Report on Research for LKI
Submitted by Liz Stoll
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Executive Summary

The task of infusing innovation into the Jewish educational system is a challenging one. In order for LKI planners to design the most effective model for accomplishing their work, they must reflect on what is known about the change process and the diffusion of innovations in general, in the broad field of education, and in the specific field of Jewish education. In particular, it is important to consider the nature of three critical elements: (1) the innovations (2) the people, and (3) the Jewish education system. The characteristics of each of these elements affect all phases of the innovation diffusion process including initiation, implementation, and continuation. Some key points to consider about each of the elements are listed below.

The innovations:

- Characteristics of innovations that play a role in the rate of adoption include: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, triability, and observability.
- An innovation diffuses more rapidly and is more likely to be sustained if it can be re-invented or adapted.
- Innovations that are more "sticky" or memorable are more likely to spur people into action and become diffused.
- It is important to have evidence that the innovation works.

The people:

- Efforts must be made to identify opinion leaders, potential change agents, connectors, mavens, and salesmen. In the field of Jewish education, these include lay and professional leaders and funders.
- Consider people who are not currently involved in Jewish education that could bring innovation to the field.
- The concerns, needs, and fears of Jewish educators in the field must be taken into account.
- Successful diffusers of Jewish educational innovations tend to provide extensive, ongoing, multidimensional supports to help ensure the quality and sustainability of their programs.
- Depending on their specific characteristics, some communities and institutions are more likely to successfully adopt/adapt innovations than others.
- Never forget the students, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of Jewish educational innovations.

The Jewish education system:

- This is a very loosely organized system. In fact, it may be not be accurate to even refer to it as a system. However, networks do exist that connect certain groups of people and institutions to each other. These networks aid the diffusion of innovations.
- There is limited availability of important resources such as funding and well-qualified staff.
- Many innovations within this system have not achieved maximum impact.
- Rewards or incentives to encourage innovation are not widespread.

- Change within this system takes a lot of time. It often takes longer than people are willing to wait.
- Efforts to identify the current priorities /greatest challenges and needs in Jewish education must be made in order to know how and where LKI can make the greatest impact.

Introduction

The Lippman Kanfer Institute for Innovation in Jewish Learning and Engagement aims to infuse innovation into the Jewish educational system. The following report provides background information to guide the planning of LKI. General theory on the diffusion of innovations and the change process is discussed, as well as information about innovation and change specifically in education and Jewish education. Furthermore, findings about the nature of think tanks are shared, since the current vision for LKI is to be "an action-oriented think tank." Finally, recommendations for LKI planning are given based on the research.

General Theory on the Diffusion of Innovations: Key Points from Key Thinkers

What is an innovation?

In his book Diffusion of Innovations, Everett Rogers defines an innovation as "**an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption**." (p.12) Note that an innovation need not be new, but it must be perceived as new.

What is known about the innovation diffusion process?

Everett Rogers defines diffusion as a "**process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system**." (p.5) The four main elements in the diffusion of innovations, which are apparent in the definition, are:

1. **The innovation**
    - perceived attributes of innovations that play a role in the rate of adoption include:
        - *Relative advantage = degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes
        - *Compatibility = degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters
        - Complexity = degree to which innovation is perceived as difficult to understand or use
        - Triability = degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis
        - Observability = degree to which results of an innovation are visible to others
    - Re-invention is the degree to which an innovation is changed or modified by a user in the process of adoption and implementation. An innovation diffuses more rapidly when it can be re-invented and its adoption is more likely to be sustained.

2. **Communication channels**
    - Mass media
    - *Interpersonal channels – more persuasive than mass media, especially if it links 2+ individuals who are similar in socioeconomic status, education, or other important ways
    - Interactive communication – internet
3. **Time**
    - Innovation-decision process has 5 steps:
        - Knowledge
        - Persuasion
        - Decision
        - Implementation
        - Confirmation
    - Rate of adoption is the relative speed with which an innovation is adopted by members of a social system (S-shaped curve)
    - Adopter categories include:
        - Innovators
        - Early adopters
        - Early majority
        - Late majority
        - Laggards
4. **The social system =** a set of interrelated units that are engaged in joint problem solving to accomplish a common goal.
    - Structure
    - System norms
    - Opinion leaders
        - Leadership is earned and maintained by the individual's technical competence, social accessibility, and conformity to the system's norms
        - At the center of interpersonal communication networks
        - Members of the social system in which they exert influence
    - Change agents
        - Individuals who influence clients' innovation decisions in a direction deemed desirable by a change agency
        - Usually professionals with university degrees in technical fields

The above ideas come from Rogers' book, which is one of the most well known and most quoted in the field of innovation diffusion. Another popular book is The Tipping Point, in which Malcolm Gladwell presents the theory that ideas, products, messages, and behaviors spread throughout society like epidemics. Using real-life examples he explains how change occurs just as viruses spread. Gladwell identifies three rules of epidemics to help provide an understanding of how change takes place in society: the **Law of the Few**, the **Stickiness Factor**, and the **Power of Context**. He explains, "Epidemics are a function of the people who transmit infectious agents, the infectious agent itself, and the environment in which the infectious agent is operating." (Gladwell, 18) Tranferring Gladwell's ideas to LKI planning, when contemplating how best to

diffuse innovation into the Jewish education system, it is important to consider the people doing the diffusing (connectors, mavens, and salemen), the characteristics of the innovation (how sticky is it?), and the nature of the Jewish educational system into which the innovation is to be diffused.

Change and the Diffusion of Innovations in Education: An Annotated Bibliography

Bennett, John, and Bennett, Linda. "A Review of Factors that Influence the Diffusion of Innovation when Structuring a Faculty Training Program." The Internet and Higher Education 6.1 (2003): 53-63.

This article describes a **successful faculty training program that was designed using insights gained from the literature on the diffusion of innovations**. The article outlines the characteristics of innovations that influence whether or not the innovations are likely to be adopted. These characteristics (which are described in Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations) include: relative advantage, triability, observability, complexity, and compatibility. Next, the authors describe how this information was applied in designing the training program. The program was evaluated using pre and post surveys of participants and the evaluation demonstrates success. In planning for LKI and specifically in choosing which innovations to diffuse and in deciding how to train educators to use these innovations, it would be useful to consider these characteristics of innovations.

Ellsworth, James. A Survey of Educational Change Models, ERIC Digest. ERIC Clearinghouse on Information and Technology. Syracuse, NY. 2000 <http:/www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED444597>

This ERIC digest suggests that **change efforts should be guided by a general understanding of the change process as well as a more specific understanding of the context or system in which the change is to take place**. Various **books and articles are suggested for further reading** including, but not limited to: Fullan's The New Meaning of Educational Change, Havelock and Zlotolow's The Change Agent's Guide, and Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations. Besides suggesting further reading, this work is useful for LKI planning in that it instructs us to carefully consider the environment into which we are attempting to diffuse innovation.

Ellsworth, James. Surviving Change: A Survey of Educational Change Models. Syracuse, NY: ERIC Clearinghouse on Information and Technology, 2000.

This book can be ordered for $20 from ERIC Clearinghouse on Information and Technology. I don't have a copy of it, but from its description it seems like it could be useful. It presents **general theories of change** as well as **educational change theories**. Basically, it seems to summarize and apply the readings that are suggested in the ERIC Digest described above.

Ely, Donald. New Perspectives on the Implementation of Educational Technology Innovations. 1999.

This paper addresses specifically the **implementation phase of the change process**. Ely suggests **eight conditions** that appear to aid the implementation of education technology innovations: **(1)dissatisfaction with the status quo, (2)existence of knowledge and skills, (3)availability of resources, (4)availability of time, (5)existence of rewards or incentives (6)participation, (7)commitment, and (8)leadership**. Although Ely has studied cases of both implementation failure and success, these eight conditions were derived from his examination of successful cases of implementation. In this paper, Ely also provides further examples from the literature that support these eight conditions. The relative strength and importance of each condition appears to vary depending on the context and the innovation. This paper helps guide LKI in that it would presumably be useful to strive for these conditions if we want Jewish educational innovations to be implemented successfully.

Evans, Robert. The Human Side of School Change: Reform, Resistance, and the Real-Life Problems of Innovation. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996.

This book offers **"a conceptual framework for understanding change as a process, educators as people, schools as institutions, and leadership as craft."** (p.xiii) Some interesting points to consider for LKI planning include: first vs. second order changes; change as provoking loss, challenging competence, creating confusion, and causing conflict; tasks of change; focus and clarity, scope and complexity, desirability, and feasibility of innovations; teachers' common questions about change (p.80); and how to successfully lead innovation. Perhaps most importantly, Evans makes the point that **"…no innovation can succeed unless it attends to the realities of people and place."** (p.92)

First vs. second order changes (Evans, p.5):
First order changes

- Try to improve the efficiency or effectiveness of what we are already doing
- Are usually single, incremental, and isolated
- Do not significantly alter basic features of the school or the way its members perform their roles

Second order changes:

- Are systemic in nature
- Aim to modify the very way an organization is put together, altering its assumptions, goals, structures, roles, and norms
- Require people to change their beliefs and perceptions

Tasks of Change (Evans, p.56):

- Unfreezing
- Moving from loss to commitment
- Moving from old competence to new competence
- Moving from confusion to coherence

- Moving from conflict to consensus

Teachers' Common Questions about Change (Fullan in Evans, p.80)**:**

- Does the change address a need?
- Will it interest students?
- Will learning improve?
- Is there evidence that the change does what it claims?
- Is it clear what the teacher will have to do?
- What will it require in terms of time, energy, and skills?
- How much will it interfere with current programs and priorities?

Fullan, Michael. The New Meaning of Educational Change. 3rd ed. New York: Teachers College Press, 2001.

This book includes an in depth discussion of the complexities of the educational change process. The process is divided into three main phases: initiation, implementation, and continuation. Fullan outlines the major factors that affect each of these stages and provides extensive advice on how to successfully bring about educational change. Although this book focuses on the public education system, much of content can be applied to change in Jewish educational institutions. Here are some of the book's highlights:

- The main problem is not the absence of innovation in schools, but rather the presence of too many disconnected, episodic, fragmented, superficially adorned projects. (p.21)
- Change will always fail until we find some way of developing infrastructures and processes that engage teachers in developing new understandings. (p.37)
- Change along three dimensions – in materials, teaching approaches, and beliefs – are essential if the intended outcome is to be achieved. (p.46)
- Factors affecting initiation (aka adoption or mobilization): (p.54)
    - Existence and quality of innovations
    - Access to innovations
    - Advocacy from central administration
    - Teacher advocacy
    - External change agents
    - Community pressure/support/apathy
    - New policy – funds
    - Problem solving and bureaucratic orientations
- Factors affecting implementation: (p.72)
    - Characteristics of change (need, clarity, complexity, quality/practicality)
    - Local characteristics (community, principal, teacher)
    - External factors

- Factors affecting continuation: (p.88)
    - See factors affecting initiation
    - Active leadership
    - Professional development

- Success is 25% having the right ideas and 75% establishing effective processes that themselves are no guarantee since each situation is unique (p.90)
- Do and don't assumptions for a successful approach to educational change: (pp.108-9)
    - Do not assume that your version of what the change should be is the one that should or could be implemented.
    - Assume that any significant innovation, if it is to result in change, requires individual implementers to work out their own meaning.
    - Assume that conflict and disagreement are not only inevitable but fundamental to successful change.
    - Assume that people need pressure to change (even in directions that they desire), but it will be effective only under conditions that allow them to react, to form their own position, to interact with other implementers, to obtain technical assistance, etc.
    - Assume that effective change takes time.
    - Do not assume that the reason for lack of implementation is outright rejection of the values embodied in the change, or hard-core resistance to all change.
    - Do not expect all or even most people or groups to change.
    - Assume that you will need a *plan* that is based on the above assumptions and that addresses the factors know to affect implementation.
    - Assume that no amount of knowledge will ever make it totally clear what action should be taken.
    - Assume that changing the culture of institutions is the real agenda, not implementing single innovations.

http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/profdevl/pd2stage.htm
On their website, the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory includes the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Hall & Loucks, 1979), which describes the seven levels of concern that teachers experience as they adopt a new practice:

- **Awareness.** Teachers have little concern or involvement with the innovation.
- **Informational.** Teachers have a general interest in the innovation and would like to know more about it.
- **Personal.** Teachers want to learn about the personal ramifications of the innovation. They question how the innovation will affect them.
- **Management.** Teachers learn the processes and tasks of the innovation. They focus on information and resources.
- **Consequence.** Teachers focus on the innovation's impact on students.
- **Collaboration.** Teachers cooperate with other teachers in implementing the innovation.
- **Refocusing.** Teachers consider the benefits of the innovation and think of additional alternatives that might work even better.

Silva, M. Kathleen, and Sheppard, Sheri. "Enabling and Sustaining Educational Innovation." Proceedings of the 2001 American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference and Exposition, Session 2330.

Silva and Sheppard report on a nine person panel assembled in October 2000 by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. This panel discussed **innovation in engineering education**, addressing specifically the **inspiration, enablers, challenges, sustainability, and assessment of innovations**. Common themes were found in each area, and, even though they are based only on a nine person panel, they can definitely help inform LKI planning:

> Several themes and commonalities became apparent during the workshop. *Inspiration* and action are sparked by pressure from external stakeholders, by recognizing an important need, or by seizing an opportunity. *Enablers* include resources, passion, commitment, faculty buy-in, risk-taking, and out-of-the-box intellectual stimulation. *Challenges* include overcoming faculty burn-out, acquiring resources, involving external stakeholders, and transforming an innovation into something sustainable. Creating multi/interdisciplinary teams and networks (involving both internal and external stakeholders which share the same visions, passions, and energies) that are provided working environments in which the culture is nurturing and individuals are recognized as valuable members of the community may be *solutions* to answer the challenges posed by innovation. *Sustainability* of innovation occurs through creating a sense of community and ownership, by changing the existing culture, by enhancing and closing feedback loops, and by recognizing the actions of one's peers through a public reward system. *Evidence* of the institutionalization process includes increased retention and enrollments, positive feedback from all stakeholders, and an energized and committed faculty.

Szabo, Michael, and Sobon, Sonia. "A Case Study of Institutional Reform Based on Innovation Diffusion Theory Through Educational Technology." Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology 29.2 (Spring 2003): ?.

Szabo, Michael. "Educational Reform as Innovation Diffusion: Development of a Theory and Test of a Model Using Continuing Professional Development and Instructional Technology." Informing Science (June 2002)

Szabo and Sobon write about the Training, Infrastructure and Empowerment System (TIES), which they developed based on theories about **disruptive innovations**. They view instructional communication technology as "an innovation with the potential to be highly disruptive and culture changing in our profession." Therefore, basic, well known change strategies are insufficient. The piece from Informing Science includes a lot of general information on innovation diffusion. Their articles may be especially helpful to LKI in the future if they choose to diffuse disruptive innovations. However, it may be best for LKI to focus on innovations that are less disruptive and therefore more easily adopted.

The Diffusion of Innovations in Jewish Education: A Report on Innovation Interviews

Background:

A total of 16 interviews were conducted with various people who have been involved with innovative projects in Jewish education. The goal of these interviews was to learn from their experiences and to identify some of the key factors and unique considerations that influence the diffusion of innovations in the Jewish education system. Interviewees included funders, agency directors, and programmers:

- David Gedzelman: Jewish Life Network – Synaplex
- Rachel Levin: Righteous Persons Foundation – Joshua Venture
- Aliza Mazor: Bikkurim – Storahtelling
- Daniel Bennett: Denver, CO central agency (CAJE) – CAJE Fellows
- Joan Kaye: Orange County, CA BJE – professional development program for religious school teachers
- Bob Sherman: San Francisco, CA BJE – Diller Teen Fellows
- Ruth Feldman: JCC Association – An Ethical Start
- Betsy Katz: Florence Melton Adult Mini-School
- Carolyn Keller: MetroWest Jewish Day School, Boston Federation – Family Educators Initiative
- David Rosenn: Avodah: The Jewish Service Corps
- Rob Weinberg: HUC – Experiment in Congregational Education (ECE)
- K'vod Wieder: Grinspoon Foundation – B'nai Tzedek
- Martin Kaminer: Bikkurim
- Carol Spinner and Debbie Krivoy: Avodah Arts
- Harlene Appelman: Covenant Foundation – JEFF
- Debbie Coltin: Lappin Foundation – Rekindle Shabbat

Findings:

A few key findings became strikingly clear as the interviews were being conducted. They are worth highlighting here at the beginning of the section on findings since they were heard over and over again:

- Adaptation and flexibility are key because each community/institution is different.
- Involving the right people is critical. These could be lay and/or professional leaders within the adopting/adapting communities or institutions.
- Carefully crafted criteria that determine whether or not communities/institutions can participate help ensure success.
- Successful diffusers of innovations provide extensive, ongoing, multidimensional supports to help ensure the quality and sustainability of their programs.
- Innovation and change takes time. It often takes longer to see its effects than people are willing to wait.
- It helps to work within pre-established systems/partnerships.
- Funding is critical and needed long term to ensure sustainability.
- Piloting programs in communities with well-connected opinion leaders can help tremendously in spreading the word if program is successful.

The rest of the findings are listed below, organized according to topic/question:

1. In your general, overall experience, what have you found works well in terms of spreading Jewish educational innovations?
    - Dissemination with goal of adaptation instead of goal of replication
    - Objective should be to create innovators as opposed to disseminating a specific innovation
    - Future of dissemination is in disintermediating – bringing innovators and adapters together
    - Finding the right people (passionate) to partner with around a change agenda (lay leaders or opinion leaders in community) to buy in, spread word, create impact within system
    - Takes vision and faith. Have to stick with it and know where you're going with it, even if that vision changes
    - Innovators have to admit that they're learning too – transparency
    - Three components are necessary: documenting, consulting/coaching, and adaptation
    - There must be an atmospheric ripeness (could LKI help institutions assess readiness?)
    - The trick is balancing innovation with sustainability
    - Professional networks help innovation spread
    - Communities of learning – professionals engaged in innovative practices meeting, talking, thinking, and learning together and sharing with others
    - Always starting with a logic model so you can evaluate the program
    - Using PR strategically / marketing is crucial
    - What works well depends on the community
    - Population you want to change needs to want change
    - Need to make sure there's enough money to do something well.

2. What doesn't work well?
    - Change takes more time than people ever are willing to give it.
    - Trying to do things too fast never works well.
    - Success is more expensive than you think
    - Totally imposing something without doing ground work to get enough buy-in. Great ideas can be generated from the top but also want to make sure there is grassroots support.
    - Lack of clarity
    - If all you're doing is disseminating a specific innovation, your impact is necessarily limited
    - People rolling out content without a plan
    - Program may be fabulous but people might not be ready for it
    - If innovation is not directly related to mission, it's not going to happen.
    - Failing to anticipate people's attachment to whatever it is you want to change
    - Most institutions are risk averse. This puts a damper on innovation. It may help to figure out where does the system in general support innovation and where does it get discouraged. Then boost and encourage innovation wherever it already supported.
    - The biggest challenge is getting other communities to want to learn more about programs. They see it costs money and unless they have funders in place, they're hesitant to consider programs in their community.

3. Where did you spread the program to and how?
    - Often a combination of communities/institutions approaching them and vise versa.
    - Pilot communities were carefully selected – typically chose communities where they already had ongoing relationships
    - After pilot work/initial year(s), word of mouth brought other communities to them
    - Learned that it was helpful to have criteria/requirements for communities/institutions to participate. Common criteria were: availability of funding; interest in innovation / openness to change; core of capable, reflective, proactive lay and professional leaders. See interview notes for examples of specific criteria for specific programs.
    - Local advisory boards are helpful / must establish local support (ideally both lay and professional – one or the other is less sustainable)
    - Melton has staff member whose job is community development, step by step process from time city calls them to time school opens
    - Important to have organizational structure in place to support growth
    - Sometimes it's less complicated to set up programs in smaller communities with less bureaucracy
    - In some cases, other people/places heard about their programs and imitated them without their help

- Dilemma – what do you do: keep number low to keep quality or increase numbers at different levels of engagement?

4. To what extent do you think that your program has been re-invented or changed in the various locations? How do you feel about this?
   - Adaptation and flexibility were encouraged in every case.
   - It was important to identify which aspects of the program were core pieces that should be required and which aspects were best left up to the specific community/site. One organization referred to this as "national consistency, local creativity."
   - Creativity within adopting/adapting sites helped improve the programs

5. What type of support (money, staff, materials, training, etc) was provided for communities/institutions adopting your program? Who provided it?
   - Money: Different programs provide vastly different amounts of financial support. In some cases, the central office offers grants to communities to help start their programs. In other cases, the communities are required to pay the central office in order to participate. One organization is set up as franchises.
   - Staff: consultants available by phone, email, and in person as needed. Some programs had regularly scheduled site visits.
   - Materials: guidebooks/handbooks, curricular materials, public relations materials, vendor lists
   - Training and Professional Development: A number of programs had multiple training sessions (topics included: pedagogy, Jewish content, marketing, volunteer engagement, evaluation, fundraising, meeting running, etc.), ongoing professional development sessions/ conferences, and conference calls for various people in various roles (both lay and prof). Some programs involved mentors. Also, some utilized online learning experiences and online workspace.
   - Other: Email networks were common. Also, some programs provided evaluation.

6. Who did you rely on/ who were the key players (professional and lay) in the diffusion process?

   Most programs seemed to rely on both professional and lay support. Some found professionals more helpful in making things happen, while others found lay people to be more helpful in spreading the word and encouraging buy-in. Involving both lay and professional leaders seemed to be best for sustainability. Below is a list of the various key players that interviewees named:
   - Professionals: Rabbis, educators/principals, federation and bureau directors
   - Lay support: "champions" with influence and connections
   - Funders
   - Local advisory boards
   - Local sponsoring agencies
   - National networks: UJC, Jewish Funders Network

7. What problems/challenges were encountered? How were these dealt with?
    - Problem: Turnover in lay or professional leadership
      Solution: Be sure both are involved so that if you lose one the program can be sustained
    - Problem: Difficulty in sustaining energy level
      Solution: Try to inform communities/sites ahead of time about time, effort, and energy that will be required. Develop participation criteria to help ensure that they have necessary resources in place before they take on program.
    - Problem: Difficulty finding and sustaining funding.
      Solution: Nobody really has a solution for this. One program requires communities to have 2 years of funding secured before they open in that community. Assessment tools may also be helpful to show that programs have an impact and are worth funding. A number of interviewees believe the money is out there and it's just a matter of doing good fundraising. One interviewee mentioned that getting an audience with the funders is a challenge.
    - Problem: Finding the right staff
      Solution: Training and professional development as well as clarifying with community/institution and specifically those in charge of hiring what "the right staff" means.
    - Problem: It was one interviewee's experience that nobody wanted to use the word "change". Community educators didn't want to be "change agents."
      Solution: In general, be aware of the language you use and how it affects people. Specifically, be careful about using the word "change."
    - Problem: Lack of community support/interest or seen as threat by community
      Solution: Some focus on working with whomever is interested. Others work hard to gain interest and support from doubters. Innovations can complement/feed existing programs as opposed to threatening them.
    - Problem: Pushing too much too soon – unrealistic timeline, lack of organizational structure to support growth
      Solution: Accepting that change takes time and slowing down. Strengthening organizational structure before expanding to additional sites.
    - Problem: Inconsistent quality – program quality is excellent in some communities/institutions and poor in others.
      Solution: More training, professional development, and support. Also important to establish core elements for all sites to follow.

8. What advice would you give to others trying to spread Jewish educational innovations?
    - Creating education innovators should be target/goal, not spreading innovations.
    - Real innovation is really about cultural shifts and that takes a lot of time. It's important to give projects a lot of time to build roots, experiment, and fail – not quick solutions.
    - What's really important for success of a project is to work with communities to make it a community collaborative project. If all members of the

community aren't brought on from day one, there can be resistance. It can be seen as another initiative from the central agency. Implementation in community needs to involve all members of the community.
- Whoever is doing the spreading has to be absolutely passionate about it. They must believe that this is really a key to a substantial deepening of Jewish life and continuity. The key is overcoming people's inertia a lot of the time.
- Evaluation processes are important for communities to be able to see effectiveness of innovation.
- You can't just give an idea to a community and expect it to happen. It takes a lot of hours, intense staff time devoted to helping communities with the process.

9. In general, what do you see as some of the most useful resources that could serve to support and encourage innovation in Jewish education?
    - The work of JESNA's Berman Center is helpful in providing evaluation.
    - A national network would be helpful to tie together different communities and share ideas.
    - We have to develop an effective and appropriate information delivery system. There are wonderful things going on all across the country but the Jewish community hasn't yet found a way to disseminate this information.
    - Financial support – especially for smaller communities, where lack of bureaucracy can often make it easier to do new things. Perhaps a group of funders could get together specifically to provide seed money to communities interested in replicating/adapting programs.
    - Innovation is not about seeing what's already done. Instead it's important to look at the processes and theories that allow people to create innovative programs. Replicability is the antithesis of innovation.
    - The Jewish community is doing just fine with innovation. By far the bigger problem is getting a good idea to have maximum impact. Organizational structures are lacking.

Specific Requests from Interviewees Requiring Follow-Up:

- K'vod Wieder would love to be kept in the loop about how LKI unfolds.
- Rob Weinberg doesn't know where institute is going but if there's a role they can play, he'd be happy to talk and explore it. Partnership?
- Rob Weinberg and Rachel Levin want copies of my report on the interviews, if possible.

Other People and Programs from Which LKI Can Potentially Learn:

- Chaim Herring: Synaplex (recommended by David Gedzelman)
- Mark Horowitz: JECEI (recommended by David Gedzelman - miraculous work in gaining buy-in in early childhood field, he has disarmed people and made them open to and wanting to be part of innovation and change)

- Ma'alah: Early Childhood Hebrew Language Immersion Network. Building on lessons learned in pilot schools, as well as upon extensive research in early childhood learning theories, twelve new pre-schools participate in a Hebrew diffusion network. http://www.jtsa.edu/davidson/melton/childhood.shtml
- PEJE
- Me'ah
- It may also be beneficial to interview people from the communities/institutions into which the innovations were diffused. They have a different yet important perspective on the process.

Think Tanks: Who, What, and How?

What is a think tank?

The American Heritage Dictionary defines think tank as "a group or an institution organized for intensive research and solving of problems, especially in the areas of technology, social or political strategy, or armament." According to the Columbia University Lehman Social Sciences Library website, "The term 'think tanks' is an imprecise phrase which is used to describe a wide range of non-profit research organizations which engage in public policy analysis and research, and often advocate solutions. Some are strictly nonpartisan, researching policy issues without regard to political outcomes, while others see one of their main functions as that of providing intellectual support to politicians or parties." While many think tanks are policy and/or politically oriented, others are not. The term is used to refer to an extremely broad range of groups of various sizes that work in many different ways to accomplish a large variety of goals.

How do successful think tanks operate?

In his article "War of Ideas," Andrew Rich indicates that conservative think tanks are beating mainstream and liberal think tanks in the war of ideas in American politics. Rich attempts to explain why conservative foundations and their think tanks have been more successful. He points out that it is not because they spend more money; rather, it is due to the fact that they **promote their ideas more aggressively**. While mainstream and liberal foundations focus mostly on research, conservative foundations also make **marketing and communications** priorities. Conservative foundations are also willing to **admit that they are biased**, as opposed to claiming to be neutral. They tend to **support institutions rather than projects**, and they are generally **multi-issue** foundations as opposed to being specialized in one area. The above qualities of successful, conservative think tanks could be instructive for planning the format of LKI.

Lawrence Reed, in his article entitled, "Thinking Through a Successful Think Tank," offers guidance for starting and operating a successful think tank. His advice is directed specifically toward free market think tanks, but much of his advice could be helpful for LKI as well. For instance, he suggests developing **a thoughtful strategic plan** because "the most successful groups are those that **know precisely who they are,**

what their strengths and weaknesses are, and what they want to accomplish in the way of specific, measurable, short-term and long-term objectives." Reed also instructs think tanks to build **a family of respected advisors and associates**, and he offers suggestions on how best to accomplish this. His article can be found at: http://www.heritage.org/about/community/insider/2000/apr00/welcome.html

From whom can LKI learn?: Examples of think tanks with useful and informative websites

The Carnegie Mellon Community Think Tank:
http://www.cmu.edu/thinktank/index.html

The Carnegie Mellon Community Think Tank is a culturally diverse body of problem solvers committed to bringing wider perspectives and collaborative action to urban issues. The website is especially useful because it contains a detailed description of the **structured process** which they use. Also, it is helpful in general to read how they describe themselves and their work.

The CIEP, an education think tank:
http://www.ciep.fr/en/presentationciep/index.htm

The *Centre international d'études pédagogiques* contributes to the development of international cooperation in education. They **diffuse information** in a variety of ways including: seminars, conferences, document resource center, and publications.

BEST Education Network think tanks:
http://www.besteducationnetwork.org/think_tanks.php

BEST EN Think Tanks are annual three day events seeking to push the field of sustainable tourism research and education forward. This website contains thoughtful information on the think tank's **purpose, participants, process,** and **outcomes**.

The Rennie Center:
http://www.massinc.org/about/cerp/about_us/about_index.html

The Rennie Center's mission is to develop a public agenda that informs and promotes significant improvement of public education in Massachusetts. Their website is helpful to see how they describe themselves, including their **description of staff, supporters, advisors, and collaborators.**

NERCHE (I also read an article about these think tanks):
http://www.nerche.org/about_nerche/about_nerche.html
Hirsch, Deborah. "Practitioners as Researcher: Bridging Theory and Practice." New Directions for Higher Education 28.2 (Sum 2000): 99-106.

This article describes the think tank programs of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE). These think tanks are unique in that they **bring together educational practitioners and educational researchers**, two groups of people that often do not interact with each other. Therefore, they help to bridge the gap between research and practice in higher education. Specifically, they provide space for practitioners to actively reflect on their practice and to compare their experiences with those of others, they expose participants to current research that can inform their practice, and they generate research questions that practitioners and researchers work together to answer. The think tanks generally take place in the form of daylong seminars. Readings are distributed beforehand to inform discussions. Members of the think tanks are selected for their ability as leaders and change agents within their institutions. NERCHE now operates six think tanks: for chief student affairs officers, chief academic officers, associate academic deans, chief financial officers, department chairs, and heads of institutional research. The information on NERCHE's think tanks could be helpful for LKI planning in that it suggests a useful model that brings together educational researchers and practitioners.

The Institute for School Innovation:
http://www.ifsi.org/mission_board.htm

The Institute for School Innovation engages in research and development to increase teacher effectiveness through the use of technology and active learning. Their website includes information on **mission, staff, governance, funding, and programs**. The institute disseminates innovative instructional programs, provides specialist certification, provides grants and scholarships to assist qualified schools in adopting its programs, hosts annual conference as well as district and regional support days for teachers, and recognizes educators committed to change and innovation with awards.

The National Diffusion Network:
http://www.sedl.org/scimath/compass/v01n01/ndn.html
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/eptwint.html

For more than 20 years, the National Diffusion Network was funded by the Department of Education to help educators share some effective practices going on around the country. Though funding of the NDN ceased in 1996, its catalog, Educational Programs That Work, is available on-line at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EPTW/index.html Website includes interesting details on **how programs were selected and supported**.

The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute:
http://www.jpppi.org.il/about_us/about_us.asp

The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute (JPPPI) was established in 2002 as an independent think tank whose mission is to contribute to the continuity of the Jewish people and Judaism, and their thriving future. Its website is quite comprehensive including information on: **mission statement, rationale, board of directors, staff, shareholders, main projects, publications, and more**.

The Whizin Institute:
http://cpo.uj.edu/Content/ContentUnit.asp?CID=1033&u=1590&t=0

There are a few institutes that think of themselves as think tanks at the University of Judaism. One is Whizin, which is run by Ron Wolfson. Other institutes at the UJ include: Sigi Ziering Institute at the Unviersity of Judaism (holocaust) and an Israel think tank.

Institute for Jewish and Community Research:
www.jewishresearch.org

This is Gary Tobin's. It is independent but thinks of itself as cutting edge.

Innovation in Canada:
http://www.innovation.gc.ca/gol/innovation/site.nsf/en/in02392.html

This is a great site about helping Canadian communities be more innovative.

The SchoolNet GrassRoots Program:
http://www.rescol.ca/grassroots/e/home/about/index.asp
http://www.rescol.ca/grassroots/e/resources/toolkit/Dibbon/page9.asp

Also in Canada, The SchoolNet GrassRoots Program, together with its provincial, territorial and corporate partners, promotes and facilitates the effective integration and use of information and communications technologies (ICT) in Canadian classrooms.

Other Relevant Findings:

Ostrower, Francie. "Behind the Buzz of Partnerships." Stanford Social Innovation Review 3.1 (Spring 2005): 34-41.

This article discusses the **advantages and disadvantages of partnerships** between organizations. It discusses specifically whether it makes sense for foundations to require grantees to form partnerships and whether it makes sense for organizations to form partnerships in order to receive grants. Ostrower points out that measuring the

success of a partnership is very difficult. This article is helpful if we are considering partnering with other organizations as part of LKI.

The American Creativity Association:
http://www.amcreativityassoc.org/index.htm

The American Creativity Association is **a resource for learning and applying creativity, innovation, problem-solving, and ideation theory, tools, and techniques**. They offer a global network of creative professionals in disciplines ranging from business and industry to education and the arts. It would be worthwhile for LKI planners to find out more about the work of the ACA if they decide to focus on developing innovative solutions as opposed to merely diffusing innovations that already exist in the field.

Diffusion of Innovation in Health Care:
http://www.iftf.org/docs/SR-778_Diffusion_of_Innovation_in_HC.pdf

This report entitled "Diffusion of Innovation in Health Care" was prepared for the California Health Care Foundation by the Institute for the Future in May 2002. It may be helpful to study how another field has applied the theories of innovation diffusion to their work

Weinreich, Nedra. "What is Social Marketing?"
http://www.social-marketing.com/Whatis.html

This article posted on Social-Marketing.com provides an overview of **social marketing**, which is about **selling ideas, attitudes, and behaviors**, as opposed to products. In addition to the usual four P's of marketing (product, price, place, and promotion), social marketing also includes the following elements: publics (target audience and those who influence them), partnerships, policy, and purse strings.

"A 7 Step Marketing Approach" Presentation to Waste Educate 98 Conference by Les Robinson, Social Change Media: http://media.socialchange.net.au/strategy/

This report outlines the **seven steps of social marketing**: (1)knowledge – I know I should, (2)desire – I want to, (3)skills – I can, (4)optimism – it's worthwhile, (5)facilitation – it's easy, (6)stimulation – I'm joining in, and (7)Reinforcement – that was a success. Each condition, or step, is actually an obstacle. **"Education strategy" is about clearing away obstacles rather than awareness building.**

Godin, Seth. "Unleash Your Ideavirus." Fast Company, August 2000: 115-133.

This article describes how ideas spread and specifically how you can get your customers to spread your ideas for you. In his discussion of ideaviruses, Godin suggests the following questions as a self-diagnostic test:

1. What can we do to make our product more virusworthy?
2. How likely are powerful (as opposed to promiscuous) sneezers to adopt our virus?
3. Do we know who the sneezers are and how to contact them?

4. Have we figured out what we want our sneezers to say? How are we teaching them to say it?
5. Is it possible to include our viral elements in our product?
6. Have we chosen a hive that we're capable of dominating?
7. How smooth is the transfer of the idea virus?
8. Have we built in multiple feedback loops so that we can alter the virus as it moves and grows?

Conclusion: Bringing It All Together To Guide Next Steps

Summary of Findings

Taken together, the above research can certainly serve to guide the planning of the Lippman Kanfer Institute. The diffusion of innovations is a complex, multi-variable, multi-step process. Some of the variables include the relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, triability, observability, and adaptability of the innovation; the skills, interests, concerns, needs, passions, fears, and influence of the various people involved and the communication channels and support mechanisms that exist between them; and the organizational structure and resources available within the Jewish education system. Some of the steps in the process of innovation diffusion include: initiation (including knowledge**,** persuasion**,** and decision**),** implementation, confirmation, and continuation. Challenges involved in the diffusion of innovations, particularly within the Jewish education system include: turnover in lay and professional leadership, difficulty finding and sustaining funding, unrealistic timelines, difficulty finding the right staff, and limited communication networks. Applying this knowledge of the different variables, steps, and challenges in the innovation diffusion process, LKI now has the ability to much more effectively clarify and accomplish its mission.

What Now? Unanswered Questions and Possible Next Steps

The following questions must be addressed in order for LKI planning to move forward:

Goal-oriented questions:

- What step(s) in the innovation process are we most interested in? Are we interested in encouraging people to come up with new innovations or do we want to focus on the diffusion of innovations that already exist?
- Are we interested in creating first order or second order change?
- Are we interested in serving the innovators or the adopters or both?
- What are the current priorities /greatest challenges and needs in Jewish education, and which of these LKI could address?
- What are the specific goals that LKI wishes to accomplish, and what are some measurable short and long term objectives?

Structure-oriented questions:

- What format will LKI take on: Think tank? Annual conference? Quarterly Workshops? Email list? Publication? Website?
- How and with whom will LKI communicate?

- How will LKI participants communicate and share ideas and challenges with each other?
- Who and how many will participate: Jewish educators? Jewish educational leadership? Jewish community leadership? Academics from fields of Jewish education, Judaic studies, and education? Students?
- Will there be prerequisites for participating in LKI? Will the participants be selected or is it open to all? Will there be a membership requirement?
- How will LKI be governed?
- Will LKI partner with other organizations?

Some possible next steps:

- Conduct further research on methods of change.
- Interview people from the communities/institutions into which various Jewish educational innovations were diffused (the adopters). They offer a different perspective on the process, and their names can potentially be supplied by the innovators who have already been interviewed.
- Conduct further research to identify the greatest areas of need and greatest areas of promise in the field of Jewish education. This could be done through interviews and could help provide guidance to LKI about the content of innovations.
- Distribute this report, or an updated version of it once all of research is completed.

Additional Recommendations: Possible Roles and Models for LKI

Based on the extensive research that I conducted, I envision various potential roles and corresponding models for LKI. Two options are listed below along with some of the advantages and disadvantages of each. I am happy to outline and/or analyze other models or suggest other potential pieces of LKI's work if such input is desired by LKI planners.

- Role: **LKI as a creator, tester, and diffuser of innovative solutions**
  Model: LKI would convene a large variety of people to address specific problems in the field of Jewish education. Problems to be addressed would be determined based on participant needs and desires (they could vote). Each conference would focus on one specific problem. Solutions/innovations would be brainstormed and developed at conferences using a specific, structured format (see think tank websites for some possible formats). Feasibility of innovations would be analyzed based on knowledge of the innovation diffusion process. A small number of solutions/innovations would be selected to be tested in various institutions/communities, with a clear plan for assessment (perhaps under the guidance of the Berman Center). Successful innovations would then be diffused using advanced marketing/communications tactics and using key players (connectors, mavens, and salesmen) to spread the word. Perhaps funding would be provided to institutions who wish to implement the innovations. Criteria would certainly be in place to determine which communities/institutions could

participate. Training sessions would also be held, and a large variety of support mechanisms (see interview findings for examples) would be provided.
Advantages: This model is extremely comprehensive and covers all steps in the innovation diffusion process. It also brings together many different players to solve problems that address their immediate needs. All aspects of the model are designed based on my research.
Disadvantages: This entire process would take a lot of time and money. This model is unfocused in that it is trying to do everything, which is probably too much.

- Role: **LKI as a convener and supporter of innovators and adopters**
  Model: On an annual basis, LKI would choose one (or maybe more than one after LKI gets some practice) specific problem/challenge to address based on participant needs and desires (they could vote). LKI would then focus on this one problem, searching for and identifying pre-existing innovative solutions that address this problem. Information on the innovations would be gathered and a committee would then select the innovations to eventually be included at a conference with potential adopters. Selection would be based on careful assessment of the innovation, considering the research on the innovation diffusion process. Before convening the innovators and adopters, LKI would bring together all of the innovators in a workshop that would instruct them on the necessary preparations to successfully diffuse their innovations. Also, at this workshop criteria for adopters would be written for each innovation. LKI would provide funding to the innovators so that they could hire necessary staff and produce materials as needed. After this workshop, written information about all the innovations, including criteria for adopters, could be distributed to all LKI participants. Potential adopters would then apply for participation and funding for their community/institution. Whether or not they receive the funding would be based on how well they fit the adopter criteria. Then, a conference of innovators and adopters would take place, where more detailed information on the innovations and how to implement and adapt them to their communities/institutions would be offered. Follow up, support, and further idea sharing would take place through phone calls, email communications, site visits, and workshops.
  Advantages: This model is more focused in that it concentrates only on the diffusion process. Both the innovators and adopters/adapters are carefully selected and trained using research-based criteria, which makes the diffusion process more likely to succeed. The innovations address participants' current needs. There are financial incentives to encourage both the innovators and the adopters to participate.
  Disadvantages: This model could be seen as limiting, as opposed to encouraging, innovation in that it focuses more on the diffusion of previously created innovations than it does on coming up with new innovations. The model could be too expensive.