



Redesigning Jewish Education in the Real World: A Case Study in Bridging Principles and Practice

*JESNA's Lippman Kanfer Institute and
Siegal College of Judaic Studies*



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**Redesigning Jewish Education in the Real World:
A Case Study in Bridging Principles and Practice**

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During the 2008-09 academic year, Siegal College and the JECC of Cleveland collaborated with JESNA's Lippman Kanfer Institute on a series of seminars for Cleveland-area educators and congregational leaders that was built around the "design principles for 21st century Jewish education" articulated by the Institute in its Working Paper, Redesigning Jewish Education for the 21st Century. The goal of the seminar was to see whether and how these design principles -treating the learner as the focal point and an active agent in the educational process, infusing education with rich peer-to-peer and educator-student relationships, and making Jewish education "life-centered" - could be used by educators as practical guides and stimuli for designing and implementing educational activities in their institutions, especially synagogues.

The two principals in organizing the seminar, Dr. Jeffrey Schein of Siegal College and Dr. Jonathan Woocher of JESNA, authored this paper to share their reflections on the seminar process, learnings from it, and its possible broader implications for the wider Jewish educational community. We conclude that the seminar did, in fact, stimulate fresh reflection among the participants on a range of philosophical and practical issues that affect their educational programs and that the design principles are a useful vehicle for generating and guiding this reflection. Moreover, the seminar demonstrated the value of this type of collaboration between a think tank and a community process involving frontline educators as a means of both informing practice and enriching theory.

The remainder of this paper is structured in sections that reflect the authors' two different perspectives on the process.

I. The Lippman Kanfer Institute Background (Dr. Jonathan Woocher)

When the Lippman Kanfer Institute began its work in 2005 it set out to articulate a vision for how Jewish education in the 21st century should be designed in order to be maximally relevant and effective. This vision was encapsulated in a set of three “design principles” derived both from an understanding of the defining characteristics of contemporary culture and of how Jewish identity is being constructed within it and from observation of current educational programs and experiences that appear to be particularly effective. The three design principles - education that is learner-centered, relationship-infused, and life-focused - were not intended to be a complete “philosophy of Jewish education,” but rather to serve as practical touchstones as educators and institutions formulate their educational policies and practices, and especially as they introduce change and innovation into their work.

Thus, when the Institute was approached by Siegal College with the idea of using these design principles as the framework for a year-long seminar with educational teams from Cleveland Jewish institutions, we eagerly accepted the invitation to collaborate. It is, after all, one thing to lay out a set of principles that are conceptually elegant and appealing; it is another to see whether these principles can be translated into or help to enrich and

illuminate programs and activities “on the ground,” in real institutions, with real students, parents, and educators. The seminar series designed by Siegal College provided an opportunity both to test and to learn. Did educators find these principles intelligible? Did they correspond to their own experience as to what makes for Jewish learning that is especially engaging and impactful? Could the principles be used to critique current practices and suggest new ones? What did they really mean for the nitty-gritty of education - for curriculum, for teaching, for how programs are organized, for the roles and responsibilities of leadership? When applied, did the principles produce tangible positive improvements in the educational process and apparent outcomes? We knew that the seminar could not answer all of these questions definitively. But, it could at least provide some initial evidence as to whether the Institute is on the right track in championing these ideas.

The Lippman Kanfer Institute believes that innovation at both the level of system design and front-line practice is a key to the continuing success of Jewish education. At the same time, we are mindful of how difficult change is for institutions and personnel who are overburdened and under-resourced. Thus, it was not only the design principles that we were eager to see tested, but the capacity of institutions and leaders to use these or other principles to undertake, or at

least to initiate, substantive change. Again, we recognized that there are limits to what can be done or tested within the framework of even a year-long, multi-part seminar experience. But, we were particularly excited by the design of this seminar, since it incorporated explicit opportunities for groups to measure their current practice against the learning they were doing and to be exposed to and consider practical models that were linked to, if not directly derived from, the design principles being explored.

We hoped, therefore, to come away from the overall experience having both contributed to ongoing innovation in Cleveland's Jewish educational system and learned lessons that could be applied more broadly as the Institute seeks to catalyze change in Jewish education continent-wide.

II. The Cleveland Background to the Lippman Kanfer Institute Collaboration (Dr. Jeffrey Schein)

Any educational community is shaped by a web of assumptions—both implicit and explicit--- that guide the way they engage in educational visioning and planning. In Cleveland, the collaboration with the Lippman Kanfer Institute was influenced by the following “theories in use” (Schon and Argyris) about educational vision and change:

1) Jewish education is in constant need of renewal through fresh ideas;

2) Exciting ideas are of minimal value if they exist in an institutional vacuum; they need to be related to the capacity building endeavors of schools and congregations;

3) Capacity building is intimately linked to the development of educational vision by a team of school/congregational lay and professional leadership;

4) Educational leadership in the field (rabbis, educators, and lay leaders) needs to also encounter these new ideas with an eye towards their relevance to their practical ongoing work;

5) There is a wisdom to effective educational practice in the field that needs to be consulted. This might lead to finding examples of the Lippman Kanfer Institute design principles garbed in a different language.

6) Educational change is a repeating, iterative rather than linear process. Hence the process requires ongoing evaluation.

Design of the Siegal/JECC-Lippman Kanfer Institute Collaboration

The assumptions outlined above—less clear as the collaboration began than they now appear in retrospect—demanded a rather complex design for the project. The collaboration was based on a model of six sessions to explore the three design principles of the Lippman Kanfer Institute. In sessions 1, 3, and 5 the three design principles of learner-focused Jewish education, relationship rich Jewish learning, and life-centered

Jewish education were explored. In each instance, we were privileged to study these principles with Dr. Jonathan Woocher, Director of the Lippman Kanfer Institute. Jon met on each of these three dates first with the senior educational leadership of the community and later in the day with teams representing nine different Cleveland schools and/or congregations.

In sessions 2, 4, and 6 (without Jon present) Dr. Jeffrey Schein led a session designed to explore in greater depth the application of the design principle to their own setting. A “homework” assignment in the form of a mapping of the design principle in relationship to existing practices and venues within the congregational prepared the teams for the session. Additionally, a panel of programs across the community that seemed to best embody the principle was organized.

The original plan was to extend the experimentation into a second year where each team would commit to a project that incorporated one of the three design principles more fully into their program. Reflecting again the non-linear nature of educational change a decision was made to wed the Lippman Kanfer Institute design principles to a larger process of educational innovation. The three design principles were morphed along with three other educational ideas into “synergy principles” designed to guide the funding of educational projects in

the Cleveland community. The “new life” and use of the Lippman Kanfer Institute design principles is described later in the paper.

III. The Collaboration in Action: Implementation and Evaluation - the Cleveland Perspective (Dr. Jeffrey Schein)

The core of the Seminar process was the work of the synagogue teams as they began to apply the Lippman Kanfer Institute principles to their own settings. The key questions for us were: How did these teams experience and make use of the design principles? Did they generate new insights for the teams? Were they seen as applicable and illuminating, as helping the process of reflection and planning, or as constraining and artificial? And, did the seminar format itself work as a spur to collaborative reflection and action?

In one sense, it is particularly difficult to measure the response of the Cleveland educational community to the Siegal College - Lippman Kanfer Institute collaboration. Attendance at the six seminars was “rolling”. In all, some 60 members of the community representing 9 different schools and synagogues attended. The core group attending at least 5 of the 6 sessions, however, was 25. This discontinuity in attendance—in retrospect quite unsurprising given the business of the lives of educators—was a continuous challenge.

Still, the following comments gleaned from various evaluation

documents seem to be representative of a positive response to the seminar:

- *Provided valuable ways to look at the congregation.*
- *The dialogues with Jon Woocher were always valuable.*
- *The learner focus requires a rethinking of the way we integrate Jewish knowledge into the classroom.*
- *Having us look at different relationships between students, temple associates, maintenance, etc. was revealing.*
- *Truthfully, we would have gotten much more out of the seminar if we found time to do the reflective exercises between sessions.*
- *I think they should be called “redesign principles”. It would be great if we could take a program of ours and actually rework it according to these “redesign” principles.*

There was a hunger from the group for tachlis applications of the design principles. One particular congregational team was suspicious of too much time devoted to theory or ideas. In another instance, perhaps our most sophisticated congregation in terms of redesigning congregational education felt like this seminar was a repeat of a process they went through several years previously. On the other hand, a congregation in the middle of an educational visioning process felt that the design principles were a valuable translation bridge between vision and practice.

In any event, we ourselves wanted to be responsive to this need for experiencing potential tachlis implications of the design principles. This is best illustrated through the principles of learner empowerment and relationship infused Jewish learning. Appended to this section are two “tools” designed to help school/congregation teams to explore the ways in which these two principles worked in their communities (Appendices A and B). Given that Jon Woocher and I were ourselves learning about the application of these principles, it was important to keep a very open mind about how either of the principles played themselves out. In theory it would be possible that

1. The practices at a given congregation incorporated the principle in very significant ways;
2. “Cousin concepts” (Wittgenstein) were operative that shared many of the same core commitments as learner empowerment and relationship infused Jewish learning but formulated through different language;
3. Congregations utilized different language to express the same ideas as embodied in the design principles.

As one reviews the data generated by different congregations as they self-assessed their relationship to the learner-centered design principle, one can see all these various possibilities become reality.

Principle 1: “Learner Focused”

- *Our vision suggests general goals that the learners may or may not share.*
- *The principle of learner empowerment works well for adult learning and youth programming; it doesn't work nearly as well in relationship to our religious school.*
- *Our vision offers choices. We have a partnership and experiential learning. What we don't have is the notion of inviting learners to be co-producers of their own Jewish knowledge. Instead we have committees. Perhaps what we need is a committee on learner choices.*
- *Our Hagiga program for children focuses on programmatic outcomes rather than the learner his/herself.*
- *This vision of learner focused Jewish education demands a counseling or coaching component that is not within our present capacity.*
- *Great potential for us would be in creating congregational mentors who could individualize the teaching.*
- *We worry that focus on individualization can lead to a loss of community and communal focus.*

Principle 2 - “Relationship Infused”

In regard to relationships, we employed a tool called morphological

analysis to map out the body of relationships within a congregational community. As one can see in Appendix B, the chart sometimes produced very predictable results. For instance, it is not surprising that most congregations would characterize the authority structure relationship between Rabbi and student as “authoritarian” (notice they did not use an alternative phrasing such as “authoritative”) yet cooperative.” In contrast the relationship between youth director and student is characterized as more democratic.

Perhaps most interesting in this regard are the lacunae that emerge. Some schools became critical of their own lack of knowledge in this arena. Why are we so unaware of how students for instance understand their relationship to the education director? Another institution questioned what it means to be a “community” when there is no observable relationship between students and the people who have the responsibility for the physical upkeep of their home (the maintenance staff).

Continued Applications and Unresolved Issues

Quite expectedly, the path of innovation in regard to the Lippman Kanfer Institute principles was anything but linear. Near the end of the seminar year the director of our community Retreat Institute began to design with one of our educational directors a ten hour in-service based on the design principles. The principal

and Retreat Institute director noted the following in regard to the three design principles. The reflections of the director of the Retreat Institute appear below

- 1) *The relationship rich principle was generally helpful in regard to thinking about the design of classroom experiences*
- 2) *While the principal and RI director had their own ambivalences about the principle of learner-empowerment and what it actually means, they were a bit surprised at some of the creativity among the teachers about how to facilitate more empowered learning, with some element of co-production.*
- 3) *The life-centered principle presented challenges to educators, in that, the teachers themselves did not have a rich reservoir of their own experiences with text that they found personally relevant and meaningful. Their basic Jewish-text literacy was shallow. (One session focused on Shavuot, which was new learning for many of the faculty.) A key agenda of the course was to engage the faculty in their own rich learning experiences that they could begin to translate into their work as educators.*
- 4) *The teachers valued their small group work and engagement with a variety of educational techniques and approaches that modeled and reflected the LKI principles. Follow-up professional development is being planned to build on the initial learning, and more deeply connect it*

to the craft of educating learners of all ages as well as our own professional growth.

In general one can see the work of the Siegal College-Lippman Kanfer Institute collaboration as a kind of formative evaluation. To quote Michael Scriven, the purpose of formative evaluation is less to “prove” that these principles were valid than to “improve” their contributions to the congregations. Hence, after the initial session with Jon the follow up sessions included some unpacking of promising practices in the community in relationship to the principle. Thus, the session on learner focus included a panel of three educators and a rabbi discussing the way in which they had embedded the focus on learner empowerment in their B’nai Mitzvah education programs. Student portfolios related to B’nai Mitzvah projects, a 13 mitzvot/b’mitzvotav program, and student-rabbi sermon dialogue were among the approaches explored.

It is interesting to note how the three LKI principles overlapped. Thus, the educator who was presenting a learner focused approach spoke naturally about the importance of forming bonds between the families in her congregation. The extraordinary value of having a venue for young 12 year olds and their parents and families to develop a personalized B’nai Mitzvah process lay in the fact that they were doing it together with other families!

IV. When the Ideal Meets the Real: Reflections on the Seminars from the Lippman Kanfer Institute's Perspective (Dr. Jon Woocher)

When ideas are translated from the conceptual realm into practice both the practice and the ideas are likely to be transformed. We were comfortable with this premise as we entered into the Siegal College seminar sessions, and, in fact, this is what occurred.

The three design principles laid out in the Institute's Working Paper were selected for that role not because they were seen as new or unfamiliar to Jewish educators. Each has a long pedigree in educational and Jewish thought. Rather, they were given prominence because each was felt to highlight a problem besetting much contemporary Jewish educational practice: an over-reliance on a "top down," provider-centered approach to organizing the educational process; a lack of strong relationships between and among those involved in the learning situation; content and curricula dictated by traditional categories, but largely unrelated to learners' real lives. In this sense, the principles constitute a critique of current Jewish education. But, they also reflect what large numbers of Jewish educators already believe constitutes exemplary practice and many are in fact implementing. By pointing to and naming these already valued principles, we hoped to both provoke and encourage educators to expand their use of them and thereby

displace practices that we believed were less effective in engaging learners and providing them with a rich and meaningful educational experience.

At the same time, we knew that educators would not, could not, and should not simply embrace these principles as if they constituted a type of "handbook" for educational program design and practice. Although the Institute's Working Paper sought to elaborate some of the practical implications of each of the principles and to link them to examples that might concretize the conceptual language, the principles themselves, simply by being abstracted out of the inherent messiness of real-world educating, were in some way artificial constructs. The seminar provided a context not only to test the applicability of these constructs and to critique the existing educational practice of the institutions and educators involved, but also to critique and further develop the constructs themselves. We would have been disappointed and, frankly, surprised, if the educators involved in the seminar had rejected the principles as thoroughly misguided and irrelevant or harmful to their work. But, we would have been equally unsettled if they had simply accepted the principles as obvious and unproblematic as they sought to connect them to their work.

As it turned out, the seminar was valuable precisely because the participants genuinely grappled with the principles and with their own enthusiasms, hesitations, and

confusions in seeking to understand and apply them. Each session challenged the participants in some way to engage in self-reflection and critique. Each enabled them to identify existing practices in their institutions that embodied these principles and (perhaps) to appreciate these in a new light. But, each session also raised questions about the principles themselves - many of which have been captured in the preceding section of this paper.

The strength of the seminar sessions lay largely in this dialectical process in which the principles “interrogated” current practice and the practitioners interrogated the principles. For example, the first design principle calls for “plac[ing] the active learner at the center of our thinking and practice as a full partner in shaping her/his learning experience” (p. 13). Participants rightly pointed out that there is not a single “learner” in Jewish education - there are learners of all ages, with all types of backgrounds, existing knowledge, and motivations. Thus, while the principle in general may be sound, and indeed was recognized as important by (most) participants, its application to the variety of settings and contexts in which Jewish education takes place can hardly be uniform. As one comment noted, adults (or perhaps parents of students) can be “partners” in setting the learning agenda in a way that young children perhaps cannot. (We should note that some early childhood educators would disagree with this comment.) At the same time,

grappling with this principle in its “strong” form - as calling for learners to be “co-producers” of their educational experience - forced educators to look at their practice in ways that looking only at “weaker” forms of the principle - e.g., as calling for “learner engagement” - might not have. Participants were encouraged to ask, for example, whether the principle of “learner-centeredness” challenges the idea that educational goals can only be set by “experts,” or that educational visioning must precede and guide the encounter with learners, rather than vice versa. These are not easy ideas to give up; indeed, some would undoubtedly argue that we should not do so. The seminar, at least, allowed this issue to be broached.

Another example of how the seminar actually broadened out the implications of the design principles grew out of the initial session focusing on relationships. The Institute Working Paper argues that “relationships are at the core of effective education” and focuses on two sets of relationships primarily: those between students and educators on the one hand and the peer relationships that create a learning (and hopefully living) community. What the session revealed was that in practice, and especially for synagogues, this greatly oversimplifies the relevant relationships, which encompass students, their families, teachers, educational directors, clergy, other congregants, other synagogue personnel, and probably a number of other categories of individuals. So,

while there was broad assent to the proposition that Jewish education needs to focus more intently on creating meaningful relationships, grappling with the practical ramifications of this principle in a particular setting actually served to raise a whole new set of (unanticipated) questions about the variety and scope of relationships that need attention if the goal is to create a true Jewish educating community.

This process of what might be called “reciprocal testing” was the core of the learning experience of the seminar for both the participants and the leaders. The process revealed areas where the participants’ practice needed to be rethought (as well as other areas where it could be reaffirmed). But, it also provided new insights about the principles themselves, how they relate to one another (we emphasized from the outset that they should be seen as an ensemble, not as three separate ideas), and - perhaps most importantly - what is missing in their original articulation in the Working Paper.

The seminar even suggested that there needs to be a fourth design principle: that 21st century Jewish education must provide serious, rich Jewish content. As participants grappled with the three principles, it became increasingly evident that their effectiveness in practice depends upon their being coupled with this fourth principle. One might well argue that this idea should have been so obvious as to have been incorporated in the

Working Paper from the outset (and, indeed, in the Paper’s defense it could be said that the idea is present at least implicitly). Correct though this judgment may be, the reality is that it was the seminar and the experience of working through the application of the design principles to the “real world” that made this insight inevitable.

V. Present and Future Uses of Lippman Kanfer Institute Principles: Suggestions from the Cleveland Experience (Dr. Jeffrey Schein)

The senior professionals in the Cleveland Jewish community continue to learn about the various applications of three design principles for 21st century learning. Recently, as a number of the professionals gathered together to do a “read around” (a term borrowed from the evaluation work of Adrienne Bank) of the mid-year reports of the funded positions in our community, the principles were a useful prism for assessing which congregations had made the most progress in creating learner-centered, relationship rich programs that linked Jewish learning and living.

As we observed the congregational dialogues about the principle, we saw two very different ways of making the principles “practical.” Dr. Harry Broudy described these as the tensions between “applicative” and “interpretive” uses of new concepts. An applicative approach tries to make a bee-line like connection between the new idea and educational practice. It

is a tool in the most practical sense of the term.

Interpretive uses are broader. While not without pragmatic benefits, ultimately they enable educators to step back and understand educational practice in a different light. They create “transformative” grids (Mesirow, 1997) for engaging in educational practice in a new way.

It is difficult and in the end unproductive to completely separate these processes. The nature of education as a practical enterprise (Schwab, 1969) is such that the keter (crown) of a deeper understanding can only come from attempts to “apply” these new insights. Much of the Cleveland experience with LKI reflects the dance between these two uses of the three principles.

Ironically, the best work with the principles may involve an effort to simultaneously enlarge and minimize the use of the design principles. Encountering these three vital design principles challenged the senior educators in Cleveland to acknowledge the “partialness” of any single educational paradigm (Schwab) and stretch towards a form of educational *shlemut*/wholeness. Reviewing community dialogues over the last several years that included thinking about educational vision, linking silos, and the characteristics of effective synagogue schools, challenged the senior educators to imagine the creation of protocols for programs that embodied the following six principles,

three of which the reader will recognize as the LKI design principles:

- 1) *aligning educational decisions to the congregation and school’s vision*
- 2) *valuing the learner and his or her needs*
- 3) *engaging in serious learning, with attention (as appropriate) to text-based and experiential formats*
- 4) *building relationships among learners, with the goal of intentionally creating community*
- 5) *creating life-centered, relevant learning*
- 6) *linking silos*
 - *between child and family*
 - *between various elements of congregational life*
 - *to the broader community (local, national and international)*

Applications for other Communities

Thinking beyond our Cleveland community, it seems to us that communities might consider the following three formats for realizing the potential applications of the design principles for 21st century Jewish learning

Format #1: Breadth orientation. One Time Community Forum. General focus. Gather together school/congregational teams. Distribute the paper

beforehand. Create a panel of people whom you think might respond most thoughtfully to the article. Provide some time for the teams to digest/dialogue in response to the panel.

Format #2: Depth orientation. One time community focus but after a short overview provided by a senior educator of the community divide into interest groups according to each of the three principles. Each group is facilitated by a member of a team of professionals who have read through and discussed the principles themselves in an exciting and interesting way and developed strategies for helping the members of this group to explore the individual principle in their own setting. Congregational teams might divide themselves up so they can at the end hear reports of all three discussions.

Format #3: Community Task Forces. Ongoing. Similar to #2 but with an intent to use some of the charting instruments discussed in the synergy grants discussions to chart and inventory communal strengths in regard to each of the three Lippman Kanfer Institute principles.

VI. Looking Beyond the Seminar: Taking Up the Challenge of Systemic Change (Dr. Jon Woocher)

In the years since the publication in 2007 of the *Redesigning Jewish Education* Working Paper, the design

principles laid out in that publication have been cited in a number of community educational initiatives and plans and served as focal points for discussion in a variety of settings in addition to the Siegal College seminar. In the course of doing so, both their utility and limitations have become apparent.

Because the principles are not and were not intended to be “new,” but rather to capture ideas and practices that already are embodied in “Jewish education at its best,” it is both possible and possibly tempting to see them as articulating a “conventional wisdom” that requires little reiteration. Also, because the principles are so broad, it is relatively easy for any institution or program to point to aspects of its current practice that are in line with these principles and to conclude that little further need be done.

By taking the design principles so seriously and devoting as much time to discussion of their practical implications as it did, the Siegal College seminar series did not permit either the participants or the Lippman Kanfer Institute to settle for an easy, but ultimately inconsequential, affirmation of their value and validity. And, in fact, the seminar helped to confirm that taking these principles seriously requires more than just cosmetic changes in how we “do” much of the Jewish education we offer today. (This is not meant to imply that the principles are “right” and current practice “wrong,” only that the

principles - especially when taken together - are not as benign and readily implementable as they may initially appear. The principles themselves, as we have emphasized above, also invite critique and further development from a variety of perspectives.) If we really want Jewish education that is consistently and rigorously learner-focused and empowering, relationship-infused, and life-centered (and, we would add today, content-rich), this will require some searching and challenging redesign on the ground of a wide range of practices and paradigms that have characterized Jewish education in North America to this point.

It is this process of redesign, not the specific principles articulated in the Working Paper that should be the real goal of our endeavors. The design principles, we learned from the seminar series, can serve as useful catalysts for educators and volunteer leaders to engage in the kind of self-examination of what they seek and what they do that is critical for any meaningful change to take place. By provoking participants to think deeply about the principles that underlie their own visions for what Jewish education in their institutions should be and how it can be maximally effective for today's learners, the seminar provided at least a basis for those institutions going on to undertake the even harder work of actually making the changes needed to consistently embrace those principles in practice.

In saying this, we are not backing off from our belief that the design principles themselves represent important statements about what Jewish education generally needs to be and do in order to maximize its reach and impact. But, on the macro level as well, the proof of the pudding will be in the eating, i.e., principles without strategies to implement them - strategies that are flexible and adaptive, but that are tuned to achieve deep and wide impact - will ultimately do us little good. The Cleveland experience is both heartening and chastening in this regard: heartening, in that Cleveland has proceeded to weave together its own set of principles, building on the work of the seminar in part, to guide a community-wide strategy for improving congregational education; chastening, in that even this effort is modest in scope and (at least at this point) uncertain in impact.

It is perhaps noteworthy that the Lippman Kanfer Institute design principles are playing a similar "touchstone" role in a major endeavor underway in New York to transform congregational education in that community. Here too, what will be decisive in the end is whether the strategies being put in place to achieve systemic change (which in New York's case are multiple, sophisticated, and ambitious) prove themselves in practice. If so, then the value of the design principles as starting points for thinking about the directions this change should embody will also be affirmed - a nice bonus from the

Institute's perspective, but hardly the central concern.

Would we recommend that other communities try to replicate or adapt the Siegal College seminar model for local use in one of the ways suggested above? That would depend on a number of factors, including what other processes are underway aimed at stimulating innovation and change in educational practice and policy. What we would contend is that educational leaders cannot afford to abdicate the playing field or to think only in small and fragmented ways about how Jewish education is organized and delivered in their communities. Too much has changed over the past quarter century in our society and in Jewish life to allow us to continue to do Jewish education as we have done in the past. Whether we like it or not, learners and

consumers *are* empowered to make choices about their own learning; they are seeking meaningful relationships; and they want what they learn to inform and enrich their lives. *They* are implementing the design principles for 21st century Jewish education, whether we are or not.

The Siegal College seminar demonstrated that educators and leaders are prepared to have serious conversations about the assumptions and values that guide their practice and their institutional stewardship. This is the vital first step in making the changes needed to keep Jewish education relevant and effective. The challenge now is to move from conversation to action - from design principles to systemic change.

APPENDIX A: MAP FOR EMPOWERING THE LEARNER

Congregational Maps of the “Empowering the Learner” Design Principle

Beginning with the learner — her/his needs, desires, and capacities — necessarily reframes a host of critical questions — what we seek to teach, why, how learners are involved in the educational process, the role of the educator, how we make education accessible and attractive, and what the learner’s journey looks like beyond the boundaries of single programs and institutions — in ways that open up and may even demand new answers. At least four corollary requisites flow from the “Copernican shift” of placing learners at the core of our thinking:

1. Understanding, listening to, and trusting those whom we seek to engage.
2. Involving learners (and their families, where relevant) as co-producers of their learning experiences.
3. Delivering quality and accessibility.
4. Actively helping to guide and facilitate learners in what will hopefully be a lifelong journey.

I. As you look at this LKI design principal please “bump” it up against a significant document for your school/congregation. It might be your strategic plan, your educational vision, or your congregational mission statement. As a group please discuss and note below:

Where does the LKI focus on the empowered learner mirror the concerns and emphases of your documents?

It enables learners, offers choices, shared learning, multigenerational, multi location. Learning is a partnership, experiential and lifelong Jewish learning

Where is there tension or discord between the two?

Do not invite learners as co-producers but have committees. Need student council of learners to suggest courses and topics. We do ask for feedback on evaluations.

II. If a Sarsonian visitor from Mars were to fall into one of these congregational venues, where would the focus on learner empowerment be concrete and visible?

Religious School	Adult Learning	Life-Cycle And Congregational Living	Youth Programs	Leadership and Governance
Hebrew Program- Mitkadem-self paced	Wide range of classes		Youth groups - plan/organize	Leadership and learning
Artistic expression curriculum development - teachers involved	Focus on multitude of topics		Choose activities Madrichim program	Temple Learning Council
Select HS classes	Adult Multigenerational		HS student led	Committees working groups

How would you educate this same Martian about the...

...Limitations of the concept of learner focused Jewish Education?

time consuming; hard to accommodate everyone

...Real obstacles to realizing its full potential even if it is desirable?

coming to consensus, time resources

III. Given the presentations of the panel on December 9th is there the seed of an idea about the “individualization” of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process that is forming? If so, what is it? **nothing new**

Please return electronically to Jeffrey Schein (jschein@siegalcollege.edu) and Jonathan Woocher (jwoocher@jesna.org) by Thursday, January 15.

#4 above - not enough opportunity for personal guidance (do get it in confirmation class)

-Possibly create mentors for this in the future.

APPENDIX B: ASPECTS OF RELATIONSHIP

		Aspects of Relationship				
		Frequency of Contact	Purpose	Venue	Style: Formal or Informal	Authority Structure <small>(democratic, authoritarian, etc.)</small>
Student Relationships	Teacher - Student					
	Parent-Student					
	Education Director - Student					
	Rabbi - Student					
	Youth Director - Student					
	Secretarial Staff - Student					
	Maintenance Staff - Student					