



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES
A DIVISION OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE – JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

MS-831: Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation Records, 1980-2011.

Series F: CIJE Accrual, 1981-2011, undated.

Subseries 2: Dan Pekarsky, 1981-2011, undated.

Box
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Folder
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Core concepts. Old goals/sandbox project, 1995-1996.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
[American Jewish Archives](http://AmericanJewishArchives.org) website.

Wednesday, July 24.

1) Recapitulation and discussion:

- Welcome to Michael Paley.

- The discussion of "outside inputs": The point is less the 'criteria' for outside inputs than that outside input is necessary. Most Jewish educating institutions would have difficulty arriving at a rich vision without outside input on their own, but on the level of principle, vision should be developed internally. Socrates could raise level of discourse without outside inputs. The problem is getting beyond mere 'values clarification' - if rich Jewish content is central, you will probably need an outside input.

- The aim of vision is not to arrive at a mission statement (even at the level of a Greenberg type of paper) or to be able to follow logical moves between the levels but rather to develop a culture of practice. The point is resonance between theory and practice, inflectedness towards implementation of desired ends, the capacity for evaluation in light of explicit aims and mobilisation around common ideas.

- The need for developing a goals project strategy calls for our own clarity on issues such as outside inputs.

- There is a need to continue to play out this discussion on 'outside inputs', since it is critical to the whole enterprise. At time it feels as if there is something disingenuous in the stated commitment to working 1-5 rather than to clarify this - Disingenuous in stated commitment to working 1-5 rather than commitment of 1-5 as a way to work.

-Daniel Pekarsky's position paper as a way of forwarding the discussion.

2) C.A.P.E- Annette Hochstein:

-Introduction of Howie Diechter, Director of Jerusalem Fellows.

- The Commission of Jewish Education in America convened 44 prominent leaders, educators, scholars and others for two years, 1988 - 1990. There were six meetings the aim of which was to answer the question of 'what needs to be done to enhance Jewish education?' Meanwhile, CJF report finding about fifty two percent assimilation rate in North America helped to raise the importance and urgency of the discussion.

- The Commission was the first project of the Mandel Institute. The Mandel

Institute deals with three areas: developing professional leadership for Jewish education; developing community support and leadership; developing content for Jewish education. The Educated Jew project belongs to the last area, and one of its spin-offs is the 'Goals Project'.

- Some spin-off institutions of the Mandel Institute are: The CIJE; The School for Educational Leadership - a mid-career training program for the development of leadership in Israeli education; CAPE - an effort similar to the SEL, designed to address the shortage of senior personnel in Jewish education in the Diaspora. CAPE includes a revamped Jerusalem Fellows program with a systematic recruitment effort and it uses a significant amount of resources in Jerusalem. Also, CAPE is making pilot efforts in the area of short term program in the belief that it can serve special audiences by making no initial demand for Hebrew proficiency or for two year commitment. Short term programs seem to be popular (to the point the point that we need to think about which to pursue and which not to pursue). All the above programs make efforts at placing content on the agenda of educational leaders.

- The need for leadership is clear. The need for training is becoming clear. What may be the framework for training? Based on our own experience with the Jerusalem Fellows and the School for Educational Leadership, and research on institutions such as France's Ecoles Normales D'Administration, our approach is one which brings theory and practice together, draws from Jewish thought and philosophy, the study of education, and policy studies. All of this exists in our long term programs; the question is how to incorporate this into our short term programs. New experimentation and research shows that an impact in such a short time is possible, but how?

- Another question is how to address the problem of a lack of educational leaders in the Diaspora? The need for scholars of Jewish education is a number one priority if we want to address this problem. To encourage the creation of scholars in Jewish education we have done the following - 1) created a scholarship fund at Hebrew University for the doctorate program in Jewish education. 2) worked with agencies in developing field. 3) created individualized programs to train a person for a particular job. All of these are experimental at this stage.

- Seymour's view of CAPE is of a 'Mayo Clinic' for the development of training for Jewish educational leadership. CAPE would develop effective training for senior personnel in Jewish education and study its own practice in a way which would enable others to learn from it.

Comments:

- The time for CAPE is right because the need is great, even to the point of panic in North America.

- Is there a possibility of a hybrid of the Jerusalem Fellows and a short term program: eg. a three month program over a period of years? CAPE experimented with this in Mexico. North America has not been explored. The question of how to do this in decentralized North America versus centralized Mexico is critical here.

- How do the programs try to infuse powerful Jewish content into training and how do they insure that it is integrated with how the trainees go out and work? Unlike in France, North American training programs focus on the social sciences and trainees don't necessarily come into programs with cultural proficiency. Our sense is that graduates of our programs need to come out with a particular vision as to where Jewish education should go, explicitly stated and considered in terms of its mode of translation and implementation. We therefore believe that the program needs to provide a grounding of educational issues in Jewish thought and philosophy and an opportunity to consider interplays between theory and practice. There are three theoretical departments - Jewish philosophy; education and public policy. These are integrated with practical issues through group projects and individual projects (the latter is undertaken with a tutor throughout the course of study, and is often implemented afterward; the tutor helps the trainee conceptualize the project in terms of level 1 - 5). People present the 'integration' of all the elements in their interim presentations of their individual projects. At least four times over two years, with staff participation and checking on integration. An example of a group project is the study of Jewish Education in Budapest. The group projects are theoretical and policy-oriented.

-The notion of CAPE as Mayo is research in the context of practice. Annette has ensured this by getting into place a seminar on training in which the directors of the various programs in this universe of CAPE, the Mandel Institute and the CIJE participate. This is the basis of the research agenda on training, implementation, vision, etc. Without leaders working with vision we have failed.

- A Recent development - Rather than turning to the School for Educational Leadership the Ministry of Education has turned to CAPE to help it in training Jewish educators for the general system in Israel. This is out of the sense that the Diaspora has the dealt with the problems of Jewish education in a secular society more than Israel.

Presentation of "Practice to Vision" Sub-Group on Developing Personnel:

- The process of the deliberations: a) introductions: "my involvement in a personnel related project is...". b) exercise: "describe the graduate characteristics you would like to see at the end of your program..." c) cases: "one characteristic of the ideal graduate" d) clarifications and questions which moved the discussion between the various levels.

- Examples:

a) Danny Gordis: Rabbis

Characteristic: The Rabbi has a broad conception of what 'Judaism is about.' This involves putting pieces of what they have learned into a larger coherent whole. It includes the ability to answer the question 'what is your best case for what Jewish life is all about?'

Clarifications and questions:

- In relation to the claim that this is important because American Jews are disaffected because Judaism is not in the realm of meaning for them (what counts for them is ethnicity, etc.): How do you know that they are disaffected? Answer: CJF study, first hand experience.

- Why are the 'big ideas' the correct response? This is supported by a fair notion of Jewish texts. "Is this because one brings question of 'big ideas' to Jewish texts?" is an open question.

- What are the implications of 'big ideas'? - An example would be core curriculum.

- Note that this deliberation brought the conversation to all five levels.

2) Devora Steinmetz: Teachers

Characteristic: Teachers have an authentic and deep personal relation to learning. The point is not the text itself, but also how it relates to the learning itself. The point demands an 'experience of learning' and 'participation in the

learning community'.

Clarifications and questions:

- How do you know that the 'experience has happened? Response: a sense of excitement, relation to the text out of curiosity...

- What if teachers do not have this in their repertoire? - Response: Then they must the experience of learning together without having asked the question 'what does this mean for teaching?

- Why is this necessary? Response: so as to have an "image" of learning - student learning and the teaching activity intertwine here.

- What is the nature of the content? Response: a) includes central primary sources (those which served as a basis for commentary over the centuries; b) is problematic - demands grappling, deals with real life situations, necessitates learning in the community. Why is this important? As a basis for engagement extended over time. Implicit in this is a theory of cognition which includes the affective.

General clarifications and comments on the whole deliberation:

- 1-5 should be seen as a 'schema' rather than as 'model' - this leaves room for fluidity.

- There is a need for more clarification of the schema (eg. a theory of cognition = level two; level three are implications for developing curriculum).

- The 1-5 discussion can serve as a check on working assumptions.

- The conversations were 'replayed' in order to check it against the levels. This also shows the effectiveness of 1-5 'schema' as a basis for strategizing.

- At one point there was an attempt to see if there were common elements in the portraits of the ideal graduate.

- A question arose about raising question at different levels for different audiences.- When is this appropriate and/or effective at each level with each audience?

- A question which arose was if answers at levels one and two were necessarily based on 'trust me' or 'this can be checked out empirically' assumptions. Is it

useful research here rather than settle for the above answers. How does one read research? Doesn't it bring the discussion back to having prescriptive values and vision? Responses: a) Research helps one be non-dogmatic about one's answers, so that there is still room for discussion, argumentation and critical reflection. "How do you know?"s as intellectual 'speed bumps'. b) What does it mean to defend a moral conception? Research gives you information about the nature of the problem, but it does not decide for you. At some point it might come down to 'my ultimately unprovable conception authenticity'. d) Noone has a right to ask why I want to live my life the way I want? The question begins with how you want to get others into the vision (though even the individual ought to value the question, How do you know?). Every level ought to be explicit about its 'rules of the game' - what is and is not warranted in this discussion. An example might be "you don't have to accept this research, but you have to know it." e) In a democracy one must expose/disclose assumptions. From there one necessarily gets into the rules of argumentation. For example, there are different ways of reading market research. The question is "How do you form the question? and "For whom do you form the question?" f) There is a need for early warning system with reference to educational ideas, against intellectual 'bandwagons' as it were, so that policy makers could decide responsibly between alternatives. This would include analyses of ideas so that one would know 'what you are buying'. On the other hand, there are 'great ideas which people quit on five minutes to midnight'. Also, consider that to rule something out totally because there is no proof for it leaves out room for experimentation. This also raises the question of how much time should be given to braintrust. g) What should characterize our work is rigor in defining the 'the rules of the game' at each level. Our writing should perfect these standards. "Why is this a good idea?" h) "How do you know?" needs to be defined. If it is a social science question, it points to a social science response. If it is a philosophical question than it requires a philosophical response. It is important to know which court you are playing in. This also relates to the strategic discussion - what is the aim of the discourse? i) This discussion raises the question of level five: evaluation. What is the job description of someone who must figure out if the problem is at any of the five levels? And if it is at level one, then do you evaluate at that level? j) Possible rules: Have you consulted the best minds? Have you used the most sophisticated tools? Have you been interdisciplinary?, Have you been inventive? Response - This may be too rigid. It may not be desirable always to be sophisticated and interdisciplinary. The first rule should be follow the rules of each level.

- Questions left for discussion - If we want to prepare educators who will lead vision guided institutions, what would there preparation programs (pre-service and professional development) look like? At the level of discussion of our work and at the level of providing a basis for others to do the same. Also, how do you

prepare people for this in a world which does not work by "vision-guidedness"?
This relates to change theory.

Presentation of "Practice to Theory" Sub-Group on Working with Institutions:

Introductory points:

- Here the worlds of vision and institutional change are brought together.
- We began by looking at cases and dealing with issues in them such as starting up the discussion on vision, setting up the conditions for vision in institutions.
- There were three critical moments in our discussion:

Agnon

- Deception in ^{TERMS} forms of roles and goals.
- Integrated self into culture.
- In a climate of trust, created conflict by asking questions, created cognitive dissonance
- ~~Contrast~~: learning community (here is a resource").

- CONTEXT

Beit Tefillah

- Explicit goals 'need fixing'
- Outside 'exporters' ^{EXPORTS} no integration into culture.
- Didactic methods and lectures.
- Teachers 'didn't get it'
- Lay people were more receptive.
- Content= traditional, status quo - OK.

Critical Elements of Working with Institutions

} BOLD

- Blameless critique
- Shared understanding of the problem.
- Inquiry/- relationships.
- Community ^{BASED} ~~of each~~ individuals.

/ - HIGHLY CONTEXTUAL

MAP OF OUR DISCUSSION

DANNY GORDIS'S PRESENTATION

Rabbi: Has a conception of what "Judaism is about"

[Level 2 or 3] American Jewry disaffected

[2 or 3] They're looking for meaning → → what's proof?
→wisdom of practice
→Empirical research [3;2]

[2 or 3] BIG IDEAS are a response → →where's that idea from?
→ wisdom of practice
→ Judaism (is this a
defensible definition of Judaism?)[2 or 1]

What are the implications of "big ideas"/great ideas?

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[3 or 4] Core curriculum → →what are the problems of Big Ideas? What do you
gain/lose?
What are trade offs? [5 or 3]

DEVORA STEINMETZ'S PRESENTATION

Teacher has an authentic and deep relationship to learning

Principles of theory of practice:

Include in corpus of what's studied things that are central (primary sources) and problematical
→Why?→theory of cognition; learning theory [1,2]

Experience of learning--"engagement"→How?→ *laalot; laredet* [4,5]

Participation in learning community →How? → teachers need to study together [4]
→Why? →theory of learning to teach

QUESTIONS

When we engage in level #1, 2 discussion and people ask “how do you know? Or why?
The answer has been either: trust me or this can be checked out empirically. Is this answer
inherent in the model when you get to level 1 and 2?

The “why” response seems to change as the audience changes. Is this true for every level?

When you enter this discussion, how, when, to whom do you disclose your basic assumptions?

QUESTIONS FOR TODAY:

If we want to prepare educators, who will be able to work in or lead/guide vision guided
institutions, what would their preparation programs (pre-service and professional development)
look like?

- A. Goals seminar
- B. Jewish subject matter (Jewish philosophy)

How do we help/ prepare/ support these newly prepared people to work in “unchanged
institutions”?

GOALS SEMINAR

Tuesday, July 23

I. Reviewing the notes

After reviewing the changes in the day's schedule, we turned to a discussion of the summary notes of Sunday's discussions. A few points were raised. On page 1 the phrase should read neutral not non-neutral.

A question was raised about the role of the principal (and others) in running the school -- who has control of education? What responsibility or right does the educator have to insist of certain values despite what the community thinks. This raises both strategic and ethical issues.

II. The agenda for the small groups

We were divided into (new) groups for a discussion of Greenberg's paper. The groups were offered the following assignment:

- A. What do we think Greenberg means in the paper?
- B. Place it in the 1 to 5 frame
- C. Evaluate it and develop questions to present to Greenberg
- D. Consider what you would you want to add to the paper.

We then broke into groups.

(Jump ahead a few hours. . . .)

III. Reports from the groups

Group 1

This group began by posing two questions to Greenberg: Why did he speak in social psychological terms and not religious terms (e.g. inner needs of people)? Why didn't he use Jewish language to justify the enterprise, instead of the quotation from Smith?

The group then moved on to an exercise: If we were to build a Greenberg school, how would we translate Greenberg into a curriculum (however defined)-- from Judaica content to English literature?

Questions: How limited is Greenberg? How do we go about interpreting G.? What lenses do we bring to that? How much reading in are we doing and how honest do we have to be?

The group worked on this as individuals and came up with the following:

1) Application to teaching Genesis 1

Greenberg principles:

1. Love of Torah
2. Guide for morality
3. Unceasing interpretive activity

Assumptions:

1. Encounter points to transcendent realm
2. Spirituality = meaning in life
3. Human need for religion

Lesson Goals:

1. Student must engage in text
2. Spiritual meaning of life questions (is there a creator of the world? Do you see order in the world? Why does God create the world/humans? What is relation of man and woman? Is the world essentially good?)
3. Morality issues in text (what about how man uses world? Man and woman issues?)
4. Unceasing interpretive tradition (study of midrash about God creating many worlds and destroying them before this one. Questions: what made this world good, other worlds bad? Etc.)

2, English literature

A whole course of English that would set up essential questions to frame the course. The course would deal with existential questions-- relationship with nature? Relationship with human beings, etc.?

3. Creating a Gemara Curriculum

Issues to address: *ivrit b' ivrit*, tension between Hebrew as spoken language and desire to deal with the deep existential issues in the biblical text, connection between *peshat* and *derash*, is the distinction between biblical and rabbinic useful for this curriculum, what should classroom look like (hevruta, frontal, etc.), what selection of texts and why = what masekhet to begin with? What about difficult moral questions posed by texts-- deal with these? Ignore these?

4. Bible curriculum

What follows from the Greenberg paper is:

Need for breadth in Bible

Need for Hebrew texts

Focus on parshanut and its history

Texts as responses to existential and ethical issues

Importance of language in interpretation and reading

Need to address: which texts to select? How much time to Bible? To other rabbinic texts?

Group 2

Much time was spent discussing what G. really means. For example, the relationship of the transcendent and the human was debated. Is this merely a meeting of human needs or is there some commanding role located in the transcendent, beyond the human? Particularly in the human to human mitzvot-- are these utilitarian, a mode of keep society together or is there a transcendent dimension here as well. What is it about text study that Greenberg values? Is it the meanings you find within it? But what about the process of text study itself.

Other questions were discussed in the small group about the translation exercise itself. E.g. from a practical point of view, isn't it difficult to start with philosophy (level 1 or 2), since the philosophical enterprise is so difficult. How clearly does the philosophy have to be presented? Do the people involved in the discussion really have to get Greenberg or just come to a consensus on what they think he means? All this might end up occupying a lot of time. Don't you need the right habits of mind to really do this kind of work?

The group looked at how Greenberg might teach Honor thy father and mother. Danny Marom related Greenberg's taxi cab commentary (the oral tradition in our times) about this-- in which Greenberg suggested the commandment be taught around the nexus of child, parent, God, indicating a continuity of an authority of benevolence.

Questions were raised about this approach (e.g. is this the kind of encounter that children could grasp?) as well as the problem that this approach differs markedly from that suggested by Greenberg himself in the original paper on the same topic.

Does Greenberg create two realms-- the transcendent, existential and the moral, human realm?

Group 2's report ended here.

IV. Discussion

Seymour related to a number of issues that emerged in the group reports, focusing in particular on the essential need for dealing the goals issues. You have to deal with these issues, he argued, otherwise the school is diminished. Schools need a Greenberg (i.e. not necessarily the Greenberg Greenberg) to engender the kinds of discussion that deeply enrich the entire educational process. It's the notes of these discussion that matter, not the paper they begin discussing.

This Greenberg could serve as a trigger; it itself could be deepened or thickened in the discussion. The issue of the Greenbergs and how they are to be used in real situations-- whether they be the actual Educated Jew Project papers or similar papers (i.e. one could have a Buber) that might be produced in some kind of Center for Philosophy of Education-- emerged as the key issue of this discussion. A few minutes later this matter resurfaced in a slightly different form, but first a few other important issues were raised. These included questions about the wisdom of starting at Level 1 and the capacity problem such as we had discussed it

before. Is the capacity problem a personnel problem-- that is, are there not enough people to do this kind of work? Must not the whole community be engaged in this kind of enterprise for it to really work? And if so, how do we get the time to do it and how do people get the skills to do it?

We had through this moved into a consideration of the *doing* of a goals project and the practical questions that implementation might raise. In the same vein (that is, issues about doing the Goals project) Ellen then raised a question that occupied a good deal of discussion. There were a number of statements and restatements of Ellen's questions (which will not be reviewed here), but the primary thrust of her concern was more or less the following: The Educated Jew papers represent one kind of external idea that can be introduced into a school as it discusses its goals and values. But aside from these papers, what are the **criteria** (this become the key word) that help us know what external ideas should be introduced and how? (Discussion and clarifications ensued for some time.)

Then Seymour responded by rejecting the whole question of criteria. He argued for doing it by doing it: starting with a group of schools that would engage in goals work. They might cut in at level 1 (e.g. study a Greenberg); they might cut in at level 4 (let's explore our Hebrew curriculum), etc. As they explored they would naturally need more inputs to move the discussion along. These might include the Educated Jew papers or other writings, examples, case studies, sociological literature, research data, etc. All of which could become grist for the goals mill.

He gave an illustration of three schools of different sorts: one school turned to the Babi Saleh, one to Twersky and Brinker, one generated its own reading list. Seymour argued that there is no right way to do this. Schools doing the goals enterprise would differ one from the next: for example a school without money might not be able to do what a school with money could; a school with one kind of leader might do it one way from another school; a school with a supportive board might do it differently from another, etc.

Gail suggested that an implicit set of principles were implied by the concept above: To do the goals work, one needed 1) a group, 2) a deliberation, 3) outside inputs (of a variety of sorts). So how might this group be run? A variety of possibilities were advanced: by a leader with the knowledge and will to do it, by a first among equals self-directed group, by a resident philosopher in place in the school (in a sense what Daniel Marom is doing at Agnon, though he is not a resident there full time.)

V. Small groups

The original small groups from yesterday reconvened. They will report on Wednesday morning.

(Some hours later. . .)

VI. Community Mobilization

Nessa and Danny Pekarsky presented on the issue of community mobilization. Nessa began by pointing out that although mobilizing community support for Jewish education was one of the key building blocks in the CIJE agenda, it was an area about which little is known: who to mobilize, what to mobilize, how to mobilize? Are all difficult questions that need to be explored. One of the CIJE Lead Communities (Milwaukee) called CIJE and asked for help in actualizing the community mobilization agenda in their community. They wanted something serious, a long term project. The Wexner Heritage influence seemed important here. The model of Wexner (2 years of study, fixed meetings, difficult admissions standards) obviously influenced the Milwaukee planners (Wexner grads).

Nessa and Danny had discussions with this group and developed an approach, summarized admirably in the Nessa/Dan (=Danny) memo of June 23, 1996 enclosed with these notes. The content of this memo was presented to our group after which a discussion followed.

Discussion

the issue is what do lay leaders need to know and be able to do to be effective leaders. Danny G. raised the question of the relationship between knowing and doing here. How can we be asking Level 1" type questions of people who may be unschooled in Judaica? He advanced the metaphor of musical knowledge and the question of an orchestra's lay leadership. What kind of knowledge do we expect the orchestra's board members to have and what kind of decision should they have input in-- what the orchestra's program of music should be next season? This metaphor was discussed a few times during the ensuing conversation.

Danny Marom asked for more portraits of lay leaders: what do they know? What do they want to know? What would help them in their work? Research of this sort would be very useful. He added that these leaders needed to be as passionate about Jewish education as they might be about Judaism.

Other issues were raised in this discussion including in particular the theme of the relationship between Jewish knowledge and Leadership in the Jewish community. Do you really need Jewish knowledge for the work that they need to do in communities and if so, what kind of knowledge? Another theme was the relationship between professionals and lay leaders and the complex way this gets played out in the community, particularly around an issue such as goals. How much could lay leadership learn from professional leaders and vice versa? Linda offered some practical suggestions to this particular project in Milwaukee: the participants could keep track of their own personal development (such as through journal writing) as they go through the process and collaborative work should be built in to the project from the beginning if that is part of the long range goal when they complete the course.

GOALS SEMINAR, A FEW MAJOR THEMES FROM DAY 3

RECAPITULATION AND DISCUSSION

A number of major themes were discussed. Once again, attention focused on the Wexner Heritage Program. It was suggested that the summary had not succeeded in identifying a key-theme -- namely, that the design of this program did not reflect systematic thought concerning how the program that was being designed would actually turn the participants into active and effective leaders. In fact, the failure to engage in this thinking may have resulted in the opposite. As a counter-point to this claim and other criticisms voiced on Day 2, a number of people suggested that the assessment of Wexner had been unduly harsh and needed revision. Our discussion concluded with a brief discussion of why we had devoted so much energy to the discussion of the Wexner program: how was this discussion related to our own interest in the problem of vision and its relationship to education? There was some disagreement concerning the actual relevance of this discussion. The view was expressed that even if the subject is relevant, it would need to be developed more systematically to contribute to our discussion.

One person commented that our discussion of the problematic character of American Jewry sometimes seemed to carry the suggestion that typical American Jews are "problematic" or "inferior." It was suggested that this characterization would not be missed by those so characterized -- and that this would undercut efforts to intervene in behalf of these very populations.

Seymour added to yesterday's presentation the notion that means are not, as some people think, non-neutral; rather, they embody various values and may predispose outcomes in particular directions. This led one member of the group to ask whether the 1 to 5 schema associated with the Educated Jew and Goals Projects also reflected certain value-commitments. That it does was acknowledged, but fuller discussion of what these value-commitments are was saved for another time.

A question was raised about the content/process distinction. Seymour suggested that his critique of process focused on the suggestion that there are certain processes which can be applied neutrally across all content domains. As against this, Seymour reiterated his view that, whether recognized or not, process inevitably embodies certain values that influence outcomes. [In the context of the working-with-institutions work-group, this issue was expressed as follows: does the effort to encourage what is sometimes called "a culture of inquiry" itself predispose an educating community towards certain kinds of educational purpose

and against others.]`

THE GREENBERG PRESENTATION

The discussion began with a question to Professor Greenberg concerning what was described as his "theological indeterminacy", i.e. the notion that his approach to education and to Text Study did not presuppose faith in God. Professor Greenberg was invited to fill in his view on this matter and to discuss its implications for the question of prayer. Here are some of the points made:

1. Religion is a human necessity. Each religion is a culturally conditioned expression or vehicle of responding to the universal need for transcendent meaning.
2. Whether you believe or not, it is part of education to learn how different cultures have responded to this basic human need. The presentation cannot be postulated on the assumption that the student is a believer, and it cannot be dogmatic -- for this is likely to arouse resistance. In fact, for this reason, a non-believer may prove a better teacher than a believer.
3. Professor Greenberg showed us the roots of his view in the position of Wilfred Smith.
4. Asked, against this background, how he would respond to the question, "Why Judaism rather than another religion?", he answered: "Because it's our tribe's way," an answer found troubling by several members of our group. Here are some of the issues that this suggestion raised:
 - a. Doesn't this suggest that being Jewish has no better explanation than its being an accident of birth?
 - a. Is this answer consistent with the biblical perspective (and perhaps, one person suggested, that of G.'s own father) that we obey the Commandments not because it's our tribe's way but because we're commanded?
 - b. What about the case in which a person's tie to the tribe is tenuous? G. described this situation as abnormal and pathological, and he suggested that in this case the educator's job is to try to help the unfortunate creature build a meaningful identity.
5. G.'s view that the state of not being identified with Judaism is problematic elicited the suggestion that in a significant sense this may not be the case. The reason is that persons who may not find their identity within the Jewish community may find

an identity elsewhere. Using the example of a Jew who found meaning in Islam, G. suggested that he had no interest in helping such a person find meaning in Judaism. If he has an identity that fills his/her life with meaning, he has no message for the person and would not intervene to try to re-direct his/her religious impulses.

6. G. urged that it is a mistake to preach Jewish superiority. Rather the challenge is to offer the student an opportunity to encounter the power of the text. This is the only acceptable way to proceed.

7. A question was raised concerning the differences between religious experience and other -- say, esthetic - forms of experience?

8. There was a lengthy discussion concerning the alleged malaise or sickness of the creature whose religious needs have not been met. While G. acknowledged that such people may feel a kind of malaise, he seemed to shy away from the suggestion that such a person is "sick".

9. Our lengthy discussion of prayer built on G.'s letter. A question was raised concerning Greenberg's unwillingness to go beyond the minimalistic aspiration that the student come to appreciation of the fact that people who pray are not hopeless primitive folks. Why, it was asked, does he not aspire to have his ideal graduates actually be "on the inside" of the activity of prayer? It was suggested that an endorsement of a committed attitude towards prayer was for a number of reasons more consistent with G's overall position than was the position he articulated. Among these reasons: 1) he was willing to stake out a stronger position on other issues; 2) G. acknowledged a relationship between prayer and moral conduct, and he had asserted a strong commitment to moral conduct; 3) G.'s minimalistic position sits uneasily with a title that suggests that he will offer not a minimalistic but an ideal set of aspirations.

10. The second part of our discussion with Professor Greenberg focused on his account of prayer.

Following the conversation with Professor G., we agreed to continue reflecting on his view with attention to: a) what his view is, b) what implications his view would have for the way we think about education; and c) the merits - or lack thereof -- of his view. We agreed to find a way to address these issues on Day 4.

Corrections and Omissions From Yesterday's notes:

The notes from yesterday continued to use the language "vision driven" as opposed to the suggested "vision guided". The note taker said he was resistant to the change and the group agreed to re-discuss this at a future time.

The example used yesterday of the Wexner group was not related to the fellows' involvement as educational leaders, but rather in more general, communal leadership roles as well.

Another member wanted to qualify this criticism based on his own personal experience with Wexner graduates who were indeed instrumental in starting new community day schools. These graduates were very clear that the impetus for their leadership efforts had come from the Wexner experience. Others agreed that they also had seen Wexner graduates have an impact on their communities.

It was stated that the Wexner organization itself is also concerned with this question of whether their graduates will reinvest their energy into the community. Although a number of Wexner graduates have made a difference in their communities, even the Wexner program isn't satisfied with the numbers who do so and their impact.

In addition to the point made yesterday about the amount of "giving" that is directed to Wexner fellows; it should be noted that the Wexner fellows aren't even told clearly that the Wexner program expects them to give back to the community tenfold. Most understand the goal as being engaged in a process of personal transformation. Perhaps there is a general lesson to be learned here about the need to more clearly state our expectations in education.

Some very talented young leaders who had powerful learning experiences did get the message and asked themselves "how can we do something similar for our children?". But in the construction of the Wexner program itself there was no connection built between personal Jewish study and community involvement. The Wexner model itself is paralyzing because it uses superstars who come from the outside and because the discourse does not encourage people to think for themselves and be insiders. Many of them consequently felt less, rather than more, able to be educational leaders.

The 'halacha' of the Wexner graduate ceremony includes the graduating groups talking about what they are going to give back. So some expectations are being setup. This a real issue related to 'scaling up', bringing in teachers from the outside. It's done to create the "Disneyland" of Jewish experience/ to be varied, energized, and glitzy. The downside is the difficulty of communicating a corporate ethic by using a large corps of Wexner teachers

who aren't necessarily aiming to get the Wexner message across. Also it is notable that so much is given to people who are already, by and large, affluent. Its the 'give me' ethic of America. The need to give so much first indicates the assumption about how hard it will be to get them to give back.

Another member asked why we spent so much time discussing the Wexner program. What is the question/problem to which we are addressing our interest. One person thought that we had gotten off track. Another said that if we are using this (the Wexner Fellows Program) as a case study, we don't have enough information. It's not fair to expect people to move into areas of policy and community development based on their newly derived passion for Jewish learning. All you would have are loose cannons. If it is a case study, we don't have the information to use.

Another person suggested that the Wexner case absorbed our energy, because while we often discuss teachers and institutions, yesterday we were focusing on the issues of the American Jewish community and our analysis of this program raised many issues related to the American Jewish community.

Finally another person suggested that the Wexner program raised the issue of what it means to educate the community about issues of education

In thinking strategically about goals, Amy shared her reaction to reading and re-experiencing the discussion about American Jewry on the first few pages. When returning to grad school, she noted that professors and students spoke about teachers and schools in a rather disrespectful tone with many global disparaging statements about them. Seizer says that for school reform to happen, we really have to believe in teachers capacity to change. Amy felt a similar disparagement in yesterday's discussion about American Jews who are not Jewishly knowledgeable. It's important not to make statements without evidence. There also seemed to be a lot of unexplained assumptions. Having worked in the area of reform for a long time, Amy said we've learned that we need to be very thoughtful and respectful of the people we want to change. It won't work if the people we work with feel that we want to 'fix' them especially if we aren't concerned about understanding and supporting them. We need to be careful how we talk about the American Jewish community. We are moving into terrain that is very touchy for American Jews.

Based on experience in leading a reform

This moves us towards the conversation with and about community leaders who are themselves very accomplished.

Seymour-(comment on teachers)- I was concerned with cutting off teachers' creativity when you program them with curriculum. The only way to get out of the prison of curriculum is if you understand the issues behind it.

Seymour on the distinction between vision and content. Why are we assuming that content (taught at Wexner or elsewhere) will have vision to it unless you emphasize vision. I'd like to develop further, what I mean by content:

There is a content of subject matter (bible, math, history)

There is also a content that deals with community. The people who deal with that are sociologists of the Jewish community, political scientists. (Suggestion: Sheffler "On the Training of Community Leaders" Human Potential. We can't have a conversation about teaching without including the content of teaching, the content of pedagogy, the content of the student (e.g. - the adult learner and how s/he is treated)

I would also like to make another point: The means of education are not neutral, they depend on the content of these elements of pedagogy. In China, Japan, yeshivot, teaching is different. In California many years ago there was a push in confluent education and values clarification, but values clarification as a means of teaching conflicts with Jewish values. If the means aren't neutral, we must discuss why one chooses one form of pedagogy over another.

Question: who is the problem? The Jew who isn't knowledgeable and committed or the community that doesn't bring the individual in? If you ask this question you have a different discussion. It would be important to have a philosophy of Jewish community. To address this problem, (i.e. develop a philosophy of Jewish community) that would help us respond to the inreach - outreach problem or core - periphery issue.

Seymour: The vision needs to include vision and community, vision and individual, vision and bible, etc. They need to be played off one another.

Someone asked Seymour to distinguish process from content.

Seymour- The distinctions don't really work. Goals will help determine what kind of process you use. In Jewish education so much of the discussion focuses

on issues of process that are vision, content, and values free (e.g. take methods like group process that 'can work anywhere'). This doesn't really work. Our principles often conflict with one another. They have to be played off one another. The means are both neutral and not neutral. My attack on process comes for the enormous amount of time and resources given to process and diverted from content issues, especially when process is assumed to be neutral and applicable to all situations.

Eli: If no process is value - neutral, what are the values embedded in the 1 - 5

Moshe Greenberg

Seymour introduced Moshe Greenberg and noted; the papers on the educated Jew have informed our discussions. Everyone has had a chance to read and discuss your paper. The group made a list of questions based on your papers. We want to start with one about the theological indeterminacy in your paper, which didn't assume a priori faith assumptions about God, Judaism, Tanach etc. by teachers or students.

What is the intellectual background on which this indeterminacy stands?

What does this mean for teaching particular subject matter, for example tefillah?

We were particularly interested because it might serve as a basis for teaching Judaism in a community school, which is why many people are here.

Greenberg: Let's start with that phrase, Theological Indeterminacy. The basic concept of religion is that it is a human necessity, in one form or another. The individual religions are culturally conditioned expressions of dealing with this fundamental human need. Therefore there ought to be analogous phenomena across religious lines answering basic human needs. Whether you believe or not, it is a part of education and self discovery to find out about the various religious responses to these human needs.

I'm not sure whether or not believers are the best presenters of religion or Judaism to non-believers. We should assume that most students don't come out of a believing environment. So one can't assume that there are agreed upon religious doctrines in a class. I assume this because I want to speak to all shades, from the extreme believer to the non-believer. I want to enlighten the non-believers in understanding a fundamental aspect of human culture.

In "Ideational Problems in the Teaching of Bible in the Public School" see pg. 262: .My approach to religion is illuminated by the work of Wilfred Confred Smith (see article in Encyclopedia Britannica, read last paragraph).

What would be the claim in an educational context for Judaism as a religious system beyond the claim of birth? "This is the way our own tribe does it". I'm being a slightly facetious but only slightly. "This is how we, our ancestors, have behaved. This is why we have behaved this way". This question doesn't

occur at an early age, the question of an early age is about the self. I wonder whether we'd ask that question if we had received a clear Jewish identity early on.

Participant- This an age of fluid identities. People don't see identity as fixed and the assumption of 'peoplehood' is tenuous.

G- Turning again to Smith, the last page - "A man's faith is in some sense...", I identify with the idea of malaise. If a child does not have a clear identity, then we are dealing with a malaise, a social pathology. If we are dealing with a social pathology, we must try to awaken or organize the blank in our pupils, try by a model of behavior and thinking, try to present a picture or model of an identity which will appeal to the student without one. So it's all the more important not to be dogmatic, insistent, so as not to arouse antagonism. That's why you cannot come with a nice set of dogmas; rather come to the public with a set of human needs which our tradition has met this way. A disorganized psyche is healed by coming into contact with an organized one. That's the secret of the Tsadik who healed anomie by being a model of an organized psyche.

Participant - I'm concerned about looking at lack of identity as a malaise. Some people identify with something other than Judaism as a prime mode of living. There are so many competing identities. The world offers many possibilities, so one may not feel lacking without a Jewish identity.

G- From time to time distraught parents or relatives approach me about a child who wants to convert. For example, in one case, the boy's sense of identification with Christianity was derived from his experience as an English major. He had found a home for himself which he hadn't found in his parents' home. I got him a job at a Jewish camp so he could see a Jewish model or role models. Five years later he had converted to Islam. He found a meaning in his life, first through Christianity then through Islam, which he had not found at home. I think this a preferable state. It would be edging on criminal to shake his faith in this lifeline he has found.

So any identity that fills life with meaning or answers the questions life poses, I have nothing to offer beyond satisfying their curiosity. But when I present to students without an identity, I hesitate to present a comparison: 'Judaism is better than...'. I present texts of power, these texts are conquering texts, they have conquered people, they have organized Western society. I aim to present these texts as best as I can with all their power and let them play on the soul of the student. It's cheap to say we're better. The texts have a glorious power of their own, kept alive through a glorious infusion of new ideas. This is their power, that they are able to absorb and remake the best of the cultures though which our people have passed. I have used comparisons to sharpen the perception of the distinctions, we have distinctive features for better or worse.

Now to be honest, some of the distinctiveness of our culture is in what we lack. That is important to acknowledge, because unless we feel a gap that has been addressed in another culture, we block progress in our own. For example, the development of human care - i.e. nursing, hospitals. In this, Christianity has a glorious page on the human care of humans. We can't match that care for the sick, poor and disabled. Once we point this out we can go about remedying this. For example, Tzvi Marks is studying Jewish resources for the human care of humans. This may become his life's work. Our ancestors have left space for us to stake out our own new territories.

Participant - Can you describe the relationship between the religious experience and other kinds of human experience. And, when we move back from the symbol to the religious experience behind the symbol, what is the hermeneutical method for doing this, so we can be sure we are going to get to the original religious experience? That is, distinguish religion from psychological phenomenon. How would you map the bodies of knowledge and experience of humans?

G- In a very elemental way, since the basis of my proposal for education is texts, I would except the text's definition. If the text says it is describing the working of the soul, I would accept that. Ibn Pekuda - the ways of the Yezter HaRa, I would classify as psychology. Another chapter on Bitachon, trust, as theology.

Participant - If religion is a human need, those without religion have a malaise. Some would say that you are really talking about a psychological need and calling it a religion.

G- If I said love was considered primarily a matter of chemistry, not sentiment, what would you respond ?

Response- There is another, qualitative, dimension that is beyond or different from the quantifiable dimension. How do you distinguish between religious and aesthetic?

G- Religion has to do with meaning. What makes it religious is the grounds of meaning in the transcendental realm. There is an infusion into the human realm which makes for significance.

Participant - On the level of education, isn't there a certain sense of luxury to being raised in an environment which speaks of revelation in a less metaphoric way than what you are suggesting. We know that those who take revelation as a literal construct can transmit Jewish life generation after generation. If it is not taken that way will the same passionate connection to the tradition be presented two or three generations from now? Also given your theological construct, isn't there inconsistency related to text. The texts to which we introduce our students are likely to include mitzvah or mitzaveh. Isn't there an inevitable cognitive dissonance between the idea of a commanding voice and a response that we do this "because that is what our people do?"

G- It isn't clear that the traditional rigorous system of education does replicate itself. There is an alternative explanation for the endurance of ultra orthodoxy -

the vortex phenomenon. Any religion without a place for fanatics isn't a religion. A religion that can't grasp the whole soul of people so inclined to be fully grasped isn't a whole religion. The haredi community has accession from the outside constantly. I'm sure it also sloughs off. Not everyone born to a haredi family has a haredi soul. The haredi community persists because there is a need for it. There are some who are powerfully attracted to the signs, certainties, clear maps of life.

With regards to the commanding voice of the text, the answer isn't simple. But this is not a peculiarity of modern theology. Medieval theologians also had a complex map, about how G-d, who is wholly other, can communicate with man. For example, why can each prophet be identified by his style of revelation if it is a dictation from G-d? This is an ancient question. The Talmud asks this; the Midrash inferred from this that there is a human dimension to prophecy. The human prophet shapes what he sees/hears based on his experience, situation, etc. Hesitation to speak with certainty about revelation is not modern, it has to do with sophistication. Maimonides is said to have anticipated Buber in saying that Moses, not G-d, wrote the laws. My basic position makes room for revelation by my definition of religion. The source of revelation, of meaning, of religion is not within humanity; it is transcendent.

Participant - Are you saying that this basic need that religion responds to invites different people to find fulfillment of this need in different ways? A haredi might accept this view too by seeing himself as a vortex person and others as not.

G- I'd say vortex community not individual.

Participant - So people who think that they don't need religion are sick?

G- No, the pathology is the need, without the means to fulfill it.

Participant - When you see the problem as a pathology, you need to respond to the pathology with a therapy?

G- When you say respond, there is no one way because there is no standard psyche. The texts apply to many psyches.

Participant - So then the young ages are very crucial, because they start out without an identity. So the challenge to the educator is to find a link to those who missed that.

G- The older you get the more impossible to intervene from the outside. The person himself has to be seeking. Without the confession of the poor soul and a desire for healing, how can healing begin?

Participant - If the religious need is a need and the person has not experienced an answer, the need may rise up later unfulfilled, depressed, dysfunctional. The presentation of religion may respond to that.

G- Here is my personal understanding of prayer and what petitionary prayer is good for. A series of propositions:

G-d is the creator, maintainer of the cosmos.

Cosmos is a Greek word whose opposite is chaos

Cosmos is order

G-d is creator of the natural, physical, material and moral order.

The observed phenomenon that there is order in nature (and therefore there is science).

That order is a creation of G-d.

That is a partial definition of G-d - the maintainer of the natural and physical order and, in the domain of humans, of moral order. For example, there is predictability (the more ambiguous) in the moral order. Evil eventually defeats itself. Pride goeth before the fall (if you are patient enough), good begets good. This view is set forth in the Bible. In the human realm "The way of the lord is the way of tzedakah and mishpat". J 9:23 - I am the lord who works tzedakah and chesed, and mishpat in the land, for in these I delight (chesed is solidarity, what moves people to help one another).

Given this conception of G-d, in order for prayer to be heard/received, the pray-er has to identify with G-d. "The lord is far from the wicked but accepts the pray-er of the righteous". The analogy is with inter-human behavior. 'The interests of the prayer and the interests of the King are identical'. The prophets reject Israel's prayer as hateful to G-d. Amos 5 "I hate and despise your feasts...., let justice flow like waters and righteousness like a stream." In the pray-er to be heard, he must adjust his will to G-ds.

Definition of religion from Encyclopedia of Religion, pg. 602, by Fern.

Prayer is an attitude or predisposition of the personality by which we give ourselves more completely to the creativity of G-d.

We use the language of prayer to acquire this disposition, but the language is for G-d, not ourselves. Prayer makes us more sensitive/responsive to the people around us, and they become more sensitive to our own interests. This is the contagion of good. Our wants are so transformed that- 1)they can be fulfilled, adjusted to the moral order and the natural order. 2)These prayers are fulfilled by our participating in the community of persons made more responsive to the work of G-d in answer to the prayer. Adjusting to such a will infuses our lives with these attributes.

I find in this statement a step forward in making sense of petitionary prayer, but it requires more attention to unself - sufficiency. It seems like it all depends on the pray-er. My experience has led me to the unself - sufficiency of the human prayer.

A passage from Bachya. Refinement of the concept of prayer in the Bible. "You make me perceive your wondrous deeds and place thanks into my mouth and praise on my tongue." A man should do more than what is in his prayer and beseech G-d to grant him to do more than is in his capacity.

We then turned to Greenberg's letter to Harry Schulweis (see attached). I wanted to show that from the biblical beginnings it is possible to construct (passage through din v'rachamim) a theory of prayer which is not childish. Some may need something more sophisticated, but this satisfies me to translate

the Biblical level of speech to a higher level of thinking. Community also comes into this. The place of prayer in creating community is touched on by both Fern and my speculations.

Participant -An educational question based on your paper which links Torah study with response to mitzvot. Why should students live out and not just respect these symbols ? With reference to prayer, is the final aim that the student will pray or that the student will understand its prayer's transcendent meaning?

G- No. I'm always a minimalist.

Participant - Do you want students to appreciate the value of Torah study or actually participate in it?

G- In prayer the minimum expectation is that the students won't consider prayer as puerile, hopelessly childish, that is to lead the students to a higher conception of prayer. The moral realm is civil society. In that realm, moral action is necessary. Moral appreciation is not enough.

Participant -Is it enough to study the Siddur as text, or study an essay about prayer, or must the student experience prayer?

G- I don't know the classroom that well. It may be educationally feasible to simulate prayer.

Translation

Was the previous session helpful?

A- It was helpful but it would take considerable more time with him.

A- The tefilah part was a good example of fleshing out one element because he fit it back into his system. Does the child need to believe in the G-d Greenberg describes? Does he need to encounter that? Does the child need to pray or to appreciate a Jewish theology of prayer?

A- That response is too minimalist for maintaining the American Jewish community.

Response- Does it matter if you like it? You can still play out the implications.

Danny- So there are two ways to play out these issues. Two possible agendas for conversation:

1) What does it mean if you buy Greenberg? Was this level 1? How do you move down from there?

2) Is this really an ideal Jewish education? Is this the agenda/vision we want to invest in?

- or three agendas - 1)Clarifying

2)Critiquing

3)Playing out translation to education.

- Seymour says that one and three will be the same.

It was decided that he was probably right, that if translation led us to say "I only need tefillah in my school twice a week," you might then be clearer about judging it.

Greenberg seems to think people work on the level of #1, high on #1 and he also assumes that people are sick. There is a strong cognitive prejudice here. He argues for Judaism and tefillah in very ideational terms. Is that either an accurate or a workable assumption?

If you create a vision of a minimalist assumption is that helpful?

D.P.- I'm not sure that on level one, I understood the experience of the transcendent as a cognitive feat.

GOALS PROJECT SEMINAR, SUMMER 1996, DAY 2

RECAPITULATION AND DISCUSSION

Corrections and omissions. It was noted at the very beginning of the day that Annette Hochstein had been wrongly described as the President of the Mandel Institute and CAPE; in actuality, her role is that of Director.

A comment concerning the difference between "values" and "vision" had been omitted from the summary of Day 1. In response to the comment that existing educational institutions that had been described as lacking in vision were actually informed by "latent visions" that reflected their supporting communities, it had been suggested by someone else that the term "values" might be more appropriate than "vision" to characterize the predicament being pointed to. The difference between the two was characterized as follows: while "vision" refers to a state of being that we hope to achieve, "values" reflect our existing situation.

A suggested lexicon-change. One person suggested (really, reiterated a longstanding suggestion) that we substitute "vision-guided" for "vision-driven" on the grounds that "vision-driven" carries the sense that an institution is being pushed around by the vision. A number of people adopted the suggestion in their comments.

The first session of the day developed around a number of different themes. Some of the major themes are briefly discussed below.

The situation of American Jewry. Picking up on our discussion on Friday, our discussion of American Jewry continued. The observation that there seemed to be some tension between the claim that American Jews are generally satisfied with their situation and the claim that they are spiritually hungry was greeted with the suggestion that the two claims are not necessarily in conflict: it may well be, for example, that the designation "satisfied" applies to some 80% of them, while the remaining 20% can be characterized as "spiritually hungry."

There was some lively discussion concerning whether this estimate underestimated the number of "spiritually hungry" groping people, and it was suggested by one person that the reason that we may be under-estimating this group is that many of their members has ceased to locate itself within the organized Jewish community (since this community and its mainline institutions fail to meet their needs). The point was illustrated with attention to the phenomenon of Jewish Buddhists. To this it was responded that one oughtn't

become unduly focused on this kind of a small minority, since the majority of identified Jews do not seem to be particularly hungry spiritually, much like the people described in CARE OF THE SOUL who have lost access to a vocabulary that speaks of transcendent matters.

Assuming it to be true that many American Jews feel no great thirst for spirituality, it was suggested that this was not something to be acquiesced in. Rather, it is precisely the job of great leadership to change such facts, to bring members of the community to an envisioning and appreciation of alternatives to their present sense of life's and Judaism's possibilities and desiderata. The suggestion that leadership can and should play a critical role in helping contemporary Jewry access Jewish culture in ways that will meet deep human needs was affirmed by one member of the group -- who went on to note, however, that the role and challenges of great leaders would vary greatly depending on whether one diagnosed contemporary Jewry as already spiritually hungry or as "unawake" to certain possibilities of the spirit.

What's the problem - and how do we know? The need to better investigate the situation of American Jewry. The discussion of how best to characterize the situation of American Jewry elicited a question concerning the basis for various assertions concerning the situation of American Jewry. Were the assertions being made data-driven, informed by serious research, or were they informed by "gut-feelings" for which there is little hard evidence? Since important policy decisions depend on our assessment of the situation of American Jews, it is, it was suggested, important to do serious research designed to better understand the self-understanding, the values, etc. of the different sub-groups that make up the American Jewish community.

A clearer understanding of such matters might put us in a better position to answer the question, "What's the problem (and whose problem is it)?" -- that is, to more effectively articulate the problematic situation to which improved Jewish education is said to be the response. It was suggested that it was not entirely clear how this problem ought to be characterized -- and that its thoughtful characterization is of great importance in determining strategic responses to it. It may be a mistake to assume that we actually have such a shared understanding.

In a related vein, one member suggested that the effort to better understand what American Jews are like and what they want need not be understood as a prelude to efforts to transform them or to simply "respond to demand". Rather, it was suggested that if we listen carefully to the way American Jews understand their situation and their needs, we may acquire

important insights about what needs to be incorporated into a compelling vision for American Jews. The thrust of this person's comment is that listening respectfully to what people feel they want or need, need not be conceptualized, somewhat pejoratively, as responding to market-considerations; there may be a wisdom at work in their self-understandings, and we can learn important things from what they say they want if we listen openly and respectfully.

Diversity, community, and passion. The theme of diversity was also revisited, and our discussion of it deepened, during this session. A suggestion was made that the American Jewish community seems to be moving in two different and competing directions. On the one hand, as American Jews are maturing and becoming clearer about where they stand and what they want Jewishly, there is a movement in the direction of developing varied particularistic institutions that attract like-minded individuals. On the other hand, and at the same time, there is a concern (exacerbated by the tendency just noted) that the American Jewish community is being Balkanized and that what we need is an overarching vision that can unite the different groupings that make up the community.

In a related vein, it was suggested by one member of the group that there may be a tension between pluralism and passion. It is the desire for a more passionate life that drives people into more particularistic commitments; as differences between groups thus increase, the sense of sharing in a common universe of values and discourse that cuts across groups declines. In response to this, it was suggested that one of the great challenges of today's Jewish community is to identify a pluralistic vision -- a vision that can serve as an umbrella for very different kinds of Jews - that can also elicit the passionate commitment of its members.

This discussion soon focused on the situation of community-schools. It was noted that such schools often represent the particularistic vision of one sub-group (say, the Orthodox), but presented in such a way as to be respectful and inclusive of other kinds of sub-groups that send their children. An alternative is to work towards a community school that represents a genuinely distinct pluralistic vision -- a vision that articulates meaningful goals the express commitments, values and aspirations that are shared among the diverse constituencies that make up the school-community. One should not, it was suggested, assume prematurely that it is not possible to do this.

It was noted during this discussion that our understanding of the problem of diversity in Jewish life and the possibility of a common vision could be enriched through contrast and comparison with problems of

particularism and multi-culturalism in the American and Israeli contexts.

Interpreting the Wexner phenomenon. It had already been observed that the young leadership group cultivated by the Wexner program showed a great interest in studying Jewish texts but very little interest in addressing the challenges of Jewish education. A number of hypotheses were advanced concerning this phenomenon:

1. Their Wexner education was insufficient to overcome their sense of relative ignorance. Lack of confidence concerning their content-knowledge engendered a reluctance to assume a leading role in efforts to change Jewish education.

2. The Wexner program tends to select for establishment-types who are very comfortable with the existing pattern of Jewish life and who are therefore unlikely to push hard for radical alternatives to the way Jewish educational and institutional life is now organized.

3. These people spend a number of years in the program "being given to", as they have the opportunity to explore basic textual and existential questions and to develop a sense of being part of a learning community. Why should we think they would respond positively when asked, of a sudden, to "give back" by engaging in what for them might seem a much less exciting activity of attending to the community's educational arrangements.

4. Neither the content nor the pedagogy associated with the Wexner program is organized with attention to the desirability of eventually taking on a leadership role in Jewish education. Organization of the curriculum around experts who lecture to and wow the group, rather than emphasizing the students' ability to make sense of the material using their own resources, militates against the development of the kind of self-confidence and sense of initiative that would make these Wexnerites effective educational leaders. It was suggested this connection that in teaching Jewish ideas to lay constituencies who it is hoped will play a leadership role in Jewish education, it is important to ask what the aims of the learning activity are and to be guided by this in determining appropriate subject-matter and pedagogy. (See discussion of "content" below for a related discussion.)

5. While these Wexnerites are moved by the opportunity to address their own needs for community and for Jewish learning, they generally lack a sense of concern for the larger predicament of the Jewish people, and they fail to connect their own excitement about learning with the larger needs of the Jewish community at this moment in time.

It was observed in the context of this discussion that the Wexner leadership, like much of the leadership of the organized American Jewish community, fails to realize that addressing the ills of the American Jewish community requires serious efforts to infuse not only education and its own discourse but also its day-to-day communal work with powerful Jewish content; hence its resistance to CIJE's proposal for the Wexner retreat in which CIJE participated.

It was observed by one member of the group that the lay people associated with the Experiment in Congregational Education of the Reform Movement (ECE) differed substantially from the Wexner clientele. Drawn into the process by a desire to improve the congregation or the education of their own children, they had a strong interest in education but were, at least initially, often impatient with the notion that they should be engaged in Jewish study. Ultimately, however, this study component proved very important.

The relevance of existing structures. Some of our discussion focused on whether existing communal structures - e.g., Federations and denominations - continue to be the most effective avenues of meeting the community's needs. In the case of the denominations, one person suggested that they represent a response to questions, once thought central, that are no longer being asked; and that, in fact, they may not be the most effective vehicle for addressing the community's needs and aspirations. Whether it was really a good idea to abandon concepts like "Revelation" that had been used to define the differences between denominations was also discussed.

What kinds of content-knowledge do different kinds of Jewish education constituencies (lay leaders, rabbis, principals, teachers, etc.) need? This question became one of the organizing themes for Seymour's first "Philosophy to Practice" sessions.

PHILOSOPHY TO EDUCATION, SESSION I

Seymour's presentation began with a number of clarifications:

Education - not schools! Seymour began by noting that in thinking about vision-driven practice our interest is not in schools but in education -- schools being just one vehicle and often not the best one for carrying out education. Indeed, a vision such as Greenberg's is ill-suited for a school and requires something much richer like an enclave.

Vision is not the only element needed for effective practice, but it needs special emphasis. The reason for this is that unlike other varied content areas that pertain to education design, the question of vision (Levels 1, 2, and 3) has been largely neglected; indeed, since the days of Rosenzweig and Buber, little has been written about Level 2; hence the need to give special emphasis to this matter in our own time.

What content is! "Content" is to be distinguished from "process". Content is not "Jewish subject-matter", although it includes Jewish subject-matter as an important component. Content includes any substantive input into educational deliberation and practice -- e.g. understandings of the social milieu, of the student, of the teacher, etc. The fact that powerful Jewish ideas have long been neglected in discussions of content makes it imperative that this theme be emphasized, but it should by no means be thought that this is the only substantive input that needs to be taken in determining educational practice.

What kind of content for whom? With attention to the 1 to 5 schema, we focused for some time on the kinds of content knowledge that different stake holders in the process of Jewish education need. Lay leaders, Seymour suggested, need to be sophisticated regarding levels 1 and 2; whether this means that they need to have substantive understanding at these levels or just need to know that these levels are important was left open. In the case of principals, Seymour suggested that they need to have a sophisticated understanding at each of the 5 levels; in other words, they need to have a sophisticated higher-order understanding of the principles informing curriculum, pedagogy, etc., as well as an understanding of the foundation of these principles.

In the case of teachers, Seymour was somewhat equivocal. Though he expressed uncertainty concerning whether they needed substantive understanding at levels 1) and 2), he also noted that teachers are imprisoned not just by ready-made curricula but by not being given the opportunity to develop sophistication at levels 1, 2, 3. For it is this kind of awareness of the principles that inform the curricula, pedagogy, social organization found in a school that can liberate the teacher from blind routine at level 4. This kind of awareness grows out of reflection at levels 1 through 3.

Guiding principles informing the development of the Educated Jew Project. Asked about the problem to which the Educated Jew Project was a response, Seymour identified three principles that informed its development:

1. As suggested earlier, there is a need for level 2 formulations of the aims of Jewish education, formulations that mediate between Level 1 philosophical formulations and level 3 formulations that help shape educational practice. Hence the invitation to selected scholars to develop papers that offer Level 2 understandings of what an educated Jew is.

2. No vision without implementation. The Project was only interested in visions that were implementable. A vision which, even when suitably modified in light of various exigencies, could not be implemented might be philosophically interesting but was beyond the purview of the project. The project was interested not just in the vision but in the way it could be used to better understand the challenges of practice (at Levels 3, 4, and 5).

3. The Five Levels is a tool associated with the Project's work which is used because it has proved effective in helping to identify, distinguish, and show the relationship between different challenges associated with enabling a vision to come alive in a living environment.

The power of content-analysis. Implicit in Level 4 phenomena (curricula, pedagogy, actual social organization of the school as a community) are weighty assumptions that can be categorized as Levels 1, 2, and 3 theses. Often unconscious or at least unexamined, these various assumptions can be teased out through content-analysis. For example, ordinary curricula tacitly make assumptions concerning what counts as knowledge, as inquiry, and as proof. They imply views concerning the nature of the historical process, the nature of an ethical life, of science, of wisdom, etc. Once surfaced and made explicit, the assumptions concerning these matters that are embedded in everyday practice may prove effective ways of stimulating reflection at levels 1, 2, and 3. This is important because, Seymour suggested, in a properly ordered school, curriculum and other decisions are informed by assumptions at levels 1, 2, and 3 that have been subjected to critical reflection.

How introduce philosophical reflection into the world of educational practice? The suggestion that schools would be better off if their philosophical assumptions were subjected to critical examination was widely

endorsed, but questions remained concerning how to introduce inquiry concerning such matters in such a way that it would seem neither an irrelevant frill nor over-whelming. In relation to schools now being created and existing schools, the "how cut into the problem?" under real world conditions preoccupied a number of the participants in our discussion?

The role of the principal. Near the end of the session, Seymour suggested that in the effort to generate vision-driven practice, the principal needed to play an important role but could not be the principal player. The principal's understandable practical immediate concerns interfered with his/her ability to systematically take on the "reflective outsider's" perspective on the institution; this role could more properly be assigned to a philosophical type assigned to the institution. At the same time, the principal needs to be supportive of the enterprise; otherwise, he/she will sabotage it.

PREPARING FOR GREENBERG

After our small work-group sessions, our last session of the day was spent preparing for our meeting with Professor Moshe Greenberg. Seymour noted that Professor Greenberg believes that he learned a great deal about the Bible from the questions of educators who were concerned with how to teach the Bible. Unlike many professional Bible scholars, Greenberg takes seriously questions emanating from a concern with making the Bible an existentially meaningful and central text for those who encounter it.

Much of our time was spent generating questions for our discussion with Professor Greenberg. Among the questions identified were the following:

1. Why/how did he decide on the four elements he identified?
2. Can he clarify and explain place of history in his approach?
3. Can he clarify and more fully explain the place of Hebrew in his approach?
4. Could he further explicate the relative importance and the relationship between immersion in the Jewish and the general culture -- as well as the suggestion that we derive all our values from Jewish sources?
5. What does it mean and how is it possible to encourage a respect for the text in a non-textual culture?
6. Why does Professor Greenberg combine as one element the love of Text

study and love of fulfilling the Commandments between Man and God?

7. How, if at all, is Professor Greenberg's conception relevant to a community school featuring a diverse clientele?

We agreed that question 7, expanded to include the question of prayer, might be a good place to start the discussion.

GOALS PROJECT MEETINGS, JULY 1996
DAY 1

WORDS OF WELCOME

Our first session began with a welcome to the participants that included expressions of relief and thankfulness that they had arrived safely. It was noted that Michael Paley had been unavoidably delayed in New York but would be coming next week.

On behalf of the Center for Advanced Professional Educators (CAPE), which is hosting the Goals Project meetings, Annette Hochstein (president of CAPE and the Mandel Institute), welcomed the participants. She took note of the fact that like the Goals Project, the principal initiatives that CAPE is involved with (including the School for Educational Leadership and the Jerusalem Fellows) are built around the idea that powerful content (from Jewish thought and from the humanities, as well as other domains) must be at the heart of efforts to improve education. Excellent people armed with powerful content are a key to significant educational improvement.

Following Annette, Alan Hoffmann, executive director of the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education (which, along with the Mandel Institute, organized this set of meetings), also greeted the participants. Noting that the Commission on Jewish Education in North America identified "Building the Profession" and "Community mobilization" as the critical building-blocks for improving Jewish education, he added that the avoidance of content-issues (of questions concerning the aims of Jewish education) grew not out of a sense that they are unimportant but out of the belief that attention to these issues would pull the Commission apart. It was, however, recognized that questions concerning the content and goals of Jewish education ("Jewish education, for what?") are critical, and over the last few years this matter has become an integral dimension of all of CIJE's initiatives; in effect, the Goals Project has ceased being regarded as an independent project but as a third basic building-block. Alan used the metaphor of a rope to suggest the ways in which these three strands of CIJE's work are inter-woven. Alan went on to note the ways in which the Mandel Institute's Educated Jew Project, launched by Seymour Fox around the time of the Commission and later joined by Daniel Marom, has facilitated the work of the Goals Project. The partnership between CIJE and the Mandel Institute on the Goals Project has proved a wonderful example of fruitful collaboration. Alan concluded by noting that this set of meetings represents the beginning of a new and important stage in the unfolding of this project.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE SEMINAR

Daniel Pekarsky's effort to contextualize the seminar began with the observation that the Goals Project is an attempt to act systematically in the North American context on Seymour Fox's longstanding thesis that in too many of its settings Jewish education is parve, in that it is not deeply informed by powerful Jewish ideas or organized around compelling visions, grounded in Jewish ideas, of what a meaningfully educated Jewish human being or community is; and that until this problem is remedied, we should not expect significant educational improvement or better results. Guided by this principle, the vision that informs the development of the Goals Project is a time in which, across North America, Jewish educating institutions are organized around visions of Jewish existence, both individual and communal, that are grounded in powerful Jewish ideas.

This is an ambitious agenda, and Daniel identified some of the major challenges that need to be faced. There is, for example, a need "to seed the culture" -- that is, to create among critical lay and professional constituencies in the American Jewish community an awareness that taking the time to wrestle with questions vision and goals is not a frill or a distraction but an indispensable part of a serious effort to improve education. There are also strategic decisions that will need to be made -- for example, concerning "where to cut in to the problem:" should the effort to encourage vision-driven practice focus on institutions? If so, what are the advantages and dangers of favoring existing as opposed to new institutions? Alternatively, might it be wiser to focus on personnel? If so, what kind (e.g., rabbis, principals, central agency staff, etc.) and at what stage (in-service or pre-service)? Given limited resources, such strategic decisions will need to be made.

Though we are still not sure of how to decide among such strategic options, we are quite confident that progress along any front will require certain pre-conditions, and the development of these pre-conditions are at the heart of our work right now. These pre-conditions include the following:

Knowledge-base. There is much that we need to know if we are to proceed effectively. It is, for example, one thing to say that professionals in Jewish education should encourage and exemplify vision-driven practice, but what does this really mean? What would it mean for, say, for the responsibilities of a principal in relation to supervision, curriculum choice, teachers meetings, interactions with parents and children, role-modelling, work with lay boards, hiring, evaluation etc.? What kinds of skills, knowledge, and commitments would such a person need -- and what kind of

preparation (and/or inservice) would equip the person for this role? Analogously, it is okay to say that institutions should become more vision-driven, but there is a tremendous amount of knowledge of different kinds that a serious effort in this direction would require.

The kitchen. Efforts to seed the culture, to work with institutions, to work with personnel of different kinds, will require a multitude of resources which need to be gathered, or if unavailable, created and then systematically organized for ready use. As examples, these resources include:

powerful portraits of vision-driven educating institutions (from general and especially Jewish education) -- portraits that can be used to make vivid what a vision-driven institution is;

case-studies of institutions that have travelled towards vision-driven practice - studies that might help interested institutions to understand what might be involved, and that progress is possible;

portraits of an educated Jewish human being (of the kind being produced by the Mandel Institute's Educated Jew Project) that can be used (among other things) a) to stimulate careful reflection concerning the aims of Jewish education among critical constituencies, and b) to exhibit the ways in which a commitment to certain philosophical ideas can inform and enrich an institution's approach to subject-matter selection, interpretation of subject-matter, pedagogy, evaluation, etc.

Articles that identify competing conceptions (grounded in different understandings of Jewish existence) of how to approach such subject-areas as Hebrew, Text-study, Israel, Tfillah, etc.

Exercises that help surface and stimulate reflection concerning implicit visions.

Capacity. The various efforts identified above -- building the kitchen, seeding the culture, building our knowledge-base (through pilot projects, deliberations etc.), and working with institutions and critical constituencies, cannot be seriously undertaken without human capacity! The development of the project requires that we expand the pool of individuals who can, in different ways, contribute to our work.

It is this last need for capacity (itself a precondition for other

necessary initiatives) that has given rise to our meetings this week. We (the Mandel Institute/CIJE staff associated with the Goals Project) sought out individuals based on the following criteria: 1) a sense that they would be sympathetic to the Goals Project's content-sensitive approach to education; 2) possession of the kinds of knowledge and skills that would enable them, in different ways, help us address the project's challenges; 3) in the aftermath of the seminar, a willingness to give time to the project. [Not mentioned but also relevant in determining who to invite was our sense that the mix of participants at the seminar would encourage stimulating and thoughtful discussions during these meetings.]

These meetings are informed by two basic hopes: that we deepen our individual and shared understandings of the work we are embarked on; and that we begin identifying fruitful arenas and ways in which participants can forward the development of the project.

PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVES ON CORE THEMES AND THESES

Since all participants have already had considerable opportunity to read and discuss articles that speak to the project's perspective and assumptions, we began by giving members of the group a chance to voice their reactions (what they found powerful, unclear, problematic, in need of further discussion, etc.).

Many participants spoke to the power of the perspective associated with the Goals Project/Educated Jew Project. A number of people noted that they found attractive the notion that Jewish education needs to be grounded in conceptions of an educated Jew, of what a Jewish life, at its best, is; and in this connection, someone noted that the distinction between an existential vision (a vision of the kind of person one hopes to nurture) and an institutional vision (a vision of what an institution at its best is like) was very helpful. The assumption of these projects that Jewish education is unlikely to improve dramatically unless enriched by powerful Jewish ideas also elicited strong positive reactions; certainly many around the table identified with the thesis that too often the content of Jewish education is boringly shallow. Other comments suggested that these projects afforded a fruitfully complex understanding of vision and its relationship to practice, as well offering an array inter-related concepts that allowed for new ways of understanding the challenges of, say, building a new institution.

While comments concerning the power of the perspective at work in the Goals Project are noteworthy, perhaps more important from the standpoint of the development of the seminar are comments that speak to participants'

concerns, uncertainties, uncomfortablenesses, and questions. A rich variety of comments were made. Below an attempt is made to capture many of them under four distinct (though, as you will see, overlapping) headings.

THE AMERICAN CONTEXT

Are Jewish educating institutions really visionless -- or do they simply have visions some of us feel are problematic? As against the suggestion made in one of the papers participants had read to the effect that many Jewish educating institutions are not vision-driven, it was suggested that perhaps these institutions are animated by a vision that is at one with the aspirations, values, and expectations of the contemporary American Jewish community -- an implicit vision that emphasizes ethnicity, that is non-demanding, and that doesn't compete with the middle class, American values and aspirations of contemporary American Jews. This kind of comment was echoed by the observation that despite some of our reservations about the content and quality of Jewish education, many American Jews seem quite satisfied with what they get. In a similar vein, one participant wondered aloud whether contemporary American Jews have a will for anything different than the standard fare they now receive. This perspective was punctuated with references to the observations of Gershon Cohen and Ron Reynolds, who spoke to this problem as well.

If it is true that the implicit vision animating the educating institutions of American Jews are not an accident but reflects the values and hopes of that community, what implications does this have for what how we interpret and approach the challenge of encouraging content-rich approaches to Jewish education of the kind the Goals Project is concerned with? In this connection, the suggestion was made that the challenge of the Goals Project will prove all the more difficult if, as the question implies, there will be active resistance to any effort to encourage a different kind of vision.

Are American Jews complacent and self-satisfied? While one of the views articulated in our session is that American Jews are basically satisfied with their situation, a contrasting view was also expressed -- namely, that, perhaps beneath the surface, there is a deep hunger for something more than contemporary American and American Jewish life offers -- a "something more" to which Judaism and Jewish education have the capacity to respond? If so, can this hunger be tapped and used to catalyze a richer Jewish education?

Need for attention to uniquely American circumstances. A number of comments indicated a sense that in striving to develop vision-driven educating

institutions, it is critical to pay attention to uniquely American circumstances. It is critical that we develop an in-depth understanding of the outlook and self-understanding of the American Jewish community. Some also suggested that while there is a strong need to articulate images of Jewish community and of educated Jewish human beings, the papers connected with the Goals Project and Educated Jew Projects are not sufficiently grounded in the realities of American Jewish life.

Given changing gender-roles and understandings of gender in the American-Jewish community, at least one person articulated the need to address this matter in thinking about guiding visions for American Jews and for Jewish education -- especially in view of the fact that much of the textual tradition is the product of males.

Getting to know vs. acquiescing in the Jewish-American reality.
Acknowledging the importance of developing a deep understanding of the American Jewish community, one member of the group expressed concern lest Jewish education become simply market-driven -- that is, that it simply respond to demands emanating from the community, rather than seek to encourage an education that is richer than what the community is presently ready to demand.

What is the place of denominations and denominational ideologies in the effort to render Jewish educational practice more vision-driven? It was observed that the readings associated with the project don't address the fact that many educating institutions are tied to denominations, and it was suggested that this fact has a strong bearing on the direction and perhaps process of an institution's effort to become more vision-driven. Attention to this matter could prove important.

In what ways does the inherently American context - such as its religious dimension - influence and have an impact on the specific Jewish educational vision of educating institutions?

Can Jewish life be formulated in such a way that American Jews immersed in the culture of modernity will find it compelling, will come to feel that their participation as active members of American society can be enhanced through their Jewish understandings and commitments?

Assuming - as, for example, the Wexner program's success suggests - that it is possible to engage contemporary American Jews in the study of powerful

Jewish ideas, why is it so much more difficult to make them equally passionate about working to make it possible for others - adults and children alike - to encounter educational settings featuring rich Jewish content? How address this problem?

PROCESS OF CHANGE

Top-down vs. multiple (and perhaps simultaneous) starting-points. While it was noted that encouraging key stake holders to wrestle with questions of vision can be a useful tool in encouraging a movement towards vision-driven practice, a concern was expressed that we not adopt a "top-down" approach that holds that one first articulates a vision and then proceed to implement it. The suggestion was made that there might be multiple starting-points for launching an institution's movement towards greater vision-driven practice - and that which one, or which combination, is appropriate depends on idiosyncratic local circumstances.

The need for malleable visions and the distinction between philosophical and educational visions. A concern was expressed that the Goals Project might be viewing vision as something fixed and unchanging, the only challenge being to implement it. This, it was suggested, would be very problematic. The need for malleability was underscored by one participant (who is associated with the project) who distinguished between philosophical and educational visions. While a strictly philosophical vision may remain fixed, an educational vision must, if it is to live in the world, be shaped by its interaction with the world of practice and with critical constituencies.

Different approaches to the process of change. One participant distinguished two different approaches to increased vision-driven practice: one of them begins with the effort to formulate a vision and then proceeds to find ways to embed it; the other begins with efforts to unearth and articulate the vision, concerns, and conflicts implicit in the perspectives of critical constituencies and in the institution's operation and to build efforts to become more vision-informed on this foundation. The comment raised questions concerning the desirability of one or the other approach and of possible ways of integrating them.

How infuse an institution's reconceptualization process with rich Jewish content? Assuming and building on the view that it is important that Jewish content inform an institution's efforts to arrive a powerful vision of what it is about in Jewish education, a question was raised concerning how and when to

introduce such content so that it will feed the process rather than seeming like a distraction.

What kinds of content-knowledge are needed? Along with Jewish content-knowledge, a number of comments pointed to the need for other kinds of content-knowledge as well, e.g., knowledge from organizational theory, sociology, leadership theory, etc. Some suggested that written materials associated with the project don't adequately reflect the importance of these kinds of content-knowledge.

Can you change old institutions? A couple of participants expressed skepticism concerning the possibility of changing many existing institutions. Echoing the comment of one participants that there is often not a strong will to change, they suggested that it may be easier and more effective to launch a new institution than to try to change an existing one?

Attention to resources is critical. It was suggested that in determining whether a vision can be embedded in practice and, more basically, whether it can be used to guide practice, it is important to consider whether one has the necessary resources "to pull it off."

Where does the vision come from? A number of comments/questions were articulated concerning the source of an educating institution 's vision. At least one person made the comment that the community supporting the institution needs to be actively involved in shaping its guiding vision. Someone else - or perhaps it was one of the same people - suggested that educators need to abandon their deference to others and become more active advocates for and articulators of their institution's guiding vision?

More generally, what is the role of the community, of educators, of intellectual and religious elites (representing a kind of Jewish high culture) in shaping the guiding vision of educational institutions?

How can the "Educated Jew" papers best be used to encourage serious deliberation concerning a guiding educational vision? The suggestion was made that it is not enough to read individual articles like the ones by Professors Greenberg and Brinker. In order to stimulate rich thinking, it is also critical that careful attention be paid to the disagreements among these thinkers, to the ways in which they would respond to one another, etc. This would serve to highlight what is at stake.

How can you use the single-minded visions associated with the "Educated Jew" papers to create a working vision for a particular institution? If the

process eclectically draws on different papers, is there a risk of losing internal consistency?

IDENTIFYING LIMITING ASSUMPTIONS. One of the participants noted that an institution's efforts at change are sometimes hindered by "limiting assumptions" (e.g., "Jewish education is going to be painful for my children as it was for me."); surfacing such assumptions can make it easier to get beyond them.

VISION/THEORY.....PRACTICE

Taking practice seriously. A number of times it was stressed that we not adopt a top-down model that sees practice as a mere derivative of theory/vision. At least three points were noted in this connection:

1. Educational practice (what actually happens when an effort is made to translate a vision or idea into educational practice) often serves to interpret, critique, temper, or otherwise modify the original guiding conception.
2. Sometimes a guiding conception can emerge from reflection of practitioners on their own practice.
3. The relationship between vision and practice must be viewed as one of ongoing mutual influence.

More generally, what is the best way to conceive of the complex relationship between vision/theory and practice and what implications will this conception have for the way we approach the effort to develop educating institutions that are vision-informed?

The problem of false similarities and the inadequacy of our language. It was suggested by one person that theories that are in fact very different from one another at the level of practice sound very much alike at the level of theory. More differentiated articulations, combined with careful and honest attention to practical implications, would help to remedy this; so would the availability of practical examples of the theory's implementation.

VISION AND COMMUNITY

Vision and communal self-understandings and values. The suggestion was made that the educational visions associated with the Goals Project are not sufficiently grounded in the social realities of the community to be addressed. The following comments were made:

1. There is a need for a deep knowledge of that community's social reality, self-perceptions, longings, etc.
2. It is dangerous to try to implement an educational vision (perhaps generated by an intellectual or religious elite) that is out of step with the community's self-understanding and aspirations; such a situation gives rise to serious ethical and practical problems. It is important, it was suggested, that the guiding vision be organically connected with the community's sense of itself.
3. As noted above, the perspective articulated in #2 elicited the concern that it could turn education into a straightforward response to market-considerations.

1., 2., and 3 (above) suggest the following question: if there needs to be an organic connection between a guiding vision and the community in which it is operative, and if the community's self-understanding and sense of value does not lead spontaneously towards a content-rich guiding vision, is it possible - and if so, how - to nurture a guiding vision that is more than a response to existing demand?

Community, vision, and diversity. The fact of diversity was mentioned a number of times in the course of the day. This included:

1. the challenge of developing a shared, non-parve vision for an institution featuring significant diversity. In this connection, the question was asked: how much commonality is needed among stake holders in an educating community in order to have a vision that is sufficiently powerful to guide practice? Also, is it possible to have a vision-driven institution that is respectful of diversity?
2. A somewhat different point: can an institution committed to diversity -- say, among its teachers - also be a vision-driven institution.

Community-visions and education. Are there available to American-Jewish communities visions of what it means to be a community that will encourage and guide their efforts to encourage their member-constituencies and institutions to develop compelling and content-grounded educational visions?

DEVELOPING A COMMON LANGUAGE

Our discussion made reference to many terms and distinctions that represent what may be the beginning of a shared language. These include, for example:

Existential vision (as distinct from an institutional vision)

Philosophical vision (as distinct from an educational vision)

"Vision-driven institutions"

"The Kitchen"

"The five levels" (and references to 1 to 5, and 5 to 1)

"Seeding the culture"

If there is uncertainty concerning these or other terms found in our discussions, it would be important to ask for greater clarity

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.

References

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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?

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?