

Havruta Assignment

Post Seminar 3

On May 22nd, I gathered my staff members for an end of year in-service. I have very little turnover on my team, and so my staff knows what to expect at this kind of end-of-year event: recap of the year's outcomes, challenges, obstacles, and what we call our "winnings and mic drop moments" aka successes. I also like to roll out a preliminary vision for the following school year. I find that when I do that at the end of the school year, it opens up conversations and allows for the staff to give meaningful time to think of how to incorporate the vision fully.

My staff knows about my participation in the MTEI program, and knows the empowerment that I have been feeling with regards to text study. I opened the Fall's professional development day with a text study, for the first time ever. I will not go into great detail about the vision for next year, but here's the cliffnotes version: Havruta study will take place in all Kindergarten through 7th grade classrooms. And, so this assignment fit right in with exactly how I wanted to end this school year- with a glimpse into what we will be doing next.

I used a lot of the same language that we used at the 3rd seminar, but also lots from the video we watched prior to our phone groups. I drew the triangle and talked about the partnership between the two people and the text as the third partner. We talked about the skills that could be developed through Havruta study, and that those skills are ones that we can expect students to internalize and use outside of JJEPC classroom, but perhaps in their secular classrooms and in every day context as well. I also demonstrated how to use the prompts, and created cards of prompts like we saw on the video as well, such as

- What's your evidence?
- Attentive silence.
- Is there another way of understanding that?
- I don't understand. Could you explain that in a different way or give an example?
- Tell me more about what you mean.

I was a huge fan of the cards, as I mentioned on the phone call. I allowed the teachers to use them as they wish, but did specifically request that they try. As I walked around I noticed that

they did in fact use the prompts and that it helped move conversations along. I should note that participating were also the three Rabbis that I work with me, and they too used the prompts to my surprise and delight.

I have a really remarkable staff. May 22nd was the VERY last day of our program, and this session was AFTER our Celebration of Learning, yet, all staff was equally engaged and the room was filled with energy regardless of the exhaustive morning that we just had.

As I wrapped it up, I asked people how this felt for them and thoughts that they immediately had about incorporating Havruta study in their classrooms next year. Again, the room filled with enthusiasm and the ideas already began to flow. The Rabbis really appreciated the prompts and asked that we use them during the Adult Ed/parent sessions that we hold on Sunday mornings as well.