

Transcript: Students Thinking About How *Havruta* and Classroom Discussion Evolve

Note: The transcripts in this webcase are excerpted from longer classroom discussions. They are not intended for use independent of the videos which they accompany.

Teacher: Do you think you guys could have had the same discussion that you had today, at the beginning of the school year? Like if we had done this text first?

Students: No.

Teacher: Why not? (Several students begin speaking at once) One at a time, one at a time. Ben, why?

Ben: Because we didn't know about respectful challenging and active listening.

Hannah: We didn't know about *havruta*.

Teacher: Who else has an idea?

Sophia: We didn't know to challenge your idea and don't just to write down the first thing that you get from your mind.

Teacher: Anybody else?

Hannah: I think because we really didn't know what *havruta* is and also at the beginning of the year it might have been almost new to see [each other]. Like if I haven't seen Sophie all summer when I see her again it might be kind of like really exciting the first time. It's kind of all jiggled up. It'd be hard to kind of focus and be respectfully talking.

Teacher: So can I connect it or build off of what you're saying? Do you think that it's easier now because you're so much more conscious of the skills? Like you're saying that over the summer you might forget that. You're just too focused on the social aspect of seeing your friend again for the first time. Does anyone else want to comment on why they think the *havruta* time today was different than if I had done this at the beginning of the school year and studied this text and these questions?

Kaniel: Yeah.

Student: Also we didn't know this much Hebrew.

Kaniel: Yeah, we wouldn't have known as much Hebrew.

Teacher: Kaniel, can you expand on that a little bit?

Kaniel: If we started at the beginning of the year, we wouldn't have known that much Hebrew. And now you're like teaching us what the text means, when in the beginning you just wanted to do easy things then it gets harder and harder until the end, close to the end.

Teacher: Are there other parts of this process that are harder now? Of *havruta* time?

Kaniel: Not really.

Teacher: Here's another big question: So what do you think that your teachers next year will expect from you when having discussions?

Jacob: They will expect really, really good active listening and respectful challenging because we've already practiced it here in third grade.

Sophia: They can expect when they give us like a sheet that we have good ideas. Not like yes and no and just like a little answer.

Teacher: So teachers are expecting that you'll expand on ideas? Go ahead Hallie.

Hallie: Like full sentences.

Teacher: What? Full sentences. Anybody else?

Kaniel: I have a question. When are we going to learn the new part of the text?

Teacher: I think next time. We'll reveal it.

Kaniel: Yes! Then we're going to have to memorize it?

Teacher: Then I'll give you some tools to memorize it. Exactly.