

Designing Havruta Text Study for Teachers' Professional Development

For the last 4 years you have served as the principal of a midsize synagogue school. You find the school to be a warm and welcoming place and you feel appreciated by the parents, the staff and the children. You also enjoy the full and public support of the rabbi. He is also always happy and willing to help out by coming to do some teaching for your teachers in staff meetings. 5

There are 11 teachers on your staff. 8 women and 3 men; 4 of them have taught in this school for more than 15 years. Two of the veteran and four of the younger teachers had formal teacher training. 10

Since your participation in MTEI, you have been trying to plan your monthly staff meetings as an opportunity for learning and for building a community of colleagues who support each other. You have been pretty successful in developing alternative ways of communication to cover administrative and logistic issues that need to be discussed with teachers. As a result, the staff meetings for the past few months have been entirely dedicated to professional development: You have designed and led 3 sessions of curriculum analysis as well as 3 sessions of video investigation. 15

At this point, you would like to introduce havruta text study as one of the learning activities of these staff meetings and you are hoping to be able to incorporate it on a regular basis. We're now in the month of February and you're thinking that it would be a good thing for your staff to study about Pesah, since they will soon have to address this topic in their classrooms as well. This looks like a perfect opportunity to begin to have your staff engage in havruta text study as well, something they have actually never done before. 20

Today, we meet you as you are sitting down at your desk, beginning to plan those sessions. You are looking at your calendar and count out three two- hours long sessions scheduled between next week's meeting and Pesah. 25

Think about your planning and design process. Jot down a few notes and then please share aloud with us: 30

- a. What 2-3 essential questions are you addressing?
- b. What steps are you following?