

## Engaging Texts

The **Engaging Texts** network provides a space where people engaged in the innovative practice of *Philosophical Inquiry* *In Jewish Education* can learn from one another and develop strategic partnerships across communities throughout North America.



\* **Engaging Texts** is made possible through a generous Covenant Foundation Signature Grant.



Activities of the network:

- Advance training opportunities for the beginner through to the advanced practitioner
- Facilitate the growth of cross-communal, and national collaborations
- Provide an online library of curriculum materials to network members

*"One of the things I appreciate the most is learning with other educators I would normally never meet."*

*Yehudit Kanfer: Columbus Jewish Day School,*

## Why Philosophy?

Philosophy is the arena in which we make sense of our experience, figure ourselves out and develop a worldview. It awakens our puzzlement and curiosity, grabbing our attention and inviting a response. Abraham Heschel suggested that philosophy is 'the art of asking the right questions' – questions such as:

*What makes something fair?*

*Is honoring someone and respecting them the same thing?*

*What do we mean when we say something is a miracle?*



## Philosophy and Children

Philosophy taps children's natural curiosity and engages them in a search for meaning. In general education, *Philosophy for Children* is recognized as the leading approach to bringing philosophical inquiry into the classroom.\* *Based around creating communities of inquiry*, participants' engagement in meaning-making is integrated with deep attention to building reflective, creative and caring community.

*This makes it particularly relevant to Jewish education.*

## Philosophical Inquiry in Jewish Education

*Philosophical Inquiry in Jewish Education* combines **rigorous exploration of meaning** with **community building** and **rich, deep Jewish content knowledge**.

\* Nickerson, Perkins and Smith (1985), Nussbaum (2012), UNESCO (2007)

"I learned how to let text "open" and not to "fill" space."

Philosophical

Inquiry

In Jewish Education

philosophical inquiry is as a practice. How to work together as a community."

"I saw how to take text study to a newer and more refreshing level."

"I learned what

## Contemporary challenges

In an open world where we are faced with fluid choices about how to live as Jews, Jewish educators need to build capacities through which learners can construct meaningful identities and a sense of purpose that is:

- Informed by the ongoing Jewish conversation
- Lived in community
- In dialogue with the world around them, and
- Grounded in sound judgment

## Philosophical Inquiry in Jewish Education

provides educators with rich resources to meet these challenges.

*"I truly believe this is the future direction of Jewish education."*

Kate Milgrom: Temple Emanu El, Cleveland



"I am amazed by the deep questions students ask"

"One of the most useful take-aways was the pedagogical tool kit"



"It reinforced how important community is to learning"



## Educators

- Strengthen their dialogue and inquiry skills as they engage with Jewish texts
- Acquire practical pedagogical tools that facilitate transforming the learning space into a community of inquiry
- Connect with the larger purposes of Jewish education

## Learners

- Engage with Jewish texts as a site for identity building and meaning-making
- Develop skills and dispositions for community participation
- Experience how their ideas can powerfully contribute to discourse in their communities

## Communities

- Create pathways for advancing this approach within their own communities
- Develop models of professional development attuned to their own context
- Gain access to other communities' experiences and colleagues who can provide critical input and support

## Opportunities

**Professional Development** opportunities are designed for Jewish educators who integrate Tanach as a resource in engaging students in diverse areas of Jewish learning and life.

Professional Development is offered through **Local, Regional** and **National initiatives**, integrating face-to-face workshops, local and online Communities of Practice and mentoring.

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