

FOLLOW UP ASSIGNMENTS Cohort 7—Seminar 1

"Torah is acquired with forty-eight qualities: ... listening and illuminating..."
(Pirke Avot, Chapter 6)

ASSIGNMENT 1: ATTENTIVE LISTENING

A key aspect of attentive listening is to focus on understanding where another person is coming from, and to check in on that understanding, before perhaps choosing to agree, disagree, correct, challenge, etc. The aim is to understand the other and to have the other person experience being understood, rather than to change the person in some way. This kind of attentive listening is essential to learning and to teaching both in the work of professional development as well as in the classroom. It can also be very fruitful in potential conflict situations.

Task:

1) Name some contexts in your work life in which attentive listening has a role. When you teach? When a teacher comes for help? When you are talking with students or parents?

2) Imagine how attentive listening might help you in these contexts....

3) Keep a journal in which you write about times in which you tried to practice attentive listening.

- In what contexts did you practice attentive listening?
- What did you do?
- What did you find easy or natural about this kind of listening?
- What did you find challenging about this kind of listening?
- Try to find out how the experience “affected the experience of the people you were working with”?
- How was what happened different from what might have happened in the past?

4) Before November, write up one of your journal entries in a form that you can share. Be sure to describe the context in which you practice attentive listening, what you heard or understood as a result, how this affected your experience and the experience of the person or people you were interacting with. What did you learn from experimenting with this practice?

ASSIGNMENT 2: TEXT STUDY

Choose a text that we studied together that you think would be important or meaningful to your faculty.

Task:

1) Prepare for the study session by asking yourself these questions:

- Why do I want to engage my faculty in learning this text?
- What questions or confusions do I have about the text?
- What are the learning goals?
 - Content goals/ Ideas of the text
 - “Engagement” goals / How will we learn together?
- What do I hope people will gain from studying it?
- How will I introduce the session?
- How will I structure (and facilitate) the teaching and learning?
 - Will I create a written study guide?
 - What are key questions that I would like to raise?
- How will I find out what participants gained or how they experienced the session?

2) Engage your teachers in learning the text and get the feedback you’ve decided to collect

3) After the session, create a journal entry (which will be shared at the Seminar) in which you discuss:

- What happened? (Describe the text-based session)
- How did this compare with what you assumed or hoped would happen?
- Were there aspects of what happened that surprised you?
- Were there aspects that pleased you? Why?
- Were there aspects that you were not happy with? Why?
- What did participants report about their experience and/or learning?
- In retrospect, what changes would I introduce in the design of the session? Why?

Bring both your “lesson plan” (responses to #1) and the Journal entry responses to our November Seminar in a form that you can share.