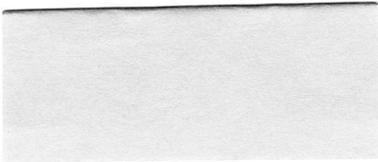


Website: OK
But NO NAME,
please

Assignment 2: Text Study

- Write your responses to the following questions, Be prepared to share your lesson plan and any study guide you might have prepared for your students to use in the context of the learning?
- What text did you choose? And why?
- To whom did you teach this text? And in what context? (e.g., orientation sessions, faculty meeting, back to school night???)
- What did you hope your participants would gain from studying it together?
- (Bring the list of questions that you prepared to ask, if they are not part of the lesson plan)
- Reflect on some aspect of the study guide or your prepared questions that worked well.
- (If you remember a difficult moment that came up when you were not sure what to do, describe that as well.)
- How did you learn about participants' experience and/or learning and what did you find out?
- What challenges did you face in setting up this session (e.g., finding time, getting childcare for teachers, paying for teachers' time, rabbi's response to your being the leader of text study session with teachers?)



Text Study Experience: Rabbi Nechunyah

As I am sure a number of our cohort members did, I chose to use the Rabbi Nechunyah text study prayer as a theme for our opening teacher meeting in August. My intent/hidden agenda was to highlight the critical importance of focusing on the needs of our students, while recognizing the power we have as teachers, and adults, to totally impact the experience of our kids in both positive, and negative, ways. The seemingly opposite yet combined messages of power and humility had personally impacted me.

In considering the use of the text, I was attuned to two particular scenarios: one in which teachers can unintentionally, or not, see kids as the source of the atmosphere in the classroom*, and another in which they are either unaware of their power, or take it more lightly, than I believe is desirable. (I want to offer the caveat that I basically have a wonderful staff of colleagues, and yet, none of us is perfect and can always benefit from another opportunity to hear and, hopefully internalize, this important message.)

We read the text aloud together, then I asked the teachers to divide into groups of two or three, mixing them by grades**, to read it together and then respond, amongst themselves, to an edited version of the questions we used at MTEI.

Then, each group had a chance to report back on highlights of their conversations, and to share their take on key messages. For me, it was also an opportunity to learn more about the teachers; their responses were quite revealing!

Most of my colleagues ultimately got at least most of the intended message, with one initially seeming to take the text as more student-based.

There was quite a bit of unsolicited positive feedback about the exercise, as shared, mixed, small group professional dialogue, not just text study, was a new experience for us. We often do grade-level shared planning, but this was a new and well-received experience.

*It does happen that kids can affect the mood of a classroom, but I believe that a skilled educator really owns the responsibility to set, or reset, the environment.

**It was interesting to see how the dividing play out, with one teacher wanting to be a "4th" in order to be with a friend. Nonetheless, I did stand by the groupings, while being reminded that it can be hard to step out of one's comfort zone, even as an adult!