

Reflection

It was really amazing to see how focused and determined my students were throughout the entire week. Students were energized and motivated to learn. And the assessments included in the events showed that they actually internalized the halachot they learned. Most importantly for me - students told me that they had fun learning Halacha. I even received the following email from a parent of one of my students:

_____ has come home 2 days in a row telling us how much fun your halakhah workshops have been. He said he learned more today about *hilkhot shabbat* than he had in several years. Whether that assessment of quantity is accurate or not, as we all know, the impression counts for a lot.

The color war structure also helped with differentiation. For example, for the Kahoot challenges, stronger students were able to read and understand the more complicated parts of the readings and then took a leadership role in helping to explain to the weaker students. This also happened when some students, who were more proficient at researching Halachic topics on the internet, helped their teammates who were having trouble in that area. I have never seen students collaborate as productively as they did that week. All this happened without me getting involved or suggesting that they help each other in this way.

I found the Iron Shabbat Chef to be one of the best events as it combined the competitive nature of a color war event with the real-world learning of preparing food and not just reading about how to prepare food and how not to prepare food on Shabbat. Incorporating real-world learning into other classic color war games such as Minute to Win It and the Amazing Race was relatively simple to do and it didn't feel forced at all. It made me rethink the learning potential of color war events - imagine how much more real-world learning in subjects such as halacha, science, math, etc we can include in the regular color war events we already have in our schools!