this case, what might be the significance of the Torah's comment that God announced the flood *seven days* before its onset? The ensuing effort to understand and address this problem is also guided and constrained by the text itself. For the resolutions that the learners come up with must themselves pass textual muster. "At these times," says Steinmetz, "it's very exciting to me the way the children ground their ideas in the text – which, of course, is

only possible because they learn it very carefully, pasuk by pasuk [sentence by sentence]."

And commenting about her own role in this process, she added: "The teacher's job is not just to encourage them to look for evidence in the text for their ideas; it's also to model this very process and to infuse their discussions with ideas that wouldn't have spontaneously occurred to them but that have the potential to enrich their thinking. On their own the kids might not have come up with the images of water and the ideas about the role of water in the chapters of *Genesis* that come before the Noah story; but once this material is out there, they're able to move with it."

Here we encounter what are by now familiar themes in a new context. Engaging a situation – in this case the text - in a spirit of inquiry is at the heart of the episode, as the youngsters and their teacher jointly identify and then try to make sense of problems presented by the biblical text. But what is perhaps more striking in this particular episode – and it's something we already had the opportunity to witness in the youngsters' deliberations concerning homeless Joe – is the way in which the intellectual movement described in this incident was *social* in character: without sacrificing intellectual rigor, members of this group of learners (a group that includes but is not dominated by the teacher) build on one another's comments in a way that yields ideas that none of them is likely to have come up with independently. As that one student put it: "I had an idea, and then I listened to other kids' ideas, and I put them together, and now I have a better idea." In other words, here the classroom exemplifies a community organized around imaginative problem-solving on the part of a group of engaged inquirers, informed by rigorous standards, enriched by inputs (in this case suggested by the teacher, but in others

by experts of different kinds), and culminating in the emergence of a rich web of meaning.

Sixth example: ***Is it permissible to turn on lights on Shabbat?***[19]

> We begin with the relevant background to the project that was designed for the children. After three years of intensive Hebrew (so intensive and effective that early on the youngsters speak, understand, and read Hebrew with ease!!), youngsters in third grade and above participate in a twice-daily Beit Midrash, one of them in Chumash and the other in rabbinic literature. There's a strong emphasis on the inter-relationship between the two literatures and on the pertinence of what's studied to their own lives.
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> In this particular year, the children were studying Seder Moed (a section of the Mishna that deals with Shabbat and the holidays). In the course of looking intensively at everything that is said about Shabbat in the Chumash, they tried to understand the relationship, pointed to in the Torah, between Creation, Shabbat, and the Mishkan, and they also tried their hand at identifying the kinds of prohibited labors that might emerge from attention to the Chumash alone. Then they went on to consider the 39 labors proscribed on Shabbat in the Talmud: they examined different explanations for why there are ***39*** prohibited labors; they worked to understand the major categories of prohibited labor; and they tried to understand the underlying principles at work in what is prohibited. Beyond this, they wrestled with the implications of the Ramban's (Nachmanides') commentary on *Leviticus* 23:24 in which he suggests, though not in these words, that it is possible to keep "the letter of the law" but violate its "spirit". The children were asked: "What place do you think a conception of the 'spirit' of the law ought to have in shaping our attitudes and our actions?"
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> It is important to add to this that at the same time the children are studying what is and is not permissible on Shabbat, they have been learning, in the context of an inter-disciplinary study of American history, about the effects of the Industrial Revolution on our lives and on the nature of the work we do. All of this leads to a detailed study of the incandescent bulb, an inquiry which includes reading primary and secondary sources about its invention, exploring basic electrical concepts, building circuits, and creating simple electrical gadgets.
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> These two streams of activity – the inquiry into Shabbat and the study of the Industrial Revolution and incandescent bulbs – flow into one another in the project that is the object of this final example. Briefly, the children are asked to imagine how the invention of the incandescent light bulb might have been greeted

[19] This is the episode, referred to in a general way earlier, that was imperfectly executed. The description that follows is in part a summary of what did happen, and in part, especially in its later phases, an account of how it was supposed to proceed. In analyzing the episode below, the significance of this gap between aspiration and actuality is discussed.

by Jews who had heretofore relied on candles and kerosene lamps for light. Here's the exercise:

> **Imagine hearing that Edison has invented an electric bulb and imagine seeing a light bulb for the first time. You find yourself over Shabbat in a home which has electric lights, and you wonder whether you may turn one on. What considerations are pertinent? And what do you decide?**

In addition to inviting the youngsters to reflect on what threatens to undermine the spirit of the Shabbat, these questions ask them to draw on and extend their earlier inquiries concerning what it means to refrain from work on Shabbat. As noted above, the children had already learned that in the Talmud the rabbis addressed the question of what counts as work by specifying 39 forms of labor that are to be included within the biblical prohibition of work on Shabbat. Needless to say, since there was no electricity at the time the rabbis were deliberating over these matters, the Talmud does not explicitly discuss whether turning on electric lights is forbidden. So one is left with the challenge of determining whether turning on a light falls under one of the categories of labor which the rabbis do explicitly forbid or whether it violates the spirit of the day. But this in turn requires developing a deeper understanding of the nature of the forbidden labors **and** of what goes on in the lighting of a bulb. And this is precisely what the kids were challenged to do! Since, for example, one of the labors forbidden on Shabbat is 'kindling a fire', the children need to determine whether the defining characteristics of kindling a fire were to be found in the activity of turning on a light bulb. Their inquiry required them to identify characteristics like heat, light, and combustion as defining characteristics of kindling a fire, as well as to investigate whether these elements are sufficiently present in lighting a light bulb to warrant putting this activity under the category of kindling a fire. This turns out to be as much a lesson about science as about Torah – a powerful example of what it might mean to integrate the Jewish and the general curriculum.

Finally, against the background of these foregoing inquiries, each child is expected to come up with his or her own perspective on the problem. As Steinmetz wrote in a Newsletter describing the activity:

> They will argue their hypotheses based on *halakhic* thinking, scientific evidence, reflection on the nature of work, and a deep appreciation of the prohibition of labor on Shabbat. They will challenge each other's ideas and they will be challenged by the ideas of scholars, past and present, introduced by their teachers. Each child will emerge with his or her best understanding of this question.

As this suggests, this light bulb project highlights the interplay between autonomy and tradition in the life of Beit Rabban. The children were to be engaged in a variety of investigations, culminating in the effort to come up with their own judgment concerning whether it's okay to turn on lights on Shabbat. The aspiration animating the design of this project was that by the time they completed the overall project, their views would be grounded in reasons that testified to rich familiarity with electricity and with biblical and rabbinic sources concerning Shabbat, as well as to a lot of careful thinking about how these sources apply to our own circumstances. Put differently, the activity exemplifies an approach to problem-solving that encourages **autonomy within the framework of the tradition**, with the tradition providing concerns, questions, ideas and insights that feed the participants' thinking.

It is beyond our purposes to assess the adequacy of the understanding of autonomy that is embedded in this activity.[20] For our purposes, the relevant point is that the school is identified with a clear conception of autonomy and that it is embodied in activities of the kind just described (as in the others we have been considering).

I want to emphasize that it would be a mistake to infer from what has just been said that the school's message to youngsters is that learning is instrumental to making decisions concerning how to live. Although they may discover that learning is helpful in

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[20] It may nonetheless be of interest to comment parenthetically on the understanding of the relationship between autonomy and tradition that seems to me embedded in the school's ideology and practice. In particular, there is much to be said for the idea that autonomy is only meaningful when it operates within the framework of a particular tradition. When we think of moral autonomy, we think of people making moral decisions within the constraints of the moral point of view, and when we think of the autonomy of a scientist we think of a person who is not outside of the tradition of science but on the inside -- someone who is steeped in its canons and standards of evidence. My 8-year-old son developed into an autonomous chess-player not by stepping outside the framework of the game, but by mastering its rules and applying them in a thoughtful way. If we take this example as a guide, we might say that what autonomy is, is actually defined by the particular 'games' or traditions in which we participate.

this way, the more fundamental sub-text in an episode like the one just described is that engaging in learning is central to one's life as a Jewish human being. Put differently, since engaging in this process of interpretation is itself one of the defining characteristics of Jewish culture, the children's engagement in this process through the light bulb project and other activities is a vehicle of their becoming rooted in this culture and beginning to contribute to the growth of Torah. It is, the school assumes, through such activities – activities that replicate the process through which the Oral Torah develops – that the youngsters come to understand what it means for Torah to grow through the process of continuing interpretation.

A related and a key point is this: this episode exemplifies the school's conviction that one's life as a Jewish human being is not separate from one's life as an inquiring, informed, and serious human being. One brings to questions of Jewish life the same inquiring spirit that one brings to one's inquiries in math and social studies, and one addresses Jewish questions not just based on 'what feels right' or what is 'politically correct' but through a reflective process that takes seriously into account pertinent ideas drawn from Judaism and the general culture.

Encountering this approach to inquiry, those familiar with John Dewey's writings on education, and with the Dewey school, may – rightly, I believe, - sense a strong kinship between the way inquiry figures into the life of Beit Rabban and the way it figures in Dewey's approach to education. For in a way that is very reminiscent of the Dewey School, in the light bulb project, as in many other episodes in the life of Beit Rabban, the children, energized by genuine curiosity, are immersed in a serious inquiry designed to address a problem that genuinely engages them -- an inquiry

necessitating critical thinking and investigation of ideas drawn from diverse realms of human thought (in this case, science, social studies, and Torah). But although it is appropriate to draw the comparison with Dewey, it is important not to exaggerate the symmetry between Dewey's educational outlook and that of Beit Rabban. While this is not the occasion to explore this matter systematically, such an exploration might revolve around at least three kinds of issues.

First, as against the assumption associated with traditional Jewish study that the texts that are its object are foundational anchors of our moral and intellectual outlook, Dewey is hostile to the idea of treating any body of literature as worthy of reverence.[21] Second, while Dewey would certainly be sympathetic to the idea of 'learning for its own sake', there is also a strong emphasis on *instrumentalism*, i.e., on the ways in which ideas and the activity of learning that gives rise to them are tools of adaptation to our environment. Though "learning for its own sake" may be something that will eventually be arrived at, Dewey is concerned, particularly in the early stages of education, to emphasize the instrumental value of learning; and as already intimated, at Beit Rabban the activity of learning is built into the day-to-day life in a way that gives it a more "for its own sake", foundational character. Third, there may be differences in the way that Beit Rabban and Dewey understand the kinds of problems that trigger authentic inquiry. More specifically, whereas much that Dewey writes suggests that what gives problems their *genuine* character is that they

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[21] Related to this, for Dewey, no system of beliefs and values – other than those beliefs that make continuing thoughtful inquiry possible – is to be viewed as sacrosanct and foundational; all beliefs other than those that facilitate and encourage continuing inquiry are to be treated as no more than possibly interesting hypotheses. Traditional Jewish inquiry, on the other hand, may allow for radically reinterpreting core beliefs but not for rejecting them outright if they don't stand the test of our critical, experience-informed inquiries. Precisely where Beit Rabban stands in relation to these two views is not entirely clear (to the author).

address the real and living concerns of the youngsters in their lives as human beings (and not just as students), in the case of the light bulb project what makes the problem real enough to be engaging (if the school's analysis is correct) is not that it concerns something that the children are troubled by in 'real life' but the simple fact that it embodies an intellectually difficult challenge with a non-obvious solution. [22]

I come, finally, to a critically important point that was alluded to above. Though the light bulb project, as described, captures what the school intended, this goal was imperfectly actualized in the actual life of the school. Its achievement was constrained, Steinmetz believes, by the limitations of the teachers, who were unable to carry it off as conceived. Though it may well be that more effective teachers could have been more successful in this endeavor, the emphasis, in Steinmetz's analysis, was more on the difficulty of identifying many teachers *anywhere* with the where-with-all to pull off this project. That is, it may be very hard to find teachers who possess the kind of fluency in Hebrew, in science, and in the Jewish textual tradition that this kind of project requires, along with the ability to integrate these domains in a concrete educational situation.[23]

The fact – and the school's admission – that this project was imperfectly executed is important for a number of reasons. First, it highlights that Beit Rabban is anything but

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[22] The Beit Rabban perspective on what makes problems interesting is very close in spirit to the views articulated long ago by Robert White. See, for example, Robert W. White, (1959). Motivation reconsidered: The concept of competence. *Psychological Review, 66*, 297-333. A judgment concerning whether the Beit Rabban's view concerning the nature of genuine problems is *really* at odds with Dewey's would require a deeper exploration of Dewey's ideas concerning what count as real and living problems.

[23] If it is really true that it would be difficult to identify many teachers who are capable of carrying out the curricular ideal that this project embodies, one would need to consider the possibility that this educational ideal is too ambitious. Note, though, that even if we prove unable to identify educators who are ready to carry out such a project *today* ,this would be an insufficient reason to dismiss the ideal. A more fruitful response might be to analyze carefully what teachers need to carry out a project of this kind and to then develop an appropriate set of learning-experiences for them. More generally, it could be that changes in the way we recruit and educate educators, as well changes in the rewards that go to educators, would help remedy this problematic situation.

a perfect school, if perfection means that it achieves all of its aspirations. It doesn't! For a variety of reasons, reasons that may variously include bad planning, poor execution, the inability to identify or attract teachers capable of adequately carrying out an educationally very ambitious project, and insufficient resources, practice often falls short of ideas inspired by the vision. Because my intention has been to highlight the ways in which the school is vision-driven, I have not focused on the school's failures; but it is noteworthy that, like other schools, this one sometimes fails. The point is important, among other reasons, because it underscores that being vision-driven is not an all-or-nothing affair and that, life being what it is, failures of various kinds are inevitable.

A related point – mentioned more generally early on, but worth reiterating in relation to Beit Rabban – is that what marks a school like Beit Rabban as vision-driven is not that it is always successful in actualizing its vision. By this standard, we would be hard-pressed to identify *any* vision-driven institution. Better criteria for identifying such an institution are, first, that there is a sustained, serious attempt to design practice in light of a larger, thoughtfully conceived conception of what the enterprise is about; and, second, that there is a willingness – one exhibited by Steinmetz in the present example - to honestly evaluate whether things turn out as one would have hoped, with an eye towards improving future practice. Beit Rabban's effort to identify and address gaps between vision and actuality are an important index of how serious it is about making this vision come to life in the school. While the effort to flag such gaps also falls short on occasion, it is undertaken with sufficient seriousness to distinguish Beit Rabban from the vast majority of educating institutions.

The Insufficiency of Vision

Because of its importance, I want to reiterate in relation to Beit Rabban a point made in a general way much earlier on: the thesis that Beit Rabban is guided by a vision should not be confused with the stronger – *and mistaken* - view that its vision is sufficient to give rise to the school's actual practice. For one thing, the move from a conception of a school that is ideally tailored to one's vision to the creation of an actual educational institution is inevitably influenced by a variety of real-world constraints. Notable among them are the amount of money available for the enterprise, the availability of teachers whose outlook, conduct, and pedagogy are coherent with the school's vision, and the availability, in appropriate numbers, of a clientele that is appropriate for this kind of a school. In the case of Beit Rabban, scarcity of financial resources is a serious constraint, with complex sources. It results not just from the absence of wealthy patrons prepared to invest heavily in the school, but also from the school's difficulty attracting a larger clientele; and the latter difficulty may itself arise in part out of the circumstance that, because it is cash-poor, its physical space is primitive to the point of turning-off some potential families.

But, and this is an equally important point, even if Devora Steinmetz and other Beit Rabban supporters owned a magic wand that enabled them to acquire endless financial resources and the ability to attract whatever educators and youngsters their hearts desired, Beit Rabban's existential vision would still prove insufficient as a guide to practice. For in the case of Beit Rabban (and any other vision-driven educating institution), a host of other kinds of beliefs mediate the move from an existential vision

specifying the kind of person and community one hopes to cultivate to the design of an optimal educating institution.

One such set of mediating beliefs pertain to the ethics of various educational practices. Among possible routes to achieving our educational purposes, we are likely to reject some and feel drawn to others based on ethical considerations. Most of us, for example, are likely to reject educational strategies which, even if they promise to be effective, entail treating learners in cruel or disrespectful ways. More generally, our educational practices will be constrained and shaped by our ethical sensibilities and beliefs.[24]

Another set of mediating beliefs pertains to empirical questions concerning learning, development, and motivation. Individuals who share the same vision of the ideal graduate may end up creating very different educational institutions because they have very different ideas about these matters. For example, followers of Freud, Skinner, and Piaget are likely to interpret educational realities and challenges in very different terms and to come up with very different strategies.

Beit Rabban offers a wealth of illustrations of the ways in which mediating empirical beliefs influence the shape of educational practice. One such example, alluded to above, concerns the place of praise in education. The school's reluctance to lavish a lot of praise on youngsters – something which is troubling to some of the parents - is a

[24] Note that these ethical beliefs may themselves be intimately connected to our guiding existential vision – so that it would be a violation of the vision to which we are committed to employ certain potentially effective means. For example, an existential vision informed by Buber's 'I-Thou' dialogical philosophy may rule out educational methods that require dehumanizing youngsters along the way. It may also be the case, however, that the ethical beliefs constraining our conduct have a source and a warrant that is different from our guiding vision. I have discussed the issue of ethical side-constraints that limit the selection of educational practices in "Education and Manipulation," *Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society - 1997* (Normal, Illinois: Philosophy of Education Society, 1978), pp. 354-362.

direct outgrowth of certain beliefs concerning the alleged tendency of praise, too liberally distributed, to diminish the meaning of excellence, to nurture unhealthy motivations for learning, and to introduce a measure of dishonesty into the life of the school. Similarly, the decision to use the school's scant resources to ensure that there is always one teacher for every eight children, at the price of sacrificing esthetics and the purchase of sophisticated educational technology, grows out of beliefs concerning what are – and what are not - essential conditions of human growth. Change these beliefs, and the whole character of the school would rapidly change![25] It is, moreover, important to add that the success of the school in making progress in the directions specified by its vision depends substantially on the adequacy of the empirical beliefs that mediate the move from educational ideal to practice.

CONCLUSION

This last observation provides an occasion to emphasize certain inferences that should *not* be drawn from the suggestion that a school is vision-driven. As just indicated, it would be a mistake to infer that, because it is vision-driven, it is a *good* school, even in the eyes of the person who advances the view that it is vision-driven. The vision may be a problematic vision; and even if we judge the vision to be adequate or even inspiring, the practices introduced to realize it may be morally suspect and/or grounded in untenable empirical assumptions. And, as also suggested above, even if the vision is compelling and the guiding empirical assumptions defensible, a school may fail to achieve excellence

[25] To illustrate this point, one might look at Plato's *Republic* in which, in contrast to Beit Rabban, careful attention is paid to the esthetics of the educational environment. Lying behind this attention is Plato's belief that the ideas of balance and rhythm that are inevitably embedded in the design of the social and physical environment that surrounds the child powerfully affect the inner balance – the moral balance – of the developing child.

for a host of other reasons, for example, because of its failure to find an adequate and stable supply of teachers who are sympathetic to the vision.

Another inference that should not be drawn from the declaration that a school like Beit Rabban is vision-driven is that 'down to its details' the school will be informed by the vision. As earlier suggested, judged by this very stringent standard, it is unlikely that any school could be characterized as vision-driven; for all schools are likely to have pockets that are not under the guidance of the visions that purport to guide them. For imperfect human beings like ourselves, a more reasonable standard for identifying an educating institution as 'vision-driven' is that it is informed by a continuing effort to bring its practice more into line with its guiding vision, as reflected in the way it approaches deliberations concerning such matters as policy, curriculum, hiring and firing, admissions, budget allocations, and crises.

Yet another inference that should be avoided is that *if* the school's vision is inspiring, and its practices sound, both ethically and empirically, and largely in sync with the vision, it will necessarily thrive. For a variety of reasons, such a school may nonetheless fail to endure. This, unfortunately, has been the fate of one more than one exciting vision-driven school that has emerged over the last one hundred years or so. In the case of Beit Rabban, its efforts to endure as a vision-driven institution continue into the present, with different levels of success at different moments in its history, and different trajectories that depend on such variables as the outlook and style of new leaders (i.e., those that succeeded Devora Steinmetz), the pool of available of teachers, and changes in the population of parents and children.

I conclude with the following point. As suggested in various ways above, vision-driven schools will not necessarily prove economically or otherwise viable schools or even good schools; and even at their best moments, the real-world institutions we describe as vision-driven typically fall far short of what *optimal* vision-driven practice would look like. Moreover, numerous circumstances threaten to erode whatever vision-driven character such schools have at their best moments. So one might well wonder: why bother? That is, why work so hard – and hard work it will be – to encourage vision-driven educational practice? Is it not a Sysiphian endeavor?

The answer, I believe, is twofold. First, although vision is not sufficient to give rise to worthy educational practice, and although we may be able to point to exciting examples of education that have not depended on clarity of vision, on the whole, the presence of vision profoundly enhances the likelihood of quality educational practice. It is a critical ingredient, even if it is not sufficient or, in all cases, necessary.

The second point is suggested by an observation made by John Dewey in a different, but related, context. Acknowledging that, at best, we have very limited control over the course of our lives, Dewey responded as follows to those who for this reason challenged the wisdom of devoting much energy to the exercise of foresight: control over the future is as precious as it is slight![26] Even a little bit of control can make a huge difference. Similarly, in the case of vision: in the end, even if a school is, for a variety of reasons, very imperfectly guided by a worthy vision, and even if the extent of this

[26] See John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, New York: Modern Library, 1930, p. 245.

guidance waxes and wanes over time, this 'little bit' of guidance may make the difference between an excellent and a mediocre educational institution.[27]

[27] As Seymour Fox makes this point in *Vision at the Heart:* "[I]t is true that in the normal course of events you will invariably fall short of your carefully thought-out vision. That is the way of the world: If you start with cognac, you'll be lucky to end up with grape juice. But that's not a bad result when you consider the alternative – if you *start* with grape juice, you'll probably end up with Kool-Aid!" (p. 3)

Brinker

Brinker himself says his vision is not relevant to North Am.

Inst. for Study of Contemp Jewry
Brinkerian Jew:
Nothing Jewish is foreign to me

Gidi Shimoni – how does the general culture define a human being and how does that affect the ways that Jews see themselves
e.g. South American societies → see national groups
hence Hebrew emphasis
What does America have to offer
Individualism
marketing approach
Synagogue emphasis → Am Congregationalism
[human beings are religious; Jews are synagogue people]

In order to understand Brinker we have to suspend our American side

See Brinker after Twersky → Brinker: "if we remain loyal to Twersky's halakhic definition of being Jewish, there won't be any Jewish!"

(1) B: Remain Jewish but still be free-thinking. This has a greater chance to survive than any other version of being Jewish.

Experience of Brinker → start in an exclusively Jewish place

Diff btwn American + Israeli definitions of <u>secular</u>

Brinker is more ideological

The living Society is the anchor upon which everything is built.

Greenberg to Brinker — "you're going to produce a Bahama"

(2) B. draws upon sources that you might not expect (like Locke or Rousseau)

B says his sources are part of a world of discourse that began w/ the Hebrew writers in 19th Century — see p. 107

Why does B choose these sources rather than European classic liberal [non-J] sources

["pretentious objectivity"]
Brinker on Twersky's view about "merely" presenting the Ramsam

B's conception of the human being → there is no place where a human can be "universal." Only way to get to the universal is thru the particular

"Liberal" needs to work thru my own community

Taking "outside" sources <u>into</u> Judaism — e.g. yoga

Among non-Jewish liberals Brinker comes out quite conservative! → Because he is so particular

Some Am Jews would fit into this Brener, Berdechevsky, etc ~~Wertic~~ → Kaplan in particular but Kaplan felt that Judaism was ~~a relig~~ irreversably religious. Kallen (cultural pluralism) influence on Harlem Renaissance. Kallen lost out to Bendaly boys + Am. Zionists

(3) Where Israel in all this?

- Are Israelis Brinkerians?
- ~~What is the tchy of Israel mean~~ curriculum: Brinker's + Rubrics ~~rubrics~~
  1. History
  2. J thought
  3. language, lit, culture

Would Brinker's curriculum include "teaching of Israel"? It would be foreign to B. He would reject tchy of Israel as a separate category.

Israel is a necessary condition for living out his vision Zionism is political Zionism → we have a state.

B: Ideas of Brenner, Ahad Ha Am etc are more relevant today because the Zionist political agenda has been fulfilled

For Am. J education — you'd need to include all of J culture

85% common texts
15% local (Philip Roth etc)

Ann Lerner's book

DP: It would useful to have essays responding to specific Visions essays.

Rights + Responsibilities – Br emphasizes "rights" but where is the connection to "responsibilities"

Jonathan Krasner
Miriam B Heller

Carol
Bethanie
Ramie

Orthodox & community positions

Lightfoot & Essential Conversation

Where does vision live? Parents? Faculty?

Relational trust — Bryk + Schneider — Trust in Schools

MacIntyre "practices" (moral values)

historical tract record
Lit about how to do them
Language

Bert Ballon

No veteran tchrs

Making Learning Visible & Reggio-Emilio

Robert White on problem-solving motivation

Carol:

Is "strategic" → the "mission"

Vision = the ~~egg~~ fossil in the dog races

Larry Scheindlin on spiritual

Analyze an institution
using the "grid" (by Carol)

Send Carol an email abt sending out the grid

Rami → Twersky Meyer Brinker Greenberg

Tom Green

Twersky + Meyer on DEON

Vision of the Educated Reform Jew at Suburban Temple-Kol Ami

We affirm that our goal is to develop forms of education that will support and challenge all learners to become educated Reform Jews who:

Engage with Torah as the Jewish people's ongoing, creative and sacred search for meaning and purpose in life.

Text and Brit

Develop a living and personal Judaism by integrating the moral and spiritual values of Judaism throughout the life cycle, during times of grief, discouragement and joy.

Personal connection to Judaism. How do we make Judaism personal outside of Temple?

Develop a personal relationship with God that deepens their own spirituality through exploration of the full range of Jewish understandings of God.

God

Celebrate Shabbat, festivals and life-cycle events as families and as members of Suburban Temple-Kol Ami.

Trying to get members to think and do Jewishly outside of Temple

Cherish and **Study** Hebrew, the language of the Jewish people.

Hebrew

Appreciate the values embedded in *t'filah* (prayer) and develop the skills to comfortably and competently pray at Suburban Temple-Kol Ami.

"Comfortably and competently pray" assumes a relationship with God. But this is more about the skills of worship, not the God-relationship.

Engage in *tikkun olam* (repair of the world) by assuming moral responsibility for the Jewish people and the global community, and by transforming that responsibility into action.

Tikkun Olam

Proudly Celebrate and positively express their Jewish identities as American Reform Jews and as committed members of Suburban Temple-Kol Ami.

Reform Judaism

Feel Personally and Historically Connected to the people, land and State of Israel as members of *K'lal Yisrael* (the community of the Jewish people).

Israel the land and the people

Respectfully Understand that all expressions of Judaism enrich Jewish peoplehood.

Accepting all forms of Judaism

MEMO

MANDEL FOUNDATION

November 8, 1999

To: Danny Marom 011 972 2 566 2837
From: Barry
Re: Professors Group

Here is a copy of the fax that I asked to be sent to you on September 17th! Something must have messed up in getting it from NY to Israel or from the fax machine in your shop into your mailbox! Who knows. At any rate here it is again. I've also enclosed the evaluation report that Susan Stodolsky did for us about the Professors group from May of 1968

Mandel Foundation

From: Barry and Gail

To: Seymour and Annette

Re: The Professors Group

Date: September 17, 1999

The Professors Group: Proposal for the Future

Introduction

This memo explores a proposal for envisioning the Mandel Foundation's Professors Group as a resource for the global enterprises of the Mandel Foundation.

1) The proposal begins with a list of recommendations.
2) The memo that comes next gives the reasoning behind the recommendations and the reasons why certain questions have emerged.
3) The recommendations are followed by those questions. The questions can serve as a partial agenda for our discussion.
4) Finally there are three appendices detailing first the background and history of the group, in the second, providing a list of the members of the Group, and in the third, a copy of the Spencer Foundation guidelines for reasons that will be explained below.

I. Recommendations

We would like to recommend the following:

1. Expanding the Professors group by 5 additional members in the coming year (1999-2000).
2. Building an organizational infrastructure for communicating with and directing the activities of the Professors in Foundation Projects. We recommend that Barry would direct that project and would serve as the contact person for the global work of the Professors with the Foundation.

3. Developing the Professors as a resource to the global enterprise of the Foundation:
    a. Doing ongoing consultation or evaluation work in various Foundation programs
    b. Teaching in Mandel programs (e.g. TEI, Jerusalem Fellows or SEL)
    c. Delivering papers and talks at conferences on Mandel Foundation-related subjects
    d. Commissioning Professors to write papers on issues of importance to the Foundation.
4. Expanding the Mandel Fellows program (which currently funds doctoral students in Jewish education at the Hebrew University) to doctoral students who would study with our professors as preparation for work in the field of Jewish education. (e.g. someone who wanted to work in research and evaluation would become a doctoral student of Susan Stodolsky or Adam Gamoran, etc.; someone who wanted to work in teacher education would become a doctoral student of Sharon Feiman-Nemser or Deborah Ball, etc.)
5. Developing a program of offering grants for research in Jewish education to members of the group, perhaps along the line of the Spencer Foundation. (Appendix 3 is an example of the Spencer Guidelines.)

II. MEMO: The Professors Group and its Future

The Professors Group was created primarily as an aid to the work of CIJE in North America. But the new reality of the Mandel Foundation creates important opportunities for the expansion of the Professors Group activities into venues in Israel or the larger world. Such expansion raises a number of important issues that we will turn to now.

1. Who is in it and Why?

Currently the group has 22 "members." (See Appendix 2.) This number includes

Adam Gamoran, Ellen Goldring and Danny Pekarsky, but does not count Barry or Gail as official "members." The professors have a wide range of knowledge about general education and certain specific areas of specialization as well. The areas break down, roughly, into four main groups, with some professors appearing in more than one group:

a) *Issues of Teaching and Learning*: Ball, Chazan, Cohen (early childhood), Feiman-Nemser, Grossman, Hoffman, Jacobs (early childhood), Richert, Stodolsky, Wineburg.

b) *Quantitative and Qualitative Research—methods and practice*. (This includes survey research, evaluation of programs, statistical methods, etc.): Firestone, Gamoran, Goldring, Kaplan, Neufeld, Schneider, Stodolsky.

c) *Philosophy*: Feinberg, Kerdeman, Pekarsky, Purpel.

d) *Policy and Educational Leadership*: Ball, Firestone, Gamoran, Goldring, Hoffman, Milstein.

We have been looking for people at the "beyond tenure" up to quite senior levels. All are considered outstanding within their fields; all are people who wish to make some contribution to the Jewish community; many are people who view the group as a chance to increase their own Jewish knowledge and commitments. There are some people who come to the group with strong or relatively strong Jewish backgrounds (5 or 6 speak Hebrew fluently); though the majority do not have such knowledge. Most members of the group have attended at least one of the three previous retreats of the group (this includes the long retreat in Israel). There are still a few people who have yet to make it to a meeting, but even those (like Pam Grossman) have wished to remain part of the group and hope to be able to attend. People have become members almost entirely by peer word

of mouth from within the group itself.

2. Should the Group be expanded?

The question of expanding the group has been raised a number of times, both within the group itself and by others in the Mandel organization. It would certainly be possible to expand the numbers, but members of the group leaned toward a "slow" expansion allowing the group to keep its cohesion. In some cases people were chosen specifically because of projects that were then on the CIJE agenda (e.g. early childhood education). This represents one reasonable way to expand the membership. Depending on the actitivities of the Mandel Foundation, professors can be sought who would fit into the Foundation's agenda.

3. "Other Professors"

A different approach to "expanding" raises the possibility of other groups of professors, modeled along the lines of the current Professors (of General Education) Group, but encompassing other domains that may be important for the Foundation. Three possible "others" have been mentioned: a) a group of professors of Judaica in North American universities; b) a group of Jewish intellectuals in other disciplines; c) a group of not-for-profit management professors.

In a certain sense CIJE had already begun developing group "a" above. We had turned to certain Jewish studies professors and used them to be teachers of Jewish subject matter in some of our programs, such as TEI and the Harvard Leadership seminars, and we had asked certain Judaica professors to speak at meetings of the old CIJE board (in two cases CIJE published these talks). This list included: Professors Isadore Twersky z"l, Jonathan Sarna, Arthur Green, Lawrence Hoffman, etc.

But is it a group at all? In fact, it's much closer to a "list" than a group since unlike the Professors of General Education, these Judaica professors, have never actually met together as a whole (and there are considerably fewer of them). An interesting question would be whether the Foundation should support the creation of a North American Professors of Judaica group. Such a group would resemble the other Professors Group but have a different "curriculum." Somewhat in the spirit of the old Melton seminar at JTS (in which Fox and Schwab introduced Jewish scholars to issues in education and Jewish education), such a group would focus in on the most important issues in contemporary Jewish education. These professors would become resources for our programs, sharing our assumptions and agenda, as well as becoming unofficial spokespeople or advocates for our approach to issues of Jewish education. They would be important resources in the expansion of the Educated Jew project.

We need to consider if this is both a worthwhile investment for the Foundation and if there are enough incentives to bring in these professors. Remember, the two main incentives that brought in the General Education group were "serving the Jewish community by using one's own expertise in general education" and "increasing one's own Jewish knowledge." Neither of these motivations is relevant to the Jewish studies professors. Still, there may be other enticements (e.g. contributing to the Jewish people beyond academy; the possibility of paid consulting work). This would need further exploration.

In addition to the Jewish studies professors, group "b" has also been proposed: Jewish intellectuals from other fields. These might include people such as Martha Nussbaum (philosophy), Michael Walzer (political theory), Stanley Fish (literary theory),

Natalie Zeman Davis (history), etc. In our view the rationale for such a group is harder to formulate. Although these are all eminent people, it's hard to know what they could contribute to the Foundation's actual program. One could imagine that such individuals could become important advocates for Jewish education—since they are significant cultural figures—but currently it's not entirely clear how one would accomplish such a mission and what might motivate them to get involved. It's possible that, like the Professors of General Education, these individuals also would be interested in learning more about Judaism for their own personal growth*, but making the link between that and serving the needs of Foundation is a much harder task. Unless we can find a better approach, our view is not to pursue this option at the present time. Perhaps we should postpone the creation of such a group until a later stage, but use certain individuals as guest scholars within some of our programs and deliberations.

On the other hand a third possibility—professors (or experts in) not-for-profit management—may be an important undertaking for the Foundation. Since one of the stated areas of focus for the Foundation as a whole is in the area of not-for-profit management, it would seem that such a group, modeled on the Professors of General Education group, may serve similar functions. Since this is not a field that we know, we cannot make specific recommendations about the membership of such a group and where it would be "located" within the Foundation as a whole, but it seems like a reasonable course for someone within the organization to pursue.

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* It's important to note that there have been examples of successful outreach to leading intellectuals and/or artists. The "Genesis" group led by Professor Burt Visotzsky at JTS brought in a group of writers to talk seriously about the Bible and led to a popular Public Television series hosted by Bill Moyers. Dr. David Hartman has succeeded in bringing leading Jewish intellectuals (such as Michael Walzer) to the

What is the Professors Group's role in the Mandel Foundation?

In our view the Professors Group has the potential to play an important role in the work of the Foundation. Based on our experience in CIJE and the connections that we have forged with the members of the group, we can see two main functions for the professors. First, the professors can be involved in the ongoing projects of the Foundation. Professors can have important teaching roles, similar to what we've seen at TEI, at the Jerusalem Fellows program, SEL, and IDP enterprises. Professors could spend summers in Israel or come in for short-term teaching modules. Since the expertise of the professors also includes specific areas of general education, they would have a contribution to make in areas such as educational issues connected to the teaching of mathematics, history and literature, ability grouping, standardized testing, etc. Professors could become tutors for SEL students.

Aside from teaching, professors could become involved in other areas of the Foundation's concern, similar to their work in the past with CIJE. These include: consulting to educational projects (e.g. the way that professors have consulted on CIJE initiatives with the Florence Melton Mini-School, Torah U'Mesorah, and Ha-Shaar) working on large scale research for the Foundation (parallel to the CIJE Educators Study, etc.) and developing evaluations of our own or others projects (such as the evaluation of TEI).

Beyond the specific projects of the Foundation, the Professors can be seen as building capacity for Jewish education as a whole. One particularly interesting possibility

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Hartman Institute for various seminars and writing projects.

would be to develop funding for doctoral students in Jewish education who wish to study with one of the professors. Thus a person interested in pursuing a doctorate in teacher education with a focus on the Jewish education context could receive fellowship funding to study with Anna Richert or Pamela Grossman. A person who wished to focus on issues related to the way students learn could go to study with Sam Wineburg, someone who wished to concentrate on educational leadership could work with Ellen and someone who wished to focus on sociological educational research could study with Adam. This is a particularly fruitful direction for us to pursue since for a relatively small amount of investment, it could help build the professoriate in Jewish education.[†] At the same time such an approach could also help increase the expertise of practitioners in the field.

The Role of the Retreats

One of the fundamental elements of the Professors Group has been the study retreats. These retreats have given an opportunity for Jewish learning, exchange of ideas about current educational issues on our agenda, bonding and fellowship (for some members this is very important), and Jewish celebration (this is important to some; less so for others). We have used these retreats as a way of presenting specific problems (such as the Indicators Project) to the group to get their input in an efficient and interactive way. We suggest that the retreats continue on a twice-a-year basis, recognizing that not all members can attend every retreat, but that the many purposes served by the retreats are essential to the group's functioning, including the ongoing identification of the Professors with the vision and work of the Mandel Foundation.

[†] This approach addresses some of the issues that Lee Shulman's program at Stanford (Wexner-

How should the Professors Group be organized and administered?

The Professors Group began as a project of CIJE. Now that the Foundation has become a global organization, questions need to be addressed about how the group will be organized vis a vis Israel Foundation work and North American work? Thus, if the Jerusalem Fellows wishes to hire one of the Professors group to teach for a certain period of time, how would that be coordinated with the needs of projects in North America? It seems that there should be a central clearing house function just to avoid conflicts within the global organization. One possibility is for Barry, as the director of the Professors Group, to take on this organizational role. We should discuss possible options in our meetings.

Similarly, how might we launch the doctoral fellowship project? How would that be coordinated? How would students be found or recruited? These questions should also be on our agenda. Finally, does the Foundation act as *shadhan* for the professors' work outside the Foundation? We have done so in the past (such as with Ha-Shaar and the Mini-School)—is this a role for us in the future as well?

Some specific challenges

The program needs to provide opportunities for the ongoing Jewish growth of the members. Up to now we have approached this through our retreats, but there are other possibilities as well. We could try to develop tutorials for the professors, both in areas of Judaica and in areas of knowledge about the field of Jewish education. The Professors

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funded doctorates in Jewish education) was aimed at.

Group began with a two-week seminar in Israel. Clearly, this was a powerful opportunity to have an impact on the individuals in the group and it would be possible to consider another lengthy seminar in Israel. However, it's important to remember that attempts to develop another Israel seminar have not up to now been terribly successful. Although there are members of the group who see a trip to Israel as an enticement, many of the group's members are either too busy with other, work-related travel to take the time necessary for a trip to Israel or are themselves unfamiliar with Israel or ambivalent about Israel. Surely, such a trip could have a big impact on such attitudes, but getting them to come is not going to be easy. Perhaps we should view the Israel seminar as something that by necessity would only be attended by a smaller number of the members. It could be coordinated with teaching work at the SEL or JerusalemFellows. We need to consider how such experiences might be developed.

III. Questions for discussion

This memo ("IV" below) raises a number of issues that the we need to discuss.

A. What current programs and projects of the Foundation should members of the Professors Group be involved in?

B. Should a "Professors of Judaica" Group be created? If so, what is its mission and how should the Group be established?

C. Should a "Professors of not-for-profit Management" Group be created? If so, what is its mission and how should the Group be established?

D. How should their involvement be managed?

E. What should happen with the retreats?

F. What role should Israel seminars (at the Mandel School) play in such retreats?

Should additional venues for professors' learning (e.g. tutorials) be created?

APPENDIX I: BACKGROUND

The Need

The Mandel Foundation's Professors Group is an attempt to address directly one aspect of the shortage of "senior personnel" in Jewish education. It has long been noted that there is a severe lack of academic expertise in Jewish education. In all of North America there are only around 30 professors of Jewish education, many of whom have significant administrative responsibilities with demands on their time that take them away from teaching and doing research. (At JTS, for example, of the eight faculty members in the field of Jewish education, one is the dean of the JTS Education School, one is chair of the department with significant responsibilities for recruitment and administrative supervision of students, one directs the Melton Research Center, and one is the National Ramah director!) Jewish education desperately needs expertise, evaluation and research. It is obvious that 30 education professors can only do a small portion of that work.

The small number of academicians in the field also creates another serious difficulty for Jewish education. Since these professors need to cover a wide range of fields within Jewish education, few have the opportunity to devote themselves to one domain and develop their expertise in a specific area of focus. Philosophers end up conducting quantitative research; teacher educators find themselves offering courses in educational administration. Members of the Mandel Foundation's Professors Group, on the other hand, have world-class expertise in a number of crucial areas of specialization, areas that are greatly needed by Jewish education: evaluation, educational leadership, quantitative and survey methodologies, early childhood education, problems of change, policy, and teaching and learning. With this depth of knowledge, the members of the Professors Group have an enormous amount to contribute to the field of Jewish education.

The Mandel Foundation Professors Group therefore can be viewed as a pilot project in preparing a certain type of badly needed senior leadership for Jewish education. We have already seen how useful their contribution can be in projects such as TEI, our Harvard Leadership seminars, and our research and evaluation enterprises.

The Goals

The goals of the Professors Group are:

- to increase the pool of talented individuals capable of teaching and doing research in the area of Jewish education;
- to initiate such individuals into the Mandel Foundation's work and utilize their services in our various projects;
- to help prepare such individuals for other aspects of work in Jewish education which may be separate from the Mandel Foundation's own projects;
- to provide the necessary background in Judaism and the nature of contemporary Jewish education and the present-day Jewish community to enable these individuals to contribute their expertise in the most effective and significant fashion possible.

The Foundation has tried to effectuate these goals by recruiting professors to our work, developing seminars for the professors around the topics suggested above, and working with the professors as they continue their connection to the Mandel Foundation.

The Members of the Group

There are many Jews—some with strong Jewish backgrounds; some with little knowledge of Judaism but with a desire to be of service to the Jewish people—who are professors of education at some of the nation's most prestigious universities. Many of these professors have worked in research areas (such as teacher education and program evaluation) that could be very helpful to our work in Jewish education. But the present communal structure of Jewish education has not made it easy for them to make this contribution. Through its early consultants such as Adam Gamoran, Dan Pekarsky and Ellen Goldring, CIJE recognized the potential of such individuals to help Jewish education in significant ways. Out of this recognition the CIJE Professors Group was born. With the reorganization of CIJE the project has become Mandel Foundation

Professors Group.

Up to this point members of the group have been involved in wide number of our projects. Among them are: TEI; the research we have conducted on teachers, on educational leaders, and on professional development; the Indicators Project; the Harvard Leadership seminars; and consultations to various educational programs such the Florence Melton Mini-School and Ha-Shaar.

APPENDIX II: LIST OF MEMBERS

Deborah Loewenberg Ball
Professor of Education
University of Michigan

Daniel Chazan
Associate Professor of Teacher Education
University of Michigan

Richard Cohen
Headstart Program Administrator
Community Housing Services

Sharon Feiman-Nemser
Professor of Education
Michigan State University

Walter Feinberg
Professor, Philosophy of Education
University of Illinois

Bill Firestone
Center For Educational Policy Analysis in New Jersey

Adam Gamoran
Professor
University of Wisconsin
Department of Sociology

Ellen Goldring
Professor of Educational Leadership
Vanderbilt University

Pamela Grossman
Associate Professor of Education
University of Washington

Marvin Hoffman
Senior Research Associate
University of Chicago

Francine Jacobs
Professor of Early Childhood Education
Tufts University

David Kaplan
Professor of Education
School of Education

Deborah Kerdeman
Assistant Professor
University of Washington

Michael Milstein
Professor of Educational Leadership
University of New Mexico

Barbara Neufeld
Education Matters, Inc.

Daniel N. Pekarsky
Professor
Department of Educational Policy Studies
University of Wisconsin

David Purpel
Professor, Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations
University of North Carolina

Anna Richert
Associate Professor of Education
Mills College

Barbara Schneider
University of Chicago - NORC

Susan Stodolsky
Professor
University of Chicago
Department of Education

Sam Wineburg
Associate Professor, Educational Psychology and Adjunct Professor, History
University of Washington

Ken Zeichner
Professor, Curriculum and Instruction
University of Wisconsin

***Barry W. Holtz*, Project director**
Associate Professor of Jewish Education
Jewish Theological Seminary of America

How is it rooted in life of professors

How will get people really involved

Grants —

Money to pursue intellectual inquiry

Given that it's a foundation

ala Spencer

Grants need partnering eg w/ another academic institution

Some should be w/o constraints

Book — 15% overhead

Spencer Web Page

Small grants 15K → rapid response

Major grants 8 months — a year

Professors of Gen Ed meet w/ and interact w/ Judaica + Intellectuals

Is "gray" important

Conferences → where Profs could give talks

John Bransford
Natl Research Council - "Mind, Context,"

Director needs to make shidduchim
w/ the global foundation

Need to have smaller subgroups
like 4 people to go to Israel for X project
or for study

Profs as consultants to Global projects
Annette - Seymour at Profs

FAX

MANDEL FOUNDATION

September 17, 1999

To: Danny Marom

From: Barry Holtz
Fax number: 212-532-2646
Voice: 212-532-2646

Re: Professors Group

Danny,

I am enclosing the memo we wrote last May (please disregard the Sept. 17th date on the memo. That's an artifact of the way the computer works!) The actual workplan for this coming year essentially includes the following items. (These were our "recommendations" to Seymour and Annette):

I. Recommendations

1. Expanding the Professors group by 5 additional members in the coming year (1999-2000).
2. Building an organizational infrastructure for communicating with and directing the activities of the Professors in Foundation Projects. We recommend that Barry would direct that project and would serve as the contact person for the global work of the Professors with the Foundation. ***(This is you now, Danny!)***
3. Developing the Professors as a resource to the global enterprise of the Foundation:
    a. Doing ongoing consultation or evaluation work in various Foundation programs
    b. Teaching in Mandel programs (e.g. TEI, Jerusalem Fellows or SEL)
    c. Delivering papers and talks at conferences on Mandel Foundation-related subjects
    d. Commissioning Professors to write papers on issues of importance to the Foundation.
4. Expanding the Mandel Fellows program (which currently funds doctoral students in Jewish education at the Hebrew University) to doctoral students who would study with our professors as preparation for work in the field of Jewish education. (e.g. someone who wanted to work in research and evaluation would become a doctoral student of Susan Stodolsky or Adam Gamoran, etc.; someone who wanted to work in teacher education would become a doctoral student of Sharon Feiman-Nemser or Deborah Ball, etc.).

dates in spring

MANDEL FOUNDATION

TO: GAIL DORPH
FROM: BARRY HOLTZ
SUBJECT:
DATE: SEPTEMBER 1, 1999

Linda Waite
Ellen Langemann
Clare Cushman
Susan Fuhrman
Aaron Pallas

I met with Seymour and Annette on Thursday, August 26th to discuss the Professors group. I had five items on the agenda.

1. Expanding the membership
2. Activities of the Foundation and how those activities relate to the issue of the Professors group.
3. Doctoral student fellowships.
4. Question of Professors of the future.
5. Research money for our professors.

In regard to the first item, future members of the group, we have in our work plan, an item to expand the Professors group by 5 people. I was interested in talking to Seymour and Annette about any possible suggestions or specialties of people that they might have. They suggested a number of different things.

- We should be looking for people in the area of philosophy of education. They sugggested that I go speak to Israel Sheffler to see if he would have any suggestions. One name they come up with is someone named Harvey Siegel at the University of Florida at Miami or Miami University. They also mentioned once again, Martha Nussbaum.

emerge out of their environment

- We should look for people in what we would call leadership education – professors who could contribute to the creation of the Mandel School.
- The third point was the need to develop Judaica Professors – the idea being that the Mandel School would need people who can teach Jewish content. They were particularly interested in us getting women to teach in the Judaica side. They had felt that they had not done very well on that in Israel and they felt it would be important to expand in that area.

In terms of the activities of the global foundation, we didn't talk a lot about that. I think that to their way of thinking, the main activity is the creation of the Mandel school and the creation of a faculty for that school but as they said to me not a lot of thinking, as of yet, went into the question of what will be the nature of that faculty, what will be the way of operation so that the question of full-time faculty versus part-time faculty has not yet been dealt with. So I don't think that there was a lot added in the area of the activities of the global foundation.

The third point was doctoral student fellowships. And I asked a question that we had of course asked a number of times before. Are there doctoral fellowships available for people outside the Hebrew University, specifically people who would be doing doctoral work with one of our professors? Their response was that what we should try to do is to find 2 really outstanding people who could be doctoral students with one or two of our professors and to present them as candidates for doctoral fellowships similar to what they've been giving at the University. What they said to me is that the selection process for the Hebrew University group was very demanding and that they rejected a number of candidates. Therefore, if we were going to present people for doctoral fellowship groups that we had to find very outstanding people. So they recommended that we find 2 such people, that we do not as of yet announce a program of doctoral fellowships but that we find the people and that will eventually lead to such a program assuming that such people are out there to be found.

The fourth issue on my agenda with them was the issue of the Professors of the future. They are they definitely interested in that idea. They think we need to develop a plan and presentation for the future on that idea. They think for a variety of reasons, budgetary, etc, that we should not begin with a full blown program but rather they suggested that we try to hold a meeting at the AERA convention in April, that we use our current professors as resources to find outstanding doctoral students who could be potential members of such a group and that we therefore begin this program of Professors of the future small but they seem pretty enthusiastic about this being something that could grow in the future.

Finally the issue of research money in the manner of creating our own Spencer Foundation. I think that it's pretty clear for the time being that this is not going to be on the agenda directly, that research de facto will emerge out of the R&D efforts that they're thinking about in Israel. That Professors will be recruited to do some of this R&D work in the manner that David Kaplan is working on Indicators and that Adam & Ellen are working on existing projects.

And that's basically the summation of the meeting. The final point is that they told me that we had asked for there to be a point person assigned in Israel to deal with this matter of the Professors. They said that they have assigned Danny Marom to this job and he will be our contact/point person in the Israel operation.

Barry Holtz

From: Barry Holtz [bholtz@mandelny.org]
Sent: Tuesday, August 10, 1999 12:52 PM
To: 'Sfox@vms.huji.ac.il'; 'annette@vms.huji.ac.il'
Subject: The Professors Group

Hi Seymour and Annette:

Do you think it would be possible for me to meet with you when you are here at the end of August concerning the Professors group? I have some questions and thoughts about future plans that I would like to run by you. These include: The issue of new recruits—do you have any ideas for people or any "specialties" that we should be including? What should our recruitment pitch be given the current configuration of the foundation? (That is, we don't have lots of projects for people to be involved in right now, so what should our approach be. What about our "professors to be" idea? Etc.

Let me know if such a meeting can be arranged. Thanks.

Barry

Build a plan here?

1. Members?
2. Activities → Global foundation
3. Doctoral students fellowships
4. "Professors to be"
5. Research # [Spencer]

Leadership education → profs who can contribute this

#4 is also on agenda

Jewish studies faculty

Philosophers — Scheffler

Harvey Siegel at Miami

Martha Nussbaum

Danny Marcus

Not announcing a program but find super people

MEMO

MANDEL FOUNDATION

June 17, 1999

To: Gail
From: Barry
Re: Workplan vis a vis the Professors

Here are possible activities in the area of the "Professors" for the upcoming workplan:

1. Expanding the Professors group by 5 additional members in the coming year (1999-2000).
   Budgetary implications: There are only small costs involved in recruiting new "members" to the group. It *may* increase the number of participants at retreats; it may entail some travel by Barry or Gail to meet with new people.

2. Building an organizational infrastructure for communicating with and directing the activities of the Professors in Foundation Projects. We recommend that Barry would direct that project and would serve as the contact person for the global work of the Professors with the Foundation.
   Budgetary implications: Small. No change vis a vis Barry's salary. This may entail an increase in travel and phone, particularly if we initiate individual visits to the professors, or bringing them into New York on an individual basis.

3. Continuing the Retreat Seminars of the group. 2 per year.
   Budgetary implications: We would like to try to organize 2 retreats per year. There has been interest expressed in a retreat in Israel (as we did to launch the entire project.) Each retreat (in America) typically costs around $25,000, including "outside" faculty, staff travel and lodging, but excluding the salaries of our own staff. Retreats in Israel would entail larger expenses—travel costs, but also the length of the retreat would likely be longer. (Also see item "e" below.)

4. Developing the Professors as a resource to the global enterprise of the Foundation:
   a. Doing ongoing teaching, consultation or evaluation work in various Foundation programs

   Budgetary implications: People are paid on a per diem basis. Aside from TEI and the Indicators Project, Mandel North America does not currently have a lot of projects so that expenses here should be low.

b. Teaching in Mandel School in Israel (e.g. Jerusalem Fellows or SEL)
Budgetary implications: This would involve travel and salary, based on what they are assigned to do. This would probably only involved a small number of professors, but see item "e" below.

c. Delivering papers and talks at conferences on Mandel Foundation-related subjects
Budgetary implications: This would involve travel and salary, based on what they are assigned to do.

d. Commissioning Professors to write papers on issues of importance to the Foundation.
Budgetary implications: People are paid on a per diem basis based on what they are assigned to do.

e. At our last retreat the professors themselves expressed an interest in developing a working project with the Israel faculty and School. This may entail a research project, teaching or working on projects with students in the Mandel School in Israel, etc.
Budgetary implications: This would involve travel and salary, based on what they are assigned to do. Since it takes place in Israel, this would entail travel of some significance. Depending on the type of research conducted, there could be additional expenses here.

5. Expanding the Mandel Fellows program (which currently funds doctoral students in Jewish education at the Hebrew University) to doctoral students who would study with our professors as preparation for work in the field of Jewish education.
Budgetary implications: This would involve significant funding—each student would need tuition and living stipend.

6. Developing a program of offering grants for research in Jewish education to members of the group, perhaps along the line of the Spencer Foundation.
Budgetary implications: This could involve significant funding, but it depends on what the research projects are.

Profs

How many people could we use and who are how

Doctoral candidates w/ Profs
SEL

Adjunct faculty of the Entity

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1. Jewish brainpower in education
2. But what about other fields? Martha Nussbaum? Stanley Fish? Natalie Davis?
3. Judaic scholars

Mandel Foundation

From: Barry and Gail

To: All

Re: The Professors Group

Date: April 14, 1999

The Professors Group: Proposal for the Future

Introduction

This memo explores a proposal for envisioning the Mandel Foundation's Professors Group as a resource for the global enterprises of the Mandel Foundation. We begin with a review of the reasons behind the creation of the Professors Group—what needs were being answered and what are the goals of the Group. This is followed by a list of current members of the Group. We then move on to a consideration of the Group's future, making suggestions and raising questions for our discussions.

The Need

The Mandel Foundation's Professors Group is an attempt to address directly one aspect of the shortage of "senior personnel" in Jewish education. It has long been noted that there is a severe lack of academic expertise in Jewish education. In all of North America there are only around 30 professors of Jewish education, many of whom have significant administrative responsibilities with demands on their time that take them away from teaching and doing research. (At JTS, for example, of the eight faculty members in the field of Jewish education, one is the dean of the JTS Education School, one is chair of the department with significant responsibilities for recruitment and administrative supervision of students, one directs the Melton Research Center, and one is the National Ramah director!) Jewish education desperately needs expertise, evaluation and research. It is obvious that 30 education professors can only do a small portion of that work.

The small number of academicians in the field also creates another serious

difficulty for Jewish education. Since these professors need to cover a wide range of fields within Jewish education, few have the opportunity to devote themselves to one domain and develop their expertise in a specific area of focus. Philosophers end up conducting quantitative research; teacher educators find themselves offering courses in educational administration. Members of the Mandel Foundation's Professors Group, on the other hand, have world-class expertise in a number of crucial areas of specialization, areas that are greatly needed by Jewish education: evaluation, educational leadership, quantitative and survey methodologies, early childhood education, problems of change, policy, and teaching and learning. With this depth of knowledge, the members of the Professors Group have an enormous amount to contribute to the field of Jewish education.

The Mandel Foundation Professors Group therefore can be viewed as a pilot project in preparing a certain type of badly needed senior leadership for Jewish education. We have already seen how useful their contribution can be in projects such as TEI, our Harvard Leadership seminars, and our research and evaluation enterprises.

The Goals

The goals of the Professors Group are:

- to increase the pool of talented individuals capable of teaching and doing research in the area of Jewish education;
- to initiate such individuals into the Mandel Foundation's work and utilize their services in our various projects;
- to help prepare such individuals for other aspects of work in Jewish education which may be separate from the Mandel Foundation's own projects;
- to provide the necessary background in Judaism and the nature of contemporary Jewish education and the present-day Jewish community to enable these individuals to contribute their expertise in the most effective and significant fashion possible.

The Foundation has tried to effectuate these goals by recruiting professors to our

work, developing seminars for the professors around the topics suggested above, and working with the professors as they continue their connection to the Mandel Foundation.

The Members of the Group

There are many Jews—some with strong Jewish backgrounds; some with little knowledge of Judaism but with a desire to be of service to the Jewish people—who are professors of education at some of the nation's most prestigious universities. Many of these professors have worked in research areas (such as teacher education and program evaluation) that could be very helpful to our work in Jewish education. But the present communal structure of Jewish education has not made it easy for them to make this contribution. Through its early consultants such as Adam Gamoran, Dan Pekarsky and Ellen Goldring, CIJE recognized the potential of such individuals to help Jewish education in significant ways. Out of this recognition the CIJE Professors Group was born. With the reorganization of CIJE the project has become Mandel Foundation Professors Group.

Up to this point members of the group have been involved in wide number of our projects. Among them are: TEI; the research we have conducted on teachers, on educational leaders, and on professional development; the Indicators Project; the Harvard Leadership seminars; and consultations to various educational programs such the Florence Melton Mini-School and Ha-Shaar.

The Group and its Future

The Professors Group was created primarily as an aid to the work of CIJE in North America. But the new reality of the Mandel Foundation creates important opportunities for the expansion of the Professors Group activities into venues in Israel or the larger world. Such expansion raises a number of important issues that we will turn to now.

1. Who is in it and Why?

Currently the group has 22 "members." This number includes Adam Gamoran,

Ellen Goldring and Danny Pekarsky, but does not count Barry or Gail as official "members." The professors have a wide range of knowledge about general education and certain specific areas of specialization as well. The areas break down, roughly, into four main groups, with some professors appearing in more than one group:

a) *Issues of Teaching and Learning*: Ball, Chazan, Cohen (early childhood), Feiman-Nemser, Grossman, Hoffman, Jacobs (early childhood), Richert, Stodolsky, Wineburg.

b) *Quantitative and Qualitative Research—methods and practice*. (This includes survey research, evaluation of programs, statistical methods, etc.): Firestone, Gamoran, Goldring, Kaplan, Neufeld, Schneider, Stodolsky.

c) *Philosophy*: Feinberg, Kerdeman, Pekarsky, Purpel.

d) *Policy and Educational Leadership*: Ball, Firestone, Goldring, Hoffman, Milstein.

People have become members almost entirely by word of mouth from within the group itself. We have been looking for people at the "beyond tenure" up to quite senior levels. All are considered outstanding within their fields; all are people who wish to make some contribution to the Jewish community; many are people who view the group as a chance to increase their own Jewish knowledge and commitments. There are some people who come to the group with strong or relatively strong Jewish backgrounds (5 or 6 speak Hebrew fluently); though the majority do not have such knowledge. Most members of the group have attended at least one of the three previous retreats of the group (this includes the long retreat in Israel). There are still a few people who have yet to make it to a meeting, but even those (like Pam Grossman) have wished to remain part

of the group and hope to be able to attend.

2. Should the Group be expanded?

The question of expanding the group has been raised a number of times, both within the group itself and by others in the Mandel organization. It would certainly be possible to expand the numbers, but members of the group leaned toward a "slow" expansion allowing the group to keep its cohesion. In some cases people were chosen specifically because of projects that were then on the CIJE agenda (e.g. early childhood education). This represents one reasonable way to expand the membership. Depending on the actitivities of the Mandel Foundation, professors can be sought who would fit into the Foundation's agenda.

3. "Other Professors"

A different approach to "expanding" raises the possibility of other groups of professors, modeled along the lines of the current Professors (of General Education) Group, but encompassing other domains that may be important for the Foundation. Three possible "others" have been mentioned: a) a group of professors of Judaica in North American universities; b) a group of Jewish intellectuals in other disciplines; c) a group of not-for-profit management professors.

In a certain sense CIJE had already begun developing group "a" above. We had turned to certain Jewish studies professors and used them to be teachers of Jewish subject matter in some of our programs, such as TEI and the Harvard Leadership seminars, and we had asked certain Judaica professors to speak at meetings of the old CIJE board (in two cases CIJE published these talks). This list included: Professors Isadore Twersky z"l, Jonathan Sarna, Arthur Green, Lawrence Hoffman, etc. This group may be said to

parallel a similar group that is often used by the Foundation's programs in Israel (Professors Avi Ravitsky, Moshe Greenberg, Avigdor Shinan, Yair Zakovitch, etc.).

But is it a group at all? In fact, it's much closer to a "list" than a group since unlike the Professors of General Education, these Judaica professors, have never actually met together as a whole (and there are considerably fewer of them). An interesting question would be whether the Foundation should support the creation of a North American Professors of Judaica group. Such a group would resemble the other Professors Group but have a different "curriculum." Somewhat in the spirit of the old Melton seminar at JTS (in which Fox and Schwab introduced Jewish scholars to issues in education and Jewish education), such a group would focus in on the most important issues in contemporary Jewish education. These professors would become resources for our programs, sharing our assumptions and agenda, as well as becoming unofficial spokespeople or advocates for our approach to issues of Jewish education. They would be important resources in the expansion of the Educated Jew project.

We need to consider if this is both a worthwhile investment for the Foundation and if there are enough incentives to bring in these professors. Remember, the two main incentives that brought in the General Education group were "serving the Jewish community by using one's own expertise in general education" and "increasing one's own Jewish knowledge." Neither of these motivations is relevant to the Jewish studies professors. Still, there may be other enticements (e.g. the possibility of paid consulting work). This would need further exploration.

In addition to the Jewish studies professors, group "b" has also been proposed: Jewish intellectuals from other fields. These might include people such as Martha

Nussbaum (philosophy), Stanley Fish (literary theory), Natalie Zeman Davis (history), etc. In our view the rationale for such a group is harder to formulate. Although these are all eminent people, it's hard to know what they could contribute to the Foundation's actual program. One could imagine that such individuals could become important advocates for Jewish education—since they are significant cultural figures—but it's not entirely clear how one would accomplish such a mission and what might motivate them to get involved. It's possible that, like the Professors of General Education, these individuals also would be interested in learning more about Judaism for their own personal growth*, but making the link between that and serving the needs of Foundation is a much harder task. Unless we can find a better approach, our view is not to pursue this option at the present time.

On the other hand a third possibility—professors (or experts in) not-for-profit management—may be an important undertaking for the Foundation. Since one of the stated areas of focus for the Foundation as a whole is in the area of not-for-profit management, it would seem that such a group, modeled on the Professors of General Education group, may serve similar functions. Since this is not a field that we know, we cannot make specific recommendations about the membership of such a group and where it would be "located" within the Foundation as a whole, but it seems like a reasonable course for someone within the organization to pursue.

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* It's important to note that there have been examples of successful outreach to leading intellectuals and/or artists. The "Genesis" group led by Professor Burt Visotzsky at JTS brought in a group of writers to talk seriously about the Bible and led to a popular Public Television series hosted by Bill Moyers. Dr. David Hartman has succeeded in bringing leading Jewish intellectuals (such as Michael Walzer) to the Hartman Institute for various seminars and writing projects.

What is the Professors Group's role in the Mandel Foundation?

In our view the Professors Group has the potential to play an important role in the work of the Foundation. Based on our experience in CIJE and the connections that we have forged with the members of the group, we can see two main functions for the professors. First, the professors can be involved in the ongoing projects of the Foundation. Professors can have important teaching roles, similar to what we've seen at TEI, at the Jerusalem Fellows program, SEL, and IDP enterprises. Professors could spend summers in Israel or come in for short terms teaching modules. Since the expertise of the professors also includes specific areas of general education, they would have a contribution to make in areas such as educational issues connected to the teaching of mathematics, history and literature, ability grouping, standardized testing, etc. Professors could become tutors for SEL students.

Aside from teaching, professors could become involved in other areas of the Foundation's concern, similar to their work in the past with CIJE. These include: consulting to educational projects (e.g. the way that professors have consulted on CIJE initiatives with the Florence Melton Mini-School, Torah U'Mesorah, and Ha-Shaar) working on large scale research for the Foundation (parallel to the CIJE Educators Study, etc.) and developing evaluations of our own or others projects (such as the evaluation of TEI).

Beyond the specific projects of the Foundation, the Professors can be seen as building capacity for Jewish education as a whole. In our (the Foundation's) work with the professors, we hope to prepare them to become resources for the larger Jewish community. In some cases this has already occurred—where members of the professors group have worked with their own local communities or other agencies. One particularly

interesting possibility would be to develop funding for doctoral students in Jewish education who wish to study with one of the professors. Thus a person interested in pursuing a doctorate in teacher education with a focus on the Jewish education context could receive fellowship funding to study with Anna Richert or Pamela Grossman. A person who wished to focus on issues related to the way students learn could go to study with Sam Wineburg and someone who wished to focus on sociological educational research could work with Adam. This is a particularly fruitful direction for us to pursue since for a relatively small amount of investment, it could help build the professoriate in Jewish education.[†] At the same time such an approach could also help increase the expertise of practitioners in the field. Thus a school principal wishing to pursue a doctorate might wish to work with Ellen Goldring in the Vanderbilt leadership program.

Intertwine

The Role of the Retreats

One of the fundamental elements of the Professors Group has been the study retreats. These retreats have given an opportunity for Jewish learning, exchange of ideas about current educational issues on our agenda, bonding and fellowship (for some members this is very important), and Jewish celebration (this is important to some; less so for others). We have used these retreats as a way of presenting specific problems (such as the Indicators Project) to the group to get their input in an efficient and interactive way. We suggest that the retreats continue on a twice-a-year basis, recognizing that not all members can attend every retreat, but that the many purposes served by the retreats are essential to the group's functioning.

[†] This approach addresses some of the issues that Lee Shulman's program at Stanford (Wexner-

How should the Professors Group be organized and administered?

The Professors Group began as a project of CIJE. Now that the Foundation has become a global organization, questions need to be addressed about how the group will be organized vis a vis Israel Foundation work and North American work? Thus, if the Jerusalem Fellows wishes to hire one of the Professors group to teach for a certain period of time, how would that be coordinated with the needs of projects in North America? It seems that there should be a central clearing house function just to avoid conflicts within the global organization. One possibility is for Barry, as the director of the Professors Group, to take on this organizational role. We should discuss possible options in our meetings.

Similarly, how might we lauch the doctoral fellowship project? How would that be coordinated? How would students be found or recruited? These questions should also be on our agenda. Finally, does the Foundation act as *shadhan* for the professors' work outside the Foundation? We have done so in the past (such as with Ha-Shaar and the Mini-School)—is this a role for us in the future as well?

Some specific challenges

The program needs to provide opportunities for the ongoing Jewish growth of the members. Up to now we have approached this through our retreats, but there are other possibilities as well. We could try to develop tutorials for the professors, both in areas of Judaica and in areas of knowledge about the field of Jewish education. The Professors Group began with a two week seminar in Israel. Clearly, this was a powerful opportunity to have an impact on the individuals in the group and it would be possible to consider

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funded doctorates in Jewish education) was aimed at.

another lengthy seminar in Israel. However, it's important to remember that attempts to develop another Israel seminar have not up to now been terribly successful. Although there are members of the group who see a trip to Israel as an enticement, many of the group's members are either too busy with other, work-related travel to take the time necessary for a trip to Israel or are themselves unfamiliar with Israel or ambivalent about Israel. Surely, such a trip could have a big impact on such attitudes, but getting them to come is not going to be easy.

What to do next?

This memo has raised a number of issues that the group needs to discuss. In summation let us outline some of the questions that should be addressed:

A. Should the Professors of General Education Group be expanded?

B. If so, how should such an expansion take place?

    1. What issues are on the Foundation's agenda that may require assistance or expertise?

C. Should a "Professors of Judaica" Group be created?

D. If so, what is its mission and how should the Group be established?

E. Should a "Jewish Intellectuals" Group be created?

F. If so, what is its mission and how should the Group be established?

G. Should a "Professors of not-for-profit Management" Group be created?

H. If so, what is its mission and how should the Group be established?

I. What current programs and projects of the Foundation should members of the Professors Group be involved in?

J. How should their involvement be managed?

K. What should happen with the retreats?

L. Should additional venues (e.g. tutorials) be created?

M. What role should Israel play in such retreats?

The members of the group and their affiliations are listed on the next page.

Deborah Loewenberg Ball
Professor of Education
University of Michigan

Daniel Chazan
Associate Professor of Teacher Education
University of Michigan

Richard Cohen
Headstart Program Administrator
Community Housing Services

Sharon Feiman-Nemser
Professor of Education
Michigan State University

Walter Feinberg
Professor, Philosophy of Education
University of Illinois

Bill Firestone
Center For Educational Policy Analysis in New Jersey

Adam Gamoran
Professor
University of Wisconsin
Department of Sociology

Ellen Goldring
Professor of Educational Leadership
Vanderbilt University

Pamela Grossman
Associate Professor of Education
University of Washington

Marvin Hoffman
Senior Research Associate
University of Chicago

Francine Jacobs
Professor of Early Childhood Education
Tufts University

David Kaplan
Professor of Education
School of Education

Deborah Kerdeman
Assistant Professor
University of Washington

Michael Milstein
Professor of Educational Leadership???
University of New Mexico

Barbara Neufeld
Education Matters, Inc.

Daniel N. Pekarsky
Professor
Department of Educational Policy Studies
University of Wisconsin

David Purpel
Professor, Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations
University of North Carolina

Anna Richert
Associate Professor of Education
Mills College

Barbara Schneider
University of Chicago - NORC

Susan Stodolsky
Professor
University of Chicago
Department of Education

Sam Wineburg
Associate Professor, Educational Psychology and Adjunct Professor, History
University of Washington

Ken Zeichner
Professor, Curriculum and Instruction
University of Wisconsin

***Barry W. Holtz*, Project director**
Associate Professor of Jewish Education
Jewish Theological Seminary of America

The Group and its Future

The Professors Group was created primarily as an aid to the work of CIJE in North America. But the new reality of the Mandel Foundation creates important opportunities for the expansion of the Professors Group activities into venues in Israel or the larger world.

Points to Make:

- How many people could be in it?
- What about other "types" of professors—a) Judaica scholars; b) other intellectuals (Martha Nussbaum, Stanley Fish, Natalie Zeman Davis, etc.)
- Role of the retreats
- Doctoral candidates with Professors
- SEL with professors
- Professors teaching at JF and SEL, IDP
- Problem about Israel for some professors
- Need for continual Jewish growth for them and knowledge about Jewish education (retreats only? Tutorials possible?). They want it; they need it to work in the field.
- What to do next?

Who should be in it and why?
How should it be organized
Role in organization
Administration of Profs.
challenges

Building capacity for J ed as whole
students, doctorates

In our work Shalhan work within Foundation

Tchg Consulting evaluation

Not-for-Profit management

Mandel Foundation

The Professors Group

The Need

The Mandel Foundation's Professors Group is an attempt to directly address one aspect of the shortage of "senior personnel" in Jewish education. It is long been noted that there is a severe lack of academic expertise in Jewish education. In all of North America there are only around 30 professors of Jewish education, many of whom have significant administrative responsibilities with demands on their time that take them away from teaching and doing research. (At JTS, for example, of the eight faculty members in the field of Jewish education, one is the dean of the JTS Education School, one is chair of the department with significant responsibilities for recruitment and administrative supervision of students, one directs the Melton Research Center, and one is the National Ramah director!) Jewish education desperately needs expertise, evaluation and research. It is obvious that 30 education professors can only do a small portion of that work. The Mandel Foundation Professors Group therefore can be viewed as a pilot project in preparing a certain type of badly needed senior leadership for Jewish education. We have already seen how useful their contribution can be in projects such as TEI, our Harvard Leadership seminars, and our research and evaluation enterprises.

The Goals

The goals of the Professors Group are: 1) to increase the pool of talented individuals capable of teaching and doing research in the area of Jewish education; 2) to initiate such individuals into the Mandel Foundation's work and utilize their services in our various projects; 3) to help prepare such individuals for other aspects of work in Jewish education which may be separate from the Mandel Foundation's own projects; 4) to provide the necessary background in Judaism and the nature of contemporary Jewish education and the present-day Jewish community to enable these individuals to contribute their expertise in the most effective and significant fashion possible.

The Foundation has tried to effectuate these goals by recruiting professors to our

work, developing seminars for the professors around the topics suggested above, and working with the professors as they continue their connection to the Mandel Foundation.

The Members of the Group

There are many Jews—some with strong Jewish backgrounds; some with little knowledge of Judaism but with a desire to be of service to the Jewish people—who are professors of education at some of the nation's most prestigious universities. Many of these professors have worked in research areas (such as teacher education and program evaluation) that could be very helpful to our work in Jewish education. Through its early consultants such as Adam Gamoran, Dan Pekarsky and Ellen Goldring, CIJE recognized the potential of such individuals to help Jewish education in significant ways. Out of this recognition the Mandel Foundation Professors Group was born.

The members of the group and their affiliations are listed on the next page.

present communal structure hasn't made it easy to make this contribution

Mandel Foundation Professors Group
General Roster
June 1999

Deborah Loewenberg Ball
Professor of Education
University of Michigan
School of Education
4119 SEB
610 East University
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259
Phone: 734-647-3713
Fax: 734-647-6937
E-mail: dball@umich.edu

Moti Bar-Or
Kolot
17 Rachel Imanu
P.O. Box 8434
Jerusalem, Israel 93228
Phone: 972-2-563-8460
Fax: 972-2-563-8461
E-mail: baror@netmedia.net.il

Daniel Chazan
Associate Professor of Teacher Education
Michigan State University
College of Education
Erickson Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824
Phone: 517-432-1715
Fax: 517-432-2795
E-mail: dchazan@msu.edu

Richard Cohen
Headstart Program Administrator
Community Housing Services
1040 Lincoln Avenue
Suite 200
Pasadena, CA 91103
Phone: 626-585-6506
E-mail: sfukushi@ucla.edu

Gail Z. Dorph
Senior Education Consultant
Mandel Foundation
15 East 26th Street, Suite 1817
New York, NY 10010
Phone: 212-532-2360 ex.14
Fax: 212-532-2646
E-mail: GZDorph@mandelny.org

Sharon Feiman-Nemser
Professor
Michigan State University
College of Education
306 Erickson Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824
Phone: 517-432-4860
Fax: 517-432-5092
E-mail: snemser@msu.edu

Walter Feinberg
Professor, Philosophy of Education
College of Education
Education Building, Room 360
1310 South 6th Street
Champaign, IL 61820-6990
Phone: 217-333-2446
E-mail: wfeinber@uiuc.edu

Bill Firestone
Center for Educational Policy Analysis in NJ
10 Seminary Place
New Brunswick, NJ 08903
Phone: 908-932-7496
Fax: 908-932-1957
E-mail: wilfires@rci.rutgers.edu

Adam Gamoran
Professor
University of Wisconsin
Department of Sociology
1180 Observatory Drive
Madison, WI 53706
Phone: 608-263-4253,
608-263-7829
Fax: 608-265-5389
E-mail: gamoran@ssc.wisc.edu

Ellen Goldring
Professor of Educational Leadership
Vanderbilt University
Peabody College of Education
Vanderbilt University
Box 514
Nashville, TN 37203
Phone: 615-322-8037
Fax: 615-343-7094
E-mail: ellen.goldring@vanderbilt.edu

Mandel Foundation Professors Group
General Roster
June 1999

Pamela Grossman
Associate Professor of Education
University of Washington
College of Education
115 Miller Hall, DQ-12
Box 353600
Seattle, WA 98195
Phone: 206-543-1847
Fax: 206-685-9094
E-mail: grossman@u.washington.edu

Melila Hellner-Eshed
Kolot
17 Rachel Imanu
P.O. Box 8434
Jerusalem, Israel 93228
Phone: 972-2-563-8460
Fax: 972-2-563-8461
E-mail: baror@netmedia.net.il

Marvin Hoffman
Senior Research Associate
University of Chicago
Center for School Improvement
1313 East 60th Street
Chicago, IL 60615
Phone: 773-834-0130
Fax: 773-288-3349
E-mail: hoff@cicero.spc.uchicago.edu

Barry W. Holtz
Education Consultant
Mandel Foundation
15 East 26th Street, Suite 1817
New York, NY 10010
Phone: 212-532-2360 ex.18
Fax: 212-532-2646
E-mail: bholtz@mandelny.org

Elie Holzer
Education Associate
Mandel Foundation
15 East 26th Street, Suite 1817
New York, NY 10010
Phone: 212-532-2360 ex.16
Fax: 212-532-2646
E-mail: eholzer@mandelny.org

Francine Jacobs
Professor
Tufts University
Department of Child Development
105 College Avenue
Medford, MA 02155
Phone: 617-627-3355
Fax: 617-627-3503
E-mail: fjacobs@emerald.tufts.edu

David Kaplan
Professor of Education
School of Education
University of Delaware
Newark, DE 19716
Phone: 302-831-8696
Fax: 302-831-4445
E-mail: dkaplan@udel.edu

Deborah Kerdeman
Assistant Professor
University of Washington
College of Education
Box 353600
Seattle, WA 98195-3600
Phone: 206-543-1836
E-mail: kerdeman@u.washington.edu

Bena Medjuck
Program Assistant
Mandel Foundation
15 East 26th Street, Suite 1817
New York, NY 10010-1579
Phone: 212-532-2360 ex.12
Fax: 212-532-2646
E-mail: bmedjuck@mandelny.org

Mike Milstein
Educational Leadership & Organizational Learning
Education Office Building 211
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131-1261
Phone: 505-277-5932
E-mail: milstein@unm.edu

Mandel Foundation Professors Group
General Roster
June 1999

Barbara Neufeld
Education Matters, Inc.
P.O. Box 1656
50 Church Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
Phone: 617-496-4823
617-234-4353
Fax: 617-492-7822
E-mail: baneufeld@edmatters.org

Daniel N. Pekarsky
Professor
Department of Educational Policy Studies
Old Educational Building
100 Bascom Hall, Room 233
Madison, WI 53706
Phone: 608-262-1718
Fax: 608-262-9074
E-mail: danpek@macc.wisc.edu

David Purpel
Professor, Educational Leadership and
Cultural Foundations
School of Education
UNC-Greensboro
Greensboro, NC 27412
Phone: 336-334-3467
Fax: 336-334-4120
E-mail: purpeld@dewey.uncg.edu

Nessa Rapoport
Leadership Development Officer
Mandel Foundation
15 East 26th Street
New York, NY 10010
Phone: 212-532-2360 ex.17
Fax: 212-532-2646
E-mail: nrapoport@mandelny.org

Anna Richert
Associate Professor of Education
Mills College
Department of Education
5000 MacArthur Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94613
Phone: 510-430-3160
Fax: 510-430-3379
E-mail: annaer@aol.com

Barbara Schneider
University of Chicago - NORC
1155 East 60th Street
Chicago, IL 60637
Phone: 773-256-6361
E-mail: schneidr@norcmail.uchicago.edu

Susan Stodolsky
Professor
University of Chicago
Department of Education, Judd Hall
5835 South Kimbark Ave.
Chicago, IL 60637
Phone: 773-702-1599
Fax: 773-702-0248
E-mail: s-stodolsky@uchicago.edu

Leah Strigler
Recruiter/Planner
Mandel Foundation
15 East 26th Street, Suite 1817
New York, NY 10010
Phone: 212-532-2360 ex.15
Fax: 212-532-2646
E-mail: lstrigler@mandelny.org

Sam Wineburg
Associate Professor, Educational Psychology
and Adjunct Professor, History
University of Washington
Department of Education
312 Miller Hall
Box 353600
Seattle, WA 98195
Phone: 206-685-3924
Fax: 206-543-8439
E-mail: wineburg@u.washington.edu

Ken Zeichner
Professor, Curriculum and Instruction
University of Wisconsin
225 North Mills Street
Madison, WI 53706
Phone: 608-263-4651
E-mail: zeichner@facstaff.wisc.edu

CIJE PROFESSORS SEMINAR: PARTICIPANT REACTIONS
MAY, 1998

SUSAN S. STODOLSKY

This report describes participant reactions to the CIJE Professors Seminar (PS) along with specific suggestions as to the shape and content of its future work. Eighteen interviews, most by phone, were conducted with all members of the seminar who had attended at least one PS meeting. An interview guide was followed (See Appendix 1). I carried out interviews which lasted approximately 30 minutes. In addition, I had a brief discussion with two professors who, though interested, have not yet attended a PS meeting.

Overview

Without exception, the professors reported a very positive response to the PS. Among the highlights were the text study component of PS, the shared Shabbat experience, and the high quality of the group members, and visiting scholars and teachers. Cutting through many interviews was enormous admiration and respect for CIJE coordinators as organizers of the seminar but also as learned teachers who can make ideas accessible to all. A number of suggestions were made with respect to how to use the time in PS more effectively to advance CIJE projects and the CIJE agenda. Suggestions also related to making better use of the expertise members bring to the PS. Locating an additional seminar meeting in Israel was explored and received mixed reactions.

Looking ahead, several patterns of future involvement with PS and CIJE projects seem likely. Some individuals intend to stay active with the PS and involved with CIJE projects. For other members, participation in the PS will be their main connection to CIJE with occasional, limited involvement in CIJE work. Others would like to become more involved in CIJE work if an appropriate match of expertise and need can be made. Some members who have taken more responsibility for CIJE projects, may find full attendance at the PS difficult, but participation is highly valued. For others, family and job obligations may make it highly unlikely that they can attend meetings in the near future, but their interest in participation is still strong. Certain considerations regarding the timing and location of the PS meetings might address these problems.

Why members joined PS

We reminded participants that two of the reasons for creating the PS were to provide a setting in which Jewish professors of general education could have personally meaningful experiences with Jewish learning, and as a mechanism through which to increase professional capacity in the field of Jewish education.

In explaining why they joined PS, participants expressed a variety of motivations including the two stated above. A number of professors were already involved with CIJE in active consultant roles and these individuals tend to be rather knowledgeable Jewishly. As a matter of emphasis, for some in this group the PS offered the opportunity for more learning in the company of other respected colleagues while others stressed the importance of having a community of scholars with whom to address CIJE work, obtain feedback, and from which to recruit colleagues to be engaged in CIJE projects.

Some professors who had not previously been involved with CIJE were intrigued with the possibility of learning more (or something) about Jewish culture, texts, and Jewish education. Members with little Jewish background were pleased their lack of knowledge did not pose a barrier to participation. The fact that learning occurred in a "Jewishly comfortable" setting with other Jews from one's professional world was also appealing. In addition, some individuals were most drawn to the opportunity to be of use, to reactivate their dormant involvement in Jewish education, and to bridge their general education work with Jewish education. A few saw the PS connection as a possible source of new professional activity.

Personal connections were also a prominent source of motivation for joining. Many members spoke of prior personal (positive) contacts with CIJE staff and consultants and respect for both individuals at CIJE and its mission. Recruiting efforts on the part of CIJE staff were evident. As one member said, "Barry finally twisted my arm into coming." Another noted that after a breakfast with Gail, he wanted to become involved. And a third indicated she had known Alan for a lot of years. Sharon was also mentioned as a person who interested a number of members in PS.

The social-intellectual potential of the PS was another source of motivation. A number of members indicated that the people sounded "like an interesting, fun group" and consisted of individuals they respected from the field of general education. Getting to know colleagues better and being with a group of Jewish professionals who were interested in education also held considerable appeal. For those recruited after the seminar in Israel, the high marks the seminar received also came into play.

Reactions to the Seminar Meetings

Three meetings of the PS have taken place. The first in Israel during July, 1996 had x professors and lasted approximately 15? days. A four day meeting in Florida in January, 1997 was followed by a four day meeting in Princeton in June, 1997. A planned meeting for January, 1998 was cancelled because too few members could attend due to conflicts and illness. A seminar is planned for June, 1998. Given their differences in

character, the Israel seminar will be discussed separately.

Israel

The most common description of the Israel seminar was "intense." The professors who went to Israel were very enthusiastic about the content and quality of the seminar, particularly the sessions involving Jewish learning and chavrutah. Most also found the focus on four scholars illuminating and highly relevant to CIJE's concerns with education. Participants were impressed with the overall conception of the seminar program and the fact that material was accessible to individuals with a broad range of backgrounds. People talked about the seminar as a "gift" and a "privilege" and were pleased to be in the "student" role in contrast to their usual one of teacher.

Other highlights included shabbat at the Hoffmans and the trip to the desert. High praise was also given to the members of the group and staff and the "community building" and friendships achieved.

Some of the seminar's strengths were also weaknesses. Most participants believed the Israel seminar was over-programmed, and contained too many sessions in a lecture-type format. A few noted some inconsistency between the espoused educational ideals of CIJE and the way the seminar was run. Concern was also expressed that insufficient time was allocated to Jewish education topics and CIJE's work, with the result that the professors' expertise may not have been adequately tapped. The very full schedule allowed little time for informal interactions and for contact with Israeli institutions and people. The question was raised, 'why was this seminar in Israel when the focus was on Jewish education and jewry in the U.S.?'

Participants had mixed reactions to the desirability of a future seminar in Israel. The main issue was its justification. While a number would like to go to Israel again, others would only consider traveling that distance if there were compelling reasons to be in Israel. There was almost universal agreement that any Israel seminar should be shorter--the suggested times ranged from 7-10 days, with one member opting for 4 days. There was also a call for some more free time but an appreciation of the tension between sacrificing program content to other purposes. One member suggested tieing the seminar to other CIJE work in Israel, making it more time and cost effective.

The majority of suggestions focused on making much more use of the resources of Israel. Members suggested learning about Israeli schools, including visiting some, learning about the Israeli education system and finding out more about Jewish life in Israel. Personal contacts were also desired possibly with Israeli colleagues, among others. More time "in the field", possibly including visits to religious sites, might help some

individuals strengthen their Jewish identity. Almost everyone wanted to retain some sessions devoted to Jewish text study and to CIJE work. To be in Israel with a primary concern on education in America seemed problematic to some members.

Reactions to other seminars

Overall, the professors were enthusiastic about both the Florida and Princeton meetings. Again, text study with chavrutah was especially appreciated as was the chance to learn from Art Green. A number of participants felt that the Florida meeting incorporated some styles of working which could be expanded and used effectively in future meetings. Having members of the seminar break into small groups to consider issues on the indicators project was one example. Another was engaging with Deborah and her video approach.

Some members noted that it seemed beneficial that Moti and Melilah participated in all the sessions making it more likely that a bridge between the text study and other PS activities would occur. In contrast, some thought it was more difficult to make connections across sessions in Princeton and that the meeting, though highly stimulating, seemed more lecture-oriented across all session. Some individuals commented that Florida seemed to allow for more informal contact, including walking on the beach, than Princeton but others liked the Chauncy Center very much. Depending on their background and practice, some members found shabbat services interesting but unfamiliar while others were very much at home. Members who did not participate were not made uncomfortable about it.

How to work on CIJE's work

An on-going concern for CIJE coordinators of the PS and for its members is how best to accomplish work on CIJE projects or plans during the seminars and maximize use of the professors' expertise. We asked directly about these issues. All agreed that the seminars have been effective in helping PS members learn about on-going CIJE work--it has served an introductory function well. But more is desired.

A variety of suggestions were made. A number of people mentioned that professors could be asked to come prepared to work, collaborate, or discuss certain issues or projects. There is every reason to send out reading materials in advance and to explain what is to be accomplished face to face at PS. As much "getting up to speed" as possible could be accomplished in advance of PS. One member expressed a similar idea in suggesting that CIJE could expect members to come prepared as one would to an advisory board. (If a significant amount of time was needed, some kind of consultant fee could be arranged.)

A related idea in terms of advance preparation was the possibility of a conference call either to establish agenda

and work plan for the PS or for a session on a particular topic. One member suggested that brief meetings elsewhere might also facilitate work on a given project. Again, the notion is that members can be more prepared to get right to work in this way. The suggestion also picks up on the idea that members, along with coordinators, can take some responsibility for planning the PS curriculum.

Another suggestion was to organize some sessions in small groups which at times might not tackle the same problem. While there is benefit in having all participants engage in all discussions, it was felt that generally the benefits of smaller groups working on a particular task were probably greater. One member suggested that we be given some kind of design task or a set of data to look at or other activities where real progress could be made. Another person suggested the creation of standing work groups such that each professor was affiliated with one (or more) project groups and time during PS was devoted to meetings of the work groups.

A variety of substantive suggestions were made for focal topics or issues that might draw on member expertise or lead to interesting dialogue in the group. These topics were suggested in addition to some time devoted to CIJE projects and agenda. The topics (in no particular order) included dialogues about intergroup relations; discussion of how professors of general education committed to pluralism and diversity negotiate involvement in Jewish education, and similarly, how Jewish education addresses societal pluralism. Similarly, consideration of issues surrounding the fact that most Jewish education is experienced side by side with public education. Examination of what may be unique about educating Jewishly and what the goals for Jewish education should be. Exploring the role of Hebrew in Jewish education. Exploring relationships between Jewish education and continuity. Examination of professional development, teacher learning and school reform in the context of Jewish education. Exploring how general teacher education confronts issues of values, and spirituality. Considering how the gap can be closed between academics, including members of PS, and those in Jewish education full time.

Logistics

Without going into detail about each professor's needs, some general responses emerged with respect to timing and location of future meetings. With respect to physical location, members appreciated that the settings used have been attractive and comfortable. But considerations of travel time definitely influence members' ability to attend. For persons on the west coast getting to Florida, for example, is extremely time consuming. A number of west coast members and "shadow" members suggested that a west coast site would facilitate their attendance. Ease of access from the airport is also desirable and a few people believed Princeton was too far. Some way to rotate

meetings in central locations seems most promising.

There are a number of professors with heavy family responsibilities associated with young children or other circumstances such as new jobs who find being away from home rather difficult. Some can get away for one or two nights but are hesitant to do more. Other members liked the 3-4 day meetings very much. Family stage is clearly a major consideration with respect to participation, as was evident in who was able to attend the Israel seminar.

For most, weekends including Shabbat are preferred although some would rather be with their families on Shabbat. The summer months seem to be the easiest time for many professors to attend PS. March-April is universally inconvenient. There may be some feasible times in December of January when intersessions occur, but academic calendars vary considerably at that time of year. Whatever plans are made it was urged that a lot of advance notice be provided. Meetings have been scheduled which conflict with other meetings such as the AERA Council. A list of possible conflicting meetings for the membership might be collected.

A focus on individual circumstances raises the issue of whether the optimal arrangement is for all members to be invited to all PS meetings. We have already discussed ways in which members could be divided to address certain tasks during the seminar. But at the level of the whole seminar program, is the group seen as arranged for "whole class learning" or might there be meetings structured for a subset? This question was raised in a number of forms. One member asked if PS is a seminar or an association? Another queried about the relationship between doing consultant work for CIJE and becoming a member of PS. Is it desirable (planned) to invite all professors who consult for CIJE to become seminar members? What criteria should come into play in a decision to offer membership? Is membership conceptualized as semi-permanent or is there an expectation of moving people through the PS and into other roles over time?

Should new members be invited?

There were mixed responses to adding new PS members. Most were open to the idea, but all were concerned that the group not become too large and that the excellent quality and commitment of the members be preserved. A number commented on the esprit among group members and a compatible non-combative style that was highly valued. Some thought new members should be added when there was a need for the person's expertise (e.g early childhood). Others knew of specific individuals they thought could make a contribution to CIJE and the seminar (suggested names will be provided to coordinators). An answer to the question of adding more colleagues also hinges on the envisioned future structure of the seminar discussed in the previous paragraph. Just to make PS larger did not really appeal to anyone.

If new members are invited, we should explain the rationale for the seminar and provide a certain amount of written material describing CIJE and its work. Members of the PS who joined after initial meetings uniformly felt welcome, but some information gap was evident.

Some final thoughts

Participants have been especially enthusiastic about the Jewish learning sessions of PS. When time limitations are not an issue, most members want to contribute in professionally appropriate ways to CIJE projects. A handful feel guilty because they believe they are not doing enough for CIJE in light of their participation in PS. Without exception, all members want to attend future meetings, even though in some cases there may be an interval when their attendance is not possible.

A general concern is how to best use members' expertise viz CIJE while also keeping PS a forum in which more general issues can be examined and the "so what" questions can be raised. A number of suggestions were discussed, but this seems like a long-term challenge.

One member asked whether the curriculum for PS has actually been specified. Over time, it may be very helpful to think out a general scope for the PS and to be able to communicate it to members. At the same time, much of the PS activity probably has to be planned on a short-term ad lib basis. Members might be brought into the planning process more than in the past.

A number of examples of involvement with other Jewish education projects, not connected with CIJE, were cited by members. They reported a tie between their involvement in PS and new activities in Jewish education and synagogue settings. Some of the activities took place because a member of PS asked another member to join in. Evidence of networking and increased concern about Jewish education was in the interviews.

I sensed a number of individuals who felt rather unsure about expectations for PS members. Should they be working on projects, if not, should they continue to participate? To the extent desirable some clarification may be in order without specifying a formal path for all to follow.

In a separate memo, I will list persons who were named as possible new members of the seminar. I will also transmit participant reactions to the idea of individual or small group study at their home base. Last, I will inform Barry and Gail of some individual concerns and questions raised in the interviews.

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People's comments on their involvement

Bill Firestone- the standards assignment is not a good fit for him, he has been ambivalent. Feels he could be more helpful on school management, leadership. He can only do small things like the Principals Workshop.

Anna Reichert- likes involvement in TEI but feels somewhat peripheral. Intends to become more involved.

Dan Chazan--thought he would be asked to do something. Now in Israel but would be happy to be called on to do more.

Wally Feinberg- not sure where but would welcome involvement.

Fran Jacobs- Is committed to the early childhood project. Also interested in thinking about how to train people to do evaluation (Evaluation Institute) but early childhood keeping her busy at the moment.

Richard Cohen--has similar interests to Fran regarding evaluation but with a new job he has limited time to devote to CIJE. Hopes things will improve after the summer.

David Purpel--happy to do what CIJE wants, already involved with the Goals project and the high school project.

Ken Zeichner- would like to be involved with TEI, but has serious time problems at the moment.

Barbara Schneider--when help is needed in her areas of expertise she will be available. Intends to make a lifetime comittment to do her "Jewish stuff" in the context of CIJE. Will contribute her time in keeping with her upbringing in a philanthropic family.

Barbara Neufeld- for next two or three years is very limited in what she can take on. Happy to do one-day activities such as the one-day Partnership for Excellence meeting in which she participated. Hopes of attend the PS meetings also.

Ellen Goldring- intends to continue her rather heavy involvement with CIJE projects. The challenge is how to maintain her consulting role and find time to attend PS. She must limit time away from home.

Deborah Ball- involved with TEI and plans to continue. It is very difficut to take 4 days in addition to attend PS even though very interested. At her family, professional stage it may be very difficult to attend in the near future.

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Responses to the possibility of personal study arrangements

Dan Chazan is very interested in finding a group of smart people to study with-he wants to go beyond traditional text study. However, given an undergraduate degree in Jewish Studies he feels it would be a waste of CIJE resources to invest in study options for him. He would be happy to think through what talmud issues should be discussed in a group of colleagues such as Sharon and Deborah who might study with a (former?) Hillel rabbi, Rid? Glogower.

Deborah Ball-"potentially sure" but time constraints make study difficult. Deborah feels she is extracting from Gail lots of Jewish learning--a major draw for her involvement.

Sharon Feiman-Nemser- in principle would love to study, but not sure she has the time. Knows there is a talented torah teacher in Ann Arbor.

Debbie Kerdeman-interest in study is high but right now professional life too demanding.

Barbara Neufeld- no too hard to fit in, but would love to in theory.

Anna Reichert- for right now she can't fit in regular study though is doing some informally and at PS which is a major draw. In 5-6 years she believes her priorities will change and she will pursue more study and building her Jewish identity.

Wally Feinberg- text study would be of interest but not sure good use of CIJE resources.

Fran Jacobs- unsure. Interested in once a week text study group--on the portion of the week, for example. Time issues there however.

Richard Cohen- has been searching around for something in translation--subscribes to UHC and Torah Ora which are good but don't include discussion. He feels you need people who are both as advanced as he is and beginners. He suggests a group on line who could all read the same thing and participate at convenient times for each person. He would make that a Shabbat activity.

Dan Pekarsky- would love tutoring and study focused on text-based knowledge--perhaps could be done by email and include a teacher and 3 or 4 others possibly from PS.

David Purpel- would love to do personal study of Torah and Talmud.

Ellen Goldring- cannot find time at this stage of family and career.

Ken Zeichner-can't think of anything he'd like to do at this time.

Barbara Schneider- no.

Bill Firestone- no.

Suggested names for additional members of Professors Seminar

1. Carole Weinstein-teacher education-Rutgers (Firestone)
2. Zvi Shapiro-sociology, curriculum theory, foundations-University of North Carolina (Purpel)
3. Aaron Paulos and Anna Neumann- Michigan State (Firestone, Schneider)
4. Sam Meisels-early childhood-U. Michigan (Schneider, Firestone)
5. Claire Wurtzel-special ed, teacher ed, social studies- Bank Street (Stodolsky)

CIJE PROFESSORS SEMINAR: PARTICIPANT REACTIONS
Summary and Questions for Discussion

BASED ON DRAFT REPORT, MAY, 1998
PREPARED BY SUSAN S. STODOLSKY

As you read this document, please think about the following issues to be addressed in our discussion: Of primary interest are questions about the overall conception of PS, its purposes, its anticipated "life span" and, in fact, what it means to be a member of PS. Also of interest is the structure of PS meetings and activities. How can the PS best utilize professors expertise and address CIJE needs while retaining the flexibility to ask "big" questions as well as the Jewish learning component valued by most members? Might there be a tension between building capacity and getting down to CIJE tasks?

Overview

This document summarizes a report of participant reactions to the CIJE Professors Seminar (PS) along with specific suggestions as to the shape and content of its future work. Eighteen interviews, most by phone, were conducted with all members of the seminar who had attended at least one PS meeting as well as two professors who, though interested, have not yet participated. Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes. Please note that the coordinators of the PS were not interviewed.

Without exception, the professors reported a very positive response to the PS. Among the highlights were the text study component of PS, the shared Shabbat experience, and the high quality of the group members, visiting scholars and teachers. Cutting through many interviews was enormous admiration and respect for CIJE coordinators as organizers of the seminar but also as learned teachers who can make ideas accessible to all.

In response to questions on the topic, a number of suggestions were made with respect to how to use the time in PS more effectively to advance CIJE projects and the CIJE agenda. Suggestions also related to making better use of the expertise members bring to the PS. Locating an additional seminar meeting in Israel was explored and received mixed reactions with many believing specific justification in terms of using Israeli resources was necessary.

The full report contains a discussion of why professors joined the seminar. It also contains a description of various patterns of future participation anticipated by members.

Reactions to the Seminar Meetings

Three meetings of the PS have taken place. The first in Israel during July, 1996 lasted approximately 15 days. A four day meeting in Florida in January, 1997 was followed by a four day meeting in Princeton in June, 1997. A planned meeting for January, 1998 was cancelled because too few members could attend due to conflicts and illness. Given the differences in character, the Israel seminar will be discussed separately.

Israel

The most common description of the Israel seminar was "intense." The professors who went to Israel were very enthusiastic about the content and quality of the seminar, particularly the sessions involving Jewish learning and chavrutah. Most also found the focus on four scholars illuminating and highly relevant to CIJE's concerns with education. Participants were impressed with the overall conception of the seminar program and the fact that material was accessible to individuals with a broad range of backgrounds. People talked about the seminar as a "gift" and a "privilege" and were pleased to be in the "student" role in contrast to their usual one of teacher. Other highlights included Shabbat at the Hoffmans and the trip to the desert. High praise was also given to the members of the group and staff and to the "community building" and friendships achieved.

Some of the seminar's strengths were also weaknesses. Most participants believed the Israel seminar was over-programmed, and contained too many sessions in a lecture-type format. A few noted some inconsistency between the espoused educational ideals of CIJE and the way the seminar was run. Concern was also expressed that insufficient time was allocated to Jewish education topics and CIJE's work, with the result that the professors' expertise may not have been adequately tapped. The very full schedule allowed little time for informal interactions and for contact with Israeli institutions and people. The question was raised, 'why was this seminar in Israel when the focus was on Jewish education and Jewry in the U.S.?'

Reactions to other seminars

Overall, the professors were enthusiastic about both the Florida and Princeton meetings. Again, text study with chavrutah was especially appreciated as was the chance to learn from Art Green. A number of participants felt that the Florida meeting incorporated some styles of working which could be expanded and used effectively in future meetings. Having members of the seminar break into small groups to consider issues on the indicators project was one example. Another was engaging with Deborah and her video approach.

Some members noted that it seemed beneficial that Moti and Melilah participated in all the sessions making it more likely that a bridge between the text study and other PS activities would occur. In contrast, some thought it was more difficult to make connections across sessions in Princeton and that the meeting, though highly stimulating, seemed more lecture-oriented across all sessions. Some individuals commented that Florida seemed to allow for more informal contact, including walking on the beach, than Princeton but others liked the Chauncey Center very much. Depending on their background and practice, some members found Shabbat services interesting but unfamiliar while others were very much at home. Members who did not participate were not made uncomfortable about it.

How to work on CIJE's work

An on-going concern for CIJE coordinators of the PS and for its members is how best to accomplish work on CIJE projects or plans during the seminars and maximize use of the professors' expertise. We asked directly about these issues. All agreed that the seminars have been effective in helping PS members learn about on-going CIJE work--it has served an **introductory** function well. But more is desired.

A variety of suggestions were made with respect to work arrangements in sessions of the PS. To date, all participants have focused on the same topic or issue in sessions of the seminar, even when we broke into small groups. One suggestion was to organize some sessions in which small groups tackled different problems, issues, or projects. While there is benefit in having all participants engage in all discussions, it was felt that the benefits might be greater from smaller groups working on particular tasks.

One member suggested that we be given some kind of design task or a set of data to look at or other activities where real progress could be made within the time constraints of PS. Another person suggested the creation of standing work groups such that each professor was affiliated with one (or more) project groups and time during PS was devoted to meetings of the work groups. Another member envisioned the possibility that a given PS meeting might be planned for a particular subset of participants. Some thought might also be given to having members rotate in and out of the PS in some fashion.

Advance Preparation

To maximize effective use of the actual time of the PS meetings, a number of people urged that professors be asked to come prepared to work, collaborate, or discuss certain issues or projects. There is every reason to send out reading materials in

advance and to explain what is to be accomplished at PS. Within reason, as much "getting up to speed" as possible should be accomplished in advance of the PS meeting.

A related idea in terms of advance preparation was the possibility of a conference call either to establish agenda and work plan for part of the PS or for a session on a particular topic. One member suggested that brief meetings elsewhere might also facilitate work on a given project during PS. Again, the notion is that members can be better prepared to get right to work during sessions of PS through advance contact or reading.

CIJE Work in PS and outside PS.

The relationship between consulting and project activities for CIJE outside the seminar and the use of the PS as a site for project work is complicated. Individual members envision different kinds of relationships between consulting time for CIJE and time in PS and it is also reasonable to assume that patterns of effort will change over time. Nevertheless, on a collective level it may be worth trying to envision some desirable options. One question, for example, is whether any professor consulting for CIJE will be invited to PS or whether additional criteria apply.

Agenda Setting.

The suggestion was made that members, along with coordinators, take some responsibility for planning the PS sessions or provide reactions to initial plans suggested by the coordinators. This broader base in planning might enhance the quality of some meeting sessions.

Possible Topics.

Members expressed a desire to retain PS as a forum in which general issues can be examined and the "so what" questions can be raised. In addition, a variety of substantive suggestions were made for focal topics or issues that might draw on member expertise or lead to interesting dialogue in the group. These topics (in no particular order) were suggested in addition to time devoted to CIJE projects and agenda.

Suggested topics included dialogues about intergroup relations; discussion of how professors of general education committed to pluralism and diversity negotiate involvement in Jewish education, and similarly, how Jewish education addresses societal pluralism. Consideration of issues surrounding the fact that most Jewish education is experienced side by side with

public education. Examination of what may be unique about educating Jewishly and what the goals for Jewish education should be. Exploring the role of Hebrew in Jewish education. Exploring relationships between Jewish education and continuity. Examination of professional development, teacher learning and school reform in the context of Jewish education. Exploring how general teacher education confronts issues of values and spirituality. Considering how the gap can be closed between academics, including members of PS, and those in Jewish education full time. There was also interest in examining some of CIJE's basic assumptions such as the commitment to using a research base to develop change strategies.

Should new members be invited?

There were mixed responses to adding new PS members. Most were open to the idea, but all were concerned that the group not become too large and that the excellent quality and commitment of the members be preserved. A number commented on the esprit among group members and a compatible non-combative style that was highly valued. Some thought new members should be added when there was a need for the person's expertise (e.g early childhood). Others knew of specific individuals they thought could make a contribution to CIJE and the seminar (suggested names will be provided to coordinators). An answer to the question of adding more colleagues also hinges on the envisioned future structure of the seminar. Just to make PS larger did not really appeal to anyone.