

### **What happened? (Describe the workshop)**

I met with five staff members on a Sunday after our Sunday morning session. I was scheduled to have a thirty minute session, but I ended up with only twenty-two minutes in which to facilitate the session. Three of the participating teachers are part-time and do not regularly participate in our on-site professional development sessions. Those same three teachers have also not participated in the text study sessions I've led this year.

I mostly followed the guidelines provided for the session. I started the session letting participants know that I would do much more frontal teaching during this session than I usually do in these sessions. I began by explaining my participation in MTEI and the way that this session as related to the content we discussed in March. We began by noticing the common conversational patterns and doing an overview of what supporting and challenging looks like. I used the powerpoint slides provided in the MTEI binder and gave examples of what strengthening and challenging commonly looks like.

The text I used was the Rav Shimi and Rav Papa text, and I provided participants with the translation in our MTEI binders and the background information provided in the binders. We read the text aloud and then stated the text in our own words. I gave participants a minute to write or think through their interpretations and asked them to support their interpretations with evidence from the text. As teachers were thinking about their interpretations, I let them know that it was alright for the interpretation to be "half baked." My boss indicated after the session that this was an important note that I gave.

I changed my mind about how I wanted to facilitate the session as participants were developing their interpretations. Before the text study session started, I thought I'd only have two participants, so I planned to do all of the supporting and challenging aloud so that I could model and coach others. I continued thinking that I would still use this structure even when I realized I'd have five participants. However, I changed my mind because I wanted each *chavrutah* pair to get a chance to really practice the language. Therefore, I first asked one participant to share her interpretation. We supported and challenged her aloud, and I was able to model and coach. Then, we broke into partners to give every teacher a chance to practice after they'd seen the supporting and challenging happen in front of the whole group. At the end of the session, I asked for feedback and thanked my participants for taking the session so seriously.

### **How did you (or did you not) use the prompts and language that were provided in the guidelines for the assignment?**

I provided all of my participants with the powerpoint slides, text, background information, and language provided in the supporting and challenging documents. I was then able to model the attentive listening and supporting/challenging language for the participants. I also heard the teachers use the supporting and challenging language and pointed it out when I heard it.

### **How did this compare with what you assumed or hoped would happen?**

This text study session went much more smoothly than I assumed it would. When I facilitated text study sessions in the past, the teachers were more hesitant to participate. In this session, teachers took the entire experience very seriously and practiced supporting and challenging as I asked them to. Part-time educators had no hesitancy about participating and bravely shared their interpretations aloud.

### **Were there aspects of what happened that surprised you?**

I was surprised when one of the teachers jumped in and was immediately ready to use supporting and challenging language. I remember feeling anxious using the conversation prompts when I was practicing with them at MTEI, so I was pleasantly surprised when an educator started using the language without any prompting.

### **Were there aspects that pleased you? Why?**

I was pleased with how easily participants used the supporting and challenging language and how willing they were to help me with my assignment. I was also pleased at my own confidence in facilitating this session. I felt much calmer leading this session, and in listening through my audio recording of the session, I was able to hear in my voice how calm and controlled I was.

### **What did participants report about their experience and/or learning?**

I asked participants for feedback about their experience. I also asked whether the sentence starters felt easy or hard to use. One teacher reported that the sentence starters felt natural but that it takes time to figure out how to phrase a comment in that language. Another teacher reported that she struggled to get the words out because those words are not the way that she speaks but that the language helped her to frame her idea. Another educator suggested that the language helped her slow down and be more attentive to her *chavrutah* partner. Finally, participants noted that they wished they had more time to practice supporting and challenging.

### **Read the Journal entry you wrote on your learning of these practices during our last seminar: Anything new you've learned? Any new question or insights you have about your learning of these practices? Any new question or insights you have about teaching these practices to colleagues?**

One of the big take aways for me at the March session was that the supporting and challenging language held me accountable to both support *and* challenge my *chavrutah*. I am more inclined to support and fear challenging. I still agree that the language for supporting and challenging helps me to be a better *chavrutah* partner by ensuring that I strengthen through challenging and supporting. In March, I felt like I needed time to figure out how to support and challenge naturally, and I still think that it is a skill to be practiced. I felt pleased with the way that my text session went, and I would teach these practices similarly in the future. The only change I would make is to have more time for the session.