

## **Why use bulletin boards around the classroom for teaching Jewish values?**

Classroom bulletin boards are not just for the purpose of beautifying the classroom; they can be used to stimulate student thinking as well as capture student work and ideas. I post charts and posters around the room that help reinforce the havruta practices that students are learning (e.g., active listening). Additionally, I always post the Jewish values text that we are currently studying, in Hebrew, sometimes with the English translation.

I also often post questions such as:

- What can this text teach us about how to learn in a classroom community?
- How may our ideas change over time?
- What Jewish values can we learn from this text?
- Why have Jews studied in havruta for hundreds of years?

We discuss these questions both as a whole group and in havrutot, and students have the chance to ponder the questions over an extended period of time.

## **Keeping the posters alive: A case for weaving the visuals into ongoing learning**

I hang on the classroom wall a student-created poster that records on the left side student ideas about situations when it's difficult to work with a partner, and on the right side ideas about taking those situations and making partner work go more smoothly. This poster demonstrates to students that when faced with conflict and challenges during pair work, they can work through difficulties that arise to create a positive outcome. Moreover, this poster can be used as a reference for times when students express reservations about havruta, saying, "What if I fight with my partner?" or "I think it's better to work alone," or when I notice havruta pairs having difficulties working together.

Proactively and reactively, I can refer back to the poster we made earlier in the year, and as a community, over time, we can add to our poster new ways to make challenging situations successful. Students are always involved in problem solving. I explicitly ask them, "Why do I take class time to discuss these ideas?" Students experience that, in our classroom community, how we interact with others is the foundation for our learning.