

Overview & Flow

CERTIFICATE IN LIBERATORY TORAH EDUCATION

This is a brief overview of the CLTE curriculum. This overview includes a brief description of what will be included in each session of the Certificate course, a brief Rationale for the requirement of taking courses throughout this program, and a set of books that might excite or inspire you.

This overview is still in process and will be until and throughout the Certification course (a version date is included in the document). No curriculum ever needs to be finished, and the needs of each participant, each cohort, and the world around us as we learn will be woven through the weft built below! Feel free to explore specific sessions in the tabs to the side. These are deeply in process, though April-August sessions are barer because they will depend more heavily on the particulars of the group.

I'd be happy to explore the curriculum more deeply and answer questions you might have over a [one on one zoom meeting](#)!

Fall Quarter - Intro to JLP

- **October • Introduction to Jewish Liberation Pedagogy (and each other)**
 - Welcome and Group Connecting
 - *Who is here*
 - *What is Liberatory Pedagogy*
 - *Discussion:*
 - *What are we Jews liberating Towards?*
 - *Goal Setting & writing ourselves an email!*
 - *Safe Communities & Writing a Brit*
 - *A communal vision - introduction to hevruta*
- **November • Educating from our Values**
 - Exploring our Teaching Values & Vision
 - Choosing 5 Values
 - Liberation Pedagogy for Torah
 - Paolo Freire & bell hooks
 - What is the Jewish knowledge you are trying to liberate?
 - Envisioning the future
 - What does it mean to be learning/be in transformation alongside our students?
 - Listening & Speaking - Tzimtzum model
 - Student centered classrooms
 - The power of open discussions
 - Creating empowering experiences
- **December • Text study, Trust, and Understanding**
 - Text Study, Disagreement, and Trust

- Experiential text study
- Parker Palmer's 3rd thing
- Building trust in our classrooms
- Text study as a spiritual practice
 - Flows of a text study class
 - Cultivating ritual and meaning

Winter Quarter • Hayta L'Rosh Pina

- **January • Creating and Expanding What Is Possible**
 - *Backwards Design*
 - *Exploring goal oriented lesson/curriculum planning*
 - *Discuss Big Questions & Enduring Understandings*
 - *Begin to discuss Modalities of learning*
 - *Using and Creating Reflective Practices - Modalities*
 - Giving time and making time in our lessons
 - Teaching as Art, Torah as Art, Everything is Art
 - Creating personal practices for reflection
- **February • How do we learn?**
 - Universal Design for Learning
 - What if people need different paths to get to through same experience?
 - Areas of UDL - returning to Modalities
 - Creating Entry points, pause points, and exit points
 - Synthesis
 - How do we know what we've learned?
 - How do we make meaning of what we've learned
 - Exploring assessment and synthesis
 - Iterative learning
- **March • Teaching towards Joy**
 - Lifelong learning is about JOY
 - Thinking about our students and why they learn
 - Thinking about why we learn
 - Thinking about our wider vision for teaching
 - Curriculum and Scaffolding
 - How do we make decisions about content?
 - How do we make decisions about flow?
 - Teaching as performance art
 - Applying Backwards Design to an entire experience
 - Decided on a project

Spring Quarter - You, the teacher

- **April • Critique as Love, toward Growth**
 - Critical Colleagues
 - Building a group feedback model

- Self reflection activities about teaching
- Revisiting, editing, and deepening our values
- Hevruta about Values
- **May • The Sandbox of Jewish Education**
 - World building & imagining activities
 - Creating a Pedagogical Statement
 - Online practices
 - Hevruta about Our Goals
 - how we want to build them
 - What we need to learn to get there
 - What challenges we anticipate and how we can prepare
- **June • Why I Educate**
 - Building the world we want to see
 - Sharing Pedagogical Statements
 - Hevruta
 - Creating a Festival of Learning

Summer Quarter • Synthesis

- **July • Looking Ahead and Beyond**
 - Learning Torah Together
 - Thinking beyond the program
 - Returning to our goals from the first class
 - Dedicated time to work on your project and brainstorm with the group
- **August • Olam HaBa**
 - Cohort Session:
 - Sharing our final Projects
 - Preparing for the Festival of Learning
 - Week of Aug 23-27 Reserved • Festival of Learning
 - August 30th • Cohort final meeting & Graduation

Personal Learning Journeys - A Rationale

To receive your Certificate of Liberatory Torah Education, you must be enrolled and attending regular text study practice throughout your certification. One course per quarter at Torah Studio (Drop in or Intensive) is included in your tuition for the duration of your program. There are no less than 4 really good reasons for this - all of which, though intertwined, stand on their own merit:

1. I've been constantly asking myself why we learn and what happens to us adults when we learn? This is one of the core questions of this curriculum. What I know already is that learning for the purpose of changing and growing (whatever the medium) helps us do exactly that. I want you to know the answer to this question in your body, not just in your mind.
2. Liberatory Pedagogy means we are all on this learning journey together and we want you to stay open and in process as both a learner and a teacher. Taking courses for fun

and exploration keeps you in an open, learning, and creative mindset that we hope to get to know intimately as we imagine creating that for other people.

3. This program will take you on a journey through learning, thinking, talking but also creating, iterating, and polishing your teaching and your Torah. We need to keep you full of fuel for your inner fire! We expect you to bring what is happening in your classes (teaching and learning) with you into our conversations and let us all learn from them.
4. On that note, every single moment, person, and text is your teacher in this. Learning from what you love, what surprises you, what irks you, what upsets you, and integrating those feelings requires that you experience them and notice them not once but over and over again. (Note, this isn't only true in our classes)

Liana's JLP Bookshelf

- Transforming Perspectives in Lifelong Learning and Adult Education, Formenti & West, 2018 (email Liana for access)
- Teaching to Transgress, hooks
- To Know as We Are Known, Palmer
- Teaching Community, hooks
- A Philosophy of Havruta, Holzer & Kent
- Attuned Learning, Holzer
- Art as Experience, Dewey
- Braiding Sweetgrass, Kimmerer
- Textual Knowledge and Teaching the Bible in Theory and in Practice, Holtz
- We Do This 'Til We Free Us, Kaba
- Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning, Tickon Schuster
- There Is Nothing So Whole As A Broken Heart, Milstein
- The Place of All Possibilities, Adina Allen

Session 1 (oct)

October

Welcome and Group Connecting

Landing Here Together

- How I Got Here
 - Have each person introduce themselves in a go around.
 - Have each person respond to the prompt: **How did you get here?**
 - Once done, prompt them to answer a second time: How did you get here?
 - And a third and final time, answer the prompt: How did you get here?
 - Welcome everyone to the Program
- Text Study - Berakhot 28a
- What is Liberatory Pedagogy?
 - Introduction to Paolo Freire, bell hooks, and other people who help us imagine new goals for education.
 - What are the major hallmarks of a liberated classroom?
 - Discussion:
 - In creating a Jewish Liberation Pedagogy, what are we Jews liberating towards?

[Break 1]

Logistics:

- Review the Syllabus
 - Review Meeting Times
 - Take Questions
- Choose Fall Classes
- How do we want to communicate?

A communal vision - introduction to hevruta

- Introduce Hevruta Triangle and process of Hevruta
- Read from a Philosophy of Havruta [] IN Hevruta!
 - Discuss:
- Group Discussion:
 - What happens when we learn together?
 - What feels Jewish about this?

[Break 2]

Safe Communities & Writing a Brit

- Bring in the poem "Almond Scented Bubble Bath"
 - <https://decolonialfutures.net/portfolio/almond-scented-bubble-bath/>
 - Discuss: What do we need?
 - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs & the spiritual journey of self actualization
- Ask them, what do they need to feel safe, held, and seen in this certificate program?
- Gather this into a brit and have everyone sign it.

Goal Setting

- Taking a moment to set our goals for the year:
 - 2 goals within the program
 - 2 goals for your learning
 - 2 goals for yourself
- Write yourself an email!
 - As you explore your goals for this year, take a minute to write yourself a letter expressing the goals, the things you are feeling now, what you hope for yourself in just under one year.
 - Send that email to yourself to schedule send on August 30th 2026.

TAKE A PICTURE

Homework:

Create an Educational Autobiography for yourself. This can be in any form you prefer but will be shared in our Archive.

(Want a suggestion? Write a narrative story of your education, write a diary entry for an important moment in your educational experience, create a graphic/photo collage, make a short film, create a powerpoint...)

Bibliography:

- <https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm#r13>
 - Even after we know, we are impelled to know more and more minutely and microscopically on the one hand, and on the other, more and more extensively in the direction of a world philosophy, religion, etc. The facts that we acquire, if they are isolated or atomistic, inevitably get theorized about, and either analyzed or organized or both. This process has been phrased by some as the search for 'meaning.' We shall then postulate a desire to understand, to systematize, to organize, to analyze, to look for relations and meanings.
- <https://pdfroom.com/books/a-pedagogy-for-liberation-dialogues-on-transforming-education/1ra51E845JQ>
- Bell hooks - Teaching to Transgress
- A Philosophy of Havruta by Eli Holzer and Orit Kent
-

Session 2 (nov)

November

Homework:

Create an Educational Autobiography for yourself. This can be in any form you prefer but will be shared in our Archive.

(Want a suggestion? Write a narrative story of your education, write a diary entry for an important moment in your educational experience, create a graphic/photo collage, make a short film, create a powerpoint...)

0-10 • Welcome

- Landing
- Values based Education
 - *Every decision we make as educators is purposeful. So we should know what roots us in our decision making.*
 - *Sharing lists*

10-65 • Educational Autobiography Presentations

- 5 minutes per person
 - After each person, please reflect in the chat on one value you noticed seemed important to them.
- Self Reflection
 - Which values being named feel important to your teaching/learning?
 - Which values feel less important?

65-75 • Break

75-95 • The Problem with “Jewish Literacy”

95-110 • Hevruta with Source Sheet

110-120 • • Wrap Up

Homework

- Pick your top 5 values

Bibliography:

- <https://rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/vayakhel/making-space/>
- Quantum listening by pauline oliveros
- <https://www.grassrootsthinking.com/liberatory-education-cultivating-human-development/>
- <https://www.everettsd.org/cms/lib07/WA01920133/Centricity/Domain/947/BANKING%20CONCEPT%20OF%20ED.2.pdf>

Source Sheet for TzimTzum

Expanding and Contracting • TzimTzum Teaching

1. Say hello to your partner!
2. Read the **Text Two** out loud together.
3. Explore and Discuss:
 - a. What is the concept of Tzimtzum?
 - b. Is it OK to contract oneself for another?
 - c. How can a teacher embody tzimtzum when creating a classroom? Why would they want to?

Text One: Making Space (Commentary on Vayekhel/Pekudei) by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

We owe to the great mystic, R. Isaac Luria, the concept of tzimtzum, “self-effacement” or “self-limitation.” Luria was perplexed by the question: If God exists, how can the universe exist? At every point in time and space, the Infinite should crowd out the finite. The very existence of God should act as does a Black Hole to everything in its vicinity. Nothing, not even light waves, can escape a Black Hole, so overwhelming is its gravitational pull. Likewise, nothing physical or material should be able to survive for even a moment in the presence of the pure, absolute Being of God.

Luria’s answer was that, in order for the universe to exist, God had to hide Himself, screen His presence, limit His Being. That is *tzimtzum*.

Text Two: The Place Where You are Standing Is Holy: A Jewish Theology on Human Relationships by Rabbi Gershon Winkler with Lakme Batya Elior

In the creation myth of ancient Judaic mysticism, God creates the universe by a process dubbed tzimtzum, which in Hebrew means a sort of stepping back to allow for there to be an Other, an Else, as in something or someone else. The Judaic notion of a world of Free Will ([Talmud Berachot 33b](#)) is deeply rooted in this concept, in the understanding that in creating life, the Eyn-Sof, or the Endless One, subdued the omnipotent, all-embracing Divine Presence for the sake of the realization of the Divine Will that there be other beings ([Etz Chaim 1:1:2.](#)) Our world, then, is the sacred space that the Great Spirit gave as a gift to us, a space in which to be as human as divinely possible, and as divine as humanly possible. A space to err, to fall, to believe, to doubt, to cry, to laugh. Our space, created by the simple motion of stepping back, the humble act of honoring the separate reality of an Other.

Session 3 (dec)

December

Text Study, Disagreement, and Trust

- Learn Leviticus Chapter 10 in Hevruta
 - What happened to Nadav & Abihu?
 - What do you make of each character's reactions?
- Discussion:
 - *Note as you participate how your body feels when:*
 - You say something
 - Someone else says something you agree with or that you disagree with
 - Someone agrees or disagrees with you
 - Someone agrees or disagrees with someone else
- Journal about the above answers
- Group Discussion:
 - What is the purpose of hearing things we don't agree with?
 - What is the goal of a disagreement?

[Break]

Text study as a spiritual practice

- Cultivating ritual and meaning
 - Class time as Hekdesh
 - Rituals we can pull from
 - Flows of a text study class
 - Class experience as a ritual
 - Goals of creating ritual
-

Session 4 (jan)

January

Backwards Design

- Exploring goal oriented lesson/curriculum planning
 - **Case study I: Teaching Liberatory Torah**
 - Improv: come up with an Example class on one of the topics we've learned so far and where we would be teaching it.
 - Goals: Have each person answer "Because of this class, my students will..."
 - Vote on our top 3 to continue on
 - Essential Questions: What questions will guide us to our goals?
Big Ideas: What big ideas do we need to explore to achieve our goals?

Modalities

*"This neuromyth persists despite the fact that we know that the brain is massively interconnected, and that common brain functions (particularly in the prefrontal cortex) cut across virtually any act of deliberate learning. Studies have consistently shown that catering to differences in students' preferred learning style does not actually result in any improvement in learning outcomes. On the contrary, **there is good reason to believe that optimal learning for everyone involves the opportunity to engage in as many sensory modalities as possible.***

- Create a list: Try to create a large list of ways we experience learning
 - Explore the subcategories that emerge from this list
 - *Introduce that some of these actually don't work for some people at all - but we'll explore that more next month.*
 - Discuss:
 - What does it feel like when you learn in a way that feels fulfilling?
 - What happens when multiple of these modalities are used in learning?
 - What about when we don't like a modality?
- *Using and Creating Reflective Practices*
 - Teaching as Art, Torah as Art, Everything is Art
 - Goals of reflection
 - Creating personal practices for reflection
- Return to our Case Study
 -

Bibliography:

- <https://www.aidansevers.com/post/curriculum-what-is-the-best-kind-of-big-question>
- <https://www.scientificamerican.com/blog/beautiful-minds/enough-with-the-learning-styles-already/>
-

Session 5 (feb)

February

Synthesis

- Discussion:
 - How do you know what you've learned?
 - How do we make meaning of what we've learned?
- Exploring assessment and synthesis
 - Case Study II:
 - Goals: Bringing back the goals from last month and consider how one might assess if these goals have been reached
 - How a student would see/recognize that goal being achieved in themselves
 - How you as the teacher could recognize/point out that goal being achieved in your student
 - Synthesis: Come up with a list of ways you could offer that would allow easier recognition of our goals being achieved based on the class we've imagined
 - Small group discussion & activity:
 - How do you feel about synthesis in your educational history -
- Iterative learning

Universal Design for Learning

"UDL is a framework to guide the design of learning environments that are accessible, inclusive, and challenging for every learner. Ultimately, the goal of UDL is to support learner agency, the capacity to actively participate in making choices in service of learning goals. The UDL Guidelines inform the design of learning environments to support learner agency that is:

- **Purposeful** - internalized self-efficacy, acting in ways that are personally and socially meaningful.
- **Reflective** - self-awareness and metacognition to identify internal motivations and external influences that support learning and make adjustments when necessary.
- **Resourceful** - understanding and applying assets, strengths, resources, and linguistic and cultural capital.
- **Authentic** - increasing comprehension and deepening understanding in ways that are genuine.
- **Strategic** - setting goals and monitoring learning with intentionality and planfulness.
- **Action-oriented** - self-directed and collective action in pursuit of learning goals.

UDL aims to change the design of the environment rather than to situate the problem as a perceived deficit within the learner. When environments are intentionally designed to reduce barriers, every learner can engage in rigorous, meaningful learning.

Agency involves learners' ability to regulate their affective, cognitive, and behavioral processes as they interact within the learning environment (Code, 2020). Further, it is essential to consider how structural dynamics influence learner agency. Learners' ability to act as powerful agents relates to the structure of the learning community and the extent to which all voices, regardless of perceived status, are valued and able to contribute (Restani, 2021).

Designing learning environments that support learner agency requires continually examining the relationship between educators and students and creating space for learners to make sense of

content individually and collectively through interaction and reflection. Further, supporting learner agency requires recognizing dimensions of culture and identity, and examining where bias may be a barrier to learners being able to fully exercise their agency.

- Hevruta the Guidelines to UDL Graphic Organizer
 - Work together to process through the Graphic - feel free to ask for help, look up youtube videos or other resources.
 - Fill out together ways you've

Bibliography

- <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>

Session 6 (mar)

- Learning is transforming is joy
 - Thinking about our students and why they learn
 - Thinking about why we learn
 - spiritual/personal growth
 -
- Curriculum and Scaffolding
 - How do we make decisions about content?
 - How do we make decisions about flow?
 - Teaching as performance art
 - Applying Backwards Design to an entire experience
- Decided on a project

Bibliography

- Transformations

Session 7 (apr)

- April
 - Chiddush with Avidan Halivni
 - Critical Colleagues
 - Building a group feedback model
 - Self reflection activities about teaching
 - Revisiting, editing, and deepening our values
 - Hevruta about Values

Session 8 (may)

- World building & imagining activities
 - Building for our environment
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6uXJWxpKBM&list=TLPQMDkwNzlwMjWxi9U-hrnd9w&index=4>
 -
- Creating a Pedagogical Statement
- Hevruta about Our Goals
 - How we want to build them
 - What we need to learn to get there
 - What challenges we anticipate and how we can prepare

Session 9 (june)

- Building the world we want to see
- Sharing Pedagogical Statements
- Hevruta
- Creating a Festival of Learning

Session 10 (july)

- July
 - Learning Torah Together
 - Thinking beyond the program
 - Returning to our goals from the first class
 - Dedicated time to work on your project and brainstorm with the group

Session 11 (august)

- Cohort Session:
 - Sharing our final Projects
 - Preparing for the Festival of Learning
- Week of Aug 23-27 Reserved • Festival of Learning
- August 30th • Cohort final meeting & Graduation