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**Different Approaches to Educational Change:
Choosing a Route that Makes Sense**

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Different Approaches to Educational Change: Choosing a Route that Makes Sense

Moving to the San Francisco Bay Area from the East Coast in 1990 has involved a long-term transition process which has touched many different dimensions of my life. The pace is different--it is slower. The food is different--it is healthier. The people are different--they are more diverse. The geology is different--there are earthquakes. The norms are different--people worry a lot about traffic. Since I arrived in California I have learned to consider carefully the route I travel from point "A" to point "B." There are always multiple routes, and there are always multiple opportunities to get tangled in traffic. Every smart driver in the Bay Area chooses a route that has options. And most of us have opinions about the best way to reach our destinations. Some rely on freeways. Others rely solely on forms of public transportation. Still others use a combination of modes of travel. This paper on different approaches to educational change reminds me a bit of the ways in which Bay Area drivers talk about ways to avoid traffic. There are multiple routes to a given destination. Not everyone agrees on the roads and not everyone agrees on the destination. But everyone agrees that there are multiple paths to educational change.

I begin this paper by outlining a few of my assumptions and biases about educational reform. Then, I describe several categories of different approaches to change and a few common critiques of each approach. I will briefly outline some lessons derived from the last decade of educational reform. Finally, I will give a set of considerations to use when crafting an approach to educational change in a variety of settings.

My beliefs and assumptions

Through 10 years of working in educational reform I have developed a set of assumptions and biases, or lenses through which I view the field. I outline these lenses as a means of identifying my perspectives as I describe the different routes to educational reform.

I assume that the primary goals of educational reform involve increasing student achievement and providing a safe, healthy and caring learning environment for adults and for students. I define successful reforms as those which have demonstrated impact on student performance through improving skills, qualities and habits of mind in academic and affective areas and have also created a vibrant learning community for adults.

I further define a chief goal of education as teaching *all* students not just the easiest ones. I delineate this assumption explicitly because it exists in

contrast to traditional assumptions that underlie the current system in public schools. Public schools were historically designed, in part, to sort students not to truly serve all students (Cuban, 1990; Fine, 1989; McNeil, 1986; Parish & Aquila, 1996; Powell, Farrar & Cohen, 1985, ; Tyack, 1974; Weis, 1983). We continue to see explicit sorting practices: tracking by "ability groups" as early as age 6, differential educational and counseling services (vocational vs. college bound), separate classes for those with special needs, etc. I am not describing the extreme cases of separate classes for students with severe disabilities, rather those cases where students are identified as different from the mainstream and are labeled and treated as such. There are many historical reasons for a sorting design principle which grow out of the societal context in which schools were previously situated and which reflect historical values. The current population of students is far more complex than the population of students that schools were historically designed to serve. The societal context in which schools work is also increasingly complex and troubled. All reform efforts address or confront this value explicitly or implicitly.

THE WHOLE SCHOOL CHANGE APPROACH

What follows is a brief description of a set of well known and successful whole school reform efforts. Included are a number of questions and concerns that have been raised regarding each effort and systemic reform efforts in general. These efforts vary in their philosophies, targeted age groups, the amount of technical and material assistance provided to schools, and the degree of local interpretation of the programs. Most of these initiatives are designed as a network of schools.

The Coalition of Essential Schools, founded by Ted Sizer at Brown University in 1984, is a network of schools which share as their goal implementing the nine Common Principles. The Common Principles are a set of ideas about teaching, learning and the organization of schools. Comprehensive in nature, the principles were designed to be interpreted at the school level. The main focus of the Common Principles is to teach students to use their minds well. Principles also encourage the organization and practice of schools which value knowing students well in order to teach them well. Working mostly with secondary schools, CES questions the fundamental assumptions that undergird a school and the compromises that teachers are forced to make in the current design of schools. Assistance is provided by regional centers, a national office staff, and a large body of resources (thoughtful newsletters, research articles, and books.) CES relies on "conversation" as the main vehicle for change. Concerns have been raised about the lack of resources and support for teachers (e.g.. there are no CES curriculum materials) and an over-reliance on assisting schools with governance and cultural issues. This concern is due, in part, to the way CES

values local wisdom and interpretation over a centralized model. Questions have also been raised about the degree of significant change in classroom practice and lack of clear and compelling data that students are performing better.

The Accelerated Schools Program, started by Hank Levin at Stanford University, has been designed to work with elementary schools (and has gradually included middle schools) who serve "at risk" low socio-economic populations. The basic premise is that schools tend to remediate students who are not achieving and that they need, instead, to accelerate learning opportunities for students. Holding students to high expectations is at the center of this effort. Emphasis is placed on a year-long "taking stock" process in which schools assess current practice and are closely assisted by ASP staff. Then school-wide committees are established to address some of the findings in the "taking stock" process. Schools are encouraged to include parents every step of the way. Ultimate value is placed on the belief that all students can achieve and that by increasing resources to those who typically underachieve students will perform better. Criticisms about the ASP approach have included a concern about schools not "owning" the work due to having developed dependency on ASP in the early phases of the effort and having trouble in later stages when they are not provided with enough assistance later. In addition, questions have been raised about indicators of success.

Working almost exclusively in urban elementary schools, the School Development Program aims to include multiple stakeholders in the lives of children. Started by James Comer, a psychiatrist at Yale University, the project seeks to improve the overall school ecology by refocusing adults' attention to students needs and issues. The project values the psychological development of students and increases the role of social service agents and the larger community in the life of the school. Value is placed on the relationships developed between students and adults as a vehicle for improving student achievement. Schools engaged in this process undergo an initial school-wide training, followed by on-going coaching and in-service professional development. Changes focus on developing school-wide goals, re-configuring the governance and decision making process to reflect the representation of various stakeholders in the work of the school, and establishing school-wide committees which focus on different aspects of reform (curriculum and instruction, assessment, technology, planning and management, etc.). Concerns have included a lack of focus on and demonstrated success in the classroom (curriculum, assessment, and instruction.)

The Child Development Project, founded by Eric Schaps, was originally conceived as a research and development effort with a very small group of elementary schools. CDP focuses on fostering students' ethical and

prosocial behavior and understanding through attention to the intellectual, ethical and social development of children. Intensive work has been done with a limited number of schools. Schools have been provided with fairly close technical assistance consisting of an intensive three year training, comprehensive curriculum materials, and in-house study groups. This effort resembles a model in which outside experts provide the program to the schools. Research conducted by CDP has shown this work to be very successful in improving student achievement and developing social and ethical growth in children. Questions include the size and scope of the effort, the difficulty of implementation of the model without close facilitation, and the lack of clear standards for all students.

*Carl Glickman
Charter
Critical
Study*

League of Professional Schools. This network of schools was started by Carl Glickman. It represents a school-university partnership effort (like CES and ASP) between k-12 public schools and the University of Georgia. The schools in this network share a commitment to improving teaching and learning by working on three priorities. First, schools are asked to craft a "covenant" which defines the educational focus for the school. The covenant serves as the collective vision for the school. Second, schools develop a "charter" for shared governance of the school. These are the rules the school agrees to follow to enact the covenant. The charter refers directly to the covenant. Finally, the schools agree to participate in a "critical study process" by engaging in school-wide action research about how the school assesses its work toward achieving the covenant. Emphasis is place on the value of democracy both for adult decision making and for student learning. School to school collaboration is promoted to create learning across sites. The League does not focus on student assessment as one of its goals and therefore may not encourage teachers to truly transform their teaching. High Schools in the League are not as successful as elementary schools.

One common critique of all of these efforts is that because the changes are comprehensive by design and long term in nature, it is difficult to detect improvements in the short term. Each of these efforts aims to change the culture, policies, practices, and structures of a school. It is challenging for any school to simultaneously address all of these dimensions. Since the work is long term, changes in the environment of the schools (new leadership, state and district policies, funding crises, increased immigration, etc.) impact progress toward reform goals. These environmental shifts are inevitable. Each of these reform efforts vary to the degree that they understand and are able to support schools to cope with environmental flux.

THE CHANGE IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE APPROACH

Another set of reforms focus on the governance and management of schools. These reforms are not always formal initiatives or a network of schools and are often encouraged at the local school district level. The main

goal of school governance reforms involves providing more decision making power to the people who are closest to the children. Several assumptions underlie this set of strategies. One such assumption involves the belief that teachers and school site administrators are best able to determine resource allocation (time, money, and human) in order to best serve students. Another is that fundamentally schools are hierarchical organizations in which teachers and students are disenfranchised and this creates a moral dilemma. "Teachers have to be part of the educational decision making process not only as recognition of or incentive to professional status, but also because the daily lives of teachers are influenced by decisions in which they have no voice." (Sarason, 1990, p.52) Many proponents of these reforms believe that until the basic power relationships in schools change, no substantive change will be achieved.

Often under the umbrella of "site-based management" (SBM) or "shared decision making" (SDM) these reforms stress teacher empowerment. School districts which provide sites with the power to allocate resources, hire personnel, and set school policy are engaging in site-based management. Schools which simply share decision-making power among teachers, administrators and sometimes parents typically call their effort shared decision making.

There are formal "democratic schools" networks which share an ideological base and are informed by the work of Lawrence Kohlberg, Paulo Freire, Carl Glickman and others. Other initiatives have been launched and supported by teachers' unions and associations (Rochester, NY and Dade County, Florida are the most famous of these efforts) as a way of promoting teacher empowerment.

Most of the whole school change efforts include a governance component. What distinguished these efforts from whole school change is that these reforms are often not coupled with a focus which includes attention to school culture, structure curriculum, instruction, student assessment, etc.

The success of these efforts have varied widely. One common concern has involved a lack of explicit (or sometimes even implicit) connections between changing the governance of the schools and improved opportunities for student learning. Critics have been known to eschew SBM/SDM because the indicators of success typically promote change in teacher satisfaction rather than improved student achievement. In addition, many districts and schools have moved into SBM or SDM without providing sufficient support for teachers to develop the new skills, or to adjust to the new school culture that results from these reforms. Another common pitfall with SBM and SDM has involved a lack of clarity about what type of decisions are truly important for teachers to make. Distinctions have often not been made about

which type of decisions are most critical for teacher voice. For example, many schools have engaged in long meetings in which teachers debate the amount of paper each teacher is allocated, or debate the process for repairing the photo-copy machine. These examples stand in contrast to schools in which teachers decide which text books to use or design, plan and facilitate their professional development opportunities for the year.

STANDARDS BASED REFORMS

Another set of reforms which occur at a local, district, state, and national level involve the development and use of standards. These reforms share a belief that teachers need to use a set of standards to insure equity, to promote high expectations, to inform decision making about both classroom and school level issues, and to encourage work toward common goals. Standards are designed to express what students know and are able to do.

In general, there are two types of standards which educators espouse: content standards and performance standards. Content standards are typically a set of agreements about what students should know and do within a given curricular area. For example, Project 2061: Science for All Americans, run by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, has compiled a set of content standards for science. Another content standard might be: students should be able to describe the major forces which precipitated World War II. Content standards are promoted by school districts, states, and even national initiatives. Performance standards are designed to capture how well a student demonstrates a given skill or area of knowledge. Defining how well a student ought to write a persuasive essay, or how well a student can design and conduct a scientific experiment are examples of performance standards. Performance standards are often written in the form of a developmental rubric which describes the different ways in which a given skill appears. These rubrics are used for assessing the performance of a student given the standard. (See the recent issue December 1996 Educational Leadership devoted to "Teaching for Authentic Student Performance." 5(4).

Standards reforms are often, but not always, tied to developing assessments which can assess student performance relative to the standards. Authentic assessments are typically discussed in this light. Assessments of performance are *authentic* when they refer to the ability to perform things that are valued in the adult world (Wiggins, 1993). Performance assessments typically refer to ways in which students demonstrate their relative mastery of a standard or assessment.

This shift in thinking about student assessment has tremendous implications for how teachers design their pedagogy and curriculum. When

working toward a set of standards teachers must consider what is important for students to learn and the nature of assistance students need in order to develop the necessary skills to meet the standards. Furthermore, assessment data relative to a set of standards can guide decisions about school-wide programs as well as classroom programs.

Harvard Project Zero, founded by Howard Gardner, is one effort specifically designed to help schools use curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment tools in order improve student performance. While not rooted in standards reform, the assessment work that Project Zero does is closely associated with much of standards work. Other key leaders in the field include Grant Wiggins, Richard Stiggins, Lauren Resnick, and Ruth Mitchell.

Critiques of standards based assessment range from pedagogical to ideological. In many State standards programs tests are closely tied to the standards. These tests are often not well developed and may not work in concert with other policies (state approved curriculum, etc.) Results often impact funding levels, status, and personnel decisions.

Insufficient support is usually provided for teachers to teach to the standards. Major assumptions are made about the use of standards. Schools often underestimate the value and implications of developing standards. Efforts are focused on development without consideration of implementation issues: professional development, necessary changes in school policies, inevitable changes in school culture, structural issues, etc. Teaching to standards and performance assessments requires a new way of approaching the classroom for most educators.

Many critics argue that standards must be developed locally to respond to the priorities and needs of the local communities. If they are developed more remotely, critics argue, then the process is fundamentally undemocratic. Others argue that standards ought to be developed at a national level to promote a common base of knowledge for all Americans.

While proponents argue that standards will help insure high quality education for all students, unless explicit attention is paid to help those students who are typically underserved in schools then standards will be one more reform that passes them by. This means teachers will need to understand how to teach to all students and that current practices of tracking (using multiple sets of standards for different students) will need to be reassessed. In order to fundamentally change this cycle, schools will need to shift from lowering standards (or having multiple sets of standards) to increasing support to meet the standards. This approach requires fundamental shifts in the ways in which students are viewed: all are capable of learning at high levels rather than just some.

CHANGING ONE SLICE OF A SCHOOL

Many reforms aim at a "slice" of the school. They are not intended to impact all students nor all adults. Rather, these efforts are designed to provide support to more narrow dimensions of the school. I have grouped a number of these efforts into three categories: curricular reforms, skill building reforms, and instructional strategy reforms.

Curriculum reforms are a good example of this type of change strategy. Typically designed to provide curriculum to teachers who aim to improve their current materials or strategies. These materials range in scope and degree of specificity. One lens with which to analyze these strategies involves the way in which the curriculum developers view teachers or the ways in which the purposes are conceived. The purpose of the reforms may be to provide resources to teachers or it may be a way to try to combat what is perceived as poor classroom practice. Some curriculum efforts are designed to provide broad guidance and ample resources. In these efforts teachers are encouraged to be creative and augment with their own ideas, materials, and adapt to the population of students they teach. Examples of this type of curriculum reform include: Facing History in Ourselves, the Algebra Project, Teachers' Curriculum Institute, and Interactive Math Project. Other curricular reforms follow a more prescribed or "teacher proof curriculum." Teachers are expected to follow the programs exactly to achieve the desired results. Examples include Success for All (an early literacy program), FAST (Foundational Approaches to Science Teaching) and Math Power.

Curricular reform efforts serve important purposes. They provide useful resources for teachers. Many demonstrate success but show limited impact when viewed across all students or the whole school. These efforts do not intend to impact all students or all dimensions of the school. Some of these efforts have structural components, that is they may recommend increased instructional time for literacy or extended planning time for teachers. Critics describe the vast history of curricular reforms in which the changes in approach and materials disappear over time without a trace.

Another category of narrow reform efforts are the skill building initiatives. These efforts are designed to help students develop skills that are deemed important and are typically removed from a curricular context. Two examples of these efforts are the HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) program developed by Stanley Pogrow at the University of Arizona and Kumon Math which was adopted out of methods made popular in Japan. HOTS works with students for 25 minutes per day. The lessons are scripted for teachers to use. "At risk" students are pulled out of traditional classes to participate in HOTS. Kumon Math also has scripts for teachers and involves intensive timed drills of math skills. Emphasis is placed on skills and swiftness not on conceptual learning.

A third category might include those reforms which target instructional strategies. A related skill building reform, this approach targets teachers not students. The most well known model was devised by Madeline Hunter from UCLA. Her model, "Instructional Theory Into Practice" involved a multi-step instruction process designed to work at any grade level and with any content area. Popular in the 1980's, these programs were taught largely in a staff development inservice model. Techniques involved giving students an "anticipatory set" or agenda for a given lesson and "checking for understanding." These strategies did not appear to impact teaching techniques nor improve student achievement over time.

Another popular instructional reform involved "cooperative learning." Teachers were taught theories, formulas, and strategies for encouraging students to work in groups. Proponents include Elizabeth Cohen, Robert Slavin, David Johnson, and many others. While the theories and strategies differed, the purpose was to provide opportunities for social learning and promote the practice of working together.

These types of programs have demonstrated marginalized success. There is little evidence, over time, that any of these strategies remained and improved student achievement. These strategies are also not intended to impact all children. In programs like HOTS, there is very little evidence of carry over or transfer to other dimensions of the student's learning. Similarly, Kumon Math skills are limited to Kumon Math.

POLICY REFORMS PROMOTED AT DISTRICT, STATE, NATIONAL LEVEL

Several of the reforms described above (curricular, SDM, SBM, standards, etc.) have been promoted or even mandated at one or more of these policy levels. Reforms initiated outside of the school building by those in policy positions have not tended to be very successful. The California State Curriculum Frameworks are a well documented example. Teachers were asked to teach math, for example, in a way that fostered understanding and not rote memorization. They were provided with textbooks tied to the new Framework, and other curricular materials (manipulatives, etc.). But they were also provided with little support and professional development to understand how to teach with the materials in a new way. Researchers found that teachers did not understand the new Framework and used the textbooks and materials to support the old way they had been teaching (Ball, 1990a; Ball, 1990b; Cohen, 1990; Wilson, 1990). What changes do result maybe what Larry Cuban would call "incremental" rather than more fundamental second order changes (Cuban, 1990; Cuban, 1993). One reason for the limited success may be that these reforms are too remote from the context in which teachers are teaching (McLaughlin and Talbert, 1993).

EMERGING LESSONS FROM EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Reformers and scholars will not always agree about the essential lessons that emerge from different approaches to change. The perspective of the critic shapes the lessons. My perspective is shaped by my experiences as a reformer and as a researcher focused on whole school change. I am interested in understanding the conditions that support and impede comprehensive and lasting changes that have "authentic pedagogy"* at the center. The brief lessons, or generalizations, that follow are intended to help illuminate these conditions.

Making significant educational change is long term work. To change deeply rooted traditions, practices, beliefs, and structures may take a generation (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; Sizer, 1992). Many working toward comprehensive change of this nature have already discovered the necessity of including all stakeholders in the process, anticipating the swinging pendulum of imperatives directed toward educators, and the challenge of trying to change a system while working within it.

Most people are unprepared for the political and personal dimensions of the work. Challenging assumptions that have existed for years evokes deeply charged responses. The work becomes personalized and highly political. Teachers and administrators have to work harder than they had previously worked. The potential for burn-out, always present, intensifies in a reform context.

Change is not fun. Adults resist changing. Professionals who have grown into proficiency do not enjoy losing competency when faced with adopting new habits, skills, and challenging their belief systems. (Evans, 1996)

Inquiry, conversation and relationships are essential vehicles for change. Creating opportunities for teachers and administrators to learn from their practice, to learn together and to commiserate is absolutely critical to any change process. The work is too hard to sustain without colleagues, friends, and intellectual stimulation. CES and others rely on critical friends to provide both support and hard questions to challenge the work. Networks are proving to be invaluable for schools by providing like-minded colleagues engaged in similar efforts and yet the context differs enough to provide necessary perspective.

* Authentic pedagogy is a construct developed by Newmann and Wehlage which emphasizes teaching that requires students to think, develop in-depth understanding, and to apply academic learning to important, realistic problems (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995).

To achieve successful reform, changes need to occur on a school-wide (or institution-wide) scale. This view is consistent with one which views organizations as ecological systems which function much like an organic system (Hannan & Freeman, 1984; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993) Ecological balance is always sought. If one aspect of the school is impacted, other aspects will necessarily be effected. For example, if a high school community chooses to adopt a new set of curricular materials and instructional methods in mathematics, other departments and aspects of the school will experience the shift. For example, increased professional development resources may be devoted to mathematics and subsequently diminish the resources for other teachers. Mathematics teachers may work more closely as they try new methods --they might eat lunch in their classrooms, they might travel to conferences together and develop private jokes, they might be tired and unavailable to participate in other committees, they might even develop disdain for their colleagues who still teach in the old way. Inadvertently cliques, factions, and even hostilities develop. A typical elementary school example might evolve from a focus on Early Literacy which typically includes K-3rd grade teachers. Teachers at the upper primary or intermediate levels are "left out" in a variety of ways. Only some teachers are learning skills that would apply to the teaching of reading at all levels. The upper primary teachers might be under the false impression that their instructional methods don't need to change. Exciting professional development which creates camaraderie and collegial learning is available to only a subset of the school. Again, unintentional groupings develop and create a dysfunctional school community and inhibit the development of a school-wide learning organization.

The people who currently work in schools have the ability to accomplish the work of reform (improve teaching and learning, write curriculum, re-design the structure and culture of the institution) but they will need support to build their capacity (Fullan, 1991; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993; Miles & Louis, May 1990; Sarason, 1990; Wasley, 1994). Reform efforts vary in their commitment to this value. On one end of the spectrum models are provided to schools with very specific implementation strategies and on the other end of the spectrum, schools are provided with a set of ideas to consider how to implement. Providing high levels of support is essential. The best kind of professional development is highly contextual, usually site based, and ongoing.

Reform strategies and efforts are highly contextual (Hannan & Freeman, 1984; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993). What plays in Peoria may not play in Palo Alto. Because reform work is ultimately shaped by those who are doing the work (teachers and students) the strategies will be interpreted by those people. Additionally, every community is different. Reform strategies that support this kind of variation is essential for success.

High expectations (for students and for adults) are essential to success (Meier, 1995). A reform which ultimately does not target all children may foster prejudices and develop biases which will have pernicious effects later (McDermott, 1987). Successful reforms include all children and expect the most of them.

Teachers have to want to change what they do. No one can mandate what is really important (Weatherley & Lipskey, 1977). Fundamentally, teachers are in control of much that happens inside their classrooms. This means that reforms that they don't believe in and are not interested in implementing will not likely come to fruition.

The environment which surrounds educational institutions is always in flux. Changes in leadership, in the community, in the political stream, and in funding mean that nothing in the environment is ever stable. Schools need to be flexible enough to adapt and planful enough to anticipate change.

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING YOUR ROUTE AND YOUR DESTINATION

The lessons and descriptions above suggest a number of considerations when planning a route to reform. I briefly outline a few areas and key questions to think about when embarking on a journey toward educational change. Just like travel in the Bay Area, educational change requires careful thought about the means of reform as well as the ultimate destination.

1. *Consider your goals.* What are you hoping to achieve. Are you targeting all students? Are you interested in transforming the entire institution or just a part? Does the culture of the institution need to change? What is your vision of educational change? What are your goals? What are your goals based on? How widely shared is the vision for change?

2. *Consider your resources.* What human and financial resources are required to pursue your goals? What resources are available? How can you leverage current resources? Who else can contribute? What type of ongoing support have you considered providing to the participants of reform?

3. *Consider the readiness of your institution.* Have conversations even begun about what needs to change? What percentage of the community is currently involved in thinking and planning for change? Would your community benefit from a few small highly prescribed innovations before tackling the larger dimensions of your institution? (Slavin, 1995) Have you surveyed the faculty to ascertain their personal and professional needs to participated?

4. *Consider your community.* Have you conducted a needs assessment (however formal) of your local community? Are you aware of community concerns and interests? Have you included all the stakeholders in the conversation? Have you waited too long to consider the stakeholders?

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Disequilibrium

Readiness

Energy-level

Genius of implementation

Role of leader

- change-agent - outside

BACKGROUND

Push the leader

GUIDES¹ SEMINAR
Providence, 7/28/97

How intense

No self-deception

but continue the

Part of the rationale for the CIJE/Mandel Institute Goals Seminar, organized in cooperation with CAPE in July of 1996, was the need to develop a cadre of talented individuals with the capacity to forward the educational agenda associated with the Goals Project. With this mind, a sub-group of the larger group that had met in Jerusalem was convened in December of 1996 to examine a case-in-progress presented by Dan Pekarsky. The group was convened a second time in July of 1997 in Providence, Rhode Island: this time, the group's work was defined by a twofold agenda: a) reflection on a project that, as a result of his work in the Goals Seminar, Alvan Kaunfer has taken on in Rhode Island; and b) the need to think through how this group of individuals might most fruitfully operate as a group and contribute to the work of CIJE and the Goals Project.

Attending the meeting were Karen Barth, Amy Gerstein, Alvan Kaunfer, Daniel Pekarsky, Nessa Rapoport, and Linda Thall. Invited but unable to come was David Purpel, who had recently participated in CIJE's Professors Seminar.

CONSIDERING AHAD HA'AM'S 'MOSES'

Our work began with a study session organized around Ahad Ha'Am's essay entitled "Moses". In introducing the session, Dan emphasized that our engagement in Jewish study should not be regarded as ritualistic or as incidental to the work that brings us together; for it has the potential to facilitate our creating a kind of learning community amongst us that will contribute to our more task-oriented conversations, as well as to introduce concepts, insights, and questions that will shed light on our discussion of critical educational issues.

Led by Alvan, this discussion focused primarily on Ahad Ha'Am's characterization of the Prophet (in the person of Moses) as leader, a characterization that emphasized 1) the Prophet's identity as a person of truth, 2) his extremism on behalf of his vision: his wholehearted and uncompromising dedication to a vision, carried deep within his soul, of what ought to be and must be; and 3) the Prophet's need of a priestly figure -- an Aaron, a person of words -- to mediate between himself as bearer of the vision and the situation down on the ground. For the very same characteristics that render the Prophet prophetic in the sense specified in 1) and 2) render him

¹ GUIDES STANDS FOR GUIDING IDEAS STUDY GROUP. SEE THE TEXT AND THE ACCOMPANYING GUIDES-PROPOSAL FOR AN EXPLANATION OF THIS NAME.

less adept at interpreting and adapting to the needs of the moment.

Our discussion of this article brought out on a number of themes, identified below.

'Truthfulness'. The Prophet is a person of truth in a double-sense. It's not just that he or she sees things as they are, unbiased by subjective feeling, but also that he/she cannot but speak the truth (as he/she sees it) to others (and even to God). It is this inability or unwillingness to tailor his/her presentation of the truth to the audience and the context that necessitates the partnership with the Priest, who is described as "a man of words."

But what does it mean for the Prophet to see things as they are? Two (not necessarily incompatible) views were articulated. On one interpretation to see things as they really are is to be brutally honest with oneself (and others) about what one sees, not letting one's fantasies, fears, hopes, or just lazy thinking contaminate one's assessment of the situation in which we find ourselves. In this context, reference was made to Senge's insistence that efforts to bridge the distance between what is and the vision to which we aspire depend on a willingness to carefully and dispassionately study what he calls 'current reality' [To cite an example from out of our later discussion, in looking at the relationship between the vision a community articulates and existing social and educational arrangements, the Prophet type is the one who does not let us get away with facile efforts to see the vision as already embodied in the present, when in fact it is not; any such claim, this figure insists, needs to be grounded in strong evidence.]

On a second interpretation, "to see things as they are" is not only a matter of being dispassionate but of seeing things **as illuminated by the vision**, a vision which offers one insight into the present which is otherwise unattainable. Thus, the vision functions as a kind of lens through which the present situation and the challenges of the community are interpreted. This interpretation was accompanied by the suggestion that the first one seems to assume that it is possible to see current reality unencumbered by what the observer brings, and this led to some discussion of the following point: granted that the observer's understandings and commitments inevitably enter into what he/she sees, can't one nonetheless meaningfully distinguish (as interpretation #1 insists) between seeing things in a distorted and in an undistorted way?

Prophet and priest. There was considerable interest in the idea that the challenges of leadership require two different "types", both Prophet and Priest, and there was some discussion of how best to understand their relationship in the process of a

community's growth. Does a community need different types at different stages in its development? Do they represent two dimensions of leadership that are constantly in interaction? Should we understand Prophet and Priest as two different roles in the life of a community -- or, as one member of the group suggested, should we understand Prophet and Priest psychologically, as elements of the Self found within the leader?

In any event, there seemed to be agreement that both leadership elements were important to a community's growth -- that the visionary without the capacity to adapt the vision to the needs of the moment risked being too out of touch with the community to be able to guide its development, and that the Priestly type who is always attentive to the mood and desires of the people being addressed is in danger of losing a meaningful connection to the kind of larger vision that the Prophet represents.

Two kinds of genius? There was in this context a challenge to what some felt to be an explicit or implicit hierarchy in Ahad-Ha'am's outlook: the Prophet is the genius, the Priest is the (mere) implementer. It was suggested that **the priest is also a genius -- a genius of implementation.** To this it was added that it is inaccurate to describe the work of the priest as a "watering down" of the vision (compromising it) in the face of a recalcitrant reality; rather, implementation can be understood as an imaginative interpretation of vision that takes into account not just the vision but the situation in which it is to be embedded. [It is, of course, possible to acknowledge both possibilities -- that is, that in the process of implementation, visions are sometimes but not always or inevitably interpreted in 'watered down' ways. How to draw this distinction may be worth exploring.]

The problem of 'readiness'. Although time-constraints precluded serious discussion, our conversation pointed to a second dimension of the Ahad Ha-Am essay that is relevant to efforts to encourage transformational change in an institution (or community, or individual) -- namely, the problem of readiness for change. Here we took note of Ahad Ha-Am's discussion of the traditional view that the Israelites that had come out of Egypt were not ready to wholeheartedly commit themselves to and embody the vision that was put before them: neither the experience of great miracles leaving Egypt, nor powerful moments at the foot of Mount Sinai, nor even efforts at "training and education" seemed capable of overcoming in an enduring way the outlook and the values acquired as slaves in Egypt. Hence the need for the forty years in the desert, for a generation that had not known slavery. There is a sense in which "Moses" offers a pessimistic view of the ability of a group of people to transcend the outlook or culture within which they have been raised; hence the need to cultivate a new generation -- or to turn one's back on

pathological existing institutions and try to create new ones.

THE PROVIDENCE CASE

Relationship to the "Moses" article. Alvan pointed out some natural bridges between our discussion of the "Moses" essay and some of the central concerns growing out of his work with the Rhode Island Jewish community. Ahad Ha'Am's Moses exemplifies the kind of "vision with punch" described in his written case, a compelling vision that is typically the product of an individual who passionately represents it -- the kind of vision that may be sacrificed in the search for a consensus aimed at allowing everyone to feel included (Alvan's "consensus" issue). And Alvan's worries about connecting the vision as arrived at by his committee and ratified by the Federation with the one-going development of education in the community (his "connector" issue) are illuminated in significant ways by Ahad Ha'Am's discussion of the relationship and role of Prophet and Priest.

Alvan's formulation of some pertinent issues. Having identified the "consensus" and "connector" issues as the larger concerns that he hoped we would jointly illuminate on this occasion, Alvan went on to identify other - what he called sub-issues - that he hoped we would address. For example:

choice and pluralism: in relation to the "consensus/inclusivity" issue, he called our attention to the committee's struggle with whether and how much to incorporate the language of **choice** and **pluralism** in its statement of vision.

the problem of breadth: Is the kind of vision produced by the Providence community too broad to elicit enthusiasm and to meaningfully guide priority-setting and other facets of practice (as compared, say, with the more focused vision emphasizing Study and Social Justice articulated by Barry Schrage in Boston)?

Discussion of Alvan's case. There was high praise for Alvan's work and for his write-up of the work in the form of a case. The writing, the exercises he used with the committees he worked with, his success in drawing attention to significant issues pertaining to change efforts informed by powerful ideas -- all of these and other virtues of his work will render this case a very useful teaching and learning tool as we proceed with our work. Below is a summary of some of the major ideas that surfaced in response to participants' reading of the case and to Alvan's presentation.

1. How far does the vision have to go? A point that is of conceptual and potentially of practical significance is concerned with how we understand the scope of vision. A vision could be

understood as referring to 1) the ideal outcomes of a Jewish education -- the kind of person and community we hope to cultivate. It could also be understood to refer to 2) the kinds of institutions necessitated by #1. Finally, it could extend beyond 1) and 2) to the inclusion of 3) the kind of infrastructure needed to support and maintain the kinds of values and institutions identified in #s 1 and 2. [While #s 1 and 2 are discussed in DP's piece on vision in Jewish education, attention to #3 pushes that discussion to another level.] All three levels in their inter-relationship are important, and it is of interest to consider how attention to them should be woven into the overall process of envisioning and implementation. [Note that while #s 2 and 3 pertain to the implementation of the ideas envisioned in #1, they are not in themselves stages of implementation; they are closer to ideas about implementation (not unrelated to Seymour Fox's Level 3, or "theory of practice).]

2. The difficulty of maintaining a high energy level. Alvan's process was much more time-consuming than his group had realized it would be, and there may have been a problem of flagging energies along the way. It was suggested that perhaps a less linear approach, one that allowed participants to regularly wrestle with questions of practice and implementation long before their vision had crystallized, might help sustain their energy; well-conceived, it might also help illuminate the developing vision.

3. How might external inputs² enrich the process of deliberation, and how can they be incorporated in ways that will have this effect and not seem like a distraction from the work of the group? Raised early in the day, we began - but, alas only began - to explore this question more systematically towards the end of the day when we spent some time considering how Menachem Brinker might have approached the questions addressed by the Providence community, and how an encounter with ideas like his might have enriched the deliberations of the group that Alvan worked with. Some of the pertinent issues in need of further discussion are articulated later in this document.

4. What are the purposes of vision and how might attention to these purposes inform the design of the process of deliberation aimed at articulating a guiding vision? It was suggested that it

² "EXTERNAL INPUTS" REFERS PRIMARILY TO WHAT WE HAVE BEEN CALLING "INTELLECTUAL INPUTS", TO PERTINENT POWERFUL IDEAS AND PERSPECTIVES DRAWN FROM JEWISH AND OTHER SOURCES. BUT AS WAS NOTED IN OUR DISCUSSION, AN EXTERNAL INPUT MIGHT ALSO BE EXPERIENTIAL (AS WHEN A GROUP OF RABBIS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SYNAGOGUE 2000 PROJECT WERE LED INTO A POWERFUL TFIILLAH-EXPERIENCE WHICH THEREAFTER AFFECTED THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR WORK.

is problematic to assume that there is only kind of a purpose that a vision can legitimately serve; depending on circumstances, it may meet very different kinds of needs. Among the purposes and needs that a vision might satisfy in the life of an educating community are the following:

- a) program/curriculum design and evaluation;
- b) resource allocation;
- c) strategic planning;
- d) creating "a big tent" under which the varied members of a community feel they all have a place;
- e) symbolic action: through the vision announcing to ourselves and/or others who we are and what we stand for.

Which of these is judged to be primary in a given situation may carry implications for the design of the process that leads to the vision.

5. How narrow or broad, small or large, should be the group that is involved in working towards the guiding vision? In the context of Alvan's case, a concern was raised about the narrowness of the group involved in crafting the vision that was to guide communal decision-making in education. It was suggested by one participant that **the process of working towards the vision is often more important than the final product;** and that for this reason it might have proved important to expand the circle of individuals involved in formulating the Rhode Island vision. It was suggested in this connection that it may not be too late to meaningfully engage significant additional constituencies in this process.

6. The tacit dimension: priorities and commitments embedded - and discoverable - in existing forms of practice and organization. It was suggested that as part of a community's efforts to discover or refine its guiding vision it may be of value to surface priorities, commitments, and compromises that are embedded in existing practice. It may, for example, be instructive to identify the value-commitments at work in an educating community's budget allocations or in a school's schedule. In the case of some such inquiries - for example, analysis of a schedule, the activity may be relatively unthreatening inasmuch as schedules tend to reflect long-standing practice rather than the ideology or idiosyncrasies of any particular individual or body. In any event, the tension between the commitments and priorities at work in existing practice, on the one hand, and those that a community affirms as central can catalyze significant progress at the levels of guiding vision

and/or practice; it can facilitate testing an avowed vision (or a community's commitment to it) and can lead to thoughtful revision at the level of practice.

7. Avoiding self-deception or smugness: insisting on evidence and on the attitude of a trustworthy physician. It was suggested that in looking at the relationship between the avowed vision and existing practice, there may be a tendency in the direction of self-deception, a tendency "to see" the vision at work in practice even when the relationship between the two is at best tenuous. To counteract this tendency, it was urged that exercises aimed at discovering the commitments and values embedded in practice include an evidence criterion -- an insistence that claims about what is embedded in practice and about the relationship between vision and practice be accompanied by the evidence for these claims.

It was suggested that an educating community needs the kind of truth-telling that one would hope for in a physician: an honest account of one's true situation, but one framed in a way that will contribute to the client's ability to respond healthily to the information. Once again, this discussion brought us back to the Ahad Ha'Am's discussion of the place of truth in the priest-prophet equation.

8. How much responsibility should the guide take for sustaining the process of deliberation and change? In the context of our discussion of a period in the Providence-process where the participants seemed to be tiring out, it was observed that at various points in a change-process, energies flag and momentum seems to slow and may be altogether lost. What is the guide's role in this situation? More specifically, under what circumstances (if ever), should he/she take on a measure of responsibility for keeping the process going, and under what circumstances and for what reasons is it appropriate for the guide to allow the process to take its own natural course without heroic efforts on his/her part to sustain it?

9. The significance of "choice" and "pluralism" language. Early in our discussion it was suggested that the prominence of "choice" and "pluralism" language in the Providence deliberation process represents a way of purchasing a sense of inclusivity among a very diverse population of Jews. Later in our deliberation, a different hypothesis was proposed: namely, that choice and pluralism represent traditional American values to which American Jews, like many other Americans, are strongly committed. On this view, the prominence of these categories reflects much more than a strategy that allows everyone to feel included; it also testifies to strongly held American values that are affirmed by the deliberators.

10. From vision to practice: the need for intermediate steps. In Providence, the process has not yet gone to the level of seriously wrestling with the practical educational implications of the vision-statement the deliberation-team arrived at. But it was noted by one member of our group that it would be a mistake to think that programmatic implications and community policy could be derived directly from this kind of a vision. There is, it was suggested, a need for developing a comprehensive strategy (a strategy that would itself rely on a host of empirical and other assumptions that go well beyond the content of the vision) that would mediate between the vision and practice. [Though not referred to in this context, this point calls to mind Seymour Fox's discussion of "the five levels", which highlights the complex and textured character of the relationship between vision and practice.

11. The leader's vision...or discovering the community's vision, OR....

In our initial discussion, there was a tendency to contrast two different approaches to vision: **either** a charismatic leader (a Moses) brings a vision to the people **or** a skilled facilitator helps the community to identify its own shared vision. In the course of our conversation, some other ideas surfaced. It was suggested that one of the challenges and tasks of a community's guide is to find a language through which to articulate this community's heretofore inarticulable understandings and values. Since these understandings and values can probably be articulated in more than one way, the guide's responsibility (for choosing a language that will be fruitful) is an awesome one.

Beyond and after playing an active role in helping the community unearth and find a language for its guiding vision, it may be the role of the guide to help this community deepen the vision by challenging it (e.g., by raising questions concerning ambiguous phrases, by offering different interpretations of key phrases, or by introducing difficult counter-examples). See in this connection #12.

12. The role of disequilibrium in the process of deliberation. The role of the guide, or coach, as a gadfly is a subject that was discussed at some length about two years ago in a CIJE/Mandel Institute consultation with Professor Israel Scheffler. This subject entered into our discussions as well. By confronting participants with the gap between what they say they are committed to and the values embedded in practice, by raising irksome but important questions about what they claim to believe, etc., the guide tries to foster among the participants a more thoughtful understanding of what they are committed to and its implications.

THE PLACE OF POWERFUL IDEAS, GROUNDED IN JEWISH SOURCES, IN THE

PROCESS OF DELIBERATION AND CHANGE

As suggested above, early on a question was raised concerning how to infuse the community's deliberations concerning a guiding vision with powerful Jewish ideas. While some attention was paid to this issue late in the day, it requires much more sustained discussion. As a way of setting the stage for such a discussion (perhaps at our next meeting), you will find below a formulation of some of the issues in need of attention and a summary of a few points made in our discussion.

The challenges we face are a direct consequence of one of our most basic convictions. CIJE strongly affirms that the process of educational deliberation needs to include serious struggle with questions of basic purpose and aspiration; and that this struggle will be enriched through the encounter with insights and perspectives found in Jewish thought. One challenge that grows out of this conviction is to identify ideas that will enrich deliberation in this way; a second challenge (perhaps that of the Priest rather than the Prophet) is to formulate and package those ideas in forms that will engage potential audiences; a third challenge is to find ways of meaningfully introducing these intellectual inputs into an individual's or a group's process of deliberation. Serious work needs to be done in all of these areas.

In relation to Alvan's case, the following questions come to mind as guides to continuing discussion:

- 1) what external intellectual inputs did Alvan try to introduce into the process he led, and for what reasons?
- 2) how and when did he try to introduce these inputs, and with what effects?
- 3) might there have been other fruitful ways through which to infuse the process with pertinent external inputs?

While this is not the occasion to address these issues, for future reference and discussion, the following point from our discussion may be worth incorporating.

While there is a tendency to think of the introduction of external intellectual inputs as taking place through an explicit encounter with Jewish texts or a précis of such texts, this is not the only, or necessarily the best, way to think about how Jewish ideas might be encountered. Consider in this connection the case of psychoanalytic therapy, in which the patient may learn all about projection, the super-ego, sublimation, and the unconscious without ever having read Freud. How does this

happen? Through the therapist's questions, interpretations, and, on occasion, elucidation of concepts and insights that are at the heart of psychoanalytic theory. Offered succinctly at the right time and in the right way, such inputs can powerfully influence the patient's thinking and self-understanding.

Analogous considerations apply to guides helping clients (communities or educating institutions) strive for vision-sensitive educational practice. The guide's questions, formulations, metaphors, analogies, and interpretations at critical points in the process can introduce important new ideas and concepts in ways that powerfully affect the deliberation of participants. If, for example, the client is wrestling with the aims of Jewish education, instead of urging the participants to read certain seminal articles, it might be more fruitful for the guide to offer short but graphic summaries of the ideas found in these essays (with careful attention to the needs of the moment).

If the guide is to play this kind of role, it is essential that he/she be steeped in the appropriate forms of knowledge **and** that he/she have the ability to access and use this knowledge at the right time and in the right (not heavy-handed) way to enrich the participants' deliberations.

DISCUSSION OF 'GUIDES'

This discussion focused on the possible wisdom of developing a serious and on-going group whose members would 1) serve as guides to communities, agencies, and institutions (and to CIJE itself) in their efforts to develop informing visions through a process that takes ideas (not limited to but especially ideas grounded in Jewish thought) seriously; and/or 2) develop materials of various kinds (e.g. theoretical pieces, portraits of vision-driven institutions, case-studies, cases, etc.) that would support and enrich the work described under #1. The proposal for **"GUIDES" (an acronym for "Guiding Ideas Study Group")** was handed out to participants at our meeting and served as the springboard to our discussion; this proposal explains why "guiding ideas" replaces the term "goals" in this document and tries to specify how GUIDES will function. No attempt is made to summarize that document, only to identify issues surfaced in the course of our conversation. As a prelude to this, it is important to note that members of the group that met in Providence reacted with enthusiasm to the possibility that we would constitute ourselves as an on-going group.

Purpose and character of the proposed group. In an effort to clarify how this group fits into CIJE and how, if at all, it differs from the Consulting Firm Without Walls, questions were raised concerning the basic purposes and character of GUIDES. The following points were offered in response:

a. GUIDES offers its members support and advice in their efforts to help Jewish educating institutions and the infrastructure that supports them to develop vision-guided practice through a process that takes ideas seriously.

b. The existence of GUIDES offers an opportunity to develop and expand a body of lore concerning how best to think about and to organize, in different settings and contexts, processes of deliberation and change that give a central role to informed and sustained reflection concerning basic purposes and aspirations. This lore will include a developing body of concepts, insights, powerful examples, cases, case-studies, and theoretical formulations. These materials will provide us with springboards to our own continuing learning; they can also be used as tools in our teaching, in efforts at "seeding the culture", and in work with educating institutions that are struggling with their visional commitments..

c. GUIDES will offer its members an opportunity for growth that is simultaneously professional, personal, and Jewish. Jewish study figures prominently in the life of this group. Its centrality is predicated on the assumption that the insights, ways of thinking, and questions that emerge from the encounter with well-chosen Jewish sources will inform our thinking about the work that brings us together in powerful ways; and also on the assumption that the activity of learning together will contribute to the emergence of a kind of community and culture that will make our work richer and more personally meaningful.

d. While CIJE expects that members in the Consulting Firm Without Walls will be on-board with CIJE's beliefs concerning the centrality of ideas in the process of developing profound forms of Jewish educational practice, what will distinguish GUIDES is that the relationship between ideas and practice is at the heart of its members' professional and learning agenda.

The place of ideas in Jewish educational reform: three dimensions. Ideas being central to the work of CIJE and to GUIDES, it is important to note that our oft-repeated claim that ideas are central to the work of Jewish education is actually a summary of, or a generalization from, a number of distinct beliefs about the importance of ideas, including the following:

a. Judaism is rich with powerful ideas about human existence in its various dimensions, ideas with the capacity to engage mind and heart and to transform the

way we understand ourselves and the world. Unfortunately, such ideas rarely enter into Jewish education as we know it. **It is essential that Jewish education be transformed in such a way that its clients will regularly encounter powerful Jewish ideas in honest and powerful ways.**

b. Too often educating institutions and the infrastructure that supports them operate without clear basic purposes that are capable of eliciting the support and enthusiasm of their constituencies; and even when lip-service (or more) is paid to a particular vision or guiding idea, it rarely suffuses the life of the educating institution or agency in a more than superficial way. **It is essential that Jewish educating institutions come to be informed by guiding ideas, or visions, that identify their central purposes and that suffuse day-to-day practice across contexts.**

c. **The process of clarifying or discovering an institution's, or our own, guiding vision is enriched through the encounter with powerful Jewish ideas that are pertinent to the questions under consideration.** As examples, the attempt to develop a community-vision will be enriched through the encounter with variant Jewish conceptions of what it means to be a community; the attempt to clarify our vision of an educated Jewish human being will benefit from the encounter with philosophically different Jewish views of Jewish existence; and the attempt to develop an Evaluation Institute that will assess the work of Jewish educating institutions will do well to struggle with ethical and other issues pertaining to evaluation, confidentiality, etc. that are discoverable in Jewish sources.

While our work has sometimes suffered from a failure to distinguish between these related but different ways in which ideas figure prominently in our work, the GUIDES proposal, like the Goals Project that has given rise to it, assumes that GUIDES will be concerned with all three of them.

This formulation of the place of ideas in the work of GUIDES and CIJE brought forth a revised formulation. In contrast to the suggestion that Jewish thought has the capacity to elevate the level of discourse that informs deliberation concerning basic purposes, **it was urged that we make the stronger statement that attention to Jewish ideas and perspective is indispensable in that it offers unique, otherwise unattainable, questions, insights, understandings, and solutions.**

Place of GUIDES in CIJE's work. As suggested above, there was considerable discussion concerning the place of GUIDES in

CIJE'S work, discussion triggered by Karen's concern that, as described in the proposal, it seems very similar to the Consulting Firm Without Walls. A number of different ways of thinking about the place of GUIDES in CIJE were entertained:

a) An area of specialization within the change-process?

If the Consulting Firm Without Walls is broken into sub-groups interested in different phases of the change-process, GUIDES would come to represent one such sub-group -- namely, a sub-group concerned with the place of ideas and vision in the change-process.

b) Levels of involvement. One could imagine the Consulting Firm Without Walls as made up of individuals with different levels of involvement. Least involved would be a group of human resources who would consult to different projects; more involved is a group that, in addition to its consulting work, attends a serious annual conference; most involved is GUIDES, a small group which meets a number of times during the year and which plays a central role in defining the agenda and content for the annual conference. It is, in one person's words, the R&D for the Consulting Firm Without Walls; it is to the Consulting Firm Without Walls what a hothouse is to a garden.

c) Where should GUIDES BE LOCATED -- CFWW OR "CORE"?

Much of our discussion seemed to assume that GUIDES would be located in the Consulting Firm Without Walls. As we proceeded, the suggestion was made that GUIDES be located in CORE, an altogether different domain, and that CIJE's regular staff actively participate in its periodic Study Group sessions that focus on the relationship between ideas and practice in Jewish education.

There seemed to be considerable support developing for the idea that GUIDES should be located in CORE.

Membership in GUIDES. Who, over and above, the small group that gathered in Providence should be invited to participate in GUIDES? The sense of the group was that the group should be kept small enough to allow for the kind of intense discussion, free of posturing, that has been a hallmark of our work.

This said, some felt that we would be enriched by including in the group some of the institution-based people (like Gordis, Steinmetz, and Lehmann) who had participated in the Jerusalem Goals Seminar in the summer of 1996. As an alternative, it was suggested that such individuals could be invited on one or more occasions to bring a case to the group which would serve as the focus of our discussion on a particular occasion; if the case is

well-chosen, both the group and the individual bringing it would profit from such an opportunity.

Some attention focused on particular individuals who might contribute to the group. It was noted that in the aftermath of the recent Professors Seminar David Purpel was invited to participate in the Providence Seminar; and DP suggested that someone like Phil Miller (the Judaica Director of the St. Louis JCC), who brings an interest in informal education along with an open but very traditional outlook) might be a welcome addition to the group. Since most of those present didn't know these individuals, it was hard for them to react, but no concerns were expressed about incorporating either of them.

Issues for GUIDES to consider. In the course of our discussion of GUIDES, suggestions were made concerning some themes that the group might focus on in subsequent meetings. For example:

Leadership vs. grassroots: when - and why - should the one be emphasized over the other in the development of a community's life? And what does Jewish thought have to say about this problem?

Ahavat Yisrael [the love owed to all Jews] vs. Reproaching Jews who 'go wrong'

Americanism and Judaism: the relationship between our identity as Americans and our identity as Jews.

END OF MEETING

It was agreed at the end of our discussion that we should wait until after CIJE's upcoming staff and steering committee meetings before determining our next gathering date. The sense of the group was that we had made a lot of progress, and we concluded by expressing our gratitude to Alvan and Marcia Kaunfer for their hospitality.

PROPOSAL FOR "GUIDES" (Guiding Ideas Study Group)

The Guiding Ideas Study Group (GUIDES)¹ is primarily made up of individuals with the competencies and desire to enhance the quality of Jewish education in one or both of the following ways: by serving as guides, or consultants, to change-ready Jewish educating institutions or to the infrastructure on which such institutions depend²; and/or by contributing to the library of intellectual resources such work requires. In some cases, these assignments will arise out of CIJE's efforts; in others, they will grow out of the individual's independent professional work. Our approach to educational improvement is profoundly informed by two ideas: first, by the conviction that Jewish educational institutions, policies, priorities and practices need to be guided by compelling conceptions of the nature of Judaism and of the aims of Jewish education; and second, by the belief that these conceptions can be clarified and deepened through a meaningful encounter with powerful ideas found in classical and more recent products of Jewish religious and cultural creativity.³

We believe that much remains to be learned about how to catalyze positive and enduring transformational change in individuals and in institutions; we also believe that there is even more to be learned about how fruitful attention to powerful ideas and to questions of basic purpose can be meaningfully incorporated into change-efforts that concern such critical matters as the reform of educating institutions, the preparation of leaders for Jewish education, and the setting of communal priorities for education. These learning challenges bring us together as a community and form the core of our learning agenda. Twice a year, members of this group retreat from their routine work for seminars that offer three kinds of opportunities: 1) the opportunity to engage in serious Jewish learning and to explore the pertinence of this learning to, and its place in, the kind

¹ As is probably clear, the term "GUIDES" is an acronym based on the phrase "**G**uiding **I**deas **S**tudy **G**roup". The substitution of "Guiding Ideas" for "Goals" is deliberate: "guiding ideas" could include but are not limited to "goals": for example, they include our underlying conceptions of what it means "to be a learning community", a congregation, or "to learn"; guiding ideas also point us towards powerful Jewish ideas that may not be reducible to goals but which inform our thinking in powerful ways. A possible advantage of the shift from "goals" to "guiding ideas" is that it enables us to drop the somewhat "instrumental" connotation of the word "goals". The term "GUIDES" is also suggestive of the role (reminiscent of the "coaches" which we used to speak of) that members of this group will play in relation to varied clients. Finally, calling the group "a study group" is intended to underscore the centrality of meaningful learning to our work together.

² This infrastructure would include, for example, national or regional institutions that prepare educators, central agencies for Jewish education, a committee composed of a community's lay leadership, etc.

³ The intent in this clause is to emphasize the centrality of **Jewish** ideas, not to rule out possibility of stimulating fruitful reflection through the encounter with ideas emanating from the general culture.

of professional work, the furtherance of which is our raison d'être as a group; 2) the opportunity to explore questions, issues, and insights that relate to members' work in the field; and 3) other opportunities to deepen and expand our shared lore concerning vision-sensitive educational practice and change.

As a vehicle of the group's own learning and as a way of building up a library of resources that will infuse our own work and that of others, members of this group agree to write up and make available to the group "cases", "case-studies", and/or other materials that grow out their work in the field.

Reflections on The Goals Project Conception of Vision Amy Gerstein

The Goals Project Conception of Vision

As I understand the Goals Project conception of vision it is one deeply rooted in a philosophical approach to vision as a picture of a particular kind of person. This conception involves both a substantive and content-based approach to describing human nature. Once a school holds this conception/definition of a vision, then they can develop strategies for employing this vision and assessing efforts to achieve that vision. Below I describe my initial understanding the dimensions of this conception of vision delineated in the five levels described by Danny Morom.

Level 1: Philosophy

This level is characterized by such questions: What is a human being? What is a Jew?

Level 2: Philosophy of education/Philosophy of Jewish education

What is an educated person or an educated Jew? Here, habits of mind and habits of heart would be articulated. Also, the larger aims of the community are involved at this level.

Level 3: Translation

This level describes moving from philosophical assumptions to a theory of practice in education.

Level 4: Implementation

At this level, the philosophy becomes very practical for education. Goals are defined and are used to create concrete structures and practice. For example, teacher training and curriculum development occurs at this level.

Level 5: Evaluation of Goals

Once the goals are explicit, authentic assessment of progress toward the goals becomes possible.

How the Goals Project conception differs from conceptions of vision within the field of school reform

My reflections regarding the Goals Project conception of vision and other conceptions of vision grow mostly out of my work in school reform. I will draw upon my experience in the field, my understanding of multiple reform initiatives, and a few key authors in this area. I am defining school reform as those initiatives which aim to fundamentally change the whole school. By whole school, I include structures, policies, practice, school culture and vision. These descriptions are broad brush strokes and are not meant to be comprehensive and specific. I describe how the current field of school reform defines vision, uses vision, derives vision, and regards vision as a strategy for change.

The Goals Project conception of vision significantly differs from other conceptions of vision in that the Goals Project conception is much more complex and finely described than ones that are traditionally described and used in reform. For example, vision is often talked about in general terms. *What is your vision? What are the qualities of students you are trying to achieve?* These questions are linked to levels one and two.

Sources and Uses of Vision

Within the field of school reform visions are typically developed out of a variety of sources which include:

1. Research on learning
2. Organizational theory and development
3. Beliefs, values, and assumptions about learning and the purposes of school
4. Experiential or practical wisdom

These cuts on vision are described often in strategic terms: as a lever for change, as a tool for designing curriculum, as a support for guiding the direction of change. These conceptions of vision differ from the Goals Project conception in that they are not mainly rooted in philosophical conception of the substance and content of human existence. They have many different sources: psychology, anthropology, sociology, and practice.

Reformers, inside and outside of schools, talk about the importance of shared vision in order for schools to change. This definition usually implies a strategic use of vision statements. Defining what is meant by a vision apart from a strategy is not typically a commonplace in practice or discourse in reform circles. Peter Senge, author of the Fifth Discipline, suggests that learning organizations need to have a shared vision:

...in order to create a sense of purpose that binds people together and propels them to fulfill their deepest aspirations. Catalyzing people's aspirations doesn't happen by accident; it requires time, care, and strategy. Thus the discipline of building shared vision is centered around a never-ending process, whereby people in an organization articulate their common stories—around vision, purpose, values, why their work matters, and how it fits in the larger world. (Senge, et al, 1994, p.298)

Senge is a proponent of vision as a strategy for reinforcing the development of a learning organization (one which is constantly renewing itself.) Yet the source of vision for Senge and others comes not from philosophical deliberation and examination of texts, but rather from peoples' values and experiences. Creating these shared visions involves continual work and attention to eliciting these values.

[A]t the heart of building shared vision is the task of designing and evolving ongoing processes in which people at every level of the organization, in every role, can speak from the heart about what really matters to them and be heard. (Senge, et al, 1994, p.299)

Many schools engaged in comprehensive reform engage members of the school community to ask the question: "What do we want our students to know and be able to do when they graduate?" It is this question that supports and guides their work. In the Coalition of Essential Schools members call it "planning backwards." Once a teacher begins with a conception of what type of student the school is aiming for, then he or she can design curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment accordingly. The answer to this essential question is derived from individuals' beliefs, values, and assumptions about learning. Again, the Goals Project approach to vision suggests that teachers would need to be more deeply grounded in philosophy and a set of essential texts to develop the beginnings of a vision. A long term process of developing goals would ultimately result in implementation.

Providing guide posts

Some reform initiatives provide a broad vision (set of principles or beliefs) that schools are encouraged to use to inform their own vision development process. These general statements are used as a set of guide posts for school communities to develop programs and even vision statements that support the larger goals. Initiative-wide vision statements are also meant to inform policy and practice at the school and sometimes district level. Examples include the Coalition of Essential Schools (Ted Sizer), the Accelerated Schools Project (Hank Levin), the School Development Program (James Comer), Harvard Project Zero (Howard Gardner), Paideia Schools (Mortimer Adler).

These initiatives provide direction, establish a set of core values worthy of pursuit and a set of strategies which range from prescriptive to ideological. For example, the Accelerated Schools Project requires schools to engage in a specific set of activities (Taking Stock) as a means of beginning the reform process that will enable a school to embrace the ASP vision. The School Development Program also has a set of activities and even clear guidelines about which role groups and the number of each type that need to participate in any given committee. The Coalition of Essential Schools encourages schools to interpret the nine Common Principles to address the needs and particular strengths of their particular communities without providing these schools with a concrete process to engage in the interpretation.

These initiatives have blurred the 5 levels of vision described by the Goals Project. For some, the derivation of their vision statements is indeed philosophy. For most, however, these vision statements grow out of research and a set of theories about learning.

A skeptical view of the value of vision for reform

Thinking about vision as a strategy for change has been critiqued by Joseph McDonald and by Michael Fullan, two researchers in the field of school reform. McDonald reminds us of the lessons of history and of the complexity of school systems.

Of course, vision alone is never enough to create change. And there is always the chance that this vision-- like its predecessors of the 1960s and 1930s--will float above most American schools and never come to ground. If so, the fault will likely lie in the folly that Seymour Sarason identifies, namely, that most proponents of good educational ideas consider schools the mere nodes of a complex system rather than complex systems in their own right. Whether school reform is launched from the outside or the inside of schools, it typically follows a linear strategy; hence, the effectiveness of some intervention is presumed to be intrinsic to the intervention itself, rather than a function of whether its impact is managed to good effect inside a turbulent world. (McDonald, 1993, p. 1)

Michael Fullan's view of visions is characterized by his conceptions of schools as dynamic systems. He describes having observed too many "pre-mature visions" which are not used in a compelling way to inspire and support reform. He believes visions should grow over time and be derived from action. These visions ought to be considered provisional after more action causes reflection on the vision: "Ready, Fire, Aim." Like Senge, Fullan believes visions ought to be shared and that schools should engage in a long-term process to develop this shared vision. He cautions:

Reliance on vision perpetuates cultures of dependence and conformity that obstruct the questioning and complex learning necessary for innovative leadership. (Fullan, 1993, p. 33)

The critical question is not where visions are important, but how they can be shaped and reshaped given the complexity of change. (Fullan, 1993, p.30)

Both McDonald and Fullan point to the dynamic and complex nature of schools and the complex and multi-dimensional nature of change. They call for a conception of vision that is adaptable to this climate. The Goals Project asserts a type of vision that may be more stable and would withstand the ever-changing nature of schools. Alternatively, a conception of vision as stable may be too rigid to withstand the dynamism.

The opportunities inherent in the Goals Project approach to vision

- A complex conception of vision may connect well with the complex nature of educational institutions.
- A multi-level approach to vision allows for more entry points and more opportunities for deep learning along the way.
- In what ways is the inquiry process involved in understanding a school's vision a model for teaching and learning strategies inside of classrooms?
- The power of this conception of vision may be compelling enough to weather the storms of resistance to change.
- The reliance on developing a vision through consulting texts and through including the larger community ought to create conditions that will promote the use and acceptance of this process.

The challenges inherent in the Goals Project approach to vision

- If every school/institution has multiple sets of goals operating at any given time (individual/personal, organizational, curricular, grade level, etc.) which level is appropriate for interrogation and intervention?
- How will an individual teacher, team, students, parents, experience the transition from multiple sets of goals to a more unified approach?
- Since the multiple levels of the Goals Project conception of vision require long-term and deep work, how will interest and support for the initiative be maintained?
- If there are a set of "readiness conditions" necessary for piloting this approach to vision, how can the Goals Project support the development and sustenance of these conditions?
- In what ways is the inquiry process involved in understanding a school's vision a model for teaching and learning strategies inside of classrooms?
- Since any "new" reform effort encounters pre-existing efforts at improvement, how will the pursuit of a vision-driven reform initiative interact with and take account of the current terrain?
- What is the current problem statement that Jewish educational institutions are suffering from? Would they define their problem in terms of vision? If not, how will they come to understand this critique and the power of it as a solution?

References

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WORKING WITH INSTITUTIONS:
THE GOALS PROJECT AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

The CIJE proposes to work with select institutions around a goals-agenda. Its guiding convictions are:

1. Thoughtfully arrived at goals play a critical role in the work of an educating institution. They help to focus energy that would otherwise be dissipated in all-too-many directions; they provide a basis for making decisions concerning curriculum, personnel, pedagogy, and social organization; they offer a basis for evaluation, which is itself essential to progress; and, if genuinely believed in, they can be very motivating to those involved.

2. In Jewish educating institutions, as in many others, there is inadequate attention to goals. All too often, one or more of the following obtain: goals are absent or too vague to offer any guidance; they are inadequately represented in practice; they are not understood or identified with in any strong way by key-stake holders; they are not grounded in some conception of a meaningful Jewish life which would justify their importance.

Goals Project work with institutions would focus on remedying these deficiencies. The following discussion tries to explain the presuppositions and the nature of this work.

WORK WITH INSTITUTIONS

Presuppositions. CIJE's work with institutions around a Goals Agenda is informed by a number of critical assumptions, including the following:

a. Key stake holders need to be committed to the effort to work on a goals-agenda.

b. Wrestling with issues of Jewish content is an integral, though not the only, element in the process.

c. A coach identified and cultivated by CIJE will work with the institution around the Goals Agenda. (The work of the coach is described more fully below.)

d. The institution will identify a Lead Team that will be in charge of its efforts and work with the coach in designing appropriate strategies. The Lead Team will have primary responsibility for implementing the plan.

e. The institution's Lead Team will be invited to participate in seminars, workshops, and other activities designed to enhance their effectiveness. This may well include the development of a partnership with the Lead Team of one or two other institutions engaged in similar efforts at improvement.

f. There is no one strategy for encouraging fruitful wrestling with goals-related issues. Whether to begin with lay leaders, with parents, with the principal and/or with teachers; whether to start with mission-statement, curriculum, and/or evaluation -- such matters need to be decided on a case-by-case basis by the institution's lead-team in consultation with CIJE.

The heart of the work. The essence of the work that will be done with institutions under the auspices of the Goals Project has three dimensions:

1. A serious, multi-faceted examination of the way goals do and don't fit into the institution's efforts at present. This phase of the work is designed to identify the institution's challenges by highlighting weaknesses: for example, unduly vague goals, inconsistent goals, goals that are lacking in support by key stake holders, goals that are not reflected in practice in meaningful ways.

2. Reflection and deliberation. Stake holders engage in a thoughtful effort to wrestle with the uncertainties and challenges identified through #1. This effort includes a serious effort to clarify their fundamental educational priorities, through a process that includes wrestling with issues of Jewish content. Materials emanating from the Mandel Institute's Educated Jew

Project will be invaluable to this effort. This stage will give rise to basic decisions concerning what needs to be accomplished.

3. The institution determines what needs to happen and be done in order that the basic decisions articulated in #2 can be accomplished. Strategies need to be developed and then implemented.

4. The effort to implement needs to be carefully monitored and the outcomes evaluated. This is indispensable if there is to be learning and a chance of serious mid-course corrections in aims and/or strategies.

The work of the coach. The coach is involved in all phases of this work. The coach works with key constituencies (separately and sometimes together) and wears a number of hats: he or she is sometimes a consultant on questions of strategy; sometimes a bridge to extra-institutional resources that are necessary to the effort; sometimes a thoughtful critic of directions for change that are proposed. In these and in other matters, the coach's primary job is to help the institution get clearer about its primary goals and their relationship to practice.

The initial and perhaps most important challenge of the coach is to stimulate the institution to do the kind of serious examination and self-examination that will identify its critical challenges. This means posing basic questions of different kinds, although which ones it will be fruitful to ask at any given time will depend heavily on local circumstances. Below is a list of some of the basic questions:

1. What are your avowed goals (as found in the opinion of key stake holders, as found in mission statements, as found in the curriculum)?
2. Are the avowed goals (as articulated or implicit in these different ways) clear or are they very vague? Do the participants understand what they mean and entail?
3. Are the various avowed goals mutually consistent?
4. Do the key stake holders - lead-educators, parents, and

teachers - really believe in these goals?

5. If the stake holders do believe in these goals, why do they believe they are important? How will accomplishing them help make the life of the student as a Jewish human being more meaningful in the short- and/or long-run?

6. Are the goals anchored in an underlying vision of a meaningful Jewish existence? Can the stake holders flesh out the vision that is implicit in the goals they have identified as important?

7. As a way of better understanding what they are committed to or might be committed to in #s 5 and 6, have the stake holders looked seriously at alternative views?

8. In what ways and to what extent are the avowed goals actually reflected in the life of the institution - in its social organization, in its pedagogy, in what happens in classrooms, etc.?

9. To what extent are the goals achieved? To what extent are actual educational outcomes consistent with the goals?

10. If you were serious about Goal X or Y, what would you need to do in order to have a realistic shot at accomplishing it?

Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE)

CHANGE THINK TANK MEETING

April 29, 1998

ISSUES:

1. Sustaining interest/involvement
2. Infusing powerful Jewish ideas into the process meaningfully
3. Willingness to invest quality time in the process
4. A powerful vision shared by diverse individuals
5. Broad-based buy-in to the change process
6. Readiness conditions for initiating a process
7. Role of outsiders in the process

SOME BUILDING-BLOCKS OF A CIJE APPROACH TO SYNAGOGUE CHANGE

Daniel Pekarsky, April 1998

INTRODUCTION

Embedded in CIJE's discourse are a number of principles that are relevant to institutional change-efforts (be they in schools, synagogues, or any number of other Jewish educating institutions); while these principles may not tell us what to do in any very concrete sense, a number of them represent criteria or standards that need to be satisfied if a change-process and its outcomes are to be in our judgment adequate. Based on various consultations, informal conversations, conferences and other activities that a number of us have been engaged in, below I attempt (in a less than systematic or comprehensive way) to identify some of these principles. Many of these points are treated at somewhat greater length in the two accompanying papers dealing with vision and education; both of these papers grew out of conversations within the CIJE/Mandel Institute worlds. You are encouraged to highlight unclarities, to assess whether I am correct that these principles have been central to our thinking, to articulate doubts, and to identify principles and concerns not herein articulated that should have been.¹

PRINCIPLES

1. We understand a Synagogue as an educating institution or learning community. Its various contexts and activities—ranging from formal educational arrangements to board meetings, religious services, communal meals, youth groups, wedding ceremonies, and funerals—are all to be understood as avenues for the intellectual, spiritual, social and moral growth of its members.

2. A healthy Synagogue (or any other educating institution) is organized around a shared and compelling vision that articulates its fundamental *raison d'être* and aspirations and that guides decision-making, policies, and practices down to the institution's very details. Such a vision vividly captures what a thriving Synagogue would look like, inclusive of the attitudes, aspirations, dispositions, etc. that mark members of this community.

3. An adequate guiding vision for a Jewish educating institution incorporates powerful ideas concerning the nature and significance of Judaism and Jewish life.

4. The presence of an adequate guiding vision energizes individual and collective activities; creates a sense of community; offers guidance to decision-making across all areas; and provides a basis for evaluating the institution's policies and practices. Though a powerful vision cannot be assumed in advance of a process of change, once it is present it represents an invaluable tool in this process.

¹ Because my own work has been so closely connected with our Goals Project, the kinds of principles I identify in this document are closely related to the work of that project. This makes it all the more important to add to the list of principles summarized in this paper and other ideas that grow out of other phases of our work.

Change-Process
Vision

5. For this reason, an essential part of a Synagogue's efforts to be a more thriving community must be a serious effort to visit—or re-visit—its fundamental nature and purpose, i.e. its vision, with the aim of clarifying the vision and establishing its status as compelling to the key stake holders.² It needs to wrestle seriously with the question: What would our Synagogue be like if we were successful? What would a thriving Synagogue look like?

It is, I think, fair to say that as an organization we have been concerned that the effort to clarify the fundamental purposes or vision of educating institutions is too often carried out in too perfunctory a way. While we've had a measure of skepticism concerning quick-and-dirty "visioning-activities", we have struggled with the challenge of how to engage relevant stake holders in a process that is significantly richer and time-consuming.

Jewish
X

6. The process of arriving at, or clarifying the vision to which this community is committed should go beyond what is sometimes called "values-clarification." While opportunities for individuals to unearth, to share with one another, and to look for commonalities among, their pre-existing basic convictions are essential, the process of working towards a compelling guiding vision should include serious opportunities to encounter and respond to powerful Jewish ideas and texts that speak, possibly in very different voices, to the nature and significance of Judaism, Jewish life, and synagogues. Rightly chosen and introduced, such ideas and texts have the capacity to raise the level of discourse and to enrich deliberations concerning an adequate guiding vision. This means that the process of developing a compelling vision will work best if it is itself a compelling form of Jewish education that facilitates the growth of the participants.

How to infuse the change-process with powerful Jewish ideas in a way that will seem meaningful and relevant to the change process is a critical educational challenge that we have not yet adequately addressed; but we believe that this effort requires both pedagogical good sense and carefully designed materials (articles, exercises, etc.). Efforts, like those undertaken by the Mandel Institute's Educated Jew Project, to develop materials that can be used as part of a serious change-process are to be encouraged.

7. An important component of the process of change is an effort to look honestly and thoughtfully at "what is". This involves several inquiries:

what is

a. At any given time in its history, a vision (or visional elements, more or less clear and compelling, and more or less coherent with one another) are embodied in the culture of an institution—in its policies, practices, forms of organization, and budgetary commitments. Unearthing the values and assumptions (about education, about Judaism, about children, etc.) implicit in existing practice is an important phase of the process of becoming a more vision-driven institution. In some cases, it will be an ideal starting-point for deliberations concerning what the Synagogue's guiding vision should be.

² Who the key stake holders are and whether they are the same as those who will enthusiastically support the vision at the end of the change-process is a question left open in this document.

b. Equally important is the effort to assess the actual outcomes of these practices and policies.

c. Looking at "what is" includes a careful attempt to understand the perceptions and attitudes of the Synagogue's varied constituencies, including—and perhaps especially—what they take to be problematic in the life of the synagogue. Clarifying "the problem" as understood by different constituencies is essential.

Embed 8. As critical as is the effort to clarify the Synagogue's guiding vision is the willingness to deliberate seriously, honestly and imaginatively about what would be required, given current realities, for this vision to be meaningfully reflected in the life of the congregation.

5 levels The relation between vision and practice is complex and multi-leveled. Seymour Fox has identified five such levels: these are Philosophy; Philosophy of Education; Theory of Practice; Practice; and Evaluation. Familiarity with these levels and the relationship between them, and the capacity to shuttle among these levels as one analyzes a particular datum—e.g. a curriculum, or a conception of an educated person—can be invaluable to the effort of interpreting and stimulating fruitful discussions concerning an educational reality or idea. Attention to these levels can also be invaluable in the process of translating visional commitments into educational practice.

Implementation 9. Rich discussions organized around institutional vision accompanied by rich discussions of what it would mean to embody the vision in practice are not enough. Careful attention needs to the process of and obstacles to meaningful implementation.

10. CIJE has at times taken the view that in order for a process of change in a synagogue to have a fighting chance, the rabbi, the president, and the educational director must be seriously invested in the effort. We have not, to the best of my knowledge, taken a position concerning other constituencies that must be committed to the process, or concerning the percentage of the synagogue-community that needs to support or be actively involved in the process of change, or concerning the kind of involvement that should be expected or encouraged in different constituencies.

? | 11. CIJE's views concerning the role of the Synagogue leadership in the process of change include the following: FILL IN

?? | 12. The CIJE approach to synagogue-change should itself be infused with Jewish ideas about the nature and aims of change, in general, and synagogue-transformation, in particular.

13. We understand the process of change as an educational process, that is, as a process in which the synagogue community undergoes growth through 1) careful examination, informed by challenging inputs, of its fundamental convictions, its practices and the relationship between them; and 2) carefully monitored change-efforts, informed by the examination undertaken described in #1. This means that the facilitator of a Synagogue change-process brings with him/her the skills and sensibilities of a talented educator. His/her work requires skills and sensitivities necessary for pedagogical excellence, as well as a strong Jewish knowledge-base

that can richly be brought to bear on his/her interpretations of Synagogue realities and on efforts to stimulate fruitful reflection and deliberation.

Like many a talented educator, this individual plays a multitude of roles that range from: a) the Socratic gadfly whose questions and observations highlight inconsistencies, expose and clarify tacit and sometimes uncomfortable assumptions, encourage recognition of and reflection on gaps between espoused ideals, practices, and outcomes, b) a Deweyan educator who is continually assessing where the learner (the community as a whole or individual members) is and, in light of this, developing educational experiences (made up of questions, content, and activities of a certain kind) that have the power to stimulate appropriate forms of growth. What these forms of growth are (reflecting on the relationship between aspirations and practice; encountering a challenge to one's aspirations, etc.) will depend on an assessment of immediate circumstances; c) a living bridge to powerful Jewish ideas and texts -- a person who is able in a timely way to infuse the deliberations of the Synagogue community with powerful Jewish ideas that enrich their thinking and range of options.

Examples 14. The willingness of a Synagogue to undertake a serious change-effort depends on a measure of confidence that fruitful change is possible. Powerful and accessible examples of institutions that have undergone and profited from a serious process of change will prove invaluable in fostering this confidence; so will examples of what we have been calling "vision-driven institutions."

MEMORANDUM

TO: Change Think-Tank Participants
FROM: Daniel Pekarsky
RE: Our task and our upcoming meeting
DATE: April 15, 1998

As you know, we are scheduled to meet on **Wednesday, April 29 from 9:30 to 4:30 at the CIJE offices**. This will be the first of a set of meetings spread across the next year. As background to this session, this memo will discuss the purpose of these meetings, some preliminary ideas about how this purpose will be accomplished, who the participants will be, as well as the agenda for our initial meeting.

The Task and preliminary ideas about approach. This Think-Tank has been organized with a fairly specific purpose. This purpose is to arrive, by the end of the year, at an articulated approach to institutional-change that will give real guidance to our efforts at synagogue-change. Our intention is to then go on to test, refine, and/or revise this approach by employing it, beginning the following year, in one or more synagogue-change pilot-projects.

We imagine that the Change Think-Tank will meet some five or six times across the year. Though the precise agenda has yet to be finalized (part of our task next week being to make some decisions in this area), our sense has been that our own efforts would benefit from a thoughtful examination of significant approaches to change found in a variety of areas. These include synagogue-change efforts now under way; change-efforts in the world of corporations; change-efforts in general education; and/or community-change efforts.

Examination of a particular approach would include the following elements: an opportunity to read pieces (theoretical and more practical) that articulate and exemplify the approach; an opportunity to learn more about the approach and to discuss it at our Think-Tank meetings with the help of one or more thoughtful representatives of the approach; an attempt to articulate which features of the approach seem coherent with our own fundamental convictions about change, Jewish life, and the nature of synagogues. As we near the end of the year, our challenge will be to develop a document representing an approach to change that meaningfully integrates old and new insights concerning change in Jewish educating institutions. How specific or concrete the approach to change we develop will be remains to be seen.

Participants. Because we believe that CIJE's core-staff brings significant but different perspectives and competencies to the critical issues we will be considering, and because we also believe that the chance to think together about issues pertaining to change has the potential to enrich our varied projects, the hope is that all of CIJE's core-staff will be part of the Think-Tank. This hope also reflects CIJE's belief that institutional-change—and, in particular, synagogue-change—is central to our work as an organization.

In addition to CIJE's core-staff, participants in CIJE's Guiding Ideas Study Group (which has been focusing on the relationship between vision and practice in communal and educational change) will be regular members of this group. We are also in process of inviting other individuals to serve as regular members of the group, the criterion for invitation being that the person in question brings a perspective, a body of ideas, and/or a set of competencies that will enrich our conversation across the year. Ideally, these invitees will include individuals who bring rich Jewish perspectives and content to our discussions.

In addition to regular members of the Think-Tank, we will be inviting various guests to particular sessions throughout the year. Typically, these will be individuals who represent and are able to thoughtfully discuss with us particular perspectives on, or approaches to, change that we think we need to consider.

The April 29 session. When CIJE's core-staff reflected on the best way to use the first session of this Think-Tank, we realized that before launching a systematic examination of various approaches to change that seem worthy of attention, we should begin by articulating beliefs about change in Jewish educating institutions that have developed in the course of, or are in any case embedded in, CIJE's work over the last several years. This is analogous—perhaps identical—to a teacher's effort to find out where the learner now is (what he/she currently believes or finds problematic) prior to setting forth on an educational process designed to foster his/her growth.

Guided by this consideration, we developed a three-part agenda for our meetings on the 29th. Following an introduction to the day, this is the projected itinerary:

1. Text-study.

This will be led by Devora Steinmetz, who will be guiding us through biblical texts that speak to the problem of change.

2. CIJE's current thinking about change.

This session will have two parts. In its first part, we will focus on some fundamental beliefs about change that have grown out of our conversations over the last few years concerning the place of vision and goals in Jewish education. Most of the ideas do not fall into the "How to..." category; they are more in the way of guiding principles, or higher order criteria, that we believe an adequate change-process (or the outcome of such a process) needs to satisfy. This part of the session will be led by Dan Pekarsky.

In the second part of this session, Karen Barth will, with the aid of examples, articulate some more concrete ideas about the way to facilitate a change process, ideas grounded in the work she has done in the area of synagogue-change both before and during her tenure in CIJE.

Note that our principal challenge at this meeting is not, in any decisive way, to determine the merits of the ideas we articulate. Rather, our task is to put them on the table, to begin clarifying and raising questions about them, to see whether they really do seem compelling to us at this stage, and to supplement them with other pertinent ideas pertaining to change that are embedded in our organizational outlook and practices.

The hope is that out of this effort will emerge not only a collective sense of what are our basic convictions pertaining to change at this moment in time, but also a good sense of our uncertainties and of areas in need of serious attention. Such an outcome may prove very helpful as we set about charting our work together across the year.

3. Sketching out the year's agenda.

Led by Karen Barth, in our last session we will work on developing a concrete plan for the year ahead, with attention to our shared comfort-level with the existing formulation of the Think-Tank's goal for the year and what needs to be done if this (or a more adequately conceived) goal is to be achieved. This will include considering the content of upcoming sessions, who the regular participants and guests should be, and what needs to be done in between sessions to maximize our effectiveness.

Background materials. As background to our session, several pertinent articles are enclosed that have emerged out of CIJE's and the Mandel Institute's work. These include 2 essays by Dan Pekarsky; two essays that Amy Gerstein was invited to write for CIJE; and the publication on Camp Ramah that was authored by Seymour Fox.

In process of being developed is a short piece by Daniel Pekarsky ("Some Building-Blocks...") that attempts to articulate some fundamental beliefs about change that (so he thinks) have been part of CIJE's culture. What these beliefs mean, whether they in fact are fundamental to our outlook, and what beliefs are missing from the proposed list of core-beliefs will be central to our discussion on April 29.

THE PLACE OF VISION IN JEWISH EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Daniel Pekarsky

**WORKING DRAFT
NOT FOR CIRCULATION**

INTRODUCTION

Educators and supporters of education are often impatient with larger philosophical questions. Preoccupied with pressing problems that already require more than the limited time and energy they have available, it may well feel to them like a distraction to give thought to basic questions concerning the larger purposes that the educational process is meant to serve. This view, however, is mistaken. Attention to such questions is not a frill but an urgent imperative. There is little of more practical value than the possession of an inspiring vision that can inform the educational process. This is the basic thesis that will be developed in this paper.¹

In their influential book *THE SHOPPING MALL HIGH SCHOOL*, Arthur Powell et. al. develop a devastating critique of the American high school. At the heart of this critique is the suggestion that, as an institution, the high school has been suffering from what might be called "a failure of nerve". It has been singularly unable or unwilling to declare for any particular conception of what the process of education should be fundamentally about, with the result that what happens is not shaped by any coherent set of organizing principles which will give the enterprise a sense of direction. In their own words:

¹This paper has been influenced by ideas articulated over the last decade by Seymour Fox. Some were presented in his course on Jewish Education at the Jerusalem Fellows' Program, as well as in various talks and papers within the framework of the Mandel Institute's "Educated Jew" project. Others emerged in my deliberations with him and his associate, Daniel Marom. See, for example, Seymour Fox: "The Educated Jew: A Guiding Principle for Jewish Education," (1991); Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler: "Jewish Education and Jewish Continuity: Prospects and Limitations" (in press); and Daniel Marom: "Developing Visions for Education: Rationale, Content and Comments on Methodology" (1994). These ideas will also appear in a forthcoming Mandel Institute book on alternative conceptions of Jewish education: "Visions of Learning: Variant Conceptions of an Ideal Jewish Education" (forthcoming).

There is one last, unhappy reason that educators have not pointed to certain misdirections in the current crop of reforms: one cannot point to an incorrect direction without some sense of the correct one. But American school people have been singularly unable to think of an educational purpose they should not embrace...Secondary educators have tried to solve the problem of competing purposes by accepting all of them, and by building an institution that would accommodate the result.

Unfortunately, the flip side of the belief that all directions are correct is the belief that no direction is incorrect—which is a sort of intellectual bankruptcy. Those who work in secondary education have little sense of an agenda for studies. There is only a long list of subjects to be studied...But there is no answer to the query, Why these and not others? Approaching things this way has made it easy to avoid arguments and decisions about purpose, both of which can be troublesome—especially in our divided and contentious society.

Powell et. al. conclude:

High schools are unlikely to make marked improvement...until there is a much clearer sense of what is most important to teach and learn, and why, and how it can best be done.²

²Powell, A.G., Farrar, E., and Cohen D. K., THE SHOPPING MALL HIGH SCHOOL, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985, pp. 305-306.

The analysis of the high school found in THE SHOPPING MALL HIGH SCHOOL applies very aptly to large numbers of Jewish educating institutions. Like the high schools described by Powell et. al., these institutions drift along, unguided by any compelling sense of purpose.³ To the extent that there are guiding ideals, they tend to be so vague as to give very little direction and to call forth little enthusiasm. What these slogan-like ideals do succeed in doing—and this is no mean achievement—is to give a multiplicity of individuals, representing very different beliefs, the illusion that "We are one!", that they can all participate in the same social and educational community. But the price paid for the failure to affirm a larger purpose that goes beyond vague rhetoric is that the enterprise of educating is rendered significantly less effective than it might be if educational institutions were animated by powerful visions of the kinds human beings and/or community that need to be cultivated.

As just suggested, by "vision" I am referring to an image or conception of the kind of human being and/or community that the educational process is to bring into being. "Visions" in this sense represent what might be called "existential visions" in that they identify what Jewish existence at its best in its social and/or individual dimensions looks like. Existential visions are to be found not only implicit in the social life of Jewish communities throughout the ages but also in writings of such diverse thinkers as Ahad Ha-Am, Martin Buber, Maimonides, Joseph B.

³For a lucid discussion of this point, see Seymour Fox, "Towards a General Theory of Jewish Education," in David Sidorsky (Ed.), THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1973, pp. 260-271.

Soloveitchik, and so on. Notice that an existential vision can be more or less filled-in: it might consist of a thick, ordered constellation of attitudes, skills, understandings, and dispositions; or it might be limited to a particular attitude or way of approaching the world (and the skills and understandings that make this possible). There is no need to assume, then, that a vision is coextensive with a way of life.

"Existential vision" in the sense just articulated is to be distinguished from an "institutional vision"—an image or conception of what an educational institution at its best should look like. When we speak of an educating institution as "a caring community" or as "a community organized around serious study of basic texts", we are identifying an "institutional vision" that identifies the fundamental organizing principles of institutional life. Though having an institutional vision is no doubt important, the worthwhileness of any institutional vision ultimately depends on its being anchored in an adequate existential vision. The reason for this is as simple as the old adage that "form follows function:" educational arrangements must be judged by their capacity to lead students towards those individual and social states of being—those constellations of attitude, knowledge, skill, and disposition—that are the *raison d'etre* of the enterprise. An adequate institutional vision is one that shows promise of optimizing progress towards the existential vision that undergirds the entire enterprise.⁴

⁴Noteworthy in this connection is Fred Newmann's "Linking Restructuring to Authentic Student Achievement," *PHI DELTA KAPPAN*, February 1991, Volume 72, Number 6, pp. 458-463. Here Newmann argues that attempts to restructure educational institutions without careful attention to the purposes that these institutions are intended to serve are seriously ill-conceived; for it is precisely these purposes that need to guide the direction of restructuring efforts. See especially p. 459.

THE BENEFITS OF VISION

Jewish education can be enriched by guiding existential visions (which I shall henceforth simply refer to as "visions") in at least three ways. The first pertains to the special predicament of American Jews at the end of the 20th century. The other two reflect general educational considerations that have a more universal application and do not assume this problematic predicament.

There is a need to introduce contemporary Jews to powerful visions of Jewish existence. During many historical periods, day-to-day experience in the family and the community sufficed to acquaint children with and to initiate them into meaningful forms of Jewish existence that enabled them to navigate their way through the world as Jews. During such periods, formal educating institutions could content themselves with supplementing this powerful informal education by passing on to the young particular skills and bodies of knowledge; it was not necessary for these institutions to take on the responsibility of presenting and initiating the young into richly meaningful forms of Jewish existence.

But our own age is very different. It is an era in which the young are no longer reared in environments saturated with Jewish rhythms, beliefs, and customs; and one can no longer count on informal socialization to assure the young's emergence as adults with a strong understanding of themselves as Jews. Indeed, many of them grow up with scant understanding of things Jewish, and certainly with little sense of the ways in which a life organized around Jewishly grounded understandings, activities, and values can answer some of their most fundamental

needs as human beings. For human beings raised under such circumstances, human beings who are surrounded with a variety of images of the good life emanating from a multitude of quarters, remaining Jewish is no longer a destiny but a choice. And it is a choice the young are unlikely to make unless they meet up with spiritually, morally, and existentially compelling images of Jewish existence.⁵ It is a major job of educating institutions to put before the Jews of our generation these kinds of images. Not to do so, to continue instead with an ill-thought-out and superficial diet of "this and that", is to reinforce the message that flows from other quarters—namely, that there is little or no reason to look to the Jewish universe in our search for existential and spiritual meaning.

To summarize: it is important for contemporary Jews to encounter powerful visions of a meaningful Jewish existence—visions that in different ways address our basic needs for meaning, for a sense of place and time. Educational institutions have the potential to respond to this pressing social need by organizing themselves around such visions and offering their clients an in-depth opportunity to encounter and appreciate them. This said, it needs to be added that organizing our educational efforts around compelling visions of the kinds of human beings we hope to cultivate also makes good educational sense on more general grounds. Two of these grounds are discussed below.

To have a vision of the kind of person and/or community that is to be nurtured through the educational process is to have a powerful tool for making basic educational decisions. In Jewish as in general education, educational goals often have a kind of arbitrary

⁵The formulation of the Jewish community's predicament that is articulated in this and the preceding paragraph is indebted to A TIME TO ACT, pp. 25-30.

character. In general education, we may laud "creativity"; in Jewish education, we may speak of the importance of "Love of Israel" or "Identification with the Jewish People;" but if one asks why these things are important, or even what they mean, it is apparent that they are often slogans without much intellectual content or justificatory foundation. The moment, however, educational goals are grounded in a conception of the kind of Jewish human being one hopes to cultivate, the situation changes dramatically. When this conception is one that we strongly believe in, educational goals that flow from this ideal acquire a twofold power they rarely have. First, the desirability of achieving these goals is readily understood; second, when they are interpreted by the larger vision, they lose their character as "slogans" and acquire a determinate intellectual content.

An example may help to illustrate these points. "Love of Israel" is on its face very vague as an educational goal: it is unclear what "Israel" refers to (Is it the land? Is it the State?); it is unclear by virtue of what Israel is worthy of our love; and it is unclear how such love is to be expressed. But this situation changes dramatically when "love of Israel" is understood as an element in a particular understanding of Judaism and of a meaningful Jewish existence. "Love of Israel" as interpreted by Martin Buber will no doubt be different from "Love of Israel" as understood by Rosenzweig, Ahad Ha-Am, or Soloveitchik. Viewed through the lens of any of these outlooks, it will be clear why and in what sense Israel is to be loved, how such love is to be expressed, and what understandings, skills, attitudes, and behaviors are requisite for appropriately participating in such love. What a moment ago had been an empty slogan now becomes an educational goal rich with intellectual, moral, and affective content—the kind of

goal that can give genuine direction to one's effort to educate.

A related point is this. When the human characteristics identified by educational goals are all anchored in a vision of the kind of person one hopes to educate, not only their relative importance but also their relationship to one another becomes readily apparent. Thus, for Professor Moshe Greenberg, love of learning Torah, "love of the fulfillment of the commandments between man and God," "acceptance of the Torah as a guide in the area of interpersonal morality," and "a relationship to the Jewish people in all the lands of their dispersion" are all educational goals. But to have access to the vision that underlies these educational goals is to have the key that interprets each of them and explains how they are inter-related; it is, specifically, to understand that the encounter with the text is the existential source of the desiderata identified by the other goals, the foundation out of which the understanding of and commitment to them emerges.⁶

To have a powerful vision of the kind of person one hopes to nurture is, then, to have a rich source of well-articulated educational goals; and such goals, in turn, become a basis for educational decisions across a variety of areas. Consider, for example, the problem of personnel. There is much talk concerning the need for high quality, well-trained educators. But what it means for an educator to be "high quality" and "well-trained" itself depends substantially on one's conception of the desired outcome of the educational process. The kinds of knowledge, commitments, attitudes, and skills the educator needs to have will differ depending on whether

⁶Moshe Greenberg, "We Were as Those Who Dream: A Portrait of the Ideal Product of an Ideal Jewish education," unpublished manuscript, soon to be published by The Mandel Institute for the Advanced Study of Jewish Education.

one is guided by Heschel's, or Maimonides', or Ahad Ha-Am's vision of an appropriately educated Jewish human being. Thus, to commit oneself to a particular vision is to have a powerful tool in the selection of educational personnel, in the organization of in service education, in the activity of supervision, and so forth.

Analogous points can be made concerning curriculum, admissions policies, and the organization of the social environment. In each case, to have a clear sense of what one hopes to achieve through the educational process affords lay and professional educational leaders as well as front-line educators an extraordinarily powerful tool in educational deliberations. It is, incidentally, a corollary of this analysis that a guiding vision is not just a desideratum along with high quality personnel and curriculum; rather, a guiding vision is indispensable in understanding what quality personnel and curricula are.⁷

Having a guiding vision and a set of educational goals anchored in this vision facilitates serious educational evaluation. Evaluation in the most important sense is an attempt to judge whether an institution is succeeding in accomplishing its fundamental purposes; and evaluation in this sense is important because, properly done, it enables policy-makers and practitioners to revisit existing patterns of practice with an eye towards improvement. But if it is to play this role, evaluation requires the identification of clear but meaningful educational goals: clearly defined but low-level goals, such as the ability to sight-read a page of Prayer book

⁷The discussion in this section will be misleading if it leaves the impression that educating institutions must choose from among a menu of predesignated visions (each associated with a "great thinker") the one that is appropriate for it. Nothing could be further from the truth. What a menu of competing visions can offer a community, however, is an opportunity to clarify its own guiding vision through a process of struggling with the perspectives and insights at work in a number of very different views.

Hebrew, may be measurable and important but do not rise to the level of guiding educational purposes; one can be successful in attaining them without being successful in the larger sense that is, without succeeding in cultivating those qualities of mind and heart that are at the center of the enterprise. On the other hand, goals like "Love of Text Study", which seem to point to basic educational priorities, are often too vague to permit meaningful evaluation of our efforts to achieve them. What is needed are educational goals which are both clear enough to allow for real evaluation but also meaningfully tied to the institution's *raison d'etre*, so that the answer to the question, "Why is it important for the students to be successful relative to this goal?" could be readily answered to everyone's satisfaction. A guiding vision offers this critical mix of specificity and existential power.

The evidence from general education. Thus far, I have offered three general reasons for thinking that being organized around powerful visions of a meaningful Jewish existence will greatly enhance efforts at Jewish education. As the aforementioned references to the writings of Powell et al. and Newmann suggest, the proposed linkage between a sense of vision and educational effectiveness is not an idiosyncratic hypothesis, but reflects the considered view of some deeply thoughtful members of the educational community at large. There is also a measure of empirical support for this view, which is worthy of attention.

Consider, in particular, Smith and O'Day's study of reform efforts in general education. The authors begin by observing the depressing results of most such efforts. Though there have been a flurry of reforms, evaluations of the reforms indicate only minor changes in the typical school, either in the nature of classroom practices or in achievement outcomes. For the most part,

the processes and content of instruction in the public school classrooms of today are little different from what they were in 1980 or 1970.⁸

Such findings do not, however, lead Smith and O'Day towards skepticism concerning the potential benefits of educational reform. The problem is not, they suggest, that educational reform is incapable of making a difference in educational outcomes but that most reform efforts have failed to focus on the right kinds of variables. To understand what the right kinds of variables are, they further suggest, we need to look at what characterizes those educational institutions which, according to research, are effective. When Smith and O'Day turn to this research, they identify a number of variables, including "a fairly stable staff, made up of enthusiastic and caring teachers who have a mastery both of the subject matter of the curriculum and a of a variety of pedagogies for teaching it." But among the elements of effective schools that they cite, pride of place goes to what we have been calling vision. They write:

Beyond—or perhaps underlying—these resources available to the student, the most effective schools maintain a schoolwide vision or mission, and common instructional goals which tie the content, structure, and resources of the school together into an effective and unified whole (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987, Purkey and Smith, 1983). The school mission provides the criteria and rationale for the selection of curriculum materials, the purposes and the nature of school-based professional development, and the interpretation and use of student assessment. The particulars of the vision will differ from

⁸M.S. Smith and J. O'Day, "Systemic School Reform." In S.H. Fuhrman and B. Malen (Eds.), THE POLITICS OF CURRICULUM AND TESTING, p. 234.

school to school, depending on the local context...However, if the school is to be successful in promoting active student involvement in learning, depth of understanding, and complex thinking—major goals of the reform movement—its vision must focus on teaching and learning rather than, for example, on control and discipline as in many schools today. In fact, the very need for special attention to control and discipline may be mitigated considerably by the promotion of successful and engaging learning experiences.⁹

In other words, as against those who argue for a focus on "practical matters" like higher salaries, better facilities, more in service education, Smith and O'Day defend the need for educating institutions and those who would reform them to step back and focus their energies on a question which sounds suspiciously philosophical: namely, what is our fundamental mission as an educating institution? What kind of a person possessed of what skills, dispositions, and attitudes should we be trying to nurture? To arrive at answers to such questions which will be compelling to the institution's key stake holders is to take a—perhaps the—decisive step forward on the road to institutional self-renewal.

RESPONDING TO TWO OBJECTIONS

In this section, two major objections to the position staked out above are addressed. One of them pertains to the feasibility of the proposal, and the other to its wisdom.

⁹Smith and O'Day, p. 235.

Is it feasible? Among those who admit that to have a guiding vision can be invaluable for an educating institution, some will nonetheless urge that in our present social circumstances it is unrealistic to expect Jewish educating institutions to arrive at guiding visions that will at once be shared, clear enough to guide practice, and sufficiently compelling to elicit genuine enthusiasm. The problem is that the constituencies served by many congregations and free-standing Jewish educating institutions are so diverse that it will be impossible to arrive at a shared vision that will be anything more than "Motherhood" or "Apple Pie." That is, only vague slogans will have the power to unite the various sub-groups that make up typical Jewish educating institutions outside of the ultra-Orthodox community; and the attempt to forge a vision that goes beyond this will inevitably push to the margins some of these sub-groups. For a number of reasons, the leaders of many institutions are unwilling to undertake a course of action that will lead to this kind of marginalization and alienation. For example, loss of membership could have unacceptable economic consequences; and there is sometimes the fear that marginalized families who withdraw may end up providing their children no Jewish education at all.

While it is hard to deny that this concern has some foundation in reality, it would also be a mistake to underestimate the progress that could be made by an institution willing to tackle the problem of vision in a thoughtful way that is sensitive to the views and anxieties of the membership. And while it may be true that any such process will probably be threatening to some groups, there are likely to be significant groups that will be relieved and excited finally to be wrestling in a serious way with questions concerning the nature and significance of Jewish

existence—especially if this effort shows promise of helping to revitalize the institution's educational program. More generally, it may be a mistake to let our fears concerning the consequences of trying to work towards greater clarity of vision prematurely paralyze efforts to do so.

But while such considerations might lead to a somewhat less shrill formulation of the institutional difficulties and risks associated with a decision to tackle the problem of vision, they do not suffice to dissolve this worrisome set of concerns. While carefully conceived efforts to work with existing institutions featuring diverse sub-groups need to be undertaken, it may in the end turn out that the extent of diversity represented in typical institutions will render it very difficult to arrive at powerful, shared visions that can guide the educational process.

If this is true, and if we also acknowledge the critical need for quality education in our present circumstances, perhaps we need to be thinking about radical structural alternatives to the way we have organized education in the American Jewish community. If it is unrealistic to think that an institution featuring a highly diverse population can go through a process that will lead it to crystallize a single vision that can guide its educational efforts, perhaps we have to begin thinking about creating an organizational universe in the Jewish community that will encourage like-minded individuals to gravitate towards educational institutions that reflect their shared convictions.

We might, for example, look to some of the voucher- or choice-plans that have been bandied about in recent discussions of general education. At present, membership in a congregation affords one the right to send one's children to that congregation's educational

program -- a program that tries to be responsive to the diversity of the institution's constituency.

Consider, however, a different possibility: suppose that membership in any congregation in a community would afford one the right to educate one's child in any of several educating institutions found in the community, and that an effort was made to ensure that each of these institutions represented a distinctive ideological orientation. The effect of such a policy might well be to draw individuals with similar ideological orientations into the same educational environment, making it possible to organize education around a vision that could elicit the enthusiastic support of the population it serves. I don't claim that dissolving the currently strong tie between congregation and congregational school is unproblematic or necessarily wise; but I do want to suggest that if we are to create substantially more vision-informed Jewish educating institutions than are now to be found, we may well need to give serious consideration to routes which disrupt existing patterns.

Is it wise? Consider, now, a second set of objections to the proposal that we organize Jewish education around compelling visions of a meaningful Jewish existence. The thrust of these objections is that even if we could do so, it would not necessarily be desirable.

One variant of this objection views the effort to organize educational efforts around visions of the ideal product of a Jewish education as an assault on the autonomy of the student. According to this objection, a vision-guided institution, an institution organized down to its very details along the lines of a particular vision, is a kind of "total institution" which does not offer the child an opportunity to taste and decide among alternative forms of a meaningful Jewish life.

There is more than one way to respond to this objection. One of them takes issue with a

tendency within a certain species of liberalism to resist passing on to the young any substantive ideas concerning the good life—except those values, attitudes, and dispositions that will enable the young to choose their own way of life and to be respectful of the liberty of others. As Richard Hare and others have argued, however, there need be no real contradiction between initiating the young into a particular form of life and meaningfully equipping them with the tools for autonomous choice. Indeed, the former may be a condition of the latter.

This last point may be especially true in our own time. As intimated earlier, a serious autonomous choice between a well-developed form of Jewish existence and various alternatives implicit in everyday life in modern, or post-modern, Western culture may only be possible if children encounter and have a real opportunity to taste an approach to Jewish existence that is more than a miscellany of customs, vague sentiments, and slogans. But in our own situation it is unlikely that they will encounter such an approach unless educational institutions set themselves up to systematically embody one or another such vision of a meaningful Jewish existence. Given the world in which the students live, the result will not be indoctrination but genuine choice.

This answer may not satisfy some species of liberals. In the name of the individual's autonomy, such individuals will argue that educational institutions must set themselves the challenge of equipping the young to choose from among a variety of competing images of a meaningful Jewish existence, rather than seeking to initiate them into any one of them.

In principle, I believe there is nothing wrong with this ideal as a guide to education. In practice, however, it is a difficult educational ideal to implement meaningfully—especially given the time—and resource-constraints that characterize Jewish education today. To undertake this

approach meaningfully it is insufficient for educator and students to stand above a mix of alternatives and to scrutinize them from afar; for under these circumstances each would remain superficially understood and appreciated. A meaningful decision concerning a particular form of Jewish life requires a measure of appreciation "from the inside". Thus, an educational system organized around the principle that the young should make their own choices among different forms of Jewish existence would need to offer serious opportunities for in-depth acquaintance, and even for a significant taste, of more than one of them. Since this is hard enough to accomplish with even a single approach to Jewish existence, the odds are that the approach recommended would turn out to be superficial in its representation of the alternatives, such that the learners would not come away satisfied with any of them.

Consider, now, a very different reason for thinking it unwise to organize education around specific visions of a meaningful Jewish existence. According to this objection, when educators view their role as preparing the child for some future state of being, they tend not to do justice to the child's immediate needs, concerns, and interests; but it is precisely these needs, concerns, and interests that are the springboard to genuine education. The educational challenge, say these critics, is not to draw the child ever closer to a predesignated form of Jewish existence, but to respond to the child's developmental and other needs in ways that further the child's Jewish growth. To respond to the child's needs and authentic concerns in a meaningful way in a Jewish setting, and to do so in ways that expand the child's Jewish understandings and self-understandings and that communicate to the child that Jewish tradition can address his or her needs in meaningful ways, is quite a sufficient challenge.

I am in many ways very sympathetic to the spirit of this objection, understood as a critique of an approach to education that bypasses the living concerns and questions of children in order to prepare them to become certain kinds of adults. But in no way do I view the positive view that informs this objection as incompatible with the position I have staked out. Among other things, a vision of what Judaism is and a conception of where one hopes the student will be at the end of the educational process need not be used to suppress the child's needs but to interpret them and to suggest ways of responding to them.¹⁰ There is not in the end an irreducible incompatibility between having a guiding vision and responding authentically to the learner's living concerns.

CONCLUSION

It is no secret that the widespread interest and financial support that Jewish education has recently enjoyed have their origins in anxiety concerning Jewish continuity. If education is to impact positively on this troubling problem, it will be because it has led its clientele to a vivid appreciation of the ways in which Judaism and Jewish life offer rich opportunities for spiritual, social, and intellectual growth. But if education is to succeed in this effort, it must go beyond a parve offering of skills, information or even "positive experiences". It is imperative that

¹⁰See in this connection Dewey's *THE CHILD AND THE CURRICULUM*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956. Here Dewey discusses the ways in which an in-depth understanding of the existing adult civilization ought - and ought not - to inform the process of education. Dewey decidedly rejects the notion that one should think of education as a step by step process of transmitting, piece by piece elements of this adult civilization. Rather, he recommends that educators use their understanding of this civilization as a lens through which to interpret the capacities, skills, and interests of the child, and to suggest ways in which these characteristics can be built upon and directed.

educating institutions courageously move beyond this kind of vague neutrality and declare themselves for particular visions of a meaningful Jewish existence, which they will use as a basis for organizing the educational experience of the young. Only if and when educating institutions offer students, both young and old, entree into forms of Jewish existence that they will recognize to be existentially, intellectually, and spiritually meaningful, will education be responsive to our present predicament. It goes without saying that when educating institutions organize themselves around such visions, they will also become educationally more serious and thoughtful learning environments.

In closing, it must be stressed that a belief in the importance of vision does not entail any particular approach to the development of vision. On this matter there are many different views. There are some who may believe that such a process begins with, or at some stage requires, an activity called "visioning". There are others who believe that explicit attempts to formulate a guiding vision should not come until after there have been extensive small-scale problem-solving efforts that engage varied stake holders in new ways and effectively transform the institution's culture.¹¹ Still others might feel that progress towards vision is best assured not by some publicly announced effort in this direction but by approaching in the right spirit the challenges that arise in the institution's day to day life. And, as noted above, there will be others who urge that the amount of diversity found in many typical institutions is so substantial that it will be impossible to arrive at a vision that will simultaneously be shared and inspiring, and that therefore the attempt to nurture the growth of vision-guided institutions must focus on strategies

¹¹See, in this connection, Michael Fullan, *CHANGE FORCES*, New York: Falmer Press, 1993, pp. 67-68.

that will encourage new kinds of institutions to come into being. Which, if any, of these views is meritorious, in general or in particular social contexts, is a matter of great educational importance. Attention to this matter must be a principal focus of our energies if we are, in John Dewey's phrase, to find our way out of educational confusion.

VISION AND EDUCATION

Daniel Pekarsky

Introduction

While virtually nobody challenges the assumption that education, both general and Jewish, is in need of reform, controversy surrounds the question, "What does an adequate education look like - and what do we need to do to make it a reality?" Among the many responses to this question is one that gives pride of place to the concept of vision. "Vision", it is argued, operates as a kind of Aristotelian telos: not only does it specify the right direction of reform, it also, if taken seriously, pulls practice in this direction. But while the case for taking vision seriously is, as I argue in the first part of this paper, very strong, its power as a tool for enhancing the quality of education depends on understandings and distinctions which are often ignored in favor of more simplistic understandings of what vision is, how it arises, and the role it can play in the life of an educating institution.¹

¹ At the outset I want to acknowledge that my thinking on these matters has been richly influenced by ideas articulated over many years by Professor Seymour Fox in varied venues that include his course on Jewish education at the Jerusalem Fellows Program and various other talks and papers. Other ideas emerged in my deliberations both with him and his associate, Daniel Marom. See, for example, Seymour Fox, "Toward a General Theory of Jewish Education," in David Sidorsky, ed., *THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Seymour Fox, "The Educated Jew: A Guiding Principle for Jewish Education" (Internal Mandel Institute Document, 1991); Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler, "Jewish Education and Jewish Continuity: Prospects and Limitations," (Jerusalem: Mandel Institute, 1996)

Locating vision in educational planning and practice

In more than one of the early Platonic Dialogues, Socrates is mocked by his interlocutors for his and other philosophers' preoccupation with ideas. Similarly, in THE CLOUDS, Euripides portrays philosophers as useless human beings engaged in reflections that have little to do with the real world in which people strive to survive and flourish. Careful attention to ideas, it is suggested, has little to contribute to our quest for a better life down here.

Certainly this idea resonates strongly with modern, Western sensibilities. Today progress is associated not with philosophical reflection but with the practical know-how that has produced tools and ways of doing things that have transformed the face of the earth. Like many of Socrates' contemporaries, many of us, too, tend to be impatient with philosophical types who ask us to step back and think in a detached way about the why's and wherefore's of what we do. It seems like a distraction from the so-called important things that need to get done. Certainly, this tendency is very pronounced among educators. Bombarded by many more demands than they can reasonably respond to and faced with daily challenges that often feel impossible, they are

and Daniel Marom, "Developing Visions for Education: Rationale, Content, and Comments on Methodology" (Internal Mandel Institute Document, 1994). See also Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler, with the assistance of Daniel Marom, eds., VISIONS OF LEARNING: VARIANT CONCEPTIONS OF AN EDUCATED JEW (Jerusalem: Mandel Institute, forthcoming). I also want to thank Haim Marantz for his thoughtful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

typically hungry for new techniques that will enhance their ability to teach this or that, to manage a group of students, to create a sense of community in a classroom or a school, or to increase their students' SAT scores; but limited energy and skepticism conspire to make them far less eager to step back and reflect on the basic aims of the enterprise they are engaged in.

That this is a serious mistake has been affirmed by a growing chorus of voices that recognize that there is much more to organizational inefficiency than simply a failure to adopt powerful management techniques, and that poor teaching is often more than a failure to adopt the latest pedagogical wisdom. This deeper source of waste, I want to suggest, is often the failure to have developed a powerful vision, a clear conception, of what it is one is trying to accomplish. In the absence of such a vision, organizational patterns, curriculum, and other critical dimensions of an educating institution's life are dictated by tradition, by fad, or by the idiosyncratic ideas of particular players. Under such circumstances, it is predictable that the result will be a kind of hodge-podge of practices, many of which may be at cross-purposes with each other. In contrast, the educator who possesses a clear vision of what he or she is trying to achieve has the benefit of an invaluable tool for deciding how best to allocate scarce resources and how to shape the physical and social environment of his or her institution in a systematic way.

A superb example of the way clarity of vision can enhance effectiveness comes from a recent study of the phenomenal growth of Willow Creek Church outside Chicago.² Deeply committed to the church's religious mission, and concerned about the many individuals who were reluctant to come through the church's doors, the leaders of this church decided to do everything they could, consistent with the church's religious mission, to bring these outsiders into their fold. They began by inquiring carefully into why people stayed away from their church, and then they set about systematically -- and, it turned out, very effectively -- adapting church practices to what they had learned. Of particular interest is the following: when the research suggested that the symbol of the Cross made potential attendees uncomfortable, the leadership decided to remove the symbol of the Cross from Sanctuary in which religious services were held. It would be a mistake to view this move as either pandering or manipulation. Rather, it illustrates how the leadership's clarity of vision enabled them to distinguish between what is essential for their institution and what is inessential, between basic purposes and strategy. For the leadership of the Willow Creek Church, the essence of the Christian message is not the Cross but the ideas which the Cross points to and, in some communities, calls forth. But where the symbol, which is ultimately a tool for invoking the message, interferes with

² James Mellado. Harvard Business School Case entitled "Willow Creek Community Church", Harvard College, 1991.

receiving the message, it can reasonably be cast aside -- even though, for people not wholly clear on what the essence of Christianity is (or who subscribe to a different conception of Christianity), this might seem to border on sacrilege.³

As this example illustrates, clarity of vision can prove an indispensable tool in educational planning; and recent attention to the importance of vision in education is salutary. At the same time, some of what has been said and written on this subject is contaminated by serious misconceptions and by a failure to make a number of essential distinctions; in what follows I draw attention to some of these important matters.

1. Institutional visions and existential visions.

Discussions of vision are often weakened by a failure to distinguish between what I shall call existential and

³ As my colleague Barry Holtz points out, while instructive, this example maps imperfectly onto Jewish religious life. The reason for this is that, at least within traditional Judaism, the relationship between religious ritual and symbolism, on the one hand, and religious insight and experience, on the other cannot be reduced to means/end or strategy/mission; on the contrary, qua Halacha, the ritualistic acts and the objects they involve are themselves invested with and express religious significance and cannot simply be cast aside if they don't seem "to work". While Holtz's point is important, it does not entirely undermine the applicability of the Willow Creek example to Jewish contexts; for it is not uncommon for practices which do not have the status of Halacha to be treated as though they were sacred and inviolable even when they may subvert rather than help realize institutional purposes.

institutional visions. An institutional vision is a conception of what, at its best, an institution is like. When someone describes an educational environment as "a learning community" or a "caring community", or a "community dedicated to Tikkun Olam", this person is identifying an institutional vision. An existential vision, on the other hand, is a conception of the kind of human being an educational institution is hoping to cultivate, a conception of its ideal graduate.

The distinction between institutional and existential visions needs to be drawn because, I submit, in an educational context institutional visions need to be (although they often are not) driven by existential visions. As Fred Newmann has argued⁴, educational reformers sometimes talk as though there are institutional forms that are inherently worthwhile, whereas in fact educational forms need themselves to be evaluated against a higher standard -- namely, the kind of human being an institution hopes to cultivate through the process of education. The question ought not to be, "What is an exemplary educational environment?", but, rather, "What is an exemplary educational environment in view of our aspiration to cultivate certain kinds of human beings?"

By this I do not intend to suggest that it is necessarily a

⁴ Fred Newmann, "Linking Restructuring to Authentic Student Achievement," PHI DELTA KAPPAN, February 1991, Volume 72, Number 6, pp. 458 - 463.

mistake to approach the question of vision in an educating community by starting with the question, "What would the educational environment of our dreams look like?", for it may be that this question concerning institutional vision will have the power to elicit imaginative responses that will ultimately lead to thoughtful reflection concerning the institution's guiding existential vision. What I do mean to suggest is that, insofar as we are talking about education, the justification of a particular kind of environment (or institutional vision) ultimately needs to be anchored in a conception of the kind of human being that institution is trying to cultivate.

2. A vision is not a statement but an informing idea that is shared, clear, and compelling.

As is well known, typically what are called "visions" turn out to be statements written down on paper which are then ignored, except perhaps on ceremonial occasions or in public relations efforts. But it is a misnomer to call such statements "visions". At best, such statements are capsule summaries, or records, of visions that are at work in the institutions with which they are associated. The real visions are those ideas or conceptions, that suffuse the lives of different institutions, giving each of them its distinctive coherence, direction, and meaning.

A vision in this sense has three characteristics: first, it is shared by critical stake holders.⁵ Second, these stake holders find the vision compelling: a vision that does not call forth the enthusiasm of the participants and stimulate them to action is not, at least for these participants, a genuine vision. Finally, an adequate vision must be clear and concrete enough to offer genuine guidance in making educational decisions -- for this, after all, is a substantial part of the *raison d'être* for having an informing vision. To say, for example, that an institution is committed to an ideal of "life-long learning" will not give its critical stake holders much practical guidance until they have specified the kind of learning they have in mind: is it the kind of "learning from experience" that Dewey has in mind, or a life-long love affair with "the Great Books" understood as particular kind of encounter, or some other specific kind of learning? Only if they provide themselves with this kind of specificity, will they be in a position to identify the kinds of skills, sensibilities, attitudes, and understandings they should be cultivating and the kinds of experiential or literary texts that will prove apt vehicles for this cultivation.⁶

⁵ While this paper's limited focus precludes attention to questions concerning the basis for designating "the critical stake holders", this is a very important matter.

⁶ While essential, this point concerning the need for clarity of vision should not be taken to imply that such clarity alone suffices to determine educational arrangements. It does so only in conjunction with a host of other assumptions concerning

Before leaving the subject of visions that are "shared, clear, and compelling", it needs to be stressed that the fact that these three adjectives can live happily together within two quotation marks does not mean that they always live happily together in the real world. While the probability of a happy marriage is quite high to the extent that the major constituencies that make up the institution represent a community of outlook and aspiration, the more heterogeneous these constituencies are the more difficult it will be to achieve a vision that is at one and the same time shared, compelling, and clear. Typically, the tendency is to sacrifice clarity and concreteness for a form of rhetoric that is so general that everyone can assent to it. While this has the advantage of circumventing divisive disagreements, it has the disadvantage of leaving the institution with a vision that is too vague to offer much concrete guidance or to call forth much enthusiasm.⁷

such varied matters as the nature of human growth and motivation, available resources, and the nature of the community in which the institution and its clientele are situated.

My understanding of this point - and, more generally, of the relationship between vision and educational practice - has been immensely deepened by Seymour Fox's identification of several distinct levels that mediate the interplay between vision and educational practice. See, for example, Seymour Fox with William Novak, *VISION AT THE HEART* (Mandel Institute and the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education, 1997).

⁷ This should not be heard as a recommendation that an institution at this stage of vagueness should immediately proceed to specify its vision more concretely. To recommend this would betray lack of sensitivity to the delicate balance that exists among the various groups that make up an institution and of the

3. A commitment to the importance of vision is not reducible to a commitment to a specific set of activities called "visioning".

When it is urged that educating institutions need to be informed by compelling visions, it is often assumed that this entails guided activities, sometimes referred to as "visioning", which lead to having a vision. This visioning-process is sometimes viewed as an intensive set of activities requiring a day or two of serious work, and sometimes as a more long-term process. Either way, the assumption is that it is made up of a series of activities that in the end give rise to a vision which will then both communicate to external constituencies what the institution is about and guide future efforts to educate.

While activities expressly designed to arrive at a shared vision may sometimes contribute to its achievement, it needs to be stressed that the link between "visioning" and "vision" is much weaker than is often thought. In the first place, some institutions may have a compelling vision without ever having gone through a process of visioning. In the second place, it is

role sometimes played by vagueness in enabling them to share in a common life. To force clarification of an institution's guiding vision at the wrong time and in the wrong way could prove devastating. On the other hand, normal anxiety concerning the possible dangers of pushing for greater clarity is pathological to the extent that it shuts off in advance the possibility of discovering a well-timed, well-conceived, and fruitful way to reduce vagueness to a point where it is less crippling to the process of education.

far from clear that any such set of activities will always or even usually suffice to give rise to a vision in the strong sense I have specified. In the third place, it may be that the best way for an institution to arrive at a clear, shared, and compelling vision is through a process that is much more indirect than what is typically associated with visioning. As Michael Fullan has observed, an institution needs to be in a particular readiness-state to tackle the problem of vision explicitly and frontally, a state that presupposes a set of cultural norms that themselves only arise over a period of time; often, the best way for an institution to move towards a compelling existential or institutional vision may simply be to begin with addressing a variety of less daunting problems in ways that bring colleagues to work and think together in new ways.⁸

There are, incidentally, some who would offer a more radical objection to the suggestion that educating institutions work towards a powerful vision through any kind of visioning-exercises. Their objection is grounded not just in beliefs about the ineffectiveness of such exercises, but in a deeper pessimism concerning our ability - through any recognized interventions - to stimulate greater vision-drivenness in problematic institutions. Some of those holding this view might well argue that the way for a community to achieve vision-driven

⁸ See Michael Fullan, *CHANGE FORCES*, (New York: Falmer Press, 1993), especially pp. 28 ff.

institutions is to give up the effort to change its existing institutions, and, instead, to establish two mechanisms: the first, a mechanism that encourages the emergence of a variety of institutions, each organized around a different vision; and the second, a mechanism that allows educators and students to self-select into these institutions based on the appeal of a particular vision.

4. Informed values-clarification.

While, as I just suggested, the process of becoming more vision-driven cannot be reduced to a set of activities associated with "visioning", it is fair to say that the process of becoming more vision-driven does involve efforts to reflect on the institution's why's and wherefore's. Certainly the hope is that over time the institution's members will grow increasing clear concerning what they are committed to. It is therefore critical that an institution struggling to become more fully vision-driven provide its members, both individually and collectively, with opportunities to step back and clarify what it is they think they are committed to.

It is, however, important to add that this process of clarifying the stake holders' commitments should go beyond exercises designed to surface their existing, if as yet

unarticulated, beliefs. Two additional inputs will enrich the process of individual and institutional self-clarification. One of these inputs is critical questioning. As even a cursory look at Socratic dialogues will suggest, the success of Socrates in stimulating his interlocutors to develop more adequate views depends not just on his ability to elicit their existing systems of beliefs but also on his posing questions which stimulate internal doubt concerning the credibility, implications, and internal consistency of these articulated belief-systems. Those who would help an educating institution strive for a more adequate vision could learn much from his example: there may be many occasions on which an individual charged with helping an institution develop or refine its vision can fruitfully play the role of a Socratic gadfly.⁹

A second way of turning the process of values-clarification into a more deeply informed process is through infusing it with the views of individuals who have ruminated long and hard about the questions at hand; for the encounter with such views has the potential to raise the participants' understanding of what is at stake.¹⁰ This point is actually a presupposition of much that

⁹ I am indebted to Professor Israel Scheffler for the suggestion, voiced in the context of a Mandel Institute/CIJE consultation, that the individual facilitating an institution's efforts to become more vision-driven sometimes plays the role of a Socratic gadfly.

¹⁰ This is one of the seminal insights that inspired the Mandel Institute to encourage a range of leading Jewish thinkers to articulate powerful and competing visions of an educated Jew,

goes on in teaching. As an example, if I am interested in my students developing a rich understanding of what is entailed by a commitment to cultivate autonomous persons, I certainly will encourage them to unearth their existing views on what it means to be autonomous. But I will also insist that they encounter the views of a range of thinkers (including Plato, Kant, Rousseau, Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor, A.S. Neill, and John Dewey) who can illuminate the question at hand. In insisting on this, my working assumption is not that their own views need to resemble the position of any one of these thinkers, but that the encounter with the ideas of such thinkers will challenge and deepen their own thinking.

Analogous considerations apply to an institution seeking to clarify its own identity. Through the encounter with a range of powerful but very different perspectives on fundamental questions that bear on the institution's self-definition and mission, the deliberations of its stake holders may be deepened in important ways. If, for example, they are struggling to better understand their institution's declared commitment to pluralism, these stake holders will benefit from an encounter with powerful extant

visions which can be used to stimulate deep reflection among a variety of constituencies concerning the aims of Jewish education. These writings will be published in Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler, with the assistance of Daniel Marom, eds., VISIONS OF LEARNING: VARIANT CONCEPTIONS OF AN IDEAL JEWISH EDUCATION, op. cit.

perspectives on pluralism that identify critical questions and that articulate the moral and practical implications of different understandings of pluralism's nature, importance, and limits. Such perspectives offer the deliberators a richer understanding of what is at stake in their discussions than would be available to them through exclusive reliance on their seat-of-the-pants views on pluralism; and they are thereby empowered to make a more thoughtful and informed decision. It goes without saying that finding ways - contexts, strategies, formulations - to introduce external intellectual inputs so that they awaken thought rather than occasion either slavish acceptance or the feeling that attending to them is a distraction from serious business is a difficult challenge. ¹¹

5. The dialectic of vision and practice.

¹¹ Those familiar with the educational movement that goes by the name of "Values Clarification", a movement dedicated to helping individuals clarify their values, will recognize that my discussion is tacitly if not explicitly critical of the approach to values-education at work in this movement; and the basis for this criticism is that this approach does not, in my opinion, go very far in the direction of helping its clients deepen their understanding of their value-commitments. To be fair, however, it should be noted that leaders of this movement urge educators to do more than elicit from their students or clients a superficial account of what they already believe. Their questions are designed to encourage their clients to reflect on the implications of their declared moral values and on the genuineness of their commitment to them; but this process stops far short of the kind of critical questioning encouraged by a more Socratic guide; and it does not require introducing their clients to new ideas that have promise of deepening their understanding of what is at stake in the selection or interpretation of a particular value. See Louis Raths, et. al., *VALUES AND TEACHING* (Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1978).

There is a dangerous tendency to think of a vision as something which, once developed, becomes a fixed template used to make all decisions, large or small. Like any set of principles, the ideas at work in an educational vision evolve - are re-interpreted, qualified, and revised in various ways - in the course of trying to apply them to ever-changing situations that offer new challenges and opportunities. A living vision can perhaps best be compared to the U.S. Constitution: over more than two centuries the vision articulated there has been shaped and reshaped in numerous ways, in part by the Congress (in framing new Amendments) and largely by the Courts, which have been charged with having to interpret the language of the original vision under circumstances sometimes unimagined by the original framers. There is thus an on-going interaction between vision and practice: whereas the vision gives direction to practice, practice serves to interpret the vision. Through this process, both vision and practice continue to be enriched and remain living.

6. The continuum of means and ends.

In speaking of a continuum of means and ends, John Dewey sought to caution his readers against a simplistic and therefore dangerous interpretation of the means-end distinction. While it may be useful in some contexts to draw this distinction, it is in his view essential to remember that the relationship between them

is dialectical. While this is not the occasion to recall Dewey's account in its totality, it is pertinent to remember his suggestion that, in thinking about the relationship between the vision we hope to realize, on the one hand, and present realities (including the students, environing social conditions, and available resources), on the other hand, we should avoid viewing this present as a mere means in the service of achieving the end-state designated by the vision; for this perspective can readily lead to emptying the present of significance and vitality in the name of the future. As important as it may be to ask whether the way we propose to organize the educational environment and the experiences of students in the present is congruent with our vision of the kind of future which we hope to bring into being through education, it is also critical to ask whether this vision is functioning to lend significance, order, and vitality to what we do in the present. More generally, as much as what we do in the present can be viewed as a means in the service of some desirable future end-state, it is also important to remember that this vision of the future can and should be used as a tool for rendering present activity rich with significance. A vision that is incapable of enlisting the energies and resources at our disposal in a pattern of activity that the participants find energizing and meaningful in the present is problematic as a guiding vision.

7. Visions are not necessarily systematically articulated.

A corollary of the preceding points is that an institution's informing vision need not have been explicitly articulated to be effective. To believe otherwise is to confuse the presence of a belief or conception with its articulation. Language provides an instructive example. Our speech is informed by and conforms to a variety of grammatical rules even though we have never stopped to articulate them and, more strongly, even though we may be incapable of articulating them. Similarly, in institutional life, various principles and convictions may be shaping day-to-day life and decisions without anybody having stopped to systematically articulate what these informing ideas are.¹² Borrowing from a tradition in the field of curriculum, we might describe such a vision as "a vision-in-use" to distinguish it from the institution's "official vision".

Some of the most interesting educating institutions the world has known have had a strong vision-in-use but no official or explicit vision. Certain fundamental ideas concerning the character of an educated person were tacitly accepted and taken for granted by the institution's supporting constituencies, and

¹² The writings of Michael Oakeshott (for example, *RATIONALISM IN POLITICS* (New York: Basic Books, 1962) and Michael Polanyi (for example, *PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962) offer numerous examples of this point in a variety of fields. It is noteworthy, as Haim Marantz reminds me, that Oakeshott and Polanyi go substantially beyond the assertion that institutions are often informed by visions that have not been systematically articulated; in their view, visions inevitably are richer and more complex than our ability to state them explicitly.

these provided them with criteria for determining educational priorities and other educational decisions. Attention to visions-in-use or tacit visions serves to remind us that explicitly formulated visions do not necessarily arise and are not necessarily useful, except under certain social circumstances. Perhaps it is only when an institution has lost its sense of direction, and all that remains is a miscellany of practices not tied together by anything of larger significance, that it becomes important to work towards an articulated vision.

8. "Vision-driven" is not equivalent to "totalitarian" or "indoctrinatory".

Phrases like "vision-driven institution" suggest something sinister to some people. Is not, so the concern gets expressed, an institution systematically organized down to its very details around a particular conception of what is important or of what human beings at their best are like a totalitarian or indoctrinatory institution?

The answer to this question is that there is no necessary relationship between an institution's being vision-driven and its being indoctrinatory.¹³ For one thing, one can readily imagine an

¹³ Of course, much depends here on what one means by "indoctrination", a subject about which much has been written. See, for example, I. Snook, ed., *THE CONCEPT OF INDOCTRINATION* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972). Those concerned with the indoctrinatory character of vision-driven institutions seemed

educating institution organized around a vision of human beings as autonomous, or self-determining individuals. Social forms, physical organization, norms, hiring and admissions policies, etc. would all be shaped with an eye towards nurturing human beings who are open-minded and who think for themselves in both theoretical and practical matters.

Secondly, whether a vision-driven institution is indoctrinatory depends substantially on the social context in which it is embedded. For children growing up in families and communities that are actively Jewish in only a very attenuated way, a Jewish summer camp or a Day School that is systematically organized around a particular vision of Jewish life does not indoctrinate students in that way of life; rather, it allows them to experience a way of life that is very different from what they have known, a taste that would be impossible were the camp or school not organized in this way.¹⁴ Under such circumstances, the vision-driven character of the institution serves not to indoctrinate its clientele but -- the very opposite!! -- to enrich the living options from which they will make life-choices.

to be troubled by their sense that such institutions aim to induct their members into a particular way of life in ways that by-pass their rationality. As I suggest in the main body of the paper, there is nothing intrinsic to vision-driven institutions which makes them especially vulnerable to this charge. But this is a matter that may merit more attention.

¹⁴ For an excellent discussion of the genesis and character of Camp Ramah as a vision-driven institution, see Seymour Fox with William Novak, VISION AT THE HEART, op. cit.

Conclusion

Quality education is the product of a multitude of elements, some of which are potentially under our control and many of which are not. What I have been referring to as a guiding existential vision is one of those elements which, potentially at least, is substantially under our control. But attention to vision is likely to bear fruit only to the extent that it is accompanied by a subtle and differentiated understanding of what vision is and how it figures in the educational process, as well as by the kind of critical thinking and sound judgment that will illuminate the content and implications of particular visions. The importance of such judgment and thinking points us to one of many reasons why those seeking to reform existing educating institutions or to establish new ones will always need people like Ackie. Unfortunately, they are all-too-rare.

Seymour Fox
with
William Novak

VISION AT THE HEART

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Educational Institutions



Council
for
Initiatives
in Jewish
Education

מכון מנדל
Mandel Institute

The Mandel Institute

The Mandel Institute is an international center for the study and development of Jewish and general education.

Established in Jerusalem in 1990 by Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel of Cleveland, Ohio, the Institute focuses on the development of educational leadership, professional and lay, for Jewish communities around the world and for Israel. In 1992, it established the School for Educational Leadership (SEL), which prepares senior professionals for Israel's educational system. In 1996, it established the Center for Advanced Professional Educators (CAPE), an institution dedicated to the professional development of leaders in Jewish education throughout the world.

The Mandel Institute has undertaken a research and development program to articulate ideas that can form the basis for effective educational policy and practice. In its activities and publications, the Institute seeks to infuse the field with compelling theoretical and practical ideas relating to areas such as the content of Jewish education, the preparation of educational leaders, and conceptions of educational intervention.

The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE)

Created in 1990 by the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, CIJE is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to the revitalization of Jewish life through education.

Its mission is to be a catalyst for systemic educational reform by: preparing visionary educational leaders capable of transforming North American Jewish education; developing informed and inspired communal leaders as partners in the reform effort; cultivating powerful ideas to illuminate Jewish learning and community; undertaking and advocating rigorous research and evaluation as a basis for communal policy; and creating a strategic design for strengthening the profession of Jewish education and mobilizing support for it.

In its pilot projects, CIJE identifies and disseminates models of excellence in Jewish education; and brings the expertise of general education to the field of Jewish education.

CIJE works in partnership with Jewish communities, institutions and denominations to make outstanding Jewish education a continental priority.

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VISION AT THE HEART

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Introduction

There is nothing as practical as a great idea.

Many of us, if we are fortunate, have at some point in our lives been part of an unforgettable educational experience—a school, a summer program, an outstanding teacher—that has touched our souls or perhaps even changed our lives. We look back on such moments with gratitude and awe, and with the hope that others—our friends, our colleagues, and especially our children—will be exposed to similar experiences that offer inspiration and purpose.

What does it take to create these kinds of experiences? While Camp Ramah is only one example, it has been a prominent and powerful one ever since its founding by Dr. Moshe Davis and Sylvia Ettenberg of the Teachers Institute at the Jewish Theological Seminary. The idea for Ramah gained acceptance in 1946, and the first Ramah camp opened in Wisconsin in the summer of 1947. Fifty years

later, there are nineteen overnight and day camps in North America, Israel, South America, and Russia.

Ramah emerged out of an ambitious dream, a carefully considered ideal of educational possibilities. Big questions were asked: What kind of Jews, what kind of people do we want to nurture? What ideas will guide this new camp? What happens when compelling but competing philosophies about the meaning and purpose of Jewish life must coexist within one institution? How should Ramah address the various convictions, controversies, and anxieties prevalent among North American Jews? How can Judaism be transmitted to children and to teenagers as vital, engaging—and necessary?

We live in a time when the Jewish community is searching for ways to revitalize existing institutions and to build new ones, ranging from community high schools to informal educational settings for adults. What can we learn about the centrality of vision to the excellence of an educational institution? How can the experience of Ramah illuminate contemporary efforts to transform Jewish life in North America through education?

Seymour Fox, a central figure in Jewish education, was instrumental in developing Ramah from philosophy to practice.

The Need for Vision

You've made the claim that every educational initiative should be guided by a clear and well-developed vision. But what may seem self-evident to you is not necessarily obvious to everyone. What makes you willing to allocate so much time and energy to what some people might view as an introductory or preliminary step in the creation of a new enterprise?

If you begin a new project with serious ideas and lofty ideals, some people will criticize you for being grandiose or for "too much thinking." And it 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!

Let me put it another way. Education that is essentially *pareve* — that's neutral and doesn't take a strong stand — has little chance of succeeding. In my experience, all effective education has at its foundation a distinct and well-considered vision. The proof of that proposition is all around us. A few years ago, Dr. Marshall S. Smith, the current U.S. Deputy Secretary of Education, wrote a paper analyzing the many attempts to reform American schools during the 1980s. He found that despite a great deal of new legislation and the expenditure of huge sums of money from both public and private sources, very little had actually improved. Among the few exceptions were those schools and institutions with a clear and substantial vision.

Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, made a similar point in her 1983 book,

The Good High School. In an attempt to discover “what works,” she visited and analyzed six well-regarded American secondary schools, of which two were urban, two were suburban, and two were “elite.” She found that each of these schools had a distinct vision, and that the attempt to realize that vision was precisely what motivated the headmaster and the staff. In some of the schools, the concerns of teachers, administrators, and students were easy to identify because they were articulated explicitly; in others, the “repetitive refrains” and “persistent themes” were expressed in more subtle and indirect ways. But whether the visions that animated these schools were loudly proclaimed or quietly whispered, they were present in each of these institutions.

Another book from the mid-1980s, *The Shopping Mall High School* (by Arthur G. Powell, Eleanor Farrar, and David Cohen), examines the other side of the coin — that is, what happens when you maintain a school *without* a clear vision. In most American high schools, almost everything is available in small doses, and everything tends to have the same weight, the same ranking. The authors contend that in trying to anticipate every possible need and desire that a student or parent might have, these schools have turned into the academic equivalent of shopping malls.

“Both types of institution,” they write, “are profoundly consumer-oriented. Both try to hold customers by offering something for everyone. Individual stores or departments, and salespeople or teachers, try their best to attract customers by advertisements of various sorts, yet in the end the customer has the final word.”

In other words, if you offer everything, you stand for nothing. Or, as the authors conclude in an understatement, contemporary high schools “take few stands on what is educationally or morally important.”

Does this mean that vision is a tough sell?

Yes, but it's getting easier. Five or ten years ago you had to convince people about the importance of vision, but today the idea is increasingly accepted — if only because we've all seen what happens in its absence. There is a professor at Stanford University who argues that in the business world, vision is even more important than leadership. He claims that if a company has a clear vision, and that vision becomes part of the culture and is internalized, the company can survive periods of weak leadership or even a move toward control by the bureaucracy. I believe this is true of educational institutions as well.

Anyone can claim that a particular idea constitutes a vision, so let's take a moment to establish what an educational vision is — and what it isn't.

A vision is a vibrant entity. It's a portrait of ideal human beings shaped by education — an image rich and exciting enough to guide your future choices. A vision is inspired by your belief about human possibility, while being influenced by your experience of human fallibility.

An educational vision must be able to answer certain questions: What kind of people will graduate from this school, camp, or other educational setting? What will they understand and believe? How will they behave? What will they know how to do? In what ways will they be able to contribute to the community? And what qualities, intrinsic to your vision, will enable them to keep growing and learning?

Vision, then, is inherently both dynamic and flexible. It is not a mission statement or a declaration of purpose, which often end up as frozen, static assertions. And a vision is more than a goal. Goals are important, but they are specific to a particular

educational setting, or even a specific class or text. You might have one goal for teaching science and another for the study of Talmud. Out of your vision will flow a series of goals for educators, parents, community leaders, and students, who will apply or translate that vision into concrete programs.

A great vision will inspire educators to creativity and even to the invention of new kinds of institutions. Goals certainly matter, but by themselves they're not sufficient. And they are often so pedantic as to leave no room for vision. A vision that is intelligent and worthwhile is guided by great ideas that will survive periods when those ideas are out of favor. In philosophy, for example, trends come and go, but you still find Platonists in every generation.

I would add that it's often easier to inspire people if you're presenting them with a vision that is essentially extremist or fanatic, that depicts the world in stark, well-defined, black-and-white polarities. The challenge is to inspire them with a vision that includes a commitment to concepts such as religious tolerance, pluralism, and democracy.

Visions in General Education

Let's look at some specific visions in American education.

John Dewey has been on my mind of late because I've been reading Alan Ryan's book, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism*. Although Dewey did most of his significant writing during the 1920s and 1930s, there's a renewed interest in him and his ideas today, just as I believe that in the Jewish world we will soon see a similar renewal of interest in the ideas of Mordecai Kaplan, who viewed himself as a student of Dewey.

Dewey had a vision of the world as ever changing, as people continually tried to modify themselves and their environment. He believed the best way to approach such a world was through rational efforts at perceiving problems and inventing solutions. Dewey had an unlimited optimism about what could be achieved by the combined powers of science and the intellect, and his vision led to a revolution in American education.

Today, it is difficult to appreciate just how significant a place he occupied in American culture. On the first page of his book, Ryan quotes the eminent historian Henry Steele Commager, who observed that “for a generation no issue was clarified until Dewey had spoken.”

Dewey’s followers took many of the ideas he wrote about and applied them to practice. The same is true of the followers of the spiritual philosopher Rudolf Steiner, who established hundreds of Waldorf schools across the country. To this day, his followers discuss every issue, down to what color to paint the walls in order to achieve a particular result that is part of Steiner’s vision. Whenever you have a vision that excites and inspires people, they continually ask themselves what it would take to translate it into practice.

Another example of a successful vision is the one developed at the University of Chicago. Robert Maynard Hutchins led the school during the 1930s and 1940s, but his influence endures to this day. His vision had to do with the centrality of great ideas, which in turn generated the Great Books movement. Over the years, Chicago has probably produced more Nobel Prize winners and university presidents than any other institution of higher learning. It was a uniquely dynamic place that was guided by a vision, and it has remained a great center of intellectual excitement.

Visions in Jewish Education

And in the Jewish world?

Any number of important visions have influenced Jewish education over the years, and many of them have been directed, either explicitly or implicitly, at the larger Jewish world. Maimonides wanted to prepare young people for a society that would reflect his concept of Judaism, in which the intellect played a central role. Centuries later, in a very different era, the modern Zionists believed that to create a new, vibrant society in the Jewish homeland, you had to educate a new type of individual.

One of the most important family dynasties in Jewish education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was that of the Brisker Rav of Lithuania, whose descendants include the Soloveitchiks. The followers of the Brisker Rav established a network of important and influential yeshivot. In some cases, they deliberately chose to teach and study texts that other rabbis felt were impractical, such as the sections on animal sacrifices or the regulations pertaining to the Temple in Jerusalem. Most other yeshivot in those days concentrated on sections of the Talmud that were more immediately applicable — texts that dealt with topics such as civil damages, marriage and divorce, the rituals of prayer — cases of Jewish law that you could actually *use*.

But the Brisker Rav's followers insisted that to ignore the more esoteric sections of the Talmud was to miss the point. As they saw it, the classical texts constituted a coherent system. If you omitted certain sections, you were not only in danger of distorting the tradition; you were also liable to overlook some great treasures. Who is to say where you will find the most significant ideas? One cannot presume to know where the highest wisdom lies.

Another major nineteenth-century educational reform movement was the Musar movement, with its emphasis on *mitzvot ben adam l'chavero* [the commandments pertaining to interpersonal relations]. The Musarists introduced a serious concentration on moral and spiritual issues into the yeshiva world of Lithuania. In most yeshivot, Musar [ethics] had been considered “soft,” unworthy of significant attention. But in the late nineteenth century, the followers of Rabbi Israel Salanter developed entire institutions that emphasized Musar. They believed that the exclusive emphasis on *pilpul* [the concentration on subtle, legal, conceptual differences] in most yeshivot could lead to a distortion of Judaism and the inability of the students to develop sufficient social and ethical sensitivities. The Musarists were reacting to a world they viewed as both excessively intellectual and insufficiently concerned with morality and personal responsibility.

Their opponents countered that the Musarists were demeaning the power of the text, which in itself contained the power to affect people’s behavior. But over time the Musarists prevailed, and their influence penetrated most of the Lithuanian yeshivot.

The Vision of Ramah

Let’s jump forward a few decades and take a close look at an important Jewish educational institution in which you were intimately involved: Camp Ramah. In the late 1940s, the founders of Ramah could have invested their energies in any number of projects. Why a summer camp?

Ramah was a response to problems that Jewish education had to confront in the years following World War II — problems that we still face today. First, most Jewish children were not being exposed to meaningful Jewish experiences during their

early, formative years. Second, most Jewish families did not significantly contribute to the Jewish education of their children. Third, most North American Jews didn't live in an environment that supported the values of Judaism. In an era when children of immigrants were busily trying to become Americans, the Jewish character of most Jewish homes was declining. The founders of Ramah wanted to go beyond what a school could achieve. By trying to create a special enclave, an entire subculture, they sought to accomplish what the family and the community were no longer willing or able to do.

We wanted to create an educational setting where young people would be able to discover their Judaism and learn how to live it in their daily lives. We hoped this would nurture Jews who were both deeply committed to their tradition and actively involved in American society.

Why a camp? Because even the best school operates only part of the day. We wanted to create a real and total society that would respond to the whole person, twenty-four hours a day, even though we could maintain that society for no more than eight weeks at a time. Within that framework, which would include daily classes for every camper, our aims could be educational in the broadest sense — not only teaching Hebrew, but grappling with all kinds of social concerns: How should counselors treat campers? How should the drama coach react when a child misses his cue during a performance? Because Ramah was a round-the-clock society, our basic source, often explicitly, was a vibrant, living *halakhah*.

Take the inevitable conflict between competence and compassion. It's good to improve your baseball skills, and it's wonderful to win the game, but when you're striving for excellence people sometimes get hurt. You have to draw a line between the

need to win, or to excel, and a concern for people's feelings. Whether it was sports, or the arts, or Hebrew, our goal was to lower the possibility for hurt without seriously compromising the aspiration for excellence. The phrase "not living up to his/her potential" was heard often, which led to a measure of disequilibrium in the lives of the campers. There was an emphasis on ethics and caring — but also on growth. Ramah was not a laid-back place.

The founders of Ramah could have invested their energy in a cluster of day schools. Ultimately they chose camping, because the issues that they believed needed to be addressed could not be addressed by a school, not even a day school. Among other limitations, a school isn't the best place to nurture a child's Jewish emotional development. The challenge of Ramah was to educate the entire child — including his or her mind. We wanted to pay equal attention to emotional and spiritual issues, and to the articulation and living out of Jewish values.

The Jewish Ideas behind Ramah

It's generally known that Ramah's Jewish vision was guided by the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary. But who were these scholars, and what, exactly, did they contribute?

I would start with Professor Louis Finkelstein, who was the primary figure in Conservative Judaism during Ramah's early years. He was president of the Seminary during the 1940s, when Ramah was established, and chancellor during the 1950s and 1960s, when the camps flourished. He believed the Talmud embodied a great ethical message, a message that spoke not only to Jews but to the larger society as well. In 1951, he was featured in a *Time* Magazine cover story as the leader of a

Jewish renaissance in America. In 1958, Dr. Finkelstein even wrote an article on business ethics for *Fortune Magazine* as a result of a meeting with Henry Luce, the magazine's founder, who had called him in to discuss the negative image of Jews and Judaism in the business world.

Above all, Dr. Finkelstein relished the opportunity to apply Talmudic principles to the issues raised by living in a modern American society. During the McCarthy hearings, he actually wanted to be summoned to testify. He wanted to tell the Committee: "I will not answer you, because you have no right to question me this way. America is based on the ideal of human dignity. In our tradition, we also have a conception of human dignity. Parts of it are delineated in the volume *Sanhedrin* of the Talmud in a concept known as *drishah v'chakirah*, which deals with how you may question a witness. And you cannot interrogate an individual in this manner."

This was an essential Finkelsteinian response: Americans are sensitive to the Bible, and the Jewish interpretation of the Bible ought to become part of the public discourse. Dr. Finkelstein wanted Jews to compete in the American marketplace of ideas from within their own tradition, especially with regard to ethics and social behavior. He once said that we Jews have been living on top of a volcano from the very beginning of our history, and we therefore had a great deal to offer a world that was beginning to understand that now we were *all* living on top of a volcano.

In postwar America, Dr. Finkelstein was viewed as a sage who spoke out of a long and venerable tradition. He delivered the invocation at President Eisenhower's inauguration, and Eisenhower used to consult with him surprisingly often on ethical matters. One of Finkelstein's proudest achievements was the Seminary's Conferences on Science, Philosophy and

Religion, where many individuals from a variety of world views and traditions would address a single theme, such as peace or equality. Louis Finkelstein's most significant influence on Ramah was his passion to create educated Jews who were active and responsible citizens.



Next, I would cite the great Talmudic scholar Professor Saul Lieberman and his emphasis on the close and careful study of Jewish texts. When the first Ramah camp opened in 1947, people were incredulous: "You're establishing a summer camp that includes *classes*?" In those days, young people went to camp to get *away* from classes, although there were some prominent exceptions, such as the Interlochen camps for students with exceptional musical talent. It was only much later that summer camps were established for the study of science or computers.

In effect, we were running a school within the camp, complete with its own educational director and staff. The daily classes were mostly text-based, and it was quite possible to spend a large part of the summer on just a few verses. Teaching was considered a full-time job, and the teachers were not given other duties, although multiple tasks would have made more sense economically. They therefore had ample time to prepare for class and were available after classes to any camper who might seek them out.

At Ramah we believed in exposing ideas to critique and inquiry rather than presenting them dogmatically. We never sought intellectual obedience. A common question the Talmud asks is: *Minah hani mili?* How do you know? The risk, of course, is that students will pose this same question about the central assumptions of religious belief. How do you *know* there's a God? How do you *know* God or Moses wrote the Torah? One must allow these questions, and all questions, while recognizing

that a tradition that encourages difficult questions will every now and then produce a Spinoza, an Einstein, or a Freud, who will operate outside of the system.

The main purpose of text study at Ramah was to uncover the basic ideas of Judaism, which isn't always a simple proposition. In those days, the Seminary didn't allow the Five Books of Moses to be taught in the Rabbinical School because they would have to be studied critically and scientifically. Biblical criticism was so rife with controversy, especially the issue of the authorship of the Five Books of Moses, that the Seminary responded by avoiding the study of these texts entirely. The Prophets? Fine. But not the Torah.

Meanwhile, at Ramah we were experimenting with the curriculum on Genesis that was prepared by the Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education. (The Melton Center was founded in 1960 at the Seminary; among its activities was a program to develop a new curriculum for the teaching of Bible in Jewish supplementary schools.) To a considerable extent, Ramah served as a testing ground for Melton material. This material, which included Professor Nahum Sarna's important book *Understanding Genesis*, argued that whether or not the Biblical text was divine in origin, it contained profound ethical and religious messages.

In the early 1960s, the volume on Genesis was in galleys, but we still didn't have official approval to use it. I went to see Professor Lieberman — not because I had to, but because it would have been irresponsible not to check with the Seminary synagogue's rabbi, who was officially responsible for the interpretation of Jewish law at the Seminary. I took with me a report on the social studies program of the Westchester public schools, where the students were being taught to distinguish among "science"

(meaning The Truth), “philosophy” (meaning True Ideas), and “religion” (meaning, in this context, myths and legends).

“This is what we’re up against,” I told Professor Lieberman, “and this is why we’re publishing our book on Genesis. Whether or not the reader regards the Torah as being divine in origin, we are demonstrating that it offers an enormously important ethical and religious message.”

At the time, much of the Seminary’s theological position was roughly equivalent to what you might find today in some quarters of modern Orthodoxy. Ramah, however, was willing to take risks in order to achieve its educational goals, and the Seminary faculty was generally sympathetic to those needs.



Another important influence was Professor Mordecai Kaplan’s view of Judaism as a civilization. He defined God as “power that makes for salvation.” He wanted to reconstruct traditional Jewish theological ideas so as to transform them from an otherworldly conception to a personal and social this-worldly conception of salvation. He was seen as a heretic by some of his Seminary colleagues, who regarded his views as a demythologization of God. Some of Kaplan’s colleagues believed that he was essentially a sociologist who had wandered off into theology. As the story goes, Kaplan replied that if the Seminary greats, especially Louis Ginsberg and Saul Lieberman, had dealt with theological questions, he would have left them alone; but their failure to address these issues forced him to attempt to fill the vacuum.

Kaplan joined the centuries-old conversation between Judaism and the great philosophers. He wanted Judaism to be in constant relationship with the world around it, and he brought the elements of music, art, and drama into central focus as legitimate religious concerns and expressions.



At the other end of the spectrum, Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel's religious vision was a major influence on Ramah. Dr. Heschel believed that Jewish rituals and symbols embodied a deep and profound message about the way human beings should live. He viewed Shabbat as a great gift to the world, a sanctification of time in a society where that sanctity was continually being violated. Heschel was amazed, for example, when the dates of certain American holidays were shifted merely for the convenience of having them coincide with a three-day weekend. "Can you imagine changing Rosh Hashanah so that it always falls on a weekend?" he asked.

For Heschel, prayer was the way for an individual to make contact with his innermost self. The whole question of what *t'fillah* [prayer] meant at Ramah was deeply influenced by Heschel and his students, including the concept of *kavannah* [devotional intention] and the idea of *t'fillah* as an opportunity for contemplation and self-improvement. But Heschel was also very concerned about the role of religion in the larger world. He marched in Selma with Martin Luther King as an expression of his own religious tradition. He believed that the most profound ideas in Judaism speak directly to contemporary social and political concerns.



Finally, there was Professor Hillel Bavli, a poet and professor of Hebrew literature. Dr. Bavli functioned as a kind of watchdog who made sure we really were using enough Hebrew at Ramah — no easy task. All of us believed that if you wanted to understand and be part of Jewish history, you had no choice but to master Hebrew; that was how you joined the ongoing conversation with Rashi, Maimonides, and all the other great

commentators and philosophers. Hebrew was also a vital link to the State of Israel, although it must be acknowledged that Finkelstein wasn't a Zionist at first, and neither was I.

After years of success, it may be difficult to appreciate what an outrageous idea it was at the time to try to run a Conservative movement summer camp in Hebrew. Camp Massad was doing it, of course, but Hebrew and Zionism *were* Massad's religion. In the Conservative movement, which was competing with other forces in the struggle to define authentic Judaism in the twentieth century, to have Hebrew as the official language of Ramah was an additional yoke around our necks. The importance of Hebrew is far from self-evident, and today Hebrew is on the wane even in some day schools. If you can acquire the same ideas in translation, why go through all the trouble of studying a whole new language?

At Ramah we believed that Jewish education, effectively carried out, would result in young people who were deeply rooted in their tradition through their attachment to Jewish texts, which they could now grapple with because they had already mastered the necessary skills. Once you introduce students into the *method*, anyone can join the ongoing conversation. In our tradition, there is no way around it: The method must involve Hebrew.

But it's also possible to go too far, to stress Hebrew so much that you err in the other direction. In some Jewish communities, such as Mexico and Argentina, there are schools where Hebrew has become the main goal of Jewish education, and content is secondary. While Hebrew is essential, it is not sufficient. You need several other components — *mitzvot*, prayer, and a communal consciousness on several levels: one's immediate community, the extended Jewish community, one's national society, and the world at large. At Ramah we tried to bring all of these components together.

I regarded these five men — Louis Finkelstein, Saul Lieberman, Mordecai Kaplan, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Hillel Bavli — as our teachers. I spent hours talking with them, and to some extent I saw my mission as one of serving as the conduit between this older generation and the next.

*I*deas into Action: *The Melton Faculty Seminar*

In addition to these five professors, Ramah was also influenced by the Melton Faculty Seminar, which discussed and debated the essential principles that would guide the camp. The Seminar, which ran through the late 1950s and 1960s, included some of the younger scholars at the Seminary, such as Walter Ackerman, Chaim Brandwein, Gerson Cohen, Sylvia Ettenberg, Lloyd Gartner, Avraham Holtz, Joel Kraemer, Morton Leifman, Shmuel Leiter, Yochanan Muffs, Louis Newman, Fritz Rothschild, Nahum Sarna, and David Weiss Halivni. To the best of my knowledge, the Melton Faculty Seminar was the longest ongoing deliberation on Jewish education in the United States.

Essentially we tackled two fundamental questions. First, what were the motifs, the essential themes that we wanted the camper to internalize through the Ramah experience? And second, what were the best ways to realize these goals?

We gradually arrived at a consensus on various points, and we formulated concepts that are still in use today. There was a productive dialogue between the ideas of these scholars and their application at Ramah. A professor might teach an exciting course at the Seminary, and the following summer his students

would be teaching it at Ramah — to the staff, or perhaps even to the older campers.

The Seminar was always asking: What is the relevance of this particular Jewish idea, and when and how should it be taught? Some of these Seminar scholars taught at Ramah, because it was a place where you could not only be excited by ideas, but could witness their application in real-life situations. In fact, it was taboo to treat theory and practice as separate domains.

*I*deas in Creative Tension

Two of the Seminary professors you mentioned, Heschel and Kaplan, had such different outlooks that they're generally seen as representing opposite poles of contemporary Jewish theology. Did these differences lead to problems in a camp that was searching for a clear religious ideology?

No, because from the start Ramah recognized that Judaism is too complex to be guided by a single perspective. Within a philosophical system, an eclectic approach can be problematic because philosophers strive for coherence. But while Ramah was guided by ideas, it was also a practical place where ideas were put into action, and where an eclectic approach could provide a rich source of energy. The fact that both ends of the theological spectrum were represented at Ramah added intellectual tension and excitement.

The Seminary professors who served as mentors represented differing and sometimes conflicting ideas. But their various approaches had already managed to coexist within the framework

of the Seminary. Ramah tried, and was often able, to take their different conceptions a step further by building a society that was guided by a similar multiplicity of visions. Fortunately, the people embodying these various visions were willing to affirm that all of us had far more in common than not.

But even when there is agreement on the fundamental principles of Judaism, there are inevitable differences as to how those fundamentals should be combined. Dr. Yochanan Muffs, a Seminary Bible scholar, once pointed out that the three basic principles of Judaism set forth in *Pirke Avot* [*Ethics of the Fathers*, an accessible and well-known section of the Talmud] — Torah, *avodah*, and *g'millut chasadim* [study, prayer, and acts of loving-kindness] — while mutually supportive and reinforcing, are not always in harmony with each other.

Focus exclusively on the study of Torah, and the result will be disembodied intellects, which was precisely what concerned the Musarists. Focus only on prayer, and you risk becoming excessively inner-directed, which can lead to reclusiveness, removal from the world, and a passivity that is inconsistent with mainstream Judaism. Finally, *mitzvah* on its own can lead to a simplistic and mechanical pattern of observance. Piety is a beautiful thing if you're living in an uncomplicated world, but that's not our reality. The answer is to try to integrate these three forces so that they all form part of the same picture.

The Educational Ideas behind Ramah

We've looked at the major Jewish influences on Ramah, but that's only part of the story. Ramah also made extensive use of experts from the worlds of general education and the social sciences.

Because what we were trying to create required a wider range of expertise, we decided to supplement the Seminary faculty by inviting some of the leading scholars in the humanities, social sciences, and education to join us. We were determined to have the worlds of general and Jewish education “interpenetrate.” The additional scholars who formed the Melton Advisory Board included some of the most thoughtful, creative minds in the field, such as Goodwin Watson, the social psychologist; Fritz Redl, the psychoanalyst; Ralph Tyler, Dean of Social Sciences at the University of Chicago, and a powerful force in American education; and Lawrence Cremin, the eminent historian of education.

Two of the scholars in this group were especially important to Ramah: Joseph Schwab, the prominent philosopher of education and curriculum theorist, and Bruno Bettelheim, the renowned psychoanalyst, who regarded Ramah as a marvelous experiment. I had written my doctoral thesis about Freud and education under the guidance of both men at the University of Chicago.

The members of our Advisory Board were not paid for participating. They were attracted to Ramah by the scope of the project and were excited by the idea of being part of it. They were also impressed by how serious we were about training educational leaders. Professor Schwab even came to camp before the campers arrived to lead seminars for the staff.

Recently, somebody asked me what motivated these high-profile professors — some with little or no interest in Judaism, others who were not even Jewish — to contribute so much of their time and energy to Ramah. The answer, I think, has to do with scholars’ wish for immortality, which occurs when people read their books and put their ideas into practice. Schwab not only generated ideas; he lived to see them acted upon at Ramah, at Melton, and many other places. What we offered these scholars, as well as the Judaic

scholars on the Faculty Seminar, was a living laboratory in which to try out their ideas. Somehow we were able to inspire in them a confidence that the various plans and ideas we discussed around the conference table would actually materialize. What was talked about in November was often part of the camp's program the following summer. Moreover, we never undertook a project without first discussing it with them and paying close attention to their comments. We were giving these scholars an unusual opportunity — the possibility of making a real impact on a society.

Schwab, in particular, viewed Ramah as an ideal place to create disciples. Certainly he was the most important force in shaping my own ideas about education.

Could you say more about him? Schwab seems to have been the key figure in this group, but his name is not well-known today.

Joseph Schwab was born in a small town in Mississippi, where the entire Jewish community consisted of half a dozen families. Although he grew up knowing little about Judaism, he became intrigued by certain Jewish concepts, such as *mitzvah*. He devoted a great deal of his time to Ramah; between 1952 and 1966 I spent at least two days a month with him. He helped us think through issues such as the connection between the cognitive (intellectual) and the affective (emotional) aspects of education. There was a natural fit between his ideas and our vision.

I should explain that Ramah was built on the belief that you have to make contact with young people on all levels — the intellectual, the emotional, the spiritual, and the aesthetic. Some people are touched by music, while others are tone-deaf. Some will respond especially to prayer, or to Shabbat, or to social justice, or to the intellectual challenge in the rabbinic commentaries, or to theology.

Ideally, of course, youngsters will respond to several or even all of the many components within Judaism. Our tradition offers a great deal, and the mind is not the only means of access to it.

In an essay entitled “Eros and Education,” Schwab argued that the human mind is not only cerebral but also passionate, and that the intellect is not an emotion-free area. He also believed there were hardly any emotional areas that did not include cognitive elements. Schwab was convinced that for education there was no meaningful distinction to be drawn between mind and body, or between intellect and emotion.

Schwab wrote in that essay that Eros was all about “the energy of wanting.” He believed that the definition of “to know” had to include “to do.” The aim of education, he said, was to produce “*actively* intelligent people,” whom he described in this way:

They *like* good pictures, good books, good music, good movies. They *find pleasure* in planning their active lives and carrying out the planned action. They hanker to make, to create, whether the object is knowledge mastered, art appreciated, or actions patterned and directed. In short, a curriculum is not complete which does not move the Eros, as well as the mind of the young, from where it is to where it might better be.

We also consulted with Schwab on how best to teach traditional Jewish texts. This was familiar territory for him because at the college of the University of Chicago nobody used textbooks, only primary sources. We spent hours with him discussing, for example, how best to teach adolescents the story of Jacob, Rebecca, and Isaac in the Book of Genesis. As presented in the text, Jacob and Rebecca can be viewed as scheming co-conspirators against Isaac. Jacob is deceitful, his mother is less than honest, and together they mislead poor Isaac into giving the birthright to Jacob instead of to Esau, the first-born.

How do you explain what is at stake here — the future of the people of Israel? How can you help adolescents discover that what appears to be a story about personal gain, about acquiring the birthright and its privileges, is actually a story about the future of the Jewish people: Which of Isaac's sons is qualified to forge a nation? How can you teach teenagers to consider the idea that a great leader can have great flaws, a persistent theme in the Torah? How do you convey to them that there are often shades of gray, when adolescents tend to see only black and white?

This is a tremendous challenge, and we discussed it with Schwab at length. Freud wrote in *Civilization and its Discontents* that the way most educators prepare young people for the world is the intellectual and moral equivalent of sending explorers on a polar expedition outfitted in summer clothing. How do you tell young people the truth about the world without doing damage to their innate idealism and hope?

Schwab was also involved in our work in leadership education. If you look at how leadership training has evolved in recent years, you will see two main schools of thought. The British school says: Study the greats. Plato, Aristotle, and John Locke will provide you with all the principles you will need. Alfred North Whitehead claimed that everything he had ever required to live the good life he found in the Bible and the literature of ancient Greece.

The American model, as you may expect, is more directly pragmatic. The Harvard Business School says: If we can provide enough case studies that illustrate the principles and include the situations you are likely to encounter during your career, you will succeed in the real world.

Schwab helped us develop a third conception, which was essentially a blend of the other two and which fit in perfectly with the

goals of Ramah: Teach young people the principles that have guided your tradition, and give the students exercises in analyzing practice in view of these principles. They must then ask themselves: If I acquire, accept, and understand these principles, what will my practice be like?

What was the contribution of Bruno Bettelheim?

First, I must say that although Bettelheim's reputation has been challenged in recent years, that in no way diminishes his important contribution to Ramah. Second, although some members of the Melton Advisory Board responded to Ramah in terms of their Jewish background, that wasn't the case with Bettelheim, who regarded Judaism and all religions as anachronistic. And yet he clearly appreciated what we were trying to do educationally.

As a graduate student at the University of Chicago I had worked at Bettelheim's Orthogenic School for emotionally disturbed children. Once, with the chutzpah of youth, I said to him that the school didn't always measure up to his descriptions of it in his book, *Love is Not Enough*.

"You're right," he replied. "The book outlines what the school was *supposed* to be." He acknowledged that it often fell short of its vision, but that didn't mean it wasn't guided and directed by that vision.

One of the distinguishing marks of Bettelheim's school was its creation of a "home haven," a comfortable and safe setting for the children. To make this happen, Bettelheim used every resource at his disposal — from architecture to food. We believed that a camper's cabin at Ramah should function in a similar way, as a supportive environment against the inevitable pressures and problems created by an intense milieu. Bettelheim helped us understand how best to bring this about.

We were influenced by Bettelheim when we asked that each camp director show us the menu for the first few days of the summer. We wanted to make sure that all our camps were serving familiar foods like hamburgers — foods that would facilitate the smoothest possible transition from a youngster's home to this new environment. We also made sure that we were prepared to provide as many additional helpings as a camper wanted, so that nobody would leave the table feeling hungry, especially during the first week. We even had the counselors serve extra snacks at night. We were a bit extreme when it came to food, especially with all those Freudians on our board!

Another lesson I learned from Bettelheim was the significance of the school custodian, who, for some students, was a more significant educational figure than the teachers or other professionals. At Ramah we paid close attention to the character of all the people we hired, not only the counselors, specialists, and teachers, but the service staff as well. Many of our dishwashers were students from Ivy League colleges. They didn't know Hebrew, but they wanted to be at Ramah and would accept any job in order to spend a summer at camp. We responded by giving them the best teachers, including, quite often, the professor-in-residence.

Bettelheim stressed the distinction between education and therapy — that while education could be enormously therapeutic, we shouldn't confuse the two. He also taught us that there ought to be a place in camp where campers could be wild and noisy, and another place where a youngster could find peace and quiet. And it was Bettelheim who introduced me to the distinguished Harvard psychoanalyst, Erik Erikson. In his biographies of Martin Luther and Gandhi, Erikson portrayed charismatic individuals as unreconstructed adolescents who continued to believe that the world could be changed and that history was

reversible. This was an idea educators needed to hear, and before long, Erikson's books were being read and discussed at Ramah.

Finally, Bettelheim helped us understand that we had a tremendous built-in advantage that we hadn't fully been aware of: Because Ramah was in opposition to American suburban values, the camp was inherently countercultural in a way that was attractive and yet constructive to adolescents in rebellion against their elders.

A *Philosophical Commitment to Excellence*

It seems to me that during its earlier years, Ramah was unapologetically elitist in a way that might not be acceptable these days.

Back then, of course, elitism was a commonly shared assumption, and nobody questioned it. It was a necessary consequence of a commitment to excellence. The Seminary sought out great scholars and the best possible students, and to a large degree it succeeded. Ramah wasn't open to everybody. It was often difficult to get in, and there were waiting lists. We believed that if you invested in the right people, they could change the world. We believed that with talent and hard work, anyone could make it to the top. But we also believed there *is* a top.

F *From Theory to Practice*

We've looked at some of the intellectual background that helped create Ramah. I'd be interested in how some of the ideas and principles that came up in the Melton Faculty Seminar were ultimately expressed in practice.

Obviously, the leap from the theoretical to the practical is a big one. How do you fill the enormous gap between a text, the internalization of its message, and its incorporation into behavior? How do you move from mastering an idea to living it? And how does your practical experience affect your theory and help you revise it?

Although we didn't articulate it in exactly these terms, we were working with a process that involved five levels.

The first level is philosophy, and it asks theoretical questions. What is your conception of Judaism, of an ideal Jewish society, and of the individual? What is your conception of knowledge? Does knowledge consist of a mastery of facts? Of basic principles? If you know, will you therefore do?

The second level narrows the scope to the philosophy of education. How does your philosophy guide your conception of education? In our case, how do your ideas about Judaism shape the vision of what education should or can be?

The third level deals with the theory of practice, and takes the process one step further. How does your philosophy of education shape and alter your educational goals? How does it shape your conception of curriculum, or of teacher education, or of informal education?

The fourth level brings the discussion to actual practice: pedagogy, in-service education, and classroom management.

The fifth level consists of monitoring and evaluation, which serves as a corrective for each and all of the levels.

But these levels are not linear, and you need not move from Level One to Level Five. Some of the most effective work in education begins with Level Five — with a careful, critical look at your ongoing program, which often demonstrates that you may not be

accomplishing what you set out to do. This may lead you to reexamine your practice or your philosophy of education, which may in turn lead you to reconsider your basic assumptions about Judaism and knowledge. In other words, you return to Level One.

In our discussions about Ramah, we often started from Level Four and then moved on to Levels One through Five. Moving from theory to practice, or from practice to theory, is a dynamic process that forces you to constantly observe, rethink, and — ideally — change and improve.

These distinctions are still somewhat theoretical and abstract. Could we look at a specific area, such as *t'fillah* [prayer], in light of these five levels?

If you are considering how to deal with *t'fillah* in an educational setting, the five levels might apply as follows:

Level One: What is prayer? Why do we praise God, who clearly doesn't need our praise? One answer, suggested by Maimonides, is that God is a role model. When we praise God for being merciful, we do so in order to articulate and emulate that particular quality. If we restricted our discussion to this sort of issue, we would have a philosophical treatment of prayer.

Level Two might ask: What is the role of prayer in your philosophy of education? What specific ideas about it do you want to convey to children? How do you make contact with the spirituality of a child?

With Level Three we move into ideas that will guide educational practice. Can these ideas be taught to younger children? You might decide that you really can't accomplish much in this area until you make people sensitive to words, because the whole assumption of prayer is that reading or chanting certain words will set off something inside you. Or you might ask whether

meditation fits into your understanding of Jewish prayer. And if it does, how will you teach it?

Actually, that last question brings us to Level Four, which deals with pedagogy. How, in the classroom, will teachers help students develop a sensitivity to words or to *nusach* [the traditional chant of the prayer service]? How will teachers be trained to carry out these assignments?

Level Five asks: As you monitor this activity, how will you make the necessary changes as a result of what you observe or learn? Does your experience support your theory?

As long as we're talking about prayer, could you explain why, given the general intellectual openness of Ramah, it was mandatory for campers to attend services every morning?

In order to reject something you first need to experience it, and at Ramah you could experience religious services under optimal conditions. As Schwab used to say about music, the sonata form isn't something you immediately respond to. It takes hard work and experience before you appreciate it. Similarly, for *t'fillah* to succeed you have to work at it and experience it. Eventually it becomes meaningful — or it doesn't. Rejection is always an option, as long as it's thoughtful and considered.

We believed that most young people who experienced Judaism at Ramah would become deeply involved in it. Of course, all education works on that premise. If you are introduced to a profound idea by a fine teacher in the right environment, there's a good chance you'll accept it. This is a faith assumption of education.

But while *Shacharit* [morning] services were compulsory at Ramah, afternoon services were not. This was an important

difference between Ramah and the Seminary. *Halakhically*, the *Minchah* service is also compulsory, but there were limits as to how much the uninitiated camper could be expected to understand and appreciate. After all, the majority of these youngsters had never experienced any daily prayers. Our educational analysis made it clear that if we insisted on *Minchah* at camp, we were likely to lose much of the impact of *Shacharit*.

In the end, the Seminary faculty voted for an optional *Minchah* at Ramah, basing the decision on educational considerations rather than *halakhic* principles. It was a difficult debate, and ultimately the issue was decided by a single vote.

How did Ramah deal with the fact that even within the Conservative movement, not to mention the rest of Judaism, not everybody observes Shabbat in exactly the same way?

As we saw it, the camp's public space was to be maintained as a religious preserve. We didn't legislate against the use of a radio in the privacy of a cabin, for we made a distinction between the public space and private space. We enabled campers and staff alike to experience as close to a total Shabbat as possible within the public areas of the camp. As with the issue of *Minchah*, our policy allowing the private use of electricity rather than its public use was not a *halakhic* decision but an educational one.

On the other hand, many other practices and activities at Ramah were non-negotiable. These included Hebrew, daily classes, morning services, kashrut, the recitation of *birkat ha-mazon* [grace after meals] — and, in a very different sphere, instructional swim.

Let's return to the five levels that move us from the theoretical realm to the practical and back again. We've

already seen how they might apply to prayer. But what about a very different area, such as sports?

Level One would begin with general philosophical questions: What is the relationship between mind and body? Why do you need a healthy body? How is the conception of a healthy body in our tradition different from that of other traditions?

Then, in Level Two, you might ask: What is the role of sports in your conception of education? You might, as John Dewey did, discuss the importance of rules, fairness, cooperation and competition.

In Level Three you would think about what role sports might play in your program. Are you prepared to let a camper complete the summer with no significant athletic experiences? What about those campers who simply don't like sports? Or swimming?

In Level Four you might think about how you will teach respect for rules and fairness. How will you teach youngsters to be good losers — or good winners, for that matter? What are your methods of teaching these values?

And in Level Five you would take a critical look at your program and measure your accomplishments. Have your students internalized the values of fairness and good sportsmanship? What changes or improvements need to be introduced in your program?

That sounds fine, but almost every institution with aspirations to greatness makes grand claims about being guided by lofty theoretical principles. How do you ensure that there really is a link between those ideals and the real world?

If you develop your ideals carefully and thoughtfully, and you constantly reinforce the message that they really matter, you can

make those principles come alive. We once had a thirteen-year-old camper who used to wet his bed. We used to have late night staff meetings, but no matter what we were discussing, or how important it was, at 11:45 PM each night two counselors would rush to this boy's cabin and wake him up to make sure he went to the bathroom. If they arrived too late, they would wake him up and change his sheets so none of the other campers would be aware of the mishap when they woke up in the morning. The driving force here was the principle of *ha-malbin et p'nei chavero b'rabim* — that you must avoid a situation where a person might be embarrassed in front of others.

That brings to mind another case involving this same principle. We had a problem one summer with adolescent girls who, after lights out, would conduct “bull sessions” — discussions in which, under the rubric of self-improvement, each girl's faults and deficiencies would be addressed by the entire group. These sessions invariably ended with girls in tears, and with some of the girls being scapegoated.

I was the camp director that summer, and when this developed into a serious, continuing problem, I was tempted to outlaw these sessions. But I knew that the campers could continue holding bull sessions as soon as the counselor was out of earshot. When the situation finally got out of control, I came in to talk to the girls.

“We don't understand,” they told me. “We're just trying to help each other.”

“That sounds fine,” I said, “but may I sit in?” I started listening, and I soon found myself interrupting. “You know,” I told them, “I appreciate what you're doing. I accept your aims, but I have a problem with your method. One of the things we don't do in

a Jewish community like Ramah is publicly embarrass our fellow human beings. What if we studied a text together that deals with how people should behave toward one another, and then each girl can do her own self-evaluation privately?”

At this point, because an alternative was available, the more sensitive girls prevailed and the study session was accepted. Each night we studied the sixth chapter of *Pirke Avot* and discussed, among other things, what it means to be a *re'a ahuv* — an intimate friend, someone you could confide in, who would be supportive and would help you muster the strength you need to change and improve. We read this chapter every night for four weeks and had some very good talks. At Ramah, this sort of thing was part of the director's job definition.

Investing in Staff

It's interesting that the camp director would spend so much time with one cabin — but what about the rest of the staff? There were so many specialists in camp.

We weren't too concerned with conserving our resources! We had three full-time staffs at Ramah — counselors, specialists in sports and the arts, and teachers. Financially, of course, it was outrageous. There were no dual roles: Different people had different functions. This was part of the audaciousness of the place. We were trying to do it all.

The best specialist was somebody who pressured you and stretched you, and sometimes that led to problems for the camper. Whether in sports, music, drama, or any other area, competition and striving for excellence can cause problems. Classes were demanding, too, because the teacher would force

you to grapple with the text and stretch your mind. If there were problems, it was up to the counselor to pick up the pieces.

We also co-opted an idea from the kibbutz movement, which saw itself as an *edah mechanekhet* [an educating community], of having the teaching staff available throughout the day. The kibbutz teacher would teach a class in the morning and would continue to debate issues with you through the day. The same was true of our teachers — at least in theory.

An even more unusual position for a camp was that of the librarian, whose job was to sit in the library and be available all day to anyone, whether camper or staff member. And just as some camps have an artist-in-residence, each Ramah camp had a professor-in-residence, generally a Seminary faculty member whose role was to encourage intellectual ferment. He or she was there to listen, to teach, to prod, to criticize, and to help the camp community respond to *halakhic* problems that would invariably arise during the course of the summer.

C*ommunal Leaders as Partners*

Let's step back from the camp community to consider a constituency that is critical to the success of any educational institution. I'm referring to the communal leaders, who as board members assume ultimate responsibilities for the various camps.

Ramah, from its inception, was fortunate in recruiting outstanding communal leaders. While today, communal leaders are more supportive of good educational programs and more active in their support, that's a fairly recent development. In the 1970s and 1980s, most American Jews of status and means cared

mainly about Israel, hospitals, and defense organizations. Jewish education and culture ranked very low. Four notable exceptions were way ahead of their time and were interested in education: Sam and Florence Melton of Columbus, Philip Lown of Boston, and Leighton Rosenthal of Cleveland.

Now it's different. More and more, people are coming to realize that Judaism's and Israel's best asset is a Jewishly educated Diaspora, and that American Jews should be investing significantly in Jewish education. Fortunately, this view has prevailed, especially as part of the "continuity" agenda. Mort Mandel, who, with his brothers, Jack and Joe, established the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, helped launch this movement in a serious way. Jewish education has now been raised to the very top of the agenda of most Jewish organizations and institutions.

In general, communal leaders are more knowledgeable and insist on having a greater voice in the projects they support. In addition, we have major assets now that we didn't have then. There are academics and well-informed communal leaders all over North America who care about Jewish education and see it as important. Jewish studies courses in colleges and universities are one of the big success stories of American Jewish life. Families today can draw on a wide variety of programs. There are hundreds of day schools in North America and any number of excellent organized trips to Israel. There are young Jews in general education who are interested in making a contribution to Jewish education. There are Jewish leaders and philanthropists publicly proclaiming that Jewish education is a top priority. For all these reasons, I'm optimistic.

This may be the right moment to ask for your thoughts on what, for many would-be institution builders, is a difficult

and intimidating process, although it's essential if you're hoping to build or sustain a meaningful project. I'm referring, of course, to the whole question of fund-raising.

This may sound strange, but I firmly believe that money is not the biggest problem. Although funds have not always been easily available, these days there are enough resources to support a wide variety of fine projects.

The key factors in successful fund-raising are the strength of your ideas, your commitment to those ideas, and your enthusiasm. I have never asked anyone to support an institution unless I would have been willing to donate a similar amount if I had it. In other words, if you're not deeply committed to the cause, you shouldn't be trying to raise money for it. You have to start with vision and commitment, and you must convey them to the people you're approaching. And you have to *mean* it. I believe we're all transparent, and that as human beings we're continually judging each other and asking: "Is this person genuine? Is he sincere?"

Another thing: I always start with the assumption that the person I'm meeting with is at least as intelligent as I am. There's no inherent reason for him to support my project, because he has many other valid claims to consider. Therefore, it is my job to convince him — or, better still, to educate him. Only if you take the time to educate people about a project will they be able to make intelligent decisions about it. If you treat potential donors as people who can join *with* you and help you in creating this new enterprise, you may get somewhere.

Although the situation is far better than it used to be, the relationship between Jewish educators and communal leaders is still too adversarial. The professionals still ask: "How can this person make an informed judgment if he can't even read Hebrew?"

And the communal leaders still think: "This guy is a shlepper. If he were really successful, he'd be in my business." This is unfortunate, but it's true.

What are the biggest mistakes you see in fund-raising?

I see three common mistakes, and they're connected. The first mistake is to treat the donor as if he or she were naive. The second mistake is arrogance. And the third one is not disclosing the full truth about the undertaking, including its problems and failures.

Here's my favorite fund-raising story: Sam Melton was visiting Ramah in the Poconos, and one morning we passed a ten-year-old boy on his way to class.

"What are you studying?" Sam asked him.

"*Chumash*," answered the boy.

"*Chumash* with what?" Sam asked.

And the boy replied, "*Chumash* with Melton."

At that moment all my fund-raising efforts were vindicated.

How do you respond to those who ask why educational change takes so long and costs so much?

With this analogy: Would it make any sense to study mortality rates in surgical wards where the instruments weren't sterilized? As long as teachers are often untrained or unmotivated, and certainly underpaid, what can you expect? When your mission is to conquer a disease, you don't withdraw funding because you haven't found a cure despite years of research. On the contrary: You invest additional money until you do. We have just begun doing that in Jewish education. It's too early to ask whether the investment is too great, or whether it will take too long.

Vision vs. Budget

Still, there must be times when a well-developed educational vision and a prudent business plan are at odds with each other.

At Ramah that happened often. We couldn't always justify the educational investment on economic grounds, which was hard for some people to accept. Take the Mador program, in which we devoted an entire summer to the training of promising high school graduates who agreed to serve as counselors for two additional summers. From a purely economic standpoint it was foolish to invest so much money in that program. And what about the professor-in-residence and the camp librarian? These people were expensive! What other summer camp had three separate staffs? But when you give parents reason to believe that you're helping their child become a *mensch*, you can ask for a great deal.

When Ramah first started, we had to make a critical decision: Who would head the camps? Should it be an educator with vision who could then hire a talented business manager, or did we need a talented manager who would hire a creative director? The Seminary, in partnership with an outstanding board of communal leaders, decided that Ramah should be led by educators, by people with a vision. Each of the camps had a capable business manager, of course, and that job was vitally important, but the camp was always led by educators.

Where Ramah Failed

We've talked about some of Ramah's accomplishments, but as you said earlier, even if you start with cognac you'll

be lucky to end up with grape juice. Looking back on it, what are some of the areas where Ramah missed the boat?

I can identify five significant failures.

To begin with, we failed to conduct any systematic evaluation of our work. Ralph Tyler once told me that not doing this was the educational equivalent of not carrying out diagnostic tests until the patient was leaving the hospital. In other words, we often had no feedback on what we were doing until it was too late to do anything about it. If our results were really as promising as they seemed, we should have been documenting the evidence. It's amazing that, as far as I can determine, we never asked our campers to write about their experiences at Ramah! We were so busy building something new that we didn't ever stop to evaluate it.

Conducting a serious evaluation of an ongoing project is time-consuming and expensive, and it may sound like a luxury. Even today, when educational institutions embark on a self-evaluation, it's more likely to be used as a fund-raising technique rather than a way of improving the enterprise. But it's something we should have done.

Ramah's second failure was that, despite all our efforts, we never really became a Hebrew-speaking camp. Hebrew was a clearly articulated goal that was central to the philosophy of Ramah, and while Hebrew was the official language at camp, we simply didn't do well enough in this area. It's true that most of our counselors didn't know enough Hebrew, but that's no excuse. We could have taught them Hebrew in the off-season, perhaps in a series of regional centers. We could have sent them to Israel. But we did neither. We had no graduated curriculum for the teaching of Hebrew at Ramah. We had no language labs. We didn't even look

to Camp Massad for guidance in this area. We assumed they were successful at it only because Hebrew was their chief concern.

I must accept some of the blame for this failure. My attitude was: If there's a conflict between understanding ideas and learning the language, let's go for understanding. In the Melton Faculty Seminar, Gerson Cohen and Shmuel Leiter fought for more Hebrew — and they were right. So did Sylvia Ettenberg, whom I consider the great hero of Ramah, and who represents the only coherent continuation from the founding of the camp until her recent retirement, a span of forty-five years. She was both an anchor for communal leaders and a nurturer of directors. She was also a great facilitator and a peacemaker between warring factions.

On a related issue, I made a similar mistake with regard to Israel, which didn't always receive its rightful place on our agenda. On the other hand, the fact that hundreds of former Ramah campers now live in Israel suggests that we must have been doing something right in this area.

For years I did my best to keep Israelis out of our camps, because the Israelis I had met who wanted to work in an American summer camp seemed inappropriate as educators for Ramah. But eventually I joined those who decided to bring over an Israeli delegation every summer to serve as teachers and specialists. They turned out to make a real contribution.

Our third failure was in not establishing a year-round program. One reason we hired full-time camp directors was our expectation that they would maintain the camp program throughout the year by working with the Conservative movement's youth program, the Leadership Training Fellowship (LTF). The summer months could have served as the climax of the year, or perhaps the launch of a new year — or both. All the camps could have

been winterized. In this area we simply quit too early; the idea didn't advance far enough to merit being called a failure.

Our fourth failure was that we didn't establish a curriculum for the camp program as a whole. It's amazing, but we never formalized the various camp programs, although some of them were remarkable. There was some sharing of ideas among the camps, but not nearly enough. Over the years, we failed to document or preserve any number of innovative and creative projects. There was far too much reinventing of the wheel and too much improvising. At least this failure was deliberate: We were afraid of formalizing what we had because it might have inhibited creativity. But this was a mistake.

The fifth failure that comes to mind was that we didn't achieve an effective transition between the rarefied atmosphere of Ramah and the camper's home community, despite the fact that we paid a lot of attention to this problem and were probably on the right track. For example, we often discussed how to help campers, newly excited about Jewish practice, who return to a non-kosher or otherwise non-observant household. Because we respected the campers' family relationships, we did not encourage them to tell their parents what they should or shouldn't eat, or do, in their own homes.

But more often than we anticipated, the reentry problems arose not with the campers' families but with their synagogues. After a summer at Ramah, campers found it hard to return to a service that suddenly seemed stilted and complacent, and to a rabbi who seemed formal when contrasted with the informality and warmth of camp. We even had youngsters who refused to attend synagogue services after camp because the service no longer felt authentically Jewish to them.

In a sense we were creating misfits, but we were arrogant enough to think our campers could turn the Conservative movement around. And they did, to some extent, although it took years.

Unexpected Successes

In addition to the successes we worked hard for, we had a few others that we hadn't really anticipated. Many Ramah campers went on to become rabbis, professors of Judaica at American and Israeli universities, or prominent community leaders. Today, Ramah graduates are extremely well represented in professional Jewish life and in institutions of Jewish culture and education — in all denominations. And a great many others have made aliyah.

Second, we recruited and developed our own personnel. That is, much of our staff consisted of former campers. We had some terrific directors, and most of them, too, came up through the ranks. We made sure they were decently paid, and we created a new Jewish profession: camp director. These people were given tenure, just like university faculty. Being a Ramah director was a difficult job that involved dealing with a variety of groups, such as staff, campers, parents, rabbis, educators, and communal leaders, not to mention such complex issues as religious ideology and finance. Most of our directors had been trained as rabbis, which meant they had a clear and obvious career line, usually in the pulpit, but sometimes in formal education or Jewish communal life. At Ramah they were really going out on a limb in terms of their future careers — some of them for years, and others for their entire professional lives.

Despite our failures, Ramah worked. I've been in the Jewish education business a long time, and nowhere else have I seen a

closer correlation between what we set out to do and what we actually accomplished. The ultimate proof, of course, are the campers. They may have hated Hebrew school, but they really learned, loved, and lived Judaism at Ramah.

They also loved and appreciated the *people* at Ramah. I have no idea how many deep and lasting friendships began at Ramah, but there have been a great many. And many marriages, too. All over North America and Israel, you can find young people whose parents — and increasingly, *grandparents* — met each other at Ramah.

*L*essons for New Institutions

What would you identify as the most significant lessons that other institutions might learn from Ramah?

First, Ramah demonstrates how a vision can motivate a staff, and how a staff can then stretch itself. Second, I think there is something to be learned about how to combine sophisticated approaches to content and theoretical discussions with the most concrete and mundane nitty-gritty details.

Ramah was also about investing in talent, and the vital importance of communal supporters. In our case, the communal leaders protected us from attempts to dilute the educational component. They believed in the project because they understood it, and they acted out of deep conviction. Ramah made it possible for educators, rabbis, scholars, and communal leaders to join forces. There was a real generosity of spirit and a genuine attempt to understand the other person's position. Ramah was more than a camp; it was an educational movement.

The success of Ramah empowered some of us to think about institutions that didn't exist, and that *still* don't exist. At some point we will probably see the creation of institutions that combine the day school with the community center, breaking down the conventional walls between formal and informal education. Just as the students of John Dewey hoped to produce an active participant in a democratic society, such an institution, when it finally comes into existence, will serve as an intensive training ground for Jewish citizenship.

The next challenge, in my view, is to provide for the needs of post-materialist people. More and more, people are looking for meaning in their lives. They want to know what our tradition is all about, and our job is to take that tradition and present it in contemporary terms that speak to them. From time to time a genius will emerge, a Heschel or a Kaplan, but you can't sit back and wait for them. It's far better, in my view, to build places where potential Heschels and Kaplans will be nurtured, develop, and flourish.



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- *Gandhi’s Truth: On Origins of Militance and Violence* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970).
- Bruno Bettelheim’s volume on the Orthogenic School, *Love is Not Enough* (N.Y.: The Free Press, 1950), was carefully studied and applied to the camp setting.



The Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education

The Melton Center was established in 1960 at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, by Samuel M. Melton of Columbus, Ohio, and plays a key role in the development of the theory and practice of Jewish education. The Melton program for the teaching of Bible was piloted at the Ramah camps. The Melton Faculty Seminar developed the papers that guided much of the educational thinking at Ramah.

During the years of my direct involvement with the Melton Center, Louis Newman served as its director. Joseph Schwab was the leading

educational consultant to the Center. The reader may find some of the publications of the Melton Center of interest, particularly:

- Nahum Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America and McGraw Hill, 1966).
- Moshe Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus: Part 1* (New York: Behrman House, 1969).



The Mandel Institute

The Mandel Institute is an international center for the study and development of Jewish and general education. It was established in Jerusalem in 1990 by Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel of Cleveland, Ohio. It has been at the forefront of the movement to revitalize Jewish education. Among its publications are:

- Seymour Fox and Israel Scheffler, "Jewish Education & Jewish Continuity: Prospects & Limitations" (Jerusalem: The Mandel Institute, 1996).



From 1988 to 1990, the Mandel Associated Foundations, the JCC Association, and JESNA in collaboration with CJF convened the Commission on Jewish Education in North America. Its recommendations were published in:

- *A Time to Act: The Report of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America* (Lanham-New York-London: University Press of America, 1991).

One of these recommendations was the establishment of the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE).



The Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE)

CIJE is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to the transformation of North American Jewish life through education. Among CIJE's publications are those of The Best Practices Project in Jewish Education, directed by Barry W. Holtz.

- *Best Practices: Supplementary School Education* (New York-Cleveland: CIJE, 1993, 1996) argues the case for the centrality of vision to models of excellence in this setting.

*A*cknowledgments

I want to acknowledge the role of Nessa Rapoport in the publication of this essay. It would never have been written without her persistence and her role as a creative, diligent, and patient editor. I am also grateful to William Novak, who brought both his skill as an interviewer and his knowledge of Camp Ramah to this work.

I was invited to join the staff of Camp Ramah in Wisconsin in 1950 by Louis Newman, the director, and Sylvia Ettenberg, dean of students at the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary. As a result of their invitation, I spent eighteen wonderful years in a close association with the Ramah movement and have continued to watch it grow and flourish since then.

From 1950 to 1968, I was privileged to work with the staff and the leaders of the Ramah movement: the camp directors, Levi Soshuk, Rabbi David Mogilner, and Rabbi Marshall Meyer, all of blessed memory; and Rabbi Jerome Abrams, Dr. Walter Ackerman, Donald Adelman, Dr. Raphael Arzt, Dr. Burton Cohen, Rabbi Morton Leifman, Dr. Shmuel Leiter, Dr. David Lieber, Dr. Joseph Lukinsky, Louis Newman, Dr. Chaim Potok, Rabbi Moshe Samber, and Dr. Morton Siegel.

Following Bernard Resnikoff, David Mogilner and subsequently Burton Cohen were appointed directors of the National Ramah Commission, where each offered outstanding leadership to the movement as a whole. In 1989, Dr. Sheldon Dorph assumed the position of director; he is guiding Ramah with inspiration from its fiftieth anniversary into the future.

I learned a great deal from all of them.

Ramah was a partnership of educators, communal leaders, rabbis, and scholars. I have not written a history of Ramah and therefore cannot acknowledge many other people with whom I was fortunate to work. I must, however, mention Lou Winer, who, as a communal leader, was a source of continuous support and encouragement to the camp directors. Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, as executive vice president of the Rabbinical Assembly from 1952 to 1989, helped us develop a common language with the rabbis, who contend with the reality of building Jewish life twelve months a year.

About the Authors

Seymour Fox, who was closely associated with Camp Ramah from 1950 to 1968, is president of the Mandel Institute in Jerusalem, an international center for the study and development of Jewish and general education.

Professor Fox was born in Chicago in 1929. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and his rabbinical ordination from The Jewish Theological Seminary of America. In 1954, he became director of Camp Ramah in Wisconsin, the first Ramah camp. After serving in various other capacities at the Jewish Theological Seminary, he became dean of its Teachers Institute in 1959. In that year he founded the Mador program of Camp Ramah. In 1960, he founded the Melton Center for Research in Jewish Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

He moved to Israel in 1966 and was appointed Professor of Education and director of the School of Education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 1969, he founded the Hebrew University's Melton Centre for Jewish Education in the Diaspora. He has served as a senior consultant to four Ministers of Education.

Among his current responsibilities in Jerusalem, Professor Fox is chairman of the faculty of the Center for Advanced Professional Educators (CAPE), a program for leaders in Jewish education; and academic director of the School for Educational Leadership, a program that trains the future leaders of Israeli education.

He is the author and editor of several books and numerous articles in the fields of Jewish and general education, including: *Freud and Education*; *From the Scholar to the Classroom*; *Translating Jewish Tradition into Curriculum*; and *Philosophy for Education*.

Seymour Fox is married to Sue Mogilner-Fox and lives in Jerusalem. He has three sons, David, Eytan, and Danny.



William Novak spent ten years at Ramah camps in Canada, the Poconos, and Glen Spey, N.Y., where he was, at various times, a camper, a counselor, a music specialist, and a teacher. Novak is a

former editor of the journals *Response* and *New Traditions* and was one of the founders of *Moment* magazine. He is also the co-editor of *The Big Book of Jewish Humor*.

As a writer, he has worked with a number of celebrities on their memoirs, including Lee Iacocca (*Iacocca*), Tip O'Neill (*Man of the House*), Magic Johnson (*My Life*), and Natan Sharansky (*Fear No Evil*).

William Novak lives in the Boston area with his wife and their three sons.



MEMORANDUM

To: The Guiding Ideas Study Group (Karen Barth, Amy Gerstein, Alvan Kaunfer, Daniel Pekarsky, David Purpel, Nessa Rapoport, Linda Thal)

From: Daniel Pekarsky

Re: Our upcoming meeting on January 19th

Date: January 12, 1998

Cc: Devora Steinmetz

As you know, we'll be meeting on January 19 at CIJE (15 East 26th St, 18th floor, NYC) from 9:30 to 5 pm, and it looks like all of us will be able to be present for most, if not all, of the day. As discussed at our Providence meeting in the summer, David Purpel will be joining our group at this meeting.

At the heart of our January meeting is a question that is of critical practical importance to the work of CIJE and the institutions that are the focus of this work: namely, how can we help schools and congregations that feel the need for some guiding ideas to develop a powerful vision of what they are about that will express their aspirations as a community and meaningfully guide their efforts?

A guiding CIJE conviction (see, for example, the enclosed article by Daniel Pekarsky) is that one of the most serious problems with contemporary Jewish life and institutions is the absence of powerful visions that give direction and meaning to the activities of the participants. At the same time, our sense is that existing approaches to the challenge of developing a vision suffer from many difficulties, including one or more of the following:

- 1) They are done "on the fly", or superficially, without sufficient investment of time and reflection, and attention to process;
- 2) They stay at the level of collective values-clarification and consensus-building, without adequately engaging the participants in encountering rich Jewish texts and ideas that have the power to deepen their thinking about the basic questions they are considering;
- 3) The vision that is articulated reflects the thinking of only a small sub-group within the community;
- 4) In order to achieve consensus, the vision that is articulated is so parve or bland as to call forth little excitement and to offer little guidance;
- 5) For one or more of the foregoing reasons (or for other reasons), the vision remains disconnected from the community's activities and practices, or else is applied to the community's life in superficial or simplistic ways.

It is, however, one thing to point to the problems at work in existing efforts; it is a much more difficult challenge to identify an approach which meaningfully remedies such problems and is also "user-friendly", i.e., not so demanding or cumbersome as to discourage most anyone from taking it on. Hence our challenge: might it be possible for us to jointly develop a credible, real-world approach (at a level of generality and open-endedness to be determined) that we could recommend to institutions that come to us seeking help in developing a guiding vision--an approach that takes seriously the importance of wrestling with powerful Jewish ideas? This question will be at the heart of our January 19 meeting.

AGENDA FOR THE JANUARY 19 GUIDING IDEAS STUDY GROUP:

- 9:30 - 10:00** Introduction to the day
- 10:00 - 11:15** Jewish Text Study Session (dealing with the problem of change), led by Devora Steinmetz
- 11:30 - 1:00** Examining and evaluating how the problem of vision is understood and addressed in the context of several significant approaches to educational change.
- 1:00 - 1:45** LUNCH
- 1:45 - 4:00** Towards a more adequate approach to the challenge of vision: Responses to a case.
- 4:00 - 5:00** Concluding session

In preparation for our 11:30 session, I will be asking some of you to articulate for the group the way the question of vision is addressed in educational change movements that you personally are involved with or familiar with. Also in preparation for this session, I am enclosing:

- a) An article describing Linda Thal's change-project with a congregation in Los Angeles, in which she describes how the problem of vision was addressed in that change-process, and
- b) A piece that Amy Gerstein wrote for CIJE a year and a half ago in anticipation of the Jerusalem Goals Seminar. Please try to read these pieces in advance of our meeting.

As indicated above, the object of the afternoon session is to work towards an approach to the problem of vision under real world conditions that has a measure of integrity and a chance of being fruitful. In preparation for this session:

- a) Please read the "CONGREGATION RODEPH ALPAYIM CASE-STUDY," which was recently used in a Synagogue 2000 seminar. This study describes a congregation that has decided to embark on a process of change designed to render it more vital. Notice that, for reasons that have to do with Synagogue 2000 project, attention focuses on religious services. While you may find the whole case of interest, our own work will primarily rely on the first section, which offers a portrait of this congregation.
- b) Imagine that at the very start of the change-process, the key-players in this congregation recognize the desirability of articulating a guiding vision that will inform their approach to the religious and social life of this community. They have heard that you have some sophistication about this matter and come to you for advice about how to proceed. With attention to some of the problems articulated on page 1 above, try to lay out a process that you think would be helpful to them. Please come to our meeting ready to describe this process and to explain the rationale that informs it. Please feel free to indicate additional information you might need and to stipulate conditions that you think would need to be in place for the process you recommend to be effective.

Note: If you find it easier to enter into this activity with the Study Questions at the end of Part I, feel free to do so.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION CONCERNING GOALS PROJECT
CAMBRIDGE, MA, FEB. 1995

INTRODUCTION

I'm not sure whether it's physical anthropologists or paleontologists who try to turn a hodge-podge of bones that they come upon into a dinosaur -- with a few bones left over; but it occurred to me tonight that this is the way I feel about the effort to reconstruct our discussions. I return to my notes and discover a slew of miscellaneous comments, half-comments, question-marks, and unintelligible scribblings; and then I do what I can to turn them into an something that makes sense, probably connecting some elements that may not have been connected during the discussion and omitting any number of items altogether -- either because I can't figure out how they fit in or because I simply don't remember them. The extent to which it ends up reflecting the discussion's content and structure, I'm not sure. Anyway, here goes....I begin with a very brief summary of my opening comments, and then move on to an account of major themes and questions that informed our discussion. I apologize in advance for omissions and misinterpretations, but trust that our discussion will surface them.

BACKGROUND TO DISCUSSION

Pekarsky's introductory comments concerning the day's agenda tied the agenda to some of CIJE's projected and announced activities: namely, to work with select institutions on what we have been calling a "goals-agenda". We would like to get clearer concerning the nature of this work, with attention to the role that what we have been calling "coaches" would play in this process. While we are also interested in the possibly very fruitful contribution to this effort that might be made by CIJE's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Feedback Project, our primary concern today focuses on the coaches-issue, as we work towards an understanding of the skills, knowledge, qualities of mind, etc. that we believe they need; clarity concerning these matters will be invaluable in recruitment as well as in determining the content, form, and length of their training. If we can emerge from the day with a better understanding of such matters, we will be better positioned to move ahead. It was also stressed in this introduction that the presence of Professors Scheffler and Howard offered us with an opportunity revisit, and thereby clarify and/or revise, varied basic assumptions that have been at work in the project -- assumptions which may, for better or worse, profoundly affect the course and success of the enterprise.

Against this background, and in order that all participants might start the deliberations with enough pertinent information, Pekarsky went on to summarize some basic assumptions of the Goals Project, notably, the four following:

1. Educational goals can play an indispensable role in guiding our efforts at education. They help us to make basic decisions concerning personnel, training, pedagogy, curriculum, etc.; and they provide us with a basis for evaluating our efforts and rendering us accountable for what we do.

2. Jewish education typically suffers from a variety of weaknesses in this domain: teaching assignments are often made without goals in mind, or with goals so vague that they are compatible with most anything; what goals there are, are often not understood by or compelling to key stake holders (including the educators); the avowed goals are often not meaningfully embedded in the life of the school, nor is it obvious to participants how attainment of these goals is connected to any guiding vision of a meaningful Jewish existence.

3. Predicated on 1. and 2., CIJE has defined the Goals Project as an Effort to encourage and support institutional efforts to become more thoughtful about their goals and to use them more effectively as a guide to practice.

4. CIJE has also been interested in goals at the level of the community (and has discovered that there is great interest in this matter on the part of some major constituencies we deal with).

It was noted that the projected work with select institutions would represent the third of a three-stage process: a) the Goals Seminar in Jerusalem last year, designed to educate lay leaders from a number of communities concerning the importance of goals and present inadequacies in this area; b) local seminars with representatives of educating institutions from these communities, designed both to enhance their understanding of these matters and to see which if any of them might be a suitable candidate for entering into a partnership with CIJE around a Goals Agenda; c) identification of such institutions would usher in the 3rd stage. Though by the end of the Goals Seminar in Jerusalem, more than one institution expressed an interest in moving with us immediately to the third, or partnership, stage, we felt that a slower approach made good sense for a number of reasons, one of them being that it would give us more time to build capacity (in the sense of both knowledge-base and personnel).

As we have begun to think about what work with institutions might look like, we have tried to articulate some guiding principles that might help to clarify what we're after or how we might proceed. These have included the following:

1. The attempt to clarify goals is critically important. The process of clarifying goals should engage participants in encountering and wrestling with Jewish content issues, and it should culminate in goals that the participants can genuinely and enthusiastically understand and endorse. It is also crucial that they be led to think carefully about what is involved in embedding these goals meaningfully in the life of the institution.

2. There are multiple routes to the desiderata identified in a), and though a coach may walk in with a variety of possible strategies for engaging the participants in the effort, which if any would be useful would depend on a thoughtful assessment of local circumstances. A process of serious self-study (understood in more than one way) would be at the heart of the enterprise.

3. Key stake holders - lay, professional, and (where relevant) rabbinic leadership - must be party to the effort if it is to be fruitful.

4. The development of our own knowledge base requires carefully monitoring what we do and what happens.

Pekarsky's comments ended with two concerns: 1) that when issues of goals come up, there is often a strong tendency in a diverse group to settle on a quick but very vague statement that can generate a quick consensus; 2) that institutional stake holders are sometimes impatient with what may feel to them like "an academic" insistence that they engage in serious study along the way.

DISCUSSION-PART I

Goals, Aims, etc. An initial response to Pekarsky's presentation focused on its inattention to possibly important distinctions between goals (of different kinds), aims, and visions (moral and strategic). There was a sense among us that making these distinctions explicitly could prove useful -- and the distinction between moral and strategic visions turned out to play an important role in our discussion (later in the day) concerning the role of Goals Project coaches.

Community- and Institutional Visions. Pekarsky's introductory comments had distinguished between work with institutions and work aimed at responding to an interest expressed by many people in addressing issues relating to "community-vision". This distinction and the attention paid to "community vision" drew a number of helpful responses.

First, although it was rightly stressed that the content of

a community vision and an institutional vision might be very different, it was also noted that the two are related in ways that make it somewhat artificial to say that we will focus on institutional visions but not on community-visions:

a. the work of institutions in developing guiding visions greatly benefits from their being located in communities that are actively wrestling with issues of vision.

b. Educating institutions (like the one in Atlanta) which view themselves as "community institutions" necessarily wrestle with what amounts to a "community vision". Indeed, their efforts at self-definition help us to understand what a community-vision might look like.

c. Seminars of the kind being offered in Milwaukee (which bring together lay and professional leaders from significant institutions to think about issues relating to educational priorities) may actually operate to encourage movement towards some kind of a larger community vision.

Second, our conversation (joined with earlier discussions) helped clarify ways of thinking about what a community-vision might look like. Here are some possible elements:

a. A community-vision might identify a language, set of practices, or commitments which, differently interpreted, could be shared by different constituencies in a community. Rosenak's essay identifies some of the elements that might enter into this shared universe. In practice, these shared elements could be identified a) through a process of dialogue among the different constituencies and/or b) by looking at what they are all, albeit in different ways, already doing.

b. A central plank in a community-vision platform might well be a proclamation of its commitment to encourage its local educating institutions to work towards a clear and compelling vision of the kinds of Jewish human beings they hope to cultivate through Jewish education.

c. A community-vision focused on Jewish education might move in two directions (or in a third direction that gives place to both of them):

1. Encouraging institutions that foster some general, ecumenical conception of a Jewish human being.

2. A pluralistic ideal: encouraging the development of institutions, each of which is organized around a different conception of a meaningful Jewish existence. Note that taking such a vision seriously may mean calling into question the idea that our emphasis should be on helping institutions featuring a great deal of ideological diversity to find a shared set of priorities; rather, the emphasis might turn out to be on finding ways to steer people who share similar priorities towards like-minded institutions. (A parallel was drawn to certain formulations of the magnet-school ideal).

3. Encouraging a pluralistic range in the spirit of #2, but one that includes institutions that try to nurture an ecumenical/general citizen vision (of the kind identified in #1).

Which of these visions a community adopts may carry significant implications for its decisions and for the efforts it tries to encourage.

The problem of vagueness. Pekarsky's presentation had pointed out that the vagueness of the goals proclaimed by educating institutions precludes their offering much serious guidance. In the discussion it was observed that in another sense this vagueness might be functional in that it allows very diverse constituencies "to hang together". This comment elicited a number of observations concerning the place of vagueness in the enterprise:

a) It is often asserted that the effort to get beyond vagueness through becoming clearer about what we're about would inevitably operate to reduce the population of participating constituencies. But is there really strong evidence to support this claim? Might it in fact be possible to work towards a substantially more substantive consensus concerning what we're after without pushing aside significant constituencies? Has this really been tried --or has the notion that it's impossible operated to prevent efforts in this direction?

b) It was stressed that community-schools that are ecumenical in their orientations are not necessarily vague or wishy-washy concerning what they are after and what the content of education should be. On the contrary, they may be capable of clearly identifying bodies of knowledge and skill which all graduates should have, e.g., in Jewish history. In response, it was suggested that such clarity might be harder to

achieve in certain delicate areas that concern normative matters, and that this might be particularly true of institutions that make non-exclusion a strong value. But to this it was responded that perhaps it is okay for an educating institution to define itself as deliberately vague or agnostic with respect to certain matters (at least so long as it is non-vague across a great deal of what it does).

c) An additional point related to vagueness, one not made in our meeting, might also be worth noting: while vagueness of goals does often leave Jewish education without a clear sense of direction, we need to be careful not too encourage so much specificity as to rule out a measure of creative interpretation on the part of educators in response to the circumstances they face.

DISCUSSION-PART II

The second part of our discussion focused on issues relating to the goals agenda in institutional settings and questions relating to the character of what we've been calling "coaching". Discussion began with Daniel Marom's presentation which did two major things:

a. it identified five different levels at which issues relating to educational goals might be discussed (Philosophy; philosophy of education; theories of practice; implementation; evaluation).

b. it suggested that any of these levels (but particularly levels 4 and 5) might offer avenues for engaging participants in institutions around issues of goals.

Whatever the starting-point, the challenge is to encourage participants in the institution to think more carefully about what they are doing, what they are trying to do, and what they think they should be doing. The level at which one intervenes, the parties that one engages, and the questions around which one engages them must be determined on a case-by-case basis. Wherever one starts, one person suggested, the critical role of the coach is to create a level of (stimulating) uncertainty, uncomfortableness, or tension among the representatives of an institution -- the kind of uncertainty that might call forth efforts to inquire thoughtfully about what they are or should be about.

This conversation sparked some intriguing conversation concerning what is at the heart of the coach's role. Up to now we've often spoken of the coach as a kind of resource person whose knowledge of strategic options and of varied conceptions of the aims of Jewish education make it possible for him/her to offer critical insights, suggestions, and teachings, etc. In

today's conversation, the suggestion was made that we think of the coach as a kind of Socratic gadfly whose primary job is to raise critical questions concerning what the institution is doing or is proposing to do -- questions which provoke intellectual tension and serious reflection. Indeed, it was suggested, perhaps we should be looking for coaches who can be trained to know nothing except how to ask good questions.

It was suggested in this vein that we should be developing for coaches a script of seminal questions that they can use, when relevant, in stimulating reflection. Such questions might include the following: a) What are your aims? b) Since these aims may be variously interpreted, can you clarify which you have in mind? c) Why are these your aims? d) What is the relationship between what you are trying to achieve and other institutional aims? e) How will what you are aiming for enter in a meaningful way into the life of the graduate of this institution? f) How are the aims you are articulating connected to - or disconnected from - the institution's avowed mission? g) To what extent does what you do cohere with your avowed aims - or give rise to other outcomes? etc.

An over-lapping formulation of critical questions focused on the following: a) What are you doing? b) What do you think you're doing? c) What do you think you should be doing?

On this view, the coach does not enter the institution with "a bag of tricks", or strategies, or suggestions for how to address goals-related issues. On the contrary, just as a good critic may not be a good novelist, the coach may be adept at helping an institution think critically about it's doing or proposing to do without being particularly adept at helping it identify what it might be doing. The coach should be adept at helping to encourage thought concerning "moral vision"; he or she need not have much to offer in the way of strategic vision (although it was acknowledged that the decision to take up or not to take up a given question, and how to take it up, involved strategic considerations of various kinds.

This view of the coach had much appeal, but it was felt by some that the coach's role might profitably be construed as a hybrid that includes but is not limited to the gadfly model. The key question on this view is this: what kinds of responses and suggestions on the part of the coach are most likely to encourage thoughtful attention to basic aims and the way they are and should be reflected in an institution's life? In some cases, restricting the coach to the gadfly role may prove too limiting.

Even if this last view is granted, the advantage of the gadfly formulation is that it highlights that the coach's role is primarily that of a catalyst, and that he/she cannot be viewed as responsible for more than catalyzing a process for which the institution must assume major responsibility. Our efforts must be primarily focused on encouraging serious reflection concerning goals; and "our bet" is that engaging stake holders in an

educating institution around such matters in a serious way will call into being processes that will give rise to significant improvement. It may well be that the institution's own personnel will prove much more effective than our coaches might be in developing exciting answers to the challenges that the coaches pose.

A concern was expressed that the coach might be drawn into institutional efforts that pull away from the primary focus on goals. The danger was acknowledged, and the response was suggested that the coach must think carefully about which issues he/she feels might forward the goals agenda, letting go of those that seem inappropriate and formulating his/her questions in ways that cohere with the goals-agenda.

Another concern expressed was that the coach be careful not to "set too many fires" in ways that might dissipate the energies of the participants by discouraging follow-through in any given area. The "setting-fires" imagery also called forth the comment that the aim should be to nurture a culture in which the setting of these fires would not depend on the presence of the coach.

It was noted that how our efforts with this project will be received may depend heavily on finding "the right rhetoric". Such rhetoric might include the following elements: 1) empowering educators by encouraging them to wrestle with issues concerning the aims that should animate their institution's efforts; 2) philosophical reflection concerning basic questions is eminently practical; it carries significant implications for what we should be doing; and 3) "lest you think we're up in the clouds," we are aware of and able to draw on practical strategies being used in a variety of educational reform efforts.

It was suggested that work with institutions (on the gadfly model) might involve creating special seminars/workshops for clusters of principals and clusters of lay-leaders, aimed at helping them move the process along in fruitful ways that outstrip the role and competence of the coaches.

The day ended with questions: a) should we be re-thinking the kinds of folks that should serve as coaches? b) should we be working with several institutions or possibly with only one? c) should we be trying to cultivate a very small cadre of coaches (or is it "facilitators") with whom we can share our back-stage uncertainties, or should we be trying to work with a significantly larger group? There was disagreement concerning such matters, and we agreed to return to them.

AN IN-HOUSE INTERPRETATION OF CRITICAL CONCEPTS AND THEMES THAT DEFINE THE GOALS PROJECT

GOALS AND EDUCATION

1. No sense of direction, no adequate deliberation. Absent a clear understanding of what one hopes to accomplish via one's educational efforts, it is impossible to make intelligent decisions concerning the design of social environment, the determination and interpretation of content, and the appropriateness of different kinds of curricular choices and pedagogical decisions.

2. What are goals. "What one hopes to accomplish" could plausibly be understood as "one's goals." By "goals" we understand general statements of purpose that identify specific kinds of skills, attitudes, understandings, beliefs, commitments, values, dispositions (and so forth) that are to be imparted, encouraged, or cultivated through the process of education. An educational philosophy is likely to include a number of distinct, though inter-related goals, each of which is tied to the other in a meaningful way.

3. Critical role of goals. Goals play a critical role in the educational process: a) as intimated above, they are an indispensable guide to the design of educational environments and practices, to the determination of curriculum content and objectives, and to the selection and training of personnel; b) goals offer a lens, or organizing principle, for scanning the interests, capacities, understandings, and skills of the students; c) without clear goals, serious evaluation of one's efforts to educate are impossible, and this makes systematic effort as improvement hard to achieve; d) a corollary of c) is that in the absence of clear goals, accountability is not possible.

GOALS IN JEWISH EDUCATION: SOME ROUGH GENERALIZATIONS

Like many - indeed, most - general educating institutions, most Jewish educating institutions fail the test of being, in any serious sense, goals-oriented. In many instances, institutions have not developed a mission-statement that articulates their goals; and even when such a mission-statement does exist that purports to articulate the institution's educational goals, these goals fail to be adequately related to the world of practice. This failure reflects one or more of a number of problems, some of which are articulated below.

1. Vague and decontextualized. They are often so vague as to offer no real guidance to practice. To be helpful, goals have to be clear and concrete enough to offer a sense of direction and to communicate what it would mean to succeed or fail in a meaningful way. The phrase "in a meaningful way" is meant to underscore the importance of thinking about goals in a broad and generous sense. Specifically, the goal of, say, "Hebrew proficiency" must include not just abstract abilities; it must also consider the contexts in

which this ability is to be exhibited and the attitudes that should accompany the development of this proficiency. Dewey's comments concerning "collateral learnings" in EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION are germane here -- particularly his concern that students may acquire a given skill in ways that lead them to hate the context in which they learned it and to be despising of the skill itself.

2 Achievement of goals not central to articulation of the educator's task. Many educators are not in any serious way encouraged to approach their teaching assignments with clear goals in mind. They may be told to teach a particular body of subject-matter, e.g. Hebrew, Bible, Israel, Jewish Holidays, but without any specification of what goals are to be achieved via this subject-matter. The result is that how educators approach the subject-matter is often very idiosyncratic and thoughtless. The guiding principle is often "what will keep them interested," rather than "How will the learning experiences I am designing fit into a comprehensive sequence of learning experiences that will move the students towards achievement of particular goals that we think important.

3. Problems of non-identification with goals and/or despair of achieving them. Even when educators are familiar with the institution's goals, and even if the curriculum comes with specific goals (itself a significant achievement!), implementation of the goals is hampered by a variety of typical circumstances: i. the educator does not in any personal way identify with the goal or embody it in his/her life; ii. the educator despairs of the very possibility of realizing the goal, given the cultural and familial environment from which the students come and to which they return and the available time.

4. Symbolic rather than systematic efforts to achieve avowed goals. There is no systematic effort to design the environment and the curriculum so as to accomplish goals that have been identified. By "systematic effort" is meant a thoughtful, careful assessment, informed by honest good judgement and whatever empirical data are at hand, of whether the practices in place or proposed have a reasonable chance of achieving the desired outcomes (in the face of constraining conditions). On the contrary, oftentimes the relationship between avowed goals and educational practice is primarily "symbolic"; that is, the institution feels comfortable if it can show that there is some educational practice which corresponds to the goal in question, but does not ask what constellation of efforts would be required if the goal is to be meaningfully achieved. corollary of this is that there is no serious and honest effort to evaluate the success of our efforts.

5. Too many goals. One of the reasons why any particular goal identified in a mission-statement is not meaningfully achieved is that oftentimes there are too many goals, a circumstances that diffuses any sense of purpose or direction. Institutions would often be better off committing themselves to the attainment of a

few clearly articulated goals (or else deciding what is essential and what peripheral), rather than trying to cover the water front.

VISION

Many of the weaknesses identified in the preceding section (points 1 through 5) speak to problems in the relationship between goals and practice. But some of these weaknesses also reflect a more fundamental difficulty, and that is that the goals identified by an educating institution are often not anchored in a coherent, organic vision of the kind of Jewish human being and the kind of Jewish community it is hoping to cultivate through its educating efforts. (While "vision" in this sense is the subject of the comments that follow, it needs to be distinguished from "vision" in other senses. See Appendix 1. for a discussion of these distinctions.)

1. A vision of the kind of person one is trying to cultivate does the following:

a) Elements: it identifies the attitudes, understandings, skills, dispositions, beliefs, commitments, knowledge, and so forth that are important;

b) Integration of elements: it explains how these various ingredients hang together and support one another in pattern of life; inevitably this integration identifies the nature of the ideal community of which the individual is a part. That is, there is a social dimension to the envisioned state-of-affairs.

c) Meaningfulness criterion: it makes evident why the kind of life that is represented in b) is "meaningful" in a twofold sense: i) it is a "worthy" way of living Jewishly; and ii) it is experienced as personally meaningful "from the inside", that is, by individuals who in their own life embody this vision.

2. A vision interprets traditional Jewish categories. A vision of a meaningful Jewish existence takes a position on the significance of key concepts like "God", "Torah", "the Jewish People," "Mitzvot," and "the Land of Israel." In the vision these concepts are interpreted, assigned a value, and understood in their inter-relationship.

3. The distinction between fixed visions and process-visions. Typically, we think of a vision as specifying an outlook and way of life, organized around certain fundamental beliefs, concerns, and values. It is, so to speak, a picture of what life at its best is like, a snapshot of a way of life viewed as ideal. But it is also possible for a vision to have a more open-ended, dynamic quality. What might be called a "process-vision" is one that specifies

attitudes, skills, and abilities that engage the individual in an ongoing process of constructing and reconstructing his or her relationship to Jewish culture and tradition. A process-vision is not necessarily, as its critics might contend, agnostic about what is important Jewishly. A process-vision might well specify the importance of studying Jewish texts (narrowly or broadly understood) or experimenting with Jewish celebration in one's efforts to develop as a Jew; it might also stress the importance of understanding diverse views that Jews of different kinds and periods have taken on critical issues and the different ways they have lived. Chances are, any process-vision one will encounter will implicitly or explicitly endorse certain bottom-line moral and intellectual virtues. Still, the emphasis (within this framework) is on growth, development and change in one's understanding of an ideal Jewish life -- and the ideal Jewish life is one that allows for and encourages such growth. In general education, Dewey represents a kind of process-vision; in the Educated Jew Project, it is arguable that Menachem Brinker represents such a position.

Note, before leaving this topic, that process-visions are of two kinds: there are process-visions which are thought of as culminating in a particular form of Jewish existence (which arises out of the designated process). There are also process-visions which are not thought of as culminating in any particular product; that is, the process is understood to be never-ending, and the ideal is to be the kind of person who is, in the right spirit, engaged in the process. Dewey's ideal of growth is a good example of this kind of a process-vision.

4. The social dimension. The preceding account of vision, understood as the ideal outcome of a Jewish education, is inadequate in that it fails to capture the social dimension of Jewish existence. Any form of Jewish existence to be aspired to will require a community organized in a particular way, without which the form of existence sought after will prove impossible. Some, indeed, would formulate the aim of Jewish education primarily in social terms -- that is, its task is to help maintain or create a community of a certain kind, a community which serves an important ethical, spiritual, or even metaphysical purpose. Perhaps the best way to think about "vision", understood as the ideal outcome of a Jewish education, is as encompassing both social and individual dimensions: to be guided by a vision is to be guided by a conception of human life in which the forms of social life enrich and are enriched by the lives of the individual human beings who make up the community. This kind of integration of individual and community - in the vision itself- is explicit in Dewey's position.

5. Why vision is important -- Vision is the anchor for goals. To say that vision is the anchor is to convey a number of important but inter-related points:

a. Goals are not self-justifying; rather, they are justified by showing how they are anchored in a vision of Jewish existence that the critical stakeholders genuinely regard as meaningful. Absent this showing goals exist in

a vacuum; they may well seem arbitrary and meaningless.

b. Vision also anchors goals in that it interprets and thus makes more concrete what the goals really signify. "Hebrew proficiency" a la Greenberg, Ahad Ha-Am, Menachem Brinker is not one thing but many: why Hebrew is important, the settings in which it is to be used, the attitudes that surround its use, and so forth are very different. The kind of clarity provided by vision gives direction to the educational enterprise of a kind impossible in the absence of vision.

c. Vision anchors goals in the sense that it explains not only the meaning and relative importance of goals, but also how the elements identified in different goals hang together to constitute a meaningful way of life.

6. What is a vision-driven institution? For reasons stated above, the Goals Project assumes that efforts at Jewish education will be substantially improved if educating institutions become significantly more vision-driven than they now are. A vision-driven institution is one that, down to its very details, Specifically, a vision-driven educating institution features the following formal elements:

a. The existence of a vision in the sense specified above. To say that the vision "exists" is to suggest that the critical stakeholders identify strongly with this vision, that they regard it as worthy and compelling.

b. The goals that guide educational practice can be explained with reference to the guiding vision.

c. The curriculum, as well as the physical and social environment, exhibit commitment to the guiding vision and the particular goals that are derived from it.

d. The educators who do the work of the institution strongly identify with and themselves exemplify the vision that the institution represents and thus approach efforts to actualize the vision whole-heartedly.

e. Because the institution cares deeply whether it is successful in realizing its goals and vision, it looks for gaps between intention and outcome and works hard to remedy them, There is here a tacit commitment to serious assessment and self-improvement -- this being a sign of a really serious commitment to the underlying goals and vision.

7. "Vision-driven" does not necessarily imply "planful" or "designed". Not all vision-driven institution emerge through systematic efforts to translate a shared vision into a blueprint for an educational institution, which is then translated into

practice under real world conditions. In some vision-driven institutions, nobody has thought systematically about what the guiding vision is or about the way to translate that vision into educational terms.

a. Invisible hand institutions. Some such institutions have evolved more organically, spontaneously, and unself-consciously through a variety of cooperating circumstances over a period of time. [Such institutions come into being and exist in a way that is described by many "Conservative" social and educational theorists like Edmund Burke, Michael Oakshott, and Michael Polanyi. These thinkers are often skeptical, if not actually critical, of efforts to systematically articulate and then implant a vision.]

b. Sometimes institutional visions precedes the vision of ideal educational outcomes. Sometimes an institution grows out of someone's vision of what an ideal educational institution looks like (and not out of a vision of the product of the educational process). In such cases as well, while there may be an animating vision of the kind of person and community one is hoping to nurture, it will not necessarily be articulated or readily articulable by the participants.

8. "Visions" and "Visions-in-Use". While the participants in an institution may not be capable of identifying a guiding vision that is at work in the institution, an anthropologically-oriented observer may be capable of doing precisely that. That is, the observer may be able to tie the predictable outcomes of participation in the institution to the body of practices, customs, organizational structure, and norms exhibited in the institution. The delicate balance of institutional life seems to operate, as though and perhaps in fact invisibly, to maintain this state-of-affairs: the outcomes remain the same over long periods of time, and institutional arrangements, down to the very details, tend to support them. Efforts to change these patterns change. In such a case, we might want to speak of a vision-in-use. "Vision-in-use" is a conception of the outcome of the educational process which, were it actively subscribed to, would go a long way towards explaining the patterns of activity and organization and other features of the institution's living reality.

It is possible that when a vision-in-use is articulated, the participants will say, "Yes -- that is exactly what we're after -- except that now you've given voice to it." It is, however, also possible that the vision-in-use articulated by the observer will be disavowed by participants in the institution: "This is not at all what we're after," they might say. a) It is possible that this denial is an act of Sartreian "bad faith;" that is, they don't want to own up to the vision that they are in fact committed to. b) Another possibility is that they have simply failed up to now to

understand the impact of the educational arrangements they have created and that they are truly disturbed by what they have discovered.

Suppose now that, disturbed by what they have learned, they set about trying to improve things but that these changes come to nought. It is an open question which of the two possibilities discussed above this state-of-affairs would support. Concrete study into the particulars of the case would probably be necessary to make a determination as between these - or perhaps other - possibilities.

TOWARDS COHERENT, SHARED, AND COMPELLING VISIONS

Jewish educating institutions typically serve an extraordinarily diverse clientele. Many of those who are tied to an institution have not ever engaged in trying to clarify their own visions of a meaningful Jewish existence, and to the extent that they have, what they discover is that there is great diversity of views amongst them. If vision-driven institutions are to become more prominent features of our educational landscape, the problem of how to generate shared vision must be addressed. Appendices 2 and 3 report some pertinent insights that come from the field of organizational development. Here we limit ourselves to a skeletal account of some pertinent issues, beginning with two very general approaches to the problem: A. Trying to transcend diversity; B. Structural reforms that make it unnecessary to try to dissolve diversity.

A. Towards Shared Vision where none has heretofore existed.

1. Most generally, assume for the moment an institution featuring at least the impression of significant diversity of outlook among the critical stakeholders. Through what kind of process can a group of individuals be brought together under the umbrella of a vision that will be both shared and compelling? A multitude of overlapping questions cluster around this general issue. For example:

1. Assuming that there is more than one process that lead to this achievement, are there reasons to encourage one or some among them and not others?

2. What is the role of professional, lay, and denominational leadership in this process?

3.. To what extent, if at all, should some variant of the "democratic process" guide or define the outcome?

4. Is it the leadership's job:

a. to guide the rank-and-file towards an appreciation of a vision they judge appropriate?,

b. to help draw out from their constituencies a vision that reflects "where they are and want to be", that is, to work towards the development of a vision that integrates the visions of the key stakeholders?

c. to encourage a process that guides the membership towards disciplined, content-based reflection concerning what they want to be educating towards?

5. In what way does serious study enter into the process of working towards a shared vision? Must it be insisted on?

6. To what extent and in what ways should some variant of the democratic process enter into the process of developing a shared vision?

7. Who are the key stakeholders that must buy into a vision - and at what stages - if an institution is to have a meaningful chance of becoming more vision-driven?

8. Is it possible that the attempt to define an institutional vision -- of the kind of institution we'd like to see - should sometimes precede the attempt to define a guiding vision of the kind of person and community we want to cultivate?

9. To what extent will appropriate answers to these various questions depend on a variety of local circumstances, e.g., the nature of the leadership, the attitudes of the constituency, the history and culture of the institution, the desire of denomination leaders to be involved, etc.?

10. Through what process can members of an institution be brought to appreciate the importance of working towards vision-drivenness and to agree to make the effort?

11. Through what set of activities/processes should the stakeholders of an educating institution take stock of the institution's present state-of-affairs -- its structures, its impact, its vision-in-use, etc., and how can participation in such activities and processes encourage the effort to move towards vision-drivenness?

B. STRUCTURAL REFORM AS A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF GENERATING SHARED VISION

The immediately preceding section pointed to different strategies by which an institution lacking a coherent and compelling guiding vision might move - or be moved - towards one. Briefly and crudely

summarized, the three strategies suggested involved: a) through a carefully devised process, a vision predesignated by the leadership comes to be shared by the critical stakeholders; b) an effort is made to elicit from the key stakeholders what their own visions are and then to develop a vision which integrates their respective visions into a coherent whole; and c) a process that involves the interplay between efforts to clarify one's own vision and efforts to understand and struggle with the articulated visions of thoughtful individuals who have wrestled with this problem in a penetrating way over a long period of time, e.g. Greenberg, Brinker, Twersky. The actual process may lean in one direction or another but may involve elements of all three strategies.

Here I'd like to suggest an altogether different approach to this problem - an approach that works from the assumption that it may be very difficult if not impossible to move people holding diverse views towards a shared and compelling vision of what they would hope to accomplish. The intuitive idea at the heart of the two proposals summarized below is that it may be easier to create structures that will encourage individuals who share a common vision to self-select into a congenial educational environment than it is to develop a shared vision among people who may begin light-years away from each other.

PROPOSAL 1: This proposal is modelled on magnet-school programs and choice-plans found in general education. In community X, a decision is made to dissolve the existing educational system which assigns children to educating institutions based on congregational affiliation. Instead, the community self-consciously establish a number of educating institutions, each informed by a different guiding vision. One institution might heavily emphasize text study as the heart of Jewish existence; another might emphasize social action, yet a third might make spirituality its core theme, etc. Parents, who have heretofore been expected to send their children to their congregation's educational institution, would be told that by virtue of their membership in the congregation they are eligible to attend any one of the educating institutions in the system. Their job is to pick an institution whose guiding vision they identify with. Through a process of self-selection different institutions tend to attract a population of individuals who share values, outlook, and aspirations. Under this system, parents wishing to enroll their child in a particular vision-driven institution would need to apply, and they might well be asked to agree to various ground-rules and expectations as a condition of admission. In such a system, we would not have to create shared visions; rather, individuals already sharing a vision would, through the operation of the system, be brought together under one roof.

PROPOSAL 2: A congregation announces that within its existing educational system - say, a congregational school -- it is about to open a smaller and very selective "school within a school." All members of the congregation are eligible to enroll their children in the school-within-the-school, with the qualification that they

must understand the vision animating the experimental institution and agree to its ground-rules and expectations.

Like Proposal 1, the arrangements identified in Proposal 2 operate to draw in a select group of families who understand and identify with the guiding vision of the educating institution -- in this case "the school within the school". The advantage of this strategy enjoys, as compared with the first, is that it does not require elaborate structural changes on the order of dissolving the institution of the congregational school.

FROM VISION TO EDUCATIONAL DESIGN

1. Having a vision does not guarantee the ability to create a vision-driven institution. Having a vision of a meaningful Jewish existence, even one that is shared and compelling, is no guarantee that one will be develop educational institutions that ably express and guide students in the direction of this vision. Indeed, although it sometimes happens that a single individual is adept both at articulating a powerful vision and at developing educational arrangements that nurture that vision into being, there is no reason to think that typically these very different skills go hand in hand.

2. No unique translation. There is no unique translation of a vision into educational terms. It is not just that the elements of the vision will inevitably be somewhat differently interpreted, but that the translation into goals and educational practices necessarily relies on a variety of beliefs concerning human nature and education, e.g., the way, and the conditions under which, human beings learn and grow. Different beliefs concerning such matters will give rise to very different educational arrangements, even if one begins with the same vision of the ideal to be striven for.

3. Dimensions of the translation. To translate a vision into practice involves attention not only to curriculum and pedagogy but also to the organization of the social and physical environment -- to what some describe as "the culture" of the institution.

3. The how question. Through what kinds of processes and expertise can a vision, once agreed on, be meaningfully translated into goals, and from goals into the design of curriculum, institutional norms, patterns of physical organization, etc.? Where is the appropriate expertise to be found? Educators are sometimes to emphasize the problem of developing curricula that are appropriate to a particular vision; see Appendix 2 for a discussion of the equally important problem of creating an institutional culture that embodies the vision.

4. Variations in one's conception of the process of translation. While, as noted above, one's translation may vary depending on one's interpretation of the vision and one's assumptions about human nature, human growth, and human learning, translations may also vary because people understand the process of

translation itself in very different terms. For example:

a. one school of thought may insist that one begin with vision, then move in linear fashion to goals, and then to objectives, and then to concrete learning experiences spread over X number of years. Regardless of the wisdom of that approach, it is worth noting that there are others.

b. Dewey's approach would probably be to use the guiding vision as an observational and planning tool. Meeting up with a new group of children, the educator interprets their impulses, behaviors, understandings and skills through the lens of the vision. Keeping the vision clearly in mind, the educator struggles, in true progressive fashion, to guide the young into activities that they will find exciting but that will help to develop understandings, desires, and dispositions that will incline the individual towards the world that the vision represents.

c. Some approach the translation problem with a guiding-principle like the following: "The whole must be embodied in the parts; that is, the vision must be present in a meaningful and visible way down to the details of institutional life."

As may be apparent, such approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Both at the level of theory and pragmatically, integrations of different kinds may be possible.

5. Towards total vision. A useful tool in the effort to transform an institution towards vision-drivenness is to do an exercise Mort Mandel recommended in the context of CIJE's effort to chart its own course. The exercise asks participants to do a version of "the future as history": assuming that things proceed as you would hope, a. what would your institution look like ten years hence? b. Describe the process that got it there, with attention to relevant obstacles, etc.

QUESTIONS FOR THE GOALS PROJECT THAT CHALLENGE ITS CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND ASSUMPTIONS

1. "Our pressing need today is not for conceptions or visions of the ideal product of a Jewish education. Rather, our principal need is to provide children and adults in our communities with experiences that bring home to them the life-transforming power of Jewish customs, understandings, and activities, so that they will develop a thirst for more and deeper such experiences. What we need is to catalyze a drive to seriously explore the resources of Judaism -- not a vision of the end of that exploration. Our energies should therefore focus on activities like Shabbatonim, Israel experiences, and text-study encounters that will awaken in

adults and children alike a thirst for Jewish growth."

2. Do we really need an underlying "vision" in which our educational goals are anchored? Might it not be possible and enough for an educating institution to develop a clear and coherent set of guiding goals which are not wedded to any particular conception of "the Good Life" (Jewishly speaking)?

Moreover, given the diversity of outlook among stakeholders within even most individual institutions, isn't it more realistic to think that we could generate widespread support for a set of general goals than for an over-arching vision of the kind of person we want to nurture? Perhaps we should be encouraging institutions to identify and commit themselves seriously to a small number of core-goals and give up the effort to develop an anchoring vision.

3. "Our problem is not 'vision', but something else. Many educating institutions do have visions (i.e. conceptions of where they want to head, of the kind of person they want to cultivate). Their problem is not an absence of vision but that the conditions of life make it impossible to realize this vision (for example, the culture that surround the children day-in-day-out, the time available for Jewish education, the attitudes of their parents, the unavailability of educators who have any commitment to the institution's vision). These problems - not "the vision-thing" -- are what we need to address.

APPENDIX 1: THE CONCEPT OF VISION

Because the term "vision' is central to the Goals Project, it is crucial that it be clear. Since the term is used in a variety of ways, some of which may be inter-related, some critical distinctions need to be made. In the main body of the text, the emphasis is on "vision", understood as the kind of human being/community towards which we should be educating. Reserving the term existential vision for vision in this sense, I want to point to two very different kinds of vision, which I will label, respectively, institutional vision and community-wide vision.

INSTITUTIONAL VISION

An institutional vision is a conception, image, or portrait, of the kind of institution one aspires to. What would our educating institution at its best look like? Towards what kind of an institution do we aspire? Such a vision can be thin or rich in details and dimensions. It might include reference to architecture, social organization, ethos, kinds of programs and learning that go on, kinds of personnel, routines and rhythms for students, staff, and parents, etc.

Having an institutional vision can be an invaluable guide to educational planning, both long- and short-term. It provides a

basis for determining specific goals and objectives, for program selection, for resource allocation, etc.

From the standpoint of the Goals Project, the important point is that there is a close connection between existential visions (what we should be educating towards) and institutional visions. At their best, institutional visions are tailored to the requirements of a particular existential vision -- so much so, that the existential vision may be inferred through an examination of the institutional vision. There are, of course, times, when the existential vision is implicitly rather than explicitly present in the institutional vision.

Viewed in this light, vision-driven institution at its best is one that has actualized an institutional vision that is informed and guided by an existential vision to which the stakeholders are committed.

TOWARDS VISION-DRIVEN COMMUNITIES: COMMUNITY-WIDE VISION

CIJE'S Goals Project is primarily focussed on the development of vision-driven institutions, not on vision-driven communities. Still, there is much that can be said about "vision-driven communities" that is pertinent to the work of the Goals Project. Some thoughts concerning this matter are sketched out below, beginning with the observation that the kinds of communities that have become engaged in the CIJE process are all communities that have announced their commitment to the cause of Jewish continuity. But what does it mean for a community to say that it cares about Jewish continuity? What is it committing itself to if it seriously announces this as its central concern? Reflection on this question offers a sterling-opportunity to work towards a community-wide vision.

Communities might choose to answer this general question in many ways. A community might, for example, interpret its "caring about Jewish continuity" as entailing the following:

1. We are a caring community. We are a community that in varied ways communicates to its members that they are cared about and that their basic needs will be met. To say that we are a caring community is also to say that we offer our members meaningful opportunities to be the givers of care to others (not just the receivers).

2. We are a community that offers its members opportunities for activities they will find personally meaningful. What these activities are -- whether in the realm of celebration or prayer, social action, study, meeting the needs of others - needs to be determined; but the key is for the community to offer its members opportunities for engagement that they might not otherwise have.

3. We are a community that takes education seriously.

Just as it is not self-evident what it means to be a caring community or a community that provides its members with avenues for meaningful engagement, so too, it is not self-evident what it means to be a community that takes education seriously. But here is one thing it does not mean: it doesn't mean that the community announces works towards a vision of an ideal Jew and then proceeds to try to actualize it. Such matters, which are at the heart of the Goals Project, are more appropriately addressed at local, institutional levels.

But to say that a community shouldn't be in the business of articulating and trying to actualize its own vision of an ideal Jew doesn't mean that it is stuck with articulating "motherhood and apple pie" kinds of goals. On the contrary, a community that announces itself to be serious about education can articulate a coherent vision of itself with some real bite. Here are some possible elements:

1. We are a community that works hard to encourage its constituent institutions to develop an adequate personnel base. We are committed to their being an able educational director working full-time in each sizeable institution and we will do what we can to raise the educational level of the educators.

2. We are a community in which everybody - including lay and professional community leaders - is engaged in serious learning, and will work hard to make this image of ourselves a reality.

3. We are a community that develops meaningful educational opportunities for those (say, inter-marrieds) who may be currently excluded from our purview.

4. While we as a community do not have a vision of a meaningful Jewish existence which we represent, we believe it important to do what we can to encourage our constituent, local institutions to become vision-driven, and we commit ourselves to using our energies and resources to making this happen.

The foregoing represents one way to approach the challenge of developing "a vision-driven community", that is, a community that establishes practices and priorities based on a vision of the kind of community it would like to be, a vision that incorporates its core values and commitments. One way to work outwards such a vision is for members of a community to imagine that they have been successful in their efforts to encourage Jewish continuity, and then to answer the following question:

To what do you owe your success? What pattern of priorities did you establish, and what goals, objectives, and activities, flowing out of these priorities, gave rise to your success in creating a flourishing Jewish

community?

It should be clear that to have a vision-driven community does not entail any particular existential or institutional visions. Although there are communities of meaning that are vision-driven in this strong sense, e.g. the Lubavitch community, most American Jewish communities (like Baltimore, Milwaukee, and Cleveland) are pluralistic in ways that preclude congruence between community-vision, on the one hand, and existential and institutional visions, on the other. This said, the preceding discussion suggests that even under contemporary conditions of pluralism there is an intimate connection between "community-wide vision" and vision in the other senses. The point is this: a vision-driven pluralistic community must be one that encourages its various constituencies to work toward vision-driven educating institutions, while at the same time working to preserve an atmosphere of tolerance, mutual respect, and dialogue amongst individual and institutional representatives of different existential visions.

APPENDIX 2: IS THERE A CIJE APPROACH TO ENGENDERING VISION-DRIVENNESS?

In one sense, the answer is "No." CIJE has no well-defined processes or formulae which it is prepared to recommend to educating strategies. On the contrary, CIJE holds that there is no across-the-board formula that will work. Institutions differ in their history, in their culture, in their leadership, and in other matters which influence the best way to proceed. This said, CIJE is guided in its efforts by a number of guiding principles:

1. While aware of models that emphasize visionary leadership and of other models that emphasize consensus-building (a la values clarification), our own model a. recognizes that both may enter in, though in varying ways depending on the institution, and b. insists that a process of serious study of different conceptions of what we should be educating towards needs to be part of the process.
2. The major stakeholders -- in a congregation, Rabbi, educational leader, and lay leader - need to be involved and supportive of the effort. Precisely who the major stakeholders are may itself vary by institution. Also, it may be that the relevant stakeholders may vary at different stages in the process. Ultimately, it is important that ways be found to engage the lay rank-and-file, especially the parents, in struggling with, adapting, and appropriating the vision.
3. "Having a vision" may not be an all-or-nothing matter. The important thing is to make progress towards being more vision-driven.

4. It is tempting to dismiss the effort to become vision-driven in advance -- on the grounds that "it's impossible." CIJE's view is that all the practical considerations that might be used to snuff out the effort need to be acknowledged but cannot interfere with the effort to understand what we're committed to and what would be entailed by a serious effort to realize this. The fact that many educational interventions have failed in advance does not speak to the impossibility of educational interventions. a) There have been some successful interventions; b) most educational interventions have not been thoughtfully conceptualized and/or implemented, with attention to other pertinent variables.

5. Brutal honesty! Institutions need to be brutally honest with themselves concerning what it is they are really committed to and prepared to realize - what really matters to them. They also need to be brutally honest in assessing the relationship between their hopes and the educational practices they now have in place. Such honesty must infuse the process.

APPENDIX 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE PROBLEM OF NURTURING VISION-DRIVENNESS

The Insights of Edgar Schein. Those looking to the possibility of institutional reform are likely to place heavy emphasis on the role of the leader. Where they differ is in the role they assign to the leader. Schein is representative of a school of thought that views the leader as the shaper of the culture of their institution. The leader is the one with an explicit or tacit vision of the kind of institution that is desirable and sets about developing and implementing policy in ways that embed that vision in the life of the institution. For Schein there is no sharp distinction between "selling" a vision and introducing it into the culture of the institution. The same processes that serve to embed the vision in the life of the institution also serve to generate support for it.

A. Schein articulates a variety of ways by which leaders can embed and transmit culture:

1. What's paid attention to/what's ignored. What gets a reaction, what provokes an emotional outburst. This is particularly true in certain contexts, e.g. planning meetings.

2. The Reward System: what gets rewarded and what gets criticized and punished.

3. Recruitment, promotion, retirement, "ex-communication," and firing.

4. Reaction to critical incidents. How does leadership react in the face of, e.g., a serious failure or an instance of insubordination. Such a reaction sends critical messages to institutional actors.

5. Deliberate role-modelling on the part of the leader.

B. The foregoing 5 ingredients represent the primary tools available to the leader in his/her efforts to embed a vision. But supporting these are various secondary reinforcers:

1. the organizational structure can be made consistent with the cultural assumptions that the leader wants to embed.

2. Routines and procedures can be made coherent with these assumptions.

3. Architecture and the design of the physical work-environment.

4. Stories and myths about the organization and its leadership may highlight its basic ethos and assumptions.

5. Formal statements of philosophy and mission-statements.

C. The role of culture. Standing behind Schein's analysis of organizational cultures are some very basic assumptions. One of these is that culture consists of those very basic assumptions which stand behind, give rise to, and explain the visible phenomena an observer encounters. "Culture" as Schein understands it serves two distinct purposes: 1) it solves some critical organizational, task-related problem; 2) it reduces anxiety by giving participants directions concerning how to behave; it creates predictability and gives meaning to one's work.

"Culture develops around the external and internal problems that groups face and gradually becomes abstracted into general and basic assumptions about the nature of reality; the world and the place of the group within it; and the nature of time, space, human nature, human activity, and human relationships. Culture can be thought of stabilize solutions to these problems, and pattern of particular assumptions that represents these solutions can be thought of as the underlying "essence" that gives any given group its particular character. Though culture is ultimately manifested in overt behavior patterns, it should not be confused with overt behavior patterns. Culture is not visible; only its manifestations are....Culture solves problems for the group or organization, and, even more important, it contains and reduces anxiety. The taken-for-granted assumptions that influence the ways in which group

members perceive, think, and feel about the world stabilize the world, give meaning to it, and thereby reduce the anxiety that would result if we did not know how to categorize and respond to the environment. In this sense culture gives a group its character, and that character serves for the group the function that character and defense mechanisms serve for the individual."

D. A desirable kind of culture? Schein avoids generalizations concerning the desirability of particular kinds of culture. A lot depends on the surrounding environment, on the size of the organization, and other such variables.

E. Inconsistent messages? Sometimes leadership gives mixed or inconsistent messages. While this can be debilitating, it is not necessarily so. The culture may evolve ways of interpreting and dealing with the inconsistency.

F. Top-Down model. While Schein acknowledges the need to achieve buy-in, the model has a top-down quality. The job of the leader is to articulate, sell, and embed a vision in the life of the institution --- to create a particular kind of culture. Top-downness is also implicit in the suggestion that an outsider, a so-called cultural therapist, may be critical in developing insight concerning the problems and challenges of the institution.

G. Blindness to the cultural regularities, to the ethos, of an institution on the part of efficiency-minded experts or leaders brought in from outside will likely defeat their efforts at reform.

H. Schein also stresses that the job of inducing change in the culture is a very different one, depending on the stage in the institution's development. A young institution, a mid-life institution, and a mature one may require different kinds of intervention-strategies.

I. Schein proceeds to list a series of pertinent intervention strategies, designed to change the culture. Prominent among them is the possibility of organizational therapy, in which an outsider helps members of the culture achieve insight concerning assumptions and realities that survive unexamined and dysfunctional. He describes a process that involves unfreezing existing assumptions in a climate that provides the psychological safety needed to examine these assumptions thoughtfully, followed by the articulation of new, more adequate assumptions, followed by a re-freezing process in which the new assumptions enter into the fabric of things.

Says Schein: "The key both to unfreezing and to managing change is to create enough psychological safety to permit group members to bear the anxieties that come with reexamining and changing parts of their culture....The process of developing new assumptions then is a process of cognitive re-definition through

teaching, coaching, changing the structure and processes where necessary, consistently paying attention to and rewarding evidence of learning the new ways, creating new slogans, stories, myths, and rituals, and in other ways coercing people into at least new behavior. ...it is the willingness to coerce that is the key to turnarounds." By "coercion" Schein seems to be referring to an ability to prevent people from leaving/exiting (though an appropriate system of incentives) while at the same time creating increasing and increasingly powerful opportunities to realize the inadequacy of the old assumptions and the desirability of the new ones.

J. As already intimated, Schein's analysis emphasizes the role of the leader as a "culture manager." Several key ingredients are required of the leader.

i. The leader must have insight into the ways in which the culture is dysfunctional.

ii. The motivation and skill to intervene in the cultural process, which involves a willingness to communicate the painful news that all is not well and that things need to change. Dedication of a strong and visible kind to the organization's larger purpose is critical here.

iii. Emotional strength. Unfreezing requires creation of psychological safety. The leader must have the emotional strength to absorb much of the anxiety that change brings with it, and he must have the ability to remain supportive to the organization through the transition phase even if group members become angry and obstructive. The leader is likely to be the target of anger and criticisms because, by definition, he must challenge some of what the group has taken for granted.

iv. Ability to change the cultural assumptions. Leaders must have the ability to induce "cognitive redefinition" by articulating and selling new visions and concepts. They must be able to bring to the surface, review, and change some of the group's basic assumptions.

v. Creation of involvement and participation. A paradox of culture change leadership is that the leader must be able not only to lead but also to listen, to involve the group in achieving its own insights into its cultural dilemmas, and to be genuinely participative in his approach to change...The leader must recognize that, in the end, cognitive redefinition must occur inside the heads of many members of the organization and that will happen only if they are actively involved in the process. The whole organization must achieve insight and develop motivation to change before any real change will occur, and the leader must create this involvement even as he sells his vision.

vi. Depth of vision. Leadership in this sense means the ability to step outside one's culture even as one continues to live within it. It is not enough just to set goals and sell symbols. The goals and symbols and the assumptions on which they are based must be "correct" in the sense that they will indeed solve key problems for the group and will fit with other deep cultural assumptions. The effective leader needs to use his deeper vision before trying to sell anything.

SOME BASIC ISSUES RELATING TO THINKING ABOUT GOALS AND VISION

A number of general concerns were expressed concerning the challenge of meaningfully engaging educators and lay people in thinking about goals and about their relationship to educational practice. For example:

1. Nurturing the conviction that it is important for educators and lay leaders to wrestle with questions of goals and vision. There is a tendency to regard such reflection as irrelevant to the demands of practice, as well as a tendency to regard it as "too deep" for ordinary people. Either way, the result is that philosophical issues aren't engaged.

2. Avoiding being shallow and pedestrian/avoiding being too disconnected. If the conversation is overly-constrained by the questions, ways of thinking, and present outlook of the participants, there is a danger of shallowness. If, on the other hand, the conversation begins with reflections on "Great Thinkers" like Moshe Greenberg, it may feel too removed from their concerns and realities to seem relevant -- even if it seems interesting. How structure the conversation so that conversation seems tied to these concerns and realities and yet brings them to encounter rich Jewish ideas and conceptions that go their ways of thinking about things?

3. Will reflections on vision and goals infuse practice? Supposing that there is a rich and engaging conversation concerning our vision of a meaningful Jewish existence, it does not follow that the insights acquired and enjoyed in the context of that discussion will find their way into the world of practice. What must the conversation and/or its context be like if such discussions will not be compartmentalized and will in fact influence educational practice? Are there ways - say, via collaborative action-research efforts or through follow-up assignments, etc. - to make it likely that at the end of a seminar or a workshop the insights acquired there will inform what one does?

IF WE OFFER IT, WILL THEY COME?

Is there a demand "out there" for addressing fundamental questions concerning the goals of Jewish education -- so that if we say, "We're here to help you," communities and institutions will gravitate towards us?

Different views were expressed on this matter. Some felt that there is a demand, a demand fueled perhaps by a sense of desperation concerning our present predicament both as a community and in our institutions.

Others wondered whether the demand would express itself through much more than a willingness to participate in a short-term seminar or retreat. Skepticism was expressed concerning the willingness of many institutions to sign on for a long-term process of study, reflection, and self-examination. Among the reasons offered for thinking that there might not be an eagerness to engage in this kind of process were the following: a) Like us, other educators are already feeling over-worked and feel that they don't have the time and energy to invest in such a process; b) such a process might seem to threaten the leadership's authority or what might feel

like a fragile consensus among the membership; c) there might, as noted above, be skepticism concerning the practical "pay-off" in thinking about questions relating to basic educational aims.

To the extent that this skepticism is warranted, it highlights one of the major questions the project has to contend with: namely, how do we respond to these obstacles? how do we bring educators, lay leaders, and parents to understand the importance of addressing basic questions concerning the aims of Jewish education in a sustained and serious way? How, as one of us put it, do we overcome the resistance to serious thinking and engender the motivation to engage in it. This question called forth a number of different kinds of responses:

1. A central challenge may be to make vivid the gravity of our situation as a People and the ineffectiveness of existing educational efforts to address this situation. Related to this was the suggestion that we make vivid to those we speak with that education is the arena in which we work out our future as a People.
2. Frame the conversation as an invitation to reappropriate our heritage as a People that has played the significant role it has in history because of its willingness to think about "the Big Questions".
3. Initiate and stimulate the conversation by inviting those we speak with to personalize "the Big Questions" --to ask themselves why they think it's important to raise their children as Jews, and how they will answer their children's questions concerning why it is important or worthwhile to live as a Jew.

It was noted, in this connection, that to engage not just individuals and institutions but the North American Jewish community as a whole in wrestling with this larger question may be the most important goal of the Goals Project. There was, in this connection, some discussion of whether this larger question is being meaningfully addressed anywhere right now -- and if not, why not.

4. Offer a "For instance!" -- a vivid example of the good things that have happened when the stake holders in an institution have seriously wrestled with questions of vision and goals and their relationship to practice.
5. Attack - by showing the weaknesses of - the "quick-fixes" that are alleged by some to respond meaningfully and adequately to our difficult predicament as a community.

In these varied ways, the challenge would seem to be to nurture a culture or a consciousness that will welcome and even demand the kinds of serious thinking the Goals Project hopes to encourage. But, as noted above, the obstacles ought not to be underestimated.

SUPPOSING THEY DO COME TO US FOR HELP, DO WE HAVE MUCH TO OFFER?

The problem. As long as we confine ourselves to asking ourselves how to motivate people to want to wrestle in a serious way with a goals-agenda, we don't have to face a very tough question: would we know how to help them if they did seek our help? Do we yet know how to help them think about goals and vision in ways that will illuminate practice, and about practice in ways that will lead them to struggle meaningfully about questions of fundamental goals. We speak about the importance of doing these things - but do we know how to do these things - how to raise the level of discourse, or how to help an institution that has begun wrestling with questions of underlying vision to arrive at any shared conclusions that can inform practice.

The solution. We need to find concrete ways of infusing serious philosophical content and deliberation into the work of Jewish educating institutions - and to do so in such a way that the infusion will be neither pedestrian nor perceived as irrelevant. It was in this context that the concepts of maps (topographic and other), tool-kits, libraries of resources, and grids entered our conversations. To be effective in responding to a problem or situation, the coach will need a map of the domain in question that will suggest categories, questions, a range of alternative responses, pertinent materials and ideas of different kinds. The map serves more than one purpose: it helps to interpret the question or situation at hand, but it also suggests a range of possible ways that coach could, depending on his or her assessment of the situation, respond.

The concept of a map is pertinent no matter what the level at which one starts. If one starts with basic philosophical questions concerning the meaning of Jewish existence, map could point one towards various views on these questions, towards the ways answers to such questions may implicit in existing educational practice, or towards questions concerning how a given answer to such questions - say, Buber's or Rosenzweig's -- might color one's approach to curriculum design or design of the social environment. The map would suggest directions to go and perhaps tools needed to move in such directions. Alternatively, the map could direct one from very practical questions -- Should the children be asked to wear Kippot? or what-not? - to questions at various other levels.

Given an appropriate map and an interest in engaging the participants in reflections on goals and their relationship to practice, any situation that arises in the coach's interaction with the participants can forward the agenda. It was the categories, the questions, the understandings, and the concerns with which DM listened to what the Agnon teachers were saying about Israel that allowed him to size up the situation and to respond to it in ways that led them to think meaningfully about basic questions concerning the meaning of Jewish life and the role of Israel (and Cleveland) in it. And GD's example that built on a video concerning "good Bible Teaching" also highlights the ways in which, informed by appropriate questions, categories, and materials, this situation might lend itself to illuminating basic goals-related questions.

It was noted that developing an adequate map could well be a difficult task requiring significant and varied forms of expertise. The particular example we focused on concerned the teaching of Bible, and we spent some time thinking about the kinds of individuals it would be useful to engage in identifying different conceptions of teaching and learning Bible, how

reflection on a particular Bible curriculum could stimulate questions concerning the nature of Torah and its place in Jewish existence, etc.

While the concept of a map suggested various directions one could go and where they might lead, that of a library of resources suggested something that included strategies and resources as well. Using this library, the coach is someone who would size up a situation with an eye towards identifying the level at which the presenting situation should be responded to in order to exploit its potential to stimulate fruitful reflection, as well as to determine the kinds of resources and strategies that have promise of stimulating such reflection at this level.

All of this led us to discussions of grids that focus our attention on the different levels at which the conversation might proceed, on the kinds of resources and questions that might be pertinent -- all in response to a presenting situation that might range from uncertainties about the Hebrew curriculum, the problem of vandalism, an interest in developing a school-wide mission, etc.

While a grid seems helpful in reminding us about the kinds of things we should be attending to, a caution was expressed about prematurely - or, indeed ever - reifying it and treating it as anything more than a flexible and revisable tool for illuminating the complexity and the choices to be made in a presenting situation.

Treated in this spirit, however, some felt that a grid could be very helpful a) in sizing up a situation; b) in determining a response along a number of dimensions -- level, materials, strategies, aims, etc.; c) in identifying some of the work--indeed, the learning -- that the Goals Project needs to begin doing if it is to develop a rich map to be used in preparing coaches or in working with institutions.

An important point implicit in our discussion of maps, grids, resource-libraries, and tool-boxes is that none of them removed the need for good judgment on the part of the coach - the ability to size up what's going on and judging how to respond, drawing on the various concepts, strategies, and materials in his/her possession.

A "PROFOUNDLY SHALLOW" ALTERNATIVE

Although not made explicit, the model implicit in much of our conversation gives the coach a very active guiding role: the coach sizes up the situation and guides the course of the deliberations of teachers and/or the principal and/or the lay leadership towards , or back and forth among, certain levels in order to stimulate a more goals-sensitive community and educational environment.

As an alternative, I.S. proposed a very different model, one which emphasizes self-direction and self-study on the part of the institution's stake holders. On this model, what "we" would provide is a center to which the participants in an institution would come in order to get help in identifying resources that would be useful to them in addressing their real and living concerns and problems. They are the ones who would identify and interpret their pressing problems and the best ways to address them using what resources. The Center would offer them a menu of resources and possible routes to go -- but would leave it in their hands which route to go, which materials to use, or how to use them.

Though generally non-directive, the model allows for the possibility that at the beginnings of the process, the Center or a coach might play a more active role in setting the tone, in establishing a culture that respects and encourages non-fake, genuine openness. But the aim is to make yourself dispensable-- and the best way to do this is to discourage dependence on the coach from the very beginning by putting the responsibility in the hands of the stake holders: it is by being responsible for our own growth that we develop a culture that thrives on being responsible for its own growth, rather than looking to someone else to stimulate it.

The aim, he suggested, is an institution which has internalized an ethos of continuous self-renewal through on-going reflection and self-study concerning what it is trying to do and how it is setting about trying to accomplish it.

The model has any number of appeals: For example: 1) it doesn't infantilize or create dependence on outsiders; 2) efforts always remained tied to the real and living concerns of the participants; 3) it affirms the power of human beings without special expertise and proceeding on their own to come to arrive at powerful insights and adequate solutions to their problems.

At the same time, the model called forth a number of concerns, including the following:

1. Left on their own, will there be a tendency to gravitate the least common-denominator?
2. Will potentially powerful and very pertinent materials not be considered or not be used in the most effective way because the participants didn't bring with them the requisite background of understanding?
3. Will the level of discourse remain superficial, rather than growing in depth?
4. Will critical questions not get asked? When I.S. studied a philosopher with his

teachers-to-be, he asked them to think in certain ways about that thinker's bearing on educational practice? Assuming that this is important, can one assume that it will happen without the suggestion or prodding of an outsider?

This is, it was noted, particularly important when we think about figures like Moshe Greenberg: is it enough to encourage a reading of what he has to say, or is the impact richly enhanced if questions focus the attention of the readers on 1) how his conception differs from their own intuitive views, or on 2) what it would mean to organize Bible study or teacher-training or After-School sports on the Greenberg model.

Among the questions that got raised in this connection concerned the desirability of encouraging people to apply what they read or think about to questions of practice (via exercises, questions, etc.). As against the view that this was desirable, the view was expressed that a rich encounter with a text is likely to have rich echoes in one's approach to one's work even if one hasn't systematically sought the connection, and also that the effort to force a connection might unduly narrow one's appreciation of the text. That there might be ways of encouraging attention to educational implications without unduly narrowing one's reading of the text was also a matter we considered.

5. The role of a thoughtful outsider - a "critical friend" as members of Sizer's coalition say - in identifying blind-spots in an institution's thinking, or points of resistance, or unspoken questions that lie behind what is uttered, was also noted.

6. A concern was expressed that while this kind of an institution might address varied concerns about one or another aspect of their school, it might never spontaneously move on to the "big questions" concerning the *raison d'etre* of Jewish education and Jewish existence.

At work in many of these questions is a fundamental issue concerning the amount and kind of structure, direction, or guidance on the part of an outsider will be fruitful (and at what price) -- an issue whose resolution would seem, as one person noted, to depend (as does the other approach) on a number of basic assumptions concerning human nature and human learning.

THE NEED FOR THE MAPS, RESOURCE-LIBRARIES REITERATED

However we analyze our predicament, and whichever model we adopt, developing a map and a resource library needs to be on our agenda:

1. Even if it is true that there is not a widespread recognition at this point of the need to struggle with issues of basic goals, our ability to respond effectively when this need is expressed will depend on developing the appropriate map and resources;
2. Even if one accepts the I.S. model, one needs to have the map and the resources available in order to suggest to the institutions that come for advice what routes and what resources they may want to consider as they ponder their situation.

TOWARDS THE END OF THE DAY

A few end-of-day points in no particular order:

1. At the heart of the Goals process and everything else CIJE does, it was suggested, is an effort to help those involved with Jewish education "learn how to think seriously" about what they're doing? [If it's true that they don't in this arena, is it also true that they don't in others e.g. in their businesses, or in their family life?]

This formulation suggested that CIJE's challenge -- in the Goals Project and other domains - is that of creating a culture of inquiry in Jewish education agencies and institutions -- one that emphasizes serious thinking and the avoidance of quick fixes.

2. Is "coaching" really the most helpful way to think about how to facilitate institutional growth around questions concerning vision/goals alone and in relation to educational practice?

3. It was suggested that we should not forget "the personal dimension" of what we're doing. It's not just that we need to encourage those we deal with to address the big questions in personal terms; we need to remember that those questions are also our own -- and attention to our own struggles with them may add insight to our efforts to work with others around them.

4. We shuttled between a number of metaphors and analogies today-- jump-starting a process; the therapist; the coach; computer-metaphors that eluded me; maps of different kinds, and others.

FRIDAY'S AGENDA

1. Corrections, additions, etc.
2. Based on where we went yesterday, re-approach the "Goals of the Goals Project" question.
3. What activities flow from this larger conception of our project?

Ball and Cohen/CIJE meeting
1/6/97

Instructional design and specification: Policies and interventions are not free-standing statements of purpose or principle -- they are inevitably associated with efforts to define, explain, interpret, and develop their meaning and entailments for action. This is the domain of specification and development. Some instructional policies and interventions are relatively sparsely specified and developed while others are relatively fully specified and developed. Since policies and associated interventions often are aimed at students but depend on professional educators, what follows applies both to the elements of policy that centers on student learning and to the elements of policy that centers on educators' learning.

Specification refers to the design and definition of educational policies and innovations. The less well specified a policy was, the more of a "black box" it would be. Defining a place for a curriculum for enactors' learning into a policy or intervention would be one example of specification, and defining the content of that curriculum would be another. At the other extreme are policies and interventions that consist chiefly of statements of principle; while such statements suggest a general direction, they often suggest little more than that. How enactors would know if they were making real progress, what steps they should take to make progress, and many related matters would remain undefined. The more undefined (unspecified) a policy or intervention was the more difficult it would be for intervenors to make rational decisions about the direction, pace, and progress of their work, or to communicate effectively about the innovation, to decide how to help users adopt and enact it, to know the difference between weak and strong work, and to design opportunities for potential users to understand what sort of instruction the innovation called for. As a result, the less well specified a policy was the more variety we would expect to see in descriptions of the work within an intervention.¹ The extent to which purpose and methods of operation -- whether evident in practice or on paper -- are specified may help to explain differences in the success of efforts to improve instruction.²

Development refers to the action repertoire of a policy or intervention -- including materials, social processes (like teacher education), working models or examples of adoption processes, or video materials that depict teachers' knowledge, norms, and skills in ways that would be educative for other teachers, social processes for involving and educating parents, etc.³ If the specification of innovations is analagous to instructional design for classrooms, then their development is analagous to creating

¹ The nature of effective communication and other matters could vary somewhat across innovations, but such differences would not necessarily impede efforts to discern how well specified innovations were.

² We do not equate specification with either explicit theory or highly specific procedures: greater specification does not require more detailed documents. Specification can be as evident in the operations of an innovation as in sponsors' writing, and we would attend at least as carefully to the theory in action as in written documents. Though approaches to change differ considerably, each approach can be more or less well worked out and understood in its own terms.

³ Development is not the mere enactment of specification. It is not difficult to imagine a direct instruction scheme that is very highly specified but for which the materials and teacher education are detailed, thin, and mechanistic. The results of development may not express the promises of innovative specification, or they may exceed those promises.

specific.
↳
interpretation

Ketcher
materials, occasions for instruction, and processes that would provoke and support change.⁴ The better developed interventions are, the more likely they are to effectively manage change and build capacity. Creating curricula for enactors' learning for use in a policy or intervention would be one example of what I mean by development.

Danger though, of over-specification
Nearly any instructional policy can be well specified and developed -- not just the more didactic ones. The more refined the specification of a policy or intervention is, and the more full its development, the more opportunities enactors will have to learn. The more weakly specified instructional policies are, the more they leave to be invented, improvised, etc., and thus the more complex and difficult enactors' learning will be.

Complete specification and development of instructional interventions and policies is of course impossible, for enactment depends on unpredictable social interactions that cannot be entirely -- or even nearly entirely -- predicted and thus scripted. But specification and development interact with purposes and methods. When the instructional purposes and methods of policies and interventions are quite simple, then more complete specification and development are possible. Specification and development are more complex and difficult when interventions are more intellectually ambitious and child-thinking-centered, and must be less complete because more complex social interactions will ensue. But this greater difficulty and incompleteness of specification and development should not be seen as a tight limit, or evidence that only broad principles can be enunciated. A great deal can be specified and developed for more complex and ambiguous policies and interventions, but there will be more contingency. Weak specification has been more common, both because the work is more difficult and because of the mistaken idea that specification and development inhibit creativity and autonomy.

But too much specification undermines local initiatives
Enactors' learning, specification, and development: Cognitive psychologists view most instruction as an ill-structured domain: most important terms can be defined in competing ways; causal relationships often are weak and unclear; and ambiguity and uncertainty are endemic. Learning and problem-solving in such domains are more complex and difficult than in well-structured domains. But these and other features of ill-structured domains are relative, not absolute, hence the problems of learning in such domains also are relative. The more weakly specified and developed instructional policies and interventions are, the more they leave to be invented, improvised, and figured out. Another way to put the point is to say that the more weakly specified and developed policies and interventions are, the more work they tacitly delegate to enactors. The more policymakers and intervenors leave to enactors to invent, improvise, and figure out, the more uncertain and ambiguous the enactors' work, and potentially the more complex and difficult their learning. Because human rationality is limited, and because we typically seek to reduce uncertainty, such weak specification and development and tacit delegation result in weak and variable enactment, and shorten the half-life of instructional policies and interventions.

Internal coherence: Instructional policies and interventions typically represent efforts to guide teaching and learning. If policy is a sort of instruction, then consistency

⁴ We do not assume that design and development exist in linear form; often design is refined as a consequence of work on development.

in the representation of what is being taught, among the various agents that commonly are used to guide instruction, would count, just as it seems to count in classrooms. These agents of instructional guidance include: frameworks and/or content and performance standards; curriculum for students, professional education, assessment for students, professional supervision and support, and incentives for students and professionals. An example of a coherent policy to improve mathematics teaching would be one that sought to guide instruction through all of these agents, and that offered guidance that was consistent in form and content across guidance agents. Many policies and interventions focus on one or two of these agents, thus losing the leverage that others could contribute. Many other policies and interventions focus on many of these agents, but relate them weakly or incoherently. As a result they send different, divergent, or diffuse messages. Less coherent policies will make enactors' learning and enactment much more difficult.

Richness of representation: Another important feature of specification and development is the richness of representation in the "content" that is conveyed by various agents that commonly are used to guide instruction. The more rich the representation the more opportunities learners have to criss-cross the domain in question, and thus to make sense of things. For instance, guidance for teachers who were learning about multiplication of fractions in a new math curriculum would be more rich if it offered several different representations of the operations involved, rather than only one representation. Guidance that included examples of students' work with multiplication of fractions along with representations of the operations would be more rich still.

A Set of Key Problems of Innovation
for Discussion
January 6, 1997

1. Scale.

Everyone worries about the spread of innovations and numbers; big numbers are thought to be better. But complex educational innovations need to scale "in" as well as "up" -- i.e., to build infrastructure within innovative situations as well as to build numbers. Scaling in requires careful design and attention to design and strategic details of the innovation itself. It also requires careful specification and development of an innovation, which seems to many to be at odds with local initiative (see #5 below). Scaling up requires development of means to spread innovation beyond the careful design environments and contexts, with reasonable fidelity of purposes, means, and outcomes, and with concern for resources.

2. The problem also is the solution.

In most cases, the source of the problem also is the agent for solving the problem. For example, teachers and parents are the key source of academic weakness in US elementary schools, but they also are the agents upon whom reformers must depend to repair that weakness. This creates all sorts of problems of incentives, learning, and comprehension of change.

One issue concerns the agents' behavior -- there are reasons why they act as they currently act; understanding why is important. Another concerns incentives: Why should or must they make the changes envisioned? It pays to consider the disincentives to change or innovate in particular ways in specific cases?

Still another issue concerns the agents' role in change: In conceiving and making the innovation happen, how are roles divided or shared? Who develops and agrees on goals? Who designs the change program? Who develops and carries it out? How much are the people to make the change considered, consulted, assisted, enforced, given incentives? How much intersection is there among these roles and responsibilities?

3. Design and initiative.

In order for a complex educational innovation to have a chance of making a difference, it should be a strong, identifiable program, movement, commitment, set of rules or norms, content, or ways of working. Yet in order to be taken up by and used in any serious way, the ideas must be embraced and re-invented by local actors (as in learning, most things that are already known by others), and adapted to fit the local context -- history, resources, players, leadership, community members. Can the requirement for careful design and specification of innovations fit with the requirement for local invention, re-invention, and adaptation?

4. Environments and agents.

Most innovations are designed as though the context of enactment was a matter of indifference -- as though the innovation was an independent agent operating in a generic environment -- but those contexts often are critical. The curriculum reforms of the late 1950s and early 1960s in the US and Europe are a case in point; innovators designed reforms on the assumption that better materials could be a powerful agent for change, but it turned out that failing to make provision for educating users and constituents (teachers, administrators, parents, local officials), damaged or destroyed the materials' effectiveness. Typically, the context is part of the problem that innovators wish to solve -- it is an agent of sorts, or a melange of agents -- but few innovators make provision for its effects on innovations.

5. Why innovations fail.

There are many explanations, but one that is little considered is that most innovations are weakly specified and developed; there is little design, strategy, curriculum for innovators, or concern for the pedagogy of the innovation itself. On this view, most innovations do not have what it would take to even hope to succeed. The 50s curriculum reforms again are a case in point: the materials were well designed, but both design and specification for use (learning from and about them, and how to use them) was weak or non-existent.

Thus in considering either the prospects for a proposed innovation or the reasons for a past innovation's performance, several questions are critical: How tightly specified is or was the innovation? What are its purposes (what are the goals of the change?), its design (how is the change to be accomplished?), its development (how far it has been pre-conceived to consider carefully and spell out the needs of people, technologies, resources, mechanisms required to make the change?)?

6. Strategic and marketing conflicts.

Time: Many worthwhile changes take time to take root, develop, and spread -- a point that enactors are likely to appreciate. But sponsors often are impatient for more rapid change. Sometimes the impatience for change is a good motivator. But sometimes it leads to a watering down of the aims and nature of the work in order to be able to produce results more quickly. It can also make an intervention look like a failure if big results are expected too soon. Time is both a commodity to be marketed and an implicit expectation of immediate results. These conflicts about time typically affect both practice and policy because the conflicts ramify to the need to communicate the change, and opportunities to mobilize provide the core technology needed for the change, get it in use.

Commitment and skepticism: Most complex change is built around complex bargains; change needs to be "sold" to multiple constituencies. Interveners must persuade funders, leaders, and those who will have to make the actual changes that something important will happen. They often have to promote the change wholeheartedly and convincingly. Doing this can lead to promising more than is

reasonably possible. It can also make it difficult to retain a healthy skepticism about the effort in ways that can help to improve it by learning in and from the experience of change. Ideology and partisanship also are common on the part of interveners and those making change, perhaps linked to the need for conviction to take on many kinds of change. Still, skepticism is a potent resource for improvement, through looking critically at unexpected and unintended costs and outcomes.

Evaluation: Depending on the tangibility and simplicity of the aims of change, the results are more or less simple to determine. In educational change of the kinds we've been studying, there is considerable ambiguity as to what to look at and what standards to hold in order to assess the effects of the change effort. Again, as before the outside influences of context can press the measures of change toward simpler indicants, so as to be able to demonstrate success. Without such clarity of outcome measures, change agents are vulnerable to attack by opponents or resisters, that their efforts are fruitless.