

## **Sharon Avni's Abstract**

*1. An abstract: a succinct statement of your research question, your aims, methodology, and, if appropriate, your preliminary findings. What makes your contribution unique? (250 word maximum)*

Despite the fact that Hebrew language teaching is pervasive in Jewish day schools, to date, much of the work in Hebrew language pedagogy has been animated more by tradition and opinion than by theoretical definitions, documented study, or researched understandings. There is scant evidence showing what effective Hebrew day school teachers do in their classroom practices, and how pedagogical choices are informed by professional development, knowledge of language acquisition, and the school context. This study directly addresses this gap. Providing a case study of an elementary school teacher that has been identified by parents and administrators as an effective Hebrew educator, it asks the following three interrelated questions:

- What pedagogical strategies and practices promote Hebrew learning?
- In what ways do professional development experiences shape Hebrew teaching?
- In what ways do contextual factors affect Hebrew teaching? To answer these questions, this qualitative case study makes use of multiple data sources, including semi-formal interviews, classroom observations, stimulated recall, and document collection. Collectively, this corpus of data provides an emic reading of the specific ways in which quality day school Hebrew teaching operates and the degree to which it drives learning. Because Hebrew teacher education is glaringly absent in Jewish educational research, this study's contribution is timely and relevant. Its findings will serve as a jumping off point for discussions about the knowledge base of Hebrew language educators, which in turn can lead to creating more powerful learning opportunities for Hebrew educators.

## **Ziva Reimer Hassenfeld's Abstract**

This project proposes intensive teacher-action research. Over the course of a year (or half of a year), I will teach one elementary grade Jewish studies class at a local community Jewish day school. I will teach the school's curriculum while implementing the *pedagogy*

*of interpretive facilitation*, a pedagogy that places students' textual inquiry at the center. This design will allow me to do the most in depth study to date of how young students, ages 8 and 9, attending Jewish day school make sense of sacred texts, the progression of student learning in the context of the *pedagogy of interpretive facilitation*, and the challenges teachers face in implementing a text pedagogy that puts student inquiry at the center. Ultimately, this research has the power to transform what we believe is possible in the teaching and learning of sacred texts at young ages.