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AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES
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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.

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Strategic Plan. Emerald City. Barth strategic plan, 1996-1997.

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VISIONS OF EMERALD CITY

INTRODUCTION

What is Emerald City - and why we want to build it. CIJE does not exist as an end-in-itself; it is an instrument in the service of a larger purpose, one that we have identified, roughly, as the revitalization of the American Jewish community. CIJE's role needs to be defined relative to this challenge, and there are at least two - not mutually exclusive - ways of approaching it. One of them avoids the larger question of what a revitalized Jewish community would look like, and instead asks the question: What critical preconditions will need to be in place if we are to make progress towards defining and achieving any credible vision of a revitalized community? The second is to ask the harder question: "What would a revitalized Jewish community look like -- and what role would be appropriate to an organization like CIJE in making progress in this direction?" Note that this second question is not intended to elicit a prediction of what the future will look like; it invites reflection on the question, "What should the Jewish community of the future look like? What kind of a Jewish community should we be trying to bring into being?"

Historically, CIJE has primarily elected the first of these routes. In encouraging community mobilization, the upgrading of personnel, attention to Jewish content, and a strong emphasis on research and evaluation, CIJE has in effect said: "Even without knowing what the contours of a revitalized Jewish community will look like, we are confident that we will make progress towards its formulation and achievement if we systematically nurture these preconditions."

As I understand it, we are now proposing not an abandonment of this route but complementing it with the second -- that is, with an attempt to formulate our work with attention to what a revitalized Jewish community -- what we are calling "Emerald City" -- might look like. In support of this approach, it can be said that clarity concerning the contours of Emerald City may give CIJE a stronger basis than it now has for making basic strategic and policy decisions -- decisions concerning what needs to be done and what role CIJE is to play in the doing. Indeed, clarity concerning the character of Emerald City may help us better interpret the challenges of traditional CIJE emphases like "professional development" and "community mobilization".

A likely objection. A likely objection to the attempt to characterize Emerald City is that it is wildly unrealistic and/or presumptuous for CIJE to undertake this effort. Whence derives our right to articulate what the American-Jewish community should look like? Even granted that the formulation we arrive at takes into account a wide range of in-puts, it is we who decide both what these inputs should be, what value should be assigned to

them, and how they should be integrated.

Here are some answers to this objection:

1) whether we acknowledge it or not, we are probably already operating with some tacit vision of Emerald City. It is better - and more honest - to be explicit about what this vision is and to subject it to scrutiny than to let it remain influential but unexamined.

2) Between operating with absolutely no vision of what a better future will look like and having a highly detailed vision, there is a vast space. Our intention is to find an hospitable position between these two poles. The intention is not to fix or dictate the future of the American Jewish community but to identify some basic assumptions about the desired future which, while not wildly controversial, are yet strong enough to provide ourselves with a measure of guidance in our work.

3) The vision of Emerald City is understood as a flexible, evolving vision, one that is on-goingly shaped by new ideas, insights, and critiques, as well as by social developments.

Building Emerald City: first steps. Our immediate challenge is to elicit from a range of individuals visions of Emerald City -- visions that we will then use as resources for formulating a compelling but flexible vision that can guide our own work in CIJE. Critical to this enterprise is the identification of a group of people to speak with who will be able to richly illuminate our problem. As we have discussed on other occasions, it is critical that we take a fairly broad scan of the landscape, one that includes individuals who have thought long and hard, imaginatively, and on a foundation of deep knowledge of Judaism and Jewish life about the predicament and significance of the Jewish people. While we do not have the luxury of being able to speak to everyone who can illuminate our question, we can ill-afford to be too parochial or in-bred in deciding whom to speak with.

But this problem of whom to interview is beyond the scope of this document. Its more narrow concern has to do with the kinds of questions interviewees should be asked. In deciding such matters and determining an appropriate interview format, we need to be guided by the principle that the job of the interviews is to elicit a vision of a compelling future that goes beyond empty slogans. In part, this means that when an interviewee voices what may seem like "an empty slogan", the job of the interviewer is to probe the slogan, to ask for concretization, explanation, or implications. But the interviewer's ability to elicit rich ideas

about the future may often also depend on whether he/she has come armed with an arsenal of themes and issues that are to be illuminated through the interview. Below I take a stab at identifying some of these critical issues.

DIMENSIONS OF EMERALD CITY

Organizing themes and issues. A number of themes and issues seem critical to the characterization of Emerald City. These themes and issues pertain to the internal organization and life of the North American Jewish community; to the relationship between the North American Jewish community and Israel (and world-wide Jewry); to the relationship between Jewish life in America and participation in the cultural, social, and political life of the larger American community; and especially to the place of education and educational institutions in the future we aspire to. The themes and issues are not presented in any particular order, and I haven't at this stage made a careful effort either to do away with overlaps or to come up with the most adequate formulation. Nor have I made an attempt at this stage to formulate particularly evocative questions that might elicit rich responses (though this will be critically important). Rather, my hope has been to highlight significant dimensions along which Emerald City will be formulated, with an eye towards stimulating responses that identify omissions, alternative formulations, etc. Here goes:

1. The moral center of the community in Emerald City

In the midst of our diversity in Emerald City, what holds us as a community? Is there a core of shared understandings, assumptions, knowledge, convictions, attitudes, commitments, practices, activities, memories, and concepts that mark us as a community?

What will the Jewish community communicate to its membership and to the non-Jewish world about what who we are as a community, about what makes us proud and distinctive as a community? What story or stories do we tell ourselves and outsiders about what it means for us to be Jews and why we find participation in Jewish life meaningful? [For example: in explaining who they are to themselves and to non-members, what are the major ways in which the inhabitants of Emerald City finish the sentence, "We are the community/culture that...."?)]

Over the last years or so, our energy as a community has flowed into causes like "the preservation of Israel" and the rescue of oppressed Jewish minorities world-wide? Where will the energy of community be directed in Emerald City -- and how will this be reflected in its funding priorities?

What norms or expectations or obligations (if any) will be

associated with "being a member in good standing" in the American Jewish community? Viewed from the other side, what are the boundaries of membership? Who is, in a significant sense, outside the Jewish community -- and why is this?

2. The character of Jewish life.

How do Jews live in Emerald City and how are the Jewish dimensions of their life related to, fused with, distinct from their life as Americans?

What are the principal ways in which American Jews will express their affiliation with the Jewish community?

What activities, experienced as genuinely meaningful and distinctively Jewish, will prove compelling (spiritually, morally, socially, intellectually, etc.) to Jews in Emerald City? How much of their day-to-day lives is spent in these activities?

What significant institutional structures and settings provide American Jews with inviting opportunities to participate meaningfully in Jewish life? What institutions/organizations that are present today will have changed dramatically or disappeared? What new ones will have entered the scene?

Assuming the continuation of centralized fund-raising, what will the community's funding priorities be? Who will be deciding these funding priorities?

How much and what forms of diversity (of intra-Jewish particularism) will be present in Emerald City? What ethos and mechanisms, if any, will be in place to ensure the maintenance of healthy diversity and the ability of diverse sub-groups to exist in the same community? What kinds of diversity will be discouraged and/or absent in Emerald City?

What will be the place of women, gays and lesbians, secular Jews, Haredi Jews, inter-married families, and other groups sometimes viewed as marginalized or second-class citizens in Emerald City? How will they be regarded, and what opportunities for meaningful participation will be available to them?

What kinds of individuals - with what qualifications and in what kinds of roles - will be the leaders of the American Jewish community?

Where will the Denominational movements be in Emerald City?

3. American Judaism and larger American community.

How do Jews in Emerald City interpret and experience the relationship between their identities as members of a Jewish

civilization and community and their identities as members of a modern American cultural and political community/tradition? Are these identities mutually indifferent, in conflict, or coherent? Explain.

What relationships will Jews in Emerald City have to America's other religious, ethnic, and cultural groupings, and in what ways, if at all, will these relationships reflect their outlooks as Jews?

4. American Judaism and Israel.

What place will the Land and the State of Israel play in the consciousness and life of Jewry in Emerald City?

5. Education in Emerald City

Very generally: what is the place of education/learning in Emerald City? How is the place of education in the life of the community discernable in the landscape of institutions, in funding allocation patterns, and in the day-to-day life of children, families, and adults in the community?

How are the purposes of Jewish education understood in Emerald City, and what activities and outcomes do they count as educational?

What is the state of Jewish literacy and sensibility in Emerald City, and how is it being achieved?

What role do educating institutions play in sustaining and enriching the community as a whole and its individual members?

What are the principal institutional settings - formal and informal, self-consciously educational or not - in which Jewish learning is going on?

More narrowly, what are the major contexts in which children are educated to become American Jews (e.g. Early Childhood programs, Day Schools, Congregationally-based educational programs, camps, Israel-experiences, etc.)? How does public education figure into the life of American Jews?

If, as popular rhetoric has it, "life-long Jewish learning" is the ideal, what would this look like in Emerald City? What constituencies are engaged in Jewish learning? What kind of learning is it? What are the settings? What are the rewards and outcomes for the participants?

If one compared educating institutions in Emerald City with our own, what would the major differences be? Characterize the content, the methods, and the compelling purposes found in

Emerald City educating institutions. For example, what kind of learning would be considered important? What would different constituencies be learning? How would they be learning? What purposes would inform the activity (on the part of both educators and learners)? What are the outcomes?

Who are the educators in Emerald City? What skills, attitudes, qualities of heart and mind, bodies of knowledge, commitments, etc. do they bring to their work?

How does the role of, say, "teacher" or "educational director", or "principal", or "rabbi", or "camp counselor" differ from their roles today? What educational roles are present in Emerald City that are not present in our own world?

What informal and formal opportunities, settings, incentives and settings are available to American Jews to grow into first-rate Jewish educators -- or for continuing growth once they have entered the field?

Relative to other fields that attract American Jews, what kinds of human rewards, remuneration, benefits, professional communities, and career-paths are available to those who choose Jewish education as their life's work?

What communal policies, resources, programs, and organizations are in place to ensure that Jewish education continues a) to be of superb quality, b) to enjoy widespread communal support and interest, c) to enable American Jews of different kinds to find the strongest and most appropriate education possible, and d) to attract, prepare, and retain the strongest possible educational leaders and educators?

EXAMPLES OF SOME MORE EVOCATIVE QUESTIONS

The preceding list of questions represents a first crack at identifying concerns to be attentive to in the interview process. It does not speak to the pedagogy of the interview -- to the kinds of questions that are most likely to call forth rich responses. Here are a couple of questions intended to be more evocative:

1. Presumably, different kinds of Jews will be found in Emerald City. Describe three representative "types". Tell us something about the nature of their conduct and experience as Jews -- for example, about how they express themselves as Jews, about the framework of Jewish institutions and social practices that facilitate and enrich their lives as Jews, and about how they regard and interact with the larger American community.

2. Educational institutions will figure prominently in Emerald City. Describe three such institutions or educational settings, each aimed at a different constituency. Say as much as you can

about who is learning (and why), about the pedagogy and content of the learning, about the background and approach of the educators, and about the outcomes of the experience.

TO: Karen
FROM: Dan Pekarsky

Below is a first effort at identifying some questions for the interviews. I am not entirely comfortable with the questions (there's a lot of overlap in themes and much that's probably missing); but given our tight schedule, I thought the best way to make progress was to elicit reactions very early on. So I'm sending this along.

For my own needs rather than for yours, I found it useful to introduce my approach to the questions with some general considerations relating to the place of Emerald City in CIJE work. I'd be interested in whether you find this formulation helpful, on target, etc.

I am hoping that we're able to talk before I leave town. I have meetings beginning around 8 a.m. until 2:30 on Tuesday, with an hour's break around noon. Would later in the day work for you?

My phone number at the Roger Smith Hotel is 755-1400.

Karen:

I felt that you raised some really important questions today about just how much we needed to say about Emerald City to make progress and about some of the dangers of attempting something too ambitious. In the wake of our conversation, I can't say I'm yet clear in my own mind concerning what level of clarity concerning the future will be helpful to us in our work, attainable, and worth working towards. But I was intrigued by how we agreed to proceed; and since I had some time before my flight home, I decided to make a start on the the sketch I said I'd draft.

I begin by trying to articulate (primarily for my benefit) the relationship between the Emerald City route and CIJE's existing route, relying heavily on some of your comments last week and today. I then go on to offer some examples of the kinds of minimalist but not inconsequential assumptions (concerning Emerald City) that might offer us some guidance. Whether these kinds of assumptions will meet that need I'm not sure; but at a minimum I hope they will move our conversation along. PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF ARBITRARINESS IN PICKING THE ASSUMPTIONS I FORMULATE BELOW; THEY ARE NOT THE PRODUCT OF SYSTEMATIC THINKING; THEY ARE MORE LIKE BASIC IDEAS THAT CAME TO MIND WHEN I REFLECTED ON THE MATTERS WE HAD DISCUSSED.

In the meantime, as I was playing with this, I found myself thinking about (and at some points relying on) Mike Rosenak's article concerning a community-vision for Jewish education. It's a very interesting piece and has attracted considerable attention within CIJE. It should be readily accessible in the CIJE office, and I thought you might find it helpful at this juncture.

Anyway, I'll be interested in getting your sense of what I develop below. At the price of not having a chance to review it carefully and to see whether it is clear and whether on reflection I myself will find it helpful, I'm sending it along now.

Talk to you soon!

D.

CONTEXTUALIZING AND DEFINING THE EMERALD CITY CHALLENGE

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As I understand it, what is now being suggested is not an abandonment of this route but complementing it with the second -- that is, with an attempt to formulate the challenges of Jewish education and CIJE's work with attention to what a revitalized Jewish community (what KB has called "Emerald City") might look like. The guiding hope is that clarity concerning the contours of Emerald City (and the role that education will play both in Emerald City and in moving us there) will give CIJE a stronger basis than it now has for making basic strategic and policy decisions -- decisions concerning what needs to be done and what role CIJE is to play in the doing.

A likely objection to the attempt to characterize Emerald City runs like this: either this effort will produce a kind of "Motherhood and Apple Pie" vision that will not afford us any real guidance; or it will produce a richly substantive vision which will prove destructively controversial. The hypothesis informing the current effort is that we may be able to avoid both these alternatives --that it will prove possible to say something meaningful about the future we hope to bring into being that will not be wildly controversial but will be rich and concrete enough to offer us real guidance in thinking about CIJE's challenges. It is this hypothesis that has given rise to the initial sketch of

Emerald City found below.

Characterizing Emerald City. Emerald City is a community in which American Jews exhibit rich diversity in Jewish outlook, in sensibility, and in the ways they express themselves as Jews. But cutting across these differences are a number of similarities:

1. Engagement and authenticity

Jews are engaged in Jewish life, and this engagement is primarily through activities which are compelling to them as human beings (intellectually, morally, spiritually, and/or culturally). Some of their basic human needs will be addressed through Jewish channels.

2. Cultural literacy

Jews are at a high state of Jewish cultural literacy, and this literacy informs their understandings and self-understandings.

3. Learning

Across the life-cycle, Jews are engaged in significant forms of Jewish learning.

4. Tolerance, working together, caring for one another

Different though they be, the sub-groups making up Emerald City will not only be tolerant of one another, they will also be able and willing to work together to maintain the community that allows them all to thrive and on other matters of shared concern. The suffering or problems of any one group will be a matter of concern for the others.

5. Relationship to Israel

Jews in Emerald City will feel a special connection, defined differently perhaps in different sub-groups, to the land of Israel.

6. Relationship to Jews world-wide

Jews in Emerald City will feel a special connection to, and responsibilities for, Jews world-wide.

7. Relationship to America

Jews in Emerald City will feel that they are loyal, contributing members to American society. They recognize the ways in which America makes possible their rich existence as Jews, and they believe that their activities and sensibilities as Jews enrich their

contribution to America.

8. Moral passion

Jews in Emerald City will share the belief that injustice and human suffering are matters to which Jews must respond.

9. Support for the enabling social structure

The Jews of Emerald City recognize and appreciate the critical role that communal policies and institutions [yet to be characterized] play in making possible their rewarding Jewish life, and they contribute in financial and non-financial ways to the support of this social structure.

10. Support for education.

As an aspect of #9, recognizing the critical role of Jewish education both as a resource for maintaining the kind of community just described and as an inherently valuable part of Jewish life, the Jews of Emerald City invest substantial financial and non-financial resources in ensuring that their educational institutions are of the highest quality.

Education in Emerald City [Karen].

BUILDING EMERALD CITY: FIRST STEPS

Our immediate challenge is to elicit from a range of individuals visions of Emerald City -- visions that we will then use as resources for formulating a compelling but flexible vision that can guide our own work in CIJE. Critical to this enterprise is the identification of a group of people to speak with who will be able to richly illuminate our problem. As we have discussed on other occasions, it is critical that we take a fairly broad scan of the landscape, one that includes individuals who have thought long and hard, imaginatively, and on a foundation of deep knowledge of Judaism and Jewish life about the predicament and significance of the Jewish people. While we do not have the luxury of being able to speak to everyone who can illuminate our question, we can ill-afford to be too parochial or in-bred in deciding whom to speak with.


But this problem of whom to interview is beyond the scope of this document. Its more narrow concern has to do with the kinds of questions interviewees should be asked. In deciding such matters and determining an appropriate interview format, we need to be guided by the principle that the job of the interviews is to elicit a vision of a compelling future that goes beyond empty slogans. In part, this means that when an interviewee voices what may seem like "an empty slogan", the job of the interviewer is to probe the slogan, to ask for concretization, explanation, or implications. But the interviewer's ability to elicit rich ideas about the future may often also depend on whether he/she has come armed with an arsenal of themes and issues that are to be illuminated through the interview. Below I take a stab at identifying some of these critical issues.

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Organizing themes and issues. A number of themes and issues seem critical to the characterization of Emerald City. These themes and issues pertain to the internal organization and life of the North American Jewish community; to the relationship between the North American Jewish community and Israel (and world-wide Jewry); to the relationship between Jewish life in America and participation in the cultural, social, and political life of the larger American community; and especially to the place of education and educational institutions in the future we aspire to. It is worth noting that an interviewee's views on these themes and issues will reflect his/her understanding of the nature and significance of Jewish existence; I have not in any systematic way highlighted this in the formulation of the themes and issues summarized below -- but it is something that interviewers should be trying to elicit from the interviewees in the course of their interviews. The themes and issues are not presented in any particular order, and I haven't at this stage made a careful effort either to do away with overlaps or to come

up with the most adequate formulation. Nor have I made an attempt at this stage to formulate particularly evocative questions that might elicit rich responses (though this will be critically important). Rather, my hope has been to highlight significant dimensions along which Emerald City will be formulated, with an eye towards stimulating responses that identify omissions, alternative formulations, etc. Here goes:

1. The moral center of the community in Emerald City

In the midst of our diversity in Emerald City, what holds us together as a community? Is there a core of common understandings, assumptions, knowledge, convictions, attitudes, commitments, practices, activities, memories, and concepts? If so, what does it look like? 

What will the Jewish community communicate to its membership and to the non-Jewish world about what who we are as a community, about what makes us proud and distinctive as a community? What story or stories do we tell ourselves and outsiders about what it means for us to be Jews and why we find participation in Jewish life meaningful?

Over the last fifty years or so, our energy as a community has flowed into causes like "the preservation of Israel" and the rescue of oppressed Jewish minorities world-wide? Where will the moral energy of the community be directed in Emerald City -- and how will this be reflected in its funding priorities?

What norms or expectations or obligations (if any) will be associated with "being a member in good standing" in the American Jewish community? Viewed from the other side, what are the boundaries of membership? Who is, in a significant sense, outside the Jewish community -- and why is this?

What traditional Jewish ideas and are at work in your responses to the foregoing questions?

2. The character of Jewish life.

What are the principal ways in which American Jews will express their affiliation with the Jewish community?

What distinctively Jewish activities will prove compelling (spiritually, morally, socially, intellectually, etc.) to Jews in Emerald City? How will these activities enter into their day-to-day lives?

What basic human needs will Jews in Emerald City meet through participation in Jewish life, and what are the settings, activities and institutional structures through which these needs will be met?

What institutions/organizations that are present today will have changed dramatically or disappeared? What new ones will have entered the scene?

What is the state of Jewish literacy and sensibility in Emerald City, and how is this expressed in the life of the community?

Assuming the continuation of centralized fund-raising, what will the community's funding priorities be? Who will be deciding these funding priorities?

How much and what forms of diversity (of intra-Jewish particularism) will be present in Emerald City? What ethos and mechanisms, if any, will be in place to ensure the maintenance of healthy diversity and the ability of diverse sub-groups to exist in the same community? What kinds of diversity will be discouraged and/or absent in Emerald City?

What will be the place of women, gays and lesbians, secular Jews, Haredi Jews, inter-married families, and other groups sometimes viewed as marginalized or second-class citizens in Emerald City? How will they be regarded, and what opportunities for meaningful participation will be available to them?

What kinds of individuals - with what qualifications and in what kinds of roles - will be the leaders of the American Jewish community?

Where will the Denominational movements be in Emerald City?

What traditional visions of the nature and purposes of Jewish life are expressed in the organization, the day-to-day life and the self-understanding of American Jewry?

3. American Judaism and larger American community.

How do Jews in Emerald City interpret and experience the relationship between their identities as members of a Jewish civilization and community and their identities as members of a modern American cultural and political community/tradition? Are these identities mutually indifferent, in conflict, or coherent? Explain.

How are the Jewish dimensions of the lives of Emerald City residents related to, fused with, and/or discontinuous with their lives as Americans?

What relationships will Jews in Emerald City have to America's other religious, ethnic, and cultural groupings, and in what ways, if at all, will these relationships reflect their outlooks as Jews?

4. American Judaism and Israel.

What place will the Land and the State of Israel play in the consciousness and life of Jewry in Emerald City, and what vision of Jewish existence is implicit in your answer to this question?

5. Education in Emerald City (A lot of overlap in this section - sorry!)

Very generally: what is the place of education/learning in Emerald City? How is the place of education in the life of the community discernable in the landscape of institutions, in funding allocation patterns, and in the day-to-day life of children, families, and adults in the community? What Jewish beliefs about the nature and significance of education are embedded in these arrangements?

How are the aims of Jewish education understood in Emerald City, what activities do its inhabitants count as educational, and why is education valued?

What are the principal arenas - formal and informal, self-consciously educational or not - in which Jewish enculturation/learning is going on?

What role is assigned to formal educating institutions in sustaining and enriching the community as a whole and its individual members? What roles are not assigned to explicitly educating institutions?

What are the major contexts in which children are educated to become American Jews (e.g. Early Childhood programs, Day Schools, Congregationally-based educational programs, camps, Israel-experiences, etc.)? How does public education figure into the life of American Jews?

If, as popular rhetoric has it, "life-long Jewish learning" is the ideal, how does this get played out in Emerald City? Who is engaged in learning? How do the purposes, settings, forms of learning, and the outcomes of education vary (or remain the same) across different clienteles?

If one compared educating institutions in Emerald City with our own, what would the major differences be in respect of the organizational design, content, methods, principal purposes, and outcomes?

What vision of what it means to be a Jewish community are implicit in the educational patterns and activities discernible in Emerald City?

Who are the educators in Emerald City? What skills, attitudes, qualities of heart and mind, bodies of knowledge, commitments, etc. do they bring to their work?

How does the role of, say, "teacher" or "educational director", or "principal", or "rabbi", or "camp counselor" differ from their roles today? What educational roles are present in Emerald City that are not present in our own world?

What opportunities, settings, and incentives are available to American Jews to grow into first-rate Jewish educators -- or for continuing growth once they have entered the field?

Relative to other fields that attract American Jews, what kinds of human rewards, remuneration, benefits, professional communities, and career-paths are available to those who choose Jewish education as their life's work?

What communal policies, programs, and organizations are in place to ensure that Jewish education continues a) to be of superb quality, b) to enjoy widespread communal support and interest, c) to enable American Jews of different kinds to find the strongest and most appropriate education possible, and d) to attract, prepare, and retain the strongest possible educational leaders and educators?

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2. Educational institutions will figure prominently in Emerald City. Describe three such institutions or educational settings, each aimed at a different constituency. Say as much as you can about who is learning (and why), about the pedagogy and content of the learning, about the background and approach of the educators, and about the outcomes of the experience.

TO: Karen
FROM: Dan
RE: Emerald City

Here's a slightly revised draft of what I sent you last week - along with a section that speaks to how having the kind of vision I describe would be helpful to us in our work. This new section responds to the concern that the described features of Emerald City are too "apple pie-ish" to offer any real guidance. If it's helpful to do so, please feel free to distribute this piece in-house to stimulate conversation.

I hope Labor Day weekend was enjoyable. Talk to you soon.

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Historically, CIJE has primarily elected the first of these routes. In encouraging community mobilization, the upgrading of personnel, attention to Jewish content, and a strong emphasis on research and evaluation, CIJE has in effect said: "Even without knowing what the contours of a revitalized Jewish community will look like, we are confident that we will make progress towards its formulation and achievement if we systematically nurture these preconditions."

As I understand it, what is now being suggested is not an abandonment of this route but complementing it with the second -- that is, with an attempt to formulate the challenges of Jewish education and CIJE's work with attention to what a revitalized Jewish community (what KB has called "Emerald City") might look like. The guiding hope is that clarity concerning the contours of Emerald City (and the role that education will play both in Emerald City and in moving us there) will give CIJE a stronger basis than it now has for making basic strategic and policy decisions -- decisions concerning what needs to be done and what role CIJE is to play in the doing.

A likely objection to the attempt to characterize Emerald City runs like this: either this effort will produce a kind of "Motherhood and Apple Pie" vision that will not afford us any real guidance; or it will produce a richly substantive vision which will prove destructively controversial. The hypothesis informing the current effort is that we may be able to avoid both these alternatives --that it will prove possible to say something meaningful about the future we hope to bring into being that will not be wildly controversial but will be rich and concrete enough to offer us real guidance in thinking about CIJE's challenges.

It is this hypothesis that has given rise to the initial sketch of Emerald City found below.

In presenting this sketch, it is important to note that the elements of Emerald City that are described do not reflect a systematic approach to the problem. Rather, the Emerald City I describe reflects intuitively compelling ideas that readily came to mind when I undertook the Emerald City challenge. Whether this lack of system is a serious drawback is something we may want to discuss, but it should in any case be noted.

Characterizing Emerald City. Emerald City is a community in which American Jews exhibit **rich diversity in Jewish outlook, in sensibility**, and in the ways they express themselves as Jews. But cutting across these differences are a number of similarities:

1. Engagement and authenticity

Jews are engaged in Jewish life, and this engagement is primarily through activities which are compelling to them as human beings (intellectually, morally, spiritually, and/or culturally). Some of their basic human needs will be addressed through Jewish channels.

2. Cultural literacy

Jews are at a high state of Jewish cultural literacy, and this literacy informs their understandings and self-understandings, including their understanding of their own activities.

3. Learning

Across the life-cycle, Jews are engaged in significant forms of Jewish learning.

4. Tolerance, working together, caring for one another

Different though they be, the sub-groups making up Emerald City will not only be tolerant of one another, they will also be able and willing to work together to maintain the community that allows them all to thrive and on other matters of shared concern. The suffering or problems of any one group will be a matter of concern for the others.

5. Relationship to Israel

Jews in Emerald City will feel a special connection, defined differently perhaps in different sub-groups, to the land of Israel.

6. Relationship to Jews world-wide

Jews in Emerald City will feel a special connection to, and responsibilities for, Jews world-wide.

7. Relationship to America

Jews in Emerald City will feel that they are loyal, contributing members to American society. They recognize the ways in which America makes possible their rich existence as Jews, and they believe that their activities and sensibilities as Jews enrich their contribution to America.

8. Moral passion

Jews in Emerald City will share the belief that injustice and human suffering are matters to which Jews must respond, and their conduct will bear witness to this belief.

9. Support for the enabling social structure

The Jews of Emerald City recognize and appreciate the critical role that communal policies and institutions [yet to be characterized] play in making possible their rewarding Jewish life, and they contribute in financial and non-financial ways to the support of this social structure.

10. Support for education.

As an aspect of #9, recognizing the critical role of Jewish education both as a resource for maintaining the kind of community just described and as an inherently valuable part of Jewish life, the Jews of Emerald City invest substantial financial and non-financial resources in ensuring that their educational institutions are of the highest quality.

Education in Emerald City [to be filled in].

How, if at all, will this vision of Emerald City illuminate our work? Does it get us anywhere? To put a major concern alluded to earlier crassly, is the 1 - 10 list that is summarized above too much in the "Motherhood and apple pie" genre to offer us rich guidance? For purposes of discussion, I will make the

case - which I'm coming to think is pretty strong - that it does help us along.

Here are some pertinent points.

First, the commitment to pluralism, while not surprising or controversial, carries significant implications for Jewish life and for Jewish education. The character of these implications becomes increasingly clear when viewed through the lens of the kinds of assumptions articulated in #s 1-10 (to which I now turn).

Second, far from being "motherhood and apple pie", I would conjecture that some of the points summarized in #s 1 - 10 could prove controversial in some quarters. For example, there are sub-groups in the American Jewish community who do not view Israel as central to Jewish life and who might well object to the notion that the sense of Israel's importance be written into our understanding of Emerald City. To this extent, asserting Israel's importance is by no means trivial, even if not wildly controversial.

The third point is that the points summarized in 1 - 10 do, if taken seriously and used appropriately, carry significant educational implications. For example:

#1 - engagement and authenticity. Taken seriously, this carries major implications for the conduct of Jewish education. Not just the content of Jewish education, but the process of education, and the organization of educational environments are answerable to this decisively important criterion: is it reasonable to expect that those educated in the way we are proposing will grow into Jews who participate whole-heartedly and enthusiastically in one or more arenas of Jewish life? Thoughtful and honest attention to this criterion will decisively influence what we do as educators.

#2 - cultural literacy. The insistence on what I am describing as cultural literacy also carries powerful educational implications. Whatever its form and orientation, Jewish education will be much more content-rich than it is today, and its graduates will know and understand a great deal more than they now do. Equally important, educational planners and educators will be mindful that the Jewish content thought central to education enter into the student's experience in ways that seriously honor the desiderata identified in the other criteria. Thus, literacy bought at the price of engagement will be unacceptable; and literacy that is disconnected from the way those being educated experience themselves and the world will not be worth very much.

#5 - relationship to Israel. Taken in conjunction with some of the other points on the list, #5 carries significant educational implications. For example, #2 and #5 together suggest that the

attachment to Israel be seriously grounded in Jewish ideas concerning the significance of Israel in the life of the Jewish People; and #5 and #7 together suggest that the tie to Israel not be grounded in hostility to American society.

In any event, my suggestion is that, some such list as this may well prove helpful to us in thinking about what the content, the process, and the social organization of Jewish education should be. There are, moreover, at least two ways in which this kind of list could offer even more guidance: a) at the risk of greater controversiality, by making the items more specific than they are; or b) by narrowing the list to, say, 3 or 4 items that we come to view as of over-riding importance.

BUILDING EMERALD CITY: FIRST STEPS

Our immediate challenge is to elicit from a range of individuals visions of Emerald City -- visions that we will then use as resources for formulating a compelling but flexible vision that can guide our own work in CIJE. Critical to this enterprise is the identification of a group of people to speak with who will be able to richly illuminate our problem. As we have discussed on other occasions, it is critical that we take a fairly broad scan of the landscape, one that includes individuals who have thought long and hard, imaginatively, and on a foundation of deep knowledge of Judaism and Jewish life about the predicament and significance of the Jewish people. While we do not have the luxury of being able to speak to everyone who can illuminate our question, we can ill-afford to be too parochial or in-bred in deciding whom to speak with.

But this problem of whom to interview is beyond the scope of this document. Its more narrow concern has to do with the kinds of questions interviewees should be asked. In deciding such matters and determining an appropriate interview format, we need to be guided by the principle that the job of the interviews is to elicit a vision of a compelling future that goes beyond empty slogans. In part, this means that when an interviewee voices what may seem like "an empty slogan", the job of the interviewer is to probe the slogan, to ask for concretization, explanation, or implications. But the interviewer's ability to elicit rich ideas about the future may often also depend on whether he/she has come armed with an arsenal of themes and issues that are to be illuminated through the interview. Below I take a stab at identifying some of these critical issues.

DIMENSIONS OF EMERALD CITY

Organizing themes and issues. A number of themes and issues seem critical to the characterization of Emerald City. These themes and issues pertain to the internal organization and life of the North American Jewish community; to the relationship between the North American Jewish community and Israel (and world-wide Jewry); to the relationship between Jewish life in America and participation in the cultural, social, and political life of the larger American community; and especially to the place of education and educational institutions in the future we aspire to. The themes and issues are not presented in any particular order, and I haven't at this stage made a careful effort either to do away with overlaps or to come up with the most adequate formulation. Nor have I made an attempt at this stage to formulate particularly evocative questions that might elicit rich responses (though this will be critically important). Rather, my hope has been to highlight significant dimensions along which Emerald City will be formulated, with an eye towards stimulating responses that identify omissions, alternative

formulations, etc. Here goes:

1. The moral center of the community in Emerald City

In the midst of our diversity in Emerald City, what holds us together as a community? Is there a core of common understandings, assumptions, knowledge, convictions, attitudes, commitments, practices, activities, memories, and concepts? If so, what does it look like?

What will the Jewish community communicate to its membership and to the non-Jewish world about what who we are as a community, about what makes us proud and distinctive as a community? What story or stories do we tell ourselves and outsiders about what it means for us to be Jews and why we find participation in Jewish life meaningful?

Over the last fifty years or so, our energy as a community has flowed into causes like "the preservation of Israel" and the rescue of oppressed Jewish minorities world-wide? Where will the moral energy of the community be directed in Emerald City -- and how will this be reflected in its funding priorities?

What norms or expectations or obligations (if any) will be associated with "being a member in good standing" in the American Jewish community? Viewed from the other side, what are the boundaries of membership? Who is, in a significant sense, outside the Jewish community -- and why is this?

What traditional Jewish ideas and values are at work in ~~the~~ responses^{to} the foregoing questions?

2. The character of Jewish life.

What are the principal ways in which American Jews will express their affiliation with the Jewish community?

What distinctively Jewish activities will prove compelling (spiritually, morally, socially, intellectually, etc.) to Jews in Emerald City? How will these activities enter into their day-to-day lives?

What settings and institutional structures provide American Jews in Emerald City with inviting opportunities to meet basic human needs through participation in Jewish life? What institutions/organizations that are present today will have changed dramatically or disappeared? What new ones will have entered the scene?

What is the state of Jewish literacy and sensibility in Emerald City, and how is this expressed in the life of the community?

Assuming the continuation of centralized fund-raising, what will the community's funding priorities be? Who will be deciding these funding priorities?

How much and what forms of diversity (of intra-Jewish particularism) will be present in Emerald City? What ethos and mechanisms, if any, will be in place to ensure the maintenance of healthy diversity and the ability of diverse sub-groups to exist in the same community? What kinds of diversity will be discouraged and/or absent in Emerald City?

What will be the place of women, gays and lesbians, secular Jews, Haredi Jews, inter-married families, and other groups sometimes viewed as marginalized or second-class citizens in Emerald City? How will they be regarded, and what opportunities for meaningful participation will be available to them?

What kinds of individuals - with what qualifications and in what kinds of roles - will be the leaders of the American Jewish community?

Where will the Denominational movements be in Emerald City?

What traditional visions of the nature and purposes of Jewish life are expressed in the day-to-day life and in the self-understanding of American Jewry?

3. American Judaism and larger American community.

How do Jews in Emerald City interpret and experience the relationship between their identities as members of a Jewish civilization and community and their identities as members of a modern American cultural and political community/tradition? Are these identities mutually indifferent, in conflict, or coherent? Explain.

How are the Jewish dimensions of the lives of Emerald City residents related to, fused with, and/or discontinuous with their lives as Americans?

What relationships will Jews in Emerald City have to America's other religious, ethnic, and cultural groupings, and in what ways, if at all, will these relationships reflect their outlooks as Jews?

4. American Judaism and Israel.

What place will the Land and the State of Israel play in the consciousness and life of Jewry in Emerald City?

5. Education in Emerald City (A lot of overlap in this section - sorry!)

Very generally: what is the place of education/learning in Emerald City? How is the place of education in the life of the community discernable in the landscape of institutions, in funding allocation patterns, and in the day-to-day life of children, families, and adults in the community?

How are the aims of Jewish education understood in Emerald City, and what activities do its inhabitants count as educational, and why is education valued?

What are the principal arenas - formal and informal, self-consciously educational or not - in which Jewish enculturation/learning is going on?

What role is assigned to formal educating institutions in sustaining and enriching the community as a whole and its individual members? What roles are not assigned to explicitly educating institutions?

What are the major contexts in which children are educated to become American Jews (e.g. Early Childhood programs, Day Schools, Congregationally-based educational programs, camps, Israel-experiences, etc.)? How does public education figure into the life of American Jews?

If, as popular rhetoric has it, "life-long Jewish learning" is the ideal, how does this get played out in Emerald City? Who is engaged in learning? How do the purposes, settings, forms of learning, and the outcomes of education vary (or remain the same) across different clienteles?

If one compared educating institutions in Emerald City with our own, what would the major differences be in respect of the organizational design, content, methods, principal purposes, and outcomes?

Who are the educators in Emerald City? What skills, attitudes, qualities of heart and mind, bodies of knowledge, commitments, etc. do they bring to their work?

How does the role of, say, "teacher" or "educational director", or "principal", or "rabbi", or "camp counselor" differ from their roles today? What educational roles are present in Emerald City that are not present in our own world?

What opportunities, settings, and incentives are available to American Jews to grow into first-rate Jewish educators -- or for continuing growth once they have entered the field?

Relative to other fields that attract American Jews, what kinds of human rewards, remuneration, benefits, professional communities, and career-paths are available to those who choose Jewish education as their life's work?

What communal policies, programs, and organizations are in place to ensure that Jewish education continues a) to be of superb quality, b) to enjoy widespread communal support and interest, c) to enable American Jews of different kinds to find the strongest and most appropriate education possible, and d) to attract, prepare, and retain the strongest possible educational leaders and educators?

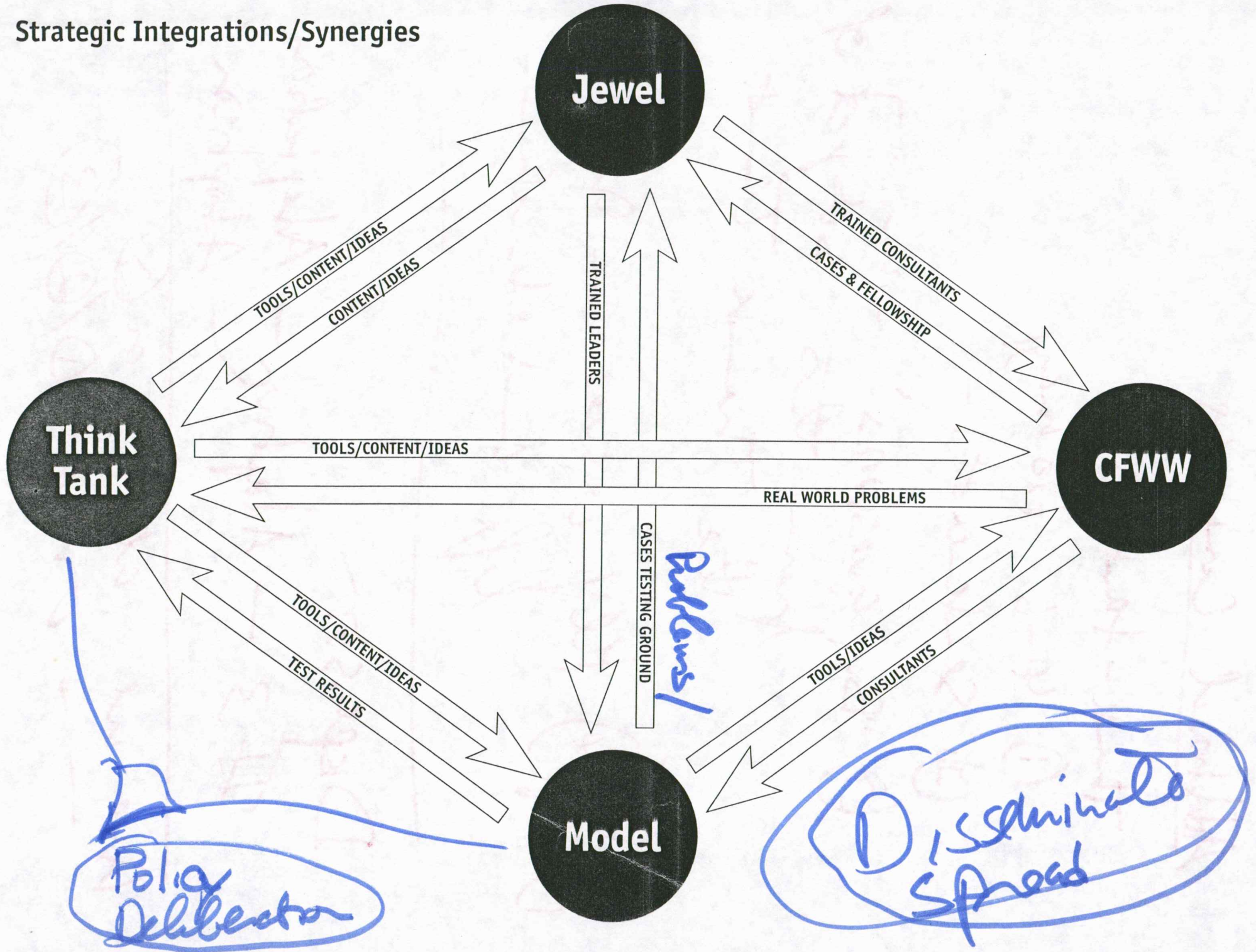
EXAMPLES OF SOME MORE EVOCATIVE QUESTIONS

The preceding list of questions is represents a first crack at identifying concerns to be attentive to in the interview process. It does not speak to the pedagogy of the interview -- to the kinds of questions that are most likely to call forth rich responses. Here are a couple of questions intended to be more evocative:

1. Presumably, different kinds of Jews will be found in Emerald City. Describe three representative "types". Tell us something about the nature of their conduct and experience as Jews -- for example, about how they express themselves as Jews, about the framework of Jewish institutions and social practices that facilitate and enrich their lives as Jews, and about how they regard and interact with the larger American community.

2. Educational institutions will figure prominently in Emerald City. Describe three such institutions or educational settings, each aimed at a different constituency. Say as much as you can about who is learning (and why), about the pedagogy and content of the learning, about the background and approach of the educators, and about the outcomes of the experience.

Strategic Integrations/Synergies



Additional Comments

Think-facts

- (1) 4-6 too many
- (2) Sentence #1 -
- (3) "Big questions" - missing
from the subject of
the Think Text

^N concept (4) Key issues - Jewish
life and education

Dispersion

#3 - Adaption - Adaptation
Adoption

Are we at (2) or (3)
- - or at (1)/(2)/(3)